



Research Paper

Efforts to Improve Cities of Urban Governance in Telangana

M. Haritha ¹

Research Scholar, Department of Public Administration
University College of Arts and Social Sciences, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Telangana, India-500007.

Dr. C. Aruna Jyothi ²

Professor, Department of Public Administration
University College of Arts and Social Sciences, Osmania University, Hyderabad, Telangana, India-500007

ABSTRACT: Because of critical importance of cities in national development, efforts to improve governance of cities have now become universal. In India efforts are being made during the last two decades to improve urban governance. They got an impetus with the passage of 74 Constitution Amendment Act in 1992. Correspondingly urban governance reforms have been introduced in the states as well. Telangana State is credited with introducing several good governance practices and methods in several sectors including urban administration. The urban sector reforms introduced during the last few years are comprehensive aimed at improving the urban governance holistically.

KEYWORDS:

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I. INTRODUCTION

Urban reforms, therefore, need to be initiated with the backdrop of Reforms Agenda under the State Vision 2030 stated above. At present urban planning process has been long and confined to the detailing of land uses and not paying adequate attention to the provision of physical and social infrastructure in towns and cities, environmental Conservation in urban areas and plan financing. Due to lack of an integrated and inclusive approach, there has been neglect of transportation in the Master plan exercise. The Urban Planning and Development Legislations which have a direct impact on urban development and financing of urban land and Housing market need to be critically studied wherein the role of urban reform cell is imminent.

Urban Sector Reforms Agenda under Telangana Vision 2030

- Telangana Vision 2030 describes the key elements of an Urban Sector Reform Agenda for the State. This agenda, among other things, includes the following actions on the part of the Government.
- Supporting economic reforms, industrialization, productivity growth, expansion of financial and other services, and promoting economic activity in both formal and informal sectors.
- Sustainable expansion of urban infrastructure facilities: water supply, sewerage and drainage, solid waste management, transport, recreation, health care, education, etc;
- Creating an enabling legal framework for planning, financing, managing and regulating urban development with the objective of sustainable augmentation of housing infrastructure and civic services.
- Facilitating commercialization of urban infrastructure and alternate forms of service provision, including privatization and public-private partnerships.
- Assisting the urban poor in income generation activities, improving the quality of their physical environment and enhancing their access to basic services like safe drinking water and sanitation, primary health care and education.
- Protecting the urban environment and ensuring harmonious development of rural and urban areas with due regard to conservation of ecology and natural resources.

- Installing and sustaining people-friendly and clean urban government based on empowered elected local bodies, committed political leadership, partnerships with civic society, participatory planning, etc., in accordance with the with 74th Constitution Amendment Act.
- Developing the capacity of Municipalities to enable them function as effective institutions of local self-government, preparing and implementing plans for economic development and social justice.

Urban Reforms in ULBs in erstwhile Telangana

Following is the Reform Agenda implemented in Telangana.

1. Administrative Reforms

- Rationalization of Staffing Pattern in ULBs
- Approval of Norms for Staffing Pattern in various categories of Posts in ULBs

Impact

- Sanction of additional 4048 posts in ULBs Constitution of Municipal Accounting Service, with 651 posts for finalization of Accounts in ULBs
- Sanction of Post of Environmental Engineer for SWM in Major ULBs

2. Revised Building Rules, 2012

- To rationalize the Standards of Building Requirement for different types of Building and Uses and Occupancy.
- DCR is based on the height of the building and set back is based on the Access Road to the Building and not other planning parameters
- FAR provision is dispensed with.
- TDR can be awarded when such lands are transferred to ULBs by way of Registered Gift Deed, which facilitates implementation of infrastructure facilities without hurdles in urban areas.
- Occupancy Certificate shall be mandatory for all buildings except the buildings in plots less than 100 sq.m.

Impact

- Provision relating to obtaining Occupancy Certificate has brought lot of compliance to the Building Rules.
- The AP Agricultural Land (conversion for Non-Agricultural purposes) Act came on 07-01-2006 to regulate conversion of Agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. Rules there under the Act were issued in the year 2006.

3. Conversion of Agriculture Land

- Prior Permission of Competent Authority is required for the conversion of Agricultural Land for non-agricultural purposes. Conversion fee shall be paid at 10% of the base value of the land in the area. Revenue Divisional officer (RDO) is the competent Authority for issue of order for conversion of land use.

Impact

- The procedure of conversion of Agricultural Land purposes is simplified and enabled reduced time frame for land use conversion process and paved way for implementation of urban development projects

4. Public Disclosure Law

- Municipal laws were amended duly providing for Model Public Disclosure Law and Rules there under were issued in December, 2009 to make municipal functions more transparent.

Innovation

- To provide the details of obligation of ULBs in respect of information to be disclosed and to prescribe the manner of disclosure of the information.

Impact

- Information on 24 items relating of ULBs shall be disclosed on Quarterly/Half yearly, yearly by the Municipal Commissioner.

II. GOOD URBAN GOVERNANCE REFORMS IN TELANGANA

Good urban governance reform initiatives may be categorized into three types- State Level Good Governance Reform initiatives, State Level Urban Sector Reform initiatives and Reforms implemented by the Local Bodies on their own. These initiatives are mentioned below.

State Level Governance Reforms

The state level governance reform initiatives have an impact on urban governance in the state. Some of the important reforms include formulation of vision for all-inclusive development of the state, preparation of

strategy paper on governance and public management, constitution of administrative reform committees to suggest reform measures to improve governance, constitution of a task force on good governance, constitution of an expert committee on performance management, constitution of an advisory Commission on People's Empowerment (COPE), establishment of Centre for Good Governance, establishment of strategy and performance information units in select departments, capacity building mechanisms, introduction of online performance tracking system, change management programmes, preparation and implementation of citizen's charters, e-governance initiatives, extensive use of communication technology, private sector participation in service delivery through outsourcing arrangements, etc. The urban vision aims that by 2020 cities and towns in Telangana will be planned, economically productive, socially just, environmentally sustainable, culturally vibrant, friendly and safe. The urban local bodies would function in a participative, transparent and accountable way. This vision will be achieved through balanced urban development, provision of urban infrastructure, operating municipal services on a competitive basis, involving private sector to supplement government efforts and to improve efficiency, ensuring local participation and accountability etc.

Utilizing information technology, government has introduced e-governance to automate government processes and simplify procedures. The establishment of e-seva centres, e- procurement, computer aided administration of registration department (CARD), etc., is a part of e-governance initiatives. Similarly using communication technology, video and tele-conference practices have been introduced to establish better communication with the administration and communities at different levels to promote good governance.

The citizen's charters have been institutionalized in the state. Most departments and all municipalities and corporations have prepared and implemented the charters. They are expected to facilitate citizen-friendly service delivery, effective redressed of grievances, provide timely feedback, etc. The citizen charters are expected to further people-centered governance. The governance reforms introduced at the state level have positive impact on the working and performance of Urban Local Bodies. They ignited serious thinking among functionaries and enabled local needs to improve governance.

Urban Sector Reforms

Good governance reforms, in urban sector include conformity legislation on 74th Constitution Amendment Act, development of performance and process indicators, introduction of information technology, state level capacity building initiatives, revenue improvement measures, outsourcing of services etc. The Government of Telangana, in conformity with 74th CAA brought amendments to the corporations and municipalities Acts incorporating most of the mandatory and optional features of the Amendment Act. The State Election Commission has been constituted and elections are being held regularly to the ULBs. Three Finance Commissions have been constituted so far and the third commission at present is working on the distribution of resources to the local bodies. Initially provisions relating to Metropolitan Planning Committees (MPC) and District Committees (DPCs) were deferred pending detailed examination. The Government in 2003 decided to further amend the Acts making provision for MPC and DPC. Of the 18 functions included in the XII Schedule, it was decided to transfer all but fire services to the urban local bodies.

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department identified performance vindicators including revenue improvement, water supply, roads and drains, waste management, implementation of development programmes like SJSRY, NSDP, etc. Similarly five process indicators like disposal of files, outsourcing of services, clearing audit objections, inspections, etc., were identified. Based on these indicators, each and corporation is graded. Regular reviews at the political and municipality administrative levels have contributed to performance improvement on different parameters. This has also led to a competition among the municipalities to improve their performance to achieve better grading. This is also contributing to transparency in urban governance.

Introduction of Information Technology to improve municipal performance is a major initiative towards improved urban governance. As a part of this process, all municipal records including financial, administrative, infrastructure etc., have been computerized to improve efficiency and to bring transparency and openness into municipal management. Similarly, e-seva centers have been established in all urban local bodies to enable citizens to have single point contact with the local body. This is facilitating payment of taxes, and also receive services from the local body through the nearest e-seva centre than visiting municipal office which is time consuming and often troublesome. Municipal information system in various areas like revenue administration, infrastructure provision, implementation of development programmes, solid waste management etc., has been developed to strengthen and streamline the municipal governance. With Networking, the information flow between the government and municipality will be online. This contributes to improve efficiency, better performance monitoring and transparency at all levels.

Capacity building and training was given high priority for better urban management. All the senior municipal officials, councilors and staff are being provided intensive training at the identified training institutions at state and district levels. This is a major capacity building initiative to improve municipal governance in the state.

The state government recognizing the problems of multiplicity of laws governing ULBs, constituted a committee to prepare an integrated law to govern all the city corporations and municipalities in the state based on the model law prepared by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India. The revised law is expected to incorporate provisions to facilitate partnerships, with public and private sectors as well as civil and community based organizations for efficient service delivery through outsourcing, etc. This is expected to pave the way for good urban governance.

To improve municipal finances several revenue improvement measures were initiated. They include preparation and implementation of revenue improvement action plans, which include revision of tax base, strengthening and streamlining tax administration, reduction of expenditure on establishment, etc., Revision of property tax base after a gap of 10 years, enhancement of non-tax rates in the areas of dangerous and offensive trades, advertisement tax, water charges, etc., are part of the efforts. These measures have improved municipal finances sustainability, which are being used for infrastructure provision and improved service delivery. Accounts preparation and updating was taken up vigorously to bring down the arrears. As part of the exercise, accounts records have been updated in all the ULBs thereby clearing heavy backlog of arrears in several municipalities. This is a remarkable achievement considering the magnitude of the problem. The auditing of accounts for over 500 audit years have been completed and the Work to clear all arrears are in progress. The reform measures also include repayment of municipal dues including loan repayments to agencies like Transco, HUDCO and other institutions. This has facilitated to bring financial discipline into municipal management. It is also facilitating proper planning for development and poverty reduction.

Outsourcing of functions and services is an important reform measure initiated by several municipalities and corporations to increase service delivery. Services like Sanitation, maintenance of water supply systems, parks, streetlights, finalization of accounts etc., are being outsourced. It is estimated that about one-third of civic services have been outsourced in the corporations and municipalities in the state. This, apart from reducing costs of delivery, has contributed substantially for improved efficiency. The level of community satisfaction in sanitation sector has increased substantially in several municipalities thereby improving the municipal image. The municipalities have also taken up provision of infrastructure through public participation. The contributions vary between 30 to 50 per cent. There has been public enthusiasm to contribute to ensure better infrastructure in their localities.

Implementation of citizen's charters is another measure to bring efficiency into the municipal governance. For delivery of each service time limits have been stipulated and municipal officials are held responsible for non-performance and deviation. In addition, the officials are expected to pay out of their personal resources for proved delays in performance. Similarly, grievance redressal mechanisms have been strengthened. The City cable system is being widely used to receive and redress grievances online.

City Based Reform Initiatives

Introduction of self-assessment system in property tax administration in 1999-2000 in Hyderabad Municipal Corporation is an important reform measure. This was done without changing the law and rate of taxation. This contributed to transparency in the levy of tax enabled the citizen to understand the basis of taxation. This has improved the property tax collection substantially and brought buoyancy in tax collection. Tax collection based on self-assessment is also linked to immediate provision of services and other development measures in the colonies. These measures have also contributed to increase in tax payer's willingness to pay property tax. Another significant contribution is the active participation of colony welfare associations in tax collection. Efforts have been made to strengthen and streamline the process further. The system has been extended to other municipalities and corporations as well.

Another significant measure initiated by the corporation is the formulation of city development strategy involving all the stakeholders' public and private sectors, academics, NGOs, community based and civil society organizations, elected representatives, officials, etc. This experiment is being extended to other major Corporations in the state. Creation of Urban Community Development and Services Fund By allocating 20 per cent of the property tax collections in the city and all funds allocated under poverty allocation programmes sponsored by the central and the state governments is another measure. The Fund would facilitate planning and implementation of poverty reduction programmes in the city.

Using the Information Technology the Vishakhapatnam Municipal Corporation launched e-governance initiative called 'Saukaryam' which was first of its kind in the country. The system is replacing the manual collection of municipal dues, reduction in processing time, online filing and settlement of complaints and grievances, online tracking of building plan approval status, online registration of birth and deaths etc. It emerged as a model for municipal e-governance and the same with adaptations is being introduced in other ULBs in the state. The system attracted international acclaim and won UNDP and Stockholm awards.

Initiatives to provide 24/7 water supply is being experimented in some localities in Ramagundam municipality. Based on its success, there are plans to extend this to the whole town progressively. The Vijayawada Online Information Centre (VOICE) delivers municipal services such as building approvals, birth

and death certificates, collection of taxes, etc., through kiosks close to the people. The Corporation also introduced a system of approving the building permissions within 24 hours if the plot area is less than 300 yards and the plans are submitted through approved surveyors. Outsourcing of collection of advertisement tax in Vijayawada Municipal Corporation has resulted in more than 100 percent increase in collection.

Most of these town level initiatives are the result of dynamism of commissioners and other actors. Support of the elected facilitated these governance reform initiatives. These measures have improved municipal performance and reduced costs substantially. Other local bodies also adopted these initiatives to improve performance and to ensure effective service delivery.

Urban Development next priority in Telangana

As per the Census 2011, urban population of Telangana State is 13.61 million representing about 38.67% of total population compared to 31.15% at all India level. The level of urbanization has increased by seven percentage points in the State. Hyderabad is a hundred percent urban district but the city of Hyderabad spreads much beyond the district boundary into the neighboring Rangareddy district. This has made Rangareddy, which surrounds Hyderabad, as the next highly urbanized district in Telangana with 17.32 percent of urban population.



Urban Development in Telangana

The urban population is spread across 73 Urban Local Bodies consisting of 6 Corporations, 42 Municipalities of all grades and 25 Nagarpanchayats. The ten municipalities, which were part of Hyderabad Urban Agglomeration, merged with Hyderabad City Corporation to form Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).

Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) encompasses a total area of 7228 sq.km. Covering all 16 Mandals of Hyderabad district, 22 Mandals of Rangareddy, 10 Mandals of Medak, 5 Mandals of Nalgonda and 2 Mandals of Mahabubnagar district. However, the level of overall urbanization is low in the other districts surrounding the GHMC namely Medak, Mahabubnagar and Nalgonda. Urban development is constrained by in-migration, settlements in slums and their continuous growth, pressure on urban amenities, solid and electronic waste accumulation, pollution, and increasing disparities in living conditions.

The emerging concept of Smart Cities encompasses information network, emerging

Communication network, safe drinking water, sanitation, housing for all in green Environment and zero open defecation with particular emphasis on participative process of until now neglected population. Due to rapid urbanization and up-gradation of major Gram Panchayats as Urban Local bodies, the Telangana State has launched "Mana Wardu- Mana Pattanam - Mana Pranalika", a first of its kind programme to identify the felt needs of the people. Ward sabhas were conducted in all the ULBs involving all the public representatives and needs of the public at ward level and ULB level were identified and prioritized needs in the focused areas of water supply, roads, drains, sanitation facilities and street lighting etc and future requirements.

Swachha Bharat Mission

Swachha Bharat, a joint mission activity of the Ministry of Urban Development and Ministry of Drinking water and Sanitation, originates from the vision of the Government expressed by the Hon'ble President in his address to the Joint session of the Parliament on 9th June 2014. The mission is being implemented from 2nd October 2014 for a period of 5 years which is a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary to be celebrated in the year 2019. The overall goal of the National Urban Sanitation Policy is to transform Urban India into community-driven, totally sanitized, healthy and livable cities and towns.

Mission in Telangana

Sanitation in Urban Local Bodies

- As per the census report 2011, 91.12 percent of urban households in Telangana have access to toilets as compared to national average of 81.4 percent.
- Open Defecation in Urban Households of Telangana State is 8.98 % which is lower than the national average of 12.6%. There are 275151 urban households practicing open defecation out of 3171376 total urban households in the State. Adilabad with 25.87% has highest percentage of urban households practicing open defecation followed by Mahbubnagar with 19.37% and Nalgonda 18.22%
- On an average, the ULBs in the Telangana State generate about 6287 Metric Tonnes of wastes per day and the per capita of waste generation in the ULBs ranges from 0.3-0.4 kg/per day. The quantities of waste are growing 5% annually and the collection efficiency is 80%. 23 ULBs do not have land for processing and disposal of waste.
- Inadequate and improper maintenance of storm water drains with frequent flooding and choking of drains is leading to unhygienic environment.

Initiatives of the Government of Telangana

The Government of Telangana has been a forerunner in implementing the Swacha Bharat Mission. In this regard Swachh Telangana Varostavam (Clean Telangana Week) was formally launched on 25th September 2014 and was observed in all the 73 ULBs of the State with focused sanitation drives and concluded with a pledge on improving sanitation situation.

Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEPMA)

The main objective of MEPMA is to organize poor women into Self Help Groups by covering all families living in slums and facilitate them to become self-reliant. Around 12.66 lakh women members formed into 1.26 lakh Women Self Help Groups (SHGs). A total of 4177 Slum Level Federations (SLF) and 97 Town Level Federations (TLF) have been formed up to December 2014. Around 19,900 persons with disabilities are also organized into 3,980 exclusive SHGs. 57 Town Vikalangula Samakyas (TVSSs) and 55 Parents Associations of Persons with Mental Rehabilitation were formed in the State. SHGs Bank Linkage worth Rs.517.00 crores have been provided to 18,193 Self Help Groups for the year 2014-15. Further under Vaddi Leni Runalu, an amount of Rs.75.02 crore is released to 6,448 SHGs.

Growth and Development of Greater Hyderabad City

Hyderabad metropolis, the State Capital of Telangana, functions as central administrative, industrial and commercial hub of the State. It was the capital of undivided Telangana for nearly six decades (1956-2014), when the Hyderabad state was merged with the Andhra State in 1956. The four hundred years old historical city of Hyderabad and its twin city of Secunderabad occupy a unique position in urban India today. The City of Hyderabad is not only the sixth largest Metropolitan City but also fastest growing city just like any other cities of the world. The city of Hyderabad is a cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic character; both deserve to be called 'a city of cultural saga'. Presently, the twin cities are the home for not only the original Urdu and the Telugu speaking people, but also a large number of people from other States of India. The city is well connected with the other metropolitan centers of India like Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Bangalore. Hyderabad hosts many important institutions. Of these, 28 establishments are defense or other strategically important establishments with National security significance. Additionally, there are about 40 Institutions owned by the Government of India with National research, development and educational interest and nine educational institutions, mostly universities supported by the State Government. All these Institutions attract people from all over the country. Most of these lie within the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) boundary, though a few spill over into the erstwhile Hyderabad Development Area (HDA).



Map: Hyderabad District

Demographical Growth of Hyderabad

Hyderabad, the 425 years historical city has been experiencing remarkable demographic growth since its inception. Hyderabad became the largest populated in India in 1750 AD with a figure of 2.5 lakhs. The city has witnessed a growth of 87% in its population during 2001-2011 census. Presently, the city ranks sixth among the demographic million plus urban centers in the country and is the only metropolitan city with 6.8 million by 2011, with becoming the capital of the Telangana and also AP state. The transformation of Hyderabad as a Metropolis began in the late 1950s, with the formation Hyderabad State in 1951 and later formation of Telangana State in 1956 with Hyderabad as its capital. In the early 1960s large scale industrialization took place, particularly in the public sector and in the late 1960s and early 1970s a large number of important educational, research and training institutions were set up in and around Hyderabad City.

Ever since mid-1990s, massive developments have been taking place in the areas around Hyderabad City in the field of information technology, biotechnology, sports infrastructure, etc. creating new employment opportunities and thus, triggering an expansion of townships. It has established itself as a centre for sunrise industries such as information technology and accounts for 10% of IT exports of the country. Hyderabad has excellent domestic and international air link to the major metros of India and

Important international destinations in south East Asia, Middle East, Europe, North America and other countries. The emergence of new economy, industries has catapulted Hyderabad into a prime position in India. The Hyderabad City had recognized as a metropolis and given the status of a Mega City by the Central Government in September 2007.

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