The metropolitan problems which the CBD is currently facing have much in common with those experienced by the world's great cities such as London, New York, Tokyo, Toronto and others. In fact, the Basic Development Plan has referred to such problems in Greater London and in some other countries such as the United States, Canada and Australia.\(^1\) Hence, the recommendations of the Basic Development Plan can best be evaluated by setting them alongside the diverse devices that have been adopted in different countries to reorganize local government in their metropolitan areas.\(^2\) These devices can be grouped under two major types. In some cases, arrangements for inter-authority cooperation and coordination have been sought to be achieved without disturbing the prevalent system of local government; and in others changes of a fundamental nature have been introduced.

The first type includes the use of extra-territorial powers, under which cities are allowed such powers as the obtaining of water, and treatment and disposal of sewage outside their own boundaries, intergovernmental agreement for the

2. All these devices have been admirably put together in Alternative Approaches to Governmental Reorganization in Metropolitan Areas, Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, Washington, 1962.
provision of specific services, and the constitution of voluntary metropolitan councils as forums for discussions and recommendations. One merit of all these devices is that they do not disturb the existing set-up of local government within a metropolitan area. But they have their limitations as well. For instance, the wide use of extra-territorial powers is apt to antagonise the neighbouring local units, and the voluntary nature of inter-governmental agreements and metropolitan councils often stands in the way of their effective working. Nor does any of these devices economise the local government administration within a metropolitan area.

Under the second type of metropolitan solution fall such arrangements as the formation of special purpose bodies responsible for metropolitan area-wide functions, annexation of neighbouring territories by a city, consolidation of two or more units of government to form new and bigger units, and the federation approach involving division of local government functions in the metropolitan area between two tiers of government, one having the metropolitan area-wide functions and the other the purely local functions.

There are certain advantages in having one or more special purpose authorities entrusted with metropolitan area-wide functions. Large-scale operations would ensure economies of scale and costs would, as a consequence, be reduced. There could be economic use of technical man-power
A unified approach, rather than piecemeal and fragmented efforts, would be brought to bear on common problems that transcend the boundaries of individual local authorities. In other words, particular service or services could be "packaged" within appropriate boundaries. Despite such advantages, special purpose metropolitan area-wide authorities are sometimes created on political grounds. The non-elective character of such authorities militates against the concept of local democracy, and they usually supplant or compete with local representative institutions. As Professor Robson remarked in connection with local government reorganization in London, "The movement from elected councils to selected boards is highly undemocratic. The trend towards a multiplicity of one-purpose statutory bodies is bound to lead to confusion of purpose, extravagance, and lack of coordination." There is a real danger in the setting up of a host of special purpose authorities each entrusted with a limited number of functions as they tend to fragment administration on a functional basis instead of integrating it on an areal or regional basis. Also, as they are to depend in general on the identical financial base, they enter into an "irrational competition for public monies."  

Of the other devices, annexation is of limited use, as areas at the fringes of the central city are brought within its jurisdiction. Selective annexation by which a city takes in only attractive areas in terms of high taxable value and carefully avoids the problem areas, breeds ill-feeling between the central city and its neighboring local authority. Consolidation of two or more municipalities, on the other hand, can produce a larger local unit and reduce the number of local authorities in an area. Since consolidation leads to the extinction of a number of local units, it is sometimes opposed by them. Also, the fear of the neighboring units of domination by the central city stands in the way of consolidation.

The metropolitan government in Toronto, with jurisdiction over the city and twelve suburban municipalities, and the government of Greater London as reorganized after the passage of the London Government Act, 1963, are instances of the federation approach to the problem of governmental reorganization in metropolitan areas. This approach has been regarded very favourably by many students of metropolitan government. It ensures coordinated area-wide administration of metropolitan area-wide problems, and at the same time, it retains the

7. Of course, London had a two-tier system even under the Acts of 1889 and 1899.
8. As Professor Robson writes, "A two-tier form of organization is especially necessary in a metropolitan area", Great Cities of the World, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1957, p.37. Also Luther Gulick suggests that "for most large, sprawling metropolitan areas the only practicable choice is a new metropolitan federation of some sort". The Metropolitan Problems and American Ideas, Alfred A.Knoft, New York, 1962, p. 163.
representative local institutions as constituent units of the federation. However, since this device leads to the establishment of a new general purpose government, it reduces the powers of the lower tier authorities, and unless the two tiers maintain good relations on the issue of distribution of functions, the federation approach may create problems of coordination and conflict of authorities. Also, the two-tier system can work successfully, if the financial resources are properly distributed between the tiers.

Solutions for the CMD

These devices show that there are many ways of tackling the government problems of a metropolitan area. As it has been rightly observed, "There is no best single approach to governmental organization applicable to all conditions and times. Every metropolitan area must consider its own peculiar needs and situation, and fashion its reorganization plan accordingly". 9 In trying to solve the problems of the CMD, we must also attempt to understand the peculiar needs and circumstances of the area.

We have discussed earlier (Chapter III) the integrated nature of the CMD. The very fact that this is a metropolitan area emphasises its homogeneity and inter-dependence in certain basic respects. Physically, for instance, the local

9. Alternative Approaches to Governmental Reorganisation in Metropolitan Areas, op. cit., p. 85.
areas within the CMD are tied together through urbanisation and circulation of people, goods and services. Daily more than 2,00,000 people arrive at and depart from the two main railway stations serving suburban commuters viz., Howrah and Sealdah. More than 3,15,000 transit passengers cross the Howrah Bridge by bus and tram on an average weekday, and in numerous other travel corridors in the city of Calcutta transit passenger volumes exceed 1,50,000 daily. Thus Calcutta is the focal point of the CMD. The commuters pour into the city from different parts of the CMD daily. Also, it is the main service centre and provider of much of the medical and higher educational facilities of the CMD. For instance, it is reported that as high as 30 per cent of the patients treated in the state hospitals in Calcutta are non-residents, and a survey of outpatient departments in some Calcutta hospitals revealed that 33 per cent of the patients came for treatment from outlying suburban or rural areas. We have pointed out in an earlier chapter (Chapter VII) how public health hazards have served to integrate the metropolitan area. The urban areas have been found to be the epicentre of endemic cholera, to eradicate which adequate supply of safe, potable water is urgently necessary for the CMD as a whole. Similarly, because of almost uninterrupted procession of the urban local authorities, the drainage and sewage

outfall problems cannot be tackled insidiously. These and
some others, such as traffic and transportation planning and
regulation, and overall planning needs, call for an integrated
approach as distinct from the currently practised fragmented,
localised approach. In fact, like many of the metropolitan
areas of the world, the CMD presently has "many governments
but not enough government". Except the CMPO and the newly
constituted Calcutta Metropolitan Water and Sanitation
Authority, there is no agency to look after the metropolitan,
area-wide problems.

However, not all problems have metropolitan, area-wide
repercussions. Many of the functions currently undertaken
by the local self-governing authorities are distinctly local-
user oriented. Thus, primary education, local roads, libraries,
local parks, markets and slaughterhouses, vaccination and
vaccination, and the welfare services - all these would
fall in this category. There are some other functions
such as housing, urban renewal, area or sector development,
slum clearance and improvement which are specific to
area-based. These are, however, undertaken by the State Government directly,
and the Calcutta Improvement Trust and the Howrah Improvement
Trust. Local self-government authorities such as the Calcutta
Corporation and the Howrah Municipality are contributing
towards the finances of the Improvement Trusts, but they have
not been allowed to operate in these fields. Similarly, the
The housing function has been directly undertaken by the State Government, and occasionally delegated to the Calcutta Improvement Trust. The local self-governing authorities have not been given this responsibility, although they are the rating and building-regulation authorities.

Here we are mainly concerned with the reorganisation of the system of local self-government in the CMD. In the preceding chapters we have discussed in detail the structural, functional and financial inadequacies from which these authorities are suffering. There are numerous units, most of which are confined to their petty nineteenth century jurisdictions. Although, in course of time, a new urban society has emerged encompassing a vast area of daily contacts and easy accessibility, the system of local government has, by and large, remained static, creating thereby a hiatus between the area of problems and the jurisdiction of government.

With the growth of the industrial urban society, new forces and problems have appeared. The alarming increase in population has been straining the local services and resources but hardly any concrete measure has been adopted to ameliorate local conditions and enhance local funds. Local administrative structure has remained antiquated. Lack of executive leadership and requisite personnel has dragged the local machinery into the path of slow decay. An inert administration cannot be expected to set the local finance in order, and financial poverty has led to further impoverishment of administration. As pointed out in Chapter XI, State-local relationship has
regained unimaginative, the accent being on punitive and disciplinary measures rather than on promotional and developmental ones. Also, splintering of responsibilities in local government matters among several State departments has stood in the way of formulation of coherent policy. As new problems have emerged, these have been entrusted to new authorities. Thus, even within their own boundaries, the Calcutta Corporation and the Howrah Municipality are not allowed to undertake development functions and bustee (slums) clearance and improvement. As already pointed out, the local self-governing bodies are not the housing authorities; public utilities such as gas, electricity, and mass transportation have not been entrusted to them; except primary education, most educational activities are outside their purview; fire-services are not placed under their care; and like pouring water on a drowning mouse, eleven special purpose authorities, as shown in Table 31, have been recommended by the Basic Development Plan, which will have the effect of further curtailment of the powers and responsibilities of the local self-governing authorities. For instance, the Calcutta Metropolitan Water and Sanitation Authority is going to take over existing municipal functions in respect of water supply, drainage, sewerage, sewage treatment and disposal, collection and disposal of night soil, and garbage collection and disposal. Major parks and open spaces will
The little power that the municipalities have at present in the field of primary education will be subject to the policies and standards to be laid down by the proposed Metropolitan Commission on Education, which will also be the agency for the location and construction of school buildings. Obviously, the local powers relating to road construction will be subject to the coordinating role of the proposed Metropolitan Traffic and Transportation Authority. Local planning and development will be the responsibility of the Development Authorities and not the local self-governing bodies. Slum clearance and improvement within the local areas of Calcutta and Howrah will be undertaken by still another special purpose body. Even ferry services, which are presently operated by the Municipalities, are proposed to be transferred to a new authority viz., the Hooghly River Bridge Commissioners.

After the distribution of these functions among the eleven special purpose authorities, the local self-governing bodies cannot be expected to have any major responsibilities.

Yet, the Basic Development Plan makes a strange observation: "...... it is equally true that strong and well-organised local governments, with efficient and purposive administrations, should play a vital role in the collective progress of the metropolitan area and in raising the standards of living of the individual citizen. There is a wide range of governmental functions, of importance both to the individual and...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Authority</td>
<td>CMD</td>
<td>Preparation of policies and development of special purpose schemes for CMD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Calcutta Metropolitan Water and Sanitation Authority</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Water supply, sewage treatment, and disposal of garbage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Metropolitan Traffic and Transportation Authority</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Traffic and construction of arterial road facilities; development of transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Metropolitan Parks and Recreation Authority</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Planning, provision of major open recreation facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Hooghly River Bridge Commissioners</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Construction of ferries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Housing Authority</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Area-wide solution of housing problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Metropolitan Commission on Education</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Rational local construction of schools, educational and allied standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. East Bank Development Authority</td>
<td>All the CMD on the East Bank up to the southern boundary of Bhatpara</td>
<td>Urban renewal of the East Bank new township plan of Bhatpara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. West Bank Development Authority</td>
<td>All of the CMD on the west Bank up to the southern boundary of Chandernagore</td>
<td>do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Kalyani-Bansberia Development Authority</td>
<td>Remaining portions of the CMD in the north</td>
<td>do-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Bustee Improvement Authority</td>
<td>Calcutta and Howrah, Siliguri, and allies</td>
<td>do-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *The Basic Development Plan*, op. cit., p. 133.
to the community, which are best performed at the local level. Furthermore, the encouragement of responsible elected leadership at this local level must, in a democracy, itself be one of the fundamental goals of all comprehensive development plans. 12

These observations are hardly compatible with the way in which functions and responsibilities have been freely distributed among different agencies. Also, it is difficult to see how "responsible elected leadership" can be expected of the local self-governing authorities in the absence of major powers and responsibilities which alone can attract men of ability and right quality. In such a context even the municipal consolidation schemes will have little value; for, mere change in structure cannot strengthen local government, unless important functions are at the same time entrusted to it. Despite all the fine words the Basic Development Plan has to say about local government, its recommendations betray an overt distrust of local democracy and a strange reliance on special purpose authorities.

Basis of Reorganisation: This brings us to the fundamental issue regarding the basis of governmental reorganisation in the OMD. Broadly speaking, there are two alternative approaches viz., (i) solution to the governmental problems lies within the system of local self-government; and (ii) since the

12. Op. cit., p. 120.
local self-governing authorities are fragmented, weak and inefficient; solution can be found outside the system of local self-government. This may not mean an either-or solution. But the major emphasis of (i) is on local self-government, and that of (ii) on other institutional arrangements. The second approach would include the formation of special purpose authorities as the Basic Development Plan has suggested, and/or direct State action for certain purposes. So far as direct State action is concerned, it has been pointed out in Chapter XI that already the State has large powers of control and supervision over the local self-governing authorities, and presently it operates such services as fire-fighting and housing and slum clearance, which are undertaken by the local self-governing bodies elsewhere in India. Any further encroachment in the local field would leave very little for local government to operate, and might even sound its death-knell. Also, the advocacy of the State Government rests on the assumption of greater efficiency of the State Government, which is not easy to prove and remains a doubtful assumption.

The idea of special purpose authorities needs a closer examination as the Basic Development Plan, as already mentioned, has relied heavily on them. We have pointed out earlier in this chapter the demerits of limited purpose authorities. We need not repeat those arguments here. Even in the United States where these authorities are quite common, the defects
of this method have stimulated a reaction to the use of limited purpose districts, and a search for other approaches to the problem of governmental reorganization. The Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London rejected the idea of ad hoc authorities by raising "two fatal objections." The first objection is that these bodies are either the creatures of Central Government or they are responsible to no-one. The second objection is that in view of the interlinked problems of the metropolitan area "what is needed is some means of considering them as a whole and dealing with them. It is no solution to separate these still further by giving each to some specially designed ad hoc body." These arguments may equally well be put forward against the Basic Development Plan's recommendation for the formation of eleven special purpose authorities. Functional splintering has been made in such a way that the much-needed coordinated approach to the metropolitan problems will be hard to achieve. Each authority will cling to its sphere of activities, and on top of it, the local self-governing bodies, smarting under the loss of power, will be working in isolation. There can be no more confusing governmental pattern than this. The past record of relationship between the special purpose authorities is.

13. Alternative Approaches to Governmental Reorganization in Metropolitan Areas, op. cit., p. 83
and the local self-governing bodies is not very bright. The CKPO itself has found it difficult to get the cooperation of the local bodies. The Calcutta Improvement Trust's relationship with the Calcutta Corporation has not been very happy. The Improvement Trust's 1969 Annual Report bears testimony to it. The Corporation has been alleged to be reluctant to take over completed schemes and to give sanction to the Trust's building plans. The Municipality of Howrah contributes with great difficulty towards the finances of the Howrah Improvement Trust. Again, when the proposed development authorities will function in the areas of the local self-governing bodies, the latter with their meagre financial resources cannot but clash with the former. Also, the acute financial difficulty from which the existing special purpose authorities, such as the Calcutta Improvement Trust and the Howrah Improvement Trust, suffer is an important lesson to be remembered in planning to set up more such authorities in future.

The reasons that have prompted the Basic Development Plan to propose the special purpose authorities as "functional necessity, managerial economy and technological efficiency." It has been argued that the metropolitan area-wide functions require financial and organisational resources not within reach of the local government units; certain civic services and facilities need to be organised and managed like the public utility undertakings and run on commercial and economic lines;

and the special-purpose authorities are best suited for these purposes because "they are not burdened with the multifarious responsibilities of general local government, (they) are able to concentrate on the limited function or functions assigned to them, and can consequently be much more efficient in the provision of their respective services".

We do not deny the existence of metropolitan area-wide problems but what strikes us is the dubious logic on which the Basic Development Plan has tried to build up a case for the multiplicity of special purpose authorities each charged with limited functions. Its recommendations have sought merely to replace geographical fragmentation through numerous local government units by a scheme of functional fragmentation. But there is little to choose between the two. Even if the argument runs along special authority lines, many of the advantages of this method can be reaped by setting up a multifunctional special authority as distinct from a number of limited purpose authorities as recommended by the Basic Development Plan. It is not clear why general local government cannot undertake specific civic services and facilities on public utility lines. There are numerous instances of municipal management of public utility undertakings in India. The transport and electricity undertakings of Bombay and Delhi and the transport undertakings of a number of city corporations such as Ahmedabad and Pobna testify to such integrated management. Prior to 1958, there were three statutory special
purpose authorities in Delhi viz., the Delhi State Electricity Board, the Delhi Road, Transport Authority, and the Delhi Joint Water and Sewage Board, all of which were later abolished and merged with the Delhi Municipal Corporation mainly to put an end to unhealthy functional fragmentation. Here is a lesson for the CMD as well. Again, the logic of greater efficiency of the special purpose authorities is based on an implicit comparison between the local self-governing bodies and the special purpose authorities. Since organisationally, functionally and financially one type is distinct from the other, such a comparison is hardly tenable. Also, in recommending transfer of functions from the local self-governing bodies to the special purpose authorities, the Basic Development Plan has in mind the present weakness and inefficiency of the local units. But, if one agrees on their reorganisation, rationalisation and stimulation, it will be wrong to advocate, at the same breath, large scale transfer of their functions and responsibilities. It is from this basic contradiction that the recommendations of the Basic Development Plan suffer.

We can now try to find out the solution to the CMD's governmental problems within the system of local self-government which has almost been sidestepped by the Basic Development Plan. As pointed out in Chapter VI, the CMD is not lacking in educated elites when it will be wrong policy to keep out of the executive decision-making process. It has often been said by our political leaders that the
edifice of national democracy will be secure only when people successfully take part in local democratic institutions. These noble sentiments need to be translated into actual institutional patterns. The governmental problems of the CMD have come as both a challenge and an opportunity to the local representative institutions, and there is no reason why these institutions cannot be suitably reformed and strengthened to meet the challenge and capitalise the opportunity. Once we accept that popular participation in government is necessary and local democracy is good in itself, the scale of problems in the metropolitan area can be tackled through properly devised representative government.

First, we can think of the feasibility of inter-local co-operation through such devices as joint boards. But as pointed out in Chapter XI, there are not many instances of inter-local cooperation in the CMD in spite of the fact that municipal legislation has made provision for such cooperative ventures. Also the Council of Coordination, mentioned in Chapter VI, has failed to coordinate the activities of the diverse local authorities in the CMD. Hence such devices as joint boards or voluntary councils cannot be relied upon. The problems of the CMD are too vast to be solved by these "paper-the-cracks" devices.

Another arrangement could be to place the entire metropolitan area under the single municipal authority. This would
involve the elimination of all the existing local units altogether, as a result of which the extent of popular participation in local government will suffer. Again, since the CMD has an area of more than 450 square miles, it will be immensely difficult for one authority to administer such a vast area. Even now, there are borough committees in Calcutta to look after limited area needs. It can be imagined that if the CMD has one municipal authority there will be need for considerable delegation of powers to several area units which will virtually constitute a second tier of administration.

In view of the shortcomings of these devices through which local self-government could otherwise be preserved, the solution for the CMD lies in some form of two-tier or federation government. Such a system is prevalent in many metropolitan areas such as Greater London, Tokyo, Metropolitan Toronto and Greater Winnipeg. Under the London Government Act, 1963, there are 32 London boroughs (plus the ancient city) and a Greater London Council. The Council, which is a directly elected body, is responsible for the major metropolitan area-wide functions such as traffic regulation throughout the metropolitan area, metropolitan roads, main sewerage and sewage disposal works, refuse disposal, fire service, major parks and open spaces and overspill housing. The borough councils have been given local functions such as construction and maintenance of local roads, personal health services and welfare services, public libraries, baths and swimming pools.
cemeteries and crematoria, local parks and open spaces,
collection of garbage and other regulatory services in respect
of food, drugs, markets, and weights and measures.16

Metropolitan Tokyo consists of the main city with
its 23 wards and 42 other municipal bodies of which 10 are
cities, 22 are towns and 10 are villages. Thus the rural
and urban areas are integrated in Tokyo. The Metropolitan
Council is directly elected and exercises wide powers in respect
of planning, fire service, public works, housing, ports and
harbour administration, public transport, personal and
environmental health services etc. Because of greater cen-
tralisation of power the second tier authorities have limited
powers in respect of local roads, parks, libraries, street
cleaning, markets etc.17

Metropolitan Toronto has a 25-member Metropolitan
Council consisting of 12 ex-officio members from the City of
Toronto and the council chairman of each of the 12 sub-
urbs, and a chairman elected annually by the Metropolitan Council.18
The Council being the upper tier is responsible for water
supply, sewage disposal, housing, education, arterial high-
ways, metropolitan parks, area planning etc. The local
governments that constitute the second tier have responsibility
for local services such as water distribution, sewage

17- Report of the Rural-Urban Relationship Committee, op. cit., p. 62. Also see Professor Masanichi Hayama, "Tokyo and
18- Alternative Approaches to Governmental Decentralisation in
collection, local roads and parks, local planning, libraries and public health services.

The other two-tier system in Canada came into being in 1960 with the establishment of the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg. Unlike the Toronto Metropolitan Council, the Council of Greater Winnipeg is directly elected. It is responsible for major roads and bridges, traffic control, sewer and water functions, garbage disposal and major parks. The municipalities which constitute the second tier are charged with all other local functions. The metropolitan government may, however, take over some other functions with the approval of the appropriate authorities.

These examples serve as some models to shape a two-tier administration for the CMD. The top tiers in all these cases except Toronto are directly elected. In a two-tier system, there is a tendency for the top tier to become more powerful in the sense that major metropolitan area-wide functions are entrusted to it. In Tokyo the metropolitan council has been made even more powerful, which is explainable, as Prof. Masamichi Royama observes, in terms of local factors such as history and social realities. It may be mentioned in this connection that a tiered structure of local self-government already exists in our rural areas. Since in the CMD as a whole the two-tier system will be an entirely


new arrangement, it will be necessary to organise it, at least for the initial period, in such a way that the inter-tier relationship remains cordial. There is much truth in Luther Gulick's significant observation that "it is generally safer to build political institutions on what we already have, rather than to wipe the slate clean and start all over again." 21 Initially, therefore, the top tier may consist mainly of members elected by the members of the second tier local units. The next important problem would be the proper distribution of functions between the two tiers, viz., the metropolitan-level body and the several local government units. International experience may be of considerable help in this regard. Earlier in this chapter we have cited instances of both metropolitan area-wide and local problems in the CMD which might provide a basis for the division of responsibilities between the two tiers. Accordingly, a scheme of allocation of functions is presented in Table 32. Our suggested distribution of functions will entail transfer of some responsibilities from the State Government and the special purpose authorities. Thus, the proposed metropolitan body will be charged with fire services, major roads, housing and slum clearance and traffic and transportation responsibilities which are presently under the State Government. 21 From the existing special purpose

Calcutta Metropolitan District: Suggested Distribution of Functions between the Metropolitan Level Body and the Local Government Units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolitan Functions</th>
<th>Local Functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Water supply</td>
<td>1. Water distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Main drainage and sewerage</td>
<td>2. Local drains and other sewers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Traffic and Transportation including its planning and regulation aspects and operation of mass transportation, metropolitan roads</td>
<td>3. Local roads and parking facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Planning of the entire metropolitan area</td>
<td>4. Local detailed planning in conformity with metropolitan plan and planning control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Garbage disposal</td>
<td>5. Garbage collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Major parks and open spaces and recreation facilities</td>
<td>6. Local parks and recreations developments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Major schemes of comprehensive development</td>
<td>7. Local developments and rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Housing and slum clearance and rehousing of slum dwellers</td>
<td>8. Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Welfare services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Burial grounds and burning ghats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Vaccination and inoculation and registration of births and deaths</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Other regulatory services in respect of food, drugs, markets, weights and measures etc</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Local taxation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
authorities it will take over some other functions such as water supply, drainage, sewerage and sewage disposal and garbage disposal; housing and site clearance and comprehensive development. Thus our proposal will lead to the abolition of the Calcutta Metropolitan Water and Sanitation Authority, and the Improvement Trusts of Calcutta and Howrah. Also it sweeps away the concept of special purpose authorities which the Basic Development Plan has sought to create. Incidentally, this scheme of allocation of functions should not be treated as an ideal one; it is presented as a basis for detailed examination.

The Second Tier: Under the suggested two-tier system the second tier authorities will have to undertake a wide range of functions. But these responsibilities cannot be shouldered by the existing local units. We have pointed out in the preceding chapters that local self-government in the CMD is structurally and financially very weak and there are too many units operating within their small irrational boundaries. Since our basis of governmental reorganisation is, in Professor Hobson’s words, to replace a momentum of decline by a momentum of advance" in the sphere of local self-government, we envisage a thorough overhaul of the local self-governing bodies in the metropolitan area. This alone can guarantee the success of the

two-tier system.

The Basic Development Plan's scheme of consolidation and annexation through which the system of local self-government in the CMD has been sought to be rationalised is sound in principle. But it has not been conceived in the context of a wide range of local functions. This is because of the emphasis of the Basic Development Plan on special purpose authorities rather than local self-government. Secondly, the consolidation proposals are confined to urban local self-government only. There are non-municipal areas close to the boundaries of the urban government units and these have been included within the CMD because these are either already urbanised or have quick urbanisation potential. Hence, a scheme of local government consolidation must take into account both the municipal and non-municipal areas together, especially where the latter are indistinguishable from the municipal areas because of spill-over urbanisation. Thirdly, the consolidated units, as proposed in the Basic Development Plan, vary widely in respect of area and population. Thus Calcutta, Garden Reach and South Suburban together form one unit with a total population of more than 32 lakhs and an area of over 53 square miles. At the other extreme, the municipalities of Utarpur-Kutirung, Konnagar and Rishra have been made into one unit with a total population of slightly more than 1 lakh and an area of only 7.30 square miles. No,
attempt has been made to distribute the population load as evenly as possible among the local units. Obviously, in our suggested two-tier system of government the size of the units constituting the second tier should be determined on some uniform criteria to avoid wide variations in their area and population.

The paucity of resources of the small municipalities and their inability to provide urban amenities attracted the attention of even the Bengal Administration Enquiry Committee (1944-45) which significantly observed that "in no area does amalgamation, as distinct from abolition, appear more calculated to improve administration than in the industrial zone around Calcutta." 23 Calcutta itself had grown by fits and starts. Its boundaries were extended as far back as in 1888 on the recommendations of a Sanitary Commission; some more areas including the then suburban municipalities of Cossipore-Chitpore, Manicktala and Garden Reach were added to it in 1923. Garden Reach was, however, later taken out of the city and constituted as a separate municipality. The Biswas Commission which was set up in 1946 to investigate into the affairs of the Calcutta Corporation had briefly referred to the problem of amalgamation, although, strictly speaking, this was not within its terms of reference. The representatives of six suburban municipalities appeared before the Commission, viz., South

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Dum Dum, Baranagore, Kamarhati, Dum Dum, Garden Reach and South Suburban. The first three municipalities did not favour the idea of amalgamation, while the last three were agreeable on certain conditions. The amalgamation issue was not pursued after that and the only tangible result was the merger of Tollygunge Municipality with Calcutta in 1953.

We have already mentioned other instances of amalgamation in the CMD. Since we are considering the local units as the second tier of a two-tier administration, in effecting consolidation certain basic criteria have to be adopted to determine the size of the units. Some such criteria would be as follows:

(i) In the interest of good relationship between the metropolitan level body and the second-tier authorities, there should not be too many local units.

(ii) The size of a local unit must be such as would ensure, as far as possible, sufficient local resources to operate the services entrusted to it.

(iii) Although the optimum operating areas of specific services may not be the same, the size of a local unit should be such as would ensure the management of services with reasonable efficiency.

I. The area and population of each local unit
should be fixed in such a way as would secure
a fair distribution of population load and
density load among the several units.

A few other factors need also to be taken into account
in any local amalgamation scheme, such as contiguity, community
of interest, economic and industrial characteristics, physical
features, means of communication and accessibility to the
centres of administration, business and social life, record of
administrative performance of the local units and wishes of
the inhabitants.

It may not be possible in practice to strictly conform
to these standards and fulfill all the conditions, as in carving
out local boundaries one factor may be found to be incompatible
with another. However, even if compromises are made, adequate
attention to these factors and criteria may yield more viable
units of local government in the CMD than what the Basic
Development Plan has suggested.

Special Problems of the Non-Municipal Areas: The non-municipal
areas which constitute more than half of the total CMD area
present some important administrative problems. As pointed out
in Chapter XII most of these areas are presently under the
administrative jurisdiction of the Zilla Parishads of 24
Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly and Nadia, and

25 See, in this connection, the factors considered by the Royal
Commission on Local Government in Greater London in determi-
ning the size of a Greater London Borough. Report, op. cit.,
p. 194.
their lower tier units viz., panchayat samities and anchal and gram panchayats. Recent administrative changes in this sector of the CMD include, the establishment of a notified area authority at Kalyani and a municipality at New Barrackpore, and amalgamation of adjacent rural tracts with the Municipal Corporation of Howrah. These changes represent three distinct methods to cope with the administrative problems of the non-municipal areas, viz., (i) the notified area authority approach, (ii) municipalisation, and (iii) annexation.

These different methods indicate that no coherent policy has yet been evolved in meeting the needs of the non-municipal sector of the CMD. The Basic Development Plan, as discussed earlier, has recommended ultimate annexation of the non-municipal areas to the municipal units, and some unspecified special arrangement for their administration in the interim period.

Since the areas under consideration form part of the CMD, the retention, in this sector, of the tiered system of panchayati raj with its orientation towards rural development has hardly any justification and on this the Basic Development Plan is also aggreable. Of the other methods adopted so far, the notified area authority has great disadvantages. It can be applied to one area at a time and would therefore lead to the creation of a number of small, fragmented authorities. The municipalisation approach has its limitations as well. Not all of the rural areas fulfil...
The conditions for municipalisation as laid down in the Bengal Municipal Act, as the state of affairs of the existing municipalities amply demonstrates, it may not be advisable to create small isolated municipalities even in those areas which fulfill the statutory criteria. The prospect of higher taxation as a sequel to municipalisation has also led, in certain cases, to popular opposition against municipalisation. Again, unless urban community development is extended to these non-municipal areas, the abrupt withdrawal of the liberal State grants to the Panchayati raj bodies may worsen the situation. Lastly, the method of annexation which has been recommended by the Basic Development Plan does not seem to be universally applicable. It may be a useful device in those cases where presently due to spill-over urbanisation the natural boundary of a municipal authority has exceeded its statutory jurisdiction. We have in mind particularly the census town groups as shown in Table 4 (Chapter III), where municipal areas and non-municipal towns have formed distinct clusters. Even then there will be the fear of increased taxation and withdrawal of the benefits of Panchayati raj to counteract which some form of differential taxation, at least for the initial period, has to be devised and urban community development extended to these areas.
The problems of the non-municipal areas have to be viewed in the context of the overall development of the CMD. It has been estimated that by 1986 the CMD population total will be between 11.32 million and 13.41 million. Like metropolitan growths elsewhere in the world, in the CMD also further growths are taking place outside the densely settled parts of the central city complex. As Table 6 in Chapter IV shows, the rate of population growth in the outer ring of municipalities is significantly higher than the rate in Calcutta. It can therefore be expected that more and more concentration of population will take place in the non-municipal areas of the CMD. Already such dispersal of population has led to the emergence of new town areas which are still being administered by the panchayati raj bodies. In the near future the rest of the non-municipal areas will be caught in the urbanisation flood and thus elude the grasp of the rural self-governing authorities.

In view of these special problems of the non-municipal areas, their integration with the suggested two-tier system of administration has to be carefully considered. There may not be much difficulty in bringing into the two-tier system selected areas which are already urbanised and situated close to the municipal boundaries to which these could be annexed. Also where non-municipal towns have

26. The Basic Development Plan, op. cit., p. 68.
grown up together almost as one unit; these can be constituted into a municipality along with some adjacent rural areas. Even then there will be large rural tracts for which, as the Basic Development Plan, rightly suggested, some special administrative arrangement has to be made. Since these areas are yet undeveloped and considerable investments have to be made to provide necessary urban infrastructure there, their inclusion in the two-tier system at this stage should be avoided.

It does not, however, follow from what is stated above that these areas should remain neglected. Contrarily, in view of the projected growth of population in the CMD, systematic efforts should be made to control and develop them within the framework of an overall plan for the CMD. Since neither the metropolitan level body nor the second tier authorities can be expected to have enough resources to attack the vast problems of the non-municipal areas, a State-level peri-urban development board can be set up to undertake the work of systematic development of the entire non-municipal sector which cannot otherwise be brought into the two-tier administration. Such a board may also be profitably utilised as a watch-dog body to keep a close watch on unregulated fringe urbanisation throughout the State. After specific areas are developed by the board, their municipalisation and inclusion into the two-tier system can be arranged. The success of such

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an institution would, however, depend on the release of substantial State grants and its healthy relationship with the metropolitan level body in conformity with whose overall planning powers the board will have to function. Hence, on the metropolitan level body the board should be represented. Under this arrangement the tiered system of panchayati raj will have to be abolished in the areas concerned, although the local agencies like the present anchal panchayats may be retained to execute local functions and represent local opinions.

It needs to be stressed in this connection that mere formal-structural changes can hardly be a panacea for all the governmental ills. There are also other factors involved which have an important bearing on the success or failure of any scheme of metropolitan reorganisation. In the first place, local administration needs to be toned up by inducting suitable administrative and technical knowhow such as executive officers, engineers and medical officers. A well-devised personnel-administration policy is, in the second place, needed to ensure proper recruitment, posting, punishment, promotion and service benefits of local employees. In the third place, proper State-local relations constitute a very important element in the successful functioning of local government. The needs of the local bodies - financial, administrative and personnel - will have to be evaluated by the State Government from time to time, on the basis of which suitable policies
should be enunciated to assist and stimulate the local bodies. The directives, and punitive and restrictive measures which have hitherto been the characteristic features of State-local relationship are now obsolete tools. What are needed instead are advice and guidance, policy leadership and an objective grants system. This highlights the necessity for inter-departmental coordination at the level of State administration. Since the policy leadership must emanate from the State Government, coordination among the departments that are directly involved in local government administration is of paramount importance. Last, but not least, local self-governing institutions will thrive or languish according as the local citizenry will be willing and able to efficiently operate them or not.

The underlying assumption in the above analysis has been that the governmental problems of the CMD can be solved not by passing the local self-governing institutions but by strengthening and reorganising them. In the ultimate analysis, however, the form of reorganisation that will actually be adopted would depend, to a large extent, on the pulls and pressures of local and State politics; for, the final decision on governmental form is bound to be a political decision.