CHAPTER - III

Section - I

IMPLEMENTATION OF IDSMT PROGRAMME IN WEST BENGAL: AN EVALUATION.

To begin with, implementation has been defined as a "process of interaction between the setting of goals and activities geared to achieving them". There are two conflicting views on the process of policy implementation: the compliance approach and the policy approach.

The first assumes that implementation is a technical routine, a political process of carrying out predetermined plans and that the administrators or implementers are subordinates who comply with guidelines formulated by political leaders. The second approach views administration as an integral part of policy making process in which politics are refined, reformulated and even abandoned in the process of implementing them, thus making implementation complex and unpredictable.

The factors that influence policy implementation have not been given adequate attention in developing countries because those who formulate policies hold the 'compliance' view of administration. Underlying assumption is that once policies are announced they would be implemented by subordinate administrators and that the intended results would be achieved in a non-political and technically competent way. But the experiences in under-
developed countries indicate that implementation is not merely a technical process of carrying out pre-conceived plans but is a dynamic and somewhat unpredictable process of political interaction. A variety of political, social, behavioural, economic and organisational factors influence the degree to which policies are implemented as they were intended and the degree to which they achieve their intended goals.

Initially, the Integrated Development of small and medium towns' Programme covered 20 towns; but the figure rose to 25 towns with the inclusion of Bolpur, Arambagh, Contai Habra and Raniganj during the last phase of Sixth Plan. While discussing the implementation of IDSMT gains and constraints are to come to the fore. Gains are apparently one vital effects and side benefits of project implementation of projects and constraints are the problems and resistance faced by it during any phase of the project's life cycle. In order to know the gains and constraints in implementation of IDSMT programme in different towns some indicators have been taken into consideration. These are: (1) Output indicators (i.e. land, plot, shop, dwelling units etc.) (ii) economic indicators (i.e. employment generation, marketing facilities etc.) (iii) quality of life indicators (i.e. addition and improvement in the town services and amenities). Besides the observations in this chapter are based on direct questionnaire
method.

(a) Gains from the implementation of IDSMT Programme:

Under IDSMT programme in West Bengal certain remunerative schemes have been taken up for implementation. The Bus terminus shopping complex, Tourist Dormitory, Industrial Complex, Market complex etc. are a few illustration of the project. Thus, there has been an improvement in the physical environment of the towns. In addition to such schemes, they implemented non-remunerative and social service schemes for upgrading the economic status along with services and civic amenities of the town. The inhabitants enjoyed the benefits of the project. A good environment is thus brought into existence.

Another important gains from the programme is that in most of the towns, the people have directly come into terms with the implementational process. Thus it has been possible to spread democracy at the grass root level.

Mention should also be made that the assets created out of IDSMT project in the towns have benefited the hinterlands. For example, the newly constructed feeder roads, linking bridge Bus Terminus and Market Centres etc. have created new scopes and opportunities to rural people living in hinterlands.
(b) Constraints in the implementation of IDSMT Programme.

In accordance with the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Works and Housing, Government of India, the Government of West Bengal has given the responsibility of implementation of IDSMT project to the respective Municipal authorities. The Municipal Engineering Directorate (MED), recently established agency of the Urban Development Department, Government of West Bengal, has been provided to give technical support and help to the towns under IDSMT. The district level co-ordination committees have been formed in each District to co-ordinate the implementation process.

Two extensions of the target time for completion of IDSMT programme indicate tardy progress of programme implementation in West Bengal. Nevertheless, all the projects, it is feared, would not be implemented by the end of 1987. The towns are at varying stages of implementation. While a large number of towns are taking effective steps for implementation of the project, a few only have completed such steps. For example, the projects of Cooch Behar, Kharagpur, Buddwan, Kalimpong, Balurghat, Bankura are near completion, the towns of Suri, Darjeeling, Katwa, Bishnupur, Raiganj, Jalpaiguri etc. are lagging behind.
Unfortunately it is observed that the co-ordination committees of different districts are inactive. The Chairman of Siliguri Municipality and the Chairman of Suri Municipality opined in a seminar, that only one meeting held so far in their respective districts. The Chairmen of Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, Midnapur and Kharagpur held the same opinion. At the outset, the co-ordination committee was headed by the District Magistrate. But the District Magistrate is so busy that he finds little time to hold meeting of the co-ordination committee. In a single line administration (as in West Bengal) the District Magistrate is the key official responsible for co-ordination of various activities in the district. But this move of the state government was strongly resented by the Chairmen of Municipalities. The provision now has been made so that the Chairman of Zilla Parishad can preside over the co-ordination committee.

The co-ordination among different authorities engaged in implementation of programme such as the District co-ordination committee, the Municipal Authority, the Municipal Engineering Directorate, the Urban Development Department of the State Government is not satisfactory.

Even after aforesaid provision the role of the co-ordination Committee did not improve. As yet, the District Magistrate does not find time to attend the meeting of the co-
ordination committee. In fact, he is the key man for removing the bottlenecks in the implementation of development at the district level. By denying him to play the pivotal role in this respect the implementation is likely to be tardy. The District Magistrate is responsible for signing the utilisation certificate. At least in two cases, for example, in Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri, the District Magistrate refused to sign the utilisation certificate on the ostensible ground that the expenditure schedules were not maintained in keeping with Accounts Rules. Interestingly, the State Government insists on the utilisation certificate countersigned by the District Magistrate as a pre-condition of the release of state fund. Admittedly, a hitch stemmed out of the right of the Finance Secretary to countersign the utilisation certificate already signed by the Secretary to the Government of West Bengal, Urban Development, who happened to be senior to the former. Thus, procedural wranglings were found to be present since the very inception of integrated development of small and medium towns programme. Perhaps, this flowed out of the non-recognition among the officials the need for overcoming procedural obstacles for the sake of development.

Inadequacy of funds is the vital constraint faced by most of the towns under IDSP programme. The Central assistance to the extent of 50 percent is an incentive for initiating
development activities, but its ceiling at Rs. 40 lakhs acts as a constraint because projects have to be framed strictly within this financial limit, even if it is a privileged scheme. The allocation of financial resources of Rs. 1 cr. for the IDSMT town has been in the ratio of 40:40:20 among the Central Government, the State Government and Municipal Body, respectively. All the towns under IDSMT programme have maintained the ratio pattern in strict sense. Some towns have prepared plan without their own shares to the extent of Rs. 20 lacs, of Rs. 30 lakhs only.

Unlike the municipalities in Southern India the municipalities in West Bengal are administratively inactive, technically inefficient, financially insolvent as evident from our study in the chapters. Simply by extending engineering help from the Municipal Engineering Directorate, the implementation of programmes in different IDSMT towns can not be properly ensured.

Sometimes available funds are inadequate which warranted the changes in the type of schemes or dropping of approved projects. This has happened in large number of cases. (9)

At the time of formulating projects the consideration for price escalation was not seriously taken into account. Presently owing to price rise, the cost of every scheme under IDSMT has become double or so. This situation has posed a genuine threat to those who are engaged in programme implementa-
tion process.

The required raw materials like cement, steel etc. for the implementation of the project were inadequate to meet the required demands of the IDSMT towns of West Bengal. This problem was posed by almost all the Chairman of municipalities in West Bengal in a seminar at Kalimp organ, 1985. No fruitful policy was made by the Government to make the raw materials available on a priority basis. Although, most of the towns have now overcome this difficulty, for considerable period of time this paucity of raw materials posed a serious constraint in the implementation of the programme. Problems of land acquisition and court injunction are other constraints in the implementation of IDSMT programme. In most of the IDSMT towns of the state, physical possession of land was not varied while identifying the schemes, subsequent change of sites required fresh approval of the government of India which itself is a time lingering affair.

Delay in working out the modality of execution under the joint control of local bodies and the Municipal Engineering Directorate is another constraint in the implementation of the programmes. In some cases the dichotomy between the M.E. and Directorate/the local bodies on the issues of programme implementation has brought the process to a halt.
Another important reason behind the delay is that the IDSMT programmes in West Bengal has started late. While, the IDSMT programme in Maharashtra, Karnataka and the other Southern states were already taken up in 1983, effort was made by the Government of West Bengal to make a start of the programme at the middle of 1983.

Absence of popularly elected municipal board in more than two municipalities and instability of the elected municipal boards in three IDSMT towns constituted a major contributing factor to non-implementation of development programmes. The elected body provides the political will behind the implementation of any development programmes. For example, in Darjeeling, Bishnupur as well as in Baharampur the execution of IDSMT programme started in late 1984. The instability of the municipal boards in Kaiganj and Midnapur Municipalities is the main constraint in the implementation of IDSMT programme.

The National Institute of Urban Affairs held that some of the important reasons for the slow implementation of the IDSMT projects are as follows:

(a) Faulty preparation of the project reports.
(b) Delay in land acquisition and also delay in sanction of estimates.
(c) Shortage of building and other material.
(d) Failure on the part of the State Government to provide adequate budget provisions.

(e) Lack of technical personnel to execute the scheme.

(f) Failure to assign sufficient priority to this scheme.

Evidently, the towns under IDSMT programme in West Bengal, have been suffering more or less from all the shortcomings as mentioned by the National Institute of Urban Affairs.

Section - 2

Implementation of IDSMT Programme: A Case Study of Four Selected towns of North Bengal.

The strategy of integrated development of small and medium towns lies in, inter-alia, achieving balanced regional development and providing a kind of buffer between the rural areas on the one hand, from where a large number of migrants flock towards metropolitan cities, and the metropolitan cities on the other, getting flooded with all kinds of people and the consequent urban problems. The kind of development envisaged is intended to provide greater relief to the metropolitan cities as well as the small and medium towns themselves not only in terms of generation of more activities and employment opportunities but also in terms of general upgrading of the services which the local governments are expected to do.
Thus, the Integrated Development of small and medium towns (IDsMT) is seemingly an important policy decision for the development of hitherto neglected small and medium towns as growth centres for providing employment opportunities to the rural migrants of the surrounding areas and also for integrated development of its hinterland and integrated provision of service and amenities in these towns.

There are certain important factors upon which the realisation of the objectives and goals depends. These are: (a) the nature of programme content; (b) financial support and (c) programme management and (d) public participation. In the light of these factors a case study of four towns may be undertaken.

A) Nature of Programme content:

A detailed description of the schemes undertaken by the four towns, such as Balurghat, Cochr Behar, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, has been made in the preceding chapter. The schemes undertaken by the said towns may be divided into three heads: (1) profit oriented schemes; (2) non-profit oriented schemes; (3) Basic social service oriented schemes. The scheme which is able to plough back the invested funds into it with an amount of profit may be termed as profit oriented scheme.
Examples of such schemes are Development of Markets, Commercial complex, Industrial estate, Municipal Rest House, Dormitory, Bus Terminal etc. Non-profit oriented scheme is not able to recycle the invested fund into it. The schemes under this category are: Improvement and upgradation of roads, construction of new roads, bridges and such other infra-structural facilities. As certain amenities fulfill the basic needs of urban inhabitants they may be categorized as basic social service schemes. Environmental sanitation, nutrition, entertainment etc. are illustrative of such schemes. From the table given below a clear picture of the nature of IDSMT programme content of the towns under study may be given:

**Table - 24**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Towns</th>
<th>Profit oriented Schemes</th>
<th>Non-profit oriented schemes</th>
<th>Basic social service scheme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>Composite area develop-</td>
<td>Road improvement.</td>
<td>Low cost sanitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ment, Bus Terminal,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agricultural market</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>complex.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>Tourist Dormitory,</td>
<td>Feeder roads for (Fringe</td>
<td>Low cost sanitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Godown-cum-office,</td>
<td>area development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Market complex.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two hundred stalls in</td>
<td>Road improvement.</td>
<td>Low cost sanitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>municipal markets,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>shopping complex.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>Improvement of Bus Stand,</td>
<td>Road improvement.</td>
<td>Low cost sanitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Construction of Godown,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-development of three markets,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Housing Tourist Lodge.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from Project Reports of IDSMT Towns.
It is worth noting that the Central Sector components of urban development, as mentioned in the 'guideline' seem to have been primarily conceived for strengthening the regional role performance of towns for articulating the growth impulses in their respective spheres of influence. But with the components, for example land development, road improvement, markets, shopping complex, tourist dormitory etc., the fulfilment of the first objective of promoting the integrated development of a town and its hinterland does not seem to have materialized in the truest sense. The state sector components as mentioned in the guidelines such as small scale employment generation activity, parks, playgrounds, health care etc., have also produced doubts in fulfilling its objectives of functional integration between the available inter-related services. The low-cost sanitation schemes have been brought under the purview of the IDSMT programme in the year 1983, (with the modification of earlier guidelines) with the stipulation that with the provision of Rs. 12 lakhs by the State Government, the central assistance would be Rs. 5 lakhs and the proportion of 15:12 (12) would be maintained for the low-cost sanitation scheme in all cases. The main cost sanitation scheme is to eliminate the practice of scavenging and to rehabilitate the scavengers. Although the towns under study have undertaken the low-cost sanitation scheme, how far they would be able to fulfill the double-edged objective of the scheme remains a matter of doubt.
It may be mentioned that in the project Reports of these towns, identification of various components to be taken for assistance did not precede a detailed analysis of the role of towns in the context of space and of different functions being performed within the towns. The Housing and Urban Development Corporation, the Town and Country Planning wing of the Ministry of Development and Planning, Government of West Bengal, Land Use Planning Cell of the Government of West Bengal, the local Government and Urban Development Department were involved in the formulation of Project Reports for different towns selected for IDSMT programme. This resulted in diversity of approach in respect of Urban Planning. It is interesting to note that during the process of Plan formulation the concerned municipal authorities under study were nominally consulted. The Chairman, Balurghat Municipality narrated how the planners formulated the project report after a hurricane tour of the town for only 12 hours. In Jalpaiguri, the state level planners spent for three days (14) In Cooch Behar the planners formulated the whole plan within seven days and met the local authority for a day only. (15) In Darjeeling owing to the absence of any elected local authority, the local people were not consulted by the Project Planners (16).

As a consequence, scope of the project or its location changed and sometimes total abandonment of a particular component
even after approval by the national government. This has been the experience with each of the towns under our study. For example, the town of Balurghat has omitted the component like composite Area Development. In case of Cooch Behar, excepting the component like extension of Central Market, (Bhabaniganj Market) all other components have been thoroughly modified. Darjeeling besides low cost sanitation, only one component i.e. the municipal shopping complex has been retained. As it has already been shown in the preceding chapter that out of twelve components in Jalpaiguri the number of schemes actually undertaken are nine in number. (17)

(b) **Financial Support:**

Method of financing is important for implementing the IDSMT programme. The 'Guideline' for the programme, as has already been mentioned, is very clear about the funding arrangement. Accordingly, 50 per cent of the total project cost in the central sector is to be met by the Central Government subject to ceiling of Rs. 40 lakhs in the form of loan. Central loan assistance being limited, major share of funds in the central sector and the entire funds in the state sector has to be mobilised by the state or the local implementing agency.

In a separate chapter, a detailed discussion has been made regarding the financial conditions of the local bodies
with special reference to West Bengal. It has been found that the weak financial base of the municipalities in West Bengal remains a constant constraint in grappling with the problems of the civic area and fostering the growth impulses. The objectives like strengthening of economic base and establishing economic linkages and employment generation remains a far cry in the existing state of municipal finance. In such a situation the financial arrangement as stipulated in the 'guidelines' is not encouraging for certain obvious reasons.

In the first place available central fund does not seem to be adequate for fulfilling the larger objectives of integrated development of towns, their hinterlands and the integrated provision of services. For example, construction of two hundred stalls in the Municipal Shopping Complex has not been possible in Darjeeling town and a request has been made by the municipal authority to the Housing and Urban Development Corporation to release a special assistance to make the newly built two storied municipal shopping complex into three storied building. In Balurghat, the assets created under IDSMT programme with specified allotment of fund, can not fulfil the above objectives. The project components (a detailed account has been made elsewhere of the study) of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar can-not also satisfy the requirement of integrated provision of services with special reference to hinterlands owing to the meagre amount of fund speci-
fiscally allotted to each project component. Secondly, the range and nature of components to be integrated into the development programme being substantial, the state government should intensify its efforts for mobilisation of resources. Thirdly, there does not exist any mechanism of financial control in the State Sector for ensuring investments on the components under this sector. Programme in the State Sector appended in the project reports may remain a pious wish and the amount of investments proposed to be made in the State Sector (as shown in the table No. 6) might not be made at all. In fact, no municipality under study has been able to expend central assistance exclusively on central sector schemes owing to the non-availability of state matching grants in instalments at regular interval.

The critical areas and issues in the financing of integrated development of small and medium towns programme in West Bengal may be analysed with reference to the experiences of four IDSMT towns undertaken for our study.

Although the stipulated time period for the implementation of IDSMT programme is over, the towns under study such as Balurghat, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri have failed to implement the schemes. It is clear that there are some impediments hamstringing, directly or indirectly, the implementation of the integrated development of small and medium towns. These
impediments may be grouped under: (a) Technical (b) Procedural, (c) Financial and (d) Political.

While the southern states of India were in near completion of the IDSMT Programme in 1983, the state of West Bengal had started the process then. The project report for the town of Darjeeling was ready in 1984. This can be explained this; for Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Balurghat towns exploration of financial resources coupled with formulation of Project Reports for IDSMT programme was delayed owing to the lack of well defined urban policy and strategy for the selection of the towns on priority basis.

Lack of Technical capability of these towns in respect of project formulation seems to be also an important factor for non-implementation of IDSMT programme. The project reports of these towns were formulated by the State Government agencies like HUDCO and Development and Planning Cells of the Government. Thus, the project formulation followed a top down approach. As a result, schemes laid down in the Project Reports of the towns mostly have no link with reality and hence at the time of implementation they were found difficult to implement. This has been the experience of all the towns under study. Along with this, the project reports of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri for not conforming to the guidelines were returned to the state for
revision and the process of programme implementation was thus delayed.

From the procedural standpoint the following factors need be highlighted: firstly, in Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri, the money released by the Central Government has remained unutilised for procedural wranglings. Both the towns of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri have not been able still now to utilise the third instalment of centre's loan assistance. Although Cooch Behar has been able to utilise both the central and state share, it has not been able to mobilise its own share of Rs. 20 lakhs. In case of Balurghat however, the town has been able to mobilise Rs. 11 lakhs out of 20 lakhs; but the full state share is yet to reach in Balurghat.

Secondly, in West Bengal, while selection, formulation and preparation of IDSMT schemes has been entrusted to Ministry of Development and Planning, the technical staff is attached to the Ministry of Urban Development (the Municipal Engineering Directorate is an Organ of the U. D. Department) creating many procedural problems. In their first phase of programme implementation, the towns under study had to face difficulties for the above reason. For example, in Balurghat site of composite area development scheme was changed because
of the non-availability of effective monitoring and technical system. In Darjeeling, owing to the meagre amount of allotted fund the construction of two hundred stalls in shopping complex was not possible and ultimately the number was reduced to seventy stalls in the shopping complex. The Darjeeling town Path Fasal Sangh had made a representation in this respect. The Municipal leaders of Darjeeling were unable to convince the said Sangh the potentiality of the two hundred stalls' shopping complex in the existing densely situated market place. Thus the progress of IDSNF Programme implementation of Darjeeling was tardy. Feasibility of Municipal lands and the incapacity of the municipal authority to purchase land in the main area of the town of Jalpaiguri poses serious problems. The Chairman of Jalpaiguri is of the view that the communication gap and timely channeling of information between the State Government and his municipality is primarily the outcome of procedural difficulties. In all cases, the result has been change of site of the selected schemes.

Thirdly, acquisition of land which takes plenty of consequent time and delay in the execution of a project remains a main hurdle. Sometimes the implementing agencies are forced to change the project site which again needs fresh approval and follow-up steps. This has been the case with Darjeeling Town.
The town had to face difficulty in constructing the municipal shopping complex in the densely populated chalk-basar area. The Darjeeling town Path Pasala Sangh stood against the decision. Ultimately, the site was changed; it led to a considerable amount of delay. In Cooch Behar, when the construction of new feeder road started, objections were raised by the land owners. The municipal leadership of Cooch Behar had been able to make the local land owners understand the potentiality of the feeder road in the near future. This problem was managed through a mutual informat agreement between the local authority and the land owners.

Papers like utilization certificates and progress reports against the money spent out of central share are to be routed through the State Governments for the release of instalments, thus causing much delay in the release of next installment. The delay caused in getting the next instalment released also affects the financing of IDSNF programme to some extent. Like other IDSNF towns, the towns of Jalpaiguri, Balurghat, Cooch Behar and and Darjeeling had to suffer for this reason. Moreover, the towns of Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling have been suffering till date from this problem.

Financing pattern of IDSNF programme raises many critical issues. As the small and medium towns have poor econo-
The base mobilisation of internal resources for urban development cannot but be inadequate. Consequently, they have to depend upon external resources for development finance. This represents the situation prevailing in Balurghat, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri towns. From their Annual Administrative Reports of last five years, it may be seen that there has been widening gap between the development expenditure and the establishment expenditure. While, on an average, the maintenance cost of the municipal properties vary between 25 p.c. and 30 p.c. the development expenditures are only 10% to 15%. From the property tax and such other taxes the above municipalities derive an income ranging between 7% to 10% of their total income. The remaining amount flows out of grant from the State exchequer. In view of such/weak economic position, the State Government is also mostly reluctant to release matching share to these local bodies. There are financial problems at state level too. The Central financial assistance is limited to fifty percent of the cost in the Central sector for each town with a ceiling of Rs. 4 million. This has to be matched by the state contribution. Fund for state sector schemes has also to be met from the state funds. The remaining sum of Rs. 2 millions has to flow out of municipal authority. Moreover, the central assistance is given as loan to the state Governments which, according to guidelines, are accountable for its proper utilisation and repayment by the implementing agencies. With this pattern of
financing, let us now turn to an analysis of actual financing of the towns under study such as Balurghat, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri.

While the state of West Bengal provides assistance to the towns under IDSMT programmes in the form of grant, the central funds are made available to the implementing authorities as loan. Thus, saving the state matching share, the incidence of the total capital investment falls on the local authorities in the long run, loan repayment and maintenance of assets created clearly impose burden on the respective municipalities. There is no denying that newly created assets would provide additional sources of revenues for the towns under survey. Nevertheless, liabilities in all towns would outstrip the incomes. The Chairman of the said municipalities are of the view that it would not be possible for their respective municipalities to repay the loan because of: (a) increasing burden arising out of newly created assets (b) increasing gap between the revenue and expenditure. This explains why there has been a deplorable state of civic services in the four towns. While the town of Darjeeling is unable to provide necessary quantum of drinking water to the inhabitants, the other three towns under study do not have domestic water supply arrangement. The sanitation has been in a deplorable situation in all the towns under study. The existing state of
urban services available in these towns has been presented in table No. 5.

The total estimated outlay, fund released (both central loan assistance and state's grant) to municipalities under study and expenditures incurred under the IDSMT project may be presented in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Municipalities</th>
<th>Proposed outlay including low cost sanitation (L.C.S.)</th>
<th>Fund released to the Municipalities</th>
<th>Expenditure incurred.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>General component (G.C.)</td>
<td>L.C.S.</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balurghat</td>
<td>101.23</td>
<td>74.50</td>
<td>14.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>105.23</td>
<td>79.75</td>
<td>14.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>113.37</td>
<td>34.00</td>
<td>9.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>108.20</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>14.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contd.............Table 25

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Municipalities</th>
<th>Expenditure incurred.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G. C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balurghat</td>
<td>37.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>87.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>47.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>44.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To be counted Lakh.

The table indicates that the town of Darjeeling has not yet received even half of the proposed outlay while Jalpaiguri has received only 64.13 lakhs against the outlay 108.20 lakhs. Balurghat municipality has not received the full grant while the Municipality of Cooch Behar is in a comparatively good position.

For IDSMT towns the provision of Rs. 96 crores as central assistance to the extent of Rs. 40 lakhs for each town can not but be questioned. The upper limit of Rs. 40 lakhs for each town has been absolutely fixed without going into the size, growth potential, complexity of problems of towns concerned. Such grievances have been ventilated in the State Housing Ministers Conference held in New Delhi on 5th February, 1982. It is held that Darjeeling with its problems deep and pervasive has been suffering on this account. In actuality, Darjeeling has been forced to undertake only one project under IDSMT scheme.

Nowhere in the 'guideline' there has been any provision for cost escalation in respect of any project. In a developing economy such a probability cannot be ruled out. In fact there was no serious thinking in this regard. As a result, there has been price-push of materials and consequently, cost escalation. Under this circumstances, Balurghat, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri have either sought revision of the projects
or abandoned some projects. This has already been shown in the tables Nos. 13, 16, 19 and 22.

Moreover, the non-availability of raw materials, scarcity of railway rakes etc. posed additional financial hurdles to the municipality and delay in implementation is the outcome. These problems were highlighted by the Chairman of Jalpaiguri Municipality in the Regional Workshop on the Management of IDSNMT programme held in Kalimpong in May 1985.

The last aspect of financial support is political in nature. Political aspect involves the following issues: (a) Political environment which includes interparty clashes, intra party discontents, coalition problems, role of Municipal employees Union, (b) problem of leadership; (c) Commitment of the municipal leadership to the programme.

The above issues are very much interlinked with the question of financial support in an indirect way. In the ensuing paragraphs, an attempt may be made to analyse the political environment and leadership of the Municipal boards of the towns under study. It is interesting to note that in West Bengal, with the coming up of the Left Front into the State Power in 1977 the elections of the local governments (both panchayats and municipal boards) were held on political party basis with the motive to spread democracy at the grass root level of the society. As a
result, after 1977, a new local leadership has sprung up and has been further geared up by the recent development strategies. In the last municipal election in West Bengal held in 1986, the different political party position in the Municipal Boards of the towns under study may be shown as under:

Table - 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Municipal Boards</th>
<th>Number of wards</th>
<th>Left Front Partners</th>
<th>Major Pol. Party Left Front</th>
<th>Other Pol. Party</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balurghat</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>CPI(M)=5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>RSP =8</td>
<td></td>
<td>MII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>CPI(M)=7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F.B. =6</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (Indepen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>MII</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19 (Gorkha League)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (Indepen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>CPI(M)=6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F.B. =4</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Indepen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CPI =1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In the year 1987 out of 26 ward commissioners, 25 commissioner joined in the Gorkha National Liberation Front, one Commissioner died and election has not been so far held.

The Left Front partners are Communist party of India (Marxist), Revolutionary Socialist Party, Forward Block, Communist Party of India, Forward Block (Marxist) and few other small political parties.

Source: Data collected from the concerned municipal offices.
It is evident from the above table that excepting in Darjeeling, in the other three Municipal Boards the Left Front partners are in power. Presently, the Darjeeling Municipal Board is being run by the Gorkha National Liberation Front. In Balurghat, the Revolutionary Socialist Party is the dominating partner of the Left Front, it is followed by the Communist Party of India (Marxist). Thus, the problem of coalition is absent in Balurghat and it is free from inter-party clashes. In Cooch Behar, the C.P.I. (M) dominates, although, the Forward Block (another ally of the Left Front) has its strong foothold. The political problem of town has recently been sorted out by the District Left Front Committee. In Jalpaiguri, the C.P.I. (M) dominates the Municipal Board although there exists a good influence of the Forward Block. The problem of coalition has been absent in Jalpaiguri. In Darjeeling, owing to the rapid change in political environment, the Gorkha National Liberation Front has its exclusive domination and authority over the Municipal Board. The new leadership does not find any issue of intraparty conflict or tension.

There are two municipal employees union: Municipal Employees Association and Municipal Employees Federation. The majority of the municipal employees of Balurghat municipality do belong to Municipal Employees Association — an organisation of the Leftist employees. In Cooch Behar 90 percent of the total
municipal staff are the members of the above Association 10 percent belongs to the Municipal Employees Federation - an organisation of the Congress (I) Party. In Darjeeling cent percent of the municipal staff do belong to Hill Employees Union - an organisation of the Gorkha National Liberation Front. In Jalpaiguri, the employees of the Municipal Board are sharply divided into two, one group represents the Municipal Employees Association and the other group represents the Municipal Employees Federation. (25)

The Chairman, Balurghat Municipality was of the view that at the first stage of programme implementation, the Municipal Board had to face difficulty in getting Central loan assistance. He mentioned that party-politics had its role in this connection. According to him, while the Congress (I) dominated Raiganj Municipal Board (the town of Raiganj is a sub-division of the District of West Dinajpur and the nearest IDBMT town to Balurghat) had got its first instalment of central's loan assistance within a few months of the submission of the Project Report, the Municipal Board of Balurghat had to wait for more than a year in getting the first instalment. To him, the Municipal Board has taken the programme as the tool of development and social change. The Municipal employees are absolutely motivated and dedicated to the process of programme
implementation. Thus it may be commented that political mobilisation process has been adequate in Balurghat and up till day no money allocated for the IDSMT Programme remains unspent.

The picture of Jalpaiguri is otherwise. Owing to the difference among themselves, the municipal staffs do not seem to be motivated to the process of programme implementation. The Chairman does not, however, think that politics has any role in getting fund. He says that, the administrative redtapsism and lapses are the reasons behind the delayed release of fund.

The Chairman, Darjeeling Municipality is of the view that the stepmotherly behaviour of the State Government has been prime cause behind the delayed process of programme implementation. He is of the opinion that politics has been playing its crucial role in this juncture. To him, when the IDSMT Programme was launched, the municipality of Darjeeling was administered by the government of West Bengal. The administrator was not at all interested in development of the town; he was busy in running the administration. When the election was held, the parties of Left Front found themselves nowhere in the municipal leadership and thus intentionally they had been and still have been making delay in releasing funds. The Municipal Staff are interested in the routine or pattern maintenance function. They are not interested in any active role in development work.
The Chairman, Cooch Behar Municipality opined that nothing can be isolated from the clutches of politics. In spite of that, the state government has tried to keep the IDSMT programme out of politics. In fact the Municipal Board did not face any difficulty in getting funds from the State Government or the Central Government. The staff of the Municipal Board have been active in translating the IDSMT schemes into reality.

c) Programme Management:

Urban planning and financing had received some attention at the highest official level during 1970's but the management aspect of urban development never received any serious attention. The Planning Commission appointed a Task Force on the problem of management of Urban Development (1983) highlighting the importance of management in urban development. Viewing management as a tool for implementing urban development programmes, the Task Force has examined the roles of the Central Government, State Government and local Government in the urban development process.

To write a few words in regard to management aspects of the development programmes under IDSMT in the towns under study would not be out of order. By virtue of the statutory provisions, urban development is the State subject and
hence, the management task of development of small and medium town falls within the purview of the State government. Guidelines on IDSMT reads: "the State Government should identify the agencies to prepare and implement the programme. The work may be co-ordinated by the Departments of the State Government. The local bodies of the towns should be encouraged and assisted to participate in the preparation and implementation of the integrated programme. Institutional arrangements for project formulation, execution and monitoring should be encouraged and assisted to participate in the preparation and implementation of the integrated programme. Institutional arrangements for project formulation, execution and monitoring should be well defined and established so that the funds are properly utilised and create a significant impact on the living and physical conditions of the selected towns.

In pursuance of the 'guidelines' the Government of West Bengal has vested the task of monitoring to the Department of urban development. The Urban Development Ministry has been monitoring the entire IDSMT programme in the state which sought help from the Department of Development and Planning and Housing and Urban Development Corporation in the preparation of project reports of the towns identified for IDSMT. The Urban Development Department of the state has created Municipal Engineering
Directorate for providing necessary technical help to the IDSMT Towns. The Directorate has its seven division each being headed by a Divisional Engineer. While it has been responsible for the technical part of the programme, the concerned local authorities such as municipalities are responsible for implementation and maintenance. The Department of Local Government and Urban Development, however, performs overall task of maintenance. At the local level, the concerned municipality is the over-all incharge of programme management, besides the district level co-ordination committee consisting of different heads of the Governmental agencies engaged in development functions of the towns and the surrounding areas and the members of the state legislature, members of the parliament and Zilla Sahsadipati of the Panchayat of the concerned district. Since the objectives of the IDSMT programme are multifaceted, the different organs and agencies such as state Electricity Board, Public Health Engineering, Sanitation Department etc. are needed to participate in the implementation process. Two objectives are clearly manifest here: the municipal board should be responsible for implementation of IDSMT programme; second, the co-ordination committee should remove the bottlenecks for implementation of the development programmes. In fact, committee should have to act as the bedrock of district level planning.

To begin with, the programme management in four towns such as Bolanaghat, Cooch Behar, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri
respective municipal authorities are charged with the task.

Technical aspect of IDSMT programme in Balurghat is looked after by Malda division of Municipal Engineering Directorate. Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar are technically placed under the Jalpaiguri Division of the M.E. Directorate. The Darjeeling Division of M.E. Directorate has to extend technical assistance to the IDSMT programme of Darjeeling municipal authority. The programme management of IDSMT in the four towns under study is not satisfactory:

First there is the lack of proper co-ordination between the different departments. The absence of co-ordination of work in the municipalities of Darjeeling, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri produces hurdles in the process of programme implementation. In Darjeeling, discontent was so high that the higher official of the urban Development Department had to intervene in the situation.

In Jalpaiguri the relationship between the M.E. Directorate and the Municipal authority is tension-laden. The Municipal Engineering Directorates of Jalpaiguri Division had to face strong resentment from the Municipal authority while reconstructing the Din Bazar Market. The way, the reconstruction was made did not satisfy the municipal authority of Jalpaiguri.

All these point to the unhappy relations between Technical Official and non-official municipal authorities. Stressing upon technical aspect only Technical Officials are, not
unoften, indifferent to local administration. Besides, the respective role and attitudes of technical officials and municipal authorities are largely incompatible.

From the review of the District Co-ordination Committee it would appear that it did not function properly. The Chairman of the municipal authorities under study narrated their experiences in this connection. While in Darjeeling only one meeting of the said committee held in 1985, the co-ordination committee in Cooch Behar met twice in 1983 and 1985. In Jalpaiguri, District Co-ordination Committee did not meet till to this date while in Balurghat, the co-ordination committee met three times in the years 1984, 1985 and 1986. The Chairman are of the view that the meetings did not produce any effective decision.

Thus, the purpose for which the District Co-ordination Committee (D.C.C.) was constituted remained unrealisable. Some of the reasons of its inactiveness may be stated thus. First, District officers remain busy in so many duties of multifaceted character. This may not allow them to attend the duty of co-ordination of IDSMT programmes management. In absence of the District Officer who is the fulcrum around which the administration revolves, there is none to remove the bottlenecks of implementation. Second, generalist-specialist controversy has reduced the D.C.C. virtually to non-functioning. Third, not unoften, the
meeting becomes highly ceremonious. Instead of solving the problems, the chairmen of the municipalities under study pointed out, mutual misunderstanding marked the proceedings. Under this circumstances, the development work is likely to be the first casualty. Notable instances are: in Darjeeling the Chowrasta Bazar shopping complex is about to complete but the local unit of West Bengal State Electricity Board (W.B.S.E.) is reluctant to provide electricity connection to this complex. The municipality of Darjeeling owes a debt of Rs. 8 lakhs to the said Board. In Jalpaiguri, the Public Works Department (P.W.D.) is not co-operating with the municipality by not supplying road rollers to the municipal authority. Although in Cooch Behar, there was sharp difference of opinion between the Municipal Board and the Public Health Engineering Department in giving water connection to the newly refurbished Bhutaniganj Bazar Area, however the problem was sorted out. In Balurghat, after initial hitch with the Municipal Board, the W.B.S.E. B. gave connection to the newly constructed Bus Stand.

In the Regional workshop on Management of IDBMT programme held in Kalimpong in May, 1985, two important problems namely Land Acquisition and supply of cement and other raw materials were highlighted. In most cases, the time-consuming process of land acquisition led the Government to the court of
law. The scarcity of cement for construction is well known. Even if the quota of cement is released by the Government of India, it requires a long time for carrying cement to the place of work owing to non-availability of Railway wagons in time. Against this, any net work programming for IDSMT project is not possible.

Turning to the administrative capability, it is to be noted that municipal authorities being administratively weak can not perform IDSMT programmes management functions properly. At this, there the need for having a quick look at the staff strength of the municipal authorities under study. In table No. 27 the staff position of various municipal boards has been shown.

**Table - 27**

**Municipal staff pattern in the four Municipalities under Study**

(Total number in each wing including fourth Grade Staff).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Belurghat</th>
<th>Cooch Behar</th>
<th>Darjeeling</th>
<th>Jalpaiguri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General wing</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts wing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting wing</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>License wing</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public work wing</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Contd............Table-27

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Balurghat</th>
<th>Cooch Behar</th>
<th>Darjeeling</th>
<th>Jalpaiguri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Water supply</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Maintenance wing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Sanitation wing</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservancy wing</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School wing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scavengers and helpers</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Data Compiled from the concerned Municipal Offices.

In regard to the staff efficiency the following factors must be taken into consideration: (a) they are not technically qualified and properly trained; (b) they perform only routine functions; (c) in view of the absence of incentives and encouragement they are now incapable of providing technical know-how in challenging projects of IDSMT. Nevertheless the municipal staff of Balurghat municipality have demonstrated praiseworthy initiative by implanting the IDSMT project under the active support and encouragement of Municipal Employees Union.

In this context, the role of the Institute of Local Government and Urban Studies (ILGUS) Intended to provide institu-
tional support to the municipal bodies may be briefly mentioned. The institute has come into being in 1982. The role of training has been emphasised by various commissions and committees. Improving municipal performance through purposeful training programmes has also been the policy of the government of West Bengal. To start with, the following courses can be thought of: (a) a course on municipal development; (b) a course on municipal task management, (c) a course of Municipal Financial Management (d) a course on low cost sanitation; (e) a course on Construction Management. All these courses have been conceived with a broader strategy of training to improve municipal performance. These indicate a preference for certain areas of municipal administration where the initial thrust of training courses may be directed. Up till now Balurghat has sent 15 (fifteen) members of its staff to such training courses. Only an overseer and a sub-assistant Engineer participated in such training courses in 1986 from Cooch Behar. But Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling remained unrepresented in the training courses. Thus, unwillingness to participate in the training courses is clearly discernible among the members of the municipal staff. In order to overcome this sense of non-participation adequate incentives should be provided and promotional opportunities opened to the employees.

d) Public Participation:

For the realisation of IDSMT programme objective deve-
Development administration has to be an effective instrument of change. Long-term historical trends, western experience and the present disquieting scene of Indian politics point to the urgency of people's active participation in development administration. Public participation has its definite role to play in the implementation of integrated development of small and medium town. It can perform its role through the task of political socialisation, through deliberations and discussions by highlighting our political values, policies, programmes and long term objectives of the establishment of an egalitarian society. So far as latent socialisation is concerned, it can be discouraging environment pollution, encroachment on roads and parks, misuse of public property, indiscipline and nuisance at public places, encourage attitudes which may subsequently issue into actions supprotive of democracy. By honouring, rewarding and appreciating the services of those who really contribute to the growth of the town it can discourage the culture of "political psychopathy". The citizens in any small and medium town consists of three types of people: (I) those who have surplus food and money (II) those who manage to meet their ends and (III) those who are very poor and have their unmet necessities. The first two groups are reluctant to organise, they do not feel any necessary to make changes in the system and are adverse to participate in
local development programme. The third group is unorganised and unconscious of its role in development process; but it can play an important role provided it be organised and made conscious of its role.

Indeed, with the ethics of development from below, the local government should come forward to organise poor section of the society so that they can perform an effective role of participation in the development programme. Judy B. Rosner suggested various techniques for ensuring public participation. These are (a) assembly of interest group for intensive meeting; (b) adhoc organisation of citizens to present the ideas of local groups; (c) provision of individual; (d) an open planning process in which all parties can express their views before a proposal is adopted; (d) holding a meeting to focus particular plan or project; (f) encouraging the citizens to visit project site; (g) inviting citizens in workshops and short conference on development issues.

To explore the nature and extent of public participation, both the leaders of municipal authorities and the inhabitants of the towns under study were interviewed on the basis of two distinctly separate questionnaires. Besides all municipal chairman of the towns under study, 30 inhabitants each of various income categories for example lower or poor income, middle income and higher income categories in accordance with
their monthly income were chosen on the basis of random sampling for the purpose of interview. The questionnaires were broadly divided into: (a) nature of public participation; (b) benefits derived by the people out of the programme.

To write briefly about the nature of individual and community consciousness is relevant here. Individually, a land owner in Balurghat sold his plot of land at a cheaper rate for the construction of Bus stand. The removal of unauthorised shops become no problem to the municipal authority. With the sense of participation in the development of town, the shop owners voluntarily had broken the unauthorised structure. This spoke well with the capacity of the municipal leadership also. The municipal authorities kept contact with the inhabitants (a) through Ward Commissioner; (b) by holding meeting on IDSMT Programme (at least three meetings were held in Balurghat and one took place in Jalpaiguri. In Darjeeling and Cooch Behar no such meeting was held); (c) by publishing information leaflets, handbooks and distributing posters informing the people about the benefits the society is likely to accrue out of the projects. It has been observed that compared to the other three towns under study the level of community consciousness is higher in Balurghat. This fact can be highlighted from interview analysis of the citizens and leaderships of the municipalities under study.
The respondents, to whom the questions were directly addressed may be divided into three groups according their incomes. The upper middle class, middle class and lower middle class or poorer section. Out 30 respondents in the upper middle class in Balurghat town 70 percent are of the view that they would have no profit from this programme. 30 p.c. of the said class respond that they will be benefited along with the society. A peculiar feature of Balurghat town is that the 65 percent of the total respondents (30 each) of both the middle class and the poorer section have taken the programme very seriously. They had attended the meetings and visited the project spots and hoped that this would help them both personally and socially.

Out of 30 respondents of the poor section 90% have been benefitted by the sanitation programme taken under IDSMT (the service latrines have been converted to sanitary latrines). It is important to mention here that Balurghat Municipal Board has converted 320(41) service latrines of the Municipal area into sanitary latrines. The low cost sanitation scheme of the Sulav International was the guideline in this connection. Along with the conversion of private service privy into sanitary latrines, (42) the Municipal Board has constructed 17 Community Latrines in different public places of the town.
No such participation has been observed in the towns of Cooch Behar, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri. Municipal leaderships of these towns feel that people's appreciation coupled with proper use of schemes are the indications of people's participation. The Darjeeling Municipality relied upon their own management and successfully built the Chowrasta Basar shopping complex. The people however, never resisted the implementation of the scheme.

Interestingly, 90% of the poorer section in Darjeeling does not know about the programme but they have seen the shopping complex at Chowrasta Bazar; they never attended any meeting organised by the municipal authority and have not been personally benefitted. Out of 30 respondents of middle class category, 60 percent were of the view that they might be benefitted from the sanitation project. The upper middle class of the town has an apathy to this sort of development. Out of 30 respondents of the upper class 91% percent are of the view that they have nothing to do with this mode of development for it does not affect them. 55% of the total respondents of the poorer section do not know about the sanitation programme. They were not asked to contact the municipality in this connection. 60% of the middle class respondent hold that they have been benefitted through sanitation programme. It is unfortunate that only 80 sanitary latrines have so far been constructed by the municipal authority of Darjeeling. (43) No public latrines or urinals have so far been
made. In Cooch Behar the Chairman of the Municipal Board has been trying to be active to involve people in the development process, but up till now no mass meeting or other methods of achieving public participation have been arranged. 60 percent of the upper middle class respondents are of the view that they have no intention to visit the project sites while construction is going on. 25 percent of the higher income group (whose monthly income is more than 3000 per month) respondents do not know what in the name of development has been going on in Cooch Behar. 70 percent of the middle income group (whose income is more than Rs. 700 and less than Rs. 2000 per month) respondents are of the view that although no personal benefit would be there, the programme would help to bring about social development. 85 percent respondents of the poor group (whose monthly income is less than Rs. 700) do not know about the programme and they have never been communicated by the municipal leadership about the programme. 40 percent of the poorer section respondents are of the view that the municipal authority has converted their service latrines into low cost sanitary latrines. Till to-day the municipal authority of Cooch Behar has converted 207 service privies into sanitary latrines and 5 community latrines have been constructed.

Regarding public participation, the opinion of the Chairman of Jalpaiguri Municipal Board may be mentioned. To him, "Since the Board of Commissioners have been elected by the people
and the members of the board are steering the IDSMT programme, automatically public participation has been successful." From this comment it has been clear that the authority has not adopted any method for ensuring and encouraging the public participation in the development programme. 60 percent of the middle income group respondents of Jalpaiguri are of the view that the programme would help to develop the town. They have visited the project sites and are aware about the programme. 50 percent of the respondents of the higher income category viewed that they are not interested in participating in the development programme because "it is others' business". 65 percent respondents of poorer section are not aware about the IDSMT programme but they know that some works under municipal supervision are going on. 30 percent of the middle class and 48 percent poor have recognised that they have been directly benefited from the sanitation programme. In Jalpaiguri, until recently, 190 service privies have been converted into sanitary latrines and 7 community latrines have been made in the public places.

All these amply demonstrated that the municipal authority of Balurghat was eager to enlist popular support through participation. While for the purpose of ensuring citizens' participation in Urban development the municipal authority of Balurghat had by and large adhered to the techni-
ques of participation as defined by Rosner, the Cooch Behar, Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling municipal authorities have not taken such techniques into consideration.

It may be argued that the level of efficiency and effective public participation depend on certain basic conditions (a) municipal leadership (b) development consciousness among the people.

By mobilising people and the employees both politically and emotionally the leadership of the Balurghat municipality has been able to implement the development programme speedily. Most (67 percent) of the leaders belong to the age-group of 31-45 years and the same political alliance. The zeal and industry of this group contributed to the speedy implementation of IDSMT programme. The following table would depict the nature of municipal leadership of the towns under study in terms of age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table-29</th>
<th>Name of the Towns</th>
<th>Total number of Commissioners</th>
<th>Age - Group in terms of years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>18-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balurghat</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>M1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooch Behar</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalpaiguri</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DATA compiled from the questionnaires.**
Evidently, the municipal leaders of the towns of Balurghat, Cooch Behar and Darjeeling, are relatively younger than those of the town of Jalpaiguri.

The data regarding occupation distribution of the leader respondents demonstrate that the municipal leadership of the towns under study is mostly dominated by three occupation groups: (a) service-holders (25 per cent), (b) professionals like teachers, self-employed engineers, lawyers and others (27.5 per cent) and (c) businessmen (18 per cent); (d) 12 per cent of the municipal leaders are whole time workers of political parties viz., Communist Party of India (Marxist), Forward Block and Revolutionary Socialist Party. The representation of unemployed youth, retired person and housewives is less significant.

The level of regular monthly income of the municipal leaders of the towns under study would depict the fact that middle income group (whose income is more than Rs. 699 and less than Rs. 2000 per month) seems to be dominant. 59 per cent of the municipal leaders respondents belong to this group. The next dominant group is the lower income group (whose income is less than Rs. 700 per month). 26 percent of the leaders constitute this group. The representation of leaders having no monthly income is small. 10 percent of the leaders who are party whole-timers have a regular monthly income ranging from Rs. 250 - Rs. 300.
All these indicate that by and large the new leaders are relatively young, educated and hailing from middle income group of the society. To a large extent, implementation of Urban development programmes is contingent upon the nature and commitment of this new urban leadership.

In view of the absence of political homogeneity and rapport in political leadership of Jalpaiguri Municipality, Programme implementation has received a set-back. This explains why this municipality could not involve the people in the process of programme implementation.

In Cooch Behar, the municipal leadership is young. Although, there remains political homogeneity between the leadership and the municipal employees the tempo of development has not been as high as in the case of Balurghat and people's participation in programme implementation is therefore not spontaneous.

In Darjeeling, although the political leadership is young and there exists cordiality in the relationship between the municipal leadership and municipal employees, the present political disturbances in Darjeeling hills on Croksa Land issue has resulted in complete alienation of the people from the development activities sponsored by the government of West Bengal and Central Government. Bandh and strikes and above all, the non-involvement of the people have contributed to the non-implementation of the
Although public participation is inextricably linked with proper functioning of municipal government the Bengal Municipal Act 1932 does not make any such provision. To many, it is a notable omission. Willing participation of the well informed citizens in the affairs of municipal government promotes its efficient and effective functioning. This follows that citizens should have right to information about the affairs of municipal government. The Bains Committee observes "we are in no doubt that local authorities have a firm duty to inform the community of their activities and to put the council's view on matters of concern to that community".

'Public Participation' and 'Public Consultation' come under 'public involvement'. Public Participation (in planning) however, means taking an active part from the outset in the formulation of development plans and the making of major planning decisions of strategic importance. The purpose of public participation is to guide, not dictate, the local authority's decisions. Dorby Committee emphasised the need for the publication of the detailed description of the project in non-technical language for public knowledge. There is, no doubt that IDSMT projects should be implemented with public participation. But it is difficult to achieve in a class and
caste ridden society like ours. Nevertheless, there is the need for a fresh look for ensuring public participation in development. This would strengthen democracy at grass root level.

REFERENCES:


6. The speech of the Chairmen of Siliguri and Suri Municipality Regional workshop on management of IDSMT programme 15-17 May, 1985, Kalimpong, West Bengal.

7. This was referred from speeches of the Chairmen of the various Municipal Boards in the above Regional Workshops.

8. The Chairmen of the various municipalities (IDSMT towns only) West Bengal have submitted a unanimous memorandum to solve procedural difficulties in submitting the utilisation certificate to the minister of urban Development Govt. of West Bengal on 6.6.86.

9. The towns of Cooch Behar, Darjeeling, Bishnupur, Suri are by far the best examples.

10. Integrated Urban Development programme for metropolitan cities and Areas of National Importance - An evaluation


12. This statement was made by D.S. Meshram in the Regional workshop on IDSMT, held in Siliguri, May 15-17, 1983.


15. Municipal office, Cooch Behar.


17. The instances of deviation of schemes have been shown in Table No.

18. Mr. D.S. Meshram, Planner, Town and Country Planning Department, in his interview with the researcher opined the fact.

19. These facts have been collected from Accounts section of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri Municipalities.

20. Records of Cooch Behar Municipal Board.


22. This fact has been revealed from the statements of the Chairmen of Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri Municipal Boards.


25. Percentage of memberships belonging to different Unions have been collected from the concerned municipalities.

27. Ibid.


29. Information was served by Mr. D. Lama, Secretary, Darjeeling Municipality, he was stating incident when Mr. D.N. Banerjee ex-officio secretary, Urban Development Department, Govt. of West Bengal visited Darjeeling to resolve the dispute. The meeting was held in Darjeeling Municipality on 23.8.85.

30. This was expressed by the Chairman of the said Municipality.

31. Mr. Asit Sen, Chairman of Jalpaiguri Municipality gave this information.


33. Mr. D. Banerjee, Chairman, Balurghat Municipality gave the information.

34. These facts were revealed out of discussion with the Municipal employees of towns under study.

35. Mr. T. K. Banerjee, Joint Director-in-Charge, Institute of local Government and Urban studies, West Bengal has made the statement in a seminar on IDSMT Programme Management, Salt Lake, Calcutta, August, 1987.


37. Ibid. p. 307


40. Chairman, Balurghat Municipality gave this information and it was revealed by the spot visit of the researcher.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Darjeeling Municipal Board Source.

44. Cooch Behar Municipal Board Source.

45. Ibid.

46. Jalpaiguri Municipal Board Source.

47. Ibid.


50. Ibid.