

Good City Governance in India:

Research Article

A CASE STUDY OF MUNICIPAL COUNCIL SIRSA OF HARYANA PROVINCE

SIWACH RAJ KUMAR | NILLAM N.

Abstract

Good governance is identified as imperative for enhancing the performance of Municipal councils in India. This is against the backdrop of mounting service delivery challenges confronting these Municipalities especially in the Haryana province. Using a case-study design, the study assesses performance in the context of basic elements of participative governance,

transparency and accountability. The article contributes to growing literature on public sector issues in the discipline.

Keywords: Municipal Council, Good Governance, Participative Governance, Transparency, Accountability, Sirsa, Haryana Province, India.

Introduction

Every urbanized society imperatively needs good governance to cater for the essential needs of citizens. For a long time, the citizens have been clamouring for Good City Governance, which as a matter of fact, is not a new concept. The continuity of Indian urban history was broken shortly after 2000 BC as the country was developed from primarily an agricultural to an industrial economy; large scale migration of rural residents to towns and cities took place. In brief, the cities developed as centres of trade and commerce where the facilities of transportation and water were in abundance. This necessitated the regulation and control of commercial and economic activities which sowed the seeds of good city governance.

Meaning and indicators of Good City Governance

The concept of good city governance finds place in the literature of Public Administration under the tag of urban local government. An analysis of the meaning of urban local government reveals that it is an integral part of national government created for the management of local affairs of human settlement with geographic boundaries. For convenience and purpose of study, the good city governance is a system of urban governance practiced in urban areas that aims to accomplish efficient and economical urban services, wider participation of the citizen and devolution of the funds, functions, functionaries and powers to local level government so that the urbanites can attain their entitlements promptly, effectively and equitably. The following indicators of good city governance are applied in the study to ascertain the degree of goodness.

- (i) Participation of the people in urban local governance affairs;
- (ii) Rule of law and public order;
- (iii) Openness and Transparency;
- (iv) Decentralization of powers;
- (v) Level of awareness among the citizens.

In this context, it would be appropriate to know the salient features of urban local governance in India. These are as enumerated on the next page:

Salient features of Urban Local Government in India

The Constitution (Seventy-fourth amendment) Act, 1992 governs the structure, working, powers and jurisdiction of urban local government in India. Its perusal reveals the following features:

- By this Act, three tiered structure of municipalities is constituted in every state. This includes Nagar Panchayat/Municipality for areas which are neither purely rural, nor urbanized, Municipal Council for a smaller urban area and Municipal Corporation for larger urban areas.
- Each urban local body is entrusted to prepare plan for economic development and social justice and implementation of 19 schemes and initiatives incorporated in twelfth schedule of the constitution. The Schedule includes urban planning, roads, bridges, public health, urban forestry, safeguarding the interests of weaker sections and urban poverty alleviation, *etc.*
- Constitution of District Planning Committee and Metropolitan Planning Committee.
- Constitution of Finance Commission for making the recommendations to govern the principles of determining taxes, duties, fees and grants in aid between states and municipalities.
- For superintendence, direction and control of the preparation of electoral rolls and the conduct of elections, there is a provision for State Election Commission.

Review of Literature

To understand the research problem deeply and extensively the available and accessible literature was reviewed. The problems of urban local government and administration have gradually received increasing attention of scholars showing considerable interest in this field of research.

The Role of Government

According to Hugh (1954), certain trends of government policy have pointed out towards increasingly centralization of powers and would not be surprising to see a considerable transfer to power from local bodies to district official under ministerial control. On another angle, Hsueh (1969) refers to the concepts of welfare state in which the functions of the state have multiplied rapidly.

As the state tends to go beyond welfare of the common people, the nature of many of its new functions and programmes seem to call for decentralisation of power to local government. This is in line with Srivastava (1980) view on municipal government and administration and its relation with the state in which the problems arising from the relationship between Municipal and State governments are analyzed. Herein, the attitude of the state government has changed from that of the superior to one of a partner, the Municipal bodies can provide a more efficient democratic and human atmosphere for local inhabitants. So there is an urgent need to change the role of municipal government and administration for the welfare of the people. In the same vein, Kaushik (1986) examined, in detail, the quality of leadership in urban government in India.

The roles of leaders in urban administration are highlighted, and suggestions offered regarding the need for an urgent change in the role of local leaders. In line with these views, Bhattacharya (1969) points out the position of state directorate of municipal administration. It is stated that the state directorates have not enough power for their work. They have relied upon their seniors and state government. It is further observed that if municipal institutions have to change from restriction to facilitation they have to work well for the welfare of the people. Against this backdrop, Singh (1999) points out the socio-economic growth difference between the urban governance in North and Eastern Region of India. The author felt that a lot of work has been done in the field of rural management but no attempt has been made so far to present a comparative picture of urban governance in the scheduled areas which have been given a special status in the Indian constitution.

Citizens' Participation

In lieu of this, Arora (2001) has made an attempt to explain the importance of people centred-governance. This is focused on the rationale, strategies, actors and consequences of people-centred governance. Many more dimensions of people-centred policy and administrative system are highlighted. Suggestions on how to revamp the governance system in order to make it more people oriented and responsive to citizens' need are offered. In similar vein, Singh (2002) has analyzed the performance of urban administration in India since independence. Herein, it is showed that with the dawn of liberalization, the significance of urban infrastructure was urgently felt by the state government keeping in view all the relevant aspects having bearing on developmental schemes. The structure of local boding was revitalized and strengthened by the Amendment Act of Parliament.

According to Parashar (2003) the history and problems of municipal administration in India relates to non-inclusion of the people. It is believed that municipal institutions be described as town, city or borough or other local government bodies. Though the concept of city, civic, and local self government is very old and also mentioned in ancient Greek, Roman, Persian, Chinese and Indian annals; the whole essence should denote citizens-oriented governance. On the other hand Chopra (2004) has discussed about local-self government and Municipal administration. Citizens' participation is highlighted on the working of local-self government in the form of municipalities and district councils which have been working since long time in India. It further highlights the functioning and the problems of local-self-government and municipal administration. This, also, is in line with Dhaliwal (2004) views on the theoretical and practical aspects of the municipal administration, along with duties of the municipal employees and function of the municipal councillors. It is noted that various problems are being faced by the urban local bodies. The problems which are being faced by the employees from bureaucracy, politicians and citizens are analyzed. Certain measures to help the municipal employees in giving a better administration and results and relating with the people were offered. This is also in line with Chahar (2005) views on governance at grassroots levels. It is noted that these institutions are most viable and suitable mechanism of realizing the desired goals of a parliamentary democracy, but suffers from many flaws

like lack of political will, inadequate and well trained and dedicated staff at the local level and citizens' participation.

Rao (2006) has discussed urban governments and managements. Herein, it is emphasized that cities are the engines of development. Today, Indian cities are at the crossroads of change. In a couple of decades from now, half of India is going to tackle the issues of human settlement in urban areas of India, which has certainly improved. In similar vein, Kamleshwer (2007) highlights on the need of governance reforms in the context. It is viewed that better quality of governance would promote development at grassroots level through citizens' participation, but this is not happening. It is therefore suggested that there is an urgent need to introduce governance reforms.

Globalization will be helpful for governance reforms and development in India. Nath (2007) pointed out about urbanization, urban development and metropolitan cities in India. The author stressed on the roots of the patterns of urbanization as well as the urban geometry of many of India's majors cities which can be traced back to the British colonial period. It is maintained that developing suitable strategies for management of rapid urban growth constitutes a major challenge for development planners and policy makers. Such strategies must meet the need for gainful employment, housing and essential services of the rapidly increasing urban population at acceptable economic and social costs. In similar context, Arora and Khandelwal (2008) examine, in detail, the initiatives and impact of good governance since 1992. Ever since the World Bank popularized the concept of good governance in 1992, there has been a proliferation of literature on this crucial theme. The issues of governmental legitimacy, responsibility, efficiency, transparency, accountability, justice, equity, and citizens' participation have been logically examined at the conceptual level and applied at various levels of state, national and cross- national contexts.

Palanithurai (2009) also highlights the decentralization process in India. The author spells out the existing conditions and problems associated with the democratization and decentralization process. He highlights the necessary changes to be introduced in the administrative system at the grassroots to enable the decentralization to work. This work raises concern about the inclusion of vulnerable and marginalized sections in the process of governance and development. Ghuman and Mehta (2010) in similar vein have

emphasized about privatization of service by urban local government in India. It is also pointed out that urban local bodies in India have been finding it difficult to provide quality public services to their citizens in the light of resource constraints and rapidly growing urban population. A number of Urban Local Bodies have invited private capital to civil local services, which has raised a host of issues that need attention of policy makers.

In a related development, Ravindra (2010) in his article critically analyzed the performance of city governance in India. This is identified in the context of performance and getting inputs from the grassroots. The Mayor, who happens to be the first citizen of the city, has neither the time nor the powers to steer the city affairs. The question therefore arises as to who governs our cities?

After having reviewed relevant literatures, the following inferences were drawn:

- The structure and functioning of municipal administration in India have not been sound, strong, and resonating because of inadequate and sufficient powers and resources.
- Poor fiscal base and lack of financial support from union and state government to municipal administrations have been major problems in urban development.
- State governments are not keenly interested to empower the municipal institutions of India.
- Centralized planning and bureaucratic dominance have severely constrained urban development through municipal institutions.
- Inadequate devolution of powers and finances, lack of own staff and excessive bureaucratic control have hindered the growth and functioning of the municipal institutions.
- Excessive political interference does not allow the Municipal institutions to function independently.
- Municipal institutions are working as the agents of union and state governments, not as autonomous bodies of local governance and urban development.

- Process of devolution of powers to municipal institutions is imbalanced by less authority and more responsibility.
- As per the XII Schedule of the Indian Constitution, 18 subjects may be transferred to municipal administration (urban government), but in reality only a few of them have been transferred, which are neither substantial nor meaningful.
- Target of urban development has not been achieved due to apathy on the part of local level bureaucracy and lack of power and resources on the part of municipal institutions.
- Implementation of urban development has been less effective.
- Role of the women and weaker sections of the society in municipal institutions have not been noticed effectively and concrete due to patriarchal and orthodox belief system.

These issues emanating from reviewed literature reveal that to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice, a micro level study is needed. This has helped in identifying principles and components of good governance at developing the city of Haryana. This shall also act as a moderate attempt to demystify the working of urban local government in Sirsa.

Objectives of the Study

Good city governance is essential for the development and democracy in India because it is the level where people experience the importance of local governance. For this purpose, the present study was conducted in Sirsa district of Haryana, a northern Indian province. The main objectives of the study were:

- (i) To study the administrative set-up of urban local governance in Haryana in the light of 74th constitutional Amendment Act 1992.
- (ii) To assess the evolution of Urban Local Government in India in general and in Haryana, in particular.

- (iii) To assess the working of Municipal Council, Sirsa in the light of citizens entitlements.
- (iv) To evaluate peoples' participation in city governance.
- (v) To examine awareness level of the officials belonging to line department of city governance and citizens.
- (vi) To suggests some realistic and practical solutions enabling the local government to work as a unit of good city governance.

Hypotheses of the study

The followings were hypotheses of the study:

- a) The participation of the citizens in the affairs of the municipal council Sirsa was below average.
- b) It seemed that the elected municipal councillors and citizens do not strictly comply with the directions and orders issued by the Government of Haryana.
- c) There seemed lack of transparency in the working of the Municipal Council Sirsa.
- d) The government of Haryana was reluctant to delegate executive powers and functions to the Municipal Council Sirsa.
- e) The women were not keenly interested in the civic affairs of the city governance in Sirsa.
- f) The government officials showed lackadaisical attitude towards city governance in Sirsa.

Research Methodology

All municipal corporations (09), Municipal Councils (14) and Municipal Committees (54) of Haryana constitute the census or universe, out of which the Municipal Council Sirsa is selected as sample. This study used "*purposive sampling of Non probability sampling.*"

This sample of *M.C. Sirsa* was selected by the researcher because it is representative of universe. The Directory maintained by M.C. Sirsa office which is the sampling frame of the study revealed that there are 31 elected municipal councillors representing all 31 municipal wards.

As per the judgment of the researchers, 10 elected municipal councillors were selected representing women, SC and BC (Backward Castes) councillors. As the officials of M.C. Sirsa play a vital role in realizing good city governance, so 15 key officials were selected for the study. Beside M.C. Sirsa officials, other line departments play a paramount role in implementing urban development policies and programmes. By using judgmental sampling the researcher finds that four line departments namely H.U.D.A. (Haryana Urban Development Authority), DHBVN (Daskhin Haryana Bijli Viduyt Nigam), PWD (Public Health), PWD (Building & Road) need to be investigated as per the objectives of the study. Thus, 5 officials representing each line department, which are counted 20, have been selected as respondents. There are 31 wards in M.C. Sirsa; so, using judgmental sampling, 5 citizens from each ward which comprise 155 citizens, have been selected for the study. A sample of 200 respondents in total has, therefore, been selected as sample size.

This study is conducted in urban area, so structured formal interview is considered as an effective research tool to elicit views from the selected respondents. To make the study more reliable and valid, the non participant observation as an important technique of data collection was used by the researcher to watch and note the behaviour of the respondents at the time of field visit. A pilot study was also conducted to rectify the errors in research tools.

Limitations of the Study

The present study was conducted in the Sirsa district of Haryana State. In Haryana there are 9 Municipal Corporations, 14 Municipal Councils and 54 Committees or Nagar Palikas. The present study dealt with Municipal Council only. So, the Municipal Corporation is beyond the scope of this study. The development is a wide concept; so in this study only administrative implications and issues of development relevant to the study were addressed.

There are many organizations concerned with urban development, but the study selected only four organizations which dealt with urban development. Some of the respondents were semi-literate who used their memory base to give information, which

to some extent, conditioned the validity of the data. There may, therefore, be some errors of sampling and statistical analysis.

Analysis, Interpretation and Discussion of Results

After collecting the relevant data and information from various sources, the task of data analysis arises. The study was conducted in Sirsa district and researcher, for this purpose, collected the data. As we know that interpretation is a very useful and important part of the study, because without proper interpretation the collected data cannot become socially useful. In explicit fact, interpretation actually serves two-fold purposes. Firstly, it finds understanding of the general factor that seems to explain what has been observed in the course of the study and secondly, it provides a theoretical framework about the concept which can serve and provide guidelines for further research. (Bhandarker & Wilkinson, 2010)

In view of these objectives of the study, the opinion of 200 respondents were analyzed and discussed.

TABLE 1: Sample of the Study

S/N	Respondents Category	No. of Respondents
1	Councillors of elected M.C. Sirsa	10
2	Official Staff of M.C. (Sirsa)	15
3	Huda	5
4	P.W.D. (B.R.)	5
5	PWD (PH)	5
6	DHBVN	5
7	Citizens	155
8	Total	(200)

The researcher with the help of semi-structured interview tool contacted these respondents to elicit their views with regard to research problem and objectives of the present study. The collected data then, was coded, classified and presented in tabular form, so that the findings can be presented. The primary data of the study were analyzed in the following tables.

TABLE 2: Citizens' opinions regarding major problems confronting them in the city

S/N	Which are the major problems?	Number	%
1	Irregular Water Supply	40	25.80
2	Dilapidated Roads	30	19.35
3	Irregular and Poor supply of Electricity	60	38.70
4	Others	25	16.12
	Total	155	100.00

Table 2 shows that 60% citizens responded that they are facing various problems but the main problem faced by them is electricity. As many as 25.80% citizens considered interrupted water supply as a problem whereas 19.35% expressed resentment about roads. Similarly this problem shall become worsened in the coming days of scorching heat of summer. 16.12% answered about other problems. So, it can be concluded that the major problem facing by the citizens is electricity supply.

TABLE 3: Citizens level of satisfaction with the behaviour of the officials/staff

S/N	Are you satisfied with the behaviour of the officials/staff?	Number	%
1	Yes	70	45.17
2	No	85	54.83
3	Total	155	100.00

Table 3 shows that 54.83% citizens answered that they are not satisfied with the behaviour of the officials and staff of the municipal council. However, 45.16% citizens were satisfied. So we can say that the behaviour of the officials/staff towards citizens is not satisfactory. The researcher observed that this state of affairs become visible due to politicization, colonial attitude and passing the buck approach adopted by the officials.

TABLE 4: Citizens' viewpoint about the effectiveness in the working of city governance

S/N	Is the city governance working effectively?	Number	%
1	Yes	35	22.58
2	No	120	77.42
	Total	155	100.00

This study reveals a startling finding about the working of Good City Governance. As per the data shown in this table 120 (77.42%) citizens said that the City Governance is not effective in its working. Only 35 (22.58%) citizens said that the city governance is effective in its working. So it was found that to city governance is not effective in its working.

A broad conclusion was drawn from this study is that the Good City Governance needs an overhaul to improve its working as per the satisfaction of the citizens.

TABLE 5: Citizens' views about representation of women in the city governance

S/N	Are women adequately represented in the city governance?	Number	%
1	Yes	30	19.36
2	No	90	58.06
3	Can't say	35	22.58
	Total	155	100.00

Table 5 shows that 58.06% citizens answered '*NO*' about the representation of women in the city governance. 22.58% citizens answered '*can't say*' and only 19.36% citizens answered '*YES*' about the representation of women in the city governance. The researcher while collecting the data pertaining to the study noted that there is a proxy representation of the women in M.C. because on the paper the women are elected but in reality their husbands/sons/fathers-in-law acted as de facto councillors. It shows that male patriarchy still dominates in the thinking of the people. It violates the letter and spirit of the constitution. So, it can be seen that the representation of the women in the city governance is exceedingly low.

TABLE 6: Citizens' views about transparency in the working of city governance

S/N	Is there transparency in the working of city governance?	Number	%
1	Yes	60	38.70
2	No	24	15.48
3	Do not Know	71	45.82
	Total	155	100.00

As the transparency is the best principle of good city governance, so in this study an attempt was made to know the status of transparency in Sirsa Municipal Council. The data depicted in this table shows that 71(45.80%) citizens do not know about the meaning of transparency. Neither are they aware of RTI (Right to Information) Act 2005. It is pertinent to note that only 60 (38.72%) citizens know the implications of transparency in the working of city governance. Further, 24 (15.48%) citizens answered that there is no transparency in the working of city governance.

TABLE 7: Citizens’ views about participating in the informal meetings of their wards

S/N	Have you participated in the meetings of your respective ward?	Number	%
1	Yes	30	19.35
2	No	125	80.65
	Total	155	100.00

Table 7 show that out of 155 respondents, 125 (80.65%) respondents revealed that they did not participate in such meetings. Only 30 (19.35%) citizens participated in the meetings of their wards. As there is no formal Ward Committee formed in Sirsa so citizens assemble together to discuss the problems of their respective wards. These meetings variably took place between months. We can therefore conclude that the level of participation in the meetings of their wards is very poor.

TABLE 8: Citizens’ response about compliance of government directions by the M.C. Sirsa

S/N	Does the city governance follow the rules and regulations?	Number	%
1	Yes	45	20.04
2	No	110	70.96
	Total	155	100.00

On the question of whether M.C. Sirsa follows the government dictions or not, *Table No. 10* shows that 110 (70.96%) citizens responded that city governance does not follows the rules and regulations of the state government, whereas 45 (20.04%) citizens

said that the city governance follows the rules and regulations. So it can be concluded that city governance is not mainly committed to following the rules and regulations.

TABLE 9: Officials' views about the general problems faced by citizens in the city

S/N	What are the major problems?	Number	%
1	Water supply	10	22.23
2	Roads	6	13.33
3	Electricity	20	44.44
4	Others	9	20.00
	Total	45	100.00

The M.C. Sirsa is delivering goods and services to the citizens. To know and understand the nature of problems faced by the citizens, a query was raised. As per the analysis of the data in the presented table, the citizens are not happy with public utilities services like water supply, Roads, Electricity, *etc.* As may 20 (44.44%) respondents considered irregular Electricity as major problem, while 10 (22.23%) considered irregular water supply and 9(20.00%) considered others problems followed 6 (13.33%) who found bad condition of roads to be a major source of concern.

TABLE 10: Officials' views about the participation of citizens in city governance

S/N	Do the citizens participate in city governance?	Number	%
1	Yes	10	22.23
2	No	25	55.56
3	Some time	10	22.22
	Total	45	100.00

In response to a query raised before the selected officials, as many as 25 (55.56%) said that citizens do not participate in city governance, whereas 10 (22.22%) responded negatively. The rest of the officials (22.22%) opined that citizens participate off and on in affairs of governance. The broad conclusion is drawn that the level of citizens' participation in the affairs of the urban local governance is considerably low.

TABLE 11: Perception of selected officials about the attitude of the district administration officials towards municipal council Sirsa

S/N	How do you rate the attitude of the District Administrative officials towards M.C.?	Number	%
1	Positive	19	42.22
2	Negative	21	46.66
3	Indifferent	5	11.11
	Total	45	100.00

The perception of selected officials reflecting their attitude about district administrative officials has been shown in above table. The data presented here shows that 46.66% officials said that the behaviour of District Administration towards municipal council is negative. 42.22% affirmed it is positive, while 11.11% said indifferent. So it is found that the behaviour of district administration towards municipal council is not good.

TABLE 12: Officials' views about the powers devolved up to grassroots level in city governance

S/N	Do the powers devolve up to grass-roots level?	Number	%
1	Yes	11	24.44
2	No	25	55.55
3	Do not know	9	20.00
	Total	45	100.00

The devolution of powers to the urban local bodies in terms of funds, function and functionaries is considered one of the cardinal principles of Good City Governance. In this respect, 11 (24.44%) selected officials were of view that there is devolution of power to the Municipal Council Sirsa, whereas 9 (20.00%) were not aware of it. A majority of respondents *i.e.* 25 (55-56%) replied that devolution of power has not taken place in real sense. During discussion, some of the officials divulged information that ULB is only paperwork. The Govt. does not want to delegate powers to ULBs. Rather, the state govt.

treats it as the subordinate department of the govt. Under these circumstances, the autonomy and independence granted to ULBs becomes a farce.

The data analysis and interpretation, in brief, reveal that major indicators of Good City Governance need momentum if municipal services are to be delivered effectively. Thus, it becomes imperative to confirm the hypotheses.

Correlation between Findings, Interpretation of Results and Verification of Hypothesis

The concept of "Good City Governance" is as old as civilization itself. Many developing countries have been practicing and promoting urban development for a number of years and many of them have achieved significant success in their efforts. Like many other developing countries, India has accorded a high priority to urban development since independence. But the performance of these programmes has not been satisfactory due to inefficient delivery mechanism.

The data and information collected from primary and secondary data department of urban local bodies like municipal council, P.W.D., Public health department, DHBVN and HUDA were analysed during the study to make it more realistic, Interview Schedules were administered.

The data and information tabulated, classified and analysed. Simple percentage method was used to test the data in accordance with stated objectives and hypothesis. On the basis of collected data, the hypotheses were thus confirmed.

H₁ → The Government of Haryana seems reluctant to delegate powers and functions to the M.C. Sirsa.

The state of Haryana has been one of the leading states in the implementation of the 74th constitutional Amendment Act 1992. It has implemented almost all the provision of the 74th Amendment Act. But it has not transferred all items to the departments as enshrined in the XII schedule of the constitution. In addition to this, power relationship between urban governments and state is of supervisory level, ineffective and minimal. In this context, as many as 25 (55.56%) respondents said that the powers have not devolved up to grassroots level. So, devolution of powers to urban governance is not in conformity with the provisions of 74th constitutional Amendment Act 1992.

H₂ → It appears that the participation of the citizens in the affairs of the Municipal Council Sirsa is below average

Citizens are the main strength of their city. Their participation in the working of city governance is very important. Without their participation, city governance does not work well. When the officials were asked about the participation level of the citizen in the affairs of the M.C. Sirsa, as many as 25 (55.56%) officials said that the citizens do not take participation in city governance. So the hypothesis that participation of citizens in city governance is low has been accepted.

H₃ → There seems lack of transparency in the working of city governance

Everyone has the right to know that what is going on in their city. The RTI Act 2005 has made a mile-stone in this way. But when the citizens were asked about transparency in the working of city governance 71 (45.82%) citizens answered that they do not know about 2005 RTI Act. So the hypothesis that there is a lack of transparency in city governance was indisputably accepted.

H₄ → The women are not keenly interested in the civic affairs of the city governance in Sirsa

Women were given one third reservation in urban government. But actual participation of the women in urban government is still a question mark. To test their participation in urban government we made enquiries from different stakeholders, specifically women. Majority of the respondents reported minimal level of women participation in urban government. Some women were complaining against the male dominance, majority were not interested in urban system affairs. About 18 (40.00%) respondents said that position of women in city governance is good while 9 (20.00%) considered their position bad in city governance. So the hypothesis that women representation in city governance is low, was approved.

H₅ → The selected government officials show lackadaisical attitude towards city governance in Sirsa

Various urban development programmes have been in operation in Haryana since its establishment as a separate state. But these programmes are not implemented successfully. During the study 69 (44.51%) respondents said that officials do not take interest in the development of city governance. So the hypothesis that the officials do not take interest in the development of city governance was accepted.

H₆ → The selected Municipal councillors and citizens do not strictly comply with the directions and order issued by the government of Haryana

The state government issued rules and regulations for the officials of city governance and citizens to foster public order in the city. As many as 20 (44.44%) respondents said that municipal councillors and citizens do not follow the rules and regulation issued by the state government. So the hypothesis that councillors and citizens do not follow the directions and order issued by the state government was accepted.

Other findings of the Study

In addition to findings emanating from the data presented in the tables, the following insights were explored:

- 1) The Constitution (74th amendment) Act 1992 provides for the constitution of ward committee. But in the study we found that there is no Ward Committee in Sirsa city.
- 2) In every branch and wing of the council, there is a large number of vacant seats, causing adverse impact on developmental activities.
- 3) Finance is the basis of development activities and machinery of the government. In the study, it was found that financial condition of city governance Sirsa is not sound.
- 4) Employees of the Municipal Council are not fully aware of the official powers entrusted to them by the Haryana Municipal Act 1992.

- 5) Only a few people take part in the meetings of their wards Sabha.
- 6) 74th Amendment Act 1992 which was considered a *magna carta* for urban local bodies, disappointingly proved ineffective because of non-implementation of its provisions by state government.
- 7) It was found that in this study there is a lack of sound urban reforms and innovative experiments.
- 8) There is lack of capacity building of city governance officials and officers, causing a great hiatus between accomplishment and objectives.
- 9) In the study it was found that the slum population remains ignored. There also exists a vast discrepancy between the quality of health care delivered by the private sector and urban local governance within the different sections of urban population.
- 10) Most of the roads in the city are in poor condition. They are full of potholes. Water get accumulated in these potholes during monsoon and become a major cause of accidents. There are no adequate street and road lights, which recurrently engender preventable road accidents.
- 11) During night hours most of the roads become high risk zones to pedestrians' accidents in the absence of street lights. Sometimes vehicles are also entrapped into road holes leading to accidents.
- 12) Insufficient spaces cause disorderly parking of vehicles in different markets, thus creating traffic nuisance.
- 13) Land is the most valuable natural resource, of which its proper planning and development offer major prospects for increases in output and incomes for the people, especially for those who are near or below the poverty line. But, in the study, it was found that land records are in very poor shape.
- 14) Lack of effective public transport and traffic management was also found, hence public disorder and harassment to commuters.

- 15) Due to adhoc arrangement for employees' recruitment and retention coupled with poor working conditions, the motivation of the employees was found at low level. There is no separate cadre for urban local services.

Conclusion

The present study is a moderate attempt to assess the working of Municipal Council in a developing city of Haryana in the light of good governance principles. During the course of study, it was found that the machinery of urban local governance has to go a long way to achieve the motto of good city governance. This is because numerous dimensions of good governance at micro level require political commitment, administrative vision, viable finance and citizens' participation. The study finds that the capacity building of elected and appointed functionaries by way of training, orientation, awareness and education require considerable attention of the Government of Haryana to develop cities to overcome challenges posed by rapid urbanization.

Though there is no short cut formula to improve governance but local empowerment initiatives and strategies, in close collaboration with exemplary NGOs, civil society movements and media can tackle the challenges posed by the deeply entrenched patronage and unaccountable local governance structure. The suggestions and recommendations made by Haryana Administrative Reforms Commission and Central Administrative Reforms Commission in its sixth report, if implemented in letter and spirit, may enable the municipalities, in long run, to function as institutions of self-government to carry out the responsibilities of economic development and social justice as enshrined in the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992.

List of References

- Arora, Ramesh K. 2001, *People-Centred Governance*, Aalekh Publication, Jaipur.
- Arora, Ramesh & Khandelwal, R.M., 2008. *Good Governance-Initiatives and Impact*, Pearson International Publishers, Delhi.
- Bhattacharya, Mohit 1969. *State Directorate of Municipal Administration*, Indian Institute of Public Administration, Delhi.
- Chahar, S.S., 2005. *Governance at grassroots level in India*, Kanishka, Publishers, Delhi.
- Chopra, J.K., 2004. *Local, Self-Government and Municipal Administration*, Commonwealth Publishers, Delhi.
- Dhaliwal, S.S., 2004. *Municipal Administration*, Deep and Deep Publications .V.T. Ltd., New Delhi.
- Ghuman B.S. & Mehta Akshat, 2010. *Privatisation of Public services by urban Local Government in India: A case study of Municipal Council Panchkula*, Nagarlok, IIPA Publication, New Delhi, January-March, 2012, vol. XLTT, No.1.
- Hsueh, S.S. 1969. *Local Government and National Development in South Asia*, *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. XXI, No.1 (UNESCO).
- Hugh Tinker, 1954. *The Foundations of Local-Self Government: India, Pakistan and Burma*. London Athlon Press, p. 345.
- Kamleshwar, Choudhary (Ed.) 2007. *Globalization, Governance Reforms and Development in India*, SAGE Publication, Delhi.
- Kaushik, 1986. *Leadership in urban government in India*, Kirtab Mahal Publication, Allahabd.
- Nath, V., 2007. *Urbanization, Urban Development and Metropolitan cities in India*, Concept publishing Company, Delhi.
- Parashar, P.N. 2003. *History and Problems of Municipal Administration in India*, Vol-III. Sarup & Sons Publication, New Delhi.
- Parlanithurai G. 2009. *Decentralization in India: Critical Issues from the Field*. Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi.

- Rao, P.S.N. 2006. *Urban Governance and Management: India Initiatives*, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi.
- Ravindra, A. 2010. *Who Governs Our Cities?* The Times of India, Delhi, Nov. 22, 2010.
- Singh U.B., 2002. *Revitalized Urban Administration in India*. Kalpaz Publication Delhi, pp. 51-52.
- Singh, U.B., 1999. *Revitalised Urban Administration in India*. Kalapz Publication, Delhi.
- Srivastava O.P., 1980. *Municipal Government and Administration in India*, Chugh Publication, Allahabad.

AUTHORS' CONTACT:

SIWACH, Raj Kumar

Dept of Public Administration
Ch. Devi Lal University,
Sirsa (Harayana) India
Email: rajkumarsiwach@gmail.com

NILLAM, N.

Dept of Public Administration
Ch. Devi Lal University
Sirsa (Harayana)
India