

CHAPTER– IV

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF FINANCE.

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Chapter – IV

A. INTRODUCTION

The efforts for a planned development of urban area in the country were initiated immediately after the country attained independence; yet, the actual development in urban areas has largely been unplanned and uncontrolled. This has had serious negative effects on urban dwellers. The provision of infrastructure facilities and services, required to support large concentrations of population, is lagging far behind the pace of urbanization. As a consequence, the civic service is deteriorating rapidly. Most of the small and medium towns in the country have serious shortage of water supply, sewerage, housing transportation and other facilities. This has resulted in proliferation of the slums, growth of the informal sector, educational deprivation and deteriorating health levels of large sections of urban inhabitants.

The urban local bodies responsible for providing infrastructure and services lack capacity for planning and management, decision-making, financial resources and autonomy. The legal and administrative systems concerning urban planning, governance and management are extremely inadequate to meet the requirements for urban development. Many of the urban legislations, instead of facilitating urban infrastructure development create hindrances and distortions in the development process. The urban infrastructure is crucial for providing the much needed support to develop economy in order to meet the demand of public services. Augmenting urban infrastructure and services has acquired added importance in the globalization regime.

The augmentation of urban infrastructure and services to improve the quality of life of urban inhabitants as well as to facilitate economic growth

requires sound organizational structure, proper way of resource mobilization and efficient management of finance.

B. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BALURGHAT MUNICIPALITY

Municipal institutions, right from their inception, have been authorized to execute the urban development functions. From this point of view, the organization of municipalities is of crucial importance. Municipalities are basically formal organization in which the elected and non elected functionaries discharge their respective functions. From this point of view the status of the municipal bodies as formal organization seems to be the starting point of enquiry. In the words of L. D. White formal organization exhibits a declared pattern of relationships, and it is based on the nature and volume of work to be done and it is dictated by requirements of efficiency in the sense of securing the optimum use of men and material.¹

Like any formal organization, municipal bodies in West Bengal are built in conformity with the provisions of the municipal Acts. As the nodal agency, their structure has been designed to enable them to undertake the functions of urban development. Like all the small and medium cities and towns, Balurghat municipal board has been constituted to discharge the civic functions.

In Balurghat, the structure of the Municipal body was built upon the provision of the Act of 1932. At the time of the establishment of the municipality in 1951, 9 members of the Board were nominated by the government and Sub-divisional Magistrate (Head-Quarter) was nominated being the Chairman.² The Vice Chairman was nominated from the local members³. After the first nominated board, elected members were regularly appointed to these posts. The members were elected from the constituencies, consisting of more than one ward. Subsequently, the system of single ward constituency came into force and gradually the number of wards was increased to 23 after the delimitation of the municipal area.⁴

The structure of the sixth elected Board was different from the earlier ones. During this period, the Chairman was the first among the equals in the municipal

administration of Balurghat. Since sixth elected board of the municipality, apart from the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, a board committee system has become an integral part of the municipal management. In the case of Balurghat Municipality, where the number of Commissioner was not less than 13, formation of committee was mandatory.

Another part of the municipal organization is its personnel system. Under the present Act of Municipality, Engineer, finance officer and health officer are supposed to be appointed by the state government. Further, there are the Secretary, a medical officer, one or more sanitary inspector, a superintendent of water works, an assessor, an office superintendent and an accountant are mandatory. But except of office superintendent, sanitary inspector, accountant and the executive officer, none of the high level officials are provided to be the civic body. So in absence of these officials, who are supposed to hold the key position in municipal personnel system, the non-political part of the municipal organization is in disorder.

Another crucial aspect relating to the organization of municipal body is the arrangement of duties and responsibilities under different departments or sections i.e. the allocation of powers and functions among different departments. These departments or sections are constituted in terms of the functions and services discharged by the municipality. Following organizational set up of the Balurghat Municipality, is developed manner⁵:

- (1) General and Establishment;
- (2) Collection Establishment;
- (3) License;
- (4) Public works;
- (5) Health and Sanitation;
- (6) Conservancy; and
- (7) Education

Creation of these departments or sections is for the smooth delivery of services to the city dwellers. Further, for the convenience, these departments are

divided into two or more sub-sections. So the General and Establishment section is divided into three sub-sections, such as tax collection, cash and assessment⁶. Again the section discharging the functions of public works is divided into three sub-sections, designated as civil, water supply and electrical⁷. Similarly, the section of Health and sanitation is also divided into two sub-sections – sanitary and conservancy. This organizational set up is evolved in concern with the volume and nature of function discharged by the municipality.

The employees of these departments are to work under the supervision of the chairman and the board of councilors. In the absence of the executive officer and the other higher officials, almost the entire work of these departments are done by the officials like the office superintendent, head clerk, accountant, sanitary inspector, conservancy-in-charge, license, inspector, sub-assistant engineers etc.

Under the Act of 1932 and in practice to the Chairman in particular and the Vice-Chairman, member of Chairman-in-Council and other Commissioners have occupied prominent position in the administration of Balurghat Municipality. Role of other functionaries, belonging to different ranks of municipal personnel system become trivial in importance in the wake of the expending role of the political executives. This made the municipal body largely a political government at the local level in Balurghat.

The remarkable distinction that the seventh board has owned is the chairman-in council form of municipal government which has been introduced in Balurghat under the Act of 1993. The Act has set-up a system of plural executive, constituted from among the councilors.⁸

The Board of Balurghat civic body falls under Group 'C' municipal town and is entitled to constitute the Chairman-in-Council of five members. Accordingly, Chairman-in-Council has been constituted indicting three councilors in addition o the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. In addition to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman elected members from ward number 18, 12,10,2 are inducted into the council. Assignment and delegation of powers and duties by the Chairman is as the following⁹:-

A. Chairman

- (1) Administration,
- (2) Establishment,
- (3) Finance,
- (4) Vehicles,
- (5) Invitation & acceptance of tender / quotation,
- (6) Pathological Laboratory,
- (7) Kshanika (Guest House)
- (8) Preparation and execution of schemes,
- (9) Any other duty as per provision of the Act or in the interest of the municipality which has not been allocated to any other.

B. Vice-Chairman

- (1) Duties as defined in section 19 of the west Bengal Municipal Act of 1993.
- (2) Imposition and collection of municipal rates and taxes.
- (3) Assessment.
- (4) License.
- (5) Using of facsimile to any bill, receipt of the municipality.
- (6) Any duty which will be assigned to him time to time by the Chairman.

C. Member, Chairman-in-Council

- (1) Approval of house building plan,
- (2) Disposal of disputes in regard to land and building.
- (3) Water supply (Tube well)
- (4) Execution of low cost sanitation
- (5) Relief
- (6) Any duty which will be assigned to him time to time by the Chairman.

D. Member, Chairman-in-Council

- (1) Electrical wings of the municipality.

- (2) Markets.
- (3) Bus terminal complex.
- (4) Park and gardens.
- (5) Ration Card and food supplies.
- (6) Any duty which will be assigned to him time to time by the Chairman.

E. Member, Chairman-in-Council

- (1) Health and Conservancy services.
- (2) Sanitary services.
- (3) Food and adulterations.
- (4) Social beneficiary services (NRY, TLC,SJSRY, UBSP)
- (5) Education.
- (6) Any duty which will be assigned to him time to time by the Chairman.

Hence, in the organizational set up of the municipality, the formation of the Chairman-in-Council is added during the tenure of the seventh elected board. It has created a new management set up adding three councilors, who did not have been a slice of executive power in the previous system. All the executive powers, previously within the domain of the chairman have been distributed among the member of the council. This has changed the exclusively chairman centre municipal administration into more participative body. The old model of powerful chairman is replaced by this chairman-in-council system. Today, the chairman is superior to others but he is not anything other than the 'first among the equals'.

C. Ward Committees under Balurghat Municipality:-

The ward committee is the most effective forum for ensuring participatory governance where citizens from all sections of society can take part in local governance at urban level. One of the significant features of the 74th Constitution Amendment Act is the setting up of ward committees in urban local bodies with a population of more than one lakh to ensure people's participation in civic affairs at the grassroots level. Moreover, it should ensure increased participation of people in

the delivery of services and governance of their areas. The objective of forming ward committees is to increase proximity between citizens and their representatives, and also to increase transparency in municipal administration and decision-making.

The West Bengal Municipal Act 1993, which was amended in 1994, has incorporated the provision for constitution of a ward committee in each municipal ward. The Ward Committee Rule 2001 state that the municipality should form ward committees within one month from the date of the first general meeting of the board of councillors after the municipal election.

There should be both elected councilor and other members nominated by the ward councilor and the concerned ULB, in a specified proportion. The number of nominated members depends upon the population of the ward. Up to a population of 2500, a ward committee consists of four members and thereafter, one member is added for every 500 population subject to a maximum number of 14 other than the councilor¹⁰. According to the recent amendment made in the Ward Committee Rules in January 2003, the minimum and maximum numbers of members of the ward committee member are seven and 17 respectively.¹¹

According to the Rules, ward committees, under the supervision of ULBs, are supposed to perform the following function, which come under four categories: (a) Supervision and monitoring, (b) Financial, (c) Planning and (d) execution of development schemes.¹²

Under supervision function it falls the activities like detection of statutory violations such as unlawful constructions, encroachment of municipal and public properties, public nuisance, evasion of taxes, unlicensed activities and the like. It also makes an assessment and collection of property tax; issue of birth and death certificates etc. Ward committees have been entrusted with one more supervisory function and the initiative has already been taken in different municipalities.

Section 15 of the Ward Committee Rules 2001 has provided ward committees with the opportunity of generating resources for augmenting municipal income in the following manner:¹³

- (1) Using municipal land for tree plantation, construction of market complexes, shops and buildings for commercial use, construction of housing complexes etc,
- (2) Using private land for commercial purposes joint venture,
- (3) Installing unconventional energy sources for commercial distribution etc.

Even though physical planning is not done at the ward level, ward committees are required to prepare a list of schemes for development within the ward after identifying the problems in it and deciding about the priorities. The list is to be prepared and submitted to the municipality within three months of the constitution of the ward committee, the schemes are put under two categories – short term schemes for one year and long-term schemes for five years. Execution of development projects includes implementation of development functions with the help of beneficiary committees constituted with citizens from the area.

Section 14 of the Ward Committee Rules 2001 states that municipalities will facilitate the functioning of ward committees by providing information on the decisions of the standing committee, resolutions of the board, budgetary allocation for the ward, details of municipal properties, annual financial statements, demand and collection of taxes and revenues from the ward etc.¹⁴ It also allows the officers of the municipality to give statement in ward committee meetings on the subjects relating to their respective departments if the ward committee places such requests before the municipality.

Two types of meetings are conducted by a ward committee: (a) Ordinary Meeting and (b) Annual Meeting. Generally ordinary meetings take place at least once a month, the notice for which specifying the date, place, time and agenda has to be circulated among the members at least seven days before the date of the meeting. According to the Rules, every ward committee should convene an annual general meeting, to which every resident of that ward is invited by public proclamation about the time and venue of the meeting. The 2003 amendment

suggests that the ward committees will have to convene a half-yearly general meeting as well in the same manner as the annual general meeting.

D. WARD COMMITTEES: THE AVENUE FOR PEOPLES' PARTICIPATION

There are 25 municipal wards at Balurghat of which four have been studied. The selected wards are located in different parts of the town. While selecting the wards, socio-economic criteria as well as political representation have been kept in mind.

According to the provision of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act the ward Committee has been formed in 2001 for the first time. At present, there are 23 ward Committees for a population of around 151299.¹⁵ On the basis of the availability of information 4wards have been selected to conduct the survey. The selection is made on the basis of highest and lowest population. Ward No. 4 is the most populous (9752) followed by ward no 14 having the population of 8856 and the least populated wards included ward no. 23 and 8 having the population of 5179 and 5176 respectively.¹⁶

In Balurghat Municipality, out of the four selected wards, women represent two. RSP members represent two wards and the Trinamul Congress, the other two. In Balurghat the four selected ward committees have 32 members. In Balurghat, out of four selected wards studied, ward 4 is the most populous and also has the maximum number of ward committee members (12 excluding the councilors). In other words, this number ranges from 9 to 12. Hence, all the ward committees have only one woman member each, excluding the councilor; in case the councilor is a lady, and another woman member is nominated.

The ward committee Rules 2001 mentions that the members should meet once a month to discuss the problems that the people of the ward are facing, and also to review the progress of the ongoing developmental work in the ward. It is observed that Balurghat Municipality follows the rules in this respect. The members meet once a month and sometimes twice, if any emergency decision is to be taken by them. In the course of research, I went through the records of monthly meetings

of all the selected wards for the past years. In ward 14 of Balurghat Municipality 11 meetings of the ward committee, including an extending meeting, took place from April 2013 to March 2014.

Irregularities in holding the monthly meetings are observed in some cases. One of the four surveyed ward committees, Ward 8, of Balurghat Municipality has conducted only four meetings in the last one year, while another, ward 23, has conducted only six meetings during the same period. According to the members of the committee, the lack of a proper ward office is the main reason for this irregularity. Even though the Ward Committee Rules 2001 specify that the committees will be provided space for their function, the municipality does not always do so. In Balurghat, some allocation for building ward committee offices is provided in the budget every year. Thus, quite a few of the 23 ward committees of the municipality have new offices. In some wards, space has been provided in the form of Community Hall, wherever they exist.

The problems which are discussed most often in the meetings differ from one municipal ward to another, as the issues depend on the location and the socio-economic characteristics of the wards. It differs from the wards dominated by the slum dwellers to the wards where there are no slum. It is noticed that the maximum discussion in ward committee meetings takes place on the maintenance of amenities like road repairs, waste disposal, streetlights etc. Discussion is also conducted on the issue of illegal construction and illegal use of residential houses in the wards.

In slum dominated areas, the important issues discussed by ward committee members are the preparation of BPL lists and implementation of different urban poverty alleviation programmes like NSDP, SJSRY, VAMBAY, formation of saving and credit groups, vocational training etc.

While going through the resolutions of different ward committees, submitted to the Balurghat Municipality, it is seen that the meeting of ward no 14¹⁷ discussed the matters like electricity connection to houses, status of land holdings and pulse polio programme. Another resolution of ward no. 23,¹⁸ discussed problems related

to fitting of sodium vapor lights, maintenance of parks, sanitation construction, if required, etc.

E. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BALURGHAT MUNICIPALITY

Efficiency of municipal government largely depends on financial management along with personnel management. These are considered to be the essential pre-requisites of municipal management. Proper management of finance is necessary as it enables the effective utilization of fund and smooth delivery of the services which are meant for the up-liftment of the living standard of the rate-payers.

Management of Finance and Financial hardship of Balurghat Municipality since 1951:-

Municipal functions for the up-gradation of living conditions of the tax-payers involve two key issues: (a) Provision for necessary fund and (b) its effective utilization are the two essential components which enhances the productivity of the municipal services. But mere procession of resources cannot alone ensure improved level of services; rather their effective utilization brightens the prospect for high quality of living. The need for effective utilization of resources is more important, particularly in the municipal bodies where there is resource deficiency and low financing from the state government.¹⁹

Over the years, the municipal bodies, outside Calcutta Municipal area, including the Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in the North Bengal have seriously been affected by discriminatory transfer of shared taxes from the state.²⁰ This neglect has led to unplanned growth of markets, buildings, narrow roads, insanitary conditions, mushrooming of slums etc. The intensity of problems has further been multiplied due to abnormal growth of population, economic backwardness, absence of job opportunities in consequence of which the majority of the population are forced to live in impoverishment. As a result a municipal body of this town has to meet the civic demands at higher cost afterwards.

So, in the context of mounting problems and the concomitant need for greater role of the municipal body in urban development, improvement in financial performance of the municipal body is of highest priority. It is to be noted here that municipal financial performance in terms of collection is little better than the Panchayat bodies, but still it falls much short of what is needed.²¹ Therefore, the financial performance of this municipal body should be improved in view of their financial handicap.

At the time of its inception, the Municipal body in Balurghat was gripped with acute financial crisis. The first elected board, which took charge on 01.03.1954, faced the problem of 70 per cent as arrear out of the total collection demand. Although the salary and wages of the employee and workers were met out of the available fund, town development was hardly possible.²²

Financial hardship of the municipality has resulted from a number of factors. Of them, the incompetence of the municipal functionaries, weak resource-base and neglect of the state government have been the main deterrents to the financial stability of the civic body.

Since its inception these factors have been responsible for financial hardship of the municipality. The Chairman of the first nominated body proposed the imposition of high rate of tax upon the residents. But the local representatives objected to this proposal on the ground that the bulk of the settlers of this growing town, were mainly the evacuees from erstwhile East Bengal and they were unable to bear the burden of higher tax rates. They stressed on gradual instead of abrupt increase in the tax tare for the convenience of the inhabitants.²³

Over the years tax collection and the management of finance have also failed to provide necessary support to the financial position of the municipality. Inefficiency of the civic authority was particularly evident during the period of super session from 16.08.1973 to 10.07.1981.²⁴ During this period, administration of the executive officers could not generate adequate revenue from internal sources. As a result this low output from internal sources, dependence on the state government was gradually enhanced for financial assistance.

Table No. 4.1

Income of Balurghat Municipality from different sources. (Figures Rs. In '000)

Period	Property Tax	Other Tax	Total	Specific sources	Total internal Revenue income	State Transfer	Total Revenue Receipts
1975-76	249	34	283	5	299	317	616
1976-77	358	25	383	19	421	632	1053
1977-78	268	35	303	25	466	670	1136
1978-79	282	28	310	24	347	662	1009

Source: Report of the First Municipal Commission.

The figure in the table shows the decay of internal revenue output of the municipality. In spite of the growth of the property tax dependence on the state government was enhanced as a consequence of inadequate yield from internal sources. Owing to its financial distress, the municipality had to confine its functioning within the narrow limit, which failed to mitigate the grievances of the rate payers. During this period revenue expenditure often surpassed the income from revenue sources and the financial assistance of the state government was used to bridge the gap between income and expenditure. The following table shows the gap between revenue receipt and revenue expenditure over the period from 1975 to 1979.

Table No. 4.2

Revenue Gap of Balurghat Municipality from 1975 to 1979. (Rs. In '000)

Period	Revenue Receipt	Revenue Expenditure	Revenue gap.
1975 – 76	616	896	280
1976 – 77	1053	1131	78
1977 – 78	1136	1534	398
1978 - 79	1009	1658	649

Source: Report of the First Municipal Finance Commission.

The table explicitly shows the quantum of the increasing resource gap which was met by the increasing flow of state assistance. The moribund condition of Balurghat Municipality was caused partly due to weak resource base and partly for erroneous financial administration. As a result, the internal income position failed to respond to the municipal liabilities.

So financial hardship has made municipal body handicapped from the very beginning. Weak resource base and inefficient financial management during this phase of the board worsened the financial plight of the municipality. Low output from the available internal revenue sources, despite greater allocation from salary and wages of the employees of the tax collection department gradually weakened the financial position of the municipality.

Financial Management since 1980s:-

The period after 1980 marked the watershed in municipal finance in West Bengal.²⁵ Previous neglect of the state government is replaced by the intensification of the government financing towards municipal development programmes. There appears parallel inflow of government finance in the form of revenue transfers, capital assistance and extra ordinary receipt of the municipality. The state government on the recommendation of the First Municipal Finance Commission, 1982, decided to waive the total loan amount for providing the financial stability to Balurghat Municipality along with the other municipalities which brought great relief to the urban local bodies in West Bengal.²⁶

During this period the municipalities were given higher assistance, derived as the share of Entry Tax, Motor Vehicle tax, entertainment tax etc. Besides, Balurghat Municipal town was brought within the purview of the centrally sponsored scheme IDSMT under which the board received 54 Lacs of rupees in installment at that time for the physical development of the town. Most of the schemes were remunerative which helped the augmentation of the municipal income. Therefore, in comparison to earlier income of the Balurghat Municipality, income during the recent years has been substantially increased which is understandable from the following table.

Table No. 4.3

Financial position of Balurghat Municipality during 1985 – 95. (Rs. In '000)

Year	Internal Revenue	State Revenue Transfer	Capital Receipt	Extra Ordinary Receipt.
1985 – 86	1488	2174	13440	1985
1986 – 87	1807	3469	9110	3913
1987 – 88	2116	4695	7506	8529
1988 – 89	2475	4451	3690	13912
1989 – 90	2821	4624	7558	12721
1990 – 91	4363	6092	2703	13229
1991 – 92	3277	7773	1420	9793
1992 – 93	4141	6717	2673	8230
1993 – 94	4378	7624	2042	10982
1994 – 95	4341	7604	7376	16750
1995 – 96	4743	10395	7422	17126

Source: Annual Accounts of Balurghat Municipality.

Therefore, a drastic change in the outlook of the higher government has strengthened the financial fund position of the municipality. As a result the municipality has to improve its performance in the field of financial management to ensure effective utilization of the available fund. As a sequel to this changed perspective, a number of pre- requisites are considered of immense importance for effective financial management. They are:-

- a) Internal resource mobilization;
- b) Tax assessment of regular interval;
- c) Regular collection of revenue;
- d) Appropriation of fund, according to budgetary proposal and
- e) Audit of municipal accounts at regular intervals.

Internal Resource Mobilization:-

Adequate mobilization of internal revenue is an indication of sound financial management. But over the years the internal income position has not been compatible with the revenue demand of the municipality. The following table shows the position of Municipal fund, derived from internal sources and the state government under revenue head respectively:

Table No. 4.4

Internal Sources and Government Revenue Transfer during 1985 – 95. (Rs. In '000) of Balurghat Municipality.

Year	Internal Revenue	State Revenue Transfer
1985 – 86	1488	2174
1986 – 87	1807	3469
1987 – 88	2116	4695
1988 – 89	2475	4451
1989 – 90	2821	4624
1990 – 91	4363	6092
1991 – 92	3277	7773
1992 – 93	4141	6717
1993 – 94	4378	7624
1994 – 95	4341	7604
1995 – 96	4743	10395

Source: Annual Accounts of Balurghat Municipality.

The table explicitly shows that over the years the internal revenue income has declined. Gradually decline of the internal income has incapacitated the municipality to bridge the revenue gap as a consequence of which the state government has to provide the necessary fund.²⁷

Table No. 4.5

Income of the Balurghat Municipality from own sources (Rs. In '000)

Year	Property Tax.	Internal Revenue
1985 – 86	1121	1488
1986 – 87	1356	1807
1987 – 88	1316	2116
1988 – 89	1443	2475
1989 – 90	1767	2821
1990 – 91	2234	4363
1991 – 92	2136	3277
1992 – 93	2582	4141
1993 – 94	2639	4378
1994 – 95	2536	4341
1995 – 96	2400	4743

Source: Annual Accounts of Balurghat Municipality

Considering the ten years of income of Balurghat Municipality during the period of 1985 – 86 to 1995 – 96, the table shows that the revenue from the property tax is not so healthy. The combination property tax and other source of internal revenue have made the fund of this municipal body strengthened.

So, in case of Balurghat Municipality, the sluggishness in the internal revenue generation is the outcome of poor proceeds from the property tax in spite of the fact which is the mainstay of internal revenue income. Over the years the slums in property tax has gradually thinned internal revenue yield, resulting into escalation of financial dependence on the state government. The following table shows the proceeds from the property tax in relation to the internal revenue income. If I analyze the current condition of the revenue status of last five years, the following table can focus the financial position of Balurghat Municipality.

Table No. 4.6

Revenue Gap of Balurghat Municipality from 2010-11 to 2014 - 15 in Rupees.

Period	Revenue Receipt	Revenue Expenditure	Revenue gap.
2010 – 11	77716550.00	77711564.00	4986.00
2011 – 12	79312730.00	79265814.00	46916.00
2012 – 13	100881043.00	101085124.00	204081.00
2013 - 14	124423059.00	124112145.00	310914.00
2014 - 15	110586895.00	110882319.00	295424.00

Source: Annual Reports of Balurghat Municipality.

The table shows that in spite of increasing level of income of Balurghat Municipality, there is a constant gap between revenue receipt and revenue expenditure. In every successive financial year the gap between is widening. However, the other sources, i, e, different projects run by different agencies and the contribution of state is filled up the gap. Among the number of projects I highlight the three important projects in three successive financial years in the following table.

Table No. 4.7

Sources from different projects:-

PROJECTS	2012 - 13	2013 - 14	2014 - 15
BRGA	1338048.00	9895237.00	5946657.00
UIDSSMT	16381315.00	16494099.00	683750.00
MPLADS	10440652.00	4319598.00	2324023.00

Source: Annual Reports of Balurghat Municipality.

In order to bring about infrastructural development, Balurghat Municipality has received funds from different sources by means of different projects. However, the sources that provided financial assistance to this ULB in every successive

financial years I have projected important three of them. Both the central and state governments have provided aid under different schemes for providing best possible services to the inhabitants of the Balurghat Municipal areas. Moreover, with the increasing population and expansion of municipal area the income from property tax has also increased in every successive year. The following table projects it.

Table No. 4.8

Property Tax collected by Balurghat Municipality during 2010-11 to 2014 – 15.

Year	Property Tax in Rupee
2010 - 11	4733585.79
2011 – 12	5107324.71
2012 – 13	4891768.32
2013 – 14	4785680.58
2014 - 15	6129725.64

Source: Annual Reports of Balurghat Municipality.

The table shows the increasing trend of property tax of Balurghat Municipality. Hence, it is found that in every financial year, the collection of property tax is not done due to various reasons. So in the next financial year both the arrear and current tax are deposited to the municipality. Thus, increasing population and expansion of wards enhanced the property tax of Balurghat Municipality.

F GOVERNANCE UNDER BALURGHAT MUNICIPALITY: MYTH OR REALITY:-

Good Governance has remained the priority of all forms of governments as it gives optimum attention as well as opportunities to citizens for their welfare and development. Good Governance is a system in which all the policy formulation and

execution activities of state revolve around the people. In other words, good governance is one which is participatory, accountable, transparent and responsive. Good governance and democratic decentralization are complimentary to each other. If the good governance is the end, then the democratic decentralization is the mean to accomplish the forms. To attain the goal of good governance, it is essential that there must be statutory and legal provisions regarding the democratic decentralization so that the institutions at the grass root level may be kept away from the domain of the state government.

The essential pre-requisites for quality governance are that the system should be good and suited to the needs, aspirations, back ground and ethos of the people concerned and those selected for operating the system should be endowed with character and competence and motivated by the spirit of public service.

Governance, in general, involves the exercise of political, administrative and economic powers in managing a country's affairs within a democratic framework. Governance as a wider strategy of pursuing development and promoting good government is occupying centre-stage in many countries. It attempts to establish a quality relationship between the government and the governed. Hence, the quality of governance is gaining prominence, as a prerequisite for fostering development.

Good governance is associated with efficient and effective administration in a democratic framework. It is equivalent to purposive and development oriented administration which is committed to improvement in quality of life of the people. It implies high level of organizational effectiveness. It also relates to the capacity of the centre of power of political and administrative system to cope up with the emerging challenges of the society. Good governance is, thus, a function of installation of positive virtues of administration and elimination of vices of disfunctionalities.

However, Good governance moves around citizens to improve quality of life, administrative system, and efficiency in delivering services and to establish greater efficiency, legitimacy, citizen-caring and responsive administration.

From India's point of view, The Second Administrative Reform Commission (2005) laid emphasis on the execution of better governance. However, the Tenth

Plan document identified good governance as the single most important factor in ensuring that the plan objectives are achieved. Among the other things, decentralization of power and citizen's empowerment, effective people's participation through state and non-state mechanisms, greater synergy and consolidation among various agencies and programmes of government, civil service reforms, transparency, rationalization of government schemes and mode of financial assistance to states, improved access to formal justice system to enforce rights have been identified as the key priorities.²⁸

Like other municipal body, Balurghat Municipal body has adopted the policies related to democratic decentralization and accordingly necessary arrangements have been made. It also followed the policy of participatory democracy and allows the people to take part in the decision making process. But excessive political interference by the state leaders in the municipal affairs has made this body inactive. Moreover, the municipal administrative staffs are lacking innovativeness and creativity in performing their job and do not have any interest to adopt the modern technological advancement that ultimately results in public suffering. There is no administrative transparency in making of implementation of different types of schemes introduced by the state and union government. So people in general fail to get benefits of those schemes. However, the most predominant problems or challenges that the Balurghat Municipality often faces can be summarize into the following ways along with their way of solution.

IMPEDIMENTS OF BALURGHAT MUNICIPALITY:-

1. Lack of resources particularly the financial and infrastructural added to the gravity of the problems and challenges faced by the municipality. The too much dependency on the state and union government for finance or grants is another impediment in the development of this body.
2. Inadequate and inefficient administrative machinery as well as lack of capacity building techniques is one of the important perils of this municipality.

3. Political intervention by the state government, MLAs and MPs in the affairs of the ULB is continuing in one form or the other which adversely affects the process of emergence of local leadership.
4. Emergence of unauthorized colonies and slums putting at stake, the basic facilities like water, electricity, health, hygiene and education as well as the poor response of the people towards government's attempts to improve the living conditions in the town are the other hindrances in the smooth sailing of this body.
5. Overcrowded and poorly managed roads and streets increasing number of vehicles and the pollution resulting these forms of poor sanitary condition, lack of proper waste disposal system etc., are the main challenges before the municipal body of Balurghat.
6. Excessive use of money in the election of the municipal election which is far higher than the actual ceiling of expenditure earmarked is another misery to this body.
7. Corruption and lack of awareness among the people and their representatives regarding the various welfare schemes and programmes launched in urban areas is a serious threat to the smooth and spontaneous development of this municipality.

SUGGESTION:-

In order to cope up with the above constraints and to ensure good governance, the following steps are required:

1. Capacity building techniques, motivation and training of the municipal councilors and the staffs of municipality are the need of hour for optimum utilization of available resources.
2. The municipality should be made financially self sufficient by allowing them more revenue raising power and increasing share of collection of cess and other taxes, share, particularly the service and development taxes can be potential sources of their income.

3. The NGOs, voluntary organizations, civil society and public private participation in all the activities of development and welfare must be enhanced to accomplish the goals of good governance.
4. Various schemes of urban development and welfare like Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission, Urban Rehabilitation Scheme, SJSRY, Rajiv Gandhi Avas Yojana; Indira Avas Yojana etc. must be coordinated and if possible be integrated.
5. The vigilant citizenry is an effective tool to make this ULB more accountable, efficient and representative.
6. To curb the corruption in this ULB, transparency and accountability must be enhanced therein. RTI Act, e-governance, citizen charter etc. can be instrumental to attain the goal of good governance.
7. The operational aspect needs to pay more attention, as the failures are more at the implementation level rather than in matters of allocation of resources and policy formulation. Ethics in administration and motivation will be helpful to score the goals.
8. Political interference of union and state governments in the ULB affairs should be put under strict vigilance by the state election commission and model code of conduct should be adhered to in letter and spirit.
9. The proxy representation must be checked and the actual candidates should be motivated for their active participation in municipal functions.
10. The use of micro web cameras or CCTV camera on sensitive spots will enhance the efficiency of administration and curb the design and motives of the offenders.

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