ABSTRACT

The entire developing world is witness to an unprecedented shift of human settlement to the cities. While India’s population remains substantially rural, it is emerging as one of the fastest urbanizing countries in the world and has already a staggering large urban population of around 285 million. The economic base of the nation through expanding industries, trade, commerce and services has already shifted to urban centres.

Cities have strongly emerged as the prime engines of Indian economy and generators of national wealth. Even though the level of urbanisation is relatively low in India, the contribution of urban economy to national economic structure is significantly high. It is realised that handling of urban development is a very delicate issue and has to be strategically operated. Thus it can be seen that urban India is facing a challenge. Cities must cope with great numbers of people, plan to provide them services, find resources to meet needs of maintaining infrastructure, respond to urbanization and poverty. Solving these complex problems is the goal of good urban governance. It envisages improving the quality of life in cities through improved local governance by reinventing the city as an inclusive city. Such a city provides space and voice to its stakeholders through inclusive decision-making, since decision-making is the heart of urban governance.

The 74th Constitution Amendment Act is a very important national initiative to implement the idea of decentralized governance. It was amended in the year 1994.
This legislation provides constitutional status to urban local bodies as the third tier of the government. It enables participation of weaker sections and women through reservation of seats, ensures the political existence of local bodies by making it mandatory to hold elections in case of suspension or suppression within 6 months of time frame and set-up the state finance commission to recommend guidelines for strengthening finances of the municipalities. It also provides for formation of local level committees, namely ward committees, to take up local issues.

The 74th Constitution Amendment Act of 1992, stipulated that the states will amend their laws so that they would become consistent with the provisions of the constitution. This was to be done within one year of the commencement of the new provisions in the constitution. The Karnataka government was unable to meet the deadline for bringing in the conformity legislation. The conformity legislation called Karnataka Municipal Corporations (Amendment) Act, 1994, received the assent of the Governor on 3rd October 1994. Though the Government of Karnataka amended the legislation, some of the provisions of the 74th Constitution Amendment Act have not yet been implemented.

This study has concentrated on the importance of urban governance, origin, structure and functions of the Bangalore Municipal Corporation, Administrative dynamics and people’s participation in Bangalore Municipal Corporation.

In this study the historical method has been adopted to understand the origin of local governance in India in general and Karnataka in particular and also about the origin of Bangalore Municipal Corporation. The documentary method is been used to examine the acts and official documents and policies. The sociological method of
interview with various corporators, officials has been extensively used. Analysis of the collected data and further findings has been identified by using the descriptive method.

The major findings are:

1. The numerous problems faced by the Bangalore Municipal Corporation arises out of lack of financial resources and poor performance. Hence the nurseries of democracy should be revamped.

2. The indirect election of the mayor combined with his short one-year tenure makes him more of a figure head. Hence a demand has been made especially by the mayors themselves as well as councillors to change the present system and have the mayor directly elected by the people.

3. Provision of some minimum academic qualifications for the councillors should be mandatory. It may improve the general tone of corporation leadership as well.

4. It is found that there is often poor coordination between the commissioner and the heads of the departments in the Bangalore Municipal Corporation. Since the departmental heads owe accountability to the committee, the commissioner’s power of direction and effective coordination gets ineffective in actual practice.

5. The relationship between the mayor and the commissioner reveals that there is a need for the separation of politics from municipal administration.

6. In Bangalore Municipal Corporation there is a multiplicity of agencies dealing with solid waste management services. Due to these multiplicity of agencies, gaps and duplications are observed in the provision of services.
7. There is no public-private partnership existing between BATF and the corporation.

8. As far as the state government control is concerned it is found that there is too much of interference by the government in the working of Bangalore Municipal Corporation. Hence there is a strong need for relaxation of control from above.

9. The strength of the municipal council has not increased in proportion to the population of the city. There is an urgent need to increase the strength of the municipal council.

10. In the Bangalore Municipal Corporation, the municipal leadership lacks the capacity to visualise, conceptualise and crystallise definite strategies for the all-round development of the city.

11. There is an imperative need to strengthen and improve the committee system within the corporation for a detailed study and appropriate recommendations and decisions about specific problems of the city.

12. The ward committee is not a fully elected body like the gram panchayat which is a body formed only by elected representatives, each member equal to the other and having his/her own constituency and the backing of the people.

13. The nominated members have been given voting rights and since they number seven in a committee of 10-11 persons, they could always overrule the 3-4 elected councillors on the committee.
14. There is indifference of many officials towards the nominated members as they do not have the powers to get them transferred. Most of the officials attended only to the issues raised by the elected councillors as councillors have the power to get them transferred.

15. Most ward committee members have identified the major problems that have hindered effective functioning of the Bangalore Municipal Corporation as: unwillingness of elected councillors to share powers with nominated members, political interference and bureaucratic apathy.