

Implementing Citizen's Charter in Urban Local Government in Bangladesh: Do Accountability and Public Awareness Matter?

Sajib Kumar Roy¹, Mohammad Nur Ullah², Bikram Biswas³, Md. Mafizur Rahman^{4*}

¹Department of Development Studies, Hajee Mohammad Danesh Science and Technology University, Dinajpur-5200, Bangladesh.

²Department of Public Administration, Bangladesh University of Professionals, Mirpur Cantonment, Dhaka-1216, Bangladesh.

³Department of Educational Administration, Noakhali Science and Technology University, Noakhali-3814, Bangladesh.

⁴Department of Public Administration, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100, Bangladesh.

*Correspondence Email: mmrahman@pad.jnu.ac.bd

Received: 10 January 2023; Revised: 3 March 2023; Accepted: 12 March 2023

Abstract: *This research looks at the possibilities and challenges of adopting a Citizen's Charter in Paurashava. In this regard, introducing the Citizen Charter in government offices is a step forward. One Paurashava was selected as the study field to observe the current situation of Citizen's Charter implementation and to recognize the problems in Citizen's Charter implementation. This study is primarily qualitative in nature. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used. Besides, official records and other relevant documents were used as secondary sources. According to preliminary observations, the extent of Citizen Charter implementation in Paurashava is extremely poor. All of the services of the Paurashava are not covered by the Citizen's Charter, and most citizens are unaware of it. A number of other problems also hamper the success of the Paurashava. Therefore, these factors constrain the successful implementation of the Citizens' Charter at the Paurashava.*

Keywords: *Citizen Charter; Accountability; Awareness; Urban Local Government Paurashava; Bangladesh.*

How to Cite:

Roy, S. K., Ullah, M. N., Biswas, B., & Rahman, M. (2023). Implementing Citizen 's Charter in Urban Local Government in Bangladesh : Do Accountability and Public Awareness Matter ? *Journal of Governance*, 8(1), 1-16. <https://doi.org/dx.doi.org/10.31506/jog.v8i1.18791>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/).

Introduction

The conventional administrative structure is currently experiencing a crisis due to its inability to provide goods and services in a timely and productive manner. This administrative structure, according to numerous authors, is ineffective, insensitive, inefficient, and often hostile to the very citizens it is supposed to represent (Osborne and Plastrik, 1997; Rhodes, 1997; Osborne and Gaebler, 1992; Hood, 1991; and Pollitt, 1990). Furthermore, it is said that the government as a whole has become profoundly disconnected from the public. It primarily serves and is dominated by the wealthy, educated, and influential. It is regarded as a cost-effective, suitable, and applicable method of delivering high-quality services. In response to this trend, a Citizen's Charter has been implemented in a number of municipalities in Bangladesh to improve urban local service provision and financial management. However, the status of citizen charter implementation at the local urban level, especially in municipalities, is not satisfactory, implying that citizen charter implementation is a problem caused by government incompetence. The key causes are corruption at the local level in cities and citizen ignorance.

Though the government of Bangladesh has taken some measures to familiarize people with the Charter, it is still at a preliminary stage. In this sector, there are several issues. For example, citizens of a municipality may not be aware of the services available to them. They would demand that the municipality guarantee their medical attention if they

knew. As a result, it can be said that citizen ignorance regarding the Citizen's Charter is a major issue that requires immediate attention as a research problem for a project.

Bangladesh has a short history of citizen charters. In reality, only in 2009 did the country pave the way for a Citizen Charter. Bangladesh is also in its early stages. Otherwise, the initial concept of the Citizen's Charter was borrowed from the outside world. In the academic field of social sciences, no study is ever finished; further research is always needed for better results. In Bangladesh, the idea of a Citizen's Charter is relatively new. As a result, the Citizen Charter report would be beneficial to both citizens and governments. By studying Citizen's Charters, we can see that lack of knowledge of the citizens is the main reason for not implementing the Citizen's Charter at the local level, especially in municipalities.

Every study has a set of goals in mind. Every task is completed during research time, and the research is completed in accordance with the research objectives. As a result, the key goals of our study are listed below:

- a. To unravel the factors that affect the implementation of Citizen's Charter.
- b. To inquire as to why problems arise in the implementation of Citizen's Charter.

Method

This is a descriptive study. To collect original data, we have chosen the survey method to meet the goals of our study. Surveys are commonly used to

gather data and monitor trends over time (Kabir, 2016). In the context of a specific research objective, it refers to the technique of collecting data through interview questionnaires.

The study was conducted at Katakhalī Paurashava in Rajshahi District. The interview method was used to collect primary data. We used the questionnaire form for the interview, which included open-ended and closed-ended questions. We chose 120 residents from the mentioned municipality based on their income and classified them into three categories for primary data collection: (a). Lower class: Monthly income (maximum BDT 5000); (b). Middle class: Monthly income (Tk. 5000 – Tk. 10000); (c). Upper class: Monthly income (more than Tk. 10000). Data was gathered using interviews scheduled from July 5 to July 31, 2021. The questionnaire was designed to elicit information about the problems faced by citizens and the organization itself. Purposive sampling was used to pick the desired sample. Qualitative analyses were used to synthesize and statistically analyze the data.

Based on income, all 120 respondents were chosen from the citizens, with 40 from the upper-class category, 40 from the middle-class category, and 40 from the lower-class category. Besides, we also spoke with the secretary of that Paurashava and other

officials. In addition, various types of records, such as prior academic studies, books, journals, magazines, and newspapers, are gathered as secondary data.

Citizen charters have been incorporated into nearly every field of government as an important strategy or method. Service providers are beginning to realize that they must be true service providers rather than merely administrators. This research will provide insight into these dimensions. Municipalities are the most powerful unit of urban local government, and their implementation is critical for customer-centric governance. The research was carried out in Katakhalī Paurashava, Rajshahi District, to see how the Citizen's Charter is implemented. The reason for choosing this municipality is that the data gathered from it will represent the practical situation surrounding the implementation of the Citizens' Charter in this area.

Conceptual and Analytical Framework

The main goal of this section is to provide an analytical and conceptual framework for the research. Attempts have been made to distinguish dependent and independent variables in order to do so. Furthermore, a successful discussion of how the independent variable affects the dependent variable has been made.

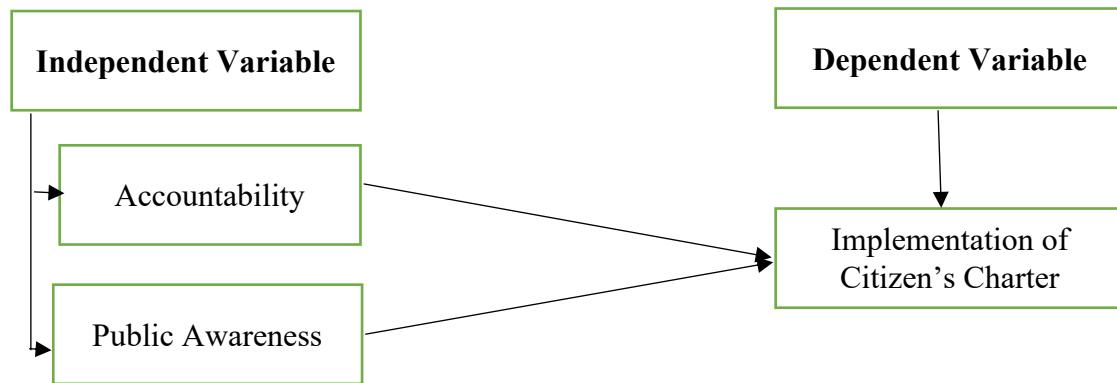


Figure 1: Analytical Framework

Citizen’s Charter

A citizen charter is a document that specifies the types of services that an entity offers, the cost that the receiver must pay to the organization in exchange for those services, and how the receiver can obtain those services. It contains the following information: (a) the name of the services provided by Paurashava, (b) where the services are available, (c) what customers must do, (d) how much money will be required, (e) how much time will be required, (f) where complaints must be filed, and 7) where appeals must be filed.

The Citizen's Charter is a formal declaration that outlines the user's rights and the service provider's responsibilities. The Citizen's Charter is a tool that puts citizens in the driver's seat when it comes to determining the quality and scope of services. It also assumes that the public has faith in the system in place to punish officeholders' bad conduct. So that if they deviate from what has been preserved, they would be held responsible (Beniwal, 2013). In other words, a Citizen’s Charter is a document that specifies the service provider's adherence to the citizen-specified quality and service requirements

(Beniwal, 2005). The Citizens' Charter is a modern tool under the umbrella of good governance that aims to improve the efficiency of public service delivery (Beniwal, 2005). In a nutshell, it is a structured piece of information that reflects the organization's comprehensive efforts to assure citizens, focusing on service quality, information selection, and consultation, among other items.

In our research, we define a Citizen’s Charter as a list of services offered by the Paurashava to citizens and how this charter can help the general public.

Accountability

Accountability in ethics and governance refers to responsibility, blameworthiness, liability, and the duty of accountability. It has been at the center of discussions about public, nonprofit, and private (corporate) issues as a governance component. In its most basic form, accountability can be described as any situation in which individuals in positions of power are supposed to be limited by external means, such as decision reversal, judicial analysis, and, to some extent,

internal norms such as codes of ethics and professional training, for example (Howard, 1998). The state of being responsible, liable, or answerable is described as being accountable. Being held accountable implies recording, explaining, or justifying something (McGrath and Whitty, 2018). People are getting a say in official decisions and the right to keep their laws accountable, which is what accountability is all about (Sharma, 2008). Accountability, according to Hupe and Hill (2007), refers to the methods by which a public agency or public official fulfills its duties and obligations, as well as the mechanism by which that agency or public official is held accountable for its conduct. According to Romzek and Dabnick (1987), there are four types of accountability (a) Legal Accountability, (b) Professional Accountability, (c) Political Accountability, (d) Bureaucratic Accountability (O'Loughlin, 1990).

Both signatories to the Citizen's Charter agree that successful adoption would result in increased interest ownership and, as a result, more efficient compliance, with the potential for replication and upscaling. Lack of resource manpower, on the other hand, is an issue with proper implementation. (Richard & David, 2018). As a result, we can conclude that transparency is the most critical element in properly enforcing the Citizen's Charter. Since transparency and enforcement of the Citizen's Charter are inextricably linked.

In our study, we have referred to accountability as the answerability of the concerned authority about any query of the inhabitants of the Paurashava.

Public Awareness

The condition or ability to perceive, sense, or be conscious of events, things, or sensory patterns is known as awareness. An observer may validate sense data at this stage of consciousness without inherently suggesting comprehension. It is the condition or standard of becoming aware of anything more generally. A human's or animal's perception and cognitive reaction to a situation or event are known as awareness in biological psychology. The definition of awareness is a relative one. An animal can be partly aware of an occurrence, subconsciously aware of it, or completely unaware of it. Through sensory experience, awareness may be based on an internal state, such as a visceral sensation, or external events. Animals create qualia, or subjective ideas about their experiences, from the raw material of awareness.

Without public participation and support, policies, especially the Citizen's Charter, that require broader public participation are unlikely to be implemented. According to Thomas and Crindle (1990), societal reaction largely determines the outcome of some changes. Put another way, public participation is often needed to introduce new programs. They said public support could only be mobilized if the theory was aware of the new initiative or policy.

Citizens may not form opinions about the Citizen Charter if they are not informed about it and thus may not support it. Furthermore, the cost and benefits of the move determine the level of public support for a proposed change. The greater the public benefits, the greater the public participation, and the greater the support for the change. It is clear that the

Citizen's Charter provides the city with more benefits at lower rates. As a result, citizen interest and support may be strong. Citizens in other worlds give validity to any system's production. Every organization and entity is part of a larger societal structure, and its outputs are absorbed by it. Rothstein (1998) observed that it is difficult to carry out a program effectively, no matter how cleverly conceived it is or how well-organized its execution is, if it does not have the respect of the community in which it is guided or of the general public.

Public knowledge of new reforms largely determines the level of public engagement and support (citizen charter). Citizens with a higher level of understanding will be able to form their ideas better in order to support the proposed program. So it is clear that participation and awareness of the citizen charter are the most important factors for implementation, and the wariness of citizens toward the citizen charter is the most important factor for its implementation.

In our study, public awareness refers to the consciousness among the citizens of the concerned Paurashava about the citizen charter (especially a list of services with a description provided by the Paurashava to the common people).

Result and Discussions Factors Affecting the Implementation of the Citizen's Charter

If any variables or circumstances align with the organization's new approach, the organization has a better chance of succeeding. As a result, it is necessary to learn how individuals at the organizational level interpret the Citizen's

Charter and how their perceptions and understandings influence the implementation of the Citizen's Charter in municipalities. By taking this into account, the main purpose of this section is limited to an overview of how certain factors influence the implementation of the Citizen's Charter.

The Service Delivery System of Urban Local Government: Does Implement Citizen's Charter Matter?

The primary goal of the municipalities is to provide services to citizens within the timeframes set out in the citizen charter. For the following reasons, it is important to incorporate the Citizen's Charter in the delivery of urban local government services: i) if the general public is aware of their rights as a result of citizen charter adoption, they would be able to negotiate with service providers on a legal basis during service delivery if any irregularities occur. ii) It has the potential to enhance the service delivery system and the performance of officials through the indirect influence of the general public. If the Citizen's Charter is effectively adopted, proper service delivery to the general public would be feasible. On the other hand, if the Citizen's Charter is not fully enforced, it will result in a chaotic situation.

"A Paurashava is a form of urban local self-government, responsible for providing civic amenities to the people of the municipal area. But with the rise in the number of inhabitants living in the municipal area, there has been tremendous pressure on the Paurashava authority to ensure a minimum quality of services. The already weak management capacity of

Paurashava is not being able to put up with this severe pressure, which results in poor and inefficient service delivery" (Chowdhury & Deb, 2012).

Citizens believe that government officials are very powerful. The way officials interact with them in catering services reflects this. People are treated as though they are merely beneficiaries of services provided by officials. They assign them a passive role as Katakali Paurashava's citizens. To put it another way, officials do not regard people as equal partners in decision-making. In reality, they are unable to contact and communicate with top officials.

One citizen, especially from the lower class, informed me that when they go to the Paurashava for services, they must wait a long time to meet officials. Officials are strong, and they must rise through the ranks of the organization to reach the top. Beniwal (2005) rightly notes in his thesis paper, "*To meet officials, we have to wait for a couple of hours. Sometimes they ask us to visit again, so we have to return without meeting them*".

For example, middle- and lower-class respondents revealed that the receptionists are not particularly helpful. They are rude to us and don't owe us any respect. In other words, the officials are haughty and conceited. Further, middle- and lower-class respondents emphasized that they sometimes wait long for an answer. The condition is aggravated further by the officials' restricted accessibility. All of this has an effect on the Citizen's Charter's implementation.

From the above discussion, it is clear that citizens from the middle and lower classes (based on income) have mentioned that when it comes to service

delivery, officials play an oppressive role in which the upper class often benefits and people from the lower classes have no or restricted access to Katakali Paurashava officials.

Implementation of Citizen Charter: What Matters?

Some factors are discussed below for which the Citizen's Charter is not implemented properly: lack of resources. The discussion to be had on the lack of resources has two folds, which are as follows:

Shortage of Human Resources

Manpower is often regarded as critical to the smooth operation of every organization. While technology is a critical component of today's organizations, it is ineffective unless it is handled by qualified personnel. Municipalities in Bangladesh are experiencing a severe manpower shortage. People who are used to going to Paurashava for services must wait a long time due to a lack of manpower, which is one of the major impediments to providing services properly and on time. Due to a lack of manpower, an individual in charge of a specific service, such as vaccination, is forced to deal with several services offered by Paurashava.

For example, Mr. Rahim, one of the employees of Katakali Paurashava, is required, apart from his official duty of vaccination, to provide consultation to people about their health. On the other hand, since there is no training facility for workers in Paurashavas, the current manpower lacks the required skills to complete tasks. Consequently, programs aren't provided in a timely or effective manner. Md. Jakir Hossain, the office

assistant of Katakhalī Paurashava, has stated that, due to a shortage of resources, they are unable to provide adequate facilities, and almost all respondents concur.

One of the prerequisites for successful CC implementation in an organization is the size and skill level of the organization's staff. According to Rothstein (1998), available resources should be put in the hands of skilled and motivated organizational actors to ensure successful program execution. A report by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP, 2005) has identified that lack of adequate financial support and inefficient human resources are the main reasons why urban governments face similar governance challenges such as managing development or decline, responding to spatial re-structuring, managing transportation networks, ensuring adequate housing, and providing social services. For the above-mentioned reason, the Citizen Charter has not been successfully implemented.

Shortage of Financial Resources

Adequate funding is a prerequisite for the delivery of services by the urban local government. Due to a lack of financial resources, the ability of the urban local government in Bangladesh to provide services has been severely limited. Since no funding is allocated to make citizens aware of the Citizen Charter, information about it is disseminated to the public locally. Furthermore, there is no scheme in place to distribute funds for officials' training on different aspects of the Charter. Furthermore, a lack of financial resources has hampered the effective

adoption of the citizen's charter in a number of ways, including: (i) due to a lack of funds, the citizen's charter has received little attention in the print media, including posters, banners, flyers, handbills, brochures, and local newspapers. (ii) A lack of funds has made the local government incapable of delivering services in accordance with the Charter. Setting aside unique budgets for raising awareness and training workers about how to enforce the Citizen's Charter.

A respondent who is the health assistant of Katakhalī Paurashava states that Paurashava's health sector receives no funding from the government. As a result, they cannot offer residents health-related services per the citizen's charter. He also claims that due to a lack of funding, they are unable to provide vaccines for epidemic diseases to the public, despite the fact that they have two employees dedicated to this task (appointed to provide vaccines to the common people). Thus Beniwal (2005) rightly states that "Implementation of the citizen's charter necessitates additional funds, either from new sources or from other activities" (Beniwal, 2005). The above discussion confirms the observation of Nayem (2010) that "the key obstacles to the effective implementation of the citizen charter in Bangladesh are a lack of adequate resources, especially limited and scarce funds, as well as untrained and unskilled human capital".

Apathy towards Existing Rules and Regulations

Rules are vital for any organization's effective functioning because they determine who will do what, where, and how, ensuring the efficient

execution of functions in a coordinated manner. As a result, the most important thing is to obey the rules as they are. People employed in municipalities are found to be unable to obey the law, which can be attributed to a number of factors, including: (1) There is no mechanism in place to ensure that workers carry out their assigned tasks in accordance with the law. The most important thing is to make sure that the tasks assigned to them have been completed. (2) Officials want to escape the confusion that comes with newly implemented issues like the citizen's charter because they are afraid of losing their job and status. As a consequence, they still go in the same direction as their forefathers. The officials seem to be government employees who are paid on a monthly basis, but they have the freedom to carry out their duties as they see fit. (3) Officials try to adopt a bureaucratic mentality, such as failing to follow written rules and regulations, taking longer to complete routine tasks, paying no heed to poor people's demands, and focusing only on their own desire to perform their duties, resulting in an unwillingness to follow the rules; (4) the honorarium, especially the monthly salary provided for their official duties, also disincentivizes them from abiding by the laws; (5) service providers are unfamiliar with the charter's ideology, goals, and main features, which makes it difficult for them to obey the rules because almost all authorities are unaware of the philosophy, goals, and main features. If a man understands the philosophy, goals, and main features of the Charter, he will be willing to follow the rules; otherwise, he will not, because a man's natural tendency is to follow familiar paths, and this is the

link between unfamiliarity with the Charter's philosophy, goals, and main features and unwillingness to follow the rules; and (6) people have a proclivity to receive care more quickly than others. As a result, they attempt to obtain services by unethical means such as personal relationships and local authority, which causes workers to disregard current rules and regulations. As a result, citizens do not receive services in the manner specified in the Charter, resulting in the failure of the Citizen's Charter to be implemented.

Because of the old bureaucratic set-up and procedures and the rigid attitudes of the labor force, introducing and implementing the principle of the Citizens' Charter in the Katakhalī Paurashava is far more difficult. This initiative's main roadblocks were: i) the general belief among organizations that drafted Citizens' Charters was that the exercise would be carried out because of top-down directives. The consultation process was either non-existent or limited. As a result, it became one of the organization's regular operations, with no clear emphasis; ii) employees responsible for the Charter's application should receive adequate training and orientation, as the Charter's obligations cannot be assumed to be fulfilled by a workforce that is ignorant of the Charter's spirit and material. However, in many instances, the personnel in question were not properly qualified or sensitized; iii) client education campaigns regarding the Charter were not carried out in a systematic manner; iv) in certain cases, the Citizens' Charter's service standards and time norms were either too loose or too strict, making them impractical and creating an unfavorable impression on Charter clients; and v) the

Charter's meaning was not fully comprehended. The organizations' earlier information brochures, promotional materials, and pamphlets were mistaken for Citizens' Charters" (<http://goicharters.nic.in/ccinitiative.htm>). So, it is clear that successful implementation is hampered by apathy towards existing rules and regulations.

Lack of Proper Training

No one is hired into a company with all of the necessary skills. As a result, training is critical to an organization's success and is seen as one of the elements in preparing people to complete tasks effectively and efficiently. This is where training comes in to help people gain new skills. Furthermore, staff are shown what is required of them and how to accomplish it through training. As a result, they become professionals capable of providing services in compliance with the organization's guidelines. As a result, the most common justification for training is to improve efficiency. As a result, teaching is likened to the old adage, "I hear and forget, I see and recall, and I do and understand".

The data shows that people working in Paurashavas are not given any training, neither on their routine work nor on anything that is newly adopted, like the Citizen's Charter. A respondent states that they are only given orders for what the government intends to do. But they are not asked what they need to execute such an order successfully.

Therefore, government policies such as the citizen's charter are enforced by people who lack adequate training, causing difficulties in providing services according to the charter's guidelines. As a result, citizens are unable to receive

services in a timely and efficient manner, creating frustration with government services. Data also shows that people working at Paurashavas do not get any training because there is no step taken by the Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development, and Co-operatives (MoLGRD&C) to train up the Paurashava level officers. Siddiqui (2005) "discusses local government institutions at both rural and urban levels: Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad, Zilla Parishad, City Corporation, and Paurashava. The present structure of local government in Bangladesh has undergone a long period of evolution. In addition, after Bangladesh's independence, amendments were made to these institutions. The central government heavily influences these organizations. These institutions have weaknesses in their management, which explains why they are unable to provide adequate services."

"The capacity of the Upazila Land Office to effectively implement the citizen's Charter is lacking. There has been no preparation arranged specifically for frontline workers to revamp and refresh them. Officials reported that the upazila land office lacks the required capacity to efficiently enforce the Citizen Charter" (Zannatun Nayem, 2010).

So, we can say that the citizen charter is not implemented successfully due to a lack of proper training.

Lack of Publicity

Information is power, and it is one of the most powerful tools for getting things done. The extent to which a program is effectively enforced is essentially determined by how well its

beneficiaries are aware of it. As a result, raising public awareness about the citizen's charter is critical to its effective implementation. According to the data, the majority of respondents are unaware of it, and as a result, people are missing out on services that the local government should provide under the citizen's charter policy. Furthermore, data shows the answer to the issue of why there has been a lack of public knowledge about the citizen's charter: a lack of publicity. Some factors have been identified as being responsible for the lack of publicity, including: (1) because there is no provision for publicity, no campaign such as a seminar, meeting, or forum has been organized so that citizens can learn clearly about the citizen charter; and (2) officials' unwillingness to inform the public about the citizen charter because they want to avoid their responsibilities. If they are made aware of the charter, it is presumed that they will be forced to provide services in accordance with it. As a result, people are still unaware of what municipalities do. As a result, citizens are denied access to facilities, resulting in the failure to enforce the citizen's charter.

Lack of Co-ordination

The application of the citizen charter and the regular functioning of any paurashava are also hampered by a lack of coordination. It may occur in one of two ways: internally or externally. Internal lack of coordination can be discovered when elected officials and paurashava officials are unable to reach an agreement in any given role. Paurashava's normal functioning is also hampered by a lack of coordination between elected representatives, Paurashava officials, and

representatives of government agencies, since the authoritarian position of elected members of Paurashava is to blame for this form of anarchy. Coordination between Paurashava officials, government departments, and non-governmental organizations is needed to carry out welfare activities at the Paurashava level, such as the relationship between the Paurashava and the Roads & Highway Department.

Lack of coordination among concerned agencies (Paurashava officials and various agencies) in the creation of Paurashava can result in the following problems in the implementation of the citizen charter: i) It is impossible to implement the citizen charter within a specific time frame, and ii) It is impossible to ensure improved service quality. One of the serious obstacles to successful functioning is the lack of proper cooperation between Paurashava/City Corporation and other development agencies working in urban areas. (Islam, 2019). So, the implementation of the Citizen Charter is automatically hampered.

Implementation of Citizen Charter: Does Accountability Matter?

Accountability is one of the most significant metrics of good governance. The term "accountability" refers to the ability to be held accountable for one's actions. As a result, it is said that if there is no liability, there is no accountability. Accountability ensures that the work delegated is completed successfully. For example, officers responsible for providing services such as health must account for their responsibilities to the mayor of municipalities in the case of the adoption of the citizen's charter. However,

statistics suggest that the mayor is unconcerned with who is doing what and how. Furthermore, owing to a lack of knowledge, people are not used to filing complaints when they do not receive proper and timely service. As a result, officers conduct their assigned duties according to their own preferences, causing difficulties in providing services in accordance with the citizen's charter's rules and resulting in the citizen's charter's implementation failing.

Officials in Katakhal Paurashava are answerable to the Mayor, who is chosen directly by the adult franchise. However, since the Mayor is not present, the officials are not held responsible for their decisions. Because of political harassment, the Mayor of the concerned town of Paurashava has been absent from his office since last year. Officials are held accountable to the Mayor for their conduct in an internal meeting attended by all elected representatives, especially upward accountability, and the Mayor is held accountable to the general public, particularly downward accountability. In reality, though, there is no way to ensure the Mayor's transparency since almost everyone tries to avoid forming coalitions with him.

Accountability of the service providers in terms of providing service differs among various classes of people. Respondents from the middle and lower classes said that the service provider's actions are not transparent, and they are not answerable, where the view of the respondents from the upper class is satisfactory. The officials provide services to the upper class timely and properly, whereas people from the middle and lower classes have to wait for a long time

or sometimes to get any specific service. It will be clear from the following example: Rakib Ali, a businessman and respondent from the middle class category, states that he had to go to the Paurashava 4–5 times to get a trade license, whereas people from the upper class may get it by a phone call. He also states that they have nothing to do with this inconvenience. The relationship between the officials and the local elite, especially people from the upper class, is the main reason behind the existing state of accountability. Because the officials always try to work in favor of the local elite, and the local elite helps them play an authoritarian role with the common people at the time of service delivery on accountability issues. For example, the local elite also provides political support and backup to the officials. As a result, the list of revenues and the list of costs are not published to the public. Representatives from various classes are not guaranteed in the decision-making process. When people, especially those in the middle and lower classes, want information, they do not provide it properly.

Rojina Tamrakar (2010) states that "From a Nepalese viewpoint, according to Article "25(5)" of the Governance (Management and Operation) Act, 2005, if service seekers suffer any disability as a result of slow service delivery or non-service delivery by the concerned office for no reasonable cause, they should either receive free service or compensation of 5000 NRs through an order issued by the redressal committee. However, the District Administration Office's grievance redress system is ineffective. If users' grievances are dismissed, they have few options for recourse. Accountability means that everyone in the company may

take responsibility for a decision or action and accept blame or credit for it. However, the grievance scheme, which is also an accountability mechanism, is not working well in the District Administration Office."

So, it is clear that accountability is the most important factor for implementing the citizen charter successfully because there is a close relationship between accountability and the implementation of the citizen charter.

Implementation of Citizen Charter: Does Public Awareness Matter?

Public awareness is also critical to effectively implementing new changes and improvements. The Citizen Charter aims to empower people by granting them certain rights and privileges and allowing them to hold organizations accountable for providing reliable and effective services. Citizens are more aware of their rights and want to see their demands and rights met as a result of increased awareness, which can help boost the efficiency and effectiveness of urban local governments like Paurashava. If citizens are aware of the citizen charter, politicians will be unable to resist properly enforcing the charter and will be compelled to take all appropriate measures.

In Katakhalī Paurashava, respondents from the middle and lower classes are not aware of the charter program because of a communication gap with Paurashava officials and a lack of institutional knowledge. For example, Md. Sujon, a businessman and respondent from the middle-class category, said that he has no sense about the citizen charter, and the reason for his lack of awareness is the education and communication gap with Paurashava officials. Here one thing

is very interesting, i.e., people from the middle and lower classes are more likely to go to the Paurashava for various reasons compared to the upper class, but a communication gap exists between the Paurashava officials and people from the middle and lower classes because the Paurashava official shows an autocratic attitude, especially in the patron-client relationship at the time of service delivery. As a result, people from the middle and lower classes are disappointed to grow up with personal relations with the officials, which creates a communication gap among them. For that reason, they are unable, especially respondents from the middle and lower classes, to play any effective role at the time of the implementation of the citizen charter. Alternatively, respondents from the upper classes are aware that the government has introduced the Citizen Charter because they have heard about it from reading the newspaper and from Paurashava officials. Here personal or social relationship plays an important role in knowing about the citizen charter by the people from the upper classes, where middle- and lower-class people have no access to Paurashava officials in terms of personal relationship because officials try to make good relations with the upper class for getting local backing, especially since it seems that the upper-class people can play a vital role for their personal interests. As a result, it is not possible to ensure the reflection of the views of all classes at the time of implementation of the Citizen's Charter.

Beniwal (2005) mentions the following about the awareness of the citizen charter among citizens: A citizen said, "*He never heard the term Citizen Charter How then can I be aware of the*

detail provisions of it". Without public support and engagement, initiatives, such as the Citizen Charter, that require broader public participation are unlikely to be implemented. According to Thomas and Grindle (1990), the outcome of some changes is largely determined by societal reaction. To put it another way, public participation is often needed to introduce new programs. They went on to say that public support can only be mobilized if people are aware of the new initiative or policy. It is the citizen's charter in this situation.

So, it is clear that the existing level of awareness among citizens about the citizen charter hampers the effective implementation of the charter as well as service delivery by urban local government. In this section, we have tried to show the factors affecting the implementation of the citizen charter. It is learned from this charter that due to the unwillingness of the officials to provide service, a lack of awareness among the people about the citizen charter, and a lack of manpower and resources, the citizen charter is not implemented successfully.

Conclusion

This study has focused mainly on four independent variables that were perceived to have affected, to different extents, the successful implementation of the Citizen's Charter in Katakhalipaurashava. Most of the theoretical questions pertaining to this study are based on determining and analyzing the factors that affect the effective implementation of the Citizen's Charter. This study aimed to explore the factors that affect the successful implementation of the Citizen's Charter in the Paurashava.

We can see the major findings and results of the study in the following way:

- I. Accountability → the service providers are not accountable in terms of providing service.
- II. Service Culture → is not performed properly. Here elite groups or upper-class people get some advantages, whereas lower-class people are deprived, especially in getting services from the Paurashava.
- III. Socio-economic Status → is not satisfactory, especially in the lower class.
- IV. Public Awareness → limited sense about Citizen's Charter among the mass people, especially in the upper & middle class, but lower-class people have no sense about citizen charter.

Based on the findings, implementing public policy successfully requires certain conditions to be fulfilled. Further, these conditions vary from country to country. In the context of Bangladesh, many unique challenges are faced in the process of effective implementation. In other words, specific prerequisites need to be fulfilled if a policy reform such as the citizen's charter is to be implemented successfully. The following criteria may be considered:

- i. Transparency in administration and recognition of the rights of the citizens to public information.
- ii. Public accountability of the different functionaries of the Paurashava Administration.
- iii. Administrative efficiency through de-centralization and citizen-friendly methods of working.

- iv. Citizen Participation, as far as possible, in the process of development.
- v. Speedy and Responsive redressal of public grievances of citizens through existing channels as well as through the proposed Charter.
- vi. Special consideration of the weaker sections of society, such as small children, schedule castes, backward classes, slum dwellers, and women.
- vii. Reviews and reforms in the administrative procedures with a view to making them results-oriented.
- viii. Government should increase resource allocation for the Paurashava to deliver service properly.
- ix. The number of employees of Paurashava should be increased.
- x. An orientation program should be conducted to make officers and staff aware of the citizen charter.
- xi. The government should provide a strong regulative or incentive strategy to implement Citizen's Charter.
- xii. The government may include non-governmental sectors in the door-to-door campaigns for the wide publicity of the charter program.
- xiii. Introduce a reward and penalty mechanism depending on how employees use the citizen charter.

Acknowledgment

The Authors express their gratitude to all colleagues for their support throughout the process of this article. May this article be a contribution to the academics' world and be useful to others.

Reference

- Beniwal. V. S., 2005. *Challenges and prospects of implementation Citizens Charter: A Study of Panchkula (Haryana) Municipal Council in India*. Department of Administration and Organization Theory, University of Bergen, Norway.
- Beniwal, V.S., 2013. Instilling citizen-centric approach in civil service: Prospects and challenges. *Journal of Politics and Governance*, 2 (1 and 2), pp.235-244.
- Chowdhury, M. S. and Deb, P., 2012. *Urban Local Government and Environmental Management in Bangladesh: A Study on Chunarughat Paurashava*. Bangladesh Development Research Center (BDRC). Website: <http://www.bangladeshstudies.org>
- ESCAP, U., 2005. Urban environmental governance for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific: a regional overview.
- Howard, L.W., 1998. Validating the competing values model as a representation of organizational cultures. *The international journal of organizational analysis*.
- Hood, C., 1991. A public management for all seasons?. *Public administration*, 69(1), pp.3-19.
- Hupe, P. and Hill, M., 2007. Street-Level bureaucracy and public accountability. *Public administration*, 85(2), pp.279-299.
- Islam, R., 2019. Comprehensive Local Government Policy: How Far Is the Shore?. *Dynamics of Public Administration*, 36(2), pp.125-136.

- Kabir, S.M.S., 2016. Basic guidelines for research. *An introductory approach for all disciplines*, 4(2), pp.168-180.
- McGrath, S.K. and Whitty, S.J., 2018. Accountability and responsibility defined. *International Journal of Managing Projects in Business*, 11(3), pp.687-707.
- Nayem, Z., 2010. *Problem of implementation citizen charter. A study of upazila land office*. North South University. Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Osborne, D., & Plastrik, P. 1997. *Banishing Bureaucracy: The Five Strategies for Reinventing Government*. Addison-Wesley.
- Osborne, David and T. Gaebler, 1992. *Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is transforming the public Sector*, Reading, Addison-Wesley.
- O'Loughlin, M.G., 1990. What is bureaucratic accountability and how can we measure it?. *Administration & Society*, 22(3), pp.275-302.
- Government. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1 Jacob Way, Reading, MA 01867
- Principe, A. P., 2009. Exploring Public Service Improvement Initiative: A Case Study of Citizen's Charter Implementation in Naga City. Master's Programme). *Urban Management and Development*.
- Pollitt, C., 1990. *Managerialism and the public services: The Anglo-American experience*. Blackwell.
- Rhodes, R.A.W. 1997, *Understanding Governance: Policy Networks, Governance, Reflexivity and Accountability*, Buckingham, Open University Press.
- Richard, E. and David, L.F., 2018. The future of citizen engagement in cities—The council of citizen engagement in sustainable urban strategies (ConCensus). *Futures*, 101, pp.80-91.
- Rothstein, B., 1998. Just institutions matter: The moral and political logic of the universal welfare state. Cambridge university press.
- Romzek, B.S. and Dubnick, M.J., 1987. Accountability in the public sector: Lessons from the Challenger tragedy. *Public administration review*, pp.227-238
- Sharma, B., 2008. Voice, accountability and civic engagement: A conceptual overview. Commissioned by Oslo Governance Centre, pp.1-33.
- Siddiqui, K., 2005. *Local Government in Bangladesh*. 3rd ed. Dhaka: The University Press Limited.
- Tamrakar, R., 2010. Impact of citizen charter in service delivery: A case of District Administration Office. Kathmandu.
- Thomas, J.W. and Grindle, M.S., 1990. After the decision: Implementing policy reforms in developing countries. *World Development*, 18(8), pp.1163-1181.