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A Study on Functions and Performance of Municipal Corporations in India

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Abstract: *The current study aims to explore the duties and responsibilities of municipal corporations. The study also aims to measure performance of four selected municipals corporations in India namely; Faridabad, Gurugram, Ludhiana and Amritsar municipal corporations. The study was based on the secondary data collected from the research reports, government reports, websites, and the research articles. Primary data was collected from 100 employees which includes 25 employees from each of the four municipal corporations through questionnaires. It can be concluded from the study that municipal corporations all across India are under fiscal stress. The primary issue in the present scenario is regarding the critical gap in the demand and supply of elemental in civic infrastructural services in growing urban areas. The policies regarding urban development need to target 100% coverage of the urban population. There is an immediate need of providing quality Municipal services to the urban population, particularly regarding essential facilities and amenities such as clean and potable water, improved sewage facilities, better solid waste management, and better housing facilities.*

Keywords: *Municipal Corporations, India, Performance, Functions, Income and Expenses, Municipal Finance etc.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In India, a municipal corporation is an entity that is charged with governmental powers over a city that has a minimum population of over one million residents (Nallathiga, 2012; Sharma, 2020). The concept of municipal corporations in India comes from the British systems of administration. The idea behind municipal corporations was to create an ultimately self-governing local body that could provide essential public services and infrastructure. These organizations are given several governmental powers over this area, since it is believed that they have a better and more in-depth understanding of local issues and problems. However, it is often the case in India that a state or national government exercises its authority over such matters and can even overturn the decisions by municipal corporations. Vaidya and Johnson (2001) find that the municipal corporation in India is charged with many important responsibilities and aims. The main role of the municipal corporation is to act in the interest of public welfare and provide supportive infrastructure and services in this regard. Some of the objectives of municipal corporations are to build and develop the systems which can improve the quality of life of the residents of the city, and enable good living conditions by providing quality public services. Some of the essential works that are done by the municipal corporations include building civic infrastructure, and maintaining roads, rails, and other systems of transportation. It also provides public services such as birth and death registrations, or driving license validations (Thakur, 2006; Sharma, 2020).

II. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITY OF MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS

In brief, we can say that it is a local self-government unit which is employed in the administration of big cities. It performs its functions via a system of well-organized departments and divisions, such as the education department, the housing

committee, the property management division, etc. These departments are headed over by qualified and experience persons, who are elected in accordance to prescribed processes and rules.

Municipal corporations share the broad idea of their duties and responsibilities with the state or central governments. However, according to Kitchen and Slack (2003), the difference lies in the scale of application of these duties and responsibilities. In terms of fiscal federalism, the duties and responsibilities of municipal corporations in India are confined to the areas falling under Municipal jurisdictions. These duties are limited to the development of the lifestyle of citizens living in that area and not at a higher level such as overall Indian development. Due to the nature of certain functions, there are distinctions made between the responsibilities of the Municipal corporations. Duties and responsibilities of the Municipal corporations can be grouped into essentially Municipal, joint, and agency responsibilities. This is done because there may be certain areas where there are intergovernmental finances involved, such as principal agent contracts. In order to carry out these duties and responsibilities of municipal corporations, several boards or authorities are appointed. For example, in Delhi, the Delhi development authority is created to take care of urban development and city improvement. Municipal corporations also undertake liabilities regarding the repayment of loans and ensuring the maintenance of public facilities (Jariwala, 2016).

In addition to the traditional functions of municipal corporations there are additional duties and responsibilities. These are developmental duties such as planning for economic development and social justice. The municipal corporations have a duty to ensure there is social equity and justice in the economy.

III. FUNCTIONS OF MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS IN INDIA

In India, Municipal Corporation performs several functions. Particularly after the incorporation of the 12th schedule according to the 74th constitutional amendment act, there are key functions of the municipal corporation which are as follows.

- 1. Urban planning-** urban planning includes all the functions related to preparing and implementing plans regarding urban development full stop it also includes town planning.
- 2. Construction and maintenance-** the municipal corporation is charged with the construction of bridges and roads under its jurisdiction. It also undertakes the maintenance and stability work of bridges and roads. In the case of any damage to roads or buildings, the municipal corporation is also charge with the function of repairing the damage.
- 3. Land use regulation and construction-** the municipal corporation formulates bye laws regarding the proper usage of land. It allocates the land according to the common use of the local area. Additionally, it also undertakes the task regarding building construction in the region.
- 4. Social and economic development planning-** the municipal corporation undertakes the task related to running as well as implementing the plants focus towards the social and economic development of the city residents.
- 5. Maintaining water supply-** Municipal corporations manage the water supply for commercial industrial and domestic purposes. It exercises powers regarding providing the supply of portable water under its jurisdiction. In the case of industry and commerce purposes the municipal corporation makes due arrangements for the supply and quantity of water.
- 6. Public health and waste management-** Municipal corporations take up the responsibility of maintaining the sanitation and solid waste management of the area. It also carries operations regarding maintenance of public Health. Municipal corporations include sanitary inspector and health officers who are charged with the duty of carrying out these functions. under public health, Municipal corporations and take functions such as provision of adequate drains regarding the disposal of dirty water, or imposition of ban regarding the tradeoff of rotten edibles, or provisions regarding public latrines and urinals. Municipal corporations also set up dispensaries and hospitals for public, and

check adulteration in food, and also decide regarding vaccination in order to contain epidemics such as Cholera and smallpox.

7. **Poverty Alleviation-** Municipal corporations also carry out programs and plans regarding the elevation of poverty in urban areas. It takes steps in order to ensure the employment to the needy people in the area. It also encourages self-employment and entrepreneurship initiatives in order to secure income for the people.
8. **Upgradation and Slum improvement-** Municipal corporations perform the basic functions regarding the cleanliness and maintaining the beautification of the city. Under this objective municipal corporation also make provisions regarding the development of the poor or lower-class areas of the cities. This includes the improvement of the state of infrastructure and life in urban slums.
9. **Fire services-** Municipal corporations also provide firefighting services. It decides regarding two operations for fire-fighting services in the City. These provisions and arrangements include fulfillment of requirements regarding fire brigades and their necessary equipment.
10. **Environmental protection and ecological conservation-** Municipal corporations strive to take the necessary measures in order to protect the city environment and maintain the ecological balance of the area. For this purpose, principle corporations take measures regarding check on pollution for deforestation or for land use. Municipal corporation is also made and encourage ecological change through tree plantation drives. In under this function, Municipal corporations plan and protect urban forestry.
11. **Safeguarding of weaker sections-** Municipal corporations are acting in the interest of the weaker sections of society to ensure their protection and development. Municipal corporations safeguard the interest of the underprivileged sections including the physically or mentally handicapped citizens. It can construct the proper homes for their development such as special homes for handicapped persons, construction of schools and other institutions for the development of specially-abled people.
12. **Maintaining Cremation Grounds-** Municipal corporations perform the function of maintaining cremation grounds. It also makes the necessary arrangements regarding the cremation or burial of dead bodies. in case of metropolitan cities and abundance of resources, Municipal corporations may also make provisions regarding electrical crematoriums in order to reduce environmental damage caused by cremation and burial practices.
13. **Preventing animal cruelty-** Municipal corporations undertake the necessary steps and measures in order to prevent the cruelty towards animals. It also may undertake operations regarding the burial of dead animals. The municipal corporations prevent the cruelty against stray dogs, cats, cows, and other animals.
14. **Birth and death registration-** Municipal corporations provide the necessary services regarding the registration of births and its. It also issues certificates that prove the validity of a person citizenship via birth and death certificates. this function of the municipal corporation helps in maintaining vital statistics regarding the citizenship of a certain region.
15. **Regulation of slaughterhouses-** Municipal corporations undertake the necessary measures regarding the opening and the regulation of tanneries and slaughter houses in a city. It makes rules and guidelines regarding their utilization. Additionally, it also makes the necessary arrangements and legal provisions that deal with the problems arising out of the pollution caused by tanneries and the wastage from slaughterhouses.
16. **Provision of public amenities and facilities-** Municipal corporations are charged with the provision of important public amenities such as parks gardens Street lighting parking bus stops coma playgrounds and public conveniences. It

also sets up regulated parking spots in town for rickshaws and autos. Additionally, it decides regarding public use amenities such as urinals and latrines.

17. Promoting culture and education- Municipal corporations take measures regarding the promotion of cultural educational and aesthetic aspects of the city. It encourages cultural diversity and heritage conservation.

Among these functions listed above, some steps and measures are obligatory in nature whereas some others are discretionary. Moreover, there is a wide range between all Indian states in terms of the assignment of overall municipal functions (Karnik, 2005). The states are also at liberty to decide the obligatory and discretionary functions to the municipalities. Whereas Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Manipur, Punjab and Rajasthan have included all the functions as enlisted in the Twelfth Schedule in their amended state municipal laws, Andhra Pradesh has not made any changes in the existing list of municipal functions. Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, Maharashtra, Pradesh and West Bengal states have amended their municipal laws to add more functions in the schedules related to municipal functions than those suggested.

IV. PERFORMANCE OF MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS IN INDIA

The performance of municipal corporations includes the overview of their fiscal measures and policies, and the outcomes achieved out of their fiscal planning over a period. The financial parameters of the municipal corporations must be duly assessed in order to review their ability in providing the requisite civic facilities and the identification of the constraints and challenges faced by them in provision of these civic services. This section discusses the performance aspect of the municipal corporations in India.

Table 1: Overall performance

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Ludhiana	25	78.1600	10.19673	2.03935
Amritsar	25	61.0800	10.18545	2.03709
Gurugram	25	64.4000	8.95824	1.79165
Faridabad	25	60.4000	8.05709	1.61142
Total	100	66.0100	11.72883	1.17288

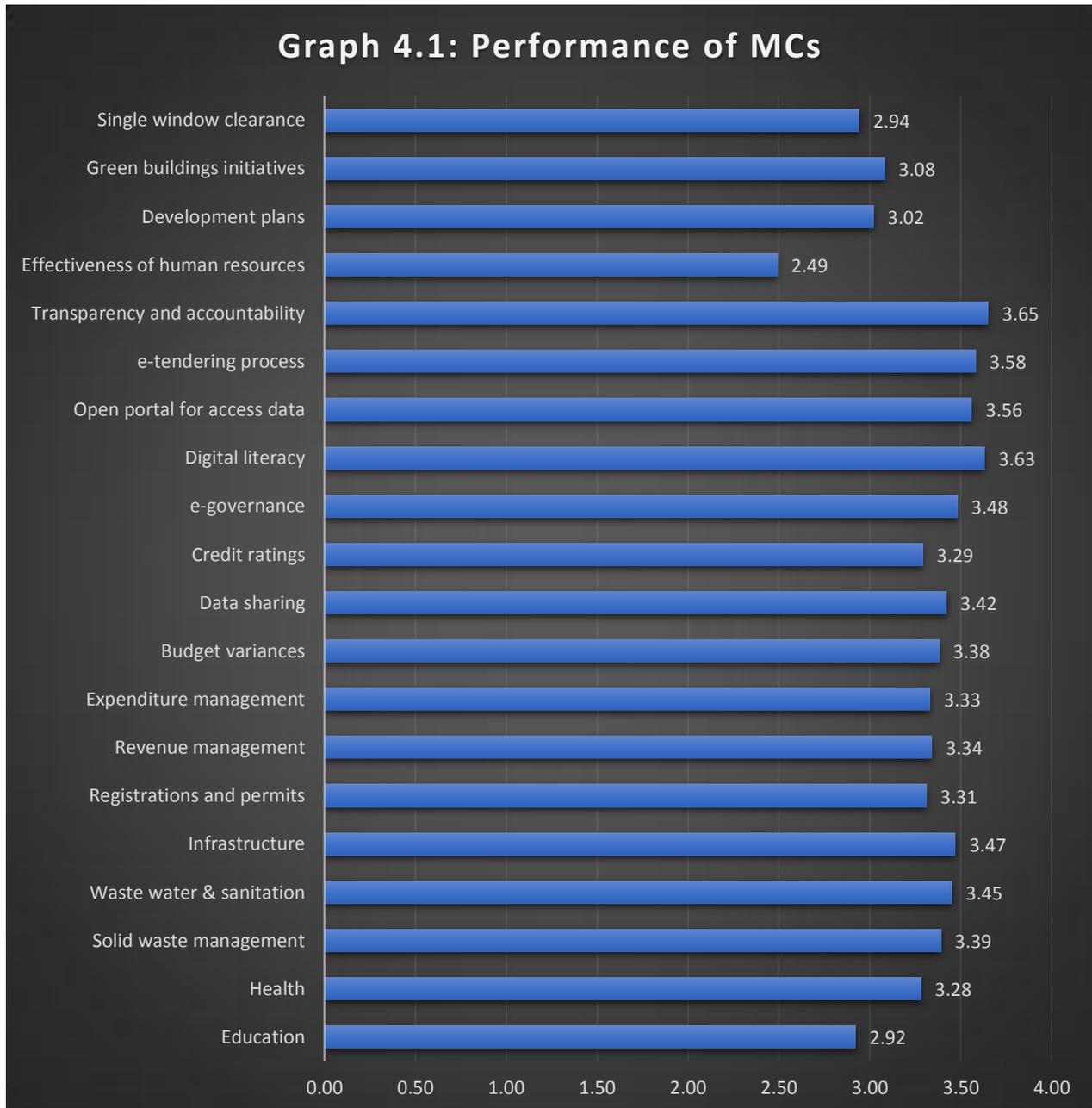
Based on the average value of the overall performance of the four selected municipal corporations, it can be inferred that 78.16 was the highest average score of the overall performance of the Ludhiana municipal corporation, followed by Gurugram municipal corporation. While the least average score for the overall performance was 60.4 for the Faridabad municipal corporation. Hence, employees from Ludhiana municipal corporation have perceived higher level of overall performance and employees from Faridabad municipal corporation have perceived low level of overall performance.

Table 2: ANOVA Results for Overall performance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	5149.790	3	1716.597	19.458	.000
Within Groups	8469.200	96	88.221		
Total	13618.990	99			

One-way Anova test applied to measure the difference in the mean scores for overall performance of all four selected municipal corporations namely; Ludhiana, Amritsar, Faridabad and Gurugram Municipal corporations. The f-value was 19.458, which is significant at 99 percent confidence level, which showed that these four municipal corporations have perceived the overall performance differently. For some of the municipal corporations' overall performance was good, while for other

municipal corporations, overall performance was poor. Hence, the overall performance will not be same for all the municipal corporations, as the income and expenditures for all four municipal corporations were different.



The average score of the twenty parameters of performance of municipal corporation shown in the graph above, and it can be inferred that 3.65 is the highest average score for the “transparency and accountability” followed by “digital literacy”. Hence, employees from four selected municipal corporations have perceived the performance of the municipal corporations highly for efforts put up by these corporations in the area of transparency and accountability, and the digital literacy. Employees from selected four municipal corporations have perceived the performance of the municipal corporations lowest in the area of education development, effectiveness of human resources, and single window clearance efforts of these corporations. Hence, overall the employees of municipal corporations have perceived that these corporations have performed well in the area of transparency and accountability, corporations have become more accountable and have worked towards the transparency in its functions. Similarly; the corporations have worked to increase the digital literacy among the staff as well as among the citizens. While, municipal corporations should focus on increasing the effectiveness of the human resources, for educational development and for single window clearance facility to the citizens. By working on these three major factors, performance of the municipal corporations can be improved further.

V. CONCLUSION

The current scenario regarding urban local bodies in India is not in a good shape. There is decay in the finances of municipal corporations, largely owing to the mismatch between their revenue collections and their assigned responsibilities. Metropolitan incomes and consumptions as a percentage of GDP are in a condition of decline and have not stayed up as per the expanding needs of the metropolitan habitats. The MCs own incomes are facing an absence of buoyancy prompting a decrease in their monetary self-governance and expansion in their reliance on exchanges from the upper levels of government. Property tax, which is, a significant wellspring of income for metropolitan urban communities around the globe, has stayed stale in Indian urban areas. The most recent blow has been from the introduction of the goods and service tax, i.e. GST which has subsumed local taxes in itself, for example, entry taxes, octroi, local body charges, and commercial duty, with no arrangement for payments at the metropolitan or urban level.

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