Inter-sectoral partnership as a viable solution to tackle issues related with the provision of civic amenities: An empirical study of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai.

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RESEARCH PROBLEM

Constant migration of people to urban areas in search of employment has contributed to rise and growth of urban areas. Urban centres are a hub of economic activities. The inevitable fallout of increasing density of population has been the governance of urban areas. The municipal governments are under severe strain in providing basic amenities to the people. Efficient municipal services through people’s participation and privatization are the ongoing mantra for good urban governance.

The Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai [MCGM] covers an area of over 437.71 sq.kms. It has 1.19 lakh employees and operates on an annual budgetary outlay in excess of Rs.3300 crores. The Solid Waste Management Department of the corporation performs the cleanliness operations. Out of the 120000 MCGM employees 35000 are employed in Solid Waste Management (SWM) department. Mechanization in this department was less. The annual budget of the SWM department is Rs. 5000 million. It is 4% of the annual budget of the MCGM. The corporation spends daily Rs. 18.2 million in managing the 7500 metric ton of waste. However 90% of the costs go towards paying employees.

Till 1976 MCGM used to manage the growing waste through in house resources. When the city expanded to include the eastern and western suburbs MCGM hired contractors to cover these new settlements. Thus a dual system emerged one for the Island city and another for suburbs.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the problems related to the disposal of solid waste?

2. What is the present status of affairs?

3. How can inter-sectoral partnership tackle the problem of solid waste management?

THEORIES AND CONCEPTS OF RESEARCH

In the present emerging context the pattern of relationship between the statutory sector i.e. the state, the private sector i.e. the economy and the voluntary sector is described as inter-sectoral partnership. The issue is not to choose between government and market but to explore the effective combination of the two that would be economically and socially desirable.
The state has to reduce its role as the producer of goods and services and expand its role as a regulator, facilitator and provider of welfare services and merit goods. It is maintained that the state has become increasingly aware of its inadequacy of provider of social services. As a result it welcomes collaboration with indigenous and foreign capital in the development of core sectors of the countries. Inter-sectoral partnership encompasses the corporate sector, voluntary and self help groups, and individuals and community based organizations. The collaborative effort described as partnership between the state, economy and voluntary sector was perceived as meaningful strategy for resource mobilization and multi pronged response to socio economic problems and community concerns.

Strong emphasis is placed upon improving the process of governance by developing accountable institutions which actively include people in the decision making process in development. Within this context community based organizations especially N.G.O's can play a key role in strengthening the voluntary sector as a viable force of development. The state has been described as a senior partner because of its ability to provide funds and regulate activities of the voluntary sector.

Voluntary sector offers increasing opportunities to participate in governance. When citizens can express their opinions formally or informally and press their demands in public within the framework of law the state acquires credibility. The strategy of involvement of the non state actors take the form of collaboration, conflict, co-operation and co-option.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

The present paper adopts the technique of case study wherein 3 out of 24 wards of the MCGM have been cited for analysis by random sample method. Primary data would be collected from the three wards viz. L ward, M east ward, M west ward as well as private agencies and NGO's through questionnaire, personal interview, observation through personal visit. Secondary data will be collected from official reports of the corporation, articles in newspapers, internet support.

KEY THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

There has been rolling back of the welfare state. It was witnessed by the western countries way back in 1970’s when ‘Thatcherism’ emphasized on new public management and deregulation. It had its repercussions in the third world countries like India after 1980’s. The neo-liberals, neo-Marxists, pluralists and associational democrats have been pleading for the replacement of the hegemony of the state and its collaboration with non-state actors i.e. economy and voluntary sector. Public private partnership is the state coming to an understanding with the private sector and entrusting it provision of social services. However public private partnership tends to become privatization as the government tries to get rid of its obligatory duties. Privatization in disguise of PPP leads to deprivation of amenities to the weaker sections.

The MCGM involved the private contractors and the community based organizations. However privatization has resulted in exploitation of the contract labour. The community based organizations are dependant on local councilors and Charity Commissioner. The Councillors have tried to form CBO’s of their own.