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Political Determinants of Municipal Capacity:

A Study of Urban Reforms in Ahmedabad and Kanpur, India

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ABSTRACT

This thesis asks why major urban reforms in India between 2005 and 2015 were more successfully implemented in some cities than in others. It undertakes a study of the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), launched in 2005 by the Indian government, which aimed to implement governance reforms and urban infrastructure renewal across 65 Indian cities, but finished with only modest success. The implementation outcome of the mission also varied across cities. This thesis focuses on the differential implementation outcomes of the reforms in two Indian cities, Ahmedabad and Kanpur, and identifies historically constituted political capacity - located in municipal organization at the city level - as the key determinant of divergent trajectories in the JNNURM implementation. The study adapts John Kingdon's framework of 'policy windows' to explore the formation of municipal capacities and municipal organisations in the two cities. The research identifies two historical 'windows' that were crucial in the shaping of municipal organizations in Ahmedabad and Kanpur: the first episode was the colonial formation of municipal organisations; the second episode was the period of neoliberalisation. Following Kingdon, in each window, the problem, the policy and the politics have been identified and spelled out. The process of "coupling" between the problem and the policy has then been analysed by looking at the nature of politics and the principal political actors. The analysis demonstrates that while in Ahmedabad, the coupling was achieved during the two historical episodes, the problem and the policy remained unattached in the case of Kanpur. This variation led to two different architectures of municipal organisations in the two cities, resulting in different levels of municipal capacities at the time of the inauguration of the JNNURM. The thesis concludes that the specific histories of urban governance systems matter, and a policy insensitive to this, is likely to fail.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMC	:	Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation
AUDA	:	Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority
BIFR	:	Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction
BRTS	:	Bus Rapid Transit System
CSMC	:	Central and Sanctioning Committees
CDP	:	City Development Plan
CRISIL	:	Credit Rating and Information Services of India
GOI	:	Government of India
GOG	:	Government of Gujrat
DPR	:	Detailed Project Report
ADUA	:	District Development Authority
EWS	:	Economically Weaker Sections
GEMs	:	Generators of Economic Momentum
GIHED	:	Gujarat Institute of Housing and Estate Developers
IIR	:	India Infrastructure Report
JNNURM	:	Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission
KJS	:	Kanpur Jal Sansthan
KMC	:	Kanpur Municipal Corporation
MOUD	:	Ministry of Urban Development
NIUA	:	National Institute of Urban Affairs
NCPs	:	National Priority Centres
NSG	:	National Steering Group
NITR	:	Northern Indian Textile and Research Organisation
PAC	:	Public Accounts Committee

PWD	:	Public Works Department
PPP	:	Public Private Partnership
RSS	:	Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh
SPV	:	Special Purpose Vehicles
SLNA	:	State Level Nodal Agency
SLSC	:	State Level Steering Committee
SCPs	:	State Priority Centres
ULCRA	:	Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act
ULB	:	Urban Local Body
UPHB	:	Uttar Pradesh Housing Board
UPJN	:	Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam
UPSRTC	:	Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation
UPSIDC	:	Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Board
VRS	:	Voluntary Retirement Scheme

PROLOGUE

1. Introduction

The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) was essentially a mission that attempted to spatially reorient Indian cities into market and investment friendly places – into growth machines. However, the mission was not entirely successful in its objective, not uniformly across cities at any rate. This work is an attempt to explain why. It demonstrates that the unevenness was because of the municipal capacity to bring about institutional and spatial changes at the local level, something that was not uniformly available in all the cities. The implementation process of the mission in the two case study cities is a testimony to that effect. Further, this variation in municipal capacity can be explained through looking at cities as historically constituted places, which essentially means looking at the making of their municipal organisations historically. Formation of municipal capacity has to be understood in the historical context of formation of cities as a place. This work employs Kingdon's framework involving problem, policy and politics streams to understand the formation of institutions of municipal governance in a city, and explores the historical episodes of alignment, or coupling as Kingdon calls it, of the three streams (or lack thereof), to understand the formation of municipal capacity.

2. JNNURM: Indian Cities as Growth Engines

2.1 Mission Objectives

In 2005, the Indian government announced that it is going to launch a mission for urban renewal. The mission, which came to be known as Jawaharlal Nehru National

Urban Renewal Mission, was launched by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 3rd December 2005. While launching the mission, the Prime Minister observed:

> Urbanisation is a relentless process which has come to stay and which has to be factored into our development thinking… We are poised to have nearly 50 percent of India living in our cities by the earlier part of the present century and that should give you an idea of the magnitude of the development and renewal task that awaits all of us.[1]

This mission of urban renewal was to be completed in the span of seven years, but owing to non-completion of various projects across the cities, it was extended for two years, till March 2014.[2] At the time of the completion its tenure, the mission did not elicit complimentary remarks for its success. A retired civil servant who had held many high positions in the ministry of urban development, remarked 'that it has done no harm'.[3]

The launch of JNNURM was motivated by the recognition that a major thrust on urban development was required for not only new developmental goals to be achieved, but also to manage the consequences of that achievement. The vision document of the programme states, "As a result of the liberalisation policy adopted by the Government of India, it is expected that the share of urban population may increase to 40 percent by 2021. It is estimated that by the year 2011, urban areas will contribute about 65 percent of total gross domestic product." (Mission, 2010b; 3).

Under the programme, 63 cities across India were selected. It was estimated that a public investment of more than 1200 billion (Indian rupees) in urban local bodies were required over the next seven years period. The mission is divided into two sub-

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[1] http://jnnurmmis.nic.in/jnnurm_hupa/index.html
[2] http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=90058
[3] (Sivaramakrishnan, 2011 ;xxiii)

missions; one sub-mission is to focus on urban infrastructure and governance, while the other is focused on basic services for the urban poor. There is provision for fund transfer from the central government to the urban local bodies in cities to achieve these objectives. However, the transfer of funds is linked to the adoption of a set of institutional and policy reforms by the urban local bodies and the provincial state. These reform measures are primarily devised to achieve the larger objective of making the governance structures of the Indian cities more efficient and conducive to private participation in the process of urban development. According to the mission overview, one of the key objectives of the programme was the "establishment of linkages between asset creation and asset management …" (Mission, 2010a; 5). While some of these reforms were to be carried out at the level of provincial states, the rest were to be adopted at the level of urban local bodies.

The mission was unequivocal in its policy direction. If the aim was to provide funds for infrastructural renewal and provision of basic services, it was done in a way that led to changes in institutional structure and processes in the desired direction. And the desired direction was to transform cities into what is commonly known in the literature into 'growth engines' (John R Logan, 1976; John R. Logan & Molotch, 1987; John R. Logan, Molotch, & American Council of Learned Societies., 2007), i.e. making cities into nodes and sites of economic growth. The preamble of the mission (Development & India, 2006) stated:

> The JNNURM aims to encourage cities to initiate steps to bring about improvement in the existing service levels in a financially sustainable ways… It believes that in order to make cities work efficiently and equitably, it is essential to create incentives and support urban reforms at state and city levels; enhance the credit worthiness of municipalities, and integrate the poor with the service delivery system.

The primary objective of the mission was to 'create economically productive, efficient, equitable and responsive cities', which apart from other things, focused on 'linkages between asset creation and asset management' and 'accelerating the flow of investment into urban infrastructure. (Development & India, 2006). In sum, the aim was to create a city that did not just provide a physical site for global-private capital investment that the Indian economy sought to attract, but also to provide a social and institutional climate conducive for the process of investment. The mission, in a sense, was an exercise in redefining the places that these cities has been.

A look at the selected cities reveal that the picture of mission implementation was highly diversified. Despite common and equal incentives for adoption of the reforms, cities across India performed in different ways; while cities like Hyderabad and Ahmedabad successfully adopted many of the reforms, cities like Srinagar, Bhubaneswar and Kanpur were the poor performers. If we look at the 10 largest cities in India, by 2010, Chennai, Hyderabad, Surat and Ahmedabad had adopted the maximum number of reforms, while Kanpur and Delhi the least.

2.2 Research Objective

This work primarily seeks to understand the implementation of JNNURM at the city level.[4] It investigates the political determinants - understood as problems, policies and politics - that shaped the implementation of JNNURM at the local level. Given such an objective, the best course of action would be to study the implementation of JNNURM reforms in two comparable cities. Furthermore, since the idea is to also understand the political determinants, choosing two cities that are comparable in

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[4] Based on information compiled from progress reports submitted to the central authority of JNNURM by February 2010.

terms of geography, demography and economic structures would bring in methodological clarity and sharpen the focus on the issues at hand. The selection of cities would have been ideal if the two cities also belonged to the same provincial state, which would have helped neutralize the role and impact of the provincial state. However, since it was not possible to find two mission cities, which were comparable in all these ways and belonged to the same provincial state, the imperative was to find two cities that are fairly comparative in spite of not being from the same provincial state. The selection of Ahmedabad and Kanpur as cities to be studied was made keeping these considerations in mind.

By carrying out this investigation, the work seeks to explore the implementation of a top down reform process at the city level. Economic and public policy reforms in India have been a much-discussed area in both in policy and in academic research since the 1990s, when the process of economic liberalisation was initiated. Scholars have sought to explain both the successful implementation of these reforms at the national level (M. S. Ahluwalia, 2002; Kohli, 2004, 2007, 2009), and in some cases, at the regional level (Jenkins, 1999b, 2004; Sinha, 2004, 2005). However, urban reforms and their implementation success and failure have not received a similar attention, perhaps also because it is a relatively recent phenomenon. The literature on cities, which is discussed in some detail in chapter 2, has focused its attention either on the implications of the reform process on cities and city dwellers, or on changing nature of everyday politics in wake of these reforms. Explaining the success of failure of reforms, remain somewhat under researched.

It is important to note that urban reforms cannot be perceived to be economic reforms at a smaller scale. Urban reforms are distinct in the sense that it is about cities, which

are a distinct form of habitation, a form that is produced in the process of interaction of the people and the space they inhabit.

3.   Theoretical Framework

3.1   Understanding JNNURM as 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism

The JNNURM, as a national level mission, is understood as neoliberal in character in so far as its policy direction is concerned. It follows therefore, that at the city level, it is viewed as the beginnings of 'neoliberalisation process': 'in contrast to neoliberal ideology, in which market forces are assumed to operate as according to immutable laws no matter where they are unleashed', actually existing neoliberalism is embedded in 'legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices and political struggles' (Brenner and Theodore (2002;351). Further, they contend that 'neoliberal restructuring strategies cannot be understood adequately through abstract or decontextualized debates regarding the relative merits of market-based reform initiatives or the purported limits of particular forms of state policy. Instead, an understanding of actually existing neoliberalism requires an exploration of the historically specific regulatory landscapes and political settlements that prevailed within particular territories' (Brenner & Theodore, 2002)

Therefore, rather than looking at JNNURM as a set of policies based on neoliberal ideas, it makes sense to look at it as a process of neoliberalisation, which, if completed successfully at the city level, would result in 'actually existing neoliberalisms'. Further, this also means that the trajectory of the process of neoliberalisation - the spectrum of its success and failure - is contingent upon 'inherited institutional frameworks and political struggles' (Brenner & Theodore,

2002 :351). Clearly, if we have to understand this trajectory, we have to do so in the specific institutional and political contexts in which JNNURM is being implemented. Since governance reforms included in JNNURM are mostly about reforming the municipal governance, investigating institutional and political contexts at the city level seems to be the suitable choice for studying the trajectory of the mission. The next section shows that city is also the suitable category if we want to define politics in spatially rooted terms.

3.2   City as a 'Place'

Cities, as a category of habitation, are 'shaped by culture, economic interests and political practices, evolving in historical time and etched in a geographical space' (Stilwell, 2014 ;42). 'Place' is the conceptual category that captures the configurations of these processes. Place has traditionally been understood as the physical setting in which social relations are constituted (Agnew, 1987). The concept gained significance from the understanding that human behaviour can be understood only in terms of its embeddedness in its concrete context.

The idea of place as a physical context in which political action takes place is not new. The notion that 'space' is a container of social action, has been around for some time. However, place as an active element of politics is of relatively recent provenance. But in the way the concept has evolved since 1970s, both in geography and sociology, dismisses this one-dimensional relationship between the concept of natural space and the social and political activities that happen inside it. Following Lefevbre's (1991) pioneering work in the field, first published in 1973, both geographers and sociologists began to recognize the category of 'place as process'. It

is through a plethora of socio-political processes through which place is produced. This led to a conceptualisation of 'place' not only in terms of an *objective macro order* ('location'), but also as the *social world* ('locale'), and a *subjective territorial identity* ('sense of place') wherein (Agnew, 1987). City as a habitation is a place in all three senses of the term.

Reconfiguring a place would ordinarily entail bringing about changes in its all three senses. But the problem is that place as understood above is not a passive recipient of any such intervention, but participates in the process actively and eventually shape the outcome. If the reconfiguration is aimed at making the place amenable to flow of capital - as is the case with JNNURM - then an institutional framework appropriate for such a purpose has to be created (Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 2006). But the creation of an institutional framework is a process not outside of the dynamic of the place, but very much inside it. Institutions - understood as rules and norms governing individual behavior (North, 1990) - are intrinsic to space understood in its relational sense, or what is understood as a 'sense of place'. Simply put, the 'idea' of a change (in rules and norms) has no way of getting around the politics of a place (Agnew, 1987).

3.3 Determinants of Political Outcome: Problem, Policy, Politics

The question that follows then is what happens when changes in institutional framework is attempted? In order to answer this question, this research takes a cue from the work of John Kingdon, who, in his book *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policy* asks the question as to when and how an issue becomes important enough for the policy makers to be considered on the top on their agenda. What are the conditions

that enable an issue or a condition to be treated like a 'problem'? In what condition then that 'problem' become important enough on the policy agenda worth attempting a solution? Fundamentally, Kingdon asks what are the key ingredients of a successful decision-making process? What are the ingredients to a successful policy implementation? A famous Victor Hugo quote states "greater than the tread of mighty armies is an idea whose time has come." John Kingdon asks, "how does an idea's time come?" in other words, what happens that makes an idea powerful enough to be translated into a policy? What happens that makes an idea the organizing principle behind institutions? It is also this last aspect of his framework that makes it relevant to understand urban governance changes that has been tried through a slew of majors, but especially through JNNURM.

In order to understand the processes that an idea goes through in its journey of being institutionalised, Kingdon conceives three process streams flowing through the system- streams of problem, policies and politics. They are largely independent of one another, and each develops according to their own dynamics and rules. But at some critical junctures the three streams are joined and the greatest policy changes grow out of that coupling of problem, policy proposals, and politics. Problems are brought to the attention of people in and around government by systematic indicators, by focusing events like crises and disasters, or by feedback from operation of current programmes. People define condition as problems by comparing current conditions with their values concerning more ideal states of affairs. The generation of policy proposal, the subject of chapter 6, resembles a process of biological natural selection. Many ideas are possible in principle, and float around in a "policy primeval soup" in which specialists try out their ideas in a variety of ways – bill introductions, speeches,

testimony, papers, and conversations. Proposals are floated, come into contact with each other, are revised and combined with one another and floated again. But the proposals that survive to the status of serious consideration meet several criteria, including their technical feasibility, their fit with dominant values and the current national mood, their budgetary workability, and the political support or opposition they might experience.

The political stream is composed of such factors as swings of national mood, administration and legislative turnover, and interest group pressure campaigns. Potential agenda items that are congruent with the current national mood, enjoy interest group support or lack organized opposition, and fit the orientations of the prevailing legislative coalitions or current administration are more likely to rise to agenda prominence than items that do not meet such conditions. The combination of perceived national mood and turnover of elected officials particularly affects agendas, while the balance of organized forces is more likely to affect the alternatives considered.
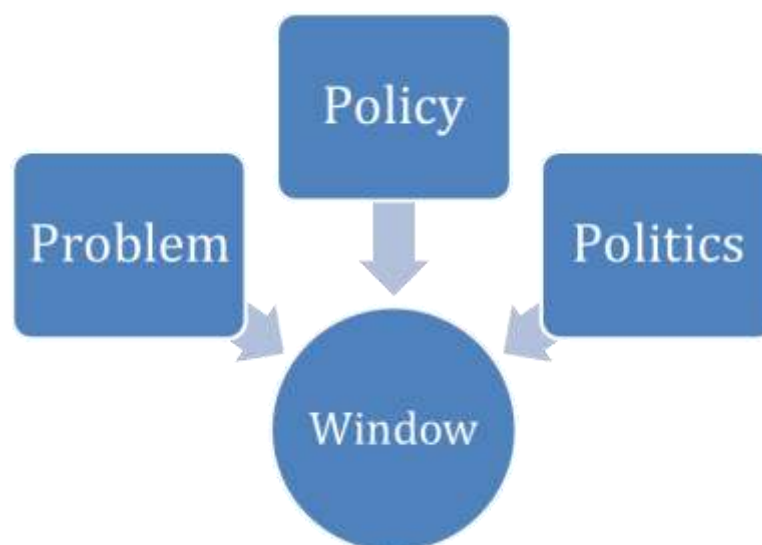
Figure 1: Problem, Policy and Politics Streams

The Window

There are certain critical times when separate streams of problems, policies and politics come together. A solution to the problem is identified as a policy and the political stream is conducive to solving that problem and is also keen on that particular policy prescription. Kingdon calls this this process 'coupling'. The coupling is most likely when policy windows - opportunities for pushing pet proposals or conceptions of problems - are open. 'Windows' are open either by the appearance of compelling problems or by happenings in the political stream. Thus agendas are set by problems or politics, an alternative is generated in the policy stream. Policy entrepreneurs - people who are willing to invest their resources in pushing their pet proposals or problems - are responsible not only for prompting important people to pay attention, but also for coupling solutions to problems and for coupling both problems and solutions to politics. While governmental agendas are set in the problems or political streams, the chances of an item rising on a decision agenda – a list of items up for actual action - are enhanced if all three streams are coupled together. Significant movement, in other words, is much more likely if problems, policy proposals and politics are all coupled into a package.

The Policy Entrepreneurs

 The policy entrepreneurs play a crucial role in this process of coupling. Policy entrepreneurs are the people who are willing to invest time, energy, resources and their skill into making sure that a coupling takes place. The location of such entrepreneurs can be in any stream, they can be in or outside of the government, or can be in elected or appointed positions. Their defining characteristic is their willingness to invest in the process of coupling, most of the times, with a hope for a

future return (Kingdon, 2014; 122). Nature of the expected return would be according to their location in the system and the kind of investment they are putting in. An elected representative, for example, would invest his political capital in expectation of promoting his political career. A policy expert would invest because she wants her policy prescription accepted and implemented.

3.4 'Place' as a Historically Contingent Process

The framework developed by Kingdon is useful in explaining the making of the circumstances in which a problem becomes a priority in a political stream, and subsequently a policy solution becomes acceptable and is implemented. However, subtle adjustments are required in this schema, keeping in view that this work is about changes in institutional framework in a spatial context. Let us now briefly return to our discussion on 'space', to argue that space in its relational sense is impossible to understand unless seen through what Harvey calls time-space or 'spatiotemporality' (Harvey, 2004). Pred (1984) uses the term 'time geography' to characterise a similar conceptualization in his understanding of place as a 'historically contingent process'.

Pred (1984;279) writes:

> The assemblage of buildings, land use patterns, the arteries of communication that constitute place, as a visible scene can not emerge fully formed out of nothingness and stop… Place in other words, always involves an appropriation and transformation of space and nature that is inseparable from reproduction and transformation of society in time and space. As such, place is not only what is fleetingly observed as a landscape, a locale, setting for activity and social interaction. *It also is what takes place ceaselessly what contributes to history in a specific context through the creation and utilization of a physical setting.* (Emphasis added)

Nothing in this historical nature of place making is more evident than the way institutional framework of urban governance takes shape in a city. Its relationship with space is clear in the sense that urban governance is essentially a set of rules and motivations that shape the process of place making. But as Pred argues, and as will be demonstrated in this research, time is no less important a factor in the process of place making in general, and formation of institutions of urban governance in particular. In sum, in the process of place making, history matters.

In view of this insight, while making use of the basic formulation of Kingdon's schema of interactions between problem, policy and politics, this research makes the following subtle adjustments to it

1. Since this work is not about a single event of policymaking in a single political system, the notion of 'window' has accordingly been expanded in the context of this work. Window here does not indicate a coupling of the three streams in the context of a singular policy proposal in a short span of time, instead, it is the process of formation of municipal governance, it is used in a relatively *longue duree* sense.

2. The terms 'problem' and 'policy' have also been used with a similar flexibility. 'Problem' and 'policy' here do not necessarily mean a short term problem with an instant solution. The term policy has also been used in a more generic sense to mean policy direction.

The discussion in the next section would help explain these departures more clearly.

4.   Making of Municipal Organisations

This work focuses its attention on two historical episodes/windows in Ahmedabad and Kanpur, in order to understand the formation of municipal capacities in these two cities. The two episodes were significant because these were instances of the cities grappling with problems pertaining to spatial configuration. The way institutions and organisations of municipal governance evolved in the two cities, in turn had a deep impact on their municipal capacity in modern times. This work identifies the following two episodes as 'windows' for the making of municipal organisation and municipal capacities of the two cities.

1.   Formation of post-/colonial municipal governance.

2.   Formation of post-liberalisation municipal governance.

Table 1: Critical Windows in Ahmedabad and Kanpur

Windows	Ahmedabad	Kanpur
Formation of colonial municipal governance [Early 20th Century onwards]	Problem: Urban Congestion Policy: Formation of land use law Politics: Congress leadership in local urban politics Outcome: Coherent municipal organization	Problem: Urban Congestion Policy: Improvement Trust Politics: European vs Indigenous/ Factional Politics Outcome: Multiplicity of municipal organization
Formation of post liberalisation municipal governance [1990s onwards]	Problem: Loss of Economic Activity following deindustrialisation Policy: Neoliberalisation Politics: Based on Hindu Nationalist Identity Outcome: Relative success of JNNURM	Problem: Loss of Economic Activity following deindustrialisation Policy: Attempted Neoliberalisation Politics: Based on Caste Identity Outcome: Relative failure of JNNURM

4.1 Making of the post-/colonial municipal governance:

The first decades of 20th century was critical for the formation of municipal organizations of Ahmedabad and Kanpur. These decades were significant for all the three streams of problem, policy and politics in the two cities. The ways in which the three streams got coupled had lasting impact on the systems of municipal governance of the two cities.

Problem

By the beginning of the 20th Century, following establishment of industries, Ahmedabad expanded significantly around what used to be the medieval walled city. The inception of colonial municipal structure in the city triggered a process, which in effect, involved a redefinition of the "meaning" of the city. This was most apparent in the way the colonial exigencies of city making, which were primarily based on segregating military and other European city dwellers for health and safety reasons, rendered the way the city was traditionally structured "a problem.". This was also associated with the spatial implications of the transition of the city from a trading to an industrial centre since the mid19[th] century[5]. The city that was organized around community based trading was gradually transforming into a centre of industrial production with a burgeoning industrial working class. This transition had its spatial implications, which required a new set of governance solutions.

By the turn of the century, the situation in Kanpur was no different in terms of the expansion of the city. As industry and trade of the city expanded, more people came into the city, leading to unplanned and unregulated establishment of colonies and localities. As other localities rapidly dotted the city landscape, the problem was

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[5] Even as the management and financial practices in the newly formed industrial sector was still shaped by the traditional community based practices. See (Gazetteer, 1879)

understood and articulated in terms of 'congestion', and was considered to be way beyond the capacity of the Municipal Board to solve. A Committee appointed to look into the issue observed: "there are far too many houses, and far too many people in those houses. Thoroughfares so narrow that a man has to turn sideways to pass through them, are common. In the dark evil smelling lanes, the passage of light and air is impeded by projecting balconies and upper storeys. The average population per acre throughout the city area is 51.4, in *Butcherkhana Khurd* and in *Cooley Bazaar* (two localities), it actually reaches 532 and 562."[6]

Policy

In Ahmedabad, as the problem was framed in two different spheres, we see that the policy intervention also occurred at two levels. In the domain of traditional ways of life versus modern-colonial ways of city making, the policy response came in the form of introduction of modern systems of urban services delivery. As a response to the second framing of the problem as 'congestion and over population', the policy response came in the form of town planning schemes.

Similarly in Kanpur, to deal with congestion problem, the Municipal Board set up an Improvement Trust and for opening up of the overcrowded parts of Kanpur. The Board made a grant of approximately 333 thousand rupees to the trust between 1909 and 1918. The trust carried out a couple of decongestion projects, including the construction of a road and an over bridge during this period. But the efforts proved to be utterly insufficient in comparison to the problem at hand. The Cawnpore Expansion Committee, founded in 1913, was another such committee in this series.

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[6] Cawnpore Expansion Committee Report, quoted in (Singh, 1990 ;9-23)

The government resolution in setting up the committee observed that there was an urgent demand "for sites for detached and healthy houses for well to do Indians. Areas are also required for industrial settlements, model villages and similar objects. The Civil Lines are equally cramped. The Railways arrangements at Cawnpore are complicated and are not regulated by a well defined scheme, and the constant growth of sidings is becoming a serious menace to road traffic."[7] The committee included the elected member of the chairman of the Municipal Board, but he was only a member among several others from the government. This suggested the decline of the Municipal Board as an organisation in the process of the city governance.

Politics

The local politics of Ahmedabad, which witnessed a significant shift in terms of not only its protagonists but also its overall expanding contours between the first and the second event. The politics of the city, in its modern, representative form, was still at a nascent stage, in the 1880s and 1890s when proposals for reforms in urban service delivery were introduced. Therefore, the local political process was not able to entirely influence the policy outcome in this instance. However, by the time the issues of congestion and town planning were being discussed in the 1910s and 1920s, the contours of local politics had become sufficiently capable of influencing the policy outcome. In this section, we explore the politics around the two events that unfolded and the ways in which they impacted the policy outcome. We also look at the larger political trends of the times that perhaps explain this impact.

In Kanpur, there were three important strands in contemporary politics that had bearings on the way problem and policy came together. Firstly, local politics was

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[7] Government Resolution about Cawnpore Expansion Committee, quoted in (Joshi, 2003)

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divided along the lines of European and Indian interests, especially in the first three decades of the century. Secondly, trade union politics of the industrial working class, especially since the 1930s, became a site of contest between the radical communists and the Congress Party supported leadership. Thirdly, there were competing factions within the Congress Party itself, along caste and religious lines.

This multiplicity of political fautlines at the local level ensured that the spatial regulation of Kanpur could never take the centre stage of political discourse. The policy that could have potentially solved the spatial problem, which was articulated as 'congestion, often got caught in these political rivalries.

4.2 Making of Post Liberalisation Municipal Governance

Problem

By the 1990s, it was increasingly clear that India's urban centres - its metropolitan and provincial cities - had a problem. The roots of this problem were mainly two folds. The first root was the force of urbanisation, which meant that more and more people were migrating to the urban centres from the rural areas, looking for better employment and life prospects (I. J. Ahluwalia, Kanbur, & Mohanty, 2014; Mohanty, 2014). Many observers and practitioners believed that urbanisation would 'perhaps be the single most important policy concern for national, provincial and local governments' (Mohanty, 2014 ;09) in developing countries. The fact that India was urbanising meant that the existing urban centres had to cope with the challenges of provision of infrastructure and basic urban amenities. That India's major urban centres required special attention if they were to cater to the demands being put to them was underlined for the first time The National Commission on Urbanisation,

which was set up in 1985, recommended direct special funds for the governance of metropolitan cities and formation of a national advisory body for their governance. However, the recommendations did not find favours and were never implemented (Sivaramakrishnan, 2011 ;08-09).

The second root of the problem was the transformative changes that India was undergoing in its economic policy direction. The year 1991 witnessed a concerted effort on part of the Indian state to realign the Indian economy from one based on protectionist policies to one integrated to global markets and open to private capital. A slew of policy changes in industrial, trade and fiscal realms abolished what had pejoratively come to be known as "License-Quota Raj" (Jenkins, 1999a; McCartney, 2010). In this new policy environment, Indian cities were to be geared to play a fundamentally new role of 'growth machines'. The cities were to be the nodes of global-private capital investments and sites of new economic activities, predominantly in the service and trade sectors. A closer look at the objectives and orientation of JNNURM and many other sporadic government initiatives preceding that (discussed in further detail in Chapter 2) does not leave any doubts about this new intended role for the city.

At least few of the traditional urban centres, which had been hubs of manufacturing, were faced with an added problem. Many such cities, like Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Kanpur, had been centres of textile industry, which witnessed a sharp decline, especially in 1980s (Oberoi, 2017; RoyChowdhury, 1995). This led to a sharp decline in economic activities and consequently employment opportunities. At a more fundamental level, with the decline of textile industry, the economic logic that governed the spatial and institutional configuration of the cities also could stand no longer.

Policy

The decline in textile industry in Ahmedabad and Kanpur more or less coincided with opening up of the Indian economy in the 1990s. This also meant a turnaround in urban policy. As pointed out earlier, cities were to play the role of growth engines – the nodes that attracted capital investment - which in turn would trigger economic activities. Throughout the 1990s, even though there was an adhocism in urban policy, this is the direction that the policy was pushing the cities towards (Sivaramakrishnan, 2011). JNNURM was an attempt to put an end to the policy adhocism and implement a concerted and a comprehensive all India level policy direction.

But Kanpur was impacted by this policy adhocism right till the advent of JNNURM, while Ahmedabad was able to sense the direction that the cities were to take in their pursuit of economic revitalisation. Ahmedabad was also able to sense that the relationshp between economic activities and spatial and institutional configurations stand inverted in a capital driven liberalised economy- that the former no longer dictated the latter. Now it was the spatial and institutional configuration that may or may not remain conducive to capital flow and consequently economic activities in the city. Since the 1990s, even before the launch of JNNURM, Ahmedabad has pursued an urban policy informed by this inverted relationship. It was in this context that Ahmedabad began to reorganise itself instionally and spatially. A good example of the former was changes that were brought in the municipal organisation and rules to make it conducive to capital flow, and the subsequent spatial reorientation and expansion that took place.

Politics

The decline of textile industry in Ahmedabad in 1980s coincided with the emergence of politics based on *Hindutva* in the city and in Gujarat. While *Hindutva* based politics of the BJP and the RSS[8] had a strong spatial dimension to it right since the 1980s, beginning of the Modi[9] era in Gujarat witnessed a marriage of the discourses of Hindutva and capital-led development. Spatial reconfiguration was the site where this marriage was most evident (Desai, 14 April 2006). Politics based on these twin discourses was conducive for spatial and institutional reconfiguration of the city to remain on political agenda. This ensured the formation of a system of municipal governance with the capacity to implement JNNURM with relative ease and success.

In Kanpur and Uttar Pradesh on the other hand, the political discourse revolved more along the class (Chakrabarti, 2007) and caste (Pai & Jawaharlal Nehru University. Centre for Political Studies, 2007) lines during 1980s and 1990s. In the context of class and caste, it was rare that politics was spatially expressed; that urban development took the centre stage of the political agenda. And even when politics was expressed spatially, like during the tenure of the Dalit Chief Minister *Mayawati*, it did not take the shape of a municipal organisation with capacity for spatial transformation.

5. Conclusion

This research investigates the uneven implementation process of JNNURM in the Indian cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur. JNNURM was a national mission of urban reforms that aimed at institutional and spatial changes in 63 Indian cities and towns

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[8] Bhartiya Janata Party and Rastriya Swayamsewak Sangh respectively.
[9] The incumbent Prime Minister of India, who governed Gujarat as the Chief Minister from 2002 to 2014.

with the objective of making them capital investment friendly places. The mission was relatively successful in some cities but unsuccessful in others. This research looks at two cities - one in which it was a relative success, and the other in which it was not a success - to understand the reasons behind the differential success of the mission. This research draws its significance from two factors: one, even as there are explanations for policy reform performance at the national, and in few cases, regional level, there is no such explanation available for policy reform attempts at the city level. Two, even if the content of urban reforms (JNNURM) share their policy direction with rest of the reform process to the extent that the idea is to make national, regional and city economies capital friendly, it is likely, as this work demonstrates, that the implementation processes would be different when a reform is implemented in a city. That is so because city as a place is distinct from regional or national economies. It is a place that is an outcome of interaction of people with natural spaces. It is also a place that is an outcome of historical processes that shaped such interactions. In sum, politics in a city is rooted both in space and history.

Institutionally, the determinants of space and history get expressed in the structure of urban governance. On the one hand, this structure shapes the interaction between space and people - the interaction that produces the place -, that is the city. On the other hand, this structure is historically shaped by the nature of interaction between people and space. This research envisages JNNURM as a policy that aimed to change the structure that shapes the interaction between people and spaces. In order to understand the successes and failures in this endeavour, this research explores the historical nature of interaction between people and spaces. This exploration is done taking a cue from John Kingdon's work that elaborates on opportunity windows

arising in successful interactions between problem, policy and politics streams. Two such windows have been identified as the formation of post-colonial municipal governance and post- liberalisation governance structures. The research finds that space and place making were important factors in the politics of Ahmedabad in both instances, which helped the city align the problem with the policy. In Kanpur, on the other hand, politics was articulated more in terms of class and caste identities, which never allowed the problems of urban space making to come to the forefront.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: WHY URBAN REFORM INITIATIVES FAIL?

1.1 Introduction

In the policy discourses in India since the 1990s, cities have come to occupy a central position. The new economic policy model, introduced during this period, emphasised the role of private and global investment and market practices in economic activities of the country. This was the period in which the country that famously resided in its villages, began to look at cities as the drivers of its economic future. Even as economic policy at the national level was gradually liberalised, tentatively in the 1980s but concertedly in the 1990s (Kohli 2009), the central role that the cities were to play in the process was pronounced gradually(Mohanty 2014). The Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) - the urban reform and regeneration mission that this work focuses on - was a culmination of this recognition (Sivaramakrishnan 2011).

However, the attempts to reform cities have not delivered the desired results (Sivaramakrishnan 2011, Kamath and Zacharah 2015). The uneven performance of the mission across cities is a significant aspect of this failure, because the evidence shows that the richer local bodies were able to utilise more funds than their relatively poorer counterparts. Even as a proper and comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the mission, the extent of its failure or success and causes behind these is still not in sight (Kamath and Zacharah 2015), the new, re-christened mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation- AMRUT – was already launched in 2015

(AMRUT 2015). This research seeks to explore the political determinants of success and failure located at the city level to analyse the performance of the JNNURM.

This chapter has two main objectives, and following this section, is accordingly divided in two parts. *First,* it briefly spells out the main research problem, and introduces the key concepts that are employed in the process of dealing with it. *Second*, the chapter then introduces the structure of this work by summarising the themes presented and arguments made in the chapters that follow.

1.2 Summary of the Research Objective and Conceptual Framework

The main objective of this research is to explore the political determinants that shaped the JNNURM implementation process at the city level, which in turn, led to differential degrees of implementation. This section briefly spells out the conceptual and policy contexts that provide relevance to this exploration. It then defines the contours of the conceptual framework and the key terms and concepts that are employed in the process of this exploration.

As discussed in detail in section 2.2, the JNNURM, was the most concerted and comprehensive urban reform and renewal programme ever launched by the Indian government. In its 7 Years span, the programme aimed to bring about governance reforms and to upgrade infrastructure in 63 Indian cities, which would potentially make them attractive destinations for capital investment.

By the end of the programme, it was clear that its performance had been underwhelming. The harshest report card came from the Comptroller and Auditor

General of India (CAG), which in its report, declared the programme a 'failure' (Ramchandran 01 December 2012). The report stated further:

> Other than execution of housing and urban infrastructure, it (the mission) was also intended to strengthen the urban local bodies (ULBs)… However, in the selected states/UTs (Union Territories), we observed that all the mandatory and optional reforms were not implemented as per commitments made in the Memorandum of Agreement. Thus the objective of bringing about reforms in institutional, financial and governance structures of the ULBs to make them efficient, accountable and transparent could not be achieved as had been envisaged.[1]

Similarly there were other evaluations that came up with similar assessments about the mission (Sivaramakrishnan 2011, Staff 2012). However this underwhelming report card also had an element of diversity. Not all mission cities had failed uniformly. In a submission to the Public Accounts Committee of the Indian Parliament, the Ministry of Urban Development reported that cities in some states have been more successful and faster in implementing the schemes under the mission. The reasons for others not being so successful were given as 'unavailability of land, capacity of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to prepare Detailed Project Reports (DPR) and slow allocation of work to contractors' (Committee 2015).

This research finds conceptual and policy significance in this diversity of the implementation outcome. The diversity of the implementation outcomes brings the conditions of the cities, where the mission was being implemented, into sharper focus

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[1] Quoted in Ramchandran, S. K. (01 December 2012). Urban Renewal Mission a Failure: CAG. The Hindu. Chenna.

compared to the factors located, for example, in mission design, or the central level execution process. The diversity makes it safe to conclude that the factors that determined the trajectories of implementation were located at the site of implementation – within the cities. The factors located at the level of provincial states could have potentially been crucial too, but because of two reasons, this work focusses at the city rather than at the provincial level. *First*, the reform processes have already been analysed in different spheres that fall under the domain of the provincial states (Jenkins 1999, Jenkins 2004, Sinha 2005, Priyam 2015). *Second*, as this work demonstrates in section 2.4.4, there is an element of distinctiveness about urban reforms because the sphere of the 'urban' is analytically distinct from other policy spheres. Cities are historically constituted places created through interactions between the people and the physical spaces they inhabit (Pred 1984). The governance structures and processes, which the JNNURM attempted to change, are the institutional manifestations of these historical interactions. This element of distinctiveness of urban reforms necessitated that the study be focussed on cities rather than at the provincial level. Methodologically, two cities in the same provincial state would have helped the work bring out the role of city specific factors in determining the path of reform process more decisively, but since there were no comparable cities in the same province, Ahmedabad and Kanpur were selected as cases because of their comparability on other accounts (Section 2.5.1). More importantly, this research finds that the role of the provincial state in the municipal governance of a city, at least in parts, has been determined by the nature of municipal structures and processes.

1.2.1 Urban Reforms as Neoliberalisation, City as a Historically Contingent Place

Both in terms of its goal, and the processes it aimed to introduce in city governance systems, the JNNURM was guided by neoliberal ideas (Banerjee-Guha 2009, Kundu 2014). The goals of making cities attractive destinations for capital, and 'growth engines', and introducing market principles into the structures and processes of urban governance, established the JNNURM as a reform initiative informed by neoliberal ideas (Section 2.2.1). In this sense, the mission aimed to establish at the city level what Brenner and Theodore (2002) referred to as 'actually existing neoliberalism' (Section 2.4.1). It is in this context that this research viewed the JNNURM, in particular, and the urban reform process since the period of economic liberalisation in general, as a process of 'neoliberalisation'. The objective of establishing 'actually existing neoliberalism' through the process of 'neoliberalisation' could not be achieved without assigning a neo-liberal meaning to the cities. This is so because urban governance processes are, apart from other things, also mechanisms whereby people interact with the physical space they inhabit. Such mechanisms are a manifestation and institutionalisation of the ways in which people have historically interacted with their spaces. In sum, the governance structures and processes are embedded in, and a manifestation of, historically produced urban meaning (Pred 1984).

This insight has two implications for understanding the urban reform process. *First,* urban reforms cannot merely be understood as changes in governmental procedures at the city level in isolation of the 'city as a place'. *Second,* the 'city as a place' is definitely about the interactions between people with their physical space, but it is as much about the temporal character of that interaction. In sum, the city is as much a historical pattern of habitation as it is a geographical pattern.

The urban reform - neoliberalisation - in this sense can be understood as a process that aims to assign a neoliberal meaning to the cities, attempting to replace their historically acquired existing meanings. The nature of existing governance structures and processes, in this sense, represents the existing urban meaning, whereas the reform initiative represents the neoliberal meaning.

1.2.2 Conceptualising Municipal Organisation, Municipal Capacity

This work expresses the system of urban governance at the city level as *municipal organisation*. The domain of urban governance includes the structures and processes involved with facilitating and regulating people's interactions with their inhabited physical space. The facilitation aspect is reflected most explicitly in systems of urban services delivery, such as water, sewerage and public transportation. The regulatory aspect is reflected in rules and regulations, such as those about urban planning, land use and housing construction. The organisational architecture of these systems varies from city to city. For example, in Ahmedabad, the municipal organisation includes two agencies - the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) and the Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority (AUDA) - carrying out the urban functions spelled out above, while in Kanpur municipal organisation includes multiple agencies carrying out these functions. This research demonstrates that this variation is not without analytical significance. The JNNURM aimed to refashion the municipal organisation with two key objectives: *first* with its emphasis on the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act the mission aimed to provide political and functional autonomy to the municipal organisation from the provincial and central levels of the government. *Second,* the mission aimed to introduce market based principles in the structures and processes of the municipal organisation (Section 2.2.1).

This research conceptualises *municipal capacity* as the effectiveness of the municipal organisation in facilitating and regulating people's interaction with the physical space they inhabit. It is the capacity to provide urban services such as water, sewerage and public transportation, as well as the functions of urban planning. The municipal capacity depends, apart from other things, on the financial robustness, administrative strength and efficiency and political orientation. Consequently, municipal capacity can be observed in characteristics such as the financial and administrative record of the municipal organisation. It can also be observed by assessing the state of urban service delivery and planning in a city. Chapter 3 demonstrates that the path of JNNURM implementation was determined by the existing municipal capacity at the city level. Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate the historical political processes that determined the architecture of the municipal organisation. Chapter 6 demonstrates the relationship between the form and architecture of the municipal organisation and the municipal capacity.

1.2.3   Making of Municipal Organisation: Problem, Policy, Politics

This work employs the framework developed by Kingdon (2014) to explore the formation of municipal organisation and the relationship of its architecture with the making of municipal capacity. Chapter 2 discusses the Kingdonian framework in detail but to sum it up, according to Kingdon, an idea getting translated into policy implementation depends on the windows that present opportunity for successful alignment of three streams - problem, policy and politics. When a problem is recognised by the political system as urgent, the solutions to that problem are offered in the form of 'policy'. However, it is more often than not contingent upon the stream

of politics. If politics is amenable to the 'coupling' of the problem with the policy, the policy is implemented successfully. Entrepreneurs, who can be located in the policy or the politics stream, play a crucial role in the process of 'coupling'.

This work employs this framework with certain adjustments (explained in section 2.4.3) and identifies two historical windows in the trajectories of formation of municipal organisations in Ahmedabad and Kanpur that determined their organisational architecture and municipal capacity. The first 'window' is located in the early 20th Century while the second 'window' is located in the last decades of the 20th Century. The first window has been identified as the making of (post-) colonial municipal organisation (Chapters 4 and 5), while the other window has been identified as the making of municipal organisation and capacity in the era of liberalisation (Chapter 6).

1.3   The Dissertation Road Map

This work is divided into seven chapters. The present Chapter 1 has introduced the JNNURM and explained it conceptually as a neolibralisation initiative that implictly aimed to assign neoliberal meaning to the cities. It then presented cities as historical contingent places with their own specific meanings. The institutional mutation that the JNNURM aimed at has to be understood as the mutation of the existing and the intended meanings of the city. The municipal organisations are the sites where this mutation has taken place. Existing municipal organisations are also understood as a manifestation of the existing meaning. The diversity of the mutation, manifested in diversity in the implementation outcome of JNNURM, therefore is determined by the municipal organisation and municipal capacity. The work employs a Kingdonian

framework, based on problem, policy and politics streams, to understand the making of municipal organisations and capacities in the two cities.

Chapter 2 further elaborates the conceptual framework of this work. In order to do so, the chapter primarily focuses on three tasks: *first* the main contours of the JNNURM are briefly presented and the mission is located in the context of the urban policy direction of the Indian government since the inception of the liberalisation era. This discussion shows that at the time of its implementation the JNNURM was the latest, largest and most concerted urban reform initiative in a long series of urban reform programmes launched by the Indian government, especially since the 1980s. An assessment of the implementation of the JNNURM shows that the mission was only moderately successful in achieving its stated objectives. Further, even this moderate success is not spread out evenly across cities; there are significant variation in the way the mission performed in different cities. The research identifies this differential success at the local level as the main focus of its analysis. This focus gains conceptual significance on the basis of an overview of literature on policy reforms in general, and urban reforms in particular. This overview shows that the relationship between local city level politics, and success or failure of external attempts at urban renewal and reform has previously been under-explored. With the research problem identified, the *second* task of the chapter is to spell out the analytical design that informs the work as it goes about exploring the relationship between local politics and the trajectory of urban reform processes. The analytical design of the research is based on three conceptual assertions: (a) the JNNURM has been conceptually understood as a neoliberalisation process, which was aimed at establishing 'actually existing neoliberalism' (Brenner and Theodore 2002); (b) cities have been understood as

places that are historically produced through political processes (Pred 1984), municipal organisations being one component of this production; and (c) in order to understand the relationship between attempts at neoliberalisation and 'cities as historically produced places', the work takes inspiration from Kingdon's (2014) ideas of 'policy windows' wherein couplings of problems, policies and politics may produce policy and institutional changes. The *final* task of this chapter is to formulate the methodological design that operationalises the conceptual design and translates it into an empirically investigable research process. The chapter explains why a qualitative comparative method was employed. The two cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur were selected for comparison primarily because of their relative success and failure in terms of the JNNURM implementation on the one hand, and their comparable historical and economic trajectories on the other.

Chapter 3 narrows the scope of investigation to the city level in order to understand the implementation process of the mission in Ahmedabad and Kanpur. The exploration reveals that the available municipal capacity, at the time of the introduction of the reform process, determined the future path of urban reform performance. In Kingdon's terms, a window had opened allowing the consolidation of municipal capacity in Ahmedabad *before* the arrival of JNNURM in contrast to Kanpur. The following chapters will explore how and why this happened. In this chapter we unpack and operationalise the category of "municipal capacity" and the specific ways in which it conditioned the reform process. In doing so, the chapter establishes an analytical relationship between the attempts of JNNURM implementation and existing institutional frameworks of municipal governance in the two cities. The chapter confirms *firstly* that successful implementation of the programme required administrative, financial and political capacities of the state at the

local level. It also shows that in the process of reform implementation, the requirement of each of these capacities manifested itself in stages. *Secondly* the chapter shows that municipal capacity can be understood only through an exploration of the municipal organisation in which it takes shape, which has deep historical roots as explained in the following chapters.

Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the formation of municipal organizations in Ahmedabad and Kanpur respectively during the colonial period. Since the establishment of industries in Kanpur occurred during the same historical phase as in Ahmedabad, the problems that the two cities faced by the early 20th century were quite similar. As in the case of Ahmedabad, the early "Kingdonian *problem*" in Kanpur was also identified as 'congestion'. The problem acquired priority when it was seen as a danger to public health in the wake of the Bombay plague epidemic that also affected Kanpur. The *policy* presented as a solution was also similar in the two cities, as Kanpur witnessed the formation of an organization to address the city's congestion and plan its future expansion. Even if a separate organisation was not formed in Ahmedabad, similar decongestion and planning initiatives were introduced there also. However, the *politics* in the two cities varied. In the case of Ahmedabad a successful alignment of the problem and the politics was achieved, as a group of Congress leaders were able to successfully revise the plan proposed by the government and implement it. In Kanpur, on the other hand, politics were factionalised, which did not allow the question of place - the issues related to urban governance - to take the centre stage in city politics, thereby hindering a successful alignment of the problem and the policy. This resulted in the same policy being reintroduced repeatedly. This meant that the elected municipal board of the city could not emerge as the central organisational manifestation of urban

governance of the city; it led to a multiplicity of municipal organisations, a feature that we find in the city right until the inception of the JNNURM.

Chapter 6 demonstrates that the nature of existing municipal organization at the city level is the key determinant that shapes the trajectory of neoliberalisation that was embodied in the urban reforms. In the previous two chapters, we witness the making of two different types of municipal organisation in Ahmedabad and Kanpur. Whereas a coherent municipal organization evolved in Ahmedabad, municipal organisation in Kanpur was fragmented. Chapter 6 demonstrates that this difference was crucial in shaping local politics in the two cities. In Ahmedabad, a coherent municipal organization with functional representative politics was able to internalize the emergence of the politics of *Hindutva* in the city. As a result, the *Hindutva* politics was articulated in urban terms; it was organized around the issues of space, service delivery and urban meaning in general. In Kanpur, a fragmented municipal organization with no effective representative politics at the municipal level was unable to internalize the politics of the city. This meant that city politics were expressed in terms of caste and religion based on identity that characterised the politics prevalent at the provincial level. In Kingdon's terms, the urban orientation of *Hindutva* politics played a decisive role in the alignment of the *problem* of industrial and municipal decline with the *policies* of liberalization in Ahmedabad. Even as this urban *Hindutva* helped transform the municipal organization and successfully produced capacities necessary for the implementation of the JNNURM, it also led to a communally segregated and ghettoized city. In Kanpur, because local politics remained oriented to provincial categories, the municipal organization remained fragmented and weak when the JNNURM was inaugurated. Consequently, local

urban problems did not become the significant theme of local politics, and the problem did not get aligned with the policy.

The objectives of the concluding chapter 7 are three-fold. *First* the chapter summarises the key insights of this research while presenting its main argument. *Second,* it reflects on the implications of this argument for our existing understanding of urban reform, transition and regeneration processes. To this end, the chapter seeks to draw our attention to the ways in which these processes have been understood up until now and how the argument presented in this research relates to that understanding and builds upon it. *Third,* the chapter briefly reflects on possible implications of the research findings for policies of urban reform and regeneration in India, and in the global south more generally.

1.4 Conclusion

This chapter has briefly laid out the main research problem of this thesis, spelled out its analytical framework and defined the key concepts that have been employed in the process. It asserts that the diversity of the JNNURM implementation outcome presents an opportunity to answer the question 'why do urban reform initiatives fail?' The diverse implementation outcomes also suggest that the answer to this question has to be found at the city level. The JNNURM is conceptualised as an initiative of neoliberlisation and cities as historically contingent places. Since the JNNURM aimed at bringing about changes in urban governance structures and processes, municipal organisation and capacity have been identified as the key to understanding the urban reform process. The next chapter details these themes further and elaborates the methodological design of this research.

CHAPTER 2

URBAN REFORMS AND THE JNNURM: CONCEPTUALISING FORMATIONS OF MUNICIPAL CAPACITY

2.1 Introduction

This chapter spells out the conceptual framework of this work. In order to do so, the chapter primarily focuses on three tasks: *first,* the main contours of the JNNURM are briefly presented and the mission is located in the context of the urban policy direction of the Indian government since the inception of the liberalisation era. This discussion shows that the JNNURM was the latest, largest and most concerted urban reform initiative in a long series of urban reform programmes launched by the Indian government, especially since the 1980s. An assessment of the implementation of the JNNURM shows that the mission was only moderately successful in achieving its stated objectives. Furthermore, even this moderate success is not spread out evenly across the cities; there is a significant variation in the way the mission performed in different cities. The work identifies this differential success at the local level as the main focus of its analysis. This focus gains conceptual significance on the basis of an overview of literature on policy reforms in general and on urban reforms, particularly. This overview shows that the relationship between the local city level politics and success or failure of external attempts at urban renewal and reform remains rather unexplored. The research problem identified, the *second* task of the chapter is to spell out the analytical design that informs the work as it goes about exploring the relationship between local politics and the trajectory of urban reform process. The analytical design of the research is based on three conceptual assertions: (a) the JNNURM has been conceptually understood as neoliberalisation process which is

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aimed at establishing 'actually existing neoliberalism' (Brenner and Theodore 2002); (b) cities have been understood as places that are historically produced through political processes (Pred 1984), municipal organisations being one component of this production; (c) in order to understand the relationship between attempts at neoliberalisation and 'cities as histically produced places', the work takes inspiration in Kingdon's (2014) ideas of 'windows' wherein couplings of problems, policies and politics may produce policy and institutional changes. The *final* task of this chapter is to formulate the methodological design that operationalises the conceptual design and translates it into empirically investigable research process. To this end, a qualitative comparative method was employed. The two cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur were selected for comparison primarily because of their relative success and failure in terms of the JNNURM implementation on the one hand, and comparable historical and economic trajectories on the other.

The chapter is divided into five sections. Following this introductory section, Section 2 introduces urban reforms generally, but more specifically the JNNURM, its vision and modalities. A detailed look at the JNNURM demonstrates that the primary idea of the mission was to transform cities into 'growth engines' by adopting a set of measures, based on neoliberal ideas. It then offers an assessment of the implementation of the JNNURM with two main findings: (a) the mission as a whole has been only very moderately successful in its objectives and (b) there are significant city-wise variations even within that moderate success. This study aims to understand this variable success at the city level with the understanding that an answer to this question would potentially be helpful for explaining, at least in part, the moderate success of the mission as a whole.

Section 3 looks for possible answers to this question in two streams of literature—the literature dealing with processes of economic reform in India in general and the literature on urban politics and reforms. A review of the first stream of literature on the economic reform process in India suggests that policy reform processes are inextricably embedded in the political structure and processes. The second stream of literature looks at the ways in which urban reforms impacted everyday politics at the city level. Even as the literature is full of insights in terms of the spatial nature of everyday politics and the nature of the neoliberal reform process, it does not, and did not intend to identify the factors that determine the trajectory of the urban reform process.

Building on these insights, Section 4 then presents an analytical framework to understand the urban reform process at the city level. *First*, the endeavour to implement reforms under the JNNURM has been understood as a process of 'neoliberalisation' (Brenner and Theodore 2002), with the purpose of creating 'actually existing neoliberalism'. The process of neoliberalisation takes place in the context of existing institutions of urban governance. Understanding existing institutions of urban governance is therefore central to understanding the trajectory of neoliberalisation. *Second,* existing institutions of urban governance—a set of organisations, rules and norms—have both spatial and historical dimensions. These institutions are aimed essentially at guiding the behaviour of people in relation to space. These institutions are also historical in the sense that they have been shaped by political processes that have occurred in 'episodes' over a period of time. Kingdon's (2014) framework, which points us towards the circumstances in which a policy or institutional change succeeds, is employed to historically analyse the process through

which institutions of urban governance have taken shape in the two cities where this research has been based.

Section 5 details the methodological choices that have informed this study and the research tools that it adopts in the process of research. The two cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur have been selected as cases because they are comparable not only in terms of economic structures and history, but also in terms of implementation of the JNNURM they represent a contrast. 'Configurational comparative analysis' (Rihoux and Ragin 2009) has been adopted to look at the two cases in a comparative perspective. In the final section, the key points of the chapter are summarised and linked with the chapters to follow.

2.2   Urban Reforms in India: An Overview

Urban reform is a part of the larger economic reform process (Kennedy and Zerah 2008), which was initiated by the Indian state in the 1980s tentatively, but became much more comprehensive and directed in the 1990s. India's economic reforms have involved changes in a whole gamut of economic policies, which together have redefined the economic model of the Indian state. These reforms included trade, industrial policy and financial policy liberalisation. They essentially meant abolition of the regime of state control and state monopoly over various sectors of the economy, infamously known as the 'License-Quota Raj' (Jenkins 1999, Panagariya 2008). The emphasis eventually centred on the participation of private capital, both domestic and global.

The reforms also entailed a shift in sectoral emphasis: from an economic development model based on industry and agriculture to one based on industry and services. This shift meant that large cities and urban centres were the primary geographical location

of this new development strategy (Kennedy and Zerah 2008). The primary role of the state in this schema was to provide a regulatory set up that facilitated private and global participation (primarily by way of capital investment) in the economic process. The urban agenda laid out by the government think tank, the National Institute for Urban Affairs, stated, 'in the era of economic reforms, liberalisation and globalisation, cities and towns are emerging as the centres of domestic and international investment'(Mahadevia 2003; 47). It was in this context that urban governance gradually came into focus and reforming urban policies, to make India's cities institutionally more conducive for private and global capital investment, became one of the priority developmental goals (Mahadevia 2003, Nandi and Gamkhar 2013).

The first signs of change from the previous policy of the Indian state that emphasised on the growth of industrial towns and medium level cities, could be seen in the report of the National Commission for Urbanisation,[1] published in 1987. Even as the report recognised the significance of towns and medium level cities, it disapproved of industrial dispersal policies used as instruments to control patterns of urbanisation. The argument of the commission was that such attempts have not yielded desired results (Kennedy and Zerah 2008). This report also brought the issues of funding of urban services and the critical financial position of urban local bodies into debate for the first time. The commission proposed direct funding from the central government to the four metropolitan cities.[2] The proposal did not find favour with the planning commission and therefore was never implemented (Sivaramakrishnan 2011).

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[1]   Also known as Correa Commission. The Commission was headed by architect Charls Correa and included experts such as Mahesh Buch, Ashish Bose, Kirit Ghosh and others.
[2]   Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkota and Chennai have conventionally been termed as the four metropolitan cities of India.

The reforms undertaken in the 1990s can broadly be understood as an outcome of this debate. It was recognised that the issues of funding of urban services and critical financial positions of the local bodies have a close connection with (lack of) institutional autonomy. However, an amendment in the constitution was required if the local urban governance structure had to be made autonomous from the control of the states at provincial and central levels. This was achieved by amending the constitution (74th Constitution Amendment Act). This amendment was aimed at bringing the urban local governance bodies at par with the regional and central tiers of government in terms of planning and implementing plans of urban development (Annexure 2). The objective was also to make them more participatory. The amendment made it constitutionally mandatory that the provincial states form State Finance Commissions, that regular local body elections be held, and that these bodies should enjoy autonomous decision-making powers (Mahadevia 2003; 53-54).

The second sphere of change was the way in which the urban infrastructure was financed. Urban infrastructure development was so far guided by a public service approach and was financed mostly by the central government. This was no longer in consonance with the wider developmental thinking. Therefore, it gave way to a new approach, which was based on commercial financing through private sector participation and creating institutional resource generation capacity at the local government level (Mehta and Mehta 2010). Even as the government articulated this new thinking through various policy documents (Mahadevia 2003; 49), it was clear that it was not achievable without a coherent governance framework at the local level that facilitated the new approach.

The launch of the JNNURM was preceded by several sporadic policy initiatives that attempted to put into practice at least some of the recommendations of the Correa Commission that were in consonance with the gradually shifting developmental policy direction of the government. For example, The Mega City Scheme launched in 1994 included the cities of Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad. The projects of city wide importance were to be funded on a cost-sharing basis wherein 25 per cent would be borne by the central and the state governments. Funding for the remaining cost was to be raised by borrowing from financial institutions (Sivaramakrishnan 2011 ; 08). This was probably the first national level urban development scheme where money was to be raised from the market.

However, the seeds of the policy framework that guided the JNNURM can be seen in the City Challenge Fund (CCE), which was later renamed the Urban Reforms Incentive Fund (URIF). Launched in 2003, it was through the CCE that funding for urban development projects were linked with cities and states carrying out certain reforms in the domain of urban governance.[3] Incentivising urban reforms by linking them with funding of urban development projects also became the formula for granting funds to cities under the JNNURM when it was launched a couple of years later.

2.2.1   Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM)

The JNNURM was initiated in 2005 by the central government, guided by the recognition that a major thrust on urban development was required for not only new developmental goals to be achieved but also to manage the consequences of that achievement. The vision document of the programme states, 'As a result of the

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[3]   The scheme was conceived in consultation with experts from USAID and DFID who were running a technical assistance programme for the Indian government. See (Sivaramakrishnan 2011).

liberalisation policy adopted by the government of India, it is expected that the share of urban population may increase to 40 per cent by 2021. It is estimated that by the year 2011, urban areas will contribute about 65 per cent of total gross domestic product' (Mission 2010 ;03).

While launching the mission Prime Minister Manmohan Singh observed:

> Urbanisation is a relentless process which has come to stay and which has to be factored into our development thinking…. We are poised to have nearly 50 percent of India living in our cities by the earlier part of the present century and that should give you an idea of the magnitude of the development and renewal task that awaits all of us.[4]

Under the programme, 65 cities across India were selected (Annexure 1). It was estimated that an investment of more than 1200 billion (Indian rupees) in urban local bodies were required over the next seven year period. The mission was divided into two sub-missions; one focusing on urban infrastructure and governance, while the other focused on basic services to the urban poor. There was a provision for fund transfer from the central government to the urban local bodies in cities to achieve these objectives. However, the transfer of funds was linked to the adoption of a set of institutional and policy reforms by the urban local bodies and the provincial state. These reform measures were primarily devised to achieve the larger objective of making the governance structures of Indian cities more efficient and conducive to private participation in the process of urban development. According to the mission overview, one of the key objectives of the programme was the 'establishment of linkages between asset creation and asset management …' (Mission 2010; 3). While

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[4]   http://jnnurmmis.nic.in/jnnurm_hupa/index.html

some of these reforms were to be carried out at the level of provincial states, the rest were to be adopted at the level of urban local bodies.

In sum, the aim of the JNNURM was to create 'economically productive, efficient, equitable and responsive cities' by focussing on: (a) improving and augmenting the economic infrastructure of cities; (b) ensuring basic services for the urban poor including security of tenure at affordable prices; (c) initiating wide ranging urban sector reforms whose primary aim was to eliminate legal, institutional and financial constraints that have impeded investment in urban infrastructure and services and (d) strengthening municipal government and its functioning in accordance with the provisions of the constitution (Mission 2010; 5).

Mukhopadhyay (Mukhopadhyay 2006; 879) categorises the reforms to be carried out under the programme on the basis of their objectives:

1. Decentralisation through implementation of the 74th amendment and assigning to or associating elected Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) with city planning (a state-level reform condition);

2. Increasing participation and transparency, through accounting reforms and e-governance at the ULB level, and a public disclosure law and community participation law at the state level;

3. Increasing ULB revenue through reform of property tax and impose reasonable user charges and reduce costs with the help of voluntary retirement scheme (VRS), so as to recover full operation and management costs;

4. Improving services to the poor through budget earmarking, enhancing security of tenure at affordable prices, and earmarking land for the economically weaker and low income categories in all housing projects;

5. Reforming land management with the repeal of the Urban Land Ceiling Act (ULCRA), reduction in stamp duty, reform of rent control, streamlining of building approval, transparent procedures for conversion of agricultural land, computerising property titling and land registration;

6. Conserving water resources through laws for rain water harvesting and the use of recycled water;

7. Undertaking 'structural reforms' and encouraging public–private partnership to improve services and reduce costs.

Clearly, the mission was shaped by the neo-liberal economic thinking that has guided India's economic policy post-liberalisation (Mahadevia 2011). Both the objectives of the mission, as well as the specifics of the recommended urban reforms, illustrated this clearly. The main objective of the JNNURM was to alter the landscape of the cities—both in spatial and institutional terms—in a way that the landscape became attractive to private and global capital. Whereas the project component of the mission would potentially lead to spatial changes, the reform component aimed at changing the institutions that governed the cities. The expectation was that both these changes together would transform the cities into what is commonly known in the literature as 'growth engines' (Logan 1976, Logan and Molotch 1987, Gothan 2000, Logan, Molotch et al. 2007). The cities had to act as nodes and sites of economic growth. The preamble of the mission stated:

> The JNNURM aims to encourage cities to initiate steps to bring about improvement in the existing service levels in a financially sustainable ways…. It believes that in order to make cities work efficiently and equitably, it is essential to create incentives and support urban reforms at state and city levels; enhance the credit worthiness of municipalities, and integrate the poor with the service delivery system.[5]

Neo-liberalism is considered to be premised on the belief that 'open competitive and unregulated markets, liberated from all forms of state interference, represent the optimal mechanism for economic development'(Brenner and Theodore 2002 ;350). Clearly, this very belief shaped the institutional changes that the JNNURM incentivised. The new institutional landscape was not quite going to be 'liberated from all forms of state interference',[6] but it was definitely striving towards introducing private capital participation in the urban infrastructure development and service delivery processes. The objectives of the mission were essentially what Wilson (2004) described as attempts to 're-intreprenuerialise' cities. This process had three features according to him; 'policy supplants redistribution for competitive pursuits, government functions are transferred to non-state or quasi-state bodies and policy offers an unparalleled and harsh punitive justification' (Wilson 2004).

The JNNURM reflected many features that the introduction of a market in the process of urban infrastructure development and urban service delivery would require. There were broadly three levels at which the JNNURM sought to bring about changes in order to open up the Indian cities for the market.

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[5] (Development and India 2006)

[6] There are arguments that recognise that neoliberalsim does not necessarily mean absence of the state, but its reingeeniering and reinforcement. See Peck, J. (2001). "Neoliberalizing States: Thin Policies/ Hard Outcomes." Progress in Human Geogrpahy **25**(03): 445-455.

First, the JNNURM actively encouraged the direct participation of private capital in infrastructure development and service delivery projects, especially in the form of public–private participation (PPP). The guidelines for project proposal preparation under the JNNURM stated that 'since the investment requirements far exceed the budgetary allocations… the government has been encouraging PPPs to attract more market investment' (JNNURM 2006).

Second, the JNNURM encouraged removal of formal rules and acts that hindered the functioning of the market in Indian cities. The abolition of the ULCRA—a mandatory reform—was most illustrative in this regard.

Third, the municipal processes and organisations were to be recast in a way that made them conducive to market functions. This was illustrated most clearly in reforming the municipal accounting system, as well as in reforming municipal human resources, known as administrative reforms. The JNNURM reforms included the double entry accounting system in municipal accounting. This was one of the major steps in the direction of improving municipal bodies' credit worthiness, which in turn would improve the municipal bodies' chances of borrowing capital from the market. Administrative staff and transparency related reforms were also going to be helpful in this matter.

2.2.2 Implementation of the JNNURM at the city level

The question is, how did the JNNURM fare? To what extent did the mission succeed in achieving its policy goals in terms of spurring infrastructure development at the city level? What happened to the institutional changes at the municipal level that it

incentivised? At a more abstract level, are the mission cities more conducive to neoliberal practices today than they were before the launch of the mission?

Assessments by experts and organisations do not declare the mission a stellar success. The rating agency Fitch said in its report that the JNNURM had failed to transform the urban infrastructure. The report noted that in the 21 cities that the agency studied, only 22 out of 120 sanctioned infrastructure projects were completed by the end of 2011. On the civic services delivery front, the agency noted that even though there were a few bright spots, in general, 'not much progress has been made and service delivery standards remain dismal even by Indian standards' (quoted in (Staff 2012). K C Sivaramakrishnan, one of the members of the National Technical Advisory Group of the JNNURM noted that 'a benign comment in passing about JNNURM … is that it has done no harm' (Sivaramakrishnan 2011 ;xxxiii).

However, this underwhelming report card of the mission as a whole had an element of diversity when looked at from the city-level perspective. Not all mission cities had failed uniformly. In a submission to the Public Accounts Committee of the Indian Parliament, the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) reported that cities in some states have been more successful and faster in implementing the schemes under the mission. The reasons for others not being so successful were given as 'unavailability of land, capacity of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) to prepare detailed project reports (DPR) and slow allocation of work to contractors' (Committee 2015).

On the reform implementation front also, while cities like Hyderabad and Ahmedabad successfully adopted many of these reforms, cities like Srinagar, Bhubaneswar and Kanpur were poor performers. If we look at the 10 largest cities in India, Chennai,

Hyderabad, Surat and Ahmedabad have adopted the maximum number of reforms, while Kanpur and Delhi the least. This research is primarily concerned with this uneven reception of the reform agenda at the city level.[7] *It aims to understand the differential implementation outcomes of the JNNURM at the city level with the view that only through an exploration of these differences can one find the elements that contribute to the success or failure of a policy intervention of this scale.*

2.2.3 Explaining the differential implementation of the JNNURM

An explanation for the relative and uneven success of the JNNURM can be explored in two streams of literature. One stream deals with the explanation of successful policy reform processes in India. The other stream is the study of urban politics in post-liberalisation India. The literature coming from these fields are relevant for understanding the JNNURM because the mission can be viewed in two different ways simultaneously. It can be viewed as a *policy reform initiative* that attempted to alter the institutions of urban governance. But in addition to that, as discussed in earlier, its location in the urban sphere necessitates that the JNNURM is also viewed as an *urban transformation initiative*.

2.2.3.1 Explaining economic policy reforms in India

The first stream can broadly be divided into two categories. The first category deals with policy reforms at the all India level (Rodrik and Subramanian 2004; Kohli 2009) whereas the second category analyses reforms at the provincial state level (Jenkins 1999; Sinha 2004).

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[7]   Based on information compiled from progress reports submitted to the central authority of JNNURM by February 2010. Since most of the project allocation under JNNURM was done by this time, and since urban reforms implementation was a condition for project funding, it is unlikely that this pattern of reform implementation would have changed significantly since 2010.

The representative works in the first category are Kohli (2009) on the one hand and Rodrik and Subramanian (2004) on the other. Kohli articulates the policy change from pro-distribution to pro-growth and then proceeds to explain this shift. The first argument he advances is that the shift was made possible because since the 1980s the state gradually embraced economic growth as a priority goal. He further argues that this shift in priority—from distributive justice to economic growth—was primarily made possible by two important factors. One, throughout the 1980s the state desisted from socialist rhetoric and reoriented itself towards an ideological position that was conducive to growth enhancing policies. Second, the indigenous Indian business class was more ready than ever before for deregulation and for opening the economy to global competition. Kohli, therefore, essentially argues that the policy shift was an outcome of a pro-business tilt of the Indian state, rather than a break from the state control and introduction of a neo-liberal policy framework (2006, 2007).

The argument presented by Rodrik and Subramanian is similar to Kohli's; they also talk about the 'attitudinal change' on the part of the state and the dominant political party, the Congress in the 1980s. They also describe the policy changes as pro-business rather than pro- market. However, the differences in the two arguments are primarily at two levels. One, there is a difference in the kind of evidence that the two authors present in support of their arguments. Kohli looks at changes in political rhetoric in the 1980s when there was a conscious effort on the part of the political leadership to not indulge in socialist vocabulary to garner popular support—something that was commonplace in the 1970s. Through an account of the business chambers, he also shows how Indian business was now prepared for a shift from state protectionism to some degree of open global competition. Rodrik and Subramanian,

on the other hand, present their case with the help of economic evidence and argue that the 'attitudinal change' on the part of the state unleashed the potential of private business (Rodrik and Subramanian 2004). The other major difference is that when Rodrik and Subramanian talk about initial conditions for take-off, they talk more explicitly about the role of institutions. They argue that if we take the robustness of India's economic and political institutions into account, India under-performed drastically until the 1980s and it was the attitudinal change that began to correct this under performance (ibid).

Rob Jenkins and Aseema Sinha in their works have looked at the economic policy reforms in India as a disaggregated process by focussing their attention at the provincial state level. Aseema Sinha's primary concern is to explain regional differential development across Indian states. She picks out West Bengal, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu as her three cases, representing failed, successful and average performers in the process of post-liberalisation development. Her argument is that the regional (provincial) elite seek to interpret national policies in their own ways. The interpretation is guided by the exigencies of re-winning political office. In some cases, this interpretation of national policies is conducive to attracting investment while in some others it is not. She therefore introduces the argument that differential development could be explained if one employs a 'nested framework' that includes national level policy and regional level democratic imperatives. She argues that the provincial leaders face a trade-off between the central transfers and regional re-election chances. In states where population rewards anti-centre actions, the state leaders privileged their re-election chances; this led them to pursue an anti- centre political strategy (Sinha 2005).

Rob Jenkins, on the other hand, is less concerned with the outcome and concentrates his focus on the issue of sustainability and political management of economic reforms in India. His answer to the question, 'how were economic reforms sustained in India?' is based on three concepts: political incentives, political institutions and political skills(Jenkins 1999: 05). He identifies two levels of incentives. The first level involved new sources of patronage opened up by liberalisation to substitute for some of those forfeited by the shrinkage of the state's regulatory role. The second level of incentives comes from the 'inherent fluidity of India's interest group structure'. 'Interest groups themselves respond to new policy derived incentives, and are vulnerable to divide and rule tactics (ibid.).' On the level of political institutions, Jenkins finds both formal and informal institutions to be instrumental in the reform process. He picks out the federal structure of the state as one political institution that played a crucial role. He also argues that the state level elite were able to rely upon informal political institutions; 'regularised networks of influence, encompassing party and non- party organisational arena', constructed around individual political leaders were equally important in the process of sustainability of reforms. Leaders used these networks not only to arrange accommodation between vast arrays of groups but also to 'gauge both the mood and the relative political worth of various political constituencies (Jenkins 1999: 06). The third aspect, political skill, came handy in 'disarming opponents of reform'.

The strength of Jenkin's analysis is that it takes into account the role of informal institutions. But the problem lies with the way he does so. When Jenkins is speaking about informal institutions, he is in the main, talking about various interest groups, which are more often than not organised informally, or support groups that various

political leaders organise around themselves with the help of patronage. The argument in the gist is that political leaders were able to play around these interest groups, which often had to lose out because of a particular reform, in order to minimise political loss. The two examples that Jenkins cites are the tax reforms in Rajasthan and the sugar lobby in Maharastra (Jenkins 1999:156–168).

In sum, explanations on offer for economic reforms are instructive, at least partly, in endeavours to explain urban reform processes. The writings discussed bring into sharp focus the role that political structures and processes play in determining the course of a policy change. This insight, that politics matters, is an insight relevant for understanding the trajectory of the JNNURM.

2.2.3.2 Exploring urban politics in India

The existing literature on urban politics, particularly writers dealing with the process of urban reforms, renewal and urban development can be put into two broad categories. The work in the first category is guided primarily by the question of change and shift in the nature of urban politics in the post-liberalisation economic reforms India. The works of Harriss, Zerah, Kamath and Vijaybaskar, Coelho and Venkat and others belong to this category. The beginning of this literature can be traced to the 1990s, when it was observed that the nature of urban politics is changing in the wake of changes in macroeconomic policy as well as because of efforts to introduce participatory and representative bodies at the local level. This pool of literature seeks to understand the precise process and outcome of this change. The second category of literature critically investigates the merits of the urban reform process initiated since the 1990s and its implications for the process and nature of

urban development. The works of Benjamin, Robinson, Banerjee-Guha, Mahadevia and others belong to this category. The problem, however, with the first type of literature is that it focuses on the implications of reforms on local politics rather than investigating the local political processes that shape and influence the introduction and implementation of the reform process itself. The second category of literature focuses its attention on the merits of the policies in question, rather than on the politics that hinders or facilitates its implementation.

John Harriss (2005) puts the focus of the first category of literature sharply when he observes the emergence of 'new politics' in post-reform urban India—a politics that is 'thought to be emerging is based in life spaces and is built up around local associations, replacing the "old politics" of political parties and the social movements associated with them…. A politics, however, that is limited to the middle classes and is exclusive in regard to the urban poor. However, Harriss is skeptical about this 'new politics' that is often couched in the language of 'anti-politics' *a la* James Ferguson, replacing the 'old politics' based on electoral and party-based democracy—something that he makes clear in his subsequent writings, this formulation of two types of politics set the tone of urban research in India in the following years. It has been researched and articulated by several scholars. The newness of this politics has to do with the language in which claims were articulated as well as the methods which were adopted to represent these claims before the state. Equally remarkably, the new politics were based in 'life spaces' as opposed to 'work spaces'. This was significant because there is an inherent shift being indicated here not only in spatial terms, from work places to residential communities, but also a shift in the political issues that galvanised people and pushed them to get organised in some form. This also indicated

a shift, from the traditional class and occupation-based interests taking organised forms to life-based interests coinciding with neighbourhoods taking precedence in terms of political representation.

This understanding of urban politics has generated a significant amount of literature (Kamath and Vijayabaskar 2014). Research focused on middle-class neighbourhood associations and slum settlements in different cities seeks to understand and analyse how the middle classes and the poor are engaging in politics. Such analyses are understandably and justifiably rooted spatially in residential neighbourhoods. For example, Harriss (2005, 2007), maps out changes in people's political participation and representation, hierarchically categorizing neighbourhood colonies in four types: planned colonies, unauthorised - regularised colonies, unauthorised - un-regularised colonies and slum and squatter settlements. Similarly, Zerah (2007) selected Advanced Locality Management (ALM) units in Mumbai to study 'middle-class participation through neighbourhood associations and its engagement with issues related to local governance and local democracy' (2007: 61). In the same vein, Coelho and Venkat (2007) studied eight localities in Chennai to 'unpack the arena of urban collective action through a combination of survey and ethnography on Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and neighbourhood groups' (2007: 359). There are similar studies focused on urban slum settlements. Jha et al. (2005) conducted a mix of quantitative and qualitative study in Delhi slums to understand how the urban poor access government and services, and to study the role of *pradhans* in the process.

Unsurprisingly, there are important similarities in what these studies find in terms of results. There are two features that run through the literature on RWAs of middle-

class colonies in Indian cities. One, the local politics that is often triggered by programmes aimed at providing participatory spaces for local communities (*Bhagidari* in Delhi or ALM in Mumbai, for example) produce politics based on middle-class exclusivity. Politics based on middle-class neighbourhoods excludes the urban poor in its vision of the city. Further, the agenda of such politics often is to counter the politics of the urban poor (Chakrabarti 2008). This political antagonism is noticed in the poor's assertion of their right to housing and in the middle class' assertion of their right to sanitised common urban spaces. In their study, (Coelho and Venkat 2009) noted not only homogeneity in the caste and gender (upper caste- and male-dominated) composition of the leadership of 84 middle-class RWAs but also "their narrow and self-interested agendas concerning urban space and governance' (p. 360).

This 'sanitised' vision for urban development, the literature suggests, is an outcome of a technocratic approach to the political process that these participatory spaces allow for. The 'new politics' emerging out of this process is capturing some of the functions of traditional elected representative based politics if not completely replacing it (Chattopadhyay 2015). The new participatory space in urban India, created under the banner of good governance reforms, has primarily been occupied by the middle classes excluding the urban poor (Coelho and Venkat (2009).

Even as some of the later works begin to complicate the idea of middle class and argue that it is far from a homogenous category, and that their politics and vision of city is more diverse (Kamath and Vijayabaskar 2014), there are other limits of understanding of 'new politics' that need to be highlighted. First, 'new politics' is also limited politics based on demands of service delivery. Not unexpectedly, most of this

research finds out that RWAs in middle-class colonies in the Indian cities function as watch dogs trying to guarantee service delivery and maintenance of common civic amenities. The question that follows from this finding is: Is this the only kind of politics that is taking place in post-reform urban India? Is this the only kind of urban local politics that matter? What about politics that leads to introduction or non-introduction of reforms that result in creating such new participatory spaces itself? Is it a valid question to ask if political voices from a city also matter in the processes of introduction of such governance changes? Or is it safe to assume, as much as this literature does, that the governance reform agenda is pushed top-down by the central and regional level states and political leaderships?

The second set of questions that emerges from the understanding of urban politics in this literature is about the basis of political organisation: How individual political interests are constituted? and How people identify them and what motivates people to form political organisations to further their interests? The literature on middle class and slum settlements in Indian cities appears to be answering such questions both explicitly and implicitly. The explicit part of the answer is in their finding that the politics appears to be about urban services and common amenities in the residential neighbourhoods. In the case of middle-class neighbourhoods, it is about services such as water supply, sewerage, clean parks, and so on, whereas in slums it is more fundamentally about the right to remain a settlement and once that is tenuously guaranteed to some degree, about basic services like water supply and services. In sum, the literature suggests that it is the 'inhabitants of colonies' aspect of their life that motivates people to participate in politics and the issues just mentioned that trigger the motivation to participate.

The implicit answer to the aforementioned question in this literature resides in their methodological choice. Even as the methodological choice of studying middle-class neighbourhood associations and politics of slums are rooted in justifiable motivations to understand newly emerged participatory political spaces and the everyday politics of the urban poor, implicit in this methodological choice is an assumption that there has been a shift in the way people in urban India conduct their politics. This methodological choice begins to assume a spatial and conceptual shift in the way people identified their most important interests and decided to act upon them organisationally when the politics of RWAs and slums are also understood as the dominant mode of urban politics. The spatial shift would be the politics conducted from work places by organised and unorganised workers, for example from big and small factories and workshops to politics conducted by the same people but as residents of unauthorised residential settlements as inhabitants. The related conceptual shift lies in the fact that people now find it more important and much easier to conduct their politics as inhabitants of residential colonies than as workers, traders, providers of services, business people etc. The spatially located method has its advantages in terms of understanding the limits and possibilities of new participatory political spaces. It helps capture the changes in nuances of everyday interactions between citizens and the state at the local level. But it also puts significant limits on the understanding of urban politics. For example, in the midst of urban renewal and renewed emphasis on urban development, contemporary politics in urban India is not just about experiences of, and struggles for, urban services. Instead, political process confronts more fundamental issues of resource allocation and public good. However, neighbourhood-based analysis limits the possibility of exploring the latter element of

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politics with the understanding that such fundamental issues are shaped at the national and provincial levels and local urban political processes have no or little say in it.

In other words, the literature on urban reforms and politics, even as it deals with the governance reform process in Indian cities, focuses on the spatial and political implications of the reforms much more than the factors that determine the trajectory of reforms in the first place. The only way the choice of this focus, and resultant selection of neighbourhoods as sites of study, can be explained is through the assumption that local politics does not really matter when it comes to the introduction and implementation of these reforms. This focus assumes that reforms are shaped at the central and provincial levels of state and politics, and pushed through in city politics in a top down manner. Benjamin (2000) is arguably the only commentator who explicitly makes this assumption. Writing on the relationship between governance and poverty, with Bangalore as a case in point, Benjamin contends that there are two parallel economies that deal with the government at two different levels. There is a 'corporate economy', which includes the information technology industry Bangalore is known for, and then there is a 'local economy', which provides most of the population with their livelihood. The corporate economy is linked with the government through the state- and national-level parastatal agencies that control most development functions. The links of local economy, on the other hand, are with the local government—its bureaucracy and political representatives. The state- and national-level parastatal agencies have no local political accountability, and they are responsible to the government and politics at the level from which they take direction.

This analysis carries certain appeal for those familiar with structures of urban governance in India. The division of functions between local and regional

governments indeed has been such that it invests most planning and developmental functions in the regional level, that is, state government. The typology of local and corporate economies also resonates with available common sense even if the inter-linkages between the two economies are much more complicated than this typology affords. However, it is urban politics and the way it is structured and organised that needs much deeper attention Even if one agrees that the local political representatives—the councillors and corporators[8] as they are known in Indian cities—are at the bottom of the hierarchy of political party and mere foot soldiers, their linkages may run not only horizontally to the political and bureaucratic wings of the local state. They also have vertical political linkages with political party functionaries and political representatives at the regional level. It is often argued that political accountability is ensured not through the formal structures of accountability in the Indian context, but through the feedback structures within political parties (Mitra 2001, Krishnan and Somanathan 2005)

Authors like Mahadevia (2011) and Banerjee-Guha (2009) are more concerned with the merits of urban reform policies. Generally situated in the conceptual rubric that understands urban reforms as policy prescriptions guided by neoliberal ideas, this literature shows how this policy direction is going to exclude in the name of inclusion, serve powerful interests in the name of urban development and ultimately be less than democratic under the guise of promoting participation and accountability.

The focus of this literature is mainly on three interrelated questions: What and who is driving urban reform processes? What does the policy aim to do? Finally, how is successful implementation of reforms changing Indian cities?

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[8] The elected representatives of the municipal councils of the Indian cities are known as 'corporators' or 'councillors'.

There seems to be unanimity in the literature on the answer to the first question: that it is unbridled neoliberalism unleashed on India that is responsible for the renewed focus on urban restructuring and transformation. 'Neoliberal urbanism' (Benjamin 2000, Robinson 2011) is an often used term that best captures this view. Often informed implicitly and explicitly by the arguments of David Harvey (1985, 2006) authors like Banerjee-Guha and Mahadevia (2003) see the focus on urban renewal and restructuring as necessitated by the tendency of global capital to commodify urban spaces, something that can be produced by both national and global investors. In this argument, therefore, urban reforms are a function of the expansion of global capitalism in its neoliberal avatar. These authors illustrate their point by citing the introduction of laws that facilitate urban land and real estate markets (Banerjee-Guha 2009), for example, views the repeal of the ULCRA as one such measure that makes urban land available for renewal and development. The repeal of the urban tenancy act, which tightly controlled the housing market, is cited as another example.

Guided by this view, the literature critically reviews the urban reform policies in some detail and calls into question its ability to achieve the stated goals of urban renewal and developing 'world class' cities (Kundu 2014). Banerjee-Guha (2009) is in agreement with this logic of capital transforming itself into urban infrastructure when he points out that it is not the urban infrastructure that is going to solve the problems of urban India, but introduction of an effective local urban government. Mukhopadhyaya (2006), even if not against the infusion of capital in urban infrastructure carried out under the JNNURM, is sceptical about it resulting in 'stronger governance, accountability with operational autonomy' at the local level. Chattopadhyay (2017) points out how this new type of urban governance structure is not in fact decentralisation but 'state rescaling' marked by an incomplete devolution

of authority and resources to cities and by making space in the municipal structure for the private sector and civil society groups (Kampen and Naerssen 2008). Kundu (2014) points out that 'heavy on the top' urbanisation in India, in which the largest cities are also experiencing the fastest growth, is a recipe for exclusion of smaller towns from the processes of growth and leads to spatial inequality.

Finally, the literature seeks to counter the impact of the reform process in terms of the claim of the proponents of the reforms of building inclusive world class cities with empirical examples of how the reforms have exclusionary tendencies. To begin with, Authors like Mehta and Mehta (2010), Anand (2006) and Desai (2012) emphasise on the infrastructure and governance components of the JNNURM, which overshadow the other component that deals with provision of basic services to the urban poor. Mehta and Mehta (2010) point out that housing is the most fundamental problem faced by the poor in urban India, and without security of land tenancy tenure, this problem is difficult to solve- a point the policy completely ignores. Anand (2006) points out a similar exclusionary tendency in the case of the construction of 'world class roads' in pursuit of a world class dream for the city of Mumbai. Slum clearances in order to make land available for various infrastructure projects are, in this literature, the most visible example of the true nature of the reform process. The displacement results in physical removal of the poor from the city landscape and its daily ordinary benefits (Anand 2006) but also, and more importantly, invisibility within the idea and vision of urban development itself (Mahadevia 2011, Desai 2012).

In sum, even if the literature on urban politics does not seek to explain the trajectory of the JNNURM implementation directly, some of the conceptual insights developed in this literature can be useful in building an analytical framework for doing so.

First, the characterisation of urban reform policies being guided by neoliberal ideas is true also for reforms included under the JNNURM. The discussion in section 2.2.1 shows how the aim of making cities attractive investment destinations is to be fulfilled by measures based on neoliberal ideas.

Second, this literature also demonstrates that urban politics around the issue of reforms is spatially rooted politics; it is a process that manifests itself in spatial terms. Therefore, any analysis of the trajectory of the JNNURM has to be based on analytical tools capable of capturing spatially rooted politics.

Third, it is also this spatial character that makes urban reforms distinct from other types of policy reforms. The discussion in Section 2.2.1 shows that intended changes in urban policy, or urban governance structure, are bound to have spatial implications. However, since politics matters in policy reform process (Section 2.3.1), and since politics is spatially rooted in urban contexts (Section 2.3.2), it is imperative that in the endeavour to understand urban reform processes, politics is defined in spatial terms.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

Building on the insights from the discussion in the previous sections, this section introduces the analytical framework that this work adopts in its attempt to explain the trajectory of the JNNURM. To reiterate, in previous sections we have: (a) understood the JNNURM as a mission that endeavours to implement municipal governance reforms and spatial reorganisation of cities on the basis of neoliberal ideas; (b) suggested that politics is a major determinant in shaping the success or failure of any policy reform process and (c) argued that space and politics are intertwined

categories as far as urban politics is concerned. Now, in what follows in this section, we build on these insights to further explore their interrelation. In other words, the attempt is to understand (a) in relation to (b) and (C) by making two key points. *First*, the endeavour to implement reforms under the JNNURM has been understood as a process of neoliberalisation (Brenner and Theodore 2002) with the purpose to create 'actually existing neoliberalism'. The domain of neoliberalisation in the Indian cities is the existing institutions of urban governance. Understanding existing institutions of urban governance is therefore key to understanding the trajectory of the neoliberalisation process. *Second*, existing institutions of urban governance—a set of organisations, rules and norms—have both spatial and historical dimensions. These institutions guide the behaviour of people in relation to space. These institutions are also *historical* in the sense that they have been shaped by political processes that have occurred in episodes over a period of time. Kingdon's framework, which points us towards the circumstances in which a policy or institutional change succeeds (Kingdon 2014), has been employed to historically analyse the process through which institutions of urban governance have taken shape in the two selected cities.

2.3.1 Understanding the JNNURM as 'actually existing neoliberalism'

The JNNURM, as a national level mission, is understood as neoliberal in character in so far as its policy direction is concerned. It follows therefore, that at the city level, it is viewed as the beginnings of a 'neoliberalisation process' (Brenner and Theodore 2002). According to Brenner and Theodore (2002;351), 'in contrast to neoliberal ideology, in which market forces are assumed to operate as according to immutable laws no matter where they are unleashed', actually existing neoliberalism is

embedded in 'legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices and political struggles'. Further, they contend that 'neoliberal restructuring strategies cannot be understood adequately through abstract or decontextualised debates regarding the relative merits of market-based reform initiatives or the purported limits of particular forms of state policy. Instead, an understanding of actually existing neoliberalism requires an exploration of the historically specific regulatory landscapes and political settlements that prevailed within particular territories' (Brenner and Theodore 2002).

Therefore, rather than looking at the JNNURM merely as a set of policies based on neoliberal ideas, it makes sense to look at it as a process of neoliberalisation, which, if completed successfully at the city level, would result in 'actually existing neoliberalism'. Further, this also means that the trajectory of the process of neoliberalisation—the spectrum of its success and failure—is contingent upon 'inherited institutional frameworks and political struggles'. Clearly, if we have to understand this trajectory, we have to do so in the specific institutional and political contexts in which the JNNURM is being implemented. Since governance reforms included in the JNNURM are mostly about reforming municipal governance, investigating institutional and political contexts at the city level seems to be the suitable choice for studying the trajectory of the JNNURM. The next section shows that the city is also the suitable category if we want to define politics in spatially rooted terms.

2.3.2 City as a 'place'

Cities, as a category of habitation, are 'shaped by culture, economic interests and political practices, evolving in historical time and etched in a geographical space'

(Stilwell 2014;42). In this sense, cities are 'places' configured by these processes the conceptual category of 'place' has traditionally been understood as the physical setting in which social relations are constituted (Agnew 1987). The concept gained significance from the understanding that human behaviour can be understood only in terms of its embeddedness in a specific context.

The idea of place as a physical context in which political action takes shape is not new. However, place as an active element of politics is of relatively recent provenance. The way the concept has evolved since the 1970s, both in geography and sociology, dismisses the one-dimensional relationship between the concept of natural space and the social and political activities that go on inside it. Following Lefevbre's (1991) pioneering work in the field, first published in 1973, both geographers and sociologists began to recognise the category of 'place as process'. It is through socio-political processes that 'place' is produced. This led to conceptualisation of 'place' not only in terms of *objective macro order* '-location', but also as the *social world* -'locale' and a *subjective territorial identity* -'sense of place' (Agnew 1987). City as a habitation is a place in all three senses of the term.

Reconfiguring a place would ordinarily entail bringing about changes in a place in all three senses. But the problem is that 'place', as understood earlier, is not a passive recipient of any such intervention, but participates in the process actively and eventually shapes the outcome. If the reconfiguration is aimed at making the place amenable to the flow of capital—as is the case with the JNNURM—then an institutional framework appropriate for such a purpose has to be created (Brenner and Theodore 2002, Harvey 2006). But the creation of an institutional framework is a

process not outside of the dynamic of the place, but very much inside it. Institutions—understood as rules and norms governing individual behaviour (North 1990)—are intrinsic to space understood in its relational sense, or what is understood as a 'sense of place'. Simply put, the idea of a change (in rules and norms) has no way of getting around the politics of a place (Agnew 1987).

2.3.3   Determinants of political outcome: Problem, policy, politics

The question that follows then is, what happens when changes in institutional framework are attempted? In order to answer this question, this research takes a cue from the work of John Kingdon (2014), who, in his book, *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policy*, asks the question as to when and how an issue becomes important enough for policy makers to place it at the top of their agenda. What are the conditions that enable an issue to be treated like a 'problem'? In what condition then does that 'problem' become important enough on the policy agenda that it is worth attempting a solution? Fundamentally, Kingdon asks what are the key ingredients of successful decision-making? What are the ingredients of successful policy implementation? The famous Victor Hugo quote states, 'greater than the tread of mighty armies is an idea whose time has come'. John Kingdon asks, 'How does an idea's time come'? In other words, what happens that makes an idea powerful enough to be translated into a policy? What happens that makes an idea the organizing principle behind institutions? It is also this last aspect of his framework that makes it relevant to understand urban governance changes that have been attempted through a slew of measures, but especially through the JNNURM.

In order to understand the processes that an idea goes through in its journey of being institutionalised, Kingdon conceives three process streams flowing through the system—streams of problem, policies and politics. They are largely independent of one another, and each develops according to its own dynamics and rules. But at some *critical junctures,* the three streams are joined and the greatest policy changes grow out of that coupling of problem, policy proposals and politics. Problems are brought to the attention of people in and around government by systematic indicators, by 'focusing events' like crises and disasters, or by feedback from the operation of current programmes. People define conditions as problems by comparing current conditions with their values concerning more ideal states of affairs. The generation of policy proposals, resembles a process of biological natural selection. Many ideas are possible in principle, and float around in a 'policy primeval soup' in which specialists try out their ideas in a variety of ways – the introduction of legislation, speeches, testimony, papers, and conversation. Proposals are floated, come into contact with each other, are revised and combined with one another and floated again. But the proposals that survive to the status of serious consideration meet several criteria, including their technical feasibility, their fit with dominant values and the current national mood, their budgetary workability and the political support or opposition they might experience.

The political stream is composed of such factors as swings of national mood, administration and legislative turnover, and interest group pressure campaigns. Potential agenda items that are congruent with the current national mood, which enjoy interest group support or lack organised opposition, and that fit the orientations of the prevailing legislative coalitions, or current administration, are more likely to rise to agenda

prominence than items that do not meet such conditions. The combination of perceived national mood and the turn-over of elected officials particularly affects agendas, while the balance of organised forces is more likely to affect the alternatives considered.
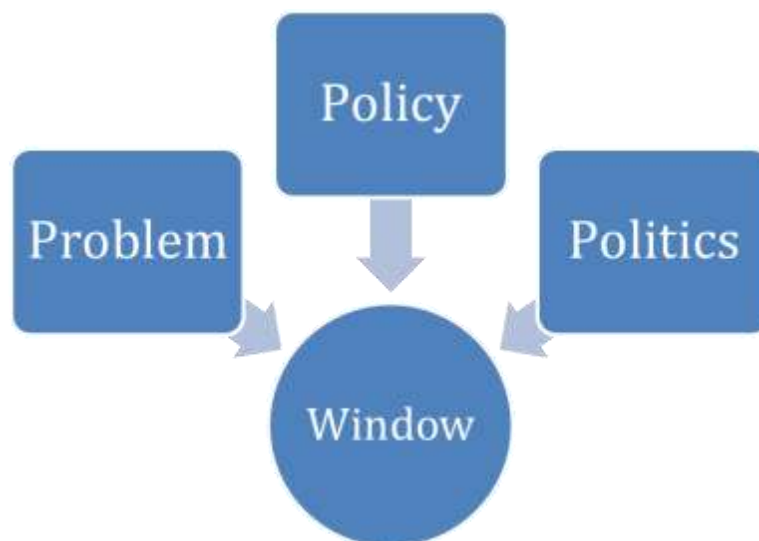
Figure 2.1: Problem, Policy and Politics Streams

The Window

There are certain critical times when separate streams of problems, policies and politics have the possibility of coming together. A solution to the problem is identified as a policy and the political stream is conducive to solving that problem and is also keen on that particular policy prescription. Kingdon calls this process 'coupling'. The coupling is most likely when policy windows—opportunities for pushing pet proposals or conceptions of problems—are open. Windows are open either by the appearance of a compelling problem or by happenings in the political stream. Thus, agendas are set by problems or politics, an alternative is generated in the policy stream. Policy entrepreneurs—people who are willing to invest their resources in pushing their pet proposals or problems—are responsible not only for prompting important people to pay attention but also for coupling solutions to problems and for

coupling both problems and solutions to politics. While governmental agendas are set in the problems or political streams, the chances of an item appearing on a decision agenda ––a list of items up for actual action––are enhanced if all three streams are coupled together. Significant movement, in other words, is much more likely if problems, policy proposals and politics are all coupled into a package.

The Policy Entrepreneurs

The policy entrepreneurs play a crucial role in the process of coupling. Policy entrepreneurs are the people who are willing to invest time, energy, resources and their skill into making sure that a coupling takes place. The location of such entrepreneurs can be in any stream, they can be in or outside of the government and they can be in elected or appointed position. Their defining characteristic is their willingness to invest in the process of coupling, most of the time, with a hope for a future return (Kingdon 2014; 122). The nature of the expected return would be according to entrepreneurs' location in the system and the kind of investment they are putting in. An elected representative, for example, would invest his political capital in expectation of promoting his political career. A policy expert would invest because she wants her policy prescription accepted and implemented.

2.3.4 'Place' as a historically contingent process

The framework developed by Kingdon is useful in explaining the making of the circumstances in which a problem becomes a priority in a political stream and subsequently, a policy solution becomes acceptable and is implemented. However, subtle adjustments are required in this schema, keeping in view that this work is about changes in institutional framework in a spatial context. Let us return to our discussion

of 'place' briefly to argue that place in its relational sense, as a 'locale' is impossible to understand unless seen through what Harvey calls 'time-space' or 'spatiotemporality' (Harvey 2004). Pred (1984) uses the term 'time geography' to characterise a similar conceptualisation in his understanding of place as a 'historically contingent process'.

Pred (1984;279) writes:

> The assemblage of buildings, land use patterns, the arteries of communication that constitute place, as a visible scene can not emerge fully formed out of nothingness and stop…. Place in other words, always involves an appropriation and transformation of space and nature that is inseparable from reproduction and transformation of society in time and space. As such, place is not only what is fleetingly observed as a landscape, a locale, setting for activity and social interaction. *It also is what takes place ceaselessly what contributes to history in a specific context through the creation and utilization of a physical setting.* (Emphasis added)

This historical nature of place making is most evident in the way institutional framework of urban governance takes shape in a city. Municipal Organisations' relationship with space is clear in the sense that urban governance is essentially a set of rules and motivations that shape the process of place making. But as Pred argues, and as demonstrated in this research, time is no less important a factor in the process of place making in general and formation of institutions of urban governance in particular. In sum, in the process of place making, history matters.

Keeping in view this insight, while making use of the basic formulation of Kingdon's schema of interactions between problem, policy and politics, this research makes the following subtle adjustments to it:

1.   Since this work is not about a single event of policymaking in a single political system, the notion or 'window' has accordingly been expanded in the context of this work. Window here does not indicate a coupling of the three streams in the context of a singular policy proposal in a short span of time. Since windows here involve the process of formation of municipal organisations and capacities, it is used in a relatively *longue durée*. Accordingly, the key the identification of 'windows' here are the events episodes that formed the significant turning points in the formation of municipal organisations and capacities.

3.   The terms 'problem' and 'policy' have also been used with a similar flexibility. 'Problem' here does not necessarily mean a short-term problem with an instant solution. Similarly, the term policy has been used in a more generic sense to mean policy direction.

The discussion in the next section helps explain these departures more clearly.

2.3.5 Making of Municipal Organisations and 'Municipal Capacity'

The institutional framework that shapes the place making process in cities is illustrated most evidently in municipal organisations. As is clear from the discussion in the previous section, and as evident from Chapter 3 of this work, it is in the encounter of the JNNURM with the existing institutional framework at the city level that the trajectory of the former's implementation is determined. Therefore, the main focus of this work is on municipal organisation.

This research conceptualises *municipal capacity* as the effectiveness of the municipal organisation in facilitating and regulating people's interaction with the physical space they inhabit. It is the capacity to provide urban services such as water, sewerage and

public transportation, as well as the functions of urban planning. The municipal capacity depends, apart from other things, on the financial robustness, administrative strength and efficiency and political orientation. Consequently, municipal capacity can be observed in characteristics such as the financial and administrative record of the municipal organisation. It can also be observed by assessing the state of urban service delivery and planning in a city. This work demonstrates that the existing financial strength, as well as the administrative and the political capacities were critical for the way in which the JNNURM performed at the city level. Such capacities have their roots in the cohesiveness of the municipal organisation, which results in the capacity of the municipal organisation to internalise political administrative and financial processes. This in turn keeps the agenda of municipal services and urban development at the forefront of the city level politics. In an absence of such an organisational cohesion, these processes are shaped by provincial and/or other levels of politics, overshadowing the issues of municipal services and urban development. This work also demonstrates that the organisational cohesiveness or its absence is contingent upon historical political process.

Since the municipal capacity has to be understood in spatial and historical terms, this work focuses spatially on the two cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur, and does so in terms of the historical evolution of their municipal organisations. The historical evolution has been understood in terms of Kingdon's episodes. This work focuses its attention on two historical episodes/ windows, in Ahmedabad and Kanpur in order to understand the formation of municipal capacities in the two cities. The two episodes were significant because these were instances of the cities grappling with problems pertaining to spatial configuration. This work identifies the following two episodes as

'windows' that shaped the municipal organisations and municipal capacities of the two cities.

1.   Formation of post-/colonial municipal governance.

2.   Formation of post-liberalisation municipal governance.

Table 2.1: Critical Windows in Ahmedabad and Kanpur

Windows	Ahmedabad	Kanpur
Formation of colonial municipal governance [Early 20th Century onwards]	Problem: Urban Congestion Policy: Formation of land use law Politics: Congress leadership in local urban politics Outcome: Coherent municipal organization	Problem: Urban Congestion Policy: Improvement Trust Politics: European vs Indigenous/ Factional Politics Outcome: Multiplicity of municipal organization
Formation of post liberalisation municipal governance [1990s onwards]	Problem: Loss of Economic Activity following deindustrialisation Policy: Neoliberalisation Politics: Based on Hindu Nationalist Identity Outcome: Relative success of JNNURM	Problem: Loss of Economic Activity following deindustrialisation Policy: Attempted Neoliberalisation Politics: Based on Caste Identity Outcome: Relative failure of JNNURM

2.3.5.1 Making of the post-/colonial municipal governance:

The first decade of the 20th century was critical for the formation of municipal organisations of Ahmedabad and Kanpur. These decades were significant for all the three streams of problem, policy and politics in the two cities. The ways in which the three streams got coupled had lasting impact on the systems of municipal governance of the two cities.

Problem

By the beginning of the 20th Century, following establishment of industries, Ahmedabad expanded significantly around what used to be the medieval walled city.

The inception of colonial municipal structure in the city triggered a process, which in effect, involved a redefinition of the "meaning" of the city. This was most apparent in the way the colonial exigencies of city making, which were primarily based on segregating military and other European city dwellers for health and safety reasons, rendered the way the city was traditionally structured "a problem.". This was also associated with the spatial implications of the transition of the city from a trading to an industrial centre since the mid 19th century. The city that was organized around community based trading was gradually transforming into a centre of industrial production with a burgeoning industrial working class. This transition had its spatial implications, which required a new set of governance solutions.

By the turn of the century, the situation Kanpur was no different in terms of the expansion of the city. As industry and trade of the city expanded, bringing in more people leading to unplanned and unregulated establishment of colonies and localities. As other localities rapidly dotted the city landscape, the problem was understood and articulated in terms of 'congestion', was considered to be way beyond the capacity of the Municipal Board to solve. A Committee appointed to look into the issue observed, 'there are far too many houses, and far too many people in those houses. Thoroughfares so narrow that a man has to turn sideways to pass through them are common. In the dark evil smelling lanes, the passage of light and air is impeded by projecting balconies and upper storeys. The average population per acre throughout the city area is 51.4, in Butcherkhana Khurd and in Cooley Bazaar (two localities of the city), it actually reaches 532 and 562.'[9]

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[9] Cawnpore Expansion Committee Report, quoted in Singh, S. N. (1990). <u>Planning and Development of an Industrial Town: A Study of Kanpur</u> New Delhi Mittal Publications

Policy

In Ahmedabad, as the problem was framed in two different spheres, we see that the policy intervention also occurred at two levels. In the domain of traditional ways of life versus modern-colonial ways of city making, the policy response came in the form of introduction of modern systems of urban services delivery. As a response to the second framing of the problem as 'congestion and over population', the policy response came in the form of town planning schemes.

Similarly, in Kanpur, to deal with congestion problem, the municipal board set up an Improvement Trust and for opening up of the overcrowded parts of the city. The board made a grant of approximately 333 thousand rupees to the trust between 1909 and 1918. The trust carried out a couple of decongestion projects, including the construction of a road and an over bridge during this period. But the effort proved to be utterly insufficient in comparison to the problem at hand. The Cawnpore Expansion Committee, founded in 1913, was another such committee in this series. The government resolution setting up the committee observed that there was an urgent demand 'for sites for detached and healthy houses for well to do Indians. Areas are also required for industrial settlements, model villages and similar objects. The Civil Lines are equally cramped. The Railways arrangements at Cawnpore are complicated and are not regulated by a well-defined scheme, and the constant growth of sidings is becoming a serious menace to road traffic'. [10] The committee included the elected member of the chairman of the municipal board, but he was only a member among several others from the government.

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[10] Government Resolution about Cawnpore Expansion Committee, quoted in Joshi, C. (2003). <u>Lost Worlds: Indian Labour and Its Forgotten Histories</u> Delhi, Permanent BLACK.

Politics

The local politics of Ahmedabad, which witnessed a significant shift in terms of not only its protagonists but also its overall expanding contours between the first and the second event. The politics of the city, in its modern, representative form, was still at a nascent stage, in the 1880s and 1890s when proposals for reforms in urban service delivery were introduced. Therefore, the local political process was not able to entirely influence the policy outcome in this instance. However, by the time the issues of congestion and town planning were being discussed in the 1910s and 1920s, the contours of local politics had become sufficiently capable of influencing the policy outcome. In this section, we explore the politics around the two events that unfolded and the ways in which they impacted the policy outcome. We also look at the larger political trends of the times that perhaps explain this impact.

In Kanpur, there were three important strands in the contemporary politics that had bearings on the way problem and policy came together. First, the local politics was divided along the lines of European and Indian interests especially in the first three decades of the century. Second, the trade union politics of the industrial working class, especially since the 1930s became a site of contest between the radical communists and the Congress Party-supported leadership. Third, there were competing factions within the Congress Party, along the caste and religious lines.

This multiplicity of political faultiness at the local level ensured that the spatial regulation of Kanpur could never take the centre stage of political discourse. The policy that could have potentially solved the spatial problem, which was articulated as 'congestion, often got caught in these political rivalries.

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2.3.5.2 Making of liberalisation era municipal governance

Problem

By the decade of 1990s, it was increasingly clear that the India's urban centres—its metropolitan and provincial cities—had a problem. The roots of this problem were mainly twofolds. The first root was the force of urbanization, which meant that more and more people were migrating to the urban centres from the rural areas, looking for better employment and life prospects.(Ahluwalia, Kanbur et al. 2014, Mohanty 2014) Many observers and practitioners believed that urbanization would 'perhaps be the single most important policy concern for national, provincial and local governments' (Mohanty 2014 :09) in developing countries. The fact that India was urbanizing meant for the existing urban centres that they had to cope with the challenges of provision of infrastructure and basic urban amenities. That India's major urban centres required special attention if they were to cater to the demands being put to them was underlined for the first time by The National Commission on Urbanisation, which was set up in 1985. The commission recommended direct special funds for the governance of metropolitan cities and formation of a national advisory body for their governance. However, the recommendations did not find favours and were never implemented (Sivaramakrishnan 2011 ;08-09).

The second root of the problem was the transformative changes that India was undergoing in its economic policy direction. The year 1991 witnessed a concerted effort on part of the Indian state to realign the Indian economy from the one based on protectionist policies to the one integrated to global markets and open to private capital. A slew of policy changes in industrial, trade and fiscal realms abolished what had pejoratively come to be known as 'License- Quota Raj' (Jenkins 1999, McCartney 2010). In this new policy context, Indian cities were to be geared to play

a fundamentally new role of 'growth engines'. The cities were to be the nodes of the investment of global-private capital and sites of new economic activities predominantly in the service and trade sectors. A closer look at the objectives and orientation of the JNNURM and many other sporadic government initiatives preceding that (discussed in further detail), do not leave any doubts about this new intended role for the city.

At least few of the traditional urban centres, which had been hubs of manufacturing, were faced with an added problem. Many cities, such as Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Kanpur, which had been centres of textile industry, witnessed a sharp decline, especially in 1980s (RoyChowdhury 1995, Oberoi 2017). This led to a sharp decline in economic activities and consequently employment. At a more fundamental level, with the decline of textile industry, the economic logic that governed the spatial and institutional configuration of the cities no longer stood.

Policy

The decline in textile industry in Ahmedabad and Kanpur more or less coincided with opening up of the Indian economy in the 1990s. This also meant a turn around in the urban policy. As pointed out earlier, cities were to play the role of growth engines– the nodes that attracted capital investment, which in turn, would trigger economic activities. Throughout the 1990s, even as there was an adhocism in urban policy, this is the direction that the policy was pushing the cities towards (Sivaramakrishnan 2011). The JNNURM was an attempt to put an end to the policy adhocism and come up with a concerted and a comprehensive all India level policy direction.

But Kanpur was impacted by this policy adhocism right till the advent of the JNNURM, while Ahmedabad found itself more prepared for a new relationship

between economic activities and spatial and institutional configurations. Since the 1990s, even before the launch of the JNNURM, Ahmedabad had pursued an urban policy informed by this new relationship. It was in this context that Ahmedabad began to reorganise itself institutionally and spatially. A good example of former was changes that were brought in the municipal organisation and rules to make it conducive to capital flow, and the spatial reorientation and expansion that took place.

Politics

The decline of textile industry in Ahmedabad in 1980s coincided with the emergence of politics based on *Hindutva* in the city and in Gujarat. While *Hindutva* based politics of the BJP and the RSS had a strong spatial dimension to it right since the 1980s, beginning of the Modi era in Gujarat witnessed a marriage of the discourses of *Hindutva* and capital led development. Spatial reconfiguration was the site where this marriage was most evident (Desai 14 April 2006). Politics based on these twin discourses was conducive for spatial and institutional reconfiguration of the city to remain on political agenda. This ensured the formation of a system of municipal governance with the capacity to implement the JNNURM with a relative ease and success.

In Kanpur and UP on the other hand, the political discourse revolved more along the class (Chakrabarti 2007) and caste (Pai 2007) lines in the decades of 1980s and 1990s. In the context of class and caste, it was rare that politics was spatially expressed; that urban development took the centre stage of the political agenda. And even when politics was expressed spatially, like during the tenure of dalit chief minister Mayawati, it did not take the form of formation of a municipal organization with capacity for spatial transformation.

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Chapters 4,5 and 6 of this work demonstrate how the form and architecture of the municipal organisations and capacities were determined by the (non-) alignment of these three streams.

2.4 Research Methodology

The methodology of this research is driven by its analytical framework, which seeks to investigate the trajectories of the JNNURM implementation in relation to historically produced municipal structures and practices at the city level. Given that the analysis has to be sensitive to spatial processes, two cities have been studied as cases, and given that the analysis is case oriented, as opposed to variable oriented, a *configurational comparative analysis* method has been adopted (Rihoux and Ragin 2009). Mainly two analytical considerations guided the selection of cases: first, the contrasting trajectories of implementation of the JNNURM; and second, similarities in the trajectories of their economic structures. These considerations are elaborated in the section that follows.

The fieldwork for this study was conducted in the two cities, in phases. The initial visit to the cities was conducted in September–October 2010. Subsequently, after a recess of 2 months it continued in the two cities, along with the two provincial capitals until December 2011. Since 2012, I have made several short-duration trips to the two cities to fill in the gaps in information, and to take account of recent developments.

The objective of the fieldwork was both to gather information and insights. Mainly two research tools were employed for this purpose: In-depth unstructured interviews were conducted with a range of people in the two cities and outside. The interviews

were focused on the themes of urban problems, policies and politics, keeping in mind the area of expertise of the interviewee. Accordingly, the interviewees included government officials, journalists, observers, politicians, trade union and civil society leaders, and leaders of other interest organisations such as traders and builders' organisations. The technique of *snowballing* was employed to identify and approach prospective interviewees.

Keeping the historical nature of the research in mind, attempts were made to gather published and unpublished material, which ranged from locally published books to pamphlets to government documents. The major sources of written material were local government offices, newspaper offices and archives, local libraries, private libraries and collections of several local residents. Written material in various forms— ranging from pamphlets to in house magazines—were also collected from organisations and individuals in the two cities. The work, however, also relies on secondary sources and other published histories to find information regarding the formation of the municipal organisations in the two cities. These sources have been read keeping in mind the specific objective of constructing the histories of municipal organisations in the two cities, which was analytically crucial for this research.

2.4.1   The Cases: Ahmedabad and Kanpur

Research was conducted in the cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur. Kanpur is a city in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, whereas Ahmedabad is situated in the state of Gujarat. Both Ahmedabad and Kanpur have been industrial cities since the colonial

period with textile mills figuring prominently in their industrial activities. Neither of the cities is currently the capital of their (provincial) state, though they are not too far from their two respective capital cities of Gandhi Nagar and Lucknow.[11] Both cities have been important centres of political activity that had significant implications at the national level. Geographically, neither is a port city, although Ahmedabad has closer proximity to ports, with Gujarat being a coastal state, whereas Kanpur has no access to ports since Uttar Pradesh is completely landlocked. But Kanpur has served as a major point of intersection between the north, the south and the east of India, ever since it was connected through railways in 1860 during the colonial period.

The initial interest in these two cities as cases for this study was based on these similarities. The fact that despite these similarities, the two cities belonged to different groups of good and bad performing cities in terms of the implementation of reforms as well as sanction and delivery of projects under the JNNURM. By October 2010, civic amenities projects worth 1,33,100 lakhs were sanctioned to Kanpur. This was just nearly one-third of 3,16,669 lakhs worth of projects that Ahmedabad had managed to get approved under the programme by April 2010.[12] Even if we factor in the population difference at the time of inception of the mission, Ahmedabad still had significantly higher amount for implementing development projects[13]. This variation was also true for implementation of mandatory governance reforms linked to the

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[11] Being or not being provincial capital cities is an important factor in the Indian urban context wherein the capital cities attract special attention from the provincial and central governments.

[12] Figures based on project reports acquired from the respective municipal corporations.

[13] A similar pattern can be seen in the incomes of the two corporations at the inception of the mission. Table 3.1

programme. Ahmedabad was way ahead with many of the recommendations already in place when the JNNURM was launched. Kanpur, on the other hand, faced obstacles both at the local and the provincial levels in implementing these reforms.[14]

Being industrial cities historically, Ahmedabad and Kanpur also afforded comparability in terms of structures of political economy, which allowed this work to focus its attention on the political and municipal histories of the two cities. Both cities emerged as industrial centres during the colonial period in the later part of the19th century. When the first textile mill was established in Ahmedabad in 1857, it was propelled by indigenous initiative and capital. By 1895, around 12,000 workers were employed in 13 textile mills, which increased to more than 43,000 in 51 mills by 1920 (Gillion 1968: 88). In 1960, two-thirds of industrial production consisted of textile and allied industries, which generated half of the industrial employment. In sum, the city emerged as a leading centre of the textile industry.

It is said that during the colonial period, the city of Kanpur was the second most industrialised city in India after Calcutta. During British times, mainly industries related to tanneries, cotton and woollen clothes production, sugar mills, flour mills, and refineries were established in Kanpur. The city was of strategic importance for the movement of troops from one region of the country to another. This led to development of a large cantonment base at Kanpur and contributed to the rise of a leather industry in the form of various saddle units catering to the requirements of British troops (with, for instance the establishment in 1858 of the Harness and

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[14] Reports by the KMC claim to have implemented many of these reforms by October 2010. but a closer look at these reports indicates that the process of implementation has merely been 'initiated' in most cases.

Saddlery) (City Development Report of Kanpur: 02)-. The textile industry followed in the next decade when Elgin Mill was established in 1864. The trend of industrial growth continued and the city received additional impetus during the two world wars. In the post-Independence era, Kanpur continued to be an important city. The private sector set up large units, such as many factories of the JK Industries group, Lohia machines and Duncans (ibid: 4-17). Even as the city continued to grow industrially, population growth was now no longer a characteristic. Migration to the city from the hinterland had more to do with push rather than pull factors. The city development report states that 'in the post-Independence years, Kanpur changed from a town of mill owners and mill workers to a city consisting of a large middle-class population of entrepreneurs and artisans' (ibid.:2–9).

The second significant milestone in the trajectory of development of these cities was the decline of their main industries. The process of decline began in Ahmedabad in the 1980s. In 1985, there were 85 functioning textile mills in the city, many of which were closed down by 1997. Between 1977 and 1992, there were a total of 33 textile mill closures. In Kanpur, there has also been a general pattern of industrial decline in industries such as textiles, rayon, metal, and a selection of chemical industries. The textile and Jute industries have been closed long ago. The National Textile Corporation and U.P. Spinning Mills also closed. Closed businesses included some historic industries such as Elgin Mills, JK Industrial plants (Cotton & Spinning mills, Rayon, Tube Works), Kanpur Chemical Works, Kanpur Jute Udyog, Tannery Corporation, Kanpur Textiles, Swadeshi Cotton Mills (Associates 2006).

According to the city development plan, out of total of 83 heavy/medium industries, 38 were working at the time of formulation of the CDP, whereas 45 industries were closed. As far as their ownership is concerned, three are owned by central government, six by the defence ministry, one by the state government and twenty-eight are private industries (City Development Plan, Kanpur, pp. 4-19) According to a news report, between 1992 and 1994, 38,650 textile mill workers employed by government managed mills took voluntary retirement packages. 'There was a time when Kanpur was christened the Manchester of the East because of the mill, but now it stands as a monument to the decaying industrial culture in Uttar Pradesh' laments the report (The Indian Express, 1997, June 3).

The period of industrial decline in the two cities also coincided with the period in which urban policy discourse in the country began to undergo significant changes, which were discussed in the first section of this chapter.

2.4.2 The empirical research

The objective of the fieldwork was both to gather information and insights. The choice of empirical methods of research was mainly determined by two factors. First, the fact that the exploration was going to be historical, limited the choice of techniques to be used. Second, municipal bodies and other local government organisations in India are not known for their record keeping abilities. So the chances of availing of any systematic historical data were slim. In the circumstances, two research tools were employed: in-depth unstructured personal interviews with a range of people in the two cities and outside, and gathering of published and unpublished material that ranged from locally published books and pamphlets to government

documents. The interviewees included government officials, journalists, observers, politicians, trade union and civil society leaders, and leaders of other interest organisations such as traders and builders' organisations.

Semi-structured Interviews

The method of semi- structured interview was selected as a data collection technique because it provided data that help us understand actors in their socio- political context (Gaskell 2000). Two types of key informants were identified for semi-structured interviews. The first category of informants comprised 'insiders' to the streams of policies and politics. This category of informants included political representatives of the municipal councils, key bureaucrats, business leaders and trade union leaders. The interview guide was open and indicative of topics I wished to cover focusing on reform and governance processes in general.

The second category of key informants included some of the outside observers of the reform process and the politics of the two cities—journalists, civil society actors and academics. The focus of these interviews was on gathering background information on the two cities—current socio-economic and political events, key hindrances to the process of reforms and key actors in the process. This information was used both in understanding the reform process in the two cities as well as in identifying the potential informants from inside the reform process.

In the past, I had conducted field research in Ahmedabad, and that helped me develop contacts in the city with key academics, urban experts, trade unionists, civil society actors and political leaders. While I did not have a similar research experience in Kanpur, I was able to develop contacts with academics during the course of the

project, who were either based in the city or had expertise on it. This was helpful in launching the investigation without losing much time.

Archival Documentation

The second method of data collection was archival research with two main objectives. The first objective was to gather background information on the two cities generally, but particularly on the process of urban governance and reforms. The second objective was to gather information from secondary and archival sources on the history of local politics in the two cities. I also asked key informants for materials they thought might be relevant for this research. Additionally, policy documents on urban reforms and related communication materials were procured from government agencies.

The second objective of the archival research was much more historical, and even though attempts were made to get as much primary archival material as possible, it focussed on collecting secondary literature that covers the information required for developing an understanding on the formation of the municipal organisations. The archival documentation component of the research was mostly conducted in the two cities, but some sources in Delhi were also explored. In Ahmedabad, the library of CEPT University was explored. Similarly in Kanpur the library of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) was helpful. In Kanpur, a group of local history enthusiasts, known as *Kanpuriyam,* was identified. This group was immensely helpful in identifying the material. In Delhi, the Nehru Memorial Library and National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUM) were especially useful.

Table 2.2: Methods and Objectives of Research by Historical Period

Period Explored	Key objectives	Method	
		Archival documentation	Semi- structured Interviews
Reform Period (1980s onwards)	To understand reform process and processes of urban governance at the city level.	JNNURM documents, documents of political parties and interest organisations. Collection of relevant newspaper reports	Key bureaucratic officials and political functionaries responsible for the JNNURM and municipal governance. Key political actors, belonging to political parties and members of municipal councils.
The period of Industrial Decline (1980s)	To capture how the process of industrial decline impinged on local politics.	Newspaper reports, literature produced by organisations.	Key Informants: Trade Union and Business leaders, Political leaders, Local observers.
Post- Independence Period (1950–60)	To understand continuity and changes in urban governance structures and local politics.	Archival documents, secondary literature including books, papers, local publications.	Local Observers.
Pre-Independence Period	To understand evolution of cities and structures and processes of city governments	Archival material, books and other academic and non-academic works on the history of the two cities.	n.a.

2.4.3 Issues of Access and Identity

In India and its circles of power, actual decision-making takes place not in formal meetings, and often not by people who are formally assigned the powers of decision-making. It takes place in personal conversations in informal settings by those who wield actual power. This makes the information about decision-making hard to locate and even harder to access. It also throws the identity of the information seeker right into the centre of the dynamic. What information you get depends on who you are.

In this respect, two of my identities played an important role throughout the fieldwork. My identity as a researcher associated with the London School of Economics (LSE) and my identity as an Indian hailing from a predominantly rural state marked by urban

problems. Because of historical linkages, the LSE is known not only among the Indian elite but also among ordinary people in cities such as Kanpur and Ahmedabad. So the identity as an LSE researcher evoked curiosity among people and helped in getting access to the powerful. My other identity broadly reversed the order of these reactions. My identity as an inhabitant of rural Bihar evoked curiosity among the powerful but allowed access to the ordinary people, which in the context of this research were mainly trade union activists and administrative staff in government and other offices. This mix of identities was a critical advantage because it gave me access, both to the elite and ordinary people.

Another factor that constrained information access was the general political–administrative climate, especially in Ahmedabad. I was conducting the fieldwork in the province of Gujarat when Narendra Modi—the current prime minister of India—was chief minister. He had the image of a leader who governed through his bureaucrats, but there were instances where criminal cases were filed against police and civil officials purportedly because they fell out of favour with the political leadership. The two factors put together, meant that the bureaucrats in the state felt powerful, but also vulnerable.

There was another trend relevant for this research, or any research exercise in Gujarat for that matter. The prolonged (2001–14) and controversial rule of Narendra Modi, which, many believed, was rooted in communal and divisive politics, frequently attracted the attention of investigative journalists, posing as researchers, often associated with foreign research organisations.[15]

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[15] A series of investigative reports written for web-based news magazine http://www.tehelka.com was the most important example. Rana Ayyub, a journalist who was involved in many such operations, accessed information for a book posing as a documentary filmmaker. Ayyub, R. (2016). Gujarat Files: An Anatomy of a Cover Up. Delhi Rana Ayyub.

All these factors put together, meant that many officials were reluctant to interact with me and speak about government policies. Even those who agreed to meet rarely allowed the interviews to be recorded. Most importantly, they stuck to the flat and officially acceptable narratives, often singing praises about the political leadership. I overcame this limitation by trying to get as many details as possible about particular events that they spoke of from sources such as newspaper reports and versions of lower ranking staff in government organisations, who let their guard down more readily.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter elaborates on the conceptual design briefly presented in the previous chapter and spells out the methodological design of the research. The three main parts of this chapter have presented the problem this work identifies and its relevance, the conceptual design that the work employs in order to find the answer to the research problem, and the methodological design that the research followed in the process of finding that answer.

Section 2 located the JNNURM in the larger processes of urban reforms and economic liberalisation. It also discussed the major tenets of the mission in terms of its objectives and design. The section then focused on implementation outcome and found that the success of the mission has been underwhelming. It is also identified that there is diversity in implementation outcomes across cities. The section identifies this modest success of the mission as its main research problem and sets out to find the answer in the diversity of the implementation outcome. Section 3 outlined the conceptual framework that this work employs to find answer to the research problem. To this end, the JNNURM has been conceptualised as a process of neoliberalisation

and asserts that this process involves assigning a neoliberal meaning to the city. The cities, on the other hand, have been conceptualised as historically contingent places with their specific meanings. In this context, the municipal organisation—the main site of intervention has been identified as the focus of this research. The chapter that follows demonstrates that the existing municipal capacity of the city was the key factor in determining the path of implementation outcome at the city level. Therefore, in order to explore the making of the municipal capacity and the municipal organisation, the framework developed by Kingdon has been employed to identify episodes that led to the formation of municipal organisation. Finally, the third main part discussed the methodology of this research, which includes an introduction to the two case cities and the method employed in carrying out the research.

The next four chapters present the empirical findings of this work. The chapter that follows this chapter focuses on the JNNURM implementation process and then narrows down the focus to its implementation process in the cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur.

CHAPTER 3

IMPLEMENTING JNNURM: MUNICIPAL CAPACITY AND ORGANISATION IN AHMEDABAD AND KANPUR

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the general framework and objectives of the JNNURM in the context of presenting the overall theoretical and methodological framework of the research. It showed how the urban reform process was part of a larger programme of urban renewal that can best be understood as a process of "neoliberalisation". This chapter narrows the scope of investigation to the city level in order to understand the implementation process of the mission in Ahmedabad and Kanpur. The exploration reveals that the available municipal capacity, at the time of the introduction of the reform process, determined the future path of urban reform performance. In Kingdon's (2014) terms, a window had opened allowing for the consolidation of municipal capacity in Ahmedabad *before* the arrival of the JNNURM in contrast to Kanpur. The following chapters will explore how and why this happened. In this chapter, we unpack and operationalise the category of "municipal capacity" and the specific ways in which it conditioned the reform process. In doing so, the chapter establishes an analytical relationship between the attempts of JNNURM implementation and existing institutional frameworks of municipal governance in the two cities. The chapter confirms *first,* that the successful implementation of the programme required administrative, financial and political capacities of the state at the local level, and also that in the process of reform implementation, the requirement of each of these capacities manifested itself in stages.

Second, the chapter shows that municipal capacity can be understood only through an exploration of the municipal organisation in which it takes shape, which has deep historical roots as explained in the following chapters.

The chapter is divided into five sections. Section 2 explores the structural and procedural aspects of the JNNURM implementation process. The next three sections examine three stages of the reform implementation process. Section 3 explores the process of preparation of city development plans (CDPs) in the two cities, which was the initial stage of the mission. The second stage of the mission, discussed in Section 4, involved the processes that led to the formulation of projects that were proposed in the two cities. Section 5 takes up an examination of the third stage of the mission— the process of project implementation. The chapter demonstrates that it is possible right from the planning stage to identify the determinant role of municipal capacity. The capacity of the administrative organisation came into focus at the planning stage; whether or not the municipal organisation had a coherent and efficient administrative organisation. The financial capacity of the local state comes to the forefront at this stage as an indication of the city's ability to formulate developmental projects in line with overall planning and to mobilise its own share of the overall cost of these projects. The interaction, or absence of interaction, between political and interest groups and the municipal organisation of the city comes across as a major determinant for the way in which projects are implemented. Section 6 describes the organisational framework of urban governance of the two cities and shows how it was crucial in shaping municipal capacity. Section 7 concludes the chapter.

3.2 JNNURM: Organisational Structures and Processes

The constitution of India creates three levels of governmental authorities, constituted by the central government, the state governments, and the local rural and urban authorities (Basu 2015: 13). The last level was enshrined in the constitution through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendment acts (Sivaramakrishnan 2011). The JNNURM was a mission launched by the central government of India to be implemented in the urban centres with an active role for state (provincial) governments with the objective of strengthening local urban bodies. The mission, which was conceived at the central government level, was to be implemented with the involvement of all three levels of government. Even though the organisational structure formally existed at all the three levels only two organisations at the central level—the National Steering Group (NSG) and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG)—had the authority to alter the policies for a better and smoother implementation process, while organisations at the other levels played only an execution role.

At the central government level, the mission was anchored in two ministries, Urban Development and Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation. The mission was to 'function under the overall guidance and supervision of a NSG (Government of India 2005: 03). As a 'coordinating arm of government of India', the NSG was to 'provide policy oversight and evolve policies to facilitate the achievement of JNNURM objectives' (Government of India 2005: 03). The NSG was also responsible for reviewing the agenda of urban reforms and making necessary changes if required. Chaired by the Minister of Urban Development and co-chaired by the Minister of

State (junior minister) of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation, the NSG included the senior most bureaucrats drawn from these two ministries as well as from the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance. The mandate of the NSG was to 'set policies for implementation, monitor and review progress, and suggest corrective where necessary' (Government of India 2005: 04). The NSG was supported by a national level TAG, which included experts and professionals drawn from the fields of law, environment, social and urban infrastructure as well as from civil society. The task of the TAG was to provide advisory support to implementing agencies at all three levels, that is central, state and local levels.

Two directorates were also established at the central government level to operationalize the two sub-missions of urban infrastructure and governance, and basic services to the urban poor. Two joint secretary-level bureaucrats drawn from the two ministries responsible for mission implementation were appointed as mission directors. The directorates were assigned with the day-to-day administration of the mission. The directorates were tasked with 'ensuring effective coordination with state government and other agencies for expeditious processing of project proposals'(Government of India 2005: 04). Apart from the directorates, two Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committees (CSMC) were also formed. The two senior most bureaucrats (Secretaries) of the ministries of urban development and urban employment and poverty alleviation were appointed Chairpersons of the committees, dealing with the respective sub-missions. The CSMC was entrusted with the responsibility of 'sanctioning and monitoring the projects and associated reforms' (Government of India 2005: 04) .

At the state level, the two organisations responsible for the implementation process were the State Level Steering Committee (SLSC) and the State Level Nodal Agency (SLNA). The SLSC had a monitoring role while SLNA was responsible for project implementation at the state level. The state chief minister or the minister for urban development was to be the chairperson of SLSC, with mayors of local bodies, members of assembly and the parliament of concerned urban areas as members among others. It was SLSC's task to screen and prioritise the projects identified by city level local bodies. The organisation was also responsible for monitoring the project and reform implementation (Government of India 2005: 05) . The SLNA, to be formed or designated by the respective state government, had the responsibility, among other things, to assist local bodies in preparation of city development plan (CDP) and detailed project reports (DPR), as well as to facilitate capacity building, education, information and communication (Government of India 2005: 06).

At the city level, the urban local bodies (ULBs) were the main implementing agencies, even though urban development authorities and other local agencies were also eligible to apply for projects. As discussed in the section that follows, the first task before the municipal bodies of the cities selected under the mission was to prepare a CDP. Further, the DPRs for development projects that the municipal body proposed were also to be prepared at the city level.

The project proposals originated at the city level and were sent to the SLNA. It was the responsibility of the SLNA to get the proposal approved by the state level sanctioning committee and then send it to the respective central sub-directorate of the

JNNURM. The final decision was taken at the level of the Central Sanctioning and

Monitoring Committee (Government of India 2005: 5–7).

National Steering Group

Central Sanctioning &
Monitoring Committee

Central Sanctioning
&
Monitoring Committee

Sub-Mission Directorate
Urban Infrastructure &
Governance

Sub-Mission Directorate
Basic Service to the Urban poor

Central Level

Support/Advice

Technical
Advisory
Groups

State Level Steering Committee (SLSC)

State Level

State Level Nodal Agency (SLSC)

Support/Advice

Urban Local Body (ULB)

Urban Local Body Level

Administrative Section
Urban Local Body

Project Proposal Flow   Policy Directive Flow

Figure 3.1: [*Organisational Map of JNNURM* [Source: The JNNURM Tool Kit]

3.3 Formulation of CDP

Formulation of CDPs was the first step that the city governments selected for the mission had to take. This was going to be an important document, because it was to shape the direction of the mission at the city level. Its significance in the overall scheme of the JNNURM can be gauged from the fact that the preparation of CDPs is the first among a four-point strategy spelt out in the vision document of the programme. Other strategies listed for successful implementation of the programme were insistence on the preparation of detailed project reports, inbuilt mechanisms for recovery of operation and management of the infrastructure created by the projects, and inclusion of 'private sector efficiencies'. The city development plan was therefore envisaged as a perspective plan document that would reflect the long-term vision of development of the city, policies and strategies through which the vision had to be accomplished, and a few initial concrete steps in the form of projects in line with the developmental strategy. The CDP also gained significance from the fact that the document was conceived as the main device that would bring about a bottom-up element into a mission that was widely considered as top down. Even as the formulation of the CDPs has to be done according to the framework prescribed by the mission, the content of the plan should nevertheless reflect the aspirations of the stakeholders vis-à-vis their city.

For the purpose of this study, an analysis of the process of formulation of CDPs as well as a close reading of the content of the plan document are significant for two reasons. One, this was the first task that the local municipal authority had to perform and therefore it would be important to have a close assessment of the processes

through which it was accomplished. These processes should serve, in the context of this research, as a window on the working of the municipal body at the beginning of the mission. Two, in the scheme of the mission itself, CDPs were envisaged as a foundation for reform and developmental strategy to be employed at the city level. Looking at the CDPs and their planning documents also tells us how the local state organisations envision the city, prioritises its development challenges and formulates specific projects to overcome them.

The cities included in the JNNURM were given a guideline, including a template (Government of India 2005) for the formulation of a city development plan, which was to work as a vision document for development of the respective cities. Accordingly, preparation of the CDP was to be a 'multistage exercise wherein the first stage involved assessment of the city in terms of its strengths, weaknesses, unmet demands etc. The second stage involved elaborating a future perspective and a vision for the city in consultation with various stakeholders. At the third stage of the preparation exercise, strategies were to be identified that would help the city from its present condition to the future vision that the stakeholders have for their city (Consultants 2006: 120). In sum, the CDP was to be a means for city organisations to answer the questions: Where are we now? Where do we want to go? What strategies are required? What are priority needs? Evidently, the planning process required the involvement of the people of the city. The guideline stated that "Planning and Development is a people-centric activity. Thus involve people along with other stakeholders in structured and scientific manner in vision formulation, strategic options and identification of projects" (JNNURM 2005).

Even though the policy directive flow of the mission, included in Figure 3.1, puts the administrative section of the municipal body at the core of the policy formulation process, it is silent on the role the elected wings of the municipal bodies might potentially play. Even though the mission talks about its conception of planning as a 'people-centric process', it does not specify a role for the elected representatives of the municipal bodies in making the planning process a people-centric activity. If the planning process was to be a 'people-centric activity' and people and other stakeholders were to be involved in a 'scientific and structured manner', it would be interesting to see how this goal was achieved.

3.3.1 Preparation of the CDP in Kanpur

The process of preparation of the CDP gives us the first indication of the weaknesses of municipal organisation in Kanpur. The fact that the entire process was outsourced to an external organisation, with little experience of working in, and background knowledge of the city, and the fact that the organisation produced the CDP in a short span of three months, indicate that neither did the municipal body have the professional expertise nor the organisational mechanisms in place to carry out such an exercise. The central government recognised that most municipal bodies at the city level might find it difficult to formulate a CDP on their own. The central government, in fact, anticipated that both in terms of administrative and technical capacity, as well as in terms of finances, the local bodies might need external support in order to be able to formulate a development plan. Therefore, financial provision was made within the programme for the formulation of the city development plan (Government of India 2005: 13). For administrative and technical support, the urban development

ministry of the central government short-listed around 30 organisations that could be contracted by the cities for the purpose of formulating the plan. The list, however, was only suggestive and did not bind the state governments or the urban local bodies in any way (Ministry of Urban Development 2006). In other words, the local bodies and state governments were free to contract an organisation from outside of this list if they deemed fit, or not contract any organisation at all if they decide to formulate the plan on their own.

To prepare the CDP, the municipal body in Kanpur decided to contract JPS Associates—a Delhi based consultancy firm—one of the shortlisted firms by the Central Mission offices. The firm began their work on the preparation of Kanpur's CDP in the month of May 2006 and produced the final report three months later, in August 2006. JPS Associates, a company established in 1979, does not list urban development or governance as one of the fields they specialise in. The company's profile has a list of national and international level organisations as clients. However, urban governance or urban development is not included in the four areas in which the company specialises (JPS Associates 2015).

To begin with, the consultant company (JPS Associates) mobilised a team for the project, which included the project director and a project manager along with other staff members. The team then began with fine-tuning its 'understanding of the assignment, related approach and methodology, and deliverables in consultation with the Client' (Consultants 2006: 243).

The process of drawing up the plan was then kick-started by organising a workshop with the help of the Kanpur Municipal Corporation (KMC) in which officials from

various agencies and government departments—the KMC, Kanpur Development Authority (KDA), Kanpur Jal Sansthan (KJS), Pollution Control Board, U. P. Housing Board, District Development Authority (DUDA), Public Works Department (PWD), Irrigation Department, and Archaeological Survey of India—participated. The idea behind the workshop was to 'brief the government officials about the overall concept of the JNNURM, the process involved in the preparation of the CDP', and to find out the current infrastructural constraints, as well as to understand their vision about the city. In the meeting, the consultant team 'briefed the government department officials about the JNNURM concept, meaning of City Development Plan, constituents of City Development Plan, (and) the process that consultants will adopt for preparation of the CDP.' (Consultants 2006: 247) The officials at the ranks and expertise of Executive Engineers, Project Directors and so on attended the meeting.

The involvement of the officials of the municipal organisations in the plan formulation process was more or less limited to this exercise. "We were supportive of the exercise. We provided all the data and information for preparing the CDP,"[1] observed the Deputy Municipal Commissioner of KMC who was in charge of the JNNURM.[2] However, it is fair to say that the officials of the municipal body did not actively participate in the process of plan formulation. Their role was at best limited to provision of feedback in terms of data, information and ideas. The plan document does not even pretend that the city level officials were closely involved in the process of conception and writing up of the document and that the consultant organisation (JPS Associates) merely worked as an instrument and vehicle for the municipal

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[1] U N Tiwari, Additional Municipal Commissioner, KMC in interview with the author, dated 19 November 2010, Kanpur

[2] Interview with the author, dated 23 October 2010, Kanpur

organisation and facilitated its preparation. The acknowledgment of the document begins by stating:

> This report was prepared by a multi-sectoral team led by Mr. Pritam Kapur, Project Director, who has seen the over all co-ordination and Dr. Vinita Yadav, Project Manager... (Consultants 2006).

The acknowledgement goes on to express gratitude of the project team to various officials of the KMC and KDA for their co-operation and support during the preparation of the plan document.

This non-involvement of the functionaries of the municipal organisation was also evident during the process of stakeholders' consultation. The officials of local government agencies or state government agencies and departments did not participate in the consultation with what was termed as 'primary stakeholders of the city'. The JPS Associate team carried out the entire consultation exercise and no functionaries of the municipal organisation—political or bureaucratic—participated in those meetings.

The question therefore is, why did the agencies of the local state take such a back seat in the process of plan formulation? There are two related answers to this question. *First*, the municipal authority relied on the Delhi-based consultancy organisation to prepare the plan because it lacked administrative and technical capacity to carry out such a planning exercise. *Second*, there were no mechanisms in place for any such planning exercise within the municipal corporation. When such a comprehensive plan suddenly became a requirement under the JNNURM, the KMC had no planning experience or mechanism in place for the process.[3] While the consultants did hold

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[3]   The city Master Plan, which would possibly be the closest to the CDP but which was also qualitatively different in many ways, was prepared by the Kanpur Development Authority. It took the agency a little less than a decade to prepare the last Master Plan. Director, Local Urban Bodies, Uttar Pradesh, in interview with the author, 10 October 2010, Lucknow.

meetings with some of the elected representatives, including the member of parliament from the city, and ex-mayor, it is difficult to term the process as a systematic involvement of the stakeholders as mandated under the programme. The consultant firm on their part focused on producing a document that ticked all the boxes so far as the JNNURM requirements were concerned. But neither did the document have a clear grasp of the problems that Kanpur faced nor did it spell out clearly a vision for the city's future.

3.3.2 Preparation of CDP in Ahmedabad

In the case of Ahmedabad, the trajectory of the preparation of CDP looks strikingly different in these respects. The municipal organisation in Ahmedabad had a different degree of municipal capacity available which becomes clear from the fact that the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) did not contract any one of the consultants empanelled by the urban development ministry of the central government to prepare the plan. The CDP was prepared by the local body—the AMC) in collaboration with the Ahmedabad Development Authority. Technical support for the preparation of the plan was solicited from CEPT University (formerly Centre for Environmental Planning and Technology) near the University of Ahmedabad. The authorship and ownership of the plan nevertheless unequivocally remained with the local body.[4]

This was possible mainly because of two factors. *First*, there was a planning mechanism in place within the AMC. *Second,* for technical support for the planning

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[4]   The front page of the Ahmedabad City Development Plan reads: "Jawaharlal Nehru National urban Renewal Mission, City Development Plan Ahmedabad 2006–2012, Prepared by Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority with technical support from CEPT University Ahmedabad". The front page of the City Development Report of Kanpur on the contrary reads: "Final Report, Kanpur City Development Plan, [logo of KMC] Jawaharlal Nehru National urban Renewal Mission, August 2006, JPS Associates Private Limited."

exercise, the AMC did not have to look beyond the city for in CEPT University, the city already had a research and educational institute that specialised in city planning. There was also a history of collaboration between the municipal and the research organisation.[5] Ahmedabad planning was an on-going process, and the JNNURM was going to provide an additional financial impetus in achieving plans that were already in the making.

The city plan, in its existing form, had its roots in the year 1999 when the process of preparing a comprehensive city development plan, even if not under the same nomenclature, began. A consultative workshop was organised by the AMC and Ahmedabad Urban Development Authority (AUDA) in association with the World Bank and Australian Agency for international development to brainstorm on the strategies of city development. This process culminated in the formulation of a medium term planning strategy and a capital investment plan for the city (Corporation 2006: 14). On the basis of brainstorming and consultations, a final report entitled City Development Strategy" was produced with the help of CEPT University.

Some insights emerge from a closer look at the preparation of the CDP in the two cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur. The first insight is about the planning capacity that was available within the local state in the two cities. Whereas Ahmedabad was able to produce a City Development Plan without significant external support as required under the JNNURM, Kanpur had to rely on an external consultancy organisation to do the work for them. This gives us an indication about the difference in available planning and administrative capacity at the municipal level in the two cities. *Second*,

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[5]   Utpal Kumar Sharma, Professor, CEPT University, in an interview with the author, dated 9 November 2010, Ahmedabad

whereas in Kanpur the plan was completed in a short span of three months and was clearly a rushed exercise, in Ahmedabad the process was more long-term and more structured and rooted in its recent history. Thirdly, the local municipal organisation in Ahmedabad also exhibited a better control and ownership over the planning exercise even as the technical aspect of the process was not managed internally. This was because they had the experience of collaborating with external organisations and experts, something that the municipal organisation in Kanpur lacked. So the local municipal body participated actively in the planning process even if external agencies such as the World Bank were involved in the exercise. These different trajectories of the preparation of the plan document require an explanation. Section 3.6 in this chapter argues that an explanation for this difference can be found in the ways in which the local municipal organisations are structured differently in the two cities.

3.3.3 Preparation of the Plans and the Consultation Process

Even as the raison d'être of the CDPs was to provide a coherent structure to the process of urban development in cities, it was equally significant in terms of making the planning process, and by implication the process of city development, participatory and inclusive. The CDPs were one instrument in the JNNURM - otherwise a top-down programme- that sought to include –at least in principle- the concerns and aspirations of the city dwellers in the processes of planning for urban development and implementation of these plans. Further, the long-term objective of the programme was to strengthen the institutions of local governance at the city level on the lines envisaged by the 74th constitutional amendments, which state that it was desirable that the participation of the local representative body and that of other

organisations representing the interests of city dwellers would be ensured in the planning process. The 74th amendment envisaged the city level institutions of governance as the third tier of state, autonomous from the first and the second tiers at the central and provincial levels respectively (see Annexure 2). This was to be achieved through the process of consultation with the stakeholders – a requirement as a part of the preparation of the plan. In this context, a closer look at the consultation process is instructive in understanding the extent to which the plan reflected the concerns and aspirations of the city dwellers and incorporated them in the vision, strategy and prioritisation of the programmes. The consultation exercise also provide a window into the workings of the local state in the two cities.

Like the planning process, the consultation exercise in Ahmedabad[6] was long drawn and began way before the introduction of the JNNURM. The CDP noted that the consultation process in Ahmedabad had been a three phase process: the first phase was aimed at city visioning and strategy formulation; the second phase was to evolve a social and environmental management framework; and the third phase was aimed at detailed project formulation (Corporation 2006: 3–4). The first phase of consultation began by way of a workshop that was organised by the AMC in collaboration with AUDA and the Gujarat government. The workshop, supported by the World Bank and the Australian Agency for International Development, was aimed at devising a City Corporate Plan and a five-year capital investment plan for the city. The main objective of the workshop was to 'develop a long term vision of Ahmedabad's development through a participatory process involving a wide cross section of citizens

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[6] The information about consultation process in Ahmedabad is primarily based on what has been claimed in the CDP. The section also gains insights from interviews conducted with local representatives and observers.

including elected representatives, professionals and other stakeholders groups, identifying the most pressing issues facing the city and evaluate strategies to achieve the objective' (Corporation 2006: 3). The second phase of the consultation process, undertaken in 2002–03, was much more focused and concentrated its energies on a social and environmental management framework and slum policy. The third phase of consultations were aimed at sectoral prioritisation and designing the detailed projects. The two major projects— The Sabarmati River Front Development Project and Bus Rapid Transit Project— were identified (Corporation 2006: 4–5).

However, it is interesting to note the way in which 'participation of the stakeholders' was conceptualised for the process. It is evident that the role of local representatives in the planning process was not as systematic as the role of the involved external agencies, the officials of the city administration and the involved academic organisation (CEPT) at various stages. The report does mention that the consultation process included 'elected representatives and other stakeholder groups' (Corporation 2006: 3) but does not mention them in the context of the second and the third phases of consultations. The CDP reports that the stakeholders were involved in the consultation process through workshops but does not say much about who the stakeholders were or how they were identified by the municipal body. Moreover, it does not say much about what kinds of concerns were raised by the stakeholders or how these concerns eventually informed the vision for the city that the plan document represents.

It is safe to conclude that the consultation process in Ahmedabad was envisaged as a technocratic rather than a political process. Guided by procedural requirements and couched in the vocabulary of the external aid organisations involved with the exercise,

the participation process of the stakeholders neglected the formal modes of representative politics at the municipal level. Several local political representatives who were interviewed, especially the ones belonging to the opposition parties, complained that the administrative wing reported directly to the state government in the general functioning of the municipal organisation and the political wing of the body was isolated. Himmat Singh Patel, former mayor belonging to the opposition Congress Party, observed:

> Even the local leaders of the (ruling) BJP have hardly any say in the JNNURM implementation process. It is a completely a nexus of bureaucrats, contractors and state level leadership that runs the show at the ground level.[7]

Therefore, two remarks can be made on the basis of the way this process was expressed in the document itself. *First*, it does not appear as if a fresh round of citywide consultation process was organised as the final version of the comprehensive city development plan took shape as was required under the JNNURM. Clearly, the administrative wing of the local body had been invested and proactive in projects aimed at infrastructure development and improvement of provision of urban services, and these projects required consultation exercises and the elaboration of a vision for the city. However, the nature of stakeholder consultation remained sketchy if we put it in the context of the JNNURM.

Nevertheless, it does appear that, because of involvement in these projects, the officials of the local body in Ahmedabad were adept at dealing with professionals, development experts and consultants and spoke and wrote in a language that was

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[7]   Himmat Singh Patel, in interview with the author, dated 05 September 2011, Ahmedabad.

understood in these circles. This adeptness can in part be explained by the fact that the local body was able to make organisational linkages—both vertical and horizontal — with funding, professional and academic institutions, work with them in tandem and involve them productively in the planning and implementation of various projects.[8] *Second*, the consultation process did not engage the formal representative structures at the local level. The local elected representatives were not involved in the process of elaborating the future vision for the city,[9] which seems to have its source in the ideas of the external agencies, experts, city administrators and the provincial level leadership. The explanation for local political support for the reform process in city governance without the systematic involvement of local leaders lies in the *Hindutva*-dominated recent political history of the city and the state—a theme that will be discussed in detail in Chapter 6.

In Kanpur on the other hand, the consultation process comes across as much more linked to the JNNURM and preparation of the CDP. But a closer look at who are identified as stakeholders and who are consulted, and who are not, suggests that the process that led to identification of stakeholders is not clear and as a result, it did not necessarily involve all sections of the city dwellers. The JPS Associates identified stakeholders as belonging to two categories: primary stakeholders and secondary stakeholders. The primary stakeholders were those who were direct beneficiaries of the planned projects—the ordinary city dwellers. The secondary stakeholders were

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[8]   This observation is based on my interaction with some of the officials in Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation during my visit to Ahmedabad in November 2010.

[9]   The local leaders belonging to the ruling party gave full credit to the provincial level leadership for their vision for the development of Ahmedabad. They contended that their involvement or its absence was resulted from their complete agreement with the vision that was adopted. For example, Dr Mukul Shah, former Mayor belonging to the BJP, interviewed by the author, dated 29 September 2011, Ahmedabad.

identified as those who were to benefit from the projects indirectly—'officials from state government, urban local government, the parastatal agencies and line departments etc.' (Consultants 2006: 101).

The consultation with the primary stakeholders was undertaken by involving organisations of various kinds that, in the view of the consultants, represented the interests of cross sections of society. Prominent among primary stakeholders consulted were NGOs (4), Community Development Societies (19), Industry Associations (4), Traders Associations (11), Builders and Property Dealers Associations (2) and Hotel Associations (4) (Consultants 2006: 101–07). The secondary stakeholders were drawn from various government departments and agencies involved with urban governance of the city. These were officials drawn from all three tiers of government—local, regional and national. The local government was represented by the KMC, and the KJN (local body responsible for water supply in the city); the state government agencies and departments included KDA, UP Housing Board, District Urban Development Agency and others. The Archaeological Survey of India, which is a central agency, was also consulted. In all, 23 government departments were consulted by the agency preparing the plan.

There are two methods of consultation that the consultant organisation adopted to get the feedback from the administrative officials of the local and state level departments and agencies. A workshop was organised in KMC on 19th April 2006 in which officials from various government bodies and departments responsible for governance of the city participated. 'The consultant team briefed the government department officials about the JNNURM concept, meaning of City Development Plan (CDP), constituents of City Development Plan, process which consultants will adopt for

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preparation of CDP' (Consultants 2006: 247). The second method of consultation was meetings with individual officials and meetings in smaller groups to have their specific feedback. For example, the consultant teams met with more than 25 top government officials in the city such as Municipal Commissioner, District Magistrate, Commissioner of Kanpur Development Authority and discussed with them specific problems faced by the city dwellers as they saw it, their vision and prioritisation of developmental projects under the programme. All the inputs gathered in the course of both types of consultations were kept in mind while preparing the final plan (Consultants 2006).

In sum, a comparative study of the process of preparation of plan document provides some interesting insights into the municipal capacity of the two municipal organisations. First, the role of the local state is drastically different in the two cases; it acted as the main agent in the planning process in Ahmedabad, but only as a resource in the case of Kanpur. Even as this tells us something about the administrative and planning capacity of the respective local states, it also raises some crucial questions about this variation. The answers to these questions are importantly to be found in the histories of the local bodies in the two cities, which will be discussed in subsequent chapters. *Second*, variation in the process of plan preparation also seems to impinge on the plan itself. Unsurprisingly, the Ahmedabad plan comes across as more coherent, detailed and specific in terms of its vision and strategy than that of Kanpur.

> The vision of a "Resurgent Kanpur" is to build on its twin strengths of industrial base and knowledge base. This, combined with plans to build new world class townships around the old city, would act as a magnet to attract fresh investment and spur economic development. (Consultants 2006: 138)

However, further reading of the document gives the impression that this vision was based more on passive optimism that improved infrastructure would lead to the city becoming attractive to investors than a proactive and specific strategy devised on the basis of an analysis of relative strengths and weaknesses. The sections dealing with vision and strategy did mention strengths such as location, availability of raw material, and human capital but did not specify the sectors wherein the city might have a competitive advantage over other cities. Nor did it say anything about how the city envisaged to improve industrial sectors such as leather wherein the city might have a clear advantage. The document merely listed generic measures such as improvement in law and order, infrastructure, incentives to entrepreneurs and investment-friendly industrial policy as a strategy for economic development.

The plan document of Ahmedabad also wanted to see a 'vibrant Ahmedabad'. But the idea behind it appears to be more specific than Kanpur in terms of strategy to achieve the vibrancy. The vision and strategy of the plan detailed this strategy. It began with recognising the setback that the city had to suffer due to a decline of its backbone industry—textiles—in the 1980s. The document suggested that the city had to move from the single-pronged strategy of the past (trade and then textile industry) to a multi-pronged strategy, exploiting all its advantages. The document mentioned pharmaceuticals as an example in which the city had been able to establish an advantage; it mentioned increasing locational advantage in the wake of opening of several private ports on the Gujarat coast; it mentioned the culture of trade and commerce and how that could be utilised to further consolidate the city as a trading centre. With the backing of these concrete strategies, the document then made its case for development of urban infrastructure.

3.4 Prioritisation and Preparation of Development Projects

The significance of the capacity of the municipal organisations to generate capital comes into sharp focus when examining the stage of preparation of development projects on the basis of the CDPs. This stage of the implementation of the programme also illustrates how this capacity was intractably dependent on the legacy of the financial and institutional relationship of the local body with the regional level state. A closer look at (1) the circumstances in which the two local states prioritised and formulated their projects and (2) organisational processes through which they proposed to implement them demonstrates that selection and implementation strategies of these projects were very much rooted in this intractable relationship. This section therefore aims to show how the initial financial capacity, or its absence, of the local bodies to generate their share (30% of the total project cost) determined how they envisaged these projects and formulated them. The section begins with a comparative summary of the financial-resource-generation capacity of AMC and KMC at the beginning of the JNNURM, and a comparison of projects that they proposed under the programme. In a nutshell, this analysis throws up two crucial points. One, the capacity of the municipal body mattered in the context of implementation of the JNNURM so much so that it more or less determined the size of developmental projects, the way they were prioritised and the way they were implemented. *Second*, in the context of urban reforms that were aimed at institutional autonomy of the local state in its relation to higher levels of the state, this appears to be leading towards a situation wherein the larger aim might remain unachieved even if the process of project implementation is a success.

3.4.1 Financial condition of the two local bodies at the inception of the JNNURM

If we compare the financial condition of AMC and KMC at the inception of the JNNURM, that is year 2004–05, it immediately becomes clear that the revenue and capital base of Kanpur was no match for Ahmedabad, the historical economic comparability of the two cities notwithstanding. This story of contrast rather than comparability is particularly striking on three counts: a) the AMC had a larger overall financial size than the KMC, b) the AMC generated far more revenue as a proportion of its overall income than the KMC and c) the AMC had a considerable capital account income at the beginning of the JNNURM in contrast to the KMC, which had a negligible capital account income. These factors put together made all the difference at the preparation stage of projects under the JNNURM and in terms of generation of 30 percent of the total project costs. Interestingly, these factors also impacted the reform process separately in ways that were not only related to financial constraints. In the financial year 2004–05, KMC earned 1,540 million rupees out of which it spent 1,368 million. The total income of AMC on the other hand stood at 9,421 million rupees out of which it spent 3257 million rupees in the same year, making the budgetary size of the latter more than five times larger. In the same year, KMC had no income in its capital account, and its capital account expenditure was a meagre 55.2 million rupees. In the same year, AMC earned 1359.65 million rupees in its capital account and spent 1890.82 million rupees in the same. In terms of revenue generated from their own taxation base also AMC was far ahead of KMC; Ahmedabad earned approximately 4622.97 million and 1737.7 million from octroi 10 and other taxes, respectively. But Kanpur had no internally generated income from octroi as it was

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[10] A tax levied at the entry gates of Indian cities on commodities for commercial purposes. Now it has been withdrawn from most of the Indian cities and merged with the sales tax collected at the provincial level.

abolished and replaced by a percentage of sales tax transfer from the state government. Income from other taxes in Kanpur was 293.5 million rupees.

This stark difference in financial capacity of the two local bodies led to two different paths in the implementation of the JNNURM, especially, the way the reform process would progress in the two cities. This contrast manifested itself broadly in two ways. First, the availability of capital at its disposal and its ability to generate capital helped the AMC plan and propose infrastructure projects under the JNNURM on a size and scale that was not possible for Kanpur, which had no capital fund at its disposal and hardly the capacity to raise it from the market. *Second*, the financial capacity available in the AMC meant that the process of implementation of the JNNURM would potentially lead to further strengthening of the administrative and financial capacities of the AMC. In contrast, because of the lack of capital and inability to generate it from other sources made the KMC completely dependent on the state government and its agencies and its line departments in the city for funds.

Table 3.1: Incomes of the two Municipal Corporations in per capita terms (2004-05)

Municipal Corporation	Income (In Millions)	Total Population (In Millions) (2001 Census)	Per Capita Municipal Income (Rs)
Ahmedabad	9421.62	4.52	2,084.42
Kanpur	1540.23	2.55	604.01

Source: Computed from Ahmedabad and Kanpur City Development Reports

3.4.2   Projects under the JNNURM in Ahmedabad and Kanpur

Generating the financial contribution of the local body— 30% of the total project budget—was a major concern as the KMC began to prepare the projects. The officials of the KMC explained that the initial inaction on the part of the local body to

approach the central government with project proposals was due to the absence of any investable capital at the disposal of the local body.[11] Not surprisingly, Kanpur had no project approved until as late as December 2007 when the JNNURM was nearly two years old. Ahmedabad, on the other hand, was one of the first cities to submit detailed project reports to the central government.

The plan document of Kanpur identified eight focus areas on which the overall development strategy of the city would be based. These focus areas included provision of housing to meet the demographic challenge, provision of infrastructure and law and order to facilitate economic development, improvement in public transport and traffic condition, slum improvement, improvement in social and physical infrastructure, and improvement in basic services to the poor and to the city as a whole. The strategy also included improvement in urban governance by making it more efficient, transparent and responsive (Consultants 2006: 139–49) . The CDP stated that the following sectors were identified as priority on the basis of consultation with the stakeholders:

1.   Improving transport infrastructure including improving trunk roads

2.   Improving solid waste management both in the inner core and outer city

3.   Redevelopment of inner core city including shifting of industries to conforming areas

4.   Renovating old and broken water pipelines

5.   Redevelopment of slums according to Bombay model

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11   Additional municipal commissioner and the other officials of JNNURM cell, in interview with the author, 23 October 2010, Kanpur.

6. Improving basic services in slums

7. Housing for the economically backward sections.[12]

However, in relation to this rather exhaustive and multi-pronged strategy, the Kanpur local body found it hard to translate it into specific projects primarily for two reasons. *First*, not all these functions fell in their domain. For example, both provision of water and slum redevelopment were areas outside of the purview of the KMC. *Second*, even in the projects that fell in its domain, the inability to finance 30% of the total project cost proved to be a hindrance. This inability had two outcomes that determined the path of both the processes of urban development and institutional change. *First*, lack of finances meant that the local body in Kanpur had not been able to initiate and propose as many projects as it intended to, which, in turn, meant a relatively slower urban development. *Second*, lack of finance re-enforced the dependence of the local body on the state government because it was the state government—directly and through its city-level agencies and line departments—that provided the local body's share of funds for the projects that the latter proposed.

Table 3.2 shows that KMC was able to get 10 projects approved under the JNNURM, which barely covered two of the priority areas and made some beginnings in the third. The total estimated cost of all these projects was 12,743 million of Indian rupees. The projects initiated by KMC included one on solid waste management, three on sewerage improvement in inner (older) and other areas of the city, and improvement in water supply in inner and other areas. Other projects dealt with areas like city public transport, capacity building of the corporation staff, e-governance and devising

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[12] Consultants 2006: 172

a policy for sanitation.[13] Out of all these projects KMC was able to mobilise its share of funds for just one project from money to which it was entitled from the higher level of government. The cost for KMC's share of the remaining projects were met with the help of a loan from the *Kashiramji* Development Fund, which is organised by the state government.[14]

The budget summary of the year 2004–05 presented in the earlier section suggested that the Ahmedabad Municipal Council suffered from no such financial constraint owing to its substantial earning on its capital account as well as its capacity to generate funds from the market. As a result, AMC's project planning appears to have been guided more by its strategy of urban development than the financial constraints. The areas of priority were no less exhaustive and many areas were identical with the KMC. In all, the AMC identified the following priority sectors on which the overall development strategy had to be based.

1. Environmental services: This included improvement in the provision of water supply, solid waste management and sewerage and storm water drainage.

2. Programmes for the poor: This includes improvement in the housing condition of the poor and provision of social security and livelihood security to them.

3. Urban transport: This includes roads, better provision of parking facilities and Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS).

4. Inner city redevelopment

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[13]   Information based on a Progress Report produced for an assessment meeting held on 1st October 2010 by the Kanpur Municipal Corporation. Most such documents and correspondence are written in Hindi. The translations are by the author.

[14]   Progress report submitted to the central government, accessed from www.jnnurm.nic.in on 28th February 2011.

5.   Social amenities

6.   Urban governance

7.   Urban environment including riverfront development and disaster management
      (Corporation 2006: 135).

The difference between the two municipal corporations begins to emerge as we look
at the preparation of projects on the basis of these key strategic areas.

Table 3.2: Overview of JNNURM in Ahmedabad City: Projects Approved Under
JNNURM: Sector-wise (Rs. In crores)

#	Sector	Nos. of Projects Approved	Fund Released By		TOTAL (GOI+GOG)	Exp. Incurred Till 2010
			GOI	GOG		
1	BRTS	03	172.20	73.80	246.00	443.83
2	Water Supply & Network	01	18.84	8.07	26.91	44.95
3	Sewesssrage Network & Treatment Plant	06	93.32	40.00	133.32	206.89
4	Storm Water Drainage Network	04	124.32	53.28	177.60	326.99
5	Bridges	09	58.43	25.06	83.49	183.29
6	Roads	01	13.14	5.63	18.77	56.45
7	Solid Waste Management	01	10.40	4.45	14.85	9.99
8	Heritage Development	01	6.50	2.78	9.28	0.00
9	EWS Housing	03	202.67	81.07	283.74	361.56
10	Bus Procurement	02	39.07	16.74	55.81	0.00
	Total	**31**	**738.89**	**310.88**	**1049.77**	**1633.95**

Table 3.2 Table Prepared by the AMC.[15]

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[15]   Made available to the author by the AMC in October 2010.

Overall, the AMC was able to get 31 project approved under the JNNURM which covered almost all strategic areas of urban development prioritised in the CDP. In the environmental services category, 11 projects were approved and being implemented by 2011 focussing on water supply, sewerage and storm water drainage; services for the urban poor included 3 projects for housing; urban transport had 3 projects for BRTS, 1 for road construction and 3 for bridge constructions; social amenities and inner city development included projects on heritage development and

Table 3.3: A Comparison of Projects Grant Per Capita under the JNNURM in Ahmedabad and Kanpur.[16]

	Ahmedabad	Kanpur
Number of strategic areas covered by the projects	6-7	2-3
Total Number of Projects	31	10
Total Estimated Cost of the Projects (in million rupees)	31,666	12,743
City Population (2001 Census, in million)	4.52	2.55
Project Grant Received Per Capita (In million Rupees)	7005.75	4,997.25

river front development. The total cost of all these projects was approximately 31,666 million Indian rupees. But more importantly, the AMC was able to kick start an urban development process with the help of these projects, which was in line with the vision and strategy outlined in the CDP.

Apart from these differences in terms of initiating urban development projects, the difference in financial capacity led to another significant outcome. Because of over-dependence of the KMC on provincial state government funds, the organisational structure underlying the implementation process was one wherein departments and

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[16] Compiled from the data available in project progress reports submitted to JNNURM nodal agencies by Ahmedabad and Kanpur.

agencies of the state government were present everywhere. This created an organisational maze, responsible for urban development, and which was potentially self-defeating in terms of evolving an efficient and autonomous institutional structure at the city level. The organisational structure behind the implementation of the programme in Ahmedabad, on the other hand, was less complicated in terms of its relationship with the state government. The favoured mode of project implementation for AMC seems to have been 'special purpose vehicles' (SPV). The SPVs were autonomous organisations created by the AMC to execute specific projects. Even as the administrative and political functionaries of the local body were included in these organisations in various capacities, such organisations did not come under political oversight of the political wing of the local body. This again reflected a relative marginalisation of the local level leadership in comparison to the administrative wing and the provincial leadership. The AMC created at least two SPVs—a private limited company established with a specific task—to carry out two of its key infrastructure development projects in the city: the Sabarmati River Front Development Project and the project aimed at overhauling the public transport system by creating the Ahmedabad BUS rapid Transit System (BRTS). The SPV for BRTS—Ahmedabad *Janmarg* Limited— which was created in 2007, had the municipal commissioner as chairman and the mayor, leader of the opposition in the municipal council, representative of the state government and a few others as directors. The reason given for this model of project implementation was that it cuts the administrative procedural red tape in implementation. However, it was also true that this model brought these projects out of the purview of conventional oversight of the local representative wing. Chapter 6 of this work demonstrates how Ahmedabad was able to regain its municipal

capacity following the economic and municipal decline of the 1980s, it occurred in the context of emergence of '*Hindutva* urbanism', both at the city and provincial levels. This political development also led to blurring of the institutional boundaries between the city and the provincial level.

The Kanpur plan document recognised the problem of non-availability of funds at the municipal level and its inability to mobilise funds from the market. In the circumstances, the only available route was to look to the state government for soft loans. But this appeared abundantly normal to the officials of the municipal body given the trajectory of the relationship that existed between the local government and the provincial level government. The plan document on resource mobilisation stated that 'funds provided by the state government in the form of grant to its line departments' are a potential source of financing for the projects (Consultants 2006: 170). The document also called for enlisting various state government departments and agencies that would contribute to various projects.

Even as the state government was potentially the only source of finance for the municipal corporation, in institutional terms, it meant that the relationship of dependence continued. The organisational structure responsible for project implementation that resulted from this model of funding, interlinked the state government departments and agencies and the local body in an intricate maze, making the question of institutional autonomy of the municipal structure rather complicated.

A look at the implementing agencies for various projects makes this clearer. Out of the ten projects of JNNURM implemented in the city, state government departments and agencies were involved in at least seven. The Ganga Pollution Control Unit of the *Uttar Pradesh Jal*

Nigam (Uttar Pradesh Water Corporation) was involved with the implementation of 6 projects pertaining to sewerage and water supply (KMC 2010). *Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam* is an agency of the UP government that was established under the UP Water Supply and Sewerage Act 1975 to carry out sewerage, drainage and water supply related planning and execution works all over the state of UP[17] (Consultants 2006: 120).

Similarly, the responsibility for the implementation of public transport projects in the city was assigned to Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC). Again, UPSRTC was a public sector enterprise of the provincial government of Uttar Pradesh. It was established in 1972 with the objective of 'development and co-ordination of road transport services' in the state of UP.[18]

Though in principle these departments and agencies were supposed to be working under the supervision of the Municipal Corporation for implementation of these projects, in practice that was not the case. All these departments in practice reported to the provincial secretariat of the provincial government. This led to administrative confusion at the local level and undermining of the political authority of the municipal corporation.[19]

The problems in administrative co-ordination also left scope for shifting responsibilities. In the case of Ahmedabad,[20] the AMC and AUDA were the two

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[17] This was a typical case of duplication of organisational responsibilities because UP Municipal Corporation Act 1959 stated that water supply and sanitation etc were a responsibility of the local municipal authority.

[18] http://www.upsrtc.com/history.htm

[19] The top officials of the local state are not very forthcoming about the problems with this arrangement of project implementation as they are appointed by the state government and their bureaucratic loyalties are oriented more towards the provincial than the local state. But the elected representatives belonging to the opposition are very vocal about the fact that they feel helpless in the face of what they call a 'nexus between officials and political leaders of the provincial government'.

[20] This section is based only on the documents that I collected during my fieldwork in Ahmedabad in November 2010.

agencies involved with the implementation of JNNURM projects. The AUDA was a parastatal agency of the state of Gujarat. However, there was a clear territorial demarcation between the involvements of the two agencies; AMC proposed and was responsible for implementation of projects in areas that fall under its jurisdiction, whereas AUDA was responsible for implementation of projects which were at the periphery of the city. Out of the total 31 projects, AMC was responsible for the implementation of 19 and AUDA was responsible for the implementation of 12 projects (AMC 2010).

3.5 Project Implementation in the Two Cities: Participation, Political Networks and City Politics

Encouraging the participation of the stakeholders in each stage of programme implementation was one of the key objectives of the JNNURM. The idea was to create a governance framework, which would be efficient, accountable and participatory.[21] Various measures were taken to ensure that active participation of the people was ensured in the entire governance process. This was also significant in the context of the 74th constitutional amendment that provided the basis for JNNURM's aim of creating an urban governance framework, which would be representative, participatory and accountable.

As elaborated in the first section, the planning process required that stakeholders be comprehensively consulted and both the agencies responsible for the plan preparation did run a consultation exercise in their own ways. In the case of Kanpur, the consultants preparing the plan held meetings with 4 non-governmental organisations

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[21] If not specified otherwise, the insights in this section are based on information gathered during the fieldwork in Ahmedabad and Kanpur.

(NGO), 11 Traders Associations, 8 Industries associations, and 4 Hoteliers Associations and Property Dealers' Associations each, as well as with 19 Community Development Society and 20 Slums (Consultants 2006: 101).

Further, at least one of the ten projects implemented in the city specially aimed at promoting participation of the city dwellers, under which 6 NGOs/community organisations were involved. One of the NGOs—Sarvottam Community Communication Centre—was engaged to communicate to the city dwellers the purposes of the programme. Five other NGOs were involved with running a day care centre, a community drinking water centre, a crèche and a health centre each for men and women (KMC 2010).

However, despite all these efforts made from the plan preparation process to the stage of their implementation, it is not difficult to observe that it was the participation of the people, their organisations, as well as their representatives that was absent from the process of implementation of the JNNURM. There are three levels at which absence of participation in the process of implementation of JNNURM and in the process of urban governance in general can be observed.[22]

First, the most direct and obvious channel of participation—the elected representatives of the local state—was involved in the process only peripherally. The elected wing of the local body was in transition during the preparation of the plan. But their involvement with the programme was minimal to say the least, and the JNNURM remained primarily in the domain of the administrative wing of the municipal corporation. This was reflected in the fact that the municipal council was

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[22] Based on interviews with elected representatives of the local council, leaders of various interest organisations and journalists in the city.

not able to emerge as a platform on which matters of city governance were deliberated and discussed by the elected representatives. In 2010 for example, the council met just once and just a day on which all the crucial approvals were given without much of a discussion and debate. As a result, awareness of the elected representatives of the council about the progress of the programme was shockingly low. Several reasons were given for such a disconnect between the elected representatives and the administrative wings of the local state. *First*, the top officials of the municipal corporation did not feel accountable to the elected representatives because of their linkages—both formal and informal—with the provincial state. This was the explanation that most elected representatives put forward as the most critical reason behind their irrelevance in the decision-making process of the local government. *Second*, the officials and some other observers blamed allegiance of the representatives to their political parties and politics based on party lines as the major reason why the council was not able to play any constructive role. *Finally*, some of the representatives blamed the micro nature of their constituency and the scramble for scarce development funds as an important reason why the council could not work in an united fashion to take on the bureaucratic control over the decision-making process. The argument was that since the administration had hold over funds because they were transferred from the state government, the officials used funds as an incentive for some of the elected representatives—often the ones owing allegiance to the party in power in the provincial state—to cooperate with the officials. Ravi Patni, the incumbent mayor of Kanpur, who belonged to the BJP—a party not in power at the state level at the time—observed:

We had many objections with the way projects were being chosen and implemented. But we kept quite because it was about money coming to the city for development. We did not want to be seen as creating hurdles in that. The bureaucrats exploited our dilemma and pressed ahead with whatever they wanted to do."[23]

Second, for the people of the city and their interest organisations, the municipal governance structure at the city level in Kanpur was too fragmented and powerless to matter. It was the provincial and the central level states that were blamed for failures and credited for successes. The expectations from the local body were low to the extent that it bordered on cynicism. Gopal Sutawala, a local entrepreneur and businessman observed:

The inefficiency is too prevalent, and so historically rooted that people of the city do not expect any better from the KMC. People have no reference point; they have never seen a time when things were any better.[24]

This was reflected time and again as the process of implementation represented in the local media and perceived by the people. For example, one occasion when the implementation process hit the headlines of the local newspapers was in October 2010, when a couple of days of non-seasonal rain brought the city traffic to a standstill owing to construction of the sewerage system. The newspapers ran stories for days seeking to expose the administrative inefficiency, ineptitude and corruption. It was implicit in the reports that these projects were bound to fail because of inefficient implementation.

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[23] Interview with the author, dated 3 December 2010, Kanpur.
[24] Interview with the author, dated 13 October 2010, Kanpur.

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3.5.1 Two initiatives of garbage dsposal: Public–private partnership versus community participation

A closer look at the projects dealing with garbage disposal and solid waste management in Kanpur is illustrative of the relationship between the citizens groups and the local state. Solid waste management was one of the first projects that got approved under the JNNURM in Kanpur. The project was to be implemented on a public—private partnership (PPP) model, which in this case meant essentially that the entire process of solid waste management—from garbage collection to its profitable disposal—was contracted out to a private company, A2Z Infrastructure Private Limited. The project was approved in August 2007 and the total estimated cost was 560 million rupees. The company began processing and disposal of solid waste from October 2009 and processed approximately 1500 tonnes of municipal solid waste per day. The contract to the company was extended to garbage collection and processing also in June 2010.[25]

Approximately during the same period, when the project on solid waste management was finalised and implemented, a citizens' group came up with an initiative in the same field. The Kanpur Parivartan Forum—"change for the better"—was a civil society collective, which was formed by industrialists, businessmen and other active citizens of the city. It was the local-medium-sized industrialists who formed the core group of the initiative and traders who were active members of the local chapter of The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE)—a US-based organisation of entrepreneurs of Indian origin with chapters all over the world. The group started with door-to-door garbage

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[25] http://www.constructionweekonline.in/article-6430-asias_largest_solid_waste_mgmt_project_in_ kanpur/ . Accessed on 15 February 2011.

collection in May 2008 in one of the middle-class colonies of the city—Swaroop Nagar. The group hired its own staff and created logistics for transportation of garbage at the colony level. Even as the initial fund came from the local chapter of TiE, colony level meetings were organised to encourage people to get involved and also contribute monetarily. A minimal monthly charge was also put in place for collection of garbage from households. Gradually, the organisation spread its activities and started garbage collection in at least 12 colonies of the city that covered a population of approximately 120 thousand. Over the period, the collective has also begun to intervene in other issues and has emerged as an important citizens' voice on civic matters in the city. The emergence of *Parivartan* and the fact that it emerged when the JNNURM was under implementation in the city and yet no organisational linkages evolved between the state agencies implementing similar projects and the citizens' collective raises important questions about the capacity of the local municipal authority to engage citizens and their groups in city governance. Anil Gupta the founding president of *Parivartan* said:

> I have good personal relations with the municipal commissioner and other municipal officials, but collaborating at the organisational level is a different ball game. Governmental procedures are long drawn and full of technical hurdles. Even we would not like to get bogged down by that.[26]

Clearly, in the JNNURM, there was space for private participation but not of every kind. The mission openly encouraged the participation of private individuals and collectives when profit making was the motive. But there was hardly any such space for voluntary public participation.

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[26] Interview with author, 14 October 2010, Kanpur.

In this context, it is interesting to note that the PPP-based waste management failed in Kanpur barely after a year upon the completion of JNNURM. A PPP that was awarded prime minister's best practice award in 2011, and was feted as a model of success of this partnership,[27] shut down in September 2015. A deputy director of KMC was quoted as saying that 'the company stopped operations without any prior notice' (Network 2015). The company spokesman on its part said that the operation has become unviable because of increased costs and that they have repeatedly shared this problem with the KMC officials and the state government (Ibid). As illustrated in the last chapter, the JNNURM promoted a monolithic definition of place, based on neoliberal ideas. The explanation for failure of a project, clearly inspired by neoliberal ideas has to be found in the existing meanings of the place. On the one hand, it raises questions about the efficacy of a mission that aims to assign a monolithic meaning to places across the country—places which are already imbued with meanings. On the other hand, a comparative analysis of the JNNURM implementation in Ahmedabad and Kanpur shows that places with a certain type of meaning lend themselves more easily to the process of neoliberalisation than other places, which may be imbued with different meanings. It warrants further exploration of places with different meanings and what is it that makes neoliberalisation processes difficult. As the discussion shows, it is the nature of municipal organisation and its creation of varied municipal capacity that shapes the JNNURM implementation

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[27] Ishar Judge Ahluwalia, who was the chairperson of high powered expert committee on urban infrastructure and services during the better part of JNNURM implementation period, wrote flatteringly about the PPP based waste management initiative in Kanpur. See Ahluwalia (2012).

trajectory. The institutional frameworks that govern city municipal organisations are the sites where these meanings become observable.

3.6 Municipal Capacity and Framework of Municipal Organisations

The following two broad points emerge from the preceding discussion about the trajectories of the JNNURM implementation process in the two cities.

First, the municipal organisations needed particular types of capacities at different stages to be able to make use of the mission in the best possible manner. This puts the institutions of municipal organisations, where such capacities are shaped, or are absent, into sharp focus. *Second*, the exploration of institutional frameworks has to be conducted in relation to the historically evolved place in which this takes shape.

As discussed in the preceding sections, the local bodies needed a certain amount, as well as a certain kind, of professional and administrative adeptness to be able to come up with a vision and strategy for their cities. The Kanpur municipal organisation lacked it and it got reflected in the way Kanpur approached the task of formulating the city development plan. The municipal organisation of Ahmedabad, on the other hand, had undertaken such an exercise before, so there was a mechanism in place. As soon as the city was selected under the JNNURM, the process of formulating the CDP was kick-started by entering into a collaboration with CEPT University, which had worked with the city officials before. Interestingly, there was only a difference of degree between the two cities so far as participation of stakeholders in the planning process was concerned; in neither city was there a systematic involvement of the elected wing of the local body in the process of planning. And yet this did not come in the way of

Ahmedabad getting project grants far more than Kanpur. There were other factors involved but the fact that Ahmedabad city officials were familiar with this exercise and the correct vocabulary to be used, having collaborated with international aid agencies before, played a role. This section illustrates the municipal institutional framework in which these capacities were shaped.

In Ahmedabad, the functions of urban governance were divided between two organisations- the AMC and the AUDA. While the AUDA primarily managed the expansion of the city and therefore its area of jurisdiction was mainly limited to the peripheral areas, it was the AMC that was the main organisation of urban governance. The AMC was further divided into 5 zones and a total of 43 wards. A deputy municipal commissioner headed each of these zones.

The AMC was anchored in the statute named the Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporation Act 1949. The Municipal Corporation was divided into two wings—the elected and the administrative wings. The mayor who was elected from among the elected ward councillors was at the helm of the elected wing. The councillors were elected on the basis of actual population of wards. At the time of JNNURM implementation, a total of 129 ward councillors were elected. Several committees were constituted among which the standing committee was the most powerful because the functioning of all other committees was subordinated to this committee. The administrative wing was headed by the municipal commissioner who was appointed by the state government. Deputy municipal commissioners who were assigned specific zonal or sectoral responsibilities assisted him.

As per the municipal corporation act, the AMC was assigned two types of functions—mandatory functions and discretionary functions. The obligatory functions included all major municipal services including provisions of water, drainage, sewerage primary health and education. There were in all 10 discretionary functions that the AMC carried out. These functions included maintenance of ambulance services, construction and maintenance of transportation services, educational institutions, among other things (AMC 2017).

Contrary to the situation of Ahmedabad, where municipal governance was divided between two organisations with clear spatial and functional demarcations, in Kanpur, the space of urban governance was overcrowded with multiplicities of organisations. At the time of inception of the JNNURM, there were at least 6 parastatal and municipal organisations involved with the tasks of urban governance in the city. (Figure 3.3) And that was without counting line departments of various state government agencies and departments and the Cantonment Board, which looked after the civic services of the area of the city occupied by the cantonment.

Table 3.4: Municipal Organisational Matrix in Kanpur

Institution's Responsibility			
Sector	**Planing**	**Implementation**	**Operation and Maintenance**
Land use/Master Plan/ Building Byelaws	Kanpur Development Authority	Kanpur Development Authority	Kanpur Development Authority
Water Supply	Uttar Pradesh Jal Nigam (UPJN/KDA/ Uttar Pradesh Housing Board (UPHB) FOR colonies developed by them.	KJS and UPJN	KJS and UPJN
Sewerage		KJS/UPJN	KJS/UPJN
Roads, Bridges, Flyovers, and Traffic Management	Public Works Department (PWD), KDA, Kanpur Municipal Corporation (KMC)	KMC/KDA/PWD Housing Board/ UPSIDC KMC/Traffic Police	KMC/KDA/PWD/ Housing Board KMC/ Traffic Police
Street Lighting	KMC	KMC	KMC
Storm Water Drainage	KMC, UPJN	KMC / KDA	KMC

Source: City Development Plan, Kanpur

The UP Provincial Municipal Corporation Act 1959 (amended from time to time, especially following the enactment of the 74th constitutional amendment act) gave powers and functions to KMC at par with those of the AMC. But in reality, the KMC remained one of the many organisations performing municipal functions. As shown in the Figure 3.3 besides the KMC, there was at least one more municipal organisation in the form of KJS, managing water services. Furthermore, there were 4 parastatals namely, Kanpur Development Authority (KDA), UP Jal Nigam, Kanpur, UP Housing Board Kanpur, and District Urban Development Agency (JPS Associates 2006: 108)

Two points emerge from this difference in organisations performing urban governance in the two cities. *First*, the multiplicity of organisations had implications for administrative co-ordination, financial consolidation and political cohesiveness, all of which, in turn, impacted the differences in capacities to implement the JNNURM in the two cities. *Second*, the difference in organisational landscape also reflected a difference in urban meanings—the way people have historically associated with their space. Besides playing functional roles in the governance process, these organisations also represented a historically constructed diagram of social and political power (Tonkiss 2006). To quote Tonkiss:

> Power can be difficult thing to achieve, but it gives itself away in space…. Modes of political, legal, constitutional, economic…authority are materialised in space and concretised in institutions. (2006: 60)

As suggested in the previous chapter, implementation of the JNNURM has to be understood in terms of a process of neoliberalisation, which, in turn, necessitates that we look at its implementation process in the context of existing regulatory landscapes.

The two chapters that follow, return to Kingdon's framework to explore the historical making of regulatory frameworks in the two cities.

3.7 Conclusion

Two main conclusions can be drawn from the discussion in this chapter. *First,* even if the JNNURM was a top-down mission, municipal capacity of the city shaped the trajectory of its implementation. All three aspects of the municipal capacity played a crucial role at all stages, but the analysis has focused on highlighting the linkages between administrative capacity and planning processes, financial capacity and project formulation, and political capacity and the ways in which projects are implemented. *Second,* it is difficult to understand municipal capacity without looking at the municipal organisations in which it takes shape. The municipal organisations are also important because they manifest the power relationships structured, and meanings assigned to the places known as Ahmedabad and Kanpur. The previous chapter showed how, at some level, there was an attempted neo-liberalisation of the cities, which essentially entailed introducing new institutional frameworks, representing neoliberal ideas and formulas, which assigned a new meaning to the cities. 'Actually existing neo-liberalisms' discussed in the previous chapter are outcomes of these encounters between the institutions being introduced and institutions as they existed at the city level. This insight emerging from the empirical discussion in this chapter brings the nature of existing institutions—and their manifestations as organisations of urban governance—intractably into the explanatory mix. The following two chapters therefore focus on the existing organisations of urban governance at the city level in their historical and political contexts.

CHAPTER 4

MAKING OF THE MUNICIPAL ORGANISATION: AHMEDABAD

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter establishes that an explanation of the implementation trajectory of JNNURM intractably involves municipal organisation at the city level. It demonstrates how the trajectory of implementation is interwoven in the encounter of neatly articulated processes of JNNURM with the characteristics of existing municipal organisations. Moreover, the question arises how to account for the differences that we find in the municipal organisations of Ahmedabad and Kanpur, despite their being comparable in other respects? Following this insight and mandate, this chapter focuses its attention on the characteristics of the municipal organisation in Ahmedabad. In undertaking this empirical exploration, the chapter engages the analytical insights developed in Chapter 2. To reiterate, first, the cities are understood here as places with their meanings formed through historical processes. The organisations of municipal governance are one of the ways these meanings are represented. Therefore, an understanding of municipal organisations has to be found in the historical processes through which they are formed. Second, the formation of municipal organisation can be understood, in Kingdon's (2014) terms, as episodes of coupling, or its absence among the three streams of urban problems, policies and politics. When the windows of opportunity appear for the three streams to come together congruently (what Kingdon calls 'coupling'), it leads to the formation of a coherent municipal organisation at the city level. When such opportunities do not

appear, or even if they do, and the three streams are unable to come together in congruent ways, it leads to the formation of fractured municipal organisation. This process may take place successively over a period of time. In case of the formation of municipal organisations in Ahmedabad and Kanpur, two windows of opportunities have been identified. The *first* window is located in the colonial period when industry-induced urbanisation led to the appearance of new 'urban problems' that gave rise to a range of 'urban policies' formulated to solve the problems. The period also witnessed extensive political activities in the two cities. The extent to which these political activities were related to the new urban problems that the cities were facing played a crucial role in the process of coupling and/or its absence. Nevertheless, the form that municipal organisation took continued uninterrupted until the second window presented itself, that is, from the period of industrialisation to the period of deindustrialisation. The *second* window presented itself in the 1990s following deindustrialisation when a range of factors came together leading the two cities to face a new set of urban problems, and opportunity, which required a new set of policy solutions. It was what occurred in the 'stream of politics' again, that determined if the coupling between problem and policy occurred or not. This chapter focuses on the first 'window' as it appeared in Ahmedabad, presenting an account of the formation of municipal organisation during the pre-Independence colonial period.

However, before discussing the pre-Independence window, Section 2 provides a historical background and a general introduction to the city of Ahmedabad in order to understand the context in which the formation of municipal organisation began to take shape. This section discusses city governance in the pre-colonial phase when it was based on social regulation and after, in the beginning of the colonial period, when the

process of replacing the former with a modern organisational structure began. Sections 3, 4 and 5 respectively discuss the problems this transition provoked, the policies that were formulated to tackle the problems, and the politics that the process of policy implementation was anchored in. The sections discuss two specific events, namely, the service delivery reforms initiated by Ranchhodlal, the first non-official chairman of the municipality, and intervention of the Congress collective in the process of schemes of decongestion and town planning. Section 6 analyses the ways in which these events shaped the municipal structure of the city and political practices around it, and discusses its continued implications during the initial decades of the post-Independence period.

4.2 Historical Background: From Medieval Capital to Manchester of the East

4.2.1 The medieval city and community governance

There are two historical legacies that have significant bearing on the structures and processes of municipal organisation in Ahmedabad in the modern period: the *first* is its medieval origins that have had a significant impact on the nature of community participation in urban affairs. The *second* is the colonial takeover of the city that shaped the structures of municipal organisation.

In the year 2011, Ahmedabad completed six hundred years since its foundation. Six hundred years ago, in the year 1411, the ruler of Gujarat, Ahmed Shah, 'laid on the ground the first brick for building of the great city of Ahmedabad, which has no equal among the cities of Hindustan'[1](Yagnik and Seth 2011: 2). The original plan of the

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[1]   Nizamuddin Ahmed, a famous historian in the Mughal Court, writing about the foundation of Ahmedabad. Quoted in Yagnik and Seth (2011).

capital city included a royal campus that was quadrangular in shape with four gates; it was spread over the area of about sixteen hectares. The only surviving structures from this original capital campus are the Bhadra towers, the Ahmed Shah Mosque and the Teen Darwaja. Beyond major structural and architectural landmarks, the architecture that developed around the daily lives of ordinary people in the city over the period of time reflected its multi community character. Raychaudhuri (2001: 680) observes that pre-modern Ahmedabad resembled both a Hindu town and an Islamic city in the sense that its spatial organisation reflected its ritual cosmography. But on the other hand, spaces used for commercial, religious and residential purposes were not separated from each other. If a *pol* (a traditional form of housing cluster) often worked as a residential pattern of community segregation, there were *pols* that accommodated a mix of castes and communities. This mixed spatial pattern was to become politically significant in the early 20th century when the colonial system of urban governance started to be imposed on the city.

The 1961 Census Report succinctly identifies the historical phases that the city witnessed since its foundation. It observes that the city 'has passed through five historical periods—two of prosperity, two of decay and one of revival'(Government of India 1961: 41). The period after the first hundred years of foundation, roughly until 1510, was described as a period of continuous growth and prosperity. The sixty years that followed was a period of decline. The next one hundred and thirty five years of Mughal control (1570–1705) witnessed renewed prosperity. The next phase of one hundred and ten years (1706-1817) was a period of disorder and decline. The last period beginning in 1818 was a period of steady progress (Government of India 1961: 41). The initial phase of progress and prosperity beginning with 1411, also coincided with the period of strength of the Gujarat

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Dynasty rulers. However, the dynasty gradually declined over a period of sixty years (1512–1572). The Mughal takeover guaranteed a prolonged period of stability and prosperity from 1573 to 1706, but again, as Mughal control weakened, and the city witnessed a frequent change of guard between 1707 and 1817, disorder and decline was the order of the day. In 1818 when the East India Company took over, Ahmedabad began a long process of recovery and of establishing itself as one of the major industrial centres in this part of the world.

In the year 1780, the British East India Company mounted a successful attack on the city under the leadership of General Goddard. The Company had already taken over Surat in 1759 and Bharuch in 1772. However, following a pact between the Company and the Peshwa, the former handed over the control of the city to the Gaekwad on a lease. All that was left behind was a Company garrison. This was a period of frequent upheavals for Ahmedabad. Around the turn of the century, there was a famine caused by failure of monsoon and causing a mass influx of Marwaris into the city. That was followed by the spread of bubonic plague that engulfed the entire city. It was rare to find any family unaffected by the plague (Government of India 1921).

It appears that the first systematic, demographic and geographical survey of the city was conducted in 1824. According to the survey report, there were a total 29,199 houses in the city of which 22,282 were Hindu; 6,913 were Muslim and 4 were Parsi households. The survey also indicates that the eastern side of the river was more populated than the western side (Yagnik and Seth 2011: 104). Similarly, a census conducted in 1825, reports the city population of 78,289 divided into communities, castes and sects, and were politically and socially controlled by traditional Panchayat

system. The system of Panchayats, which controlled relations between social groups functioned along with the commercial and occupational control of *Nagarseth* (Chief Merchant) with the help of Mahajans (traders) representing each of these groups (Yagnik and Seth 2011: 105).

Table 4.1: Ahmedabad Population[2]

Year	Total Population
1872	128,505
1881	137,041
1891	159,366
1901	199,609
1911	232,777
1921	274,007
1931	310,000
1941	595,210
1951	842,641
1961	1,156,788

According to the Census of India in terms of demographic size, Ahmedabad was already the second largest city of the Bombay presidency with a total population of 128,505. Between 1872 and 1921, population of Ahmedabad grew faster in proportional terms than that of Bombay (Government of India 1921: 51).

On the economic front, the 1961 Census reports that the economic activity in the city thrived on 'three threads', namely, the cotton, the silken and the golden (Government of India 1961b: 42). The East India Company opened its trading centre and factory in the city in 1615. Its Dutch counterpart followed suit three years later. With the entry

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[2]   Census of India 1921; Census of India 1961.

of the two European companies the production of textiles became increasingly market-oriented (Yagnik and Seth 2011: 46). There were significant changes in the city economy in the 19th century. Because of several factors, but mostly because of improved law and order situation and changes in tax structures, the volume of trade to and from Ahmedabad increased markedly. Secondly, because of the introduction of railways, the relationship of Ahmedabad with other trading centres changed significantly. Finally, as the volume of trade increased, it also led to a decline and change in the character of trade during this period (Raychaudhuri 2001: 682).

It was the informal position of the *Nagarseth* (loosely translated as the chief merchant of the city) that looked after the public matters of the city. The turning point however came in 1725 when *mahajans* (merchants) of the city decided to make a permanent 'grant' to the *Nagarseth* family as an expression of their appreciation. This grant gave them the power to tax a quarter per cent on all goods entering and leaving the city. Interestingly, not only did the Hindu and the Muslim merchants participate but also the English, the Dutch and the French merchants, who gave their word of honour to pay the prescribed tax (Yagnik and Seth 2011: 71–72).

If the leadership of the community-based *mahajan*[3] systems of trade and city governance came from the institution of *Nagarseth* the community association found its spatial expression in the *pols*. The pols were organized into councils, which represented them socially and politically. The elevation to and hierarchy within the pol council seems to have been determined by wealth, caste and power hierarchies prevalent in the

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[3] A community based organization of trading function; caste and community regulated entry into and functioning of a particular trade. For details see Gillion, (1968).

pol (Yagnik and Seth 2011: 94). The council strictly regulated the everyday lives of its members. The *pol panch* also regulated rental, sale and purchase of houses as well as the entry of new members into the pol. A report included in the Census 1961 (Government of India 1961: 277) observes that Ahmedabad was the first Indian city where 'people voluntarily came forward to tax themselves' for the provision of certain civic amenities. This practice took root in the period immediately after the Company takeover of the city in the 1830s when the city was in a dilapidated state after frequent and continuous wars in and around it, affecting economic activities and social life.

4.2.2   Colonial governance of the 'Manchester of the East'

The period of political uncertainty ended in the year 1817 when the lease period of the Gaekwad came to an end and the collector of Kheda, JA Dunlop, took charge of the city (Yagnik and Seth 2011). This transfer of authority signifies the formal integration of Ahmedabad into the Bombay Presidency and into the administrative structure of the East India Company. With this began the transition of the city governance from a structure based on community and informal traditional rules to one based on formal colonial structures and bureaucratic rules. This was also the period that saw Ahmedabad undergo a change in its underlying economic structure. By the end of the 19th century, the city had transformed itself from a centre of trade to a centre of textile industry.

In 1830, a precursor to the formal municipal organisation came into existence when a small committee of four persons, two government officials and two non-officials, were formed to manage local and civic affairs of the city (Gillion 1968: 110; Gazetteer 1984: 651). The two official members of the committee were to be the

collector and the judge while the two non-official members were the *Nagarseth* and the *Kazi* (Head of the Mosque). The committee came to be known as the Town Wall Committee. The Town Wall Committee played a significant role in the transition and indeed integration of the traditional indigenous system of city governance in Ahmedabad into the modern state structure that the British sought to introduce during this period.

The Town Wall Committee continued to function even after the wall repair work was over. In 1844, Bombay government published a draft act that conceptualized the idea of formation of municipal bodies in cities. The draft had to be dropped eventually because of widespread protests from Ahmedabad and elsewhere against the proposals to introduce house and property taxes—a practice alien for the city dwellers of the time. In 1852, on the suggestion of the Collector, who wanted to put the Town Wall Duty on a proper legal footing, two hundred and seventy one leading city dwellers petitioned the government for the formation of a municipal body in Ahmedabad. The government accepted the proposal and formed the municipal body with effect from the 1st of January 1857 (Gazetteer 1984). In all, thirty municipal commissioners were appointed. These commissioners included fourteen government officials (both European and Indians) and sixteen non-official members. While the non-official members included the *Nagarseth* and the *Kazi*, others included leading members of the Hindu, Muslim, Jain and Parsi communities. Even though a majority of Indian members did not speak English and their participation in city affairs was passive, the most prominent among them, such as the *Nagarseth*, or the *Kazi*, were able to influence the decision-making process from time to time. During the proceedings, the collector moved a majority of the motions, and more often than not, these motions

were passed, however there were occasions when the majority refused to tow the official line and rejected proposals.

In sum, the Town Wall Committee made the process of transition from the traditional community-based governance of the city to one based more on impersonal bureaucratic processes. However, this transition occurred in such a way that at least some elements of the community-based structure percolated into the new bureaucratic structure. This continuation ensured that the norms of state practice that were to inform and guide municipal governance in the city in the decades and centuries to come were able to establish a sense of ownership and participation among the city dwellers rather than passivity and alienation.

Some of the functions that the municipal body carried out in its initial decades included maintaining fire engines, street lamps on main streets, watering the main roads and scavenging. The collection of taxes was ordinarily carried out by the commission's own employees but there were times when it was contracted out.

From 1862, the commission also made contributions to the vernacular and English schools in the city. It also paid for vaccinations, health care centres and asylums. A full time health officer was appointed in 1875 (Gillion 1968: 128). The municipal body undertook the repair of Kankaria, a water reservoir first completed in 1451, spread over 72 acres with an adjacent garden. Apart from these activities, the municipal body also built parks, bridges, and a vegetable market, and restored some of the important historical and religious monuments.

However, two of the most important functions that the municipal body undertook were the provision of piped water and construction of underground drainage.

In 1877, the municipality prohibited the construction of deep-well latrines and by 1879, it closed all the existing ones. From 1870, the municipal body also began to impose a cess on the owners of latrines. Known as *halkhor* tax, it was imposed in all of the city by the year 1890. Measures were also taken for the cleaning of household, municipal and pol latrines by municipal servants. By 1884, provisions were made for carrying of night soil through tramway carts outside the city.

The idea of making municipal governments in India fully elected came from Lord Ripon, who was the Viceroy in 1880s. The reason for getting elected local governments was not guided by the logic of participation, better governance or efficiency. The move was guided by the logic that it would be a process of political education for the city dwellers— something that can prepare them for democratic citizenship. The Bombay Presidency initially resisted the idea on the grounds that it was too radical and somewhat premature. Such a move may, it was argued, deteriorate the standards of urban governance in the cities of the Presidency, which were considered to be relatively better governed than their counterparts in other regions. It was on these grounds that the Bombay government accepted the idea only on a 'tentative and experimental basis' (Gillion 1968: 133–4). Under the new provisions, at least half of the members of city municipalities were to be elected. Though the Presidents of municipalities were still not to be elected, the position was to be filled with a private, non-official individual wherever possible.

It was in March 1883 that the first municipal elections were held in Ahmedabad. For the first time, representation in the local urban governance of the city was based on geographical wards, rather than on castes or communities. However, there were apprehensions right from the start that the new way of representation might not allow

representation of certain communities, especially the Muslims. The apprehension came somewhat true when results for the first elections were announced and no Muslim emerged a winner. Among the winners were Hindus, Jains and Parsis, with their professional backgrounds in law, education, administration and business and trade. Prominent members of society also found canvassing and asking for votes a demeaning exercise and therefore were reluctant to contest. But the government still had the power to nominate members of the municipalities and some of these prominent members were nominated (Gillion 1968: 135).

4.3   The Problem: New Challenges of Urban Governance

The inception of colonial municipal structure in the city triggered a process, which in effect, involved a redefinition of the 'meaning' of the city. This was most apparent in the way the colonial exigencies of city-making, which were primarily based on segregating military and other European city dwellers for health and safety reasons, rendered the traditional city structure 'a problem'. This was also associated with the spatial implications of the transition of the city from a trading to an industrial centre since the mid19th century.[4] The city that was organized around community-based trading was gradually transforming into a centre of industrial production with a burgeoning industrial working class. This transition had its spatial implications, which required a new set of governance solutions.

In this context, there are two levels at which the problem of urban governance came to be framed in Ahmedabad. *First*, the introduction of municipal structure introduced a

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[4]   Even as the management and financial practices in the newly formed industrial sector was still
        shaped by the traditional community based practices. See Gazetteer (1879).

'modern' gaze on the traditional medieval spatial organisation of the city. The medieval trading city of Ahmedabad had its own ways of spatial organisation as well as its governance. The preceding section described its basic tenets. But to reiterate briefly, land use was, what would be understood in the modern vocabulary of urban planning, as mixed land use, in the sense that business and professional on the one hand, and personal on the other, were not spatially segregated. There were no separate business districts and residential enclaves. Similarly, the social structure regulated both business practices as well as conducted urban governance. In sum, this was a city where different aspects of city dwellers' were intractably intermingled, and this phenomenon reflected itself spatially. But this encounter played itself out in the domain of urban service delivery, particularly in a debate about insufficient and outdated systems of water supply and sewerage. The introduction of a modern technology-based water supply and sewerage systems was seen as a *policy solution* to this problem. *Second,* as the city expanded following industrialisation, the city witnessed a haphazard growth. This problem was perceived as a problem of overpopulation and congestion. We will see in the next section that town planning was also seen as a *policy solution* to this problem.

This traditional way of city making came under scrutiny for the first time when the first elected municipal chairman, Mr Ranchhodlal Chhotelal, found that the problem of excessive mortality in the city was linked with traditional methods of water supply and waste disposal, a system which was under strain and in need of repair anyway. Moreover, the city witnessed a rapid population growth in the second half of the 19th century (Mann 2014), which continued in the 20th century as well. The population was estimated around 128 thousand in 1872, which increased to around 232 thousand by 1911 (Table 4.1). Owing to this rapid population growth, municipal limits were

expanded in 1875, 1879, 1881, 1892, 1900 and 1911, much to the chagrin of the villagers occupying these areas (Gillion 1968: 146–148). But the expansion of municipal limits was hardly a solution given the fact that the municipality, as it existed, had no planning function or capacity.

As a result, even the location of new mills was guided by convenience rather than planning. Because the mill workers could not have lived too far from their workplace because there was no notion of public transportation yet, they settled around the mill areas, often built by the mill owner or other wealthy businessmen (Yagnik and Seth 2011: 170). These factors together resulted in two distinct characteristics: (a) vastly increased population density in the old city area and (b) a very haphazard growth in the areas where mills were established.

The urban sprawl that emerged as the habitation of the working classes were known as *chawls*. The *chawls* were congested, cramped spaces in which many workers often shared a single room. It is worth noting that the initial migration did not include workers' families accompanying them (Yagnik and Seth 2011:165). A special report included in the census of 1931 that investigated the living conditions of the working class both in Bombay (now Mumbai) and Ahmedabad reported that the working class areas were 'overcrowded'. It was reported that 'overcrowding was found not to be rare. In the cases examined, there were 57 tenements occupied by 6 to 11 persons each'(Sorley 1933: 107). The report stated:

> In Ahmedabad… the average floor space per person is 47:36 square feet (38:29 in one room tenements and 13:30 square feet into huts). 45.6 percent of the working class tenements examined had no windows at all. 29.5 percent had one window. Municipal privies were used by 28 percent of the population examined. 23.3 percent of the private water taps served more than 16 tenements each. Spodek, H. (1969:107)

Unsurprisingly, the population density in the city was extreme. As early as 1782, the number of persons per square mile in Ahmedabad was 53,435, which was greater than Bombay and double the density of London. By 1902, the density within the city limit was 60,000 per square mile (Gillion 1968: 144). G V Mavalankar, a local lawyer activist who went on to become the first speaker of the Lok Sabha described the abject conditions in Ahmedabad thus:

> A five foot and a half man would not be able to stand upright in that space, that's how high it was. And its breadth was not enough for him to sleep with his legs stretched out. At that time, the monthly rent of such a space was Rs 3. There was no water supply in the chali (chawl). Toilets were few and so filthy that one had to look no further to get a glimpse of hell. (Sorley, H. T. (1933:170)

In sum, therefore, the problems of city governance reflected at two levels. At one level, it was the problem of changing the methods of provisions of urban amenities; at the other level, it was about spatial planning that solved the problems of over population and congestion.

4.4   The Policy: Urban Service Delivery and City Improvement Schemes

As the problem was framed in two different spheres, we see that the policy intervention also occurred at two levels. At one level, the transition of a medieval city into a modern industrial city resulted in problematizing the way in which people associated with the city space. The first encounter was in the domain of urban service delivery and its fault line was drawn around the issues of traditional habits, and the notions of hygiene and purity, versus a modern technology-based policy response. This encounter was taking place towards the last decades of 19th century following

the introduction of elections in the municipality in 1883. The main protagonist of this encounter was the first non-official chairman of the Municipality Mr Ranchhodlal. The second framing of the problem was more about congestion and over-population. This encounter occurred as industrialisation was well underway in the second and third decades of the 20th Century. The main protagonist of this encounter was the Congress collective led by Valabh Bhai Patel. The *policy response*, in this case, came in the form of town planning and 'city improvement' initiatives.

Mr Ranchhodlal was a mill owner and therefore unsurprisingly a great admirer of the power of modern technology. A British official, who had worked as the district collector of Ahmedabad when Ranchhodlal was the chairman wrote Ranchhodlal's biography. The official described Ranchhodlal as the 'father of modern Ahmedabad; and the 'ablest, most courteous and most progressive Hindu gentlemen with whom it was ever my lot to be associated during my 35 years career in India' (James 1920: i–ii). This modernist and progressive outlook was in full display once he took over as the chairman of the municipality.

In December 1883, Ranchhodlal sent a memorandum to the Bombay government that listed the urgent need for improvements that the municipality should undertake. The list included proposals on various issues but modernizing the water supply system and introduction of a new drainage system were the two proposals that he pursued with vigour. When the Bombay government received the document, the Sanitary Commissioner commented patronizingly, which was not uncommon for the time, that it was a 'remarkable document for a native gentleman to have written' (Gillion 1968: 136). Once he had identified his priorities, Ranchhodlal visited Calcutta to gather

information on the problems and consult the 'experts' on the subject. Ranchhodlal analysed the mortality rates of the cities of Ahmedabad, Bombay and Pune and concluded that the mortality rate in his city was much higher in relative terms than in the other two cities. His diagnosis was that widespread Malaria was the main cause behind the excessive mortality rate. And in order to contain the spread of malaria, a complete revamp of water distribution and sewerage systems was required. (Yagnik and Seth 2011: 174).

The problem though was that introducing the piped-water distribution and a sewerage system also meant doing away with the traditional methods of water distribution and disposal of human waste. The traditional methods were in accordance with both the notions of purity and social hierarchy, which the modern system threatened to completely overlook. The traditional method of water supply was based on aqueducts, wells and step wells. But aqueducts had fallen into disuse and now the supply was generally from wells or the river, or in some cases, from cisterns containing rain water collected from roofs (Gillion 1968: 129–31). Similarly, the work of disposal of human waste was carried out by *bhangis* who belonged to the caste of untouchables and who collected and carried the human waste (Tam 2012). The proposed system was based on piped supply of water and an underground sewerage system.

Similarly, as discussed in the previous section, the issue of urban congestion and overpopulation acquired the attention of government following a major plague outbreak in Bombay in 1896. So the discussion about town planning in India began piggybacking on a public health issue. The objective was especially to protect the military and other officials and the rest of the European population in the Indian

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cities. Outbreak of plague and other epidemics was a major health hazard for them. Decongesting the inner city areas was perceived to be an imperative in order to prevent the outbreak of epidemics (Datta 2015).

This gave a fillip to the urban planning movement in India. The development in the domain happened at both the academic and practice levels. At the academic level, associations were formed and journals were started. This also led to the process of lobbying with the government to recognize town planning as an important governmental function (Datta 2015). The outbreak of Bombay plague in 1896 gave this argument much needed weight, and this led to the establishment of Improvement Trusts in Indian cities and towns in the subsequent years. Predictably, the first Improvement Trust to emerge was in Bombay in 1898, followed by one in Mysore in 1903 and one in Calcutta in 1911. The United Province passed the United Provinces Town Improvement Act in 1919, and trusts were formed in both Lucknow and Kanpur in the same year (Singh 1978: 33–5).

Even if these trusts were modelled on the British National Housing Reform Council, which gave special attention to the living standards of the poor (Mann 2014), it was soon clear that the Improvement Trusts were adopting a Haussmanian model of prizing the inner towns open in a quest to find a solution to the congestion problem (Datta 2015). Ahmedabad was a significant exception to the list of cities where an Improvement Trust was formed. But the government did attempt to implement the same recipe of solution in Ahmedabad that the Improvement Trusts were using elsewhere. The Bombay Town Planning Act of 1915 was the legal framework for such attempts (Gillion 1968: 149). However, the way politics was shaping up in the

city and elsewhere around this time played a key role in influencing the urban planning trajectory of Ahmedabad somewhat differently.

4.5 The Politics: Elite Engagement and Urban Nationalism

The framing of the problems and policy solutions that got associated with them were anchored in the local politics of Ahmedabad, which witnessed a significant shift in terms of not only its protagonists but also its overall expanding contours between the first and the second event. The politics of the city, in its modern, representative form, was still at a nascent stage, in the 1880s and 1890s when proposals for reforms in urban service delivery were introduced. Therefore, the local political process was not able to entirely influence the policy outcome in this instance. However, by the time the issues of congestion and town planning were being discussed in the 1910s and 1920s, the contours of local politics had become sufficiently capable of influencing the policy outcome. In this section, we explore the politics around the two events that unfolded and the ways in which they impacted the policy outcome. We also look at the larger political trends of the times that perhaps explain this impact.

4.5.1 Plumbing a 'modern' Ahmedabad: Politics around urban service delivery reforms

The modern impulses that were shaping the projects of water supply and underground sewerage system found support in the colonial government and opposition in other municipal commissioners, the local press and general public, almost in equal measures. The actors of local politics found themselves in two opposite camps. On the one side were Ranchhodlal and the local and provincial officials of the government who supported his move to modernise the water supply and sewerage systems. On the

other side were the majority of other municipal representatives, the local vernacular press and other city dwellers. If the pro-reform group included Ranchhodlal who had put his hard-earned goodwill at stake for the city's reform, the opposition group also included many respected names of Ahmedabad who had contributed to the civic life of the city (Gillion 1968: 137).

The opposition group had multiple reasons to oppose the reforms, but we can broadly categorise them as technological, financial and socio-political.

Technological reasons: Many argued against the scheme because they were not convinced that the technology guiding it was sufficiently tested and suited Ahmedabad's conditions. This was supported by the argument provided by the former collector of Ahmedabad Theodore C Hope, who suggested that the technology being proposed was untested and too advanced for Ahmedabad (Tam 2012). Mahipatram Rupram, one of the main voices of opposition, argued that the proposal was self-defeating because the gas emanating from the proposed underground drainage would poison air in the narrow and ill-ventilated streets. Similarly, many were worried that the piped water supply would lead to dampness in congested colonies (Gillion 1968: 137–38).

Financial reasons: The financial argument was the exorbitant cost of the scheme and ensuing increase in taxation. Theodore Hope also talked about the scheme being too costly, which found great resonance with the majority of the commissioners; they found increasing the tax burden on themselves and other city dwellers as completely unacceptable. Taxation was already a sensitive matter when the controversy around service delivery reforms erupted. Traditionally, Ahmedabad has had octroi and no house or property tax. The people of Ahmedabad and the representatives preferred the

octroi, but the government had abolished octroi and had levied a house tax. On its formation, the municipality had attempted to restore octroi, but the provincial government quashed the move. The concern was that the new scheme consolidated the argument further in favour of a house-based taxation (Gillion 1968; Tam 2012).

Socio-political reasons: However, it were the socio-political reasons that galvanized most people against the scheme even if these reasons were the least articulated among the three. Even as both water supply and disposal of human waste were processes of people interacting with their city space, both these processes were also implicated in the traditional social structure and helped its perpetuation. Both procurement and consumption of water were closely associated with the Hindu notions of purity and social distinction. The traditional ways of households procuring or storing water was in harmony with this notion while a common supply of water to be used indiscriminately by everyone disturbed this harmony (Gillion 1968). Similarly, the process of human waste disposal had traditionally been based on social assignment of this task to the caste of untouchable *bhangis.* It was this group of people which collected human waste from the households, carried it and disposed of it. While the sewerage system promised to end this dehumanizing practice, it also threatened to break the traditional linkages of caste and occupation. It alarmed the city dwellers that the caste of *bhangis* would no longer be carrying out the work that is socially assigned to them; that they would be seeking other occupations (Tam 2012), which, in turn, would prize the traditional social structure apart.

In order to win the political battle that ensued, both the groups enlisted 'experts' and their opinions. The opposition camp approached Theodore Hope, and he obliged with

a memorandum detailing his reasons against the reforms. To counter, Ranchhodlal even wrote a memorandum to Florence Nightingale requesting her to support the proposal of underground drainage. The supportive officials of the Bombay government were brought to the city and Ranchhodlal called a meeting in which the officials were to convince the commissioners who opposed the move. But the majority of the commissioners boycotted the meeting, which was called off because of lack of quorum (Gillion 1968: 137–8). As the local press was completely against the scheme, Ranchhodlal decided that The Ahmedabad Municipal Records would be published both in English and Gujarati so that they would be accessible to the common people, who, he thought, were being swayed against his proposals by negative coverage in the local press.

Eventually, a compromise was reached whereby the opposition agreed to allow the improved system of water supply. In return, Ranchhodlal dropped his plan for underground drainage and opted for collection of sullage water of the city in carts. However, the Bombay provincial government, which had so far refused to interfere in the matter, refused to sanction money on the basis of this formula and asked the municipality to seek expert opinion instead. The local press criticized the government for its 'interference'. But the municipality decided to opt for underground drainage in one ward on an experimental basis. This drainage became functional in Khadia ward in 1895. In 1903, the system was extended to other parts of the city (Gillion 1968: 139–40).

Thus, the reforms in service delivery were achieved albeit with a little helping hand of the provincial government. These initiatives proved to be a landmark and pioneering for urban service provision in Ahmedabad. It brought the issue of urban governance

right to the centre of public discourse of the city, in which most sections of the society got deeply invested. But the episode also showed that the politics of the city in its representative form were still in a nascent stage with a deep chasm between modernizing impulses represented by Ranchhodlal on the one hand, and the traditional tendencies on the other, which opposed the former. Unsurprisingly, the coupling of urban problem and the policy solution could not take place through the local political process alone; the provincial government played its part. The weakness that the municipal organisation showed following the demise of Ranchhodlal can be understood in this context. After his death in 1898, the municipality had as many as four different presidents in the coming ten years. In 1909, the commissioner for the northern division recommended that the municipality be superseded on grounds of complete breakdown of services, which may cause public health problems. It was suggested that the problem was that the important committees were in the hands of members with an obstructionist attitude and the president was not capable enough to control them. In May 1910, the provincial government superseded Ahmedabad Municipality on the grounds of alleged incompetence. Sir Chinubhai Madhavlal, grandson of Ranchhodlal, was appointed the chairman of the committee to supervise urban affairs. A chief officer with executive powers was already appointed in 1909. In 1915, the elected municipality was restored, though a new powerful position of Municipal commissioner now replaced the chief officer (Gillion 1968: 142–3).

4.5.2   Planning a modern Ahmedabad: Politics of the Congress Collective

Even as town planning earned currency in policy discourse (Section 4.4) and came to be institutionalized in the form of Improvement Trusts across Indian cities and towns,

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Ahmedabad was an exception where an Improvement Trust was not formed. However, this does not mean that the congestion and over-crowding was not on the policy agenda. In 1916, following the enactment of Bombay Town Planning Act of 1915, the government tasked A E Mirams, consulting surveyor to the government of Bombay, with the responsibility of a comprehensive plan for the city. It was this plan that would work as a framework for city improvement in Ahmedabad (Gillion 1968: 149).

This coincided with the restoration of the municipality in 1915, following which, a group of leaders belonging to the Congress party with a deep interest in city affairs got themselves elected to the municipality and began to challenge the British vision about the city. This was the period that witnessed the beginning of a new phase in the history of India's struggle against the colonial rule. It was the colonial presence in the form of East India Company first and then direct British rule in the 19th century that shaped, and provided a larger political context to the system of urban governance in Ahmedabad. However, in the first few decades of the 20th Century, it was no longer uncontested politically, nor was its vision of urban governance unchallenged. The nationalist struggle was additionally significant for Ahmedabad because the city emerged as the epicentre of nationalist struggle. It was in this period that Gandhi famously made Ahmedabad home for himself and for his experimentations in socio-political-economic-cultural life that he envisioned for India. But it was no less important that it was in Ahmedabad, where a group of the local leaders, under the leadership of Sardar Ballav Bhai Patel, decided to make municipal governance as a site for contestation between colonial rule and nationalist aspirations. The developments that followed Gandhi making Ahmedabad his political and ideological home and Patel choosing municipal governance as a site of contestation put together

were to have far reaching implications for the future of Ahmedabad in general. But more specifically, these developments were to shape the processes of urban governance, structure of the municipal organisation as well as the ideological contours of local urban politics. The episode involving city decongestion and the town planning scheme epitomized it.

As described in Section 4.3, in the initial decades of the 20th century, Ahmedabad was struggling with urban problems with their roots in the economic and spatial changes of the 19th century. According to the assessment of the colonial government, the root of the problem, especially in the walled city, lay in the system of fluid land use that existed in a traditional city such as Ahmedabad. It was possible to use the same piece of land in more than one way. The government perceived that the only way the city could be decongested was by creating clear land use patterns and assigning areas of the city for a particular sphere of activity.

There were broadly three ways in which the government attempted to decongest the city. First, the government started to make a clear distinction between the 'public' and the 'private' spaces in the walled city—a distinction that was traditionally absent. The idea was to declare certain areas as 'open spaces', and to open out certain other areas by realigning existing streets. Second, and a little later, this attempt to decongest the city took a more comprehensive and systematic form. It came to be known as Town Planning. Third, the government also tried to incorporate land from the outskirts of the city into the city limits (Raychaudhuri 2001: 686).

However, the task was complex, especially given the fact that the city was established without any such spatial boundaries. But even more importantly, most of the people in

the city found this concept culturally alien and socially disorienting, because this kind of spatial categorisation was markedly different from the traditional categorisation that conformed to the cultural markers of caste and community. This discomfort that was also visible against the initiatives of Ranchhodlal was even more vocal in the early 20th century. Even as people felt that congestion was a severe problem and worth addressing, they were opposed to a solution that, in their imagination, was radical, and breached the conformity that existed so far between their cultural imagination and the spatial organisation of the city. It became gradually clear that they wanted solutions to their urban problem without a break in this conformity.

The colonial government began to pay attention to the problem of congestion in the first decade of the 20th century, around the same time as municipal governance was in disarray with a succession of unimpressive municipal presidents. However, by the year 1915, when the elected municipality was reinstated, a group of new local leadership had begun to emerge, a group that would play a significant role in shaping urban governance for the coming two decades. This new leadership was not necessarily composed of the descendants of the traditionally important families of the city, as was the case with the local leadership that emerged soon after the electoral system was started in the late 19th Century. For example, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, who was one of the doyens of the textile mill industry of the city, and a prominent member of this new emerging group of leaders, belonged to the less-known lineage of the Oswal Jain social group. Ballabhbhai Patel, the most prominent leader of this group who was to eventually become the first deputy prime minister and home minister of independent India, hailed from a family that was agriculturalist before moving to the city (Raychaudhuri 2001: 690). Neither were they part of a particular political party or

group. Individuals who were part of this included industrialists like Kasturibhai Lalbhaiand Ambalal Sarabhai, a Patidar turned middle-class professional and later politician Vallabhbhai Patela, a middle-class socialist professional politician and trade union leader Shankarlal Banker, and middleclass professionals turned politicians such as G. V. Mavalankar and Bhulabhai Desai. Clearly, they did not belong to one particular social or economic category. Rather they represented a 'conglomeration of various connected interests with broad common aims, with a core group at the centre' (Raychaudhuri 2001: 690). Unsurprisingly, the colonial government did not find an ally in this group in its endeavours of urban governance and development like it had found in Ranchhodlal. The difference was that this group of leaders had a remarkably different vision for the city.

In the first decade of the 20th century, the government made several attempts to convince the municipal board to implement plans for decongestion. But the government realized that the municipal leadership would not change the traditional morphology of the city because its own influence rested on it. So in 1910, the government decided to supersede the elected municipal board and formed a Committee of Management (COM) in its place. The CoM consisted of men chosen by the government. It started to implement the plan to address congestion and unsanitary conditions on the basis of government approved principles of economic rationalisation and space management. The plan went beyond the traditional boundaries of the walled city. However, the problem was that the implementation of such a comprehensive restructuring programme required additional funds. Consequently, in August 1911, to raise additional funds, the COM proposed to increase the water tax and water connection fee. In 1914 again, the COM decided to replace a terminal tax

with octroi and house tax. These measures were expected to raise an additional one hundred thousand rupees annually (Raychaudhuri 2001: 688–9).

Expectedly, the increase in taxes worked as a flash point and led to large-scale protests (Raychaudhuri 2001: 689). By 1913, the city began to witness large protest meetings and public demonstrations. Large sections of city dwellers had turned against the government on an issue that was not only about the schemes in question, but also about the larger vision of the city that these schemes were part of.

It was in the midst of this fundamental chasm between the government and the majority of the people about the future shape of the city that the new group of leaders began to take an interest and intervene in the municipal affairs of the city. When the municipal board was reinstated in 1915, it was reorganized and now consisted of 40 members, 27 of whom were elected. This was an opportunity for different sections of the people to again get their representatives on the municipal board. But even more importantly, it was a chance for this new emerging group to occupy positions on the municipal board. Their cause was significantly helped by the fact that most of these leaders had credibility owing to their opposition to the government's interventionist schemes. In 1917, Vallabhbhai Patel was elected to the board following a vacancy in Dariyapur ward (Spodek 2011: 49). Some other members were already on the board since 1915 (Raychaudhuri 2001: 691–2).

Raychaudhuri (2001: 692) points to the variety of ways in which the new leadership tried to consolidate their position, vis-à-vis the colonial board, in the municipal board. First, they had certain arrogant and abrasive government officials who dominated the board removed. Commissioner Shillidy was the most important example in this regard

(Spodek 2011: 50). Second, the group sought to take advantage of the government's plans for extending the social base of local self- government by expanding the electoral base. The leadership tried to shape this expansion of enfranchisement in a way that was politically beneficial to them. They pressed for inclusion of social groups in which they had support, or could potentially get support. Interestingly, they never pressed for a general enfranchisement. It was kept limited to the property holding, tax and rent paying sections.

By 1918, a large number of leaders from this group were elected to different committees. The group totally dominated the committees dealing with sanitation, public works and rules and by-laws. When municipal elections were held in 1919, the group managed to acquire a dominant position in the municipality. Since their electoral success was premised on public opposition to government schemes, the group continued to oppose and stall government proposals from the inside now. Between 1916 and 1920, the government proposed two major schemes for restructuring the walled city, namely the city wall and the relief road schemes. By late 1920s, the municipal board had managed to postpone the implementation of the City Wall scheme. The Relief Road scheme met a similar fate in June 1921 (Raychaudhuri 2001: 694–5). It was also in this period that the provincial government of Bombay solicited Patrick Geddes' advice on the matter. Patrick Geddes was initially invited by the government of Madras (now Chennai) to advise the municipalities on the issue of town planning. In his writings, he had opposed the idea of driving roads through old areas as a solution to congestion (Datta, 2015). In the case of Ahmedabad also, Geddes advised what he termed as 'conservative surgery', which meant a careful study of the local environment and removal of minimum possible existing structures.

He argued for the retention of a majority of the existing old structure—a solution the provincial government deemed impractical and rejected (Gillion 1968: 150). Nevertheless, this illustrated that the policy being pushed by the government was not the only possible solution.

The provincial government again resorted to the old tactic and superseded the board in February 1922 primarily owing to its complicity in the nationalist non-cooperation movement and formed a CoM for 2 years (Spodek 2011: 31). This second CoM again tried to implement City Wall and Relief Road Schemes in January and October 1923. This led to widespread protests and demonstrations, seriously undermining the government's authority in the city. Subsequently, the municipal elections were again held in January 1924 and the board was reinstated. Unsurprisingly, the group again assumed control of the municipality. Vallabhbhai Patel was the new President of the board (Gillion 1968: 150).

This ushered in a phase in the politics of this new urban leadership, when they began to elaborate an alternative urban vision and implement it incrementally. The new leadership was in agreement with the colonial government on the issue that the city needed a reorganisation to deal with problems of congestion and smooth provision of urban services. But they sought to bring the nature of this reorganisation closer to the socio-economic realities of the city. In other words, the vision of the reorganisation was still modernist, but it was situated in the socio-economic and cultural realities. It was modernist because it departed from the traditional cosmography that allowed for fluid land use. The new leadership shared the modern vision of a fixed and unitary land use. The leadership also accepted the standard monetary valuation of land. But

within these two general parameters, the new leadership was willing to allow social and cultural continuities (Raychaudhuri 2001: 696–7).

The Patel-led group determined that the best way to move in this direction was to take up the government-initiated schemes, change and redesign them to fit with the traditional norms of the city and implement them. The City Wall Scheme was the first example of this strategy of city reorganisation. The new leadership recognized how crucial this scheme was not only for decongestion of the walled city, but also for further city expansion. But they could not have been more aware of the unpopularity of the scheme because they had led the protest against it. In the circumstances, they decided to make changes in the scheme and do away with its components that affected people adversely and directly. So in November 1924, the new urban leadership asked the government surveyor to prepare a similar scheme for construction of a circular road around the walled city, either by demolishing the wall and using that space for the road or some other way. However, the most important consideration for the surveyor was to be to minimize the acquisition of private property. Similarly, the president of the board wrote to the government asking to amend the Town Planning Act that made it possible to tax the private properties, the prices of which multiplied because of construction of the road. In the earlier scheme, such property holders were to pay a lump sum to the government, making the scheme unpopular. With these changes, the scheme found general approval of the people because now very few people were to part with their properties and make the government a one-time payment on account of a rise in their property prices. The proposal of the Town Planning Committee received the approval of the General Board in December 1924 (Raychaudhuri 2001–07).

The Elise Bridge scheme was a little trickier, mainly for two reasons. One, the land size for this scheme was much larger in this case, and two, because the land belonged to several mill owners and the agriculturist Patidars. The new leadership depended on both these groups for their support and so could not afford to antagonize them. In opposing the scheme when the colonial government had attempted to implement it, these two groups had also developed a close alliance on the basis of common interest. In order to implement this scheme, the new leadership started to work on breaking this alliance by convincing and pressurizing the mill agents into lending support to the scheme. Three factors helped the leadership in achieving this goal. *First*, even as many mill agents had property in this area, they also had property in other areas. But even more importantly they had other types of mill-related concerns with the city authorities and could ill afford to antagonize them. *Second*, not all mill agents had property in this area. And the ones who did not wanted the scheme to be implemented so that they could buy property in the area. Finally, it also helped immensely that at least some of the leaders in this group belonged to the mill-owning class. Because of all these efforts, the scheme got some acceptance by the year 1926, though it took a few more years before it could be implemented (Raychaudhuri 2001: 700–01). As we discuss in Chapter 6, the changes made in the town planning scheme, which made the land acquisition process both attractive and fair for the population, had long-term implications. The act was applied successfully again in the 1990s when the city expanded exponentially and a model of town planning was required to manage this expansion.

However, this may have been the immediate and more tangible reason behind the success of the new leadership in taking over the municipal organisation of the city and then in shaping the city reorganisation. This was the first case in which a group of

indigenous leaders had entered the municipal structures and seized the initiative away from the hands of the colonial government. In the process, they also came up with a model of town planning that sought to embed a modernist outlook into the existing socio-economic and spatial environment. In the next section, we discuss the larger political processes that were simultaneously beginning to gain ground in the city. This politics was not about urban space or governance, but may have been instrumental in providing the philosophical and political impetus to the municipal leaders and their politics, which led to their success.

4.5.3 The Textile Labour Association and the Gandhian Class Relations

Gandhi's decision to make Ahmedabad his home in India had a great bearing on local politics. Even if he was yet to establish himself as a pan-Indian nationalist leader, when he landed in Ahmedabad in the latter half of the 1910s, his feats in South Africa were well known at least to the upper and the educated classes of the Ahmedabad population. The scathing philosophical attack he had launched on western civilisation (Gandhi 1941) went a long way in neutralizing the halo of the philosophical premises on which the colonial governance practices were based.

 Gandhi's involvement with the local politics of Ahmedabad started with a dispute between the textile mill owners and the workers. The relations between the mill owners and workers had taken a down turn between December 1917 and February 1918. The immediate issue was the cancellation of plague allowance and payment of a bonus instead (Raychaudhuri 2001: 703–04). The workers were only starting to organize during this period while the mill owners were already organized under Ahmedabad Textile Mill Owners Association. Ambalal Sarabhai was the head of the

Mill Owners Association. Interestingly his sister Anusuya, who had recently returned from England, leaving her degree in social work at the London School of Economics unfinished (Spodek 2011: 53) but nevertheless found socialist ideas inspiring, was helping workers organize themselves and get their demands met. It was Anusuya who wrote to Gandhi, requesting him to intervene. Gandhi introduced the method of arbitration and impressed upon both the parties to agree to the formation of an arbitration board, with Ambalal Sarabhai, Seth Jaganbhai Dalpatbhai and Seth Chandulal as representatives of the mill owners; and Gandhi, Shankarlal Banker and Vallabhbhai Patel as representatives of the workers (Breman 2004: 38). However, the mill owners were not very enthusiastic about Gandhi's intervention. They perceived it as workers' indiscipline. Ambalal Sarabhai remarked:

> It will be intolerable if workers defied us frequently counting on the support of outsiders. If this happens, there would be nothing like discipline among them. Besides, it is not proper that every time there is a dispute between us and the workers, we have to accept the arbitration by a third party.[5]

This was notwithstanding Ambalal's deep respect for and a close relation with Gandhi. It was Ambalal who had saved Gandhi's Ashram when an 'untouchable' family was inducted into it leading to fierce opposition from his other benefactors (Spodek 2011: 17).

The mill owners also tried to win over Gandhi by appealing to caste affiliations, but it is said that Gandhi got upset. Gandhi, after assessing the situation, suggested that the workers be given a raise of 35 per cent as against 50 per cent that workers were

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[5] Quoted in Yagnik, A. and S. Seth (2011: 201).

demanding, and 20 per cent that the owners were ready to give. However, he was not able to break the deadlock. He called for a strike by the weavers. In reaction, the mill owners declared a lock out for the weavers. As the strike continued, the numbers in Gandhi's gatherings dwindled, owners considered it to be their victory and decided to withdraw the lock out and appealed to the weavers to join the work with a raise of 20 per cent. The millowners' strategy seemed to be working but Gandhi announced that he would fast unto death in support of a 35 per cent increase in the wages. This was too much political and moral pressure for the mill owners and they agreed with Gandhi for arbitration. The workers were indeed paid a raise of 35 per cent on the first day, 20 per cent on the second day and 27.5 per cent for the remaining days, to prove that no one party had actually won (Breman 2004: 39).

This was the Gandhian philosophy of capital–labour relations based on conciliation and arbitration, as opposed to conflict and confrontation, at work. The mill owners understood the importance of this philosophy, not necessarily for its moral beauty, but for its usefulness for the management of the workforce. They had experienced that Gandhi had the ability to command the loyalty of the workers. Throughout the year 1919, sporadic strikes in individual mills continued as a constant reminder for the owners that they required a mechanism to deal with the labour question. It was in this context that the Textile Labour Association (TLA) was formed on 25 February 1920. The Ahmedabad Mill Owners Association offered their felicitation and asked for the formation of a conciliation board (Breman 2004: 41).

In the decade of 1920s, the TLA grew links with the Congress Party. The TLA members fought municipal elections on the ticket of the Congress Party. In the 1930s,

the influence of the TLA increased even further and it was given two reserved seats in the provincial assembly. When elections were held for provincial governments the TLA's General Secretary Gulzarilal Nanda became the labour minister in the government of Bombay province (Breman 2004: 41–47).

4.6 Municipal Organisation and Transition to Independent India

The two events discussed in earlier sections constitute two aspects of the core functions of a modern municipal organisation, namely, delivery of urban services and the rules and practices of town planning. These events played crucial roles in shaping the structures and processes of municipal organisation in the city. Consequently, the implications of the events went beyond the time in which they unfolded. *First,* even if the politics around the initiative of modernisation of the methods of urban service delivery left a space for the provincial government to intervene in the matter, it brought the 'urban' to the centre of local political discourse. It also kick-started the tradition of civic engagement of the local elite, and not necessarily on racial lines, as we will see was the case in Kanpur (Chapter 5). As Ranchhodlal's case showed, there were always elements of the local elite, which were pro-change and pro-government. The debate of tradition versus modernity of the urban space was not neatly organized on the lines of the local elite versus the colonial government. So, to begin with, even if the government went ahead and superseded the municipality whenever it became a political inconvenience, it did not go to the extent of erecting parallel organisations, as was seen in the case of Kanpur. Ahmedabad remained one of the very few Indian cities of considerable importance where the Improvement Trust was not formed; town planning was attempted through the existing municipal organisation itself. *Second,* the

way in which the local nationalist leadership was internalized in local urban politics, as we see in the example of the Congress collective, and the way in which Gandhian experiments shaped the class politics in the city, proved to be conducive for the development of the municipal organisation. The changes in the town planning scheme was its most tangible illustration, but the ways in which it brought different class interests together under the deliberative spaces of the municipal organisation cemented its place as the fulcrum of city politics.

So, when the Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporation Act 1949 was introduced, providing a post-Independence legal framework for municipal organisations in the province, it created one powerful municipal organisation bestowed with all urban governance functions. The smooth transition and continuation of political practices from the pre-Independence period was also carried forward as the Chinubhai Seth who was the chairman of the municipality was elected the Mayor after the corporation was established. He continued to hold the office until 1962 (Ashraf 1975). Later, by the time the AUDA was created in 1978, the organisational domain of the municipal corporation was already firmly established and the AUDA operated mainly in the peripheral city areas on acquire-develop- transfer basis.

Thus in Ahmedabad, the bare bones of the formal legal framework as envisaged in the Municipal Act got political meat from the events that had preceded its enactment, especially the two events discussed in the preceding sections. These events produced a political reference point through which the formal municipal framework was seen and interpreted. Unsurprisingly, the political trends that were established in the wake of these events continued to inform the municipal politics even in the post-

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Independence era. Even as the Congress dominated municipal politics until the 1980s, except for a hiatus in the 1960s, the pattern of collaborative class relations based on the Gandhian philosophy and reflected in the representation of both Ahmedabad Mill Owners Association and the TLA at the municipal level continued (Ashraf 1975).

For example, in the municipal elections of 1961, out of the total 70 seats for the council, the Congress Party gave 31 tickets to candidates belonging to the TLA, out of which 29 won the elections. This was the continuation of the practice started way back in 1924 when the TLA selected 1 candidate and sought the Congress Party's approval. Similarly, the TLA selected 2 candidates in the 1927 elections (Spodek 2011: 137). This Gandhian consensus, however, came under a successful attack in the 1960s under the leadership of Indulal Yagnik, a left leaning self-proclaimed Gandhian himself, who criticized the TLA by saying that this is not the same organisation that Gandhi had created. Consequently, in the municipal elections held in 1965, Yagnik-led Maha Gujarat Janata Parishad (MGJP) to crush the Congress Party by winning 42 seats; the Congress won 13 seats. However, the Congress made a spectacular come back in the next elections by winning 65 seats. The MGJP, which had galvanized the opposition forces in the previous elections, proved to be a failure as a party in power (Spodek 2011: 160–64). However, the political changes ensued as the city witnessed its first major communal violence in 1969, signalling the weaknesses that had crept in the Gandhian consensus (Varshney 2003). The year of 1969 was significant also because the Congress Party split nationally into two-one faction led by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the other faction led by the old guard of the party known as the syndicates. The split did not impact Ahmedabad immediately, but in 1971, the split occurred at the municipal level, when 37 councillors parted ways with the main party

(Ashraf 1975). The decade of the 1970s was more eventful in terms of provincial and national politics as Gujarat emerged as a major centre of the political attack launched on Congress dominance at the national level. The decade of the 1980s—the time of accelerated decline of the textile industry—witnessed setting in motion the events that were going to trigger another phase of transformation for the municipal corporation, local urban politics and the city in general. This will be discussed in Chapter 6.

The organisational coherence and prolonged political consensus at the municipal level resulted in administrative and financial capacity that enabled the AMC to focus on service provision and urban development. For example, by the end of 1958, the AMC had extended underground sewerage facilities to almost the entire area within its limits. Similarly, the number of primary schools run by the AMC increased from 195 in 1960–61 to 364 in 1965–66. The corporation also initiated the cooperative housing ventures, and housing societies witnessed an exponential of growth from 110 in 1950–51 to 1,419 in 1969–70 (Spodek 2011: 132–34).

The civic engagement of the mill owners and other industrialists also led to the establishment of a range of institutions of higher education under the aegis of Ahmedabad Education Society (AES). The institutions included the Gujarat University, Indian Institute of Management, National Institute of Design and Centre for Planning and Architecture (CEPT), which finds mention in the previous chapter in the context of formulation of the City Development Plan. Vikram Sarabhai, a Cambridge PhD and grandson of Ambalal Sarabhai, played the pivotal role in establishment of many of these institutions (Yagnik and Seth 2011: 246–49).

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter set out to trace the formation of municipal organisation in Ahmedabad by asking the question: What led to the formation of municipal organisation that existed at the inception of JNNURM? The answer to this question led us back to the colonial period in which the municipal organisation was taking shape in its present form. The chapter identifies two key events, or *problems* in Kingdon's terms, in this period that were crucial in shaping the municipal organisation. The first event occurred soon after the popular formal municipal organisation was introduced in the city in the 1880s. To contain the problem of high mortality prevalent in the city, the first non-official chairman of the municipality proposed a *policy* initiative to change the methods of water supply and disposal of human waste on modern lines. The second event took place, in the form of a 'Kingdonion problem', in the second and third decades of the 20th century, when a group of congress leaders first resisted the government-led city decongestion and planning scheme, and then successfully implemented a revised plan, which was considerably less anti-people and fairer. The chapter finds that the *politics* around both these events was critical in determining the precise nature of alignment between the problem and the policy being presented to tackle it. The chapter also demonstrates that the precise nature of these alignments were critical for the way in which the municipal organisation took shape. It concludes that these events provided a framework of political meaning in which the formal-legal structure was interpreted. The formal legal structure was created soon after Independence, known as The Bombay Provincial Municipal Corporation Act 1949. The functioning of the municipal corporation in the initial decades of the post-Independence period substantiates this point.

This chapter focused on the formation of municipal organisation following industrialisation in the city. The next chapter carries out a similar exercise in the case of Kanpur. Chapter 6 then explores the transitions in municipal organisations following the deindustrialisation process that the two cities witnessed in decades following 1980s.

CHAPTER 5

MAKING OF THE MUNICIPAL ORGANISATION: KANPUR

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the formation of the municipal organization in Kanpur during the colonial period. Because industries in Kanpur were established during the same historical period, as in the case of Ahmedabad, the problems that the two cities faced by the early 20th century were quite similar. As in the case of Ahmedabad, the early 'Kingdonian *problem*' in Kanpur was also identified as 'congestion'. The problem acquired priority when it was seen as a danger to public health in the wake of the plague epidemic that also affected Kanpur. The *policy* presented as a solution was also similar, as Kanpur witnessed the formation of an organization to address the city's congestion and to plan its future expansion. However, the *politics* of Kanpur was factionalised, which did not allow the question of place—the issues related to urban governance— to take the centre stage in city politics, thereby hindering a successful alignment of the problem and the policy. This resulted in the same policy being reintroduced repeatedly. This meant that the elected municipal board of the city could not emerge as the central organisational manifestation of urban governance of the city; rather, it led to a multiplicity of municipal organisations, a feature that was found in the city right until the inception of the JNNURM.

The chapter is divided into seven parts. The next section briefly traces the origins of the city and its development as a colonial military and industrial seat in the second half of the 19th century. It also explores the origins of municipal governance in the

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city. The next three sections are focused on the Kingdonion *'problem'*, the *'policy'* and the *'politics'* of municipal governance of the city. The problems of haphazard development of the city and lack of basic urban amenities have been discussed in Section 5.3. How these were sought to be tackled with the policy of city improvement and planning is discussed in Section 5.4. Section 5.5 looks at the three levels at which the politics of the city was riddled with factions—the politics of business interest, the politics of working class interest and the politics of the Congress Party. Section 5.6 analyses the outcome of the factionalised politics that did not allow the alignment of the problem and the policy, hindering the development of a coherent organization of urban governance in the city. The section also traces the links between the organisational multiplicity in the colonial period and its continuation post-Independence. The final section concludes the chapter. The chapter draws on archival and secondary sources and on a local journalist's reflections on the municipal affairs of the city that he self-published in 1952 (Mehra 1952). The chapter presents a reading of the city's history, with the aim to explore the episodes that were crucial in the formation of the city's municipal organisation.

5.2   Historical Background

5.2.1 Origins of the city: From army garrison to Manchester of the East

Unlike Ahmedabad, Kanpur is not a city of medieval but of colonial origins with its history intractably intertwined with the history of colonialism in India. In fact, Kanpur had a humble beginning as a garrison post of the East India Company, which, following its victory in Bengal in 1757 was on ascendance in northern India. The area that came to be known as Cawnpore (British name for the city—based on the English

mispronunciation of its native name) was close to Lucknow, the political seat of the *Nawab* of Awadh. It was also not too far from Delhi, the capital of the Mughals. The place was strategic also because it was on the banks of the river Ganga, a major mode of transport in the period. It was connected to the already existing road, the Grand Trunk Road, which linked eastern and northern India—from Calcutta to Peshawar (Singh 1990 ;07). Kanpur became a cantonment of the East India Company in 1778 and a district headquarters in the year 1801. Even as the East India Company continued its military and political expansion in northern India, Kanpur's significance increased. As the size of the army and bureaucratic apparatus in general increased, so did the demand for essential provisions such as food, clothing, army gear and so on. By the middle of the 19th century, Kanpur had emerged as a town covering an area of little less than 700 acres, and had a population of little more than one hundred thousand. Apart from being a cantonment, it was also emerging as a trading centre. However, the civic amenities were at a very nascent stage. Streets were narrow and dusty, with mud and brick houses on both sides and wells for the supply of water (Singh 1990 ;09). Until that time, Kanpur was still a cantonment town predominantly, which controlled most of the premium land including most of the river front, and about 90 per cent of the total area (Joshi 2003 ;27).

The uprising of 1857 is considered to be a turning point in the history of Kanpur. It was the first uprising against Company Rule that spread throughout most of Eastern and Northern India. The Indian *sepoys*[1] joined hands with disgruntled zamindars, princely states and others. Kanpur was a major centre of this uprising and was etched

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[1] A term, a mispronunciation of the Hindi word *Sipahi* used by the British to address the Indian army soldiers.

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infamously in the British narrative about its rule in India as the 'Cawnpore Massacre' in which 'native barbarity' came to be on full display. Around 300 British men, women and children were massacred, purportedly on the orders of a Maratha chieftain Nana Saheb.[2]

Even as the revolt was etched on the British psyche, it was on the debris of the revolt that the economic history of Kanpur started to be written. Soon after the revolt, a railway track was completed between Kanpur and Allahabad. The bungalows that had dotted the riverfront in the pre-revolt period were destroyed during the revolt and were soon to be replaced by factories (Joshi 2003 ;33). In the 1860s, leather and textile industries began to be established, both initially triggered by the demands from the ever-expanding military presence in the cantonment. An association—Cawnpore Cotton Committee—was formed in 1860 largely on the initiative of Mr Buist, the stationmaster of the newly established Kanpur railway station. The association included, among many others, Mr Hugh Maxwell, whose family owned a large estate in the district since the beginning of the century. The Elgin Cotton Spinning and Weaving Company Limited, which was incorporated in 1861 and started functioning in 1864, was established largely on the initiative of this association (Upper-India-Chamber-of-Commerce 1938;12). The second textile mill to come up was Muir Mills in 1974. The government had already established the Harness and Saddlery Factory by this time, and also started a Boot and Army Equipment Factory in 1880. The Cawnpore Woolen Mills that had had a humble beginning in 1876 to produce army blankets was to become famous throughout North India for its woollen products.

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[2]   For details on the role of Kanpur in 1857 revolt, especially on the massacre, see Joshi, C. (2003). Lost Worlds: Indian Labour and Its Forgotten Histories Delhi, Permanent BLACK.

Several other cotton spinning and pressing factories were also established in these decades. In the 20th century, the First and the Second World Wars also gave impetus to industrial growth in Kanpur.[3]

The fact that Kanpur emerged initially as a military post and subsequently as an industrial centre had its bearing on its socio-spatial character. When the Company occupied Ahmedabad, the city already had the social, economic and spatial character of a medieval city with a traditional governance structure in place. As discussed in the last chapter, there was an interesting encounter between the reality of Ahmedabad as it existed in the early 19th century and a modernist urban vision shared by a section of the local elite and the colonial government. Kanpur's story was different, which was to be shaped by the British government as well as British private nationals. This difference reflects in most of the spheres of development—economic, spatial, social, political and institutional.

5.2.2   Origins of municipal organisation in Kanpur

This initial key difference in the formation of Ahmedabad and Kanpur had important bearings on the way the municipal organisation was to be set up in the two cities. *First*, the British were to form the urban governance structure, without having to manage a transition. *Second*, because the British led both the governance structure and the economy, there was no space for the local elite structure, which was in a very nascent stage of its formation anyway, to take up a leadership position in local politics of the city. Because of its medieval history, the merchants of Ahmedabad had their

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[3]   A detailed account of industrial development in Kanpur can be found in Khosla, R. (1992). Urban Politics with Special Reference to Kanpur New Delhi, S Chand and Company Ltd.

traditional associations that regulated their socio-economic behaviour, protected their economic interests and represented these interests to the political authorities upon the arrival of the Company (Gillion 1968). Kanpur's colonial origin led to the formation of a municipal organization that was premised on the notion of a city that betrayed spatial expression of the nature of colonialism itself.

Right from the beginning of the civic administration of Kanpur, there were no ambiguities about the 'civil station' being the core of its focus. The official language made a clear distinction between the 'civil station' and the 'town proper'. The civil station was an area with urban amenities such as parks, theatres and proper bungalows, whereas the city proper consisted of 'agglomerations of crowded brick built mohallas separated by narrow lanes and a few wide thoroughfares' (Joshi 2003 ;51). Unsurprisingly therefore, when the first committee was formed on 22 November 1861, to look after the civic affairs of Kanpur, its jurisdiction was limited to the civil station and did not include the town proper. The committee consisted of ten commissioners, five of which were to be drawn from the Company government. The remaining five were to be allocated to non-official positions, open to the public. The first ten-member committee that was appointed consisted of eight European and two Indian members. According to the notification issued by the Lieutenant Governor of the North West Province, on 22nd November 1861, the ex-officio members of the committee were to be the district magistrate and collector, the joint magistrate, the assistant magistrate, the district superintendent of police, and the civil assistant surgeon. The non-official members were to be elected by the house proprietors of the town. The members elected in the first committee were Mr Powens, Mr Mackintosh, Mr Corrigan, Lala Sheoprasad and Lala Beharee lall (Mehra 1952 :15).

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In its first meeting, held on 18th December 1861, a nascent administrative organisation was put in place. In the meeting, the district Magistrate, Mr G. E. Lance, was appointed as the chairman and Assistant Magistrate Mr T. B Tracy was appointed the secretary of the committee. A set of rules for the committee was drafted and sent to Allahabad for publication. It was resolved that the establishment would consist of one superintendent on a pay of Rs 40 per month, one writer on Rs 10 per month, one *jemadar* (cleaner) on Rs 10 per month and six *chaprasis* (peons) on Rs 3 per month each (Mehra 1952 :15).

The rules, which were published in the Gazette of 18th February 1862, provided, inter alia, that the provisions of Act XXVI of 1850 were enforced in the civil station of Cawnpore. The boundaries of the civil station were: river Ganges in the north; Colonelgunj Road north of the city in the south; the present cantonment boundary in the east; the old cantonment boundary in the west. The number of commissioners, it was provided, would not exceed 12 or be less than 6, one of them being the magistrate of the District. The non-official members were to be selected in a meeting of registered proprietors to be held on the second Wednesday of August every year. According to the notification, the primary task of the committee was to 'make better provision for constructing, repairing, cleaning and lighting the public roads and drains for the prevention of nuisance, and for the improvement of the said town and station' (Mehra 1952 :15-16).

The initial jurisdiction of the committee was to be limited to the civil station; however, by 1866, the rest of the town was also included in its purview. In March 1866, the chairman of the committee proposed that the administration of civil

administration be amalgamated with the administration of town of Cawnpore. The government accepted this proposal and the committee's jurisdiction also included the Cawnpore town from May 1866. However, the caveat was that at least six commissioners must be house owners in the civil station area (Mehra 1952;20).

The reorganized Municipal Committee met for the first time on 1st May, 1866. In the meeting, the district magistrate was elected as the chairman of the committee for the year 1866–67. The committee consisted of total of 18 members—12 from the city and 6 from the civil station. The 12 commissioners, elected from the city, were elected by the city householders paying a *chowkidari* (security) tax of Rs 20 or more. Lala Sheoprasad was elected as the vice chairman because he had secured maximum number of votes from the elected members (Mehra 1952 ;20). The Committee was reorganized again in 1868. Now the committee was to have 6 government officials including the magistrate as the ex-officio chairman and 12 non-official members elected biennially by the taxpayers. Out of the twelve members, eight were to represent the city, whereas the remaining four were to represent the civil station. The six official members included the magistrate, the joint or assistant magistrate, the civil surgeon, the superintendent of police and the engineer and the Tehsildar (Mehra 1952 ;22). The formation of the municipal committee was further changed in 1873 and then in 1884. The number of official members on the committee was reduced whereas the number of elected members was increased. A separate category of 'appointed' (nominated) members was created. The city was divided into wards for the purposes of election. The committee now had two vice-presidents elected from among the members and a full-time paid secretary.

In its initial years, the finances for the municipal committee were drawn from sources such as ground rent on all buildings, rent derived from grazing and grass, taxes on bazars, *serais* (rest houses), proceeds of the sale of fruit and vegetables from the botanical gardens and fines imposed for violation of municipal rules and laws. The finances generated from these sources were sufficient for the regular and very limited functions that the municipality performed at this stage. However, by 1866, it was recognised that the town required an effective drainage system, and municipality required additional funds to put it in place. To increase financial resources, the committee decided to impose a license tax for trades. In October 1892, octroi was introduced, but it was replaced by a terminal tax and a terminal toll in 1895. A house tax was introduced in 1901 (Mehra 1952 ;21).

5.3   The Problem: Governing an Industrializing Metropolis

The roots of the problem of urban governance in Kanpur can be found in the way in which the colonial government and local elite imagined the space that constituted the city. As discussed in the previous section, when the municipality was formed, its jurisdiction covered only the civil station. For the local colonial elite, consisting of company officials, industrialists, traders and industry managers, the city as a whole, including the areas known as 'proper town', could never become a preoccupation beyond their imagination of it as a problem of congestion and filth. The local Indian elite, for their part, which was formed by the local merchants, landlords and traditional rich drawn from the surrounding region, accepted a subservient position in the municipal affairs vis-à-vis their British official and non-official counterparts. For them, a position on the municipal board was more about prestige and proximity to the government and less about participating in city-making processes.

This divide in spatial imagination and the corresponding difference in the way the authorities treated people living in the civil station (later known as 'civil lines') and other parts of the town while governing the city was apparent. This was on display most starkly in the events of 1900, leading to the infamous plague riots. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the issues pertaining to urban congestion and planning became important for the colonial government following the outbreak of plague epidemic in Bombay in 1896. In the wake of this epidemic, the administration in Kanpur took stringent steps to quarantine and segregate people who they suspected to carry the disease. The Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897 empowered plague committees to ensure segregation of contacts in special camps. The European population, however, was exempt from any such segregation (Prakash 2008). The problem was that the local population found such segregation merely on the basis of suspicion unacceptable. The reason was that it ran contrary to local cultural sensibilities of purity and practices of caste hierarchies. Local vernacular newspapers were full of complaints against the measures taken. One such newspaper article commented on the lack of understanding among the European doctors 'of the temper, habits, customs and manners of the people' (Prakash 2008 ;841). Similarly, the daily newspaper *Pioneer* published a letter from a reader, which complained:

> The Plague Act is in force but the doctors do not know what plague is…
> The *ryots* is oppressed on account of plague. No one hears the grievances
> and the Government punishes the aggrieved…. No one fears plague but
> fears its laws which is so much killing. (Yalland 1994: 383).

It was this fear of the plague law, aggravated by rumours, that led to a riot. The riot broke out on 11th April 1900 as rumours of a boy being kidnapped and being sent to

the plague camp to be burnt alive proved to be the spark. A crowd armed with *lathis* and hatchets attacked the plague camp and burnt the plague huts. They murdered 6 policemen, including a head constable, and threw the bodies into the flames of burning huts (Yalland 1994, Prakash 2008).

If the handling of the plague situation was symptomatic of the way in which the authorities treated the civic issues, it was also a reminder of the urban governance problem that was developing in the city. Even as a nascent service delivery mechanism was put in place soon after the inauguration of the municipal board, the service provision was never adequate in the wake of exponential growth that the city was experiencing with industrialisation. Speaking about the years following the formation of the municipality, the Gazetteer of Cawnpore 1909 observed:

> Conservancy at the time left much to be desired. There were but six carts for carrying away the filth, the sewers were generally defective, and the house and subordinate drains so badly constructed that they often acted as mere cesspools. Private houses depended on their own sweepers who emptied all filth into the large excavations in the suburbs. Sullage found their way into the streets. (Nevill 1909: 176-77)

Subsequently, in 1872, the provincial government advanced a loan of 2.13 lakh to the municipality for construction of drainage and other urban infrastructure. A 5-mile-long tramway was constructed in 1902–3 for the removal of filth from the city. But in 1933, motor trucks replaced the tramway because the former was considered to be more efficient and affordable (Awasthi 1985 ;47). The finances for the tramway construction were mobilized from the open market which was a first for a city of this province, though it did not make a significant change in the financial capabilities in the city (Nevill 1909).

But clearly all these efforts were not sufficient to meet the urban infrastructure requirements of the city. In 1909, the district collector of Kanpur observed that 'the city of Cawnpore is the most congested in the province, that almost the whole population lived within an area of about one square mile' (Mehra 1952 ;43). In 1931, on an average 300 people lived on one acre of land. Some of the working class localities were far more densely populated (Yadav 2004 ;55). Even as the colonial period came to an end, the urban report card of the city was no better than it was at its beginning. A study estimated that the city had a shortage of at least 50,000 quarters for the industry workers who were living in an abysmal condition (Agnihotri 1954). In 1951, the Municipal Medical Officer found the sanitation standards of the city unsatisfactory. In his report, he considered, 'over-crowding to the point of suffocation, existence of *ahatas* (shelter for the working classes) with most unsatisfactory conservancy arrangements, insufficient numbers of public latrines urinals, pail depots, sewers' as some of the reasons for this state of affairs (Mehra 1952 ;123). Similarly, the special report on Kanpur included in the Census 1961 stated:

> [T]he city can boast of most pestilential drains, fermenting cesspools
> and gigantic piles of garbage mixed with excreta, surely it would not
> be correct to dignify by the name of 'air' the substance one breathes
> here. (Bhatnagar 1965: 67)

The census report also confirms that the divide that existed in the spatial imagination of the city on the part of the colonial authorities had taken a concrete shape by the end of the colonial rule. According to the census report:

> Kanpur, though developed during the colonial period, does not,
> however, show the happy blending exhibited by the port cities. It
> shows a haphazard urban development characteristics of medieval
> cities, having a clearly distinguishable city proper, and the

comparatively modernized civil station… the city proper has closely built ill shaped, multi-storeyed structures with narrow and crooked lanes… on the contrary, the modernized areas are carefully planned beforehand, keeping in view the specific functions which they have to perform. (Ibid)

However, the most damning certificate came from Prime Minister Nehru. In 1952, after vising some of the working-class settlements in the city, Nehru reportedly went in a rage and said, 'hang the chairman of the Development Board and burn these *ahatas'* (Mehra 1952 :184-85). Later, while addressing the industrialists, Nehru told them that the living conditions in Kanpur were a 'disgrace'; that it would be better if the pace of industrialisation slowed down than workers were made to live in these shocking and humiliating conditions (Mehra 1952 :185).

5.4   The Policy: City Improvement and Development

As discussed in the previous chapter, the policies related to town planning were initially introduced as measures of public health. This followed the plague epidemic in Bombay in 1896 when haphazard urban growth came to be considered as a public health hazard. Kanpur was an integral part of this all India pattern, especially because it was also a city, which was considered prone to plague epidemic; as noted in the previous section, the Plague Act was in force in the city. However, despite that, the city did experience its own bouts of plague epidemic in the early 1900s (Awasthi 1985 ;47). It was in this context, a loan was advanced to the municipality by the provincial government for the construction of a tramway to move rapidly the garbage that was produced in the city on a daily basis.

As 'congestion' was diagnosed to be the main issue causing a potential public health problem, a policy on decongestion was to be put in place. As was the trend, discussed in

the previous chapter, An Improvement Trust Committee was formed and assigned the task of decongesting the city. The local government made a grant of more than 8 lakhs between 1908 and 1918, and a loan of 2.5 lakhs to the Improvement Trust Committee for the task of decongesting the city. In the intervening years, the improvement trust came up with various schemes to decongest the city, but the only project that it could complete successfully was driving a road through a thickly populated area of the city. The road, which was predictably premised on Haussmannian planning philosophy, came to be known as Meston Road (Mehra 1952 ; 43-44).

However, before the Trust Committee could go about any further with its task of decongesting the city, the organisational set up was changed again. It was now decided that it was not possible to manage city planning as long as it remained within the organisational purview of the municipal board. Consequently, in 1913, the provincial government appointed The Cawnpore Expansion Committee and assigned it the task of managing and planning the expansion of the city. The resolution passed by the government stated:

> The most suitable direction for the extension of the city of Cawnpore is
> a problem to which no solution hitherto has been found. The city is
> now densely congested…. (Mehra 1952: 44)

The committee came up with a comprehensive report, which emphasised that a town-planning scheme was urgently required for the city. The committee also came up with a 50 year plan in its effort to guide the future expansion of the city (Mehra 1952 ;46). In the meantime, the United Provinces Town Improvement Act came into a force and Cawnpore Improvement Trust was formed on this basis in the same year (Singh 1978 ; 34-35).

The policy, however, remained unachieved, which was evidenced by the report that yet another committee constituted by the provincial government in 1944 made clear in no uncertain terms. The committee found the general civic administration in a 'deplorable state' along with outdated systems of drainage, sewerage and transport facilities (Mehra 1952 ;50).

5.5   The Politics: Factionalised Political Landscape

Clearly, in the case of Kanpur, the policies of the decongestion and town planning did not deliver the desired results. This section demonstrates that: (a) the roots of this failure of alignment of the policy with the problem were located in the factionalised local political process and the ways in which it found organisational manifestation; and (b) the lack of this alignment hindered the evolution of coherent municipal organisation in the city, which was evidenced by its multiplicity. The factions that were organized on racial lines among the industrial and business elite of the city, on caste and religious lines among the political elite of the city, especially the Congress Party, and ideological lines among the industrial working class and its leadership dominated the political landscape of the city throughout the colonial period. As we discuss later in this chapter, this even spilled over to the post-Independence period.

With political fault lines drawn along these other lines, the politics around the issues of space—the way people lived in their habitat and experienced its surroundings—could never take the centre stage in the political life of the city. Its origins can be seen in the 1880s, when the European inhabitants of the city were not enthusiastic about serving on the municipal committee. By the middle of 1880s, participation of the European inhabitants in the committee was limited to the Chairman and other official

members. The Europeans, who were not part of the administration, did not show any interest in contesting for the committee membership places open for non-officials. The official members were unhappy with the decline in the quality of men being elected to the municipal board. Mr F. N. Wright, who was the chairman of the municipal board from 1889 to 1891, wrote:

> It is a matter of much regret that none of the non-official residents come forward as candidates or take any interests in the elections. The result is that the representation has a tendency to get into the hands of *vakils* (lawyers) who are the only persons who go the trouble of canvassing. There are also two or three doctors on the Board to whom the position is of advantage professionally. But the old type of members, as I remember them is dying out.(Ibid: 24)

'The old type of members' here meant the European residents who had been replaced on the committee by the Indian notables and professionals.

5.5.1   Divided politics of the business class

In the circumstances, the government began to appoint some of the European mill owners and managers to the committee to overcome this lack of interest and consequent misrepresentation. For example, John Harwood, founder of the Cawnpore Cotton Mills, was an appointed member of the board from 1890 to 1905 (Upper-India-Chamber-of-Commerce 1938).

In order to alter this situation further and to bring back the European representation on the municipal committee, the district administration decided to rope in the services of the Upper India Chamber of Commerce (UICC). The UICC was the first business organisation to be established in Kanpur on 12 September 1888. By late 19th century,

there were a sizable number of industrial and commercial establishments in the city. Some of the leading industrialists and merchants came together to form the Chamber of Commerce. The idea behind the organisation was to have a platform through which issues common to the industrialists and merchants of Kanpur and others in northern India could be taken up with the government. The UICC emerged as an important voice for the industrial and commercial interests of Kanpur at different levels of government (Upper-India-Chamber-of-Commerce 1938). But the UICC had one major limitation; it emerged as and remained a voice of, the European industrial and commercial interests in the city.

In 1892, Mr H M Bird, the chairman of the municipal board, suggested that the Chamber should be engaged with municipal activities. The strategy to involve the European population through the chamber of commerce seems to have had some success. In the last decade of the 19th Century, a few European residents who were also closely involved with the activities of the Chamber were elected on the board from the civil line area. In 1896, the Chairman and Magistrate Mr A W Tretheway noted with some satisfaction that the civil lines ward was now represented entirely by European members (Mehra 1952; 24).

However, the UICC was a limiting vehicle for elite engagement in city affairs, because this further institutionalised the segregation of Indians from Europeans and the civil station area from the rest of the city. From 1887, the government started to appoint representatives of the European mercantile community on the municipal board. In April 1904, the government asked the Chamber to nominate three members on the municipal board. Mr A AcRobert, Mr W. G Bevis and Mr G H Westcott, who

were also the president of the chamber at different points in time, were subsequently appointed on the board. This practice continued until the end of the colonial government (Mehra 1952 ;29). However, this institutional linkage that the Chamber–Municipal Board represented worked as a major limitation in terms of engagement of the fast-emerging Indian elite, as well as fast-emerging nationalist and working-class politics. It also meant that the municipal policy priorities, which were to have long-term impact on the shape that the Kanpur city was to take, were not inclusive enough. Absence of native political voices in the municipal organisation meant that the majority 'native' population and their habitat were taken most of the time merely as a congestion problem.

The Chamber was unabashedly an organisation that represented the European industrial and trading interests. In 19th Century Kanpur, it was not problematic per se, because almost all the trading and industrial interests in the city were European. Some of the Indians were indirect and silent investors in industrial establishments, but Europeans were invariably the managers and in charge (Joshi 2003 ;38). However, the situation began to change in the 20th century, especially after the First World War, when industrial demand was increasing, which led to unprecedented industrial growth in the city. The Singhanias—descendant of a Farrukhabad merchant family—who had been settled in Kanpur for decades, were the first Indians to start an industry in Kanpur. They established the JK Cotton Spinning and Weaving Mills in 1921. Their industrial interest expanded rapidly and they added JK Cotton Manufacturers in 1933, JK Jute Mills in 1931 and JK Iron and Steel Company in 1934. They also started Laxmi Ratan Cotton Mills in collaboration with another indigenous entrepreneur Ram Ratan Gupta, in the year 1934. By the 1930s, many other merchants who had only

played the role of investors so far, started their own industrial establishments (Joshi 2003; 38).

The composition of UICC, however, did not reflect this change. It remained an organisation of European business interests long after the industrial map of Kanpur was racially diversified. Until 1938, no Indian was ever elected the president or the secretary of the Chamber. The same can be said about the Chamber's representatives in the provincial legislative assembly. In the 1930s, the Chamber did nominate Jwala Prasad Srivastava—an Indian engineer and entrepreneur—to the legislative assembly, but that was more of an exception that at least partly reflected the changing political reality of the country. Similarly, the Chamber never nominated Indians on the municipal board (Upper-India-Chamber-of-Commerce 1938).

In 1914, the Indian traders and industrialists set up their own organisation, the UP Chamber of Commerce (UPCC) (Khosla 1992 ;27, Joshi 2003 ;39). The Chamber was formed to 'safeguard the rights and ventilate the grievances of the Indian commercial men' (Khosla 1992 ;27). Subsequently, as the Singhanias emerged as the most powerful industrial and business group of the city, he founded The Merchant Chamber of United Province. Late Kamplapat Singhania was the first president of this chamber (Bhatnagar 1965). The Singhania kept complete control over this chamber, and it was later believed that they used it to promote their own interests more than the general interests of the entrepreneur community of the city and province.[4] Even as these organisations shared some common interests with the UICC, it was primarily aimed at giving voice to the interest of Indian businesses in the city, which were hitherto side-lined in public affairs. It was only natural, therefore, for the UPCC to

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[4]   Gopal Sutawala, interview with the author, dated 13 October 2010, Kanpur.

take a pro-Swadeshi[5] ideological stand. By the 1930s, the UPCC had become confident enough to ask for a share in representing the city business interests in different legislative and other government forums. When the UPCC was allowed to give representation before the Joint Select Parliamentary Committee on Indian Constitutional Reforms, it highlighted the inadequate representation of the Indian business interest in the provincial legislative assembly and demanded equality of representation between the European and the Indian business interests in the assembly. The UPCC was subsequently recognized as a constituency and given the right to send its representative to the provincial legislature (UP 2016). However, at the municipal level, by the time the UPCC came into existence, the tables had already turned as far as Indian and European representations were concerned. Ever since elections were introduced for the membership of the Municipal Board, Europeans found it much harder to get elected on it than the Indians. Since 1916, when the UP Municipalities Act was passed, which ended government's domination over the Board by significantly reducing the number of nominated members, and provided for election of the chairman of the Board, the Indian businessmen and professionals had numerically dominated the Board. Babu Beharilal was the first non-official and elected chairman of the Board (Mehra 1952 ;32-33), after whom, the Board had a succession of chairmen belonging to the Indian business community, including Lala Kamlapat Singhania, who was the main force behind the UPCC (Ashraf 1977 ;39).

However, there is no evidence to suggest that urban governance was as much of a priority for the Indian Kanpur business community, as was, for example, trade or

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5   *Swadeshi,* which loosely means 'indigenous' was a political plank used by the Congress Party to highlight the colonial practice of 'free trade' that put the British manufactured products in an advantageous position. See Chandra, B., et al. (2016). India;s Struggle for Independence New Delhi, Penguin

taxation policies. It is possible that these eminent figures continued to contest elections for the municipal board and getting elected as it brought political prestige and proximity to the government.

5.5.2 Interest of the working class

It was the industrial working class that had contributed the most to the rapid population growth of the city in the first half of the 20th century. The working class settlements, known as *ahatas*, had proliferated throughout the city (Yadav 2004). And yet, the issue of representation of the working class on the Municipal Board also kept getting sidetracked. Dr Muralilal, who was elected as the chairman of the municipal board in 1923, was also the president of the Majdoor Sabha (a Congress affiliated Workers organisation). But he failed to secure any representation for the workers on the Board. The workers for their part were confident that they would finally get representation and had congratulated Muralilal soon after his election as chairman. The board continued to be lopsided in terms of class representation with reserved seats for the UICC (3), the UPCC (2) and the Marwaris (2) (Khosla 1992 ;118). Even when the representatives were nominated in the name of workers, they were not actually the workers' representatives. Neither did they belong to the working class, nor did they take any interest in their welfare. Later, when the Development Board was constituted, the working class did get two of its representatives on the Board. But that proved to be symbolic. A local newspaper commented that one of the two representatives, Harihar Nath Shastri, hardly attended any Board meetings and the other, Ganga Sahai Chaudhary, barely ever raised any issue pertaining to the working class.[6]

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[6] The Citizen, Kanpur, 21 April, 1951. Compiled in Arora, A., Ed. (2006). 80 Days: Kanpur Labour Problem from 1951 to 1955. Kanpur, Kanpur Itihas Samiti. Brass, P. R. (1965). Factional politics in an Indian state; the Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh. Berkeley,, University of California Press., Brass, P. (July 1962). "An Industrial Labour Constituecy: Kanpur " Economic and Political Weekly(Special Number): 1111-1118.

It was this failure of the local Congress to give proper voice to working-class interests that led to *Lal Kanpur* (Red Kanpur) in the late 1930s. The city witnessed unprecedented strikes, and militant—at times even violent—agitations by workers in 1937—38, earning the city the moniker of *Lal Kanpur.* As the world economy was coming out of the great depression, the industrial demand was rising, leading to Kanpur Mills working in double shifts. Workers demanded a rise in their wages, which was not accepted by Mill managements. This led to strikes in particular mills, which eventually turned into a general workers' strike across mills. After negotiations, the Employers' Association agreed to recognize the Kanpur Majdoor Sangh (KMS), and to constitute an enquiry committee to look into the workers' demands. The condition, however, was that the workers would resume work and would not go on strike pending the report of the enquiry panel. A settlement was reached but the workers were indignant with its terms, especially the condition that they could not go on strike pending the report of the enquiry committee. The leaders of the strike, drawn both from the socialist strand of the Congress and the communist parties, were vehemently criticised by the striking workers. Sporadic strikes continued during the tenure of the enquiry committee, despite the settlement (Joshi 1999, Joshi 2003 ;208-211).

Noted Congress leader Dr Rajendra Prasad, who was to become the first president of independent India, headed the three-member enquiry panel. The idea to include a member each from the KMS and the Employers' Association was rejected in the initial proceedings. The problem was that the employers had little faith in the members of the panel to begin with. They trusted Rajendra Prasad, but he hardly participated in the proceedings on account of ill health. Subsequently, when the panel

submitted its report, the Employers' Association rejected it in May 1938 (Joshi 2003 ;212-213). This led to widespread and spontaneous strikes by the workers. The fact that the KMS extended its support once the workers had already put down tools, suggests that it was not just the Indian National Congress but even the trade unions and their leaders that were unable to win workers' trust and represent their interests. This was the turning point in the industrial relations of Kanpur that led to an antagonistic relationship between workers and management. The next chapter will discuss how the implications of this antagonistic relation were not limited only to the economic sphere.

5.5.3   Local factional politics in the Indian National Congress

If there was one organisation that had the capacity to change the factionalised nature of representation of the business and the working classes, it had to be the Indian national Congress. As discussed in the previous chapter, Ahmedabad's case illustrates precisely this point. If the Congress collective was able to overshadow caste and religious divides by privileging the politics of place, by providing an alternative understanding of capital–labour relations, Gandhi facilitated an organisation of the working class that functioned on the basis of conciliation rather than confrontation. However, what follows here, illustrates a very different story of the role of the Congress in Kanpur.

The emergence of the Indian National Congress as a political force in Kanpur, especially after the 1920s, was rooted in the activities of some of the Hindu social groups, especially the *Arya Samaj* (Pandey 2006). Some of the important Congress leaders retained their links with these Hindu organisations as well as the political

rhetoric associated with them. As a result, the local organisation of the Indian National Congress was divided into factions, both on caste and religious lines, which also provided bases for competing patronage networks (Gould 2004). Broadly, the Congress was divided into two major factions. A decision of the Congress to form town committees in all towns with more than 50 thousand population led to the formation of the Town Congress Committee (TCC) in Kanpur. This committee was in addition to the already existing District Congress Committee. Right from the start, two factions of the Congress came to dominate each committee. While one faction controlled the District Congress Committee, the other had control over the *Majdoor Sabha* (the workers wing of the party) and the TCC.[7]

The consequences of intra-party factionalism were also on full display in the affairs of the Municipal Board. When the elections for the Board were held in 1923, most of the Congress nominated candidates were elected, and Dr Muralilal, the president of the TCC, was elected as the president of the Municipal Board. However the Congress Party was a divided house inside the Board with each faction seeking to weaken the other, rather than making a common cause against the colonial administration. The Congress faced a major embarrassment in July 1923 when a resolution was passed favouring the welcome of the provincial governor, who was to visit the city. The local press, as well as the people of the city perceived it to be in complete contradiction with the Congress' stated position of non-cooperation and boycott (Khosla 1992 ;101-103). The factionalism meant that the Congress was unable to create a common platform against the government even within itself, let alone with the members of the

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[7] For details about Intra-Party Factionalism in the Congress, see Mehra, S. P. (1952). Cawnpore Civic Problems Kanpur, The Citizen Press.

Muslim community, and other organized interests in the city. The result was that on the one hand, the government always had its way in the midst of all the squabbles, while on the other, the elected representatives were shown in poor light as being devoid of a vision for the city. The fact that the Municipal Board was unable to deal with the task at hand, and was at the verge of bankruptcy even before the Congress representatives took office, was forgotten. The result was that Dr Muralilal was forced to resign his chairmanship much before the completion of his tenure. When elections were held again in 1925, the Congress members did not fare well, and a candidate close to the government got elected as the chairman of the Board. However, no sooner had the Municipal Board gotten away from the Congress factionalism, communal division resurfaced. Months after the new Chairman took office, two Muslim members resigned protesting the appointment of Hindus as Chairman of the majority of sub-committees (Khosla 1992 ;108-111).

The elections for the membership of the Municipal Board and its chairmanship were right at the heart of the Muslim alienation in the city also (Joshi 2003). The schemes to decongest the city invariably ran into the issues of removal of places of worship of both communities. However the Muslim community felt that the municipal authorities dealt with them unfairly. Hafiz Hidayat Husain, a representative of the local Muslim Community, while giving representation before a government statuary panel protested against the 'cavalier treatment meted out to the Muslims by the Hindu Chairman of the Municipal Board' (Khosla 1992 ;70). He also pointed out that no Muslim was appointed as the chairman of the Board.

Muslim alienation was also an outcome of a sense of insecurity created by the activities of certain Hindu organisations. Before the Congress was formed, collective

life was expressed in terms of community. *Arya Samaj*, an organisation founded in the 19th century to interpret and reform Hinduism on modernist lines, was formed in Kanpur even before the formation of the Indian National Congress. In the beginning of the 20th Century, *Arya Samaj* claimed to have just short of a thousand members in Kanpur district. In the first decade of the 20th century, the organisation was running night schools and a library. In the 1920s, it launched *shuddhikaran* (purification) programmes that made Muslims of the city suspicious (Pandey 2002 ;111). There were other Hindu organisations in the city with even more extremist views (Guptoo 1997). There was also proportionate Muslim political alienation in the city, right from the first decade of the 20th Century.[8] In sum, this was yet another fault line in municipal politics with significant implications.

The problem of factionalism continued in Kanpur throughout the 1930s and 1940s.[9] The end of British colonial rule and advent of the Congress as the party in power more or less coincided with the formation of the Development Board in Kanpur. It was ironic that once in power, the local Congress showed keen interest in the Development Board, a body (discussed in the next section) with members nominated by the provincial government and not so much in the affairs of the Municipal Board, which was elected by the people of the city directly. It was ironic because the whole argument of the Congress party against the colonial government was premised on the idea of people's participation and representative governance processes. But no sooner was the party in power, it acted exactly in the manner in which the colonial

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[8]　For details about communal politics and violence in the city, see ibid.

[9]　Details about factional politics in the Kanpur Congress during this period can be found in Khosla, R. (1992). Urban Politics with Special Reference to Kanpur New Delhi, S Chand and Company Ltd., Pandey, G. (2002). The ascendancy of the congress in Uttar Pradesh : class, community and nation in Northern India, 1920-1940. London, Anthem Press.

government had been acting in the affairs pertaining to the municipal governance of Kanpur. The municipal positions and offices became instruments of patronage wherein individual leaders started to offer these positions to enhance their patronage networks and increase their individual power and control. They started assigning these positions to their supporters, paying scant attention to the matter of expertise and qualification.

The rule of the colonial government ended in the province on 1st April 1946, and the rein was now taken over by the Congress ministry. As soon as this transfer of power occurred, the city congress of Kanpur started to demand the reconstitution of the board so that it reflected popular aspirations. In October 1947, the provincial government reconstituted the Development Board as well as increased the number of members on the board. The newly constituted board had Congress members and its loyalists, which, in turn, also triggered a new factional rivalry. There was considerable heartburn among the local Congress leaders who were left out (Mehra 1952 ;67-68).

In the post-Independence period, municipal politics of the city remained embroiled in the factional politics of the Congress Party. [10] Ram Ratan Gupta—a Marwari industrialist—and Shiv Narain Tandon—a businessman belonging to the Khatri caste—led the two factions that dominated the Congress Party and municipal politics in the 1950s and the 1960s. As the municipal corporation was inaugurated in the city, Gupta and Tandon were elected Mayor and Deputy Mayor, respectively. Soon enough, Gupta quickly managed to sideline Tandon from the affairs of the corporation

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[10]   A detailed discussion on factional politics in Kanpur during this period can be found in Brass, P. R. (1965). Factional politics in an Indian state; the Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh. Berkeley,, University of California Press.

and, within three months, he resigned expecting that the provincial Congress leadership would take note of his protestation. However this made Ram Ratan Gupta's control over the corporation even stronger (Brass 1965 ;184-94). The Congress factions continued to fight for control of the municipal corporation throughout the 1960s and the 1970s (Ashraf 1975). This allowed the provincial government to supersede the municipal corporation frequently, as discussed (in Section 5.6.1) later in this chapter.

5.6   The Outcome: Fragmented Municipal Organisation

The factionalised political landscape of the city, as discussed in the previous section, led to the emergence of a fragmented municipal organisation during the colonial period—a characteristic that continued in post-Independence also, right till the inception of the JNNURM. In Kingdon's terms, the failure of the problem, policy and politics stream to come together meant that the windows for creation of municipal capacity could not be taken advantage of throughout this historical evolution.

The process of this factionalisation began with the formation of the Improvement Trust in 1909, which indicated the government's distrust of the municipal board in its willingness and capacity to implement the decongestion and town planning related policies. It was also an attempt to counter the 'native' domination of the city governance process once the elections were introduced in the municipal board.

This process started as elections to the board membership and reduced number of nominated membership meant that the European population was further isolated. This led to a deterioration of the relationship between the administrative set up of the city, which was still dominated by the Europeans, and the elected Board, which now had Indians in an overwhelming majority. This friction was epitomized most starkly

during the *Durbar* (ceremonial meeting) held by Lieutenant Governor Sir Antony MacDonnell, in Kanpur. Babu Sidhgopal Mishra, a board member, publicly accused the board officials of inefficiency and corruption. Because the allegation was made at such an important event of the city, in front of such a high profile dignitary, an enquiry was constituted. But nothing really came out of the enquiry except that it highlighted the chasm between the administrative and the political wings of the Board and its inefficiencies (Mehra 1952 ;30).

This provided a context for the government to start setting up parallel committees and trusts to deal with urban problems in the city. The idea was to placate the elected board by bringing in nominated members in such committees. For example, an Improvement Trust was set up by the Municipal Board to deal with the problem of congestion and for opening up of the overcrowded parts of the city. The Board made a grant of approximately 333 thousand rupees to the trust between 1909 and 1918. The trust carried out a couple of decongestion projects, including the construction of a road and an overbridge during this period. But that was utterly insufficient in comparison to the problem at hand. The Cawnpore Expansion Committee, founded in 1913, was another such committee in this series. The government resolution setting up the committee observed that there was an urgent demand:

> for sites for detached and healthy houses for well to do Indians. Areas are also required for industrial settlements, model villages and similar objects. The Civil Lines are equally cramped. The Railways arrangements at Cawnpore are complicated and are not regulated by a well defined scheme, and the constant growth of sidings is becoming a serious menace to road traffic. [11]

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[11]   Government Resolution about Cawnpore Expansion Committee, quoted in Joshi, C. (2003). <u>Lost Worlds: Indian Labour and Its Forgotten Histories </u>Delhi, Permanent BLACK.

The committee included the elected member of the chairman of the Municipal Board, but he was only a member among several others from the government. The President of the UICC, Mr Henry Ledgard was appointed the head of this committee. This was another clear indication of the diminishing authority of the Board, and the strategy of the colonial government to bypass it in the process of its efforts at urban governance.

The Expansion Committee, in its report, submitted in November 1917, made several important recommendations. But most importantly, it emphasized an urgent need for a general town planning scheme to provide for the expansion of the city. The committee sought to envisage the requirements of the city for the coming fifty years and drew up a town plan on that basis. It estimated that an additional 1250 acres of land would be required for the extension of the Civil Lines area. Similarly, for new factories, an additional 1000 acres, for dwellings for the industrial workers an additional 1000 acres, and for the remaining city expansion, another 1070 acres would be required. The expansion programme, which was to be carried out over a period of fifty years, was envisaged to cost 168 lakhs of rupees (Mehra 1952 ;44-46).

The Expansion Committee proposed the setting up of an Improvement Trust, in place of the existing Municipal Improvement Trust Committee, to carry out the expansion plan. Equally importantly, the committee suggested that the treatment of the existing congested areas should also be in the jurisdiction of this trust. The proposed trust, according to the report, should consist of a full-time chairman to be appointed by the government, the collector as ex-officio member, Municipal Board executive officer as ex-officio member, two representatives of the Municipal Board and two representatives of the UICC (Mehra 1952 ;47). With this report, urban governance in Kanpur was moving away from a system

of popularly elected municipal governance. Even if the Municipal Board was going to continue, it had a very limited role in shaping the future of the city. Even though the government amended the constitution of the Improvement Board and included the chairman of the Municipal Board as an ex- officio member, apart from two Board members as originally recommended, it was clear that the municipal board was not going to be in-charge of the town planning.

The Cawnpore Improvement Trust eventually started working in December 1919. Its formation was preceded by the passing of the UP Town Improvement Act 1818, which was also based on the recommendation of this report. The committee continued its function until August 1945, when it merged into yet another organisation, the Development Board. The Trust did take up several projects during its existence. S. P. Mehra (1952 ;48). reports that 20,061 constructions were made, which included 8,190 houses, bungalows and factories, 622 *ahatas* (settlements for the industrial workers) and 11,871 quarters. However, these efforts were no match for the ever-expanding and rapidly populating city, which becomes clear from the fact that by 1944, the government formed yet another committee to look into the issue of improving the Kanpur urban area. Headed by a former chairman of the Cawnpore Improvement Trust, and comprising of other government officials, the committee was to:

> examine all matters connected with the improvement of Cawnpore and
> in particular the important question of water supply and sewerage and
> drainage, which, it is essential, should be placed on a satisfactory basis
> if any progress is to be made with the equally important problem of
> town planning and slum clearance.[12]

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12 Government Press Communiqué announcing the appointment of Souter Committee. Quoted in Mehra, S. P. (1952). Cawnpore Civic Problems Kanpur, The Citizen Press. page 49

In January 1945, the committee submitted its report, which observed that it found complete unanimity among all the stakeholders regarding the deplorable state of civic governance in the city. Out of date and inadequate drainage, sewerage and sewage disposal got special mention. The report also noted a complete lack of coordination between the Municipal Board, the Cantonment Board and the Improvement Trust. In light of these challenges, and challenges arising from a rapidly growing city population that had doubled in the 1930s alone, the report recommended that efficient urban governance would be possible in the city only if a Municipal Corporation replaced the Municipal Board. However, the report also observed that given the enormity of challenges, even a newly constituted Municipal Corporation might find it hard to meet them. The report recommended that a Development Board be constituted in the interim to streamline the systems of urban governance before a Municipal Corporation would be formed. The report noted that almost all the witnesses, including the city's Chamber of Commerce stressed the need for the replacement of the Municipal Board with the Municipal Corporation (Mehra 1952 ;49-52).

In August 1945, the government formed the Development Board by promulgating Cownpore Urban Area Development Act, 1945. The Board was to discharge all the functions of the existing Improvement Trust. In addition, it was also to take over the provision of some of the crucial urban services, such as water supply, drainage and sewage disposal from the Municipal Board. The tenure of the Cawnpore Development Board was to be initially for five years, but the government had the authority to extend the tenure as necessary. The Development Board was to have a position of a full-time, paid president. Apart from the President, the Board would also have ex-

officio members as: the District Magistrate, the Labour Commissioner, the Chairman of the Municipal Board and the President of the Cantonment Board. Apart from that, the Board was to have three members to be elected by the Municipal Board, and eight non-official members to be nominated by the *provincial* government. Apart from the funds that were available to the Improvement Trust, the Development Board was also given the power to raise loans from the open market and levy betterment taxes. The Development Board was also to be supervised by and report directly to the *provincial* government (Mehra 1952; 51-56) With the formation of the Development Board, therefore, not just town planning functions, but even functions related with provision of urban amenities were also out of the purview of the municipal board. As we see later, this provided a context for a multiplicity of organisations providing municipal governance even in the post-Independence period.

5.6.1 Municipal organisation post-Independence

The formation of the development board was to be an interim measure. The committee that had recommended its formation had viewed it as a transitory organisation with the objective of bringing the urban situation of Kanpur out of its deplorable state (Ashraf 1975). Once this was achieved, the formation of a municipal corporation was recommended. Keeping this in mind, the Development Board was formed for a five years period. However, as a political tug of war engulfed the Board, in September 1950, its term was extended for another five years (Mehra 1952 ;68). The organisation of the Municipal Board, in the meantime, lingered on at the provincial government's mercy.

The provincial government framed charges of irregularities against the municipal board in 1949 and 1950, which were later dropped. In 1952, the provincial government superseded both the Municipal Board as well as the Development Board. Eventually, in 1960, the Municipal Corporation of Kanpur was formed on the basis of the UP Provincial Municipal Corporation Act 1959 (Mishra 2008). In the intervening period, the entire responsibility of urban governance was put in the hands of a provincial government appointed administrator (Ashraf 1975).

However, the formation of the municipal corporation did not bring a new era in urban governance to Kanpur. It was not an end to the organisational multiplicity as far as urban governance was concerned. Even as the factional politics continued in the city (discussed in Section 5.5.3), the corporation was just another site where it played itself out (Brass 1965). This gave the provincial government opportunities to intervene. Consequently, the Municipal Corporation was superseded frequently and municipal elections were held irregularly, if at all. For example, the second municipal elections were not held in time because of which the term of the municipal council was extended by a year. When this period ended in January 1966, the state government put the municipal administration under the administrator. Finally, elections were held in 1968, but the corporation was superseded again in 1973. (Ashraf 1975). This supersession was extended annually by the provincial government and continued until the 1980s. Regular elections resumed in 1995 only after the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act was passed in 1992.

The absence of a representative and functional municipal corporation had two broad implications. *First*, The discontinuities in the operations of a proper municipal organisation had administrative, political and financial implications. Administratively, it led to adhocism, which never allowed a municipal corporation to evolve. The provincial government appointed administrators for a tenure of not more than a year. Unsurprisingly, they interpreted their role as daily functioning of the city rather than taking a long-term view regarding urban governance and development. *Second,* over a period of time, it also had an impact on the accountability of the municipal officials, who felt responsible not to the city and its population, but to the political and administrative bosses at the provincial level. Politically, because of long interruptions, municipal politics could never become as important in the eyes of local leaders and people alike, as were provincial or central level politics. Financially, this meant that no long-term financial planning occurred at the city level, and the municipal finances depended on aid and loans from the provincial government.

This also led to organisational multiplicity. In July 1966, the provincial government promulgated the UP Palika (Municipal) Centralized Services Act 1966, by which provision of certain services were made the common responsibility of the municipal and provincial governments. The Act also gave the provincial government the power to take action against the officials of the municipal corporation (Ashraf 1975). Subsequently, the parastatal organisations were formed to provide urban services to the people. Following this Act, in April 1966, the UP Housing and Development Board was formed. The responsibilities of this Board included implementing houses and

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development schemes in the city. Such schemes could include acquiring land and developing roads, water supply, electricity and other urban facilities (Associates 2006 ;127). Further, the provincial government legislated the UP Water Supply and Sewerage Act 1975. This Act led to the establishment of two agencies responsible for water supply and sewerage in the city in 1976—a parastatal agency, *UP Jal Nigam* Kanpur, and a local body, *Kanpur Jal Sansthan*. Both these agencies were responsible for water supply and sewerage in the city. The Kanpur Development Authority was established already in 1974 to manage and plan the expansion of the city (Associates 2006).

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter traces the development of municipal organisation in Kanpur. We find that unlike Ahmedabad, municipal organisation in Kanpur never had the opportunity to develop a coherent unified form. The reasons for this difference can be found in non-alignment of the problem and the policy. The reasons can be found in the successive episodes where the policies proposed to solve the city's major problems were repeatedly ineffective due to the factionalised nature of politics. This could be seen in the way the politics of the business class, the working class and the local Congress Party, were each marked by intractable factionalism. Even as the policy of improving decongestion and town planning was sought to be implemented throughout this period, it resulted in the formation of organisations alternative to the municipal board, even as the problem remained. The absence of a coherent organisational form in this period meant that post-Independence, even when a legally coherent and unified

organisation was created in the form of a municipal corporation, the latter could not work as a coherent municipal body.

It is in this background that the city entered the phase of its second window—the period of de-industrialisation, which preceded the inception of urban reform programmes, especially the JNNURM. In the next chapter, we begin with a brief comparison of organisational coherence of Ahmedabad vs the organisational multiplicity of Kanpur. It then explores the implications for urban governance in the two cities as they negotiated the phase of industrial decline.

CHAPTER 6

MAKING OF MUNICIPAL CAPACITY: AHMEDABAD AND KANPUR

6.1 Introduction

According to popularly accepted narratives,[1] it was in the 1990s that 'an individual' set Ahmedabad on the path to development, and it was 'an event' that led to the stagnation of Kanpur. The individual was a dynamic municipal administrator who turned things around in Ahmedabad between 1994 and 1997, when the AMC was on the verge of bankruptcy during the post-industrial decline of the 1980s. The event in Kanpur was a strike by the workers of rapidly closing down industries that drowned hopes for an agenda of urban revival. The academic explanations that resonate with these narratives originate in literature on the role of leadership in the reform process[2] and in the literature that suggests that a militant organized working class can create a successful road block in the process of neoliberalisation (Frost and North 2013).

However, this chapter shows that there were deeper processes shaping the trajectories of the two cities. The chapter demonstrates that the nature of existing municipal organisation at the city level is the key determinant that shaped the path of neoliberalisation that was embodied in the urban reforms. In the previous two chapters, we witnessed the making of two different types of municipal organisations in Ahmedabad and Kanpur. Whereas a coherent municipal organisation evolved in

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[1]   Several local journalists, academics, business leaders and municipal staff interviewed in the two cities begin their narrative of revival and stagnation of Ahmedabad and Kanpur respectively with these two events.

[2]   Illustrative is Jenkins (1999).

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Ahmedabad, municipal organisation in Kanpur was fragmented. This chapter demonstrates that this difference was crucial in shaping contemporary local politics in the two cities. In Ahmedabad, a coherent municipal organisation with functional representative politics was able to internalise the emergence of the politics of *Hindutva* in the city. As a result, the *Hindutva* politics was articulated in urban terms; it was organised around the issues of space, service delivery and urban meaning in general. In Kanpur, a fragmented municipal organisation with no effective representative politics at the municipal level was unable to internalize the politics of the city. This meant that city politics were expressed in terms of caste and religion based on identity that characterised the politics prevalent at the provincial level. In Kingdon's terms, the urban orientation of *Hindutva* politics played a decisive role in the alignment of the *problem* of industrial and municipal decline with the *policies* of liberalisation in Ahmedabad. Even as this urban *Hindutva* helped transform the municipal organisation and successfully produced capacities necessary for implementation of the JNNURM, it also led to a communally segregated and ghettoized city. In Kanpur, because the local politics remained oriented to provincial categories, the municipal organisation remained fragmented and weak when the JNNURM was inaugurated. Consequently, the local urban problems did not become the significant theme of the local politics, and the problem did not get aligned with the policy.

The chapter is organized into seven parts. This introductory section (6.1) is followed by Section 6.2, which identifies the problems that the two cities faced in the wake of industrial decline in the 1980s. Both cities faced similar problems in the wake of the decline of the textile industry. Both cities had to cope with, apart from other things,

major municipal financial crises. In this period, the two cities also experienced episodes of communal violence and violence involving the working class. Section 6.3 shows that the introduction of liberalisation policies, which coincided with the problems of industrial and municipal decline, was also similar in the case of both cities. The 1980s was also a watershed decade for politics. This is when the decline of the Congress began, providing space for the emergence of identity politics based on caste and religion. Section 6.4 discusses the ways in which this political transition occurred in Ahmedabad and Kanpur. It demonstrates that the nature of prevalent municipal organisation was the key that shaped this process and determined the path of municipal renewal in both cities. In Ahmedabad, the rise of *Hindutva* was internalised by coherent municipal organisation, leading to the emergence of '*Hindutva* urbanism'. In Kanpur, the weak and fragmented municipal organisation meant that city politics was driven by the provincial politics. Section 6.5 focuses on the outcome of alignment of problems and policies. It finds that *Hindutva* urbanism provided the political framework of consensus within which administrative and financial transformation of municipal organisation became possible. In Kanpur, municipal organisation remained weak and fragmented because the provincial level identity based political competition could afford to sidestep municipal issues. The final section (7) concludes the argument of the chapter.

6.2   The Problem: Industrial Decline and Communal Divisiveness

The 1980s underlined a new phase in the history of Ahmedabad and Kanpur. This was the decade in which it became apparent that the industrial character of the two cities

was going to change for good. Even as the textile industry in Kanpur had experienced difficulties since the management changes in the wake of Indian

Independence, it was in this decade that the decline became unstoppable. Similarly, in the 1980s, the textile mills began to close down rapidly in Ahmedabad. This was also the decade when the religious cleavage between Hindus and Muslims took the form of frequent violent clashes, and a religious divide between the two communities emerged as the most important political fault line in the politics of the city. In Kanpur, unrest took the form of strikes and disruptions from an increasingly restless industrial working class, along with some episodes of communal violence. The city also emerged as one of the important sites of the political assertion of *dalit* communities. Whereas, the municipal organisation in Kanpur was already in disarray, as the previous chapter discussed, the municipal organisation in Ahmedabad also felt financial strain and a general decline following the shutting down of the textile mills.

In this context, the problems of the two cities since the 1980s can be understood as three interrelated phenomenon. First, closure of the textile mills in the two cities triggered a general economic downturn in both cities. Second, this economic downturn severely impacted municipal finances and municipal service delivery in the two cities. Finally, communal disharmony (especially in Ahmedabad and also in Kanpur) coincided with the economic decline and emerged as a major problem.

In the 1980s, the textile mills started to close down rapidly. Many factors that were general in nature, and not necessarily city specific, came together to trigger a decline

of the composite textile mills[3] all over India.[4] However, Ahmedabad and Kanpur as the cities with the largest number of mills after Bombay were two major centres of this decline. In Ahmedabad, there were 63 functioning composite textile mills, employing an average of 155, 244 workers each day. By 1997, only 19 mills remained functional, employing 35,494 workers (Spodek 2011: 195).

The trouble for textile mills in Kanpur was relatively prolonged, but it was accentuated during the 1980s and 1990s. Just as a transfer of power took place from the colonial British government to the post-Independence Indian government, a transfer of ownership of mills took place from British mill owners to Indian business families in the city, such as the Kotharis and Jaipuriyas. The end of the colonial era also resulted in the loss of technical and managerial staff in the city as many British who had these capacities decided not to stay behind in post-Independence India. This led to changes in management practices in the mills in the city.[5] That was on top of attempts to rationalize[6] the workforce following the decline in demand, which had spiked during World War II—a move resisted by the trade unions. As the private mill managements pressed for rationalisation, and the trade unions resisted the move, the Indian government, at the heyday of it interventionist intent, began to nationalize the mills. The Victoria Mill was the first to be nationalized and put under the control of the National Textile Corporation. In all, nine mills were put under nationalized

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[3]   The large scale mills as they existed traditionally in cities such as Bombay, Ahmedabad and Kanpur carried out the processes of weaving, spinning, dyeing, washing and finishing under one roof, hence the name 'composite mills'.

[4]   Many factors contributed to making the composite textile mills unviable since the 1980s. These included regulatory frameworks that favoured smaller industrial units, by way of tax incentives and labour laws and technological and market factors in terms of a shift away from cotton to synthetic yarn. For a general account of the changing nature of the textile industry in India, please see Roy (1996) and Oberoi, B. (2017).

[5]   Vijay Chawla, Kanpur-based journalist, in an interview with the author, 10 October 2010, Kanpur.

[6]   A common prescription in economics that sees markets as the only efficient way to allocated resources.

management—an arrangement that even the private mill owners preferred. They actively created the conditions for their mills to be nationalized (Mahaprashasta 2016). In the 1980s, as the government started to rethink its interventionist economic policy (Kohli 2009), it came up with a revised textile and handloom policy in 1985 that departed from the earlier policy of taking over the mills and managing them under the public sector (Uchikawa 1998). In 1989, the provincial government of Uttar Pradesh formed a committee headed by K K Pandey with the mandate to suggest ways to revive the mills. The committee recommended reducing the number of workers in the mills as well as mechanical modernisation and fresh investment. Even as no investments were forthcoming from the government, fear of retrenchment led to massive strikes and demonstrations. [7] The government also announced a voluntary retirement programme proposed for permanent workers and they were encouraged to take it up. Eventually, in the early 1990s, when the government of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao took office and the policies of economic liberalisation turned from piecemeal reforms to a definitive strategy, the central government ordered that government-owned mills stopped production without technically closing down. After a decade-long protracted battle, the government finally shut down 72 out of 126 units. The rest were referred to the Northern Indian Textile and Research Organisation (NITR) to assess the viability of these units. The organisation found all but 2 mills to be non-viable. Therefore, except for the two mills, which were assigned to the newly formed Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), all the mills were closed down (Mahaprashasta 2016).

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[7] Subhasini Ali, in interview with the author, 17 October 2010, Kanpur.

The implications of the closure of mills in the two cities were going to be deep and wide, but one of the very direct impacts was borne by the local municipal organisation. Even if the existence of a municipal organisation during this period was only notional, as no municipal council was constituted between 1974 and 1989, the industrial decline, which was not limited just to the textile mills (Awasthi 1986), further aggravated the problem of urban services delivery as the provincial and the central governments grappled with the problems of the textile mills. As discussed in Chapter 3, the KMC was in acute financial difficulty at the time of inception of the JNNURM with its total budgetary size, less than a fifth of the budgetary size of the AMC. Even more importantly, it had negligible funds for capital expenditure. And as discussed in Chapter 2, the local bodies were to contribute 30 per cent of the total cost of the development projects sanctioned under the JNNURM. The first challenge before the KMC, therefore, was to mobilise that 30 per cent of the finances for the projects it wished to apply for under the JNNURM.[8] This financial problem made the KMC completely dependent on the provincial government, since it had no internal capital or the capacity to mobilize funds from the market. The state government decided to lend this amount to the municipal corporation as a soft loan.[9]

A closer look at the finances of the KMC during the decades leading to inception of the JNNURM illustrates the trajectory of the financial problems of the KMC. The problem with the financial capacity of Kanpur was threefold and it can be summarised

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[8] This section is based on multiple interviews with the KMC functionaries whom the author interviewed in small groups of 2–3 and/or individually in October 2010 in Kanpur. The names are withheld as per their wishes.

[9] The information regarding policies of the provincial government of UP comes from a series of interviews conducted by the author in October 2010 and June 2013 in Lucknow with Rekha Gupta, Director, Urban Local Bodies, Government of Uttar Pradesh.

as financial inefficiency, financial dependence and trust deficit. The financial inefficiency in terms of internal tax collection and management, the financial dependence over the provincial government, and a trust deficit reflected in the unwillingness of city dwellers to pay taxes. Let's examine these in turn.

Fiscal inefficiency reflected itself most starkly in the process of internal tax collection, or its absence. According to the rules governing the functioning of municipal corporations, the corporations are authorized to levy and collect taxes (Government of Uttar Pradesh 2008). Octroi—a tax on goods entering the city limits for commercial purposes—and property tax have traditionally been the most important taxes levied and collected by the municipal corporations in India. However, the octroi was abolished by most provincial states in the 1980s mainly on the basis of two arguments. The first argument was based on the idea of octroi working as an unnecessary trade barrier both in logistical and financial terms. But an equally important reason given for the abolition was the archaic and inefficient system of its collection employed by the local bodies that resulted in both evasion and corruption. With abolition of octroi, property tax became the most important internal revenue source for municipal corporations.

Table 6.1: Revenue Income of Ahmedabad and Kanpur Municipal Corporations: Internal and External Sources (1991–92)

Municipal Corporation	Total Income (In Lakhs)	Percentage of income from internal sources	Percentage of Income from External Sources
Ahmedabad	17747.84	81.81	18.19
Kanpur	4415.46	19.44	80.56

Source: Ahmedabad and Kanpur Municipal Corporations.

But in Kanpur, the low percentage of tax collection was a problem. For example, about 34–37 per cent of total property tax dues were not collected between 1990–91 and 1993–94. A significant portion of this uncollected tax was from organisations that owned textile mills. During the 1990s, the percentage of tax collection went down progressively (State Finance Commissions Cell 1996: 20). A National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) study conducted on the financial condition of the KMC, seeking to find out the reasons behind the low percentage of tax collection, observed that lack of punitive powers with the municipal corporation, as well as lack of motivation, were the major reasons for low tax collection. Moreover, as the textile mills—the largest taxpayers of the city—were on a path of terminal decline, they resorted to delaying tactics such as questioning and appealing against the valuation by the municipal corporation (State Finance Commissions Cell 1996: 21).

In the case of Ahmedabad, the AMC began to feel the financial stress for the first time in the 1980s and 1990s as the mills closed rapidly and direct and indirect revenues that the mills generated for the AMC dried out. In the decade of the 1980s, the AMC was able to balance its budget only twice. In all other financial years, it faced a budgetary deficit that significantly reduced the percentage of capital investment by the AMC into the city. In the year 1989–90, the AMC spent only about a third of its capital budget. The percentage went down progressively between 1989 and 1991 (Spodek 2011: 204).

Furthermore, it is fair to say that the economic and municipal implications of the decline of the mill industry in the two cities were quantifiable and therefore can be stated objectively. There were political implications to which we return later in the

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chapter. However, there were more nuanced and qualitative changes that the two cities and their populations experienced. For the cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur, textile mills were of course arenas of economic activity, but they were also the lynchpin of social and political lives of the cities. As the mills went silent, the social and political life of the city that was organized around the mills also withered. This was experienced more acutely in Kanpur than in Ahmedabad because over a period of time, Ahmedabad was still able to diversify. As the previous chapters suggested, Kanpur had never been an ideal city in terms of planning or provision of urban services. The problems of congestion and poor housing conditions, and filth were there even when the mills were functional. However, the difference was that the vibrancy the functioning mills added to the city compensated for other problems. The workers and other city dwellers took pride in their mills as they overlooked the pathetic level of municipal services and miserable urban condition. Mills were not just producing fabric, they were also producing an urban meaning for the cities and people. Subhashini Ali, a trade union leader of national repute and former parliamentarian from Kanpur, reflected:

> There was a buzz in the air of Kanpur when the mills were running. The sirens of the mills, workers rushing into the mill compounds as their shift started, and coming out in hoards when it ended, food stalls outside the mills; it had all been the part of city landscape. Kanpur is not the same ever since the smoke stopped rising from chimneys of the mills.[10]

As the mills closed, Kanpur and Ahmedabad could no longer lay claim over the moniker of '*Manchster of the East*'. The problem, and the challenge, was the reinvention of the cities as places and the quest to find new monikers. Under the

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[10]   Interview with author, dated 17 October 2010, Kanpur.

JNNURM, when the two cities were asked to prepare their development plans, apart from other things, they were also being challenged to outline the monikers they aspired to acquire.

The closing of the mills also meant that the cities had suddenly lost the logic on the basis of which they were organized spatially.

In the wake of this, the two cities experienced repeated social strife in the 1980s and 1990s (Engineer 1992). In the case of Ahmedabad, the frequent communal conflicts between Hindu and Muslim communities reassigned the identities of erstwhile working-class settlements as Hindu and Muslim colonies. The politics of communal conflicts will be discussed further in the chapter, in the section 6.4. The areas where the erstwhile industrial workers from both the colonies lived together were worst affected and this eventually led to spatial segregation and ghettoisation in the city (Chandhoke 2009). Similarly, Kanpur also witnessed communal conflicts between the two communities in 1979, 1980, 1994 and 2001 (Engineer 1994, 2002; Rajalakshmi 2001). The city had minor incidents intermittently, but this was far less compared to the conflicts in Ahmedabad. However, in addition to communal violence, Kanpur also witnessed at least two labour-related incidents that left a long shadow over the collective psyche of the city. In December 1977, the police fired on agitating workers of the Swadeshi Cotton Mill, killing at least 12 of them. Similarly, in 1989, the workers interrupted interstate rail services in what is known as the longest *Rail Roko* (stop rail) agitation.

6.3   The Policy: Political Decentralisation Aimed at Cities as Growth Engines

The problem of economic decline of the two cities and a consequent need for reinvention coincided with a significant shift in urban policy direction at the national

level. The policy direction that eventually took the shape of a national level mission in 2005 had its roots in the mid-1980s, in the recommendations of the Correa Commission that we discussed in Chapter 2. The 1980s was the decade that began to witness a clear shift in the policy direction of the Indian government vis-à-vis cities and urbanisation. Prior to the recommendations of the Correa Commission, the entire emphasis of urban planning had been on preventing the over expansion of the four metropolitan cities (Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta) and ensuring regional and spatial balance as the urban population increased and new urban centres sprang up.[11] This objective of 'regulating urbanisation' had led to a policy framework that involved strict control of the state over the process of urbanisation, as well as a close involvement of the state as a player. The Correa Commission recommendations sought to put an end to this control and intervention.

It is also in the Correa Commission recommendations that we first witness the arrival of the idea of cities as 'growth engines'. The Commission identified 329 cities calling them Generators of Economic Momentums (GEMs), which were further divided into (National Priority Centres (NCPs) and State Priority Centres (SPCs) (Batra 2009: 17). The government did not accept the recommendations immediately, but their impact began to show on the government policy as the process of economic liberalisation picked up pace in the 1990s. Many of the reform recommendations that formed part of the JNNURM reform prescription had their origins in the Correa Commission and other similar reports solicited by the government during this period (Mahadevia 2003). Especially important was the India Infrastructure Report (IIR) prepared under

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[11] A summary of urbanization policy in India prior to the 1980s can be found in Batra (2009).

the chairmanship of Rakesh Mohan. The document submitted in March 1996, titled *India Infrastructure Report: Policy Imperatives for Growth and Welfare* included in it recommendations that shaped both the content and terminology of the urban governance reforms to be pursued by the governments in the decades of the1990s and the 2000s. Making it clear that budgetary allocations alone were not going to be sufficient for the infrastructural requirements of Indian cities, the report recommended private investment in the process. The report also recommended that devolving planning authority and strengthening service delivery capacity at the city level should be the way to achieve private investment in urban infrastructure (Batra 2009; Mahadevia 2003).

The policy recommendation to devolve power to the urban local bodies was in line with the simultaneous changes taking place in the political stream. Since the mid-1980s, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had been pushing for political decentralisation by providing constitutional sanction to the local rural and urban bodies. After a failed attempt of his Congress predecessor to bring about a constitutional amendment to this effect, the Narasimha Rao government finally achieved this in 1992 through the 73rd and the 74th amendments (See Annexure 2) in the constitution of India (Sivaramakrishnan 2011). The constitutional sanction to the urban local body was a major political landmark in the history of municipal organsiations in India, at par with the reforms that Viceroy Lord Rippon had introduced more than a century before. This amendment was to give both a political framework as well as the legitimacy to the policy recommendations of the Rakesh Mohan Committee Report. Unsurprisingly, the JNNURM brought together the elements of the report that recommended public

investment in urban infrastructure with the aim of attracting private investment and the implementation of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act.

At the city level, this shift in policy direction was experienced most directly in the form of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, which necessitated changes in the existing municipal laws at the state level. Correspondingly, the two states of Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh amended their municipal corporation acts in 1993 (Yadav 2014: 216) and 1995 (Mishra 2008). But the amendments in the Acts did not mean that all the provisions of the act were also implemented at the city level. It did mean, however, that the elections were held now at regular intervals. It is worth noting that no municipal elections were held in Uttar Pradesh between 1974 and 1989. The incorporation of the 74th amendments within the municipal acts made holding municipal elections a constitutional responsibility, therefore, eliminating the possibility of such a hiatus.

For the two cities, therefore, the coincidence of the problem of economic decline and consequent municipal problems and the policy that began to look at cities as spaces for capital investment was a *window of opportunity* for reinvention of the cities as the engines of economic growth. But as we see later in the chapter, politics—both past and contemporary—were crucial in transforming this coincidence into a coupling to use Kingdon's terminology. As discussed in the previous two chapters, the politics of the past were reflected in the municipal organisational landscape. In this chapter, we discuss the nature of contemporary politics that played a role in the process of coupling.

6.4 Politics: Hindutva Urbanism Versus Provincial Identity Politics

The 1980s and the 1990s witnessed interesting shifts in the Indian political landscape, which can best be summarised as the decline of the Congress Party on the one hand, and the rise of identity based political forces to substitute for the vacuum left by that decline on the other. Identity politics, in turn, manifested principally in two forms: one form was the idea of Hindu nationalism whereas the other form was caste-based political groups. In the 1980s, Ahmedabad was the place where experimentations of the politics of *Hindutva* took shape. Kanpur, on the other hand, was an equally important place where a prolonged contestation took place between other forms of identity politics during this period. However, the key point that this section demonstrates is that the presence of a coherent municipal organisation in Ahmedabad ensured that the politics of *Hindutva* was manifested through the processes of municipal politics. In Kanpur, on the other hand, the absence of such an organisation meant that even if the city remained an important site of political contestations at the provincial level, politics was not configured through the processes of municipal politics. This distinction was significant in terms of the making of municipal capacities in the two cities.

6.4.1   Ahmedabad: Emergence of Hindutva urbanism

Since the 1990s, the story of Ahmedabad has been a story of the rise and rise of the BJP riding the wave of Hindu Nationalism (Sahni 2005). The rise of Hindu Nationalism since the 1980s was attributed to the organisational and ideological spread of the Sangh Parivar (Hansen 1993), on the one hand, and political ingenuity and inventiveness of the BJP leadership on the other (Corbridge and Harriss 2000).

By reworking its ideology around contemporary themes and issues, the BJP successfully alluded to Hindu victimhood in the face of Muslim appeasement by the Indian state. Nothing portrayed this combination more spectacularly than the Ram Janmbhoomi–Babri Masjid dispute. The claim, that a medieval mosque was built by the Muslim rulers of the time at the very site where Hindu God Ram was born, in effect became an evidence of how Hindus were historically wronged in their own land by outsider others, and how the state stood with the other and not with Hindus, in the name of an imported notion of rule of law. This political message was buttressed continuously through the vast and efficient organisation that the Sangh Parivar had successfully built over a period of time. In sum, in the 1990s, the formula of success included an appealing political message delivered effectively by a robust organisation (Corbridge and Harriss 2000).

In Ahmedabad, the politics based on Hindu victimhood and a wronged Hindu nation got its municipal manifestation especially through two events. One was the communal narrative that was weaved around a bootlegger turned mafia don of the city, Latif. The other was about the name of the city itself, which represented its Muslim founder Ahmed Shah and the campaign launched by the BJP to change it to Karnavati.

Abdul Latif emerged on the streets of Ahmedabad at the intersection of the policy of a liquor ban that exists in Gujarat and churnings in the urban land business in the city following the promulgation of the Urban Land (Ceiling and Regulation) Act (ULCRA) in 1976.

Interestingly, the deep communal divide that became the main political fault line of Ahmedabad and Gujarat politics had its immediate origins in the anti (caste based)

reservation agitation and the KHAM (Kshatriya, Harijan Adivasi, Muslim) strategy adopted by the Congress Party. Even though the city experienced its first major communal violence in the year 1969 (Shah 1970), it was in the 1980s that the communalisation of politics began in a systematic manner. It was close on the heels of the strategy of the Congress Party in the late 1970s in which it forged a social alliance of four different castes and communities, known as (an alliance of) KHAM. This alliance brought four different communities including the dalits and Muslims together in an electoral alliance. But it also politically alienated the other 'upper castes' in the process. The resentment that built up against this politically convenient alliance led to anti- reservation agitation by the middle of the 1980s (Ray 1985; Shah 1987). The anti-reservation movement, which was essentially a conflict between the 'upper' and the 'lower' caste groups, was counterproductive to the politics of the Hindu Right led by the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) that was beginning to take root in Ahmedabad. (Engineer 1985) Since 1985, communal conflict between the Hindus and the Muslims became almost a yearly affair. The city experienced frequent communal conflicts throughout the 1990s. It finally culminated in a major spread of anti-Muslim violence in 2002, in which approximately 2000 people were killed.[12]

This political recalibration from caste-based political consolidation to religion-based political consolidation was achieved in the context of the industrial decline that we have discussed in the previous section. The industrial decline had its implications for spatial and habitation patterns of the city. Closure of the mills resulted in making

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[12] For a summary of communal violence in the city during this period, see Chandhoke (2009). A comprehensive assessment of the events of 2002 can be found in Varadarajan(2002).

urban land, occupied by the mills and adjoining slum settlements occupied by the workers, available for new forms of real estate development. However, the UCLRA introduced in the last decade had put strict controls on the development of land markets in the Indian cities,[13] creating informal land markets often run through illegal means with the help of local criminals.

Abdul Latif's metamorphosis from a wholesale bootlegger to a mafia don, who dabbled in the real estate market and municipal politics, can be seen in the light of this political economy of urban land. By the beginning of the 1980s, Latif was already a successful bootlegger operating from the Dariyapur locality of Ahmedabad. He ran his illegal wholesale liquor business through an efficient system of bribes to the local administration and politicians. He also cultivated the image of a local Robin Hood who helped his (Muslim) community—a ploy useful for his trade (Jha 1917). Soon, this enhanced muscle power and clout in the community made Latif useful beyond his trade. While there are many competing explanations of the communal violence that Ahmedabad experienced in the 1980s (Sahni 2005), it is clear that frequent communal violence served the twin purposes of political consolidation on communal lines, and getting the urban land cleared from slum settlements. Latif was instrumental in both these purposes. It is claimed that the politicians used him and other bootleggers to incite communal violence (Sahni 2005; Spodek 2011). Around this time, Latif became the 'go to' person for land deals and clearance in his areas of influence. Talking about

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13   The Gujarat Institute of Housing and Estate Developers (GIHED)—the association of real estate developers of Ahmedabad—initially originated as a pressure group against the UCLRA. It subsequently formalised as an association of real estate developers of Ahmedabad and Gujarat. Praful Shah, in an interview with the author, dated 01 September 2011, Ahmedabad.

the land angle of communal violence in the city, a former president of the Gujarat

Chamber of Commerce and Industry observed:

> It is incorrect to say that the riots were orchestrated to help real estate
> developers of the city. But in retrospect, an honest assessment would
> be that the riots helped the clearance of land in the city.[14]

Nevertheless, as Latif grew bigger in his influence, his entanglement with the criminal

justice system increased as well, which culminated in his arrest. When the municipal

elections were held in 1986–87, Latif contested from five municipal wards from

inside the jail and managed to win all the seats (Jha 1917).

It was the increasing criminal and political clout of Latif that provided the local BJP

with a tailor-made opportunity to communalise local politics. Even as they accused

the Congress and other parties of patronizing Latif, there was a simultaneous shift in

emphasis from Latif's[15] criminal identity to his Muslim identity. Unsurprisingly, in

the same elections in which Latif managed to win all his five seats, the BJP was voted

to power in the corporation for the first time in the history of Ahmedabad.[16] The

Hindu–Muslim divide was firmly established as the main political fault line of

municipal politics in Ahmedabad. The majoritarianism of Hindu nationalism had

finally replaced the consensus of Gandhian nationalism. In electoral terms, this fault

line afforded the BJP nearly an invincible edge. Since 1987, the party has

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[14] Interview with the author, dated 8 September 2011, Ahmedabad.

[15] The Gujarat Police shot Latif dead in 1997 as he allegedly attempted to escape from their custody while being transported for interrogation. The rise and fall of Abdul Latif became the subject of a 2017 Hindi film *Rayees*. See Jha (1917).

[16] Congress was in power in the AMC since its inception except for three hiatuses: a. the Janata Parishad was in power from 1965 to 1969; b. the corporation was superseded by the provincial government during the period of national emergency from 1975 and 1977; c. Janata Morcha won the election following national emergency in 1977. The Morcha was in power until 1980, when the Congress returned to power again.

continuously been in power in the municipal corporation except for a term between 2001 and 2005 when the Congress wrestled back the majority.

The transformation of the *Manchester of the East* into a *Hindu Ahmedabad* began with the name of the city itself. The word 'Ahmedabad' that carried the name of its Muslim founder Ahmed Shah was contradictory to the meaning that the BJP wanted to assign to the city. Therefore, the BJP-led municipal council wanted to revise history by claiming a 'Hindu origin' of the city. The claim, premised on shaky historical grounds, was that the original city existed even before the time of Ahmed Shah by the name of Karnavati (*Times of India* 1990). The municipal council passed a resolution in early 1990 requesting the renaming of Ahmedabad to Karnavati (Times of India 1990). However, the final call on the name change was to be taken by the Central Government of India, but the government of the time rejected the proposal. For a considerable period of time, this issue dominated the political rhetoric of the BJP and the RSS, and they refused to use the name Ahmedabad. Later on, when it became clear that the name change from Ahmedabad to Karnavati might not be plausible, many Hindutva leaders began to call the city Amdavad, a pronunciation closer to the Gujarati language, and a name less closely associated, at least in its phonetics, with the Muslim ruler. In 2011, when the city marked 600 years of its establishment, the municipal corporation completely ignored the occasion. On the contrary, the attempt to erase the 'Muslim legacy' picked up pace on that occasion. It was reported that the corporation began to remove the old name 'Ahmedabad' and replace it with 'Amdavad' from its stationery as well as from the signage and other important public places in the city.

All the billboards at Ahmedabad International Airport, railway station, inter-state bus terminus and at other public places, have been changed overnight with 'Amdavad', erasing Muslim ring from it. The logo of the civic body has also been changed by using the word 'Amdavad', with no proposal in this regard put before AMC's Standing Committee, the highest decision making body of the civic body. All the new stationary printed by the AMC has 'Amdavad' in place of Ahmedabad (Correspondent 2011).

The changes in symbolisms also had a more substantive aspect to it, in terms of the processes of urban governance and development. The same events of communal violence that opened the door for the electoral domination of the BJP over the city, also opened the doors for a more fluid urban land market and real estate development. The Urban Land Ceiling Act (UCLA) 1976 had had a significant impact on the land holding pattern of the city. As the act did not permit the ownership of land holding beyond a certain limit, it resulted in an informalisation of the land market. According to a survey conducted by the AMC in 1976, about 78 per cent of the total slums in the city were on private land. As the legal recourse to get the land vacated was not available, since most of these lands were not under the legal ownership of their actual owners, the owners, who were mostly property developers, found it very hard to reclaim these lands. This situation led to the emergence of slum lords who collected rents from slum dwellers on behalf of actual landowners, and got the slums vacated in the event of non-payment Yagnik and Seth (2011: 280) observe that 'in this phase, many slum lords turned builders, and builders joined political parties, contested municipal elections and used their political connections to gain control over lucrative pockets of lands in the city'.

The frequent communal violence and a politics based on communal identities made this process smoother. Some observers interviewed during the field research believe that the communal violence was too profitable politically and financially for it not being organized. But it is nearly impossible to find evidence if the violence was indeed organized to clear land on behalf of real estate developers. Many real estate developers also agree that the rise of communalism triggered a land transfer, distress sales and ghettoisation that were helpful for real estate development in the city. Therefore, when Keshav Varma was about to launch his drive to inject strength and efficiency in the urban governance of the city, the dominant political and the economic interests in the city had already reconfigured the vision of the city. The vision did require a strong and efficient city government in order for it to get a concrete spatial manifestation.

Even as this convergence of political and economic interests was taking shape, the BJP also wrestled power at the provincial state level in 1995. The party has governed Gujarat since, except for a year and a half long intermission in 1997–98. This was a major boost to this alliance as controlling the provincial government meant a control over the AUDA—an agency controlled by the provincial government responsible for the development of the city. Surendra Patel, a veteran RSS activist with a background in engineering and construction, was appointed the vice chairman of the AUDA in 1996. His first stint ended in 1997, but he was reappointed soon after in 1998 and remained in the office until 2005.

6.4.2 Kanpur: From factionalised local politics to provincialised identity politics

In the 1980s, when the condition of industrial decline was most acute in Kanpur, there were no representative politics at the city level. Even as the municipal corporation

was headed and run by a provincial state appointed administrator, the municipal services were being provided by several local and provincial level organsiations. The absence of democratic space at the municipal level did not allow political expression of the economic and the spatial churning in 'urban' terms, something that we witness in the case of Ahmedabad. In Ahmedabad, even if the mills and the Congress consensus declined and gave way to the emergence of Hindutva-led poltics, this change found expression at the municipal level and the politics that resulted was about spatial changes and changes in meaning in a way that suited Hindutva politics. Unlike Ahmedabad, where the emergence of Hindutva urbanism led the way for the rise of Hindutva at the provincial level in Gujarat, politics in Kanpur during this period was led by the emergence of identity-based politics at the provincial level. Even as there were similarities in the two provinces in terms of the decline of the Congress party and emergence of identity-based politics, there were significant differences in the ways in which these transitions played themselves out in the two cities. We see in this section that even as trade union politics, which were perhaps the only distinctive characteristic of Kanpur politics, declined in the decades of the 1980s and the 1990s, local politics got completely subsumed in the larger processes and categories of provincial politics.

The decline of the Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh was preceded by its decline in Kanpur. As discussed briefly in the previous chapter, even when municipal politics existed in the city in 1960s and early 1970s, it was deeply factionalised, with Ram Ratan Gupta and Shiv Narain Tandon, leading the two Congress factions. Factional politics took over municipal political processes soon after the first elections were held, following the formation of the municipal corporation. A factional compromise

within the Congress Party resulted in the leaders of the two dominant factions—Ram Ratan Gupta and Shiv Narain Tandon—getting elected as the mayor and the deputy mayor of the city, respectively. But it was not long before municipal politics were subsumed by the factional agendas of the two leaders. This factional competition manifested first of all in two separate visions from the mayor and the deputy mayor. The mayor presented a comprehensive twenty-five point programme, aiming at a major reorganisation and expansion of the city. The deputy mayor came up with his own fourteen-point programme for civic improvement. The former programme was ambitious and aimed to reconfigure the city, the latter was modest in comparison and focused on improving public amenities for city dwellers. This differences in the visions, which according to observers, was a lot to do with a personality clash and one-upmanship, led to further complications in terms of budget allocations (Brass 1965). As both groups wanted budgetary allocations for their own programmes, an intense tussle over budget allocation followed. As the deputy mayor presided over the executive committee, he got his version of the budget passed in the executive committee. When this budget was then presented in the full house, chaired by the mayor, he adjourned the house for the day. Upon the resumption of proceedings in the next meeting, the mayor made sure that the budget was not approved. For the coming two months, the two factions campaigned for a censure motion against each other. The group led by the mayor was eventually successful in passing a censure motion against the deputy mayor. This neutralized Tandon as the deputy mayor, and in the process the position of deputy mayor itself (Ashraf 1975).

Ram Ratan remained the mayor of the city for two years after which he was elected to the parliament. With Tandon having already lost much of his political sheen, the two

factions gave way to smaller groups in the Congress Party that got configured frequently on the basis of political interests (Brass 1965). As a result of chronic factionalism, the dominance of the Congress Party was broken by the left party-supported trade unions of the city (Brass 1962). S. M Banerjee, an independent candidate supported by the left-oriented trade unions of the city, represented Kanpur continuously in the Indian parliament from 1957 to 1977. The Congress was able to make a come back in the 1980s when its candidate was elected to the parliament between 1980 and 1989. In 1989, the city elected a trade union supported candidate one final time when Subhasini Ali won from the constituency. Since the 1990s, either the Congress or the BJP has represented the city in Parliament.

However, it is in the results of the state assembly that we witness the clear evidence of the trends in provincial identity politics swaying the politics of the city. In the elections for the provincial assembly, the BJP was clearly the cumulative winner from the city on the basis of the politics of Hindutva. It was either the BJP or the Janata Dal/ Samajwadi Party,[17] that divided between themselves the assembly seats of the city since 1989, the year that saw the last Congress government in the province being voted out of power. Whereas the BJP represented politics based on Hindutva identity, the Samajwadi Party was successful in combining caste identity with the identity of the minority Muslims. This was a clear reflection of the way in which provincial level politics was shaping up in Uttar Pradesh in the decades of the1990s and 2000s. With the decline of the Congress Party, the electoral politics in the province became four cornered with caste and religion-based identity as its organizing principle. Three of

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[17]   Mulayam Singh Yadav, who was the leader of Janata Dal in UP when it was formed in 1989, later split the party to form his own Samajwadi Party to contest the assembly elections of 1996. Interview of the district President, Samajwadi Party Kanpur District [details to be inserted]

the four political forces in the state appealed to well-defined caste and community groups. While the BJP mobilized the Hindus, and Samajwadi Party appealed to the intermediary castes and the Muslims, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) mobilized the *dalits*—officially known as the Schedule Castes (Pai 2002a, 2002b).

Consequently, as Table 6.2 illustrates, the Samajwadi Party was successful in winning the seat dominated by the Muslims and the intermediary castes, the BJP repeatedly won the seats dominated by the Hindu community. Unsurprisingly, the municipal elections, when they resumed in 1989, have followed a similar trajectory. Even though Sri Prakash Jaiswal of the Congress Party became the Mayor in 1989, following the implementation of the 74th amendment act 1995 all Mayors, except one, belonged to the BJP.

Table 6.2: Provincial Assembly Results of Kanpur

Constituency Year	Arya Nagar	Shismau	General Ganj	Kanpur Cantonment	Govind Nagar
1989	Janata Dal	Janata Dal	Janata Dal	Janata Dal	BJP
1991	BJP	BJP	BJP	BJP	BJP
1996	Samajwadi Party	BJP	BJP	BJP	BJP
1998	Samajwadi Party	BJP	BJP	BJP	BJP
2002	Samajwadi Party	INC	BJP	BJP	INC
2007	Samajwadi Party	INC	BJP	BJP	INC

Source: Compiled from the information available on the website www.elections.in retrieved on 11 November 2016.

Even at the provincial level, this identity-based mobilisation was inimical to a concerted development effort in the post-liberalisation period (Jeffery et al. 2014). The condition of cities and the issue of urban development were no exception; they

remained in the shadow of identity politics at the provincial level. When the BSP came to power, initially in 2002, for a little more than a year, and again in 2007 for a full term, the issue of urban symbolism came to the forefront of politics. Chief Minister Mayawati ordered the construction of parks and memorials dotted with the statues of Dr Ambedkar and other *dalit* icons, including herself in the provincial capital Lucknow and Noida (Gundimeda 2014). Even as Kanpur was an important seat of political activities and *dalit* assertion that led to the emergence of the BSP, (Bellwinkel-Schempp 2005), the city did not become a site for the symbols of *dalit* assertion in the urban sphere, owing perhaps to the dismal electoral performance of the party in the city (Table 6.2). Owing to the fractured organisational framework, the local BJP leaders found it hard to push for municipal policies that suited their ideological proclivities. Satish Mahana, a local BJP leader and a long-time member of the UP Legislative Assembly (MLA), from the city observed:

> As an MLA, I am part of various committees dealing with municipal and urban development of Kanpur. But meetings of these committees are rarely held because it is so difficult to bring officials from KNC, KDA, district administration, and political representatives together on a regular basis. We all have different priorities and keep busy schedules. Even when such a meeting takes place, decisions of the meeting are seldom implemented. It is impossible to fix accountability. So, I have stopped going to these meetings.[18]

Similarly, social justice that was the ideological plank of the Samajwadi Party was never articulated as a demand for a just city.

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[18]   Interview with author, 7 December 2010, Kanpur.

6.5 The Outcome: Divergent Municipal Capacities and Trajectories of 'Neoliberalisation'

The problems that Ahmedabad and Kanpur faced in the wake of the industrial decline were similar. The introduction of liberalisation policies at the national and at the city level occurred even as the two cities were dealing with the problems associated with industrial decline. In both the cities, as well as at the provincial levels, this was also a period of the decline of the Congress Party and emergence of *Hindutva* and caste-based identity politics. The crucial difference, however, was the way in which politics was organized in the two cities. In Ahmedabad, a functional municipal politics channelled through a coherent municipal organisation ensured that the newly emerging political force, the BJP, had to deal with municipal problems, articulate its ideology in terms of urban categories and in the process offer a new urban meaning to the city. In other words, the politics of the city led to an alignment of the problem and the policy. In Kanpur, on the other hand, a dysfunctional municipal politics, and a fragmented municipal organisation resulted in a politics in the city that was not articulated in terms of urban problems and categories. The city remained merely a site of the larger political processes taking place at the provincial level.

This was to have significant bearing on the way municipal organisations were shaped in the two cities following the 74th constitutional amendment act. This also greatly impacted the acquisition of capacities in the municipal organisations of the two cities as they attempted to prepare for becoming 'growth engines'. In the next section, we look at this process.

6.5.1 Municipal capacity in Ahmedabad

Keshav Verma took charge as the municipal commissioner in this background in the early 1990s. As discussed in the Section 6.2, this was also the time when the AMC was facing acute financial difficulties. To make matters worse, the city faced a scare of bubonic plague epidemic close on the heels of Surat.[19] The scare of an epidemic, which is directly linked to urban services and cleanliness, an epidemic that was uncannily visiting the region after 1896,[20] an event that had started the debate around the issues of urban service delivery and planning in the first place. It was an embarrassing indictment of the degenerated urban services of the city. Varma said later in an interview:

> When I started we had plague in 1994 and there was a lot of concern about controlling it. In addition to that, city administration had been superseded, the political side of it for financial bankruptcy. It was a pretty serious situation… the city had to be approached in a manner in which one could build the confidence among the people for the measures that we were taking. There was a lot of concern that measures that the AMC was taking were not sufficient to stop the plague…Plague is not a 20th Century thing. But (the truth was) we did not have the finances. (The situation) was extremely serious because we did not have the finances to approach the situation in a serious manner.[21]

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[19] In 1994, more than fifty people lost their lives in a plague epidemic in Surat, the second most important city of Gujarat. There were apprehensions that it might spread to other cities in Gujarat and Maharashtra, including Ahmedabad (Ghosh (1996).

[20] Discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.2.

[21] Varma, L. S. I. w. K. Leadership Series Interview, https://www.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/ preview/partner_id/32325/uiconf_id/5168392/entry_id/1_qbwr1xjv/embed/legacy?

Under the circumstances, Varma focused his attention on what he identified as his main constraint. However, given the organisational coherence, he could still start the process of streamlining internal resource mobilisation. Octroi and property tax were the two major internal financial sources for the AMC. But the problem was that the collection processes of both these taxes suffered from various shortcomings. The problems in property tax collection were similar to the problems that the Kanpur local body faced; there were opaqueness and subjectivity in assessment and industrial decline had impacted property tax collection adversely. Because of several factors, and also because of declining performance in terms of service delivery, there was a growing trust deficit among the people of the city. That also led to a general unwillingness to pay local taxes. Varma, therefore, decided to initially focus his attention on octroi. It was a taxation that did not directly involve the entire city population, which meant that tough measures would not immediately run into the local political process. It was also a taxation that brought money to the local body on a daily basis. A regular and increased cash flow would give the local body the ability to improve municipal service delivery.[22]

The municipal commissioner devised a two-pronged strategy. The first part of the strategy was to streamline the octroi collection process. The second part of the strategy was to use the additional resources brought in through improved collection of octroi into the most fundamental and visible aspects of municipal service delivery. In order to streamline the octroi collection process, the valuation manual for valuation of goods to be taxed was updated and based on current prices. A system was put in place

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[22] Hansmukh Shah, a local Ahmedabad journalist, in interview with the author, 25 September 2011, Ahmedabad.

through which the goods that went untaxed previously could be taxed retrospectively. Varma also strengthened the security, surveillance and vigilance of the tax collection process. About 13 new vigilance squads were formed, and weighing machines were installed (Vaidya and Johnson 2001). Security and surveillance were added to apprehend those who tried to sneak into the city without paying the tax. Security also helped with eliminating the role of touts, local goons and other middlemen who cut deals between vehicles seeking to evade tax and the corrupt employees of the AMC. All the access booths were equipped with wireless network for better coordination. With all these systems in place, Varma came down hard both on evaders as well as on his own errant employees. Senior municipal officials, led by Varma himself, carried out frequent random checks and punished—at times by taking law into their own hands—anyone who sought to interfere with the tax collection process. The media reported such occurrences charitably, even with an element of approval and glee.[23]

It was the improved collection system of Octroi and a significant improvement in the amount collected, which provided the backbone to the story of this turn around. In the year 1989–90, the corporation had collected a total of rupees 734 lakhs as Octroi. This figure increased to Rupees 2030 Lakhs by the year 1995–96. This was approximately 69 per cent of all the resources mobilized by the local body (Sekhar and Bidakar 1999). The additional resource allowed the municipal commissioner to focus on the other problem that he had identified- diminishing public trust in their municipal body. As discussed in earlier chapters, the AMC historically had a relatively good record of municipal service delivery, and this was made possible by

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[23] For example, "Indian Official Whips a Mobster and Tax Rolls In" read the headline of The Wall Street Journal Karp (1997).

collective trust that people had in the municipal body. However, this trust was at its lowest in the early 1990s. The municipal corporation was superseded by the provincial state on account of being on the verge of financial bankruptcy. Varma used this opportunity in two ways. To begin with, Varma's own hands on style of functioning meant that he was visible to the public as the AMC carried out the task of reforming the octroi collection. He was also physically present in wards, colonies and slums asking people about their most acute problems, and trying to solve the solvable problems while also trying to understand patterns. As Varma put it himself,

> We wanted to make a visible difference by being more visible on the streets of Ahmedabad. So, people were not used to seeing the municipal commissioner walking through the streets, slums. We walked through each ward with the (other) officers, noted down their problems and also developed a clear pattern of actions immediately. So, the problem that were noted down had to be immediately acted upon within the next day.[24]

Later, when the AMC began to fill the gap in service delivery, with the help of additional funds, Varma became the face of the resurrection of the AMC. From the streets of the city pages of the newspaper, it was his presence that began to indicate to the people that the municipal corporation was serious about revitalizing itself and transforming the municipal governance of the city.[25]

It was also the kind of work that Varma decided to carry out that had its impact. For the people, worsening road conditions in the city had become a measure of municipal governance failure. It was road repair and construction that Varma prioritized. When

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[24] Varma, L. S. I. w. K. Leadership Series Interview, https://www.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/ preview/partner_id/32325/uiconf_id/5168392/entry_id/1_qbwr1xjv/embed/legacy?
[25] Hansmukh Shah, in interview with the author, 25 September 2011, Ahmedabad/

the road repair and construction work started, and road conditions started to improve, public trust in their municipal body began to improve as well. Talking about the trust deficit, and his approach to change that, Varma observes:

> We had enough money coming in and we started working on roads. We immediately started deploying these resources into improving the condition of the roads, improving lighting, infrastructure… Ahmedabad has hot weather so the roads have to be built at night because bitumen has to be settled and has to be rolled before the sun is out again. So, (when) the road work would start at night at 10 PM, thousands of people would kind of surround that patch where the work is going on and they are seeing after a long time big machinery working or laying down of big boulevards.[26]

Once the issue of gaining public trust was relatively less of a problem, the work of reforming the property tax, as well improving the entire system of financial management also began. The municipal corporation had enough trust of the people to put coercive measures in place against the property tax defaulters. So the corporation began to stop the water supply and cut drainage to defaulting properties, warrants were issued against defaulters and if the situation came to that the property was auctioned (Asnani 1999). The AMC started the process of revising the property tax assessment process, which had similar problems as discussed earlier in the case of Kanpur. The difference was that Ahmedabad began to proactively revise the assessment process to make it objective and transparent. The system was eventually transformed from a rent-based assessment method to the area-based assessment method. The corporation started to build a computerized database of all the properties

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[26] Varma, L. S. I. w. K. Leadership Series Interview, https://www.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner_id/32325/uiconf_id/5168392/entry_id/1_qbwr1xjv/embed/legacy?

within the city limits. All these measures led to a significant increase in property tax collection as well (ICLEI 2016).

Having streamlined the municipal revenue collection and provision of basic municipal services, the AMC now focused its attention on improving the civic infrastructure of Ahmedabad. However, a large amount of capital investment was required for the development of infrastructure, which was impossible to meet through internal sources. It was in this context that the idea of a municipal bond was muted (Vaidya and Johnson 2001). While resource mobilisation by issuing municipal bonds is a common practice in city governments in Western cities, it was never attempted by an Indian city in the past. Since credibility as well as financial health would be major criteria in the bond market, the corporation needed to improve its accounting system bringing it up to international standards. The corporation also required credit rating by a credit rating agency. These requirements led to the transition from a manual single digit accounting system to a computerized double entry accounting system. During the transition period both methods were maintained for a couple of years. From 1996, an independent accounting firm was hired to prepare the corporation's balance sheet. Similarly, the AMC got itself rated by the credit rating agency the Credit Rating and Information Services of India (CRISIL), which gave the corporation a rating of A+ (ICLEI 2016). The AMC was the first municipal body in India to have moved to a double entry accounting system and to have acquired a municipal credit rating. Building on these improvements, the corporation finally launched a municipal bond worth 1000 million rupees in 1998, also making it the first municipal body to have done so (Chttopadhyay 2006; Vaidya and Johnson 2001).

This account of the turnaround of the AMC suggests Varma's skilful handling of the situation and his overall leadership as the key factor behind it. However, clearly, there were two important determinants that created conditions for Varma to demonstrate his leadership qualities. *First*, the coherence of municipal organisation—both in terms of its formal legal provisions and actual organisational structure—was crucial for Varma to succeed. The long history of taxation practices in the city, discussed in Chapter 4, and the practice of its collection at the city level (as opposed to the provincial level in Kanpur since the 1980s) contributed to Varma's successes in reforming the tax collection system. *Second*, by the 1990s, the political process of the city, as well as of the province, was inching towards a *Hindutva* consensus. As discussed in the previous section, 'the urban' was very much on the political agenda and the BJP was keen that its ideology achieved an urban manifestation and success. Varma's endeavours to strengthen municipal services in Ahmedabad were in perfect alignment with *Hindutva's* urban project.

This *Hindutva* consensus both at the city and the provincial level—the BJP has been in power in Gujarat since 1995 since a small intermission in 1997–98—gave the party an opportunity to plan the expansion of the city. The AUDA—controlled by the provincial government—was responsible for planning the city expansion. Surendra Patel, a veteran RSS activist with a background in engineering and construction, was appointed the vice chairman of AUDA in 1996. His first stint ended in 1997, but he was reappointed soon after in 1998 and remained in the office till 2005.[27]

Surendra Patel's personality, in a way, epitomized the nature of *Hindutva* urbanism that was unfolding in the city. Patel is a civil engineer by training. He came from a

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[27]   Interview with Surendra Patel, 05 October 2011, Ahmedabad.

family that owned a construction company in Ahmedabad and he belonged to the RSS.[28] Patel combined his training as an engineer, the experiences drawn from his family business, with the ideological moorings of the RSS. This combination was expressed aptly in the introduction to a restaurant that he designed and owned at the outskirts of Ahmedabad:

> Established in 1978 with a vision to change the way we see Gujarati food, Mr. Surendra Patel pioneered the idea of a restaurant that wouldn't only serve food to the guests but would also give them an experience. Guests would escape the urban cityscapes and go back to their roots in a rustic and homely environment. Mr. Surendra Patel, one of Gujarat's most well-known architects and interior designers, designed the space, lending keen attention to every detail.29

Even as Patel began to plan for the expansion of the city, the RSS and the BJP began to view the processes and projects of urban development as concrete and visible manifestation of *Hindutva* itself (Desai 2006). Patel was ingenious enough not to use the conventional route of the land acquisition act to acquire land on the peripheries of Ahmedabad. For land acquisition and development, he used the old town planning scheme (Shah 2015), evolved by the Congress collective (see Chapter 4) during the British period to decongest the city. Rather than taking away the land from its original owner, according to this scheme, the AUDA took temporary control over the land, aggregated and developed it, and then returned a percentage of land to its original owner. His other major project was to make a ring road around the city. It was no coincidence that the ring road was to be named after Vallabhbhai Patel.

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28   Interview with Surendra Patel, 05 October 2011, Ahmedabad.
29   Vishala (2012). "http://www.vishalla.com/about-us.html."

However, if it was this *Hindutva* consensus that paved the way for the city's regeneration in its own image, contemporary Ahmedabad also represents the darker side of *Hindutva* in a concrete, spatialised form. Ahmedabad today is a segregated, ghettoized city, with its localities clearly marked as Hindu and Muslim areas (Desai 2013). This spatial discrimination is also coupled with discrimination that is meted out to the Muslim inhabitants of the city by the municipal corporation, private builders and private citizens alike. The municipal services in Muslim localities of Ahmedabad remain in abysmal condition (Chandhoke et al. 2007). It is nearly impossible for the Muslims to buy or rent a house outside of the ghettos assigned for them even if they are willing to pay a premium for it (Reporter 2009).

6.5.2   Municipal capacity in Kanpur

Predictably, in Kanpur, the story of the municipal organisation unfolded rather differently. The fragmented nature of municipal organisation, when the problem of industrial decline arose, and when the liberalsiation policies were introduced, meant that the political process was not internalised within the municipal organisation. As a result, politics was not articulated in the language of the urban. Local politics was not about 'making of the place'. The provincial level identity-based political categories also dictated the politics of Kanpur. As a result, there was no alignment of the problem of urban regeneration and the policies of neoliberalisation.

The administrative organisation of the corporation remained stagnant and so did the financial weaknesses. At the level of the rank and file, the corporation experienced the casualisation of its workforce. Owing to a constant financial crunch, the corporation failed to plan the administrative changes according to the larger changes taking place

in the urban policy environment. At the level of leadership, the political changes taking place at the provincial level made sure that the corporation rarely secured Indian administrative service officers in the post of municipal commissioner. For most of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the corporation had to get along with only one officer from the Indian or state civil services, but mostly from the state civil services, along with a few other officials drawn from the municipal services— never seeing the kind of competent officials that Ahmedabad enjoyed. Financial constraints meant that the corporation was dependent on the provincial government even for payment of salaries to its staff. This, in turn, meant that every appointment required a prior approval of the provincial government. Even as successive provincial governments were reluctant to give such approval for financial reasons, party and patronage politics were an equally important factor. The financial assistance ran into party politics frequently. It didn't help that political dominance at the municipal level and at the provincial level rarely belonged to the same political party.

R N Trivedi, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officer, who is one of the very few IAS to have served as the municipal commissioner of the city since the 1990s recalls how difficult the situation was:

> The municipal elections were held after a long time so the councillors were eager to show their electorates their performance. But the problem was that the municipal corporation was financially on the verge of bankruptcy and administratively outdated. Following the withdrawal of octroi collection, all the field officers responsible for collection were rendered workless and brought to the main office. Their salaries had to be paid but they were no good in the office work.[30]

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[30] Interview with the author 08 December 2010, Kanpur.

In 2006, even as the JNNURM was at the launching stage, when other selected municipal corporations were busy preparing city development plans and detailed project proposals, the KMC administration was engaged in dealing with a serious but not infrequent financial crisis. The crisis was so acute that the corporation was not able to pay the gratuity and pension to its retiring employee. One such employee went to the Allahabad High Court—the provincial level court—for redress. The court in its order in September 2006 imposed a ban on all developmental expenditures and payment of employee salaries until all the dues of the pensioners were cleared. The corporation owed approximately 700 lakhs to its retired employees at this stage. But the financial condition of the corporation was so crisis ridden that, it was reported (*Hindustam times* 2006), the corporation did not even have the funds to challenge the court order in the Supreme Court of India. Even the daily service provisions and administrative activities were affected because petrol pump owners were reluctant to provide fuel to the corporation on an overdraft given the financial uncertainties. The morale of the employees also hit an all-time low with a freeze on their salaries. The employees decided to go on a strike (Correspondent 2006). The provision of municipal services as well as tax collection work came to a halt.

The challenge before the municipal commissioner of the time, who was an IAS, was to navigate through the crisis in a fragmented and polarized political context. The provincial government was led by the Samajwadi Party and headed by its leader Mulayam Singh Yadav known for caste-based politics, with a political emphasis on caste identities. The party got a significant number of its nominees elected in the municipal council of Kanpur in an election that coincided with the period of this crisis. But the Uttar Pradesh Municipal Act provided for the direct election of the city

mayor. A nominee of the BJP was elected the city mayor. This meant that the municipal commissioner had to deal with the financial situation while balancing the political needs of two opposing political groups.

The municipal commissioner contacted the provincial state seeking financial help. He also sought the government's sanction to sell or lease out one of its workshops to be able to mobilise resources. The newly elected mayor publicly extended his support to the commissioner's effort and announced that he would shun his privileges such as his official vehicle as long as even one corporation employee was not paid his salary. However, that the political wing of the corporation was deeply divided became evident right during the oath-taking ceremony. The councillors belonging to the Samajwadi Party (the party in power at the provincial state level) demanded that they should be allowed to take the oath in Urdu. The demand symbolized the larger political strategy to highlight the Hindu Nationalist background of the mayor by raking up the issue of language. Historically, Urdu and Hindi have come to be closely associated with the Hindu and Muslim communities and polarisation of politics around communal identities (King 1994; Pandey 2006).

Through a series of measures and a petition to the court, the municipal commissioner was able to temporarily resolve the problem when the court lifted the ban on salaries and developmental work. The corporation opened two dedicated bank accounts for payment of retiring employees and the pensioners. A 'retirement fund account' was opened with Rs. 400 Lakhs for payment of a gratuity to the employees retiring that financial year. A 'pension account' was also opened with Rs 200 Lakhs, for payment of the pension. However, even as the municipal commissioner was in the process of

resolving the problem, he received his transfer orders from the provincial government. The mayor, reacting to the transfer of the commissioner, said that the commissioner was 'an able administrator. But this (provincial) government will not allow an honest man to lead the KMC. They will replace him with someone who can run KMC as their puppet' (Srivastava 2006).

The crisis demonstrated that the municipal corporation was unable to deal with it because of its inherent weaknesses caused fundamentally by the fractured politics in the city. It also demonstrated that these weaknesses allowed a space for its relationship with the provincial state to become a determining factor in its functioning. Kanpur too was on a path of neoliberalisation: it was also attempting to create public–private partnerships and, as discussed in Chapter 3, it was able to carry out reforms in its property tax collection relatively successfully; the accounting system was in the process of being upgraded to the double entry system, and e-governance was put in place for various services. But the trajectory of this neoliberalisation was remarkably different from the one we saw in Ahmedabad. In this case, municipal processes were being neoliberalised in what remained a somewhat fragmented municipal organisation. Some of these processes succeeded, while others did not. Property tax collection reform was an example of that success (Anand and Tiwari 2009). As discussed in Chapter 3, the waste disposal involving private participation turned out to be a failure.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter makes two key points. *First,* it demonstrates the key role the municipal organisation played in determining the agenda of politics at the city level. For a

political ideology or political force, it was not necessary to have a view on the urban question in order to maintain control over the city government. It was not necessary that the politics in a city be about the city. The case of Kanpur demonstrates this point. However, Ahmedabad showed that the municipal organisation played a key role in making the politics of the city, also the politics about the city. If the municipal organisation internalises the political process of a city, it forces the participants of politics to engage with urban issues of land, service delivery, urban planning and such. If the municipal organisation is incapable of internalising the political process of a city, the participants of politics may operate in the city but engage only with provincial or national issues. The two cases of Ahmedabad and Kanpur demonstrate the two scenarios clearly.

Second, the chapter shows that it is more likely for urban problems to find policy solutions if the politics in the city is also about the city. Because the political forces in Ahmedabad engaged with issues of urban services and planning, it remained high on the political agenda. This made an alignment of the problem and policy possible. In Kanpur, in the absence of a coherent political organisation, the participants of politics in the city were able to evade the urban question while focusing on provincial level politics. The political engagement required for a wholesome alignment of the problem with the policy was missing. This in turn means that that the problem and the policy have coexisted in parallel coming into alignment only in bits and pieces.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION: POLITICAL DETERMINANTS OF URBAN NEOLIBERALISATION

7.1 Introduction

The main objectives of this chapter are three fold. *First* the chapter summarises the key insights of this work while presenting its main argument. *Second,* it reflects on the implications of this argument for our existing understanding of the urban reforms, transition and regeneration processes. To this end, the chapter seeks to draw our attention to the ways in which these processes have been understood up until now and how the argument presented in this work relates to that understanding and builds upon it. *Third,* the chapter briefly reflects on possible implications of the research findings for policies of urban reforms and regeneration in India, and in the global south more generally.

7.2 Summary of the Key Insights and Arguments

This work aimed to understand the implementation of the JNNURM, an urban regeneration mission launched by the Indian government across Indian cities in 2005. The mission that attempted an institutional and spatial reform of the cities with the objective of turning them into capital investment friendly places - growth engines- achieved only a moderate success. Moreover, the degree of success of the mission varied across the Indian cities. This research specifically looked into the political determinants that were responsible for these differential degrees of success of the mission at the city level. There were two motivations behind identification of this line of research. *First,* the policy significance of the mission that covered almost all major

Indian cities, and aimed at national level urban renewal, cannot be overstated. India is urbanizing at a considerable rate adding substantial numbers to the total world urban population every decade. This makes Indian cities important sites of habitation. The liberalization and globalization of the Indian economy since the decade of the 1990s have added a policy significance to the Indian cities as well. In the current liberalized and globalized policy framework, the cities have to function as 'growth engines'; cities are the nodes that attract private and global capital and lead the charge in the battle for economic growth.

Second, a study of differential degrees of success of the JNNURM afforded an opportunity to develop new insights into the policy reform process in general, and into urban reform processes in particular. The available explanations for the success or failure of policy reform processes either suggested the agency of political leadership as the determining factor (Jenkins 1999), or pointed towards changes in conditions in state structures and attitudes at the national level (Rodrik and Subramanian 2004, Kohli 2009) that facilitated reform processes. While many of these explanations were based on the study of the national level state (Rodrik and Subramanian 2004, Kohli 2009), a few approached the policy reform process in a disaggregated manner by focusing their attention on provincial states. (Jenkins 1999, Sinha 2005) The studies at the city level focused mainly the implications of the reform process(Mahadevia 2003, Banerjee-Guha 2009). Consequently, most of these studies focused their attention on the ways in which changes in policies had an impact on urban politics and places. A study of the JNNURM provided an opportunity to investigate the local political determinants of the reform process. It also allowed for a methodological opportunity

to investigate the local political determinants in a comparative perspective, given that the mission was implemented in a majority of Indian cities.

It is with this background that this research set out to explore the implementation of the JNNURM in the cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur. The specific objective of the study was to identify the city level political determinants that shaped the trajectory of the mission implementation process. The selection of Ahmedabad and Kanpur was based on two considerations: *first* whereas Ahmedabad had implemented the JNNURM rather successfully, the implementation process in Kanpur had been sluggish. *Second,* the two cities were comparable in terms of their historical and economic trajectories to a considerable extent, which allowed this work to look at the political processes of the cities to identify the possible reasons behind the difference in JNNURM implementation.

A closer look at the modalities and the objectives of the JNNURM showed that the mission was the latest, largest and most concerted attempt at reforming the Indian cities in a series of other such attempts that preceded it. The main objective of the mission was the institutional and spatial refashioning of the Indian cities in order to transform them into 'growth engines'. The modalities of implementation were invariably based on a top-down approach to the reform process, and the objective guided by neoliberal ideas introducing market practices into the systems of urban governance. This persuaded me to conceptualize the JNNURM as a process of neoliberalisation with the objective of creating 'actually existing neoliberalism' (Brenner and Theodore 2002). In other words, the reform of the cities was not merely about fine-tuning local governmental structures and practices, but aimed to bring

about a much deeper change in the ways in which people had historically interacted with particular city spaces in the process of creating these cities. In sum, the reform process was about putting a standard template of neoliberal meaning on what clearly had been a plurality of urban meanings created through specific urban histories. This insight led me to conceptualize cities as historically produced places (Pred 1984). The research has found that one of the significant ways in which urban political histories manifest themselves is through the form and capacity of municipal organization. Municipal organizations were also the natural choice for this exploration given that they were the primary sites of JNNURM intervention.

With these conceptual issues in mind, the research set out to identify the determinants that shaped the trajectories of the JNNURM implementation in the two cities. It was quickly apparent that the available municipal capacity at the city level in the beginning of the mission determined the path of the JNNURM implementation process. Municipal capacity manifested itself in the form of financial strength and administrative efficiency and political orientation as the mission implementation process began (Chapter 3). The discovery that the variable of municipal capacity led to differential implementation processes helped develop another insight; that two cities with similar histories and economic trajectories would not essentially have similar levels of municipal capacities. The varied municipal capacities in Ahmedabad and Kanpur demonstrated as much. This also meant that the roots of municipal capacity do not necessarily lie in the trajectories and the structures of urban economies, as the two cities were significantly comparable in this regard, but potentially, in their political histories, especially in their municipal histories.

Therefore, this work focused on a reading of the political histories of the two cities with the specific objective of tracing the formation of their municipal organization.

In order to trace the formation of municipal capacities in the histories of the city, the work employed Kingdon's framework of 'policy windows' (Kingdon 2014) with certain adjustments. The research identified two historical episodes that were crucial in the shaping of municipal organizations in Ahmedabad and Kanpur: the first episode was the colonial formation of municipal organisations in the two cities (Chapters 4 & 5); the second episode was the period of neoliberalisation (chapter 6). The identification of these episodes is based on political events that involved municipal issues of significance and impacted the formation of the municipal organizations. In each episode, in line with the Kingdonian framework, the problem, the policy and the politics have been identified and spelt out. The process of coupling between the problem and the policy has then been analysed by looking at the nature of politics and its main political actors. The analysis demonstrates that in the event of coupling between the problem and the policy, the municipal organization takes one form, while in the event of its absence, the municipal organisation takes a different form.

7.2.1 Making of the Municipal Organisation: Ahmedabad and Kanpur

The episode of colonial formation of municipal organization occurred predominantly in the early decades of the 20th century. But it was in the latter half of the 19th century that the economic trajectories of the two cities began to converge. This was made possible by the establishment of textile mills in both cities. However, there was one significant difference between Ahmedabad and Kanpur, as the process of their industrialization began. Ahmedabad had been a trading city since the medieval period,

whereas Kanpur was established only in the 19th Century. In terms of formation of municipal organizations, this made a crucial difference. Ahmedabad already had traditional, community based and informal municipal structures and practices that had to adapt or give way to the formal structures and practices of municipal governance. In Kanpur, the municipal structures and practices were shaped completely by the colonial government.

The 'problem' of urban service delivery and planning, which was building up following industrialization and corresponding population and geographic spread of the two cities, acquired critical proportions following a plague epidemic that started from Bombay and spread to other cities. Even as the municipal structures were already in place in the two cities, they were not geared to manage the expanding industrial cities. Since urban planning was yet to be institutionalized and made part of the municipal functions, the growth had been haphazard in both cities. In Ahmedabad, the old medieval part of the city was suddenly seen as a problem as its traditional ways of habitation did not conform to the evolving notions of what should be the land use pattern in a city. Therefore, in wake of the public health concern that the plague epidemic generated, even as the roots of the 'problem' were considered to be similar in the two cities, it was framed differently. In Ahmedabad, the 'problem' was two pronged: first, the introduction of the 'modern' gaze saw the problem as the traditional spatial organization of the city; and second, the problem was overpopulation and congestion caused by the rapid growth of the city. In Kanpur similarly, the congestion in the areas inhabited by ordinary Indian people was taken as the root of the problem, however the spatial segregation that existed in the colonial imagination of the city was ignored.

As the problem was framed in two related ways in Ahmedabad, the policy response also came at two levels. The first response was the modernization of urban service delivery, while the other response was the introduction of town improvement schemes and urban planning. The process of the modernization of urban services, which began in the last decade of the 19ᵗʰ Century under the leadership of Ranchhodlal who was the first non-official chairman of the Municipal Board, questioned traditional habits and notions of hygiene. The problem of over population and congestion was to be addressed through the policy of city improvement and town planning in both the cities of Ahmedabad and Kanpur. The improvement trust existed in Kanpur since 1908 in some form but its organisational structure and scope changed repeatedly given its inability to deal with the urban problems. In Ahmedabad, even as an improvement trust was not created, the provincial government attempted to implement the same solution using The Bombay Town Planning Act of 1915.

In Ahmedabad between the two events, we witness a shift in the contours of politics at least in two ways. *First*, during the first event involving the modernization of urban services, representative politics in the city was at a nascent stage. While it was energetic, animated and occurred in full public view, it drew the political fault-line sharply and actually deepened it. By the time of the event of congestion and urban planning a decade or so later, the representative nature of politics had expanded. While it remained energetic and animated, it was now based on a recognition that politics is not merely about drawing fault-lines, but also about attempting to bridge them. This recognition was introduced into the politics of Ahmedabad following the arrival of Gandhi in the city in the second decade of the 20ᵗʰ Century. *Second*, this expanding nature of politics could also be witnessed in the changing nature of

leadership. During the times of Ranchhodlal, it was the people from the social and the economic elite of the city who provided the leadership. During the event of congestion and planning, the leadership was drawn from a broader social and economic base. Also, it became possible for this new leadership to come together because of the presence of the Congress Party at the local level, which provided them with a platform outside of the official set up to deliberate on their politics and evolve agreements before they could present a united front at the official level. During the earlier event, the only available platform was the official municipal board.

This expansion in the contours of local politics, which was attuned to the problems of urban service delivery and planning, resulted in a politically strong municipal organisation in Ahmedabad. The municipal organisation drew political strength from the consensus that the local congress party was able to evolve between the workers and the mill owners, and the way this consensus was channelized in the municipal organization in terms of representation of both the interests.

In Kanpur, the politics got factionalised right from the start of representative politics in the city. The evolution of Kanpur politics, as the representative politics was introduced, involved a shift from a race based political fault-line, which divided the European and the Indian populations of the city, to a caste and religion based fault-line that factionalised the politics of the Congress Party. The divided politics of the business class originated in the fact that most of the mill owners and managers in the 19th Century were British expatriates. But by the beginning of the 20th Century, Indian owned mills also started to be established. However the business chamber continued to remain the exclusive domain of non-Indians. That forced the Indian mill owners

and businessmen to form their own organization. This organisational division of the industrial and business interest meant that they were not able to put up a united front. Similarly, the workers' organization was also divided between the trade unions affiliated to the left and those affiliated to the Congress Party. Finally, the Congress Party itself remained marred by factional competition on the basis of caste and community and personalities.

The factionalised nature of politics in Kanpur had two major impacts. *First* it resulted in repeated involvement of the provincial government in the affairs of the city. This involvement was both at the governmental and the political levels. At the governmental level, it was reflected in the formation of the improvement trust, which culminated in the development board. At the political level the factional politics of Congress politics had vertical linkages with the provincial level leadership; the local leadership was affiliated with the provincial level Congress leaders on the basis of caste and religious identities. *Second*, the factionalized nature of politics resulted in poor urban service delivery and planning outcomes, which was then, in turn, addressed by forming parallel organisations. The coexistence of the Municipal Board and the Development Board was a culmination of this process.

Post-independence, even as the municipal corporations were formed in the two cities following the enactment of two municipal corporation acts at the provincial levels, this shift in formal organization did not alter the trajectories of municipal politics. The local factional politics in Kanpur meant that the municipal corporation became a stage of factional competition as soon as it was inaugurated in 1960. This gave the provincial government opportunities to intervene in the city affairs. As a result

municipal elections were delayed in the 1960s and seize to take place between 1974 and 1989, giving the provincial government direct control over the municipal affairs of the city. The multiplicity of municipal organization, which was eliminated briefly following the formation of the municipal corporation, returned soon enough as the provincial government attempted to improve municipal services by forming specialized agencies and organisations. In Ahmedabad on the other hand, the municipal corporation continued to be representative, except during the national emergency (1975-77), and functioned with a degree of efficiency. The only other urban governance organization that was formed in Ahmedabad, was AUDA (1978).

7.2.2 Liberalisation Policies and the Making of Municipal Capacity

The decade of the 1990s presented another 'window' as a range of policy shifts involving both national and local governments were set in motion. In the economic realm, state control gave way to market based involvement of private and global capital in the Indian economy. This change came to be known as 'liberalisation'. In the realm of organization of representative politics, the 74th constitutional amendment, among other things, made popular representation in urban local bodies a mandatory constitutional requirement.

These changes in the 1990s were coming in the wake of the problem of industrial and municipal decline in Ahmedabad and Kanpur, especially during the preceding decade of the 1980s. The textile mills, which had been the centrepiece of economic activity in the two cities, declined in this period. This led to a decline in municipal finances and correspondingly, in the level of urban service delivery in Ahmedabad. In Kanpur, the already inadequate levels of municipal service provision declined even further. The

problem was compounded by the repeated episodes of communal violence in Ahmedabad. Kanpur also experienced communal violence, but not nearly as frequently as Ahmedabad. However, Kanpur also witnessed the violent death of workers shot down by police as industrial conflict intensified following the closure of the mills.

The problem of industrial decline in the two cities and the consequent need for their reinvention coincided with a shift in urban policy at the national level. The Correa Commission recommendations that marked this shift most explicitly, called for cities to act as 'generators of economic momentum' (Batra 2009). The trajectory of urban policy, which began with these recommendations and culminated in the JNNURM, had at its core, the objective of transforming Indian cities into 'growth engines'. As mentioned already, the 74th Constitutional Amendment was to mark the beginning of constitutionally mandated representative city governments across India.

However, the outcome in terms of the making of municipal capacity was different in Ahmedabad and Kanpur. The AMC was successful in rebuilding its financial and administrative strength through the decades of the 1990s and the 2000s. The KMC could not achieve any such transformation. Consequently, when the JNNURM was inaugurated in 2005, there was a marked difference in the ability of the two cities to use funding available for city regeneration.

The difference in this outcome had its roots in what Kingdon referred to as the "political stream". In Ahmedabad, if the decade of the 1980s marked the decline of the "Congress consensus" in the city, and decline of the Congress Party eventually at the provincial level, it also marked the beginnings of a "*Hindutva* consensus" at the city level and the emergence of the BJP as the dominant force at the provincial level. Similarly, in Kanpur

the decline of the Congress Party gave way to the emergence of caste and community based identity politics at the city and provincial levels. However, the key factor that determined the variation in the making of municipal capacity was the way municipal organisations had historically evolved in the two cities. As discussed already, there were multiple organisations and agencies performing the tasks of urban service delivery and planning in Kanpur. The provincial state was closely involved in this process as well. In Ahmedabad, the AMC had evolved as a coherent municipal organization that carried out all municipal functions. This difference proved crucial when the new political configurations developed in the two cities following the industrial decline and the decline of the Congress Party. Even as the BJP was the new political force in the city riding the *Hindutva* wave, a representative municipal organization compelled the party to adapt its general ideological moorings in specific urban terms, which was described as 'urban *Hindutva'* in Chapter xx above. In the context of frequent communal violence, the Party did this, to begin with, by utilizing the Muslim identity of a local bootlegger, who also dabbled in municipal politics, to draw a communal fault-line in the city. Later the party also communalized the name of the city itself and demanded a rechristening of the city. Gradually, as the communal fault-line translated into a spatial fault-line, being drawn in the city by way of segregation and ghettoization, the very project of urban development was transformed into a spatial expression of *Hindutva.* It was the urban *Hindutva* that provided the political consensus that set off the formation of municipal capacity in the city under the leadership of a dynamic municipal officer.
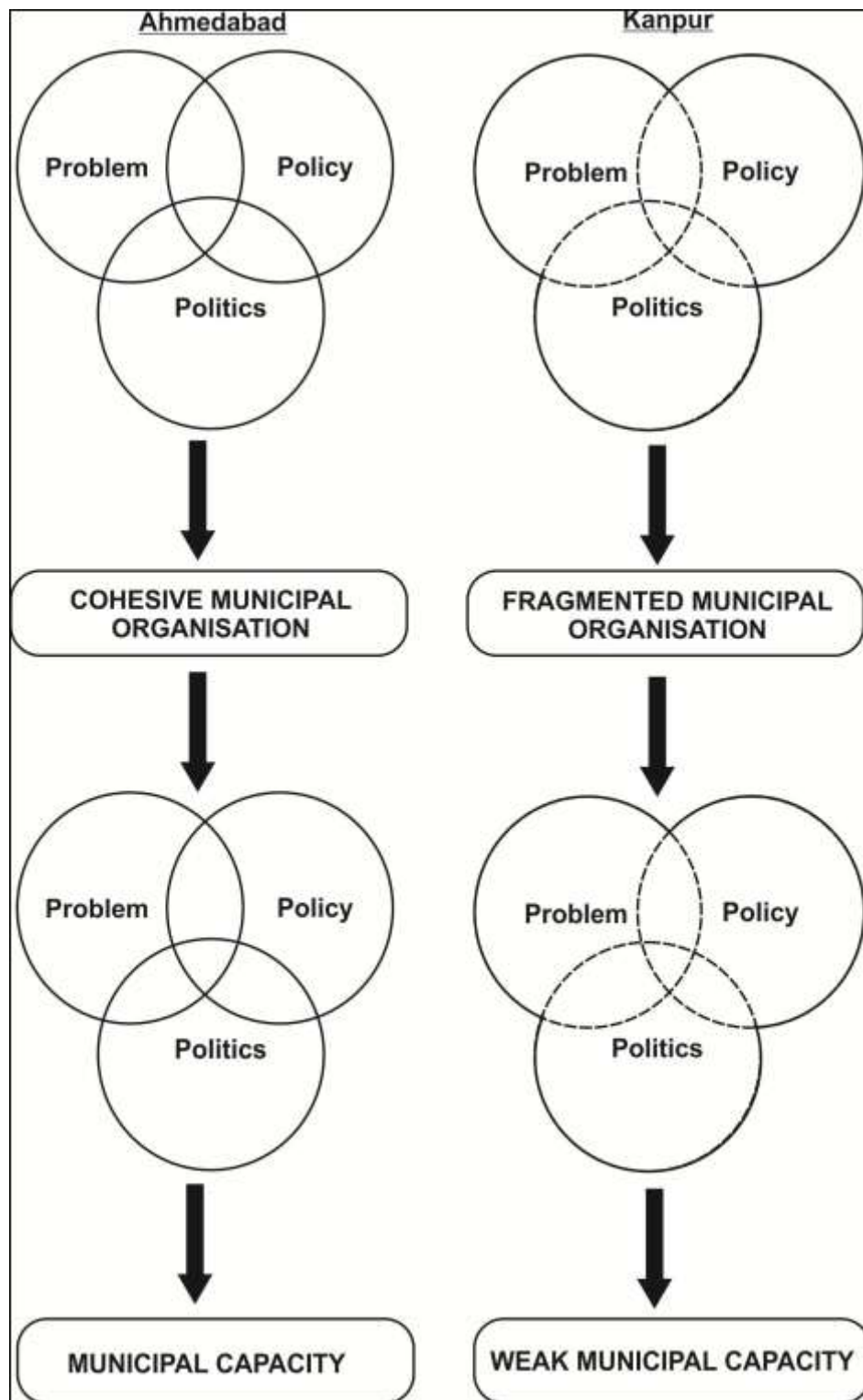
Figure 7.1: Making of Municipal Capacity

In contrast, the historical formation of municipal organization in Kanpur had led to a multiplicity of agencies providing municipal services and a definitive role for the provincial government in municipal life. When industrial decline and political transition was taking place in the city, an internal municipal political process was completely absent, while the provincial government dominated the functions of urban service delivery. In this context, even as the caste and community based identity politics emerged in the city and at the provincial level, the forces representing these political trends never felt compelled to cast their politics in specific urban terms, articulating the problems of urban infrastructure, services and planning. As a result, we see that whenever attempts to address the problems associated with municipal capacity were made, the political process worked as a roadblock rather than as a framework within which the capacity could be realised.

7.3   Municipal Organisation, Municipal Capacity, and Urban Reforms

This research demonstrates the key role of municipal organization in the making of municipal capacity, which determines the urban reform trajectory. In doing so, it makes three points that add to our understanding about the relationship between politics and policy change generally and urban reforms in particular. *First,* in demonstrating the centrality of the historical formation of municipal organization in the urban reform process, it sheds new light on the way the role of leadership has been conceptualized in the policy reform process. *Second,* the work exemplifies the different paths taken within neoliberalisation processes and the role that 'existing politics' plays in the process of the formation of 'actually existing neoliberalism'. *Finally,* this research demonstrates that the category of municipal organization may

carry enough analytical weight for it to become a central focus in understanding urban politics.

7.3.1 When are Political Entrepreneurs Successful Change Makers? Conceptualising Leadership, Organisations and Policy Change

Previous scholarship explaining successful implementation of the policy reform process has highlighted the central role that the leadership plays in the process (Jenkins 1999, Sinha 2004). The biographer of Narasimha Rao - the Prime Minister widely credited for successfully dismantling the Nehruvian 'Licence - Quota Raj' and liberalizing the Indian economy - calls him a leader who was 'half wolf–half lion' for the way he used his leadership skills to achieve the task in hand.[1] Similarly, more academically structured works such as Jenkins (1999)￼ and Sinha (2004) also focus on the skills and interests of leadership in determining the success of reform processes. While the agency of individual political leaders is undeniably an important factor, such explanations put rather disproportionate focus on personal leadership attributes while underemphasizing the structures of politics within which their success or failure is determined. In Jenkin's analysis, both 'incentive structures' and 'interest groups' come across as fluid categories, amenable to be recast themselves at the wishes of a skilful leadership (chapter 2). Similarly, in Sinha's analysis the interest of the leadership defined as the ability to achieve re-election, appears to be the major determinant of development outcomes (chapter 2).

The insights developed in this research suggest that the nature of organisations within which a leader functions plays a critical role in determining an individual leader's

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[1]   The phrase originally used by Niccole Machiavelli. See Sitapati, V. (2016). <u>Half Lion: How P V Narasimha Rao Transformed India</u>. New Delhi, Penguin Random House.

success or failure in achieving policy reform. Further, organisations are an outcome of long drawn historical political processes and, therefore, they may not be as fluid and amenable to change as these explanations suggest. In Ahmedabad, the successes of the Congress leaders, including Patel in the beginning of the 20th Century or Keshav Varma towards its end, cannot be understood on the basis of their political or administrative entrepreneurship alone. This work demonstrates that there was an organisational context in which that the personal attribute of entrepreneurship could excel. Explained in a Kingdonian framework, while political entrepreneurs did play a role in making the alignment of problem and policy possible, the opportunity for them to do so arose because of deeply rooted political processes. This research demonstrates that the role of these political processes can be understood and observed through an analysis of the organisational form taken by politics. It demonstrates that factionalized organisational forms repeatedly did not allow local political entrepreneurs in Kanpur to successfully align key "problems" with "policies". In Ahmedabad, on the other hand, the emergence of a coherent form of municipal organisation, first in the early 20th century and then again towards its end, provided opportunities for political and administrative entrepreneurs like Patel and Varma to successfully align the problem of the day with policy. Therefore, this research recalibrates the equation between political leaders and their organisational context in determining the role of leaders in the process of policy change.

Similarly, the research also sheds some analytical light on the fuzziness of 'attitudinal change' of the state and the changing 'political rhetoric of the leadership' that Rodrik and Subramanian (2004) and Kohli (2009) respectively use to explain successful policy changes at the national level in India. It demonstrates that the attitudinal

change and the change in rhetoric may be political signs of a successful alignment of policies with problems.

7.3.2   Urban Reforms as Neoliberalisation

That the objectives of urban reform process, including the JNNURM, were informed by neoliberal ideas, is an insight that emanates from several studies of urban reforms process at the city level (Mahadevia 2003, Mahadevia and Brar 2006, Banerjee-Guha 2009, Mahadevia 2010). However, this insight per se is not sufficient to explain the differential reception of urban reform initiatives at the city level. This research demonstrates that looking at the urban reform initiatives of the 2000s as 'neoliberalisation' can deliver a more precise understanding of the process. In this respect, this research contributes to the existing understanding of 'neoliberal urbanism' (Peck, Theodore et al. 2009) by introducing the role that the historical trajectory of existing municipal organization plays in determining the path of neoliberalisation and the nature of 'actually existing neoliberalism', at the city level. The existing literature that views urban reforms in Indian cities as a neoliberal process is, by and large, preoccupied by questions of the politics behind neoliberal policies and their implications at the city level (Mahadevia 2003, Banerjee-Guha 2009, Chattopadhyay 2017). Varying trajectories of neoliberalisation and factors that determine those trajectories have not received adequate attention.

This research, through its focus on the formation of municipal organisation explores the role of 'already existing places' in the process of mutation of neoliberal ideas into 'actually existing neoliberalism'. The research demonstrates that neoliberal urbanism is not always about replacing existing urban meanings by assigning cities a neoliberal

meaning, but rather it is about the mutation of the existing meaning with neoliberal ideas. The case of Ahmedabad illustrates this case abundantly by tracking the emergence of 'urban *Hindutva*'. The process demonstrates that while the consensus around *Hindutva* paves the way for the introduction of neoliberal ideas in the city, the eventual characteristic that the city acquires is a mutation of both neoliberalism and *Hindutva*. So if we have the introduction of market linkages and private participation in urban governance processes on the one hand, we also have a communally ghettoized city in which Muslims do not even have equal consumer rights to buy a property at the market rate in an area of their choice. *Hindutva* urbanism of Ahmedabad is an example of an 'actually existing neoliberalism' (Brenner and Theodore 2002).

Kanpur may also be seen as a case of an 'actually existing neoliberalism' in the sense that practices based on neoliberal ideas have percolated into governmental practices at the city level, even if in a scattered and haphazard manner. These practices may not have resulted in a complete mutation, producing municipal capacity and shaping urban meaning, as in the case of Ahmedabad. But neoliberal practices in urban governance processes have been introduced, both at the provincial and the city level (Singh 2013). Even in the case of Kanpur, the 'actually existing place' has determined the path of neoliberalisation. Because the 'actually existing place' of Kanpur has had a significant presence of the provincial state in its governance processes, mutation to 'actually existing neoliberalism' has included a decisive role for the provincial state. The provincial state continues to play a significant role in the governance processes of the city, and multiple (parallel) service delivery organisations continue to exist, but several of the processes adopted now are based on neoliberal ideas.

7.3.3 Significance of 'Municipal Organisation' in Understanding Urban Politics

This research demonstrates the analytical and methodological centrality of 'municipal organisation' in understanding politics at the city level. Existing explanations either highlight the role of the provincial state in determining urban governance processes at the city level, or seek to understand governance processes through an urban community's experiences and interactions with the provincial state. The focus on the provincial state is based on the idea that decision-making capacities lie with the provincial government on most of the affairs of Indian cities. A World Bank report suggested, for example, that 'Kanpur's lagging growth trajectory cannot be understood purely in terms of city level factors' (Mustafa and Grover 2016 ;05). While this contention is correct, this work demonstrates that the historical political process of the formation of municipal organization played the determinant role in producing a weak city government in Kanpur, which in fact was a major reason why the provincial government held so much sway in the city.

Similarly, as discussed in chapter 2 (Section 2.3), much of the literature on urban politics in India, especially in the post-liberalisation period has focussed on 'life spaces' in the city (Jha , Harriss 2005, Harriss 2005, Kamath and Vijayabaskar 2014). While this approach produces rich accounts of the everyday nuances of urban politics, the scope of this approach often does not allow a city level examination with municipal organization as the main analytical focus. My research, however, points to the key role of municipal organisation in determining how people relate to, and the expectations they have of, the government. It also demonstrates the crucial role that municipal organization plays in the process of creating the frameworks within which

people come to experience their government. In sum, therefore, this research demonstrates the necessity of expanding the agenda of urban research from its focus on 'life spaces' to one that includes 'organisational spaces' as well.

7.4 Policy Lessons of the JNNURM Implementation Process at the City Level

When the general elections were held in 2014, the BJP promised to build 200 smart cities in India. Following the formation of the new BJP led government a new national level mission, the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) was launched in the year 2015. Apart from the name[2] and nomenclature, the basic premise of the new mission appears to be the same. The mission statement of the AMRUT asserts:

> "Learnings from the earlier Mission have shown that infrastructure creation should have a direct impact on the real needs of people, such as providing taps and toilet connections to all households. This means that the focus should be on infrastructure creation that has a direct link to provision of better services to people"[3]

So far as the implementation process is concerned, one significant change is that in the new mission, rather than project based funding, the 'state annual action plan' (AMRUT 2015) must be approved. However, the fact remains that the mission statement mentions no systematic and comprehensive assessment of the JNNURM before the AMRUT was designed and launched.

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[2]   While the JNNURM was named after the first Prime Minister of India, the AMRUT is named after the first BJP Prime Minister of India, Atal Behari Vajpai.

[3]   AMRUT (2015). The Mission. M. o. U. Affairs. New Delhi, http://amrut.gov.in/writereaddata/The%20Mission.pdf.

By offering an answer to the question, why top down policy intervention follows different paths in different cities, this research firmly establishes that attempts at urban transformation are going to result in unpredictable results unless the policy intervention is designed by keeping in mind the nature of local municipal organisation and local politics in general. The lesson for the policy community is that the 'policy' is just one of the three components of the dynamics that determines the 'outcomes'. The specific 'problems' that policy seeks to address at the city level and the orientation of 'politics' towards them, are the other two components. Unless policy is designed in a way that is conducive to the alignment of all three factors, the chances of its success are doubtful.

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ANNEXURE-I

LIST OF CITIES INCLUDED UNDER THE JNNURM

S. No	Cities	State	Population (Million)
Mega Cities/UAEs			
1	Greater Mumbai	Maharashtra	16.43
2	Kolkata	West Bengal	13.21
3	Delhi	Delhi	12.88
4	Chennai	Tamil Nadu	6.56
5	Hyderabad	Andhra Pradesh	5.74
6	Bangalore	Karnataka	5.7
7	**Ahemdabad**	**Gujrat**	**4.53**
Million-plus Cities/UAs			
8	Pune	Maharashtra	3.76
9	Surat	Gujrat	2.81
10	**Kanpur**	**Uttar Pradesh**	**2.72**
11	Jaipur	Rajasthan	2.33
12	Lucknow	Uttar Pradesh	2.25
13	Nagpur	Maharashtra	2.13
14	Patna	Bihar	1.7
15	Indore	Madhya Pradesh	1.64
16	Vadodara	Gujrat	1.49
17	Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu	1.46
18	Bhopal	Madhya Pradesh	1.46
19	Ludhiana	Punjab	1.4
20	Cochin	Kerala	1.36
21	Visakhapatnam	Andhra Pradesh	1.35
22	Agra	Uttar Pradesh	1.33
23	Varanasi	Uttar Pradesh	1.2
24	Madurai	Tamil Nadu	1.2
25	Meerut	Uttar Pradesh	1.16
26	Nashik	Maharashtra	1.15
27	Jamshedpur	Jharkhand	1.1
28	Jabalpur	Madhya Pradesh	1.1
29	Asansol	West Bengal	1.07
30	Dhanbad	Jharkhand	1.07

S. No	Cities	State	Population (Million)
31	Faridabad	Haryana	1.06
32	Allahabad	Uttar Pradesh	1.04
33	Vijayawada	Andhra Pradesh	1.04
34	Rajkot	Gujrat	1
35	Amritsar	Punjab	1
Cities/UAs with less than one million population			
36	Srinagar	Jammu & Kashmir	0.9
37	Thiruvananthapuram	Kerala	0.89
38	Ranchi	Jharkhand	0.86
39	Guwahati	Asam	0.82
40	Chandigarh	Punjab & Haryana	0.81
41	Mysore	Karnataka	0.8
42	Raipur	Chhattisgarh	0.7
43	Bhubaneshwar	Oriissa	0.66
44	Jammu	Jammu & Kashmir	0.61
45	Dehradun	Uttarakhand	0.53
46	Puducherry	Puducherry	0.51
47	Ajmer-Pushkar	Rajasthan	0.5
48	Ujjain	Madhya Pradesh	0.43
49	Nanded	Maharashtra	0.43
50	Bodhgaya	Bihar	0.39
51	Mathura	Uttar Pradesh	0.32
52	Tirupati	Andhra Pradesh	0.3
53	Shillong	Meghalaya	0.27
54	Imphal	Manipur	0.25
55	Aizawl	Mizoram	0.23
56	Haridwar	Uttarakhand	0.22
57	Nainital	Uttarakhand	0.22
58	Porbandar	Gujrat	0.2
59	Agartala	Tripura	0.19
60	Puri	Oriissa	0.16
61	Shimla	Himachal Pradesh	0.15
62	Panaji	Goa	0.1
63	Kohima	Nagaland	0.08
64	Itanagar	Arunachal Pradesh	0.4
65	Gangtok	Sikkim	0.3

ANNEXURE II

THE CONSTITUTION (SEVENTY-FOURTH AMENDMENT) ACT, 1992

Statement of Objects and Reasons appended to the Constitution
(Seventy-third Amendment) Bill, 1991 which was enacted as
the Constitution (Seventy-fourth   Amendment) Act, 1992

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

1.   In many States local bodies have become weak and ineffective on account of a variety of reasons, including the failure to hold regular elections, prolonged supersessions and inadequate devolution of powers and functions. As a result, Urban Local Bodies are not   able to perform effectively as vibrant democratic units of self-government.

2.   Having regard to these inadequacies, it is considered necessary that provisions relating to Urban Local Bodies are incorporated in the Constitution particularly for-

   (i)   Putting on a firmer footing the relationship between the State Government and the Urban Local Bodies with respect to-

      (a)   The functions and taxation powers; and

      (b)   Arrangements for revenue sharing;

   (ii)   Ensuring regular conduct of elections;

   (iii) Ensuring timely elections in the case of supersession; and

   (iv) Providing adequate representation for the weaker sections like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women.

3.   Accordingly, it is proposed to add a new part relating to the Urban Local Bodies in the Constitution to provide for-

(a)   Constitution of three types of Municipalities:

(i)   Nagar Panchayats for areas in transition from a rural area to urban area;

(ii)   Municipal Councils for smaller urban areas;

(iii)   Municipal Corporations for larger urban areas.

The broad criteria for specifying the said areas is being provided in the proposed article 243-0;

(b)   Composition of Municipalities, which will be decided by the Legislature of a State, having the following features:

(i)   Persons to be chosen by direct election;

(ii)   Representation of Chairpersons of Committees, if any, at ward or other levels in the Municipalities;

(iii)   Representation of persons having special knowledge or experience of Municipal Administration in Municipalities (without voting rights);

(c)   Election of Chairpersons of a Municipality in the manner specified in the State law;

(d)   Constitution of Committees at ward level or other level or levels within the territorial area of a Municipality as may be provided in the State law;

(e) Reservation of seats in every Municipality-

    (i)   For Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population of which not less than one-third shall be for women;

    (ii)   For women which shall not less than one-third of the total number of seats;

    (iii)   In favour of backward class of citizens if so provided by the Legislature of the State;

    (iv)   For Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and women in the office of Chairpersons as may be specified in the State law;

(f) Fixed tenure of 5 years for the Municipality and re-election within six months of end of tenure. If a Municipality is dissolved before expiration of its duration, elections to be held within a period of six months of its dissolution;

(g) Devolution by the State Legislature of powers and responsibilities upon the Municipalities with respect to preparations of plans of economic development and social justice, and for the implementation of development schemes as may be required to enable them to function as institutions of self-government;

(h) Levy of taxes and duties by Municipalities, assigning of such taxes and duties to Municipalities by State Governments and for making grants-in-aid by the State to the Municipalities as may be provided in the State law;

    (i)   A Finance Commission to review the finances of the Municipalities and to recommend principles for-

(1) Determining the taxes, which may be assigned to the Municipalities;

(2) Sharing of taxes between the State and Municipalities;

(3) Grants-in-aid to the Municipalities from the Consolidated Fund of the State;

(j) Audit of accounts of the Municipal Corporations by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and laying of reports before the Legislature of the State and the Municipal Corporation concerned;

(k) Making of law by a State Legislature with respect to elections to the Municipalities to be conducted under the superintendence, direction and control of the chief electoral officer of the State;

(l) Application of the provisions of the Bill to any Union territory or part thereof with such modifications as may be specified by the President;

(m) Exempting Scheduled areas referred to in clause (1), and tribal areas referred to in clause (2), of article 244, from the application of the provisions of the Bill. Extension of provisions of the Bill to such areas may be done by Parliament by law;

(n) Disqualifications for membership of a Municipality;

(o) Bar of jurisdiction of Courts in matters relating to elections to the Municipalities.

4. The Bill seeks to achieve the aforesaid objectives.

ANNEXURE III

SUGGESTED DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PREPARATION OF CITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN (CDP)
JNNURM

Do's

- Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) should appreciate and share the supportive and reform driven approach of the MoUD to develop and help provide basic utilities and physical infrastructure to make cities more livable for people and attractive to investors.

- CDP is a Development document for the city incorporating vision, as well as long term and medium term perspectives. It should be understood that though JNNURM is an initiator and facilitator, it is only one of the options for financial and technical support for development projects.

- CDP is a comprehensive document covering wider issues of development. JNNURM aspects or projects covered within the CDP are only one part. This may be clearly highlighted.

- Baseline data on present status should be as accurate as possible. It is in the best interest of the city, its residents, the local body and other stakeholders.

- Planning and development is a people centric activity. Thus involve people along with other stakeholders in structured and scientific manner in vision formulation, strategic options and identification of of projects. Consultation at the sub-city level may be very useful and effective.

- All required details mentioned in guidelines should be furnished for FOP and CIP. Incomplete or partial treatment of these financial aspects will dealy the approval/ sanction.

- Answer to some basic questions regarding the financial status of the city government (overall financial profile) may be provided as follows:

- what budgetary and accounting practices are being followed?

- what sources of revenue does the city government have?

- Is the city government able to meet its recurrent expenditure out of its own resources?

- The extent of the city government's financial dependence on the state government?

- property Tax system and criteria for fixing user charges?

- Sector wise financial profile –water supply, sewerage, drainage, sanitation, roads.

- what are the cost incurred in service provision?

- what are the recoveries against such provisions?

- The uniqueness of the city and its positive image is not only to be retained but proposed to be enhanced in the CDP.

- Heritage and tradition (areas, activities, customs, fairs, architecture, arts and crafts etc.) are to be taken due care with the help of professional experts of the field.

- Welfare of urban poor and people involved in informal sector activities should be especially addressed in the CDP. This is one of the important focuses in JNNURM.

- The entire document of CDP should have a rational interlink among all the four components – present status, vision, strategy options and the CIP and should provide a very strong justification for each of the projects whose DPR is submitted for financial sanction.

Don'ts

- Exaggerate projection of population just to increase consequent development cost in projects. It may backfire and prove harmful to the interest of the city.

- Consider JNNURM as an opportunity to get huge financial allocation for the city. Your project cost should relate to the size of the city and its genuine need, and should be sustainably recoverable.

- Undertake any aspects as required in guidelines only for the sake of formality. It has to be taken diligently with all sincerity and in the interest of the city.

- Submit projects from CDPs which are beyond the JNNURM coverage for funding under the mission. It should be handled under the options other than JNNURM.

(Prepared by the JNNURM central Secretariat)