

Abstract

Title of the paper

Improving Citizen's access to civic services in urban areas: Experiences and Lessons

India is undergoing an economic, social and political transformation brought about by urbanization and globalization. Even at a relatively low level of urbanization, 28 per cent in 2001, India's urban system is already the second largest in the world, after China. Not surprisingly, given this scale, the urban sector accounts for over 60 per cent of the nation's GDP. While the ongoing urban transition poses numerous challenges, it also offers significant opportunities for India to accelerate economic growth and improve the overall quality of life for its citizens. Whether this potential is realized depends critically on how Indian cities are managed, governed and financed.

Urbanisation has led to not only pressures on the delivery of civic services but also to the increasing urbanisation of poverty. Currently, about 80 million people live below the poverty line in Indian cities and their numbers are projected to rise dramatically over the next decade.

The national trends in economic growth and poverty reduction are increasingly being determined by the productivity of cities. In this context, the urban policy challenge for India is to achieve a world class urban system. Embedded in this goal, is the very important step of attaining efficiency and equity in the delivery and financing of urban infrastructure and services.

Currently, infrastructure gaps in urban areas are enormous. Cities are experiencing severe pressure on services like water, sanitation, waste management, traffic and transportation. Local bodies are unable to mobilize resources to meeting emerging needs. This situation of urban areas calls for not only large-scale investments but also high quality managerial competence. Strengthening urban management through capacity building is therefore a key area by which cities can meet the challenges of urban development.

This paper presents two recent good practices in urban management in India, 1) Solid waste management in Hyderabad and 2) Public transport improvement initiative in Bangalore City. The paper presents city context, pre project situation, trigger for reforms, change management practices followed in respective cities, capacity building interventions, impact and outcome of reforms, learnings for other cities and potential for replication for cities in India and elsewhere.

