



CITIZEN PERCEPTION OF PERFORMANCE OF THE URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL IN SERVICE DELIVERY

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ABSTRACT

Municipal Corporations in India are urban local government systems that work for the development of a Metropolitan City. The intent of this paper is to present the evaluation and analysis of the opinions of the citizens regarding the functioning and the performance of the urban local government council in providing services. The data was obtained on a three-stage random sample of 502 citizens in the state of West Bengal in India. A structured interview schedule taking into account the citizen's assessment of the overall performance of the local government municipal council and its performance in twelve local services delivery and responsibility areas was used in the study. Using Regression Modelling and Quadrant Analysis, it is inferred that the urban local government council has a very strong position in the minds of citizens in regard to its performance in Public hospitals and health facilities/services and Sports, Recreational and Cultural facilities.

KEYWORDS : Perception, Performance, Urban Government, Service Delivery

INTRODUCTION

Municipal Corporations in India are urban local government systems that work for the development of a Metropolitan City. The Mayor is the head of the Municipal Corporation. Executive Officers monitor the implementation of all the programs related to planning and development of the corporation with the coordination of Mayor and Municipal Councillors. The objective of the present study is to engage citizens in a meaningful assessment and debate on the quality of services and governance at the Urban local level and to evaluate and analyze the opinions of the citizens regarding the functioning and the performance of the urban local government municipal council in providing services.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, the multistage sampling procedure is adopted in primary data collection and hence it moves through a series of stages until the population elements that constitute the desired sample are arrived at. The three stages of sampling in this study are carried out according to probability sampling principles.

For this study, respondents were selected from two Municipal Corporations, namely, Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Siliguri Municipal Corporation that were randomly selected out of the corporations in the state of West Bengal in India. In Kolkata Municipal Corporation, a total of 326 citizens were selected from 41 wards out of 144 wards with a sampling interval of 4. Eight households were selected from each of the selected ward except in one ward where only six households were selected. In Siliguri Municipal Corporation, a total of 176 citizens were selected from 16 wards out of 47 wards with a sampling interval of 3. Eleven households were selected from each of the selected ward. A sample total of 502 citizens from these wards were selected as respondents for the study. The units selected form a good representative sample. A structured interview schedule taking into account the citizen's assessment of the overall performance of the Municipal Council's general Service Delivery in the Municipal Corporation and the performance of the local government municipal council in twelve local services delivery and responsibility areas was used in the study. The interview schedule was administered to the respondents through informal interviews to elicit information relating to the study.

In order to achieve the objective of the study, tools such as Regression Analysis and Quadrant Analysis were used in this

research and key Local Services Delivery and Responsibility areas that are associated with the Overall Performance of the Local Government Council are identified.

A key part of the analysis is to estimate a regression model with Citizen Satisfaction with the Overall Performance of the Local Government Council in the Municipal Corporation as the dependent variable and satisfaction with the performance of the Municipal Council in twelve Local Services Delivery and Responsibility Areas in the Municipal Corporation influencing citizen satisfaction such as Local roads and Streets, Solid waste, garbage and refuse collection, Public transport, Water supply, Sewerage, Electricity supply, Public schools, Public hospitals and health facilities/services, Economic Development - efforts of municipal corporation to improve local business environment / tourism / jobs creation, Green areas (parks, playgrounds, public areas), Care for the Elderly, and Sports / Recreational / Cultural facilities as the predictors. The results of this analysis which is carried out using an assessment of the performance of the local government municipal council in local services delivery and responsibility areas for two Municipal Corporations, namely Kolkata Municipal Corporation and Siliguri Municipal Corporation in the state of West Bengal in India are given in the section below.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result of the analysis yields the following estimated regression equation:

$$S = .021X_1 + .089X_2 - .003X_3 + .040X_4 - .008X_5 - .032X_6 + .126X_7 + .258X_8 + .107X_9 + .116X_{10} + .127X_{11} + .172X_{12}, \text{ where}$$

S = Rating of Overall Performance of the Local Government Council

X₁ = Rating of Local roads and Streets

X₂ = Rating of Solid waste, garbage and refuse collection

X₃ = Rating of Public transport

X₄ = Rating of Water supply

X₅ = Rating of Sewerage

X₆ = Rating of Electricity supply

X₇ = Rating of Public schools

X₈ = Rating of Public hospitals and health facilities/services

X₉ = Rating of Economic Development

X₁₀ = Rating of Green areas (parks, playgrounds, public areas)

X₁₁ = Rating of Care for the Elderly

X₁₂ = Rating of Sports / Recreational / Cultural facilities

The average ratings together with standard deviation for Citizen

Satisfaction with the Overall Performance of the Local Government Council in the Municipal Corporation and the twelve key local services delivery and responsibility areas are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall Performance	2.96	1.101
Local roads and Streets	2.95	1.289
Solid waste, garbage and refuse collection	2.72	1.347
Public transport	3.41	1.154
Water supply	3.00	1.325
Sewerage	2.60	1.369
Electricity supply	3.63	1.185
Public schools	3.11	1.189
Public hospitals and health facilities/services	3.09	1.146
Economic Development	2.57	1.180
Green areas	2.76	1.225
Care for the Elderly	2.74	1.261
Sports / Recreational / Cultural facilities	2.76	1.218

Table 2 given below is the table of standardized regression coefficients together with significance values.

Table 2. Coefficients

Variable	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Beta			
Local roads and Streets	.021	.723	.470
Solid waste, garbage and refuse collection	.089	3.069	.002
Public transport	-.003	-.082	.935
Water supply	.040	1.799	.073
Sewerage	-.008	-.289	.773
Electricity supply	-.032	-1.086	.278
Public schools	.126	3.031	.003
Public hospitals and health facilities/services	.258	5.855	.000
Economic Development	.107	4.629	.000
Green areas	.116	3.570	.000
Care for the Elderly	.127	3.842	.000
Sports / Recreational / Cultural facilities	.172	5.120	.000

It is observed that with regard to the Municipal Corporation, out of the twelve local services delivery and responsibility areas, eight areas such as Solid waste, garbage and refuse collection, Water supply, Public schools, Public hospitals and health facilities/services, Economic Development - efforts of municipal corporation to improve local business environment / tourism / jobs creation, Green areas (parks, playgrounds, public areas), Care for the Elderly, and Sports / Recreational / Cultural facilities are significant.

The regression coefficients provide estimates of the relative importance of the different local services delivery and responsibility areas in the Municipal Corporation in determining Citizen Satisfaction with the Overall Performance of the Local Government Council. The results show that X8 (Rating of Public hospitals and health facilities/services) is most important in determining overall satisfaction. The results indicate that a one-unit increase in average rating on Public hospitals and health facilities/services will produce an increase of .258 in average citizen satisfaction rating for Overall Performance. For example, the current average rating on Public

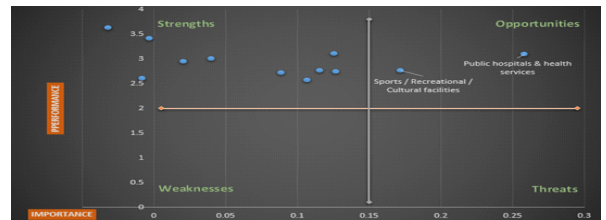
hospitals and health facilities/services is 3.09. If, by providing better Public hospitals and better health services and facilities, the urban local government could increase this rating to 4.09, then it would expect the average citizen satisfaction rating for Overall Performance to increase to 3.218.

X12 (Rating of Sports / Recreational / Cultural facilities) is not far behind Public hospitals and health facilities/services in its effect on Citizen Satisfaction with the Overall Performance of the Local Government Council in the Municipal Corporation according to the regression estimates. At the other extreme, X1 (Rating of Local roads and Streets), X2 (Rating of Solid waste, garbage and refuse collection), X3 (Rating of Public transport), X4 (Rating of Water supply), X5 (Rating of Sewerage), and X6 (Rating of Electricity supply) are less important in determining Citizen Satisfaction with the Overall Performance of the Local Government Council in the Municipal Corporation and the other four factors such as Public schools, Economic Development, Green areas (parks, playgrounds, public areas), Care for the Elderly are in between in importance.

The performance ratings provide a different picture. According to the average ratings, citizens believe that the Municipal Corporation is doing the best job on X6 (Electricity supply), followed closely by X3 (Public transport) and the worst job on X9 (Economic Development - efforts of Municipal Corporation to improve local business environment / tourism / jobs creation).

The Quadrant Chart with regard to the performance and importance ratings of the different local services delivery and responsibility areas in the Municipal Corporation are shown in the following figure (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Quadrant Chart for Local Services Delivery and Responsibility Areas



The results for the Municipal Corporation, shown in Figure 1, indicate that the urban local government council has a very strong position in the minds of citizens in regard to its performance in Public hospitals and health facilities/services and Sports / Recreational / Cultural facilities. Both Public hospitals and health facilities/services and Sports / Recreational / Cultural facilities are very important to citizens, and the Municipal Corporation is perceived to be doing a good job in these areas. The Municipal Corporation also is perceived to be doing a good job in terms of all other remaining ten local services delivery and responsibility areas. However, these items are somewhat less important to citizens. There seems to be no pressing problems for the Municipal Corporation relating to local services delivery and responsibility areas.

CONCLUSION

The local service delivery area of Public hospitals and health facilities/services is the most important one of all the local services delivery and responsibility areas that were considered in determining Citizen Satisfaction with the Overall Performance of the Local Government Council's general Service Delivery in the Municipal Corporation. The area of Sports / Recreational / Cultural facilities is not far behind in its effect on Citizen Satisfaction with the performance according to the regression estimates. Other areas are in between in importance or less important in determining satisfaction with the Overall Performance of the Local Government Council in the Municipal Corporation. The citizens also believe that the urban local government is doing the best job on Electricity supply, followed closely by Public transport. It is also concluded that

the urban local government council has a very strong position in the minds of citizens in regard to its performance in Public hospitals and health facilities/services and Sports / Recreational / Cultural facilities.

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