

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The issue of ‘development’ of Siliguri Municipal Corporation Area is the fulcrum of the study. This basic issue engages the aggregate of activities of the municipal authority and the city-dwellers of Siliguri. However, any effort towards in depth study and analyses of the manifold problems and solutions of each and every aspect of development of urban Siliguri carries the possibility of making the whole exercise in vain and superfluous. This is for the simple reason that such an attempt is beyond the scope of a dissertation. In order to provide relevance to the study, the researcher seeks to specifically highlight those issues of development which bear contemporary significance. Having said that, other aspects of development as have been highlighted in the Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution of India do come into discussion as appropriate support systems to the contemporary relevant issues to be studied.

If one peeps into the trajectory of the concept of development in the time-line framework, one finds that it has traversed a long way with its focus changing time and again. It started off with focus on economic development and meandering through various facets, like, alternative development, human development, neo-liberal development and the like, has come under the most stressful period in the form of sustainable development where the existence of the earth itself is at stake. This concept of ‘sustainable development’ got defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 in its report, “Our Common Future” as thus, “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs”. This particularly applies to urban conglomerations and Siliguri is no exception to it.

Since the advent of modern capitalist age, there has been a deep and intimate relationship between economic development based on science and technology and urbanization. The unprecedented urban growth can be attributed to massive industrialization process which contributed immensely in the push-effect migration from rural areas. Several studies indicate that by another quarter of a century, global urban population will stand at about sixty percent of the world’s total population. As far as developing countries are concerned, they will have over 135 cities with 4 million population, by 2025. In case of India, urban people are likely to account for nearly 40 per cent of the total population

of the country by 2021. The State of West Bengal presents a similar picture with 28.03 per cent of the State population residing in urban areas which is higher than the national average of 27.60 per cent according to 2001 Census. If one looks at the decadal urban growth rate of the city of Siliguri since 1941, one finds them to be much higher than those of both the national and the state figures. A comparison of such has been laid down in Table 1.2. All these gave rise to manifold problems of urbanization compelling one now to think over the question, 'Can city be a livable place?'

The contemporary key issues of urban development are squarely integrated with urban environmental, aesthetic and social equity concerns. The basic question in this regard is the meaning of the qualifier 'environmental', 'aesthetic' and 'social equity' in an urban context. These terms may be defined too broadly as well as too narrowly. Taking former perspective, almost all urban development initiatives can be labeled environmental and aesthetic as well as related with social equity. Narrowly speaking, it relates to the degradation of urban water, air and land on the one hand and a balance between concrete jungle and greenery as well as between well-to-do areas and squatters on the other hand. However, for the purpose of the present study, environmental, aesthetic and social equity related developmental issues would refer to human-induced damage to the physical environment of the city of Siliguri and efforts and inadequacies of the local self government of Siliguri and the common city-dwellers to tap such leakages which usually have harmful consequences for human welfare, either now or in the future.

When one speaks of 'sustainability' of urban agglomerations, it gets related to the aspect of 'good governance'. The latter, in turn, gets reflected in as to how efficiently and effectively management of the cities/towns is done. Better urban management requires 'innovative practices' and 'adaptability' to the needs of the changing times. The most important aspects of such practices becoming successful are better financing and cost recovery measures. On all the above, ultimately, depends the level of performance of infrastructure development and service delivery. In a nutshell, infrastructure development and service delivery in an urban area on a sustainable basis needs the adoption of 'good practice' on the part of all stakeholders residing in a city/town.

In the above context, the issues of development which the researcher seeks to highlight are all included in the Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution of India. At the same time, other aspects laid down in the said Schedule do provide the platform and support system to one or the other issues of development to be

taken up for the present study. The broad issues to be taken up for the study are laid down as under :

- (1) Sanitation with special reference to Solid Waste Management;**
- (2) Water Supply;**
- (3) City Transportation, Pollution and Social Forestry; and**
- (4) Slum Improvement and Urban Poverty Alleviation**

### **1.1 The Issue of Development and Municipal Authority**

The advent of independence in India, far from improving municipal administration, witnessed a remarkable deterioration. With the increasing pace of urbanization, the demands made on municipal bodies have vastly increased. With time, though taxes and grants-in-aids have increased substantially but efficiency and effectiveness of municipal governance have, in general, declined. Further, very few attempts have been made to discard the 19<sup>th</sup> century framework of municipal administration, laws and bye-laws, rules and regulations, procedures and practices. This obsolescence has put a brake on urban development. While the cities today plan for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the institutions which are supposed to implement these plans are a hangover of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, some top level institutional hangovers are that the Department of Urban Development in the Central Ministry does some superficial coordination work, the Town and Country Planning Organization does some editing of the master plans and the Planning Commission does not take note of individual cities in their planning process.

The municipal bodies are, by and large, centers of inefficiency, corruption and political nepotism. Most of them are bankrupt and cannot in any way tackle the big problems, in particular, in the field of solid waste management, drainage and sewerage system, pollution in ground water and air, slum improvement, urban forestry, traffic congestion and transportation, encroachments and aesthetic aspect, all of which have their bearing on the environment of the city and its periphery. Besides, they do not have administrative machinery to implement a modern master plan.

The problems faced by the municipal bodies have been reverberated in the United Nations report, 'World Urbanization Prospects: The 2001 Revision', which reveals the year 2007 as a milestone in the history of human settlement with equal number of urban and rural dwellers. This population growth has been particularly rapid in developing countries with an average growth of 2.4 percent

per year. This has created manifold problems and strain before the cities (Hust 2005), like,

- (a) infrastructural inadequacies leading to deficiencies in the supply of housing, water and electricity; sewerage systems, health, education and public transport;
- (b) gradual widening of the gap between the haves and the have-nots in terms of both quantity and quality;
- (c) environmental degradation.

## **1.2 The Issue of Development and the People**

Though the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1992 completed the process of creating local self government at the urban levels, yet urban decentralization has received far less attention in the country than its counterpart in rural India in the form of panchayati raj institutions. The base of the federalist pyramid is expanding primarily for rural local government. On the other hand, urban dwellers are finding themselves in a governance vacuum. This becomes all more pertinent in the backdrop of the fact that India is projected to be 46 percent urban by 2030 (United Nations 1996). Table 1.1 lays down in this regard the political representation ratios in urban and rural India, urban and rural West Bengal and urban and rural Siliguri.

The Table amply shows the grave limitation in Indian Federalism as far as rural-urban approach to decentralization is concerned. The lopsided approach towards urban decentralization can be traced to Article 40 under Chapter, 'Directive Principles of State Policy' of the Constitution of India which requires the state to organize panchayats as the units of self-government in the rural areas. It failed to include urban areas in its ambit. Later on, even the recommendation of the National Commission on Urbanization to expand the article to include urban areas as well was not implemented.

Ramanathan (2007) buttresses the point that not only the constitutional fallout, the difference in attitude of the people in government towards the rural and urban forms of local self-government was evident even in the two drafting of legislations which ultimately culminated in the passage of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments Acts. The passage of 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 promoting panchayati raj institutions was the result of intense debate and struggle of over four decades, including the constitution of two national committees, namely, Balwantrai Mehta Committee in 1957 and

**Table 1.1. : Political Representation Ratios**

Particulars		Rural India	Urban India	Rural West Bengal	Urban West Bengal	Rural Siliguri	Urban Siliguri
(1)		(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Population Level		742,617,747	286,119,689	57,748,946	22,427,251	533979	472370
Gram Panchayats	No. of Units	233606	-	3354	-	22	-
	Total Representatives	2678183	-	49545	-	405	-
Intermediate Panchayats	No. of Units	6094	-	341	-	4	-
	Total Representatives	157973	-	8563	-	64	-
District Panchayats	No. of Units	543	-	18	-	1	-
	Total Representatives	15583	-	720	-	7	-
Total No. of Units		240243	-	3713	-	27	-
Total No. of Representatives		2851739	-	58828	-	476	-
Citizen : Representative Ratio		1 : 260.4	-	1 : 981.6	-	1:1121.8	-
Municipal Corporations	No. of Units	-	-	-	6	-	1
	Total Representatives	-	-	-	364	-	47
Municipalities	No. of Units	-	-	-	118	-	-
	Total No. of Representatives	-	-	-	2422	-	-
Notified Areas	No. of Units	-	-	-	2	-	-
	Total No. of Representatives	-	-	-	25	-	-
Total No. of Units		-	-	-	126	-	1
Total No. of Representatives		-	70,000*	-	2811	-	47
Citizen : Representative Ratio		-	1:4087	-	1:7978.3	-	1:10050.4

\*Approximation (Borrowed from Sivaramkrishnan 2007)

**Sources:** Census of India, 2001; [www.pib.nic.in](http://www.pib.nic.in) ;

Municipal Statistics, 2007-08, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Govt. of West Bengal;

Administrative Report of Municipal Affairs Department, 2001-05, Govt. of West Bengal;

District Statistical Handbook, Darjeeling, 2007, Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Govt. of West Bengal

Ashok Mehta Committee in 1977. As such, there is enough documentary evidence related to the evolution of rural decentralization in India. Even the original 64<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment bill concerning panchayati raj institutions during the Prime Minister ship of Rajiv Gandhi which though failed to pass, saw a protracted debate on the issue across the country.

As against this, urban decentralization was bereft of such lengthy debates and discussions which got manifested in the dearth of documentary compilations till recently. No doubt, some voices were raised through 'All India Council of Mayors' and 'the National Commission on Urbanization' demanding greater urban autonomy. Yet, there was utter lack of those advocates who yielded national impact. Even the original 65<sup>th</sup> Constitution (Amendment) Bill related to urban decentralization – which, too, like the 64<sup>th</sup> Amendment Bill failed to pass – was drafted on an urgent basis within a period of few months. As such, urban decentralization in some ways mirrored the structural aspects of rural decentralization with inclusion of unique needs of urban areas. However, such effort missed the essential spirit of the rural amendment – 'the centrality of the citizen' and the bottom up nature of local self-government (Ramanathan 2007). This structural drawback of urban decentralization continued with the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional (Amendment) Act, 1992. All these failed to create more proximity between the citizen and their urban local government. This gap, further, plagues the 'accountability' aspect of funds, functions and functionaries of local governance directly to the city-dwellers. As of now, accountability of urban local governance lies to some other level government. Thus, one form of such accountability is to provide formal opportunity for citizens to participate in local governance. Citizen engagement is one of the critical success factors for federalism. (Hosp 2003)

Rights are only one side of the coin of city-dwellers empowerment. These must be corresponded and complimented with equal seriousness with 'duties' to provide urban empowerment and development a true meaning. Duties of a city-citizen majorly implies four aspects – (a) duty to comprehensively avail the existing rights laid down by constitutional provisions, acts, laws, bye-laws and government notifications; (b) duty to press for more justified rights; (c) duty to practice and follow the urban rules and regulations; (d) duty to protest against undutiful behavior of others in public life; and (d) duty to vision and initiate newer ideas of development.

One of the purpose of the researcher is to find out the level of awareness and the level of dutifulness and responsiveness of the city-dwellers as far as

urban rights and duties are concerned, in particular, with regards to the issues to be taken up for study. Besides, the objective is to elicit opinions of the city-dwellers themselves as to how to improve upon the existing situation. To add to this, the researcher would himself lay down reformative recommendations in these regards from his own perspective based on his readings, observations and formal and informal conversations.

### **1.3 Objective of the study**

It is due to the above reasons that the studies and research of selected municipal bodies in different states of India have become necessary which would help highlight not only the administrative problems encountered by these municipal bodies, but also the role of the urban-dwellers in urban development. It is in this context that the researcher seeks to undertake a comprehensive study of some of the key issues of Siliguri Municipal Corporation area, one of the fastest growing cities of West Bengal. The issues in focus as has already been mentioned would be (a) sanitation with special reference to solid waste management; (b) water supply; (c) city transport, pollution and social forestry; and (d) slum improvement and urban poverty alleviation. These issues would be dealt from two perspectives : one, from the perspective of the municipal governance, i.e., Siliguri Municipal Corporation's and other associated institutions' efforts and inadequacies; and second, from the perspective of city-dwellers, i.e., their role, duty and participation. The present study is thus an evaluative one with reformative suggestions.

Researches in the field of urban areas have started in the early 1960s in this country. However, very few researches show the cause and affect relationship among the people living in cities, the urban governance and its developmental aspects. The study assumes significance as it deals with the Siliguri Municipal Corporation area which is a very fast developing city with its unprecedented strategic, political and economic importance.

The proposed research seeks to show that "urban development is the judicious blending of the infrastructural development, uniform development, sustainable development, and development with social justice" in the context of the issues to be studied so that each and every person living in it feels a sense of belongingness, feels that the city is better organized for better living. The study seeks to evaluate as to what extent Siliguri has achieved the above judicious blending of urban development as well as what options are available and what measures should be adopted to take urban development of Siliguri to its optimal

level. It is in this context that the researcher seeks to address the above mentioned issues taking note of the followings :

1. The urban legislations applicable to Siliguri;
2. West Bengal's Urban Development Policy;
3. Identification and correlation of the most appropriate instruments of revenue;
4. Addressing capital funding and development of infrastructure in the municipal corporation area;
5. Adoption of privatization and principles of involvement of private enterprises where feasible and beneficial;
6. Involvement of NGOs in the development process and the guiding principles thereof;
7. Addressing the concern for the poor;
8. Information gathering on the problems faced by various localities and residents and prioritizing them;
9. Involvement of city dwellers in the developmental process and their assessment of the authorities;
10. Assessing their behaviour in terms of their rights and duties;
11. Assessing the public relations functions of the authority.

#### **1.4 Theoretical Framework**

The urbanization process involves a transformation of the rural characteristics of people, their activities and settlements into urban ones. It results in concentration of people engaged in non-agricultural activities as well as concentration of non-agricultural land uses in selected human settlements that in turn provide the necessary economies for the production and provision of specialized goods, infrastructure facilities and services.

If one takes note of the urban growth in terms of population since the first Census in 1901 of India, West Bengal and Siliguri (which was inducted as class V town in 1931 with a meager population of 6,067 ), one can easily come to the conclusion that Siliguri has registered an unprecedented urban growth and much faster than the national and the West Bengal urban growth rate. Table 1.2 is indicative of the phenomenal urban growth of Siliguri.

**Table 1.2 : Urban Population Growth (1901-2001), India, West Bengal and Siliguri**

Year (1)	Total Population (in Million)		Urban Population (in Million)		Urban Population (%)		Siliguri Town Population (7)	Decennial Urban Growth Rate (%)		
	India (2)	West Bengal (3)	India (4)	West Bengal (4)	India (5)	West Bengal (6)		India (8)	West Bengal (9)	Siliguri (10)
1901	238.39	16.94	25.85	2.07	10.84	12.20	738	-	-	-
1911	252.09	17.99	25.94	2.35	10.28	13.05	-	3.5	13.7	-
1921	251.32	17.47	28.09	2.52	11.18	14.41	-	8.3	7.2	-
1931	278.98	18.89	33.46	2.89	11.99	15.32	6067	19.1	15.0	822.1 <sup>#</sup>
1941	318.66	23.23	44.15	4.74	13.85	20.41	10487	31.9	63.7	72.4
1951	361.09	26.30	62.44	6.28	17.30	23.90	32400	41.4	32.5	209.7
1961	439.23	34.93	78.94	8.54	18.00	24.40	65471	26.4	35.9	101.6
1971	548.16	44.31	109.11	10.97	19.90	24.70	97484	32.9	28.4	48.9
1981	683.33	54.58	159.46	14.45	23.30	26.50	153825	38.7	31.7	57.8
1991	844.32	67.98	217.18	18.62	25.70	27.48	216950	31.6	29.5	41
2001	1028.74	80.18	286.20	22.43	27.80	27.97	470275	31.8	20.5	216.8*

# Growth for Three Decades

\*The high percentage of Decadal Growth has been due to the upgradation of Siliguri Municipality to Siliguri Municipal Corporation in 1994 and subsequent inclusion of 17 new Wards.

**Sources** : Census of India

Gazetteer of India, West Bengal, Darjiling, March, 1980

The growth of Siliguri helped in up gradation of its status from a Municipality to the Municipal Corporation in 1994. Its population in 1994 was estimated at 3,76,492 – a growth of about 78.8% from what was in 1991. Urbanisation in a country can be broadly identified as a process of three-stage migration. In a developed country, urbanization takes place because of the ‘pull affect’. Industrialisation needs the employment of labour who can be pulled from the rural sector. Moreover, a developed city provides an infrastructure for further investment by entrepreneurs. In other words, there is a linkage between urbanisation and industrialization. So far as urbanisation in a developing country is concerned, it is not the ‘pull affect’ but the ‘push affect’ is vigorously present. In fact, the surplus labour that subsists on agriculture is being pushed out of it. But to study the urbanisation process in a developing country like India, it is to be pointed out that it cannot be explained entirely by ‘pull affect’

or 'push affect'. In reality, both the 'pull affect' and 'push affect' are combined so as to explain the phenomenon of urbanisation in India. Siliguri is no exception to this. Its growth can be attributed to both 'pull affect' and 'push affect'.

The need, therefore, is to follow such strategy of development which can sustain people who are there and who are migrating due to push affect as well as pull those people who are vital for further investment and development. Through such strategy, urban development of Siliguri tinged with social justice can be realized. It is, thus, needless to say that sustained, environment-friendly, controlled and planned urban infrastructure development and better service delivery calls for urgent and committed concern for the issues of sanitation and solid waste management; regulation of water supply; regulation of transportation, promotion of urban social forestry and minimization of pollution; and slum improvement and urban poverty alleviation as well as imparting education and creating awareness in urban administration to city-dwellers.

With regard to the above urban issues in the context of Indian cities, including Siliguri, one finds several bottlenecks like, scarcity of financial resources and the resultant low effectiveness; excessive state control; problems in personnel management; low level of participation; ineffective leadership; structural lacunae; ad hoc and discretionary planning; etc. All these results in a series of paradoxes – growth and decay, slums and mansions, illiteracy and educational excellence, parochial groups and universalistic associations, hope and despair. As such, there is a need for the municipal institutions to bridge these anomalies by judiciously blending infrastructure development, uniform development, sustainable development and development tinged with social justice, thereby, enhancing encompassing development of the issues to be discussed. Here comes the need for "good governance". It calls for such system where those selected for operating the system should be endowed with character and competence and are motivated by the spirit of service to the people.

Good governance which will open up the path for required development with respect to the issues laid down include clarity in respect of the following :

1. Vision : where we want to go
2. Objective : the new desirable situation
3. Mission : our work guide to approach the vision
4. Doctrine : our professional code of ethics
5. Leadership : the directing force

6. Setting : our operating environment
7. Strategy : our general measures to approach the vision

The preceding paragraph indicates the need for ‘capacity building’ of the municipal institutions for good governance and requisite development. Any strategy for ‘capacity building’ needs to address the following :

1. Institution of systemic capacity : implementation of the constitutional provisions regarding establishment of the institutional framework for urban service delivery- defining functions, finances and the framework for responsive service delivery for local government institutions;
2. Designing an enabling framework for making the system operational : internal municipal organization – balancing of political and executive power;
3. Technological and procedural capacity building : adoption of appropriate technology for the production and distribution of services and procedures to facilitate efficiency and accountability;
4. Manpower capacity building : up gradation of manpower for improving service planning, production and delivery – research and training;
5. Establishment of checks and balances : ensuring that municipal institutions and officials are faced with appropriate incentives to deliver results and do not deviate from the mandated tasks.

One should take note of the fact that the assignment of functions is only the first step towards building a good municipal government system. The second step is to ensure that the assigned functions are matched by adequate sources of finance. But the pervasive inability of the municipal institutions to finance and manage the large volume of municipal tasks makes out a strong case for privatization and public-private partnerships in the case of some municipal services.

The present study on Siliguri Municipal Corporation area seeks to find out the strategy of the municipal authority with regard to capacity building, mobilization of resources and involving private enterprises in the above-mentioned developmental process.

City-dwellers, regardless of their occupation or profession, get affected by the city’s products, values and lifestyles as developed and regulated by the municipal authority. In short, the urban environment determines the behavior of the city-dwellers. But the influence should not be one-sided. Rather, it should be

from both sides. As the citizens are shaped by the urban environment developed and regulated by the municipal authority, similarly, the citizens, too, should shape urban environment according to their needs and aspirations and which are beneficial to the majority of the city-dwellers. In order to make the relationship a never-ending cycle of mutual influence, the need is for active participation in the developmental process by the city-dwellers.

However, participation can only be described in the real sense of the term when the citizen who participates is fully conscious of the responsibility that he assumes in doing a thing. In a democratic society, participation gives the ordinary citizen a means of voicing his opinion and of showing by his behavior and action that he is able to take responsibilities. It gives the ordinary citizen to demonstrate his good citizenship by other means than only periodically exercising his right to vote. Participation, thus, signifies self-motion.

Participation does not mean only demand and fulfillment of rights. But it entails corresponding duties, too. Duties must be voluntary and self-contributory rather than enforced by the authorities. The study, thus, focuses on the rights and duties of the citizens in the context of the issues mentioned above, viz., sanitation and solid waste management; water supply; transportation, pollution and urban social forestry; and slum improvement and urban poverty alleviation. Besides, the study also seeks to find out the measures to make citizens more conscious, participative and dutiful from the perspective of the municipal authority, citizens themselves and the researcher.

## **1.5 Methodology**

The study was descriptive and diagnostic in nature along with exploration of the intricacies of developmental aspects of a growing city of Siliguri. As part of the design of the study, four interrelated steps were followed.

**Step One:** An overview of urban development, urban governance and urban participation in the context of India and a brief historical investigation and existing status of the four parameters of development laid down above within Siliguri Municipal Corporation Area. These were collected from various sources, i.e., (i) books concerning Siliguri, gazetteers, newspapers' and magazines' articles and papers, municipal acts and government reports, theses and dissertations on the concerned area, minutes of conferences and seminars, Siliguri city plans; (ii) interacting with officials at various levels; (iii) interacting with citizens residing in the SMC area.

**Step Two:** A brief sample survey of the common people eliciting their roles, duties, interests and suggestions with regard to the four parameters of development were collected. Besides, opinions of urban officials were undertaken through interview schedules. The survey primarily included participant and non-participant observations; structured and non-structured interviews; and structured and non-structured schedules.

**Step Three:** The sample for the study was drawn following the procedures of probability sampling. The Wards were considered as clusters and from each cluster a sizeable number was drawn following the method of the draw of lots. However, besides the probability sampling, in some cases compromises were made by selecting the respondents on the basis of the judgement of the researcher due to non-availability of the selected respondents on repeated occasions as well as the kind of reluctance and unwillingness of the people of some areas to respond to issues of development of Siliguri Municipal Corporation. The reason for this seems to be political as well as low level of awareness to grapple with technicalities of urban development.

**Step Four:** Laying down reformative suggestions for strengthening further developmental process of Siliguri in general, and with regard to the four parameters laid down, in particular. These suggestions are based on the analysis of the views given by the sample respondents and personal observations, literary readings and knowledge and insight of the researcher.

## **1.6 Survey of the Literature**

In India, research in the field of public administration was not very encouraging till recently in comparison to other areas of academics. This may be attributed largely to the fact that public administration, including urban administration, was not taught as an exclusive subject in Indian Universities until recently. Moreover, institutions engaged in research on administration of urban local bodies are numbered. It is therefore not surprising that there are not much research contributions in this field. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that vast amount of materials on urban issues exist which need to be fruitfully explored.

One can note that the process of urbanization is a leading world-wide phenomenon. India is no exception to that, though the process has been slow in comparison to other countries. Needless to say, academicians and researchers have found a blooming and fertile area of study in this sphere. As such, various aspects of urban affairs are being dealt with by scholars of late. However, the

progress in research in this area has been slow in comparison to its counterpart, i.e., rural administration and rural issues. Thus, there is a need for extensive and comprehensive evaluative studies of the existing set up, besides exploring untouched issues of urban administration and development.

With respect to the present study, then, a comprehensive survey of the existing literature on the related subject and issues with regard to India, West Bengal and Siliguri is a prerequisite. The researcher tried his level best to go through these as much as possible in order to get an in depth understanding of the issues to be studied, well before writing the synopsis as well as during the compilation of the dissertation. The survey of literature included (a) Historical Studies; (b) Books and Monographs; (c) Biographical Materials; (d) Government Reports, Municipal Acts, Commissions, Selected City Plans; (e) Institutional Research on Municipal Administration and Municipal Issues; (f) Papers presented at Conferences and Seminars; (g) Articles from Journals and Reports from Newspapers; (h) Ph.D. Theses on Urban Issues available in the Library of University of North Bengal; and (i) host of official and other Websites related to Urban Issues. It is not possible to lay down all the works went through by the writer. However, the worth-mentioning titles can be enumerated in brief.

### **(A) HISTORICAL STUDIES**

Let us begin the survey of literature by referring to the important historical studies on the evolution of municipal administration in India. Hugh Tinker's "Foundations of Local Self Government in India, Pakistan and Burma" (1954) is the outcome of the author's Ph.D. theses. On the basis of his extensive review of municipal administration ever since the foundations of modern local government in India were laid during the period 1687 to 1880 to the emergence of the national Government in India in 1947, Tinker draws conclusions which are of particular relevance to planners and administrators. His main conclusion is that the comparative lack of success of local authorities in India " has been due partly to failures in British and Indian leadership, and partly to certain other adverse factors which were both fortuitous and yet in escapable (such as poverty, political ferment, social flux and economic chaos). As regards leadership, British administration had its Ripon and Indian public opinion had its Gokhale, but apart from the efforts of a few men like these two, the challenge offered by local government did not bring forth a courageous

response from either British officials or Indian leaders, in the formative half-century leading up to the First World War.

Finally, Tinker makes an observation which is of topical interest today especially in the context of several state governments super ceding corporations and municipalities on various grounds. To quote him at length, "The first reaction of contemporary observers of local bodies at work was to condemn the whole experiment as unsuccessful or as in the case of some Indian and Burmese writers, to hold the administrative machinery responsible for the shortcomings of those who worked it. The disillusioned supporter of representative institutions often adopts this attitude if a system of government fails, than it must be abolished and a better form of government devised. It is possible that present - day Indian and Burmese politicians, when they find local bodies unfit for the discharge of their programmes, or when they find their political opponents utilising local bodies to build up opposition to the government may react by restricting local boards' powers, or even by abolishing them. Certain trends in present-day Indian government policy point to an increased centralisation of power, and it would not be surprising to see a considerable transfer of powers from local bodies to district officials under ministerial control....."

The next important work is R. Argal's "Municipal Government in India" ( preface written in 1954, the date of publication not given) which was a D.Litt. theses of Allahabad University. His study is based on the materials collected by him personally from 1946 to 1950 from state secretariats and municipal offices. He consulted the vast amount of materials that were lying in the government reports, circulars, notifications, proceedings of the Legislative Councils and Assemblies and in the judicial decisions.

From the point of view of source materials for historical studies on municipal administration, the problems faced by Argal deserve to be mentioned. He says, "The National Archives has some reports on the working of municipal government but there are wide gaps and since the reports only up to 1924 are available, one can have only fragmentary material on the development of municipal government in India and nothing more. The Municipal Manuals and Acts, which form the basic materials for such work are generally out of print ..... Had some work on the subject been published in various states, there would have been at least a framework for the development on the subject. But there was nothing to fall back upon."

Argal, in his Bibliography at the end of his book lists numerous municipal

Acts and also gives a list of judicial cases which have a bearing on the subject. Argal, however, fails to draw conclusions on the basis of his study except to suggest certain remedies like provision for a “municipal inspectorate”.

## **(B)BOOKS**

These are number of books which are essentially descriptive and refer to the functioning of municipal government as well as different parameters of urban development. There are analytical books, too, which refer to good governance and people living in cities.

A book titled "Urbs Indis - A Plan for Municipal Reform" (1947) by H.D. Shourie contains reflections on the subject of municipal administration. Shourie says “For a purposive effort,.....The failures of the present system have essentially to be envisioned in their entirety. These skeletons would need to be taken out of the town hall cupboards, for their being trotted out to the public gaze and condemnation”.

In a booklet, “A Study of Local Self Government” (1958), P. K. Mattoo pleads for reform of local bodies which have inherited a weak and insufficient administrative set-up. In his words, “A static state of existence invariably leads to decay. Local bodies have been static for such a long time that they reek of decay. There has been no serious effort by the local bodies to examine their own weakness and to boldly speak out the same. Local bodies have been persistently following the same old rot.”

R. K. Khanna, in his book, “Municipal Government and Administration in India” (1967) discusses the structure of municipal government and organization of municipal authorities. One of his interesting contributions is in respect of defects and deficiencies in the municipal services in India. He lists 14 such defects and makes 12 recommendations for improving municipal personnel administration in India. He laments, “The weakness of our municipal administration is due, among other reasons, to the fact that the administrative personnel of municipal bodies in the country has not been always recruited by a system of merit or trained adequately in the techniques of municipal administration. Nor are men of talent attracted to the municipal service because of the low salaries paid to municipal employees in general”.

Another notable contribution is R.K. Bhardwaj's “The Municipal Administration in India - A Sociological Analysis of Rural and Urban India” (1970). Like other authors on municipal administration, Bhardwaj also

comments on the unsatisfactory state of affairs. To quote him, "The way in which the people have dealt with the local bodies in India does not bring credit to the smooth functioning of municipal administration. The social and political groups have not developed emotional attachment with local problems. Their allegiance was rather to the caste and religious interests than towards the community and local considerations with the result that there was never meaningful interaction between various groups for solving the civic problems."

"The Study of Urbanization" (1965), edited by Philip M. Hauser and Leo F. Schnore is a book which originated in an inter-disciplinary conference held by the Social Science Research Council in 1958. The gaining point of this book is that it seeks to promote inter disciplinary and cross cultural research, especially in the developing areas. The book not only deals with the study of urbanization from the political science point of view, but also from historical, geographical, economical as well as sociological points of views.

"Urban Problems: Psychological Inquiries" (1976), edited by Neil C. Kalt and Sheldon S. Zalkind is a compilation of thirty six research reports documenting psychology's contribution to the quest for solutions to our most serious urban problems, like, prejudice, poverty, housing, education, drug use, crime, riots, and the effects of the urban environment. Taken together, the studies suggest that a variety of strategies can lessen the severity of many urban problems. For example, the findings indicate that token reinforcement can improve the school work of poor children and that public housing can be designed in ways that reduce the incidence of crime. The book presents evidence from a wide range of well designed studies, and with its emphasis on data, avoids ideological argument. It is an important source of information for researchers and the people who make or implement urban policy.

Another worth mentioning text book is "Indian Urbanization and Planning Vehicles of Modernization" (1977), edited by Allen G. Noble and Ashok K. Dutt. The book discusses the modernization in India as revealed by the process of urbanization and planning. The book is quite helpful due to the fact that not only Indian but also the perspectives of American scholars have also been incorporated. The book is divided into two parts. The first part gives more attention on structure while in the second part more consideration is given to process.

"Process of Urban Fringe Development : A Model" (1978) by K.N. Gopi deals with the problem of development of fringe areas of the rapidly growing metropolitan cities of India. He has examined the entire phenomena of the

239349

24 MAY 2012



Page | 17

transformation of the fringe of a metropolitan settlement in the light of structural changes in the metropolitan economy and society. He has established in his study that not only the land use patterns change but the entire societal structure of the fringe area is radically metamorphosed because of its strong linkage with the metropolitan economy. The process of transformation is gradual and directly related to distance and accessibility from the metropolis. In his words, "Economic integration and interdependence of the fringe community with the city is undeniable. This is evident from the commuter traffic and commodity flows between the fringe and the city..... While the fringe community finds a ready market for its agricultural products in the city, it depends on the latter for all higher order goods and services". The author takes Uppal, a fringe settlement of Hyderabad as his area of study. The author has suggested a typology of fringe settlement which is evolutionary in character for he points out that each type is characterised by a specific set of economic activities, social system and morphological features. Further, these characteristics are dynamic in nature and are susceptible to change under the compelling influences of the expanding metropolis. The pattern of fringe development is also strongly related to the prevailing social, political and economic systems.

"Urban Development in India since Pre-historic Times" (1979) by B. Bhattacharya traces urban development in India for over four-and-a-half millenia. In this book, he divides urban development into five phase, viz., urban phase of the Harappan Culture; the period of transition and the fresh beginning of urbanization in the early historical period; urban development during the medieval period; the rise of the European settlements; and urban progress in the twentieth century. The book focuses on the underlying forces that contributed to the unchecked growth of towns and cities over centuries. To the author, urbanization is a natural rather than an accidental phenomenon. Especially, the topics related to the growth of urban population (1901-1971) and the nature of existing urban development is quite useful.

Another useful text in this context is Baleshwar Thakur's "Urban Settlements in Eastern India" (1980). Though the regions selected for the study are the Bihar plain, the Chotanagpur plateau, the lower Ganges plain, the Orissa highland region, and the Utkal Coastal plain, it is worthy in the sense that it examine the spatial aspect of the evolution of urban system by focusing, primarily upon the accompanying changes in the distributional pattern of urban places. The study uses two techniques: nearest neighbourhood and entropy,

based entirely on a quantitative analysis in the field of quantitative geography.

Another notable book is "People in Cities: The urban environment and its effects" (1985) by Edward Krupart . This book emphasises as to how people act and why they act as a function of their past and present environments. In other words, human beings are products of their social and physical backgrounds. It provides a more sophisticated understanding of the relationship of environment to behavior and the reasons why city people act the way they do. The whole book is divided into two parts - the first deals with the idea of the city including the city as environment and various definitions and models of urban life; and the second part concerns with the actual living in the city and its consequences, such as, crowding, noise, stress, isolation, etc. and to cope with such situations. In the concluding remarks, the author maintains that the city can be a livable place if people are encouraged in, and rewarded for, assuming control over their environment, which of course, require considerable effort and planning.

Ashok Mukhopadhyay in his book, "Municipal Personnel System" (1985) observes on the basis of an empirical study of municipal personal system in Gujrat and Rajasthan that the unified personnel system cannot be said to have scored definitely over the separate personnel system. However he concludes that, "For too long, the municipal services have been treated as 'inferior' services and, hence, have not attracted 'superior' talent. Therefore, the need is to improve pay scales, allowances, leave conditions, terminal benefits, career prospects, scope for self-improvement and incentives of these personnel in such a manner that competent and motivated personnel enter and stay in the municipal services. One of the devices for effecting these improvements is an innovative system of position classification that can rationalise the pay grades and privileges of the municipal personal in terms of their duties and responsibilities".

E. S. Savas in his book, "Privatisation: The Alternative to Government" (1987) advocates for public-private partnership for qualitative and efficient service provision to city dwellers. He maintain, "While complete ownership and control of production and distribution of services is one extreme, complete privatisation is the other and there can be numerous intermediate arrangements including contracting, franchising, self-help modes."

Pardeep Sachdeva in "Urban Local Government and Administration in India" (1993) specifically deals with the acute scarcity of finance facing the urban local bodies, besides other aspects. He says, "Generally, their sources of income are inadequate as compared to their functions. Their chief sources of

income are the varied types of taxes. However, most of the income generating taxes are levied by the Union and State governments and the taxes collected by the urban bodies are not sufficient to cover the expenses of the services provided. Though they can impose certain new taxes, the elected members of these urban bodies hesitate in doing so for fear of displeasing their electorate. The administrative machinery, at the disposal of these local bodies, is insufficient and ineffective. The staff, which is often underpaid, indulges in corrupt practices which lead to loss of income: Quite often, failure in collecting taxes leads to accumulation of areas running into crores of rupees. As a result, many urban bodies are on the brink of bankruptcy.....Many civic bodies have not been able to provide even the basic civic amenities in the areas which have been included in their jurisdiction during the last couple of decades”.

H.M.Golandeg suggest that the states should set up agencies which would monitor the performance of municipal bodies and guide them regarding distribution of funds and in other financial areas. He cites the examples of Kerala Urban Development Finance Corporation and Gujarat Municipal Finance Board in this respect and urges other states to follow the same in order to help the municipal bodies overcome their financial problems.

Another book on the provisions of the Municipal Acts of some states vis-a-vis the constitutional provisions is U.B. Singh's “Urban Local Government” (1997). He divides the history of urban local self-government into seven phases characterised by a definite aim and purpose with the first phase convening the period up to 1882 and the seventh phase starting from 1992 onwards after urban local self-government got a constitutional status with the enactment of the 74<sup>th</sup> Constitution Amendment Act, 1992. The book is highly informative and useful to those working in the field of urban management such as, administrators, policy makers and researchers. The author covers areas such as the demographic profile, constitutional set up, personnel system in terms of recruitment procedures, terms and conditions, responsibilities, power, functions and duties. The book also deals in detail with the urban finances like municipal funds, budget, taxation procedures, accounts and audit.

Another very useful book with regard to whole lots of problems facing urban agglomerations is Evelin Hust and Michael Mann edited, “Urbanization and Governance in India”, published in 2005. Several authors have contributed articles on contemporary relevant issues like supply of housing, electricity and water supply, sewerage system, health, education, slums, public transport, etc. which are putting enormous strain on the Indian cities’ infrastructure. In

particular, the write up by Martin Fuchs, "Slum as Achievement" is quite enlightening in the sense that he has sought to promote slum pockets not as a nuisance but an integral part of the city.

Mention may be made of K.C. Sivaramkrishnan's, "People's participation in Urban Governance : A Comparative Study of the Working of Wrd Committees in Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra and West Bengal" (2006) which measures the level of participation of the urban people in the process of development. In particular, his field survey in Siliguri has helped the writer in several ways in penning down this work.

So far as books on Siliguri are concerned, they are rare in number. From the books written by two Europeans, Hooker (1969) and Hunter (1974), it becomes clear that the overall unhealthy conditions in the region were always been dreaded by Europeans. Hooker in his account described Siliguri as a terrible and unhealthy place in the British days. He wrote, "Siliguri stands on the verge of the Terai, that low malarious belt which skirts the base of the Himalayas,.....flora, fauna and topography here were different from other places.....the Mahanuddee, flowing in a shallow valley, over a pebbly bottom; it is a rapid river.....Its banks are fringed with bushes".

Similarly, W. W. Hunter depicted the town and its adjoining areas as a dense forested tract during the capture of Bengal by the Britishers and only saints (sanyasis) could reside here. These 'Sanyasis' were defeated by the British during their march and that can be traced from the naming of Siliguri by Hunter as "Sanyasikata". The names of 'Gosaipur' and 'Sanyasisthan' justify the inhabit of Siliguri as stated above.

Besides, another useful book is B. Ghatak's "History of Siliguri" (1983) written in Bengali language. The book traces the history of the Siliguri town since the British days and encompasses political, social, cultural and economic faces of the township. Also, a booklet, "Finances of Siliguri Municipality" (1983) by K.P. Deb provides an in depth understanding of the financial position and problems of Siliguri till early 1980s. Besides Ghatak, booklets on the history of Siliguri have also been written in Bengali by authors like Shib Prasad Chattopadhyay, Haren Ghosh, and few others. On the whole, one can say that books on various facets of city life of Siliguri, in recent times are conspicuous by its absence. However, mention may be made of a survey conducted by the Institute of Social Sciences on Siliguri slums and published that in the form of book in 1995. This was "Basic Services for the Urban Poor : A Study of Baroda, Bhilwara, Sambalpur and Siliguri" written by Archana Ghosh, S.Sami

Ahmad and Shipra Maitra. This book provided an insight to the researcher as to how and why slums grew in abundant numbers in Siliguri despite non presence of any slum in Siliguri till 1970.

### **(C) BIOGRAPHICAL MATERIALS**

During the British rule, a number of prominent national leaders were associated with municipal work. Notable among them were Surendra Nath Banerjee, Pheroz Shah Mehta, Lala Lajpat Rai, G.K.Gokhle, Vallabhbhai Patel, J.L.Nehru, C.R.Das and Subhas Chandra Bose. In understanding the evolution of municipal administration in India, it is very necessary to take help of their biographies as well as their speeches, writings and other municipal documents available in unpublished form.

A recent material in this context is Patwant Singh's "Of Dreams and Demons: An Indian Memoir" (1994). Though it emphasises on Delhi in particular, but his canvas of reference is India. As such, the book can be useful for researcher of different urban areas. The author started 'Design' magazine to get himself involved with design and planning. Writing about his first visit to the U.S.A., Patwant wrote in the 'Design' magazine, "What is more important for our planners is to see how the real-estate operators take over the cities, so that similar takeovers can be prevented here, even though Bombay is already half - way ground under their heel."

Through the 'Design' magazine and author's close proximity with architects and planners, Patwant has been able to point out the monumental lapses of our planning process at the national and local levels; about the serious lack of appreciation and application regarding the physical-spatial dimensions in India's national planning exercise that has, by and large, remained 'space less' and at time has led to the serious consequences causing avoidable environmental degradation and ecological imbalance. These are now becoming apparent.

To him, a healthy nation cannot exist without healthy cities and towns. And, the future of India would be to a large extent determined by the manner the state is able to cope up with the incoming urbanization. He comments, "The greed of our real estate operators unleashed urban chaos in Bombay, Delhi, Bangalore, Madras, and Pune and other once – graceful cities of India, littering them with crass commercial constructions – symbols of and indifference to India's great building traditions."

He further adds, “No amount of critical writing on urban mismanagement, high rise buildings and dishonest land use policies would help India’s urban development (on saner lines), so long as criticism was leveled only at the architects and planners. The real culprits were the unscrupulous politicians in league and backed by corrupt officials and so-called developers: and since politicians only respond to criticisms which threaten their political existence, the general press – not the Design Magazine was the place for it.”

The author argues that new vandals in the form of land developers and promoters of unauthorised colonies have begun to emerge on the Indian urban scene. These ‘new predators’, in league with the politicians and the strategically placed officials, are able to circumvent the norms of planned development as they manage to enroll the ruling cliques as partners-in-crime, “A disgraceful bunch of political godfathers came into being who, to keep themselves in power, learned to promote their own vote banks by specially marked constituencies packing them with the seemingly unwanted new migrants to the Indian metropolis in the form of Jhuggi-jhonpadis (squatter’s clusters) in our burgeoning cities.”

He concludes, “Government and real estate developers are not the only ones to blame. Many well off citizens joined in the plunder by getting permission to convert their villas into high rise properties....”

However, the author is also an optimist and feels that people are again waiting for person of quality, with resolution, courage, fortitude and drive, to provide India with dynamic leadership.

#### **(D) GOVERNMENT REPORTS, ACTS, COMMISSIONS, PLANS, ETC.**

The first attempt to introduce municipal administration in India goes as far back as 1687 when the Madras Corporation was constituted on the lines of the Borough of Portsmouth in England. The Madras Corporation was entrusted with the running of a number of public services including upkeep of a town - hall and a school. However, it was unsuccessful as the residents objected to the imposition of new taxes. In 1726, a second Municipal Charter was issued under which the Madras Municipality was reconstituted and Calcutta and Bombay Municipalities were established. In the pre-independence period various commissions and committees were appointed from time to time. Important among them can be enumerated as follows :

(1) Royal Army Sanitation Commission (1863) - It emphasized strongly the

need for local institutions to deal with local problems .

(2) Lord Mayo's resolution on Provincial Finance (1870) - It made arrangements for strengthening the municipal institutions, especially in terms of finances, and increasing the association of Indians in these bodies.

(3) Lord Ripon's resolution on Local Self-Government (1882) - It was hailed as the Magna Carta of local government and got for Lord Ripon the title of "father of local self - government in India". Ripon suggested reforms for instilling life into the local bodies. He advocated the establishment of a network of local self-governing institutions, financial decentralization, the adoption of elections as a means of constituting local bodies and the reduction of the official element to not more than third of the total membership.

(4) The Royal Commission on Decentralisation (1907) - It examined the reasons behind the failure of local self-governing bodies and concluded that it was due to strict official control, excessive narrow franchise, meagre resources, lack of education and shortage of committed persons. It suggested that the chairman of an urban body should be elected non-official and that he should be given wider financial powers and the elected non-official members should comprise a majority in these bodies.

(5) The Government of India Act, (1919) - On the basis of the Montague-Chelmsford Report on Local Self-Government (1918), the Act made local self-government a transferred subject under the charge of a popular minister of the provincial legislature. The Act increased the taxation powers of local bodies, lowered the franchise criteria, reduced the nominated element and extended the communal electorate to a larger number of municipalities. This experiment was a success as well as a failure. It was a success because the local bodies became popular bodies and they imparted a certain amount of political education to the people. It was a failure because communal representation dampened the spirit of unity, the system of dyarchy was very confusing and the municipal personnel were untrained.

However, many provincial legislatures enacted Municipal Acts under this Act. In Bengal, the first minister- in-charge of the portfolio of local government was Sir Surendra Nath Banerjee. He drafted a new Act, the Bengal Municipal Act of 1932. This Act gave birth to the second generation Urban Local Bodies in non-presidency towns. It was under this Act that Siliguri was made a municipality in 1949.

(6) The Government of India Act (1935) - Like the Act of 1919, this Act also declared local government as a provincial subject and provided more and less

similar powers to them.

Besides the above, there were Reports like, the Taxation Enquiry Commission Report (1918), Report on Local Taxation and Local Government (1925), and the Indian Statute Commission Report on Local Self-Government (1928).

In the post-independence period, the Central Government has, from time to time, showed its concern for the need to improve the urban bodies by appointing several committees and commissions. The most important ones and their contribution are :

(1)The Local Finance Enquiry Committee ( 1949-51) – It chiefly suggested the widening of the sphere of taxation of urban bodies.

(2)The Taxation Enquiry Commission (193-54) – It recommended the segregation of certain taxes for exclusive utilization by or for local government.

(3)The Committee on the Training of Municipal Employees (1963) – It emphasized that training institutes be set up both at the central and the state levels to train municipal personnel.

(4) The Rural- Urban Relationship Committee (1963-66) – It submitted a most comprehensive report on the subject and enquired into all aspects of municipal administration such as personnel, planning, and taxation and dwelt upon inter dependence between the town and its surrounding villages. This report needs to be mentioned in some detail. It is a three volume report. The main report of this committee discusses at length urban development and planning machinery, the structure of urban local bodies, public municipal personnel, finances of urban local bodies, public participation in urban community development, and relation between the state government and local level administration. The second volume contain a number of notes on urban local government practices in various states in India and also gives a list of Municipal Acts and state-wise lists of different types of urban local bodies. It also provides some details about local governments in different countries of the world. The third volume of the Report is concerned with the analysis of replies given to the questionnaires issued by the Committee by various persons and organizations throughout the country. As such, these three volumes constitute an important source material for the study of the administration of urban areas.

(5)The Committee of Ministers on Augmentation of Financial Resources of Urban Local Bodies (1963) - It pointed out that the urban bodies were not levying even in the fields earmarked for them and urged the local bodies to set up Statutory Urban Development Boards to undertake town planning.

(6)The Committee on Service Conditions of Municipal Employees (1965-68) - It recommended the constitution of a statewide cadre of municipal employees.

(7)The National Commission on Urbanization (1988) - The Commission gave wide-ranging suggestions for revitalizing the urban government. In August 1988, the Commission was set up under the chairmanship of C.M. Correa, with the purpose of reviewing and analysing the urbanization process and formulating policies for integrated urban development. The Commission examined several issues and problems relating to urban government. Some of these related to urban management, spatial planning, resource allocation, urban housing, conservation, urban poverty, legal framework, information system etc. Some of the recommendations of the Commission were :

- (a) The Ministry of Urban Development be restructured to make it the nodal ministry to deal with urbanization.
- (b) A National Urbanization Council (NUC) be set up to formulate urbanization policies and monitor and evaluate the implementation of policies.
- (c) An Indian Council for Citizens' Action (ICCA) be created to encourage citizens through organized voluntary effort.
- (d) Every town, with a population of more than 50,000, be provided with an urban community development department through which development programmes may be implemented. Its 'New Deal for the Urban Poor', incorporating 13 points of action, is worthy for consideration. Besides, it gave a large number of recommendations on the efficient administration of urban areas.

Apart from the above, there were some other task forces, committees and commissions, appointed by the Government of India, have examined the problem of urban development in India, such as, the Task Force on Planning and Development of Small and Medium Towns and Cities (1975); the Study Group on Strategy of Urban Development (1982); the Report of the Working Group of Reorganization of Family Welfare and Primary Health Care Services in Urban Areas (1982); the Task Force on Housing and Urban Development (1983); the Report of the West Bengal Municipal Finance Commission (1982); etc.

A landmark event in the municipal affairs came with the Constitution 74th (Amendment) Act, 1992. The Act which received the assent of the President on 20<sup>th</sup> April, 1993 and introduced a new part, namely, Part IX A, in the Constitution and also the Twelfth Schedule, seeks to ensure that municipal

bodies are rested with necessary powers and removal of their financial constraints to enable them to function effectively as units of local government. The Twelfth Schedule includes 18 items and provides an illustrative list of functions. The state governments were accordingly expected to review the functions entrusted to municipalities and expected to formulate a new set of municipal functions while amending conformity legislation. In this regard, the West Bengal Municipal Act, 1993 were amended through the West Bengal Municipal (Second Amendment) Act, 1994 and the West Bengal Municipal Corporation Laws (Third Amendment) Act, 1994. The various Acts in West Bengal has an elaborate list of 49 obligatory functions and 40 discretionary functions.

Besides, several recently enacted Acts which have relevance to the present study may include Slum Areas (Improvement and Clearance) Act, 1956; Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974; Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977; Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981; Environment (Protection) Act, 1986; Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993; and National Environment Tribunal Act, 1995. Moreover, a Model Municipal Law has been devised by the Central Government to be imbibed by the State Governments in order that ULBs may function in a better manner.

A host of National Policies have been formulated to lay down the vision and objectives on various aspects of urban development, such as, National Urban Sanitation Policy, National Urban Transport Policy, National Housing Policy, National Policy on Street Vendors. Apart from these, in order to promote sustainable development of cities, guidelines for proper implementation of schemes on poverty alleviation, housing, SWM and sanitation, water, etc. have been formulated.

Moreover, comments have been sought on 'Model Real Estate (Regulation of Development) Act, 200\_'. Apart from these, a number of task forces and advisory groups have been formed to examine the problems of urban governance and development in India.

So far as Siliguri is concerned, it was provided the status of a Municipal Corporation in 1994 under the Siliguri Municipal Corporation Act, 1990. Amendments have been made in this Act from time to time. However, this Act has been repealed. At present, the Siliguri Municipal Corporation is guided by the West Bengal Municipal Corporation Act, 2006.

Besides, several studies have been conducted from time to time for the

development of Siliguri. Mention may be made of Interim Development Plan for Siliguri, Siliguri Planning Organisation, Govt. of West Bengal (1965); Comprehensive Developments Plan for Siliguri, Siliguri Planning Organisation, Govt. of West Bengal (1967); Report on Traffic Survey (1975) by Siliguri Planning Organization; A Study on the Trend of Land Values within Siliguri Municipal Area (1975-80) by Siliguri Planing Organization; Report on Problem of Siliguri's Urban Development (1984), submitted to SJDA by M. Dasgupta; Outline Development Plan for Siliguri and Jalpaiguri, SJDA, Govt of West Bengal (1986); 'Siliguri Municipality : A Brief Report of Problems and Possible Solution of Siliguri Town' (1976); etc.

Further, RITES conducted "Traffic Engineering and Management Study, Siliguri Urban Area' in 1998. It identified the major traffic and transportation problems of Siliguri and recommended several solutions to solve the immediate traffic problems. Keeping a futuristic five year perspective in mind, they identified major problem areas and stretches like Mahabirsthan, Khalpara Area, Hill Cart Road, Station Feeder Road, Burdwan Road, Bidhan Road and Sevoke Road. Some of its recommendations with regard to traffic management were junction improvement of Mahananda More, Sevoke More and Panitanki More; relocation of parking of public transport within the town area; road widening; widening of bridges and construction of new bridges; proposals of new links; etc. The latest in the line is the "Perspective Plan 2025 : Siliguri Jalpaiguri Planning Area", prepared by Department of Architecture and Regional Planning, IIT, Kharagpur for SJDA. Though this Plan covers a wide area but main focus has been attached to Siliguri. Besides, the SMC and SJDA comes out with Annual Reports which are quite helpful for the purpose of research.

#### (E) INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH ON MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATION

Several institutions have been established which undertake researches on municipal administration. Some such organizations are Centre for Urban Studies, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi; Indian Council for Social Science Research, New Delhi; National Institute of Urban Affairs; New Delhi; Institute of Town Planners, New Delhi; Centre for the Study of Developing Countries, Old Delhi; Centre for Human Settlement, Calcutta; Unnayan, Calcutta; Institute of Local Government and Urban Studies, Calcutta; and the National Library, Calcutta.

In 1961, the Institute of Public Administration, New York sponsored a

series of studies on Calcutta in collaboration with the Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization. Thirteen studies were prepared under this. The study by Ali Ashraf on the City Government of Calcutta attracted considerable attention. Ashraf pleads for a strong Mayor in order to overcome the problems facing the Calcutta Corporation.

Mohit Bhattacharya and Abhijeet Dutta contributed in this area a lot while working at the Centre for Training and Research in Municipal Administration established in 1966 at the Indian Institute of Public Administration in New Delhi.

In particular, Bhattacharya's "Essays in Urban Government" and Dutta's "Urban Government, Finance and Development" are worth mentioning. Bhattacharya, while discussing state-local relations in urban development observes that "Our five year plans have so far consistently kept comprehensive municipal development out of their scope. The approach has been towards functional stimulation rather than co-ordinated development of urban areas. It is high time that the latter approach is adopted and municipal development schemes are integrated into the five year plans via the state plan schemes."

Abhijeet Dutta, while discussing administration for urban development, refers to a significant development since independence, namely, the increasing fragmentation of executive responsibility for the various components of urban development. He discusses the different types of new agencies for urban development, namely, State Departments, special purpose bodies and state undertaking.

One of the important contributions of the Centre for Training and Research in Municipal Administration of IIPA, New Delhi is a study of "State Directorates of Municipal Administration" (1969). This report is based on the field trips undertaken by Bhattacharya to study the Directorates of Municipal Administration in different states of India. It may be mentioned here that Rural-Urban Relationship Committee had recommended the setting up of such Directorates mainly with a view of providing an agency which would act as a mouth piece of the urban local bodies in their dealings with the state governments. However, as G. Mukherjee, the director of the centre for Training and Research in Municipal Administration, points out in his preface to the study, "Unfortunately, in most cases this has not happened. On the contrary almost exactly the opposite is beginning to appear. In fact the Directorate has begun to function as superior authorities at the bureaucratic level.....The general picture is one of urban local government having lost some of their

vigour and initiative, partly because of greater interests as such in the state and central levels of political institutions, and partly because of greater interference by the state government in local administration.”

In his report, Bhattacharya points out that “What we have been following so far in our Municipal Acts are all due to uncritical and irrational continuation of old practices that belonged to a very different political regime.” He recommends that, “ A policy cell consisting of real experts on different aspects of municipal government and administration should be set up within the secretariat department, in charge of municipal government and there must be a continuous feedback of full information from a well organised inspectorate to the secretariat department.”

Another significant institution in this regard is the Indian Council of Social Science Research based in New Delhi. The institution mainly conducts projects sponsored by itself. However, the anomaly is that most of the sponsored work relates to either neighbouring states like Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra, U.P., M.P. or the North-East. West Bengal, by and large, have been neglected. Among various case studies, only Calcutta has been the focus of study in West Bengal. Again, most of them have been done by geographer and sociologist. And majority of the projects deal with improvement of slum areas and squatter settlements. Notwithstanding, they are commendable and useful for the purpose of the present study.

“Effectiveness of Slum Improvement Programs and Patterns of Slum Proliferation: A Case Study of Rahmatnagar” by M. Bharath Bhushan is a project study of nine chapters. It maintains that the growth of slums is due to inadequacy of shelter. The study estimated housing shortage in India at around 39.1 million units by 2000 A.D. and the amount required to meet the need of RCC housing was estimated around Rs. 1,250 billion. According to him, between 22% and 55% population in Indian metropolitan and 'A' Class cities lived in slums and squatters. The commendable portion of the work is its evaluation of the state policies with respect to the slums.

V. Keerthi Shekhar's " Rapid Urbanization and Satellite Townships: A study in urban sociology" dealt with the growth of satellite townships.

“Metropolitan set-up for Delhi” by Dr. Prabhu Chopra deals with the historical aspect of the set up in Delhi as well as some of the metropolitan set up of other capital cities like Washington and Tokyo. The study also suggests as to how metropolitan set-up can be organised.

One of the important taxes of the municipal area is the property tax. In

this regard, the research under the auspices of ICSSR – “Property Taxation of Calcutta Corporation : A Study of Loss of Potential Revenue” by Mrinal K. Bhattacharya is quite useful. The whole work is divided into four parts. The first part deals with the state of Property Tax which includes among other things definition and role of property tax, its assessment, its demand and collection, and property tax arrears. The second part deals with the review of tax assessment. The third part deals with tax demands and includes supplementary demand gap and fresh demand gap. Finally, part four provides certain valuable tips as to how property taxation of Calcutta can be improved.

T.V.Subramanias’s “Planing for Computer-based Management Information Systems for Municipal Corporations” is also a useful work. This work is a consequence of the recommendation of the Administrative Reforms Commission, and following this work, some serious attempts have been made to introduce formal management information system in government departments. The study confines itself to planning of computer-based MIS for municipal corporations. ‘MIS’ as the name implies, is a system to provide informational support for the managerial activities for an organization. ‘MIS’ proposed a federation of the following sub-systems: (1) Subsystem for comprehensive planning; (2) Subsystem for project management/control; (3) Subsystem for performance evaluation of services; and (4) Sub-system for administrative control.

“Local Finance and Economic Development - A Case Study of the Local Bodies in the District of the Hazaribagh” by P.S. Mukherjee attempts to form a clear background for the proper understanding and appreciation of the financial ills of the urban local authorities. The author seeks that there should be integration of functions between the three layers of government – Union, State and Local – and thus they should develop a healthy fiscal partnership in place of rivalry and competition for powers and finance.

“Research Report on Evaluation of a Government Slum Up gradation Programme : A Case Study of Dharavi – Bombay” prepared by I.P.Srivastava is another notable work on slum improvement. It is basically a field work involving collection of data from the Bombay City Improvement Project Cell, holding discussions with concerned officials of the cell, inspecting Dharavi slums and conducting interviews with the slum dwellers, etc.

“The Urban Poor : A Study on the Beggars” by Sumita Chaudhari deals with trends of urbanization in India and the consequent growth of urban poor. It emphasises begging on two respects, viz., the beggars in a religious place and

beggars in a public place.

“The Development of Marginalised Settlements – An Outline Proposal to the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority” prepared by Unnayan, Calcutta in June 1980’ emphasises on the working structure, phasing and project prerequisites. It also provides a sketch of field action for the development of the marginalised settlements.

Ashok Mukhopadhyaya in his “Municipal Government and Urban Development – A Study of the Reforms in West Bengal” maintains that in practice, every Municipal Corporation functioning in the country does not enjoy adequate powers to undertake their functions. He argues, “Several studies have pointed out that in most of the states, the Municipal Corporation Acts are liberal in listing the functions to be undertaken by those Corporations but functions like transport, electricity and fire fighting were either never assigned to these bodies or have been given to some functional agencies. The current tendency of transferring water supply management, sewerage, community health services, roads and primary education to other governmental bodies or special agencies has gained impetus. Such a trend of de-municipalising the management of certain local services is defended on technological grounds and on the grounds of economy of scale, maintenance of a uniform and efficient standard of services. The argument of the incapability or inefficiency of municipal government has proved to be a handy one for the State Governments that wish to de-municipalise the management of certain local services.”

The National Institute of Urban Affairs is another premier institution for conducting studies in urban affairs. One of its memorable studies was “The Study of Master Plans of Towns and Cities in India”. The Principal Investigator was Mr. M.N.Buch, IAS. In another important study, viz., “The Nature and Dimension of the Urban Fiscal Crisis, samples from as many as 210 municipalities were taken. The study concluded that “.....the one unmistakable conclusion that emerges from the analysis.....is that the state of municipal finances deteriorated during the period 1979-80 and 1983-84.....One of the most disconcerting features of the state of finances was an absolute decline in the per capita incomes of urban local bodies.”

Presently, a host of other institutions apart from the above ones are there who are engaged in studies of urban areas, such as CPHEEO, NEERI, NBO, etc.

The Institute of Local Government and Urban Studies, Department of Municipal Affairs, Government of West Bengal brings out booklets as well as

conducts studies on urban affairs from time to time. One of the important publications is “Urbanization and Urban Governance in West Bengal” (2000) by Prabhat Datta. It deals with the evolution of institutional instrumentalities of urban governance in West Bengal and what has the government done to conform the Seventy fourth Amendment Act. It is useful in the sense that it provides an understanding of the composition and functions of the institutions, viz. Central Valuation Board, Directorate of Local Bodies, Municipal Engineering Directorate, State Urban Development Agency and District Urban Development Agency. Prabhat Datta concludes, “Finally, the institutional innovations and changes in the internal structure of urban governance, ....., cannot be called administrative reforms in the conventional sense. The entire exercise has been process-oriented and sustained over a long period of time. The West Bengal experience suggests that sustained efforts are more effective than one-shot exercise, particularly because urban areas are very sensitive and urban social and political life is more exposed to number of internal and external influences than the rural social and political life.”

The Bureau of Applied Economics and Statistics, Government of West Bengal annually brings out “Municipal Statistics of West Bengal” which are quite helpful in several studies.

As regards theses related to urban affairs, scholar and teachers of various colleges and universities have been submitting them from time to time. But it is not possible to make a comprehensive survey of Ph .D. theses submitted to various universities. As far as the University of North Bengal is concerned, not much has been written on the subject. In all, eleven theses have been awarded on this fertile area of study. One of them is "Urban Development in North Bengal: its process, character and future trends" by Shyamal Mukhopadhyaya gives an insight on the urban areas of North Bengal. In particular, Chapter I dealing with the historical background of urban development in North Bengal provides some valuable facts regarding the increase in population in Siliguri since its inception under class V category town in 1931.

## **(F) SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES**

Soon after independence, the first conference of the State Local Self Government Ministers was convened by the Union Ministry of Health in 1948 and six years later the Central Council of Local Self-Government was established. Since then, a huge number of all-India and regional conferences and

seminars have been held, such as, Annual Conference of Ministers of Local Self-Government, the Annual Conference of Mayors and Corporation Members, etc.

The list of seminars and conferences is a lengthy one. However, one of the first such Seminars may be referred which was organised by the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi in 1958. The subject was "Improving City Government". A series of papers were presented at this conference which dealt with the relations between deliberative and executive agencies, trends in municipal financing of cities, the development and redevelopment of cities and citizens' participation. Inaugurating this seminar, T. Subramaniya referred to the address given by Mahatma Gandhi to the city Municipal Council of Bangalore in 1927. Subramaniya pointed out that Mahatma Gandhi told the city fathers that "he was not very much interested in the fine parks and the wide roads that have been laid or in the city beautification and enquired what the Municipal Council had done for the poor and the homeless of the city. A satisfactory answer could not be given at that time, and I am afraid, cannot be given even now. In the interval the problem has grown in dimensions rendering a satisfactory solution much more difficult than it was at that time."

In 1960, an international Seminar on "India's Urban Future" was held at Berkeley, California. The proceedings of the seminar (published in 1962) contained a series of papers on government and planning. Of particular importance was P.R. Nayak's paper on "Challenge of Urban Growth to Indian Local Government". Nayak discussed, among other things, the adequacy of the local government structure and pleaded for an urgent re-examination of the functions of the local government.

It has been no stopping since then as far as seminars, conferences, workshops, panel discussions and lecture sessions on urban governance, development and participation is concerned at the international, national, state and city levels.

Apart from the above, the researcher went through over a hundred articles from journals like Indian Journal of Public Administration, IIPA; Nagarlok, IIPA; Urban India, NIUA; Administrator; Administrative Change, Economic and Political Weekly, etc. and news reports on cities contained in several leading newspapers and magazines like India Today, The Economic Times, The Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Telegraph (North Bengal Edition), The Statesman (North Bengal Edition), Uttar Banga Sambad, Ananda Bazar

Patrika, etc. in order to remain updated about the happenings in cities all over the country. However, the list is too exhaustive to lay down here due to constraints of space.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

It is a sorry state of affairs that very few scholars of public administration have touched upon the different dimensions of urban affairs. It is worth noting that since the advent of the First Five Year Plan and with emphasis on community development and 'panchayati raj', there have been numerous studies on local self-government in rural areas. One of the premier research institution, the Indian Council of Social Science Research, gives more attention on the studies in the field of 'panchayati raj'. Thus, there are far more rural studies than urban studies with regard to local self-government. Though there have been some important contributions to the study on the administration of urban areas in recent years but the overall picture is one of neglect of such studies.

It is further surprising to note that majority of the works done in this sphere have come down from the pens of Geographer, Sociologist or Economist. If the instance of the theses registered with the University of North Bengal to which the researcher is associated is taken, one finds that out of the eleven theses awarded on urban affairs till the time of submitting the synopsis of the present work, only two belonged to the scholars and teachers of the Department of Political Science. It is in this context that the researcher chose to study urban affairs so as to minimize the paucity of research work done in this specific area.

Another significance of the study lies in the fact that the present work buttresses the importance of the contribution of people living in cities – both at the individual and collective levels – in the developmental process of the city. It is not only the urban authority which is responsible for initiating and sustaining urban development but the role of city-dwellers is equally important. Various researches till date have primarily emphasized on the various dimensions of urban authority and urban finance in urban development. There is dearth of studies highlighting the integration of people in that process. Thus, the present study assumes significance in the sense that it does not only deals with the role of urban authority in urban development but also highlights the role of the people themselves living in the city. In other words, the study focuses on the fact that city-dwellers should not only demand rights but should correspondingly fulfill their required duties.

Besides, the present study seeks to highlight the utility, role and contribution of non-governmental organizations in the issues of development of the city to be undertaken as there are limitations on the part of the municipal institution to finance and manage the large volume of these municipal tasks.

Finally, the study assumes great significance for the fact that it undertakes the study of above-mentioned contemporary relevant developmental issues in the context of the Siliguri Municipal Corporation Area. The city of Siliguri is developing at a phenomenal pace as an important trading centre, besides being strategically very important due to its geographical proximity with four countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and China. The influx of migrants with the creation of Bangladesh and the problems of insurgency in the North-East has contributed to the rapid growth of Siliguri in the last two decades or so and has made it the most important economic center of North Bengal. Other contributory factors for its thriving are that it is the gateway of tourism for Darjeeling and Sikkim hills; and it is situated in the tea and log belt.

The rapid process of urbanization of Siliguri can be gauged from the fact that since its inception as 'Class V' town in 1931, it rose to earn the status of Municipal Corporation in just about six decades in 1994, though still being a sub-division of Darjeeling district. This rapid urbanization of Siliguri calls for an effective infrastructural, uniform and sustainable development as well as development tinged with social justice so that it does not become a place of squatter guided by few well-to-do areas. It is very necessary to anticipate problems and offer solutions in advance rather than wait for the problems to reach serious proportions. Herein lies the utility and inevitability of the micro study of Siliguri Municipal Corporation area with particular emphasis on the contemporary issues of sanitation and solid waste management; water supply; transportation, pollution and urban forestry; and slum improvement and urban poverty alleviation.

The ultimate purpose of the research is to provide a proposal for making Siliguri a model city to be imbibed by other cities for better urban living.

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