



Volume: 2, Issue: 7, 459-464  
July 2015  
www.allsubjectjournal.com  
e-ISSN: 2349-4182  
p-ISSN: 2349-5979  
Impact Factor: 3.762

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## Aizawl Municipal Council: A Study of its Working

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#### Abstract

Until 1966, when insurgency broke out Aizawl was a large village but the regrouping of Mizo villages after the uprising made it become a larger town and then a city. More than 25% of the Mizoram population reside in Aizawl. The Aizawl Municipal Council was constituted in 2008 under the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007. The Municipal Council is comprised of an area of 129.91 sq.kms. The city, Aizawl, is divided into 19 wards, which is further divided into 82 localities each having a local council composed of 5-7 elected representatives in each locality. The first election to the Municipal Council was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2010. The Aizawl Municipal Council office is being administered by the Board of Councillors and the Executive Council headed by one Council Chairman, Vice Chairman and three executive members. In accordance with the 12<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution, a number of functions have been transferred to the Aizawl Municipal Council by the State Government. This paper attempts to bring out the activities that have been performed by the Aizawl Municipal Council and the road ahead.

**Keywords:** Aizawl Municipal Council, Councillors, revenue, wards, assets, urban.

#### Introduction

Aizawl, the present capital city of Mizoram was established as an outpost by the British in 1871-72, due to the disorderly conduct of Khalkhawma, a Mizo chief. This later became the Aizawl village. It was practically unoccupied in 1890, when Mr. Dally of the Assam Police, arrived with 400 men of the Silchar Military Police battalion to support the troops under Col. Skinner, which was working to punish Lianphunga for raiding the Chittagong Hill Tracts. It was on Mr. Dally's recommendation that Aizawl was chosen as the site of the fortified post which Colonel Skinner had been ordered to construct. The site, like all old village sites, was fairly clear of jungle. The troops constructed stockades and buildings at the site. Peace was restored by the spring of 1891 and thus began the expansion of Aizawl. In 1892-95 Aizawl became accessible from Silchar by fair weather road under the supervision of Major Loch. Until 1966, when insurgency broke out Aizawl was a large village, but the regrouping of Mizo villages after the uprising made it become a larger town and then a city. Aizawl has become the centre of road network in Mizoram connecting the north and south, east and west. More than 25% of the population of Mizoram reside in Aizawl.

The City is located north of the Tropic of Cancer in the northern part of Mizoram and is situated on a ridge 1132 metres (3715 ft) above sea level, with the Tlawng river valley to its west and the Tuirial river valley to its east. In the summer the temperature ranges from 20-30 degrees Celsius, and in the winter 11-21 degrees Celsius.

#### I. Aizawl Municipal Council

The Government of Mizoram has provided for a three tier system of urban administration in Aizawl, comprising of the Municipal Body, composed of elected councilors; Ward Committee headed by the concerned councillor and the Local Councils comprising the elected representatives of the people, for each locality. The Aizawl Municipal Council was constituted in 2008 under the Mizoram Municipalities Act, 2007. The Municipal Council is comprised of an area of 129.91 sq.kms which is 0.61% of the total area of the State of Mizoram. It has a population of 291,822 as per 2011 census which is 26.59% of that of the State. Out of the total number of households in the State, 27.20% that is 27.2060,635 households live in the Municipal area. The city is divided into 19 wards, which is further divided into 82 localities each having a Local Council composed of 5-7 elected representatives in each locality. The first election to the Municipal Council was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2010. The AMC office is being administered by the Board of Councillors and the Executive Council headed by one Council Chairman, Vice Chairman and three executive members.<sup>[8]</sup> It consists of 19 elected members representing 19 Wards of the city and 12 others appointed by the Governor of Mizoram. The appointed members

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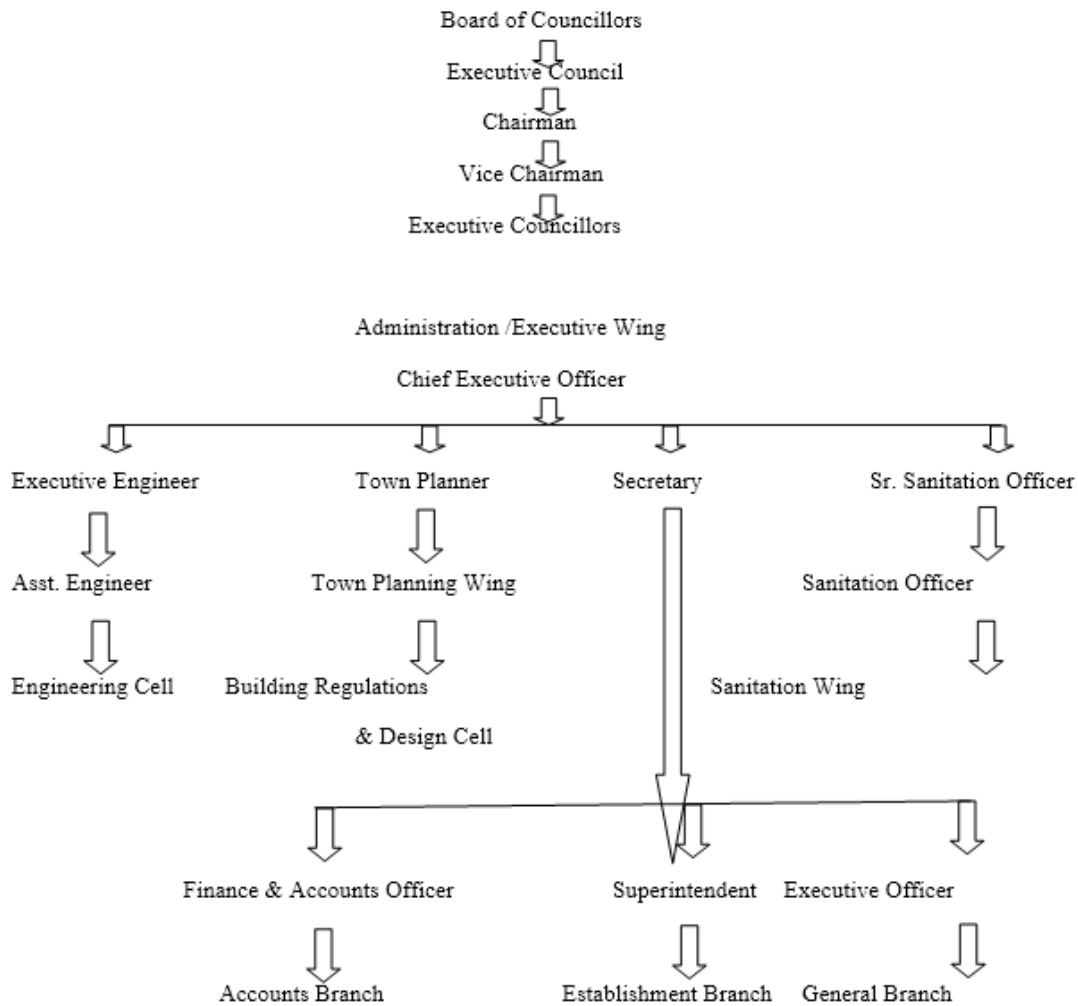
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are 11 Member Legislative Assembly whose constituency falls partly or wholly under the Municipal jurisdiction and 1 Member of Parliament, Lok Sabha. One-third of the total membership is reserved for women, these six seats shall be rotated after every five years. The tenure of the council is five years. There is a Ward Committee in every ward that consists of a Chairman, who is an elected councillor from that ward, and two members each from all the Local Councils within the ward. There are 78 Local Councils having a term of 3 years. In accordance with the 12<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Indian Constitution the following functions have been transferred to the Aizawl Municipal Council by the State Government:

1) Urban Planning including Town Planning

- 2) Regulation of Land Use & Construction of buildings.
- 3) Planning for economic and social development
- 4) Public Health, sanitation conservancy and solid waste management
- 5) Slum Improvement and upgradation
- 6) Urban poverty alleviation
- 7) Burials & burial grounds; cremations, cremation grounds and electric crematorium
- 8) Public amenities including street lighting, parking lots, bus stops and public conveniences.

**II. Organisation**



**III. Councillors and their entitlements**

According to Mizoram Government notification No. B. 13017/36/2010-UD&PA (AMC) dated 29<sup>th</sup> December, 2010, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Executive Councillors and Councillors are entitled to remuneration of Rs. 6000, ward allowance of Rs.2000 and transport allowance of Rs. 2500 per month, sitting allowance of Rs.250 per day during the session of the Council.

The Chairman is further entitled to a sumptuary allowance of Rs. 3000 and contingency allowance of Rs. 2000 per month, while the Vice Chairman is entitled to a sumptuary allowance of Rs.2000 and contingency allowance of Rs. 2000 each. The Executive Councillors and councillors receive an amount of Rs. 1500 and Rs.1000 as sumptuary allowance and Rs. 1500 and Rs.1000 as contingency allowance respectively.

TA/DA during Official tour of the members and Medical reimbursement for the members and their families is as

applicable to group a officers of the entry grade under the State Government. Members are also entitled to the use of 400 units of electricity per month and a muster roll unskilled household attendant employed at the rate of Rs.220 per day.

The Chairman, Vice-Chairman and executive Councillors are each entitled to a ceiling of telephone charges of Rs.3250 for office and Rs.2000/- for residence bi-monthly and Rs.750/- for mobile phone per month. The other members are entitled to Rs. 500/- per month for mobile phone billing.

An official car and co-terminus driver are provided to the chairman, Vice-Chairman and executive Councillors. The Chairman is entitled to a free furnished bungalow or Rs.2000/- per month as HRA, while the Vice-Chairman and executive Councillors are entitled to Rs 30000 in the first year for furnishing residence and Rs. 10000/- in the subsequent years during the term.

**IV. Working**

The activities presently undertaken by the Aizawl Municipal Council are:

**1) Management of Ch.Chhunga Bus Terminal and Ch.Saprawnga Truck Terminal:**

These two terminals started functioning from September, 2009, under the control and supervision of the Municipal Council. The council provides parking spaces, night shelter and other essential services such as counters for bus operators, toilet and drinking water facilities. Parking facility is provided at the rate of Rs 100/- per day (24 hours) for Heavy Motor Vehicles. The revenue earned from the parking facility and use of toilet in both the terminals since its inception till the month of July, 2014 has amounted to Rs. 1,04,75,429/- with the annual earnings given in the table below:

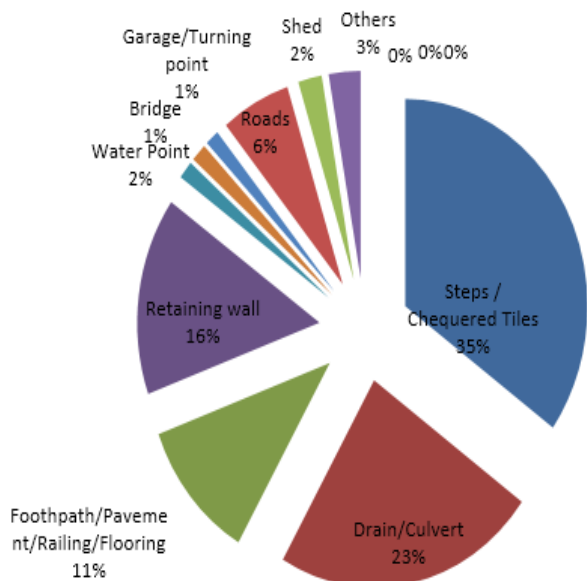
	2009-10 (w.e.f Sept)	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015 (till July '14)
CST	4,81,6	12,50,2	13,97,0	11,81,5	13,21,0	4,14,10
T	20	50	40	40	40	0
CCB	3,73,9	7,90,56	8,82,21	9,14,51	7,96,68	6,74,92
T	46	5	5	3	0	0
Total	8,55,5	20,40,8	22,79,2	20,96,0	21,17,7	10,89,0
l	66	15	55	53	20	20

(Source: Report on Activity Mapping of Aizawl Municipal Council.)

**2) Basic and civic services**

In accordance with the Mizoram Municipalities (Ward Committee and Local Council) Rules, 2010, the Aizawl Municipal Council provides civic services to the people through the Ward Committees and Local Councils. Capital assets, such as, steps, drains, water points, internal roads etc., are constructed by utilizing the grants received from the 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission for Urban Local Bodies. The Aizawl Municipal Council has got the largest contribution in the construction of steps/ chequered tiles which accounts to 35%, followed by the construction of drain/culvert at 23%. The least provision is the construction of turning points for vehicles and bridges which accounts for 1% each.

**Distribution of Civic Amenities within AMC during 2012-13**



(Source: Report on Activity Mapping of Aizawl Municipal Council.)

**3) Solid Waste Management**

Solid Waste Management is another very important function of the Aizawl Municipal Council which was transferred to the Municipal Council by the State Government in 2011, vide Government order No. B.13017/40/2011-UD & PA(M) dated 20.9.2011. Solid wastes are collected at designated points in each of the 82 Local Councils and dumped at the Aizawl Municipal Council Dumping Ground at Tuirial. The Local Councils are responsible for the collection and disposal of the solid wastes. The Aizawl Municipal Council bore the entire expenditure in the early stages of its inception. Between the years 2012-2014, 90% of the expenditure incurred was borne by Municipal Council and 10% by the local Councils through public contribution. From the year, 2014, it bears 80% of the expenditure for solid waste management [1]. The share of the Municipal Council is to be reduced gradually in the ensuing years. The Local Councils collect a minimum of Rs. 10/- per month from every household within their jurisdiction to pay for the remaining 20% of the expenditure incurred for solid waste management. The amount to be incurred by the AMC is determined by calculating 80% out of whatever amount is submitted by the Local Councils as the amount utilized by them for solid waste collection and disposal. It is found that no survey has been done to validate the demands made by the local council. The rapid increase in expenditure incurred for this brings to light the need to take up measures for reducing wastes in each local council. Recently fund has been granted for proper disposal of waste at the dumping ground in Tuirial. There is no scientific management of the waste collected.

The table below shows the expenditure incurred on solid waste management in the municipal area:

Year	AMC Contribution (in lakhs)	Public contribution (in lakhs)	Total (in lakhs)
2011-2012	294.34	nil	294.34
2012-2013	313.92	31.33	345.15
2013-2014	328.84	32.88	361.72
2014 (upto July 2014)	334.93	66.89	401.82

(Source: Report on Activity Mapping of Aizawl Municipal Council.)

**4) Land Revenue & Property Tax**

The State Government, vide Government notification No. B.13017/45/2012-UD&PA/LOOSE(A) temporarily assigned the collection of Land Revenue to the Aizawl Municipal Council from February 2012 to March 2014. The Municipal Council serves only as the medium for collection and the total revenue generated is deposited to the State Government. From an interview with the functionaries at the Aizawl Municipal Council Office it was brought to light that the administrative costs incurred is also borne by the Municipal Council, while no share whatsoever is allotted to it.

The state government ordered the commencement of the implementation of the Mizoram Municipalities (Property Tax) Management Rules, 2014 from 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2014, vide Government of Mizoram through its notification No. B.13017/51/2013-UD&PA dated 28.5.2014. Recently, the Municipal Council has started collecting taxes on buildings within the Municipal area.

**5) Parking fees**

The Aizawl Municipal Council has specified 58 parking areas within its jurisdiction. The services in these parking areas are managed through public private partnership mode. The contractors are selected through quotations. Responsibility of Parking lots and collection of parking fees was transferred to

the Aizawl Municipal Council vide Government order No. B.13017/40/2010-UD&PA/Loose-I dated 11.5.2012.

The table below highlights the revenue generated through the collection of parking fees:

2012-2013	2013-2014	2014 (upto July)
Rs. 21,97,835	Rs. 21,70,350	Rs. 26,40,000

(Source: Report on Activity Mapping of Aizawl Municipal Council.)

### 6) Advertisements and Hoardings

The subject of Advertisement and Hoardings was previously under the Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation Department of the Government of Mizoram in accordance with the Mizo District (Administration of Town Committees) Act, 1995. It was turned over to the Aizawl Municipal Council in the areas under its jurisdiction by the Aizawl Municipalities Act, 2007. Section 246 of the Aizawl Municipalities Act contains the provision for taxing on advertisement and hoardings. The rates, however, are to be determined by the Board of Councillors.

Since January, 2014, The Aizawl Municipal Council Display of advertisement and Hoardings Regulations, 2013, has been implemented. Applications for hoardings have been scrutinized and hoarding and no hoarding zones have been identified. Aizawl city is divided into three (3) categories as-A, B and C. The rates fixed for the three categories are Rs. 40/- per square feet for category A, Rs. 30 per sq.ft. for B and Rs. 20 per sq.ft for C category. The number of advertisement hoardings identified as of July, 2014 are 73 in A, 19 in B and 1 in C categories.

The areas under each category is given below:

1.	Category A
	(1) Sikulpuikawn to Bawngkawn Main Road (both upper & lower main road)
2.	Category B
	(1) Bawngkawn to Sihphir
	(2) Bawngkawn to Zemabawk Tawngtaina
	(3) Sikulpuikawn to Falkawn (ADA Area)
	(4) Temple Square to Tanhril
	(5) Hunthar to Airport road
3.	Category C
	(1) Any other areas or places not mentioned in Category A and B

(Source: AMC, Display of Advertisement & Hoarding Regulations, 2013)

### 7) Licensing for Business Establishment

The Aizawl Municipal Council Licensing Regulations, 2012 has been drafted by the Aizawl Municipal Council for issue, control and regulation of licenses for certain trades within its area of jurisdiction. The Chairman is authorized to issue licences in respect of trades or business specified in the schedule. According to the regulation, registration for trades or business must be fulfilled by July, 2014. Till date, 768 licenses have been issued. 39 licenses have been issued to non-tribals, out of which 37 are Gorkhali permanent residents of Mizoram. It is estimated that an average of 20,000 business establishment exist within the Aizawl Municipal Council jurisdiction and an estimated revenue of Rs.2.00 crores per annum is expected to be generated. A revenue of Rs. 7,94,100 has been generated between January, 2014 and July, 2014 through licensing.

Various Non-Government organizations and Merchant Associations in the city had requested for amendment of the

Aizawl Municipal Council Licensing Regulations, 2012. However, the same is in force from January, 2014 till date.

### 8) Aizawl Municipal Council Building Regulation

The Aizawl Municipal Council Building Regulation, 2012 came into force on 20<sup>th</sup> December, 2012. As per this regulation permission is required to be obtained from the Aizawl Municipal Council for all construction of buildings within its area of jurisdiction. Building Regulation was earlier handled by the Aizawl Development Authority and was delegated to the Aizawl Municipal Council from October, 2011, prior to the implementation of the aforementioned regulation. Till July, 2014 a revenue of Rs. 54,09,843 has been generated through building fees.

### 9) Street Lighting

Fund for maintenance of street light within the Aizawl Municipal Council is allocated according to the estimate made by Power and Electricity (P&E) Department. The estimate for allotment is made as and when the need arises, through complaints submitted to the Municipal Council through the Local Councils. The Municipal Council refers it further to the Power & Electricity Department. As decided by the Aizawl Municipal Council and the P&E Department in its meeting on 2.05.2014 the installation and maintenance of street light within AMC area should strictly adhere to the Joint Electricity Regulation Commission (JERC) for Manipur and Mizoram (Electricity supply code) regulation, 2013. The Local Council in collaboration with the P & E Department acts as a monitoring agency for maintaining the street lights within their area. A limited amount is allotted to the Local Councils for street light maintenance on special occasions like Christmas and New Year, in accordance to the requirement submitted by the Local Council. There are 5497 street light pole within the Aizawl Municipal Council area as on July 2014.

### Expenditure incurred

(Rupees in lakhs)

Sl.no.		2011-12	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015
1.	Public Lighting	5.00	16.00	355.00	360.00

(Source: Report on Activity Mapping of Aizawl Municipal Council.)

The table shows a drastic increase in the expenditure through the years, as in the initial stages there was no transfer of street lighting to AMC. The little amount that was utilized for the purpose was only meant to help the Local Councils in times of need.

### 10) Street Vendors

The Aizawl Municipal Council is the local authority for street vendors vide Government Order No.B.13017/40/2010-UD & PA/Loose-I dated 11.05.2012. A Town Vending Committee under the chairmanship of the Chief Executive Officer, Aizawl Municipal Council, has been set up vide Government notification No. B. 13016/21/2012-UD7PA dated 02.08.2012, to make recommendations for the enforcement of Street Vendor Protection of Livelihood Act. The committee is to make recommendations for registration of all the vendors, vending zone, capacity and timing within the Municipal Council. Rules are under preparation with identification of vending zones in accordance with the National Street Vending Policy.

### 11) Market Shed

The maintenance of the market shed at Zemabawk has been transferred to the AMC from the UD & PA department. The

shed was previously used as a godown for storing ginger by private individuals and is presently used as a public market for vegetable vendors since September, 2014. A Management Committee has been formed with the Sanitary Inspector, Aizawl Municipal Council and members of the Local Council of the area where located. Rent for the market shed has been collected by the Aizawl Municipal Council since May 2013 at the rate of Rs.8000 per month. The revenue generated from this market shed since May 2013 upto July 2014 is Rs. 1,12,000.

### 12) Grants in Aid

One of the main source of revenue of the Aizawl Municipal Council is the grant-in-aid from the State government. These grants are specifically for salary and wages, office expenses, office expenditure and for creation of capital assets, viz., basic services, infrastructures etc. The amount of the State grant varies from time to time. The grant though allotted for various purposes is found to be insufficient to meet the salary of the employees of the Aizawl Municipal Council.

In cases when the grants released by the Ministry of Finance are not deposited to the account of the Municipal Council, by the State Government, an additional interest has to be borne for the release of the second installment.

## VI. Result & Discussion

The Aizawl Municipal Council has made the proposal of constructing a number of infrastructures such as storm water drainage, pedestrian pavements and public stairs, market cum parking lots, parks etc. It also proposes to provide basic services like drinking water, sanitation, solid waste management and promotion of public health. The Municipal Council intends to continue its subsidization of solar water heating system and solar power pack, which are given to private individuals in pursuance of making Aizawl a solar city.

Implementation of the Mizoram Municipalities (Property Tax) Management Rules, 2014 is underway. As per the rule the earlier method of calculation and collection of property tax based on the rental cost per month would be replaced by the Unit Area Method. In this method the calculation would be based on the purpose for which the property is utilized and the size of the property. This is expected to enhance the revenue earned by the Municipal council by way of property taxes.

It is found that data which is required by the Municipal Council is lacking which has adverse effect on the preparation of plans as well as timely preparation of projects and which is also bound to effect the outcome and thereby the development of the city. Therefore, it is of dire need to conduct baseline survey of all the local councils within its jurisdiction.

The Municipal Council's expenditure on waste management has been increasing with the increase in population. The need of the day is waste incinerator/ recycling plant for the management and disposal of the waste that are dumped at the dumping ground at Tuiriial. Moreover, the system used at present of burning waste causes a lot of air pollution that the people living in the vicinity of the dumping ground are found to be suffering from different kinds of respiratory diseases and other problems caused by the infestation of flies.

The Aizawl Municipal Council needs to co-ordinate with other departments of the state government in order to avoid duplication and overlapping of functions including contradictions in orders and works. More authority if granted to the Municipal Council should enable it to perform better for the development of the city.

Collection of taxes needs to be undertaken in order to meet the funding needs of the Municipal Council and for the development of the city. However, care needs to be taken that the common masses are not over-burdened through proper study and research work before the fixation of taxes. The Municipal council being in the nascent stage needs to ensure that the administration is people-centric and

## VII. Conclusion

The Aizawl Municipal Council though a young establishment has been awarded the General Performance Grant, which is awarded to those Municipalities throughout the country on the condition that they comply with the conditions as stated in the guidelines given by the Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure dated 23.09.2010. Those Councils which are qualified to receive this grant are also given an additional General Performance Grant (GPG) (forfeited by other States). Fifty percent of the allotment ear-marked for those Municipal Councils which eventually are unable to fulfill the conditions given by the Ministry of Finance, is distributed among the performing states.

The conditions required to be fulfilled were mostly assigned to the State Government, specifically, Urban Development & Poverty Alleviation. Good performance was seen in the 10 yardsticks given – viz., general conditions, finance, accounts & budgets, audits of PRIs/ULB, Ombudsmen, electronic transfer of funds within 10 days, SFC, property tax, property tax board, service delivery benchmarks and disaster management.

The General Basic Grant of Rs. 719.11 which is the grant money received from the Central Government was recently released by the State Government to Aizawl Municipal Council on 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2014, that is, eight months after the commencement of the financial. This amount accounts for the first installment of the Central aid for 2014-15. The second installment is to be released on submission of utilization certificate and certification that the finances received were deposited in the account of the Urban local Body within 10 days from the day of sanction, failing which Reserve Bank of India interest has to be paid for the release of the 2<sup>nd</sup> installment.

## VIII. Acknowledgment

The author would like to thank the officers and staff of the Aizawl Municipal Council for the help rendered in collecting the required information for the study.

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