

Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC)

Summary

With the implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, the functional domain of the KMC increased manifold with inclusions of urban planning, building rules and regulations, town planning, urban poverty and slum rehabilitations and many more.

Kolkata is the third largest municipal corporation in India with a population of over 4.58 million (Census 2001) and a population density of 25000 per sq km. The city also supports another 5.5million floating population which is more than the population of the city itself. This includes a slum population of 1.5 million. The area under Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) consists of 141 wards that are grouped into 15 boroughs. It contains a total of 5500 slums which accounts for 1/3 rd of resident population.

KMC provides a range of services to the city including the bustee (slums) services such as supply of drinking water, sewerage and drainage, solid waste management, roads maintenance, street lighting, slum development works and so on

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Keywords

KMC, 'Mayor-in-Council', Public–Private Partnership Model, Underground Car Parking System, BOOT, Water Supply, Sewer Lines, Parks and Gardens, Road Management, Healthcare

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Photos (5)

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Complete Report

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Background:

The Kolkata Municipal Corporation popularly referred to as simply 'Corporation' by the common people had stagnant revenues and was running under severe budget constraints for several years. A major amendment in the 1984 act resulted in the introduction of 'Mayor-in-Council', with all the attributes of a Cabinet government. With the implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment, the functional domain of the KMC increased manifold with inclusions of urban planning, building rules and regulations, town planning, urban poverty and slum rehabilitations and many more.

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Implementation of the Project

The implementation of the project was undertaken at different organizational and institutional levels. The basic civic services can be categorized under the following heads:

- **Parks and Squares:** A special drive to plant saplings has resulted in the city to become greener in comparison to what it was fifteen years ago. During the last 15 years the city has planted over more than one lakh saplings each year in the city. All water bodies are listed and documented and maintaining them as it is. As an attempt towards non-sanitary problems 36 water bodies have been cleaned. Similarly parks are maintained through sponsorship. Some of the most commendable ones include a new park called 'Mohar Kunja' (opposite Rabindra Sadan) and another Elliot park which was raised by the Police authority and KMC jointly in addition to 50/60 small green patches.
- **City Roads:** With a restricted area the development of roads in the city has been very different from that of developing a national highway. With hardly any chance of expansion, planning has virtually been absent. It is estimated that about 6% of the city area is under roads, which is too little. The standard of modern city demands 25-30 percent of the area be under roads. The material foam bitumen is being introduced to build the roads. This will use less of bitumen leading to greater quality bonding even when the material is cold. Thus it does not require heating the material before usage and hence will not contribute to heat loss and eventually to the global warming. Nevertheless the on street parking is a menace and parking fees have been introduced. KMC was the first in India to introduce computerized off street parking. Under the Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) system the public private partnership (PPP) has benefited all stakeholders creating a replicable model.
- **Water Supply:** The Kolkata Municipal Corporation supplies potable water to the city, sourced from the river Hooghly. It is the oldest Asian city to supply potable water. The city records the highest per capita water which is now replicable. The KMC has been able to eradicate the arsenic menace that existed in the ground water sources. It was in 1868, that supply of water was done from surface sources through pipelines and no tariff existed then, so it is rather difficult to introduce one now. The outer fringes_of the old city still suffer from arsenic menace. There are some shadow areas with water supply problems such as the eastern fringe of Kolkata city and the extreme west and south west parts of the city. The areas under water supply imply the source for 24 X 7 with ensured pressure in the pipe is in the road map. Impounding of water and mosquitoes are some of the other implications with present day

intermittent supply. Since 1868, all kinds of water filtration system were used and a varied water treatment has been practiced successfully at IGWTP.

- Drainage: It is the oldest city with underground drainage system established in 1878. This can be replicated by others. Vigorous cleaning and rehabilitating efforts are in place these days through trenchless methods which are fast and eco-friendly involving least social implications. There are 88 kms of man entry big sewers and 92 kms of non-man entry brick sewers. Presently rehabilitation of 25 kms of man entry and 36 kms of non-man entry has been taken up under JNNURM program. In 1989 all the sewerage and water supply systems of UK was privatized for making them efficient and profit centers. Initially a lot of commotion generated but eventually this was very successful.

In addition initiatives are under way in devising new building rules for rain water harvesting, waste water recycling and efficient solid waste management with segregation, yielding energy and gas. It has also done away with plastic bags in municipal markets, developed solar power for the street lights and a compost plant. It has developed an energy saving hot mix plant which resulted in 9% of fossil fuel saving and is supported by the Research of the Jadavpur University. It has been successful in doing away with the cattle sheds in 1995 which generates methane gas leading to added global warming. It also undertakes the responsibility of Health and Education which are executed under relevant departments.

Why is it a Best Practice?

The KMC is an initiative that has had a substantial impact and touches the lives of the poor by improving people's quality of life and living. It has also proven to be sustainable in their economic, environment, social, and cultural components. Its lasting effect has been on policy and decision-making, use of resources and management systems. The documentation of KMC has been fairly consistent. These can be replicated in other cities and similar results can be obtained.

Replication

All mega cities and their old inner city areas have issues such as traffic and parking. Moreover land is scarce in these congested localities for any new construction. The KMC's multi level, underground and above the ground car parking system in the heart of the city and the strategies in sustainability is a panacea for such issues.

The underground parking (with a capacity of 280 cars) near the New Market was inaugurated on 20 April 2007 and above the ground car parking at Rowdan Street was inaugurated in Nov 2001. The latter is a

three level parking all above the ground. It has been found extremely safe especially for citizens who are going out of station and can leave their car parked in perfect safety. This initiative of the KMC in collaboration with the 'Simplex Projects Limited' was a Public – Private Partnership project on a Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) basis. The uniqueness of the project lies in the two direct car lifts for drivers to take their cars to and out of the parking lot. It has already received an award in Goa.

Sustainability

The partnership project of KMC such as the car parking system does ensure financial sustainability. The parking fees, advertisement rights and premiums on shops – gives returns on investment for the private partner because of the very nature of the BOOT contract.

Five percent of the gross parking revenue that KMC gets from Simplex Projects for 20 years generates estimated annual revenue of Rs 5 lakhs for KMC. The quarterly basic rent that the KMC gets from each of the shop owners is the return that the KMC gets for giving rights to the BOOT operator for use of one of its storey built on the same land.

Cost Effectiveness

The dependence on government grants reduced from 54% of total receipts to 25% in 6 years. Thus in the year 2007-08, government grants were only 28.9% of total receipts. Own source revenue of KMC increased and is sufficient to meet 75% of revenue expenditure in 3 yrs. As per budget estimate 2008, 93% of revenue expenditure is met from revenue income. Amount spent on capital works increased from 9% of expenditure to 20% in 3 years. Capital expenditure as a % of total expenditure for the year 2007-08 stands at 43.14%. These figures do reflect the degree of cost effectiveness.

Speed of Service Delivery

It takes 2-3 minutes for an online transaction through barcode based collection. This is only 1/5th of the time it used to take per transaction earlier. Birth Certificates are issued within 1 hour in Green Channel Cases and within a day for Red Channel Cases. Earlier these took 1 day and 3-4 days respectively. An increase in the overall productivity has led to an increase in the revenue collected by the departments. Accurate record keeping (validation is imposed before recording data) is now in order. Data consistency (across locations, systems) is maintained. Faster workflow based approvals available. Assessee-wise Property Tax records are 100% digitised. In fact progress is initiated to digitize department wise data to achieve greater transparency and better administration. The website has been used to provide information on Beneficiary lists for

social sector programs, Citizens Charter, Forms and all citizen facing transactions are done online across the counter. Any payment of bills, dues for citizens, etc is received with increased convenience and compliance

Participation

In order to address issues such as traffic congestion, and renovation activities without displacing the local inhabitants, the KMC went ahead with certain projects such as car parking, development of Municipal Market, etc. such a partnership benefited all stakeholders – the KMC, the construction company / contractor, and most of all the car owners and harassed pedestrians all in a most sustainable manner.

Transparency & Accountability

KMC formed a committee comprising of experts from the reputed educational institutions such as the IIT Kharagpur, Jadavpur University, Indian Statistical Institute and Bengal Engineering and Science University along with officials from KMC for better transparency and accountability. Central Server has been commissioned in a well designed Data Centre owned by the Corporation. About 80 major outlying city offices have been centrally connected through dedicated and backup links. A Disaster Recovery Site to ensure smooth running of operations in case of failure of Primary site, is under completion. Major Hardware is procured and commissioned through a fully equipped Central Data Centre. All 15 Borough offices have full-fledged Video Conferencing facilities with the Central Municipal Office. Data Centre management is outsourced to hardware vendors for 10 years. Network Management is outsourced for 5 years

Conclusions

Quoting in the words of the Mayor in council, the city of Kolkata is going through a significant churning process. A new city is emerging. The Kolkata Municipal Corporation has been operating a huge variety of services and activities. With an extremely populous city and given the dimensions of the area, it will not be an easy task for KMC to guide through the entire project. In the eastern end of the country, we are getting revitalized as the development pivot for the new millennium. For the sake of the next generation, we have to work hand-in-hand to renew our city as a centre of greatness.

Lessons Learnt

Some of the most important lessons that one gathers from the KMC best practice is managing expectations across all levels within the tight schedule. A public private partnership initiative can work to the advantage

of all stakeholders and it is important to understand how it works in a complex and real time environment. The usage of IT is crucial in achieving speedy access of delivery system. Thus it is important that the staff understand the benefits of the IT and make use of it for better transparency and accountability.