CHAPTER - 2

URBAN GOVERNANCE IN
ANDHRA PRADESH
Urbanisation in Andhra Pradesh

There has been an unprecedented shift of human settlements to select urban areas in search of better living conditions in the entire country and Andhra Pradesh is no exception to it as indicated by the steep increase of urban population of 23.32 per cent in 1981 to 27.08 in 2001 and the growth of urban areas from 85 in 1981 to 124 in 2007. India is emerging as one of the fastest urbanising courtiers in the world with an already staggeringly large urban population of 285 million and 35 metropolitan cities. Thus, India is very likely to become more urban than rural by the middle of the century or even earlier. The economic base has already shifted from rural to urban centres which indicates that the future of Andhra Pradesh, like that of India, is inescapably urban.

As per the 2001 Census data, the population of India was estimated at 102.70 crores. Out of this 27.78 crores in absolute terms lived in urban areas. The total population in 2001 of Andhra
Pradesh which is the fifth largest state in India was estimated at 7.62 crores with 2.08 crores i.e., 27.08 per cent in Cities and Towns. The percentage of population living in urban areas in the state went up from 9.65 per cent (1901) Andhra Pradesh witnessed rapid urbanization during the last two decades. It is likely that the trend of urbanization is inevitable, consequent on the large-scale migration of rural people to urban areas and also on the new economic policies that are being implemented in the country since the 1990s. This rapid urbanization is becoming a challenge to the Government and to the administrators in terms of provision of the minimum basic amenities to the people.

Table 2.1: Urban Population of India and Andhra Pradesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State/All India</th>
<th>Population 2001 (in crores)</th>
<th>% of Urban to Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>7.57</td>
<td>2.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>102.70</td>
<td>28.53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India, New Delhi, 2003.

Table 2.1 discloses that the growth of urban population in Andhra Pradesh is more or less equal to the all India urban growth. There has been significant amalgamation of rural pockets into the urban areas contiguous with them and thus the urban areas have naturally extended beyond their signified boundaries. E.g. Visakhapatnam city has extended up to Gajuwaka, while nine big towns contiguous with Hyderabad city are merged into Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, renaming both cities as Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation and Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation.

The above urban trends in the state put greater stress on urban administration in regard to the provision of urban basis
services commensurate with the needs and demands of the fast growing urban areas besides enforcing an efficient local administration which attends to local call.

**Urban Governance in Andhra Pradesh**

In Andhra Pradesh Municipal Administration & Urban Development Department functions under the administrative control of the Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development. There are 109 Municipalities, 15 Municipal Corporations and 7 Urban Development Authorities functioning in the state.

An urban area is constituted into a Municipality or Municipal Corporation based on the criteria of population and income. As per these criteria, there are 124 Urban Local Bodies in Andhra Pradesh classified into the following categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipal Corporations</th>
<th>... 15</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Corporations (A Grade)</td>
<td>... 03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Corporations (B Grade)</td>
<td>... 12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipalities</th>
<th>... 109</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection Grades</td>
<td>... 03</td>
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<tr>
<td>Special Grade</td>
<td>... 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Grade</td>
<td>... 21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Grade</td>
<td>... 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Grade</td>
<td>... 35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nagar Panchayats</td>
<td>... 06</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Good urban governance envisages improving the quality of life in cities through improved local governance by reinventing a city as an inclusive city, which provides space and voice to all its stakeholders through inclusive decision-making. It affords
adequate opportunity to women’s thoughts and initiatives since women are the biggest levers of positive change in society. Governance is the manner in which power is exercised in the management of a country’s economic and social resources for development. It is the manner in which public officials and institutions acquire and exercise the authority to shape public policy and provide public goods and services. Good urban governance provides for Transparency, Accountability, Honesty, Efficiency, and Sensitivity.

The key issues of good urban governance are: decentralisation, integration of the poor and marginalised, environmental sustainability, mobilisation of municipal finance, transparency and civic engagement, better municipal management and capacity building.

The Department of Municipal Administration and Urban Development (M.A. & U.D) in Andhra Pradesh consists of three main wings, namely the Administrative wing headed by the Commissioner & Director of Municipal Administration, who is always a senior officer of the Indian Administrative service; the Public Health Engineering wing, headed by an Engineer-in-Chief; and the Town Planning wing, headed by the Director of Town & Country Planning.

In respect of the Health wing in Municipalities, it is headed by an Assistant Civil Surgeon with a Diploma in Public Health (D.P.H.) who is deputed by the Director of Health, but the Director of Health is not within the purview of the Municipal Administration Department.

All the three heads function under the overall supervision and control of the MA&UD Department in the Government
(Secretariat) headed by the Principal Secretary to Government who is one of the senior most I.A.S. officers in the State.

The Department of Municipal Administration and Urban Development handles planning and development in urban and rural areas. The development is achieved through Master Plans prepared for urban centres and rural areas.

The main functions of the Department, besides directing the ULGs in routine administrative matters, are: to

- Assist the government in town planning matters
- Coordinate with various departments involved in development schemes like A.P. Housing Board, A.P. State Housing and Urban Development Corporations, A.P. Industrial and infrastructure Corporation, Industries Department, Urban Development Authorities and others.
- Offer technical recommendations to the government in matters like change of land use proposals, alienation of lands and relaxation of rules.
- Suggest and implement layouts and regulate the development of industries and other buildings as per suggested norms.
- Suggest and implement various Environmental Improvement Schemes, Remunerative Schemes and Road widening Schemes.

Urban Local Governments in A.P.

"Local self-government is that part of the government of a nation or state which deals mainly with such matters as concern
the inhabitants of the particular district or place, together with those matters which parliament has deemed it desirable should be administered by local authorities, subordinate to the central government. Local government institutions existed in India right from the Vedic times. The Rig Veda reveals that the ancient Hindus led a corporate life. According to K.P. Jayaswal, "the national life and activities in the earliest times on record was expresses through popular assemblies and institutions." Kautilya refers to those institutions. Urban administration in ancient India was not only advanced but was also well-organised as is evident from historical documents. Megasthenes gives a description of the administration of a large Hindu town in the third century before Christ. The city consisted of six bodies of each five to look after industrial arts, entertainment of foreigners, birth and deaths, trade and commerce, manufactured articles, and tax collection. Although local government existed in India since time immemorial, the ULGs in their present form and style of functioning owe their existence to the British rule in India. The two dominant considerations that led the British to establish local government institutions in India were the administrative problems due to the large size of the country and the paucity of the finances of the imperial power. The earliest steps towards the setting up of the local authorities in urban areas were motivated by the need of mobilising local fiscal resources for roads, public works, education, health and the like which were regarded as matters concerning the local people. The first Municipality in Andhra Pradesh was established in the year 1861 in Bheemunipatnam when the Dutch established their shipping activity there.

The word Municipality derives its name from the Roman word 'municipium' a free town possessing the right of Roman Citizenship but governed by its own laws.
The Municipal Office or Urban Local Government has two wings: the deliberative wing called the municipal council or the municipal corporation and the executive wing called the executive wing. The executive wing is headed by a Commissioner, who is the Chief Executive Authority (CEA) of the Urban Local Government who coordinates the services of an Engineer, a Town Planning Officer a Municipal Health Officer, a Revenue Officer and a Manager. The elected wing consists of elected representatives (ward members) headed by the Chairperson. Though the Commissioner is not a direct subordinate to the Chairperson, he is under the administrative control of the Chairperson in Municipalities (Section 56 (4) of the A.P.M. Act, 1965, while in Municipal Corporations, the Commissioner is more independent and exercises administrative and financial powers independent of the control or supervision of the elected body including the Mayor. The Municipal Authorities entrusted with the implementation of Municipal law are:

- In respect of Municipality:
  a. Council;
  b. Chairperson;
  c. Commissioner;
  d. Wards Committees;

- In respect of Municipal Corporation;
  a. Corporation;
  b. Standing Committee;
  c. Commissioner
  d. Wards Committees;

It is significant to note that while the Chairperson is one of the municipal authorities entrusted with the implementation of the APM Act, 1965 in Municipalities; the Mayor in Municipal Corporation is not one of the Municipal Corporation authorities entrusted with such functions, powers or responsibilities. The
Mayor of a Municipal Corporation is a titular head of the Municipal Corporation without any administrative and financial powers, with all the real executive powers vested in the Standing Committee and the Commissioner.

**Constitution of Urban Local Governments in Andhra Pradesh**

Urban Local Governments can be broadly divided into three categories viz., Nagar (Town) Panchayat, Municipality and Municipal Corporation. The population and income criteria for constitution of Urban Local Governments are as follows:

1. **Nagar Panchayat**

   Major Gram Panchayats with Urban Characters whose population exceeds 25,000 and is below 40,000 with an annual income of Rs.40.00 lakhs and above and in which employment in non-agricultural income is 50 per cent or above shall be constituted into a Nagar Panchayat which is a transitional area between a Gram Panchayat and a Municipality. There is not much difference between a Third Grade Municipality and a Nagar Panchayat in regard to the staff pattern or functioning. They both work under the same Act with the same powers and functions. The different nomenclature is only to signify the fact that it is gradually switching over from rural to urban area.

2. **Municipalities**

   There are 5 Grades of Municipalities in Andhra Pradesh with the following income criteria:
Table 2.2: Grades of Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No.</th>
<th>Grade of the Municipality</th>
<th>Income (Rs. in Lakhs)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Grade - III</td>
<td>100.00 or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Grade - II</td>
<td>100.00 to 200.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Grade - I</td>
<td>200.00 to 300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Special Grade</td>
<td>300.00 to 400.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Selection Grade</td>
<td>400.00 and above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: A.P.M. Act 1965.

There is no population criteria prescribed for the grading of Municipalities.

3. Municipal Corporations or Large Urban Area

An Urban area with a population exceeding 3,00,000 and having potentialities for international trade and commerce.

Election of Civic Chief

The Civic Chief (Mayor, Chairperson or President) of an Urban Local Government is directly elected in certain states while he is elected from among the ward members in other states. The direct election of the Civic Chief was introduced in Andhra Pradesh in 1987 in order to give him a status of irremovability from the elective office for the full term and to enable him to act independently in decision-making in certain matters. Experience gained over the last three elections shows that the direct election of the Civic Chief has certain inherent disadvantages. It very often happens that the directly elected Civic Chief belongs to one political party while the Deputy or Vice Civic Chief, who is the leader of the single largest political party in the council, belongs to another political party with the result the official machinery has to swing between two political authorities ultimately resulting in bad administration. Experience has further shown that the directly
elected Civic Chief often becomes a tyrant, irresponsible to public call and unaccountable to the council, while the Civic Chief, elected from among the elected ward members, functions in close harmony with the elected council and the scope for unilateral decisions or lopsided administration is minimised.

The third and more important political authority under the Local Governments Acts is the Chairman of the Standing Committee who exercises more powers than even the Civic Chief or the Deputy Civic Chief. In certain states there are a very few matters that go up to the Council or Corporation presided by the Civic Chief, the rest being settled either by the Commissioner or the Chairperson of the Standing Committee. Thus, due to the concentration of political and administrative powers in two or three authorities the efficiency of administration of the Urban Local Governments suffers.

In the light of the vast experience gained over several decades of the functioning of the elected local authorities what can be suggested is that there should be clear demarcation of responsibilities rather than powers among different political and administrative authorities of Urban Local Governments in order to ensure greater accountability of the ULGs to the citizens.

Andhra Pradesh is one of the well advanced States in enforcing an efficient urban administration in the State, despite the poor financial position of certain Urban Local Governments. Each higher grade Municipality is organized in such a way that it functions like a State Government writ small, since it encompasses all the subjects of the State Government and even more.

The Municipalities in Andhra and Rayalaseema Regions of the state functioned under the Madras Districts Municipalities Act,
1920 and the Municipalities in Telangana regions functioned under the Andhra Pradesh (Telangana area) District Municipalities Act, 1956 until 1965. In the year 1965, the Government thought it desirable to enforce an uniform system of administration in the entire state duly enacting a common law in place of the then existing two Acts specified above. Thus, the Andhra Pradesh State legislature enacted the Andhra Pradesh Municipalities Act, 1965 (A.P.M. Act, 1965) which came into force on April 1, 1965 in order to securing uniformity in the laws prevailing in both the regions, and with a view to providing more scope for the elected representatives on the Municipal Councils to have greater voice and control in administration and also to minimize the control of the Government over the Municipal Bodies to the extent possible.

The enactment of APM Act, 1965 brought with it several problems and administration of Municipalities in the State had almost come to a stand still for 4 years due to innumerable lacunae in the law. Most of the powers of the Commissioner, who is the chief executive authority of the municipal council, are transferred to the Chairperson and the Commissioner is reduced to a stooge simply to nod his head to the tune of the elected Chairperson. Owing to various reasons the Chairperson did not pay proper attention to the administration of the Municipality with the result that the official machinery was baffled and was quite unable to deliver the goods. An accountable and service-minded administration had gone out of the reach of urban dwellers, necessitating urgent amendment to the A.P.M. Act 1965. The amendment transferred certain powers to the Commissioner. In the year 1971, a comprehensive legislation was made clearly defining the functions, powers and responsibilities of the Commissioner. The Act was further amended in 1993 in order to set things right in the light of the working of the Act for over 28 years.
Structural Organisation of Urban Local Governments

The ULGs in most of the states in India including Andhra Pradesh have a similar official structure with six (6) main sections each performing a specific function: (1) Establishment section; (2) Accounts Section; (3) Revenue Section; (4) Engineering section; (5) Town Planning section; and (6) Health section. The functions of each section are discussed here:

It is an established fact that most of the Urban Local Governments are only perfunctorily, but not perfectly, performing their functions. The reasons are not far to search. It is, therefore, necessary to probe into the reasons for the dismal performance of the Urban Local Governments so that the deficits can be known and the measures to tone up the functioning of the Urban Local Governments can be arrived at in order to ensure cent per cent accountability of the ULGs to the urban dwellers.

1) Establishment Section

The establishment section mainly deals with the service matters of the office staff and organisation of the municipal office. In each ULG office there will be an office order indicating who should perform which functions of the ULG assigned to specified officials in the Municipal Office Manual. The functions assigned to the Commissioner of a ULG (who is the chief executive authority of the Urban Local Government) may be performed by his subordinate officers or the Heads of the Sections as per the delegation of powers given by the C.E.A. The efficient functioning of the establishment section depends on the thorough knowledge of the establishment staff relating to the section. Every member of the establishment must make himself thoroughly conversant with the rules, regulations, bye-laws and executive instructions issued by the competent authority from time to time. If the establishment section
is accountable for its due discharge of its duties efficiently, the plea of ignorance of the staff dealing with the section should never be accepted as an excuse for their inefficient role in the management of the section. But, owing to the heavy financial deficit in budget allocation to the department of municipal administration, the governments of certain states have almost stopped fresh recruitment of staff to the vacancies caused due to the retirement, death or resignation of working staff. And whatever recruitment there was for over a decade and an half was limited only to the appointment of the children of employees deceased in harness on compassionate grounds, their appointment being based on a legal provision but not on merit. Thus ignorance was substituted for intelligence. Most of the state governments have stopped fresh recruitment of staff to the municipalities for over a decade in order to reduce expenditure on establishment. The steep reduction of efficient hands in the establishment section has adversely affected the efficient functioning of the section ultimately failing in its accountability to the public.

The reasons for the growing indiscipline and irresponsible attitude of the municipal staff towards the public are due not only to a lack of recruitment of staff on the basis of merit but also due to undue interference of the local politicians in the administration of the ULGs that prevents the staff from efficient discharge of their duties. The accountability of the ULGs thus fail in this aspect. The first step to efficiently organise the ULG, therefore, is to “divide the office into convenient sections, and to draw up a clear distribution list, showing the subjects dealt with by each clerk.” The establishment section is headed by the Manager (in respect of Municipalities and Nagar Panchayats and the Superintendent in case of Municipal Corporations) who supervises the despatch of business of the section and its discipline. The establishment
section mainly deals with correspondence which includes opening, registering, indexing, fair-copying and despatching, the receipt of papers into the record room, their number-wise and chronological arrangement in the record room, their issue form there when required for reference and such other matters. While this section has the responsibility of prompt despatch of business, inordinate delay is experienced owing to incapacitated staff, inadequate modern infrastructure needed for quick disposal of work commensurate with the demands of the current age, political interference, absence of regular recruitment to various cadres of posts in the office, improper maintenance of registers etc. will result in poor accountability of the section. Thus, poor accountability of establishment section leads to overall inefficiency or poor performance of the administrative system of the ULG. The staff of the ULGs must be made to develop work culture and each public servant must realise that human life becomes more meaningful and fruitful with fulfilment through work. A public servant, through his total commitment and dedication to work fulfils his accountability to the public. All of man's life and achievements have always had a relevance to committed and committed work. This dedication and commitment would be possible through developing a love for the task given under the statute. Even during the Vedic times, the Indian Hindu society was divided into four Varnas (categories or communities) based on the functions they had to perform. The whole community, divided into four compartments, was supposed to perform all the society's work and cater to its needs. In an exactly similar manner, the public servant or a government official has to perform his tasks strictly according to law, to fulfil his accountability to his employer, that is, the local self-government. Nowadays, although work is a professional exercise for earning a living, it does not seem to
represent a central-life interest unlike a few decades ago when work was pleasure and public servants regarded sincere discharge of their official duties as primary and all other activities were secondary to them. Nowadays there is a wide-spread and just feeling among citizens unfortunately that there is a serious slacking of interest, concern, sense of duty and responsibility among a majority of municipal employees. The environment in which they work encourages these tendencies among them. They owe it to themselves, the institutions in which they work, and the society they belong to, that they discharge their appointed duties sincerely, promptly and responsibly. The sooner they realise this wisdom, the better for them. The development of work-culture is, therefore, of paramount importance in order that the public servants perform their functions to the best satisfaction of the citizens. This aspect is discussed in detail in the chapter seven on Skill Up-gradation for Capacity Building.

2) Accounts Section

Financial administration and its maintenance is the exclusive responsibility of the Accounts Section. This section has to deal with the preparation of annual budget, finalisation of annual accounts, audit, accounting for receipts and expenditure pertaining to the entire Urban Local Government. Prioritising items of expenditure and careful financial management in times of crisis is the sole responsibility of the head of the Accounts Section. The Accounts section in a ULG should, while preparing the annual budget, know how to cut the suit according to the cloth. It has to prepare a realistic annual budget clearly specifying the items of expenditure, both obligatory and discretionary, to which the municipal fund may be applied. Adequate provision will have to be made for everything necessary for or conducive to the safety, health, convenience, education of the inhabitants or to the
amenities of the ULG and everything incidental to the administration. The head of the Accounts Section in a ULG should be capable of distinguishing the important item of expenditure from the unimportant and the more important from the less important item of expenditure.

The financial bankruptcy of most of the ULGs in the country and their inability to rise to the occasion in times of crisis is attributable to the inefficiency of the Accounts Section in prioritising the items of expenditure. There is a dire need for the Urban Local Governments to switch over to “Modern and transparent budgeting, accounting, financial management systems, designed and adopted for all urban services and governance functions” as envisaged under the JNNURM reforms.

3) Revenue

The entire activity of the ULG revolves around the Revenue section’s capacity and efficiency. The revenues of the ULGs can be categorised into five heads: Taxes, Non-Taxes, Assigned Revenues, Non-Plan grants and Plan Grants. While the latter three are devolved from the state government the taxes and non-taxes are directly collected by the ULGs. The more the efficiency of the ULG the greater is the levy and collection of revenues from the two major heads. But there are several loopholes in the assessment, levy and collection of taxes and non-taxes by the ULGs which result in poor financial position that disable them to perform many of their important tasks properly.

4) Engineering Section

The most important section that holds the attention of the citizens captive is the Engineering Section. All developmental activities like the provision of urban infrastructure and its
maintenance preparation of projects for the development of the town/city come under the purview of this section. The main reason for the squalid look of most of the urban areas in the country is the incompetent and inefficient engineering staff who have no vision, commitment, dedication and expertise coupled with inadequate budget provision for maintenance of essential services. The role of the Engineering Section in the development of urban areas, the reasons for its poor accountability and all the related issues are discussed in the chapter on Urban Infrastructure.

5) **Town Planning Section**

This section is responsible for the regulated development of urban areas, prevention of reckless growth, and removal of encroachments, widening of roads to enable the safety of vehicular traffic, preparation of master plan of the entire urban area as well as general town planning schemes, layouts, designs for housing, preparation of industrial, commercial, residential and agricultural zoning regulations and all matters related to the proper development of the town/city. This section, while preparing plans for urban development, has to follow the urban planning systems comprising long term perspective plan, mid-term development plan and annual plan synchronising with the economic planning system of five year plans and annual plans. Planning is essential for effective urban development and urban development management.

6) **Health Section**

All health-related matters fall within the purview of this section. Street sweeping, solid waste management, preventive medicine, control and prevention of seasonal diseases, epidemics and endemics, family planning, maintenance of medical institutions etc are the essential functions expected to be performed by the health section of Urban Local Governments. The
fast growth of urban areas, urban population and urban slums bring with them more and more health-related problems which the Urban Local Governments are unable to address properly due to inadequate public health staff and their poor financial position. Thus the efficient functioning of this section is stunted.

It is now the responsibility of governments-central, state and local- to take up measures required for streamlining the urban local administration in the light of the added responsibilities entrusted to them.

DEVOlUTION OF POWERS AND FINANCES

The Constitution (74th Amendment) Act, 1992 envisages the Urban Local Bodies to function as full-fledged local self government units and directs the States to take up confirmative legislation. The Act provides an important leverage to the state governments to involve urban local governments in the implementation of welfare programmes oriented towards the urban poor. The Act was a major policy directive. This harbinger effort is a turning point in the life and functioning of urban local governments in the country. This historic amendment provides for people's empowerment, democratic, decentralised and participative civic governance duly recognising municipalities as constitutional bodies forming the third tier of the federal polity of India. The CAA is expected to alter the governance structure of the country. The principal object of the Act is to refurbish the entire system of urban local governance by restructuring the municipal authorities with devolution of additional functions, planning responsibilities and a new system of fiscal transfers. The amendment seeks to provide the much-needed institutional capability to improve urban governance with the impulses of urbanization and urban growth. The Act further seeks to provide a framework for political, functional and fiscal
improvement of Urban Local Governments for good governance. It also provides for the constitution of Ward Committees in municipalities/corporations with a population of more than 3 lakhs, Metropolitan Planning Committees and District Planning Committees for preparation of plans of spatial, economic and social development. Thus, the emphasis has shifted from "top down" approach to "bottom up" approach. The Act aims at decentralization initiatives to undertake municipal reforms in financing urban infrastructure. These measures include: clear distinction of functional responsibilities among various levels of government; devolution of adequate revenues to Urban Local Governments commensurate with their functions; and ensure an accountable urban local administration.

These measures enable towns and cities to become credit-worthy entities to attract the finances needed for infrastructure development in urban areas.

Keeping in view the 74th Constitutional Amendment on the devolution of powers and functions to Urban Bodies, the A.P. has adopted conformity legislation by transferring 13 out of 18 functions enlisted in XII Schedule of the Constitution to the Urban Local Governments in Andhra Pradesh as detailed below:

1. Urban Planning including Town Planning;
2. Regulation of land use and construction of buildings;
3. Roads and bridges;
4. Water supply for domestic industrial and commercial purposes;
5. Public health, sanitation, conservancy and solid waste management;
6. Slum improvement and Up gradation;
7. Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks gardens, play grounds;
8. Burials and burial grounds: cremations, cremation grounds and electric crematoriums;
9. Cattle pounds, prevention of cruelty to animals;
10. Vital statistics including registration of births and deaths;
11. Public amenities including street lighting, parking lots, bus stops and public conveniences;
12. Regulation of slaughterhouses and tanneries;
13. Urban Poverty Alleviation;

Further, the Government has also transferred the following subjects to the control of the ULBs.¹²

1. Planning for economic and social development.
2. Urban forestry, protection of environment and promotion of ecological aspects.
3. Safeguarding the interests of the weaker sections of society, including the handicapped and mentally retarded.
4. Promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects.

In addition to the above the following financial powers are also devolved on the Urban Local Bodies.¹³

(i) The Municipal Chairperson can also exercise the financial powers presently exercised by the Municipal Commissioner during an emergency subject to ratification by the Council at its next meeting.
Further the Chairperson is empowered to sanction house service connections, public fountains and also the shifting of existing public fountains in consultation with the Municipal Engineer, under Section 140 of A.P.M. Act, 1965.

The Urban Local Bodies are authorized to outsource civic services wherever necessary.

Great hopes were raised about municipal bodies with the enactment of the Constitution (Seventy Fourth Amendment) Act 1992. The Amendment empowers a State Legislature to endow the municipalities with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as institutions of self-government and such law may contain provisions of the devolution of powers and responsibilities upon municipalities with respect to the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice. The sonorous terminology is pleasant to hear but the State Legislatures have not taken any action so far in pursuance of this Constitutional provision, except constituting a new elected body before the expiry of the term of the previous body and transferring responsibilities without devolution of adequate finances. It is impossible for an empty pocket to prepare plans and projects for economic development and social justice. Article 24-X provides that the Legislature of a State may assign a municipality such taxes, tolls and fees levied and collected by the State Government and provide for making such grant-in-aid to the municipalities from the consolidated funds of the State. Besides the State has not sanctioned any new taxes and new grants-in-aid to the urban local governments, even the Profession tax collections are not adjusted to them. The State Finance Commission (S.F.C.) was constituted under Article 243-I to review the financial position of the municipalities and make recommendations for the distribution
between the State and the municipalities of the taxes, duties, fees etc. collected by the State. While the subjects are transferred from the state domain to the local domain, adequate funds for development are not devolved.

**Decentralisation of Powers**

Decentralisation of administrative decision is not a new idea. Lord Mayo in his resolution of 1870 stressed the need to introduce certain changes in the administration of Municipalities. This resolution advocated that services like roads, education and medical relief should be treated as local issues and the funds required for their administration should be raised through taxation. The resolution also emphasized the need to raise local recourses for the management of local bodies.14

Lord Ripon, a liberal minded Viceroy, known as the father of Local Self-government in India recognized the need to organize Local Self-government on sound lines. The resolution aimed at the devolution of functions and finances according to local needs.15 "By this system", Lord Ripon said "the tax payers have a satisfaction that they get a direct and immediate return for the services of sanitation, water, lighting, roads and education. To encourage public participation, men of respectable standing in native society may be induced to be elected as Chairman and conferred the little of Rao Bahadur or Khan Bahadur"16

The idea of decentralisation was to relieve the central government and state governments a large part of their excessive powers and responsibilities. Decentralisation means the transfer of certain powers and responsibilities from a higher authority to a lower or local authority. It connotes the establishment of a local representative government endowed with adequate administrative
and financial powers to discharge the constitutional obligations and deliver their mandated services to their citizens. The Constitution (74th) Amendment Act 1992 is the foundation for India's decentralisation efforts. The Amendment provides constitutional status to Urban Local Governments as the third tier of the government, enables the participation of women and marginalised groups in government, ensures the existence of local political bodies and sets up a State Finance Commission to recommend guidelines for improving the financial position of the urban local governments. Decentralisation enables the ULGs to take decisions close to the scene of action. It allows active participation of citizens in the development process through identification of felt-needs, prioritisation of basic needs which leads to a sense of true ownership of the citizens (beneficiaries of urban development) and their commitment to the civic cause. Decentralisation efforts in the government should be complemented with necessary legal changes in the consumer laws so that they ensure better services to the people.17

Decentralisation has to take place at three stages: the functional and financial decentralisation from the State to the ULGs; decentralisation within the city from the city administrative units to the divisional levels; decentralisation from the divisional level to the community groups and civil society stakeholders, women and the marginalised to share in decision-making and implementation. The appropriate idea of decentralisation in the context of the Constitution (74th) Amendment Act 1992 connotes citizen participation in urban local administration in its fullness.

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992 no doubt infused new blood in city governance in the country but the required and expected efficacy has not been achieved owing to
various factors like inadequacy of urban administrative machinery and lack of a state wide broad based urban cadre, both administrative and technical. The Municipal Commissionerate is to be strengthened to function not only as a vital channel of communication but also as a staff agency to provide managerial and technical service.

**Accountability of ULGs in Andhra Pradesh**

The accountability of the ULGs connotes their prefect functioning in due fulfilment of their constitutional obligations with commitment and dedication encompassing the role of all stakeholders of urban development and management. But in the prevailing political and official scenario the ULGs in A.P. are not able to function to the expected level and therefore fail to enforce a transparent and accountable administration. The Government has made certain amendments to the Andhra Pradesh Municipalities Act 1965 in order to empower the ULGs to perform their tasks better and to answer the public in all matters concerning civic welfare by transferring certain powers to the officials who are answerable to the public in respect of certain important administrative matters. This has expedited administration in certain aspects. The Citizen Charter, introduced in May 2001 for redressal of public grievances, is yet another development which ensures the commitment of the official machinery in respect of rendering certain important services. The Citizen Charter imposed a timeframe on the official machinery of the ULGs to attend to certain important services, linked to payment of penalty for delay of service beyond the timeframe fixed. It has ensured streamlining administration to some extent in respect of these services. But it is still in the initial stage.
Accountability of Government Officials

The accountability of government officials could be improved by a combination of factors including reducing opportunities of distorting organizational objectives. The current incentive system punishes even honest mistakes and does not reward creativity and achievement of objectives. Hence, the incentive system needs to be modified duly giving the clients and stakeholders a chance of evaluating performance. The Government also needs to withdraw from activities where the private sector is likely to be more efficient, thereby increasing total welfare and permitting the bureaucracy to concentrate on doing a better job at the repetitive elements of governance.

The principal objective of Urban Local Governments should be the creation of a local administrative machinery which moves forward with dedication and commitment to civic welfare and which is always alive to public expectations and which will establish a lasting partnership between the people and the local administration in the endeavour to provide a citizen-friendly administration responsive to civic call. This includes:

- Providing information to all citizens about the essential services delivered by the Urban Local Government and the procedure prescribed to avail themselves of those services;
- Creating awareness among the public regarding the duties and responsibilities of the citizens towards Local Government so as to enable them to play their role effectively and efficiently to help the ULGs function to the best satisfaction of the public;
- The creation of an official machinery to implement the Citizen Charter more effectively;
Ensuring the active participation and cooperation of the public in taking administration to the door steps of the urbanites.
References


2) Dr.A.Gunasekharan in his paper on *Good Governance in Poverty Reduction*, 2008, Chennai University, p.278.


11) Bata K. Dey, op. cited, p.165


