

Urban Governance and Perception of Local Citizens: A study with special reference to Jammu Municipal Corporation

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The administration of the state provides public goods and services to the citizens through the union government, state governments, and local governments, comprising rural and urban governments. In various nations around the world, each of these tiers of government has its own jurisdiction, authority, and powers. While states differ in terms of structure, authority, and jurisdiction, the fundamental duties essentially remain the same. The local level of government is the closest to the people and hence provides the best amenities among the three levels of government. In this paper, an attempt has been made to know the perception of local citizens about the urban governance ensured by Jammu Municipal Corporation [JMC] in its 75 Municipal Wards. The study uses a qualitative research approach. The major finding reveals that urban governance in the JMC is compromised on several fronts. The institution is not being administered by the 74th CAA 1992, which accords constitutional status to ULBs of India. Thereby, lacking in several domains of urban governance. Consequently, it has been seen that most citizens are not happy with the urban service delivery mechanisms.

Keywords; Urban Governance, Urban Services, Municipal Finance, Citizens Perceptions.

Urban Local self-governments are the best unit of government to reach the people for providing public goods and services to the people. (Maheshwari, S. 1971). In India, these institutions have great history and importance in as much that the first Urban Civilization of India, i.e., the Indus Valley Civilization was one of the oldest civilizations of the world. Likewise, the institution of urban local government can also be found in the epics, like the Vedas, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Upanishad, and in Arthashastra of Kautilya. Moreover, keeping into consideration the importance and significance of local self-government. In India, various regimes from Mauryan to Mughal and Britishers followed and developed the institutions of Urban Local government in India. Although the local government existed in India in Ancient times, in its present structure and style of functioning it owes its existence to the British rule in India as the first Municipal Corporation was started by them in 1687 by establishing Chennai Municipal Corporation. Furthermore, the efforts made by Lord Mayo and Lord Ripon, in the form of their Resolutions 1870 and 1882

respectively had further strengthened the system of local government in India. After the independence of India in 1947, various committees and Commissions were constituted to strengthen and involve local government in realizing the objective of freedom of India. However, the most important and great milestone in the history of Local government in India is the 73rd & 74th Constitutional Amendment Act 1992, which has accorded Constitutional status to the local government (Palekar, S. A. 2017). In this paper, an attempt has been made to understand the genesis of Jammu Municipal Corporation and the perception of Local citizens about its functioning.

Review of Literature

The Constitution of India includes urban government in the state list. As a result, the administrative architecture and regulation of ULBs vary from state to state. However, experts have pointed out that ULBs in India suffer similar issues. For example, ULBs across the country lack autonomy in city management, and several city-level tasks are administered by parastatals (state-run organizations). Several taxation authorities have also not been delegated to these groups, causing municipal finances to be pressured (Kaye-Essien, C. W. 2021). These obstacles have resulted in poor service delivery in cities, as well as administrative and governance issues at the municipal level (Kaur & Gupta, 2020). Meanwhile, India's urban population grew from 62 million people in 1951 to 286 million in 2001 and reached 377 million in 2011. As per the latest reports it is estimated to stand at 675 million in 2035 (The Hindu, 2022). Consequently, many Indian cities are becoming incredibly crowded, and if we look at the top 20 most densely populated cities in the world, 5 of them are from India, including, Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022). Existing Literature considered cities as engines of Economic growth and accelerators of economic development (Colenbrander, 2016). However, Indian cities are plagued by the "rich city-poor city administration" problem (Mehta & Hingorani, 2021). Moreover, Municipal Administration in most cities is reliant on state governments even to pay wages to their staff. They are confronted with a significant misalignment between required duties and available resources, having limited, rigid, and non-buoyant income sources at their disposal (Mishra, A. K., & Mohanty, P. K. 2018). Additionally, the municipal income's proportion of total central and state revenue fell from 3.71 percent in 1990–91 to 2.43 percent in 2000–01 and stood at less than 2 per cent in the year 2018 (Mishra, A. K., & Mohanty, P. K. 2018). Several studies have suggested that Indian ULBs should be granted the authority to apply the taxation concept to local regions (Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy, 2018; NITI Aayog, 2021; Reserve Bank of India, 2022). In this context, the 15th Central Finance Commission (CFC) India has awarded Rs 1 55,628 crores in funds to municipalities. Cities with populations of 50 million or more will get 38,196 crores, of which 12 139 crores will be used to improve air quality, and 26,057 crores will be used to improve solid waste management practices. All other cities with a population of less than a million people get 82,859 crores. This sum has been split into three parts: 24,858 crores for drinking water, 24,858 crores for sanitary and solid waste management, and 33,143 crores for other municipal services. For the first time in the history of the Indian Central Finance Commission, the 15th CFC has specified how the entire budget would be distributed among the country's urban local bodies. Furthermore, the administration has adopted the Finance Commission's recommendations (Viswanathan, S. 2021).

Municipal revenue across the globe is far behind. It was 1 per cent, compared to 4.5 percent for Poland, 6.0 percent for South Africa, 7.4 percent for Brazil, 13.9 percent for the United Kingdom, and 14.2 percent for Norway. (Sharma, N. 2020). The state of ULBs has further deteriorated with the inception of the Goods and Service Tax 2017. The Municipal Corporations' income had decreased from 0.49 percent in 2012-13 to 0.45 percent in 2017-18. Furthermore, from 0.33 in 2012-13 to 0.23 in 2017-18, the ability to produce own resources of municipal income has decreased. It has put a lot of strain on the delivery of municipal services throughout the nation (Gupta, M. D. 2020). According to the 2011 census 33.3 percent of the Indian population is settled in city areas, which contributes 63 percent of Indian GDP. As per projections of the World Bank and NITI Aayog, the Indian urban population is expected to increase 40 percent by 2031, with a GDP contribution of 70-75 percent. India's cities must expand their urban infrastructure to accommodate the country's increasing population (Rajhans, R. K., & Halder, A. 2017).

Statement of the Problem

From the existing review of literature, it becomes evident that contemporary urban governance systems are encountering challenges that render them inadequate for their intended functions. It requires critical reforms to enable sustainable and inclusive urban development. They have institutional frameworks that prevent urban governments from fully delivering on their responsibilities through inadequate decentralization, insufficient resources, poor capacity, and weak frameworks for engagement with residents, civil society, and other key stakeholders. Indian ULBs suffer from an ill-defined distribution of responsibilities between different levels of government, leading to the duplication of roles and gaps which can lead to institutional ambiguity. The net effect is that common citizens suffer from poor public service delivery, and they end up procuring these services from informal, expensive yet unsafe channels. Urban areas increasingly contribute year after year to the national income. The urban population is also increasing at an alarming rate. People are shifting their base from villages to urban areas in search of jobs. All these developments are enhancing the responsibilities shouldered by the Municipal Corporations, Councils, and Municipalities. Furthermore, the area being studied is not being administered under the 74th CAA 1992, but with the J&K Municipal Corporations Act 2000. It has enshrined the same functions as in the 74th CAA, however, when it comes to implementation only a few are being administered by the JMC. Thereby, urban governance has always remained in distress, compromised, and faulty. Additionally, in the available plethora of research, very limited literature is available, this study is most probably the first of its kind to focus on the perception of local citizens in the study area. Thus, it may help bridge the existing literature gap on the phenomenon being studied.

Research Methodology

The primary objective of the study was to know about the perception of Local Citizens on the functioning of JMC. A qualitative research approach followed by a descriptive research design was used to know the perception of taxpayers of Jammu Municipal Corporation. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents, that was comprising about basic information about the respondents' basic services provided by JMC and other urban infrastructure. A total of four

hundred respondents were selected by using sample selection techniques given by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) for data collection. Cluster sampling criteria were used to select the sample from 75 Municipal Wards of Jammu Municipal Corporation. Seventy-five Municipal Wards were grouped into five clusters. Cluster One is comprised of Municipal Wards from 1 to 15, Cluster 2 from 16 to 30, likewise cluster four from 31 to 45, and so on. The total 400 samples were divided into seventy-five municipal wards of the study area: $400/75 = 80$. Therefore, the researcher randomly selected 80 respondents from each Municipal Cluster to know their opinion of the functioning of the Jammu Municipal Corporation.

Locale of the Study Area

The erstwhile state of J&K is divided into two administrative provinces Jammu and Srinagar, each having ten districts. Both provinces are separately headed by the office of Divisional Commissioner. Moreover, the important cities of both provinces have one Municipal Corporation in each, namely, Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) and Srinagar Municipal Corporation. Jammu Municipal Corporation, the erstwhile Jammu Municipality, was established after the reforms taken by Lord Rippon in the first quarter of the 19th Century. The provision of the elective element in the Municipalities was introduced in the year 1930. The next step towards the municipality's development in the state was the passage of the J&K Municipal Act 1941. In the 51st year of the Republic of India, the State Legislature passed the J&K Municipal Corporation Act 2000, giving it the status of Jammu Municipal Corporation. Since independence, the elections of Jammu Municipality have taken place five times only, i.e., 1956, 1972, 1980, 2005, and 2018.

Perception of Local Citizens on the Functioning of JMC

In the public institutions of democratic countries, the involvement of citizens plays a very important role. The maximum involvement of local citizens in the decision-making process of public organizations is called citizen-centric administration and citizens pro-administration Singh, S. (1986). Hence, the perception of citizens about the administrative processes occupies a central position in determining the notion of governance. Moreover, taking or recording the perception of citizens about any organization in a systematic way helps in assessing the administrative effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, and other hallmarks of Good Governance. Based on the citizens' opinion, the public organization's functioning and process can be corrected and reorganized and desirable changes or reforms can be initiated. In the aforesaid background, in this part of the chapter, an attempt has been made to extract the perception of Local Citizens of Jammu Municipal Corporation about its functioning, one of the objectives of the present study. For this purpose, we have used a closed-ended questionnaire comprising different aspects of urban governance. Moreover, information cannot be extracted until and unless a researcher does not establish a good rapport with the respondents. To make sure to get the response of respondents on determined aspects of urban governance like street lighting, drainage, solid waste management, traffic management and to ensure the ethics of research, the researcher has taken their permission by clearing the purpose of the study and maintenance of their confidentiality. Further, in the opening of the questionnaire, some questions are there about their personal details, age, profession, income and social background number of family members. Once the

required information was collected on urban governance, the qualified respondents from the study area were selected by using simple random sampling techniques of the probability sampling process. The extracted information by this means is further analyzed by applying descriptive statistics which have been shown below in the form of tables and charts along with their interpretation.

TABLE 1: Showing the Particulars of Local Citizens of Jammu Municipal Corporation

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	274	68.5%
Female	126	31.5%
Total	400	100

In Table 1, it is mentioned that out of the 400 Local Citizens who were interviewed from the Seventy-five Municipal wards of JMC, a considerably good number of respondents were male (68.5 per cent), and nearly one-third of respondents were female. While collecting the primary data, the researcher came across a problem that is most probably the exact reason behind this low percentage of women. In the study area, whenever a female respondent was approached (through the decided sampling technique) to get their opinion on the phenomenon being studied, most women said, "Let our husband or any other male member come, he will say whatever is the matter". Despite making various efforts, the researcher could not convince them to get their perception of JMC. Moreover, the conditions prevailing due to COVID-19 were also a great challenge to ensure the participation of all sections of society. The above-mentioned facts and figures are further elaborated in the chart.

FIGURE 1:Particulars of Local Citizens of Jammu Municipal Corporation

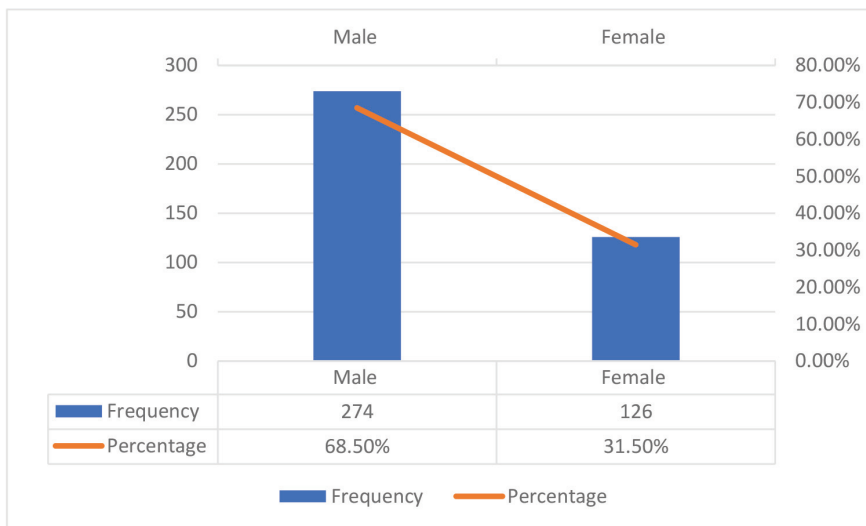
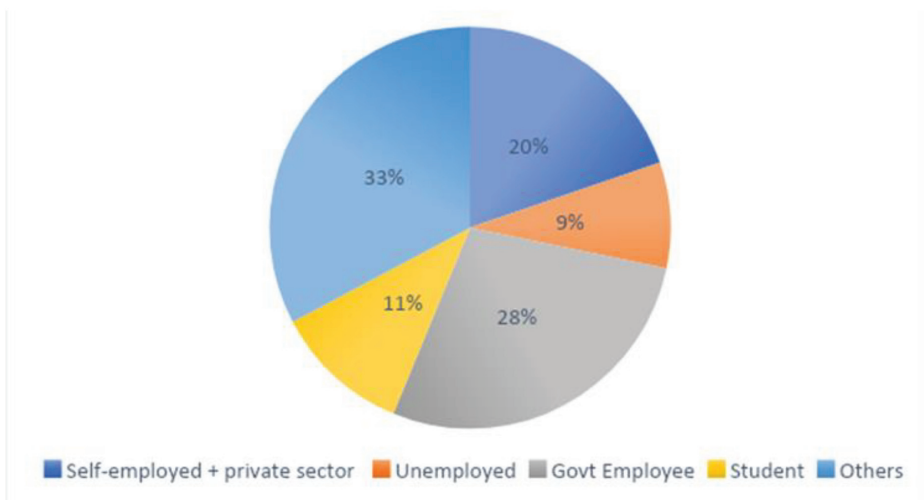


TABLE 2: Showing the particulars of professions of Local Citizens of JMC

Type of Profession	Frequency	Percentage
Self-employed + private sector	79	19.8%
Unemployed	34	8.5%
Govt Employee	112	28.0%
Student	44	11.0%
Others	131	32.8%
Total	400	100%

In Table 2 it represents the profession of taxpayers of Jammu Municipal Corporation. A considerable number of respondents (32.8 per cent) were engaged in another profession viz. casual labourers, daily wagers, and street vendors where they do not have work security, hence, keep changing their job as per the availability of work. A few numbers of respondents (28 per cent) were working in different departments of the government sector. Very few respondents (19.8 percent) were self-employed and worked in the private sector. Near about one-fourth of respondents (32 per cent) were students and insignificant respondents (8.5 per cent) were not working. In this part, it was observed that the maximum number of respondents are working in the unorganized sector. Furthermore, government employees were also more than other professions mentioned in table 4.1 as in Jammu and Kashmir the private sector is much less comparatively than other areas of India. So most people remain dependent upon the public sector for employment. Meanwhile, the percentage of unemployed taxpayers was merely eight percent. Moreover, the above-mentioned information about the profession of the qualified respondents is shown in the below-mentioned pie chart, clearly displaying the percentage of each profession.

FIGURE 2: Frequency



Coming to the social background of the Local Citizens ST, SC, OBCs, and General were also analyzed which is listed below:

TABLE 3: Social Background of the Local Citizens

Social Background		
Particulars	Frequency	Percentage%
Scheduled Caste (SC)	136	34.0%
Scheduled Tribe (ST)	73	18.0%
Other Backward Class (OBCs)	83	20.8%
General	108	27%
Total	400	100%

Table 3 shows the social background of the respondents. A considerable number of respondents belonged to the Scheduled caste (34 per cent). Very few respondents belonged to the Scheduled tribe. About one-fourth of the respondents belonged to the General category. Few respondents (20.8 per cent) were from Other Backward Class. The same facts have been illustrated in the below-mentioned pie chart:

FIGURE 3: Social Background

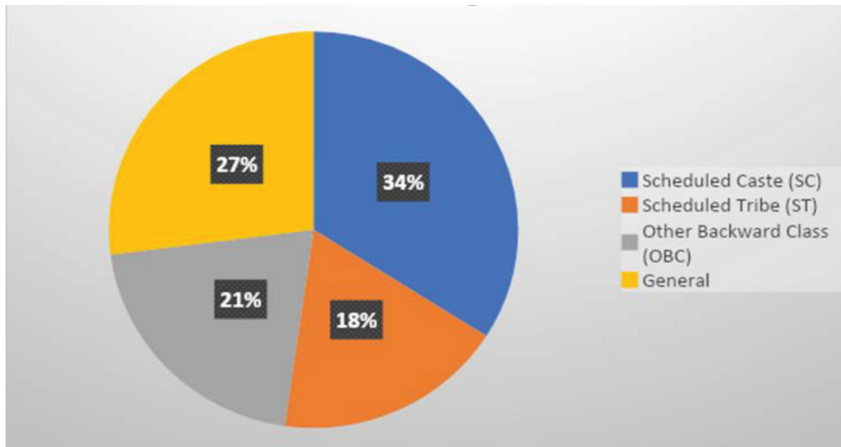


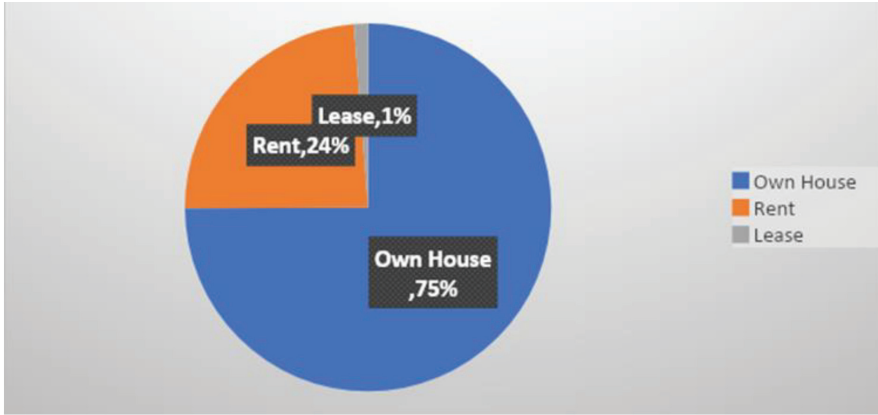
TABLE 4: Particulars of the Possession of the House of Local Citizens

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage%
Own House	302	75.5%
Rent	96	24.0%
Lease	5	1%
Total	400	100%

Table 4 represents the possession of the House of Taxpayers. A good number of respondents (75.5 per cent) have their own house and close to one-fourth of the

respondents (24 per cent) have resided in rented houses. Insignificant respondents were staying on a lease basis. The pie chart depicts the same information about the possession of households.

FIGURE 4: Possession of House Per cent



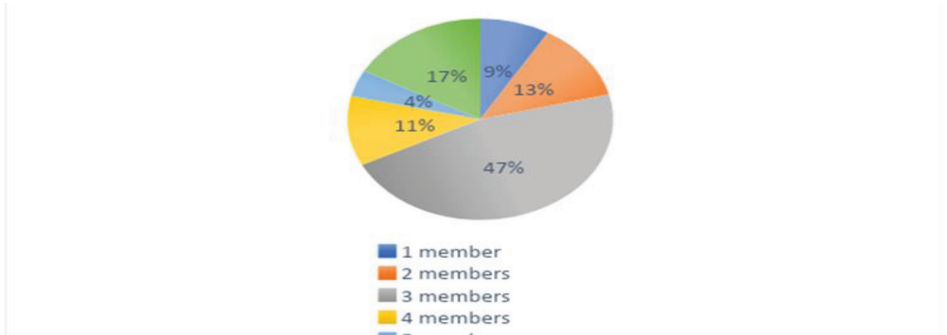
In every household, different types of families live, like nuclear families and joint families. Keeping in mind the rapid increase in urban population across the world, efforts were made to know about the number of family members living in each household. In this regard, the provided information by the respondents has been included in the table listed below:

TABLE 5: Number of Family Members of Respondents

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
1 member	34	8.5%
2 members	50	12.5%
3 members	186	46.5%
4 members	45	11.3%
5 members	17	4.3%
Above 5 members	68	17.%
Total	400	100%

Table 5 represents the details of the number of family members of respondents in the territorial jurisdiction of JMC. In this context, it was seen that nearly half (46.5 per cent) of the respondents have three members in their family. Very few (17 per cent) families have above five members in their families. whereas an insignificant number (8.5per cent) and (4.3 per cent) families have one member and five members families respectively. That shows, that up to some extent, people are aware of family planning, and the economic burden of having more family members in the family. Further, respondents having only one member in the family were those who had come from other adjoining districts for educational purposes and job purposes. The aforesaid things have been further elaborated in the below mentioned diagram;

FIGURE 5: Number of Family Members



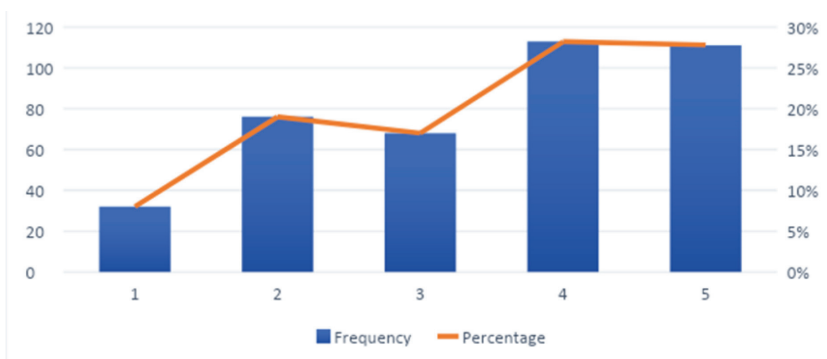
The income of the Local Citizens has also been analyzed:

TABLE 6: Annual Income of the Local Citizens

Particulars in Lakhs	Coding	Frequency	Percentage
50,000 to one lakh	1	32	8%
One - Two	2	76	19%
Two – Three	3	68	17%
Three – Four	4	113	28.2%
Four – Five & Above	5	111	27.8%
Total		400	100%

Table 6 presents the annual income of the Local Citizens. In this part, it has been seen that more than one-fourth (28.2 per cent) of respondents earn three to four lakhs per year. Few (27.8 per cent) earn four to five or above five lakhs per year. Whereas, little less than one-fifth (19 per cent) of respondents earn one to two lakhs. Similarly, almost one-sixth (17 per cent) earn two to three lakhs. Further, insignificant (8 per cent) respondents only earn fifty to one lakh per year. This shows maximum people residing in the JMC are not economically well off. Hence, most people belong to middle-class families. This has been further explained in the chart below.

FIGURE 6: Income of Respondents

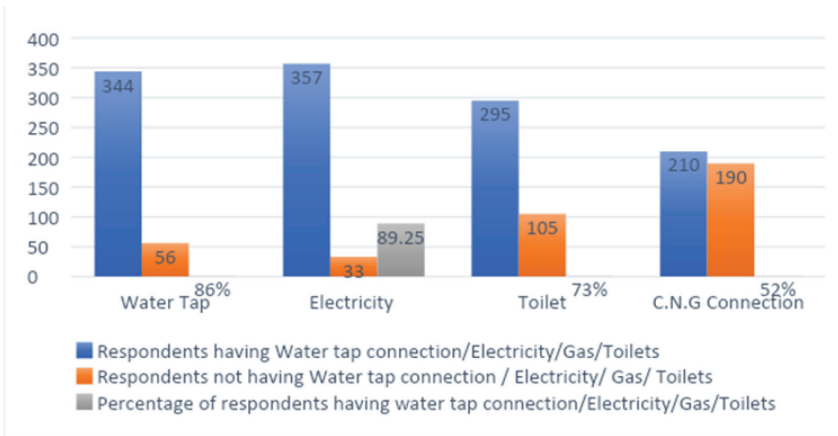


To get the exact information about the phenomenon being studied, the research scholar has included some basic questions. The intention behind this endeavour was to establish a rapport, thereby, creating an environment in which the respondent feels at ease to respond to the questions. Furthermore, this enables the researcher to understand the socio-economic condition of the respondents. The researcher has implemented the same in its real manner to seek the responses of the respondents in his/her natural environmental setting. After obtaining details of the respondents through the opted method of data gathering, questions were framed about the basic services provided by JMC, in fact, those that are essential for everyone living in modern society. In this below-mentioned table, the facts and figures about people having access to basic services in the jurisdiction of study are incorporated and further elaborated with the help of tables and charts:

TABLE 7: Basics Services Provided by JMC

Particulars	Frequency	Frequency of not having Water tap connection/ Electricity/Gas/Toilets	Percentage
Water Tap	344	56	86%
Electricity	357	33	89.25
Toilet	295	105	73%
C.N.G Connection	210	190	52%

Table 7 presents the statistics concerning citizens having access to basic services in the study area wherein, it has been seen that the majority of respondents (86 per cent) have access to tap water and very few (14 per cent) respondents do not have water facilities. Similarly, the majority (89 per cent) of households have electricity connections and merely one-ninth (11 per cent) households have no electricity connection. Almost three-fourths (73 per cent) of people have toilets at their homes and little more than half (27 per cent) of people defecate openly on the nearby bank of river Tawi, Nallahs, and Forest areas. Similarly, more than half (52 per cent) of people have a CNG connection and nearly half (48 per cent) of people have no access to a CNG connection. Moreover, people from all the areas of study have complained about the curtailment of water supply in the months of summer. Similarly, the problems of power cuts remain bothersome for the people almost across the entire study area in the peak of winter and summer. As per the respondents of the study area, JMC is not focusing on the development of urban infrastructure like water tanks, transformers, roads, parks and playgrounds. On the aforementioned issues, when the then Hon'ble Mayor of JMC was asked to respond in a telephonic interview, he replied, "Since there was no elected government from 2010, we took charge only two years ago in 2018 and we are trying to develop an urban area on par with the other cities of the country. Yes, of course, it will take time for us to reach all localities. However, our staff and corporators tirelessly work to ensure good governance." The diagram further shows the statistics of basic services within the study area:

Figure 7: **Basic Services**

In the second part of the questionnaire, some questions were asked of the respondents related to the management of urban governance in the study area. All those important aspects of urban governance are listed below:

TABLE 8: Give your opinions on any one of the three levels

1	How do you feel about the maintenance of Roads in your Municipal area?	Good/Average/ Bad
2	What is your impression of street lighting in the city?	Good/Average/ Bad
3	What is your opinion on the public health services provided by the Corporation?	Good/Average/ Bad
4	How are the services of the Corporation in respect of services relating to Birth & Maternity Relief?	Good/Average/ Bad
5	How are the facilities of Sanitation and public toilets in your area?	Good/Average/ Bad
6	What is your opinion on the management of compost by the corporation in your area?	Good/Average/ Bad
7	How do estimate the efforts of the Jammu Municipal Corporation in checking food adulteration in the city?	Good/Average/ Bad
8	What are the arrangements for water supply in your area?	Good/Average/ Bad
9	What are the arrangements for drainage management in your area?	Good/Average/ Bad
10	What is your perception of the Working of Municipal Schools in the city?	Good/Average / Bad
11	How do you experience the town planning arrangements in the city?	Good/Average/ Bad

12	What are the arrangements of Parks / Libraries for the provision of recreation in the city?	Good/Average / Bad
13	What is your impression of the maintenance of markets in the city?	Good/Average/ Bad
14	What are the parking facilities in the city?	Good/Average/ Bad
15	How are the arrangements for the protection of the environment in the city	Good/Average/ Bad
16	Give your suggestions for enhancing the performance of your municipal corporation in extending civic amenities to the citizens	

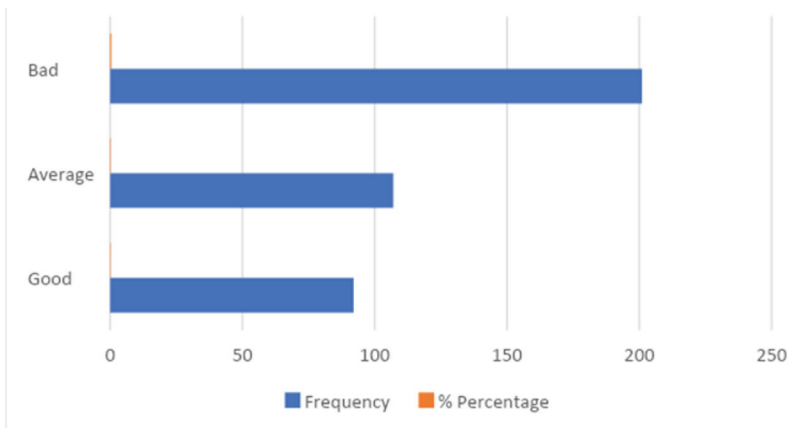
For all these important areas of urban governance and important functions of Municipal Corporations, the respondents in the study areas have responded as per their personal experience. The same has been elaborated on the below-mentioned table:

TABLE 9: Local Citizen’s Opinions

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Good	92	23%
Average	107	26.8%
Bad	201	50.25%
Total	400	100%

As per the recorded responses of qualified respondents in the study area. It has been seen that little more than half (50.25 per cent) of respondents said that the civic services provided by the JMC are bad. At the same time, approximately one-fourth (26.8 per cent) of respondents said the provision of civic services is average in the study area. Likewise, a little more than one-fifth (23 per cent) of respondents said that the civic arrangement is good. The same is further elaborated in the below-mentioned chart below:

Figure8: Local Citizens Opinion



1. Result and Findings

Taking into consideration the opinion of respondents, we can say that most people belong to the middle class and are very aware of the family planning process. Moreover, it has also been seen that merely 50 per cent of people are not happy with the urban governance mechanism and the rest are placing this system average and bad. Besides, some important areas of urban governance like school and water supply management do not fall under the administrative domain of JMC, as these domains in the study area are managed by the concerned state department. This eventually has taken over the domain and functions of urban local bodies provided by the Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Corporation Act 2000. Consequently, the JMC had no control over these administrative domains. But after the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019 and the re-organization of Jammu and Kashmir, efforts are being made to implement the 74th C.A.A in J&K. Eventually, in this regard in 2020, 108 primary schools falling under the jurisdiction of JMC along with funds, assets, functionaries have been transferred to it, although due to the slow administrative process, nothing has yet changed at ground level. Furthermore, the health sector at the primary level, water supply, and power department-related work has been placed under the administrative jurisdiction of the study area. Many respondents across the study area have suggested improving the drainage-related work, especially in Nanak Nagar, Jewel Chowk, Sainik Colony, Talab Tillo, and Bikram Chowk. They have also suggested that unorganized and unplanned construction work needs to stop immediately as many streets are becoming congested. Municipal Solid Waste management is another problem. The citizens have complained that in those areas where politicians and bureaucrats live, the JMC takes care of Municipal Solid Waste removal diligently and continuously yet, where the common people live, JMC has shown no concern. It appears that the elected councilors have no say in JMC. Respondents from newly created municipal wards of the study area seventy-two, seventy-three, seventy-four, and seventy-five are very disappointed. They said that they were happy under the Rural Governance Mechanism, where at least some of their works were done under the Mahatma Gandhi Rozgar Yojana (MGNRGA). Since this area was placed under JMC in 2018, they have been facing several problems like drainage problems, water supply, seeking birth and death certificates. Most people do not know about the administrative system and procedures for availing services provided by JMC. The system has become very ambiguous for them and the concerned administration has not shown any concern to overcome this ambiguity thus far. Another important aspect from the study areas that has been noticed is that JMC has no power to impose property tax which is the main source of municipal revenue across the globe. Hence, JMC has been deprived of earning revenue from this aspect since its inception as a Municipal Corporation in the year 2000. Further, the other duties, fines, fees, and user charges are being collected offline. Thus, the use of e-governance has not been incorporated into its administrative process due to which, the wastage of resources, energy, and time is not being minimized. If the same could have been minimized, the perception of citizens or Local Citizens would have been different. In short, JMC somehow is failing to make the city of Jammu capable and financially viable so that it can act as an engine of economic growth.

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