MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract: *India has introduced a third tier of local governance, integrating institutional reforms in local governance with economic reforms. Urban local self-government emerged to manage the heavily populated country, with three types of democratically elected local governance bodies: Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, and Municipal Committees. Key factors in forming a municipal corporation include a densely populated area, public ability to bear increased taxation, and strong public will. This study aims to discuss bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer software to map data on Municipal Corporations' and their financial performance. Various publications published in national and international journals were examined for a literature review, focusing on the topic of Municipal Corporations' spending in Rajasthan and financial performance. The total number of publications extracted from 1995 to 2023 are 2649. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the financial performance of Municipal Corporations.*

KEYWORDS*: Financial Performance, Bibliometric Analysis, Municipal Corporation*

INTRODUCTION

India added the third tier to its federal structure, integrating institutional reforms in local governance with economic reforms. Urban local self-government emerged to manage the vast and heavily populated country. The third tier of local government in rural and urban areas was enshrined in India's constitution by the 73rd and 74th amendments, respectively.

Local government is the government by independently elected local bodies, endowed with power, discretion, and responsibilities to be exercised and discharged by them without control over their decisions by any other higher authority. Their actions are subjected to the supremacy of the national government. Urban local governance is divided into three types of democratically elected local governance bodies under the umbrella term 'Municipalities'. These types include Municipal Corporations, Municipal Councils, and Municipal Committees. Municipal Acts are legislations carried out by the State government to establish and administer municipal governments, set rules for elections, establish demarcation or mapping out boundaries of urban areas, recruit staff, and publish their financial accounts.

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There are of three types: State-wide general Municipalities Act, Separate Act, and Act catering to particular municipal corporations. Key factors in forming a municipal corporation include a densely populated area, public ability to ban increased taxation, and strong public will.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

There have been many studies on Municipal Corporations spending in Rajasthan, but there is no research that discusses bibliometric analysis with the mapping process using VOSviewer. Therefore, a comprehensive study is needed so that it can be used to help other researchers to plan research related to this field. The future researchers can research on it that are still rarely used.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Bibliometric Analysis VOSviewer software is used to map data (Al Husaeni & Nandiyanto, 2022). Bibliometric analysis is considered effective in providing datasets that can be used to improve the quality of research (Nandiyanto et al., 2020). A qualitative software called VOSviewer enables the creation and visualisation of bibliometric networks. These networks can contain journals, researches, or specific articles, and they can be created by citation, bibliographic coupling, co-citation, or co-authorship links. The bibliometric map displayed the type of publication, citation impact, mapping of countries, journals, authors and keywords related topic area studied.

BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS

1. Number of Publications

Various publications published in national and international journals were examined for the purpose of conducting a literature review. These papers were obtained from the Dimension Database, one of the largest free databases of peer-reviewed journals. The keywords "Municipal Corporation and financial performance", "Local bodies and financial performance", "Local government and financial performance", "Municipality and financial performance" etc. were used to compile all of these articles on May 29, 2023. Title and abstracts were included in the search criteria. The theme of each article was analysed and represented as bibliometric maps using VOSviewer software.
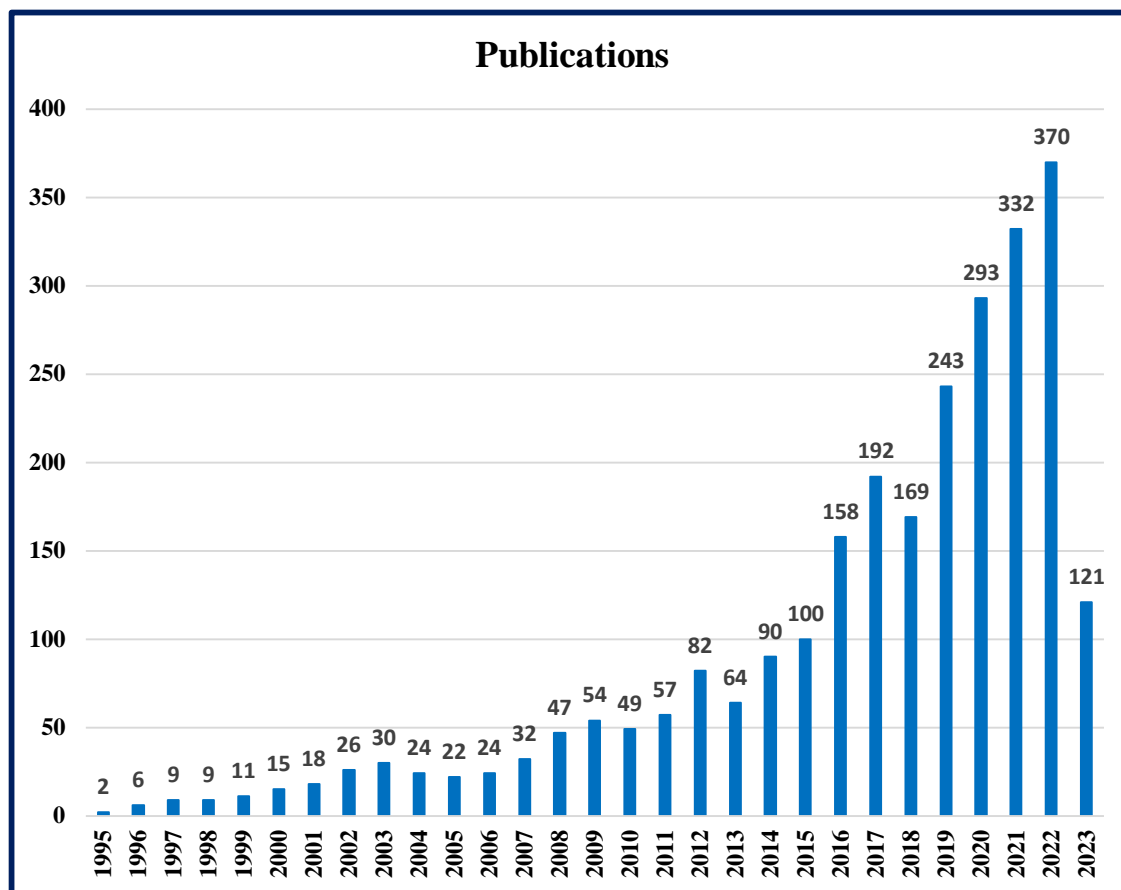
Figure 1 shows the year-wise number of publications on the given topic.

It is found that VOSviewer has extracted research papers from 1995 to 2023. The total number of publications extracted were 2649. In the previous century, number of publications per year were very less. Probably this could be because of the reason that obtaining data for Local Bodies or Municipal Corporation could be great difficult and time consuming. At the beginning of this century the number of publications on the given topic started increasing at a fair rate but during the last decade the number of publications on this have a expeditiously topic increasing trend like anything. The highest increase was observed from 2015 to 2016 and from 2018 to 2019. The highest number of publications were in the year 2022 i.e. 370. The year 2023 has very lesser number of publications because the data from the software were obtained till May 2023. This shows that the number of publications on the topic are increasing at a rapid rate and hence the interest of researchers is increasing towards analysis of finances or revenues and incomes of municipal corporations of local bodies.

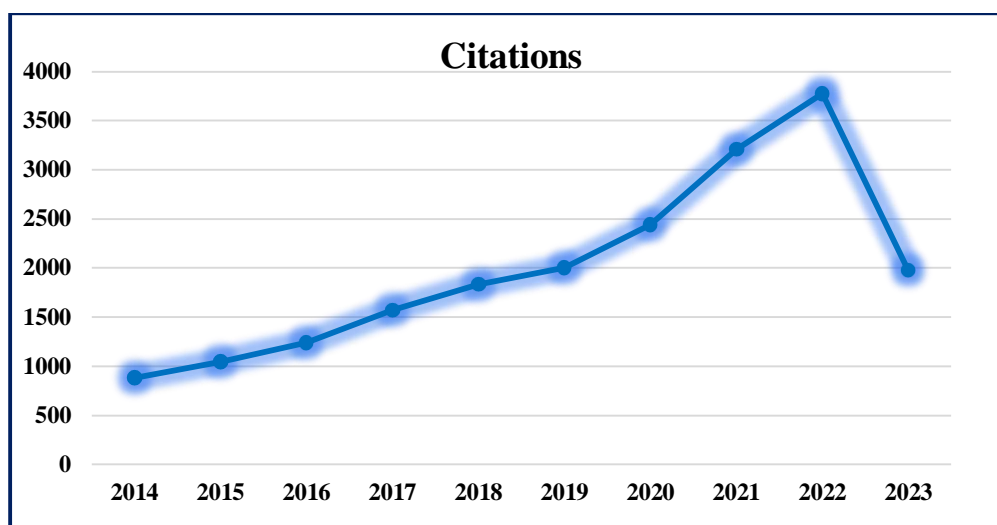## 2. Number of Citations

Figure 1: Number of Citations of Publications

Figure 2 shows the number of citations over the years on the given topic of the documents collected by VOSviewer. The Dimension Database generates this chart from 2014 to 2023. This shows that in 2014 the number of citations were 885 which continuously increased over the years. The highest increase was observed from 2020 to 2021 i.e. from 2441 to 3207. The year 2023 has lesser number of citations due to availability of half-year data only.

3. Bibliometric Mapping of Countries

VOSviewer generates three basic types of views of bibliometric mapping – Network Overlay and Density. Figure 3, 4, and 5 presents the three views of bibliometric map on the basis of country-wise citation of documents. In other words, these maps show the bibliometric networking of documents published and cited in various countries. The threshold set was minimum 2 documents from a country with minimum 5 citations. Out of total 107 countries, 73 met the threshold.

Figure 3 shows that the bibliometric map has 9 clusters denoted by different colours. The biggest cluster – Cluster 1 has eight items and contains Austria, Estonia, Germany, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden etc. Cluster 2 has 7 items and has countries like Brazil, Denmark, France, Greece, Portugal, Saudi Arabia, and Spain. Cluster 3 has 6 items – Israel, Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, South Korea, and United States. Likewise other clusters are also formed. These countries are clustered together because of strong networking identified by the software among the publications of these countries.It is further observed that countries like United

States, Indonesia, Australia, China and United Kingdom are among the countries who are prominent in the field of research related to

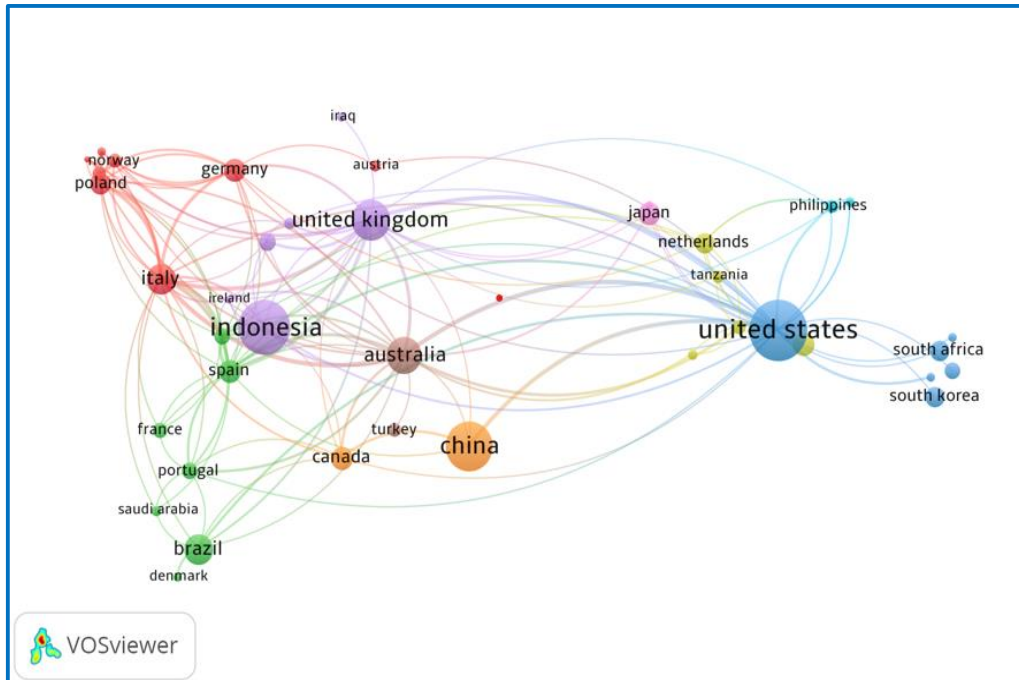Municipal Corporation and their financial performance.

Figure 2: Country-wise Bibliometric Map: Network Visualization
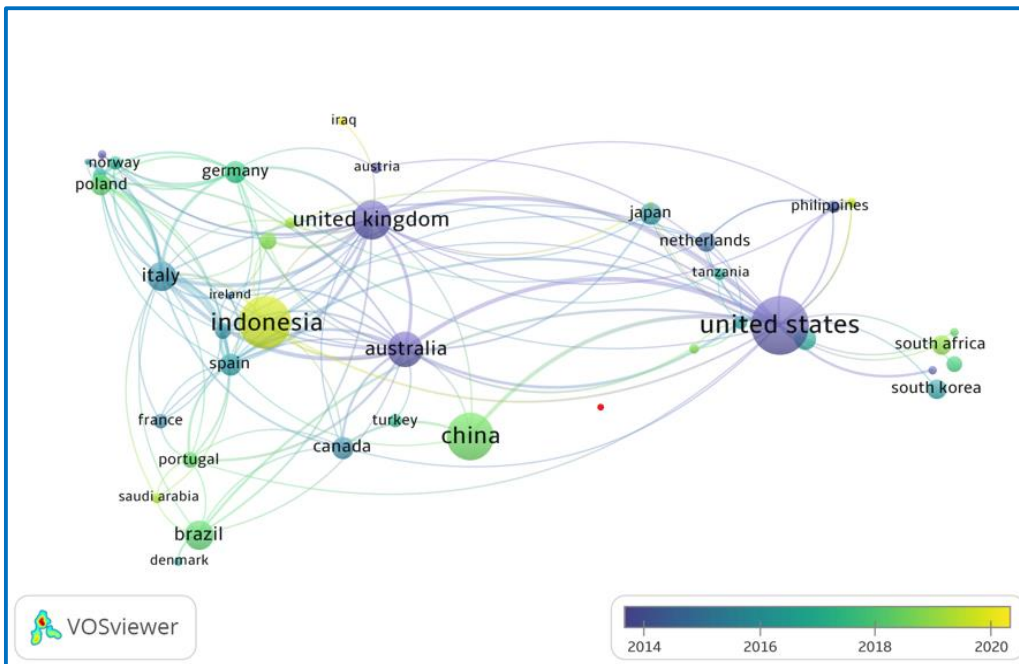

Figure 3: Country-wise Bibliometric Map: Overlay Visualization

Figure 4 shows the overlay visualisation which means the year wise publication trend on the topic in various countries. It is found that initially the research was carried out in developed countries like United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Italy, France, Spain etc.

Then in 2018 researchers started exploring Germany, Poland, Norway, Brazil etc. and by the year 2020 researchers tried to explore countries like India, Indonesia, Iraq, South Africa, Saudi Arabia etc.
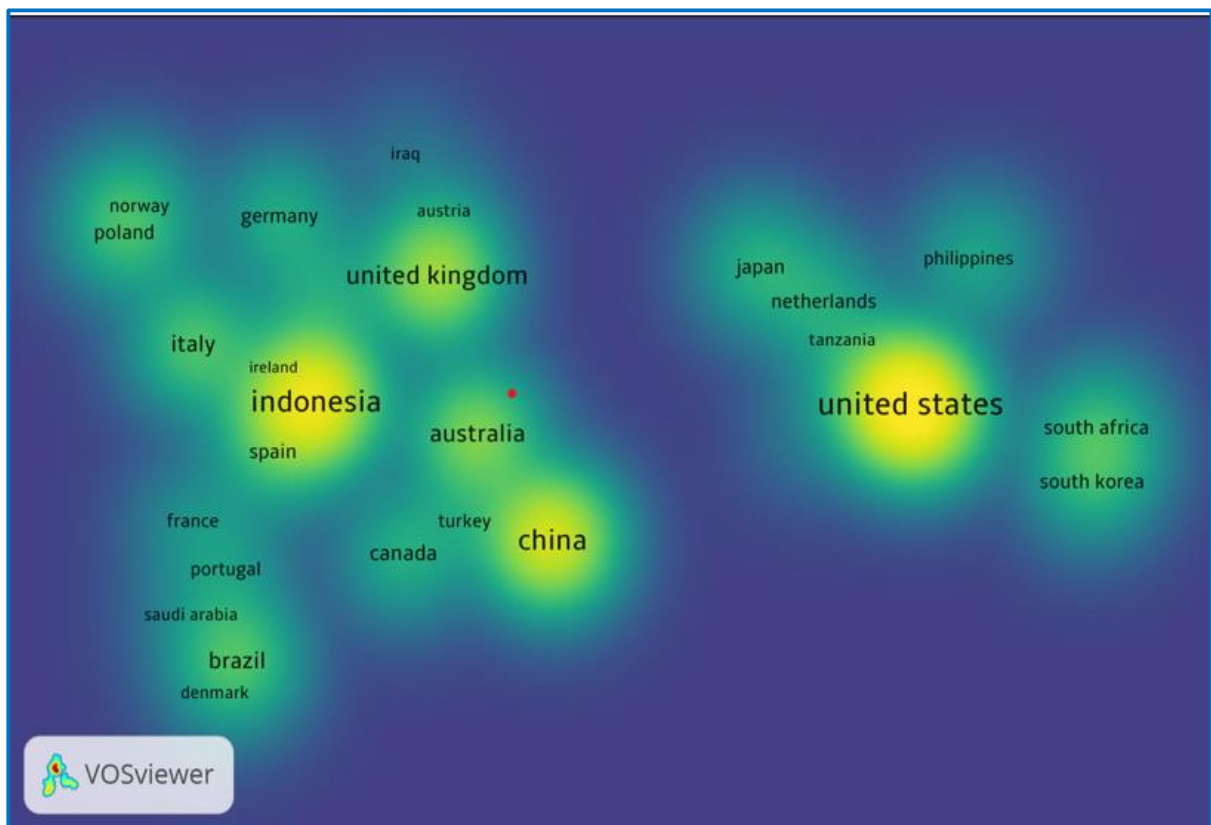

Figure 4: Country-wise Bibliometric Map: Density Visualization

Figure 5 shows the density of publication in different countries. The bibliometric map shows that United States of America, Indonesia, China and United Kingdom have highest number of publications as the colour on these countries is highly concentrated. On the other hand, countries like Philippines, Brazil, Italy, Norway, Poland, Ireland, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea etc. show lesser density for publications on this topic.
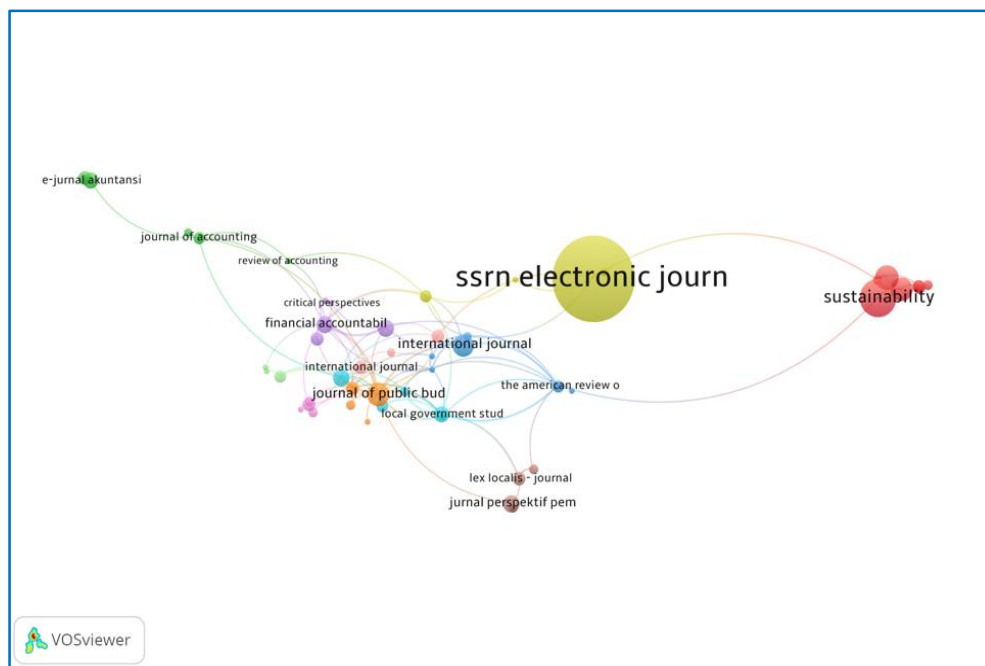
4. Bibliometric Mapping of Journals

Figure 5: Network Visualization of Source-wise Bibliometric Map

Similar to country-wise bibliometric maps, it has also been attempted to make bibliometric maps on the basis of journals. Figure 6 shows the prominent journals in the field of Municipal Corporation and their financial performance. It was found that in total there were 1680 journals and in order to reduce them the criterion set was minimum 2 documents from a journal with minimum 5 citations. This reduced the journals to177 and when the bibliometric map was attempted to create on the basis of these reduced number of journals, Figure 6 shows the obtained bibliometric map.

It was found that maximum number of papers are from SSRN Electronic Journal with 126 documents with 299 citations. This is due to the reason of free public access of documents. It was further found that Journal of Public Budgeting Accounting and Financial Management has 15 documents with 129 citations; Financial Accountability and Management has 9 document with 285 citations; Local Government Studies has 8 documents and 2003 citations. Similarly number of publications and citations of other journals like International Review of Administrative Sciences are 6 and 182, Public Performance and Management Review 9 and 183,The American Review of Public Administration has 5 and 191. Thus, these are the prominent journals in the field of research

on local government and their financial performance.

5. Bibliometric Mapping of Authors

This section tries to identify most prominent authors in the given research field. Dimension database provided in total 5999 authors. In order to make a manageable bibliometric map, the criterion set was minimum 2 documents of an author with minimum 5 citations. Then number of authors reduced to 212 which fulfilled the criteria. These authors were classified into 9 clusters. Figure 7 presents the bibliometric map on the basis of authors.

It was found that maximum number of documents are of Dollery (17) with 123 citations whereas Ferry has 8 documents with 247 citations. Other prominent authors with number of documents and citations are Eckersley (4, 179), Zakaria (3, 137), Marques (7, 235), Cohen (5, 126) etc. Other authors have also contributed a lot in this field like Grossi (5, 134), Duggan (3, 151), Brownson (3, 151), Pilcher (5, 117), Zopounidis (3, 99) etc.
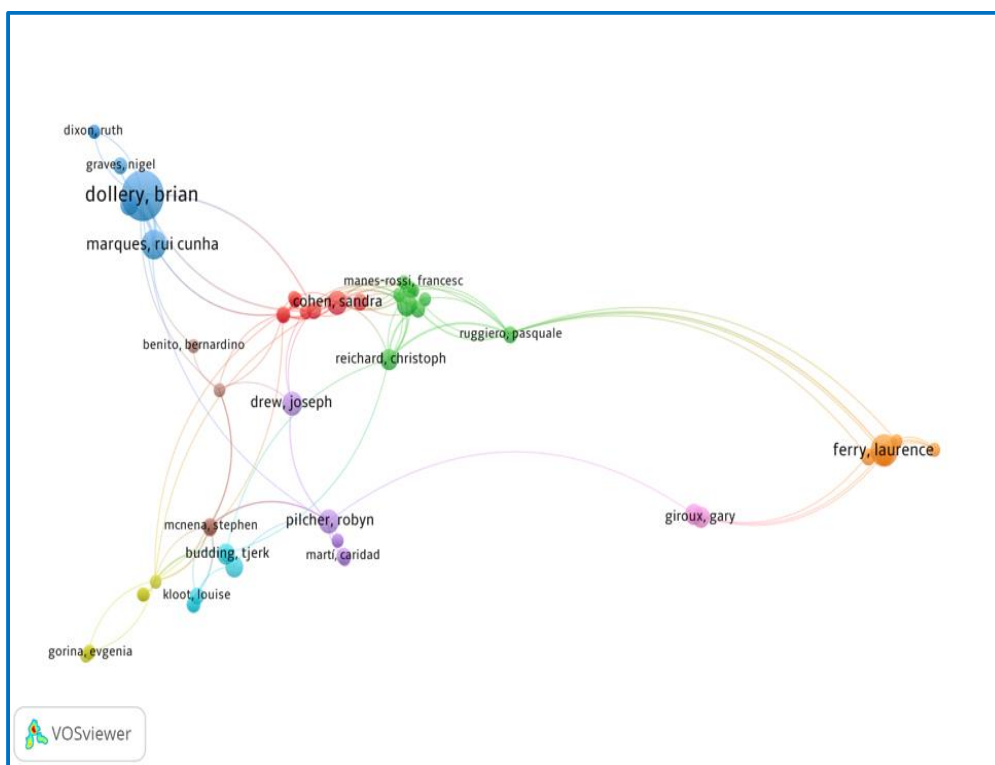

Figure 6: Network Visualization of Author-wise Bibliometric Map

6. Bibliometric Mapping of Keywords

For popular terms used in publications relating to Municipal Corporation and Financial Performance, additional bibliometric maps were created. To include all instances of a keyword in a document in the counting, the

research the full counting approach. The title and abstract of the document were searched. The minimum number of times a keyword must appear was set at 30. 267 out of 85677 keywords were identified to meet the requirement. Out of these, VOSviewer selects 60% terms, thereby reducing final keywords selected to 160. These keywords were classified into 5 clusters. Figure 8, 9 and 10 displays the network, overlay and density visualization of bibliometric map on the basis of keywords.
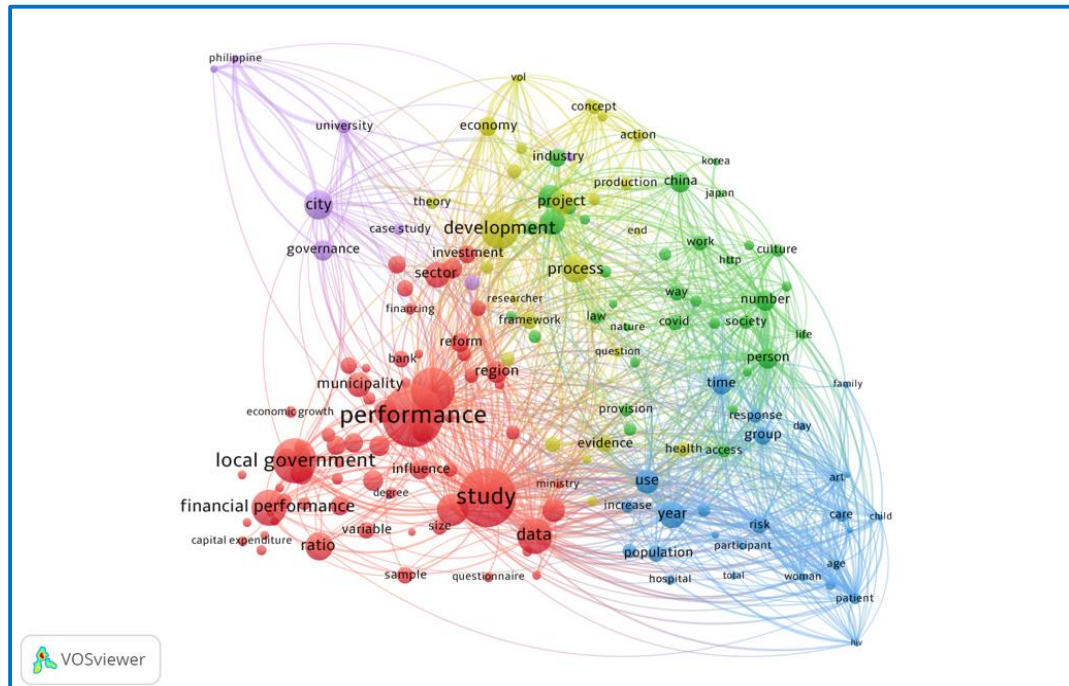

Figure 7: Keyword-wise Bibliometric Map: Network Visualization

It was found that cluster 1 has overall 66 keywords such as accountability, capital expenditure, asset, Central Government, effectiveness, efficiency, financial management, budgeting, decentralization, decision making, economic growth, enterprise etc. Cluster 2 has 35 items such as access, Korea, Japan, example, demand, company, China, Australia, law, market, Covid etc. Cluster 3 has 26 items containing family, group, individual, hospital, child, patient, population, care, age, response, difference, risk, increase etc. Cluster 4 has 25 items such as action, framework, innovation, process, production, researcher, economy, development, application, evaluation, evidence, energy etc. The last cluster has 8 items such as city, future, governance, universally, public administration, Philippines, case study, assessment etc.
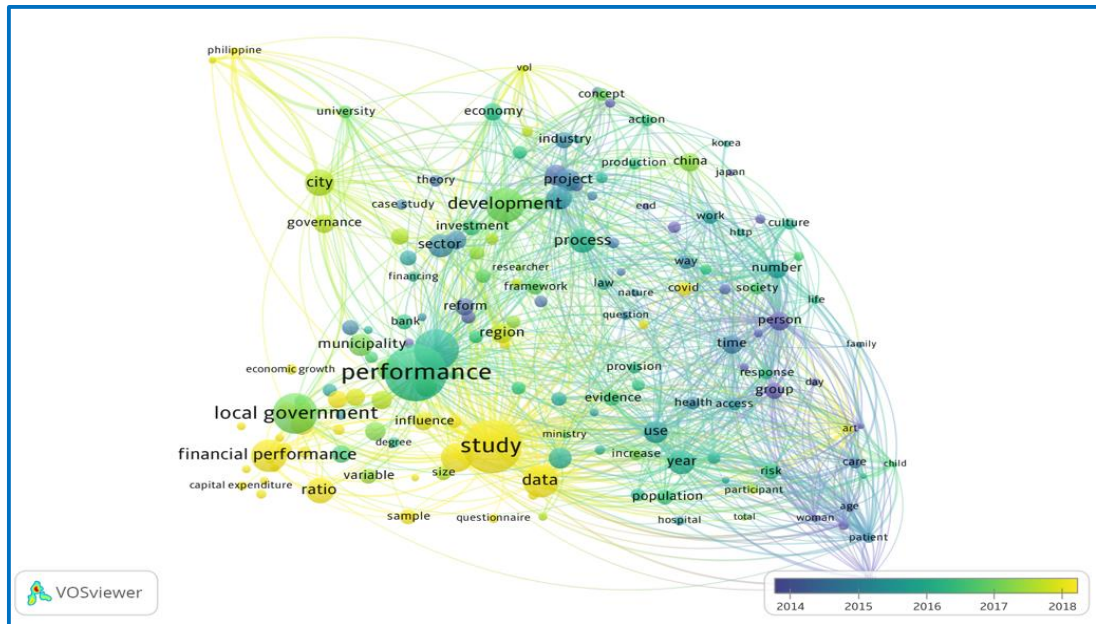
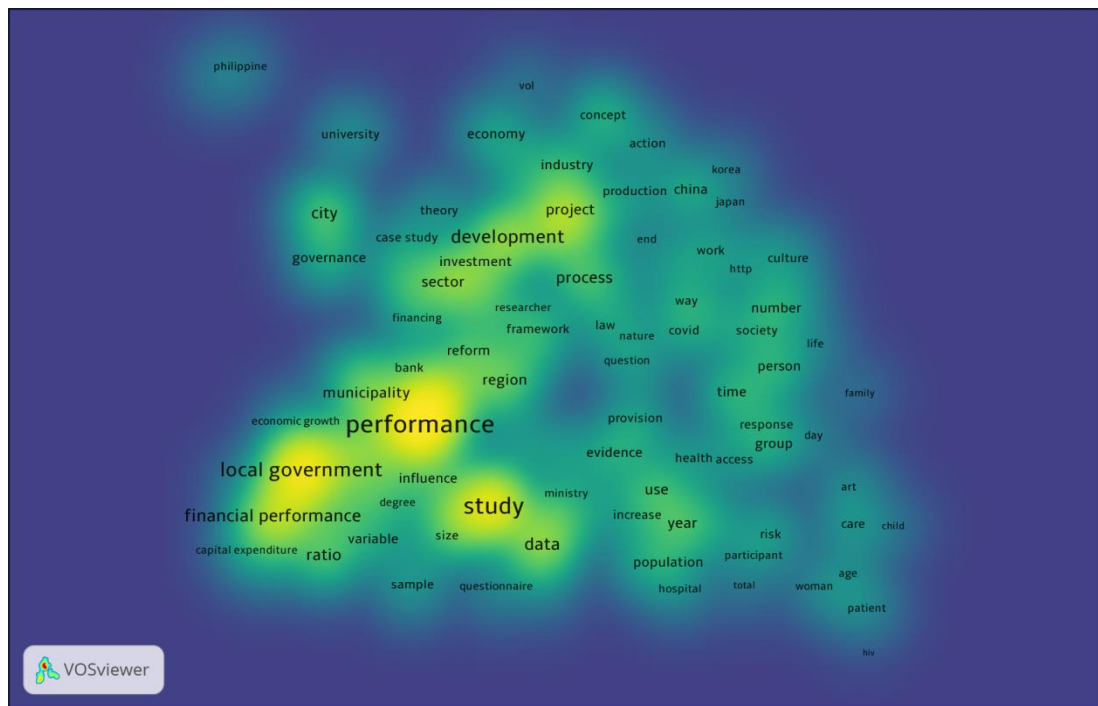**Figure 8: Keyword-wise Bibliometric Map: Overlay Visualization**

Figure 9: Keyword-wise Bibliometric Map: Density Visualization

Figure 9 shows the change in year-wise occurrence of keywords in publications on the topic. The period covered is from 2014 to 2018 and later. In initial years researchers working in the field of Municipal Corporation and financial performance used keywords such as group, person, age, case, reform, sector, project, degree etc. This shows that analytical work had not started in these years. In the middle years, focus shifted on keywords such

as performance, year, population, evidence, development, local government, economy, action, university etc.

In recent years, researchers have started using keywords like study, data, ratio, financial performance, sample, influence, questionnaire, capital expenditure etc. This clear cut shows that in recent years, research has been more based on empirical analysis based on primary and secondary data.

CONCLUSION

After synthesising available literature through Bibliometric analysis, it is evident from the research that no studies have been done up to this point that address crucial facets of municipal spending in Rajasthan. The focus of research on Municipal Corporations and their financial performance has changed significantly over time, according to bibliometric analysis. Terms like "group," "person," and "sector" predominated in the initial keywords used in publications between 2014 and 2018, reflecting a more theoretical and descriptive approach. This suggests that this field's emphasis on analysis and empirical research was still in its infancy. As time went on, the keywords changed significantly starting in 2018, indicating a greater focus on governance, development, and performance evaluation. Terms like "performance," "local government," and "economy" became more common. This change reflects the growing

focus on the pragmatic elements of municipal corporations' financial performance. Moreover, keywords like "study," "data," "financial performance," and "capital expenditure" have been used more frequently in recent years, which suggests an increase in empirical research. As a sign of a more developed stage of analytical and data-driven research in this area, researchers are increasingly depending on primary and secondary data to examine financial performance. Because it is open-access, the SSRN Electronic Journal leads in both publications and citations, according to an analysis of prestigious journals. The literature is also greatly influenced by other important journals, such as the Journal of Public Budgeting Accounting and Financial Management and Financial Accountability and Management. This demonstrates how important open-access and specialized journals are in influencing studies on municipal financial performance and governance.

Important achievements to this field are further identified by bibliometric mapping of writers; among the most prolific are Dollery and Ferry, followed by Eckersley and Marques. The clustering of keywords identifies specific research fields, from more general subjects like governance, innovation, and public administration to more specialized ones like accountability, financial management, and economic growth. These clusters, which cover a variety of topics like budgeting,

decentralization, and economic processes, demonstrate the multidisciplinary character of research on municipal corporations.

To sum up, the bibliometric trends show how research in this area has changed over time, shifting from descriptive analysis to more empirical, data-centric investigations. The focus of research by well-known writers and in important publications highlights the increasing importance of municipal financial performance and governance as a field of study.

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