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Participation and Urban Governance

MEERA MEHTA

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I INTRODUCTION

The last decade has seen dramatic changes in the political and economic systems around the world. The rise in democratic polity, with, in the Soviet bloc and growing disenchantment with the traditional role of the government in the development process. There is an increasing belief in the participation of the private sector in the process of provision and maintenance of urban services. This represents a truly global phenomenon ranging from divestiture of public utilities in Great Britain, contracting of services in the United States, the rise of the market economy in the former Soviet union and China to the embryonic attempts at privatization in South East Asia and, now India.

These changes are both momentous and represent rather uncharted territory in the social and economic history of this country. However, in relation to these, one often tends to neglect the considerable social changes taking place in the urban centres. It is indeed surprising that not much attention has been paid to the fact that the intense and sustained social unrest in the country has been far more widespread in the urban areas. The rising trend of inequality, apathy, and a loss of faith in government characterise the cities today. However, the few rays of hope during the recent spate of violence throughout the country have come from local efforts involving partnerships between the community and local governments.

The rising disenchantment with the governmental role requires a complete rethinking of its mode of governance, rather than negating the government itself. The government and the associated public authorities have an important role to ensure public purpose and equity in the emerging new arrangements. However, the past experience of almost half of a century of governance in India has clearly shown that the nature and system of government, especially the processes and procedures which hamper creativity, innovativeness, and ultimately effectiveness, need to be changed. The main agenda for urban governance should focus on supporting this transformation in the role of local governments and public agencies.

It is in this context that the issue of participation becomes extremely important. It recognizes the need for community control and empowerment and the need for transforming the government through cooperation and collaboration with different stakeholders of the civil society. It recognizes the need to go beyond the procedures of representative democracy as well as the tokenism of many of the legal provisions for public participation. It recognizes that completely new methods of cooperation and interaction will be necessary. It also necessitates the strengthening of community based organizations, associations and NGOs representing the different forms of civil society. It is the government itself, along with the established NGOs and their many a networks, which will have to perform this role. The government will have to recognize them not as their adversaries but as partners in development. This requires a critical appraisal of the existing systems to identify the potentials and constraints for the changed roles.

- **An Overview:** This paper, first reviews the evolution of the concept of participation in urban governance. The review suggests three main themes in the changing context of participation. First, the notion of *alternative development*, which emphasizes people centred development that is both equitable and environmentally sustainable. Second, the shift towards a wider perspective incorporating the civil society at large rather than just the participation of beneficiaries in isolated projects. There is now a new recognition of the importance of evolving processes which combine the different stakeholders in governance. Third, the role of the government itself is changing in all spheres of governance. It is now being viewed as a facilitator and an enabler rather than a regulator and a provider. The developmental concerns have also broadened to include wider definitions of environmental quality and a new focus on the poor and women as the disadvantaged. Most importantly, however, the issues related to equity in distribution and mobilization of resources are becoming important. The notion of participative urban governance itself is also changing from the early emphasis on participation in development projects to partnerships for service delivery and public policy debates. In line with this is the widening objectives from mere *instrumental* ones related to effectiveness and efficiency to capacity building and empowerment.

In the second section, we focus on the different stakeholders from the civil society who have long been ignored in governance. In India, it is still the NGOs who dominate the scene. However, amongst them,

a change in roles to strategising expansion and development of apex organizations are the new trends. Similarly, consumer and citizens' forums are in a very nascent stage in India and require considerable support for participating in governance process more effectively.

The definition of urban governance can be very broad based. However, in the next section, we identify three specific areas of urban governance which are relevant for participation. These are development projects, delivery of urban services and broader policy issues and planning. We trace the Indian experiences in each of these areas, based on the available evidence.

While the Indian experience in evolving a participatory form of urban governance, is at best, weak and fragmentary, the wide variety of experiments and efforts do present possibilities for a sustained and focused effort in the future. It, however, is necessary to point out the utter paucity of analytical literature and even good documentation to derive a generalized picture from these, at times, disparate experiments. It is essential to assess the impact of the Indian experiences more rigorously within a consistent framework in order to identify the constraints and potentials emerging from these.

The fourth section outlines the vision and the main lessons emerging from the Indian experiences. The long term vision of this approach is that participation will not be an operational strategy but a form of governance itself. Within this perspective three main lessons are identified from the Indian experiences. The first is the inadequate coverage and development of organizations of the stakeholders. A far more proactive and promotive role for government is evident here. This is certainly possible in view of the already changing role of the NGOs and other representatives of the civil society. The biggest constraint, however, relates to totally inadequate institutional arrangements for participative governance.

Based on these findings some operational strategies are suggested for turning the vision of participative urban governance into a shared mission. The first of these is to strengthen the "voice" of the stakeholders through supporting development and capacity building of their organizations. In this respect, more innovative partnerships as well as greater devolution of power and resources to these groups appear essential. Most debilitating constraint, however, is the apathy and ignorance created by shrouding the process of governance in unnecessary mystery and even mystique by the government, which has tended to become the new *Brahmin* guarding the spread of knowledge

to a select few. There is thus an urgent need to demystify urban governance through greater transparency and interaction with representatives of the civil society. The seventy-fourth Constitutional Amendment presents enormous opportunities for operationalizing some of these strategies effectively and rapidly in the coming years. Specifically, the envisaged NGO representation on the ward committee, the need to prepare reports on incidence of subsidies in urban services and the possibility or even encouragement to partnerships for provision of urban services are some of the enabling provisions.

The final section suggests that there really is no dilemma regarding the need and even inevitability of participative urban governance. The dilemma, however, concerns the ability and willingness of the stronger stakeholders in governance today to share the power and information through collaboration and cooperation. Similarly, the dilemma also relates to the NGOs and other groups representing the weaker and disadvantaged groups of stakeholders, to be ready to cooperate and to have the necessary abilities and skills to lobby and negotiate effectively. The resolution of these dilemmas will determine the course of urban governance in negotiating the rapidly spreading social tensions in the Indian cities.

II. PARTICIPATION—EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT

The concept of participation in urban governance cannot certainly be claimed as new. In fact, it maybe argued that the notion of urban governance, based as it is on a notion of local self rule, itself embodies this principle. Conventionally, however, participation has meant direct participation by small groups in well defined activities, generally confined to specific projects. This rather narrow view of participation has undergone dramatic changes over the years. The new outlooks are both in relation to the community empowerment and a much wider perspective of participative urban management structures with definite linkages between the two trends. We trace these changes in the following pages.

Changing Context of Participation

Over the years, the need for and understanding of the nature of participation has undergone tremendous changes. It is possible to trace three different strands of ideas which have emphasized the need for participation. These are, however, not exclusive and have tended to

merge and overlap in actual practice.

- **Alternative Development:** The origins of the *alterative development* model can be traced back at least to the sixties, when “movement politics stirred the world from Beijing to Paris.” The wide variety of movements essentially represented, in a historical perspective, “the rise of the civil society as a collective actor, working for political agendas outside the established framework of party politics.” (Friedman, 1993). This trend was paralleled by an intellectual movement which fought for an alternative development approach for the developing countries. While the economic realities have moved these countries away from the alternative economic doctrines, there has been an increasing recognition of other issues in this approach related to environment, women’s role and status and the need for more effective participation of the civil society in development policy and practice.

The alternative development has also been associated with other more doctrinal beliefs linked to the notions of the supremacy of the community action with a negation of all the actions by the state, and therefore, by extension, avoidance of all political action. In this view, the *people centered development* must remain authentic by focussing only on the community or the people and completely negating, avoiding the state and the political action. (Korten, 1990 as quoted in Friedman, 1993). However, this is a very narrow view of people centered development. While the community action is important, the role of the state, albeit in a changed manner, by *reinventing the government*, is also crucial. This is because the focus areas are wide ranging and include the role of women, protection of the environment and common resources, removal of the inhibiting factors to human development like hunger, poor health, poor education, constant fear of dispossession and social conflicts that are common in most communities. The role of the state, however, is viewed in the context of the need to evolve mechanisms for moving from *exclusion of a large majority to their empowerment*.

This is clearly reflected even in some of the recent international efforts culminating in the passing of a resolution (Agenda 21) on *Promoting sustainable human settlements development*, at the UNCED conference in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. In a sense the Agenda 21 brings together the two main strands of *alternative development*, namely, the emphasis on *basic needs* rather than only growth maximization and the notion of *outer limits* in relation to the *planet’s resources and its environment to sustain such growth*. This view of alternative

development emphasizes a people centered development and necessitates that it begins at the local level.

- **Reassertion of the Civil Society:** The last two decades have also seen nascent efforts of the reassertion of the civil society. This has come in the wake of a clearer understanding of the limits of the representative democracy for effective service delivery, especially in the urban centres. The widespread alienation of the civil society, especially the exclusion of the disadvantaged from the developmental processes coupled with a general perception of the failure of the urban government to meet the needs of its citizens, have necessitated alternative forms of associations of the civil society.

It is in this context that there has been a growing awareness of the role of the *Third Sector* in developmental processes. Whether it is in the national policy outlooks or the agenda of the international agencies, there is a consensus on the potential offered by the non-governmental organizations, especially for reaching the low income population and those in the informal sector and for environmental and resource issues with long term social impacts. It is in these aspects that the role of NGOs has been found to be potential.

Over the years, there have been significant changes in the strategies adopted by the NGOs. This is especially true for the more activist NGOs as compared with the others focussing on the service delivery functions. In the initial years these NGOs have tended to take a more confrontationist attitude with an anti-establishment stance. However, over the years there has been a greater sensitivity to the role of the government and a greater readiness to negotiate and enter into partnership arrangements. This has also led to the establishment of networks and coalitions in their efforts to lobby and influence policies at local, regional, national and international levels. Besides, these networks have also provided a forum for information exchange and sharing of experiences.

It is in their new role that the NGOs become important links in any effort in improving the participatory character of urban governance. In fact, the notion of urban governance itself undergoes a tremendous change with an active participation of the civil society.

- **Facilitating and Enabling Government:** The third major strand of idea has been the changed role of the government itself. From the early decades in the second half of this century when the state was

perceived as a provider, there is now a disenchantment with this role. The role of private sector and the community or popular sectors, has been found to be very important. In many of the urban developmental functions, it is recognized that it is the latter which has in fact catered to the needs of the low income population, largely through informal processes. The changed role of the state as a facilitator and an enabler has become the main premise of the new policy perspectives.

The facilitator, role of the government automatically suggests the need for enhanced participation by different stakeholders in the urban developmental process. In fact, the role of the government will essentially be to evolve the necessary structures and procedures for cooperation and partnerships amongst them. This of course leads to a totally different view of participation, in terms of its purpose and underlying rationale, the different actors or stakeholders as well as the appropriate methods and mechanisms for making the governance truly participative. We discuss these in the following sections.

Developmental Concerns for Participation

In this wider context of participation, the specific developmental concerns have also shifted considerably to encompass a large number of issues. The repertoire of this new paradigm is very wide and largely within the perspective of *Alternative Development*, as discussed above. It may be broadly grouped into three main categories:

- **Urban Environment:** Beginning with the approach of community participation in development projects, the initial emphasis was on improving the quality of living environment. This first referred to the physical environment, especially including shelter and infrastructure services.

However, over the years, the notion of urban environment has become more broad based and includes not just the natural environment but also the social aspects, especially related to education and human health. In this sense, it deals with the collective services and common resources which are also the prime concerns of any system of local governments. Specifically, it includes environmental services, namely, water, sanitation and solid waste management; social services related to education and health; and the conditions of common resources like air, water, public open lands and vegetation.

The focus on participation essentially relates to the effectiveness in service delivery and project implementation. The role of various forms of participation and of the civil society outside the representative political processes can have tremendous influence on these concerns. It must, however, be recognized that the extent and nature of participation will differ considerably for different services and even components of each service, depending on its characteristics.

- **Gender and Poverty:** The inequitable access to a better environmental quality for different groups in society has emerged as a second main focus of the developmental process. Emergence of the *growth with justice* models, in response to the failure of the trickle down theory, has helped to highlight these further. Over the years, in the context of developing countries, mainly two disadvantaged groups have been focused on, namely the poor and the women.

This concern also coincides with the shift from participation as a means to improving project performance to participation being reviewed as an end, leading to empowerment. Thus, the empowerment through developmental efforts remains a prime concern. Empowerment is visualized to occur through enhanced knowledge and information, access to credit and mobilization for effective participation in developmental activities. It also envisages a pro-poor bias and gender awareness in all developmental activities, especially the public programmes and service delivery.

- **Equity in Resource Allocations:** The most important, but probably the least understood, of the developmental issues is the question of an equitable allocation of resources. In fact, the *alternative development* model emphasized the inequitable global economic arrangements, suggesting the need for a new *economic order*. These concerns, however, transcend different levels, as the question of equity in resource allocation needs to be focused at the local levels also.

Unfortunately, the various NGOs partly due to their disciplinary bias, have focused on environmental and social services and have tended to neglect the broader issues of resource allocation totally. On the other hand, on the side of the government, there is a lack of adequate transparency in resource allocation processes and outcomes. For more effective participation in these, there is an urgent need for demystification and transparency. At the same time, the organizations representing the civil society also need to take a greater interest in the

issues of resource mobilization and allocation, in order to make these more equitable for the disadvantaged in society.

Need/Rationale for Participation

During this decade there has emerged a new understanding of politics and participation. While democratic societies are supposed to automatically ensure participation, the election processes do not necessarily lead to active participation of service users and producers (when they are different from the public agencies) in its design, planning and delivery. This is partly due to the fact that the political process, especially in the urban areas, is rather far removed from most citizens due to the sheer size of the urban centres. Thus, "the voice of the people cannot be heard at all if the channels are limited to the formal structures of local government. (Sivaramakrisnan, 1994). This suggests the need for alternative structures which enable a far greater and effective participation of citizens, especially the more disadvantaged ones like the poor and the women.

Over the years, the basic rationale and nature of participation has undergone tremendous changes. In the urban context, and in relation to the process of urban governance, two strands of changes maybe traced which also suggest the evolution of the entire paradigm of participation.

- **Areas of Urban Governance:** The concept of governance goes beyond the routine government functions and emphasizes the manner in which the developmental activities are carried out to ensure an adequate quality of living environment and to promote the economic vitality of the city. In this sense, governance goes beyond just maintenance of public order and suggests a more proactive and promotive role for the different levels of the government.

With respect to the concept of participation, three areas of urban governance are particularly relevant. The first two of these relate largely to smaller community levels with more direct approaches like *development projects* and *delivery of urban services*. Development projects refer to time bound and a definite set of investments to improve the quality of living environment in different parts of the city. They may encompass slum improvement related projects, provision of community level infrastructure facilities as well as employment programmes. In addition to these, there are many other social and environmental

services that are critical for urban life. For example, water and sanitation, collection of solid waste, education and health are amongst the important ones. In the past most efforts at participation of urban communities have been in these contexts.

The third area of governance relating to the *consultation for public policy and planning* is now being recognized as being of significant importance. This necessitates actions at the city and larger levels, where the conflict between representative and participatory approaches come into sharper focus. It also relates to policy decisions which have larger city or regional impacts and, therefore, are not generally given priority by smaller community based groups. This necessitates other forms of participation to have the representation from different interest groups in the civil society.

TABLE 1. Objectives of Participation

Area of Governance	Objectives of Participation
Development Projects	Effectiveness Efficiency Cost sharing Capacity Building Empowerment
Local Services	Coverage Effectiveness Efficiency Community awareness Capacity Building Empowerment
Public Policy and Planning	Effectiveness Equity Capacity Building Empowerment

- Objectives of Participation: The second major shift has been in terms of the envisaged objectives of participation. The earlier idea of participation, as largely linked to development projects, was with a view

to improve *effectiveness* and project efficiency. Effectiveness refers both to the extent of achievement of a given objective of the project as well as the qualitative results on critical parameters. Participation was felt to contribute to a improving effectiveness by a better understanding of the needs and preferences of affected groups and their greater satisfaction due to their involvement.

Project efficiency on the other hand refers to the costs associated with a given level of outputs. This improvement can be effected by participation through better coordination and cooperation between the main stakeholders, leading to less delays and smoother project implementation. Another project linked objective has been *cost sharing*, which helps to reduce public costs, but more importantly helps to improve the stakes of clients in the project with the resultant the resultant benefits for both effectiveness and efficiency.

These project linked objectives or rationale of participation have often been called instrumental ones or as means to some other ends. The NGO sector has particularly pleaded for empowerment strategies and not being satisfied with minor project level objectives. In this vein, the objective of *capacity building* refers to both the project linked approach and as a means. The experience in many development projects suggested that they lacked sustainability and often the poor maintenance and client apathy led to rapid deterioration in living environment. The concept of capacity building is thus to enable the communities to continue with the regular functions as well as participate in project deliberations more effectively.

While the importance of participation for improved project performance is clearly recognized by most governments and funding agencies, there has also been considerable criticism of the *instrumental* view, especially from the NGO sector. They have emphasized “the *change-inducing* (UNESCO, 1986) or *authentic* community participation (Midgley, et.al, 1986) where people’s involvement is seen as an on-going process and an end in itself.” (Shetty, nd). It is within this perspective that *empowerment*, with both political and psychological overtones, is suggested as a main objective. It basically refers to a greater exertion of pressure by the disadvantaged groups and their ability to initiate actions on their own, due both to self esteem and access to better knowledge, information and resources. There is also a recognition of great potential in community based action and that empowerment will help to release this for developmental concerns. Further, it is also realized that the society is fast moving towards an information revolution and access to

knowledge and information represents power and status. The community empowerment thus also necessitates better access to these.

Empowerment clearly implies the need for processes which can respond to the demands and initiatives from the community level organizations. This leads us to the question of larger city level policy issues and two important objectives become important from this wider perspective of participation. First, is the issue of improvement in *coverage* of local collective services. Secondly, ensuring *equity* in decisions of public resource allocation become important. In the urban context, both the intra urban spatial equity and across groups in society. The main focus of participation is to help protect the interests of the disadvantaged groups, and use the resource allocation to achieve a more balanced distribution of urban services.

- From Projects to Planning and managements: The widest use of participation in urban governance has been in development projects, where attempts are made to involve the *beneficiaries* in its planning, implementation and later operations. The focus in such attempts was on improving the project effectiveness and efficiency and cost or resource sharing through either self help or later community based cost recovery. While such efforts certainly help to improve the cost effectiveness of project investments, they may not lead to more sustained participation in developmental processes later.

Some of the most widespread illustrations of this approach are the urban projects funded by the World Bank and other international agencies who have often used the concept of community participation in their development projects. The emphasis there has been to organize the *beneficiaries* into user groups. The nature of participation, however, was most intense for information sharing and consultation. Participation in actual decision making has been only modest. This approach, however, also showed the critical importance of technical inputs. Failure and shortcoming on this front also hampers effective and real community participation. (Paul, 1987, pp. 28) The attempts at capacity building and empowerment have, however, received far less emphasis in development projects.

The empowerment theme leads to the possibilities of greater demands for services. This will necessitate widening the process of governance to include the voice of the civil society, and especially the disadvantaged groups, to be heard and attended to in decisions related to service provisions and resource allocations. It is this recognition that

has led to enhancing participation in other areas of urban governance, especially provision and delivery of urban services and the larger issues of public policy, planning and resource allocation.

This widening of the concept of participation is supported by the global trend towards decentralisation, especially greater control by the local governments. As we noted above, however, for the local governments to be effective, the political process of the representative democracies may not suffice. This has led to a search for more effective ways of involving the civil society, to ascertain their preferences, to monitor and be the watchdogs to give feedback on governmental policies and programmes and to be more direct partners in the developmental process and urban governance.

III. CIVIL SOCIETY AS A STAKEHOLDER IN URBAN GOVERNANCE

Any strategy of participation must first of all clearly identify the different stakeholders in the process of urban governance. The three main stakeholders are i) the government itself, ii) the civil society which is the main consumer of the services and as represented by different collective forms and lastly iii) the other private producers of these services. Each of these are represented by their primary units as well as at higher levels representing a larger collective association. As the government and producers are being dealt with in other accompanying papers, we focus more on the different forms representing the civil society.

Representatives of Civil Society

For effective participation, the civic society needs to be organized into groups representing different collective interests. These may range from neighbourhood based community organizations (often referred as CBOs or resident welfare associations), to organizations which support the development of such CBOs (often referred as the non-governmental organizations NGOs) or different forms of citizen or consumer forums (CFs) which represent the interests of specific groups in society. A variety of associations of such primary CBOs, NGOs or CFs at regional, national and even international levels have also been formed in recent years.

TABLE 2. Representatives of Civil Society

Type		Main Rationale	Members	Examples from Indian cities
Primary	Community Based Organizations (CBOs)	To pursue Common Interests	Groups of people living or working together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thrift and Credit Groups • Housing Societies • Resident Welfare Associations • Neighbourhood Committee
	-Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	To pursue developmental mobilization objectives on a non-profit basis	Group of Socially Motivated Individuals; Social Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEWA, Ahmedabad • SPARC, Bombay • Sharan, New Delhi • AVAS, Bangalore • ASAG, Ahmedabad • Vikas Centre for Development, Ahmedabad
	Consumer Forum (CF)	To Safeguard Interests of Specific Consumer Groups and Influence Public Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrepreneurs or • Group of socially motivated Individuals/ Social Workers 	
Apex	Federation	To pursue Common Interest and Promote new Groups	Primary CBOs, NGOs or TCGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FTCA-Federation of Thrift Credit Association-Hyderabad • Women's World Banking • National Slum Dwellers' Association, Bombay
	Support	To provide Support Services to Primary Groups and Influence Public Policy	Group of Socially Motivated Individuals; Social Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PRIA-Society for Participatory Research in Asia
	Citizens' Forum	To be Watchdogs for Municipal Services	Other Primary CBOs/NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express Group of Citizens, Poona • Proposed ward committees under the seventy-fourth CAA

- **Typology of NGOs:** The NGOs have come to be recognized as an important cornerstone in any strategy of participation, whether at the level of development projects or in larger concerns of consultations on public policy. However, why is it necessary to typify the NGOs? As suggested by PRIA (1991), “the experience of voluntary development organizations and other non-governmental organizations in India has become so diverse and multifaceted that there is a need to systemetise and classify this vast range.”
- **Rationale:** Most of the earlier attempts at such classification have tended to focus on the basic rationale. The differentiation is generally made between those with a belief in *relief and welfare* approach and those who believe in *struggle and empowerment*. It is argued that the former are more likely to work with the government while the latter may find themselves in conflict with both the government and the political parties. The Indian experience, however, suggests that even those with a belief in struggle and empowerment have over time realized the need for developmental activities. Similarly, those with a relief and welfare approach have realized that for sustainability, community capacity and control are very important.
- **Size:** PRIA (1991) also provides additional considerations related to the size of the NGO. (See Table 3). The question of size is extremely important. One of the major limitations of the NGO sector has generally been its limited coverage and reach. This means that the possibility of growth in the size and, therefore, an expansion in its coverage, become critical to overcoming this constraint.
- **Primary and Apex Organizations:** With the growth in number and size of NGOs, a variety of federations have emerged to serve the common interests and to provide the support services which are not possible to internalize for most, except a few very large, NGOs. It is thus useful to distinguish between primary and apex NGOs. The primary ones are either the community based organizations (CBOs) or the other NGOs. The CBOs are formal or informal associations of a group of people, either living or working together and formed to pursue common interests. The NGOs, on the other hand, are associations established to *pursue developmental objectives on a non-profit basis* (Forbes and Paltenberg, 1993).

TABLE 3 Size of Non Governmental Organizations

Size	Characteristics
Small	Few fulltime staff with volunteers. Work confined to a few areas/ localities. Internal funds
Medium	Several slums - About 10 full time staff. Some external funds. Annual budget about Rs1 lakh
Big	25-50 full time staff. Several cities on a programme basis. Annual budget about Rs 5-20 lakhs
Large	100 or more full time staff. External funds from many sources. Annual budget about Rs 50 lakhs or more.

SOURCE. Based on PRIA (1991), pp. 33-40.

The basis for the apex institutions is the need to share experiences and *overcome isolation*, for protection of legitimacy and identity (PRIA, 1991), sharing critical services and the desire to influence policy and programmes in a larger perspective. These needs emerge from the specific organizational and management environment in which the primary CBOs and NGOs operate.

This new trend of apex institutions take many forms, including federations, support organizations and networking. Federations may be either general or evolved around specific issues. However, they will have a specific group of primary organizations associated with them. The support organizations, on the other hand, do not necessarily have a specific constituency and can provide the necessary services to the NGO sector as a whole. For example, the Society for Promotion of research in Asia (PRIA) is such a support organization. (See Box 1).

Box 1**Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA)**

Started in 1982 PRIA is a unique support organization which combines professional management, largely associated with the corporate sector, with socially committed activism associated generally with the *voluntary* sector. Its basic mission is to create opportunities for sharing, learning from experiences and enabling dialogue across groups. Its focus in activities is on studies, research and documentation, arranging for *educational events and preparation and publication of educational materials*. In recent years influencing public policy and strengthening the environment for effective reassertion of the institutions of the Civil Society have gained strategic importance for PRIA. Its specific areas of work include Occupational and environmental health, participation and governance, institutional development and developing global alliances. In its role as a support organization, PRIA essentially attempts to strengthen the organizations committed to people centred development, especially by improving their information and knowledge base, building internal capacity for organizational and financial management.

Networking suggests a more loose organizational form with a focus on exchange of ideas and experiences and providing opportunities for dialogue, consultation and cooperation. This is preferable when a large variety of organizations are involved and very formal structures may become difficult initially. A major issue here has in the past been for the NGOs with different basis, approaches and styles to come together effectively. As PRIA (1991) highlights this with the case of AVARD, where coming together has often been quite difficult.

Based on a study of 18 leading NGOs in Indian cities, it is possible to illustrate the typologies using the three criteria of status (primary/apex), rationale and size. The evidence presented in Table 5 highlights the changing nature of the NGO typologies. Interestingly, over time many of the NGOs who started with a predominantly struggle and empowerment rationale have taken up development activities also. Similarly, most of the NGOs who have gone beyond the *small* category have taken on some of the support functions. At least three of the NGOs had begun with the apex function. This changing role of the NGO has implications for its own internal organizational structure and nature of linkages, as we discuss in the next section.

Development of NGOs in India

Over the past four and a half decades since independence there has been a tremendous rise of Non-Governmental organizations in India and the world over. They have emerged as a major lobbying force for the downtrodden, for bringing and keeping alive the long term social concerns like environment and women's role and for organizing and representing the civil society in various the local, national and international forums. Their nature, developmental concerns and internal and external linkages have undergone significant changes over this time. We trace these based on the available scanty evidence. It is indeed surprising that despite the growing importance of this sector, there is very little rigorous documentation of these efforts.

While the roots of *Voluntary movement* are found even in pre-independence period, the more development oriented growth of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) started only after independence as the Voluntary Action groups joined in the task of nation building. During the first two decades the NGOs continued to join the government in these efforts. The student movements during the sixties also strengthened these developments. It was during the seventies, however, that there was a lot of reflection on, and at times a disenchantment with the governmental actions.

The limitations of these actions in reaching the disadvantaged and a complete lack of participation of these groups in the developmental processes led to a new emphasis on conscientization and people's participation. The early emphasis on "social work with a focus on charity now veered towards development work and community mobilization" (PRIA, 1991).

During the eighties, these trends were further strengthened with the entry of young professionals in this area. In fact, it was during this period that the notion of Voluntary action started to change to the notion of Non-Governmental Organizations. While the social commitment continued in these efforts, it was no more visualized as being voluntary and for charity. There was also a greater consciousness regarding the need to *come together* and support the more sustainable development of this movement with the necessary planning and management. This has led to the growth of Apex organizations which we referred earlier. This growing awareness, however, needs to be translated into policies which directly or indirectly promote such organizations. More importantly, however, there is a need to evolve

processes which enable their participation in larger policy issues and planning processes.

Organizational Roles and Linkages

A critical aspect in moving towards such systemic and sustainable efforts for participation in urban governance through the collective associations of the civic society, is the need to carefully nurture appropriate organizational forms. This is indeed difficult as these alternatives appear to have very complex and diverse organizational structures and it may be difficult and indeed inappropriate to have simplified organizational forms. However, it is possible to identify the main roles or orientation necessary for successful organizations. Based on a study of 18 different NGOs working in the areas of shelter and finance with the urban low income communities, Mehta (1994) identifies the following three main roles.

- a grass roots base,
- a wide ranging set of developmental activities,
- an ability to strategies expansion, external linkages and influence policy environment.

This study also found that all the three roles are critical to successful NGO operation in terms of their coverage and extent of activities. Those with only a grass roots base and a limited set of activities have a limited reach and little capacity to expand their operations. Those with the strategising capacity were able to mobilise resources, receive technical assistance, enhance interactions and were able to expand their coverage in an effective manner. On the other hand, a few NGOs which lacked a strong grass roots base were also unable to grow beyond isolated projects.

The important, though the more difficult role of strategising can also be performed by a federating apex organization. In such a case the apex organizations for CBOs or NGOs may not have any direct grass roots base. Their focus is largely on the strategy function with the developmental activities focussing on support to the primary organizations. The apex organization must be evolved to support strong primary organizations and have continuing relationships with them. Ideally, they must also have representation from the primary organizations. Without this clear linkage, the strategic efforts of the

apex organization are not likely to be very effective.

The functions performed by the Apex NGOs may also be replicated by governmental organizations with a specific mandate to reach the disadvantaged groups. In fact, as we review later in the next section, some of the attempts by the governmental programmes like the Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP) have attempted to do exactly this.

TABLE 4. Organizational Forms and Roles

Type of Organization		Role of Organization		
		Grass Roots Base	Developmental Activities	Strategy
Primary	CBO	Direct	Community Priorities	—
	NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct • Through NGO 	Developmental Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion strategy • Vision • External linkages
Apex	NGO	—	Support to Primary Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External linkages • Expansion strategy • Policy advocacy • Vision
Govt.	—	—	Support to Primary Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External linkages • Expansion strategy

A recent study of 18 different NGOs in urban India finds that some of the NGOs evolve rather complex organizational linkages to ensure that all the three important roles are fulfilled. Table 5 highlights these. More indepth inquiries are necessary to understand these linkages so that the governmental programmes like the UBSP may adopt these structures. In the UBSP, the community structures of primary CBOs provide the grass roots base. The strategising function for expansion and external linkages is envisaged to be provided by the UBSP staff at city level. However, in many of the cities, this structure is very weak and hence the programme impact also remains weak. The developmental activities are envisaged through all the governmental programmes to be availed through convergence. In this manner, the NGO organisational linkages can be used in a governmental programme which can then be replicated more rapidly and widely than any NGO based programme.

TABLE 5. Typologies of Urban Non-Governmental Organisations

	Primary		Apex		Size (Small Medium Big Large)	
	Relief and Welfare	Develop ment	Struggle and Empower ment	Federa tion		Support
SEWA		o	●	o	o	Large
BCC		●		o		Big
SPARC (NSDF)		o	●	o	o	Big
FTCA				●	o	Medium
AVAS		●				Small
VIKAS		●				Small
LWS	●	o				Big
Sharan		●	o		o	Medium
Deepalaya	●	o		o		Big
CEDMA		●			o	Big
Shramik Bharati		o	●	o		Medium
Adhikar		o	●	o		Medium
CASP PLAN	●	o				Small
PUNERVAS				o	●	—
DPG		o			●	Medium
Asha Niketan	●					Small
Unnayan		o			●	Medium
DCA	●	o				Medium

SOURCE. Derived from Mehta (1994) and NIUA (1994).

NOTE. ● Main/Initial Role, o Secondary/Second Stage Role

Another important aspect in the growth of the NGO sector in India is the role played by both some of the large primary NGOs and the apex federations. In the first case, the primary NGO either actively promotes its philosophy and organisational style by starting new organizations in different cities or initiating similar activities. SPARC and NSDF have followed this approach not only in many other Indian cities like Lucknow, Bangalore and Poona, but even internationally in South Africa. SPARC enables the women from the slum communities to spread the philosophy and strategic approaches through experience sharing and training. This can be a very effective strategy for rapid growth. The UBSP can emulate this approach for further expansion effectively.

In an alternative approach, the growth impulses can also come from simply diffusing the idea and the philosophy through experience sharing, or the former associates in an NGO setting out to start a similar NGO themselves. SEWA, Ahmedabad represents such a case where its philosophy and approach have been used by affiliated SEWAs set up in several other Indian cities.

IV. INDIAN EXPERIENCES IN PARTICIPATIVE GOVERNANCE

While the Indian experiences in evolving a participatory form of urban governance are at best weak and fragmented, the wide variety of experiments and efforts present some possibilities for a sustained and focused effort in the future. It, however, is necessary to point out the paucity of analytical literature and even good case documentation from which future directions may be derived meaningfully. Systematic efforts are crucial in this regard both to evolve more meaningful strategies and to share experiences amongst the different actors in this process. Such sharing of experiences is also crucial, as these approaches require continuous innovation and adaptation.

We have grouped the different experiences into three areas of governance. Our attempt is to assess these within the conceptual framework suggested in the previous section. We also highlight the main lessons from the existing approaches and potentials for the future. Table 6 highlights main approaches and examples from India.

Participation in Development projects

In terms of its reach and coverage, incorporating community participation in developmental projects has probably been the most

widespread form of participation in urban governance. In relation to the three developmental concerns for participation which we referred earlier, this mode largely relates to the first set of concerns related to the urban environment, encompassing the environmental services like water, sanitation and solid waste collection. The urban component of social services (especially health) is very small or even nonexistent. Further, these are more appropriate to review in the next section on delivery of services. In recent years there have also been some attempts to introduce specific employment programmes for the urban poor.

- Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS): The governmental developmental projects with significant community participation potential have largely been those related to the development of slum settlements. Unfortunately, however, this has not been true for the most important nationwide programme of the Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums (EIUS). It started out as a centrally funded programme, but has later been transferred to the State sector. Over the years, many local municipal governments have also undertaken this with their own budgetary allocations. This programme has, according to the official estimates, covered almost 20 million slum dwellers (45 per cent of total slum dwellers) by 1990.

The programme, however, has been implemented as a typical sectoral departmental activity with no effort at involving the local communities in selecting the service levels, technology, location, etc. This has led to serious service gaps in implementation. An evaluation of this programme in Ahmedabad suggests that the services provided are generally inadequate in magnitude, are poor in quality, inappropriately located within the slum settlements and suffer from poor maintenance as nobody owns up to the *government* services. As a result, the assets are often in a perpetual state of disrepair and have no real value for the slum communities (Boni, 1985).

It is indeed surprising that there has not been any significant attempt to incorporate the simple community participation principles for making the service provision more effective and sustainable, despite the evidence from some of the more successful examples from rural as well as urban settings. The following three main constraints in this regard may be identified. These have to be viewed in relation to the pressure on the ill-equipped municipal functionaries to fulfil the targets, rather than meet the needs of local citizens.

Attitudes	-	that community participation is time consuming and not really essential
Lack of skills	-	especially for community mobilization
Lack of CBO/NGO structures	-	lack of strong CBOs with an ability to take management responsibilities

• ODA/World Bank Slum Projects: As against the rather dismal performance of the EIUS with respect to participatory approaches, the projects funded by some of the international agencies have emphasized the need for community participation to a far greater degree. While rigorous evaluation studies are not available even for these projects, some observations are possible. In the ODA slum upgradation projects, the principle of community participation has been the main basis as they have followed the community development model. Thus, formation of appropriate community structures has been a prerequisite for undertaking the developmental works and service delivery. These community groups have then also undertaken service provision or effectively supervised its provision. However, even in these projects there has not been adequate attempt made to mobilize community resources and tap its potential in a wider perspective. The community also has essentially been a recipient and has not participated directly in the selection of service levels and technology. Further, as the ODA funds have come as grants and the community did not pay for the services, its real and effective choice has not really been understood or explored. At the same time, the quality and adequacy of services, user satisfaction and later maintenance are evidently far better than in the settlements covered under the EIUS mode.

In the World Bank approach, while there has been an emphasis on cost recovery, the community affordability and willingness to pay have not been ascertained effectively. The programme also did not attempt very effectively to evolve a base of community structures, especially in Madras. Even in the later programmes in Bombay, it has been difficult to evolve these in the envisaged time. The programme has faced long

delays. It would be essential to review the reasons for this as to whether they relate to the need for more time or use of inappropriate methods or the far greater politicization in the slum settlements in larger metropolitan centres like Bombay.

- Urban Community Development (UCD/UBS/UBSP): The third set of slum related projects have been those in the mode of urban community development. Compared to the rather top down nature of the EIUS scheme, this set of programmes envisage an emphasis on the role of the community at the grass roots. The need for community mobilization to precede other activities is clearly recognized in this approach.

The first formal approach at urban community development in India was the Delhi Urban Community Development pilot Project, in 1958, sponsored by the Ford Foundation. About 20 different pilot projects were started in by the Government of India in the next two decades with UNICEF support. The most successful of these was the Hyderabad UCD Cell in the city Municipal Corporation. Based on this experience, the national government launched a major programme of Urban Basic services (UBS) with UNICEF support in 168 towns during the Seventh five year plan.

Based on the UBS experience and the recommendations of the National Commission on Urbanisation, a Urban Poverty Alleviation division was established in the Ministry of Urban Development in 1990. This cell developed a revised programme of Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP), which was launched along with the employment programme of Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY). The Eighth Five year plan envisages a coverage of 500 cities and 12.5 million urban poor under the UBSP during the period of 1992–97. By 1993–94, it had become operational in 280 cities with a coverage of almost 5 million slum dwellers. While adequate qualitative assessment of the community structures under the UBSP is not available, the numbers are certainly impressive, with more than 50000 community volunteers and over 5000 neighbourhood committees, largely composed of the representatives of slum women.

TABLE 6. Operational Strategies for Participation in Urban Governance

Area of Governance	Participation		
	Objective	Approach/ Strategy	Examples
Development Projects	Effectiveness Efficiency Cost sharing	.Self help .Community Mobilisation .Information Sharing and Consultation	.Slum Upgradation Projects .BUDP-Sites and Services Project
	Capacity Building Empowerment		
Local Services	Coverage Effectiveness Efficiency	.Delegation .Participatory Monitoring Oxd feedback .Contracting of Services	.NGO Schemes of sectoral ministries .Ward Committees of seventy-fourth CAA
	Community awareness Capacity	.Partnerships through Community Mobilisation	.Express Group of Citizens, Poona
	Building Empowerment	.Information Exchange and dissemination .Social Mobilisation	.Contracting of Municipal Services .Partnerships for SWM/Health (EXNORA) .Law Enforcement (Bhivandi) .Total literacy Campaign
Public Policy and Planning	Effectiveness Equity	.Coordination/Interaction with Bureaucracy .Interest Group Lobbying	.Ward Committees .Plan Committees
	Capacity Building Empowerment	Legislative Channels	.National Campaign for Housing Rights .Public Interest Legislation .Town Planning Acts

Box 2**Hyderabad Urban Community Development Project**

Often cited as the most successful of the urban community development projects, the Hyderabad UCD has expanded from a coverage of 4000 population at its inception to over 500000 population (80 per cent of slum population) over a 15 year time span. Today it covers the entire slum population. The programme is a part of the Municipal Corporation, and over the years has received assistance from many international agencies. Its focus, especially at the initial stage was to identify the felt needs and create linkages with the necessary government programmes. Over the years, however, many development activities have been incorporated, the latest being the slum upgradation and social facilities and activities under the ODA funding. The success of this UCD programme illustrated the possibilities of governmental agencies also undertaken people centred planning with the right leadership and motivation. The Government of India programme on Urban Basic Services has been influenced to a great extent by this experience.

The UBSP as a strategy has tremendous potential for incorporating the participation of the weaker sections of the urban population in all governmental programmes. In this sense, UBSP goes beyond the usual objectives of improving the effectiveness of a single project with an emphasis on capacity building and empowerment. Besides, its idea of convergence hopes to create linkages of the community structures with the different sectoral departments. In practice, however, the programme as being implemented at present does not provide adequate opportunities for the community structures to make effective choices, mobilize resources and gain control over other resources. This may make it difficult to sustain these over time. Similarly, the idea of convergence requires clear institutional arrangements encompassing different sectors and departments. Other available evidence from evaluative assessments emphasize the need for appropriate staff, strong support at the city level and the need for allowing and encouraging local initiatives. (NIUA, 1993 and Mehta, 1993).

- Employment Programmes for the Poor: The Government of India employment related programmes for the urban areas are fairly recent, as the efforts in the past were largely confined to the rural areas. The first such programme was the Self-Employment Programme for the Urban poor (SEPUP) by the central government in 1986. It essentially

focussed on promoting self-employment amongst the urban poor through access to subsidised credit. During the five years of its operation, it fell short of even the envisaged targets by about 25 per cent. (Reserve Bank of India, 1991–92 as reported in Pathak, 1993).

This small programme was subsumed in 1991 by a larger programme of Nehru Rozgar Yojana (NRY). It aims at skills upgradation through training, provision of credit for self-employment and provides for wage employment through creation of community based physical assets and shelter upgradation. NRY has been more successful in achieving its targets, especially for credit and wage employment. However, its performance in field is adversely affected by a total lack of any participation of the community in selection of the beneficiaries and cost recovery. A recent ongoing evaluation study highlights this. The delays and inappropriate beneficiary selection can be resolved to a great extent through effective community participation. Similarly the assets created under the wage employment component of NRY were not for community based physical assets as envisaged (ORG, 1993). It is clear that the employment programmes, especially those focussing on credit and wage employment need to involve community groups to a far greater extent. As pointed out by Nagraj (1993), absence of involvement of the beneficiaries into the process and the excessive orientation on fulfilment of targets, “bring about a *fractured* perception of the programmes on the part of the key agents”.

Further, a recent study highlights the importance of Community based Finance Systems (CFSSs) for appropriate targeting and better loan recovery (Mehta, 1994). Their financial performance is reasonably good and there are significant possibilities of using these for reaching the urban poor. In fact, the UBSP programme, discussed above, also plans to include development of such CFSSs as a part of its strategy. In Kerala, the community groups formed under the UBSP have been able to access large volume of funds from NABARD a rural apex finance agency, on a line of credit basis for providing finance to the poor women for income generating activities. A recent initiative of the Department of Women and Child Welfare attempts to do this by setting up a special credit fund for women. The aim of such endeavours, however, must be to support the development of the CFSSs in a financially viable manner and to integrate them into the general financial systems rather than keeping them continually dependent on low cost governmental or donor funds. The subsidies, to the extent that are likely to be available, need to be spent on meeting the initial administrative costs and for risk

fund. One such proposal for housing finance is under consideration just now under the Indo-USAID Housing Finance Expansion Program.

- **NGO Partnerships in Development Projects:** It has become fashionable to have NGO involvement in governmental schemes and projects. However, this involvement is often not evolved within a well defined strategy focussing programme/project objectives, relative strengths of the NGO sector and the existence of strong and genuine NGOs in the local context. At the same time there are some successful cases of NGO partnerships, especially for shelter and environmental improvement projects. For example, the efforts of AVAS in Bangalore for shelter improvement, CEDMA for housing for the poor in Madras, BCC for a slum upgradation projects in Baroda, etc. provide successful ventures, where there was a significant involvement of the community in design and implementation.

The major limitation of the NGO linked partnership is the limited scale and reach of such efforts, as brought out by a recent study of the 9 NGOs who were involved in housing and infrastructure projects, none had been involved in more than 4 projects (NIUA, 1994). Further, in any expansion through such modes, the NGO management capacities come under strain and the costs are also likely to go up considerably. A better approach would be to more carefully identify the strengths of NGOs in a local context and develop a detailed strategy to incorporate the NGOs at appropriate stages of the project cycle. Such strategy formulation itself, however, must be done jointly with the NGOs and the community groups.

Partnerships for Service Delivery

Besides the development programmes, the urban governance also implies delivery of many services which are critical to urban living. It is well known that in many cities throughout the country, the local governments are not able to provide many of the services for all its citizens. In such situations, the rich manage to find other private alternatives which are affordable even though they may not be environmentally sustainable or appropriate. The poor, however, are totally priced out or are forced to avail inadequate or qualitatively poor services, often paying more for these than the richer and more fortunate citizens. In such situations, partnership arrangements may help to improve the coverage or effectiveness of services. This would, however,

require considerable community involvement in design and monitoring.

Such partnerships may take place between public agency and the community or private contractors with NGO or community monitoring the process. Alternatively, government may use existing NGOs for improving the service delivery. Such efforts may happen either at the initiative of the government, NGO or by the community based organization itself.

- Delegation through Government Schemes for the NGOs: Almost every sectoral ministry or department has over the years evolved schemes for direct assistance to NGOs for service delivery. However, the share of these in the total sectoral allocation is generally very small and it has reduced further. For example, a recent standing parliamentary committee on finance found that the budget allocation for voluntary organizations had been pruned from Rs 64 million to only Rs 12.5 million from 1993–94 to 1994–95. (Economic Times, 1994).

In addition, the government has also set up institutions which provide funds for the NGOs. The most common of these have been in adult education, literacy, health care, environment and social forestry. A major one has been the Council for Advancement of Peoples' action and Rural Technology (CAPART). While, most of these operate for NGOs from rural areas only, their effect on the NGOs has probably been mixed. On one hand, such funds have provided the necessary finance to many NGOs to remain viable. At the same time, however, as such funds generally come with strings attached, the NGOs dependent on them also have to tow the government line fairly closely. A study by PRIA (1991) points out that many NGOs who refuse to do this find that their *grant in aid* is not continued.

There is no comprehensive assessment of the impact of these efforts on the NGO operations in the urban areas. In a way, however, it may be argued that many alternative avenues will help the NGOs to have choice amongst these. On the whole it appears that a more careful assessment of the rationale for NGO involvement is necessary to maximize the benefits from such schemes in the future. In fact it may even be desirable to encourage the formation of NGOs and CBOs (as being done in the UBSP strategy) in areas where the government presence is weak and the NGO may hold advantage. As for example, in the health sector, the totally inadequate urban services suggest the need for promoting and nurturing such ventures.

- **Local Government Contracting:** The second form of partnerships for services is through management contracts. In this form, a local authority contracts with a private firm, another public agency or community groups to take responsibility for operation and maintenance of a service or specific tasks like bill collection. These arrangements may also be based on a profit sharing arrangement where the private firm is authorized to levy charges for the services rendered within set guidelines. Such contracting is already being used in India, especially for services related to solid waste management, sanitation, development and maintenance of green or recreation spaces like parks and gardens and those related to roads and street lights. (See annexure 1 for prevalence of management contracts in Indian cities). Such contracting would be appropriate in situations of potential improvements in cost efficiency, increase in service coverage (or better targeting) or improvement in service quality.

Box 3**Contracting Out in Rajkot**

Rajkot, like many other cities in India, has contracted out a number of municipal services to private firms as well as community groups. The most prominent of these are the solid waste management, and maintenance of street lights, public toilets and gardens. Others include recreation services and afforestation. Interestingly, while this has led to some cost savings, to the extent of 5 per cent of the total revenue expenditure on service provision, the major purpose has been rationalization of labour management within the Corporation. However, this has been done without any effort at retrenchment (which would be in any case impossible given the labour laws) but by freezing new recruitment for existing vacancies. Contracting has also helped the Corporation to increase service coverage for essential services and provide extra services (like aviary, aquarium and afforestation) which may not have been possible otherwise. In case of neighbourhood gardens, maintenance has been handed over to local residents with positive results. RMC has been careful in controlling the extent of contracting out to ensure service by public department in case of service disruption. More studies are necessary to assess the effect of competition on costs and service performance.

Source: RMC (1993), as reported in Mehta (1993)

Mehta (1993) discusses in detail the important issues related to the design of such contracts. No detailed assessment of such contracts is available for India. However, it appears that the role of community in local level monitoring would be quite important in such arrangements. For community contracts, the relevance and importance of the service for the community become crucial. Bombay has seen some innovative attempts in using or enabling community groups in such partnerships. In New Bombay, the development authority, CIDCO has sought the participation of community groups or individuals for cost recovery and bill payments. This has yielded excellent results. In South Bombay, in an upper income area, a residents' association has been actively involved in developing and maintaining a local playground and park. The development and maintenance of neighbourhood parks has been also handed over to local residents in Rajkot. These examples suggest that the communities will be ready to take over services which they consider as important and not a prime responsibility of the government. Even for other services like water and street cleaning residents maybe involved through innovative efforts, as suggested by the EXNORA example in Madras.

- **Innovative Public-Private-Community Partnerships:** A large number of urban services suffer not so much from a lack of resources, as from the total apathy of the different actors involved. Thus, the users or consumers have become mere recipients and for the providers, it is a job rather than service to a client group. On the other hand, in many critical services, there is no provision being made at all in urban areas. For example, the public health services are abysmally poor in urban centres. Mehta (1993) in a study of Aligarh, a medium sized city in Uttar Pradesh, brings this out clearly for both education and health services.

In either of this situation of no service or very poor and inadequate services, far more innovative efforts are necessary which essentially enhance the role of different stakeholders in the process of service delivery. Such efforts, though still very rare have started to show the way towards improving the service delivery and ultimately the quality of life in our cities. An excellent example of such efforts is the work of the EXNORA group in Madras where they have transformed the solid waste management through involvement of the community at the neighbourhood level, without adversely affecting the role of informal sector (See Box 4).

The Government of India programme of Urban Basic Services for the Poor also envisages development of such innovative partnerships in selected demonstration cities with UNICEF support. The idea of these demo towns, as they are called, is to illustrate low cost but effective ways of meeting the needs of the disadvantaged urban population. In one of the demo towns of Uttar Pradesh, Aligarh, a very innovative project for Community Health Services has been proposed. This attempts to develop a partnership amongst the community, the local private practitioners, the public health service personnel and the NGOs in the city. It plans to use the existing arrangement of local private practitioners (the RMPs—Registered Medical Practitioners, who are essentially para medical staff) to enable the community to have easy access to immunization and other MCH services.

Box 4**Exnora for Solid Waste Management in Madras**

EXNORA stands for ideas which are EXcellent, NOvel and RADical. It started with a rather simple vision to improve the cleanliness of Madras streets, create awareness amongst the citizens and to do this with their active participation. It has generated a system of garbage collection which has retained the role of informal rag pickers, by enabling them to receive salaries which were paid by the contributions by the residents. In Madras, over 500 local EXNORAs are working with an average of 75 households each. Each has a committee which manages organization effectively. EXNORA also works in the slum areas of Madras. It has also attempted to introduce operational efficiency into the solid waste management system. The system is also sustainable as people have been willing to meet the costs of primary collection, despite this being a municipal responsibility. Even in the slum areas by combining labour inputs with financial, it has been to evolve a cost effective and self sufficient system. It has helped to generate a greater awareness about the services, amongst the citizens as well as the a more positive and enthusiastic response from the Corporation to have the garbage collection schedule followed more closely. These experiments have been also emulated by other cities in India, as for example Baroda, a large city in Western India.

Source: Menon, A. (1993).

Another such innovative partnership to improve the monitoring of local services and create more direct interactions between the municipal authorities and community groups has been undertaken in

Poona through the efforts of the Indian Express groups of newspapers. Known as the Express group of citizens, it has evoked considerable interest from both the community groups and the municipal authorities. However, initial inquiries in Poona suggest that the areas housing weaker sections have had more difficulties in effective participation. This suggests the need for better consultation and capacity building for such networks.

The main advantage of developing such partnerships is not just improved service delivery, but equally, if not more importantly, the greater and more meaningful participation of the stakeholders in the process of urban governance. As has been shown in Bhivandi, this will also lead to their greater commitment and help to control the widespread social unrest evident in Indian cities.

Box 5

Express Groups of Citizens and Poona Corporation

The newspaper group, Indian Express has recently begun a very innovative idea for enabling the citizens and the Poona Municipal Corporation (PMC) to start dialogues on provision of services and other issues. For this an Express Group of Citizens (EGC) is organized as an informal association, for every municipal ward. This includes two representatives from every residents' welfare association (or housing societies), representatives from the slum settlements and local NGOs and prominent social workers. Each EGC holds a meeting once a month, which is attended by a senior officer of the PMC and the local councillor. A lively exchange of information takes place at this meeting where the people's grievances are raised and specific actions are suggested. The actions are reviewed in the next meeting for their status. While it helps the RWAs to perform a watchdog function, it also provides an opportunity to the PMC to learn about the delivery problems as well as to put their constraints more directly to the people. While this may have begun partly out of the fear of the media represented by the newspaper (which gives these meetings a wide coverage), in the future PMC may well be able to use this forum to bring in important changes in tax and charges, if it can demonstrably improve its service delivery. Similarly, while the focus at present is only on delivery of service at the local level, it may well provide a forum to discuss major policy and planning issues.

*Source: NUA, ongoing study on Decentralization of Municipal Administration
- Based on discussions with Dr. G. Jha.*

Consultations on Public Policy and Issues

Despite the growth of NGOs in the past four decades in India, their role in influencing larger public policy is still rather new and tentative. In the past, "much of their attention and energy has been in creating alternative models, innovations, experiments and not so much in influencing the process of formulating and implementing public policies" (PRIA, 1991). However, these groups have recognized this need from their practical experiences as well as through the networking. In the former, there has been a clear recognition of the limits to their efforts in isolated communities due to the inherent limitations imposed by the larger policy frameworks.

In a representative democracy like India, the public policy maybe influenced through three different modes as discussed below. While recent literature has highlighted the role of urban social movements in influencing policy and programmes at the local level, there have been considerable constraints on the spontaneous rise of such movements in India.

- **Interactions with the Bureaucracy:** The first mode is through the regular channels of policy formulation in which the bureaucrats and officials at different levels are engaged. This necessitates opportunities for interaction created either through informal interpersonal channels of communication between the leaders of the NGOs and the officials or through more formal modes with appropriate representation of the civil society on appropriate committees and decision making forums.

This is the most prominent mode of influence as has been used by the NGOs, especially for representing the interests of the poor and the disadvantaged. However, the emphasis has largely been on the informal channels and the efforts have largely not been very systematic. Many adhoc citizens groups of concerned professionals or social workers have also often attempted to influence public policy. For example, in Ahmedabad, the Sabarmati River Front development has received attention of many such groups, including the local architects and urban planners, educational and research institutions as well as NGOs. Professional NGO groups and internationally renowned local citizens have attempted to influence plans related to local issues like water supply services, development of parks, facilities for the children etc. These efforts have, however, been only adhoc in nature and need to be incorporated in a more systematic fashion.

The provisions in the recent seventy-fourth Amendment do provide for greater opportunities for incorporating the views of NGOs in the formal governance process, through their representation in the ward and district level committees. It is in this view that the few and isolated attempts of citizens' forums and at times leading citizens to influence public policy become important.

- Interest Group Lobbying: The second mode as suggested by PRIA (1991), is through the efforts of *organized interest groups*. This maybe done through efforts to influence the political parties and the elected representatives or by creating a more favourable public opinion through public awareness. While political lobbying is a well known and accepted route in western democracies, its use in India is still not very common. However, the more powerful interest groups like the corporate sector, real estate developers, financial institutions, etc., have been more apt at lobbying in a systematic manner as they have been able to devote far greater resources on research, documentation and strategizing.

The interests of the poor and the disadvantaged in such lobbying have received far less attention. This is partly due to the fact that the poor are themselves often not organized enough to take concerted action. The NGOs who largely represent their interests, have traditionally abhorred political action and contacts. They also have not devoted adequate resources to the necessary research and documentation for clearly identifying the policy agenda for which they need to lobby. It is of course also true that for policy issues alternatives are far more complex and require more innovation and debate. This is evident from a very intense lobbying effort by the National Campaign for Housing Rights (NCHR) to influence housing policy to be more favourable to the poor. While the efforts of the NCHR at mobilizing a nationwide drive are commendable, it may be argued that it failed to identify a few critical policy decisions as being the most important. Its approach at an alternative housing policy formulation was perhaps far too ambitious and hence, in the ultimate analysis not very successful. Such efforts can draw lessons from the lobbying styles of corporate sector, where certain key essential decisions are identified and pursued rigorously.

The interest group lobbying may also be done by influencing public opinion, rather than direct political lobbying. This requires media support and other means of generating public awareness around issues of public concern. While NCHR tried to create an awareness amongst the professionals in the shelter sector, their efforts at public

awareness were rather weak. PRIA (1991) points to the rather successful public awareness campaign by the state government of Gujarat in favour of the Narmada dam, which has kept the popular opinion in Gujarat totally in sympathy with the governmental actions.

Another aspect of lobbying in the western democracies is also the very important role played by groups for protection of consumer interests. With liberalization and India's entry into global markets, consumer protection becomes important. However, this is one area which has received hardly any emphasis in most NGO efforts. Ahmedabad based Consumer Education and Research Centre is an unique organization of this type. It has so far paid limited attention to urban services. However, it is currently engaged in a major project for environmental monitoring. CERC combines lobbying and legislative action with strong research and documentation efforts.

Despite these efforts at influencing public policy, on the whole record of the NGOs and other representatives of the civil society has been rather weak in India. Further, the few efforts have been confined to public policies in the area of social sectors like education, health, child and women welfare, etc. A major lacuna has been on the more planning related issues and especially those related to resource mobilization and allocation. The NGOs have traditionally been averse to *finance*, and this has prevented any deeper insights into the above issues. This is unfortunate as often the resource allocations determine the access to services. The government on the other hand has generally tended to mystify, often unnecessarily, the entire question of resource allocation. Within the local urban government, often important investment decisions are not debated adequately even by the elected politicians, let alone by the civil society at large. This entire outlook needs to be changed and the efforts are necessary from both the sides, the NGOs and civil society to understand the resource linked issues and for the government to simplify and make the resource linked issues more transparent.

- **Legislative Channels:** A third channel of influencing the policy issues and plans for the civil society is through the legal process or by the statutory requirements, as in the town planning Acts. Under this, the public authorities are required to invite public objections through gazette notifications. Unfortunately, however, these provisions have largely been used only by the landowners directly affected by the land use plan provisions. The NGOs and other concerned about the rights

of the poor have not made any effective use of such available legal provisions.

A more effective legal channel has been the public interest litigation which has become "a popular supportive intervention to strengthen the work of NGOs in influencing implementation and development of public policy" since the early eighties. (PRIA, 1991). The public interest litigation permits the NGOs or any other socially concerned parties to approach the court for legal justice without determining the *locus standi*. PRIA (1991) highlights the three important basis for public interest litigation, namely, to ensure the implementation of a legislation or constitutional rights, to alert the state to societal injustices and lastly, to evolution of public policy itself on the basis of case laws. While the PIL has been used more in the rural issues, it presents tremendous possibilities as evident from the stay on slum evictions in Bombay and the more recent Ratlam case whereby the courts have directed the municipal government to ensure provision of sanitation facilities, regardless of the fact that the state government had usurped this function. In this regard, however, it is also necessary to review the Consumer Protection and Redressal Act (COPRA), which was recently amended but failed to include the municipal services.

On the whole, however, far greater efforts are necessary to involve the civil society and especially the groups representing the interests of the disadvantaged in the process of policy formulation and planning. More innovative techniques need to be evolved for this. Similarly, the NGOs need to also make greater efforts to build up capacities for contributing effectively to such consultations and cooperative ventures.

V. PROPAGATING PARTICIPATION: VISION AND STRATEGIES

The changing perspective on participation also implies considerable adaptation in strategizing these objectives, goals and developmental concerns. Our interpretation of participation has been rather broad based, inclusive of the social practices as emerging by various forms of articulation of the civil society's role in the developmental processes. However, we also hinted at the need to support and incorporate these practices in the context of governmental decentralisation tendencies already in evidence. This requires an operational strategy with a clearer idea of its basic orientation and based on the characteristics of the main stakeholders.

Vision

The basic premise is to move towards collaborative actions rather than the confrontationist attitudes evident in the literature on social movements. The vision also seeks to create a balance between confrontation and cooperation. The former is necessary to ensure a focus on the disadvantaged. However, without cooperation, it is not possible to move towards workable and effective strategies. The need is to strengthen the negotiating skills, especially of the disadvantaged, as these are crucial for such cooperation and partnerships. It is the realization that for all civilized societies, governance is essential. However, the forms and patterns of governance will need to change drastically in the coming years. While total anarchy is not a viable alternative, incorporating the strengths of community based initiatives will lead to a new form of anarchistic governance, which will be more participative and effective. The long term vision of this approach is that participation will not be an operational strategy but a form of governance itself.

The civil society and the citizens at large will have a far greater influence over the government and other service providers through “voice”, by enhanced lines of communication. While the differences in interests of different stakeholder will not wither away, there will be greater transparency and a better distribution of communication and negotiating skills amongst them.

Lessons from the Indian Experience

The brief review of the Indian experiences in participative government in the previous section, suggests a few important lessons. While there is certainly a need to assess and evaluate the impact of these efforts in more rigorous comparative frameworks at least three important considerations are relevant.

- **Inadequate Coverage and Development of Organisations of the Stakeholders:** The review clearly highlights the greater success or effectiveness in situations where there were strong and sustainable community organisations or these were developed. Even in the simplest form of development projects, the role of such CBOs is of great importance. Similarly, for primary NGOs, a strong grassroots base is found to be extremely important.

The review of programmes and service delivery also suggests that at the city level, it has been possible to enhance the coverage of participative practices considerably once the base of CBO's and NGOs is already in place. However, this requires considerable and intense manpower inputs on a sustained basis for an adequate time period. While the costs of these need not be very high, appropriate staff selection with both skills and aptitude for community mobilization are critical in this. Such going to scale also necessitates considerable skills of strategising and management.

Many of the approaches at community mobilization efforts have, however failed to even attempt real capacity building. Most of the efforts have concentrated on instrumental objectives of improving provision or delivery of only a specific service. While the NGOs have focussed more on capacity building, their efforts generally do not have a good reach. However, there have been a few NGO operations like the SEWA in Ahmedabad which have achieved considerable success in expansion. Amongst the governmental programmes, the only exception to this is the UBSP programme which aims to develop community structures to support the convergence process rather than mere service delivery. However, even in UBSP, greater efforts are necessary to enable communities to learn management skills for resource mobilization, making informed choices on service levels, technology and external negotiations.

The apex organisations for representing the interests of the disadvantaged groups are only now emerging on the scene. These have a tremendous role to play in moving towards participative governance. Efforts are necessary to understand their structure. Government allocations for NGO support need to be evolved more carefully to develop such organisations, rather than simply using the NGOs as an additional service delivery mechanism.

- **Changing Role of NGOs and Other Representatives of Civil Society:** Despite the growth of NGOs in India, for many the roles have still remained narrow and limited. At the same time, it is worth noting that there is a growing awareness among some of the NGOs for the need to consolidate and expand their activities. There is also a growing realisation amongst some NGOs to introduce more effective management structures, to systemize their efforts and to consolidate them with rigorous documentation. This new vision is shared by many NGOs and especially those with more professional outlooks and styles.

Thus, the image of the NGO from a social welfare voluntary organisation is fast changing to a more professionally managed organization with a social commitment towards the disadvantaged groups in society.

These changes are still nascent and require considerable support. The new apex organisations have so far been quite weak in influencing public policy and larger planning and resource allocation decisions. The general aversion of most NGOs to 'finance' has also been a hindrance in this regard.

Interestingly, however, the NGOs have a variety of organisational linkages to fulfil the different roles of grass roots base, promoting developmental activities and strategising vision, expansion and external linkages. Different patterns for their growth are also evident. There are important lessons from these which maybe emulated by public-private-community partnerships.

The emergence of other representatives of civil society, notably consumer and citizen forums are very recent. However, in the changing economic order and a changed governmental role to facilitating, their contribution as watchdogs becomes important. The opportunities presented by the seventy-fourth Constitutional Amendment need to be exploited fully for such purposes. For example, the Amendment provides for ward committees in all cities with more than 3 lakhs population. These are expected to have at least two NGOs as representative members. This will be an important way to influence the local service delivery. Similar representation at the city level is also envisaged. However, to contribute effectively to these, the NGOs themselves need to strengthen their efforts at good research and documentation as well as maintaining a strong grass roots base.

- **Inadequate Institutional Arrangements for Participative Governments:** The review of Indian experiences clearly highlights the adhoc nature of CBO-NGO participation in urban governments. While the adhoc arrangements may permit more flexibility, they also suggest less commitment. Possibilities of participation in governments will remain dependant on the interests of specific bureaucrats and their rapport with the NGO leaders. The lack of clearly detailed, though flexible institutional arrangements and responsibilities inhibit processes which can be replicable in other situations. Alternatively, where there have been attempts to formalise, as in the governmental schemes for voluntary agencies, their role is generally limited to only service

delivery or help in implementation of developmental projects.

There have been some attempts to evolve new institutional arrangements which run across sectoral ministries and departments and focus on convergence of programmes and services for the disadvantaged. At the most local community level, the needs are diverse and cut across sectoral organisations of the governments. Convergence has thus emerged as a major plank in many programmes, including the Urban Basic Services for the Poor (UBSP). Many social sector departments in different ministries including education, health, family welfare, women and child development etc. have also attempted to introduce the concept of convergence in their programmes. (Mehta 1993 and TOI, 1994).

However, in all of these it is essential to clearly detail out the appropriate institutional arrangements and responsibilities with the necessary guidelines from the higher levels in sectoral line departments. This requires considerable advocacy and coordination at each level of the government which has different programmes reaching the urban poor.

The arrangements for incorporating consultations with the stakeholders in civil society for the formulation of public policy and planning, are totally inadequate or nonexistent at present. Thus, while some attempts to generate a national debate on education policy was made, such efforts are only adhoc in nature. Especially at the local level while there is a realisation of the need for such cooperation, the efforts have so far only been initiated by citizens' forums or large apex NGOs only.

Operational Strategies

The lessons from Indian experience clearly point to the limited and fragmented operationalisation of the emerging vision of participative governance. Thus, while there is a far greater acceptance of its need, it is still essential to evolve operational strategies propagating participative governance on a much wider scale.

- **Strengthening Voice of Stakeholders:** Probably the first important task in operationalisation is to support development of organisations which can effectively become the voice of different groups in civil society. In relation to urban governance, three specific groups need to be promoted. The first are the community based organisations with a

capacity to voice the community demands and prioritize these, be the watchdogs for service delivery and mobilize community resources for local level management. The second are the different citizens and community forums who can help to monitor the services as well as contribute effectively to policy debates and planning. The third are the apex NGO organisations which will provide federating and support services for the primary NGOs and help them to strategies their expansion and external linkages.

The government role must move away from using the NGOs for mere service delivery to this larger role. The government can also play a more proactive and promotive role to develop support mechanisms for such organisations by adapting the NGO roles and organisational linkages. While the seventy-fourth Constitutional Amendment provides the opportunities for the NGOs to participate in urban governance, the facilitator and enabler role of the government requires that central and state programmes carefully support the development of such organizations without using them for mere service delivery.

The major dilemma here is the need to strengthen the “voice” of the disadvantaged so that it can sustain the competition from the better off sections in the society. The brief experience of the Express Group of citizens in Poona certainly points in this direction. Without such a focus, there will only be a further strengthening of the more organised and articulate interest groups in civil society.

- **Innovative Partnerships:** The emerging experiments in innovative partnerships need to be scaled up considerably. At present, the starting of such partnerships is dependant on initiatives of a few individuals or organisations. While this is extremely important, carefully designed incentives and a much greater effort at documentation and sharing of experiences can help to propagate the idea further.

Many of the ongoing governmental programmes will benefit tremendously by casting them in the public-private-community partnerships mode rather than the departmental delivery which is being currently used. It may be useful to draw lessons from the World Bank funded PROSANEAR project in Brazil which strives to foster technical and institutional innovation. New approaches were introduced in this project “for involving the communities in the decision to participate in the project..... and for enabling the households to make choices about service levels.”

The innovative partnerships need to capitalize the strengths of each of the partners. In this regard, it must be also recognised that the communities cannot do everything. Thus, to support community initiatives or enable them to make more informed choices on service levels, they must be able to assess the costs and benefits of all important alternatives. This requires technical support which must be provided. Similarly, the community must also have adequate information. Such innovative partnerships will also help to enhance management capacities of communities, besides improving the effectiveness and efficiency of projects and service delivery.

- **Demystifying Urban Governance:** One of the most debilitating of the constraints to participative governance is the unnecessary mystification of the process of governance. For the common citizen, this has created a total sense of apathy, bred often on ignorance. Any efforts to change this need to be encouraged. The Poona experiment by the Express Group is one such attempt where by the local citizen groups are able to monitor the local services and in the process demystify this aspect of governance.

Similar efforts are, however, also necessary for larger policy issues and important planning decisions. Wider public debates and popular consultations are necessary on key investment decisions. This, however, necessitates the governments to present the decisions in a proper perspective along with the analysis of alternatives. Such debates must involve all the stakeholders who are directly affected as well as for larger projects even larger forum of civil society. New techniques and methods need to be evolved for such consultation. The western countries have experimented with many such methods besides the interest group lobbying which is widely prevalent in United States. Thus, while the government needs to introduce these methods to open up their decision-making processes and make them more transparent, the NGOs, and especially the Apex ones, need to also develop capacity to fruitfully contribute to such debates in the future. They must also learn the techniques of lobbying as practised by the corporate sector to keep the arena of influencing political action open and accessible.

The opportunities that are provided by the seventy-fourth Constitutional Amendment, which require the municipal authorities to prepare detailed reports on the effect of pricing and financing mechanism and tracing the equity in incidence of subsidy, need to be used innovatively to introduce the long needed transparency in

governmental functions. This will gradually lead onto the demystification of urban governance.

VI. IN CONCLUSION

This paper has been an attempt to weave together the emerging conceptual understanding on the objectives and nature of participative governance and also to assess the Indian experiences in this framework.

The review of the conceptual frameworks suggests a move towards a broader approach to participation, both for more effective urban management and for empowerment of the disadvantaged which will help to pressurize the public policy for more equitable distribution of resources. While this vision is shared by many of the strong non-governmental organisations representing the civil society, and at times enlightened bureaucrats, its operationalization is still in a very nascent and experimental stage. As we move towards a more clear operational strategy, it is extremely important to learn from these experiences, preferably through more participatory evaluation techniques.

The dilemma for participative governance certainly is not regarding its relevance. In fact, it may be argued that it is inevitable, as without such participative arrangements the quality of life for a large majority cannot be improved in a sustainable manner. Further, in the newly globalising world, and the envisaged enabling role of the government, urban life is going to be characterized by a far greater degree of interdependence and linkages which transcend levels from global to community. In such a changing social scenario, participation fulfills both instrumental function of effectiveness and efficiency, as well as, and perhaps, more importantly, the psychological one of protecting identity of communities and ensuring the legitimacy of governance.

The dilemma, however, is whether those who currently derive short-term benefits from the repression of the disadvantaged and a governance process shrouded under mystery will be ready to see the long-term vision of strengthening the "voice" of all the stakeholders. Similarly, the dilemma also relates to whether the NGOs, who currently lay a claim on being the voice of the disadvantaged groups in civil society, are ready and equipped to move towards collaborative ventures, and willing to negotiate and lobby with the skills essential in the world dominated by the power of knowledge and information. All the partners in urban governance have to change, adapt and be willing to experiment in this process of *reinventing* governance itself.

 ANNEXURE 1. Management Contracts for Services in Indian Cities, 1993

Service/tasks	Cities
Sanitation and public health:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservancy: drain cleaning • Sanitation: maintenance of STP • Construction and Maintenance of toilets • Mosquito control 	Guwahati, Bangalore, Jodhpur, New Bombay, Ludhiana Faridabad, Delhi, Hubli-Dharwad, Aurangabad, Kalyan, Jaipur Cochin
Solid waste management:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garbage collection: disposal, street cleaning 	Guwahati, Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Baroda, Bangalore, Cochin Bombay, Pune, Jalandhar, Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jaipur Baroda, Kalyan
Roads and streets related:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road construction • Road maintenance • Street lightning 	Ahmedabad, Cochin Bangalore, Cochin, Jaipur Ranchi, Rajkot, Faridabad, Jodhpur
Water supply:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of water supply system 	New Bombay
Tax Collection:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collection of entry tax, other local taxes/charges • Parking lots: collection of charges • Gardens and parks, etc. • Development and Maintenance of garden parks: playgrounds/sports complex, swimming pool, planetarium, traffic islands • Social forestry, tree planting along streets 	Guwahati, New Bombay Guwahati, Pune Rajkot, Baroda, Bombay, Faridabad, Hubli-Dharwad, Bangalore, Cochin Kalyan, Pune, Amritsar, Ludhiana Jalandhar, Jaipur Baroda, Rajkot
Others:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bus terminus shelters • Ward security • Market development • Maintenance of vehicles • Land development • Maintenance of libraries etc. • Milk market 	Ranchi, Cochin Ahmedabad, Rajkot Ahmedabad, Kalyan Rajkot Faridabad Faridabad Hubli-Dharwad

SOURCE: Based on the data from Ministry of Urban Development as reported in Mehta (1993)

Abbreviations

ASAG	Ahmedabad Study Action Group
AVARD	Association of Voluntary Agencies in Rural Development
AVAS	Association for Voluntary Services and Action
BCC	Baroda Citizens' Council
BUDP	Bombay Urban Development Project
CAA	Constitution Amendment Act
CAPART	Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology
CASP PLAN	Community Aid and Sponsorship Project-Plan International
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDMA	Centre for Development-Madras
CERC	Consumer Education and Research Centre
CF	Consumer Forum
CFS	Community Based Finance System
CIDCO	City and Industrial Development Corporation
COPRA	Consumer Protection and Redressal Act
DCA	Delhi Catholic Archdiocese
DPG	Development Planning Group
EGC	Express Group of Citizens
EIUS	Environmental Improvement of Urban Slums
EXNORA	EXcellent, NOvel and RADical
FTCA	Federation of Thrift and Credit Associations
LWS	Lutheran World Service
MCH	Maternal and Child Health
NABARD	National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development
NCHR	National Campaign for Housing Rights
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIUA	National Institute of Urban Affairs
NRY	Nehru Rozgar Yojana
NSDF	National Slum Dwellers' Federation
ODA	Overseas Development Agency
ORG	Operations Research Group
PMC	Pune Municipal Corporation
PRIA	Society for Participatory Research in Asia
RMC	Rajkot Municipal Corporation
SEPUP	Self-Employment Programme for the Urban Poor
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SPARC	Society for Promotion of Area Resource Centres
STP	Sewage Treatment Plant
SWM	Solid Waste Management
TCG	Thrift and Credit Groups
UBS	Urban Basic Services
UBSP	Urban Basic Services for the Poor
UCD	Urban Community Development
UNESCO	United Nations Economic and Social Commission
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development