Preface

Studies on the nature and extent of citizen's participation in India indicate that a combination of colonial legacy, social diversity, poverty, and illiteracy and the peculiarity of the political process restrict popular participation in the public administration at the grass root level in India. The government functioning still characterizes the colonial legacy by an administrative elite in certain parts of the country. Numerous cleavages along religious, ethnic, linguistic and class lines characterize the social structure. Poverty and illiteracy facilitate the continued dominance of powerful socio-economic groups in the society to monopolize the fruits of development and progress. These do not encourage public participation in the administration at the grass-root level. Further, the general passivity and subservience of the masses have resulted in the bureaucracy becoming a privileged minority who refuses to share any decision-making power with the people nor would it encourage popular participation in decision making. The system of democratic decentralization introduced in India provides an opportunity to change the situation, though it still falls short of effective devolution of power to the masses in many provinces. This process cannot be achieved in a short span of time due to weak capacity, low levels of literacy and social dynamics. It requires patience and institutional reforms. This thesis proposes one such reform.

In view of this, public administration cannot deliver satisfactory performance either in the centralized or decentralized form of administration. There has to be a third alternative form of administration that will satisfy the citizens in the current bureaucratic form of administration as well as facilitate the decentralizing process with better management skills. The objective of this study is to give shape to this alternative form of administration through induction of the private sector assistance in public systems management. It was chosen with the ardent intention to contribute to the thinking process aimed at improving the services provided by municipalities. The study takes stock of the Indian urban scenario and makes an attempt to highlight the magnitude of the issues confronting urban development. Further, the study reviews the privatization models adopted by various urban bodies. It then focuses on the
Municipal Corporation of Delhi to provide a complete overview of its functioning, problems, issues and magnitude. As a major exploratory part of the study evaluates the quality of provision of some municipal services by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi in two specific residential localities of Vasant Kunj and City Zone and compares it with the similar services provided by the private sector in Sushant Lok Township developed and maintained by the private sector in Gurgaon.

Considering the major issues involved in the privatization of municipal services and the concerns of the municipal entities, the study proposes a solution to delegate municipal service responsibility to privately run Municipal Enterprises under the supervision and regulation of down sized municipalities under an Assignment Model. The study therefore formulated an Assignment Model of Municipal Enterprises and Systems (AMMES). The reforms proposed by the study envisage savings or at least no increases in financial burden on the exchequer in spite of the expected improvements in the quality and efficiency of delivery of municipal services.

This study is intended for urban policy makers, urban developers, municipal corporations, municipalities, institutions involved in urban managements and for academicians.

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