# Inclusive Development through Municipal Governance

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**ABSTRACT**

*Since decades, the debate has been going on about social, economic, cultural and political development. In recent years, there has been a growing need for "inclusive development" to meet contemporary development demands and challenges. It is argued that although economic growth is important, but it is not enough to foster people's welfare. The time demands for such a development approach which may ensure the equal, fair and equitable distribution of growth benefits across all parts of society, especially large sections of vulnerable communities. In Indian context, inclusion and exclusion have multiple dimensions as the country has lot of heterogeneity and diversity in terms of many aspects; it may be culture, language, beliefs, geographical location, educational status, caste, religion, creed, races, etc. Keeping in view these dynamics, each area people have different needs and concerns and their visualisation and expectations of inclusion and exclusion also differs. Therefore, each area has a different system of governance structure at local level. The research study attempts to delve into relevant literature to discuss the role of urban local governments in ensuring inclusive development.*

**Keywords:** *municipal governance, inclusive development, urban local government, performance, development*

## INTRODUCTION

Today, 55 per cent of the world's population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to increase to 68 per cent by 2050 (UN). According to 2001 and 2011 Census, 28.53 per cent and 31.16 per cent of

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Indian population was residing in urban areas respectively. As per the World Bank Report, 2018, it was estimated that 34.03 per cent of Indian population lived in urban areas. UN State of the World Population report (2007) projected that by 2030, 40.76 per cent of country's population is expected to reside in urban areas. In the present context, if we look into the city infrastructure we can see that metro cities are highly dense and overloaded with people. Basic facilities like clean water, 24x7 electricity, housing and sewerage are not available to them.

According to census 2011, 92.67 per cent of the households in urban areas use electricity as the main source of lighting. The Census Report (2011) identified 13.8 million households — about 64 million people are located in city slums nationwide, that is 17.4 per cent of all urban households, accounting for roughly one-third of India's 1.2 billion people. World Bank data (2014) shows that 24 per cent urban population is living in urban slums and 28 per cent people in rented houses (Economic Survey 2017-2018). After seven decades of Independence we have not achieved basic sanitation facilities in Indian cities, so it is a matter of great concern and it is clear that high level of exclusion exists in urban areas of the country.

Now, the question arises how and who will address these issues in a logical and sustainable way. Here the role of urban local bodies becomes relevant as local level of governance will only be able to work according to peoples' needs and concerns in a sustainable manner. The main purpose of the study is to document all the ongoing initiatives of the identified study areas and to understand as to how to make those programmes more inclusive. There are many issues which create barriers for inclusion of many communities or sections in the mainstream society. The present study has come out with this report with sufficient field based information about the inclusive approaches and dimensions of the municipal governance with special reference to the study area. It is an honest attempt to understand the process of inclusion in concerned local bodies of study areas. The findings of the study can be used for planning of further strategies of inclusive development.

**Defining key terms**

**Inclusion:** Inclusion is considered as a universal human right. The central concept of inclusion is to embrace each and every individual irrespective of their race, gender, disability, medical or other need. Inclusion is all about giving equal access and opportunities and absence of any sort of discrimination. Inclusion is mainstreaming the people who are otherwise disadvantaged and left behind.

**Development:** It is a process of creating growth, progress and positive change or the addition of physical, economic, social and demographic components. The ultimate purpose of development is a rise in the standard and quality of life of the people (Sid Isreal, 2018). 'Development' is a very complex, highly contested, ambiguous, and elusive. MDG-Monitor, 2016 states that generally, the term development describes good change. But it also raised another question, that how do you tell which change is good? So researcher described development in three ways like development as a vision, historical approach and as an action.

Professionals, scholars and researchers have come out with a variety of meanings and definitions for the word 'development' over the years. For example, Amartya Sen came up with the 'capability approach', and defined the term 'development' as a tool of enabling people to reach the highest level of their ability. He suggested ultimate freedom of action, i.e., economic, social and family actions, etc. as necessity to achieve the highest level of ability.

**Inclusive development:** Inclusive development is the process of ensuring that excluded and marginalised groups are taken along in the development activities. Inclusive development is the result of a combination of principles and processes. Marginalised and disadvantaged sections should be as equal partners in development process. "Leaving no one behind" is the central idea of the concept of inclusive development: the imperative of inclusive development.

**Governance:** There is no such consensus on a single definition of governance. World Bank defines governance as 'the exercise of political authority and the use of institutional resources to manage society's problems and affairs'. Stephen Bell in his book titled '*Economic Governance and Institutional Dynamics*' defined governance as 'the use of institutions, structures of authority.

### Review of Literature

In 2015, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a report which gives a glimpse of how governance plays a multidimensional role for inclusive growth where it has given an overview of governance system and inclusive growth from various developed countries. The document has widely discussed that how governance plays an important role in ensuring inclusive growth and it stated that slow growth, high unemployment and widening inequalities are barriers for inclusive governance. For the inclusive growth and development, governance needs to ensure the societal well-being and health for all. The report rightly mentioned that a strong governmental

will, mid-term budgetary considerations, sustainable policy making and inclusive institutions are essential for designing policies which will be closer to society's needs and lead to inclusive growth and development. Inclusive growth approaches also depend on openness and accountability in decision-making. These components ensure just and equal representation of needs and aspirations of all the stakeholders, including underserved populations, in decision making. Openness and accountability in decision making also prevent it from elite capturing, so that the process of achieving inclusive growth objectives reflects collective interest, rather than special or individual.

In 2016, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) released a report aiming to see the various categories of people who all are under the risk of exclusion and how to address their exclusion and bring in the fold of inclusion. The report was purely based on Canadian cities and government activities. This study explores the context in which local actors are working to eradicate prejudice and discrimination, and highlights social inclusion initiatives, especially for groups most at risk of marginalisation. The report also attempted to provide recommendations for local actors. It stated that when towns and cities do not operate for the good of everyone, it leads to discrimination which creates cycle of deprivation for underprivileged and exclusion starts. In the context, to promote inclusion for all, ensuring justice and equity in opportunities and services, as well as equal distribution of the rewards and responsibilities of society is required at all levels. Cities have lot of inclusion initiatives but still we can see various issues which can be identified as reason for exclusion like unemployment, poverty and inequality. The report emphasised that municipal governments are best positioned to take appropriate and prompt steps to take on the problem of exclusion by identifying best practices related to inclusion in the development, execution and evaluation of policies and services at the city level.

Mehta & Kumar (2019) studied the challenges faced by Kolkata, capital city of West Bengal which is believed to be India's oldest metropolitan city —vis-à-vis the country's Smart Cities Mission. They examine the various issues relating to the slapdash urban growth of Kolkata and the various steps taken to preserve its liveability and sustainability by the Government of West Bengal and the local government. Cities have greater contribution for economic growth of the state as well as country, however recent spatial and demographic growth acceleration of Indian cities is challenging their sustainability and inclusivity to cultivate. The report concluded with the recommendation for effective and efficient policy interventions to address those challenges.

Sharma (2015) has published a research paper titled *Sustainable and Socially Inclusive Development of Urban Water Provisioning in Indian city of Patna, Bihar.* The paper asseses the current paradigm of drinking water provisioning in Patna and intends to position the 'water economies' in the broader debates on inclusive development, state and sustainability. The study found that state machinery has failed to manage water economics, leading to the uncontrolled appropriation of groundwater by individuals and community. The study concluded by stating that sustainable inclusive development in urban areas will be possible only when natural resources like water will be managed through institutional provisioning with equitable water provision for citizens.

Davison Muchadenyika (2015) has conducted a research study to know how the "Harare Slum Upgrading Programme" had been creating and strengthening local governments and community partnerships to take on city challenges in an equitable and inclusive way. The research was initiated among urban poor in Harare and Zimbabwean cities. Major finding of the study was that the participatory slum upgradation initiative not only promotes inclusive local governance, it also strengthens partnerships between municipal governments and community. It also highlighted that the political will plays a vital role in shifting the attitude of ULB's towards the urban poor. The paper strongly emphasises about people and institutionalisation of development process by the city level government. It also argues that inclusive development needs systematic and regular approach and it is to opposed for project based development approach.

Catherine Sutherland (2015) opined that due to rapid urbanisation Durban city municipal actors are struggling to achieve inclusive and economic growth. Inclusive development of cities depends on inclusive city governance but her study reveals that deep spatial and socio-economic inequalities seem to be the challenges to achieve the same. The study pointed out that ensuring water and sanitation provision gained international recognition for its inclusiveness. So the study considers that universal access to basic water and sanitation can be major indicators for inclusive development in Durban city. The author found that Durban city people have achieved universal access to water and sanitation but it creates uneven waterscape.

Lee (2019 discussed about various dimensions about the concept of inclusive growth and recognised that it is a new *mantra* for local economic development. In his paper, he elaborately discusses about evolution of the concept and definition of inclusive growth, arguments for inclusive growth in metropolis and its limitations. In conclusion, the author stated that there is now considerable traction around the inclusive

growth in agendas of city governments. It is not mandatory that the inclusive growth agenda should be perfect, it needs to be better than the available alternatives. Although the pinpoint meaning of inclusive growth is fuzzy, the overall goal is straightforward.

Ahluwalia (2017) has carried out a research study to see the federal framework's structural characteristics and devolution frameworks through which cities have to provide their citizens with a better standard of life and create an investment environment capable of sustaining rapid growth and inclusive development. In his paper, he emphasises that cities in India are not empowered as its missing metropolitan planning and governance and it affected by anti-urban biasness by political spectrum. For inclusive governance and development city level government needs strategic leadership, adequate financing, and capacity building assistance for urban planning and management. Central, state and city level government need to create enabling environment where every level of government can discharge their constitutionally assigned responsibilities.

Gupta and Ros (2015) have elaborated the very important dimensions of inclusive growth and defines the larger concept of inclusive development and its linkages with sustainable development. The authors also discuss about the nexus between inclusive growth, inclusive wealth and inclusive economics and how it can have an impact on governance. Hence, inclusive development is not just a technocratic and instrumental approach; it also questions the fundaments of unequal societies. Thus, it gives us a layer in which we constantly challenge social, political and economic structures and arrangements. Therefore, inclusive development can be ensured through genuine interactive governance which must work for the empowerment of marginalised people.

Pouw and Bruijne (2015) have conducted an interdisciplinary and trans-disciplinary research where they majorly discussed about the ideas and perspective about 'strategic governance' and 'inclusive development' in urban settings, especially in the Global South. The authors argued that urban governments of Indian metro cities have been strategically adopting new forms of governance to deal with challenges arising due to rapid urbanisation. Such forms of governance strive for greater participation, higher engagement and negotiation at the ward level. The study documents various challenges involved in the process of building strategic governance for inclusive development and some of these challenges are glocalisation, lack of reliable data, political constraints and lack of political will, inter-cultural differences, suitable public policy and action etc. While addressing all these challenges the author stated that boosting the voice and power of marginalised

people with suitable policy action is required. The study emphasised that adoption of a governance system, which is both—interactive as well as strategic is required for planning and execution of inclusive development initiatives.

Kundu & Samanta (2011) opine that the development of urban areas or urban renewal is one of the important national common minimum programmes in India. In this paper, the author analyses various urban development policies with a focus on its coverage among different class level and the extent of equity and effectiveness of the programme. The study found that 58 per cent of urban population not covered by the JNNURM and funding patterns also creates big city bias. There are challenges where small urban local bodies and economically backward states have reported under-utilisation of funds or expressed their inability to prepare detailed project reports. So, the researcher suggested for unconditional generous grants support for those states and smaller urban bodies so that growth process will be inclusive and urban poor can be a part of that development. The author also emphasised that to address these issues, urgent attention needs to be paid for urban governance reforms, building capacities at the ULB level so that the inclusive development can be a reality through urban governance.

Ruble, Tulchin, and Hanley (2005) in their research paper highlight that from both academicians and policy makers' view, it is difficult to make the city inclusive as it is not just some basic services it needs to combine services where all may get a standard place to live, education, recreation, health, sanitation, water and jobs as well. So, it is a challenging job to make the city inclusive. The study focused on four principal factors, i.e. informal economy, basic infrastructure and services, migration, governance and planning. So to make the city inclusive, the research discussed about various approaches and stated that local government has a significant role to make the city inclusive but voice of civil society also needs to be taken care of through a democratic process. In conclusion, the author stated that effective and efficient urban development needs strong local government with democratic participation of civil society.

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

In 1993, after the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, was passed all urban areas received a structure of local level government which was supposed to look after the prosperity of city and welfare of all sections of citizens. The Act, its 12th Schedule with 18 subjects incorporated provisions for devolution of certain powers and functions to third tier of Governance structure, i.e. ULBs. The responsibility of

local economic development and social justice has been devolved to ULBs. The institutional structure of ULBs is not uniform across states or metropolitan areas, and it is complicated with political and administrative problems. As ULBs are set up under an Act of the State Legislature, hence the size and criteria of these ULBs are decided by it. For example, Rajasthan Municipal Act 2009 defines the role and responsibilities of all 191 ULBs of state. The purpose of urban local governance is to create effective, responsive, democratic, transparent, accountable governance framework, according to a rational structure which promotes responsiveness and accountability.

**Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

There are 17 SDGs and 169 targets where local level of government has larger role to play for achieving these goals and targets. In this context, recognising rapid urbanisation and change, the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon said that, "our struggle for global sustainability will be won or lost in cities". There are three Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are most relevant to ULBs: The SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere; SDG6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all; and SDG11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

Apart from these, Central government and respective state governments may take many initiatives or schemes for the inclusive development of urban areas. Some of the very important schemes of Government of India are: *Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana* (RSBY), *Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana* (PMAY)-Urban, *Public Distribution System* (PDS), *Deendayal Antodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihood Mission* (DAY-NULM), *Atal Pension Yojana* (APY), *Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana* (PMJJY), *Swachch Bharat Mission* (SBM)-Urban, *Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana*, *Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation* (AMRUT) —to address the issues of poverty, sanitation, housing, etc. Now, urban local governance has a very significant role for the proper implementation and monitoring of all schemes. So, for ensuring inclusive development in urban areas role of urban local governance is unquestionable.

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