

Municipal Service Delivery in Small Cities of Punjab

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Introduction

With an urbanization rate of 2.7 percent over the past two decades,² Pakistan is one of the most rapidly urbanizing countries in the world.³ According to 2017 Census, 75 million persons out of a total population of 207 million or some 36 percent lived in urban areas as compared to 45 million in 1998.⁴ According to available data, by 2030, around half of Pakistan's population will live in urban areas.⁵

There are three major reasons driving urbanization in the country: growth of the native population of the cities which too is growing at the same 2.7 percent per annum,⁶ rural-urban migration,⁷ and reclassification of rural areas into urban.

Punjab is the most populous province of the country with 53 percent of its population. It had a total population of 110 million in 2017, out of which over 40 million were urban dwellers.⁸ While at present, only seven percent of the urban dwellers in Punjab live in small cities, having populations between 100,000 and 250,000, the share of the urban population living in small cities in Punjab is expected to almost double to 13 percent over the next 30 years.⁹ All the same, small cities have largely been ignored in both academic and policy discourses relating to municipal service delivery (MSD). Owing to limited infrastructure and enhanced pressure due to increasing population, service delivery in small cities of Punjab is coming under pressure.

¹ 32nd MCMC.

² Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Provisional Summary Results of 6th Population and Housing Census-2017*, October 22, 2021, <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/provisional-summary-results-6th-population-and-housing-census-2017-0> (accessed October 22, 2021).

³ UNDP Pakistan, *Sustainable Urbanization*, May 8, 2019, https://www.pk.undp.org/content/pakistan/en/home/library/development_policy/dap-vol5-iss4-sustainable-urbanization.html (accessed October 25, 2021).

⁴ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Provisional Summary Results of 6th Population and Housing Census-2017*, October 22, 2021, <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/provisional-summary-results-6th-population-and-housing-census-2017-0> (accessed October 22, 2021).

⁵ The Urban Unit, *Punjab Spatial Strategy 2047-Technical Paper 3 Cities and regions*, Lahore: The Urban Unit, Planning and Development Department, Government of the Punjab, 2019.

⁶ The World Bank, *Urban population growth (annual %) - Pakistan*. n.d., <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?locations=PK> (accessed October 22, 2021).

⁷ Nasira Jabeen, U. Farwa, and M. Jadoon, "Urbanization in Pakistan: a governance perspective", *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* 54.1, 2017: 127-136.

⁸ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Provisional Summary Results of 6th Population and Housing Census-2017*, October 22, 2021, <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/provisional-summary-results-6th-population-and-housing-census-2017-0> (accessed October 22, 2021).

⁹ The Urban Unit, *Punjab Spatial Strategy 2047-Technical Paper 3 Cities and regions*, Lahore: The Urban Unit, Planning and Development Department, Government of the Punjab, 2019.

MSD has a direct relationship with reducing poverty and achievement of several targets under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, it is important that gaps in this respect are identified and service delivery to the citizens is improved by bridging these gaps.

Statement of the Problem

Out of the total population of 110 million of Punjab, 40 million live in urban areas. Due to increase in urban populations, the quality and coverage of essential municipal services to the urban dwellers of Punjab is low. The situation is of particular concern in small cities of the Punjab because of inadequate infrastructure. Additionally, their local governments have insufficient capacity to plan and deliver services. Remedial action to alleviate such challenges seems to be limited, if not totally missing, as the focus of the Government of the Punjab and its international development partners has been, for the most part, on improving the municipal infrastructure of large urban centers while largely ignoring small cities.

It is, therefore, important to understand the current situation of the delivery of essential municipal services in small cities of Punjab, the issues and the challenges involved, and how service delivery can be improved at the operational level.

Scope and Significance of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to investigating MSD in the small cities of Punjab. For this research, service delivery in four sectors including water supply, sewerage, solid waste management and urban mobility has been considered through a sample of four small cities.

This study is significant because MSD is directly related to achievements of several targets under the SDGs. Furthermore, small cities have largely been ignored so far in the academic and policy discourses, as opposed to the large cities, despite their growing importance.

Review of the Literature

There is a dearth of literature on MSD in small cities of Punjab. There is just one case study available on community-government partnership for provision of drinking water in Bhalwal.¹⁰ However, considerable work has been done on large cities, for example, on evaluating the efficiency of major local governments,¹¹ solid waste management

¹⁰ Muhammad Naveed Iftikhar, Shujat Ali, and Andrea Sarzynski, "Community-government partnership for metered clean drinking water: A case study of Bhalwal, Pakistan", *Climate Change in Cities*, 2018: 163-179.

¹¹ Arfan Ali, Waqas Riaz, Sajjad Ahmad Baig, Shah Nawaz Saqib, and Abdul Sami, "Evaluating the Efficiency of Major Local Governments of Punjab (Pakistan) in Revenue Generation by Using a Yardstick Approach", *Abasyn Journal of Social Sciences – Special Issue*, 2017: 226-233.

(SWM) in Lahore,¹² and the challenges and opportunities of urbanization in Lahore.¹³ The reports from international development partners such as United Nations, World Bank and Asian Development Bank are also mostly focused on large cities. For example, UN-Habitat's *State of Pakistani Cities 2018* mostly discusses the large urban centers.¹⁴

A few urban sector projects of the World Bank have focused on small cities. These include the Punjab Municipal Service Improvement Project (PMSIP)¹⁵ and the Punjab Cities Program (PCP).¹⁶ The reports available through these projects have analyzed MSD in many small cities of Punjab.

Methodology

The research methodology is based on a mix of descriptive, quantitative, qualitative, and analytical methods. Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized.

Out of a total 38 small cities of Punjab, a convenience sample of four small cities—Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad—was taken to draw inferences about such small cities. The reports on municipal infrastructure and service delivery in the selected cities provide the necessary basis for understanding the current situation of MSD and gaps therein.

In order to gather primary data, records of the Municipal Committees (MCs) were reviewed. Interviews were conducted with the Chief Officers (COs) of the two MCs of Bahawalnagar and Hafizabad, the Deputy Project Director of PCP, and the Senior Environmental and Social Specialist of the Urban Unit, Punjab. The secondary sources of data included reports prepared by the international financial institutions, various articles, and sources available on the internet.

Organization of the Paper

This research paper is divided into two sections. The first deals with urbanization trends. It also defines the small city and highlights the importance of MSD. The second section analyzes the current state of municipal services, the gaps in service delivery

¹² Maryam Masood, Claire Y. Barlow, and David C. Wilson, "An assessment of the current municipal solid waste management system in Lahore, Pakistan", *Waste Management & Research* 32.9, 2014: 834-847.

¹³ Irfan Ahmad Rana and Saad Saleem Bhatti, "Lahore, Pakistan—Urbanization challenges and opportunities", *Cities*, 2018: 348-355.

¹⁴ UN-Habitat, "State of Pakistan Cities report 2018", *UN-Habitat*. 2018. <https://unhabitat.org/state-of-pakistan-cities-report-2018> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁵ The World Bank, *Operations Portal*. n.d., <https://operationsportalws.worldbank.org/Pages/DocSearch.aspx?projectId=P083929&k=concept> (accessed November 11, 2021).

¹⁶ The World Bank, *Punjab Cities Program*. n.d., <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/project-detail/P156972> (accessed November 11, 2021).

and discusses the challenges to better service delivery. These two sections are followed by conclusion and recommendations.

Section I

Urbanization Trends and Municipal Service Delivery in Small Cities

1.1 Urbanization Trends

We are living in an increasingly urbanized world. By 2020, 56 percent of the global population lived in urban spaces.¹⁷ The number of people living in urban areas worldwide is expected to grow to 68 percent by 2050.¹⁸ In comparison, only 30 percent of the world's population lived in urban areas in 1950.

In line with the global trend, Pakistan is also urbanizing rapidly at an annual rate of 2.7 percent,¹⁹ which is one of the highest in Asia.²⁰ Based on the National Population Census 2017, 36 percent of Pakistanis lived in urban areas.²¹ At the present rate, it is expected that nearly half of the country's population will be living in the urban areas by 2030.²² Punjab is following the national trend. Out of a total population of 110 million, 40 million or 36 percent live in urban areas. From 1997 to 2018, the urban population in Punjab grew at an annual rate of 2.74 percent. This is expected to grow to 92 million people by 2047.²³

1.2 What is a Small City?

Cities are usually classified into mega, large, intermediate, or small based on population. However, it's difficult to find a consistent classification. Existing classifications vary between countries and over time. Different countries and academics use different labels such as small or intermediate for cities of the same level. For example, the Punjab Intermediate Cities Improvement Investment Program classifies a city with population between 250,000 and one million as an intermediate

¹⁷ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "World Urbanization Prospects 2018", *Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Population Dynamics*. n.d., <https://population.un.org/wup/Publications/Files/WUP2018-Highlights.pdf> (accessed October 30, 2021).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ The World Bank, *Urban population growth (annual %) - Pakistan*. n.d., <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.GROW?locations=PK> (accessed October 22, 2021).

²⁰ The Urban Unit, *Punjab Spatial Strategy 2047-Technical Paper 3 Cities and regions*, Lahore: The Urban Unit, Planning and Development Department, Government of the Punjab, 2019.

²¹ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, *Provisional Summary Results of 6th Population and Housing Census-2017*, October 22, 2021, <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/provisional-summary-results-6th-population-and-housing-census-2017-0> (accessed October 22, 2021).

²² The Urban Unit, *Punjab Spatial Strategy 2047-Technical Paper 3 Cities and regions*, Lahore: The Urban Unit, Planning and Development Department, Government of the Punjab, 2019.

²³ Ibid.

city.²⁴ Some studies have used the term “medium-sized city” to refer to cities such as Abbottabad with a population around 200,000 or to Sargodha with a population over 500,000.²⁵ For the purpose of this research, the population-based ranking of cities of Punjab done by the Urban Unit, Punjab is used. According to this classification a small city is the one which has population between 100,000 and 250,000.²⁶ There are 38 such cities based on the 2017 Census, including Attock, Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Chishtian, Hafizabad, and Haroonabad, etc.

Urbanization is often thought to be only manifested in the large cities of Punjab. This is not without reason. The population of Lahore and the four large cities of the province makes up 52 percent of its urban population.²⁷ Yet, small cities should not be ignored in the urbanization discourse. These cities are also rapidly growing in population and size. Research suggests that by 2047, there will be 73 small cities in Punjab housing about 13 percent of the province’s population.²⁸

1.3 Importance of Municipal Services

Municipal services can be understood to include water management, solid waste management (SWM), sewerage, and transportation.²⁹ These four services are essential to sustain quality of life in urban areas. Several goals under the United Nations’ SDGs 2030 highlight the importance of providing municipal services to citizens in a sustainable way. For example, the targets under the SDG 11 that reads “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable”, focus on achieving sustainable urbanization and provision of basic services to the citizens.³⁰ Goal 6 is specifically related to provision of clean drinking water and sanitation to all. Similarly, Goal 12 aims to reduce waste generation and its sound management to avoid its negative impacts on human health. A lack of any type of municipal service can reduce the quality of life of residents, limiting their human and economic capabilities and damaging the environment. Pakistan is committed to achieve the targets set under the SDGs. Therefore, provision of municipal services to citizens is very important to fulfill the country’s commitments under SDGs 6,11 and 12. They are also indirectly related to the achievement of several other SDGs.

²⁴ Asian Development Bank, Pakistan: Punjab Intermediate Cities Improvement Investment Program, September 6, 2016, <https://www.adb.org/projects/46526-001/main#project-pds> (accessed October 30, 2021).

²⁵ Masood Sarwar Awan and Nasir Iqbal, *Determinants of Urban Poverty: The Case of Medium Sized City in Pakistan*, Islamabad: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, 2010.

²⁶ The Urban Unit, *Punjab Spatial Strategy 2047-Technical Paper 3 Cities and regions*, Lahore: The Urban Unit, Planning and Development Department, Government of the Punjab, 2019.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Asian Development Bank, Pakistan: Punjab Intermediate Cities Improvement Investment Program, September 6, 2016, <https://www.adb.org/projects/46526-001/main#project-pds> (accessed October 30, 2021).

³⁰ United Nations, *Sustainable Development Goals*. n.d., <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/> (accessed November 11, 2021).

1.4 Legal and Institutional Framework of MSD in Small Cities of Punjab

Under Section 81 of the Punjab Local Government Act (PLGA) 2013, urban local governments (LGs) are mandated to provide municipal services.³¹ All the local governments, however, are required to work within the provincial framework under the PLGA 2013. The Local Government and Community Development Department (LG&CDD) of the provincial government oversees the functions of local governments. According to the PLGA 2013, cities having populations between 30,000 and 500,000 have Municipal Committees (MCs) as their local governments.³² Therefore, each small city in Punjab has an MC. These MCs are body corporates and are headed by an elected Chairman, who is the executive head of the MC. He is assisted by a Chief Officer (CO), who is responsible for coordinating the functions of the MC.

An important distinction regarding MSD between large and small cities is that, in most large cities, there are specialized agencies dealing with delivery of services. For example, the WASAs (water and sanitation agencies) deal with provision of water and sanitation. SWM is the responsibility of companies such as Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC). However, in small cities the MCs themselves undertake all municipal functions.

Historically, in Punjab and in other provinces of Pakistan as well, provincial governments have been reluctant to run local governments through elected representatives. This is primarily because politicians at the provincial level view local elected representatives as their competitors who reduce their relevance and power.³³ They prefer that provincial government-appointed administrators (who are generally civil servants) run the affairs of local governments as civil servants and thus fully under the control of the provincial governments. Hence they can be manipulated at will. Thus provincial governments have never devolved political, administrative, and financial authority to the elected local government representatives as required under Article 140A of the Constitution of Pakistan.³⁴

Furthermore, local governments in Punjab have very limited functions as compared to other countries. For example, local governments in Punjab spend only 5 percent of the total public spending as compared with 30 percent in India.³⁵

³¹ Government of the Punjab, "PUNJAB LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2013", *Punjab Code*, n.d., https://punjabcode.punjab.gov.pk/en/show_article/BDwCMQA2VWw- (accessed November 11, 2021).

³² Ibid.

³³ Ali Cheema, Adnan Q. Khan, and Roger Myerson, "Breaking the countercyclical pattern of local democracy in Pakistan", *Unpublished manuscript*, 2010.

³⁴ Asmat Kakar, *Local government and Pakistan's reluctant political elite*, March 16, 2017, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/southasia/2017/03/16/local-governments-and-pakistans-reluctant-political-elite/> (accessed November 10, 2021).

³⁵ Ming Zhang, *Local elections in Pakistan: A chance to improve public services*, December 22, 2015, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/local-elections-pakistan-chance-improve-public-services> (accessed November 15, 2021).

Section II

Overview of Municipal Service Delivery in Small Cities of Punjab

To understand the current levels of MSD in the small cities of the Punjab as well as gaps and related challenges therein, a sample of four of the 38 small cities of the Punjab has been selected. These cities include Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad and are representative of the situation prevailing in small cities all over the province.

The table below provides a brief overview of the demographics of these cities.

Table 1: Demographics of the Selected Cities³⁶

City	Population (2017)	Population Growth Rate (1998-2017)
Bahawalnagar	160,883	1.96%
Burewala	232,030	2.24%
Hafizabad	245,751	3.25%
Wazirabad	128,096	1.86 %

Four essential services namely water supply, sewerage, SWM and roads have been examined. The assessment of each function is given below:

2.1 Water Supply

2.1.1 Current Situation

For municipal water supplies, all the selected cities rely on the water extracted through tube wells. The water supply systems do not extend to the whole municipal limit in any of these cities with coverage varying from 18 percent of the city area in Burewala to a maximum of 65 percent in Hafizabad.^{37 38} Supply hours vary from 3 hours/ day in Bahawalnagar to 7.5 hours per day in Wazirabad. Water quantity ranges from 15.5 gallons per capita per day (GPCD) in Bahawalnagar to 37.5 GPCD in Hafizabad.³⁹

³⁶ Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, "Final Results of Census-2017", n.d., https://www.pbs.gov.pk/sites/default/files/population_census/census_2017_tables/punjab/Table02p.pdf (accessed October 20, 2021).

³⁷ Municipal Comiittee Burewala, *Service Delivery Detail*. n.d, <http://www.mcburewala.lgpunjab.org.pk/SDD.html> (accessed November 30, 2021).

³⁸ Municipal Comiittee Hafizabad, *Service Delivery Detail*. n.d, <http://www.mchafizabad.lgpunjab.org.pk/SDD.html> (accessed November 30, 2021).

³⁹ Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, *Gap Analysis of Municipal Services Infrastructure & Service Delivery in Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad*, Lahore: Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, 2018.

Although reservoirs for water storage are available in Bahawalnagar and Burewala, most of these have been abandoned or are in need repair. In Bahawalnagar, nine out of 16 reservoirs are functional while in Burewala, only one out of 13 is functional.⁴⁰ The water tariff structure is different for domestic and commercial consumers. For domestic connections, the tariff ranges from Rs. 100 to 1200, while for commercial consumers it is between Rs. 200 to 3000.^{41 42} The table below summarizes the water supply situation in the selected cities:

Table 2: Summary of Water Supply in the Selected Cities⁴³

City	Coverage (%)	Functional Tube Wells (No.)	Connections (No.)	Supply Timings (Hrs.)	Tariff (Rs.)		O&M Recovery (2013-18) (%)	Subsidy (2013-18) (Million Rs.)	Daily Water Supply (GPCD)
					Dom	Com			
Bahawalnagar	65	18	19458	3	100	200	28.22	165.48	37.5
Burewala	57	25	7278	5	1200	3000	6.2	219.17	15.5
Hafizabad	18	8	4451	5	200	400	10.86	68.94	21
Wazirabad	60	15	8425	7.5	175	500	37	110.7	32

2.1.2 Gaps in Service Delivery

Significant proportions of these cities, ranging from 82 percent in Hafizabad to 35 percent in Bahawalnagar remain outside water supply coverage.⁴⁴ In Hafizabad and Burewala, the quantity of water extracted and supplied is significantly less than the standard of 33 GPCD of the Punjab Public Health Engineering Department (PHED).⁴⁵ The MCs end up wasting a lot of energy while operating the tube wells for water production as energy conservation principles are not adhered to.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the existing tariff structure does not even cover the operation and maintenance (O&M) cost of the water supply system. The MCs of these cities subsidize the water supply heavily. As shown in Table 2, subsidies during the five years from 2013 to 2018 range from Rs. 68.94 million in Hafizabad to Rs. 219.17 million in Burewala. Such huge subsidies are not sustainable because these respectively constitute 25 and 60 percent of the total revenue receipts of these cities in Financial Year (FY) 2020-21. The total revenue receipts for Hafizabad and Burewala were Rs. 270.13 million and Rs. 360.74 million

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Municipal Committee Bahawalnagar, *Service Delivery Detail*. n.d, <http://mcbahawalnagar.lgpunjab.org.pk/> (accessed November 30, 2021).

⁴² Municipal Committee Burewala, *Service Delivery Detail*. n.d, <http://www.mcburewala.lgpunjab.org.pk/SDD.html> (accessed November 30, 2021).

⁴³ Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, *Gap Analysis of Municipal Services Infrastructure & Service Delivery in Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad*, Lahore: Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, 2018.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ The Urban Sector Planning and Management Services Unit (Pvt.) Ltd, "Design Criteria for Water", *Punjab Cities Governance Improvement Project*. n.d, <https://pegip.urbanunit.gov.pk/D2017/Design%20Criteria%20of%20WASAs.pdf> (accessed November 4, 2021).

⁴⁶ Abid Hussainy, *Senior Specialist, Environmental and Social Safeguards, The Urban Unit*, interview by Author, Lahore, 6 November, 2021.

respectively in the FY (including Provincial Finance Commission provision but excluding the PCP grant from the World Bank).^{47 48} The quality of water supplied is also not good in most of the areas of these cities. The complaint of contaminated water is very common because the distribution networks comprise old and rusted pipes.⁴⁹

2.1.3 Challenges

Based on the analysis above, following are a few major challenges, related to water supply, in small cities of Punjab:

First, extension of the water supply coverage to the unserved areas is important and very challenging. It requires huge investments which exceed the resources of these cities as well as the provincial government.

Second, the existing distribution network is old and dilapidated. It is resulting in wastage of water in the form of non-revenue water (NRW). It is also a source of water contamination.⁵⁰ The distribution network needs to be rehabilitated, an effort that is capital intensive.

Third, the existing tariff structure is insufficient to cover even the O&M costs. For political reasons, the government doesn't allow the municipalities to increase tariffs.⁵¹ Furthermore, due to the fixed tariffs, consumers tend to waste water.

2.2 Sewerage

2.2.1 Current Situation⁵²

The sewerage network of the selected cities extends to 60-70 percent of their areas. The length of the sewerage network ranges from 17.25 km in Wazirabad to 97 km in Burewala. The sewerage network in each city is served by several disposal stations. The MCs charge nothing or very little tariff (of around Rs. 220 per annum) and this too is levied only on a small fraction of the total households connected to the sewers. All the MCs have suction pumping machines available; some have jetting and winching machines too. Both main and branch sewers are available on main roads and streets, but most of the streets do not have lateral sewers. The table below summarizes the current situation of sewerage in the four selected cities:

⁴⁷ Municipal Corporation Burewala, "Budget For The Year 2020 - 2021", Burewala, 2021.

⁴⁸ Municipal Corporation Hafizabad, "Budget For The Year 2020 - 2021", Hafizabad, 2021.

⁴⁹ Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, *Gap Analysis of Municipal Services Infrastructure & Service Delivery in Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad*, Lahore: Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, 2018.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Umar Mukhtar, *Chief Officer, Municipal Committee, Bahawalnagar*, interview by Author, Lahore, 7 November, 2021.

⁵² Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, *Gap Analysis of Municipal Services Infrastructure & Service Delivery in Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad*, Lahore: Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, 2018.

Table 3: Summary of Sewerage Situation in the Selected Cities

City	Coverage (%)	Length (Km)	Machinery	Connections (No.)	Tariff (per annum)	O&M Recovery (%)	Subsidy (2017-18) (Rs. Million)
Bahawal-nagar	60	97	01 Suction machine 01 Jetting machine	718	200	046	106.98
Burewala	70	44	02 Combined Suction and Jetting	4670	250	0.56	85.12
Hafizabad	69	41	01 Suction machine 01 Winching machine	14874	0	0	32.47
Wazirabad	65	17.25	01 Suction	6000	0	3	33.03

(Some information in this table has been obtained from the websites of the MCs.)

2.2.2 Gaps in Service Delivery⁵³

About 30 to 40 percent areas remain unserved in these cities. Streets do not have lateral sewers. None of these cities has a wastewater treatment plant. Waste water is discharged untreated into rivers or streams or is used for irrigation purposes which is extremely dangerous for the environment. Choking or partial choking of the sewer lines is a common problem in all these cities. This results in overflow of wastewater which damages public and private properties and hinders mobility. Furthermore, a very small proportion of the households is accounted for as far as the number of official connections is concerned. Only such officially connected households end up paying the annual charges. The tariff is also extremely low which hardly makes any contribution to the O&M expenses of the MCs. Consequently, the MCs are required to bear these expenses.

2.2.3 Challenges

Extension of the sewerage networks to unserved areas, environmental degradation resulting from the wastewater and maintenance of the existing sewerage networks are major challenges for these cities.⁵⁴ Addressing these issues requires huge investments.⁵⁵ The MCs in these cities also complain about the shortage of human

⁵³ Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, *Gap Analysis of Municipal Services Infrastructure & Service Delivery in Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad*, Lahore: Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, 2018.

⁵⁴ Abid Hussainy, *Senior Specialist, Environmental and Social Safeguards, The Urban Unit*, interview by Author, Lahore, 6 November, 2021.

⁵⁵ Engr. M. Iftikhar Rasool, *General Manager (Engg.)/ Deputy Project Director Punjab Cities Program*, interview by Author, Lahore, 8 November, 2021.

resources as their resources have not kept up with the increasing population growth of the cities.⁵⁶

2.3 Solid Waste Management (SWM)

2.3.1 Current Situation⁵⁷

The coverage of the SWM services ranges from 22 percent of the city area in Hafizabad to 70 percent area in Bahawalnagar. The rest of the areas in these cities are either partially covered or are unserved. These cities generate between 55 and 120 tons of waste every day. Out of the total waste generated, 49 to 80 percent is disposed of in different cities. Only Bahawalnagar has a landfill site. The other cities resort to open dumping at a dumping site, for example, Burewala and Wazirabad or along the roads in case of Hafizabad. There are no proper collection points in the city and many areas are inaccessible due to narrow streets.⁵⁸ Overall condition of SWM in all these cities is unsatisfactory.⁵⁹ The table below summarizes the current situation of sewerage in the four selected cities:

Table 4: Summary of SWM Situation in the Selected Cities⁶⁰

Name of City	Coverage (%)			Waste Generation(G)/ Disposal (D)			Open Dumping(O)/ Land-fill(LF)	Sanitation Fee	Subsidy (2017-18) (Rs. mil.)	Level of Service Delivery
	F=full; P=partial N= none			G.	D.	%				
	F.	P.	N.	G.	D.	%				
Bahawalnagar	55	12	33	120	66	55	O	Nil	121.54	Unsatisfactory
Burewala	22	27	51	102	50	49	Not Available	Nil	63.08	Unsatisfactory
Hafizabad	70	10	20	78	63	80	LF	Nil	13.61	Fair
Wazirabad	40	30	30	55	33	60	O	Nil	66.7	Unsatisfactory

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, *Gap Analysis of Municipal Services Infrastructure & Service Delivery in Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad*, Lahore: Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, 2018.

⁵⁸ Engr. M. Iftikhar Rasool, *General Manager (Engg.)/ Deputy Project Director Punjab Cities Program*, interview by Author, Lahore, 8 November, 2021.

⁵⁹ Abid Hussainy, *Senior Specialist, Environmental and Social Safeguards, The Urban Unit*, interview by Author, Lahore, 6 November, 2021.

⁶⁰ Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, *Gap Analysis of Municipal Services Infrastructure & Service Delivery in Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad*, Lahore: Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, 2018.

2.3.2 Gaps in Service Delivery

Large areas in these cities remain unserved. In Burewala, Bahawalnagar, Hafizabad and Wazirabad, 33, 20, 51 and 30 percent areas respectively have no SWM services available.⁶¹ Except Bahawalnagar, all other cities remove only half of the waste generated / day which is extremely inefficient. Furthermore, three out the four cities dispose waste by open dumping without any compacting or environmental covering. This is extremely unhygienic and hazardous to the environment. This practice results in contamination of sub-soil water, facilitates the spread of vector and water borne diseases and creates insanitary conditions for the citizens. The MCs do not collect any sanitation fees. Consequently, they end up bearing all the expenditure on O&M. The MCs have poor planning capacities for SWM and lack strategic direction.⁶² Inadequate equipment, lack of its repair and maintenance, and inadequate workforce with MCs for the SWM function are major issues.⁶³ For example, Hafizabad has only eight (08) tractor trolleys, three (03) front loaders, two (02) mini dumpers and one mechanical sweeper. Of these, five (05) tractor trolleys and all the other equipment is in need of repair to some extent or the other.⁶⁴ The city has only 139 sanitary workers supervised by seven (07) supervisors;⁶⁵ absenteeism is common among them. Most of them have private jobs as well where they end up spending most of their time.⁶⁶ According to an assessment, the city needs at least 200 more sanitary workers, 10 sanitary supervisors and 10 drivers.⁶⁷

2.3.3 Challenges

The MCs are confronted with several challenges related to SWM. First, the availability of a sanitary landfill site in every city is important so that the waste could be disposed of in a hygienic and environmentally friendly way. However, land acquisition for the landfill and its construction are expensive. Efforts to identify suitable locations for landfills are underway at the MCs of Burewala, Wazirabad and Hafizabad.⁶⁸

Second, the MCs need adequate equipment and sanitary workers to provide better services. However, they need support of the provincial government and funds to procure equipment and recruit sanitary workers.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Haider Ali Chatta, *Chief Officer, Municipal Committee, Hafizabad*, interview by Author, Lahore, 7 November, 2021.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Municipal Comiittee Hafizabad, *Service Delivery Detail*. n.d, <http://www.mchafizabad.lgpunjab.org.pk/SDD.html> (accessed November 30, 2021).

⁶⁶ Haider Ali Chatta, *Chief Officer, Municipal Committee, Hafizabad*, interview by Author, Lahore, 7 November, 2021.

⁶⁷ Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, *Gap Analysis of Municipal Services Infrastructure & Service Delivery in Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad*, Lahore: Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, 2018.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

Third, O&M in SWM is very expensive. The current model, where the MCs pay for all the expenses is unsustainable. Consequently, the MCs are not able to provide satisfactory services and large areas remain unserved.

2.4 Roads

2.4.1 Current Situation

Roads in the cities of Punjab are categorized into (i) National Highways, (ii) Punjab Highway Roads, (iii) District Roads, and (iv) Municipal Committee/Corporation Roads. Only the roads under the last category i.e. Municipal Committee Roads category are managed by the MCs. The roads under this category are generally in poor condition and need reconstruction or maintenance. For example, in case of Hafizabad, out of a total of 72.15 kilometers (kms.) of the MC Roads, 27.25 kms. are in poor condition and need maintenance. Similarly, in Wazirabad, 15.28 kms. of MC Roads out of the total 25.68 kms. are in bad shape and need immediate repair and maintenance.⁶⁹

2.4.2 Gaps in Service Delivery

Urban transport service is not available in any of these cities. People use motorcycles, bicycles, rickshaws, or cars for commuting to work or schools. With increase in ownership of cars, congestion and issues of parking are increasing.⁷⁰ Sidewalks for pedestrians are not available in most of the cases, which makes urban roads unsafe for pedestrians.⁷¹

2.4.3 Challenges

One of the major challenges regarding roads is the coordination of the MCs with various agencies which own different roads in the cities.⁷² These agencies include the National Highway Authority, Provincial C&W Department and District Councils. They are often not responsive to the MCs. Secondly, these cities are increasingly facing congestion. Several roads need widening but sufficient land is not available to allow road widening. Making these roads pedestrian friendly in the wake of increasing motorized transport is also a significant challenge.

⁶⁹ Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, *Gap Analysis of Municipal Services Infrastructure & Service Delivery in Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad*, Lahore: Punjab Municipal Development Fund Company, 2018.

⁷⁰ Haider Ali Chatta, *Chief Officer, Municipal Committee, Hafizabad*, interview by Author, Lahore, 7 November, 2021.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Umar Mukhtar, *Chief Officer, Municipal Committee, Bahawalnagar*, interview by Author, Lahore, 7 November, 2021.

2.5 Institutional and Capacity Challenges

The MCs across the Punjab are confronted with several institutional and capacity challenges, which are cross cutting and affect the municipal service delivery across all sectors. Some of these are described below:

First, the MCs of small cities have limited planning capacity to undertake holistic and integrated planning for water supply, sewerage, drainage, solid waste, and urban mobility.⁷³ In many cases, lack of capacity in terms of qualified engineers, skilled workers and staff is more challenging than not having enough funds.⁷⁴ Investment planning and asset management are weak. Investment decisions are not evidence-based and do not aim to respond to the priority needs of citizens.⁷⁵ Currently, investments are either driven by politicians or are undertaken in response to a crisis. Furthermore, these cities also lack master plans or Outline Development Plans to guide investments. Consequently, development takes place in a haphazard way.⁷⁶

Second, frequent changes in the local government system have also affected service delivery and created confusion at the local level. The Punjab Local Government Ordinance (PLGO) 2001 was replaced with the PLGA 2013. This resulted in increase of local governments which has not been matched by an increase in the number of staff or appropriate support to transition to the new system. After a few years, the PLGA 2013 was again replaced with PLGA 2019. The Punjab Government is now planning to introduce Punjab Local Government Act 2021.⁷⁷ Indeed, as noted earlier, the constituency for local governance is very weak.

Third, the local governments are dependent on Provincial Finance Commission (PFC) grants for their finances. The intergovernmental fiscal transfer system in Punjab lacks predictability, clarity, and transparency.⁷⁸ As a result, autonomy of the local governments is undermined. Ad hoc transfers through the Members of Provincial Assembly (MPAs) are common.

2.6 Punjab Cities Program (PCP)

The Punjab Government is currently implementing the US\$ 200 million PCP with the support of the World Bank. This Program is targeting 16 small cities of Punjab

⁷³ Engr. M. Iftikhar Rasool, *General Manager (Engg.)/ Deputy Project Director Punjab Cities Program*, interview by Author, Lahore, 8 November, 2021.

⁷⁴ Farvacque-Vitkovic, Catherine, and Mihaly Kopanyi, *Municipal finances: A handbook for local governments*, Washington D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2014.

⁷⁵ The World bank, *Project Appraisal Document*, Washington, DC, USA, February 21, 2018.

⁷⁶ Abid Hussainy, *Senior Specialist, Environmental and Social Safeguards, The Urban Unit*, interview by Author, Lahore, 6 November, 2021.

⁷⁷ The Express Tribune. *LG Act 2021 draft sent to law dept*. November 20, 2021.

<https://tribune.com.pk/story/2330203/lg-act-2021-draft-sent-to-law-dept> (accessed November 22, 2021).

⁷⁸ Farvacque-Vitkovic, Catherine, and Mihaly Kopanyi, *Municipal finances: A handbook for local governments*, Washington D.C.: World Bank Publications, 2014.

including Bahawalnagar, Burewala, Hafizabad and Wazirabad. The objective of this program is to bridge gaps in MSD in these cities and provide support for strengthening their MCs. The Program started in 2018 and is expected to close in 2023. According to the latest Implementation Status and Results Report, released by the World Bank in August 2021, the Program is on track to achieve its development objective and its implementation progress is satisfactory.⁷⁹ Out of the total US\$ 200 million, an amount of US\$108.29 million has been disbursed; 15 out of 16 MCs have achieved their disbursement linked results.

Conclusion

The small cities of Punjab have varying degrees of basic infrastructures for municipal service delivery. They have also received financial and technical support from the Punjab Government. However, service delivery is far from satisfactory. Large areas of these cities are not served by water supply systems. Due to poor infrastructure and resultant contamination, the quality of water is poor at most of the places. The coverage of sewerage systems ranges from 60 to 65 percent of the cities' areas. None of the cities has a wastewater treatment plant. The condition of SWM is generally unsatisfactory. Most of the cities do not have a landfill or a dump site.

The MCs of these cities which are responsible for service delivery are confronted with several administrative, financial, and operational challenges. Elected local governments which could have improved service delivery on account of being closer to citizens and having a better understanding of their needs⁸⁰ have generally been absent (due to a higher level political lack of interest). Whenever, these were present, they have had limited autonomy as compared with the autonomy guaranteed under Article 140A of the 1973 Constitution of Pakistan.⁸¹

The financial practices of the MCs are also not sustainable because the recoveries of expenditure incurred on service provision is extremely low. They have limited OSR and are dependent on fiscal transfers from the provincial government. The MCs do not have enough resources to undertake capital investments on new infrastructure and adequately maintain the existing infrastructure. The operations of these MCs are also inefficient. They end up wasting a lot of water in the form of NRW and do not adhere to energy conservation practices. Urban roads in these cities belong to different agencies which operate in silos. Consequently, the road assets management is poor and results in poor mobility.

⁷⁹ The World Bank, *Implementation Status & Results Report*, The World Bank, 2021.

⁸⁰ Ming Zhang, *Local elections in Pakistan: A chance to improve public services*, December 22, 2015, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/local-elections-pakistan-chance-improve-public-services> (accessed November 15, 2021).

⁸¹ National Assembly of Pakistan, n.d, http://www.na.gov.pk/uploads/documents/1549886415_632.pdf (accessed November 11, 2021).

With the expected increase in population of small cities, their municipal infrastructures are going to come under further pressure. This may result in deterioration of service delivery and environmental degradation. For 16 PCP cities, there is a huge opportunity to benefit from investments under the Program to improve their municipal infrastructure and build capacity of their employees.

Improvement in the delivery of municipal services is essential in order to fulfill the country's commitments under the SDGs. The following recommendations could be helpful in this regard.

Recommendations

A. Institutional

1. Local governments (LGs) should be provided necessary administrative, financial, and political autonomy as envisaged under Article 140A of the Constitution of Pakistan and their elections should be held regularly.
2. All cities should prepare their master plans.
3. To the maximum extent possible, municipal authorities in Pakistan should outsource municipal services under public private partnership (PPP) contracts. Different PPP models have been experimented in India⁸² and other countries, indicating their financial viability.⁸³

B. Financial

4. More authority should be devolved to the LGs to enable them to collect more OSR.
5. Service delivery charges must be rationalized by being based on the expenditure incurred on services to make their financing sustainable.
6. Fresh surveys should be conducted for water, sewerage and SWM consumers to bring out of the network consumers into the billing network.

C. Operational

7. The inefficiencies in the form of NRW should be reduced by improving the distribution network. Consumers should be charged based on their water

⁸² Gopal K. Sarangi, "Towards a Public-Private Partnership Regime: An Analysis of Water-supply Systems in Urban India", *ASIEN*, 2010: 45-57.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

consumption as opposed to the current fixed tariff. Similarly, potential areas for energy conservation should also be investigated and implemented.

8. Capacity building of MCs should be undertaken in terms of equipment, upgradation of existing systems and processes as well as training for their employees. There is a huge opportunity of using ICT.

D. Environmental

9. All the cities should be provided with sanitary landfill sites and wastewater treatment plants by the provincial government with the assistance of international development partners.

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