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AN EVALUATIVE STUDY ON VARIOUS SERVICES OF GUWAHATI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (GMC) FROM ETHICAL POINT OF VIEW

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ABSTRACT

Through this paper an attempt is being taken to evaluate various services rendered by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation strictly from ethical angle. In doing so, the entire paper is divided into three parts. The first part "Theoretical Approach includes an introduction, objective of the study, Research question of the study". The second part entitled "Various services of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation and their ethical dimension" is a comprehensive study where various services of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation are evaluated whether these are rendered strictly in the light of ethical vision or not. Accordingly, if these are not done ethically then why and what are its consequences will also be discussed in details. The third part entitled "conclusion", where major findings which stand on the way of ethical discharge of the services of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation are identified and some suitable suggestions are put forward by virtue of which Guwahati Municipal Corporation(GMC) can be ethically stranded.

KEYWORDS

services, GMC and ethical.

PART - I

THEORETICAL APPROACH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Ethics is the basic element which shows its importance in every aspect of human eye as well as in the field of business. Upto 1960, social responsibility was essential for business, thereafter it was realized that without business ethics no one can properly discharge social responsibility. Moreover, business ethic is the foundation of sustainable development. Sustainable Development has no side effect and it is a development for a long time. Hence, only by ethical way this sustainability can be achieved. Now a day most of the business aims at earning lots of profit without taking much care on ethical aspects. An ethical approach to sustainability suggests that society has an obligation to restrain wasteful uses of resources among the affluent, but it also has a special obligation to foster economic development for the poorest of the poor, while maintaining environmental resource protection. When referring to sustainable development, one needs to define what is to be sustained, for whom, and for how long. Sustainability is not an absolute condition, but is always partial. Sustainability, like justice, occurs along a continuum, and making progress along this is necessarily incremental. Restraint is its price. "The Guwahati Municipal Corporation (GMC) is the creator of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation Act 1971 Corporation was duly constituted in 1974 in the first meeting of the elected councillors as per provision of sec 4 5 of this Act. GMC covers an area of 216 km² under its jurisdiction and it is divided into 31 municipal wards"¹. Guwahati is the main gateway for all other states of northeast and it has a wider scope for making the city beautiful. The Guwahati Municipal Corporation is focussing mainly on the areas that are affecting the growth of whole Guwahati city. Mainly the problems of the drainage system, solid waste management, street lights etc. are standing on the way of attaining its sustainable development.

Considering these circumstances, this paper attempts to discuss, two broad categories of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation activities such as cleanliness and beautification keeping in purpose their ethical dimensions.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The basic objective of the study is to examine various services of Guwahati Municipal Corporation keeping in consideration, whether these are discharged ethically or not and if not done in ethical norms and conditions, then the study attempts to explain as why and what are its unethical consequences. The ultimate purpose of the study is to establish Guwahati Municipal Corporation as an ethical organisation. In order to achieve the above basic objectives, the following specific objectives are undertaken:

- a) To examine the cleanliness services of Guwahati Municipal Corporation.
- b) To examine the beautification services of Guwahati Municipal Corporation.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to examine the above objectives, the following research questions are set and these questions are explained in the appropriate context of the second part.

RQ₁: Are the cleanliness services of Guwahati Municipal Corporation performed by maintaining ethical norms and conditions?

RQ₂: Have the beautification services of Guwahati Municipal Corporation been discharged ethically?

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted for the collection of data are basically of two ways. These are primary and secondary sources. Primary data are collected by the technique of field survey, personnel interview and through questionnaire. Secondary data are compiled from various books, journals, newspaper and websites. To depict the location of the study, the map of Guwahati City is shown in the Fig. 1.

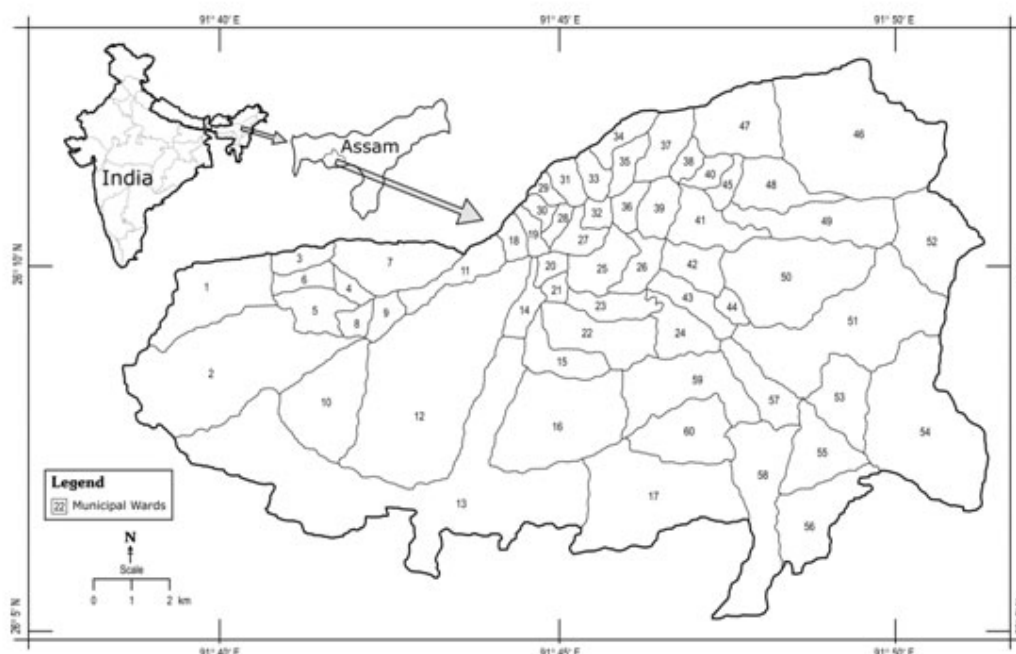


Fig. 1 : Location map of Guwahati city showing its Municipal Ward Boundaries

There are near about seventeen hundred of total employees including both permanent and contractual at different categories. Out of which nearly 20 numbers of top and middle level officials are selected, which are found to be experienced and knowledgeable in the connection of subject matter of the topic for collecting data and information. Further, a group of 90 respondents is formed for the purpose of conducting questionnaires as follows-

TABLE 1: LIST OF RESPONDENT

Sl.No	Sources	No. Of Respondent
1	GMC Officers-Top level and middle level	20
2	GMDA	20
3	Senior Intellectual Citizen	15
4	NGO engaged in this line	15
5	Lawyers	10
6	Industrialist	10

Sources: Compiled from Personal Interview and field survey.

PART - II

“Various services of Guwahati Municipal Corporation and their Ethical Dimension”

Guwahati Municipal Corporation is basically a service oriented Assam Government undertaking, with a view to developing Guwahati as a Metropolitan city. The Guwahati Municipal Corporation was established in the year 1974 and an Act has been made with some rules and regulations to be followed by one and all. It also follows the Assam Nagara Raj Act 2007, and has been made compulsory for all the members to work accordingly. In fact, the Guwahati Municipal Corporation is to perform a lot of services out of which cleanliness and beautification are the main services to make the Guwahati Municipal Corporation successful in achieving its objectives. These two basic services are to be rendered according to ethical norms and conditions. So, below a detailed discussion is made to examine these two services as to show how long GMC has performed ethically.

2.1 CLEANLINESS SERVICES FROM ETHICAL ASPECTS

Guwahati is a vast area and so it has been divided into some zones and under which the works take place. An attempt had been made long ago by many to make the city clean but due to some unavoidable circumstances the aim could not be accomplished at that time. But now since the division of zones are made, so the duties and responsibilities are also divided and the area works are done on that basis. Below cleanliness activities of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation are discussed under the following categories of task.

2.1.1 Collection and processing of solid wastes

In the case of cleaning the waste materials i.e. the garbage, (wastes) now the conservancy department has undertaken it more seriously. “In the case of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation it is observed that garbage’s are thrown in some dustbins provided in some particular areas and also Guwahati Municipal Corporation has entrusted the collection task of garbage’s to some NGOs from the residential areas and to deposit it in the main street dustbins and from where the Guwahati Municipal Corporation garbage carrying vehicle will carry it out to the main disposal area, such as in Boragoan, where the garbage’s are segregated according to the uses and then sent for recycling. Currently 7 kilowatt power is being produced in Boragoan from garbage’s.”²

Regarding the processing of solid waste of Guwahati Municipal Corporation, it is to be mentioned that “Solid waste is processed in three steps: “First step is the primary collection –from door to door, commercial places etc., second step or the secondary stage is that stage where the garbage’s are taken to the Main site and the third step is to dump all the garbage’s in Boragoan for various uses. At present 550 to 600 tonnes of wastes are generated daily and these wastes are used for various purposes and mainly now focussing on bio fuel.”³

A table below is shown about the different sources and types of waste collected in Guwahati City.

TABLE 2: SOURCE AND TYPES OF WASTES

Sl.No	Sources	Types of Wastes
1	Households and institutions	Mostly organic waste with some non-organic
2	Commercial places	Papers and plastics
3	Health Centres	Infectious and non-infectious waste
4	Animal keeping places	All kinds of dung and their eatable left over
5	Different market places, restaurants etc.	Mostly organic waste

Sources: Compiled from NGO offices and field survey

The above table shows the various types of wastes generated and from where, it is clearly known that though there are various kinds of wastes, only to some extent all the resources are fully utilised as for landfills, recycling, creating manures and bio fuels

QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS

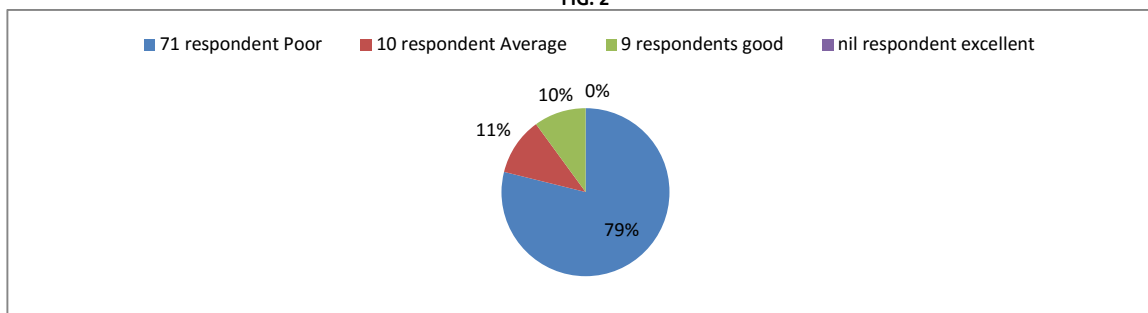
In order to elicit the views of different selected respondents the following question is put to them.

Q1. What is your opinion regarding the collection and processing activities of garbage by GMC?

Poor Average Good Excellent

Against this question, 71 respondent says as poor, the percentage of which is 78.8% and 10 (11.1%) respondent's opinion is as average and remaining 9(10%) respondents are of the opinion as good and no one claimed it as excellent which is depicted in the following diagram.

FIG. 2



In the light of above observation and feedback of respondents the following drawbacks are observed:

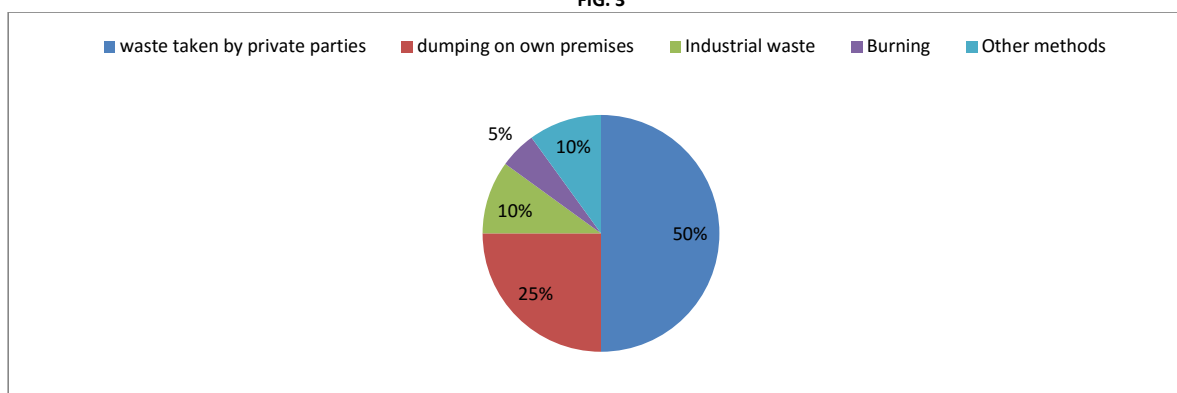
- Lack of Awareness of general public: It has been found that the general public of Guwahati city lacks the basic sense of discipline and environment harmful impacts. Many people still throw the garbage's from a distance to a nearby roadside dustbin but it fails to reach its inside and falls down on the roadside. Also some people are seen throwing the waste in nearby drains or just outside in open plot without thinking about the increase of some dreadful diseases and also of water logging problems.
- Inadequate dustbins: Though the municipality had provided the big dustbins area wise, it is found that the number of such dustbins are not adequate for collecting all garbage's at a time due to increase of population in Guwahati.
- Irregular collection of wastes from dustbin: The dustbins are put in the main street line of all areas but irregular cleaning of the dustbins leads to overflow of the waste on the roadside which causes bad smell for the people to cross by it and also leads to pollution.

2.1.2: Method of waste disposal and its management

Managing the waste in proper way is an art as well as technology. Waste management groups include source reduction and reuse, animal feeding, recycling, composting, fermentation, landfills, incineration and land application.

There are various methods of waste disposal out of which, five methods are adopted by the GMC. In doing so, different methods are used at different proportion. Regarding this proportion, the following percentage are identified through field survey and personal interview.

FIG. 3



From the above diagram, it has been found that garbage takers are provided by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation, many people keep their waste in bins and when the person comes for collection they give it to them in proper way. Some of the citizens do it, whereas some people dump it in their own premises as they have land inside their own campus and by doing so they manure their own land for their own cultivations of fruits and vegetables. Remaining of wastes are just burnt away whereas other methods are also applied to dispose the waste materials.

TABLE NO. 3: CATEGORY OF AREA WILLINGNESS TO PAY RS 30 TO THE GARBAGE CLEANER.

Areas	Mean Value of willingness to Pay (in Rs)(approx)
Residential Areas	80
Commercial Areas	75
Other Institutions	50

Source: Field survey and personal interview.

It has been found that people of residential areas are willing to pay the people who takes away their garbage's out of their home and deposit in the given places by Guwahati Municipal Corporation. It has been found that the present scenario is that all the people are willing to pay to make their environment and surrounding pollution free. It has been seen that to tackle the problem of waste disposal due to limited landfill areas and air pollution, some wastes are being recycled to save energy, conserve resources, lessen the environment pollution and for various other uses. "There are many new methods that the developed countries are using as for example Incineration, plasma gasification etc. which are mostly seen in Japan. United States also adopted many new technologies where they utilised waste to get energy and also try for waste minimization policies"⁴, but it has been found that such type of technology have not been adopted by our municipal corporation. The Guwahati Municipal Corporation is yet to developed this type of method which is immensely important at the present scenario of Guwahati Municipal Corporation. Due to lack of sophisticated method, the Guwahati Municipal Corporation failed to dispose this huge amount of wastes, which causes lots of pollution, side effects etc. In this connection, the negligence of Guwahati Municipal Corporation is one of the root cause. Moreover, top officials of Guwahati Municipal Corporation are politically affiliated. Hence the Mayor along with top executives have no scope at all to use their efficiency ethically in professional skills.

From the sites of dumping, it was found that things used for biodegradable waste are generally recycled where as other things like papers, bottles, metals etc. are now a days recycled for various uses in order to attain sustainability. But no such highly equipped industries are available to recycle and make new products from PET bottles or glass bottles, metals etc.

Survey data conducted in the landfill site Boragaon showing the quantity of recyclables collected every month and the market prices (April, 2015)

TABLE NO. 4: ITEMS FOUNDS FROM THE WASTE

Sl no	Items	Quantity per KG/month	Prices per Kg in market(Rs)
1	Plastics	30000	8
2	papers	10000	10
3	Glass materials	7000	6
4	Leather	1000	7
5	Metal	3000	8

Sources: GMC office and field survey

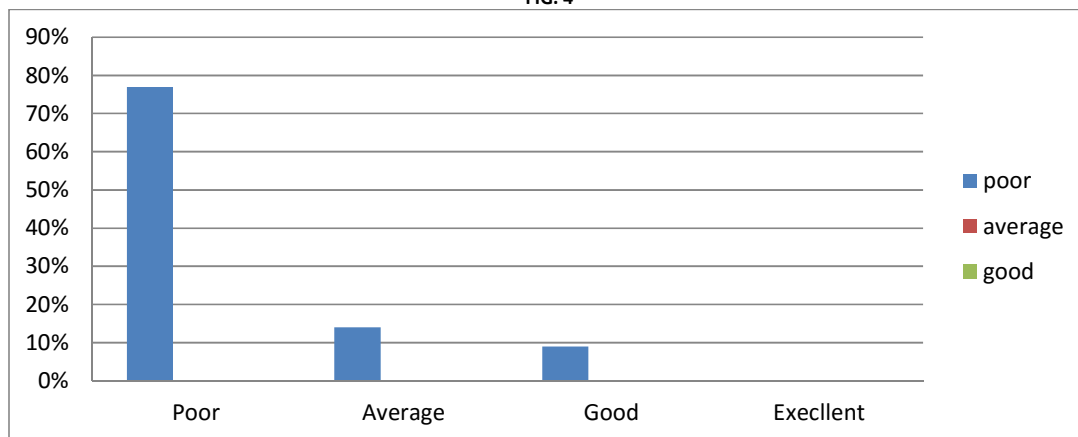
In order to elicit the view of selected respondent on the above topic few questions were put to them:

Q2. what is your opinion regarding the method of waste disposal used by Guwahati Municipal Corporation?

Poor Good Average Excellent

Against this question, 77% replied as poor ,14% replied as average, 9% replied as good. According to 77% it is poor because inspite of having ample scope to handle the waste disposal activities, no serious attention has been paid by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation for doing so. On the other hand, the reason of 14%(average) respondent is the apart from the duty of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation, there are lot of responsibilities to be discharged individually by the people of the society. But practically most of the people are not aware of their duties, which is depicted by the following diagram.

FIG. 4

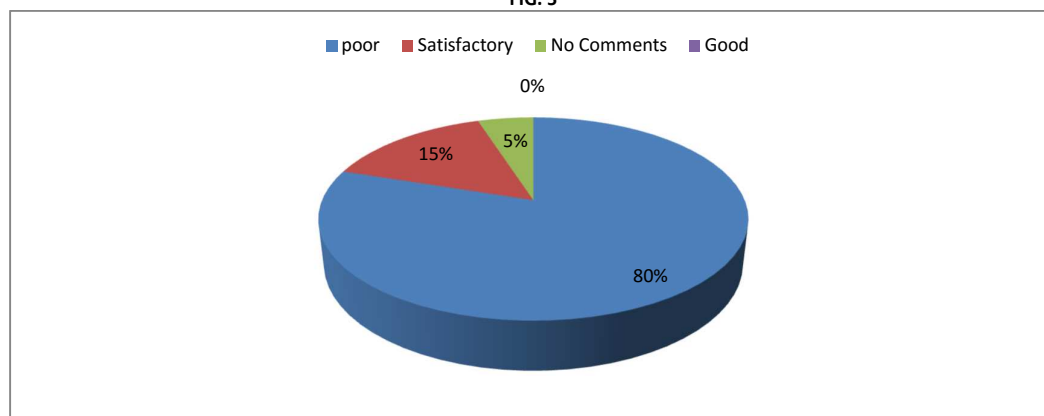


Q3. Is the waste being utilised properly for recycle?

No Yes Satisfactory No comments

It is observed that majority respondent of 78% in support of their reply as poor indicates that the Guwahati Municipal Corporation still failed to manufacture some bio-product from the wastes by utilizing the latest technology. The reason of replying as satisfactory by the 17% group of respondent is that the Guwahati Municipal Corporation to some extent has utilized in productive way some wastes to produce as biofuel, manures etc.

FIG. 5



2.1.3 Conclusion to the Research question 1

In support of the above explanations, a conclusion can be drawn to the research question 1 that still the Guwahati Municipal Corporation is not in a position to discharge its services completely on ethical basis. Of course, the Guwahati Municipal Corporation is gradually giving effort for performing its cleanliness services by maintaining ethical norms and conditions. It can be further concluded that approximately, 20-25, of its services have been performed in support of ethical vision such as in removal of garbage's from residential areas and making some bio products from the wastes.

2.2 BEAUTIFICATION SERVICES IN THE LIGHT OF ETHICAL ASPECTS

Regarding beautification of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation, there are a lot of aspects to be done by the corporation. Basically, following aspects pertaining to the beautification of the Guwahati city, so far as Guwahati Municipal Corporation is concerned are as follows:

2.2.1 Lighting

The Guwahati Municipal Corporation formulates a plan of making the city brighter even in night time. As part of the project, the Guwahati Municipal Corporation plans to install 10,000 streetlights across the city after it receives application from individuals and business establishments. Regarding the purpose of lighting Mr. Ajay Hazarika, consumer Legal Protection Forum opined that "Streets should definitely have more streetlights to prevent crime. We welcome the Guwahati Municipal Corporation move to install lights but the extra cost is uncalled for. Residents are already paying heavy tax to the Guwahati Municipal Corporation"⁴. According to Samar Bezbaruah, secretary of Society for Socio-Economic-Development in the Region (SSEDR), "This is illogical. Lack of streetlights leads to increase in crime. If money is charged for something as basic as streetlights, the poor will be deprived. Residents who can afford to do so will pay the fee and get the lights installed, but we need to think about the poor,"⁵

As per rule of Guwahati Municipal Corporation the new lights will be installed on a 'first-come, first-served' basis. And also the streetlights of, low-energy, 16-W, 15-ft.-high LEDs, will be installed within the premises of the applicant's building. The minimum distance between two streetlights will be 25 m. But as of now nothing in reality has come out. Project Jyoti has been formed with much hope to make the city bright even in dark and mainly to help the people to move in proper way in night time.

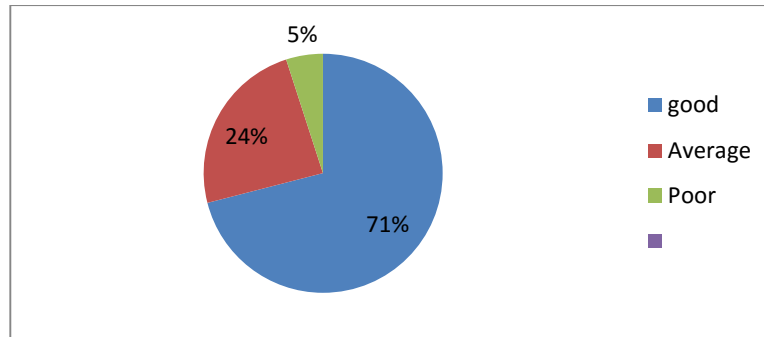
To elicit the view of respondents a question has been put forward to them:

Q4. What is your opinion on the steps taken by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation on project light?

Poor Good Average Excellent

According to the question asked it was found that 71% respondent, the Guwahati Municipal Corporation miserably failed to provide lighting in most of the bye lane and some remote areas under Guwahati Municipal Corporation. According to them, there is immense need of providing lighting in all bye lanes as because these bye lanes are very unsafe as well as of poor conditions.

FIG. 6



2.2.2: Drain Cleanliness

Drain cleanliness is another aspect of beautification of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation. In this connection, both Guwahati Municipal Corporation and GMDA, presently evicting unauthorised encroachment from the places specially the bank of Bharalu and Brahmaputra river, for beautification. It has also been found that illegal cutting of trees and making homes in the hills are one of the reason which has created obstruction in making the city clean. In case of Guwahati it has been found that to make it a beautiful city a proper terrace system along with rain water harvesting system must be adopted. The Guwahati Municipal Corporation had started fencing the walls in the areas having steep slopes to prevent soil erosion. But practically it is observed that due to devoid of adequate public awareness amongst must people of Guwahati city, the effort given by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation has not become effective. Hence the Guwahati Municipal Corporation should immediately stop people from cutting trees in the hill side for building houses as it is one of the main reasons for which the whole Guwahati city comes under flash flood and must be more assertive to stop throwing plastic in drains, then only it can have beautification and recreational purpose more effective.

To elicit the views of the selected respondents a question has been put to them:

Q.5. How far the Guwahati Municipal Corporation is successful in controlling the encroachment problem in hilly area.

Not Success to some extent success success in progress already success.

The answer to the above question has been depicted in the following diagram.

FIG. 7



2.2.3: Development of Tourism

There is ample scope of developing the tourism sector within Guwahati. In doing so, the GMC has started taking care of the various temples as for example the Kamakhya temple, Umananda temple, Basistha temple etc. along with Deepor Beel and Bank of Bharmaputra. But the fact is that in spite of having ample potentiality of developing these places as attractive tourism spots, the Guwahati Municipal Corporation has paid no such serious attention in this regard. Of course, to some extent, it has made projects to clean many tourist sites and also Deepor Beel to encourage people to visit the sites. Roads on several places have been repaired in order to make the communication comfortable for the people to visit the historical places in Guwahati. To make different kinds of malls along with cinema halls permissions are being given by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation to promote the Guwahati city and make it a metropolitan area.

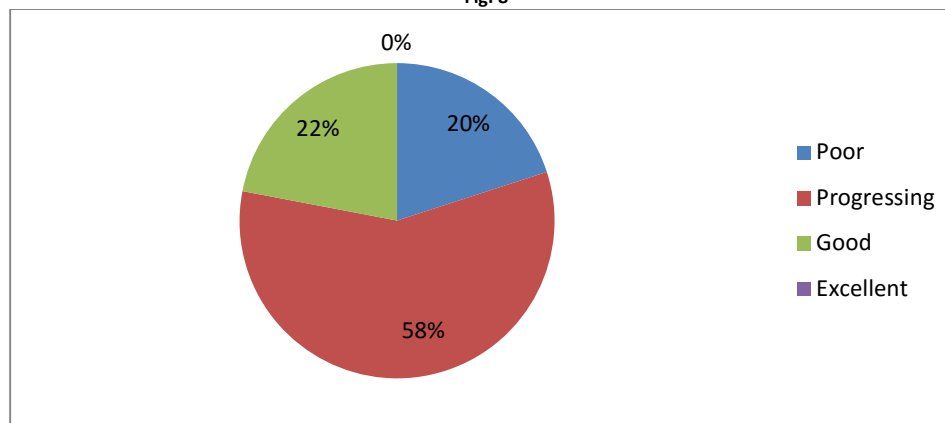
To elicit this view a question has been put forward to a group of respondents:

Q6. What is the level of development of Tourism activities done by Guwahati Municipal Corporation so far as the beautification of Guwahati City is concerned?

Poor Progressing Good Excellent

Against the above question it was found that only 58% said, it is in progress whereas 22% respondent as good and the rest 20% respondents as poor, but no one claimed it as excellent. It has been shown in the following pie diagram.

Fig. 8



In this regard already JNNURM (Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Rural Mission) was launched by the government which aims at bringing about fast track planned development of identified cities with a clear focus on bringing efficiency in urban infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms, community participation and accountability of parastatal agencies towards citizens. Guwahati Municipal Corporation has focussed on beautification in regards to environmental issues and also in tourism. For the cleanliness drive, the main focus is on the water channels of Guwahati city. The Guwahati Municipal Corporation which has been entrusted with the work to beautify the banks of Bharalu, has chalked out an eco-friendly solar energy based plan of beautifying several stretches of Bharalu from GS Road to Bharalumukh. As per the sources it was found that the project worth Rs 1500 crores would use solar power instead of grid power for lighting etc. Under the project the power transmission line along the Bharalu River would be shifted to other side. The entire stretch under the project would be covered with tall barricades so that garbage's cannot be thrown into the water channel. Also eviction drive has been taken place near the bank sides of the river. In this way the main purpose is to have a free flow of water throughout the year and check the re-encroachment. Moreover, The Revenue and Disaster Management Department of the State has allotted a plot of land measuring 20 bighas to the Guwahati Municipal Corporation for setting up its solid waste management plant to tackle the city's municipal solid waste.

PART - III

In this part, some major findings as identified throughout the study are given. Accordingly, some suitable suggestions are put forward for removing the prevailing problem and thereby to make services of the Guwahati Municipal Corporation effective.

3.1 FINDING**3.1.1 Findings on cleanliness services:**

- The Guwahati Municipal Corporation fails to utilise the waste in productive way for landfills, recycling of the wastes etc. Behind this there is lack of technological knowhow and proper vision of management.
- Lack of awareness of general public is another serious problem which stands on the way of providing quality service. Majority of public are not conscious regarding the use of wastes and environmental sense.
- Inadequate dustbins in sense of number, size and quality is another hindrance found in case of rendering service of Guwahati Municipal Corporation.
- Proper management of waste not done which creates lots of problems in the environment as well as for the society.
- Guwahati Municipal Corporation is still lacking in terms of technology use and proper execution of work is not done inspite of planning in papers.
- In spite of Government ban on use of plastic which creates lots of blockages in drains and pipes, still it has been found that people are using it and throwing it on the roadside or in drains and which is basically a non-renewable product and hampers in the growth of the development. Government rule is enacted but no necessary control for proper implementation is done.
- Proper dumping of garbage's and the collection by the people are not done. Also often found that garbage takers do not turn up to take the regularly which ultimately leads to disastrous in terms of air pollution, soil pollutions etc.

3.1.2 Findings on Beautification

- In spite of project 'Jyoti' for implementing street light in and around Guwahati, still the work has not been completed properly.
- Lack of funds and equipment have made the projects delay, but only a few steps regarding it has been taken in some areas so far of.
- Guwahati Municipal Corporation is still working on the flash flood problem by trying to clean the drains, but the total outlets required to drain out all the water are not found to be sufficient and so there is overflow of water in the city.
- Though the Guwahati Municipal Corporation is doing the evacuating process of people residing in nearby areas of Bharalu river, they have overlooked many areas near hilly side for which the water comes out straight to the road instead of going in a proper manner to the drains, as lack of drainage planning is found in it.
- It has been found that fines have been imposed for using plastics only for a certain period of time but after wards again people starts using it and Guwahati Municipal Corporation is not able to stop it at all.
- Deforestation has been a major cause for flood in many areas which Guwahati Municipal Corporation along with GMDA is trying their best to put some laws and punishment for them those who violates.
- GMC is trying to promote many tourist places such as Deepor Beel, which is one of the attractive sites for the tourist.
- In order to make the Guwahati city more attractive many malls and cinema halls are being set up but failed to provide the required parking spaces.

- In order to make the communication smooth JNNURM is introduced and also it has been found that the Guwahati Municipal Corporation is focusing on water development sources, so that water is supplied to all the areas in Guwahati City.
- Organic manure fertilizer are being made from the waste by the GMC which is very useful for the environment and has started to supply it to some places such as Kalashetra in Panjabari Guwahati.

3.2 SUGGESTIONS

- i) Guwahati is the centre place of northeast. The number of population is increasing day by day. Accordingly, amount of wastes has also been increasing. Hence, it is high time to use these wastes in a very systematic way for the productive purpose. In this regard Guwahati Municipal Corporation should hire advanced technology for utilizing this wastes to produce manure, biofuels etc.
- ii) Government should strictly impose some rules and regulations for providing the level of awareness of general public. Moreover, Government should encourage, manage and control with financial and other facilities. The different NGOs, who are engaged in cleanliness services.
- iii) Selection of the places of dustbins and accordingly the size of dustbin, frequency of collecting wastes from dustbin, control and monitoring of workers engaged in connection of dustbin related activities etc. aspects should be very scientifically planned and implement under strict policy and strategy so that by no means wastes can create any pollution and disturbance to the general public.
- iv) The Guwahati Municipal Corporation has to recruit many trained people in order to execute the project 'Jyoti' on time and it should put emphasis more on the long term projects.
- v) A full designed map must be drawn area wise to see the drainage problems and to sort out with some solutions to let the water outlets fall in the main Brahmaputra river.
- vi) The Guwahati Municipal Corporation should arrange different hoarding in different places throughout the city where some instructions should be given to public which are-
 - Heavy fine will be imposed on the people who are found to be violating the rules of beautification and cleanliness of the city.
 - Plastic bags are prohibited and in place of it people should use cotton or jute bags.
- vii) Awareness campaigns, street dramas taking the facts of beautification and necessity of cleanliness etc. should be arranged by the Guwahati Municipal Corporation itself.
- viii) Various tourism places of Guwahati, should be developed in the line of successful Metropolitan cities of the world.

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