

Introduction

In the continuity of our daily requirements, different types of services are needed to be utilized. Some of these services are very closely connected to our lives. As such, they have become essential services. Out of such essential services, health and sanitation, waste disposal, disease control, safety, secure places to spend leisure peacefully and clean and safe roadways occupy important positions. Therefore, the need has arisen for a public institution to mediate with the supply of these essential services to the public.

To fulfil such regional requirements more fruitfully and efficiently, special institutions established in Sri Lanka are introduced as Local Government Institutions. They function under three categories now as Municipal Councils, Urban Councils and Pradeshiya Sabhas.

The aim of this chapter is to look into the functions of these Local Government Institutions broadly.

By studying this chapter you get the opportunity to study the followings:

- Local Government Institutions and their structure
- Need for Local Government Institutions and their services provided to the community
- Duties to be fulfilled by the public for the maintenance of such services effectively
- Duties to be fulfilled with regard to the services to be provided by the public representatives and the government officers attached to the Local Government Institutions
- You will be able to analyse the contribution of the Local Government Institutions for the national development through regional development.

4.1 Local Government Institutions

4.1.1 Identification of Local Government Institutions

It was a holiday. Achini's father was reading the daily newspaper. Achini came to him with a cup of tea. She looked at the paper her father was reading. A part of their conversation is as follows:

Achini - "Father, today's paper carries a lot of information about Local Government Institutions, doesn't it?"

Father - "Ah, yes, daughter. Both these pages describe Local Government Institutions."

Achini - "Father, what are these Local Government Institutions?"

Father - These institutions have been set up to ease the administration of the region, and to fulfil the needs of the region.

Achini - That means these institutions have been set up for our own ease, haven't they?

Father - "Yes, Daughter, take your time and read this article leisurely. You will get to know a lot about Local Government Institutions."

Having read the article published in the newspaper, Achini had summarized some important points as given below:

- Local Government Institutions function under the guidance of the Central Government.
- Local Government Institutions in Sri Lanka function as Municipal Councils, Urban Councils and Provincial Councils.
- The Central Government has assigned the administrative affairs to the Local Government Institutions through various Acts.
- The 13th amendment to the 1978 constitution empowers the Provincial Council to supervise the administration of the Local Government Institutions.
- The structure of a Local Government Institution consists of the members elected by the public vote and of the government officers.
- Local Government Institutions are bound to follow the instructions issued by the Central Government as well as the Provincial Council.
- Under the democratic ruling system, Local Government Institution contribute to maintain the administrative affairs of the Central Government more easily and to operate welfare services more closely to the public.
- Local Government Institutions provide an immense service to regional development.

It can be simply defined that the special institutions which are operative to maintain community services, easily and efficiently, in the urban semi - urban and rural levels are called Local Government Institutions.

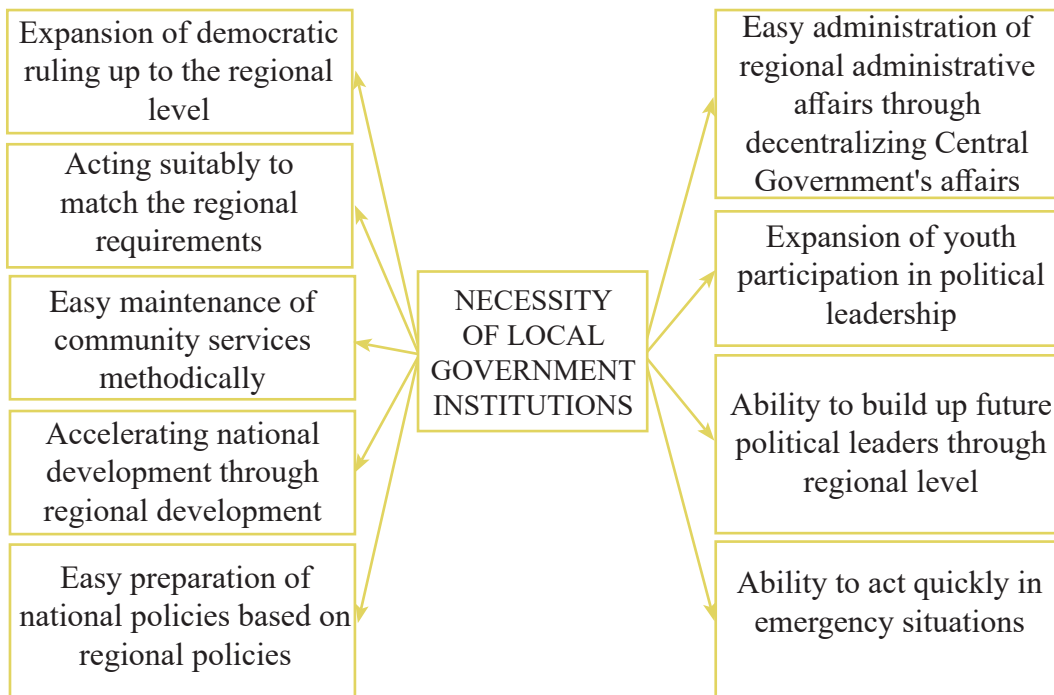
Activity 4.1



1. Construct a simple definition to introduce Local Government Institutions.
2. Name the Local Government Institution which belongs to your living area/ your school.

4.1.2 Necessity of the Local Government Institutions

The main purpose of a Local Government Institutions is to maintain public services efficiently and fruitfully. Study the chart given below to identify the necessity of the Local Government Institutions:



4.1.3 Historical evolution of Local Government

Inception of the present Local Government Institutions of Sri Lanka commenced during the British ruling system. History bears evidence that the concept of regional administration existed in Sri Lanka, long ago.

With the introduction of a plantation economy by the British, they needed to develop infrastructure (eg: roads, exchange of messages). Increase in the population, urbanization and the increase in the provision of social benefits to the public, were the other reasons contributed towards to form formal Local Government Institutions during British period.

As such, the regulations brought in by the British, affect the birth of Local Government Institutions and their gradual development.

Some regulations brought in by the British are as follows:

- Establishment of Municipal Councils in 1865 A.D. in Colombo, Kandy and Galle under the Municipal Council Ordinance No. 17
- Establishment of Village Councils in 1871 A.D. under the Village Council Ordinance No. 26
- Establishment of Town Councils in 1940 A.D. under the Town Council Ordinance No. 61
- Establishment of Urban Councils in 1946 AD under the Ordinance No. 03

The first Municipal Councils in Sri Lanka



**Municipal Council in
Colombo**



**Municipal Council
in Galle**



**Municipal Council in
Kandy**

After the independence, the following Local Government Institutions were functioned in Sri Lanka;

1. Village Councils
2. Rural Councils
3. Urban Councils
4. Municipal Councils

In the year 1980, By the regulation No. 35:

- abolished Village and Rural Councils and established District Development Councils and,
- established village based councils and divisional based councils to promote more participation in District Development Councils.

Regulation No. 15 of 1987 abolished the District Development Councils and established Provincial Councils.

Accordingly, after 1987, in Sri Lanka,

- Pradeshiya Sabhas
- Urban Councils and
- Municipal Councils are under operation.

Activity 4.2



Prepare an article for a wall newspaper on, “Changes that took place in the local administration of Sri Lanka after independence.”

Local Government Institutions function in Sri Lanka as at 01.05.2017

Province	District	Municipal Councils	Urban Councils	Pradeshiya Sabha	Total
Western	Colombo	05	05	03	13
	Gampaha	02	05	12	19
	Kalutara	-	04	12	16
Central	Kandy	01	04	17	22
	Matale	02	-	11	13
	Nuwara Eliya	01	02	05	08
Southern	Galle	01	02	17	20
	Matara	01	01	15	17
	Hambantota	01	01	10	12
Northern	Jaffna	01	03	13	17
	Mannar	-	01	04	05
	Vavuniya	-	01	04	05
	Mulativu	-	-	04	04
	Kilinochchi	-	-	03	03
Eastern	Batticaloa	01	02	09	12
	Ampara	02	01	17	20
	Trincomalee	-	02	11	13
Wayamba	Kurunegala	01	01	19	21
	Puttalam	-	02	10	12
North Central	Anuradhapura	01	-	18	19
	Polonnaruwa	-	-	07	07
Uva	Badulla	02	01	15	18
	Moneragala	-	-	10	10
Sabaragamuwa	Ratnapura	01	02	14	17
	Kegalle	-	01	11	12
Total		23	41	271	335

4.1.4 Structure of Local Government Institutions

Local Government Institutions are inclusive of both the representatives of the public and the government officials. A board of officers, including government officials, has been formed to fulfil the affairs of such institutes efficiently and fruitfully. Some basic features of the structure of a Local Government Institution are as follows:

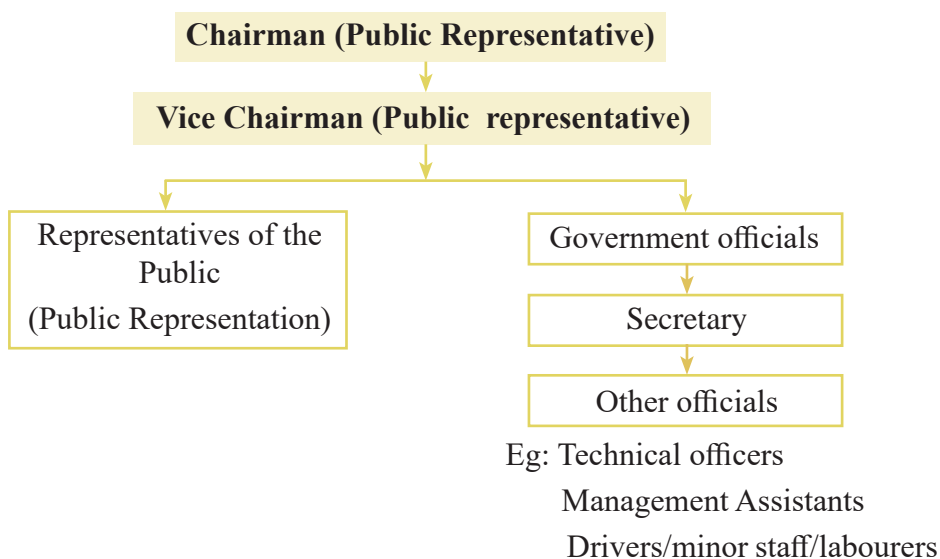
- The person in-charge of the Local Government Institution is a representative of the public.
- Conducting administrative affairs is done by the government officers
- Decisions regarding the Local Government Institution are taken by the public representatives.

Heads of Local Government Institutions

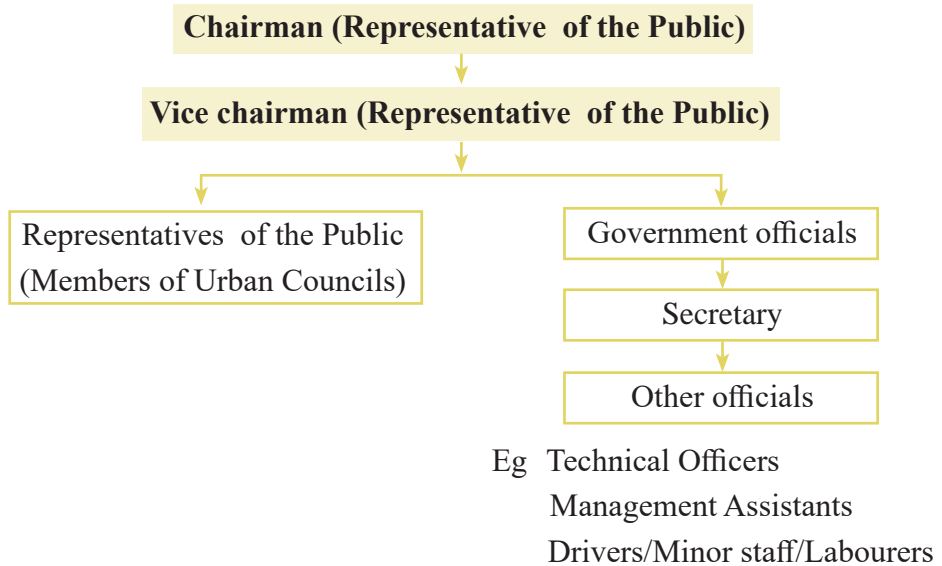
Designation ↓	Institution →	Municipal Council	Urban Council/ Pradeshiya Sabha
Chief		Mayor	President
Assistant		Deputy Mayor	Vice President
Administrative officer		Municipal Commissioner	Secretary

Structure of the representatives of the public and the government officers in different Local Government Institutions are as follows:

Structure of a Pradeshiya Sabha

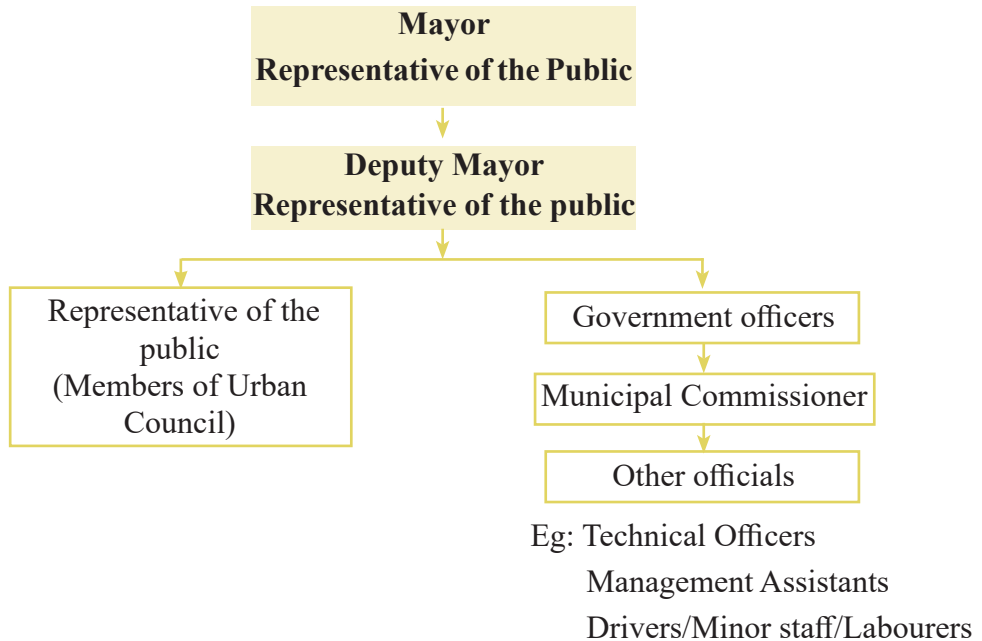


Structure of a Urban Council



This basic structure can vary based on different urban councils.

Structure of a Municipal Council



Activity 4.3



1. Draw the structure of the Local Government Institution which your school/home belongs to.
2. Compare the structure of the Local Government Institution of your area you drew, with the structure given in the textbook.

Responsibilities of the Head of a Local Government Institution:

1. To convene and postpone the council
2. To preside over the council
3. To take the initiative to provide the needs of the people
4. To organize and conduct activities related to the Local Government Institution

- An officer of Sri Lanka Administrative Service is appointed by the Governor of the relevant Provincial Council as the Municipal Commissioner in a Municipal Council.
- An officer of the Super Grade, in the State Management Service is appointed, as the Secretary to the Urban Council/ Pradesheeya Sabha, by the Public Services Commission.

When the term of a council ends, the respective Municipal Commissioner or the Secretary carries on with the conduct of the responsibilities of the council until the next election. Otherwise, administrative authorities are entrusted to a special officer.

Local Government Institutions are given various powers to carry out their responsibilities. Given below are a few examples of them:

- Imposing Assessment Taxes and other related taxes
- Issuing street markings certificates
- Approving building plans
- Permitting the construction of permanent buildings and other structures
- Dismantling unauthorized structures
- Initiating activities to preserve the environment
- Constructing public roads, canals, public markets, dispensaries, libraries, gardens and maintaining them

- Carrying out necessary action to eradicate infectious diseases
- Removing unauthorized slums, huts and other structures harmful to health
- Maintaining ownership of natural streams and reservoirs

Proper execution of the above mentioned powers ensure the public welfare and the development of the area. Finances that are required to be spent for the multi services launched by the Local Government Institutions are earned in various ways.

Ways of earning Financial Resources by the Local Government Institutions

- Assessment taxes/Tax finance
- Grants from the Minister of Local Government to the Local Government Institutions
- Money earned through Leasing/Renting out of properties attached to the Local Government Institutions. (Eg - Town halls, boutiques, shops, etc.)
- Revenue collected from the supply of public services
- Allocations from fines imposed by magistrate's courts over violating laws
- Donations and Aids from foreign governments and Non-Governmental Organizations, with the approval of the Parliament of Sri Lanka

Electing representatives for Local Government Institutions

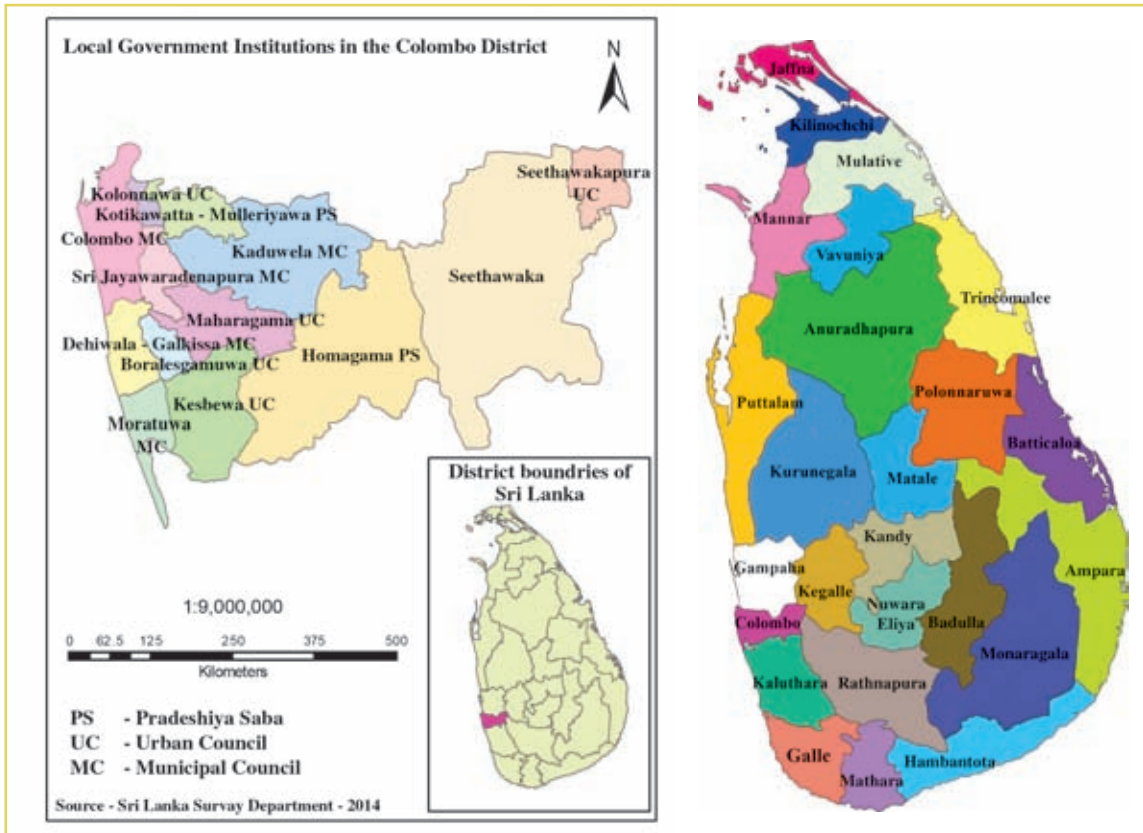
- So far, representatives were elected by the votes of the relevant region on proportional representation. Amendments to the election of Local Government Institute Ordinance No. 22 of 2012 has now been approved. Accordingly, procedure for the representation of Local Government Institutions at an election is scheduled to be changed.
- In accordance with that, it is suggested that the representatives will be elected on individual representation and proportional representation, based on the electorate level.

Delimitation of Local Government Institutions

Limitations to the Local Government Institutions are decided by a National Committee on Limitations. Accordingly, criteria that are taken into consideration at the limitations of Local Government Institutions are listed below:

- Population ratio to suit different nationalities
- The geography and physical features
- Population and the Density of the population
- Level of economic development

According to the limitations decided on Local Government Authority areas, map of the Colombo District Local Government Authority area is shown below;



Activity 4.4



1. Having discussed with the teacher, present a short report of details, on the procedure of the election of representatives to the Local Government Institutions.
2. Is proportional representation the more suitable approach to select members to Local Government Institutions?

OR

Is a combination of a member for each division and proportional representation better? Arrange for a debate. Be guided by your teacher.

4.2 Services offered by the Local Government Institutions

Under the subject Civic Education, students of Grade 9 were expected to learn that day about "The services offered by the Local Government Institutions." Having accepted the invitation given by the Class Teacher, an officer in the Pradesheeya Sabha, Mr. Anil had come to the class on time to discuss details of the topic.

A part of the discussion Mr. Anil had, with the students in the classroom, on the services fulfilled by the Local Government Institution is given below:

Mr Anil: Local Government Institutions offer many services to the residents of the areas and specially for students. Maintaining public libraries and reading rooms, children's parks, passageways for walking and jogging, etc. can be taken as examples.

Local Government Institutions also conduct pre-school services. They also contribute to launch religious and cultural programmes with a common value.



Library service



Reading hall



Children's park



Passage ways for walking



A pre - school

Fathima: Are the roads too repaired by the Local Government Institutions?
(student)

Mr Anil: Services such as road repairs, construction of bridges and culverts and construction of new roads that belong to the Local Government authority areas are fulfilled by them. Street lighting is also attended by the Local Government Institutions.



Regional road maintenance

Sandareka: What are the other services provided by the Local Government Institutions?
(student)

Mr Anil: Providing health and sanitation is a major responsibility of a Local Government Institution. Under this topic the institution attends to the maintenance of proper drainage and sewage services, maintenance of drains and canals, maintenance of public toilets, etc. They are all valuable services.



Sewage Services

Amila: Isn't the waste disposal a service carried out by Local Government Institutions?
(student)

Mr Anil: Yes. Management of waste is a very important service carried out by Local Government Institutions. They attend to proper disposal of waste and operation of projects for recycling.



Collecting garbage for re - cycling

For free distribution

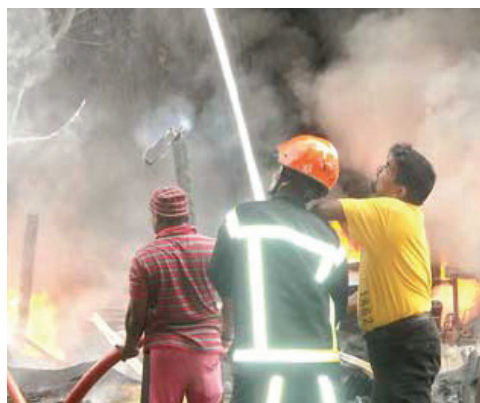
Ravi: Don't the Local Government Institutions check the sale of unhygienic food?

Mr Anil: Why not? Oh yes. Thank you very much for reminding that. Not only the sale of unhygienic food, the Local Government Institutions also act against advertising of such food. There are many more services offered by the Local Government Institutions.

Maintenance of public cemetery, maintenance of public bathing wells and crematoriums, the supply of water based on the regional needs, are some other responsibilities of the Local Government Institutions. Services provided as fire extinguishing are also fulfilled by the Local Government Institutions.



Public well



Fire extinguishing service

Malithi: There was a clinic organized in our village by the Pradesheeya Sabha.

Mr Anil: Yes, eye clinics, clinics for infants and pregnant mothers, programmes to control the spread of infectious diseases like dengue and clinics for the control of non-communicable diseases are some other programmes provided by the Local Government Institutions. They also maintain ayurvedic dispensaries. Not only that but social security programmes for the elders are also conducted.



Programme to eradicate dengue



Clinics for pregnant mothers



A rural medical clinic

Achini: Are there any other programmes for the development of the area by the Local Government Institutions?
(student)

Mr Anil: Local Government Institutions attend to the development of water supply and small irrigation canals towards economic development. Not only that, programmes are also conducted to preserve the environment by the Local Government Institutions.

The monitor of the class, Asitha thanked Mr. Anil for the explanation of the services given regarding the Local Government Institutions so well. His speech went like this:

We did not know the Local Government Institutions do such a big service. You explained the services from the Local Government Institutions so well. Local Government Institutions contribute an immense service to maintain cleanliness of the environment and to ease our day - to - day activities on various occasions from our birth to death. It is now clear to us that all those working in Local Government Institutions provide a lot of services to us and the country. We are very happy about it. We wish to offer our gratitude and honour to you for holding such a friendly discussion and making us knowledgeable on the subject.

Activities 4.5



1. Discuss with your teacher how the following services extended by the Local Government Institutions in your area contribute to the development of human resources.
 - Maintenance of libraries and reading rooms
 - Maintenance of playgrounds
 - Conducting of medical clinics
2. Propose a series of programmes to your Local Government Institution that can be done towards prevention and control of dengue.

4.3 Duties of the public towards the services given by the Local Government Institutions

The public has the right to get the maximum use of the services provided by the Local Government Institutions and to enhance their living conditions. As well, it is the duty of the recipients of such services to fulfil their duties in return effectively for those services.

Given below are a few examples of duties the public (recipients) has to attend to:

- Payment of due taxes without delay
- Prompt payment of bills for the services provided
- Adhering to the instructions given by the Local Government Institutions regarding the management of waste and other disposables in a suitable manner
- Maintaining a clean environment and contributing towards environmental preservation
- Safeguarding public property and economical use of such property
- Obtaining legal approval for constructions
- Working co-operatively with the public representatives and officers attached to the Local Government Institutions
- Make the public representatives and the officers aware of the regional needs
- Informing breakdowns of services and maintenance work on emergency situations

4.4 Responsibilities and duties of public representatives and government officers towards services offered by the Local Government Institutions

This chapter made you aware of the services supplied by Local Government Institutions towards welfare of the public. Both public representatives and government officers attached to the Local Government Institutions need to attend to their responsibilities and duties in a responsible manner. Such an attitude is essential towards an efficient service.

Responsibilities and duties of the representatives of the public and the government officials

Responsibilities	duties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifying resources in the area ● Understanding the needs and the problems of the public ● Identifying strategic plans for development ● Assisting with the preparation of plans ● Considering requirements in making decisions ● Looking into programmes being acted on ● Acting on rules and regulations given ● Providing leadership ● Taking action against forgery, corruption and bribery ● Preventing misuse of public property and government services ● Supervising development activities as required ● Fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted, properly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Paying attention to the grievances of the public ● Maintaining close relationship with the public ● Attending meetings/ Taking part in meeting ● Preventing forgery, bribery and corruption ● Commitment towards the betterment of the public ● Being honest ● Making the institution an attractive place for the public ● Fulfilling the public needs effectively ● Avoiding the misuse of state property and government services ● Providing a service of high standard

Activity 4.6



Given below, in column 1 in the table, are some duties a people's representative/government official has to attend to. Fill column 11 with the procedure to follow in fulfilling of duties.

Column 1	Column 11
Duties of public representatives and government officials	Procedures that should be followed in fulfilling daily services/ duties
Maintain close relationship with the public	
Fulfilling of public needs efficiently	
Avoid misuse of government property	
Commitment to serve for the welfare of the public	

4.5 Contribution of the Local Government Institutions towards the national development

The utmost result of a regional development process is the social, economic and cultural development of a country which takes place as the overall development. Maintaining a balance with the environment is essential in the implementation of all development activities. Regional development is directly associated with Local Government Institutions. A few examples regarding contributions from regional development towards national development are listed below;

- i. Identifying regional needs and the resources
- ii. Preparation of regional development plans through identifying the regional needs and the resources
- iii. Implementing plans properly
- iv. Producing regional leaders

A short description about each topic is given below:

i. Identifying regional needs and the resources

The needs of people that differ according to the place they live in are called regional needs. The following contribute to vary the requirements of regions:

- Distribution of resources
- Variety in culture
- Geographical background

Therefore, it is a strong responsibility of a Local Government Institution to identify the requirements for each region. A few examples related to regional needs are given below:

- Providing drinking water to those living in a dry zone region
- Proper waste disposal and management in the Urban areas
- Development of infrastructure in rural areas
- Providing recreational facilities to both urban and rural areas (library services, playgrounds, roadways for walking, children's playgrounds, etc.)
- Providing houses to low income groups
- Street lighting
- Maintaining pre-schools to develop little children
- Taking steps to control the spread of dengue in affected areas.

ii. Preparation of regional development plans identifying the regional needs and the resources

Water supply

Procedure to be followed in preparing plans to supply water to drought-stricken areas

Examples:

- Identify suitable catchment areas for the supply of water to areas with a shortage of drinking water
- Investigate the possibility to supply water from the national water supply
- Prepare action plans to find the necessary finances for the water supply scheme
- Get technical assistance



Installing tube wells



Bowsers distributing water

Garbage disposal

- Supply containers and give instructions to prepare compost manure with household leftovers
- Arrange to sort out garbage before disposal
- Supply waste bins
- Collect garbage
- Arrange recycling programmes for garbage
- Prepare plans for the production of organic manure
- Make the public aware of their duties to dispose waste lawfully and in a decent manner



Waste Management

Control of Dengue

- Identify the areas likely to spread dengue in the region
- Propose suitable measures to clean or destroy vector mosquito breeding places
- Prepare plans for public participation in such programmes and to get the assistance from government/volunteer organizations/people of the region

iii. Proper implementation of plans

It is the responsibility of representatives of the people and government officers in Local Government Institutions to see that these programmes meet expected outcomes. At the same time, good supervision with such programmes will help provide better services to the community.

Examples:

- Supervision of regional road constructions/repairs to ensure the proper standards.
- Supervise to see whether both garbage collectors and the public keep to their duties properly in the management of garbage and when necessary they must be given advice.

iv. Producing regional leaders

The main factor to the success of a democratic system of government is an honest, efficient and noble political leadership. Regarding the regional administration in a democratic system of a government, Local Government Institutions which are given authority are also very closely attached to the public. Therefore, people who live in that area has a right to elect exemplary political leaders of the region with democratic qualities as the representations of Local Government Institutions. This is a very important responsibility the public enjoys.

Representatives, elected in that manner, need to do their work devotedly towards the public they serve to acquire knowledge about politics, experience and training. Introducing such remarkable leaders to national politics is a very important national service.

Following these procedures, Local Government Institutions can contribute immensely to build up a prosperous Sri Lanka.

Activity 4.7



1. List a few good qualities that you feel a candidate should have, in electing him for the Local Government Institution.
2. Prepare a list of daily activities that can be proceeded in preventing the spread of Dengue in your home garden/ school.
3. Present your suggestions to manage garbage collected around your house.

Summary



- Local Government Institutions are a set of special institutions which have been established by the Central Government to execute consumer services of people at regional level efficiently and successfully.
- Local Government Institutions are comprised of representatives of people and government officers.
- The concept of regional administration has existed in Sri Lanka from the ruling periods of kings.
- Expansion of the modern Local Government Institutions have commenced during the British rule.
- Laws enacted after independence have brought about changes to the system of Local Government.
- In Sri Lanka, there are now Municipal Councils, Urban Councils and Pradeshiya Sabhas function under Local Government Institutions.
- Local Government Institutions provide a lot of services to help ease and make better, the lives of the people.
- Fulfilling the duties and responsibilities played by people's representatives and officers attached to Local Government Institutions help to continue the same.
- It is highly important to fulfil the duties and responsibilities of the people in regard to the services provided by the Local Government Institution efficiently.
- Local Government Institutions are capable of providing a high contribution to succeed the strategies of the national development through regional development.