

## CHAPTER - 3

### ORGANISATION FOR PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF DALURHAT

#### A. Organisational Framework for Urban Development in West Bengal

In the developing countries which were under colonial rule, the colonial powers replaced the pre-colonial administrative system and set-up their own pattern of administration.<sup>1</sup> After independence, these countries are yet to shrug off completely the hangovers of the pre-independence administrative system and the legacy has been unsuitable for the task of development.<sup>2</sup> Attempts have been made to replace it, but a suitable alternative is yet to emerge.

One of the consequences has been the persistence of fractured programme implementation due to the absence of a cohesive organisational machinery. Many government offices, multi-sectoral committees, boards and councils have been created, but the performance of these authorities has often been very dismal and disappointing. The result, inevitably, has been the duplication of functions and diffusion of responsibility. Hence, the spectacle of sectoral programmes, being implemented in parallel fashion, ignoring the beneficial effects of joint planning and coordinated implementation, is common.<sup>3</sup> Institutional weaknesses then, appear to constitute the major hindrance to development.<sup>4</sup> The present deficiencies call for the creation of an effective apparatus for

development which falls within the domain of development administration. The focus has been on rebuilding and reforming the administrative system. It covers both 'development of administration' and 'administration of development'. They refer to strengthening and improving the administrative capabilities as well as organisational development.

Therefore, the building of effective organisation is the foremost task in the developing countries. At this juncture, organisational development is regarded as the *sin qua non* to wipe out the shortcomings of the present administrative system. Organisational development is indispensable to make it consistent with the predictable and unpredictable as well as unforeseen needs of the years to come. The concept refers to different connotations. But there is a basic convergence of perception. Bennis views it as a response to change, a complex educational strategy intended to change the beliefs, attitudes, values and structure of organisations to orient them to upcoming changes.<sup>5</sup> According to Wendell French, it refers to a "long range effort to improve an organisation's problem solving capabilities and its ability to cope with changes in its external environment with the help of external or internal behavioural scientist consultants or change agents, as they are sometimes called".<sup>6</sup> However, the basic assumption of organisational development is to diagnose the organisational weaknesses, increase the capability of the organisation, stress on innovation and change and self-renewal, and a prediction of future needs as the

remedy to entropy.<sup>7</sup> So, development is contingent upon the efficacy of the organisation.

**B. Role of the Municipality and the Agencies of the State Government : A Framework of Partnership.**

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In West Bengal, the archaic structure of management has prevailed for a long time. Municipal authorities have been the primordial institutions for urban development in the State. It should be noted here that some State Government agencies also perform some key functions. A number of supra-local and special purpose development agencies, which have been created by the state Government at the urban area level, have been entrusted with some development functions along with the municipal institutions. While Improvement Trusts have been installed both for Calcutta and Howrah, and an area-specific unifunctional agency like Calcutta Metropolitan Water Supply and Sanitation Authority for Calcutta, several government agencies such as Public Works Department, Housing Board, Public Health Engineering Department, West Bengal State Electricity Board, etc. have been vested with a number of major functions. Recently, the financial institutions like the public sector banks have also been vested with some key functions, as they are used as the instrument for directing the economic development programmes in urban areas.

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Since independence, municipal institutions and the government agencies have performed their functions within their respective jurisdiction in isolation from one another. Their

functional separation has produced tardiness in the delivery of civic services. As a result of the lack of cohesion and coordination among the development agencies, services have been discharged in piecemeal and disjointed manner. This disorderliness in the sphere of urban administration has made it imperative to renovate the organisational framework for urban development.

Recently, the development of the small and medium towns in West Bengal has been one of the major planks of the development strategy adopted by the Government of West Bengal.<sup>8</sup> The changed strategy of the State Government in the field of district administration has also brought about significant reforms in the sphere of urban administration.

In recent years, the Government of West Bengal has undertaken several reform measures in the field of district administration. As a result, adoption of the policy, treating the district as the separate and spatial unit for planning has come into force. A District Planning and Coordination Committee, (henceforth referred<sup>b</sup> as DPCC) was set up in place of erstwhile District Level Coordination Committee with a Minister of the State Government in charge as Chairman. A District Planning Committee, (henceforth referred to as DPC) was also constituted as the executive arm of the DPCC with the Sabhadhipati of the Zilla Parishad as Chairman and the District Magistrate as the member-secretary.<sup>9</sup> Chairmen of the municipalities in the districts also

represent their respective municipalities in the DPC. Subsequently, it has been reconstituted in the light of the 74th amendment of the Constitution.

The DPC has emerged as the key agency for the formulation of plan and schemes for the district.<sup>10</sup> It has been constituted for the balanced development of the districts. The basic idea has been to secure peoples' participation at the grass root level and better coordination among different participating development agencies.

Subsequently, the Government of West Bengal, with the objective to reform the administrative machinery, constituted the Urban Planning Sub-Committee (henceforth referred as UPSC) under the DPC.<sup>11</sup> The objective behind the formation of UPSC was to induce integration and coordination of the urban area activities of all concerned departments and organisations for the purpose of formulation of a comprehensive urban plan of the district, making it an integral part of the overall district plan.....<sup>12</sup>

Recently, a number of changes have also taken place in the field of urban administration. Two new bodies, one each at the state and the district level, have been introduced for the implementation and monitoring of two central programmes like Nehru Rozgar Yozana and Urban Basic Services for the Poor. They are : State Urban Development Agency and District Urban Development Agency for carrying out the programmes like Nehru Rozgar Yozana and the Urban Basic Services for the Poor at the state and districe level.<sup>13</sup> In

Dakshin Dinajpur district, the district agency has been constituted with the Sabhadhipati of Zilla Parishad as its Chairman and the Chairman of the ULBs and the district level officials of various governmental departments as its members.<sup>14</sup>

The first hand observation about the agencies, carrying out varieties of functions suggests that they function separately on the basis of their own capacity. There have been no formal rules to harmonise the function of those agencies, and the position of the civic body in the present organisational framework has remained unclear. However, recently, in the municipal Act of 1993, the Municipality has been given a more assertive position in the functioning of the entire machinery. Under section 63(3) (E) and (9), the Municipality has been empowered to coordinate the functions of the agencies. The municipal Act of 1993 has been a departure for a better inter-agency coordination and municipal leadership.

### C. Role and Functions of the Development Agencies

The archaic structure of management of civic affairs has been preserved to discharge the civic services in the cities and towns. Basically, two types of development agencies are found to operate at the city and town level. Among the town-level development agencies, municipal institutions have emerged as the focal organisation for directing urban development programmes. Municipalities of the small and medium towns have derived their

functional authority from the Bengal Municipal Act, 1932 (Amended Act, 1980), which does not distinguish between obligatory and discretionary municipal functions, except only the conservancy service which is treated as a municipal function of obligatory nature.

The broad categories of functions which the municipalities in West Bengal perform are as follows:

- (a) water supply, sanitation, public health and garbage removal;
- (b) roads, street lighting and building control;
- (c) provision of community facilities;
- (d) provision of measures for public safety; and
- (e) primary education.

These are the broad categories of functions which the municipal bodies normally perform, according to their capacity. Here, it should be mentioned that some municipalities disown the responsibility of medical, public health and transport control, ~~due to financial hardship.~~

Beside the prominent role of the municipal bodies, several government agencies have also figured significantly in urban development functions. Some of the government agencies have extended their services to the municipal towns. The technical agencies of the State Government as mentioned in previous sub-

section, not only provide technical advice, but also undertake some work of large capital investment in the cities and towns on their own or on behalf of the local authorities.

In the context of a broader view of urban development, the functions, especially which are performed by the Public Works Department, Public Health Engineering Department, West Bengal State Electricity Board and the Banking Institutions, are of considerable relevance. Therefore, it is necessary to enquire the agency-wise distinction of functions.

The objective behind the creation of Public Works Department (henceforth referred<sup>b</sup> as PWD) was to make it an arm of the State Government for implementing the works of capital expenditure, such as construction of government buildings, roads and other types of construction. This department of the State Government has been a primordial agency, which functions both in the urban and the rural areas.

Although the PWD is not a special agency for urban development, it has already implemented several constructional works for the physical development of Balurghat. Since inception, this department of the State Government has built the quarters of the District Magistrate, District Hospital, Administrative Building, quarters of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and New Fire Station in the town.<sup>15</sup> It has also built the most important road, known as the PWD road which is the lifeline of the town, covering the entire town in a circular way, starting from the

Raghunathpur three-point crossing at the north-east corner of the town in ward no. 21. Further, it runs through ward nos. 22,18,19, and central business area in ward nos. 1,7,13, and also the wards like 13,14 and 15, before it ends up just beyond the boundary of Balurghat General Hospital. Beside these constructional works, this department has also made some widening and repairing works of the PWD road and constructed high drains, parallel to the PWD road. Recently, it has again undertaken a scheme for extending the breadth of the PWD road. So, it performs the important function of constructing government buildings and maintenance and construction roads in Balurghat.

The other government agency, which also, unlike the elected local authority of area-specific jurisdiction, has area-wide functions, is the Public Health Engineering Department (henceforth referred<sup>to</sup> as PHE). This department is entrusted with the very important function of piped water supply.

Piped water-supply, implemented by the PHE was first introduced in the town during the latter part of the seventies when a scheme meant to serve an ultimate population of 63,000 was completed. The area at present served by piped water-supply facility is divided into two zones. Zone-I covers ward nos.1,2,3, 4,5,6,7,8,9,10, 11, while Zone-II covers ward nos. 12,12,14,15,16, 17,18 and 19,20,21,22,23,23. These wards are only partially covered by the existing distribution system. The number of existing stand-

posts are 190 and there is a proposal for further installation of 40 stand-posts in different wards.<sup>16</sup>

But, there is no denying the fact that the position of piped drinking water-supply is in a poor shape as there is no arrangement for house-connection in Balurghat. Besides, the stand-posts for street-water supply are also very few and far from being adequate.

Subsequently, the Balurghat municipal authority realised the inadequacy of the existing provision and requested the Directorate of the PHE to undertake comprehensive scheme for the augmentation of water-supply in the town.<sup>17</sup> Subsequently, the PHE Directorate agreed to extend the piped water-supply system in the town and divided the total area into four zones for equitable distribution of water in the entire municipal area.<sup>18</sup> But the scheme, prepared by the PHE on the basis of an estimated population of Balurghat in 2011<sup>19</sup> has not been implemented for want of fund.

So, it is needless to reiterate that PHE has been vested with a very important function of water-supply, which is a basic human need.

The state level agency like West Bengal State Electricity Board (henceforth referred<sup>b</sup> as WBSSEB), an autonomous organisation under the State Government has been constituted in order to discharge the function of public lighting in West Bengal.

Previously, the function of public lighting was discharged by the WBSSEB alone, but at present, in the municipal

areas, the Municipality shares this function with the WBSSEB. Now, the Municipality prepares the schemes and makes financial provision for the implementation of the schemes. The WBSSEB only provides technical assistance to the municipal schemes. But the maintenance service lies with the Municipality, as the local authority is entrusted with the responsibility of switch operation, replacement of lamps whenever the are necessary.

The functions of both the Municipality and the WBSSEB are governed by the Group Supply Advisory Committee on Power. In Balurghat, the Committee, a bloc-level forum is represented by the elected functionaries of the urban and rural local bodies and the officials of the WBSSEB. The Chairman of Balurghat Municipality is the Chairman, while the Assistant Engineer of Group Supply Advisory Committee acts as the Secretary of the Committee. The members of this Committee are the Sabhapati of Balurghat Panchayat Samiti, Officer-in-Charge of Balurghat Police Station, Block Development Officer of Balurghat Block, Anchal Pradhan, all Assistant Engineers of the WBSSEB within the Block and the representatives of the Employees Union, WBSSEB.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the entire function of public lighting i.e. extension of street phase, maintenance are done through the Group Supply Advisory Committee on power. The Municipality and the WBSSEB discharge their functions relating to urban electrification under the guidance of the said Committee.

However, it is understood that the performance-stand-

lard of the WBSSEB has not been satisfactory. An understanding of the poor performance of the WBSSEB can be made from a study on the schemes, which are supposed to be implemented during the period 1994-1995 (upto June). The following Table shows the number of implemented and pending cases.

Table - 3.1

Ward-wise implemented and pending schemes for  
street - lighting

Ward Number	Nature OF work	Implemented	Pending	Amount paid by the Municipality (Rs)
15	Street line extension	yes	no	142,505 (04/02/94)
1 & 10	"	yes	no	46,711 (03/05/94)
3	"	no	yes	42,024 (29/06/94)
4	"	no	yes	39,734 (21/07/94)
13	"	yes	no	32,997 (21/07/94)
20	"	no	yes	34,227 (16/09/94)
22	"	no	yes	33,533 (16/09/94)
22	"	no	yes	33,193 (12/09/94)
15	"	no	yes	69,068 (10/11/94)
22	"	no	yes	43,959 (10/11/94)
22	"	no	yes	36,637 (6/12/94)

The data regarding the implemented and pending cases of electrification show that the performance of WBSSEB has been far

below the expected level. However, it is evident that as the technical agency the MSSE is in charge of electrification in the town and on many occasions it has failed to discharge the services in time.

Today, the banking institutions play an important role to combat the problem of unemployment, and economic impoverishment of the urban dwellers. The change in the approach to urban development has made the policy-makers feel that not the physical development alone, but a policy of economic development should be adopted in the wake of rapid accentuation of the problem in the municipal towns. In this context, the financial institutions like the banks play crucial role for the implementation of the anti-poverty and income-generation programmes. Financing of the programmes such as Special Component Plan for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, Self-Employment Scheme for the Registered Unemployed, Self-for Urban Micro Enterprise under the Nehru Rozgar Yozana (henceforth referred<sup>to</sup> as SCP, SESU, SUE, NY) respectively through the banks.<sup>21</sup> The banks in the public sector are in charge to provide financial assistance to the schemes, forwarded by the municipal authority.

In Balurghat, the poverty-alleviation programmes of the Government are jointly implemented by the banks and the Municipality. Here, it should be pointed out that the role of the banks is of immense importance in view of the economic backwardness of Balurghat. The programmes of the Union Government such as

SESRU, SCP and NRY have been directed through the Municipality and the banks for the generation of income and employment opportunities in the town.<sup>22</sup> In Balurghat, although the Municipality has the authority to forward the schemes, after examining their viability, the banks are entirely responsible for financing the anti-poverty-cum-employment-generation programmes. Therefore, the role of the banks is crucial for structural development of the cities and towns and henceforth they have emerged, as one of the frontal agencies for the development of Balurghat.

Pattern of financing of the banking institutions in Balurghat can be ascertained from the following figures relating to the cases sanctioned and disbursed by the banks under the schemes of SESRU and NRY, within Balurghat Municipal area.<sup>23</sup>

Table - 3.2

Progress under SESRU and NRY

Name of the Scheme	Number of Cases Sponsored	Number of Cases Sanctioned	Number of Cases Disbursed	Number of Cases Pending	Number of Cases Rejected
SESRU	140	36	16	47	20
NRY	653	158	131	375	147

(SESRU figures upto 30/04/92)

(NRY figures upto 31/06/95)

It is found that not all the sponsored and sanctioned cases have obtained financial assistance from the banks.

Out of the sponsored cases, only a few of them have been financed by the banks. However, whatever is the reason for the rejection of such large number of cases, the banks are still the foremost agencies for the economic upliftment of the needy people of the town.

#### D. Incidences of Interaction Among the Development Agencies

##### I. Inter-Organisational Issues and Types of Interactions Among the Agencies

In the realm of urban administration, participation of the local development agencies is founded upon the interacting relationship among them. These agencies interact among themselves and come together, with the objective to discharge their respective functions in the interest of the people. It is pertinent to mention that since urban development in the current context is not the function of a single agency only, functions of several agencies should be discharged in such a manner that they bring the desired results to the beneficiaries.

In Balurghat, the agencies engaged for urban development interact with one another. The current urban development strategy has designated the Balurghat Municipality as the foremost organisation for directing the development programmes in the town. Yet, the present framework, producing balkanisation of urban development functions has induced the municipal authority to interact with the government agencies. Thus, the Municipal Board

in Balurghat and the State Government agencies which perform major functions in the Balurghat municipal area, such as PWD, PHE, WBSEB and also the banks, discharge their respective functions in coordination with one another.

At the operational level of urban administration in Balurghat, the situation of interaction arises in the context of the development of the town. Thus, the Municipality has occasionally interacted with the PWD. Correspondences have been made between the Chairman of Balurghat Municipality and the Assistant Engineer PWD Balurghat Sub-division, and also the Executive Engineer regarding construction of drains in the area, running from Balurghat Bus Stand to Hill culvert on the eastern side of the PWD road and repair, reconstruction and widening of the PWD roads with flanks and drains within Balurghat municipal area.<sup>24</sup> These are the instances of interaction between the municipal authority and the PWD in Balurghat. Further, the letters from the Chairman, Balurghat Municipality to the Assistant Engineer and the Executive Engineer for the reconstruction of drain outside the north perimeter wall of the sub-jail and for repairing of the potholes, are the instances of interacting situations between these two agencies.<sup>25</sup> Correspondences between them have continued afterwards when the Chairman of the Municipality have written the Minister-in-charge, PWD for widening the PWD road and removal of encroachments.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the Executive Engineer, Dakshin Dinajpur Division, wrote to the Chairman of the Municipality for

shifting all the encroachments to a distance of 25 feet from the road edge on both sides of the road to prevent congestion and also for the rehabilitation of the encroachers by the Municipality.<sup>27</sup> Since then, these two agencies have made several correspondences on the issue.

Unlike the types of interaction with the PWD, the interactions with the WSEB are being made through the Group Supply Advisory Committee on Power. Each of the issues relating to their mutual functions is placed before the Committee. Decisions which are taken in the Committee are binding upon the Municipality and the WSEB. All the problems relating to electrification within Balurghat Municipal Area are resolved in this Block Level Committee. But the unresolved issues are referred to the District Level Advisory Committee on Power. The Group Supply Advisory Committee is authorised to undertake electrification schemes worth of rupees five thousand and below. The unresolved cases, relating to fixing of subsidy and rebate for mercury and fluorescent street lamps on the basis of watt-consumption, and extension of street phase under the Balurghat Municipality have been the issues of deliberation in the meetings of the Committee.<sup>28</sup> Hence, this type of interaction between the Municipality and the WSEB for the formulation and implementation of electrification schemes through the Group Supply Advisory Committee are found at the municipal level in Balurghat.

Interaction between these two agencies has taken

place on a number issues. The Chairman of the Municipality complained about the irregularity of the meetings of the Group Supply Coordination Committee on power and the negligent attitude of the Secretary of the Sthayee Committee (Electricity) of the Panchayat Samiti.<sup>29</sup> The Chairman has also expressed her dissatisfaction for convening a meeting without intimating her who happens to be the Chairman of that Committee by Government Order.<sup>30</sup> The relationship between these two agencies, has been strained due to some factors which will be taken up at length in the relevant section.

Interdependence between the Municipality and the department of PHE stems from the need to introduce the piped water supply in the town. It has induced them to interact with each other. The correspondences between these two agencies for the provision of piped water-supply in Balurghat reflect the interaction between them. The Chairman of Balurghat Municipality has requested the PHE Directorate to prepare a scheme for augmenting the source of water-supply and also for extensive coverage of the entire municipal area.<sup>31</sup> The chief Engineer-1 PHE Directorate, in response to the request from the Municipal Chairman has acknowledged the necessity for extending piped water-supply system in Balurghat.<sup>32</sup>

In this respect, the communique from the PHE to Municipal Affairs Department may be referred, wherefrom a projection for the augmentation of water-supply in Balurghat Municipal area at an estimated cost of Rs. 20 lacs can be obtained. It has also been stated that a sum of Rs. 15 lacs has been released to the Municipality with the concurrence of the Finance Department.<sup>33</sup> In this connection the Executive Engineer, Balurghat Division has informed the District Magistrate about the receipt of the administrative approval and has requested him to place the fund of Rs. 15,0000.<sup>34</sup> These correspondences have not been made directly between the Municipality and top-level officials of the PHE. However, such types of interaction have taken place between the PHE and the Civic body for the elevation and implementation of water-supply schemes in Balurghat.

Apart from the linkage with the State Government agencies, the Municipality in Balurghat has to interact with the banking institutions for the implementation of poverty-alleviation and income-generation programmes of the Government. In Balurghat, the schemes, prepared within the frame of several programmes such as SESRU, NRY, SUNE etc. are approved by the Municipality. The Municipality forwards the approved schemes to the banks for providing financial assistance to the beneficiaries. A 'screening Committee' comprising the Municipal and bank functionaries is the forum for interaction between these two key agencies of development. The local elected authority and the banks jointly act as the instrument for guiding economic development programmes in Balurghat.

Their concerted functioning is supposed to accrue economic development of the town.

Therefore, varied types of functions have bred institutional plurality in the field of urban administration in Balurghat. Different types of agencies carry out development functions of different nature, at the horizontal level in Balurghat. The functional responsibilities of the agencies bring them in inter-action with each other.

## II. Problems of Coordination Among the Development Agencies in Balurghat

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Urban development in West Bengal is a complex process. Here, the municipal authority, the focal organisation for urban development has to interact with other agencies for the smooth delivery of the services. Hence, coordination among the agencies at the operational field ensures proper and timely delivery of services to the people. But in reality, each agency with its own functional field has remained more or less as an island in itself. Multiplicity of urban development agencies, without an effective institutional coordination has become a perennial problem. It has been found that although the agencies have the common interest in development, conflicts and tensions usually occur among them, due to professional differences, organisational priorities, procedures and commitments. Experience shows that these conflicts get magnified and sometimes thwart development

efforts.<sup>35</sup>

In West Bengal, the municipal institutions have often been bypassed, as the non-elected government agencies such as the Urban Development Authorities, Improvement Trust, PWD, WBSEB, PHE, banking institutions, etc. have been vested with specific urban development functions. But separate rules of business have often produced disorder in the delivery of services. Urban development services under guidance of elected and non-elected agencies have fostered a dichotomy. It has created parallel agencies, beyond the control of local civic authority. Thus, dualism in urban development and separation of development functions have made it extremely difficult to maintain a judicious balance between the separated activities under dual control.<sup>36</sup>

In Balurghat, urban development functions have been discharged in a haphazard manner. Fragmentation of functions has prevailed for a long period. Consequently, the disorder in the delivery of services has produced little effect by way of change of the existing condition of Balurghat. Of late, the Government of West Bengal, with the objective to bring integration and coordination of the functions of the elected and non-elected agencies at the district level as stated before, constituted the DPC, as the executive arm of the DPCC.<sup>37</sup> Again, the State Government, in a bid to revamp the administrative machinery for urban development, has formed the UPSC under the DPC for more integrated preparation of urban plans for the districts and extensive participation of the

elected representatives of the Municipal organisations.<sup>38</sup> The objective behind the constitution of UPSC has been to ensure 'integration and coordination of the urban area activities of all concerned departments/or organisations for the purpose of formulation of a comprehensive urban plan of the district, making it an integral part of the overall district plan....'<sup>39</sup>

The inception of the UPSC under the DPC raises some pertinent issues, relating to their functions for integrating and coordinating the functions of participating agencies. It is found that formation of the UPSC under the DPC is not a radical change from the previous framework of urban administration in West Bengal. The UPSC is nothing, other than a new committee for formulating urban plans. Installation of the Sabhadhipati of Zilla Parishad as the Chairman does not ensure proper status of the municipal bodies. Besides, there is no provision, empowering the Municipality to guide and supervise the functions of the government agencies. As a consequence, the constitution of UPSC has failed to go beyond the previous policies. Adherence to previous framework of urban development has dwarfed the efficacy of the UPSC as an effective forum for integration and coordination of development function in Balurghat.

Partnership in the development functions usually gives birth to the problems relating to integration and coordination of urban development functions. It is rightly observed that coordination is a two-way traffic. For the whole is determined

not only by its constituents, but also by their relationship to one another. Its creativity lies in the outcome of the cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiences of higher and lower levels of functionaries in the desired directions, indicated in the form of the goals of the organisation.<sup>40</sup> In simple terms, it is viewed that the tasks performed by individual participants under a system of differentiation should be coordinated or integrated in order to achieve the objectives or goals. There should also be appropriate method and technique of coordination and control for different tasks.<sup>41</sup>

But the problem of coordination is embedded in the system. In the framework of urban development in Balurghat, it is found that the absence of municipal authority over the non-elected agencies has helped them to nurture their own departmental tradition and work culture. Separate rules of business and different jurisdiction of functions have placed the participating agencies in contrast to each other. The distinctive attitude of the participating agencies, what is called the 'agency philosophy',<sup>42</sup> lead them to inculcate their own ethos and interpret the task and role in development, according to their own perception.

In Balurghat, it has already been mentioned earlier that the Municipality interacts with other participating agencies either through inter-departmental committee or occasional correspondences. It is often found that adherence of the government officials to departmental rules and procedures, indifferent

attitude to their problems of Balurghat, apathy to work beyond their routine function and the reluctance to discharge urban development functions under the leadership of the Municipality are responsible for haphazard delivery of urban development services. These factors, present in the interdepartmental relationship negate integration and coordination of the urban development functions in Balurghat. A few incidences, showing incohesion and lack of coordination are cited for proper understanding of the problems.

In the case of bi-lateral relationship between the Municipality and the WSSB regarding public lighting in Balurghat. It is found that separate rules and procedure of function have produced some problems. For instance, the problems which the Balurghat Municipality faces in times of discharging the service of public lighting can not be settled in the Group Supply Advisory Committee on Power. One of the main problems is that the Assistant Engineer, Group Supply Advisory Committee has the authority to approve schemes, worth five thousand rupees or below. But, most of the municipal schemes, relating to supply and extension of street phase, exceed and financial limit of five thousand rupees. As a consequence, the matter is referred to the higher body like District Level Advisory Committee on Power, where the decision is taken. The entire process is lengthy, which slows down the implementation of the electrification schemes. As a result of such delay, the estimated cost escalates for which either the implemen-

tation of the entire scheme becomes impossible or the Government has to place the fund, straining other key areas of town development. A few years back, the problem of coordination with the NBSEB cropped up for the absence of the office of Divisional Engineer in Balurghat. Although the Office of Superintendent of Engineer was in Balurghat, the Office of the Divisional Engineer was in Raiganj, the headquarter of Uttar Dinajpur district. The Assistant Engineer of the Group Supply Advisory Committee did not have direct link with the Superintendent of Engineers. For this, the Assistant Engineer had to receive instructions from the Divisional Engineer, posted in Raiganj. This resulted in a cumbersome process, which invariably delayed the implementation of the schemes. Subsequently, the Office of the Superintendent of Engineers was shifted to Raiganj and Office of the Divisional Engineer was installed in Balurghat.

Other cases regarding the problems of coordination can be referred here. The Municipality was compelled to suspend the bill-payment to the NBSEB in 1987, as the matter of subsidy and rebate on the mercury and fluorescent lamps, entitled to the Municipality remained unresolved for long time. The issue could not be decided at the local level and subsequently was solved by the higher authority after relentless insistence of the District Level Advisory Committee. Furthermore, the proposal from the Municipality regarding the extension of street phase has received no action or reply from the Assistant Engineer of the Group Supply Advisory Committee.

The relation between the Municipality and the WSSSB was embittered, as some issues remained unresolved for a long time. There was a dispute over the post of Chairman of the Group Supply Level Coordination Committee on Power. The matter was referred to the Government by the Municipality for solution.<sup>43</sup> It was reported that a meeting of the Committee was alleged held on 22.4.1994 without informing the Chairman of the Municipality.<sup>44</sup> The problem also cropped up after the installation of the Office of the Divisional Engineer, as his activities were much to the dissatisfaction of the civic authority.<sup>45</sup> Besides, the civic authority alleged that the departmental formalities of the WSSSB, shortage of material and indifference to the need of Balurghat, were responsible for the delay in the implementation of the schemes. Incidentally, the Councillors of Balurghat Municipality led a deputation to the Power Secretary to the State Government on 9.3.1994 through the Divisional Engineer for the timely disposal of the schemes. It was proposed that if the WSSSB was unable to arrange necessary materials, the civic body could arrange if it was allowed to make the purchase. In the deputation, an ultimatum was served on the Divisional Engineer for intensive movement, if the matters were not properly dealt with in time.<sup>46</sup> It was evident that the agencies have been in conflict with each other, inspite of the presence of a Committee to resolve the differences. In fact, inter-agency conflict was more pronounced in their functioning.

The coordination between the Municipality and the

PWD in Balurghat has been hampered, owing to the differences in outlook of the functionaries of both the agencies. There is no inter-agency Committee for coordination between them. Coordination between them is made through the statutory body, like the DPC. As a result, the inter-departmental correspondences and exchange of views have been made bilaterally. But these are occasional, as there is no formal forum for coordination.

The civic authority has requested the Assistant Engineer, PWD, Balurghat, to extend their functions in Balurghat. But, the dependence on the higher authority for approval and fund placement, compelled him to turn down several municipal proposals. In addition to these, distinctive attitude of the officials of both the agencies and reluctance of PWD officials to see their department under the leadership of the Municipality at the local level, has brought distortion in the delivery of services.

The function of creating provision of piped water to the inhabitants of Balurghat, has brought the Municipality and the PWE in interaction with each other. But, the problems of coordination also persist between these two agencies. According to the present arrangement, the PWE is to hand over the responsibility of water-supply to the Municipality after building the infrastructure. The Municipality is supposed to undertake the overall responsibility of piped water-supply from the PWE. In Balurghat, the first phase of water supply scheme has already been implemented by the PWE in the later part of the seventies.<sup>47</sup> Still the Municipality has not taken the charge of water-supply from the PWE. The

State Government has asked the Balurghat Municipality to take charge of the responsibility, but no letter or reasons have yet been formally given for their inability to undertake this responsibility.

So, the problem of coordination between the Municipality and the PHE arises out of reluctance of the Municipality to take charge of water-supply from the PHE. Consequently, the PHE has to bear the burden of water-supply out of their limited departmental fund. The constraints of the civic body are still unknown. If the reasons are financial and administrative, that should be transparent, so that the rate-payers are correctly informed. So, in the absence of coordination between the PHE as the technical agency and the Municipality as the local authority, the impasse seems to continue for indefinite period.

The inter-agency coordination problem between the Municipality and the banks is intensive, for the greater autonomy of the banks in respect of financing the schemes. The municipal allegation against the banks is that the banks often turn down the sponsored cases, forwarded by the 'screening Committee' on the pretext of their non-viability.<sup>48</sup> It was found that as many as 680 cases under the NRY were cleared during 1990-91 in consultation with the banks, but even during the closing months of 1995-1998 financial year, none of the prospective beneficiaries was given any assistance from the banks. Furthermore, the banks were not willing to release the second instalment of the loan. Most of

the sponsored cases have been kept in abeyance. Therefore, the very purpose of the self-employment schemes of government has been defeated.<sup>49</sup> They were interested in those cases where the repayment is assured, to reduce the amount of 'bad debt'. One such case of refusal was found in a communique from the Gour Gramin Bank, in which the bank turned down the proposal of the civic body for fresh loan under the 'Special Component Plan', as the Municipality had failed to pay attention for the recovery of earlier loans. The manager of the Gour Gramin Bank, Balurghat, expressed inability to consider the proposal.<sup>51</sup> In the case of coordination between the civic body and the banks, differences in outlook and institutional interest, <sup>→ stood</sup> in the way of concerted effort for the economic upliftment of the needy people. 50

#### Results of the field survey

The issue relating to the problem of inter-agency coordination is taken up for enquiry in order to study the resultant situation and consequences arising out of the interaction among the agencies. This is a problem of the agencies which unlike the rate-payers perceptible to the members of the sixth and seventh elected Board (separately presented),functionaries of the government agencies and political leaders. On the issue of inter-agency coordination, most of the respondents from the category of members of the Board, functionaries of government agencies and political leaders view that disorder persists in the delivery of services due to the problem of coordination, as shown in Table 3.3.

Table - 3.3

Perception of the members of the Board, Officials of government agencies and political leaders in respect of coordination among the agencies.

Categories of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Partial Coordination	Absence of Coordination	No Reply	Donot know
Members of the sixth elected Board	15	12 (80)	1 (6.7)	2 (13.3)	N=15 P=100
Members of the seventh elected Board	21	17 (80.9)	1 (4.8)	3 (14.3)	N=21 P=100
Officials of government agencies	8	8	-	-	N=8 P=100
Political Leaders	10	7 (70)	-	3 (30)	N=10 P=100

Figures in parentheses show the percentage

*members of*

In the view of 80 per cent of the sixth elected Board and 80.9 per cent of the seventh elected Board, coordination among the agencies is partial and also all the officials of government agencies view coordination among the agencies is not optimum. Most of the political leaders i.e. 70 per cent of them find coordination at the partial level. Most of the respondents are more or less aware of the problem, but it is disappointing to see that some of

the members of the Board and political leaders are not abreast of the events and not aware of the issues, relating to coordination. However, the overall impression gathered is that coordination is not adequate. It requires a thorough overhauling of the machinery in order to bring harmony and coordination in the functioning of the agencies.

It appears that the problem of coordination is perceptible to members of the Board, government officials and political leaders. But as the causes of the problem are exclusively embedded in the inter-organisational relationship, they are perceptible only to the members of the Board and officials of the government. Here in understanding the causes, differentials in respect of formal education, and political affiliation of the elected members of the Board have been considered important to unfold the impediments to coordination.

Perception of the members of the sixth elected Board of Balurghat Municipality, when is analysed in terms of their educational background shows that they have accused the officials of the government agencies for their ineptitude and negligence to the problems of Balurghat. According to them the attitude of the government officials should be changed for better coordination among the participating agencies.

Table - 3.4

Perception of the members of the sixth elected Board, arranged according to their level of formal education in respect of the causes for the absence of coordination.

Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Separate Rules & Procedure	Indifference of the government Officials	No Reply	Do not know	
Illiterate	-	-	-	-	-	N=0 P=0
Primary	1	-	-	-	1	N=1 P=100
Secondary	4	-	3 (75)	-	1	N=4 (25)P=100
Graduate and above	10	4 (40)	6 (60)	-	-	N=10 P=100

Figures in parentheses show percentage

The data shown in the Table 3.4 <sup>reveal</sup> that greater emphasis is laid upon the indifferent attitude of the government officials. Further the perception of members of the sixth Board is studied in terms of their political affiliations, in Table 3.5.

Table - 3.5

Perception of the members of sixth elected Board, arranged according to their political affiliations in respect of the causes for the absence of coordination

Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Separate Rules & procedure	Indifference of the government Officials	No Reply know	Do not know
Members of the RSP	10		9 (90)		1 N=10 (10) P=100
Members of the CPI(M)	3	3 (100)	-		- N=3 P=100
Members of the INC	2	1 (50)	-		1 N=2 (50) P=100

Figures in parentheses show percentage

Therefore, most of the members of the sixth elected Board, belonging to higher level of education and affiliated to the RSP insist on the indifferent attitude of the government officials. Only a few of them find separate rules and procedure as the hindrance to coordination.

Perception of the members of the seventh elected Board has also been studied in respect of understanding the causes, acting as the impediment to coordination.

Table - 3.6

Perception of the members of the seventh elected Board, arranged according to their level of formal education in respect of the impediments to coordination.

Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Separate Rules & Procedure	Indifference of the government officials	No Reply	Do not know	
Illiterate	-	-	-	-	-	N=0 P=0
Primary	2				2 (100)	N=2 P=100
Secondary	7	2 (28.6)	4 (57.1)	-	1 (14.3)	N=7 P=100
Graduated & above	12	3 (25)	9 (75)	-	-	N=12 P=100

Figures in parentheses show percentage.

Here also in the perception of the members, the problems relating to coordination arise from the indifferent attitude of the government officials. Members with poor educational background are not conversant with the causes that impede the growth of optimum coordination among the agencies. Their perception has also been examined in terms of their political affiliations.

Table - 3.7

Perception of the members of the seventh elected Board, arranged according to their political affiliations relating to the impediments to coordination.

Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Separate Rules & Procedure	Indifference of the government Officials	No Reply	Do not know	
Members of the RSP	14		13 (92.9)		1 (7.1)	N=14 P=100
Members of the CPI(M)	1	1 (100)				N=1 P=100
Members of the INC	6	4 (66.7)			2 (33.3)	N=6 P=100

Figures in parentheses show percentage

The figures explicitly show that the indifferent attitude of the government officials is responsible for the absence of coordination. Elected functionaries are of the view that the government officials, in spite of the separate departmental rules are able to extend proper assistance, if they are not intent upon rigidly following the departmental rules. But this view of the members of the Board has been refuted by the Officials, when they view about the causes of the problem from their standpoint.

Table - 3.8

Perception of the government Officials in respect of causes for the Problem of coordination

Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Separate Rules & Procedure	Indifference of the government Officials	No Reply	Do not know	
Officials of the P.W.D.	2	2 (100)	-	-	-	N=2 P=100
Officials of the P.H.E.	2	2 (100)	-	-	-	N=2 P=100
Officials of the W.B.S.E.B	2	2 (100)	-	-	-	N=2 P=100
Officials of the Banks	2	2 (100)	-	-	-	N=2 P=100

Figures in parentheses show the percentage

So, the officials of other agencies have explicitly denounced the views of the members of the Board. They view that the civic authority always blames them for the disorderliness in the delivery of services, without adequate comprehension of the constraints of the government agencies. However, it transpires from the enquiry that the respondents of all categories feel for a better mechanism of coordination in order to remove the hindrances. Considering the gravity of the problem they view that until an effective mechanism is devised, the problem will persist in future. On this issue, the perceptions of the members of the sixth and seventh

elected Board, officials of the government agencies and political leaders have been presented in the following Table, without differentiating them in terms of education, age, income and political affiliation.

Table - 3.9

Perception of the members of the Board, officials of government agencies and political leaders in respect of mechanism of coordination

Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Inter-departmental Coordination Committee	Town Level Coordination Committee	District level Coordination Committee	No Reply	Do not know
Members of the sixth Board	15	-	100	-	-	- N=5 P=100
Members of the seventh Board	21	-	100	-	-	- N=21 P=100
Officials of other agencies	8	-	-	100	-	- N=8 P=100
Political leaders	10	-	100	-	-	- N=10 P=100

Figures in the parentheses show percentage

Difference in the outlook of the respondents stem from their respective standpoints. In the view of the members of the Board neither the 'inter-departmental Committee' nor 'district level Committee' would be the effective mechanism of coordination, because in the 'Coordination Committee' at the bilateral level, all the function - sharing agencies would not find their place and in the 'district level Committee', the entire thing would go beyond the purview of the civic authority. Hence, all the members of the Board, have preferred the formation of a 'town level Committee' for greater assertion of municipal authority. Political leader - respondents also, like the members of the civic body have been in favour of constituting a 'Committee' at the town level. But the functionaries of the agencies, such as PWD, PHE and BSES have argued that the problem of coordination can best be handled in a 'district level Committee'. Conspicuously, they have insisted on the creation of a committee at the district level to get rid of municipal control.

In the study it is found that in the perception of the members of the Board the problems of coordination persist due to the indifferent attitude of the government functionaries, while the officials of the government agencies point out the separate rules and procedures, followed in their respective departments, as the problem of coordination. It is often argued that the Municipality should be authorised to guide the functions of other agencies in order to remove the distortions in the delivery

of services and be entrusted with leadership role in respect of planning and development of Balurghat. Perceptions of the members of the Board, officials of the government agencies and political leaders provide insight into the prospect of the Municipality to assume a greater role in the planning and development of Balurghat. In the analysis of their perceptions, the differentials of education, age, political affiliation and income have not been taken up because they are found to have little impact on the respondents in respect of this issue. It is needless to analyse their perception in terms of the differentials because the respondents of each category have expressed their views in uniform manner.

absence of coordination affects the rate-payers.

But they like the functionaries of the Board, officials of the government agencies and political leaders do not have adequate comprehension about how this problem can be overcome. Therefore, in the table 3.10 perceptions of the members of the sixth and seventh elected Board, officials of the government agencies and the political leaders have been presented in terms of the differentials stated above, as they are more conversant with the problem due to their day-to-day interaction with each other.

Table - 3.10

Perception of the members of the Board, Officials of the government agencies and political leaders regarding the role of the Municipality in respect of inter-agency coordination and development of Balurghat.

Category of Respondents	No. of Respondents	Municipal leader-ship for inter-agency coordination and urban development.	Municipal leader-ship for inter-agency co-ordination and urban develop-ment.	No Reply	Do not know	
Members of the sixth elected Board.	15	15 (100)	-	-	-	N=15 P=100
Members of the seventh elected Board	21	21 (100)	-	-	-	N=21 P=100
Official of government agencies	8	-	8 (100)	-	-	N=8 P=100
Political leaders	10	-	-	-	-	N=10 P=100

Figures in parentheses show the percentage

It is explicitly clear from the perception of the respondents that all of them have responded in the same manner. There is no intra-group variation and all the members of both the

✓ sixth and seventh elected Board have expressed that the Municipality is the foremost agency for urban development and should be given the overall charge for inter-agency coordination and planning for the development of Balurghat. In course of discussion, they have expressed their view that the DPC has not been able to pay attention to the basic civic problems of the town. So, when the civic body has to bear the whole responsibility of development, ✓ it should be given necessary powers and fund, otherwise dichotomy and disorderliness is likely to prevail in the delivery of services. The political leaders have also offered suggestions along the same line. But the government officials have expressed their views against municipal leadership, as they have failed to perceive how to follow the guidelines, plans and programmes of the Municipality, when they have to strictly follow their departmental rules and procedures.

So, these are the practical problems, which have been perceived by the respondents of each category from their own points of view. The respondents have preferred to stick to their own standpoints. So, the entire machinery is ridden with dichotomy. ✓ Clear-cut policy to remove the impediments is overdue, as a result of which the agencies have been functioning without proper understanding of the need for a concerted effort. From the perception of the respondents of each of the categories, it is found that they are yet to overcome their narrow departmental and

organisational outlook. Unless the functionaries train their mind to work together and certain rules are framed to remove the constraints, little change will take place.

### E. Concluding Observations

The study reveals that although urban development has been a part of development planning in India, proper care has not been taken for the improvement of the organisational set-up. Organisation development has seldom drawn the attention of the policy-makers. The ULBs have not only been without proper status, they have been functionally and financially by-passed. Colonial set-up has been kept for a long time and when it has begun to be replaced, the evolving machinery also, has failed to respond to the necessities. In the new framework, no specific arrangement has been made to overcome the problem of coordination. Moreover, in the new set-up of districtwise decentralised governance, the ULBs have not been accorded the required status. The result has been the persistence of disorder, in stead of coordination. The DPC has been formed in tune with the constitutional provisions, but this is not likely to produce any improvement because how urban development will take place in the present system is still unknown. So, in the absence of statutory obligation of the agencies to work together, the problem of coordination is likely to persist until it is renovated to make a concerted drive of all the agencies to remove the hindrances to development.

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