

The necessity of urban local government institutions

[Government](#)



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Abstract

Urban local government institutions/municipalities are constituted for the maintenance and planned development of urban areas. The objective is to ensure that suitable levels of infrastructure and services are available to the citizens. In many parts of India, the quality of life in urban areas is miserable and the citizens lead a difficult life. To overcome this problem, a series of reforms have been initiated by the Indian government to strengthen local-level governance.

The main purpose of this working paper is to describe the major issues of governance at the local level and to identify some important challenges for urban local government institutions in India in the light of recent urban sector reforms. This assessment is based on data collected from six urban

centres situated in three northern/north-western states (namely Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttaranchal) of India on key urban local government characteristics - constitution and governance, duties, composition, management and finance practices, state/local-level initiatives and problems.

The findings of this study show that urban local governments in India continue to remain plagued by numerous problems, which affect their performance in the efficient discharge of their duties. These problems relate to the extent of participation and rule of law in the municipal decisionmaking process, transparency in the planning and implementation of infrastructure projects, and level of efficiency in various municipal management and finance practices. It is concluded that fresh thinking is necessary to resolve the problems confronting urban local governments in India.