Chapter-V

Conclusion

In commemoration of its Golden Jubilee, 2001, the Indian Sociological Society has brought out a series of volumes on various themes based on the articles published so far in the sociological Bulletin. The present volume Urbanization in India: Sociological Contributions is one in the series. It include selected articles illuminating some of the significant features of urbanization in the country. Many scholars have defined urbanization according to their own orientation and understanding. But there is a general agreement that urbanization is a complex socio-economic process intimately connected with the scientific technological revolution, and that it exercises a growing influence on all aspects of society's life affecting the nature of economic development as
well as the demographic, ethnic, and many other social processes. To make it more clear, according to Kantsebovskaya (1976)

Urbanization implies changes in the nature of people’s activities; in the ratio between population engaged in agricultural activities and rest of the population; in the population distribution according to the types of settlements; in population concentration of man’s activities in shaping of urban way of life and its growing influence on the other sections of population.

The most striking feature of India’s urbanization is its long tradition. The emergence of early urban life here is associated with the evolution of Indus Valley civilization around 2500 B.C. (Dunbar 1951:2) Some temporal and spatial discontinuities in urban growth and spread notwithstanding, the urbanization process diffused
to other parts of the country under the impact of varied forces operating during the ancient (from early times to 1206 A.D.), medieval (1206 to 1757 A.D.) and modern (1757 A.D. till date) periods of Indian history. For that reason, India's urban pattern is a mosaic of segments belonging to the pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial periods (Rajbala 1986, King 1976).

Despite its long urban history spanning over nearly five millennia, India remains one of the less urbanized countries of the world. When it entered the twentieth century, it was one-tenth urban; it was around one sixth urban at the time of Independence (Krishna and Singh 1993). During first half of the twentieth century, the process of urbanization was slow, registering an increase in the level of urbanization from 10.84 to 17.29 percent. On the other hand, the urban population increased two and-a-half times, i.e., it increased
from 25 millions to 62 millions. The latter the developing countries general, and India in particular. During this period, although the level of urbanization in India increased from 17.29 per cent to 27.8 per cent, the total increase in urban population is about four-and-half times, i.e., from 62 millions to 285 millions during 1951-2001 (Singh 2001). India has the second largest urban population among the countries of the world. Although there are 285 million urbanites and 35 metropolises in India, the urban phenomena have not received due attention from scholars.

It is very difficult to take a comprehensive view of urban sociology at the international level and at the national level because its status has intimate relationship with the level of development and level of urbanization of a particular nation. In the United States of America, the subject obtained recognition in 1925 when the American
Sociological Association devoted an annual meeting to urban sociology. The papers read out in this meeting were published as a volume entitled the Urban Community under the editorship of E.W. Burgess. Prior to this volume, Park, Burgess and McKenzie published The city (1925), which contained essays they had brought out in the previous decade. These two works laid the foundation of the subject, which was further enriched by the students of park and Burgess at the University of Chicago, which is very well known as the Chicago School of Urban Sociology. On the contrary, in India, sociology is a relatively young discipline. It was only in 1920 that Professor Patrick Geddes established the first department of sociology at the University of Bombay. During the decade 1914 to 1924 he carried out diagnostic and treatment surveys of some 50 Indian urban areas which included two volumes of Town Planning Towards City Development for indore in 1918 (Boardman 1976) Yet, unlike Park and
Burgess, his work could not lay the foundation of the subject. The field of urban sociology remained unheard of in Indian universities till 1960 (Ganguli 1965)

Rao (1974) suggested two main reasons for this neglect: first, the predominant view among the sociologists that the distinction between rural and urban sociology is not meaningful in India due to its lower level of urbanization; and second, the argument that in the Indian context, there was no dichotomy between the traditional city and the village, as both were the elements of same civilization.

The three trend reports or surveys (D'Souza 1974, 1985, Kosambi 1994), commissioned by the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research, which have reviewed the literature on urban studies from 1950 to 1988, reveal the major trends in the field
of urban studies in India. It is important to note that the field of urban studies has been subjected to multidisciplinary research involving disciplines like economics, geography, history, political science, demography and social anthropology, besides sociology. On the other hand, urban sociology has a specialized field, which forms a part of urban studies. The present survey reports have been undertaken only from the sociological point of view. The contributions in the field of urban studies belong to all the disciplines motioned above. These surveys have divided the field into a number of subject matter areas to learn how far each area has been covered. In each area, the studies are further examined to see if they provide adequate explanation of the problem involved (D’Souze 1974:115). The subject matter has been considered under the following categories; urbanization, city and region, urban functions, urban internal structure, emerging urban systems,
urban social organization, urban community development, urban social problems, and urban planning

D'Souza (1974) observed that a huge mass of urban data and many studies based on this data had already accumulated. But these studies were mainly descriptive, revealing only the magnitude of the phenomena concerned. They did not aim at explaining the problems or make generalizations. Some comparative studies had been undertaken but these aimed at contrasting cities with regard to certain variables. Some important studies were carried out by Mitra (1961), Lal (1962) and Prakasa Rao (1964) mainly based on Census data. Other comparative studies were conducted under the aegis of Research Programmes Committee. Hoselitz (1961) studied the cities of Calcutta, Kanpur and Jamshedpur. Pethe (1962) compared the socio-economic conditions of Hyderabad, Poona Sholapur, Baroda, Hubli, Cuttack,
Delhi, and Madaras. All these studies are very useful but are lacking in analysis.

However, it is a known fact a municipal corporation is set up under a special statute which is passed by the state legislature. Such a legislation may be enacted specially for a particular corporation or for all corporations in a state.

As the corporation is set up under a statute, the different states apply different criteria in the setting up of corporations. Corporations vary very considerably both in terms of population and the revenue.

The Rural Urban Relationship Committee (1966)

As pointed out in the proceeding chapter, under the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act of 1976 the population criterion was fixed at 2 lakhs. The Karnataka Municipal Corporations (Amendment) Act,
1994, provides for a municipal corporation for cities or larger urban areas which have a population of not less than 3 lakhs and annual income of not less than rupees six crores per annum or an amount calculated at the rate of rupees two hundred per capita per annum whichever is higher.

In the Belgaum city municipal council what one notices is meetings are of two types, statutory and non-statutory. The statutory meetings are held in accordance with the Act, while the non statutory (urgent and special meetings) are held when the mayor or some specified not less than 1/3 of the members wishes to have such meetings.

The Council meetings are presided over by the mayor, and in his absence, by the deputy mayor as done in any other municipal council.
The resolution of the council once made, cannot be modified or cancelled within three months except at a meeting specially called for that purpose and this council is following this.

It implements the provisions of the Act by making resolutions.

It makes bye laws regarding the time and place of meetings, the conduct of proceedings at meetings etc.

It also exercises powers over the public health, housing licences and permits, markets and so on.

It has the power to supervise, investigate and inspect the various administrative departments.

It can call for any municipal officer to get explanation on any matter with which he is connected there are several incidents of this kind.
The financial powers relate to consideration and adoption of budget including passing of appropriation and levying of taxes, licence fees and rents. It has the power to raise loans, receive grants in aid and undertake remunerative enterprises. In this respect the Belgaum Council has done extremely well without any problems so far.

The mayor is the first citizen of the city. The office of the mayor is one endowed with considerable dignity. A provision is made by the Act of 1994 to reserve the offices of mayor and deputy mayors of the corporation to scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SC/ST), women, and backward classes. This will be by rotation this council has strictly observed this.

As the head of the deliberative wing, he controls its sessions and deliberations in
consolation with the commissioner and the secretary.

The agenda and the minutes are framed with his approval. He maintains the dignity, decorum and decency of the council. The mayor is kept in touch with the day to day working of the corporation.

He is allowed to delegate his administrative functions to the commissioner.

The mayor enjoys the power of inspection, and gives direction to the commissioner with regard to implementation of any resolution of the corporation.

Suggestions

The office of the mayor needs to be strengthened to enable the incumbent to emerge as a
leader of a self governing self respecting community.

Like in the fully decentralized system the mayor be made the head of the corporation area and be consulted by the state government, in the appointment of the commissioner for the corporation.

The committee system is a part of the municipal corporation. They are in vogue in one form or the other in all forms of local government but their working needs to be strengthened.

Municipal corporations cannot function without the assistance of the committees.

The committees may deal with matters which are likely to be debated in the council but that does not happen here and need to be strengthened.
The Karnataka Municipal Corporation Act provides for the Social Justice Committee of the Corporation. This committee consists of mayor and six other members elected by the councilors belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In this regard the Municipal Council has to work still.

Thus I would say that Local government is an important component of every system of government irrespective of its political form of governance. It is recognized and created under law for the management of local affairs by the concerned governments in a given geographic boundary. Local government is a realization of Decentralization concept like other levels of government. Local government embraces the principle of sharing power, among the totality of its residents.

The jurisdiction of local government is limited to a delimited area and its functions largely relate to the provision of civic amenities to the population.
within its jurisdiction. It is subordinate to the state or provincial government, which exercises control and supervision over it.

In the years before independence, the term Local self government was used for Local government

Thus, term 'Local Government' or Local Self Government', means the government of elected local bodies which are endowed with power, discretion and responsibility to be exercised and discharged by them without control over their decisions by any other authority. Their actions are, however, subjected to the supervision of the national and state governments.

Local government is an important component of every system of governmental system
Thus finally we can say that as Laski points out, we cannot realize the full benefit of democratic government unless we begin by the admission that all problems in their incidence require decision at the place, and by the persons, where and by whom the incidence is most deeply felt and so long as this does not happen thee is no point in discussing the merits of decentralization, Municipal government of Belgaum is no exception to it.

Thus, in this study, in relation to the hypothesis drawn, one can draw the following inferences;

❖ That the working of corporation is said to be satisfactory (65% Table-1)
❖ That its working was serving the local needs (62%) Table-2)
The success of its working is partially because of the successful participation of citizens (53% Table-2)

That as elsewhere found people in Belgaum too have poor conception of Decentralization and the working of decentralized institutions (53% Table-3)

Given the problem of Language and linguist minority when asked about the working atmosphere in the corporation majority of the felt that there was a problem (65% total Table-8) (60% officials 50% councilors 66.67% citizens and elites)

About the administrative efficiency the corporation such as standing committees etc, 43% agreed that it was healthy (Table-4)

About 51% agreed that corporation was able to deliver development (Table-5)
Thus the overall performance of this Municipal Corporation clearly indicates positive development and favours the hypotheses drawn

Although this is a border district much of these positive developments have been due to the yeoman service in terms of education from KLES', attitude of the people, traveling frequently to Maharashtra. History is also partly responsible, entrepreneurship of people is yet another factor.

Political sensitivity enlarges political participation to the locals to work with interest for their cause. Private initiatives as against government attitude in the region cause enlightenment. Thus, study clearly indicates the healthy working of Municipal Corporation.
As a formality few suggestions can be added;
❖ That there is need to empower women in local governments.
❖ Party politics is rather weak and needs to be strengthened.
❖ Elections do not necessarily encourage local issues to the fore. This needs to be done by the political parties.
❖ Local government seems to be burdened with central and state level programmes rather than their own.
❖ Finance is major hurdle.
❖ Civic amenities need to be strengthened.
❖ Health and hygiene needs attention.
❖ State must invest rather heavily to enthuse and utilize the people's interest and initiative.
Thus, the effort of the thesis to understand the working of the Belgaum Municipal Corporation brings the following:

1. That the local governments are here to stay
2. Participation is a scale to measure the success or failure of local governments.
3. More the decentralization more will be the responsibility sharing.
4. Transparency in administration leads to increased responsibility among the citizens.
5. For a border district like Belgaum development is the key to overcome border related political issues.
6. Urban governments have today come of age and the state governments must work towards greater federalism within the state.