

LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

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Abstract. *Pakistan is one of the several developing countries which identify the need for devolving power and responsibility for social delivery. For this purpose, the Local Government Ordinances and Acts have been created that established Local Bodies which are responsible for providing basic services (water supply, sanitation, streets developments, and health services) to people. It has been analysed from the research that the poor performance of local government is due to the lack of specialised education and training regarding local government system. Similarly, managing local government efficiently is essential for improved performance of local government. Management of local government is of unique characteristics. It includes the use of existing resources efficiently and effectively in meeting legitimate demands for public services. The research aims to provide ideas for making local governments more effective.*

Keywords: Local Government; Management Process; Phases of Management; Performance Of Local Government; Training In Local Government.

1. Introduction: Effective and efficient local government is widely recognized as essential to the economic, social, and cultural well-being of a community (Mushamba S 2010). Local government is an important channel for delivering services that are connected with the alleviation of poverty and community development (Andrews M & Shah A 2005). For instance, local government's delivery of essential physical infrastructure such as roads, recreational parks or social services such as education, housing, refuse removal and water affects the quality of people's lives. The services provided by local government also play an important part in establishing relations of accountability between government and communities.

This study focuses on the performance of local government depending on the management process and particular training and appropriate education. There are serious problems with the delivery of basic services in urban and rural areas: including frequent interruptions in water supply, persistent power cuts, poor health services and dilapidated infrastructure. In order to solve these problems, a unique kind of management process and specialised training and education for local government employees is needed. The research highlights how the management process can improve the performance of local government. Moreover, the gaps between the supply and demand issue of training and education of local government officials has been pointed out and programmes have been shown to be adopted to solve these issues.

Research Methodology: The research is based on documentary research. Both print and electronic media were utilised in carrying out this study. The internet was extensively used in giving a comparative analysis with other jurisdictions and for researching international standards in regards to LG institutions.

2. What is the management process? A local government, in its attempt to satisfy the economic, social, and environmental needs within a community, implicitly or explicitly follows a process. We refer to this as the management process. Simply stated, the management process is the way in which public officials decide what to do and get it done. The management process refers to the way in which public officials translate community needs into community objectives; develop strategies and programs to achieve those objectives with available resources. Implement the programs, producing desired results with budgeted resources; and evaluate results, making adjustments as necessary.

The management process consists of three major phases: planning, implementations, and evaluations. These phases are interrelated and overlapping, but each is sufficiently distinct to warrant separate analysis.

The management process is a common denominator in the undertaking of many activities. Take, for example, a family outing to the beach. This effort calls for careful planning (where to go, when to get there, how much food to take); determined implementation (getting the kids into the car, finding the right beach, deciding naps can be skipped, and fighting the traffic to get home; and thoughtful evaluation (deciding whether the day's joys outweighed its headaches and whether the family should attempt to repeat the outing the following week). Depending on the nature of the endeavour, the management process is more or less evident and important. It is not likely that we would think about it as a distinct process in relationship to a family outing. But in carrying out the business of local government, it demands our separate attention.

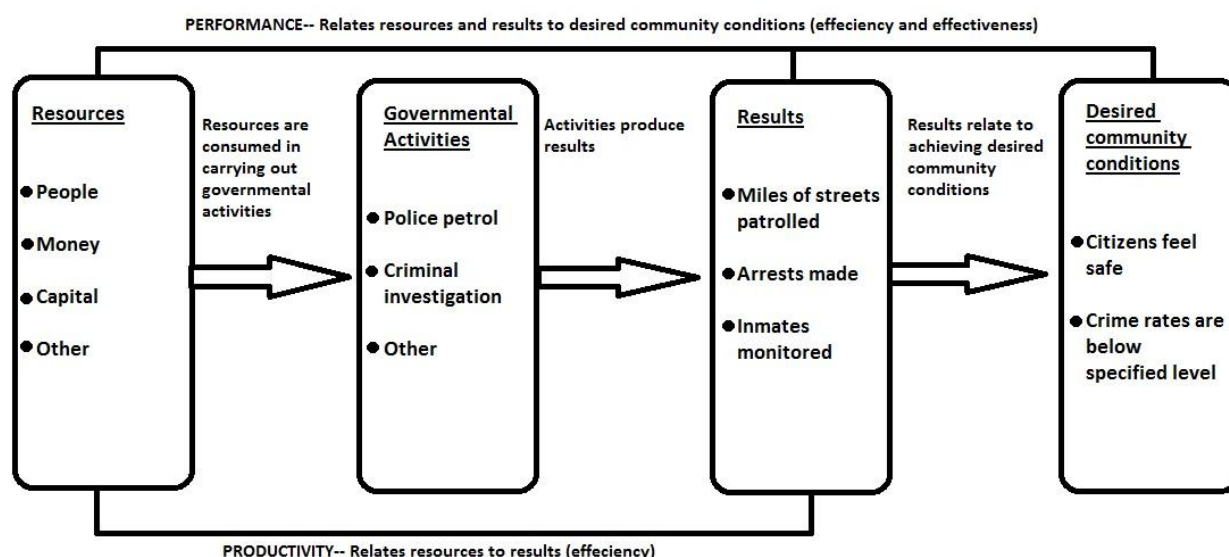


Figure 1. The relationship of performance to the achievement of desired community conditions

3. The three interrelated phases of the management process. The management process in local government should consist of three phases: planning, implementations, and evaluation.

Planning, the first phase, involves four steps: (1) determining what to do—the translation of community needs into community objectives, (2) determining how to do it—the definition of the means (programs, strategies, projects) required to achieve stated objectives, (3) assigning responsible managers—the identifications of those who will be held accountable for carrying out the programs, and (4) allocating resources—the development of a budget for each program and for each responsible manager.

Each step is critical to successful planning. The most critical step, however, is the establishment of community objectives—the end result of community planning. To be useful, these objectives should meet four requirements. First, they should be explicit. They should be written down and communicated throughout the community as well as throughout the agencies and departments of local government. Second, community objectives should be easily understood, so that citizens have a basis for holding their elected leaders accountable. Third, objectives should be achievable by a specified date. They should not represent “pie-in-the-sky” desires that raise expectations that cannot be met. Finally, community objectives must be capable of being measured, so that it is clear when achievement has, or has not, been realized.

Determining what to do within a community has little or no value unless public officials also determine how they are going to get it done, who is going to do it, and whether there are sufficient resources available to do it. The annual budget is the means of doing this. The budget is the most important document of a local government because it bridges the gap between planning and implementations.

Implementation, the second phase of management process, addresses how we will get done what we have decided to do. A local government budget should represent a series of contracts wherein responsible managers agree to reproduce specified results with budgeted resources. Implementation is the process of executing these contracts. Accordingly, it involves organising (coordinating people, functions, and activities), staffing (putting the right people in the right jobs), determining productivity standards (identifying the results that should be obtained per unit of resources consumed), and supervising and controlling work (directing day-to-day activities to ensure that resources are spent and results produced according to plan).

Evaluation, the final phase of the management process, is related to both implementation and planning and asks: did we do what we said we would do? Were results produced and resources consumed as planned? To the extent that they were not, what modifications should be made? In short, evaluation is the process of relating what was intended to be done to what were actually done and initiating changes to reflect new circumstances.

4. Public policy and management process. Understanding the management process in local government serves to integrate politics (the process of determining public policy) with public administration (the process of producing results). The view advanced by Woodrow Wilson and other progressive reformer that there should be a rigid separation between politics and administration does not reflect the reality of decision making process within most local governments. In his 1974 "Report to the Board of Overseas," Derek Bok, president of Harvard University, forcefully stated the need to integrate politics with public administration. In this report Bok called for a new generation of public officials who would serve in responsible government positions armed with a better understanding of how politics and administration interact in the formulation and implementation of public policy.

Focusing on performance as it is related to the management process satisfies this need as figure 2 illustrate, the management process links the political process to the administrative process. By focusing on performance, the management process integrates public policy with administrative results, bringing political science and public administration together in the study of public management.

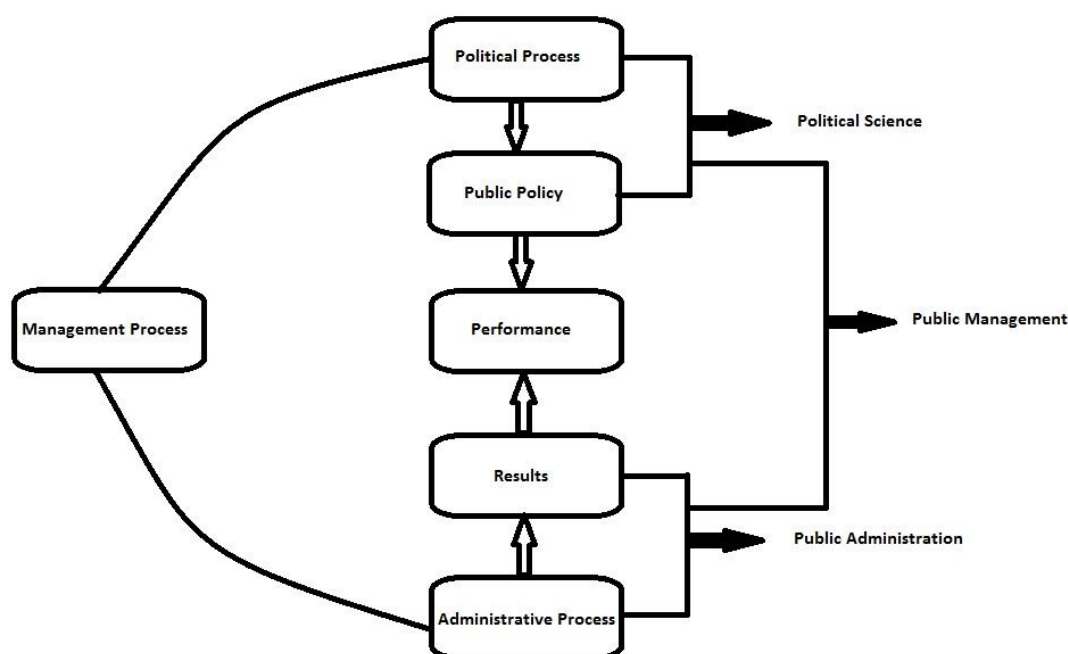


Figure 2. How the management process integrates political and administrative process

5. Local Government educational and professional development; The national picture: supply and demand issue. Local government performance can be improved by training and appropriate education. Pakistan's Local government training environment is complex and sometimes fragmented, and the first stage of this review is to identify and map the relevant players and their needs and motivations. On the demand side, councils have a multitude of training requirements: entry into local government, statutory training, training for specific professions, succession planning, governance training and training on emerging policy issues, just to name a few. On the supply side, there are very few government , educational and private organizations who provide training for councils.

5.1. Identifying existing programs. This section sketches a profile of existing courses which are relevant to local government, including professional development programs, higher education, training in key skills shortage areas, and postgraduate courses both within Pakistan and also internationally.

Post-graduate university courses which contain a specific focus and tailored content for local government should also be identified and profiled.

5.2. Identifying program gaps. The local government sector has particular challenges in accessing funding and good programs which influence options for the future. In reviewing the above information, particular training gaps for local government have been identified and will be further researched to verify the magnitude of the gaps and the nature of associated supply and demand issues.

The following are suggested as gaps for programme development.

5.2.1. Local government management skills training. Local government management is different from other sectors, and has some unique features which are not covered in traditional management courses or management training and coaching services. There are some programs internationally which cover the following, however they may not be accessible to all who need or seek them.

- strategy and vision
- community engagement
- working with councillors
- strategic partnerships and intergovernmental relations
- change management
- financial management
- risk management
- service delivery
- equity issues - cultural diversity

5.2.2. Elected member training. A difficult area due to the lack of resources in many councils for councilor training, as well as the turnover due to elections and the rigors of what is essentially a voluntary role. The local government associations provide a wide range of excellent short courses in this area, however there are no tertiary training opportunities and limited systematic training programs for elected members. Some of the topics which may be important for councillors include:

- communication skills
- local government finance
- governance and probity
- policy development
- managing issues

5.2.3. Local government components in mainstream tertiary courses for key professions. Key professional areas which are well served with general tertiary undergraduate training may also benefit from particular units which focus on local government, so that graduates have an understanding of the unique skills required as well as the career opportunities within local government. Mainstream courses might include:

- engineering
- environment, geography, planning
- business administration - hr, finance
- building surveying
- public policy
- public health
- law
- sociology

5.2.4. Training in skills shortage areas. The following are the key skills shortage areas. This area needs further research; however it is fair to say that the skills shortages are not due solely to the lack of courses – other issues related to competition from other sectors, and issues relating to career progression are also at play.

- planning
- civil engineering
- plant operators
- environmental health

5.2.5. Training on key policy issues for local government. In an environment of constant change, local governments are often required to respond to emerging issues within their communities for which there is no traditional approach or standard practice which will solve their problems. Courses on these kinds of topics would need to include a review of international approaches, comparison of emerging practice and oriented towards sharing ideas and designing new solutions:

- climate change
- asset and infrastructure management
- transport
- water management
- affordable housing
- economic development
- service delivery options
- workforce development

5.2.6. Workforce planning in local government. Many of the challenges facing local government which have been covered in this report relate to the building of skills and expertise in a multi-faceted, complex and fast-changing environment. Within individual councils this is often left to the Human Resource Managers, however it requires a strategic and whole-of-council approach. Learning to plan for the needs of a changing workforce is another skills gap, and topics which may address this include:

- changing role of hr managers
- collecting workplace data
- information about changing sector needs
- conducting skills audits
- assessing training needs
- succession and career planning
- building individual capacities

Further work in this area will be needed, particularly in the area of developing pathways for para-professionals, identifying other skills gaps, and responding to significant issues such as the impact of the mining boom and competition from the health sector. Input from local government stakeholders will shed further light on training needs.

5.2.7. Delivery modes appropriate for small, rural and remote councils. Not a skills gap as much as a gap in appropriate delivery modes. Distance affects local governments' capacity to access skills and expertise in many ways, and training programs are needed to serve these organizations and their particular challenges,

- cost-effectiveness
- access across distances
- multi-skilled workplaces

5.2.8. Delivery modes using peer learning and best practice. Local governments tackle issues on a scale which is small and complex. These issues required innovations especially tailored to local communities, however councils also tend to be quite inwardly focused. Councils need opportunities to share approaches, compare experiences and seek good ideas from others who are facing similar problems, and training programs on a number of topics can encourage:

- regional co-operation
- case studies
- good practice models
- process improvements
- peer support
- professional networks

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the performance of local government, gaps in the existing system, and give some ideas for discussion. In that vein, some program ideas have been developed which may stimulate discussion.

1. **Nationally networked Masters degree in Local Government Management.** Comprised of a series of short courses which could be taken individually or as part of a Masters degree.
2. **Graduate Certificate in Local Government Politics.** A post-graduate course designed for elected members.
3. **Local government modules for undergraduate courses in key professions.** To be designed as an optional/elective component in undergraduate degrees.
4. **Peer learning networks.** Conceived as a professional development and problem-solving exercise rather than for the purpose of skill development or career planning.
5. **Staff exchanges.** Establish and maintain a database of staff seeking an exchange, whereby staff with similar skills and aspirations could be “matched”.
6. **Short Course for Councils.**

6. Conclusion. Local governments provide residents with basic services such as water supply, health services and waste management. Service delivery in urban areas is characterised by erratic water supply, poor waste management, and intermittent health services. The poor state of service delivery can be traced to various challenges facing Local Governments in the performance of their duties. This study focus o how to face these challenges and improve performance of local government. Due to poor management of the elected and non elected officials of the local government, the aims or main objectives are not achieved. The policy making and the framing of issues do not take place properly. Moreover problems are not solved on priority bases which are in fact a failure of the local government officials. The performance of the local government can be improved, as we have stated earlier, by improving management. However, it is impossible that a person who is not aware of the management of local government , which is of unique type, and a person who hasn't enough literacy level to foresee and plane to solve the problems on priority bases can manage the business of local government. Educating and training the officials of local government is essential for improved performance of local government.

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