

District Administration and Service Delivery:

Gaps and Way Forward

 Mudassir Riaz Malik ¹



Copyright © 2023 Author(s)

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

Suggested Citation:

Malik, M. R., (2023). District Administration and Service Delivery: Gaps and Way Forward. *Journal of Pakistan Administration*. 44(1). 81–116.

Received: March 8, 2023/ Accepted: July 28, 2023/ Published: June 30, 2023.

Abstract

A country's governance is a function the effectiveness of its public service delivery systems. Pakistan still ranks low in terms of its 32 percentile ranking in the Government Effectiveness Index (part of World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators 2020). Even though the province of Punjab has taken several initiatives to improve service delivery at the district level, citizens in general are not satisfied with services at public facilities. This paper explores the association of accessibility to services, quality of services and public sector integrity through a logit model with overall satisfaction of citizens towards services. The study employs a quantitative approach to examine the association and collects data through survey of citizens by means of a structured and close-ended questionnaire administered at selected public facilities in Lahore and Faisalabad. The study also conducts a gap analysis between citizens' perceptions of service delivery and understanding of public administration. The district administration structure for service delivery in Punjab is one of a hybrid nature with comprehensive framework of laws and policies including Local Government Act 2019 and Civil Administration Act 2017 placing Deputy Commissioner at an important position for coordinating public facilities as well as supervising service delivery systems. Moreover, the data collected shows that the majority of respondents are young males hailing from urban areas, self-employed and educated. Even though 70 percent of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the services received, interestingly 38 percent of them approached the public facility with some reference - an indication of their lack of trust in "normal" service delivery. The study finds that quality of services

¹ University name, Lahore, Pakistan
e-mail: mrmalik@gmail.com

and public sector integrity significantly explain citizens' overall satisfaction towards effective service delivery in spite of the fact that accessibility and leadership role are not found predictive of the same. Similarly, the widest gap between citizens' satisfaction with service delivery and administrators' perception of these services lies in public sector integrity. The study concludes that focus areas of public administrators for improving service delivery include enhanced responsiveness and quality of services, digitalization, and transparency. The study recommends that dedicated desks with staff skilled in dealing with citizens, automation of services and effective complaint management systems can help improve citizens' perceptions towards effective service delivery.

Keywords: *district administration, public service, quality of services.*

1. Introduction

Good governance is considered to be a significant factor for economic development of any country. One of key factors determining good governance of a country is the effectiveness of public service delivery systems. Pakistan lacks effective public service systems. This is evident from the fact that the country scores eight on scale of one to ten with one representing the highest level of effectiveness of public services and ten the lowest. This is way above world mean of 5.6 (World Bank Group, 2022). Moreover, Pakistan ranks at 111 out of 137 countries in terms of governance (Stiftung, 2022). Out of the four provinces, Punjab has witnessed greater improvement in public service delivery in last one decade (World Bank, 2016). However, still citizens have not been found to be satisfied with effectiveness of service delivery in the province.

Punjab is the largest province of the country with population of 110 million out of which 40 million live in urban settings with 71 percent literacy rate for males and 55 percent for females (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Poverty in Punjab stands at 16.3 percent with intensity of multi-dimensional poverty of 44 percent (Butt & Faraz, 2021; Punjab Economic Research Institute, 2017). Moreover, around 13 percent people of Punjab defecate in open due to want of toilets (UNICEF, 2019). Failure of providing improved and effective services up to the satisfaction of citizens in Punjab may be attributed to various factors which include structural, human and institutional.

Existing literature demonstrates that citizens' satisfaction towards effective service delivery is determined by public sector integrity (Khalil & Adelabu, 2012) transparency leadership (Agba et al., 2013; Allio, 2015), quality of service (Agba et al., 2013) digitalization of services (Shaikh et al., 2016), a citizen-centered approach (Ozols et al., 2018) and accessibility to information, geographical nearness and cost of service (Tervo et al., 2013; Saurman, 2016).

The study finds that quality of services and public sector integrity significantly

explain citizens' overall satisfaction towards effective service delivery. This is in line with existing literature. However, accessibility and leadership role are not found predictive of effective service delivery. The study also discovers that significant number of people approach service centers with some reference that indicates lesser confidence of citizens in systems available in these centers to address their problems. Moreover, the study finds that the widest gap between citizens' satisfaction with service delivery and administrators' perception to services lies in public sector integrity.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Effective service delivery at local level in Pakistan has remained an issue of public concern since its inception. According to the World Bank (n.d), Pakistan has been ranked at 32 percentile on citizens' perceptions of quality of public services. Likewise, the situation in Punjab, the most populous province of the country with 36 administrative units, is no exception. Recently, the Punjab Right to Public Service Act 2019 and Punjab Civil Administration Act, 2017 were introduced to improve service delivery besides stand-alone interventions like e-khidmat centers at district level, however, citizens' overall perception of effective service delivery has not changed significantly due to various factors including accessibility issues, lack of quality services and corruption.

On the basis of existing scholarship, the study developed the following hypotheses to explain factors associated with citizens' satisfaction to effective service delivery:

1. Accessibility to services determines citizens' satisfaction with effective service delivery.
2. Citizens-centered services predict citizens' satisfaction with effective service delivery.
3. Digitalization of services improves citizens' satisfaction with effective service delivery.
4. Quality of services determines citizens' satisfaction with effective service delivery.
5. Public sector integrity is associated with citizens' satisfaction with effective service delivery.
6. Leadership role in district administration predicts citizens' satisfaction with effective service delivery.

1.2. Significance and Scope of the Study

The study is significant as it introduces a new model of analysis on the basis of literature for predicting relationship between effective service delivery and accessibility, quality of services and human factors through six hypotheses.



Moreover, the study also identifies gaps between service delivery on the ground and citizens' perception of effective service delivery in Punjab. Hence the study not just adds to existing scholarship, but is, to the best of the author's knowledge, the first that informs such relationships and gaps on the basis of a newly designed analytical framework and adapted questionnaire tool.

For this study, a limited number of services provided by selected public facilities in a district have been observed. These services include those rendered by Deputy Commissioner (DC) office, Arazi Record Centers (ARCs), Municipal Corporations (MCs), Municipal Committees, e-Khidmat Centers and health services in hospitals.

Limiting the scope of the study was the fact that it was conducted by gathering data in only two districts of Faisalabad and Lahore. This was on account of limited time and resources available. The six variables were broadly classified into three categories of accessibility, quality of services and human factors while literature reports several other factors influencing effective service delivery, such as public officers' motivational level, monetary incentive of public officers, structure of organization and strength of institutions that have not been accounted for in this study. Accordingly, an analysis of effective service delivery from the perspective of additional factors as well as by including other areas of Punjab is suggested for future studies.

2. Literature Review

This subsection introduces an analytical framework on the basis of existing scholarship on effective service delivery from the perspective of service delivery gaps in public facilities. The literature on effectiveness of public service delivery is vast and comprehensive. It emphasizes that no effective public service system with higher standards of living can be designed without establishing a two-way link with people (The World Bank Group, 2014). Moreover, high quality public service is explained by a sound understanding of citizens' expectations and experiences of public services as reflected in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicator 16.6.2 (United Nations, n.d.).

The existing work recognizes public sector integrity as one of main factors that influence delivery of improved public service. Public sector integrity can be understood from perspective of accountability and feedback management system and is strongly related with effective public service delivery (Khalil & Adelabu, 2012). Even though public service integrity is considered to affect service delivery at all levels of government, translation of "function performance" into reality in local governments can be materialized by overcoming issues of corruption and undue political interference (Agba et al., 2013). This suggests that accountability and complaint redress systems lie at the heart of effective local government systems.

Another important factor that has been established in literature on effective service delivery is dependability and quality of service delivery. In this respect, one of the most influential models used to identify gaps in quality of services is Gap Model of Service Quality proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1985). The delivery gap in the model is explained by difference between quality-of-service standard and service rendered in reality and can be attributed to structural, human and infrastructure factors (Parasuraman et al., 1985; Hasan et al., 2019). The reliability and quality of service are further militated by lack of qualified employees and poor work attitudes especially in local governments (Agba et al., 2013). Though it is established that quality of service that satisfies citizens is a function of consistency and clarity (Public Sector Research Centre, n.d.), this cannot be provided in insecure and unsafe environment (Jackson, 2020).

In existing scholarship, the role of e-government has been found to be critical in provision of effective service delivery. It is now considered to be more important that the public sector is assessed by efficiency of service delivery rather than by revenue generation (as cited in Public Sector Research Centre, n.d.) through citizen-focused systems using technology (Public Sector Research Centre, n.d.), as e-government accentuates on user satisfaction by not only enhancing efficiency but also responding to the need for accountability and transparency (Shaikh et al., 2016; United Nations, 2014). Other significant advantages of use of on-line services are reduction in overhead costs such as transportation and lodging costs and saving effort and time (Aritonang, 2017; Anshari & Lim, 2016; Chatzoglou et al., 2015).

One of the fundamental issues in any effective public service delivery system is the level of accessibility of services being provided. Such accessibility can be evaluated by way of location and place of service-delivery, burden of fees for services and easy access to the public (Tervo et al., 2013; Saurman, 2016). In other words, the level of ease of service delivery and access by citizens also determines the quality of service as is evident from citizens' realization that even a "one-stop-shop" does not resolve problems for those accessing it from remote areas (Purnomo & Wulandari, 2017; Hasan et al., 2019). Further, in China it has been seen that environmental pollution caused by service centers (with respect to transportation to and from the location) can be reduced by positioning facilities in areas with suitable urban accessibility (Wang et al., 2021).

One of the biggest challenges for the public sector nowadays is how to adopt a citizen-centered approach for service delivery on the pattern of private sector. For this purpose, important considerations include responsiveness to citizens' needs and expectations, designing an effective feedback management system, planning service centers in line with citizens' satisfaction, using technology, providing services without delay and creating emergency plans to cater for



failure (Public Sector Research Centre, n.d.). However, the goal of citizens-focused service delivery system can be effectively achieved by the public sector through organizational integration supported by digital transformation (Ozols et al., 2018).

A public service system is considered to be delivering effectively if it is led strongly. People are always better off in terms of service delivery with an institutional system that is headed by leadership which works with clear strategies, direction and ethical practices (Agba et al., 2013; Allio, 2015). Moreover, there exists a strong relationship of managerial accountability with quality of leadership delivering effective services (Khalil & Adelabu, 2012). Descriptive research in 47 counties of Kenya (Gaitho et al., 2018) has shown that higher level of engagement between leaders and their staff results in improved service delivery (Nurung et al., 2020).

This study focuses on evaluating the service delivery system at the level of district administration by building a framework of analysis that includes both demand side citizens' perceptions of service delivery as well as supply side of assessment of the delivery system by public service providers. The model for this study concentrates on service delivery machinery from the perspective of accessibility to services, citizen-centered approach of designing systems and delivering services, digitalization of public services, reliability and quality of services, public sector integrity and role of leadership in effective service delivery system.

3. Research Method

The study has been designed for estimating relationship of explanatory variables of accessibility, citizens-centered services, digitalization of services, quality of services, public sector integrity and leadership role in district administration with overall satisfaction of citizens towards effective service delivery. The relationship is predicted through hypotheses testing by using following logit model:

$$\text{Logit (citizens' satisfaction to service delivery)} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 (\text{age}) + \beta_2 (\text{gender}) + \beta_3 (\text{residential background}) + \beta_4 (\text{employment status}) + \beta_5 (\text{education}) + \beta_6 (\text{accessibility}) + \beta_7 (\text{citizen-centered services}) + \beta_8 (\text{digitalization of services}) + \beta_9 (\text{quality of services}) + \beta_{10} (\text{public sector integrity}) + \beta_{11} (\text{leadership role}) + \varepsilon_0$$

β_i = Coefficient/ Estimate

ε_0 = Error term

Clearly, the study uses a quantitative research methodology and has mainly used primary data. It is cross-sectional in nature. For collection of data, a structured and close ended survey questionnaire was administered in

scheduled face-to-face interviews with citizens coming to various offices of the government as well as officers and administrators managing public facilities. In this regard, a survey questionnaire tool designed by the World Bank Group (2022) has been adapted (both citizens and administrator checklists) with necessary modifications in line with objectives of the study. The outcome of these questionnaires was used for not only predicting association between dependent and independent variables, but also identifying gaps in service delivery through a 'Gap Analysis'. The responses were gathered by trained data collectors. The data collected through interviews was uploaded in real time.

In total, 589 citizens were surveyed in the districts of Faisalabad and Lahore. The selection of these citizens was done through a non-probability purposive sampling technique as they were interviewed in a planned manner in selected offices on a given day. Moreover, the responses were recorded electronically on Google Forms designed for the purpose and uploaded in real time.

Moreover, the sample size for the study was determined by using Cochran's formula that suggests a minimum sample size of 384; this study used a sample of 589.

3.1. Organization of the Paper

Following the Introduction, this paper is divided into three main sections. The Introduction presents an analytical framework on the basis of existing literature on relevant concepts and theories for structuring, guiding and informing an analysis of the relationship between six independent variables and citizens' overall satisfaction towards service delivery.

The next section is titled 'District Administration and Service Delivery Structure in Punjab'; it discusses the service delivery structure in Punjab along with role of DC from perspective of laws, policies and actual practice in vogue. The second section of *Results* describes statistics resulting from data along with hypotheses testing and identification of gaps in service delivery through logit model and comparison of responses between citizens and service providers. The third section involves discussion of results and goes on to relate these findings to available literature. This section is followed by conclusion and recommendations.

3.2. Structure of District Administration and Service Delivery System

A comprehensive district administration for delivering various services to citizens exists in the Punjab. This system has witnessed many changes over a period of time ranging from hybrid system of governance mainly controlled by the provincial government led by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) as District Magistrate before 2001 to a singularity achieved through the 'devolution plan' that introduced a highly decentralized system of governance at the district level



which was headed by “Zila Nazim” [District Supervisor]. This was followed by a period of unsettled governance between 2013 and 2016; this period began with the promulgation of a new Punjab Local Government Act 2013 and lasted till local bodies’ elections were concluded on December 13, 2016.

The district administration system took another important turn when Civil Administration Ordinance was introduced in 2016 and was later substituted by Punjab Civil Administration Act 2017. These laws specified fresh roles of the DC in a service delivery paradigm. However, Punjab Local Government Act (PLGA) 2013 was replaced by an Act in 2019 by Pakistan Tehrik-e- Insaf (PTI) government on a pretext of transferring more power to local bodies. The process again witnessed change under the new setup in Punjab led by PML (N) in 2022 by passing Punjab Local Government Act (PLGA) 2022. These institutional changes in local governments at district level have had significant dimensions of guiding to effectiveness of service delivery at local level.

The present institutional structure of the district administration vis-a-vis service delivery to citizens is composed of a hybrid system of governance managed through the provincially controlled DC office and a semi-autonomous local government arrangement. As local governments elections have not been held, these governments are currently being run by provincially appointed administrators such as Commissioners, DCs, Additional Deputy Commissioners Revenue (ADCR) and Assistant Commissioners at various local levels. Therefore, it can fairly be assumed that working of departments at district level has remained unchanged in terms of service delivery system since 2019.

According to PLGA 2022, the structure of local administration in districts has been designed on the basis of population and development levels. Under the system, nine Metropolitan Corporations (MeC) including those in Lahore and Faisalabad as well as 14 municipal corporations have been established. Likewise, 234 Municipal Committees (MCt) are being setup in the districts. Furthermore, the District Council is also an integral part of the new system. The newly enforced system provides for devolution of several provincial departments to the local level such as primary education, social welfare, tourism, sports, transport, primary health, civil defense, family planning, public health, arts and culture. Under the new system, all development authorities will be under local governments, a significant progression of empowerment. Hence, even large corporate entites like the Lahore Development Authority (LDA) and Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) will be under their respective MeCs. As the law has been recently implemented, it will take time for transformation and devolution of roles and services in the field. During the timeframe of this study, while data was being collected, the on-ground arrangement of delivery of services had not changed under the new law and all services at district level

were being provided by various departments as well as local government system in line with PLGA 2019.

Both for purpose of this study and according to the structure of district administration in Punjab, services at the district level can be broadly divided into following three categories:

1. municipal services,
2. social services and
3. land management services.

Municipal services are those that citizens expect local governments to provide them in lieu of their taxes such as water, sanitation etc. In this regard, in the light of PLGA 2019, local governments under administrators have already been entrusted with responsibility of providing various services to citizens including sanitation, water supply, street lights, issuance of certificates of marriage, divorce, birth and death etc. Besides, Local governments are also dealing with several other issues such as building planning and regulation, removal of encroachments and development of infrastructure. In bigger cities like Lahore, Multan and Faisalabad sanitation and waste management functions of local governments in urban areas have been assigned to solid waste management companies through "Services and Assets Management Agreements" (SAAMA). Similarly, in Lahore, parking related matters have been entrusted by MC to Lahore Parking Company (LPC) through an agreement. Administratively, MC Lahore is currently headed by Commissioner Lahore as its Administrator. Functionally it is managed by the Chief Corporation Officer (CCO). Similarly in all divisional headquarters, MCts are headed by Commissioners who act as Administrators and operated by Chief Officers. Likewise, District Councils are headed by DCs. Municipal Committees housed at district headquarters are headed by respective ADCs (R), and those present at stations other than district headquarters by concerned Assistant Commissioners. Union Councils are headed by Deputy Directors Local Government of the respective district.

Public social services comprise the second group. At the district level in Punjab, these include education, healthcare, police, fire services, food banks, public transportation etc. For this study, the focus is on primary and secondary health services at the district level. Currently, primary and secondary health services are devolved to local governments and are being managed through District Health Authority (DHA) headed by DCs in districts as Administrators. DHAs are functionally managed by Chief Executive Officers who are professional doctors from Health Department. Primary and secondary health services in districts under DHAs are provided at four levels: Basic Health Units (BHUs) basically meant for preventive care are at village level, Rural Health Centers (RHCs) provide primary health care with facility of 20 beds and are designated



for a group of villages to, Tehsil Headquarter Hospitals (THQs) with at least 40 beds and few specialties at tehsil headquarter level, and District Headquarter Hospitals (DHQs) at district headquarter level with expanded system of specialties and secondary health facilities.

The third group of services relates to land management and include both urban and rural land management facilities. These range from issuance of *fard* (copy of land record), mutation, registration of deeds etc to allotment to state land, land related cases in revenue courts etc. Currently land management services are being provided by land revenue officers under Board of Revenue Punjab. At district level, the DC has been assigned the role of District Collector, the custodian of land record in the district as per Punjab Land Revenue Act 1967; the DC also serves as District Registrar under the Registration Act 1908. DCs are assisted by group of officers including ADCR, Assistant Commissioners, Sub Registrars, Tehsildars, Qanungos and Patwaris (in descending order). The system of land management in Punjab including processes and structure of delivery remained unchanged since partition of India till 2016 when the project of computerization of land record was completed. The project was undertaken to deal with several issues of erstwhile British system of delivery of land services such as high transaction cost for obtaining land related services in the form of bribes and risks of changes in manual land record. The main aim of the automation of land record system was to improve land related service delivery in Punjab.

With the introduction of Land Record Management Information System (LRMIS), computerized Arazi (land) Record Centers or ARCs were opened in all districts of the Punjab under Punjab Land Record Authority (PLRA). Here citizens can come and receive services through a smart token and queue management system. In this regard, Lahore with 26 “Qanungoi” circles, 251 “patwar” circles and 363 “Muaziat” is provided with five ARCs. Similarly, district Faisalabad that is divided into 33 “Qanungoi” circles, 299 “patwar” circles and 842 Muaziat is being administered through seven ARCs. These ARCs are managed by in-charge ARCs; powers of Tehsildars are given to Assistant Director Land Record in these centers. Moreover, computerized land record is available in these centers, copies of which are provided to citizens on demand. Additionally, other services like mutation, mortgage, change in land record etc are also provided. Now, several Qanungoi Arazi Record Centers (QARCs) have also been opened in Punjab for delivering these services at Qanungoi level in a bid to improve accessibility of services to citizens. For instance, there are now three QARCs in Faisalabad while this service has not yet started in district Lahore. Although LRMIS project has been completed in Punjab, the target of computerization of entire land record has yet to be achieved. There are still “patwar” circles in many districts in Punjab including Lahore where land record is manual and all services to citizens are being provided by Patwaris and

Tehsildars. In this regard, out of 25,000 muaziat, computerization of land record of around 1,700 muaziat is still pending, out of which most of muaziat are of urban nature, that is about seven percent of the total target (PLRA, n.d.).

Many services of all three groups indicated above have also been integrated for availability to citizens in e-khidmat centers in a few districts of Punjab as part of a one-window solution. Currently, there are 11 such facilities working in Punjab with a total 17 services under one platform. The integration process of these services, which are generally provided by various departments at different places, at one place has been completed by Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB). The main objectives of these facilities are improving accessibility, introducing transparency, efficiency and accountability, simplification of processes, reducing transaction costs and increasing citizens' satisfaction. Currently, these centers are providing services that include issue of certificates of birth, marriage, death, divorce and character, registration of vehicles, collection of vehicle taxes, issuance of *fard*, learners' driving license, collection of traffic fines, issue of domicile certificates, CNIC, route permits for public transport etc.

In brief, the structure of district administration and framework of service delivery in Punjab have gone through several changes over period of time. However, effort has been made by different governments for improvement of these services through technological interventions such as introduction of LRMIS and e- khidmat centers.

3.3. Role of Deputy Commissioner Office: Linchpin

The Deputy Commissioner is the meta-supervisor of general administration in a district and is declared as principal representative of the government in a district. As per Civil Administration Act 2017, the DC is not only responsible for observing and overseeing the duties of Assistant Commissioners but also for carrying out effective coordination among all departments in the district as well as public facilities mainly for effective service delivery. Another important role of the DC is to ensure observance of standards laid down by government for a public facility besides keeping an eye on various departments to check whether policies and guidelines of the government are being followed or not. Further, the DC has been empowered to take appropriate legal action jointly with the District Police Officer (DPO) for maintaining peace and order in the district. In every district, the DC has been notified as convener of District Intelligence Committee (DIC) comprising the DPO and representatives of all the intelligence agencies; the DIC has been playing an instrumental role in decision making processes of matters related to law and order in districts.

Moreover, DCs have also been assigned the role of District Collectors in relation to land matters in a district. The position is very important for managing land issues. In this respect, DCs hold courts to hear cases of land disputes and give



judicial decisions thereof. Thus, DCs have a dual role to play in district: not only do they have the administrative function for managing and coordinating various departments but also have been conferred with judicial powers for adjudicating cases of land disputes. While the direct role of DCs in land affairs has been reduced after establishment of ARCs and QARCs (as these centers are directly controlled by PLRA), they still have the role of supervising, and coordinating ARCs and QARCs and deciding cases emanating from land disputes as well as their subsequent implementation in computerized record. In addition to direct responsibilities given to DCs for managing land record, the DCs are assisted by set of officers such as ADCs(R) and Sub Registrars in districts. They are also in-charge of process of registration of deeds in districts with Sub Registrars at their disposal.

Direct involvement of DCs in municipal functions of district is not currently provided in any law except the function of coordination and supervision. Similarly, their direct role in the functioning of development authorities such as LDA and FDA is also restricted. However, the *de facto* position is different from *de jure* one because presently DCs are functioning as Administrators of District Councils in districts; similarly ADCs(R) and ACs who are also working as Administrators of MeCs and MCTs respectively. This on-ground arrangement puts DCs at center of entire service delivery system.

There are other important functions that are also formally or informally executed by DCs in their respective districts. In total these responsibilities can be divided into more than 100 categories. Few of these duties include managing Overseas Commission Cases, wheat procurement, price fixing and checking of essential commodities, issuing domicile certificates, issuing various NOCs such as those for petrol pumps, political, religious and musical events, matters of Charity Commission, controlling the Civil Defense Department at the district level, monitoring and coordinating Social Welfare Department matters, heading District Task Force for Anti-adulteration in Pesticides and Fertilizers, District Emergency Board, playing a role in parking company, establishing Ramzan Bazaars, managing pandemic issues, issuing arms licenses etc. These functions are other than those flowing from the position of DC as head of DHA and District Education Authority (DEA).

The role of DC in current administrative setup of districts is vital and influential in performance of various administrative functions related to service delivery. This position has been either defined through various laws, policies, and guidelines of the government or assumed informally as principal representative of the government. That is why, variance is often observed between the *de jure* role and the *de facto* roles of DCs. However, all these roles of DCs have impacts on the paradigm of service delivery at the district level.

3.4. Laws, Policies and Practices Governing Service Delivery System

While a comprehensive framework of laws governing public service delivery in districts exists, together with a few policies, practice on ground varies due to gaps between laws and policies and existing implementation systems. The main laws and rules that govern service delivery systems at district level include the following

1. PLGA 2019, comprehensive legislation determining the role of local governments and municipal functions;
2. Punjab Local Government Registration of Births and Deaths Rules 2021,
3. other local government rules,
4. Civil Administration Act (CAA) 2017 which specifies roles and responsibilities of DCs,
5. Punjab Land Revenue Act 1967, the Registration Act 1908, and other land administration laws,
6. Punjab Land Records Authority (PLRA) Act 2017 defining land management processes
7. Pakistan Citizenship Rules 1952 and
8. Punjab District Authorities (Composition) Rules 2016.

Moreover, Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 is also a landmark legislation for improving transparency in public offices. Above all, the Punjab Right to Public Services Act 2019 provides a comprehensive framework for all public facilities and requires provision of timely services to public in a transparent manner.

Besides laws and government policies, practices on the ground are instrumental in shaping effective service delivery system. Even though there are several legislations governing actions of various government departments related to sectoral services for citizens in Punjab, there is a dearth of public policies in these sectors. However, one important policy notified by the government for improving service delivery in various public facilities is Punjab IT Policy 2018 that envisages Punjab as the province with highest standards of e-governance. The practice however at district level varies due to fragile implementation institutions. The institutional arrangement of executing local and special laws pertaining to public services is weak due to several factors including non-existence of a dedicated structure for implementing these laws, as well as a long



and tedious process of decisions on matters related to these laws in courts. Moreover, there are gaps and lack of clarity and definitions on different enabling matters in various laws such as CAA 2017 with reference to service delivery. These inhibit and hinder public administrators from taking decisions in these matters, thus compromising the quality of public services.

4. Descriptive Statistics

Citizens' data indicates that a majority of the respondents (31.9 percent) are between 26 to 35 years of age with 36.6 percent from Faisalabad and 27.5 percent from Lahore. This is followed by the 36-45 years age bracket wherein 25 percent respondents represent Faisalabad and 21 percent Lahore. Hence data indicates that 76.6 percent of the total respondents are between 16 and 45 years of age — an overall pointer towards younger respondents. In case of gender, male respondents outnumber female ones with 75 percent of total sample size that indicates that more male citizens turn to public offices for services. Data further indicates that more than half of the total respondents belong to urban areas (53 percent) while 37 percent are from rural ones. This finding seems logical as both Faisalabad as well as Lahore are highly populated metropolitan cities. Moreover, employment status from the data reveals that majority of respondents are self-employed (26 percent) while 19.9 percent are unemployed and 12.9 percent students. It has further been found that 46.9 percent respondents have completed university degrees (bachelors or above) while 78.8 percent have completed matriculation (grade 10) or above; this demonstrates that respondents are relatively educated. The demographic characteristics of respondents can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (Citizens) (N=589)

	District					
	Faisalabad		Lahore		Total	
Age in Years	n	Percent	n	percent	n	percent
16-25	50	17.4	79	26.2	129	21.9
26-35	105	36.6	83	27.5	188	31.9
36-45	71	24.7	63	20.9	134	22.8
46-55	44	15.3	50	16.6	94	16.0
56-65	17	5.9	23	7.6	40	6.8
66-75	0	0.0	4	1.3	4	0.7
Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Gender						

	District					
	Faisalabad		Lahore		Total	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	percent	<i>n</i>	percent
Age in Years						
Female	66	23.0	83	27.5	149	25.3
Male	221	77.0	219	72.5	440	74.7
Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Residential Background						
Peri-Urban	29	10.1	27	8.9	56	9.5
Rural	130	45.3	89	29.5	219	37.2
Urban	128	44.6	186	61.6	314	53.3
Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Employment Status						
Private-Sector Job	57	19.9	73	24.2	130	22.1
Public Sector Job	65	22.6	46	15.2	111	18.8
Self-Employed/ Business	87	30.3	68	22.5	155	26.3
Student	30	10.5	46	15.2	76	12.9
Unemployed	48	16.7	69	22.8	117	19.9
Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Education						
Illiterate	19	6.6	24	7.9	43	7.3
Primary	23	8	17	5.6	40	6.8
Middle	25	8.7	17	5.6	42	7.1
Matriculation	42	14.6	48	15.9	90	15.3
Intermediate	47	16.4	51	16.9	98	16.6
Graduation	49	17.1	77	25.5	126	21.4
Masters	63	22	62	20.5	125	21.2
M.Phil.	13	4.5	5	1.7	18	3.1
Ph.D.	6	2.1	1	0.3	7	1.2
Total	287	100	302	100	589	100

Note: n means number of respondents

Citizens' responses about effective service delivery by district administration are given in Table 2. The data describes citizens' satisfaction with accessibility of services; in this respect 76.9 percent (75 and 79 percent in Lahore and



Faisalabad respectively) responded that finding correct information about their required service was easy. In the same terms (ease of contacting public facility), only 21.2 percent citizens are dissatisfied (22.3 and 20.2 percent in Faisalabad and Lahore respectively).

Similarly, from perspective of outreach to services, 76.7 percent citizens with almost the same level of satisfaction in Faisalabad and Lahore were found to be satisfied. Another significant finding is that 37.4 percent citizens visit public offices for services with some reference. Data for geographical proximity, an important indicator of accessibility, shows that 76.6 percent citizens find it convenient to access service center with no variation in responses gathered in two districts. Moreover, 33.6 percent respondents report that their grievances have not been redressed at one place. In terms of affordability, 78.8 percent report that cost of service is affordable while 81.7 percent respond that reaching the facility is affordable. According to data, overall, 76.5 percent people are satisfied with accessibility of services.

In terms of citizen-centeredness of services, data in Table 2 also reflects that 70 percent respondents found services in public facilities to be user friendly. Moreover, 66 percent citizens believe that these services are tailored according to special needs of citizens with identical percentage in both Faisalabad and Lahore. As far as timeliness is concerned, 66 percent citizens (62.7 percent in Faisalabad and 68.5 percent in Lahore) responded that they were provided services within the given time. When responses about digitalization, one of the key factors in citizen-centeredness of services, were analyzed, the data signifies that only 44.8 percent citizens are satisfied with availability of documents online and 10.4 percent dissatisfied. It is also revealed that significant percentage of citizens (43 percent) are not accessing online services and information. In this regard, 71 percent people agree that there is a need to digitalize and automate public services.

In terms of quality of service, 54.5 percent citizens believe that they were not provided any extra attention by the relevant staff. This factor was more prominent in Lahore as compared to Faisalabad. Similarly, in terms of competency of staff, 77.6 percent people agree that staff know their job. Also, only 24 percent citizens did not eventually receive the desired service while 70 percent of citizens were found to be satisfied with the quality of service provided. Further, 73.2 percent people responded that they would like to avail the service again. Moreover, people in Lahore were more satisfied with the quality of service than those in Faisalabad.

Public sector integrity has also been considered by this study to inform effective service delivery. This variable has been measured through indicators of safety and security as well as feedback and complaint handling in public offices. The data suggests that in terms of safety and security, 78 percent people agree that

service centers are at a secure place while 76.7 percent citizens believe that their information and documents will not be misused by staff. Moreover, 28 percent citizens were found favoring staff with bribes or gifts for services while 73.7 percent people strongly feel that the issue of corruption should be dealt with strictly in offices. However, data reveals that significant number of citizens (around 67.9 percent) agree that discriminating behavior is employed in offices towards citizens and this percentage is more profound in Lahore (around 73 percent).

Citizens were also asked questions regarding feedback and handling of their complaints in offices. The responses indicate that only 24 percent of citizens were asked to evaluate services in these centers. However, it has also been found that only 24 percent lodged complaints against services provided, out of which only 25 percent of citizens received a response from public offices. This means only six percent of those who lodged complaints got a response from the service provider. Moreover, only 29.5 percent of people were found to be satisfied with the redress of their complaints.

In order to assess leadership and supervision levels at offices as seen through citizens' perceptions, respondents were asked if service delivery could be improved through regular or more frequent visits by officer's in-charge. The data shows that 87 percent believe that service delivery could be improved if officers paid regular visits to these centers. However, only 46 percent citizens observed officers' presence in offices for monitoring. It was also found that more people in Lahore experienced officers monitoring service centers than in Faisalabad have by a margin of eight percent.

Table 2
Citizens' Responses about Effective Service Delivery by District Administration

		District					
		Faisalabad		Lahore		Total	
		n	percent	n	percent	n	percent
Accessibility: Access to Service							
Ease of finding the correct information about the service	Dissatisfied	71	24.7	65	21.5	136	23.1
	Satisfied	216	75.3	237	78.5	453	76.9
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Ease of contacting Govt. entity	Dissatisfied	64	22.3	61	20.2	125	21.2
	Satisfied	223	77.7	241	79.8	464	78.8
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Outreach to the service	Dissatisfied	68	23.7	69	22.8	137	23.3
	Satisfied	219	76.3	233	77.2	452	76.7



The SDGs of Education and Health Sector in Pakistan

		District					
		Faisalabad		Lahore		Total	
		n	percent	n	percent	n	percent
Approached Facility through some reference	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
	No	176	61.3	193	63.9	369	62.6
	Yes	111	38.7	109	36.1	220	37.4
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Accessibility: Geographical Proximity							
Convenience to reach the facility	Convenient	221	77.0	230	76.2	451	76.6
	Inconvenient	66	23.0	72	23.8	138	23.4
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Redressal of grievances at one place	No	104	36.2	94	31.1	198	33.6
	Yes	183	63.8	208	68.9	391	66.4
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Accessibility: Affordability							
Affordability of Cost of service	No	60	20.9	65	21.5	125	21.2
	Yes	227	79.1	237	78.5	464	78.8
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Affordability of reaching the facility	No	51	17.8	57	18.9	108	18.3
	Yes	236	82.2	245	81.1	481	81.7
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Citizen-centered: Services Tailored to the People							
User-friendly services for PWDs	Agree	195	67.9	218	72.2	413	70.1
	Disagree	92	32.1	84	27.8	176	29.9
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Services tailored according to the needs of citizens (special needs, Elderly etc)	Agree	196	68.3	194	64.2	390	66.2
	Disagree	91	31.7	108	35.8	199	33.8
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Citizen-centered Services: Timeliness							
Received service within the given time.	Agree	180	62.7	207	68.5	387	65.7
	Disagree	107	37.3	95	31.5	202	34.3

		District					
		Faisalabad		Lahore		Total	
		n	percent	n	percent	n	percent
Overall satisfaction with service delivery time	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
	Agree	179	62.4	219	72.5	398	67.6
	Disagree	108	37.6	83	27.5	191	32.4
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Digitalization							
Availability of all the required documents online	Dissatisfied	32	11.1	29	9.6	61	10.4
	Do Not Remember	4	1.4	7	2.3	11	1.9
	Not Applicable	120	41.8	133	44.0	253	43.0
	Satisfied	131	45.6	133	44.0	264	44.8
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Need to digitalize & automate the services	No	111	38.7	60	19.9	171	29.0
	Yes	176	61.3	242	80.1	418	71.0
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Quality of Service							
Staff paid extra attention to facilitate	Agree	147	51.2	121	40.1	268	45.5
	Disagree	140	48.8	181	59.9	321	54.5
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Competency of staff in Service matter	Agree	212	73.9	245	81.1	457	77.6
	Disagree	75	26.1	57	18.9	132	22.4
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Ultimately received the desired service	Agree	201	70.0	249	82.5	450	76.4
	Disagree	86	30.0	53	17.5	139	23.6
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Satisfaction with the service received	Agree	181	63.1	229	75.8	410	69.6
	Disagree	106	36.9	73	24.2	179	30.4
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Would like to avail the service again in future	No	95	33.1	63	20.9	158	26.8
	Yes	192	66.9	239	79.1	431	73.2



The SDGs of Education and Health Sector in Pakistan

		District					
		Faisalabad		Lahore		Total	
		n	percent	n	percent	n	percent
Total		287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Public Sector Integrity: Safety and Security							
Service center is a secure place	Agree	202	70.4	258	85.4	460	78.1
	Disagree	85	29.6	44	14.6	129	21.9
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Trust on staff regarding the information/documents shared	Agree	195	67.9	257	85.1	452	76.7
	Disagree	92	32.1	45	14.9	137	23.3
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Favored staff for service (gift/ bribe etc)	Agree	100	34.8	64	21.2	164	27.8
	Disagree	187	65.2	238	78.8	425	72.2
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Corruption, bribe, or exploitation should be addressed strictly	Agree	198	69.0	236	78.1	434	73.7
	Disagree	89	31.0	66	21.9	155	26.3
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Discriminating behaviors toward citizens	Agree	181	63.1	219	72.5	400	67.9
	Disagree	106	36.9	83	27.5	189	32.1
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Public Sector Integrity: Feedback & Complaint Handling							
Asked to evaluate the Service(s)	Do Not Remember	49	17.1	49	16.2	98	16.6
	No	168	58.5	181	59.9	349	59.3
	Yes	70	24.4	72	23.8	142	24.1
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Lodged complaint against the service	No	216	75.3	234	77.5	450	76.4
	Yes	71	24.7	68	22.5	139	23.6
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Received response regarding the complaint	No	206	71.8	234	77.5	440	74.7
	Yes	81	28.2	68	22.5	149	25.3
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0

		District					
		Faisalabad		Lahore		Total	
		n	percent	n	percent	n	percent
Satisfaction with redressal of complaint	Dissatisfied	190	66.2	225	74.5	415	70.5
	Satisfied	97	33.8	77	25.5	174	29.5
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Leadership & Supervision							
Officers monitoring the service centers	No	141	49.1	175	57.9	316	53.7
	Yes	146	50.9	127	42.1	273	46.3
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0
Service Delivery may improve if officers pay visits regularly	No	51	17.8	27	8.9	78	13.2
	Yes	236	82.2	275	91.1	511	86.8
	Total	287	100.0	302	100.0	589	100.0

Note: n means number of respondents

4.1. Hypotheses Testing: Logit Model

The study tests six hypotheses through the logit model of regression by using R. The citizens' overall satisfaction towards effective service delivery, the dependent variable, has been predicted through accessibility, Citizen-centered Services, Digitization, Reliability and Quality of Services, Public Sector Integrity and Leadership Role. All variables including both regressand and explanatory variables are binary in nature. Similarly, other variables like Gender, Education, Residential Background, Employment Status and Age are categorical in character. The study finds that four independent variables such as Citizen-centeredness of Services, Digitization, Reliability and Quality of Services and Public Sector Integrity have statistically significant relationships with the dependent variable while Accessibility and Leadership Role have not been found statistically significant with the regress and thus may not have power to predict it (as is given in Table 3.)

The study also showed that females were more satisfied than males in terms of receiving services and the results are statistically significant with p-value of 0.03 as shown in Table 3. However, it was further shown that Education, Residential Background, Employment Status and Age are not statistically significant with p-value of more than 0.05 as shown in Table 3.

The study demonstrates that Accessibility and Leadership do not affect citizens' satisfaction with service delivery. In terms of Accessibility, it was found that with a one unit increase in Accessibility to services in the form of access of



citizens including access to information about these services, geographical contiguity and affordability, overall satisfaction of citizens increased by 0.17 units; hence the results are not statistically significant. This means that Accessibility is not a significant predictor of citizens' satisfaction to service delivery. Similarly, the study establishes that one unit increase in citizens' agreement on leadership role at district administration level in the form of regular visits of supervisory officer enhances overall satisfaction of citizens towards service delivery by 0.12 units but the results are also not statistically significant.

Through this study, four hypotheses were found validated. Firstly, it is authenticated that Citizen-centered Service Delivery and Responsiveness predicts overall citizens' satisfaction towards effective service delivery. With one unit increase in citizen-centered service delivery in the form of services catering for needs of people as well as timeliness of services, it has been found that overall satisfaction of citizens rises by 1.5 units. Moreover, the result is highly statistically significant with p-value of 9.1×10^{-7} . Besides, the data evinces that one unit increase in digitalization of services in terms of availability of documents, information and ancillary services online, people's satisfaction level increases by 0.75 points. The results are statistically significant in this case too with p-value of 0.016. Thus, digitalization positively predicts the satisfaction of citizens towards service delivery.

The results of Logit regression displayed in Table 3 also confirm the hypothesis of positive association between Quality of Service and Reliability and citizens' overall satisfaction. It is found that if Quality of Service increases by one unit in terms of more attention provided by staff, availability of competent staff and greater inclination of citizens towards receiving service, overall satisfaction of citizen's increases by 2.73 points- statistically the most significant one with p-value of zero. Moreover, the standard error in this case is 0.3 which suggests that the model used is precise enough to predict that Quality of Service is strongly and significantly related to citizens' satisfaction towards effective service delivery.

Table 3
Logistic Regression Model of Predictors of Citizens overall Satisfaction towards Effective Service Delivery

Coefficients	Estimate	Std Error	Z value	Pr(> z)
Gender (Male)	-0.78	0.36	-2.13	0.03 *
Education				
Illiterate	-0.19	0.60	-0.32	0.74
Intermediate	-0.00	0.46	-0.00	0.99

Coefficients	Estimate	Std Error	Z value	Pr(> z)
Masters	-0.47	0.43	-1.08	0.27
Matriculation	0.09	0.47	0.20	0.83
Middle	-0.59	0.56	-1.06	0.28
MPhil	-0.21	0.91	-0.23	0.81
PhD	-0.39	1.31	-0.30	0.76
Primary	-0.11	0.58	-0.19	0.84
Residential background				
Rural	-0.31	0.49	-0.64	0.52
Urban	-0.06	0.48	-0.13	0.89
Employment Status				
Public Sector Job	0.26	0.43	0.61	0.53
Self-Employed/Business/Shareholder/Small Scale Local Trade	-0.20	0.39	-0.51	0.60
Student	0.43	0.58	0.74	0.45
Unemployed	-0.22	0.44	-0.50	0.61
Age (years)				
26-35	-0.07	0.46	-0.15	0.87
36-45	-0.80	0.49	-1.61	0.10
46-55	0.05	0.54	0.10	0.91
56-65	-0.68	0.66	-1.02	0.30
66-75	1.22	1.47	0.82	0.40
Accessibility				
Citizen-Centered Service Delivery and Responsiveness	1.49	0.30	4.91	9.1e-07 ***
Digitalization	0.75	0.31	2.40	0.01 *
Reliability and Quality of Service Delivery	2.72	0.30	8.82	< 2e-16 ***
Public Sector Integrity	0.75	0.28	2.71	0.00 **
Leadership	0.12	0.29	0.40	0.68
Intercept	-1.17	0.80	-1.46	0.14

Note: Std= Standard, z= standard score, pr= probability

With respect to Public Sector Integrity, the study finds that it also has a positive



association with the dependent variable. Through results in Table 3, the data demonstrates that in case of one unit increase in public sector integrity (determined in the form of safety and security of visiting place as well as maintenance of secrecy of citizens' information and effective feedback and complaint handling mechanism in service centers), the overall satisfaction of citizens increased by 0.76 units. The variables are statistically significant with p-value less than 0.007. Thus, for this study, public sector integrity strongly and significantly predicts the regression.

The Logistic Regression Model has also been run by controlling factor of visiting public facility through some reference as shown in Table 4. It is however found that results are not sensitive to the Reference variable and thus there is no change in significance level as well as estimates of influencer variables. This indicates that visiting public facility centers through reference does not change citizens' understanding of issues affecting their satisfaction.

Table 4

Logistic Regression Model of Predictors of Citizens overall Satisfaction towards Effective Service Delivery controlling for Reference

Coefficients	Estimate	Std. Error	Z value	Pr(> z)
Gender (Male)	-0.768826	0.366066	-2.100	0.035708
Education				
Illiterate	-0.183122	0.605743	-0.302	0.762416
Intermediate	0.024217	0.462760	0.052	0.958265
Masters	-0.511008	0.433365	-1.179	0.238333
Matriculation	0.139758	0.477013	0.293	0.769534
Middle	-0.588457	0.565623	-1.040	0.298168
MPhil	-0.174643	0.915115	-0.191	0.848649
PhD	-0.434876	1.323326	-0.329	0.74244
Primary	-0.080121	0.582156	-0.138	0.890535
Residential background				
Rural	-0.313189	0.494020	-0.634	0.526107
Urban	-0.066266	0.483814	-0.137	0.891058
Employment Status				
Public Sector Job	0.259633	0.437678	0.593	0.553043
Self-Employed/Business/Shareholder/Small Scale Local Trade	-0.183394	0.398620	-0.460	0.645465

Coefficients	Estimate	Std. Error	Z value	Pr(> z)
Student	0.423074	0.585462	0.723	0.469905
Unemployed	-0.213462	0.445018	-0.480	0.631462
Age (years)				
26-35	-0.073887	0.464211	-0.159	0.873538
36-45	-0.835760	0.499812	-1.672	0.094495
46-55	0.033864	0.544464	0.062	0.950406
56-65	-0.707930	0.665268	-1.064	0.287271
66-75	1.341903	1.484270	0.904	0.365951
Approached Facility through reference	0.293095	0.295231	0.993	0.320824
Accessibility	0.182875	0.385288	0.475	0.635041
Citizen-Centered Service Delivery and Responsiveness	1.541405	0.308693	4.993	5.93e-07 ***
Digitalization	0.736342	0.312141	2.359	0.01832 *
Reliability and Quality of Service Delivery	2.710601	0.310034	8.743	< 2e-16 ***
Public Sector Integrity	0.743418	0.280272	2.652	0.00799 **
Leadership	0.080889	0.298836	0.271	0.786637
Intercept	-1.288602	0.810465	-1.590	0.111845

Note: Std= Standard, z= standard score, pr= probability

5. Gap Analysis

By way of a comparative analysis of responses received from citizens (589) and administrators (20), the study found gaps between services provided by public facilities and perception of citizens regarding those services.

It was found that 77 percent of respondents are satisfied with ease of finding correct information along with 78 percent who indicated ease in contacting the government entity. Similarly, three fourths of citizens were satisfied with the time it took in reaching the facility. Administrators communicated policies mainly through personal interaction, which was followed by social media. This implies that face to face interaction and social media are the most useful communication tools for access to service in terms of finding correct information and ease of accessing government facility.

A majority of citizens (77 percent) found it convenient to reach the public facilities which were easily accessible through public transport. As reported by the district administrations, 65 percent of the facilities were within 200 meters



of public transport stations. Similarly, 55 percent of these facilities are directly accessible through Metro or public buses/vans. In terms of grievances redress at one place, issues of around two thirds of the citizens are addressed at one place which is in line with the response of administrators; thus, no significant gap is seen in this variable.

Around one fifth (21 percent) of citizens are not satisfied with the cost of service. Likewise, a similar proportion of citizens (18 percent) do not find it affordable to reach the service. Comparably, the response of administrators corresponded to those of citizens in this regard, only 15 percent defaulted on the charges, and out of these, 10 percent requested for waiving off of service charges.

A significant number of citizens (71 percent) agree that the services at service centers are user friendly. Similarly, 95 percent of administrators report that services are citizen friendly while 80 percent agree that these are tailored to special needs, thus no significant gap in responses is seen.

Around two third of citizens believe that they have received required services within given time. Likewise, almost the same proportion of citizens are satisfied with the duration of time in which they received the service. However, for their part, the administrators believe that they invariably render services within stipulated time and resolve citizens' issues within time. This suggests a considerable gap between perceptions of administrators and citizens.

Only 45 percent citizens are satisfied with the availability of required documents online, while the same number do not use digital services. Similarly, 71 percent citizens want automated services. Comparably, the administrators emphasize that 100 percent services may be digitalized. Though there is a gap of understanding in the use of digital services, a considerable need for it was expressed by both administrators and citizens.

Less than half the citizens (45 percent) thought that the staff paid any extra attention to facilitate them; 78 percent believed that the staff was competent in their work. Furthermore, 77 percent agree that they received the desired service, and out of this group, 70 percent were satisfied with the service received. As a result, 73 percent stated that they would avail the services again in future. However, all the administrators believe that their staff is helpful to citizens and possess requisite knowledge and skills. According to public facility managers, the issues were being addressed at different places in 45 percent of public facilities.

A majority of citizens believe that service center is a safe place to visit (78 percent), while around the same proportion trust that staff will not misuse their information. However, 74 percent of citizens emphasized that corruption, bribery or exploitation should be dealt with strictly. Data also indicates that a significant number of citizens feel that they faced discriminatory behavior from

service providers while availing the service. The responses of administrators do not corroborate citizens' responses, thus, indicating a wide gap between the services rendered and perceptions of services received. In this regard, somewhat different to the citizens' responses, almost all administrators believe that citizens visit office without any fear and that their information is kept confidential. Interestingly, only 55 percent administrators believe that a mechanism is in place to avoid corruption with a similar proportion who believe that a mechanism is in place to handle discrimination.

The data also suggests that almost one fourth of citizens visiting the centers were asked to evaluate the services; of these 76 percent lodged complaints against the services received but only 25 percent received responses regarding their complaints. In this regard, only 29 percent of citizens are satisfied with the redress of their complaints. Here we see a wide gap between the responses of citizens and administrators. In this regard, 80 percent of administrators inform that a mechanism is in place to report about problems in service delivery and 100 percent believe that citizens' complaints are appropriately resolved with 90 percent reporting that complaints are resolved within the stipulated time.

The comparison of responses also informs that almost half the citizen's report seeing officers visiting for monitoring the service centers; a vast majority (87 percent) believe that service delivery could be improved if officers paid regular visits. On the other hand, 65 percent administrators believe that their officers visit service centers frequently for supervision and all of them agree that services will be improved if the frequency of visits for monitoring are increased. This suggests a gap in monitoring indicator.

This section focuses on the interpretation of the outcomes with regard to the hypotheses. Moreover, it also discusses the results of the study both in comparison and in contrast with available literature.

The study has not only analyzed the power of accessibility, quality of service and human factors at district administration level to predict citizens' satisfaction through a logit model of regression, it has also evaluated responses of citizens and administrators through a gap analysis. The study has not found statistically significant association of accessibility to services with citizens' overall satisfaction with effective service delivery. However, quality of service has been established in the study as strongly and significantly related to effectiveness of service delivery. Similarly, public sector integrity is found predictive of effective service delivery while the leadership variable does not show a significant association with citizens' satisfaction. Education, residential background, employment status and age are also not statistically significant to the responses variable; however, gender has shown statistical significance with citizens' satisfaction. In terms of gap analysis, there is a considerable gap between perception of citizens and that of administrators in quality of service.



There is also a small gap in the leadership role variable but the widest gap between the perceptions of the two groups exists with reference to public sector integrity. No substantial void exists in perceptions in terms of accessibility to services.

It has been observed that accessibility is not a significant predictor of effectiveness of service delivery. The findings generally do not support existing literature. Access to information, geographical proximity of facilities and cost of these facilities are taken as key measures of accessibility in this case. For the respondent's accessibility is not a major issue in receiving services.

With most of the respondents being from urban areas (around 55 percent), public facilities centers were naturally located at convenient places as there exists an extensive network of public transport in both Lahore and Faisalabad. Thus, accessibility was not seen to be an issue in large urban centers. However, it may be influence responses in rural areas where facilities are scant; for this a separate study is required. It also seems logical that accessibility to service centers does not remain a significant factor when people ultimately get services; in this study this factor was found to be around 77 percent. It is evident from the results that citizens prefer face-to-face communication for accessing information and resolving their issues. This is because people either are not aware of websites of public facilities or they feel more confident in physically reaching out to the center for getting information and have their issues resolved. The gap between perceptions of citizens and service managers in terms of the accessibility variable is not significant. This too indicates that if citizens are finally able to get services, they generally feel satisfied.

As is evident from the results, quality of service significantly and strongly explains effectiveness in service delivery. In terms of quality of service, when services cater to needs of citizens, especially elders and persons with disability (PWDs) and are provided in time, greater satisfaction of citizens is natural. It was found that around 66 percent citizens feel that public offices are providing customized citizen-centered services; this implies that a considerable proportion of people feel satisfied in this regard. However, a 24 percent gap was found in terms of perceptions of citizens and administrators in case of citizen-centeredness of services. That means that either citizen-centered services are not available at service centers up to level required by citizens or that administrators are not aware of the actual requirements of citizens vis-a-vis customization of services. This gap needs to be filled by government intervention.

Similarly, service quality is also a function of the extra care rendered by staff to citizens as well as the knowledge and skillfulness in the manner of delivery. As

more than 50 percent people felt that staff did not provide any extra attention to them, their perception of service delivery was affected. Though citizens' perception about staff's skill and knowledge about services is considerably positive, as well as their willingness to receive service again, a substantial gap between perceptions of citizens and administrators in terms of service quality is seen. While administrators believe that a system for obtaining citizens feedback appears to be in place, citizens feel differently. This manifests a significant gap between citizens and administrators' perceptions of service quality in public facilities due to several factors such as lack of information available to the people about these services, lack of capacity of staff in handling citizens, higher expectations of citizens with regard to quality of service, and administrators' inability to understand the real issues of citizens etc.

Further, digitalization and automation of services are integral to determination of quality of service. Existing literature indicates that in a hyper connected world in which digital solutions to complex problems abound, providing online services is a significant factor in enhancing citizens' satisfaction with public services. This is substantiated by the results of this study as well which has established a significant association between digitalization of services and effective service delivery. Only 45 percent people were satisfied with availability of required documents online and more than 50 percent were either dissatisfied or not aware of the existence of such services. This seems to be a significant problem especially when a large number of respondents are educated. In this case, 80 percent of the respondents had a schooling of matriculation (grade 10) or above with 21 percent holding master's degrees. Hence this mainly urban group was educated and able to access online services - and yet unable to reach these services. More importantly, around 71 percent citizens desired these services online. This reflects that either services are not available online or people are not aware of these services.

It has also been observed that even though mostly of services relating to land record have been automated through LRMIS, these are not available on line and citizens have to approach land record centers to access these services. Moreover, in case of e-khidmat centers also services have to be accessed through a physical presence. In all other services considered in this study which are provided by district administration manual handling continues. Moreover, in Lahore and Faisalabad there still are several areas (*muaziat*) with manual records. It was also observed that while a few services had been digitalized, in most cases services have not been automated. Generally, only basic information of these services is available on websites of these public offices. Thus, the fundamental need of citizens about quality information as well as use of services online for resolution of their issues remains to be fulfilled.

While 66 percent respondents expressed satisfaction with quality of service, this result may be misleading as 38 percent of them approached these public



facilities with some reference. Interestingly, of those who approached these facilities with some reference 24 percent were still not satisfied with the service provided; this makes the situation even grimmer in terms of effectiveness of service delivery. However, when the reference variable is controlled in Logit Model, it does not show any change in results in terms of significance and even coefficients as shown in Table 4. It is thus a valuable finding that in terms of factors significantly influencing citizens' overall satisfaction, it does not really matter whether citizens approach the service centers through some reference or not. All the same, the fact that a considerable number of citizens approach public facilities for getting their issues resolved through an external contact indicates a lack of trust in the service delivery process as well as its outcome.

The results of the study indicate that public sector integrity also strongly predicts effective service delivery. Hence, while people generally trust the service providers regarding confidentiality of their information and also consider these centers as safe places, yet most of them feel that issues of corruption and lack of transparency should be addressed by government. In this regard, 28 percent citizens reported offering a favor for receiving the service. Thus, the issue of corruption is relevant and important as this percentage may be on lower side due to either under-reporting of such cases or the factor of approaching the center through a reference for availing service; this aspect needs further investigation. It can, however, be inferred that the issue of corruption in public offices needs the government's proactive response.

Another important aspect is the fact that systems available in these offices lack transparency which is evident from the fact that only three cases under Punjab Transparency and Right to Information Act 2013 were received by DC Lahore office in last one year (Government of Pakistan, [2013](#)). This indicates that people either don't have confidence in public facilities to ask for information or they are unaware of this legislation or that public offices discourage applications under the Act. A majority of people feel that public facility centers display discriminatory behavior towards citizens. This means there are citizens who receive preferential treatment. This finding seems logical from the fact that a considerable number of people come to these facilities by using a reference.

With only 24 percent citizens submitting complaints against service providers, it appears that complaint management systems in the public offices studied are weak. Moreover, with only a fourth of those who lodged complaints receiving a response, the fact of people's lack trust in the complaint management system is further strengthened. This also suggests a need to make the complaint management system in service delivery centers more responsive and effective. However, there is another possible explanation of the low rate of complaints in these offices: As a considerable number of citizens approached the offices by using their contacts, it is likely that they would hesitate in lodging complaints

and try to follow the same path for resolution of their problems. Even though this variable has no statistically significant relation with effective service delivery, a majority of citizens believe that an increase in supervision and monitoring will improve service delivery. The factor of using references is important in another aspect: if more people approach with references, they are likely to ignore observance of supervision mechanisms as they are already being taken care of through preferential treatment.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that Quality of Services and Public Sector Integrity significantly predict citizens' overall satisfaction with effective service delivery. However, Accessibility and Leadership Role have not been found to be in a statistically significant relationship with effective service delivery. A significant number of people (38 percent) approached service centers with a reference; even though this reference variable does not change the significance level or estimates of explanatory variables in relation to the dependent variable, this indicates a low confidence of citizens in the systems available in these centers for addressing their problems. The study has constructed hypotheses on the basis of analytical framework proposed in the Introduction and tested these by using a Logit Model of regression through data collected from six public facilities in Lahore and Faisalabad.

The study has analyzed the role of accessibility to services, quality of services and human factors at district administration offices in explaining citizens' satisfaction to service delivery and has found mixed results with reference to existing literature. While results justify a theory of positive association of quality of service and public sector integrity with effective service delivery, there's a lack of evidence in validating predictability of effective service delivery through accessibility and role of supervision. This may be on account of selection of cases of highly urbanized centers where offices are usually under continuous scrutiny from the government. Further, respondents were found to be more educated.

The study has also conducted a gap analysis by comparison of responses between citizens and administrators. It has been shown through results that the widest gap is in public sector integrity in terms of discriminatory behavior by staff of public facilities and redress of complaints in addition to corruption. Also found was a considerable gap in quality of services that suggests the need for intervention by government to improve service quality standards. The study does not confirm a wide gap in the accessibility factor; this means that the perceptions of both citizens and administrators match for this variable.

The study has also examined existing scholarship on factors that determine effective service delivery. Literature indicates that citizens' satisfaction towards effective service delivery is influenced by public sector integrity (Khalil &



Adielabu, [2012](#)), strong accountability systems, a strong leadership role (Agba et al., [2013](#); Allio, [2015](#)), quality of service (Agba et al., [2013](#)) through digitalization (Shaikh et al., [2016](#)) and citizen-centred approach (Ozols et al., [2018](#)) and accessibility (Tervo et al., [2013](#); Saurman, [2016](#)). The study adopted a questionnaire tool for both citizens and administrators on the basis of a survey questionnaire designed by World Bank Group ([2022](#)).

The study has used various measures of dependent and independent variables. Effective service delivery has been measured through citizens' perceptions of their satisfaction towards service delivery. Similarly, the accessibility variable has been determined through access to information, geographical proximity and cost of services. Likewise, quality of services has been measured through level of digitalization and whether services are citizen-focused. Service quality was also measured in terms of extra care for citizens, competency of staff and whether the required service was eventually received. Similarly, human factors are determined through public sector integrity - that is composition of safety and security, as well as feedback and complaints handling systems and leadership role through supervision. Moreover, for this study, districts of Lahore and Faisalabad were selected for data collection at six different facilities, including the DC office, Arazi Record Centers, Municipal Corporations, Municipal Committees, e-Khidmat Centers and health services in primary and secondary healthcare facilities. The results have been found consistent for both the districts.

It is believed that the study contributes to existing scholarship by validating positive relationship of quality of service and public sector integrity with effective service delivery by analyzing data from six service centers in Lahore and Faisalabad. The author believes that this is the first study for assessing a relationship of these variables from the perspective of two large urban centers of Punjab. Moreover, the study is significant in a way that it also identifies gaps to be filled towards improvement in effective service delivery by public facilities.

As the study has focused mainly on two large urban centers of Punjab, space for further investigation in evaluating factors predicting effective service delivery in other urban centers such as DG Khan, Khushab, Sargodha and Sahiwal is available.

7. Recommendations

On the basis of findings and conclusion of the study, this study suggests provision of quality services along with complete automation. Improving complaint management system and transparency are also important

The study recommends that special counters should be established for elderly people and PWDs in public facilities along with decent sitting places for them.

Moreover, staff should be trained to deal with these people with special care. Besides, waiting areas should also be provided for ordinary citizens along with qualified staff in public facilities. It is also proposed that each public facility should have a special purpose-built information counter, preferably with trained female staff to facilitate citizens; at this counter the requirement of every citizen should be electronically entered and passed online to concerned office desk. Further, staff at operational desks should be given specialized training to manage service delivery requirements of citizens.

It is further recommended that automation of public facilities should be initiated immediately through PITB and a special committee under Chief Secretary (CS) should be formed to oversee implementation status of automation and placing all documents of these facilities on line. It is anticipated that automation will help improve quality of service, efficiency and transparency. The government should place funds through Annual Development Program for this purpose over the next five years; targets for completion of automation within this time period should be put in place. Special awareness campaigns should be launched in electronic media and social media for propagating online services that are available in public facilities. PITB should also connect public services through “*Raast*” for payment of fees and service charges to help reduce overhead costs and make service delivery process efficient.

Special email addresses and WhatsApp numbers should be announced publicly to receive various complaints including those of corruption. It is suggested that PITB should introduce a digitally connected system to analyze these complaints on its portal. Moreover, supervisory officers should be mandated to see this analysis on a daily basis and hold enquiries of cases after scrutiny. In this regard, this analysis along with actions taken (as well inaction on part of supervisory officers) should be displayed in the CS’s monthly review meeting.

References

- Agba, M. S., Akwara, A. F., & Idu, A. (2013). Local government and social service delivery in Nigeria: A content analysis. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 2(2), 455.
- Allio, R. J. (2015). Good strategy makes good leaders. *Strategy & Leadership*.
- Anshari, M., & Lim, S. A. (2017). E-government with big data enabled through smartphone for public services: Possibilities and challenges. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 40(13), 1143-1158.
- Aritonang, D. M. (2017). The impact of E-government system on public service quality in Indonesia. *European Scientific Journal*, 13(35), 99-111.



- Butt, T. A., & Faraz, N. (2021). Development Studies PIDE School of Social Sciences Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad. <https://file-thesis.pide.org.pk/pdf/mphil-development-studies-2019-taimoor-ali-butt-is-psdp-effective-in-creating-employment-in-pakistan.pdf>
- Chatzoglou, P., Chatzoudes, D., & Symeonidis, S. (2015, September). Factors affecting the intention to use e-Government services. In *2015 Federated Conference on Computer Science and Information Systems (FedCSIS)* (pp. 1489-1498). IEEE.
- Gaitho, P. R., Ogutu, M., Awino, Z. B., & Kitiabi, R. (2018). Strategic leadership and service delivery of county governments: The Kenyan experience. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*, 6(11), 395-411.
- Government of Pakistan. (2013). *The Punjab transparency and right to information act 2013*. <http://punjablaws.gov.pk/laws/2547.html>
- Hasan, I. R., Agustang, A., Kahar, F., & Tahir, H. (2019). Super Service Delivery": an advanced conceptual model of one-stop service for wide administrative region. *Problems and perspectives in management*, 17(1), 189-201.
- Jackson, E. A. (2020). Importance of the Public Service in achieving the UN SDGs.
- Khalil, S., & Adelabu, S. A. (2012). Model for efficient service delivery in public service. *Journal of Public Administration and Governance*, 2(3), 85-95.
- Nurung, J., Tamsah, H., & Azis, M. (2020, March). The effect of leadership on public service quality. In *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* (Vol. 473, No. 1, p. 012070). IOP Publishing.
- Ozols, G., & Meyerhoff Nielsen, M. (2018). Connected Government Approach for Customer-centric Public Service Delivery: Comparing strategic, governance and technological aspects in Latvia, Denmark and the United Kingdom.
- Pakistan Bureau of Statistics. (2022). *Final Results of 6th Population and Housing Census, Islamabad*: Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Statistics, and Islamabad: <https://www.pbs.gov.pk/content/brief-census-2022>
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1985). A conceptual model of service quality and its implications for future research. *Journal of marketing*, 49(4), 41-50.
- Public Sector Research Centre. (n.d.). *The road ahead for public service delivery*.

- https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/psrc/pdf/the_road_ahead_for_public_service_delivery.pdf
- Punjab Economic Research Institute. (2017). *Poverty profiling in Punjab*. https://peri.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/Chapter%2020Poverty%20Profiling%20in%20Punjab_0.pdf
- Punjab Land Records Authority. (n.d.). *About PLRA*. <https://www.punjab-zameen.gov.pk/>
- Purnomo, Y., & Wulandari, A. (2017). Sebaran Fasilitas Pelayanan Publik dan Pilihan Masyarakat di Kecamatan Pontianak Utara, Kota Pontianak. *Langkau Betang: Jurnal Arsitektur*, 4(2), 95-113.
- Saurman, E. (2016). Improving access: modifying Penchansky and Thomas's theory of access. *Journal of health services research & policy*, 21(1), 36-39.
- Shaikh, A. Z., Shah, U. L., & Wijekuruppu, C. (2016). Public service delivery and e-governance: The case of Pakistan. *International Journal for Infonomics*, 9(2), 1161-1170.
- Stiftung, B. (2022). *BTI 2022 Country Report — Pakistan*. Gütersloh: Bertelsmann Stiftung. Bertelsmann. https://btiproject.org/fileadmin/api/content/en/downloads/reports/country_report_2022_PAK.pdf
- Tervo, M., Kotavaara, O., Antikainen, H., & Rusanen, J. (2013). Accessibility analysis of public services in rural areas under restructuring. *Nordia Geographical Publications*, 42(2), 39-52.
- The World Bank. (2014, May). *Critical administrative constraints to service delivery: Improving public services in Afghanistan's transformational decade*. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/20765/882740REVISED00raints0Report0final0.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- The World Bank. (n.d.). *Worldwide governance indicators*. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/worldwide-governance-indicators>
- UNICEF. (2019). *Analysis of drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) Punjab MICS 2018*. https://hudphed.punjab.gov.pk/system/files/WASH%20MICS%20Analysis%20Report%202019_0.pdf
- United Nations. (2014). *E-Government Survey 2014*. <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Reports/UN-E-Government-Survey-2014>



- United Nations. (n.d.). *Sustainable development goals indicators: Metadata repository*. <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/?Text=&Goal=16>
- Wang, W., Zhou, Z., Chen, J., Cheng, W., & Chen, J. (2021). Analysis of location selection of public service facilities based on urban land accessibility. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(2), 516.
- World Bank Group. (2022). *Service upgrade: The GovTech approach to citizen centered services*. <https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/c7837e4efad1f6d6a1d97d20f2e1fb15-0350062022/original/Service-Upgrade-The-GovTech-Approach-to-Citizen-Centered-Services.pdf>
- World Bank. (2016). *Punjab service delivery assessment: A decision-making tool for transforming funds into improved services*. World Bank, Islamabad. <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/26428>