

“The Calcutta Municipal Gazette”—the Public Relations Organ of the Local Self Government (1924-1997)

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Introduction

During the British period, Calcutta has been in point of population and importance one of the largest cities in the world, not to mention the second largest in the British Empire, and the first in India. The activities of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation have been therefore manifold and intricate. Its jurisdiction extended over 29 square miles, as it also catered to a million people as far as their civic needs were concerned. Its rate-payers belonged to various races, believed in various creeds, were attached to various cultural ideals, and followed various standards of economic life. Hence, in order to function effectively and adequately it had to take into account all these differences of outlook, tradition, habit and manner, and tried to weave them into a texture of a common civic life in which all that was valuable in each would have not only recognition and free scope but also full support and encouragement.

Objective of the Paper

Municipalities have always been centre of power symbolising the co-operation of human effort for fulfilling human destiny. From the dawn of history to the present day they represent a yearning and an achievement that promise great things. Through the conflicts and complexities which contemporary society is called upon to harmonise and correlate, the scope and utility of municipal institutions have alike widened [1,2]. Hence the Calcutta Municipal Gazette, being the official organ of the Corporation of Calcutta can be looked upon as a mass communication catalogue or journal identifying the categorial properties of the civic developments that had taken place throughout the city of Calcutta along a particular time period running parallel with a feeling of nationalism that got reflected in the columns of outstanding intellectuals those who contributed in the gazette [3].

Significance of Research article

For the last eight decades the myriad aspects of Calcutta's city life have been the lively theme of masterminds and outstanding intellectuals. Their unique contributions on these aspects found their rightful places in the respective issues of Calcutta Municipal Gazette. Amal Home who was fortunate to have had the blessing and affection of Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore, was at the helm of affairs as the editor of Calcutta Municipal Gazette [4-6].

He was the dynamic force and in a large measure instrumental in collecting and publishing rare and valuable articles in respect of publication of the Calcutta Municipal Gazette. As a matter of fact, by virtue of his editing, Calcutta Municipal Gazette had won not only all-India fame but also International reputation and appreciation [7].

Calcutta Municipal Gazette, published by the civic body since 1924, the contents offer insights into India's freedom struggle through letters and speeches of people like Mahatma Gandhi, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and Rabindranath Tagore.

The emphasis of this journal has generally been placed on social, at times on political, and at times on commercial power as municipalities

have always been centres of power symbolising the co-operation of human effort for fulfilling human destiny. Through the conflicts and complexities which contemporary society is called upon to harmonise and correlate, the scope and utility of municipal institutions have alike widened as they have always remained the groundwork of progress.

The Gazette-as a Public Relation Organ

The Calcutta Municipal Gazette within no time got itself involved in the negotiation of socio-scientific issues ranging from the essentials of the civic life to making informed decisions regarding nationalistic issues as it had a moral and ethical appeal to it as well in the pre-independent era [8]. It included the ability to engage constructively in socio-developmental issues (a part of developmental communication) and also brought out the insights of how the city of Calcutta was gearing up for the freedom struggle. It not only served as an information brochure for the Calcuttans highlighting the civic developments but also became a major source of urban media influence [9]. We know Public relations are generally considered to be as a process of providing any sorts of information to the public or in this case the stakeholders (citizens of Calcutta) in order to present a specific view of a product or organisation. Public relations being comparatively less obtrusive as compared to advertising, is aimed at providing a more comprehensive opinion to a large audience in order to shape public opinion so in this context the Calcutta Municipal Gazette can accordingly be termed as the public relation organ of the local self-government [10].

Inference

Thus, public relations being comparatively less obtrusive as compared to advertising, is aimed at providing a more comprehensive opinion to a large audience in order to shape public opinion so in this context considering all the above mentioned aspects the Calcutta Municipal Gazette can accordingly be looked upon as the official public relation organ of the local self-government.

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