

AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON ETHICAL DIMENSIONS IN GUWAHATI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION SERVICES

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Abstract: The Guwahati Municipal Corporation was established with the objective of providing a series of quality service to sustain the welfare aspect of people inhabitant in Guwahati City. In order to provide the quality service with welfare aspects, ethical dimension is a most urgent factor to be considered. The paper aims at examining whether ethical dimensions have been discharged in endearing the service of GMC. There are near about 16 categories of services out of which 5 services are selected to examine their ethical dimensions which include Market, Veterinary, Health, Enforcement and Parking, considering their involvement in public relation and welfare. It is observed that the authority of GMC as well as the Government of Assam, since its inspection, have not been paying any serious attention on the importance of ethical dimensions as a important criteria to be considered. Consequently people of Guwahati City are not benefitted in real sense. The paper aims to provide some pragmatic guidelines to make the service of GMC ethically viable for providing ample welfare to its people.

Keywords: Ethics, Market, Health, Veterinary, Enforcement, Guwahati Municipal Corporation

INTRODUCTION:

Guwahati city, the capital of Assam is located on the south bank of river Brahmaputra towards the south eastern side of Kamrup district. The metropolitan area of the city is 264 sq km of which an area of about 216.79 sq km is within the Corporation limit. (Choudhury 2012). Guwahati is aiming to become a smart city but the management of ethics in the corporation is not very good. Ethics is the science of morality of conduct. It deals with rightness and wrongness of actions (sinha 2017). There is a trend of changes in the society due to the environment. The forces of change, from both within and outside the organisation are constantly providing new challenges to the Guwahati Municipal Corporation (Sarkar et al 2009). Ethics help in taking a direction where larger social questions are involved (Badi and badi, 2006). In Guwahati Municipal Corporation to maintain ethics is a main concern in order to adopt to the new changes in terms of works and technologies. Under these circumstances sixteen dimension have been taken into account where implementation of ethics will give fruitful result (GMC, 2018). However, out of those dimensions, basically five dimensions are selected for our study, considering their demand and work load. These are- i) Marketing ii) Health iii) Veterinary iv) Enforcement and v) Parking. The study will be conducted in such a way so that it will be helpful for formulating various schemes and ethical policies by the corporation. Marketing is a link for a corporate with the outside world and it the market branch of the GMC should maintain ethics in terms of the information, safety provided to the citizens. The health branch should know the ethical norms that have to be followed in order to maintain the customer related organisation and same should be maintain by the veterinary branch. The enforcement branch people which looks after the eviction should do their works in ethical manner which could lead to the upliftment of the Guwahati city. The parking branch needs to apply more ethical values in order to maintain the law and order of the city along with the beautification of the city. Keeping in mind all these aspects a discussion has been made on the ethical dimensions in the above five branches and it has been shown how ethics is essential to fulfill all the goals of the corporation.

OBJECTIVES: The following objectives are taken for discussion:

- 1) To examine the Marketing activities of GMC from ethical perspectives.
- 2) To examine the Health branch function from the ethical point of angle.
- 3) To observe the Veterinary function of GMC from ethical aspects.

- 4) To examine the Enforcement activities on considering its ethical vision.
- 5) To examine the Parking activities of GMC in terms of ethics.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

In order to examine the above objectives following research questions have been formulated and these are tested in the appropriate context of the paper.

RA₁: Is the market branch of the GMC able to fulfill all its necessary works for the citizen in terms of ethical vision.

RQ₂: Is the health branch of GMC able to provide adequate facilities to the employees and to the citizen of Guwahati?

RQ₃: Is the veterinary branch functioning in ethical aspect towards achieving its goal?

RQ₄: Is the enforcement branch able to accomplish its duties in terms of ethical vision?

RQ₅: Is GMC able to provide all the facilities to the citizen in terms of parking in ethical manner?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE: Donald C. Menzel (1995) studied on the ethical environments of local government managers and found that trust and leadership should be in them to be successful. Jacqueline L. Reck (2000) studied on Ethics and Budget Allocation Decisions of Municipal Budget Officers which emphasis on the moral judgement that is every must important for the government officers to build social responsibilities. Lillian Lillemoen, Reidar Pedersen (2013) they studied on the Ethics in Municipal Health Services: Working Systematically with, and Developing Competence in Ethics and resulting in giving emphasis on the ethics. I Sharma, PS Sarma, KR Thankappan (2010) they studied on Awareness, attitude and perceived barriers regarding implementation of the cigarettes and other tobacco products act in Assam, India and found that the people of Assam are using too much of tobacco which is a serious concern for the state. Utpal Goswami and D.H.P Sarma (2006) have studied on the) Chemical characterization of the solid wastes in Guwahati city and it causes serious hazard to the ecosystem of the guwahati city. Omair Aziz Wani, J. S. Gothankar et al (2017) they studied on the animal bites Of Pune Municipal Corporation and found that there is a need to create awareness regarding epidemiology and at-home management of animal bites among general community.

MATERIALS AND METHODOLOGY:

- a) **Type and nature of the study** –By the nature the study is analytical and empirical.
- b) **Location and limitation of the study:** The location of the study is the entire Guwahati city specially the zones of the GMC and its limitation is till the zones and its wards from where the information have to be collected.
- c) **Sources and collecting techniques of data.:-** The sources for collecting data basically involves primary source of data is through visiting the different branches ,zone offices ,sites, personnel interview etc and another is the secondary data is through the documents that are available in GMC offices and websites, articles etc.
- d) **Size of the populations and sample** The study is basically analytical as well as descriptive conducted empirically. Both the primary and secondary data are used where primary data are collected through field survey, personnel interview and questionnaire. It is estimated that there are 46 no of executive level and 70 no of supervisor in the GMC. Out of which 20% of the executive and 30% of the supervisor are taken as sample. Also out of 40 NGOs 6% is taken as sample along with 5% citizen of Guwahati. Secondary data are compiled from various office memos of the GMC. All of these data are

1. MARKET BRANCH:

There are four main wholesale markets in the city. Important features of these markets are as follows:

- a). *Machkhowa-Fancy Bazaar area:*
 - Location: right within the heart of the city facing the river Brahmaputra;
 - Planning: random / haphazard locations of the shops in approx. 75 ha area;
 - Commodity: mainly potato, onion & other vegetables, food grains & mustard oil , other commodities including crockery, tea, cattle feed items, plastic, salt, biscuits, masala, mineral water, handlooms, sugar, garments, paint, consumer durables etc.
- b). *Along AT Road- Paltan Bazaar area:*
 - Location: Along 1 km stretch of AT Road starting from fire station near ASTC to Athgaon railway crossing
 - Commodity: Hardware and spare-parts
- c). *Maligaon Timber market area*

- Location: At Maligaon along half km stretch of AT Road in the foothills of Kamakhya, starting from Maligaon Rail Over bridge (ROB) to Maligaon Chariali
 - Commodity : Timber
- d). *Fish market in Paltan Bazaar area*
- Location : Near Paltan Bazaar area on the back of Meghdoot cinema
 - Commodity : Fish

In addition to the wholesale markets, there are thirteen major markets under the GMC jurisdiction in the city which also plays an important role in the ethical aspects, as the commodities are to be of good qualities and should be economic and healthy.

Table no:1 list of market and their commodities.

SI No	Market	Commodities
1	Dispur Super Market	General, Stationeries, Groceries
2	New Market Bazaar	Pooja Items, Fish
3	Ganeshguri Market	General, Stationeries, Groceries, Fish, Vegetables
4	Ulubari Market	Groceries, General, Fish, Vegetables, Chicken, Mutton
5	Tarun Ram Phukan Market	Vegetables
6	Chandmari Flyover Market	General
7	Fancy Bazar GMC Market	Vegetables
8	Fatasil Market	Groceries, General, Fish, Vegetable, Pan, Mutton
9	Uzan Bazaar Market	Groceries, General, Fish
10	Chandmari Colony Market	Groceries, General
11	Kacharighat Market	Fish, Vegetable
12	Beltola Biweekly Market	Vegetable, Fruit, Chicken, mutton, Clothes, Stationeries.
13	Beltola Evening Market	Vegetables

Source: GMC office Lakhtokia Guwahati

A survey was conducted in the various market places of the city area and various respondents such as vendors, buyers, employees respondent to the questionnaire that were being asked as follows:

Q1. Are the GMC providing all the requirements that a market should have?

Yes

NO

Table no:2 Response to the requirement provided by GMC.

Serial No	Respondents	Total	Yes	No
1	Vendors	35	7	28

2	Citizens	50	20	30
3	Employees	40	28	12

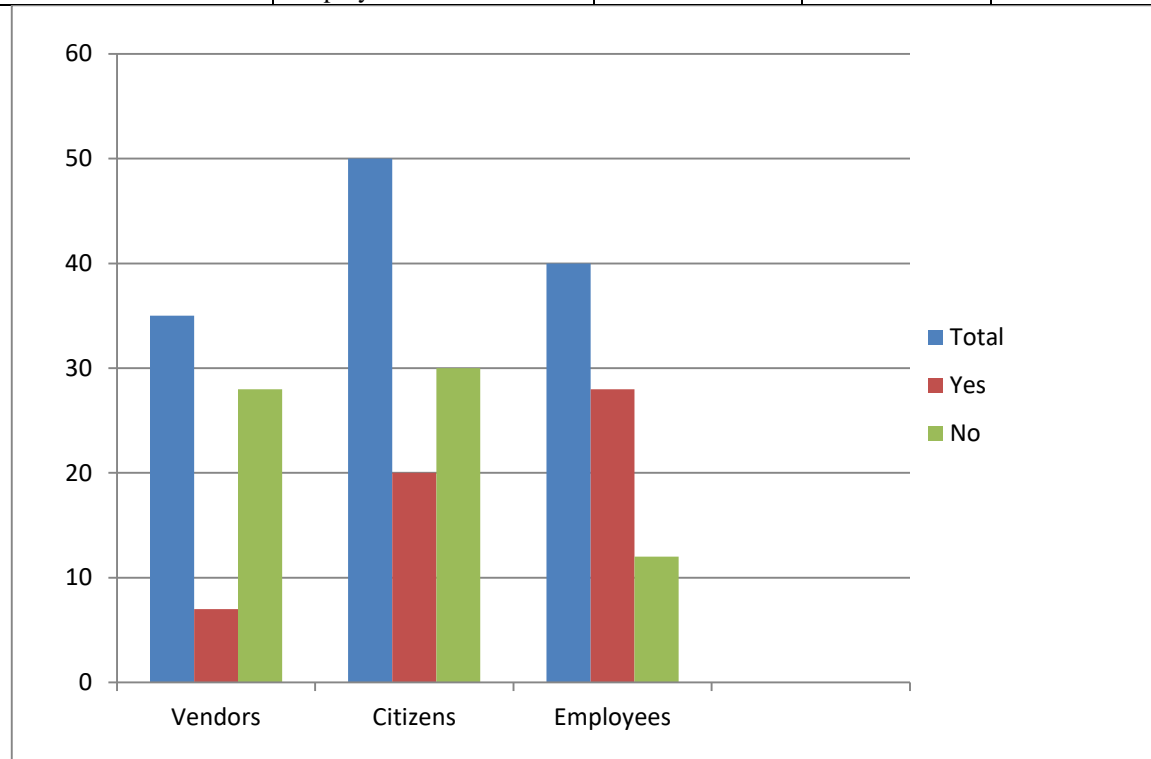


Figure 1

As per the survey it was found that most of the people are of the opinion that the GMC is not providing the adequate facilities that they should have provided and also the maintenance of the markets are not proper. The vendors are of the opinion that they are just allocated a space and for which they used to pay a rent depending on the type of market it is. The cleanliness of the market and supervision has not been taken with utmost care.

2. HEALTH BRANCH:

Maintaining good health of the urban populace is an important challenge in Guwahati city. The health department looks after the following trades:

- Hotels and Restaurants, Hostels, Lodges etc
- Hospitals/Nursing Home/Polyclinic/clinic/Diagnostic Centres etc.
- Physiotherapy, Gym, Tattoo piercing
- Spa saloon, beauty Parlour etc
- Confectionery items, Bakery
- I.M.F.L Bar.

It also looks after the birth and death record registration and mosquito control programme.

The birth and death record of Guwahati city for the last three years are as follows :

Table no 3: Birth and death records of Guwahati from GMC.

Year	Birth	Death
2015-2016	6771	1566
2016-2017	3779	790
2017-2018	3560	820

Source: GMC Health Branch Guwahati.

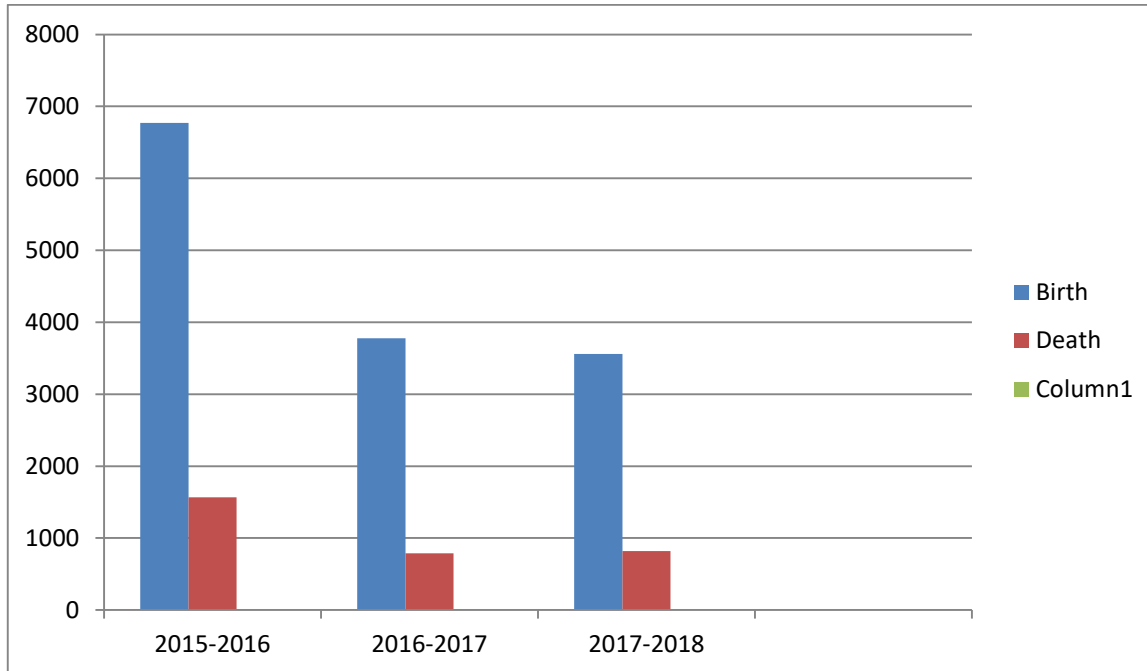


Figure 2

From the table no 3 and fig 2 ,it is clearly seen that in the year 2015-2016 the rate of birth is more as compared to the next two years and even the death rate is more. But also a fact is that all the death cases are not registered immediately in the GMC office and similarly some birth case issues are also not registered for which the ethical process of maintaining the record becomes difficult.

Also as per the complains given by the public for the mosquito menace the health branch provides larvicide operation through spraying and adult mosquito operation fogging.

The health branch goes for inspections in all the wards and a record is maintained to find whether all the places are maintaining the health and hygienic rules and thereby following it. The Inspection is carried out based on the following Checklist:

1. Availability of Running Water Provisions
2. Use of Filtered Drinking Water
3. Cleanliness of Hotel Rooms
4. NOC from Fire Services
5. Proper Drainage System
6. Use of Containers for throwing daily garbage
7. Use of sufficient space for Wash Basin
8. Availability of sufficient space for Kitchen
9. Use of Hot water
10. NOC from Pollution Control Board
11. Availability of Nearby Garbage disposal
12. General Health Conditions of the Workers.
13. Daily handover of garbage to the respective NGOs.

On the basis of the above points, inspection reports are prepared by the Health Inspectors. The Health Inspector issues notices as per norms to the defaulters those operating without trade license and on hygienic ground. The notices are of four kinds;

1. 7 Days
2. 3 Days
3. 24 Hours

If after issuing these three notices also, the establishment is not taking up corrective measures to improve the hygienic condition, then “390 section” notices is issued by the Commissioner, GMC to seal the business establishment.

Table no: 4 Zone wise inspections list 2016-2017.

Zone	Inspection	Notice issue	Rectify
WEST	77	31	28
CENTRAL	198	35	30
SOUTH	236	71	65
LOKHRA	146	44	40
EAST	187	43	40
DISPUR	232	27	25
TOTAL	3779	790	228

Source: Field Survey and GMC office Lakhtokia.

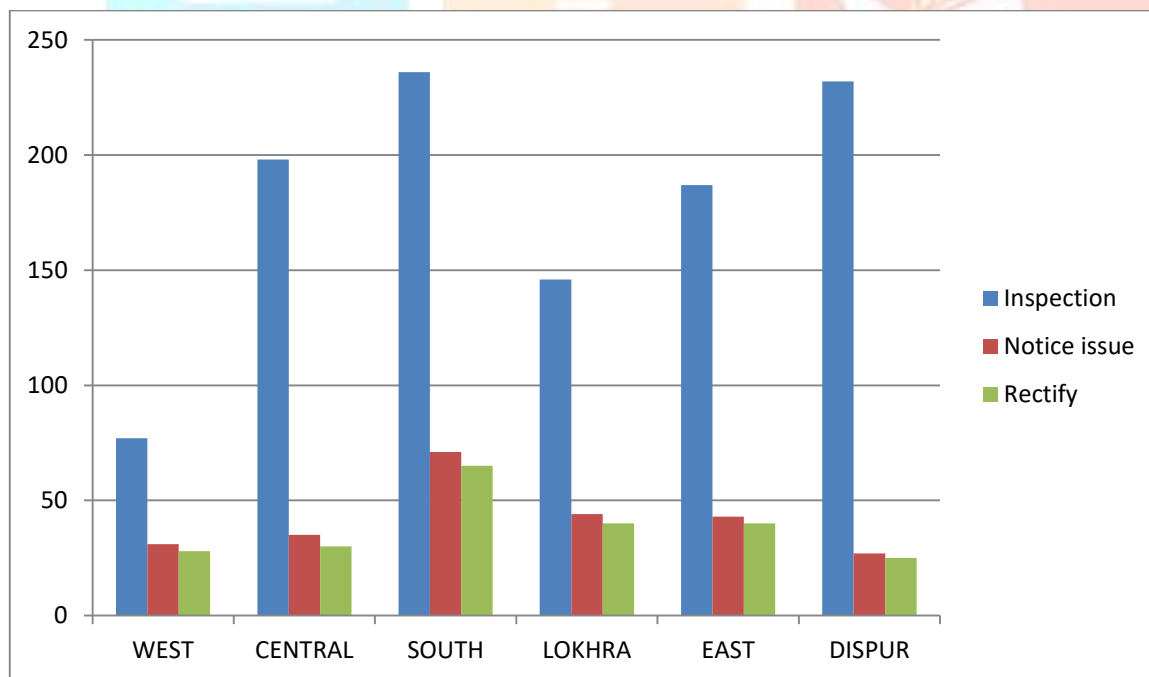


Figure 3

From the fig 3, it is clearly seen that there is lack in the ethical part of the traders in each zones for which notices have been issued. Even the traders are not taking care of the solid waste and separation of items that needs to be done according to the three R's. It is seen that the south zone has been issued maximum notices as per the survey and till date all the traders have not rectified it as per the standard. The health needs to inspect more frequently in all the zones and should make flying visit. Inspection in the west zone is very less.

3. VETERINARY BRANCH:

The veterinary branch deals with agricultural trades such as milk, meat, fish, farm, egg, etc. It also has various other functions such as organizing supply of hygienic meat to hotel/restaurant etc from certified scientific slaughter house, establishing meat parlour at six different prime locations of Guwahati Municipal corporation area, identification and removal of unauthorized meat/fish shop of road and food path with the help of Enforcement branch, GMC Pet dog registration, cattle lifting, etc. The hygienic part of the establishment comes under it. The branch is still planning to supply hygienic meals to all the required areas of Guwahati City. It looks after the public complaints specially of the stray dogs and cattle farms. The following table no 5 shows the public complaint response and its action.

Table no:5 Public complain responses for stray dogs and cattle farms.

Years	Stray dog complain		Cattle farms	
	Application receipt	Application disposal	Application receipt	Application disposal
2012-2013	6	6	7	7
2013-2014	2	2	9	9
2014-2015	5	5	8	8
2015-2016	7	7	7	7

Source: Field survey and GMC office Fancy bazaar.

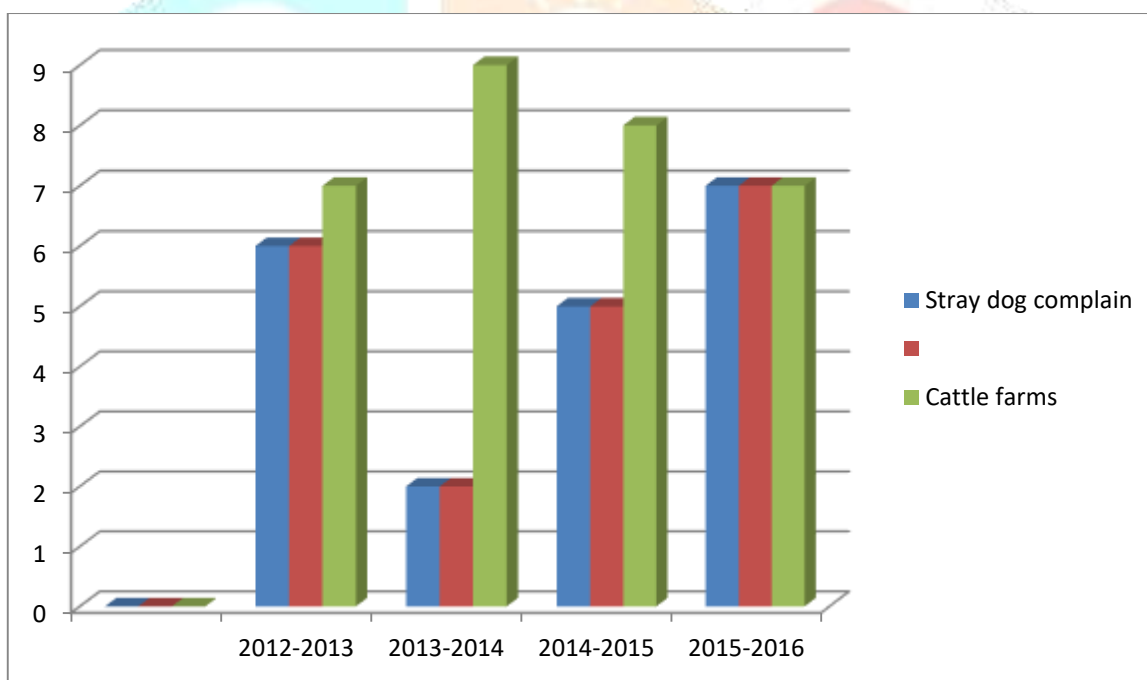


Figure 4

From the above fig 4 it is seen that the department attends to the complains it received from the public and solve them as fast as they can but it is found that they don't maintain any such records electronically which results in an unsystematic arrangement and the processing gets delayed. If a record from a file has to be known then it becomes a one day affair to get it from the store room. It is found in a discussion with the veterinary officer that for the cases of cattle lifting they picked up the cattles and later on as per the need in auction they release it. The department looks after the cow shed and the following questionnaire is being asked to the owner of the cow shed.

Q2. Is the GMC providing all the facilities for the cows in all the wards?

Yes

No

Table no:6 Cow shed per wards

Sl No	Wards	Yes	No
1	11	56	44
2	12	48	52
3	14	70	30
4	16	45	55
5	18	30	70
6	19	42	58
7	23	75	25

Source: Field survey and questionnaire

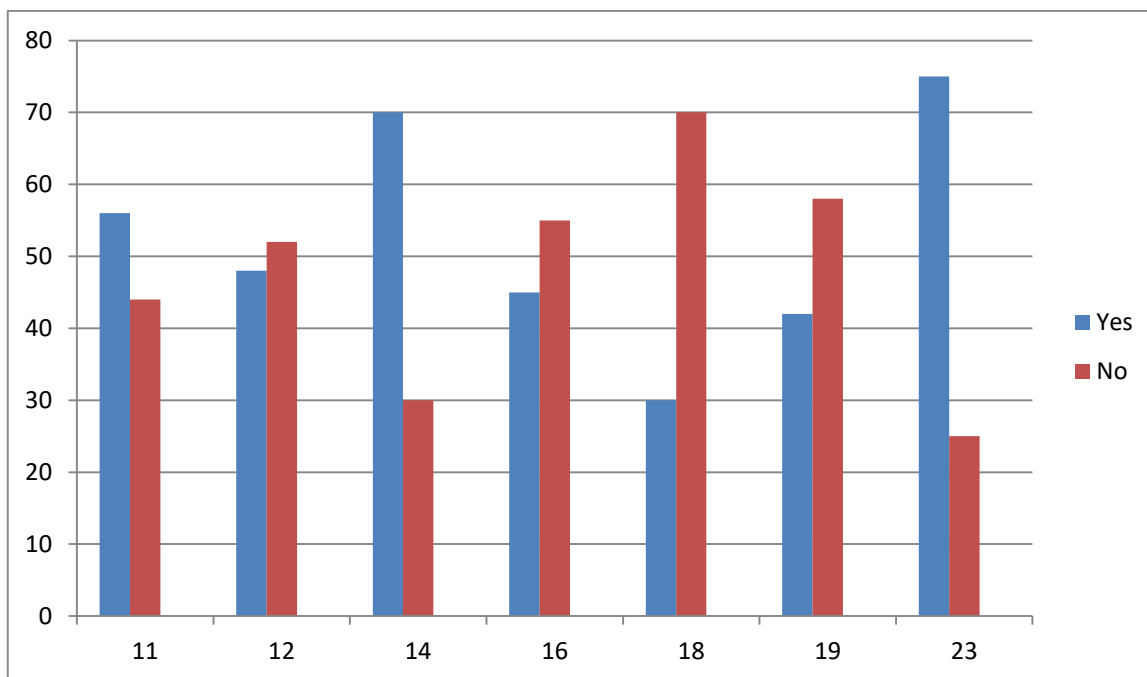


Figure 5

From the above fig 5 it is clearly seen that no owner of any ward is fully satisfied with the facilities provided by the GMC. It shows that in ward 18 the adequate facilities provided for the cow shed is very less compared to the other wards. Mostly it is seen that in the ward 23, 75% of the owners are of the opinion in positive side followed by the ward no 70. The Veterinary branch must look into the hygienic part more strictly and should provide Animal Birth control and Anti Rabies Vaccination programmes. They must provide the adequate land for cattle grazing.

4. ENFORCEMENT BRANCH:

Enforcement branch mainly deals with the eviction part. They also demolished the unauthorized structures and sealed any structure as per the court order or if any violation seen in them. It also removes the footpath unauthorized vendors.

It also takes care of lifting unauthorized banner cutting. The department received complains dealing with residential areas. The table below shows the number of demolition and sealing done by the GMC in the last three years.

Table no: 7 No.of demolition and sealing

Serial No	Demolisation	Sealing
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1	2015-2016	10	20
2	2016-2017	9	24
3	2017-2018	6	12

Source: GMC Office memorandum Panbazar.

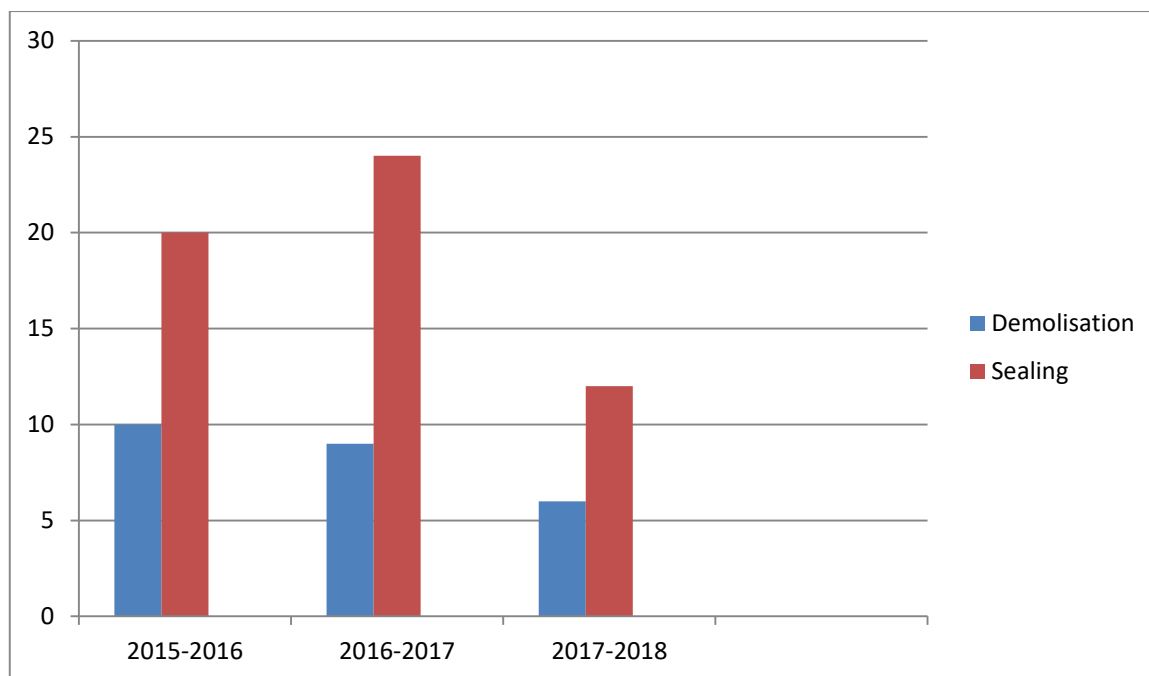


Figure 6

From the above fig 6, it is clearly seen that the sealing of buildings, shops are more than demolition. Also from the field survey it is found that still some buildings need to be demolished but the GMC is delaying for unknown reasons which shows that they are not following ethics in their way of their services. As from the comparison it is found that in last two years the people were not abiding by the rules and regulation of the GMC which leads to more sealing and demolishing of buildings. The GMC must frame out some punishment for the offenders in the upcoming years.

5. PARKING BRANCH:

The allotment of vehicles to be parked on the road in the Guwahati city is looked by this branch. It is found that every year there is a tender of contract which the people filled to get the space for collecting parking fees. But as per the survey it is found that some time the tender does not go to the deserved people as favourism is seen prevailing. In previous years the parking areas were more but now the Government has confined the places where the parking is only allowed. In the Guwahati city there are different slot of areas provided by the corporation for parking and the number of area located per year are as follows:

Table no: 8. No of parking areas allotted by GMC.

Serial No	Year	No of allotted area
1	2014-2015	41
2	2015-2016	71
3	2016-2017	73
4	2017-2018	49

Source: GMC office record and field survey.

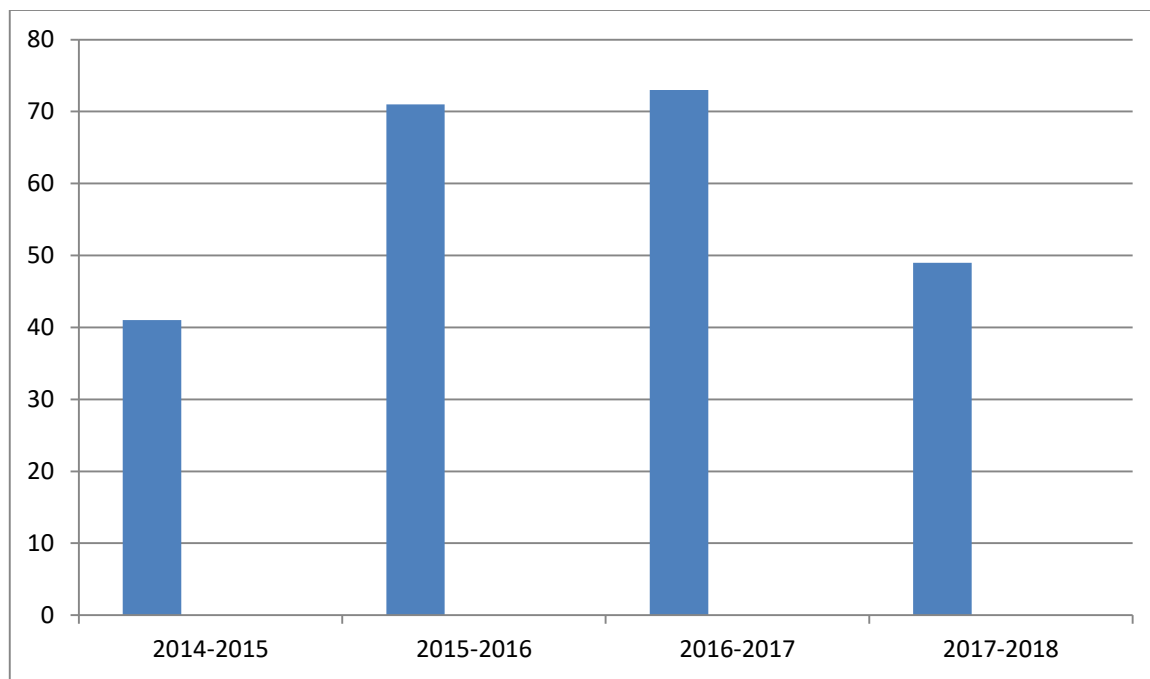


Figure 7

From the above fig 7, it is seen that in the year 2016-2017 the parking areas were more but at present the area is only 49 which is strictly monitored by the GMC. The GMC is imposing fine on the people who park the vehicle in the no parking area and also there is lots of space constraint in the city which have hampered the parking places. The GMC has newly developed some more areas for parking in the city.

FINDINGS:

- 1) It has been observed that the GMC has not been supervising the market area in proper way.
- 2) More particularly, it is been observed that the hygienic condition and the garbage disposal has not been attended as it is expected by the citizen of Guwahati.
- 3) In health section the agonizing fact is that death and birth record has not been maintained properly.
- 4) Inspection of hotels, restaurants, meat shop etc has not been done with great interest for which the hygienic condition of the city has deteriorated. Moreover, health awareness program has not been organised regularly which is unethical.
- 5) Ethical part in veterinary section has not been maintained. The menace of haphazard growth of meat shop has not been controlled which has become a health hazard.
- 6) Another ethical aspect not maintained by the GMC is the provision of cow shed in all the wards. As a result there is a every possibility of adulteration in milk.
- 7) Menace of stray dog being controlled partially but the cattle farming still needs improvement.
- 8) Unauthorized construction of building have become a problem for Guwahati Municipal Corporation.
- 9) Roadside parking is another problem for GMC.
- 10) It is found that the Guwahati Municipal Corporation employees are not abiding by the guidelines frame by the corporation which results in the failure of achievement.

SUGGESTIONS:

1. Supervising officers should be directed to supervise the market area regularly.
2. Regular disposal of garbages and maintenance of hygienic condition should be monitored.
3. Placing of small dustbins in front of the shops should be made compulsory.

4. Maintenance of death and birth records should be computerised.
5. Regular inspection by GMC authority should be done in respect to hotels, hospitals, meat shop etc.
6. Health awareness programme should be organised by engaging reputed doctors.
7. GMC should take up the matter of controlling the stray dogs and should be very strict in issuing licence to the traders, if they don't fulfil the required criteria.
8. If possible cow shed should be provided where necessary and should monitored their maintenance.
9. Unauthorised constructions should be demolished as fast as possible.
10. Although GMC has allotted some parking places these are not sufficient .In view of increasing number of vehicles in the city and should stop illegal parking collection, some more parking places should be allotted.
11. Unauthorised vendors on the footpaths and streets must be removed.
12. Employees should be directed to follow the rules and regulations laid down by the GMC Act, otherwise strict measures should be taken against the offenders.

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