

P R E F A C E

In the Third World Countries like India, there has been a new realisation that development can not be achieved if the focus of development is not shifted from modernization and industrialisation to the balanced development of all regions. The past two decades have seen a radical shift to a people - oriented development programmes for ensuring equitable distribution of resources and fulfilment of the basic needs of the poor. At the level of national policy-making, it has been considered that rural and urban development should be linked with each other to enable the urban centres and the rural areas to move together for balanced development. Urban development has also been conceived as the integral part of the overall development process. The National Commission On Urbanisation (1988) has particularly been eloquent on the complementarity between urban and rural development is not less difficult than the challenge of rural development. But the administrative machinery which is the engine of growth has its infirmities and weaknesses in trying to respond to the challenge of urban development. Almost the whole administrative machinery has been unable to activate itself to cope with the present thrust of integrated development. Against this backdrop, the present study seeks to find out the problems of development in the small and medium towns and to explore how the administrative machinery has tried to tackle the problems for

their healthy growth. (In this micro-level study, carried out in the medium size border city like Balurghat, which is in the northern part of the state of West Bengal, and attempt has been made to explore the working of the machinery and its constraints that stem from the milieu of urban development. It is expected that the results of such investigation and the findings of the study would highlight the critical issues of urban development and generate scholarly interest and offer valuable inputs in respect of policy-making for urban development in future.) The relevance and significance of the study in the context of the present problems of urban development can not be denied.

The study has been divided into eight broad Chapters each of which consists of several sections and sub-sections. Chapter-1 deals with the theoretical framework, objectives of the study, research questions and overview of literature. This chapter also includes the research design, universe of the study, content of the questionnaire, and collection and analysis of data. Chapter-2 delineates the locale and significance of the study. The Chapter also includes the growth, socio-economic profile, and political developments in Balurghat. In Chapter-3, there is an analysis of the role of different agencies, the mode of their interaction and the problems of coordination. Chapter-4 deals with the study of Municipality as organisation, structure and functions of the Municipality and the problems of Balurghat. Chapter-5 makes a study on the performance of the Municipality in the field of

financial and personnel management. Chapter-6 focusses on the state-municipal relation in the case of Balurghat. Chapter-7 analyses the politics of urban development in Balurghat. It studies the horizontal and vertical linkage of politics with the functioning of the civic body. Chapter-8 offers a summary of the findings, makes concluding observations and offers suggestions for improvements in future.

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