

Preface

The functioning of Municipal Governments in West Bengal had certain problems concerning their successful operation and achievements in relations to developmental goals through decentralization. Democratic decentralization as a political concept necessitates to widen the scope of people's participation in the development process. The 74th Constitution Amendment Act 1992, and as a sequel of the said Amendment, the West Bengal Municipal Act 1993, have initiated few measures to gear up the decentralized development process through the vehicles of Urban Local Governments in the urban sector in West Bengal. In the present study, an attempt has been made to explore the measures and their relativity in the perception of Councillors (elected representatives), Municipal Officials and the beneficiaries (citizens) of four Municipalities in the two districts of West Bengal, empirically.

In the Chapter-I, Section 'A' deals with the Introduction and Conceptual Framework of the study; Section 'B' deals with literatures relating to urban development and administration; Section 'C' deals with India's Five-Year Planning and Urban Development Policy in India; Section 'D' deals with the various theories of Decentralized Development; Section 'E' specifies the research questions relating to the present study; and Section 'F' deals with the methodology followed in the study.

Chapter-II entitled 'Municipal Reforms in West Bengal' presents in Section 'A' a brief historical review of Municipal reforms; in

Section 'B' the Municipal reforms in Post-Independence West Bengal before 1990's; in Section 'C' the 74th Constitution Amendment Act 1992 and the Municipal Reforms in West Bengal in the 1990's.

In Chapter III, "State-Municipal Relations in West Bengal", Section 'A' deals with the theoretical concepts of State- Municipal relationship; Section 'B' with the State-Municipal Functional relations in West Bengal; Section 'C' with the State-Municipal administrative relations; Section 'D' with State-Municipal Financial relations in West Bengal; and Section 'E' with the new strategies for Municipal Governance in the context of Global change.

Chapter IV presents, as the title suggests, 'Profiles of the Towns under Study' in six sections. Section 'A' deals with Jalpaiguri District Profile; Section 'B' with Jalpaiguri Town; Section 'C' with Alipurduar Town; Section 'D' with Cooch Behar District Profile; Section 'E' with Cooch Behar Town; and Section 'F' with the Town Profile of Tufanganj.

Chapter V, entitled "Results of the Field Survey and Analysis of Empirical Findings," presents the Charts and analysis of data collected from *Field Survey* in the four Municipalities under study.

And Epilogue presents concluding observations and suggestions of the author to minimize few of the urban problems in the four Municipalities in specific and in the other in general.