

Basu, Anurima Mukherjee; Punjabi, Shruti

## Article

# Participation in solid waste management: lessons from the Advanced Locality Management (ALM) programme of Mumbai

Journal of Urban Management

## Provided in Cooperation with:

Chinese Association of Urban Management (CAUM), Taipei

*Suggested Citation:* Basu, Anurima Mukherjee; Punjabi, Shruti (2020) : Participation in solid waste management: lessons from the Advanced Locality Management (ALM) programme of Mumbai, Journal of Urban Management, ISSN 2226-5856, Elsevier, Amsterdam, Vol. 9, Iss. 1, pp. 93-103,  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2019.11.002>

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/271378>

### Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

### Terms of use:

*Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.*

*You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.*

*If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.*



<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## Journal of Urban Management

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/jum](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/jum)

# Participation in solid waste management: Lessons from the Advanced Locality Management (ALM) programme of Mumbai

Anurima Mukherjee Basu\*, Shruti Punjabi

Faculty of Planning, CEPT University, Ahmedabad, 380009, India



## ARTICLE INFO

## Keywords:

Solid waste management (SWM)  
Participation  
Partnership  
Advanced locality management (ALM)  
Mumbai

## ABSTRACT

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is the national flagship programme of the Government of India that aims to achieve the vision of ‘Clean India’. The Solid Waste Management (SWM) component of the SBM envisages to become a ‘janandolan’ (people’s movement) with participation from a wide range of stakeholders. This assertion emphasizes the importance of community and civic groups in maintaining cleanliness of cities. The ‘Advanced Locality Management’ Programme (ALM) of Mumbai is one of the earlier efforts of citizen-government partnership for SWM in India. Initiated in 1997 it is still operational in Mumbai. This paper traces the evolution of the ALM programme, with particular reference to engagement of civic groups, their changing roles and responsibilities over time. In doing so, the paper argues that for true ‘janandolan’ on urban civic issues, a broader mandate for participation that encompasses wider concerns of citizens is required.

## 1. Introduction

Solid waste management (SWM) has traditionally been an obligatory function of urban local bodies in India. Starting from the 1990s, neoliberal and new public management policies in urban development have gradually seen engagement of private and community organisations in various capacities in SWM; in order to ensure efficiency, cost-savings and accountability (Singh, 2012). The intervention of the Supreme Court of India, which resulted in the Municipal Solid Waste Management and Handling Rules, 2000, also emphasized the need to involve different actors in SWM – community-based organisations, private contractors and NGOs as partners of municipal governments; to ensure better coverage and efficiency of SWM services. Recently, the national flagship programme Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) has given significant importance to the involvement of individual citizens and citizen groups in SWM along with private sector and community based organisations (Government of India, 2017: 29). Swachh Bharat, which means Clean India, is envisaged as a people’s movement (*Jana Andolan* or *janandolan*) for ensuring hygiene, waste management and sanitation across the country (Government of India, 2017:29). On 2nd October 2014, the Prime Minister of India launched the SBM throughout the country as a campaign that aims to achieve the vision of ‘Clean India’ by 2nd October 2019 ([http://www.pmin-dia.gov.in/en/major\\_initiatives/swachh-bharat-abhiyan/](http://www.pmin-dia.gov.in/en/major_initiatives/swachh-bharat-abhiyan/) accessed on 20 Nov 2017, 12:04 p.m.).

In order to translate the programme into a people’s movement, the guidelines of SBM-Urban specify that it is essential for ULBs to elicit active participation of individual citizens and citizens groups through Ward Committees, Resident Welfare Associations, NGOs and Civil Society Groups in its implementation. The SBM-Urban has six components relating to sanitation and SWM (Government of India, 2017). The SWM component of the mission envisions covering all parts of cities, i.e. planned residential colonies, unplanned

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [anurima.mb@cept.ac.in](mailto:anurima.mb@cept.ac.in) (A. Mukherjee Basu), [shruti.punjabi2@gmail.com](mailto:shruti.punjabi2@gmail.com) (S. Punjabi).

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jum.2019.11.002>

Received 31 January 2019; Received in revised form 17 October 2019; Accepted 7 November 2019

Available online 21 November 2019

2226-5856/ © 2020 Zhejiang University and Chinese Association of Urban Management. Production and hosting by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

colonies, slums/informal settlements, religious and all public spaces. The appeal of the Prime Minister has been responded with mass mobilization for voluntary cleaning of public spaces. A wide range of organisations, individuals and groups of people have got involved in the mission. Special cleanliness drives have been held by government and private organisations, institutions like schools, NGOs, hospitals, CBOs, local clubs etc. As of March 13, 2018 a total of 12,95,696 hours of voluntary service has been mobilized across the country, to keep neighbourhoods clean (<http://www.swachhbharaturban.in/sbm/home/#/SBM> accessed on 13 March 2018, 12:35 p.m.).

On the occasion of its third anniversary in 2017, the Mission has announced guidelines on “Swachh (Clean) Neighbourhood”, which further emphasizes the need for citizen engagement for making neighbourhoods clean and garbage free. The assertion on people's movement (*janandolan*) emphasizes the importance given to involvement of community and civic groups in cleaning and maintaining cleanliness of their neighbourhoods. However, such attempts to develop partnerships between local government and citizens/citizens groups are not new in the Indian context. The ‘Advanced Locality Management’ Programme (ALM) of the Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM) is an example of earlier efforts to establish a citizen-government partnership for solid waste management in India. Started in 1997 it is still continuing, although with several modifications. This paper traces the evolution of the ALM programme, since its inception to the present; with particular reference to engagement of civic groups, their changing roles and responsibilities over time. In doing so, the paper argues that for a ‘*janandolan*’ (people's movement) on urban civic issues, to be effective and successful in achieving its goals, a broader mandate for participation is required. Project-specific, narrowly focused initiatives of citizens' involvement may not translate into mobilization of the nature sought, envisaged and needed for the SBM. Using secondary sources of literature and field work, the paper traces the changes in the ALM programme, learnings of which can inform the current initiatives under SBM. Secondary sources include earlier research on ALMs, web materials and documents of NGOs and MCGM, newsletters/periodicals of ALMs and newspaper articles. Qualitative research methods have been used for fieldwork, which includes observation and in-depth interviews with MCGM officials, elected member of the MCGM known locally as Corporators, ALM members and members of NGOs (Table 1 gives the list and profile of interviewees). City level information on ALMs was collected from MCGM officials and further four ALMs were selected for in-depth study. Fieldwork was conducted over a period of three months, from January to March 2017. The next section of the paper discusses the evolution of the programme, followed by a section on the current status and issues of ALMs, which is based on fieldwork conducted in four ALM localities. The final section concludes the discussion highlighting the achievements and shortfalls of the ALM programme which can serve to inform policy-making on citizens' involvement in similar fields, not only in Mumbai but in other megacities worldwide.

## 2. The ALM programme in Mumbai

An ALM consists of a group of concerned citizens, representing a group of buildings covering one/two lanes or more, mostly in residential areas with about 1000 citizens as members. ALMs are formed on voluntary agreement amongst the residents of neighbouring housing societies and are committed to organizing door-to-door collection of garbage and waste segregation in their locality (Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010). They are similar to neighbourhood associations found in other Indian cities, however different terminologies are used, such as Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), Housing Cooperative Societies, etc. In Mumbai, housing cooperative societies are mandatory legal entities formed for maintenance of buildings (Zerah, 2009). An ALM usually includes one or several such housing societies. In many places, ALMs also include commercial establishments like shops in their membership. A lot of diversity is seen in the composition, area and population covered by ALMs across the city; as they are formed on voluntary agreement amongst residents in a locality. ALMs began as an informal partnership between MCGM and local residents for ‘waste minimization’ and ‘segregation of waste at source’ in some localities of Mumbai, but it has gradually evolved into an institutionalized city level programme (Mahadevia, Pharate, & Mistry, 2005; Redkar, 2008; Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010).

**Table 1**  
List and profile of interviewees.

Sr No	Designation of Interviewee	Organisation & Profile
1	Additional Municipal Commissioner	MCGM, SWM Department Currently in-charge of ALM programme
2	ALM Officer	MCGM, SWM Department Currently coordinating the programme
3	Ex – ALM Officer on special duty	Now retired, was working with MCGM, SWM Department and coordinated when the programme was launched
4	ALM Ward Coordinators (all 4 wards)	MCGM Coordinates the ALM programme at the ward level
5	Corporators (all 4 wards)	MCGM Local elected representatives
6	ALM Secretary (all 4 case study ALMs)	Heads the ALM Committee of the selected ALMs
7	ALM Committee Members (all 4 case study ALMs)	Participates as member in the ALM Committee
8	Managing Trustee Together VCAN	Together VCAN NGO Member of ALM Committee- Little Gibbs Road 1,2,3 and actively participates in its activities
9	Managing Trustee Karmayog	Karmayog NGO Coordinator of NGO Council

The evolution of the ALM programme can be distinguished into three phases, which coincide with significant developments in the structure of the programme, the actors involved and roles and responsibilities of the different actors. The first phase 1997–2002 saw the initiation of the programme, due to joint efforts of residents of some localities in the city and MCGM. This phase is also marked by a rapid increase in the number of ALMs across the city and emergence of other actors in the programme. The second phase 2003–2012 is marked by the increasing influence of ALMs in Mumbai's urban governance and efforts of MCGM to consolidate the large number of ALMs by forming city level institutions. The period from 2012 until present marks the phase three of the programme; wherein fresh attempts to redefine the ALM programme has been made by MCGM by publishing an ALM Manual in 2012 and launch of the *Swachh Bharat Mission* in 2014.

### 2.1. Genesis of the programme-increasing numbers (1997–2002)

Studies on the ALM programme have traced its beginning to an effort by residents of Joshi Lane in Ghatkopar area, a north-eastern suburb of Mumbai; to solve the issue of waste management plaguing their neighbourhood (Mahadevia & Pharate, 2008; Redkar, 2008). Waste collection in the locality was irregular, which led to accumulation of waste in the streets and unsanitary conditions; hence residents approached the local ward office of MCGM with their complaints (Redkar, 2008). A series of meetings were held between MCGM officials and representatives of housing societies in Joshi Lane, which provided a forum for interaction and an opportunity to understand mutual problems and constraints (Mahadevia et al., 2005). Residents were informed of the 'restrictive staffing policy' of MCGM adopted in 1995, being the main reason for shortage of cleaners/sweepers (Baud & Navtej, 2008). Local residents also realized the importance of people's awareness and participation in maintaining cleanliness of the locality. Residents volunteered to segregate waste at the household level and devised a method to implement the concept of three 'R's' i.e. Reduce-Reuse-Recycle within their locality. Residents voluntarily formed a 'Street Committee' with residents from housing societies in Joshi Lane as members. Members of the Street Committee thereafter approached MCGM for partnering in SWM. MCGM officials at the ward level made an informal arrangement for Joshi Lane, where it was agreed that MCGM would be responsible for street cleaning at regular intervals, door to door garbage collection and disposal; while the Street Committee had the primary function of spreading awareness about waste, segregation at source, monitoring timely collection and vigilance of the neighbourhood to prevent littering (Mahadevia et al., 2005; Redkar, 2008). Soon, news about this initiative and its success in improving the cleanliness of the neighbourhood spread to the nearby neighbourhoods, and residents in these areas started adopting similar practices voluntarily. After six Street Committees were formed in Ghatkopar area, the partnership between MCGM and local residents was formally launched by the Additional Municipal Commissioner, MCGM with the name of "Advanced Locality Management" Programme in 1997 and adopted for the whole city, based on a voluntary action by the citizens (Mahadevia et al., 2005; Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010). In a neighbourhood that was interested, several housing societies would come together and voluntarily form an ALM committee, consisting of at least one member from each building/housing society in the neighbourhood. After this voluntary ALM Committee is formed they had to register themselves in the local ward office of MCGM to be officially recognized as partners in ALM Programme. Segregation of waste was made mandatory for ALM Committees to be formally recognized by MCGM. Just a couple of years after the launch of the Programme for formal settlements, a separate scheme was adopted to address the specific issues of slum areas in 1999, known as the 'Slum Adoption Programme' (SAP), to be implemented in registered slums (Redkar, 2008).

The formalization of the programme by MCGM encouraged more localities to come forward to form ALM Committees. An Officer on Special Duty was appointed by MCGM for creating awareness about the scheme. The Officer on Special Duty was entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating and supervising overall performance of the ALMs, which was reviewed by the Additional Municipal Commissioner (Redkar, 2008). Regular meetings between ALMs and Ward Officer were scheduled on a fixed day and time, to resolve complaints. MCGM also encouraged local NGOs, private corporations and CBOs to join the programme. City-level NGOs like Dignity Foundation and Action for Good Governance and Networking in India (AGNI) were roped in by the MCGM to organize ALMs in the areas where they had influence (Redkar, 2008; Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010). These NGOs took up the role of facilitating the formation, networking and capacity building of ALMs and ALM network (Singh, 2012). Private corporations also got involved as members of ALMs used their personal and professional networks to get support. For example, ALMs in Chembur and Juhu received financial support from Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited for their eco-friendly initiatives and PestomSagar Citizens' Group received funding from Bombay Dyeing for their vermi-composting project (Singh, 2012; Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010). Private clubs like Lions and Rotary Club also started sponsoring several projects of ALMs. Due to the social contacts and networks of their residents, it was mostly the ALMs located in elite and middle-class neighbourhoods that managed to get support from private corporations. Some localities saw the emergence of larger citizens' federations like the Juhu Citizens Welfare Group and the Malabar Hills Residents Association (Singh, 2012). The period between 1997 and 2002 shaped the programme into a 'movement' with increasing numbers of ALMs emerging in different localities of the city due to concerted efforts of local residents, MCGM, NGOs and private companies (Redkar, 2008).

A study reported the number of ALMs to have exceeded 1000 in 2002 (Modi, Chavan, & Palnitkar, 2002). A large number of ALMs were emerging across different parts of Mumbai; however they were unevenly spread across the city. Coverage was found to be more in higher-income wards e.g. K-west and H-west (Baud & Navtej, 2008). In the following few years, the programme not only increased its coverage, but also expanded in terms of its scope and actors.

### 2.2. The ascent of ALMs in Mumbai's urban governance (2003–2012)

The second phase of the programme (2003–2012) is characterized by increasing enthusiasm of citizens, NGOs and corporate

bodies to work as partners with the local government (MCGM), to improve the condition of their neighbourhoods. The increasing awareness and knowledge gained by the ALM committees during monthly meetings encouraged them to address other local issues faced by residents, like water, sewerage, roads etc. along with solid waste management. In some localities, MCGM also decided to expand the role of ALMs from mere waste segregation and vigilance of neighbourhoods. Public garden plots and neighbourhood roads were handed over to ALMs for beautification and maintenance (Redkar, 2008). ALM committees started raising other local problems in their meetings with MCGM ward officials; though, the prime focus remained on waste management. A study done by Baud and Navtej (2008) of 60 ALMs spread over Mumbai found that ALMs had taken up diverse activities along with solid waste management. 35 ALMs were performing street beautification or greening, followed by 26 engaged in activities related to sewerage management (cleaning and closing of street drains) and 12 related to water management (dealing with leaking water pipes and water shortages, awareness campaigns). In localities where ALMs performed the primary objective of SWM; MCGM allowed them to take up other activities of their interest in the locality. MCGM officials would also discuss these issues with ALM members during the regular meetings.

During this period, the ALM programme saw some institutional changes, which was an attempt by MCGM and its corporate and NGO partners to consolidate the functioning of the programme at the city level. As a large number of ALMs had sprung up across the city, attempts were made to consolidate the efforts and streamline their functioning by forming city level institutions like the ALM Trust and NGO Council. As both these organisations were important for the performance of ALMs in this phase, they are individually explained below.

The Orchid group of Hotels, a corporate partner of MCGM in the programme, registered a trust known as the Orchid Advanced Locality Management Trust or ALM Trust in 2002 (The Orchid - An ecotel Hotel, 2002; Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010). Its main objective was to create environmental awareness amongst citizens and to motivate them to partner with MCGM towards making the city a better place to live in. It was envisaged as a platform for consolidation of the efforts of diverse ALMs and enable sharing of experiences, ideas and innovations (The Orchid - An ecotel Hotel, 2002). It actively promoted the ALM programme by helping to establish more ALMs, assisting and monitoring the existing ones with support of MCGM. The Trust also conducted seminars and other projects to educate ALMs and citizens. It instituted an award known as the 'ALM Award' – to encourage and felicitate ALMs for best practice in environment (Redkar, 2008; Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010). A contest amongst ALMs was organized by the ALM trust in 2004 with the help and support of MCGM; wherein 'waste segregation' was the topmost qualifying point. The ALM Trust also encouraged vermi-composting of waste in various neighbourhoods and supported the 'Nirmalaya Composting Project', for creating organic manure from the flowers and garlands offered during religious festivals (The Orchid - An ecotel hotel, 2004).

In an interview with the ex- ALM Officer on Special Duty, she mentioned about the positive impacts of the ALM trust

*"The support and encouragement from ALM trust motivated the ALMs to expand their activities from SWM to others like rainwater harvesting, recharging of ground water, solar power etc. This was happening when we were interacting with the Orchid Hotel ALM Trust. At least two annual meetings of all ALMs were held by ALM Trust."* (Interview on 12<sup>th</sup> Jan, 2017, 1:30 pm)

Another institutional change was the formation of the NGO Council by MCGM in 2005, which was to function as a representative body of various non-government and community-based organisations in the city. Realizing the proximity of NGOs with local people and their network throughout the city, MCGM invited NGOs to partner with it. Initially a committee of seven large city-level NGOs that were interested to partner was formed by MCGM. The NGO Karmayog acted as the coordinator to mobilize NGOs from different wards (Council, 2006a). Later, the committee was transformed into an NGO Council with about 70 NGOs, spread across the city; and Karmayog acting as the umbrella body (Council, 2006a). The NGO Council believed in working with the government in a partnership model and therefore signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with MCGM in 2005. The basic functions of the NGO Council as specified in the MoU was (i) to spread information relating to civic matters and policies (ii) to function as a networking platform (iii) coordinate the efforts and work done by various citizen groups and organisations and (iv) coordinate with concerned government officials (MCGM & Council, 2005). Solid waste management was a priority civic issue to be addressed by NGO Council. But it also decided to address other myriad local issues, like public health, street children, transport problems, corruption etc (Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010). Just after the NGO Council was formed, a series of meetings and discussions were initiated on SWM with ALMs, experts and concerned MCGM officials in different localities. It served as a platform for interaction of ALMs with NGOs and MCGM. The NGO Council was instrumental in framing the Municipal Solid Waste (Prohibition of Littering and Regulation of Segregation, Storage, Delivery and Collection) Rules, 2006 and the Charter for the MCGM-Local Area Citizen Group Partnership (LACG), 2006 (Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010).

After the MSW rules of 2006 came into force, MCGM realized the difficulty in coordinating a large number of ALMs across the city and they proposed to have larger sized units in the form of Local Area Citizen Groups (LACGs). In order to reduce the diversity and harmonise the size and composition of ALMs, MCGM proposed to merge several smaller ALMs into a LACG with demarcated geographical areas. With help from NGO Council, MCGM developed the Charter for the LACG programme in 2006; which provided the guidelines for consolidation and reframing of the ALM programme (Council, 2006b). The criteria for demarcation of area was proposed to be (a) population density and (b) geographical stretch of an area - thus dividing Mumbai into 2000 LACGs with a population range between 5000 and 10000 (Council, 2006b). The LACGs would be recognized as formal partners by MCGM and would work in co-ordination with NGO Council to enable better delivery of civic services and provision of civic infrastructure in their locality (Council, 2006b). The activities to be performed by the LACGs were also wider in scope than the ALMs – from giving feedback on MCGM's projects/plans for the area, ensuring proper provision of public amenities, regulation of hawkers, encroachments and also to help in special drives like polio vaccination.

Another significant development during this period was the involvement and entry of ALMs into local politics. A number of

studies have documented the conflicts of ALMs with elected representatives in some areas, as ALMs directly worked with the MCGM officials, bypassing them (Zerah, 2007, Baud & Navtej, 2008). Local elected representatives perceived ALMs to be competitors for power and position for decision making and felt threatened by them. During municipal elections in 2002 and 2007, ALMs in some localities worked as pressure groups in local politics. They held meetings with the political parties to ascertain their priorities for the locality and discussed local issues (Zerah, 2007). ALM groups like the Juhu Citizens Welfare Group lobbied hard in the Vote Mumbai Campaign with the state government to carry out systemic reforms in governance during the municipal polls of 2007 (Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010). The influence of ALMs in urban governance and politics of Mumbai did not reflect in the number of active ALMs, which were decreasing in the city. Baud and Navtej (2008) report not more than 217 active ALMs in the city, though the official list of MCGM showed 700 ALMs. Even though a large number of ALMs were formed in the city, subsequently many became inactive; due to various reasons. In some, the leaders of ALMs (i.e. residents who took initiative to form the group) stepped down and could not be replaced, in other places, ALMs consisted of representatives from businesses or administrators (not local residents) who eventually lost interest (Baud & Navtej, 2008). Another reason for the discrepancy in the numbers of ALMs is that, the MCGM considers ALMs as ‘active’ only if the members continue to perform the primary function of SWM; so even if an ALM is registered with MCGM but is not carrying out the mandated function of SWM, it will be considered ‘inactive’.

### 2.3. 2012 – present: reframing the priorities of ALM programme and Swachh Bharat Mission

Over time, many ALMs completely shifted their focus from the prime objective of solid waste management and started raising other civic issues affecting their neighbourhoods with MCGM officials. The monthly meetings of ALMs with ward officers became the platform to discuss these issues which led to conflicts and confrontations in many places. Explaining this, the ex-Officer on Special Duty of MCGM said:

*“Some ALMs went beyond waste management and got involved in other activities, like removal of hawkers and illegal encroachments. Somewhere the central focus of waste management was lost and their interactions with (MCGM) officials turned into arguments, confrontation and disputes. If these ALMs would have continued with their primary responsibility of waste segregation and argued, we would have agreed. But if they don't comply with the primary goal (of the ALM programme) but argue on other issues, they can't call themselves an ALM”* (Interview on 12/1/17).

The interview excerpt explains the stand taken by MCGM – i.e. to formally recognize only those ALMs which were actively performing the primary objective of the ALM programme, i.e. waste segregation. MCGM officials would hold meetings with only these recognized ALMs, and engage with them on other issues. Newspaper reports around this time also reported the MCGM's policy of not recognizing ALMs that were not segregating waste, which led to discontent amongst ALMs (Baligal, 2013). An official recognition from MCGM was required for ALMs to continue as partners in the programme.

The LACG programme had failed to take off as envisaged and the NGO Council was also not performing as actively as earlier. MCGM officials informed that LACGs were not functioning as *“the concept was detailed out only on paper and none of it was implemented”* (Interview with ALM Officer, 1st Nov. 2017, 4:30 p.m.). The ex-ALM Officer on Special Duty also stated,

*“The concept of LACGs was introduced to dilute the ALMs. As the MCGM had realized that the ALM concept is getting popular, they felt that it was a big threat. The corporation felt that more awareness would lead to more demand for services. So, they (i.e. MCGM) introduced something in between to dilute it...and of course, it never worked. It worked for 2-3 months and after that it collapsed”* (Interview on 12th Jan, 2017; 1:30 pm)

The NGO Council also has become completely dysfunctional and retains no formal relationship with MCGM. The current ALM Officer terms the NGO council as ‘information providers’, as *“they have only collated the information of the MCGM and put it on their portal”* (Interview on 11 Jan 2017, 4:30 p.m.).

Other studies have also pointed out the ineffectiveness of the NGO Council. In a critical appraisal of the partnership between MCGM and NGO Council, Singh & Parthasarathy (2010) reveals its ‘restrictive’ and ‘exclusive’ nature. Their study shows that Civil Society Organisations in Mumbai that were vociferous about the rights and issues of marginalized groups, were not included in the membership of NGO Council. They adopted a ‘managerial-technocratic’ style of functioning and completely bypassed the local elected representatives. Interaction with ALM members in the four case study areas, also revealed the same pattern, i.e. none of them have had any formal meetings with the NGO Council ever and the council had hardly contacted them once or twice asking for updated information.

In 2012, MCGM published the ALM manual, a guideline providing information on ALM formation, responsibilities of ALM and MCGM and modalities of functioning of the scheme. Since there were a lot of ALMs who had diversified into other activities, it was felt necessary to reinstate the core concern of waste management and segregation. Accordingly the Manual defined the basic function of ALM Committee as to create awareness and ensuring segregation of waste at source and prevention of littering and spitting in the neighbourhood. An ALM Committee could also take up other local civic issues, provided it performed its basic function related to waste management (MCGM, undated). The Manual defined an ALM as *“an identified locality or neighbourhood, the residents of which commit themselves to improve the “Quality of Life” in the locality /neighbourhood in close co-operation with the MCGM.”* (MCGM, Undated). It stated that the ALM programme has initiated a civic movement as many ALMs across the city have partnered with MCGM to solve local issues. The Manual identifies two main partners of the programme and their responsibilities– MCGM officials and resident households and shopkeepers. Out of the ten responsibilities listed for ALMs, six are related to SWM and segregation. Other than that ALMs can take up beautification of their locality and address Local Civic Issues (L.C.I) pertaining to storm water drain, sewage line,

**Table 2**  
Actors/organisations in the ALM programme.

Sr No	Actors/Organisation	Role and Responsibility	Current Status
1	MCGM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Public Awareness</li> <li>● Developing policy for ALM, overall coordination of ALM programme</li> <li>● Registering ALMs</li> <li>● Appointing officer on special duty (O.S.D)</li> <li>● Collection &amp; transportation of segregated waste</li> </ul>	Functional
2	ALM Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Awareness Generation</li> <li>● Ensuring segregation of waste and prevention of spitting/littering</li> <li>● Monitoring waste collection from households</li> <li>● Attending monthly ALM meetings at ward level</li> </ul>	Functional in some locations
3	ALM trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Initiatives for Clean and Green Mumbai</li> <li>● Encouraging ALMs</li> <li>● Providing a platform for knowledge sharing</li> </ul>	Not functioning
4	Corporate Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Providing sponsorships to ALM projects</li> </ul>	Functioning in some locations
5	NGO Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coordinating efforts of various NGOs involved in ALM programme with MCGM</li> <li>● Communication intermediaries &amp; information coordinators</li> </ul>	Not functioning
6	Local Area Citizen Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Partnership proposed between MCGM &amp;ALMs (Developed by NGO Council)</li> <li>● Enable better delivery of civic services and provision of civic infrastructure in locality</li> </ul>	Not functioning

water, pest control, illegal encroachments, hawkers, utility services, and road; with prior permission and in co-ordination with MCGM. The inclusion of these activities in the Manual is evident of the fact that MCGM recognizes the diverse issues already taken up by ALMs, but it reiterated the importance of SWM and waste segregation as the prime objective of the programme.

In specifying the importance of public participation in management of the city, the ALM Manual states the importance of ‘...an alert and active citizenry, who have identified pressing problems and possible methods of redressal and thereafter, voluntarily jointly as a body, come forward as a body to assist MCGM in improving infrastructure services in the locality /neighbourhood’ (MCGM, undated). Based on MCGM’s earlier experience of implementing the ALM programme, the role articulated for citizens in the Manual is that of voluntary service and actively looking for solutions, and not only raising issues or complaints. The Manual clearly states that citizens should work as partners with MCGM and not as ‘pressure groups’ so, ‘instead of confrontation and complaints; cooperation, consultation of citizens in city management’ are specified as core elements of public participation. In 2014, with the nationwide launch of *Swachh Bharat Mission* (as mentioned in Introduction), which emphasized on active participation of citizens and citizens groups in implementation, the ALM programme got renewed focus. A summary of the various actors and organisations involved in the ALM programme is given in Table 2.

### 3. Present concerns and issues of ALMs

In order to gain an indepth understanding of the concerns and issues faced by ALMs, fieldwork was conducted in four neighbourhoods where ALMs are functioning actively since their formation. The ALMs were selected based on the information given by the SWM Department of MCGM and in discussion with the ALM Officer. The criteria for selecting the ALMs were that they have been functioning actively throughout the duration of the programme and have maintained good interaction with MCGM. ‘Active’ ALMs as per MCGM definition are those that have continued to segregate waste and monitor waste collection in their neighbourhood. Key person interviews were conducted in these neighbourhoods with ALM committee members and ward officers. The critical points of discussion were (i) the activities carried out by the ALMs other than SWM (ii) periodicity of meetings and response of residents to ALM activities (iii) nature of meetings and interaction with MCGM officials and (iv) support received by these ALMs from various sources for continuing their work. This helped in understanding the constraints and challenges faced by ALMs and the factors that helped them to remain active. The four selected ALMs are (i) N Dutta Marg Environmental Group in K West ward (ii) Little Gibbs Road 1, 2 & 3 in D ward (iii) Union Park Resident Association in H West and (iv) PestomSagar in M West ward (see Fig. 1).

Brief profile of the selected ALMs is presented in Table 3. A lot of diversity is observed in the composition, coverage and method of selecting committee members in the four ALMs (Table 3). The coverage varies from 21 housing societies in Little Gibbs Road to 112 housing societies in Pestom Sagar. Also two of the case study ALMs (Pestom Sagar and Union Park Residents Association) have included the neighbouring slum areas within their ALM. Thus MCGM’s attempts to harmonise the size, composition, population and area covered have not been fruitful as the concept of LACGs did not take off.

All the four ALMs are performing the mandatory functions specified in the ALM Manual of MCGM; that of waste segregation and addressing local civic issues (LCI). Other than these, ALMs have also taken up other issues as evident from Table 4. This corroborates with earlier studies done that have also documented the wide variety of activities taken up by ALMs in partnership with NGOs and other organisations (Baud & Navtej, 2008; Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010; Singh, 2012).

The programme has provided an opportunity to ALMs to take up activities of interest. One common activity taken up by all four ALMs is of maintaining the green spaces in the neighbourhood. Some ALMs have specialized in certain areas like the N Dutta Marg ALM, which has taken up activities related to environmental improvement of their locality. Other than beautification of the road sides, common public spaces, they have set up a compost plant and practice rain water harvesting in the locality. The Union Park

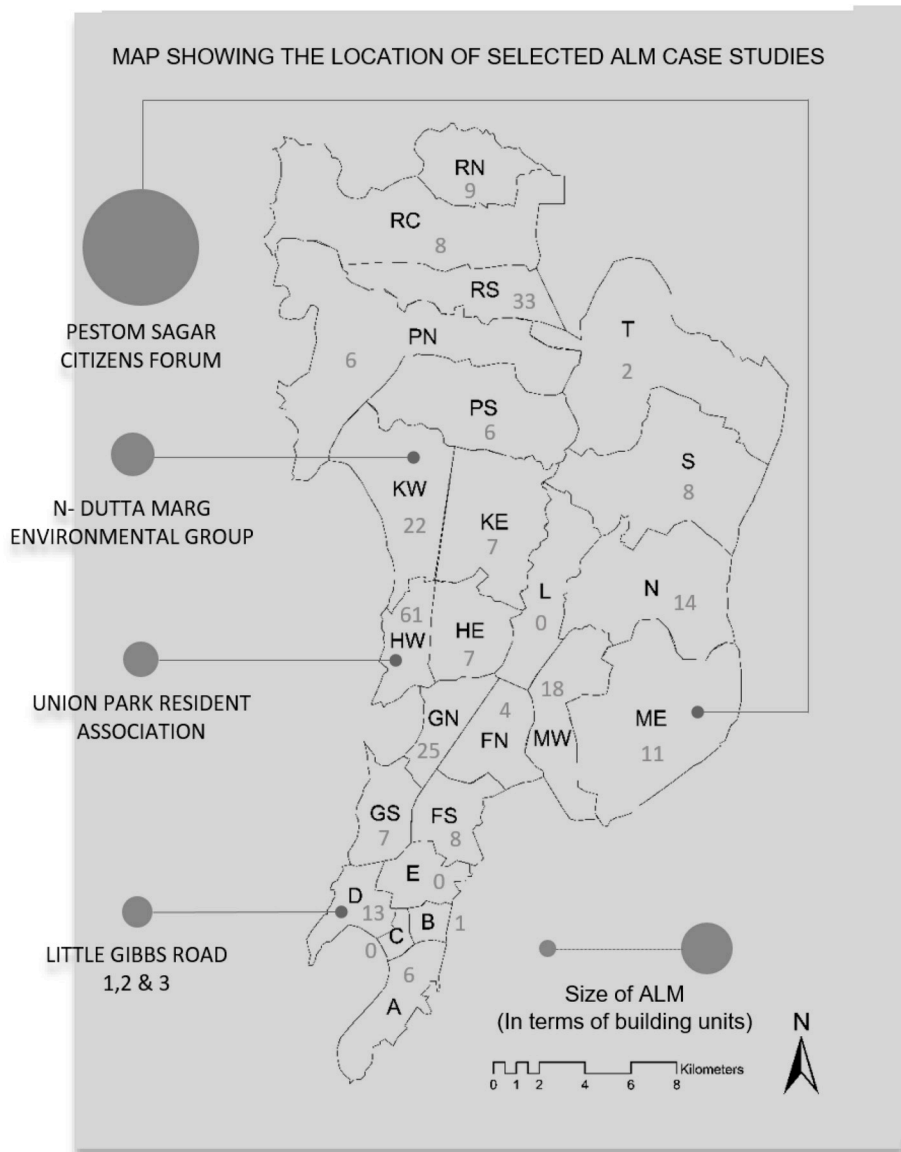


Fig. 1. Map of Mumbai showing selected ALMs.

Source: BMC, 2012, (Numbers within the wards represent the no of ALMs active in these wards as per MCGM data 2016).

Residents Association ALM operates a radio station in the area, which discusses about multiple subjects related to environment, social and educational issues about the locality. It serves as an awareness and informational tool, which is conveyed innovatively along with music, talk shows, speeches, advertisements and pledges. The radio station helped residents during the Mumbai floods in 2005, when news about the city and community were shared via radio while all other system failed to perform (Interview with ALM Committee Member, 9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2017, 2:00pm). The ALM of little Gibbs Road 1,2 & 3 has strong linkages with an NGO named as Together VCAN as the founder trustee of the NGO is an active member of the ALM. The NGO supports the ALM in carrying out many of its activities, including financial support by sponsoring its activities. This network also helped the ALM to take up some projects with other NGOs for improvement of the neighbourhood. Two such projects are the Hawkers Rehabilitation Project in the Hanging Garden -Kamla Nehru Park area and construction of washing spaces for women of Simla Nagar slum with help from Sulabh Sauchalaya.

One of the aspects pointed out by ALM members in all four localities was their improved relations with the ward level officials of the MCGM. During interviews with ALM coordinators they informed that ward officials respond to them over phone or even social media. But this has been possible due to constant efforts of ALM members to keep the programme active. An ALM member from PestomSagar, complained about the lack of sustained support from MCGM ward officials for the programme. Whereas earlier waste was collected at a designated time by MCGM vehicles, over time they have become irregular. The frequency and quality of meetings between the ward officials and the PestomSagar ALM members were regular, for the initial 8 years; but that has deteriorated over



**Table 3**  
Profile of ALMs selected for study.

Name of the ALM	Ward Name	Registered in (Year)	Coverage (No. of Units)	Type of Population	Selection of ALM committee
N-Dutta Marg ALM	K-West	2002	35	MIG; HIG predominantly retired people in bank colonies	Nominated
Union Park Resident Association	H-West	2000	48 + Slum Units	LIG; MIG; HIG Along with Ambedkar Nagar Slums	On voluntary Basis
ALM of Little Gibbs Road 1,2 & 3	D Ward	2000	21	HIG	Nominated
PestomSagar ALM	M-West	1998	112 + Slum units	LIG; MIG along with multiple small slum pockets i.e Asha nagar, Valmiki Nagar etc.	Elected

**Table 4**  
Activities performed by case study ALMs.

Sr. No.	Activity/Issues Taken	N Dutta Marg	Union Park	Little Gibbs	PestomSagar
<b>Mandatory activities as per ALM Manual</b>					
1	Waste Segregation				
2	Local Civic Issues (L.C.I)*				
<b>Additional activities</b>					
1	Maintenance & adoption of green spaces				
2	Composting				
3	Rain Water Harvesting				
4	Checking illegal extensions and increasing commercialization				
5	Social Activities	Music Manch, distribution of clothes to slums	Community radio station Competitions, Workshops		Laughter Club, Children's Activities
6	Specific projects with other NGOs		'Jago Mumbai' – Good Earth Programme	Hawkers Rehabilitation Project, Washing spaces in slum	
*L.C.I as defined in ALM Manual- Storm water, Drain, Sewage line, Water, Pest Control, Illegal encroachments, Road. Cells coloured in grey depict activities being performed by an ALM. Source: Fieldwork					

time (Interview with Member, PestomSagar ALM, 14 Feb, 2017, 11 a.m.). During interview the ALM secretary stated that the Ward Officer started sending junior officials, who had limited decision making powers for meetings with ALMs. This delayed the process of problem solving and some ALM members also lost interest. For the ALM of Union Park Residents Association, transfers of MCGM officials pose a problem in continuity of the additional activities taken by them. An ALM member recounted that when a new Assistant Commissioner is posted, the ALMs from the ward actively seek an appointment with the official to inform him/her about the additional activities being undertaken by the ALMs; otherwise a new person may not appreciate these initiatives. The ALM members feel that it is MCGMs responsibility to sensitise its officers about the scheme and the diverse activities initiated by ALMs under it. They stated that it requires '*continuous sustained effort*' by the ALM members to keep the programme functional.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusion

The story of the ALM programme in the last twenty years since its beginning in 1997 has been quite tumultuous. What started as a local initiative in one neighbourhood soon emerged as a city-level programme and generated immense enthusiasm and support from a variety of organisations and actors. One of the critiques of the programme has been its elite and middle-class bias, evident in the concentration of ALMs in the well-off neighbourhoods of the city and the agenda taken up by them (Anjaria, 2009; Baud & Navtej, 2008; Zerah, 2007). Most studies have pointed out that ALMs have an exclusionary vision of the city and that it helped to articulate a 'collective identity' of law-abiding citizens paying taxes (Anjaria, 2009; Zerah, 2009). Notwithstanding such arguments, the need and importance of the ALM programme is significant in the current urban governance context, where participation of citizens in local governance is a prerequisite for good governance.

The idea germinated at a neighbourhood level as an informal partnership arrangement between residents' associations and MCGM with an effort to solve local problem related to SWM. When it got formal recognition of the local government (MCGM), the enthusiasm spread to other parts of the city and it attracted other actors, like NGOs and corporate bodies. The trajectory of the programme has been tumultuous due to the entry and exit of different actors, fluctuating numbers of ALMs, successes and failures of various initiatives taken under the programme. The failure of the NGO Council, LACG programme and ALM Trust, coupled with the fluctuating numbers of ALMs; is indicative of partial success of the programme. However, the contribution of the ALM programme in enhancing civic participation in Mumbai cannot be ignored. It did generate a momentum of civic participation in the city, which had the potential to become a *janandolan*; not only on SWM but on other local issues as well. The monthly meetings between ALM Committees and MCGM created a platform for participation and opportunity for dialogue, discussion and interaction. The programme

transcended the boundary of its initial mandate i.e. of waste management; and local residents and other actors got involved in solving other neighbourhood problems.

The MCGM acknowledges the contribution of ALMs in other aspects of local civic issues, but has been redefining and reinstating the primary objective of SWM time and again, even putting waste segregation as a precondition for official registration of ALMs. This has been further reinforced after the nationwide *Swachh Bharat* Mission, which emphasizes the role of neighbourhood and residents' associations in maintaining cleanliness of their locality. As evident from the case study ALMs, their concerns and approach have been different. These ALMs have taken up additional responsibilities in response to the specific needs of their locality. In contrast, the ALM programme objectives, as defined by the city authorities have not evolved as much over the last twenty years – it had started as an institutionalized response of the Solid Waste Management Department to a small local initiative, it then expanded to encompass several other public services and infrastructure; but it could not evolve as a city-level movement for civic issues. The SWM department, which continues to implement the programme, has time and again reiterated the project-specific, narrowly focused definition of citizens' involvement, which limits participation.

The study also reveals that there is a disconnect in the perceived roles of ALMs between MCGM and ALM members. The fluctuating numbers of ALMs in the official records of MCGM over different periods of time is a reflection of the lack of clarity and communication amongst MCGM's ward offices/officers and ALM members about the programme objectives. So even though on official records the numbers were high; 'active' ALMs i.e. those that were continuing to perform the primary objectives of SWM were less. As per official information collected from the SWM Department of MCGM, there are 276 active ALMs in Mumbai in 2016, which are segregating waste. Recent newspaper reports state that the MCGM has a higher number of registered ALMs - 719 (Singh, 2017, Mumbai *Mirror*, 2017) and in order to ensure timely implementation of SWM priorities under SBM, they are reaching out to these ALMs for their support. However, MCGM officials report that the number of 'active' ALMs is much less and since they do not have an estimate of the same, a survey is being conducted by the SWM Department to find out the number of 'active' ALMs. Notices for deregistration are being sent to ALMs not complying with the primary function of waste segregation by MCGM ward officials (Mirror, 2017; Pinto, 2017; Singh, 2017; Mumbai). The MCGM could have drawn on the momentum of civic movement generated by the ALM programme – the local resources, skills, ideas and approaches could have helped the MCGM in tackling other local issues as well. In redefining the ALM programme, MCGM has restricted the role of the participating ALMs.

The other aspect that this programme highlights are the challenges faced by local governments (in this case MCGM) in implementing a citizen partnership programme in a city like Mumbai; which is characterized by large heterogenous and dense population, allowing co-existence of extreme typologies and economic classes. The city has multiple mixed neighbourhoods, each having their own unique problems, issues and needs –creating diverse and often conflicting demands from citizen groups. As an instance, the failure of the NGO Council and its initiatives (i.e. the LACGs, networking amongst NGOs in the city), is attributed to its inability to involve the large numbers of grassroots NGOs and civil society organisations working in Mumbai and raise more pertinent issues of affordable housing, tenancy rights and hawkers that affected large sections of the city's population (Singh & Parthasarathy, 2010). Citizens' response and enthusiasm was also not uniform across the city in this case, ALMs functioned well in neighbourhoods where citizens were interested and failed in areas where citizens did not come together.

Also, local governments in India have typically evolved to function as techno-managerial organisations without adequate understanding of and skills in community engagement and development. As a result, although encouraged by local governments, participation takes place in a piece-meal, project specific mode – without a larger vision for engaging citizens and civic groups as real partners in governance. Local government officials in the Mumbai case discussed in this paper, lack understanding of the importance of participation, thus ALM members have to struggle to nurture their relationships with local ward officers. The ALMs in the case study have remained active due to the sustained efforts of its members and they have rightly articulated their difficulties in dealing with MCGM officials, especially when new officers are posted. Such negative experiences have resulted in a rather negative attitude towards government officials. This calls for a new role for local governments who have to rediscover themselves in the art of governance – not only as implementing agencies with technical skills, but skills of community engagement, conflict resolution and negotiation. Citizens for their part also need to understand the constraints of local government officials and empathize with them. The intent of the *Swachh Bharat* Mission is laudable, but to enable a true *janandolan* (people's movement), we need to reinvent not only the way our local governments work and think of participation, but also find new ways of engaging more citizens in local governance. Perhaps more importantly, the two groups of actors, local government and citizens, need to develop a sense of common interest and common goal. Rather than seeing each other as opponents, they need to work together towards a common goal of quality of life under the challenging conditions of a megapolis such as Mumbai.

### Funding source

Financial support was provided by CEPT University, Ahmedabad under its Directed Research Project (DRP) to Ms. Shruti Punjabi, to conduct the field work for the study.

### Declaration of competing interest

None.

## Acknowledgement

This paper was presented at the International Conference on Democracy and Participation in the 21st Century, Lisbon School of Economics and Management, Universidade de Lisboa, 12–15 July 2017. The authors acknowledge the comments received at the conference.

## References

- Anjaria, J. S. (2009). Guardians of the Bourgeois city: Citizenship, public space, and middle-class Activism in Mumbai. *City & Community*, 8(4), 391–406.
- Baligal, L. (2013, March 8). *No segregating trash, no Advanced Locality Management status*. The Times of India. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/No-segregating-trash-no-Advanced-Locality-Management-status/articleshow/18855752.cms>, Accessed date: 9 February 2018.
- Baud, I., & Navtej, N. (2008). “Negotiated spaces” for representation in Mumbai: Ward committees, advanced locality management and the politics of middle-class activism. *Environment and Urbanization*, 20(2), 483–499.
- BMC (2012). *Mumbai municipal ward offices and Corporators*. Retrieved from *BMC elections 2017*. <http://www.bmcelections.com/bmc-new-ward-maps/>, Accessed date: 20 November 2017.
- Council, K.-N. (2006a). About Karmayog. Retrieved from Karmayog: <http://www.karmayog.com/aboutus.htm>, Accessed date: 12 November 2017.
- Council, K.-N. (2006b). MCGM - charter for the MCGM - local area citizen group partnership 2006. Retrieved from Karmayog: <http://www.karmayog.com/lacg/lacgrules.htm>, Accessed date: 12 November 2017.
- Government of India (2017). *Guidelines for Swachh Bharat mission (SBM)- urban, revised as on 5<sup>th</sup> october, 2017*. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India. retrieved from [http://164.100.228.143:8080/sbm/content/writereaddata/SBM\\_Guideline.pdf](http://164.100.228.143:8080/sbm/content/writereaddata/SBM_Guideline.pdf), Accessed date: 30 April 2019.
- Mahadevia, D., & Pharate, B. (2008). Multiple partnerships: Mumbai. In D. Mahadevia, & W. J. Solid (Eds.). *Waste management in Indian cities: Status and emerging practices* (pp. 212–256). New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
- Mahadevia, D., Pharate, B., & Mistry, A. (2005). *New practices of waste management - case of Mumbai*. Ahmedabad: CEPT University. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238729323\\_New\\_Practices\\_of\\_Waste\\_Management\\_-\\_Case\\_of\\_Mumbai](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/238729323_New_Practices_of_Waste_Management_-_Case_of_Mumbai), Accessed date: 24 February 2017.
- MCGM. (Undated)ALM manual: An initiative by SWM dept. MCGM. Retrieved from Municipal corporation of Greater Mumbai: <http://www.mcgm.gov.in/irj/go/km/docs/documents/Circulars/ALM%20manual.pdf>, Accessed date: 12 November 2017.
- MCGM, & Council K. -N. (2005, Dec 12). *MOU between MCGM and NGO council*. Retrieved from Karmayog [http://www.karmayog.org/ngocouncil/ngocouncil\\_1920.htm](http://www.karmayog.org/ngocouncil/ngocouncil_1920.htm), Accessed date: 12 November 2017.
- Mirror, M. (2017, Oct 8). BMC to take action against inactive ALMs. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/bmc-to-take-action-against-inactive-alm/articleshow/60993328.cms>, Accessed date: 10 March 2018.
- Modi, J., Chavan, R., & Palnitkar, S. (2002). *Wealth of wastes, waste recyclers for SWM- A study of Mumbai*. Mumbai: All India Institute of Local Self Government.
- Pinto, R. (2017, Nov 1). *118 more Advanced Locality Managements face BMC action on waste segregation, disposal*. The Times of India: Mumbai City News. retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/118-more-alm-face-bmc-action-on-waste-segregation-disposal/articleshow/61376088.cms>, Accessed date: 10 March 2018.
- Redkar, S. (2008). New management tools for Mumbai's solid waste management. In I. A. Baud, & J.d. Wit (Eds.). *New forms of urban governance in India: Shifts, models, networks and contestations* (pp. 213–232). New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Singh, B. (2012). Changing contours of solid waste management in India. *Journal of Asian Public Policy*, 5(3), 333–342.
- Singh, V. V. (2017, Oct 26). *Waste management failure: 46% of ALMs scrapped*. Mumbai City News: The Times of India. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mumbai/waste-management-failure-46-of-alm-scrapped/articleshow/61232197.cms>, Accessed date: 10 March 2018.
- Singh, B., & Parthasarathy, D. (2010). Civil society organisation partnerships in urban governance: An appraisal of the MumbaiExperience. *Sociological Bulletin*, 59(1), 92–110.
- The Orchid - An ecotel hotel (2004). *Envirosupport - nirmalya composting project*. Retrieved from The Orchid - An ecotel hotel: [http://stayingat.com/hotels/india/orchidhotel/mumbai\\_hotels/envirosupport.htm](http://stayingat.com/hotels/india/orchidhotel/mumbai_hotels/envirosupport.htm), Accessed date: 21 November 2017.
- The Orchid - An ecotel Hotel (2002). *Envirocommunity - advanced locality management (ALM) trust - 2002*. Retrieved from The Orchid - An ecotel Hotel: [http://stayingat.com/hotels/india/orchidhotel/mumbai\\_hotels/envirocommunity\\_02.htm](http://stayingat.com/hotels/india/orchidhotel/mumbai_hotels/envirocommunity_02.htm), Accessed date: 21 November 2017.
- Zerah, M.-H. (2007). Middle class neighbourhood associations as political players in Mumbai. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42(47), 61–68.
- Zerah, M.-H. (2009). Participatory governance in urban management and the shifting geometry of power in Mumbai. *Development and Change*, 40(5), 853–877.

## Further Reference

- <http://www.swachhbharaturban.in/sbm/home#/SBM>, Accessed date: 13 March 2018.
- [http://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/major\\_initiatives/swachh-bharat-abhiyan/](http://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/major_initiatives/swachh-bharat-abhiyan/), Accessed date: 20 November 2017.