DEMOCRATIC DECENTRALISATION
AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 74TH CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT ACT IN TRIPURA

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE
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INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Democracy is an elastic concept over the centuries, it has gradually attained wide currency throughout the world. Democracy, not only a form of government but a form of society, a way of life, has become very popular throughout the world. The democratic way of working at grass root level has drawn the attention of every civilised person. The concept of grass root democracy is the crux of local self-government which is possible through the process of democratic decentralisation.

The roots of local self-government lie in decentralisation by taking 'power to the people'. Effective democracy at the grass root level can exist only when there is effective delegation of responsibilities to local governments, along with building up of local capacities in order to help them discharge these responsibilities to the satisfaction and betterment of the citizens. Therefore, effective governance by urban local bodies implies those cities as well as small and medium towns having a well defined functional domain generate adequate resources to carry out their responsibilities and impart a fair degree of transparency and accountability in performing their functions. Though urban local-self government is an old phenomenon in India, in the recent past, there has been a conscious effort to strengthen and revitalize urban local self-government in India through the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992. This Amendment has bestowed upon the urban local self-governing institutions in urban areas the responsibilities to prepare and implement a number of development plans based upon the needs of local people. However, the current scene in Indian states along with in Tripura shows that devolution has made little progress with multiplicity of issues plaguing decentralized urban governance. These include bureaucratic red-tapism, lack of clarity between state and local functional domains leading to overlapping of functions, political encroachment in local functional domain, limited autonomy at the local level due to state control over local revenues, poor generation of revenue, inefficiency of staff, ineffective devolution of welfare and planning functions, lack of effective implementation of the developmental plans and programmes, lack of awareness and weak role of elected bodies in municipal management etc. It is with this background, the present study has intended to take stock
of the extent of devolution of funds, functions and functionaries of urban local bodies of Tripura in the light of the implementation of the provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

Since the present study deals with the ‘Democratic Decentralization and Implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act in Tripura’, an attempt has been made here to explain the concepts, namely- ‘Democratic Decentralization’, ‘Local self-government’, ‘74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992’, and ‘Tripura Municipal Act, 1994’.

Democratic Decentralization

Democracy and decentralization are two sides of a same coin. In common parlance, decentralisation denotes diffusion of powers from a single concentrated authority to a certain number of units around. In other words, decentralization means dispersal of authority among the lower levels and its essence is vesting of decision-making power in the lower units of the political system of country. Its aim is to ensure accountability, efficiency, accessibility and transparency within the political system of the country. Democratic Decentralisation helps to identify the needs and preferences of people through their direct participation in plan formulation and implementation.

Local self-government

The level of governments which is much closer to the people living in towns and villages is called local government. The local self-governing bodies may provide training for good citizenship, cultivate the sense of civic duties into the minds of citizens and meet local needs with limited local resources. According to B.K.Gokhale, “Local self-government is the government of a specified locality by the local people through the representatives elected by them.”

74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992

In September 1991 P.V.Narsimha Rao's government has introduced a modified Municipalities Bill in the Lok Sabha and it has been passed unanimously both by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha in December 1992. Afterwards, it has been approved by the required number of state legislatures and finally assented to by the President of India in and has come into force on 1 June 1993. The Act has added a new Part IX-A to the Constitution of India and it is entitled as 'The Municipalities' consisting of provisions from Articles 243(P) to 243(ZG). Besides, the Act has also added a new 12th Schedule to the Constitution containing 18 functional items of municipalities.

Tripura Municipal Act, 1994

The Tripura Municipal Act, 1994 has been enacted in conformity with purpose, substance and directions of the provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. The Act has received the assent of the Governor on the 26th October, 1994 and thereupon it has come into force. The Act has been enacted by the Tripura Legislative Assembly in the 45th year of the Republic of India. The Act has XX Chapters containing 280 Sections.

Review of Related Literature

As the present study deals with the process of democratic decentralization and the implementation of the provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 at the urban level, the followings books and articles have been reviewed:

- *Local Government in India* (S.R.Maheshwari, 1970) discusses both the rural and urban institutions of local self-governments in India. After tracing the history of local government, it attempts to discuss the structure, personnel, finance and functioning of rural as well as urban local government. This book suggests the ways and means of improving the system of local government in India. In doing so, the book has focused on local government as an entity operating within the larger system of government in the country. Finally, the book reveals that local government can ultimately succeed only if the citizens are endowed with integrity and with what John Stuart Mill called other-regarding feelings and attitudes.

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• Agartala Municipality-Historical Documents 125 Years-1871 to 1996-1997 (Manik Deb, Maharajkumar Sahadev Bikramkishore Devvarman and Jagadis Gan Chaudhuri, 1997)³ is a collection and compilation of some historical documents of Agartala Municipality. This book has highlighted that AMC has passed through several vicissitudes of history and a large number of Acts, Reports and Administrative Orders have been enacted and issued throughout this long period. This book has also included the Tripura Municipality Act, 1994 along with a schedule which enlists the functions of the Municipality.

• Empowerment through Participation: How Effective is this Approach? (Pradeep Narayan, 2003)⁴ observes that empowerment and participation are means and ends to each other and promoting women’s participation requires the abolition of the existing power relations. But increasing participation will help to create alternative discourses and power structures. If participation still perpetuates dependency relationship, it cannot be regarded as real participation.

• Agartala Municipal Council-A Socio-Economic Study (Unpublished Ph. D. Thesis) (Dhananjay Ganchoudhuri, 2005)⁵ reveals the role and evolution of the Agartala Municipal Council. He highlights the finance and problems of Agartala Municipal Council. He has also thrown light on the administrative responses to these problems of Agartala Municipal Council. Besides, he mentions few provisions of the 74th constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 in one of the chapters of his work.

³ Manik Deb, Maharaja Sahadev Bikramkisor Devvarman and Jagadis Gan Chaudhuri, Agartala Municipality Historical Documents 125 Years (Agartala: Bharatiya Itihas Sakalan Samiti, 1997).
• *Democratic Decentralization of Urban Governance* (Aradhana Srivastava, 2008) reveals the problems of decentralization in Indian states, namely-lack of clarity regarding local functional domain, limited fiscal domains and autonomy at local level, lack of orientation towards developmental works, ineffective devolution of welfare and planning functions, weak role of municipal elected bodies, and lack of people’s participation in overall planning exercise. Besides identifying the problems of decentralization of Indian states, the study also suggested the ways and means for eradicating the problems essential for development of urban governments in India.

• *Urban Local Self-Government: Administration and Management in the 21st Century* (S.L. Goel, 2011) observes that local government is essential to establish democracy at local level as it is very near to the people who can participate in governance. In addition Local Government if entrusted with functions as mentioned in 74th Constitutional Amendment Act can discharge their functions efficiently and lighten the burden of state and Union Government and make the governance efficient and economy and transparent. It highlights that Indian urban local government has vast potential to improve quality of life of citizens in urban areas provided these urban local governments are empowered in practice and entrusted with authority and responsibility.

• *Role of Women Councillors in Urban Bodies: A Case Study of Kolkata and Howrah Municipal Corporation* (Anjana Ghosh, 2010) is a comparative study of women political representatives in the municipal bodies of twin cities of Kolkata and Howrah. It is an empirical research that tries to look into the role of women as political representative vis-à-vis their role in the family, society and political party. This book reveals that higher caste women are being elected as political representatives in these two important cities. In a progressive state like West Bengal due to lack of education and awareness among the lower caste women

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needs serious introspection by policy makers. The study also reveals that there is a still lack of consensus on women’s political role. Even though family has emerged as the basic support base for the women councillors, it is also the source of intervention of male family members as main political patrons. Political party’s influence on women councillors especially while making decisions is still an important reality.

From the above, it has been revealed that a trend of research on local self-governing institutions is not a new phenomenon. Many a research work has been carried out over the topic. But so far no systematic study has been done on the implementation of the 74th Amendment Act in Tripura. Thus, the present study has thrown the sufficient light in this connection.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of the proposed research work is to assess the extent of democratic decentralization through the implementation of 74th Amendment Act, 1992 in Tripura and its success and failure as well. This study has fixed the following broad objectives:

1. To trace the origin, evolution and growth of municipal government in India.
2. To trace the growth of municipal government in Tripura.
3. To analyze the socio-economic profile and level of political awareness of the respondents.
4. To trace the sources of income of urban local-self governing institutions.
5. To map overall success and failures of urban local-self governing institutions in post 74th Amendment Act situation and identify potential measures for improvement in local-self governing institutions in Tripura.

Research Questions

The following questions pertinent to the present study have been formulated:

1. Do the socio-economic factors of the respondents determine their level of political awareness?
2. How do local resources stand in comparison with the government grants?
3. Have the provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 been implemented in Tripura?
4. What are the problems in the implementation of the provisions of the Constitution (Seventy-fourth Amendment) Act, 1992 in the urban areas of Tripura?

Methodology of the Study

The research work has been conducted with the help of historical and empirical methods. The study is based on data collected from both primary and secondary sources. For the study, 80 respondents have been selected and all of them have been interviewed with the interview schedules by the researcher himself. All the elected representative of the AMC, Udaipur NP, Ambassa NP and Kailasahar NP have been selected for the study.

Primary data has been collected through interview schedule containing both fixed alternative and open ended questions. For collecting primary data, three interview schedules have been formulated and used. Schedule-I has been used to collect data pertinent to the socio-economic background of the respondents. Schedule-II has been used to collect information as to the level of political awareness of the respondents. Schedule-III has been used to collect information from the respondents as to the problems in the implementation of the Constitution (Seventy-fourth Amendment) Act, 1992 in the urban areas of Tripura. Primary data have also been collected from the records available at the offices of ULBs at Agartala, Udaipur, Ambassa and Kailasahar.

Secondary data has been collected from books, journals, newspapers and reports and publications available at the offices of the Municipalities; Urban Development Department, Government of Tripura; Statistical Department, Government of Tripura; and other departments associated with the ULBs. To gain deep insight, discussion has been held with the concerned officials and administrators of the Urban Local bodies. For the purpose of the collection of data from secondary sources Central Library of Tripura University; Library of ICSSR-NERC, Shillong; Central Library of North East Hill
University, Shillong; Bir Chandra State Central Library, Agartala have been also been consulted. Extensive use of Internet materials has also been made for the study. The analysis of the data has been made according to the nature of data.

Significance of the study

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 has marked a new era in the history of urban local self-government in India. The Act has aimed at ensuring the goals of social justice and economic development for the people living in urban areas. The present study has been confined to four Municipalities / ULBs in the state of Tripura. Of these, the number of Municipal Council is one and the rests are Nagar Panchayats, and to this end, four urban local bodies from the four districts of Tripura such as, ULBs located at the district headquarters of West, South, North and Dhalai Tripura Districts have been selected. A careful study of the Urban Local Bodies has provided a basis of knowledge through which socio-economic and political functions of the urban local self institutions for ensuring social justice and economic development can easily be understood. This study has been helpful to examine the success and failures of the 74th Amendment Act and has also set sufficient light on the problems existed in urban areas even after the implementation of the Act. Lastly, an in depth analysis of the issues related to the study has been very important to identify the base for effective solution of the issues and problems. The findings and conclusions of this study may come to the use of the administrators in making the urban self-governing bodies effective, active and efficient.

Rationale of the Study

The rationale of this study lies in finding a political-economic relationship in the working of a few urban self-governing bodies. The present study has been focused on the working system of the four Municipalities of four districts of Tripura. The selection has been made to conceptualise the fact of the functioning system of the Municipalities situated at the district headquarters in the light of the provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992. Thus, the present study “Democratic Decentralisation and the Implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act in Tripura” has been taken up
to provide a deep insight into the fund, functions and functionaries of other Municipalities throughout the state of Tripura. Because, democratic decentralization without efficiency and economy is self-contradictory, a national wastage.

Chapterisation

The study has been divided into the following six chapters:

Chapter-I: Introduction
Chapter-II: Evolution of Municipal Government in India
Chapter-III: Socio-Economic Profile and Level of Political Awareness of the Respondents.
Chapter-IV: Finance of the Urban Local Bodies
Chapter-V: Implementation of the 74th Amendment Act in Urban Areas in Tripura
Chapter-VI: Concluding Observations and Findings

Summary of the chapters:

➢ Chapter I has given a detailed outline of the research plan which includes the statement of the problem and the importance and relevance of the study. A conceptual framework of the study has been outlined to comprehend the key concepts such as- ‘democratic decentralisation’, ‘local self-government’, ‘74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992’, ‘Tripura Municipal Act, 1994’ associated with the present study. It has also contained an analytical review of related literature, aims and objectives of the study, relevant research questions, methodology of the study, significance of the study, rationale of the study, chapter plan and the profile of the sample area. The present study has been associated with the four urban local bodies of Tripura, namely- AMC, Udaipur NP, Kailasahar NP and Ambassa NP. Hence, an attempt has been made to present a brief profile of these four urban local bodies.

➢ Chapter II holds a brief discussion on the origin and evolution of municipal government in India. For the convenience of a systematic study as to the origin and evolution of municipal government, this chapter has been divided into four Sections. Of these, Section I deals with the institutions of municipal government
in Ancient and Medieval India as well. Section II elucidates the stages in the the evolution of municipal government during British rule. Section III has taken an endeavour to focus on the development of municipal government in post-independence India. Finally, Section IV deals with the evolution of municipal government in Tripura in particular. Section I postulates that the idea of municipal government is not a new phenomenon in Indian social system as it had been in existence in ancient India also.

Chapter III makes an empirical analysis of the socio-economic profile of the sitting municipal councillors and their level of political awareness. For the convenience of presentation, this chapter has been divided into two Sections. Section I deals with the socio-economic profile of the sitting councillors and Section II deals with the level of political awareness of the respondents. While analysing the socio-economic profile of the councillors, their age, education, caste, gender, monthly income, occupation, monthly family income, religion, association with social organization, marital status have been examined. This chapter discusses that various factors or determinants play a vital role in shaping and elevating the level of political awareness of the councillors at the urban level. Among these factors, ages, education, gender, association with socio-political wings have been proved to be the major determinants for assessing the level of political awareness of the respondents. The level of monthly income of the respondents is not as dominant as other determinants in terms of determining the level of awareness of the respondents. It dwells upon that many councillors at the urban level, who have been entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the goals of social justice and socio-economic development, are not conscious of the basic issues related to the urban bodies. A lion’s share of the members have been found either unaware or having very poor knowledge about the basic issues of the urban administration. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 has been introduced with the aims of securing the ideals of social justice and socio-economic development, but in order to realise the ideals as enshrined in the Act, the councillors on whom the success of the Act is hinged they should be bestowed with the adequate knowledge and awareness. Otherwise, the very goals of the Act would meet with a great fiasco.
Chapter IV has given an overview as to the finance of the Urban Local bodies. For the convenience of the study, this chapter has been divided into two sections. Out of the two sections, Section I deals with grants to the urban local self-governing institutions in Tripura, and Section II dwells upon the own revenue income of the urban local self-governing institutions. This chapter discusses the financial resources of the four urban local self-governing institutions in Tripura such as, AMC, Ambassa NP, Udaipur NP, Kailsahar NP and Udaipur NP from the the financial year 2000-2001 to 2011-2012. The chapter discusses that the income of the urban local bodies from their own sources is much more less than that of government's grants. Government is the biggest financer of these bodies and usually these bodies are dependent to a great extent on the government grants for carrying out the development activities within their jurisdiction. But excessive dependence on Government for grants-in-aid is a major defect of the municipalities.

The Chapter V has undertaken an effort to understand if the provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 have been implemented in Tripura. This chapter has been divided into the following Sections, namely: Constitution of Municipalities; Composition of Municipalities; Constitution of Wards Committees; Mandate Periodic Elections; Reservation of Seats; Duration of Municipalities; Functional Responsibilities of Urban Local Bodies; Setting up of State Finance Commission; and Constitution of District Planning Committee.

Chapter VI has summarised the findings of the study. In this chapter, an attempt has also been made to suggest some remedial measures in order to ensure well and truly implementation of the provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act in Tripura.

The concluding observations and findings of the study have been presented in the light of the objectives and research questions. Chapter-wise presentation of the summary of the content and findings has been made here:
The idea of municipal government is not a new phenomenon in Indian social system as it had been in existence in ancient India also. There had been a highly organised system of urban local government even in the Vedic period in India. The Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Upanishads and the Jataka stories gave a clear indication as to the existence of urban government in Ancient India. In Ancient India there were the institutions of urban local government like ‘Parishad’, ‘Municipal Board’ and ‘Nagaraka’ to look after city administration.

During the Mughal rule there was an officer called ‘Kotwal’ who had been vested with the responsibilities of performing many municipal functions. In other words, he was a generalist administrator entrusted with the responsibility of many civil and police functions.

It was in 1687 that a municipal corporation was set up for the first time in Madras in India during the British period. During British period Lord Mayo’s Resolution of 1870 gave a new impetus to the improvement of urban local government in India. However, the Lord Ripon’s Resolution of 1882 was the first sincere effort to reinvigorate the concept of urban local self-government during the British period. Later on, ‘The Government of India Act, 1919’ inaugurated an era of new interest and activity in the area of urban local self-government.

The Constitution of India that has come into force on the 26th January of 1950, under the Entry 5 of the List II and Entry 20 of the List III of the 7th Schedule has given a reference to urban local self-government. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 which marked a new vista in the history of the evolution of of urban local self government in India. The Act has given the constitutional status to the urban local government in India.

The system of municipal government was in existence in Tripura from time immemorial. In 1871 the first Municipal Council was established at Agartala. Many a effort has been made for the improvement of urban local self- government in Tripura and in this connection, the most important one is ‘The Tripura
Municipal Act, 1994'. At present, there are twenty urban local bodies in Tripura; out of these, one Municipal Corporation, thirteen Municipal Councils and six Nagar Panchayats.

- It has been revealed that out of 80 respondents for the study, the presence of elderly people (aged 51 and above) was found to be 55 percent, while 6.25 percent is found belonging to the age group of ‘18-30’, 7.50 percent belonging to the age group of ‘31-40’ and the remaining 31.25 percent belonging to the age group of ‘41-50’.

- It has been revealed that 43.75 percent of respondents have been found to be educated up to ‘graduation and above’ and the remaining 43.75 percent belongs to ‘below madhyamik’, ‘madhyamik’ and ‘higher secondary’ at the rate of 15.00 percent, 30.00 percent and 11.25 percent respectively.

- As far as the caste composition of the respondents is concerned, a majority of 58.75 percent respondents have been found to belong to General category, while the remaining 41.25 percent belongs to SC, ST and OBC at the rate of 23.75 percent, 5.00 percent and 12.50 percent respectively. Thus it has been found that though the majority of the respondents are belonging to the higher caste, yet people belonging to SCs and STs also are taking part in urban politics.

- It has been revealed from the study that 47.50 percent has been found to belong to male and the remaining 52.50 percent belong to female. Thus now-a-days, women are not born to be confined to the household activities only, rather, they are participating in the decision-making bodies at the urban level and playing important role in society as social and political leaders.

- As for the income of the respondents, it has been found that majority of the respondents belong to the income group of ‘Up to 5,000/-’ (56.25 percent) per month, and while the remaining 43.75 percent respondents belong to the income groups such as, ‘5,001-10,000’, ‘10,001-15,000’, ‘15,001-20,000’ and ‘20,001 and
above’ at the rate of 16.25 percent, 15.00 percent, 5.00 percent and 7.50 percent respectively.

- Regarding the occupation of the respondents, it has been found that people having different occupations namely- ‘agricultural’, ‘business’, ‘wage earner’, ‘housewife’, ‘pensioner’ and ‘others (which includes mostly social workers and teachers)’ are found taking part in urban politics.

- So far as the religious status of the respondents is concerned, the respondents are divided into three major religious groups, namely- Hinduism, Islam and Christianity at the rate of 93.75 percent, 3.75 percent and 2.5 percent respectively. Thus it has been found that ULBs are dominated by the belonging to Hinduism.

- It has been found that the respondents are divided into five groups, namely- ‘Up to 5,000’, ‘5,001-10,000’, ‘10,001-15,000’, ‘15,001-20,000’ and ‘20,001 & above’ at the rate of 12.50 percent, 22.50 percent, 23.75 percent, 15.00 percent and 26.25 percent respectively. It has been found that there is a significant difference among the respondents in terms of their monthly family income. It has also been revealed that people belonging to lower income group also participate in political affairs of the urban administration.

- It has been found that 48.75 percent is associated with the political wing, 16.25 percent belong to social wing only and the remaining 35.00 percent is associated with both types of wings. As regards the marital status of the councillors is concerned, out of the 80 respondents, 93.75 percent is found married, 3.75 percent has been found to belong to widow or widower and only 2.50 percent has been found to belong to unmarried.

- It has been revealed that the level of awareness of the respondents belonging to the age group of ‘18-30’ and ‘35 & above’ is higher than those of the respondents belonging to the age group of ‘31-40’ and ‘41-50’. Again, it has been found that the respondents belonging to the age group of ‘18-30’ have higher level of
awareness in comparison with the other age groups. Thus, it is found that the young respondents are more acquainted with the issued related to the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act.

- It has been found that the respondents having educational qualification ‘Graduation and above’ is more aware than the respondents having educational qualification ‘H.S. (+2 Stages)’, ‘Madhyamik’ and ‘Below Madhyamik’ respectively. Similarly, the level of awareness of the respondents having educational qualification ‘H.S. (+2 Stages)’ is more than that of the respondents having educational qualification ‘Madhyamik’ and ‘Below Madhyamik’ respectively. Again, the respondents having educational qualification ‘Below Madhyamik’ are not so aware as the respondents having educational qualification ‘Madhyamik’.

- It has been found from the study that the level of awareness of the male respondents has been ranging from 92.11 percent to 65.79 percent; whereas the level of awareness of the female respondents has been ranging from 76.19 percent to 52.38 percent.

- It has been revealed that the respondents belonging to the monthly income group of ‘10,001-15,000’ have higher level of awareness as compared to the respondents having other income groups. There is no significant difference between the respondents belonging to the monthly income groups of ‘15,001-20,000’ and ‘20,001 and above’ in terms of their level of awareness. As to the level of awareness of the respondents having monthly income of ‘Up to 5,000’ and ‘5,001-10,000’ has been found quite satisfactory.

- It has been found that the respondents belonging to ‘Pensioners’ and ‘Other’ categories are more aware than the respondents having different other occupations. It has been found that the level of awareness of the ‘agriculturalists’ is higher than those of ‘businessmen’. Out of the total 42 female respondents, 28 (66.67 percent) respondents are ‘housewife’. It has been found that though the representation of the respondents belonging to ‘housewife’ is more than 50.00 percent, but their level of awareness is less than 50.00 percent in all cases.
• It has been found that the respondents who are associated with both the types of wings such as social wings and political wings having high level of awareness as compared to the respondents who are associated with either of social wing or political wing only. Again, it has been revealed that the respondents associated with the political wing are more aware than those of associated with the social wing.

• It has been revealed that on an average the amount of government grants received by AMC is more than three times vis-à-vis its own revenue income from the financial year 2000-2001 to 2011-2012. A similar trend has been found in all Nagar Panchayats also. Regarding Udaipur NP, it has been found that the revenue income of Udaipur NP on an average is less than government grants by Rs. 131.03 lakhs per year. Regarding the Kailasahar NP, it has been found that the amount of grants received by Udaipur NP is as nearly as 12 times more than that of its revenue income on an average from the financial year 2000-2001 to 2011-2012. It has been revealed that the grants received by Ambassa NP is more than 26 times as compared to its own revenue income.

• It has been found that the own revenue income of the ULBs is too poor to meet their needs, requirements and expectations. As a result, these bodies are dependent on government grants to a great extent. Although the excessive dependence on the government Grants has made the Urban Local Bodies solvent to some extent, but at the same time it has emasculated their independence to a large extent.

• It has been found that as per the Census of India 2011, the size of population in AMC is more than 3 lakhs; the population size of all the three NPs also is not less than 15 lakhs respectively; nonetheless, Agartala Municipal Council has not been upgraded to Agartala Municipal Corporation, and the towns at Kailasahar, Ambassa and Udaipur have not been upgraded as Municipal council before 2014. Later on, in the year 2014, Agartala Municipal Council has been upgraded as Municipal Corporation and the towns at Udaipur, Kailasahar and Ambassa have been upgraded as Municipal Council.
From the study, it has been revealed that the constitution of AMC, and Udaipur NP, Kailasahar NP and Ambassa NP has been made in consonance with the spirit and substance of the Act.

It has been revealed that Ward Committees have been constituted by the Municipalities within their own jurisdiction and the number of Ward Committees is equal to the total number of Wards of the ULBs concerned. Regarding the composition of Ward Committees, the number of nominated member of a Ward Committee should not be more than 13, but it has been found that the Ward Committees within the territorial area of Kailasahar NP have been constituted with more than 13 nominated members which has transgressed the maximum limit.

It has been found that in the Elections to Municipalities, 2000, the total number of seats was 37, and out of these, 7 (18.92 percent) seats were reserved for SCs and 2 (5.41 percent) seats were reserved for STs; in the Elections to Municipalities, 2005, the total number of seats was 69, and out of these, 15 (21.74 percent) seats were reserved for SCs and the seats reserved for STs were 3 (4.35 percent); and in the Elections to Municipalities, 2010, the total number of seats were 80, and out of these, 19 (23.75 percent) seats were reserved for the people belonging to SCs and 4 (5.00 percent) seats were reserved for the people belonging to STs. Thus, the people belonging to SCs and STs have been given due opportunity to take part in the decision-making body of the government at the urban level.

It has been found that in the Elections to Municipalities, 2000, the total number of councillors belonging to SCs were 7 and out of them 3,(42.86 percent) councillors were women; in the Elections to Municipalities, 2005, the total number of councillors belonging to SCs was 16 and out of them, 8 (50.00 percent) councillors were women; and in the Elections to Municipalities, 2010, the total number of councillors belonging to SCs were 19 and out of them 8 (42.11 percent) councillors were women. Similarly, in the Elections to Municipalities, 2000, 2005 and 2010 the total numbers of councillors belonging to STs were 2, 3 and 4 respectively; and all the seats, that is, 100 percent seat was occupied by women only.
• It has been revealed that increasing women participation does not ensure their active and effective participation as their participation is mainly determined by many factors such as, the policy of reservation of seats, caste factor, family political status, and political affiliation. It has been found that caste identity, political affiliation and the policy of reservation play dominant role in winning elections to the municipalities for women.

• It has been found that the seats in the office of the chairperson of the municipalities have been mainly occupied by the representative of people belonging to higher castes, not by the representatives of the people belonging to SCs and STs. Out of these four urban local bodies, only in Udaipur NP, the seat in the office of the chairperson was adorned with the schedule caste member since 2010, and in all other ULBs the seats in the office of Chairpersons were chaired by the people belonging to the higher caste only.

• In Tripura, ULBs completed their full tenure of five years long since 1995. As per the provision of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992, the elections to the urban local bodies should be held after every five years. Accordingly, in Tripura, elections to the ULBs have been conducted by the separate state election commission after every five years such as-in 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015.

• It has been found that the first Tripura State Finance Commission was constituted in 1994 and the second Tripura State Finance Commission was set up in 1999, but the Commission did not submit any report on the financial conditions of the ULBs. The third Tripura State Finance Commission was set up in 2008, but the third Tripura State Finance Commission was set up after a long gap, that is, after the nine years from the formation of second Tripura State Finance Commission and the recommendations of the third Tripura State Finance Commission are still on the paper. Again, the fourth Tripura State Finance Commission has been constituted in 2013, but it has not submitted any report with respect to the urban local bodies in Tripura so far. Thus, the State Government has so far been following the recommendations of the First State Finance Commission.
• It has been found that the formation of the District Planning Committees has not been made as per the provisions the Act. The North Tripura District Planning Committee and West Tripura District Planning Committee have prepared the consolidated District Plan for the year 2010-11, 2011-12 and 2012-13 and sent to the Planning Department of the State. But, the information regarding preparation of District Plan in respect of other districts was not available.

• It has been found that out of the 18 functional items as mentioned in the 12th Schedule of the Constitution of India, only eight functions, namely-water supply, drainage, solid waste management, sanitation, roads and bridges, street lighting, sewerage and housing for urban poor were identified as core service areas by Urban Development Department of Tripura, but all these core service areas are not looked after by ULBs only. Again in terms of these core service areas also, there is deficiency of service, as these are not materialised well and truly so far.

• It has been revealed that the deficiency in service is mainly due to lack of finance, bureaucratic red-tapism, lack of people awareness, lack of knowledge of technology of the personnel of ULBs, party politics. In order to solve these problems, steps have been taken by the respondents from time to time. It has been found from that though the sitting councillors have taken setps to implement the provisions of the Act, yet the percentage of success is less than 50.00 per cent ranging from 7.50 per cent to 46.25 percent.

The findings of the study have shown that the provisions of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 have been partially implemented in Tripura. Therefore, the following suggestions are recommended for the vibrant functioning of the urban local self-government in Tripura:

❖ Sincerity, efficiency and speed are lacking in the functioning of the ULBs. As a result, proper service do not reach the people dwelling in the municipal areas. That
is why, elected representatives and officials should be more people oriented, more service oriented and they should be answerable to the demos for their act of omission and commission. They should not be callous to the needs, necessity and aspirations of the demos.

- The structure of municipalities is not always appropriate for facing the numerous problems and the connection between people and municipalities is not always upto the mark. Hence, Infrastructural system of the Urban Local Bodies and their networking with the common people should be improved for ensuring socio-economic development of all sects of people. Budgeting and accounting must be computerised fully and monitored centrally with facilities of networking extended to all Urban Local Bodies. These will increase efficiency in financial management of resources of Urban Local Bodies.

- For the purpose of comprehensive and planned development of the urban areas of the State, the Urban Development Department may take necessary steps for the purpose of formulation and implementation of master plan for Municipalities, by engaging consultant having sufficient experience in the field. This will cater to the requirement of development planning of all the Urban Local Bodies on long term basis in future.

- Ward Committees should take steps to reduce the gap between the electorate and the elected representatives and to ensure the increased people's participation in the decision-making body of the government at urban level. Ward Committees should look after and fulfill the needs and aspirations of the people living within the Wards and in order to increase people's participation in the democratic process of urban administration. District Planning Committees should be constituted at par with the provisions of the Act and their activities should be materialized.

- Transparency, accountability, responsiveness on the part of the both electorates and their representatives should be increased and they should have been aware of the basic issues relating to the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act and to this end
, seminar, workshops, training programme, awareness programme etc. for the municipal employees and elected representatives should be arranged.

- C and AG is the proper authority to examine and look after the financial positions of the Urban Local bodies. Their reports and comments carry weight. The reports of the C and AG should be brought to the notice of the common people in order to ensuring the transparency of the mode of expenditure of the urban local bodies.

- ULBs should take necessary steps with regard to generate more revenue income so that these bodies can be independent from economic point of view resulting in reducing the degree of their dependency on government grants for their functions. In order to increase their own financial resources new taxes should be introduced and the rates of existing taxes should be increased so that the ULBs can discharge their responsibilities and functions earnestly and efficiently and can establish themselves as true agents of local self-governments for urban areas throughout the country.

- One of the most important features of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 is the set up of the finance commission once in every five years. But in the State of Tripura, Finance Commission has not been constituted after every five year. It should be constituted in every five years for giving necessary suggestions for improving the financial position of the urban local bodies and it should also suggest the ways and means for making the ULBs strong from economic point of view. Finally, State Government should take into consideration the observations and suggestions of the Finance Commission in right earnest.