

A challenging sustainable service delivery system of municipal organization: A case study

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Abstract

Municipal organization, a people elected local administrative body is facing major challenges for establishing effective service delivery system all over the world. The main purpose of municipal governance is to create effective, responsive, democratic, transparent, accountable local governance which may strengthen the legal, fiscal, economic and service delivery functions of municipalities. The 74th Indian Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) has given the liberty of the urban local bodies to act as a democratic unit of self-governance with nominal interference of the state government. Apart from the collection of revenue from the local area, the State Government is also funding large amount of money to the Municipal authority for the development of the municipal area. The municipal authorities are entrusted to provide efficient service delivery to its citizens and enable them greater facilitation of its service. The paper compares the services rendered by two municipalities selected from the district of Howrah, West Bengal, India, in the context of selected similar services. The paper discusses the opinion of citizens in the dimensions of water supply based on Citizens Charter. A comparative study of utilization of capital income and revenue income has also been discussed in this paper. Both primary and secondary data have been used for the study. Primary data have been collected through field survey from a structured questionnaire from the locality. The secondary sources of data are the West Bengal Municipal Act, 1993, municipal annual budget for a period of five years from 2007-2008 to 2011-2012 and Websites. For the analysis of the performance of the municipalities the null hypothesis is, that there are no differences of performance between the municipalities. Based on the service delivery levels, the study identifies that the municipalities have to improve its quality of services by strengthening the areas of planning, governance and services delivery system for the citizens.

Keywords: municipal organization, municipal governance, 74th Indian Constitutional Amendment Act, urban local bodies, citizen charter.

Introduction

Local self government is a local administrative body, which are the people elected institution created for performing the basic functions of the local area. In India local government is the third tier government after Central and State Government. In rural area it is called rural local government which is called *Panchayatiraj* and in urban area it is called Urban Local Bodies. Urban Local Bodies are divided into four categories: Municipal Corporation, Municipalities, notified area committee, town area committee and cantonment board. Municipal governance in India has been in existence since the year 1687 with the formation of Madras Municipal Corporation.

The main function of the municipality is to provide basic infrastructure and services in cities and towns. The purpose of municipal governance is to create effective, responsive, democratic, transparent, accountable local governance framework. The aim is to provide responsive policy guidance and assistance to strengthen the legal, fiscal, economic and service delivery functions of municipalities. The participation of the local people in the administration of local affairs strengthens the municipal organization. Municipalities can solve the local problems efficiently by involving its local people.

Municipal services

Municipality is an establishment which exists to enhance the services of citizens in its local area. It runs by following the acts, rules and regulations in exercising its obligatory and discretionary functions. The Chairperson (Vice-Chairperson in

absence of Chairperson), who is the head of the Municipal administration selected or elected from among the elected members (Councilors) from the different Wards (different local area), control the municipality and is responsible to carry out those functions. Chairperson manages the municipal office with the discussion over the Board of Councilors and the Chairman-in-Council meeting. The local authorities are closest to the people, they are elected by the citizens to represent them and are responsible to ensure that services are delivered to the community in well manner. There are a large number of services that are provided by the municipalities. The most important of which are: water supply, sewage collection and disposal, public health facilities and services, refuse removal, street light, roads and drainage, municipal park and recreation, urban development, library etc. The constitution of some developed countries like UK, Australia, USA prescribed some important services like police, fire, electricity, transportation, gas etc in the municipalities services.

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA), 1993 is a milestone in the history of urban governance. The purpose of the 74th CAA was to ensure that the urban local bodies will function efficiently as democratic units of self-governance with nominal interference of the state government in elections, functioning, powers, and authority of the ULBs. The most important amendments were:

- a. Provide democratic and accountable government for local communities
- b. Ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner
- c. Promote social and economic development

- d. Promote safe and healthy environment
- e. Encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matter of local government.

Again, eighteen important service areas have been identified to strengthen the urban local bodies under the said 74th CAA. Some of the areas are (a) prepare the plan for economic development and social justice, (b) determine the tax, duties, tools and fees (c) distribute the resources between the state and the municipalities (d) perform the functions and implementation of schemes as may be entrusted to them etc. The constitutional amendment states that the municipalities have the responsibility to make sure that all citizens are provided with services to satisfy their basic needs. The municipalities are collecting a reasonable amount from the local citizens residing its own jurisdiction by way of holding tax depending on the assessment made from time to time in a certain interval. It also collects fees for mutation, plan sanction, water line connection, market, hire-charges etc from the city dwellers. On the other side, the upper tier government, especially, the state government is spending large amount of money for the development of the municipal area for providing better services to the society. Again, financial assistance is given to the Municipalities from time to time for function the municipal activities as revenue grant. In this respect, it is required to understand the level of services that are available in the municipal area and the quality of services the municipal authorities are providing to the citizens.

Local government is a key player in helping to accelerate progress towards the achievement of these objectives. This paper was necessitated from the view point which reveals that the present service delivery paradigms in local government are highly challenged. The study also highlights how the municipal administration is accepting the following challenges that they are presently facing in the competitive service delivery activities:

- a. To promote a faultless, generous, principled, professional, trustworthy and accountable governance.
- b. To make sure service excellence through committed institutional understanding and competent administration, official who are directly related with the community services.
- c. To ensure the developed, structured services and infrastructure for the community for equal access.
- d. To transform the municipalities for ensuring effective and efficient service delivery system to the local communities.
- e. To proper utilisation of the resources for the sustainable development of the municipal area to generate revenue for future.

Objectives of the study

Municipal services are funded by the upper tier government and the fund generated from own sources. It must sure that people in their areas have at least the basic services they need. These services have a direct or indirect effect on the quality of lives of the citizens in their jurisdiction. A sound and systematic administrative structure will help the municipal authority for developing effective service delivering system. In this respect, the objectives of the study are:

1. To evaluate the level of service at Bally Municipality and Uluberia Municipality

2. To determine resident's perception of the provision of water by these two municipalities
3. To build a comparative analysis between two municipalities regarding the quality of service delivery.

Methodology

Selection of sample, Data collection and Statistical tools used

The study has been conducted in two municipalities of the district of Howrah in the State of West Bengal, India. 100 respondents from both the municipalities are randomly selected using simple random sampling method. A structured questionnaire has been framed out with multiple answers and the citizen's views have been noted. The selected respondents are the head of the families. The questionnaire is prepared based on the water services provided to the residents who are directly getting the services. The secondary data has been collected from annual budget over a period of five years from 2007-2008 to 2011-2012. Some articles, books and journals have also been considered for the study. The information so collected from the primary and secondary sources has been classified, tabulated and analyzed as per the objectives of the study. T-test and chi-square have been considered to compare the performance of services.

Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

The study deals with the scope of service provided by the municipalities to the citizens. Emphasis is given with the analysis of data and information as collected from the different sources of two selected municipalities with the objectives to determine the performance of rendering citizen's services. Only the department of water supply of two municipalities, namely, Bally and Uluberia has been taken into consideration. The budget estimate of each of the municipalities were collected for the period of five years from 2007-08 to 2011-12. The study is divided into three sections for the purpose of data analysis and findings. First section deals with the general background and facilities available in connection with the supply of water of the municipalities. Second Section deals with the expenditure incurred for the purpose of water supply in the local area. In this regard, both capital income and expenditure and revenue income and expenditure for the purpose of water supply have been taken into consideration. The analysis shows the expenditure pattern of the municipalities to identify whether, the municipalities have the similar or not. The third and last section deals with the feedback taken from the citizens residing in the municipal area. The study tested the null hypothesis that there is no difference of providing services between the municipalities. Chi-square test has been generalized to test the independence of two attributes.

Section-A: Analysis from the view point of facilities available for citizens

Group-A municipality Bally, covering the area of 11.81 sq km has 35,558 populations and established in the year 1985. Whereas 49254 population are spreaded over the area of 9.06 sq km in case of a Group-B Uluberia municipality which was established in 1982.

Both two municipalities are not fulfilling the minimum basic requirement of providing 135LPD per individual. Again the

people are deprived from drinking water due to non availability of water pipe lines. The ratio of number of stand posts and

number of tube wells to the total number of households is very high (figure-1), which is not desirable at all.

Table 1: Water supply facilities

Name of the Municipality	Demand of water	Supply of water	Water pipe lines covered (in Km)	Number of stand points	Number of hand tube wells
Bally	135 LPD	71 LPD	70%	1822	300
Uluberia	135 LPD	76 LPD	65%	1120	787

Source: Primary data survey

Fig-1: Percentage of tubewell & standpoint in proportion to Households

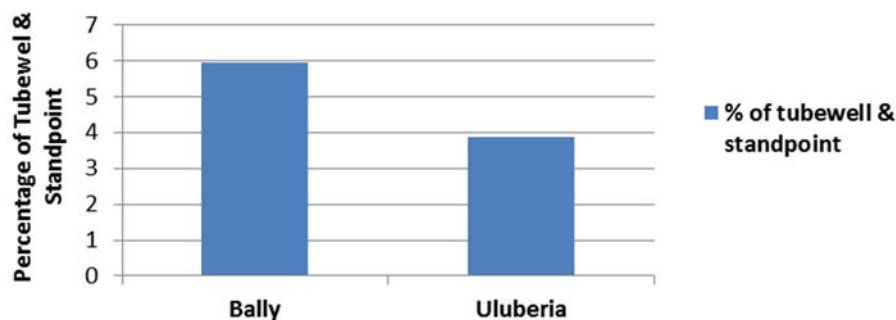
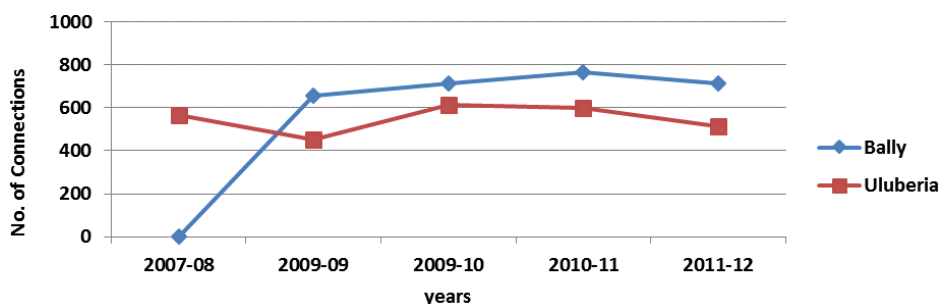


Table 2: Number of connections given in last five years

Name of the Municipality	Connections given (no.)	Number of Connections				
		2007-08	2009-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Bally	8098	No Connection	657	714	765	712
Uluberia	4602	567	450	612	599	515

Source: Primary survey

Fig-2: No. of connections given in last five years



The rate of water supply connections of both the municipalities is very poor. Total number of water line connection in proportion to total number of households is also very low, which is very much unexpected. It is also known from the primary survey that Bally municipality was stopped

households water connections in between 2001-02 to 2006-07 due to some technical reasons.

Section-B: Analysis from the view point of expenditure for water supply purpose

Table 3: Capital Expenditure for Water Supply purpose to total Capital Expenditure Ratio

Name of the Municipality	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Bally	4.35	9.12	6.93	8.71	7.85
Uluberia	9.08	9.47	6.10	6.49	7.82

Source: Municipal Annual Budget

Table 4: Operation and Maintenance Expenditure for Water Supply purpose to total Revenue Expenditure Ratio

Name of the Municipality	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
Bally	3.90	3.46	3.77	3.98	3.65
Uluberia	2.09	1.43	1.79	1.49	2.69

Source: Municipal Annual Budget

Table 5: Analysis of Ratios

Ratio	Municipality	Mean	SD	Sem	t	df	Significance
y1:Capital Expenditure for Water Supply purpose to total Capital Expenditure Ratio	Bally	7.39	1.9	0.85	-0.37	8	0.72
	Uluberia	7.79	1.5	0.67			
y2:Operation and Maintenance Expenditure for Water Supply purpose to total Revenue Expenditure Ratio	Bally	3.75	0.21	0.09	7.47	8	0
	Uluberia	1.9	0.52	0.23			

In case of the ratio of capital expenditure of water supply purpose to total expenditure ratio there is no significance difference between two municipalities Bally and Uluberia. The performance of both the municipalities is very poor. They are spending very negligible amount from total capital income for the purpose of laying water pipe lines or replacing the old and damaged pipe lines. On the other side, in case of operation and maintenance expenditure for water supply purpose to total revenue expenditure ratio, and there is a significant difference

between the municipalities. Although, the performance of both the municipalities are not satisfactory for the citizens towards spending the revenue earnings for water supply operation and maintenances purposes. But it can be said that Bally municipality is comparatively better performer.

Section-C: Analysis from the view point of citizen satisfaction

Sources of water (Source-1)

Cross tabulation						
Counts		Sources1				Total
		Others	Own connection	Road side Standpoints	Tube well	
Municipalities	Bally	6	65	15	14	100
	Uluberia	4	49	27	20	100
Total		10	114	42	34	200

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.133 ^a	3	.068
Likelihood Ratio	7.197	3	.066
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.00.

Maximum people are using water from their own connection given by both the municipal authority. It is expected to provide services to this local people satisfactorily. The analysis shows

that the municipalities are not associated. They are independent to each other.

Frequency of facing water supply disruption (Source-2)

Cross tabulation						
Count. 0		Sources2				Total
		None of the others	Once in a month	Once in a week	Twice in a month	
Municipalities	Bally	10	19	42	29	100
	Uluberia	6	49	8	37	100
Total		16	68	50	66	200

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	38.325 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	41.033	3	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.00.

The municipalities are related to each other. They are not independent. Citizens are suffering from water cut off in any way for both the municipalities. Compare to Uluberia municipality, the people of Bally municipality are suffering a

lot as maximum number of people are facing the problem of water once in a week.

Reasons for water cut-off (Source-3)

Cross tabulation						
Count 0		Sources3				Total
		Damage in pipe	Leaks in the pipe	Others	Repairs and maintenance	
Municipalities	Bally	29	43	10	18	100
	Uluberia	16	48	12	24	100
Total		45	91	22	42	200

The value reveals that the municipalities are not associated. Both the municipalities are suffering water supply due to leak of pipe lines. The survey also shows that the pipe lines of Bally municipality are mostly damaged due to negligence of maintenance.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.069 ^a	3	.167
Likelihood Ratio	5.127	3	.163
N of Valid Cases	200		
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.00.			

Quality of drinking water (Sources-4)

Cross tabulation						
Count		Sources4				Total
		Excellent	Good	Poor	Very Poor	
Municipalities	Bally	0	51	36	13	100
	Uluberia	19	62	17	2	100
Total		19	113	53	15	200

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.949 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	43.392	3	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.50.

People of Bally municipality are not satisfied with the quality of drinking water compare with the Uluberia municipality.

Water related fault (Source-5)

Cross tabulation						
Count		Sources5				Total
		Excellent	Quick	Slow	Very Slow	
Municipalities	Bally	4	43	31	22	100
	Uluberia	13	59	22	6	100
Total		17	102	53	28	200

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.946 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	18.792	3	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.50.

Both two municipalities are not functioning in a similar manner. Most of the people in both the cases are in favor of quick services provider but against the excellent services. So, two municipalities are associated with each other.

Suggestion for improvement (Source-6)

Cross tabulation						
Count		Sources6				Total
		Administration should be more careful	Clean water should be provided	More water reservoir should be build up	Old infrastructure should be replaced	
Municipalities	Bally	48	15	8	29	100
	Uluberia	6	15	49	20	90
Total		54	30	57	49	190

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	63.460 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	71.102	3	.000
N of Valid Cases	190		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.21.

The performance differs from municipality to municipality. In case of Bally municipality it is seen that the administration is not functioning well. The people of Uluberia municipality want to build uo more water reservoir to get sufficient water in the entire locality of the municipal area.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The analysis discloses that in most of the cases the municipalities are not efficiently performing with regards to the service delivery to the local community. Water cut-off happens either for the reason of damaged pipe lines or leak in the pipes. Citizens are not satisfied with the activities of taking actions against the recovering the faults. Most of the people are not pleased about the quality of drinking water supplied by the municipalities. The administrations are also not serious of providing better services in the locality.

The activity manage by the administrators are the dimensions of service on regard the citizen value. The link between administrative performance measure and citizen satisfaction are very interesting in nature. Citizen satisfactions fully depend on the performance of the organization. Policy making and

implementing the decision are the key and important factors of setting goal. A good performance can improve the quality of life of the citizen. While a poor performance of the municipality may stop the development of the local area. Quality of service as well as quality of life of the citizen would be worse. In order to maintain the good performance level it is important to find out the reasons of poor performance. Poor performance of the municipalities regarding water supply, may arise due to: (i) Uneven utilization of capital and revenue funds, (ii) Inability of creation of own sources of revenue, (iii) Lack of skills and capacity, (iv) Absence of suitable organizational performance measurement system, (v) Absence of appropriate strategy (vi) Inadequacy of monitoring process and (vii) Inefficient management and administration.

The standard of service provided by the municipality is the most important for the citizens.. The choice of the level of a particular service is influenced by affordability as well as community needs. When a municipality is thinking about the higher level of services to be provided, it should consider the long term viability of the providing services. In that case the costs to provide that level of services sometimes may increase. Ultimately the pressure will go to the citizen's side. As a result, municipal tax rate may be increased. In that case, if the local people cannot bear the tax burden, the municipalities will suffer the revenue loses. In this respect, if the municipal authority can improve the work area, the capacity and efficiency of the municipality may develop. A new healthy culture will create in the municipal organization, which will help to improve a better monitoring process. Some recommendations are given below:

1. Better communication between the municipal authority and the citizens will help the municipality to determine the needs of the community whether the requirements are being met.
2. Municipalities can improve and expand the service delivery system and the quality of services delivery by improving its own ability of creating assets so that the municipalities can generate revenue from it. So, focus of investments should be on asset creation as well as management.
3. Municipalities may tie up with other municipalities, NGO's, private organizations as a service provider for hiring services to provide better services by using their better resources and improved management skills. Networking and sharing knowledge with other municipalities locally or internationally will enhance the usefulness and effectiveness of the municipal performance management system.
4. Integrate various urban development and related programs at local, state and national levels helps to develop a sustainable challenging service delivery system in the municipal organization.
5. A special training and support programme for councillors could be integrated into a holistic councilor-training programme. Training and ongoing support will need to be provided for administrators in order that they fulfill their roles in planning, monitoring, reviewing and improving performance. This can be integrated into other forms of management training that your municipality provides, such as a management development programme.
6. A monitoring and evaluation unit can be set up in either the offices of the Municipal Councilors and chairman.

This unit could be attached to the project leader for performance management, and would measure all level of municipalities analyze all performance reports corporately.

7. It is important to regularly evaluate your performance management system in terms of all its users. At least once a year, preferably after the annual review process it may be useful, together with a sample group that is representative of all stakeholders, and key decision-makers in your municipality, to evaluate the PMS.
8. Municipalities may impose water taxes for providing water to the citizens. Water meter may be initiated to measure the volume of water used in each household.

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