

MEETING WITH SHINY MATHEW EX-WARD COUNCILOR - WARD 01

Meeting Date: 09.02.2021

Meeting Time: 01.00pm – 01.20 pm

Meeting Attendees: Shiny Mathew, Ex-ward councilor ward 01

Nandana L S, DRP student, CEPT University

Meeting Venue: Fort Kochi

- Participation of the urban poor in the ward committee: They call for a ward sabha once in 6 months which is different from the ward committee (WC). WC happens 3-4 times a year which is mandatory according to the Kerala Municipal Act of 1994.
- There are only a few members involved in the ward committee, most of the people will only come for 1 or 2 meetings and there will be enough people coming to fill the quorum.
- For ward sabha they extend invite to all the people who are in RWA, NHG and other organizations, they are called to talk about the issues and suggestions that can be done in the division.
- On an individual level, pension of the different people their needs all will be discussed in the meeting.
- There are also discussions about the agriculture, distribution agriculture benefits, grow bags, also approval of the beneficiary list of various govt schemes like PMAY-LIFE mission, Ardham Mission etc. is done through the WC.
- Maintenance issues of the road, streets etc. are also discussed.
- There is an average of 200-300 people that used to attend the ward sabha meetings when called during a session. It is all according to the availability of the people
- Which is more effective ward sabha or ward committee?
 - When there is a sudden or a fast decision to be made it is easier to bring it through the WC, as there are a smaller number of people and thus will have lesser number of opinions and oppositions.
 - Ward sabha will have all kind of discussions and when a situation where more opinion is required it is easily available and easily propagated through ward sabha meetings.
- Political influence in the organizations like NHG or RWA:

- There are wards which has issues like that where the RWA or some other organizations or even influential individuals who are of the opposition party of that of the councilor pose issues which used to reflect in the efficient working of the WC.
 - Since I haven't encountered such issues this ward is usually politically neutral, even if there is opposition party influence that never obstructed the collective decision making in the division.
- Shiny Mathew was the chairman for Town planning Standing committee in the Municipal Corporation. What is the composition of working group, does members of ward committee a part of the working groups?
- Working group consists of councilors and professionals of the fields and people who will be selected by the municipal corporation on their behalf, there is no connection between ward committee and working group members.
 - These professionals, councilors together discuss and formulate the projects that will be included in the budget that year. Along with these discussions comes the proposals from different WC, which will also be discussed as a group and will be allotted according to different sectors.
- Every proposal from different ward is pooled in together by each councilor and that is presented in the standing committee and further specialized sectors of each working group will take up the projects to discuss and formulate.
- Other than the proposals that is coming from the divisions the councilors can propose projects combining one or more wards, if that is found necessary that also get approved.
- If as a chairman of the town planning standing committee I put forth a proposal of acquiring a piece of land for so and so project and if it is found relevant that also is approved but when such projects are getting discussed there is the advisory committee which is the steering committee also involved especially if there is land acquisition of private property.
- Is the development seminar a place where the suggestions and opinions are taken?
- Development seminar is a platform where all the people can be part of the meeting, it is a meeting that is held after lots and lots of discussions in the

working group, council and standing committee, so most of the things are considered there.

- Changing something in a project during development seminar is difficult until and unless it is a relevant and uncompromisable thing. These kind of suggestions, opinions and differences mostly arise when there is a public acquisition of private land parcel or an institutional land parcel etc.
- Even if there are 10 proposals that are initially gone from a certain ward, 2-3 of them only might get implemented, it is not necessary that all 10 will get approved and get implemented.
- There is also a situation where there is a certain essential project that is being proposed, there is a limited fund in that sector, even in that case there is difficulty in approving that project.
- All the discussions about the issues of the urban poor are directly dealt through the NHGs, when the ADS chairman and secretary of that division are invited for the WC they present the issues of the urban poor in the WC.