

Challenges of Urban-Local Government in Delivering Services: A Case Study on Gazipur City Corporation, Bangladesh

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Abstract: Bangladesh is a developing country that faces numerous challenges in the delivery of essential services to its citizens. The local government plays a crucial role in addressing these challenges but is beset by several obstacles. This study explored the challenges facing local governments in delivering services in Bangladesh. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in local government, including officials and community leaders. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns. The study found that political interference was a significant challenge facing local governments in Bangladesh, with officials being pressured to prioritize political agendas over service delivery. Weak institutional capacity was also identified as a major obstacle, with limited resources, inadequate training, and insufficient staffing hindering the ability of local government to deliver services effectively. The study further revealed that a lack of citizen participation and ineffective monitoring were other challenges facing local governments in Bangladesh. Citizens were often excluded from decision-making processes, leading to a lack of trust and accountability, while ineffective monitoring systems allowed for the mismanagement of public resources and the provision of substandard services. The findings of this study highlight the need for reforms to strengthen the institutional capacity of local government, promote citizen participation, and improve monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The study recommends targeted training and capacity building for local government officials, increased citizen engagement and oversight, and the establishment of effective monitoring systems to enhance service delivery in Bangladesh.

Keywords— political interference; urban-local government; service delivery; poor governance; citizen participation

1.0 Introduction

The Gazipur City Corporation (GCC) was established in 2013 with the objective of providing efficient and effective services to the citizens of Gazipur (Latif et al., 2014). The GCC is responsible for a wide range of services, including waste management, sanitation, road maintenance, and water supply (Rahman et al., 2016). Despite its mandate, the GCC has faced several challenges in delivering these services effectively, including a lack of financial resources, inadequate human capital, and poor infrastructure. As a result, the quality and accessibility of services provided by the GCC have been suboptimal, affecting the well-being and livelihoods of the citizens of Gazipur (Ahmed et al., 2020). In order to improve service delivery, the GCC has implemented a number of initiatives, such as increasing its budget for infrastructure development and introducing new technologies (Chowdhury, 2021). Additionally, the GCC has also sought to strengthen its human capital by training existing staff and recruiting new personnel. These efforts have been successful in improving the quality of services offered by the GCC and have had a positive impact on the citizens of Gazipur. However, further investment is needed to ensure that these improvements are sustained in the long-term. This research paper aims to examine the factors that affect the GCC's service delivery and to develop a conceptual framework to identify interventions that can improve the GCC's service delivery. By examining the inputs, processes, and outcomes of the GCC's service delivery model, this research paper seeks to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities for improving service delivery in Gazipur. Ultimately, the findings of this research

paper can inform policy interventions to enhance the GCC's service delivery and contribute to the well-being and prosperity of the citizens of Gazipur.

2.0 Literature Review

Governance refers to the process by which those in authority make decisions, allocate resources, and exercise power and authority to achieve desired outcomes. It encompasses the entire range of activities involved in managing the affairs of a society or organization, including setting policies, making decisions, implementing plans, and monitoring and evaluating performance (World Bank, 2021). In Bangladesh, the urban-local government system consists of city corporations, municipalities, and union parishes. City corporations are the highest level of urban-local government, followed by municipalities, which cover smaller urban areas, and union parishes, which cover rural areas. City corporations are responsible for providing a range of services, including water supply, sanitation, solid waste management, roads, and transportation (Ahmed & Hossain, 2020).

A number of studies have been conducted on governance in urban-local government in Bangladesh. Most of these studies have focused on the challenges and issues faced by urban-local governments in providing basic services to citizens. For example, a study by Hossain and Ahmed (2018) found that weak governance, a lack of accountability, and corruption were major obstacles to the effective delivery of basic services in urban areas. Another study by Islam et al. (2019) examined the impact of decentralization on governance in Bangladesh. The study found that decentralization had improved service

delivery in urban areas but that there were still significant challenges, particularly in terms of financial management and accountability. A study by Hossain and Rahman (2019) examined the role of citizen participation in governance in urban-local government in Bangladesh. The study found that citizen participation was critical to improving the quality of service delivery and promoting accountability in urban-local government. Nonetheless, urban population growth is increasing quickly, which has led to significant demand for a number of basic services (Stren & White, 1989). This demand includes access to clean water, sanitation, and waste management systems. Failure to meet these needs can result in negative health and environmental consequences for urban residents. According to Tanzi (1998), achieving a specific level of governance is a condition for the quality of service delivery. Therefore, it is important for urban planners and policymakers to prioritize good governance practices in order to ensure that the basic needs of urban residents are met and negative consequences are avoided. This includes promoting transparency, accountability, and participation in decision-making processes. Along with addressing financial crises and technical challenges, local governments in urban areas play a crucial role in the efficient delivery of services (Boex et al., 2014). Because it has closer ties to the community, local government typically delivers services more effectively than the central government. Therefore, it can adopt and carry out policies that are considerate of local needs.

Local governments continue to be answerable to residents and have a greater impact on local development (Bhattacharya et al., 2014). In this aspect, opportunities for resource mobilization are scarce in Bangladesh's urban areas, claim Ferdous & Das (2022). Local resources can also be produced using a portion of performance-based government grants. The main issues are insufficient assessment, revenue inelasticity, inadequate employee training, and subpar administration. Seddiky (2019) cites a number of factors as major barriers to the local government providing healthcare services for the community, including financial limitations, a lack of coordination and information, a shortage of skilled workers, persistent decentralization issues, political instability, and corruption.

According to Bhuiyan 2010, a well-constructed public-private partnership can ensure efficient solid waste management and, as a result, good urban governance in Bangladesh. Moreover, there is little citizen satisfaction with city governments (Mahmud, 2021). In this regard, lack of coordination prevents the provision of necessary services (Panday & Panday, 2008). This highlights the need for effective communication and collaboration between city governments and citizens to improve service delivery and increase satisfaction. Additionally, implementing innovative solutions such as digital platforms can help bridge the gap between citizens and governments. Local urban governments don't have the necessary power, independence, or resources. Additionally, there is insufficient citizen participation (Chowdhury

& Aktaruzzaman, 2016). The coordination of agencies working in urban areas is still very difficult (Rahman, 2015). The central government retains a significant amount of overall control over local and urban areas while granting local governments a limited amount of authority, functions, and sovereignty (Sharmin et al., 2012). Chowdhury & Deb (2012) investigate how the urban-local government makes a significant contribution to the delivery of services to the general public.

Rahman & Hassan (2006) examine how solid waste, industrialization, slums, drainage systems, etc. can be detrimental for urban environments. All these, in effect, are caused by poor governance. Keeping the same view, Ahmed (2005) explained how the complex socio-economic environment of urban areas had led to problems in urban services and infrastructure. To solve these problems, governmental policies and the effective roles of local government and NGOs are very important. Like other previous researchers, Jahan (2005) also agreed through her research findings that a lack of appropriate urban policy and planning, problems in financial management, and institutional weakness always lead to poor quality of civic services in urban Bangladesh. As a result, municipal services are not properly delivered to stakeholders, which creates problems in urban areas. Similarly, Ahsan and Rahman (2013) emphasized appropriate legal, institutional, and community action for promoting urban sustainable development, i.e., to defeat the loss of natural resources, improve the living environment, and reduce local pollution.

Overall, governance is a critical factor in the effective delivery of services by urban-local governments in Bangladesh. The study conducted on Gazipur City Corporation highlights the challenges and issues faced by urban-local governments in providing basic services to citizens, and provides valuable insights into the role of governance in service delivery. The study underscores the need for measures to improve governance and accountability in urban-local government, including strengthening citizen participation, improving financial management, and increasing transparency in decision-making processes.

3.0 Methodology

The study is based on both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative research methods involve gathering data through open-ended questions and observations, while quantitative research methods involve gathering data through numerical measurements and statistical analysis. The combination of both methods allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

Both qualitative and quantitative data have been used in the research. Qualitative data will be collected through interviews and focus groups, while quantitative data will be obtained through surveys and statistical analysis of existing data sets. The required data has been gathered by using primary and

secondary sources. Primary sources of data include surveys, interviews, and experiments, while secondary sources include published articles, reports, and statistical data from government agencies.

Primary data has been gathered from GCC service seekers, government officials, and public representatives like the mayor and councilors who are responsible for delivering basic municipal services. Primary data is also collected from official documents such as GCC minutes of meetings, annual budget reports, administrative reports, progress reports, etc. This primary data is crucial for understanding the current state of municipal services in the GCC region and identifying areas for improvement. By analyzing this data, policymakers can make informed decisions about resource allocation and service delivery.

Various research reports and articles, official statistics, relevant books, unpublished study documents, theses and dissertations, journals, daily newspapers, the internet, etc. are used as secondary sources of data in the research. Secondary sources provide valuable insights and information that can support the primary data collected in the research, helping to strengthen the findings and conclusions of the study. Additionally, the use of secondary sources allows for a broader perspective on the research topic and can aid in identifying gaps in the existing literature. However, it is important to critically evaluate the credibility and reliability of these sources before incorporating them into the research.

The desired sample size is 300, of which 275 are from service seekers (households) and 25 are from service providers, including the mayor, councilors, and some selected officials who are responsible for delivering basic services in the corporation area. Since this study is mainly about the perceptions of the citizens on the quality of services provided by the city corporation and other agencies, they are considered the main source of information. A two-stage cluster sampling design will be followed to obtain the sampled households. At stage 1, the GCC wards will be taken as the cluster sampling units, and approximately one-fifth of the total number of wards, i.e., 11 out of 57 wards, will be selected randomly. At stage 2, within each selected ward, a systematic random sample of about 25 households will be selected. Within each selected household, the head will be interviewed. In case he or she is not available for interview, another responsible adult has been interviewed.

As a supplement to the primary data, content analysis has been used to gather secondary data, information, and facts. For in-depth analysis and making the information more reliable and valid, relevant documents like publications, journals, books, research reports, newspapers, etc. have been reviewed and analyzed in order to fit and compare with this proposed research. This method has helped to broaden the scope of the research and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the topic. Additionally, it has allowed for a comparison

between the primary data and existing literature in order to identify any gaps or inconsistencies.

To avoid inconsistency and error, collected data has been reviewed, scrutinized, and processed in the light of objectives and verifiable indicators, following certain steps like editing, coding, categorization, listing, tabulation, etc. The collected quantitative data for the research has been analyzed following inferential techniques such as robust regression, correlation, and other statistical models using SPSS. On the other hand, qualitative data has been analyzed in a descriptive way with logical reasoning. Results and findings have been presented in tabular and narrative form, including percentage and frequency. In addition, a graphical presentation is made to interpret the data in an attempt to make it more meaningful and easily communicable to the readers.

4.0 Challenges of Urban-local Government in Delivering Services

4.1 Challenges in Providing Enough Water to its Residents

Water demand is greatly increased by the population's rapid growth (Condon et al., 2004). Between 1991 and 2001, the amount of water used in agriculture increased by 2.73 times. A prediction states that in 2018, the water demand will be 24,270 mega cubic meters, while the supply will be 23,490 mega cubic meters (Ahmed & Roy, 2007). In this aspect, water availability is a major concern for the residents of the GCC. In the era of water scarcity, supplying enough water is a great challenge (Rijsberman, 2002). A large group of people do not have access to clean drinking water (Smith et al., 2000). Groundwater sources are being used to supply water via CGI. Both in urban and rural areas, groundwater is the main source of drinking water (Ahmed et al., 2006). Although there are many rivers and canals across the nation, surface water is not thought of as a source of water supply. These groundwater supplies are tainted with arsenic, iron, and other dangerous substances (Smith et al., 2000). Many individuals do not have access to safe drinking water from groundwater. So, there is not enough water supply. Infrastructure is inadequate and unreliable, resulting in reduced access to water, particularly in rural areas (Rijsberman, 2002). In this aspect, Gazipur City Corporation is facing significant challenges in providing enough water to its residents. With the rapid growth of population, the demand for water has increased significantly, putting pressure on the existing water supply infrastructure (Khatri et al., 2008). Unfortunately, the infrastructure is not well-developed and lacks the necessary capacity to meet the growing demand. Climate change is another significant challenge for Gazipur City Corporation. It can lead to droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events that can affect the availability and quality of water (Frederick & Major, 1997). Inefficient water management practices, such as leakage and wastage, can lead to significant losses of water, exacerbating the problem of inadequate water supply. Furthermore, water pollution is also a significant challenge in Gazipur city. Industrial and domestic wastewater discharge,

as well as solid waste disposal practices, are major sources of water pollution. This can result in serious health risks for residents, and it can also impact the quality of water available for domestic and commercial use (Goel, 2006). Additionally, lack of funds is another challenge that Gazipur City Corporation faces in providing enough water to its residents. The city may face challenges in raising enough funds to invest in upgrading and expanding its water supply infrastructure. This can limit the city's ability to meet the growing demand for water and improve the quality of water supplied to residents.

4.2 Poor Governance for Delivering Services

Poor governance is a significant challenge for delivering necessary services in Gazipur City Corporation. The city's administration is often characterized by inefficiencies, corruption, and a lack of transparency, leading to inadequate delivery of essential services such as water supply, sanitation, health, and education. One of the main issues related to poor governance is the lack of investment in public infrastructure (Kwak et al., 2009). Many parts of Gazipur City Corporation lack basic amenities such as paved roads, street lighting, and public transportation. The lack of investment in public infrastructure is partly due to corruption, which siphons off funds earmarked for public projects. Another issue related to poor governance is the unequal distribution of resources. In Gazipur City Corporation, resources are often allocated based on political considerations rather than the needs of residents. This results in some areas of the city receiving more resources than others, leading to an unequal distribution of services.

GCC has always struggled greatly to achieve the progress it wants due to a lack of good governance. Four fundamental components of good governance, including accountability, participation, predictability, and transparency, are listed by the Asian Development Bank (Roy, 2006). Corruption continues to be one of the most pervasive and least addressed issues facing public service institutions in developing countries (Davis, 2004). One of the major issues in ensuring good governance in Bangladesh is corruption. According to Rahman and Khan (2008), corruption has severely impeded the country's prospects for good governance as well as economic growth. According to a recent study (Panday, 2007), there are problems with intra-organizational coordination in urban Bangladesh that are brought on by a lack of institutionalized rules and regulations and poor financial management. The lack of coordination between government departments in Bangladesh means that innovative solutions to water-related problems, such as water pollution, waste, reuse, and conservation, are often hindered. This lack of coordination between government departments leads to an inefficient use of resources and a weakened implementation of water-related policies. The process of authorizing work and funds as well as the division of office duties without coordination frequently cause needless delay and inefficiency (Zamena, 2002). Two or more government personnel are not properly integrated. Another government entity will attempt

to overturn a decision made by one when it serves its interests. In this way, coordination between government departments is hindered, resulting in duplicated efforts and conflicting objectives. This puts the GCC in direct competition with each other and leads to an unnecessary waste of resources.

To address the issue of poor governance in delivering necessary services, Gazipur City Corporation needs to implement a range of measures. These measures include improving transparency and accountability in service delivery, enhancing public participation in decision-making processes, and investing in public infrastructure. In addition, the city can explore the use of technology to improve the efficiency of service delivery. This can include the use of digital platforms to streamline service delivery processes and improve communication between the city administration and residents. By addressing the issue of poor governance in delivering necessary services, Gazipur City Corporation can ensure that all residents have access to basic amenities such as water supply, sanitation, health, and education. It is essential that the city takes immediate action to improve governance, as the consequences of inaction could be severe and long-lasting.

4.3 Lack of Adequate Budget

Financial challenges are a significant obstacle to delivering necessary services in Gazipur City Corporation. The city administration faces a range of financial constraints, including a limited budget, inadequate revenue collection, and a high debt burden. One of the main issues related to financial challenges is the lack of investment in public infrastructure. Gazipur City Corporation has limited financial resources to invest in public infrastructure, such as roads, public transportation, and sanitation facilities. This lack of investment results in inadequate service delivery and contributes to the poor living conditions of many residents. Another issue related to financial challenges is the inadequate revenue collection. The city administration faces difficulties in collecting taxes and fees from residents and businesses, leading to a shortfall in revenue. This shortage of revenue limits the city's ability to invest in public infrastructure and deliver necessary services.

To address the issue of financial challenges, Gazipur City Corporation needs to implement a range of measures. These measures include improving revenue collection through measures such as tax reforms and better enforcement of regulations, reducing wasteful spending, and attracting private sector investment. In addition, the city can explore the use of innovative financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships (PPPs) and municipal bonds to finance public infrastructure projects. These financing mechanisms can help to attract private sector investment and leverage public resources to finance necessary services. By addressing the issue of financial challenges, Gazipur City Corporation can ensure that all residents have access to basic amenities such as water supply, sanitation, health, and education. It is

essential that the city takes immediate action to address financial challenges, as the consequences of inaction could be severe and long-lasting.

4.4 Rapid Urbanization

Rapid urbanization refers to the process of a large-scale shift of populations from rural to urban areas, resulting in the growth and expansion of cities and metropolitan areas. According to the United Nations, urbanization is a global trend, with the world's urban population projected to increase from 4.2 billion in 2018 to 6.7 billion by 2050 (United Nations, 2018). Rapid urbanization can bring about several benefits, such as economic growth, increased access to essential services, and improved quality of life. However, it can also pose significant challenges for urban areas and their inhabitants. One of the major challenges is the strain on infrastructure and resources, leading to issues such as traffic congestion, inadequate housing, and environmental degradation. Additionally, rapid urbanization can exacerbate social inequalities and create new forms of poverty and exclusion.

Rapid urbanization has become a significant challenge for Gazipur City Corporation in recent years. The city has experienced a significant increase in its population, resulting in the growth of informal settlements and slums. As a result, the city is facing several problems, including poor sanitation, inadequate healthcare, and a lack of access to basic services. One of the significant problems resulting from rapid urbanization is the growth of informal settlements and slums. These settlements are characterized by overcrowding, poor sanitation, and inadequate infrastructure. As a result, the residents are exposed to numerous health hazards, including water-borne diseases and respiratory illnesses. Another problem associated with rapid urbanization is the pressure it puts on the city's resources. With the growing population, the demand for basic services such as water, sanitation, and healthcare has increased significantly. The city's infrastructure is struggling to keep up with this demand, resulting in inadequate service delivery to the residents.

Traffic congestion is another problem that has arisen due to rapid urbanization. The city's road network is under significant pressure due to the increasing number of vehicles on the road. This has led to traffic jams, which result in wastage of time and resources. The rapid urbanization in Gazipur City Corporation has also led to environmental degradation. The city is highly industrialized, with many factories and industries located in the city. This has resulted in air and water pollution, which poses a significant risk to the health of the residents. The effects of climate change are also being felt in Gazipur City Corporation. Floods and extreme weather conditions have become more frequent, resulting in damage to infrastructure and displacement of residents.

To address the challenges associated with rapid urbanization, Gazipur City Corporation needs to adopt a comprehensive and

integrated approach. This approach should involve the participation of all stakeholders, including the government, private sector, civil society, and the residents themselves. The government should focus on improving basic services such as water, sanitation, and healthcare. This can be achieved by investing in the necessary infrastructure and resources. The government should also focus on developing sustainable transportation systems, such as promoting the use of bicycles and walking.

4.5 Lack of Autonomy

Another factor contributing to the local government's failure to provide services is the involvement of central governors in local government affairs (Adeyemi, 2013). Eboh & Diejomaoh (2010) claim that central governments, in particular, exert a significant amount of external influence and interfere in local government affairs. The governors are accused of controlling local governments' financial resources, taxes, and funding sources and refusing to hold local government elections. Instead, they rule local governments with appointed administrators, the majority of whom are party loyalists and their friends and relatives, turning the entire operation of local governments into irrelevant schemes of things (Ukonga, 2012). This kind of political corruption and abuse of power not only undermines democracy and the rule of law but also hinders development and progress at the local level, depriving citizens of their basic rights and services. It is crucial for the government to take action to address these issues and ensure that local governments are transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of their constituents. There have been instances where central governors dissolved all of the elected council's officers without due process (Eboh&Diejomaoh, 2010). This centralized control over local governments has resulted in a lack of accountability and transparency, as well as limited opportunities for citizen participation in decision-making processes. These actions undermine the principles of democracy and hinder the development of effective governance at the local level.

4.6 Lack of Resources and Manpower

The Gazipur City Corporation (GCC) definitely doesn't have enough staff given their workload and responsibilities. Additionally, GCC lacks logistical aids like computers, motorcycles, and other forms of transportation. Despite having a sizable tax base, the local government is unable to collect taxes up to the potential target due to political realities and general sociocultural and economic conditions. In general, the GCC lacks the managerial capability and resources necessary to plan and implement innovative service delivery in industries like job creation, health care, and education. Instead, local government has a tendency to focus on infrastructure, particularly the building of roads and culverts, and to be more interested in it. Local government projects' timely completion and quality are also hampered by the government's delayed release of development grants. According to some reports, such delays also present a window of opportunity for corruption and resource leaks, which in turn

lower the quality of projects aimed at delivering services. In this regard, the GCC is having difficulty providing necessary services to its citizens. This is a concerning issue as it can lead to dissatisfaction among citizens and hinder the overall development of the region. Therefore, it is crucial for the GCC to address these delays and corruption in order to improve service delivery and meet the needs of its people.

4.7 Lack of Coordination

The majority of the participants observed a lack of field-level coordination between government and extension service delivery personnel. The extension staff of the corresponding line government agencies and the GCC Committees actually have no formal affiliations at all. Numerous GCC services are broken and useless as a result of this isolation. The GOB line agencies are unable to provide the GCC with technical support or other professional assistance as a result. It was noted that they weren't given enough authority to control and monitor the actions of the government extension workers. Additionally, they express dissatisfaction over the lack of a framework for regulation or law that would allow the GCC to demand that officials be held accountable to locally elected bodies. Additionally, they haven't yet received any official directives from their respective line agencies outlining exactly how they are to collaborate with and work for the GCC in particular. This lack of clarity and direction from their line agencies may hinder the effectiveness of their collaboration with GCC and could lead to confusion and misunderstandings in their work. It is important for the officials to have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in order to ensure successful cooperation with GCC.

4.8 Lack of Appropriate Rules and Regulations

Several upazila-based officials acknowledged during the FGD session that there aren't enough appropriate, integrated rules and regulations for coordinating and supervising the GoB's field-level extension staff. For ensuring that residents receive necessary services, there are no effective rules and regulations. This lack of regulations has led to inconsistencies in the quality and delivery of services, which has resulted in dissatisfaction among residents. The officials emphasized the need for a comprehensive framework to ensure efficient and effective service delivery. However, a lack of coordination and supervision is hindering the delivery of necessary services to the residents, leading to a gap in the implementation of development programs and initiatives. It is crucial for the government to establish effective rules and regulations to ensure that the field-level extension staff can deliver their services efficiently.

4.9 Lack of Effective Monitoring

Lack of monitoring is another great challenge that the GCC is facing. In Gazipur City Corporation, we observed that the citizens don't get enough services because of ineffective monitoring. Effective monitoring involves tracking and evaluating the performance of government officials and programs to ensure that they are meeting their objectives and

delivering services effectively (UNDP, 2008). Without effective monitoring, local government officials may not be held accountable for their actions and decisions, and public resources may not be used efficiently. In many developing countries, including Bangladesh, a lack of effective monitoring is a widespread problem that affects the ability of local governments to deliver essential services to citizens (Khan, 2018). This is due to several factors, including weak institutional capacity, political interference, and a lack of resources and expertise (Ahmed, 2017). One of the key consequences of a lack of effective monitoring is the mismanagement of public resources. Without effective monitoring, it is difficult to identify inefficiencies and waste in government programs, and resources may be diverted for personal gain or used to fund projects that do not benefit citizens (Khan, 2018). This can result in the provision of substandard services and the erosion of public trust in government institutions. To address the lack of effective monitoring, several strategies can be employed. One approach is to improve the capacity of local government officials to monitor and evaluate their programs effectively. This can be done through training programs, the establishment of monitoring and evaluation units within government agencies, and the use of technology to facilitate data collection and analysis (Ahmed, 2017).

4.10 Lack of Accountability and Transparency

Lack of accountability and transparency is a significant challenge facing local government in many countries. Accountability refers to the obligation of government officials to be answerable to citizens for their actions, decisions, and policies, while transparency refers to the openness and accessibility of information related to government activities (UNDP, 2009). In the case of local government, accountability and transparency are essential for ensuring that public resources are used effectively and that the needs and priorities of citizens are prioritized (Prud'homme & Eichenauer, 2021).

In Gazipur City Corporation, a lack of accountability and transparency is a common problem that affects the ability of local governments to deliver essential services to citizens (Ahmed, 2017). This is due to several factors, including weak institutional capacity, political interference, and a lack of citizen participation (Alam & Hasan, 2018).

Corruption is one of the main effects of a lack of accountability and transparency. When public officials use their positions of authority for personal gain, frequently at the expense of citizens, that is corruption (UNDP, 2009). This could lead to the misuse of public funds, the delivery of unsatisfactory services, and a decline in public confidence in governmental institutions (Prud'homme & Eichenauer, 2021). Corruption can also have a negative impact on economic growth and development, as it creates an uneven playing field for businesses and investors and discourages foreign investment. Therefore, combating corruption is crucial for promoting good governance and achieving sustainable

development. To address the lack of accountability and transparency, several strategies can be employed. One approach is to increase transparency by establishing mechanisms for public disclosure of government activities and finances, such as open data portals, public audits, and financial disclosure requirements for public officials (UNDP, 2009).

4.11 Lack of Public Participation

Lack of citizen participation is a significant challenge facing the Gazipur City Corporation. Citizen participation refers to the active involvement of citizens in decision-making processes that affect their lives and communities. In the case of local government, citizen participation is crucial for ensuring that public services are responsive to the needs of the community and that local government is accountable to its citizens (Mawardi & Rokhim, 2019). In the GCC, a lack of citizen participation is a pervasive problem that affects the ability of local governments to deliver essential services to citizens (Alam & Hasan, 2018). This is due to several factors, including low levels of civic engagement, limited access to information, and a lack of trust in government institutions (Kohli & Singla, 2018). To address this issue, there is a need for innovative approaches that can increase citizen participation in local governance, such as the use of technology and social media platforms to facilitate communication and engagement between citizens and their local governments. Additionally, building trust through transparency and accountability measures can also help to improve citizen participation in the GCC.

4.12 Weak Institutional Capacity

Local government in many countries, especially in developing countries, faces significant challenges due to weak institutional capacity. Institutional capacity refers to the ability of an organization to effectively carry out its mandate and deliver services to the public. In the case of local government, weak institutional capacity can lead to inadequate provision of services, a lack of transparency and accountability, and limited ability to respond to the needs of citizens (Sarker, 2019).

In Bangladesh, weak institutional capacity is a pervasive problem that affects the ability of local government to deliver essential services to citizens. This is due to a range of factors, including inadequate resources, insufficient human capacity, and limited technical expertise (Hossain & Ahmed, 2016). These challenges are compounded by a lack of political will to address the problem as well as limited citizen participation in local government decision-making processes (Islam & Islam, 2019). One of the key consequences of weak institutional capacity is the inadequate provision of services to citizens. For example, in Bangladesh, many local government authorities struggle to provide basic services such as sanitation, healthcare, and education due to a lack of resources and technical expertise (Bari & Hoque, 2019). This can lead to widespread public dissatisfaction and reduced trust in local government.

4.13 Political Interference

In Bangladesh, political interference in local government is a universal problem that can undermine the provision of essential services to citizens. Politicians often use their influence to secure personal gains or to benefit their political parties rather than serving the interests of the public (Bari & Hoque, 2019). This can result in mismanagement of funds, nepotism in recruitment and promotion, and interference in the implementation of development projects. Political interference can also create a culture of fear and intimidation within local government institutions, which can discourage officials from speaking out against corruption or malpractice (Hossain & Ahmed, 2016). This can lead to reduced accountability and transparency, as well as reduced public trust in local government. To address political interference in local government, several strategies can be employed. One approach is to strengthen the legal and regulatory frameworks that govern local government, ensuring that they are free from political interference and that officials are held accountable for any wrongdoing. This can include establishing independent oversight bodies, such as ombudsmen or anti-corruption commissions, to investigate and prosecute cases of corruption and malpractice.

4.14 Limited Resources

Limited resources are a significant challenge that local governments face when it comes to providing necessary services to citizens. According to a report by the National League of Cities, "Local governments are facing tough choices as they try to balance the need for essential services with the reality of dwindling budgets" (National League of Cities, 2020). One of the primary reasons for limited resources is budget constraints. Local governments rely heavily on taxes, grants, and other forms of revenue to fund essential services. However, budget cuts can result in reductions in services and personnel. In a study by the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), budget cuts were cited as a significant challenge facing local governments, with 88% of respondents indicating that budget cuts were either somewhat or very challenging.

Another factor contributing to limited resources is the increasing demand for services. As populations grow and age, the demand for essential services such as healthcare, education, and public safety also increases. This can put a strain on local government resources, which may not be equipped to meet the growing demand. For example, in a study of local government finance conducted by the Pew Charitable Trusts, researchers found that "the primary drivers of rising expenditures were employee salaries and benefits, followed by healthcare and public safety costs". Moreover, limited resources can also lead to a lack of capacity in local governments, which can hinder their ability to provide quality services. A study by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) found that "capacity limitations in staffing, knowledge, and technology" were

significant challenges facing local governments (International City/County Management Association, 2020).

5.0 Conclusion

The challenges facing Gazipur City Corporation (GCC) in delivering services are multifaceted and require a multi-pronged approach to address them. Political interference, weak institutional capacity, a lack of citizen participation, and ineffective monitoring were identified as significant obstacles to effective service delivery. These issues are intertwined, and addressing one necessitates addressing others. To address the challenge of political interference, the study recommends the establishment of an independent civil service commission and the adoption of transparent recruitment and promotion policies. This will help to insulate local government officials from political interference and ensure that they are appointed and promoted based on merit and competence. To address the challenge of weak institutional capacity, the study recommends targeted training and capacity building for local government officials. This can be achieved through the establishment of training programs and the recruitment of technical experts in key areas such as finance, planning, and management. To address the challenge of lack of citizen participation, the study recommends the establishment of citizen feedback mechanisms, such as complaint hotlines and citizen scorecards, to promote greater citizen engagement and oversight. This will help to hold local government officials accountable for their actions and decisions and ensure that services are tailored to meet the needs of citizens. Finally, to address the challenge of ineffective monitoring, the study recommends the establishment of effective monitoring and evaluation systems within local government agencies. This can be achieved through the use of technology to facilitate data collection and analysis, the establishment of monitoring and evaluation units within government agencies, and the promotion of greater citizen engagement in the monitoring and evaluation process. In summary, the challenges facing local government in delivering services in Bangladesh require a coordinated effort to address them. Addressing the challenges will require reforms to strengthen institutional capacity, promote citizen participation, and improve monitoring and accountability mechanisms. The recommendations made in this study provide a roadmap for addressing these challenges and improving service delivery in Bangladesh.

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