



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Identification of Gap between Mandated Municipal Services and Services Rendered on the Ground**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this study we examined the gap between mandated municipal services and services provided on the ground. Local municipalities in Sindh are mandated to perform 253 different functions which are listed in 17 groups of compulsory services and 95 groups of optional municipal services. To assess the gap between what local municipalities are committed to deliver and what they are delivering this research was done adopting mixed methods research. Municipalities were selected by adopting multistage random sampling, where 400 respondents, for primary data collection, were selected through stratified random sampling method. The results revealed that only 19% mandated services are delivered. Half of the compulsory services and 89% optional services are not delivered. The access for delivered services also varies for both compulsory and optional municipal functions. The paper recommends prioritizing the service delivery for undelivered municipal services, while budget allocations process, so that maximum municipal outreach may be ensured.

**Keywords:** Gap in Municipal Services, Municipal Services, Municipalities Need to Do

**Introduction**

Municipal governments are mandated to deliver basic municipal services. These services include water sanitation and public health, and are necessary for human survival (Makoti, 2018; Ndebele and Lavhelani, 2017). The municipalities are required to provide all those basic services which are demanded by local citizens. Apart from the common set of municipal services, there seems to be variation in service delivery based on the size of population and structure of municipality (Ferran & Puey, 2016).

However, these councils don't deliver their mandated services in developing countries. The dissatisfaction of citizens is portrayed through people's feedback, heated arguments, protests, and other violent manners (Masiya et al., 2019). The efficiency of municipal services has a direct relationship with the fact that which political government is ruling. The councils led by ruling parties are generally more efficient (Benito et al., 2013). The rendered municipal services despite decentralization of local councils are unable to meet the needs of every growing population. In other words, there is a gap between services demanded and services provided. This gap further widens when it comes to assessing the urban areas (Singh, 2006).

When municipalities are unable to deliver what local citizens are expecting them to deliver this phenomenon is known as gap between what is demanded and what is delivered. In some cases, the services agreed or assigned to municipalities remain undelivered, this is also called gap or inconsistency in municipal services. In certain circumstances this gap becomes alarming that some essential municipal services are either not delivered or partially delivered. (Dlodlo et al., 2012; Nordengen et al., 2006). This shows a great

organizational failure for local government system when local people remain un-served with basic municipal services (Masiya et al., 2019).

There are varied reasons for non-delivery of such municipal services including financial constraints, capacity issues, political interferences, corruption issues and poor monitoring mechanism (Kanyane, 2016). The efficiency of local government directly depends on the financial capacities of local municipalities. The more a municipality is financially sound the greater it renders the mandated services. After financing factors, the size of municipality in terms of population and density are also influencing factors in municipal service delivery (Ahmad, Khalid, & Muzaffar, 2015).

Scarcity of resources is not always the only reason for poor municipal service delivery. A study conducted in west province of south Africa indicates local municipality despite having resources at hand were unable to mandated services up to the satisfaction of municipal users. The reasons were dearth of skills to plan resource allocations, poor capacity to prudent spending of resources, and other transparency cum accountability related concerns which affected service delivery despite resources at hand (Khale & Worku, 2013).

Poor service delivery of local municipalities is caused due to various factors including lack of community participation, poor service delivery skills, dearth of leadership and above all the financial constraints. This study suggests improving revenue collection practices and engaging local communities in implementation and execution of municipal services (Kalonda & Govender, 2021).

It is imperative to ensure compulsory municipal services so that basic needs of citizens are addressed. To improve the overall service structure of local municipalities there is required to undertake overall structural changes in the overall municipal governance system with an aim to minimize political interference. This study further suggests adopting e-governance and an improved accountability system to minimize the menace of corruption

Local municipalities in Sindh are mandated to perform compulsory and optional functions to deliver 129 groups of municipal services per the Sindh Local Government Act 2013. To assess the status of actual municipal services delivered on the ground by local municipalities against the mandated services, the study was conducted from 400 randomly selected users of municipal services. This study presents the findings based on the respondents' feedback. These findings are further cross from government reports and other available literature. In the final part of this research paper, the recommendations are narrated to suggest measures local government institutions are required to fill the gap between mandated services and services rendered on the ground.

## **Literature Review**

Basic municipal services including water supply, sanitary and refusal removal are ensured by South African government to poor citizens at either subsidized rates or completely free. The benchmark for rendering these services free of cost is decided based on their level of income of beneficiary households. This study further explains that though there is no decided official poverty line by the government however, unofficial sources claim that such households having a minimum income of less than R1500 are considered in low poverty line (Bhorat et al., 2012).

Local municipalities in United States, followed by great recession, adopted pragmatic municipalism including the usage of alternative revenues and introduction of privatization and cooperation of other actors to cater the increased demand of municipal services by local communities (Kim & Warner, 2016)

Service delivery in municipalities has a direct relationship with the overall operational scale and capacity of the municipality. The higher the scale and capacity of the municipality the greater are the municipal services. The structure of local municipality also has a relationship with service delivery. The study has found more decentralized councils are more capable of delivering required services. Above all the resources availability also has direct and positive relationship with service delivery (Sethunya & Mlambo, 2022).

Municipal expenditures have a direct and positive relationship with municipal expenses. As expenditure increases, they generate additional income. This study further explains that expenditures are rewarding investments which ultimately increases the income of local municipalities. The findings also suggest that increased income gives the opportunity to local municipalities to spend more and to provide better services. The improved services motivate taxpayers to pay local bills and council taxes which in the long run increases the income and vice versa

The study conducted in South Africa to assess the satisfaction of municipal users with municipal services with particular focus on what is delivered versus what ought to be delivered. The fundamental municipal services like provision of water, electricity and sanitation are delivered up to mark. However, other municipal tasks like maintenance of roads, ensuring public safety, improving financial conditions through creating jobs and other such related municipal tasks are not delivered (Akinboade et al., 2012).

## **Material and Methods**

For this study purpose mixed methods research was adopted. Mixed research methods comprise of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the same research to provide holistic and broader vision of the problem (Almeida, 2018; Halcomb and Hickman, 2015). Application of mixed methods research along with varied data sources are useful in making data findings more reliable and valid to report (Abro et al., 2015).

Multistate Random Sampling method is used for selection of scattered geographical locations. This approach is both cost effective and provides accurate results. The multistage estimators give more accurate and reliable results. (Maduekwe and Vries, 2019; Sisodia & Singh, 2020).

Therefore, two stage random sampling approaches were adopted. At first stage the selection of municipalities was done through multi-stage random sampling method where from the province Sindh two divisions namely Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas were selected and therein two municipal corporations including Municipal Corporation Mirpurkhas and Municipal Corporation Hyderabad were selected. The councils' selection was further narrowed down to select Qasimabad Municipal Committee and Digri Town Committee, to provide equal opportunity to all representing samples.

Stratified Random Sampling method is very effective in selection of unbiased sample for any primary data collection. This sampling method ensures equality opportunity to every unit in the population to be part of selection process for any door-to-door data collection requirements (Howel et al., 2020; Tyrer & Heyman, 2018).

Hence, for the selection of respondents stratified random sampling technique was used to select 400 different users of the municipal services including 200 shop keepers and 200 households' owners. The primary data collected was cross verified by survey guides comprised of 04 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 40 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The data outliers were addressed, and necessary rectification was done before interpretation and presentation of results.

Qualitative content analysis was done to explore mandatory municipal functions. It was found that there are 253 different mandated municipal functions distributed under various groups of mandatory and optional services. The service delivery analysis was done through both qualitative and quantitative data using SPSS descriptive statistics. The common responses were assessed in form of percentage frequencies. The results are presented in two forms including status of municipal service delivery and percentage of access to these services. Survey guides intimated to gauge the satisfaction of citizens from municipal services however, keeping in view the time constraints and limited scope of this paper, we choose to presented status of service delivery with view to assess and analyze the gap between mandated municipal services and services finally delivered to end users.

## Results and Discussion

As discussed above in section one, the municipalities are responsible to render municipal services in substitute of taxes and fees paid by local people. There are 17 groups of mandated services and 95 groups of additional services with 36 compulsory functions and 217 optional functions respectively which local municipalities to perform within their jurisdiction as per the Local Government Act 2013 and its amendments. The results, however, reveal that these municipalities are only able to deliver 47% of mandated services and 11% of optional services in respective jurisdictions. Hence, there is a significant gap between mandated municipal services and actual services delivered on the ground. This gap clearly indicates an inconsistency in service delivery. The status of compulsory services is tabled below.

**Table 1**  
**Status of Service Delivery for Compulsory Services**

#	Major Functions	Performance / Delivery Status
1	Water Supply Services	The water supply services are delivered to 94% of the population. 06% of people are not provided any water supply.
2	Sanitation Services	Sanitation services are provided to 81% of the population. Whereas 19% of residents are not provided with sanitation services.
3	Solid Waste Management Services	Solid waste management including refuse collection is provided to 66% respondents. Thus, 44% of citizens don't have access to refuse collection and/or solid waste management service.
4	Management of Public Transport	Public transport management is done in 43% of areas whereas local municipalities are unable to ensure transport management in 57% areas.
5	Management of local markets including functional market management committees	Access to market management services is confirmed by 48% respondents. This shows that 52% of areas including markets don't have municipal support or role to manage markets.
6	Other mandatory services including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ public health management</li> <li>○ public streets management</li> <li>○ protection from animals</li> </ul>	Only 24% of respondents have confirmed access to these mandatory services. In other words, 76% respondents shared that their municipalities are not providing the listed mandatory services. Tragically, all the other compulsory mandated services are not provided. This clearly depicts the gap and

- public safety measures
- tree planation

The analysis presented in table above shows that only 47% of the mandated services are provided by local municipalities in Sindh. Whereas 53% of these services are never rendered. This clearly depicts a wide gap between mandated services and services which local municipalities are able to ensure to their citizens. Even for the services provided, there seems an inconsistency as percentage for access varies for each municipal service. The highest access is for water supply service which is 94%. In other words, there are around 06% of residents in local municipalities who don't have any access to municipal water supply service. They either purchase water needed or use other private sources like handpumps, dug wells etc.

After water supply the sanitation services are also very crucial. However, the results reveal that 81% have access to sanitation services. The councils, despite their various efforts to address sanitation needs in Sindh, are unable to provide access to 19% of citizens to basic sanitations services. This again shows that sanitation service is provided by local municipalities in respective jurisdictions, however, there is significant inconsistency in its access to all citizens.

The access to third compulsory municipal service of refuse collection decreases further to 66%. In other words, 44% of people within the jurisdiction of local municipalities don't have access to this facility of refuse collection. Likewise, 57% of the citizens don't have access to the municipal service of public transport management and 52% denied access to market management services. This percentage of access to compulsory municipal services decreases to 24% for all other 47% provided compulsory services.

The results show that 57% of the mandated compulsory municipal services are never provided by local municipalities in their areas. This creates a wide gap. This gap further broadens as the analysis shifts to analyze the access to optional municipal services.

**Table 2**  
**Status of Service Delivery for Optional Municipal Services**

#	Major Functions	Performance / Delivery Status
1	Removal collection and disposal of refuse by occupiers	1/3rd of occupiers is asked to remove refuse. Less than 10% of occupiers receive formal notices. Occupiers refuse in 80% cases collected by council.
2	Refuse to be property of council concerned	No such evidence collected from the field. Councils don't claim refuse and further auction as per law.
3	Public toilets to be provided at key public areas	90% of key public areas are devoid of toilet facilities. Whereas 3/4th of available toilets are also non-functional and non-operational.
4	Establishment of public markets / Special Markets	Public Markets including 'Special Markets / Bachat Bazars' are established occasionally.
5	Firefighting service	97% of respondents confirmed the availability of firefighting service.
6	Public Street Maintenance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Public roads</li> <li>○ Street Lightening</li> </ul>	60% of respondents confirm the street maintenance service of the local council.
7	Provide amenities for life saving in emergencies	40% of respondents confirmed that lifesaving amenities are provided in emergencies
8	Management of burial and cremation places	70% of respondents confirm that local council manage and regulate these places.

9	Disposal of Carcasses (dead animals)	30% of respondents confirmed that carcasses are transported and thrown away. No proper dumping in practice
10	Establishment and regulation of libraries	65% of respondents confirmed the role of their council in the establishment / maintenance of libraries.
11	Community development works / schemes	82% of respondents this role of municipalities
12	Licenses of Hammam or bath	20% hammams or bath spots are having proper license and permission.
13	Other miscellaneous functions	7% of respondents confirmed other functions.

The summary of findings as presented in table above explicitly describe that the mandated municipal services which comes under optional functions chapter some important optional services relating to coerced measures to ensure cleaning and refuse collection are not ensured as per their mandate. Only one third of responsible individuals who refuse to be occupied on open roads and streets are formally asked to remove on the refuse. In 80% of the cases where refuse created by individuals like remains of construction materials etc is removed by local municipality without any formal penalty or action to occupiers. Similarly, 80% of public areas are devoid of public toilets, which otherwise is the responsibility of the local council to provide them. Whereas the majority of the respondents confirmed that firefighting services are provided by local municipalities. However, the establishment of special markets is done occasionally.

Moreover, the optional services of street management including provision of public roads, ensuring safety and street lightening are not provided to 40% of the residents. In other words, as per the record of local municipalities, this optional service of street management is provided in respective municipal jurisdictions. However, the primary data collected from respondents confirms that this service is hardly provided to 60% of the people. Hence, the results explain a wide gap between mandated services versus services delivered.

Though the provision of life saving amenities in case of emergencies is optional municipal functions. However, this is very crucial keeping in view the safety of human lives in case of emergencies and natural hazards. However, only 40% of respondents confirmed that such lifesaving amenities are provided to them during emergencies and hazards.

Likewise, the access to management of burial places municipal service is confirmed by 70% citizens and libraries management services are accessed and confirmed by 65% of the population. The access percentage for other optional services dwindles as we move down on the analysis scale.

Tragic part of this gap analysis is explained through very poor access to optional municipal services. Only 11% of the mandated optional services are delivered against the commitment of the municipalities. Ironically, 89% of the mandated optional services of municipalities are not even delivered. The status of inconsistent access against the 11% delivered services is much lower than people's expectations. Tabled below are the municipal functions which are not provided by local municipalities.

**Table 3**  
**Mandated Service Which Are Not Delivered**

Compulsory and Optional Municipal Services which are not provided			
Infectious Diseases Control.	Alteration, closures of private drains.	Establishment of Veterinary Hospitals.	Civil Defense Functions.

Public Vehicle.	Prepare Drainage Scheme.	Prevention of contagious diseases in animals.	Flood response.
Adult Education.	Government to reject or approve Drainage Scheme.	Impound of stray animals.	Famine control.
Primary Education.	Implementation of Drainage Schemes.	Picketed or tethered animals.	Control of Dangerous and Offensive Articles.
Protection from stray animals.	Regulation of Private Drainage.	Establishment of animal homes.	Regulate and seize dangerous articles.
Brick Kilns, Potteries, and Other Kilns.	Establishment of Bathing and Washing Places.	Cattle farms.	Electricity, Gas and Water Connections.
Establishment of Hospitals.	Licenses of Hammam or Baths.	Monitor Animals Sale.	Provision of Burial Places.
Frame Schemes.	Establishment & Regulation of Dhobi Ghats.	Frame Livestock Schemes.	Administration of Burial places.
Establishment of Health & Maternity Centers.	License for Washermen.	Control of dangerous animals.	Tree Plantation.
Health Education.	Declaration of Water Course.	Hold Cattle Shows.	Establishment of Public Gardens.
Establish & Maintain Hospitals and Dispensaries.	Provide Amenities for life saving.	Maintenance of Zoo.	Maintenance of Open Spaces.
Hospitals to be Equipped.	License for boats & Vessels.	Disposal of Carcasses.	Improvement of Forests.
First Aid Centers, Mobile Medical Units, Promoting.	Ferries in Public Water Courses.	Road Maintenance.	Protection of Trees.
Medical Education, Inspection.	Public Water Course as public Fishery.	Street Maintenance.	Protection from Tanks.
Regulate private water sources.	Prohibit manufacture or sale.	Streets nuisance offenses etc.	Establish & Maintain Education Institutes.
Regulate the private drains.	Prohibit import and hawking.	Frame Schemes.	Efforts of Compulsory Education.
Establishment of Markets.	Regulate the transport.	Public Street Watering.	Innovative efforts to promote culture.
Regulating the Existing owners of private Markets.	Seizure of Animals.	Smooth flow of traffic.	Establishing libraries.
Discontinue or take over private markets by council.	License by Council.	Public vehicles operated by animals.	Organizing Fairs.
Maintenance of private market.	Milk Supply Schemes.	Prevention and Extinction of Fire.	Establish Welfare Homes.
Prepare and implement Development Plan.	Business Enterprise Development.	public housing schemes development.	training of drivers and lifeguards.

Sponsor Community Development Projects.	Land development and improvement schemes.	maintenance of religious places.	assistance in disasters and emergencies.
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Therefore, the detailed analysis above indicates that local municipalities in Sindh are unable to deliver 53% of mandated services and 89% of optional services. The services presented in table no. 03 are never delivered by local municipalities though they are mandated under the Sindh Local Government Act, 2013. This proves that there is a wide gap between services which local municipalities are required to delivered against the actual services which are delivered. This is yet another debate that out the provided municipal services the percentage of people's access and their satisfaction is not up to mark. This paper, however, focusses on the gap between required service delivery versus actual services rendered on the ground.

## Conclusion

Local municipalities in Sindh as required to deliver municipal services to their citizens. These services are broadly categorized in two chapters including compulsory municipal services and optional municipal services. Both these groups include 112 group of services with a breakup of 17 services under compulsory chapter and 95 services under optional one. Each service group varies in number of functions. There are a total of 36 compulsory and 217 optional functions which local municipalities, under the Sindh Local Government Act 2013 and its later amendments, are mandated to deliver. The results however suggests that despite all the efforts and changes in local laws, the local councils in Sindh deliver only 19% of the total mandated services. In other words, 81% of the mandated services are not delivered. These services and their related functions are just narrated in books. The apparent reasons for this wide gap between mandated services and services rendered on the ground is funds shortage. The other reasons also include poor planning, capacity issues with regards to service delivery, low prioritization of municipal actions and political interference in service delivery process.

This gap between mandated services and services finally delivered to end users varies once we review separate analysis for compulsory and optional services. Local councils in Sindh deliver 47% of the mandated services and 11% of the optional services. In other words, 53% of the compulsory services and 89% of the optional services are not delivered. Hence, this gap widens greatly when considering the optional services.

The status of access for the rendered services also varies for each service group. The water supply and sanitation have highest access that is 94% and 81% respectively. This also explains that 06% citizens don't have access to municipal water supply service. Similarly, 91% people are deprived of sanitation services. This access deprivation aggravates further as we move down on provided municipal services. Like 44% people don't have access to refuse collection service and 52% denied any access of market management services provided by local municipalities in their areas. 76% people confirmed that they don't have access to public health management, street management and other related compulsory services. This status of access deteriorates further for rendered optional municipal services. For some claimed services more than 90% respondents denied the access. Furthermore, those citizens who are having access to municipal services, their satisfaction is yet another debate which may be assessed separately.

The crux of above conclusion may be summarized in the concrete statement that there exists a wide gap between mandated municipal services and service delivered on the ground. This gap also varies greatly for compulsory and optional municipal services. Half of the compulsory services are not delivered. Only 1/10<sup>th</sup> of the optional services is delivered. Moreover, the access of local citizens for delivered services also varies greatly. The minimum value for denial of access is 06% and the maximum is up to 93%. This indicates



that for some delivered optional services 93% people don't have access to such services. However, this research did not explore the satisfaction of citizens from the accessed municipal services which yet is another area to ponder upon.

### **Recommendations**

This research recommends that local municipalities should prioritize their delivery of much needed services, while their budget allocations, which are never addressed. The resource allocations may be prioritized keeping in view the demand of citizens with an aim to expand the operational scale of local municipalities and to address most of their mandated services. A holistic approach to mobilize resources and to expand operational may unable local municipalities in Sindh to minimize and fill that gap of mandated services and services finally delivered on the ground.

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