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DYNAMICS OF CITIZENS' SATISFACTION ON E-SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS (UNION PARISHAD) IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract: *The necessity for modernizing the public sector is repeatedly driven by a need to make public service delivery more effective and responsive to citizens' aspirations. In this regard, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is considered an efficient instrument for delivering better service delivery to citizens. Innovative uses of ICTs in Bangladesh also deal with new modes of providing information and various public services to allow citizens' accessibility through local government institutions. Better performances in public services may generate satisfied clients, which will in turn enhance satisfaction in government and more trust in local institutions. This paper maps perceptions of citizens as regards e-service delivery performance and citizens' satisfaction with local government institutions.*

Keywords: *E-Government, Citizen's Satisfaction, E-service delivery, Union Parishad, Bangladesh*

1. Introduction

E-Government can be largely expressed as the usage of the Internet and information and communication technologies (ICTs) to improve actions of public institutions for the benefit of citizens (Teo et al., 2008). This is because ICT standardizes service

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provisions, uniforms service delivery, and makes public institutions more accountable and transparent. Although ICTs have been in practice in the government sphere for over fifty years in the context of Bangladesh and especially at the local level this is a recent phenomenon. The cumbersome government's standard operating procedures in decision-making processes led to delays much to the dissatisfaction of citizens in public institutions. To streamline and modernize processes of decision-making and to enhance more communications with citizens, ICTs have been introduced even at the local level. The local government at the lowest level in Bangladesh has now embraced ICT allowing rural people access to the internet and communicates online with the rest of the world. Although the uses of ICT especially by the banking sector and other private interests such as mobile phone operators have penetrated the rural areas to ease monetary transactions from home and abroad, it is recently that the public sector has introduced ICT. The key objective of this paper is to measure the perceptions of citizens towards e-service delivery performance and citizens' satisfaction with local government institutions. So, it is essential to know about the influencing factors which are involved in building citizen's satisfaction.

The paper basically focused on three issues including:

1) To assess the present status of citizens' satisfaction on e-service delivery in Union Parishad in Bangladesh.
2) To identify the challenges on the way of e-service receiving at the Union level.
3) To propose some recommendations to overcome the challenges and improve the e-service delivery.

2. Union Digital Center (UDC)

To serve citizens and reduce rigidity, the Government of Bangladesh introduced the Union Digital Center (UDC), which is a one-stop service delivery channel situated at every Union, which is the lowest tier of the local government system. As part of realizing the Digital Bangladesh pledge and achieving the status of a middle-income country, UDCs are considered an effective tool to realize these long-term goals of the government. UDCs are comparable to the 'telecentre' idea by the private sector and based on the idea of Public-Private Partnership (PPP). There are 4,501 UDCs located at every Union throughout the country, and in 2010, around 9002 young entrepreneurs comprising 50% females are employed at UDCs. Entrepreneurs are self-employed who sustain their livelihood with their own generated individual revenue. The major challenge of UDC is how entrepreneurs reap the benefits of this ICT initiative and become self-sustainable through the PPP mode (Hoque & Sorwar, 2015). UDC provides an array of services to local users as well as to other institutions. These include birth registration, life insurance, telemedicine, land records, and foreign employment application as well as telephone services, mobile banking, etc. Given UDC's utility at the local level, various international institutions are also interested to use its services to serve the local population. This is helping to promote UDCs' entrepreneurs to increase their financial incomes. For example, Practical Action Bangladesh is using UDC services for delivering marine fisheries, agriculture, and livestock facilities, UNESCO is

promoting non-formal education while the British Council is recommending prospects of studying English as a language through UDC (Zaman, 2015). The Government of Bangladesh has projected that UDC is considered to be one of the most effective tools through which rural disadvantaged people can be empowered through the use of ICT and reduce asymmetry in information and knowledge.

3. E-Service Delivery, Performance and Citizen's Satisfaction

The transformation of ICT has been shifting human conduct, administration of businesses, and governance of nations. Communication is, actually, much simpler through the internet and mobile gadgets. The upper and lower levels of government have progressively applied the internet as a way of the facility and transfer of public possessions and facilities. E-government has the authority to raise citizen effort to the government; progress endorsed decision-making and raise the level of transparency of government dealings (Kim, 2007). The welfares of e-governance are easily accessible and reliable to citizens. It contains inclusive facilities, keeping of time and cost, greater clarity, better collaboration, better awareness, better examining and mechanism, decision-making etc. However, in the contemporary past, studies maintained with an experiential study are being frequently described in e-governance works, e-governance performance events grounded on viewpoints of crucial stakeholders going to diverse undertakings are usually missing (Suri & Sushil, 2017).

Performance management is whatever anyone acts to progress or whatever anyone acts to uphold superior performance. Performance management can signify accomplishing the performance of an established mentor an entity. Performance facts must facilitate leaders to comprehend how satisfactory the establishment, functions of the establishment, and persons are doing. Efficient performance management must validate that: one understands what an individual is intending for, one understands what individuals have to perform to experience individuals aims, one understands in what way to evaluate advancement to one's aims and one can identify performance difficulties and make a solution of them (Isaac, 2007). Public principles assist as vital actions for e-government performance (Chen et al., 2019). E-government accelerates government service, performance, and trust among citizens in public institutions. Government has to reinforce its management capability, for example, strategic formation, performance supervision, interacting, and governance, to confirm the suitable performance of e-government (Yang & Rho, 2007). This study focuses on citizen's satisfaction with e-service delivery as the key issue.

4. Citizens' Satisfaction on E-service Delivery

Citizen contentment is of pronounced significance to government organizations that perform as facility suppliers to their people (Mishra & Geleta, 2020). Government has the potential to rise citizen fulfillment with management by employing the ICT appropriately, particularly on the internet. This upgraded network of communication confirms the availability and wholeness of public information and service transfer in a

farther suitable method. Citizen satisfaction with e-government facilities is connected with citizen's views. Service productivity is measured as performance dimensions and service results are as citizen satisfaction (Saha et al., 2010).

5. Methodology

This is a qualitative study based on several in-depth interviews including interviews of the chairman of the UP, one UP Members, one official, and interviews of persons from the UP. This study aimed at the dynamics of citizens' satisfaction on E-service delivery in Local Government Institutions in Bangladesh and find out the major dispute and contributions. It also highlights the role of the UP interaction. To address the research aim, all cases were condensed substantively data to facilitate the cases paying attention and highlighted. This study is generally based on primary and secondary data. These primary data were collected during December 2020. To maintain primary data, secondary data were also utilized. To accomplish the study the qualitative method is followed and the cases were selected based on indicators and finally, data were collected from the Cumilla zone of Bangladesh. Nevertheless, the sample design of the study is given in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample design of the study

Division	District	Upazila	Union	Participants	
Chittagong	Cumilla	Comilla Sadar	6 No Jagannathpur Union	Chairman	1
				Secretary	1
				Officials/Staffs	2
				General People	2
				Total	6

Source: Own representation

Based on the case studies, it was initiated that e-governance has contributed to various aspects of the grassroots level. It is noted some evidence from case studies to facilitate E-Governance and it indicates many of the problems and describable facilitates of getting updating service. The following case explains how ICT-based information and service improve service delivery. The following cases will reveal the challenges and contribution of the E-service at the Union level.

Case 1: Roma Akter (pseudonym) is a 40-year-old and she is a Union female Secretary in ward no. 12. Recently she has transferred here from another Union. Our union provides various services like distributing national ID cards, land transmits deed registration, passport issue, car registration, driver's license, law & order maintenance, birth & death certificate, education, and health care, etc. The online platform is exercised in delivering public services to the people. It gives confidence in citizen involvement in the management process and its creation of government more answerable, transparent, and efficient. Online service increased the citizen's satisfaction by providing information and services smoothly. As I am a Union secretary, I manage all e-files finely. No problem has arisen. If no hostility is found within the specific period, I correct the file rights as well. If any doubt is found, then the chairmen monitoring the matter. In some e-service, there need various documents to justify, but generally, people do not fulfill the requirements. There are not show require a certificate. Trade license, citizenship certificate is also issued. Currently, all services are online-based for corona situations. I think Union Office has the necessary staff. IT has enough equipment, but as a secretary, I don't have an official computer yet, I manage e-services through mobile. There is somewhat problematic arise in providing services. There are server problems in other places, but not in our office. Elsewhere the whole month of December could not work due to online problems. We had some problems here in early November. The server problem was later resolved by talking to UNO. So, we can do a lot of good work this month. The cost of the service is very low and, in this case, follows the citizen's charter. How much will be charged for any service that is defined as charted? It does not take more than prescribed citizen charters. She said,

"I am very satisfied to be able to provide service here. Even the service charge is 10 or 20 TK in some cases which would have been 50 Tk if taken from outside. It costs 50 Tk to apply for a small application for an outside shop, but we have 20 to 30 Tk here."

And the service is provided immediately. The previous secretary had less computer knowledge so he had to depend on the entrepreneur. People get all the services, so they don't have to be harassed for anything.

Case 1 express some noteworthy issues like the general people are unaware, UDC officials have less computer knowledge, online problems. To run getting better service, there has no enough equipment or sufficient employee. But here, the cost of the service is very low and the general people do not face any harassment for any e-services.

Case 2: Md. Sajal Kundo (pseudonym) is 45-year-old Union Officials (UDC). As a Union Officials, he has many responsibilities in the UP office. Citizens ought to visit more times in the office to get e-service like to know the application procedure, accumulate the necessary information, make out their job rank, and collecting finishing the document. He talks about those citizens who had to stay several times in the office and wait until the work is complete. Our working platforms are very narrow. No broad workspace. Lack of sufficient trained manpower, citizen's demand is more than the supplier. For these reasons, sometimes citizens wait the afternoon to get service. People had to stay for hours due of officials are not available for the service and they are always being busy. Only three computers cover the whole demands. Sometimes they arrogant behave to the citizens. There are feedback mechanisms that are not better level. E-Service is provided fruitfully due to server problems. There are existed low speeds in website; nonetheless, some respondents use the facilities very well.

A lot of people are looking for services, but the table is just three. We have to do the work because we don't have the sufficient manpower of the local government. Moreover, there is a problem with the server. Many do not understand e-service. In this case, we have to give economic cooperation. I would be satisfied if the device was updated. He stated that ***"I have been doing the same job for 12 years, but no training".*** We are insulted by the public for providing low-quality services at the lowest level, but those at the upper level only set the policy. Our broadband line was cut four months ago today, not repaired yet.

Case 2 shows some noteworthy issues like the waiting time, low speed of service delivery, and the feedback system are not easier. In general, the greater parts of the respondents have to visit 3-4 times for taking one service. For getting improved service, they have no sufficient funds. The inadequacy of the funds could not support the difficulty.

Case 3: Md. Aminul (pseudonym) is a 60-year-old entrepreneur who lives in this union area. He was the main source of income for his families with five members include his three children and his wife. His daughter will be admitted to the fifth class after passing the fourth class. But now he wants to be admitted his daughter to a government school. This requires a proper birth registration card. So, he went to the union council office and filled out the application form. To fulfill the form, Jannat Akhter wrote the name of his daughter. They told me everything is acceptable, but after a few days, they informed me more documents are essential. When the officers checked the document, he saw Sravanti written on the child's card. So this application was not accepted. One of his relatives said less change has taken while the final paper submitted. After correcting it after 3 days, he gave the birth registration. When they didn't effort after that I came into the office. They said that many files have to seek out. Except paid, they are not to be pleased. Officials said everything ran according to the process. Nevertheless, there is a shocking experience. He opined that ***"still now mass people are sufferings in various causes. Officials should block any unfair registration from the early stage that might stop to public sufferings"***.

Case 3 reviews the administrative culture and organizational setup. In this regard, there is seen intra organizational coordination or transformation of documents. Due to the narrow work scope in the office, the officials don't manage properly and there is a lack of administrative setup. For that reason, e-governance services are not perfuming smoothly. If they perform the first work genuinely, still these problems cannot be raised. She informs that she also asked the officials or staff to show her the daughter's documents. These officials should check the document of the child chard. Before checking the documents, then it might prevent such problems.

Case 4: Mr. Karim (pseudonym) is a 50-year-old and is a permanent resident of Jagannathpur Union. A few years ago, he bought a portion of land from his neighbor and his name is Motaleb Khan. Nevertheless, while Karim applies for the renovation of land, he found his application was discarded and mentioned that there is an inconsistency of the name of the ownership of land in the evidence. Karim was extremely disappointed with the negative response to his mutation case. Although it revealed the registered deed of land is to transfer, but, the name of the supplier was mentioned Motaleb Khan. However, in the previous record, according to the Khatian, the landlord is Motaleb Khan. As a result, it creates uncertainty regarding authentic ownership because the name of the seller does not contest. In these circumstances, Karim can't sell this land as the name of evidence is dissimilar. At last, he managed everything's as he is the real owner with the support of Union. Mr. Karim got to relax after managing the accurate registration deed, and which had been implemented online based. He spends energy and money to solve the problem.

Although it revealed the registered deed of land is to transfer, Case 4 reviews the mistakes of land registration and transformation documents. Though the main responsibility goes to the buyer in examination the facts are correct. Maybe the officials ought to help them avoid the mistakes. Moreover, E-Governance plays a very important role in arranging the registration deed to stop mistakes similar to this case and avoid the awful consequences.

Case 5: Moriom (pseudonym) is 35 years old and she is a housewife. She stays in Jagannathpur Cumilla. Recently she faced problems. She will go abroad, but there is a problem with the name. She said one application of mine was rejected by the officials due to mistakes. National Id card name and Birth Certificate name are not marched. I go to the Union Office for solving the problems. The officials were puzzled and said he will check the files. I called him again and again and asked to update him immediately. But he cannot provide the reason for the delay. She is not responding instantly to some slight reasons and he advised me to reapply the next time then it will be approved next time. For this reason, I paid 200 TK for this service and solve the problem in 10 days. So, I think that "the social and political position is very important matters in getting service speedily". She asked the officials how it could be corrected. She also requested him to inform the matter details. Administrative culture is not highly inclusive in nature. There is the exit of the traditions of "Tadbir" because the powerful get different services easily because of their connection to the power source. But disadvantaged and poor people are paying more because of the "Tadbir" culture and lack of connection. Sometimes we are meeting the terms of suffering.

In Case 5 some significant issues are views and observed. Initially, the deficient of consciousness of the mass people are to blame for these consequences. She didn't validate the documents. Furthermore, he has lacked sufficient knowledge and if firstly she checked the documents, then he might not be falling in trouble with this problem. Secondly, the officials are likely to be delay, lack accuracy and they do not justify the document properly and poor administrative culture. There is existed "Tadbir culture" and services vary persons to persons.

Case 6: Mijanur Rahman (pseudonym) is 52 years old and is a Chairperson of the Union Office. The manpower of the union Parishad is inadequate to maintain & operate websites. The total personnel of this office are few, while officials have no training to operating and maintenance of ICT. ICT-based equipment or system is not updated properly. In the offices, most of the service options are online-based, but it does not function correctly. There is no strong searchable database and necessary software to update it. The human resource is not satisfactory to manage and retain E-Governance. Administrative setup is not well like internet & other infrastructural facilities are inadequate and generally supervise locally. So, an amalgamation of electronic processing and the manual system is concerned to supply facilities to citizens.

There is low-speed internet connectivity in the Union office. He also said some DC offices are connected to internet service at own management through a somewhat high-speed connection. But local level offices are planned to high-speed internet connectivity under IT project. In these cases, proper planning is extremely very important to make sure sustainable and high internet connectivity to local offices. Due to COVID 19 crisis, the delivery of services is turned online-based. This indicates the advanced level of E-service and the organizational culture are integrative. Still, E-Governance facilitates are rising. Thus, the government should be able to have the funds for ICT facilities so that the office is available with cost-effective service and E-Government can bring about the desired result.

Case-6 reviews some noteworthy issues like the lack of training officials, lack of ICT equipment or system is not updated, poor internet connections and low speed of service delivery. The financial support and the infrastructural facilities are inadequate.

6. Condensed Findings of the Study

Some of the key findings of the study are:

- **Lack of official's IT knowledge**: The employees are not trained properly about IT skills. The staffs also have not excellent knowledge about online or e-service and virtual work.
- **Online/ server problems**: Most of the Unions face IT problems in the service delivery process as well as keep the low speed of service delivery
- **Lack of necessary equipment:** There are no sufficient tools, equipment, and facilities regarding e-service delivery and to maintain quality services and during a time of crisis.

- **Lack of sufficient employee**: Lack of sufficient employee: There is a lack of adequate personnel and they take workload pressure and occurred to delays delivery of the quality of the services. Furthermore, skilled and energetic personnel are needed to provide quality services always
- **Culture of waiting:** Usually, the greater parts of the people have to visit 3-4 times for taking one service.
- **Lack of training**: The staffs have not proper training to develop IT skills and handle digital IT systems efficiently to supply services to the citizens.
- **Lack of sufficient funds:** The organization cannot fulfill the public's demands lack of funds. The inadequacy of the funds could not support the difficulty.
- **Lack of administrative set up**: The organizations have not proper logistical support to ensure e-service and lack of congenial work environment for the officials. They take extra stress and they are lacking eagerness.
- **The deficient of consciousness of the mass people**: The general people are not aware of e-service facilities, citizens go to the Union Parishad when they face any problems and they are not aware of the citizen charter and not concern about other service charges.
- **Poor administrative culture**: Sometimes the officials do not justify the document properly. There are also existing Adair cultures and service varies from person to person.

7. Recommendations and Conclusions

Based on findings the following recommendations are put for the suitable performance of E-Governance in Bangladesh.

- Update online application system with full-fledged automation.
- Develop an administrative culture and ICT infrastructure to connect all e-facilitating and provide low cost with high internet speed to access data.
- Union offices required sufficient networking system and materials like computer
- All electronics devices in keeping up-to-date.
- Arranging proper training programs for the officials and staff to improve ICT skills.
- Raising consciousness among general people to improve their knowledge and duty.
- To maintain change management by proper leadership with managing financial support and it reduces service delivery difficulty.

At present major government offices are running based on national web portals so that common citizens can access e-service delivery. In local level offices, it would be ensured while citizens would receive faster service. E-Service facilities are boundless which brings various fundamental changes regarding government service delivery. In Bangladesh, the E-Governance sector has also been flourishing in bringing innovative change regarding falling number of unrestricted influence of officials, bother and

corruption; make sure accountability and progress on the whole service delivery procedure. The study also highlighted a number of factors to measure citizen satisfaction with online service delivery at local government institutions. The study examines the relationship between citizen satisfaction and the provision of online services in the context of local government institutions. Overall, the study found that the level of citizens' satisfaction was not adequate due to lack of official's IT knowledge, server problems, low speed of service delivery, lack of necessary equipment, lack of sufficient employee, lack of training, lack of sufficient funds, lack of administrative setup, deficient of consciousness of the mass people, poor administrative culture. Consequently, delivery services are no more efficient. Moreover, the respondents are not pretty more satisfied with the overall performance of the e-service delivery. However, the government needs to be developed E-Systems into the service delivery process with a view to increasing the speed of service delivery and monitoring the activities. Therefore, local government institutions should also provide adequate tools, equipment, and facilities for the provision of quality services.

Authorship

Md. Foyjul- Islam and Rajib Chandra Das were responsible for data collection and analyses. Jannatul Ferdous led manuscript preparation and all authors contributed to manuscript drafting.

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