INTRODUCTION

The world at present is passing through a phase of rapid urban transformation. As per the world urbanization prospect, the 2014 revision globally more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 54% of the world’s population residing in urban area in 2014. By 2050, 66% of the world’s population is projected to be urban. The urban population of the world has ground up rapidly since 1950, from 746 million to 3.9 billion in 2014. Asia is home to 53% of world’s urban population. It is projected that Asia will rank first in urban population by 2030. India, being as major country in Asia, is no exception to this process of rapid urbanization. (World urbanization prospect, The 2014 Revision published by Department of Economic and social Affairs, United Nations).

Thus proper urban management and efficient policy making are today the major challenges before the urban local government institution in India. It is in this context with the special reference of West Bengal I propose to take up the present paper.

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

There is hardly any comprehensive study on the roles played by the urban development authorities in the sphere of urban management and policy making in the context of West Bengal or any other states in India. However, two noteworthy exceptions are, first, a study on Gaya Improvement Trust in the state of Bihar by Kamal Deo Narain Singh (1978), and secondly, on KMDA by N. Sridhar in the edited volume by I.S.A.Baud and J.De Wit (2008). Political Scientists engaged in urban studies in India have seldom ventured to probe into the nature of relationship between urban development authorities and elected municipal governments, both engaged in the task of urban governance. The work on small and medium towns by Raj
Nandy (1985) is also noteworthy. There is a relevant work on the urban planning by Abdul Baki (2010). The books written by Shriram Maheshwari (2010) and R. Ramachandran (2012) are also of great help especially for the theoretical approach. Two articles, firstly, a study on Haldia by Sujit Das and Krishnendu Gupta (2012), and secondly, on rapid urbanization process and its impact on development of small and medium towns of West Bengal by Mahalaya Chattopadhyay (2013) are also relevant in the context of present study. Thus it remains a largely unexplored research area. The present study has been a modest attempt by a student of Political Science to bridge this research gap to some extent.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary objective of the present research has been examined the role of the Urban Development Authorities in West Bengal on the basis of the case studies on HDA and MKDA in the districts of Purba and Paschim Medinipur respectively. In the process of this study we also tried to enquire whether the urban development authorities working side by side with the elected municipal government facilitate the task of urban management, or the existence of parallel authorities hinder the task. In the perspective of this objective we formulated the following research questions for the present study.

a) What is the rationale behind the creation of such development authorities by the state government?

b) Whether there are jurisdictional and functional overlapping between the urban development authority and the municipal government?

c) Whether the functioning of the development authorities really benefits the urban dwellers and how the city people evaluate the role of such authorities?

d) How are the issues of vertical and horizontal linkages maintained in local governance (in respect of urban development authorities)?

METHODOLOGY

The present research has combined the methods of field – work and collection of data from other documentary sources. Primary data from the field have been collected through sample surveys and interviews (both structured and unstructured). Government reports and documents, circular and instructions, Draft Master Plans, Survey Reports and other relevant sources have also been consulted. For the purpose of the present study we have collected data from some of the elected representatives and officials of the three municipalities (Midnapore, Kharagpur and Haldia) and Midnapore Kharagpur Development Authority (MKDA) & Haldia Development Authority (HDA) through interviews. In addition, a sample population of the city people of Midnapore, Kharagpur and Haldia has also been interviewed. A total of two hundred fifty respondents have been selected (roughly eighty persons per town). The sample population in case of each municipality has been selected covering all the municipal wards.
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Urbanization has been driven by the concentration of investment and employment opportunities in urban areas. The process historically has been associated with important economic and social transformations. Urbanization is an integral part of the process of development as it is conceived today. It is progressive concentration of population in urban unit; ‘an index of transformation from traditional rural economies to modern industrial one. It is a long term process.’ (Datta:2006)

Local government institution is not a new concept in India. The panchayats were like ‘small republics’. The first phase of urbanization is associated with the Indus valley and Dravidian civilizations dating back from around 2350 B.C to 600 B.C. We can find the existence of local government also in Mughal dynasty. As per Abul Fazl’s ‘Ain-i-Akbari’ the administration of a town vested in an officer, called kotwasl, who performed many municipal functions besides exercising supreme authority in all magisterial, police and fiscal matters. (Maheshwari:2010)

The year 1687 was pioneer, in the case of modern urban institution, when a municipal corporation was set up in Madras. The Charter Act of 1793 established municipal administration in the three presidency towns’ i.e. Madras, Calcutta and Bombay. In the history of evolution of local government in India Lord Ripon is recognized as father of local self-government. He opened the path through which the local government was transferred to popular control. “Local self-government in India, in the sense of a representative organization, responsible to a body of electors, enjoying wide powers of administration and taxation, and functioning both as a school for training in responsibility and as a vital link in the chain of organisms that make up the government of the country, is a British creation.”

After a long period, almost 46 years after independence by 73rd & 74th constitutional amendment act Local Government of India gets the constitutional recognition and becomes the third stratum of government. This has been historic in ensuring, for the first time since independence, a constitutional recognition of municipal government in India.

The P.V. Narshima Rao Government coming into power in 1991 drafted the Constitution (Seventy-Third Amendment) Bill, 1991 pertaining to Municipalities and introduced it in Lok Sabha in September 1991. It was passed by the Lok Sabha on December 1992 and by the upper house the same month. Following its rectification by more than half the state assemblies, it received the assent of the President on 20 April 1993 and is known as the Constitution (Seventy-Fourth Amendment) Act, 1992. (Maheshwari:2010). The 74th amendment introduces a new part, namely part IXA, in the constitution, which deals with matters relating to urban government. It is noteworthy that in a country where cities like Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro once flourished and regarded as ‘architectural admiration of any urban system’, urbanization is not a new concept. This is perhaps why in India this process is being prolonged till today.
There are various forms of urban local bodies existing at present in the country. Urban government includes municipal corporations, municipalities, and nagar panchayats. Existing notified area committees and town area committees have now become the nagar panchayats; the nomenclature recommended the Seventy-Fourth constitutional amendment of 1993 and cantonment boards. Article 243 states that there shall be constituted in every state:

a) a Nagar Panchayat (by whatever name called) for an area which is in transition from rural to urban;
b) a Municipal Council for a smaller urban area; and
c) a Municipal Corporation for a larger urban area. (Chatterjee:2009).

In order to describe an urban area, the following criteria have been laid down in the 1991 census:

1. Statutory towns: All places with a municipality, corporation, Cantonment board or Notified town area committee, etc. so declared by state law.

2. Census towns: Places which satisfy following criteria:-
   i. A minimum population of 5,000;
   ii. Seventy five percent of the male working population engaged in non-agricultural activity;
   iii. A density of population of at least 400 per sq.km (Datta:2006:p.3)

India is often portrayed as a land of villages though in recent past it can be considered also as a land of towns and cities. In the last ten years, between 2001 & 2011 in West Bengal five hundred thirty four towns has been born. West Bengal is one of the most highly urbanized States in India with 31.87% urban population. (Chattopadhyay:2013) But this picture is not only of West Bengal. There is an explosion of urbanization throughout the country. The opportunity of higher study, service, scope of better income and other overwhelming attractions of urban life are the causes of the urban growth of the towns. As per the provisional population totals of Census 2011, the population density of India has gone up to 382 persons per square kilometer from 325 persons per square kilometer in 2001. West Bengal is one of the most highly urbanized States in India with 31.87% of the State’s population in the urban area.

The article written by Mahalaya Chattopadhyay gives a concrete knowledge about urbanization process in West Bengal especially in post independence era.

2011 census gives important information. This census report reveals that this is for the first time in India the population growth of urban area lagged behind the rural population growth. In the year 1901 only 10% of the total population was resided in urban area. In 1951 the figure increased up to 17%. And at present the percentage is 31%. In post 90s it is being noticed that urban population of India is increasing in rapid motion.
In the case of our own state the urbanization scenario was different. During independence phase West Bengal had the fourth place in India in urbanizing process. In post-independence period in West Bengal the rate of rural population was greater than national rate whether that of urban population was less than national rate. Prof. Chattopadhyay has given its explanation. According to her analysis in the pre-independent period or colonial period industrialization was the main driving force of urbanization in West Bengal. In search of industrial job the labor from almost all over India were gathered in the industrial belt and in capital of the state. But that trend was getting lower after independence. Only the 1951 census report was exception because of the very partition which accelerated urban population growth in West Bengal as a result of huge number of migration from Bangladesh. On the other hand the successful implementation of Land Ceiling Act, Land Reformation, Five Year Plan, various Rural Development Projects and mostly PRI give stability to the rural base. Most of the government planning & program adapted for development of rural India as a part of ‘nation building process’; on the other hand urban areas were less prioritized. After a long gap the 2011 census is a breakthrough that removes the pale picture of urbanization in West Bengal.

Historically there is a trend of disparity in urbanization of West Bengal. In the colonial period modern urbanization process of Bengal was started centering the Kolkata port area. Industrialization fostered the urbanization in Greater Kolkata extending to 24 Parganas, Howrah, and Hooghly. Many small and medium towns were emerged due to Jute Industry. Some towns and hill stations of North Bengal were developed because of Tea Industry & Tourism. Asansole and Raniganj were emerged as one of the important Coal Industrial belt of the country. After independence two important industrial towns of Bengal were created i.e. Durgapur & Haldia. But except these areas other district had a very little rate of urbanization till the 2011 census which shows a change to this scenario.

The report of 2011 census is the first one which shows that the population of class-iv & class-v town has been increased significantly. This is why many new towns have been emerged in West Bengal most of
which are census town. This is a noticeable and significant change in the perspective of urbanization of West Bengal.

It is seen throughout India that most of the rural male person engaged themselves into non-agricultural activities rather than agriculture as the later gradually is becoming a non-profit occupation. So, it is seen that more than 75% rural male now are engaged in non-agricultural profession that satisfies the second condition of the census town. Besides for the environmental or ecological reason now the industry are built up mainly at the adjacent rural area. On the other hand the cottage industry or women directed industries also have been developed.

Prof. Chattopadhyay analyzed that ideally the urban structure of a country should be pyramid shaped so that small towns should be the base and the big towns should be at the upper layer. This structure is hardly followed in our country. In the whole Eastern and North-East India Kolkata has the highest number of population. Hence in West Bengal the urbanization has been concentrated in Kolkata which makes Kolkata agglomeration one of the large agglomerations of the country.

But such kind of urbanization leaves negative effect. Though these newly emerged urban areas are ‘town’ as per census report but administratively these are still rural area which are governed by PRI. So it is quite obvious that desired service to the dwellers cannot be provided. The residents have to suffer the demerits of a transitional process. On the other hand this kind of urbanization is harmful ecologically too. Unplanned urban agglomeration destroys the environmental architecture by filling agriculture land and wet land.

G. Breese depicts urbanization in India as ‘pseudo urbanization where in people arrives in cities not due to urban pull but due to rural push.’(Breese: 1969). Such urban growth represents nothing more than large villages with a thick conglomeration of poor structures (Bhattacharya:1979). It may be said that Indian urbanization is involuted not evoluted. (Mukherjee:1995). Pranati Dutta in her paper has pointed out seven basic features of urbanization in India as follows:-

1) Lopsided urbanization induces growth of class I cities.
2) Urbanization occurs without industrialization and strong economic base.
3) Urbanization is mainly a product of demographic explosion and poverty.
4) Rapid urbanization leads to massive growth of slum followed by misery, poverty, unemployment, exploitation, inequalities, degradation in the quality of urban life.
5) Urbanization occurs not due to urban pull but due to rural push.
6) Poor quality of rural-urban migration leads to poor quality of urbanization.
7) Distress migration initiates urban decay. (Datta:2006:p.12)

Urbanization offers both opportunities as well as difficulties for local governments. On the positive side; cities are recognized as motors of development. On the other, the scale of growth of cities and towns
causes huge problems for city governments. (Baud & Wit:2008)\textsuperscript{12} A city is the site where micro and macro social processes or global and local contexts can be articulated and observed. (Sandhu:2007)\textsuperscript{13} The tremendous population pressure coupled with unplanned urbanization has led to haphazard or disorderly growth of cities and towns in India, making them almost incapable to cater to the needs of their residents.

**CAUSE BEHIND ESTABLISHMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**

The great Greek philosopher Aristotle said that, “Experience shows that a very populous city can rarely, if ever, be well governed. To the size of states there is a limit, as there is to other things (plants, animals, implements), for none of these retain their natural power when they are too large or too small: (Aristotle: 322 B.C)”. (Bhattacharya:1979). The very philosophy of local democracy states that urban local government is the most suitable institutional machinery for effective management, policy formulation and implementation. “By local government is generally meant a system of territorial units with defined boundaries, a legal identity, an institutional structure, powers and duties laid down in general and special statutes and a degree of financial and other autonomy. The definition of democracy, on the other hand, is concerned with the national political system based on citizen participation, majority rule, consultation and discussion and the responsibility of leaders to lead.”\textsuperscript{14} This defines the conventional feature of local government. But the present scenario has been changed.

But the present scenario has been changed. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA): Population Division, World Urbanisation Prospect, the 2014 Revision, globally more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 54% of the world’s population residing in urban areas in 2014. It is projected that Asia will rank first in urban population by 2030. India, being a major country in Asia is no exception to this process of rapid urbanization.\textsuperscript{15}

![Fig 2: Projected Population Growth by Region](image-url)

The new dimension of urbanization has changed the governmental orientation within an urban area in India. It is being argued that urban local governments in India generally lack the necessary perspective, the administrative machinery and the resources to keep pace with rapid urbanization. The increasing size of urban population has serious implications for the municipal authorities that are required to provide basic civic services and urban infrastructure. Today urban development is the main agenda for any government in any country. Urban development connotes a vast provision of basic facilities and services in urban areas. These facilities and services may be listed as water supply, drainage and sewerage, solid waste management, urban renewal and housing, urban development, transportation, road construction, supply of electricity etc. In the era of sustainable development the green agenda and human development are also included in urban development. These areas are not definite as the country moves along with urbanization; new problems and issues would arise and demand solution.

The cost of execution of any comprehensive project which requires persistent and sustained efforts on systematic lines is beyond the capacity of already overburdened corporations and municipalities. Therefore the specialists of the field urban development suggests for the urban development authority which exists parallel with the municipal government. There is a small attempt has been done to identify the reasons behind the establishment of such authorities which are given as follows:-

1) Municipality has a specific jurisdiction which is consist of only urban area. But the fringe area or ‘non-municipal urban area’ should also be concerned. To take an integrated developmental approach or trans-municipal planning it is necessary to establish urban development authority.

2) The municipalities are governed by the elected representatives. But most of them are lack of specialized knowledge which is required for the urban development. Therefore the coexistence of a specialized authority with the municipal government is necessary.

3) The elected members of the municipal government are appointed for a specific tenure. But a process like urban development needs persistency, sustainability, professionalism and experience that can be satisfied only by A nodal agency like development authority.

4) The balance of development cannot be maintained if all the measures of development are being concentrated only in the big cities. The aim of an ideal development is an integrated development which balances the process of development between urban areas, suburbs and adjacent villages.

5) The role of representative politics in determining public policies has been considerably weakened by the growth of ‘technocratic government’ and the major influence of powerful unelected corporate bodies on policy-making and . This has been part of a shift away from elected local government towards unelected local administration implementation.(Breese:1969)

6) Last but not the least the composition of municipal government in India has the typical parliamentary form. In such institution opposition plays the role more destructive than constructive. As a result the development is become victimized.

Besides now a day’s an urban problem very much prominent especially in big cities i.e. ‘urban segregation’. Segregation is one of the expressions of inequality. According to the dictionary meaning,
segregation means, ‘to exclude’ and thus it has a negative connotation. In Sociology the concept of segregation stands for ‘the geographical separation of groups, whereby, the weaker groups are forced to reside in a restricted area or to use separate facilities’. Space has always been a highly meaningful category for human groups. It not only signifies a physical entity but also is a social entity. The amount of space available to individuals, groups or nations defines them and bestows an identity upon them, which is distinct from others. Social segregation is separation of people on the basis of space available to them. Slums, ghettos, China Towns, Little India are all examples of segregation of poor or ethnic groups. (Sandhu:2007).

It is argued that a new urban regime is emerging. Cities are becoming the new actors of ‘Borderless World’.

Since sixties, the role of local government was getting undermined. Several functions performed hitherto by local bodies were taken away and are now performed by urban development authorities. Such arguments is in line with a paradigm shift in development thinking about local areas – from ‘local government to local governance’- since around mid 1970s. the word ‘governance’ is being used to describe, among other things, the emerging new forms of non elected decision making bodies at the local level. When parallel authorities of urban management emerge and function side by side with the elected urban local governments, the two obviously enter into relationships. “This defines governance as a multi-stakeholder process with weaker and stronger actors who need to cooperate to solve collective problems and negotiate using their (divergent) bases of power.” (Baud & Wit:2008:p.6). The traditional role of government and local bodies is changing from ‘provider to facilitator’. This also offers the state an opportunity not only to create infrastructure conducive to increased investment and improved quality of life of the urban people but also opportunities to seek additional resources in the form of private sector participation and other resources to drive this sector to achieve its perspectives for development. At the very outset the present study tries to probe into the nature of such relationship.

However, in our country we often find parallel non-governmental authorities engaged in the task of urban development. In the process of institution building for better urban governance, the state governments in India often create multiple agencies to provide the same services. It is being argued that urban local government in India generally lacks the necessary perspective, the administrative machinery and the resources to keep pace with rapid urban growth.

We find the existence of parallel urban development authorities also in West Bengal. The earliest such institution emerged in the undivided Bengal in 1911 when the Calcutta Improvement Trust was established. The Howrah Improvement Trust followed after independence (1956). The increasing urban growth of Calcutta in the post-independence period led to the creation of Calcutta Metropolitan Planning Organization (CMPO) in 1961. The ex Chief Minister of West Bengal Dr. Bidhan Ch. Roy took active initiative to establish this organization. CMPO formulated first ‘Basic Development Plan’ for Kolkata Metropolitan Development Area. Later the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA), presently called KMDA (following the change of the name from Calcutta to Kolkata) was constituted in 1970 to carry out and implement the perspective plan prepared by CMPO.
After the Left Front government came into power in 1977 there was a noticeable change in the urban development policy of the state. The ‘Urban Development Strategy Committee’, constituted by the government, put primary emphasis on decentralized urban development with the goal of reducing the growing population pressure on Calcutta and simultaneously to develop the small and medium towns in an integrated manner. In 1978 the name ‘Department of Municipal Services’ was changed to ‘Local Government and Urban Development Department (Chakraborty:2010).’ In 1979 the West Bengal Town and Country Planning and Development Act was passed to realize the above objective. The ‘West Bengal Town and Country Planning Act, 1979’ is “An act to provide for the planned development of rural and urban areas in West Bengal and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.” (Saha: 2010) Resultant of this act nine Development Authorities were emerged in West Bengal. These are:

1. Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority (KMDA) (1970)
6. Digha Shankarpur Development Authority (DSDA) (1990)

The issue of functional and jurisdictional overlapping between the municipality and development authority is a common issue. One of such example is as per the Chapter IX of The West Bengal Town and Country (Planning and Development) Act, 1979 the development authority has the power to levy, assessment and recovery of development charge. But in such case of change or convert of land use municipality is also concerned. The councilor of the respective ward has to issue no objection certificate for change in land use. For such administrative complexity sometimes people are confused about where to apply. Though development authority mainly deals with periphery there are some trans-municipal linkages especially where development authority deals with infrastructural issues. To some extent it is true that the resources of the concerned authorities are not adequate for successful implementation of all plans and projects.

It should also be mentioned that autonomy of these development authorities gets encroached as a result of the presence of both horizontal and vertical political linkages. Party political compositions in the municipalities as well as at the state level politics are important components through which such linkages are maintained and remain operative.

CONCLUSION

A major research and logic behind the creation of urban development authorities is to develop an additional support structure to the municipal authorities for carrying out the task of sustainable urban
development. It is well known that urban local bodies in West Bengal, and for that matter in India, lack the efficiency and specialized knowledge to deal with the ever increasing demand of proper urban management in the perspective of rapid urbanization since the second half of the last century. Urban development should be judged from broader perspective. Without development social resources cannot be distributed justly and cannot be sustainable. ‘Brown’ & ‘Green’ both agenda should be prioritized. An Urban Development Authority with skilled personnel and specialists in the field can be of much help in this task. In the wake of the present urban scenario in our country, the importance of such authorities cannot be denied. But to be really effective, those should be depoliticized and function with greater autonomy.

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