



URBAN GOVERNANCE AND ROLE OF URBAN LOCAL BODIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES

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Abstract

Over the course of the past three decades, there has been a significant movement of people from rural areas to urban areas in India. The steady expansion in urban population is primarily driven by a number of factors, including the expanding economic success in cities, the low employability in the agricultural sector, and the yearning for higher standards of living. Multiple agencies, operating under the auspices of various levels of government (federal, state, and municipal), are responsible for managing the administration of urban affairs. Because of the poor condition of urban infrastructure and the absence of civic services for the majority of city residents, there should be a review of the policies currently in place regarding urban planning and the operations of the agencies that are in charge of urban administration. The provisions that were created for the empowerment of local entities and for increased public engagement in the process of government were made possible as a result of the 74th amendment to the constitutional document. This article examines the most important aspects of effective urban government, as well as the problems and difficulties associated with putting governance principles into reality in India. In addition to this, the author has made an effort to assess the role that urban local bodies play in the process of making urban government more effective and more focused on the needs of the people. The municipal bodies have not been given many powers by the state governments, despite the fact that these organizations are responsible for extremely fundamental civic duties. The author of this post has also provided recommendations on the solutions and alternate paths that might be taken in order to achieve the goals that were envisioned by the 74th Constitutional Amendments.

Keywords: *Governance, Partnership, Management, and Network*

Introduction:

During the past few decades, there has been a discernible movement toward urbanization in India, which we have observed. In this regard, rapid urbanization due to a variety of reasons, such as high growth of population, migration of people from rural areas to cities for better economic opportunities, increased unemployment and under employment in rural areas, attractive living conditions of urban areas, and other push and pull factors. In this regard, rapid urbanization due to a variety of reasons, such as high growth of population, migration of people from rural areas to cities for better economic opportunities. We are aware that urbanization is an essential component of economic growth, and that metropolitan regions serve as the primary drivers of economic progress. On the other hand, at the same time, rapid urbanization has presented urban municipal bodies and urban administration with a variety of issues and challenges. Those individuals will be added to this Unit at a later time. As a direct response to the effects of globalization, governments all over the world have launched a diverse range of community-focused projects. The trend of decentralization has been a driving force behind all of this, which is especially significant in a nation as diverse culturally and

as densely populated as India. In addition, the adoption of clear standards and better processes at the local level using the instruments of accountability, openness, and inclusive governance have also contributed to the success of the initiative. However, this picture of development is not as rosy as it may seem because there are a host of challenges facing the Local level Government. Some of these challenges include a lack of infrastructure, unevenly distributed financial resources, rapidly growing demographic dividend, increasing socio-economic disparity, lagging to catch up with a burgeoning technology sector, a lack of affordable housing and health facilities, and poor quality education services. These are just some of the challenges that are facing the Local level Government.

OBJECTIVE

1. Study On Urban Governance And Role Of Urban Local Bodies.
2. Study On Issues And Challenges In Good Urban Governance And Involvement.

OPPORTUNITIES TO STRENGTHEN THE URBAN LOCAL DOMAIN

India has been experiencing urbanisation like any other nation, globally yet the pace of urbanisation has been relatively slow in comparison to other developing countries. As of 2011, 31 percent of India's population is conservatively classified as "urban", whereas, this tabulated to 45 percent in China, 54 percent in Indonesia, 78 percent in Mexico and 87 percent in Brazil. Therefore, the structural transformation of the cities is characteristically linked with its optimum utilisation of resources and infrastructural potential; with India being no exception. In India's current stage of development, the industry and service sectors aka secondary and tertiary sectors are considered to be the drivers of growth. This, of course, is accompanied by the growth of urbanisation as the blooming infrastructural capabilities viz. transport, urban services, telecommunications, etc. At the same time, this fosters a scope of private sector involvement, thus, creating employment opportunities with an influx of labour force in various urban sectors. This will further cultivate migration as an important factor from rural to urban areas; thereby, creating an avenue for urban planning and growth. However, in the light of the existing scenario, it is indeed inevitable to quote that undoubtedly it is the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992, which have facilitated the base for accountability, transparency and participatory decision-making. A few important prospects, which through these legislations had brought in opportunities for the Local Government institutions are discussed hereunder:

- a) A Forum for Development Strategies: Whether it is through the meeting conducted regularly or through other means, these institutions of grassroots democracy have ensured to garner people's valuable feedback in the implementation of programmes and policies, and to solve the local problems through democratic means.
- b) Converging Departmental Efforts: It is through the institutionalisation of the structures of Local Bodies that there has been both internal and external convergence, which may be within and beyond the supervision of Local Bodies (larger sectoral organisations of the community). This is done to ensure the synergising of maximum benefits from the policies and programmes implemented for the community.
- c) Participation of Women: Over the years, it has been realised that the breakthrough step for women's reservation has not only brought in better efforts for community development but they have also managed to evaluate, monitor and access the working of Local Bodies in a more sincere manner. A number of studies revealed that women give more importance and attention to local needs. Wherein, women representative not only address the urgent issues but also solve them in innovative ways.

d) Enhancing Accountability of Elected Representatives: It is through the regular conduct of elections and the establishment of the State Election Commission that prospects of consistency, regularity and accountability of the elected representatives is maintained.

e) Initiate Social Audit: The purpose of Social Audit constituted and initiated by the Local Government institutions is to evaluate the quality, effectiveness and conformity of the work conducted. This audit is conducted by the Social Audit Committee.

f) Ushering in an Enabling Environment: The components of the Local Government edifice is such that it ensures the creation of a people friendly environment through its tools of power sharing, autonomous local authority, genuine participation of the marginalised; all in the context of achieving empowerment and a decentralised system within. Training and fresh institutionalisation of the bureaucrats and the political elites to change their mindset from centralisation to decentralisation and adopting explorative and innovative approach are just a few to name.

g) Fiscal Decentralisation: The concept of financial decentralisation is a necessary aspect of the functioning of any system of Local Governance. Fiscal decentralisation is essential not just to have autonomy in the matters of expenditures but also in relation to resource mobilisation. This helps the local institutions to get the required training and experience to serve as effective and mature bodies to carry out developmental tasks.

URBAN GOVERNANCE: MEANING AND CONCEPT:

The story of urbanization is the story of the development of humans; hence, urbanization has been a transformative process ever since it first emerged. Its grip has been so solid that it has continued to gain ground despite the passage of time, which has caused its speed to quicken. The study of what has occurred to human settlements over the stretch is a spectacle of unresolved questions since, with the exception of two aspects, namely the research of internal migration and local development, nothing else in this inquiry carries any value. In more recent times, significant changes in the dynamics of expansion of cities that contradict the traditional paradigm of urban concentration have been detected. These variations have been noted for a variety of reasons.

Therefore, on a worldwide scale, there is an unstoppable march toward a process of growing urbanization. This entails a population concentration in the densest cities which results in the destruction of places that are genuinely rural. This was an evolutionary perspective, in which social change was considered to be a part of a larger process that was connected to modernization and industrialization. It is possible that we should first investigate the concept of urban government before moving on. In common parlance, "governance" refers to the methods in which a state, a system, an organization, etc. is governed, whether it in its entirety or in its component parts. However, this expression has a variety of meanings depending on who you ask.

The act or practice of ruling, especially the exercise of authoritative direction and control. This might be a simple definition (Webster Dictionary). However, it is already common knowledge that "governance" refers to a far larger concept than "government" alone. "Governance" is defined as "the process through which components in society wield power, authority, and influence and implement policies and choices involving public life and social upliftment," as stated by the British Council. It is typically referred to as "good governance" when the governance is following certain positive characteristics, such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, inclusivity, etc. In this context, "good governance" refers to when the governance is following certain positive parameters. The concept of governance may be used to a wide range of subfields

or sectors of public management, one of which is urban management, or urban governance in a more general sense.

Consequently, if we apply the concept of governance to the urban sphere, we may clearly see what is meant by the phrase "urban governance." It might be a reference to the strategies and procedures used to administer urban regions and urban affairs. To put it another way, it can be used to refer to the manner in which the local government or local agencies in an urban area plan and work for the betterment of people and the development of the region by taking appropriate decisions, optimum resource mobilization, rational allocation of resources, delivery system, etc. In a similar vein, good urban governance may involve having an effective delivery system, making decisions in a participatory manner, maintaining administrative transparency, being accountable for one's actions, ensuring the long-term viability of an area and its resources, including the environment, maintaining consistency in service delivery, ensuring equality and inclusive growth, etc. According to the principles of good governance, the decision-making process is not limited to the involvement of a single governmental agency or a single group at the local level. In point of fact, the process of urban governance typically involves the participation of a wide variety of stakeholders. According to UN-Urban HABITAT's Management Document, the following is a list of some of the most important players in urban government.

The Tradition of Urban Local Governance in India

Urban local governing organizations have existed in India in some form or another since the ancient period. Their functions have varied throughout time. The remains of towns from the Indus Valley Civilization that have been excavated (such as Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, among others) show abundant evidence of well-organized urban government. During that historical period, urban bodies functioned as self-sufficient government entities. In his extensive work titled "Arthashastra," Kautilya discussed the function of a "Nagaradhyaksha" or "Negara," the city superintendent who was primarily accountable for the upkeep of the municipal law and order (Sharma, 2004).

During the Maryann period, the entire city was divided into four major parts, and each part was headed by an officer known as 'Shank,' which is the equivalent of the present-day superintendent of police. Additionally, on a unit of 10 to 40 houses there used to be an officer known as 'Goop,' and his duty was not only to provide security to the residents, but also to keep a close eye on the activities of the residents. During the Maryann period, the city was (Sharma, 2004). Towns were governed by councils during the Gupta period, but Munhall monarchs appointed a "Catwalk," who served as the city governor and had the powers and responsibilities of the main city police officer, magistrate, and prefect of municipal administration (Ajar, 2006). Nonetheless, throughout that historical period, the ruling classes, together with their nominees and other subordinates, had a significant amount of power in the government of the municipalities. During that time period, the size of metropolitan regions was often quite limited. On the other hand, as more time passed, they expanded in size and got more complicated. As a result, there was a growing demand for a more nuanced and intricate model of municipal government.

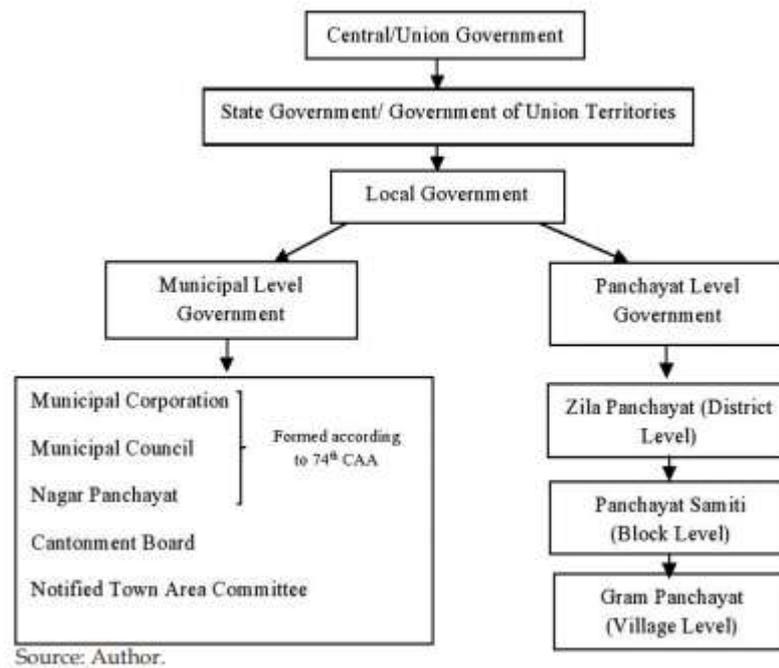


Fig. 1: The current structure of India's government is organized in a hierarchical fashion.

ROLE OF URBAN LOCAL BODIES IN GOOD URBAN GOVERNANCE:

It is imperative, for the sake of effective administration, to make certain that all demographic subgroups of the population are represented in the civil society, and not just the influential or powerful individuals. In his paper titled "Urban Governance and Right to the City," Anil Kumar Vaddiraju champions the right to city⁷ as a moral right for marginalized sections of the community.

According to him, the idea of having a right to a city is implemented in the framework of urban citizenship, governance, and social and political participation⁸. The issue that has to be asked at this juncture is whether or not urban management has been effective in developing an atmosphere in which everyone of the urban population has equal access to the civic facilities in the same manner. The correct response to this inquiry is not the affirmative one. In point of fact, the dismal state of municipal infrastructure in cities has been recognized in a number of studies⁹ conducted by academics, policy-makers, and other types of professionals.

Through its nodal ministry¹⁰, the Central Government of India has formulated a variety of projects and programmers for the improvement of municipal infrastructure. Some of these schemes and programmers are given below:

1. Smart cities.
2. The Anal Mission for the Revitalization and the Transformation of Urban Areas (AMRUT).
3. The National Heritage City Enhancement and Development Yolanda (HRIDAY).
4. The Swatch Bharat Mission for Cities and Towns (SBM-U).
5. Urban Transport.
6. The Prime Minister's Housing Initiative, or the Prada Mantra Awes Yolanda (Urban)
7. The National Urban Livelihoods Mission, also known as the Deendayal Anthodia Yolanda (DAY) (NULM).
8. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).

Regrettably, despite the fact that there are so many plans for greater urban infrastructure and facilities, there has not been much of an improvement in the urban government. What are the primary reasons why the implementation of government policies and programmes has been so unsuccessful? Is it due to an excessive population, a poor state of local governance, bureaucratic hurdles, legislative indifference, or a lack of public participation in the policy making process and the implementation of these schemes?

On the other hand, the decentralization of government that is envisioned in the Constitution does not adequately manifest itself in the operation of the urban municipal authorities. There has not been a lot of initiative on the side of state governments to ensure that individuals are involved in the governance of metropolitan areas. There are problems with the establishment of ward committees, the distribution of resources to urban local bodies, the granting of functional autonomy to urban local bodies, the development of sources of financing for urban local bodies, and the modification of outdated municipal laws.

It is of the utmost importance to determine whether or not our cities have the capacity, in terms of infrastructure and civic amenities, to cater to the needs of a growing urban population at a time when Indian cities are witnessing a huge influx of rural population in cities for various reasons and when these cities are engines of economic growth. At this time, Indian cities are witnessing a huge influx of rural population in cities for various reasons. The responsibility of urban local governments is limited to meeting the fundamental requirements of the urban populace, which include providing transportation, water, and sanitation services.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN GOOD URBAN GOVERNANCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF URBAN LOCAL BODIES IN PROCESS OF URBAN GOVERNANCE:

First, the author is going to talk about the importance of having effective urban government, as well as the difficulties involved in achieving good urban governance and achieving decentralization in governance. This is despite the fact that the government has introduced many policies and programmes. The failure to execute decentralization of government in both text and spirit has resulted in poorly planned and disorderly urban growth as well as ineffective urban governance.

There are no coordinated efforts for the execution of urban plans since the many agencies that are involved in urban government do not coordinate their efforts with one another. This makes the process of urban governance a tough proposition to undertake. Non-state actors, such as civil society including NGOs, academia, and other stakeholders, are not being consulted on a regular basis when policies are being formulated and such policies are being executed, which goes against the genuine spirit of urban government. The currently in place legal provisions, such as laws, rules and regulations, and policies, among other things, do not provide sufficient coverage nor are they comprehensive enough to assist urban local governments in performing their duties.

Local governments, state governments, and national governments do not have a well defined demarcation of functions, responsibilities, and authority, and urban local bodies lack both functional and financial autonomy. There is no clear-cut separation of roles, responsibilities, and authority. The absence of effective urban governance is an issue that exists all over the world, and it has taken on a much greater level of importance in light of the increasing dependence that a big percentage of the population of any country has on metropolitan areas.

Good urban governance, as defined by UN Habitat, may be identified by the presence of a number of interrelated and mutually reinforcing norms¹⁵, including the following:

1. Sustainability throughout the board in terms of urban planning and development.
2. A subordinate position with respect to power and resources.
3. Equal access to the basic essentials of urban life as well as the decision-making processes that surround them.
4. Effectiveness in both the provision of public services and the stimulation of economic growth at the community level.
5. Transparency in decision-making processes and holding all parties involved accountable for their actions
6. Participation in civic life and citizenship.
7. The safety of persons as well as the environments in which they live.

The reasons for a considerable lack of these qualities in the urban government system of India might be stated, inferred, or unexplained. One or more of these explanations could be correct. One of the primary causes of ineffective urban government may be that authority is not enough decentralized and that civil society is not sufficiently represented. The apparatus of the national and state levels of government has not been very active in promoting the cause of urban local bodies. The urban local authorities' severe reliance on outside funding severely weakens their ability to play a role in the execution of urban programmers.

CONCLUSION

The urban areas of India are confronted with a formidable obstacle in the form of a growing population and an increasing amount of demand to provide excellent administration. As a result of the progress in the economy, inequality is growing at a faster rate than it ever has before, moving closer and closer to a situation that would be catastrophic. The precarious nature of Indian urban government is made clear by the fact that Indian cities consistently fail to realize their fervent goal of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and conceiving of 'inclusive progress. 'one of the primary factors that contributes to the deterioration of the ecosystem is poverty. When economic and social growth does not occur, and the population continues to rise continually, there will surely be negative effects on the environment. This shackle can be broken by grassroots efforts at economic and social development, as well as through public involvement. The eradication of poverty, protection of the environment, and engagement of the local community are the three primary facets of sustainability, and urban governance has a significant impact on all three of these areas. As a result, now is the time to take the necessary steps to fix the situation in order to create a brighter future for India and a world that is more sustainable overall.

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