Original Research Paper

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A STUDY ON EFFECTIVENESS OF MUNICIPAL AND TOWN COUNCILS IN NAGALAND

Social Science

KEYWORDS: Change, sanitation, effectiveness and maintenance

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the effectiveness of municipal bodies in Nagaland. It discusses how municipal bodies can make themselves accountable for higher standards of their performance in serving its citizens. Using a sample population of 300 respondents, the writers analyze their response patterns and present it in the form of tables and figures vividly.

Introduction:

The effectiveness of municipal governance depends on a wide range of factors such as social economics and political, it also includes structures, processes and resources. Effectiveness also depends upon the skills and motivations of its political leaders, officers, staff and other stakeholders. All these factors contribute to effectiveness of every municipality. Effective municipal governance depends on how the interactions between various stakeholders are managed to produce the desired goals.

The growth and development of Municipal Councils in Nagaland is of relatively recent phenomenon. This was necessitated by the rapid growth of the towns and their relative association with the establishment of new administrative offices. Under the Naga Hills (Constitution of Town Committee) Rules, 1954, Town Committees have been established to look after urban governance in addition to other governmental agencies. Thus, the Dimapur Municipal Council (DMC), erstwhile known as Dimapur Town Committee was officially established in August, 1954. During that time the Nagaland State was administratively under the Assam State as Naga Hills District. In 1950, a Regulation called - The Assam Tribal Areas, Administration of Town Committee was passed in where and got assent of the then President of India. Under this Regulation, the Governor of Assam was authorised to constitute town committees in specified areas wherein "considered improved arrangements were necessary to deal with all the matters of Towns and Tribal Areas" (Singh, 2012: 58-59).

Objective: To examine the effectiveness of the municipal and town councils in developmental programmes in Nagaland Methodology: Both primary and secondary sources have been used. The study is based on purposive random sampling. Out of 11 (eleven) districts in Nagaland, 6 (six) districts (3 Municipal Council and 3 Towns Council) were selected purposively and a sample size of 300 respondents (50 respondents from each town) has be drawn randomly to represent the universe of the study.

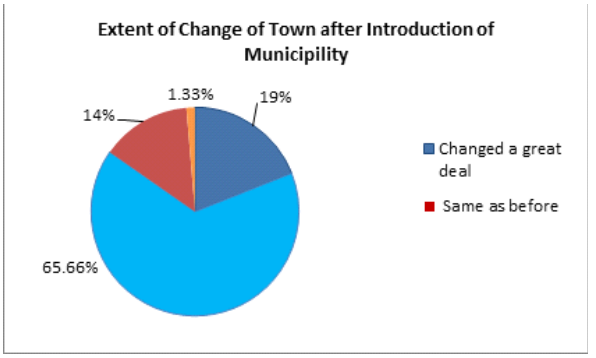
Extent of change after the introduction of municipality:

Change can be defined as "the movement away from a present state toward a future state; or generally a response to some significant thread or opportunity arising outside of the organization" (Rashid, Sambasivan and Rahman, 2003:161). Change is the law of nature. Society is subject to constant change; change occurs in all societies at all times. However, the tempo (or rate) and direction of change differs from one society to another.

Positive change of town after the introduction of municipality results from sustained efforts within management system and are often basic features of public management. The need to ensure efficient service delivery to its citizens and to be effective in meeting the needs of its constituents has caused local government to work effectively. Given below is the citizen's opinion to the positive extent of change of town after the introduction of municipality in Nagaland.

Figure 1 Respondents opinion on Extent of Change of Town after Introduction of Municipality

N=300



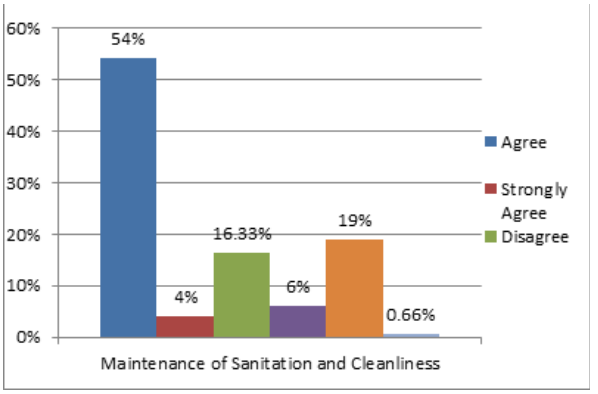
The above figure 1 shows that majority of the respondents i.e. 65.66 percent were of the opinion that change is slow. Only 19 percent of the respondents opined that town has changed a great deal, while 14 percent said that they see no change and the town has remained same as before even after the introduction of Municipality in Nagaland, 1.33 percent simply avoided the question.

Sanitation and Cleanliness:

A well maintained and clean town reflects the mentality of the people that inhabits it. More so, municipality in Nagaland is equipped with a number of scavenging staff, which includes street sweepers, laborers under sanitation inspector or in-charge. All of them along with the active co-operation and participation of the citizen is responsible for the cleanliness of towns in Nagaland. Today sanitation, cleanliness and beautification of town and preservation of natural environment have become major responsibilities of local government.

Figure 2 Respondents opinion on maintenance of sanitation and cleanliness by municipality in Nagaland

N=300



The study reveals that 54 percent of the respondents agree that there is sanitation and cleanliness in towns, 4 percent strongly agree, 16.33

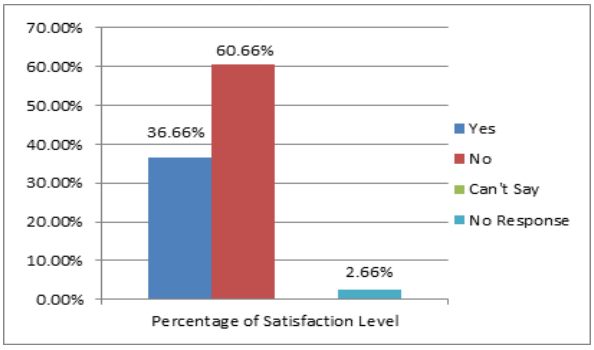
percent disagree, 6 percent strongly disagree, 19 percent Can't Say and 0.66 percent didn't give any opinion. Therefore, one can easily infer from the above figure that there is sanitation and cleanliness of towns as more than half of the respondents i.e. 54% agree that towns are clean in Nagaland.

Effectiveness of municipality:

Effectiveness relates to a system's over all ability to produce results, to create and allocate values. A system's capabilities, efficiency or effectiveness can be valued by the functions which it performs. It involves the system of mechanism to ensure that public, officials and political leaders are accountable to its citizens. Effectiveness also includes accountability and transparency in the system. Competence in making and executing appropriate policies and delivering efficient public services is essential and shows its efficiency and effectiveness.

Thus, to know the performance of the municipality in Nagaland and to evaluate its effectiveness and a need to make a study on it performance becomes inevitable.

Figure 3 Respondents opinion on level of satisfaction with effectiveness of municipality



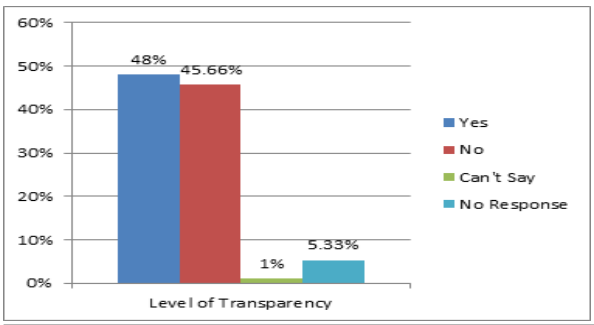
The study shows that 36.66 percent of the respondents opined that municipality is very effective on developmental activities and the respondents are satisfied with their works while 60.66 percent said that municipal is not effective on developmental activities, while 2.66 percent were silent and did not give any response.

Transparency:

Transparency in municipal governance places more power to citizens to increase democratic accountability and make easier for citizens to contribute to the local decision making process and help shape public services. Transparency in municipal governance means that governments officials acts openly with citizens knowledge of the decisions the officials are making availability of information on government policies and actions, a clear sense of organizational responsibility, and an assurance that governments are efficiently administered and free of systematic corruption are important components of transparent governance (icma.org/en/international/Services/expertise/anti_corruption-transparency?mobile=false, accessed on 11.03.2017)

Figure 4 Level of transparency of municipal government in Nagaland

N=300



The study shows that 48% of the respondents opined that there is transparency in the working of municipal and town council and 45.66% of the respondents said that there is no transparency followed by 1% under the category of can't say and 5.55% with no response.

Dedication:

The legacy of a good municipal governance rests with the dedication and commitment to work of the municipal staff and officials who have made service to the community they serve. A dedicated municipal officials/staff motivates and engage residents in innovative programmes and policies. Effectiveness of any given system depends greatly on the level of its employee's dedication to work and to the effective performance of the system's employees.

Table 1 Respondents opinion on Employees' dedication

N=300

Age Structure	*Opinion*				
	Yes	*No*	*Can't say/undecided*	*No response*	*Total*
17-26	54	48	3	8	113
27-36	51	66	2	12	131
37-46	16	13	1	2	32
47-56	4	6	1	1	12
57&Above	6	6	-	-	12
Total	**131**	**139**	**7**	**23**	**300**
Percentage	***43.66%***	***46.66%***	***2.33%***	***7.66%***	***100%***

Table 1 reveals that 43.66% of the respondents said that the employees are dedicated in their works, 46.33% opined that they are not dedicated, while 7.66% with no response. Looking at the percentage of the respondents response 43.66% yes and 46.66% no, it is difficult to infer a conclusion on employees dedication to their work as we can see there is only a negligible difference with just 2.67% difference between yes and no.

Corruption:

Corruption is a form of dishonest or unethical conduct by a person entrusted with a position of authority, often to acquire personal benefit. Government or political corruption occurs when an office holder or governmental employee acts in an official capacity for personal gain. (en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/corruption, accessed on 13.03.2017)

Table 2 Respondents opinion on Level of employees' corruption

N=300

Age structure	*Opinion*				
	Yes	*No*	*Can't say/undecided*	*No response*	*No. of response*
17-26	23	9	78	3	113
27-36	37	14	78	2	131
37-46	6	6	20	-	32
47-56	2	3	7	-	12
57&Above	2	4	6	-	12
Total	**70**	**36**	**189**	**5**	**300**
Percentage	***23.33%***	***12%***	***63%***	***1.66%***	***100%***

Table 4 shows that 23.33 percent of the respondents opined that the municipal and town councils employees are corrupted followed by 12% under the category of no, 63% (can't say/undecided) and 1.66 % (no response).

Financial position of the municipality

Finance constitutes the major component of every municipality. Without adequate finance all developmental activities will come to a standstill. According to the norm the executives in consultation with

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the chairman make municipal budget and send it to the state government for its approval but owing to the failure to conduct municipal and town council election the financial assistance provided by the government has come to a standstill and it has hampered many developmental activities to happen. In such a situation, another option for the generation of revenue apart from governmental support becomes necessary. Therefore, opinion from the public was ascertained in order to see their views and suggestion. The response pattern is given below.

Figure 5 Respondent suggestion for improvement of financial position of the municipality

N=300

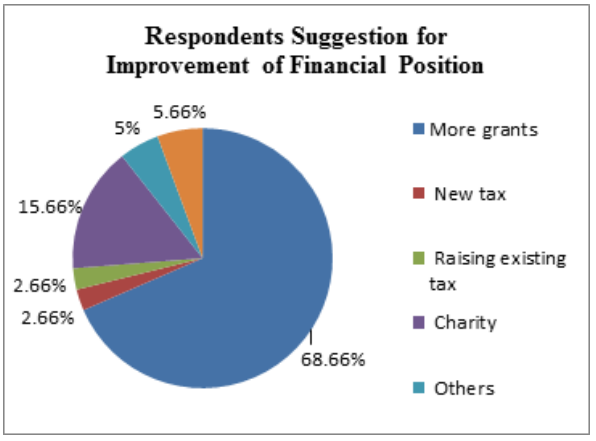

Figure 5 shows that 68.66 percent of the respondents suggest that more grants should be given from the state government to the municipal government so that there is adequate fund for the development and smooth functioning of municipality in Nagaland. 2.66 percent of the respondents opined that new tax should be imposed to enhance its financial position, again 2.66 percent of the respondents suggested raising the existing tax, 15.33 percent of the respondents suggested raising finance through charity shows, donations etc. 5 percent opined that municipality should raise funds through other methods and 5.66 percent no response.

Conclusion:

In state like Nagaland, governmental assistance is a major source in the process of developmental programmes as revenue generated through levy of taxes are mainly utilised to pay the salary of its workers and maintenance vehicles. Therefore for better management and effectiveness of municipality in Nagaland funds and grant-in-aid from the state/centre government requires attention for developmental activities. Municipal government is a part of the process of democratic de-centralisation at the grass root level, interference of the state government is unavoidable. Therefore, timely intervention by the state government and attention to solve its various issues becomes a necessity.

Suggestions:

- Kohima Municipal Council from the year 2011 gives award for best inter-ward cleanliness to encourage wards and the general public for awareness and better management of waste at the household, wards, colonies which was found to be very successful according to KMC officials. Such programme can also be implemented in towns of Nagaland where there are municipal and town council establishments. Along with all these awards given to individuals and wards, awards can also be initiated to dedicated municipal workers and labourers to create more awareness to citizen on cleanliness, sanitation and waste management.

- Proper Town planning is not implemented in Nagaland so far. In such case, it is high time to bring Experts from other states having experiences to solve problems or in locating problems and improving urban management and local area planning and governance.

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