Urban Local Self Government in India: An Analysis of Old Malda Municipality in the District of Malda

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INTRODUCTION

Urbanization is a worldwide phenomenon and urban population is increasing at a faster rate than the average rate of growth of nation. It is an ongoing process. Although India is not a highly urbanized country there has been a rapid growth of towns and cities during the last 50 years. Consequently the urban population of the Old Malda Municipality has also increased 4885 in 1961 to 84012 in 2011.

Democracy as we enjoyed in the society has been divided into two broad categories; (i) direct democracy and (ii) indirect democracy. In a country like India we are enjoying the indirect form of democracy i.e. through the people’s representative we rule ourselves. Inspite of all these principles we could able to rule ourselves directly through local government operates at the lowest level of society. These local governments are also divided into two categories, first one is urban and another one is rural local government. It works at the grass-root level close to the people touching their everyday life. No other government whether state or national, is as near the people as this.

Seventy Fourth Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992:

This amendment introduces a new part IX-A in the constitution relating to Municipalities. It contains provisions from Article 243-P to Article 247-ZG. In addition, the act has also added a new Twelfth schedule to the constitution this schedule contains eighteen functional items of municipalities, THE CONSTITUTION (SEVENTY-FOURTH AMENDMENT) ACT, 1992, [20th April, 1993.]

"TWELFTH SCHEDULE":

Article 243W of the Indian Constitution say about;
1. Urban planning including town planning,
2. Regulation of land-use and construction of buildings,
3. Planning for economic and social development,
4. Roads and bridges,
5. Water supply for domestic, industrial and commercial purposes,
6. Public health, sanitation conservancy and solid waste management,
7. Fire services,
8. Urban forestry, protection of the environment and promotion of ecological aspects,
9. Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded,
10. Slum improvement and upgradation,
11. Urban poverty alleviation etc.

The committees and commissions appointed by the central government to improve the functioning of urban local governments are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Name of the committee/commission</th>
<th>Chairman</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>1949-51</td>
<td>Local Finance Enquiry Committee</td>
<td>P.K. Watlal</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>Taxation Enquiry Commission</td>
<td>John Mathai</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>1963-65</td>
<td>Committee on the Training of Municipal Employees</td>
<td>Nur-Ud-din Ahmed</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>1963-66</td>
<td>Rural-Urban Relationship Committee</td>
<td>A.P. Jain</td>
</tr>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Committee of Ministers on Augmentation of Financial Resources of Urban Local Bodies</td>
<td>Rafiq Zakaria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>1965-68</td>
<td>Committee On Service Conditions of Municipal Employees</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Committee on Budgetary Reform in Municipal Administration</td>
<td>Girijapat Mukharji</td>
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Problems and Prospect of Urban Local Self Government in Old Malda Municipality:

Because of modernisation and economic liberalisation, the industries and transport systems grow rather out of proportion. These developments are primarily responsible for pollution of environment, particularly the urban environment. The important problems associated with urbanization are:

1. Pollution in Urban areas
2. Excessive Population
3. Problems related to Settlement
4. Lack of Employment opportunities
5. Increasing Slums and related problems

Out of these problems only three major problems in this area are highlighted:

I. Supply of Drinking Water:

This is one of the most essential elements of nature to sustain life and right from the beginning of urban civilisation, sites for settlements have always been chosen keeping in view the availability of water to the inhabitants of the settlement. However, supply of water started falling short of demand as the cities grew in size and number.
III. Communication and Transport Related problems:

High population leads to traffic congestion and almost all cities of India are suffering from acute form of communication and transport problem. Transport problems increase and become more complex as the town grows in size. With its growth, the town performs varied and complex functions and more people travel to work or shop. When the cities becomes extended, even people living within the built-up area have to travel by car or bus to cross the town and outsiders naturally bring their cars or travel by public transport. As trade is important, commercial vehicles such as vans and trucks will make problem of traffic more complicated.

Source: Uttar Banga Sambad (Bengali Daily Newspaper), Dated: 06.07.2017 & 12.06.2017 & 23.06.2017

ANALYSIS OF THE FOCAL THEME OF STUDY

The Old Malda Municipality was established in the year 1869 with an area 3.24 sq.km. At present the municipality comprised total area 9.58 sq.km due to addition of further 6.34 sq.km areas by the government in the year 1995.

Old Malda is located at 25o 02. N 88o 08.E. As of 2011 India census the population of Old Malda was 84012. Among this most of the people are Hindu some Muslim, Sikh, Christian people live here.

Establishment of the Municipality Malda or Old Malda with the adjoining villages thirty one in all, was formed into a Choukidari Union under Act XX of 1856. It was brought under the District towns act of 1868. Comprising 31 villages the area was little over one & half square miles.

Description of the Old Malda Town

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ward No-I Comprising Mouja</th>
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| Ward No-II Comprising Mouja |
The Municipality establishment at the beginning in the year 1869 consisted with one clerk, a tax collector, a Dafadar, a Vaccinator but the present municipal body is consisted with 79 staff member headed by chief executive officer. (Administrative Report)

Developmental Projects undertaken by Old Malda Municipality:

For the development of Old Malda Municipality various state government and central government project and scheme are continue in this urban local body such as water supply project, IHSDP, Housing for Urban Poor, CBPHCS, SJSRY, ICF, NFBS, Mid Day Meal, JSY, SSK, and various department of Old Malda Municipality has undertake these schemes and project for the upliftment of the Old Malda Municipality.

As far as the developmental works in the Old Malda Municipality is concerned, few developmental programmes are highlighted below:

Road Construction:

![Road Construction Image]

Sanitation:

There are four number of pay and use toilet in the area of old Malda municipality that are set up in Molpur, Vivekananda more, pushupati more, Mangalbari More.

Development for slum area:

There are eighteen slum area of this urban local body for the development of those slum area, the Old Malda municipality has made concrete pavement, community centre, livelihood centre, electric informal market for the welfare of these slum area.

Banking facilities:

In this municipality there are Four (04) National Banks like State bank of India (02nos.) Mangalbari Branch and Bachamari Branch, United Bank of India (01no.) and one Cooperative Bank situated at Mangalbari under Old Malda Municipality.
**Education:**

To provide quality education the Old Malda Municipality has taken a lot of steps for civilization. There are 53 primary school, 6 middle schools, 5 secondary schools, 3 senior secondary schools, and 1 college in this municipal area. (Ref. District Census Handbook, 2011).

Considering the information it is revealed that a cyclonic wave of education was stretched throughout the municipal area to make the people literate.

**SPECIAL CLEANLINESS DRIVE**

Receiving the message from health department government of West Bengal the Old Malda Municipality immediately has taken special cleanliness drive and the following precaution has been taken up to tackle the situation.

- a) For public awareness hoarding, flex, wall posturing, leaflets have been arranged by the ULB. The health workers conservancy supervisors have played a vital role. They went door to door campaign.
- b) Publicity over microphone also has been done.
- c) Heap of garbage’s have been removed from all wards.
- d) Road, drains, Choked drains are made clear.
- e) Fog machine, spray machines are being used till today regularly specially in the afternoon.
- f) Bleaching amalgamated with lime is being spread out throughout the area as well as market, bus stands, Public urinals, ditches, etc.

In this connection the Old Malda Municipality have arranged a rally throughout the municipal area with placards and banners to make people concern about the dreadful disease.

This urban local body has decided to continue the cleanliness drive in each ward regularly to keep the people healthy.

**FINDINGS**

It is the workforce which make an administration to run smoothly without well-trained and qualified workers no organisation can achieve its goal. This is true in case of municipal administration also. The major findings of the research show that:

1. The necessity of a dynamic Chief Executive in the Urban Local Governments to perform the regular administrative measures smoothly.
2. The working atmosphere of the urban government should be congenial by making employer-employee relationship after taking an advantageous relationship like formal and informal.
3. Need proper training of the personnel of the urban local bodies.
4. Unnecessary political interference may create an untoward situation which is not expected in the development of the urban local bodies.
5. Lack of promotional avenues and incentives of the personnel and other employees leads to demoralize the administrative efficiency among them.
6. Local representative after winning the votes are always ready to away from the people not in close contact with them as expected.
7. Reevaluation of property for the purpose of assessment of house tax which is not done regularly.
8. Recruitment in regular interval is not taken by which a huge backlog of unemployment problem arises among the urban young generations.
9. Decentralization of power is not practically applied.
10. Excess state monitoring and interference among the local bodies are held etc.

SUGGESTIONS

There are a lot of problems and serious deficiencies in the administration, accounting and budgeting practices which are followed and practised by the urban local bodies in India as well as Old Malda Municipalities. To avoid all those hurdles and to improve the developmental projects the following suggestions may be considered into account:

1. Peoples' participation is essential for successful completion of projects involving infrastructure and services. The following areas are suitable for involving the local community:
   a) Water and sewerage sector
   b) Sanitation/solid waste management
   c) Urban poverty alleviation
   d) Slum development
   e) Environmental conservation
   f) Pollution Control

2. Urban planning including Town Planning should be implemented in a proper manner that the institution like District Planning Committee under Article 243 ZD becomes successful.

3. Coordination between the Municipal Committees with various departments is quiet expected for the smooth running of the urban administration.

4. Managing local municipal affairs including preparation and execution of urban infrastructure projects necessary to maintain a minimum level of quality of life in rapidly growing urban centres in India.

5. The situation calls for innovative strategic measures for the development of sound urban infrastructure and efficient delivery of civic services through capacity building of urban local bodies and enhancing the administrative and managerial skills of electing the representatives by disseminating enough information on provisions related to power, authority, duties and responsibilities delegated to them.

6. Privatization of municipal services is a viable option to off-load the functional burden of the municipalities and bring efficiency to municipal management.

7. There should be no place for political populism.

8. Broad contours of reforms in tax and non-tax sources are necessary for the generation of additional resources and also direct and indirect cost recovery. The municipalities should improve buoyancy of the existing taxes and draw on alternative avenues of resource mobilization to finance urban infrastructure.

9. Rapid growth of slums is a matter of grave concern and serious efforts are required to address this problem. Alleviation of urban poverty also requires intensive efforts.

10. The elected representatives are close to the problems of the people and can, therefore, effectively mitigate their hardships. They have the onerous duty to affect economy, reduce wasteful expenditure and eliminate inefficiency.

It is also hoped that the Urban Local Self government of the State as well as the Government of India will consider these suggestions and will be able to bring about the desired changes not only in Old Malda Municipality but also in other municipalities of the State of West Bengal and the country as a whole.

REFERENCES

[7] www.omm.org.in