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## **Municipal bill passed, more power to local bodies, women**

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JAIPUR: The women in the state will finally have an equal share in management of local bodies as the Rajasthan Municipal Bill, 2009, was passed in the state assembly on Thursday. Reservation for women also coincides with the reservation for youth and will be applicable in all existing categories.

Though similar to the Ordinance passed by the previous government, the Bill, which would replace the Rajasthan Municipal Act, 1959, is amended to provide more rights to the local bodies. Provisions have been made to provide more independence to the local bodies and enable them to provide self-governance in real terms.

"Municipalities will be able to implement local [tax](#) and could sanction their own budget, providing more autonomy to these institutions," said local self-government minister Shanti Dhariwal.

Local bodies will now be able to impose fines up to Rs 50,000 on encroachers while there shall be no upper limit for the fine to be imposed by these bodies on violation of other norms.

They have also been given the power to seize any building that is being constructed in violation of building norms. These bodies will now also play a role in management of traffic in their respective areas.

The powers of elected representatives have also been raised. The operation of municipalities will now be highly influenced by the elected representatives.

"The previous government had sidelined the opinion of elected members in disciplinary action against the municipality employees. Now, only on approval of the chairperson, the CEO will be able to take action against any official," the minister claimed.

"However, to make these members more accountable, they will now have to submit records and statements to the investigating officer in case of a judicial inquiry," he added.

The selection process for the administrative officers of the municipalities will also undergo a change as their selection will now be made through Rajasthan Municipal Administrative Services (RMAS) and Rajasthan Municipal Technical Services (RMTS), generating more career advancement opportunities.

Even as the changes in municipal norms were proposed earlier during the previous government, the minister denied much credit to the preceding Ordinance as large numbers of changes have been made in the recent Bill.

"The recent Bill still contains nearly half of the provisions of 1959 Act, which are still relevant. In the remaining 30 Sections of the previous Ordinance have been deleted while nearly 120 amendments have been made in constituting the Rajasthan Municipal Bill, 2009," he added.