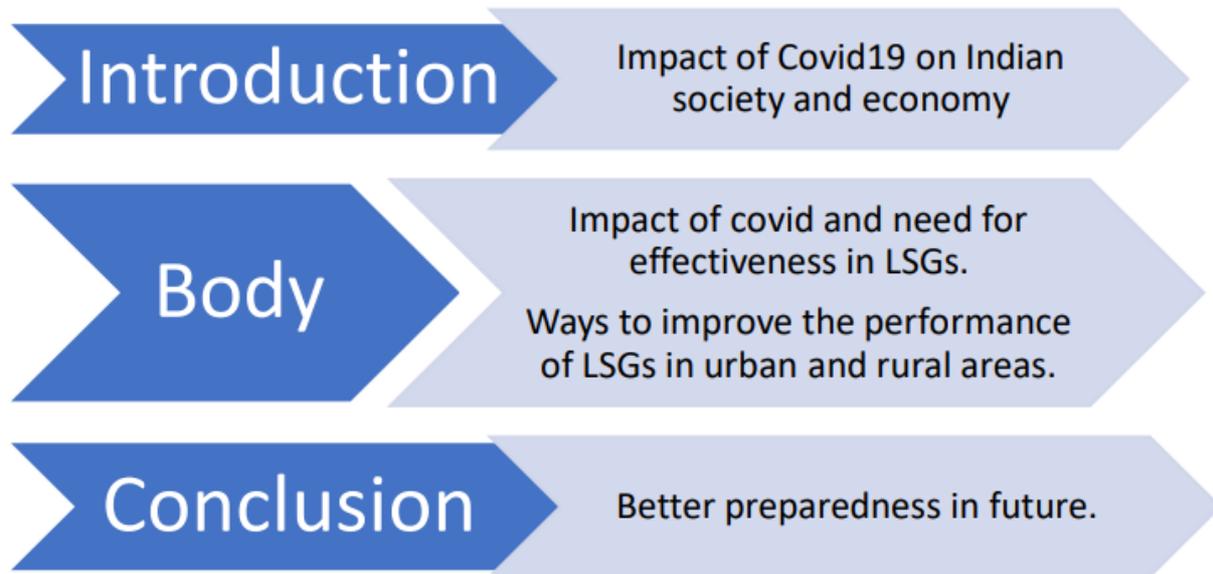


The breakout of Covid19 pandemic has underlined need for empowering local governments. Discuss the ways in which rural and urban local governments can be better prepared and utilised for management for such crisis in the future.



The COVID-19 issue has had a wide range of regional and local effects, with substantial implications for crisis management and policy responses. The asymmetric impact of the COVID-19 crisis in its various dimensions: health, economics, social, and fiscal has highlighted the importance of rural and urban local governments, as they are on the frontlines of crisis management and recovery, and are confronted by COVID-19's asymmetric impact – both within and between countries and regions and local areas.

Need for empowering local governments:

Breakouts of pandemics, epidemics and other crisis including natural disasters necessitate both short and medium-term policy responses. Dutt and Fischer point to three reasons as to why local government performs better for a variety of grassroot state functions including Covid 19 response:

- First, local governments are, quite simply, more closely connected to public and better able to navigate context-specific local conditions (Manor).

- Second, local authorities are themselves embedded within the societies that they serve and likely to be more responsive to the public's urgent needs. Introduction Impact of Covid19 on Indian society and economy Body Impact of covid and need for effectiveness in LSGs. Ways to improve the performance of LSGs in urban and rural areas. Conclusion Better preparedness in future.
- Third, local government is often perceived as more legitimate than other external actors for carrying out different kinds of state regulatory functions. In electoral institutions, local authorities are directly selected by the public and thus may reflect citizens' values and aspirations and often their sense of identity.
- Pandemics necessitate public health action, which is the constitutional obligation of both panchayats and municipalities in rural and urban regions, respectively. In the event of a medical emergency, it becomes the federal and state governments' responsibility to cooperate and iron out disagreements in the prevention of disease outbreaks.
- In the Constitution's 73rd and 74th Amendments, 'Public Health' was added to the 11th and 12th Schedules. As a result, civic authorities have been delegated to panchayats and municipalities to provide 'public health' services to residents within their domains.
- People's own democratic and cooperative organisations at the local level are arguably the best at providing local public goods such as inoculation and immunisation. Kerala's 'kudumbashree' programme which was the forefront of covid containment or the contribution of anganwadi and other workers in vaccination drives are an important example in this regard.
- These institutions of local self-government, including panchayats and municipalities, were enacted into law to create a better quality of life for the entire local community by active involvement or even initiative. The term 'community' refers to a small community in a geographical rural or urban area that is divided by caste, religion, and economic status.
- Firms have optimised their value chains during the last few decades by outsourcing and concentrating their production bases in low-cost regions. However, as the pandemic continues to spread, regional and global value networks are becoming increasingly fragmented, necessitating a critical re-evaluation and re-engineering of globally interconnected supply chains. India's vision of "Aatma Nirbhar Bharat" (Self-sufficient India) was outlined, including the economy, infrastructure, system, demography, and demand.

- With a renewed focus on Make in India 2.0 and making India a preferable destination for international investment, 'voice for local' could be a game-changer. Only by empowering urban and local self-government in numerous sectors can this be possible. The current government has already planned for such a shift toward decentralisation and localisation.

Empowering local and regional governments for a more inclusive multilateral system for future:

- Local and regional governments are critical to the realisation of the Agenda 2030 of the SDGs. The COVID-19 pandemic's crisis highlighted the critical role that local public service provision plays in ensuring that people and the environment are safeguarded. It has also highlighted the fact that the health of our communities extends far beyond healthcare.
- Looking ahead to COVID-19, it is obvious that local and regional governments, as well as their associations, must be empowered, and that a more inclusive and coherent multilateral structure is required to fulfil national and global objectives. Experienced functionaries should be included in the bodies and urban-rural synergy can be further pushed through initiatives like Aatmanirbhar Health Infrastructure Mission and the Virtual Health ID card.
- India should prepare its local governments to actively participate in events such as the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments, which will bring together mayors and governors from around the world to share how, through their experiences at the local and regional levels, the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is strengthened by putting communities, local governments, and local people first.
- Local governments can be the strongest platform for addressing rising disparities aggravated by COVID-19 by protecting the most vulnerable and strengthening their access to and protection of health services, as well as advancing resilience through climate action and fostering culture.
- Local governments in both rural and urban areas are also constantly suffering from a dearth of funds. The same can be generated through not just increased devolution of funds from state governments but also innovative measures like municipal bonds which have enjoyed success in cities like Pune in India.

Conclusion:

- Local governments and communities, which are closest to inhabitants, are best positioned to bring about this transformation to ensure better response in future crisis and instil this change in society on a long-term basis. As a result, the role of local governments must be highlighted.
- If those in charge are ready to learn from the lessons learned, a disruptive event like the Covid-19 outbreak invariably turns out to be a blessing in disguise for implementing systemic adjustments