

DRAINAGE CONSTRUCTION SCHEME OF RURAL AREA: A CASE OF BIJOYPUR UNION PARISHAD, CUMILLA DISTRICT

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Abstract

Projects are widely recognized as valuable instruments for development. Government agencies and local government institutions carry out public development efforts in Bangladesh. Due to the scarcity of locally produced resources, local administrations mostly rely on the federal government for funding when implementing Union-wide development initiatives. The general public's satisfaction is the main objective of government spending. Through LGIs, the government significantly finances rural development. Significant local interests try to sway UP politically, socially and economically out of self-interest. Building up rural infrastructure is one of Bangladesh's top development concerns. The research investigates how satisfied locals are with the projects and how funds allocated to UP initiatives are distributed. A combination of tactics was employed. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were applied to primary and secondary data. The conclusion is that project management effectiveness (as determined by time, money and scope) does not always guarantee project success (as defined by the satisfaction of the local population). It depends on other factors. They include user participation in the project's execution and the added value of its services.

Keywords

Projects, Union Parishad, local government, Bangladesh.

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1. Introduction

Rural local government is vital to delivering services to people (Ferdous & Das, 2022). Projects such as women's empowerment, health, education and rural infrastructure can play a key role in improving Bangladesh's socioeconomic circumstances. Roads, culverts, drainage construction and other infrastructure development projects are carried out for rural communities. Local Government Institutions (LGIs) and government agencies carry out public sector projects in Bangladesh. This research examines the execution of projects by Union Parishad, the lowest tier of local government. The Union Parishad is a local government institution located in a hamlet. Aminuzzaman (2013) states that each Union Parishad, averaging 28,000 inhabitants, often spans 33.3 square kilometres. Bangladesh comprises 4,554 Union Parishads, each with nine wards encompassing 15 to 18 villages (Aminuzzaman, 2013). The British Colony Rulers instituted the Union Parishad system in 1885 and during the last century, several rulers have modified it. Four main duties of Union Parishad are outlined in Article 47 of the

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Local Government (Union Parishad) (Amendment) Act, 2010 of Bangladesh: planning and implementing for local socio-economic development; public order; administrative and establishment concerns; and public welfare-related services.

The government makes vast annual expenditures through LGIs for rural infrastructure development (Ferdous *et al.*, 2024). For example, in 2017-18, the government allocated Taka 277.08 million for development projects to be implemented by the local government, which is 11.60% of the total budget. Nonetheless, these projects encounter considerable obstacles during implementation. An implementing agency requires support from both internal and external environments to execute projects efficiently. Unfortunately, these conditions provide difficulties for UPs in Bangladesh when efficiently implementing programs. UP faces challenges in high-level tasks such as project implementation due to its internal capability and resource shortages (Adhikari, 2010).

Moreover, specific influences, chiefly from political settings, influence many operations, including implementing the UP project (Aminuzzaman, 2014). These are likely to affect the overall happiness of project participants. The lack of adequate infrastructure is a significant impediment to expanding the rural economy. High-quality infrastructure is an important asset. It also aids in the development of various socioeconomic environments.

2. Statement of the Problem

The principal objective of government expenditure is the satisfaction of the general populace. The government allocates substantial financial resources to rural development through LGIs. The money is allotted to support various government goals, with the ultimate goal of enhancing rural communities' infrastructure, generating jobs and raising rural residents' standard of living. Nonetheless, it is noted that the general public's level of satisfaction is low at the local level. The procedure of carrying out the development activities may be the source of this issue. People are not happy with the services provided by LGIs, according to Bhattacharya *et al.* (2010) in recent research on the subject of service delivery by LGIs in Bangladesh (Ferdous *et al.*, 2024; Ferdous, 2024; 2019; Khan & Ferdous, 2017). The need to raise the standard of services is growing.

In several instances, while being able to offer services, they could not deliver high-quality care, which left the locals unhappy (Momen & Ferdous, 2023). Compared to older LGIs, new LGIs are in poorer shape. However, several obstacles must be overcome for the development of the developmental activities. According to empirical data, projects are frequently done on paper rather than in reality. Furthermore, if project implementation bodies are occasionally engaged, financial embezzlement occurs. The local population's level of satisfaction may be impacted by these phenomena, which highlights shortcomings in project management. Whether the initiatives are successful or not emerges in this setting. Assessing a project's degree of success is a challenging task. However, in 1986, the Project Management Institute (PMI) recognised the need to define and evaluate project implementation success (Baccarini, 1999).

In its most basic form, project success is based on four criteria and is acknowledged as one of the oldest notions. A project is deemed successfully implemented if all goals and objectives are completed within the allotted time and financial resources provide customer satisfaction (Pinto & Slevin, 1987; Mbaluku & Bwisa, 2013). Performance, scope, or quality are other names for the first criterion: aims and objectives

(Dobson, 2004). The term “triple constraints” refers to time, cost, and performance (scope).

Since changes to one of the three restrictions impact the others and require balancing trade-offs, Atkinson (1999) dubbed the triple constraints the iron triangle. Dobson (2004) correctly noted that the triple restrictions bound the project's universe and cannot be disregarded while implementing a project. The actual situation of project implementation, however, is rather different. In most projects, delays and cost overruns are unavoidable. As an illustration, Flyvbjerg et al. (2004) discovered that under the following scenarios, cost overruns in infrastructure projects might reach 90%: 45% in rail projects, 34% in fixed links (such as bridges and tunnels) and 20% in road projects. In this context, several scholars disagree that the triple restrictions should be used to define project success (De Wit, 1988; Linberg, 1999). Similarly, Turner (2009) says that stakeholder satisfaction should be considered in addition to project constraints when assessing a project's performance. Along with the triple restrictions, Mbaluku and Bwisa (2013) have identified the local population's project approval as a critical component in this setting.

According to Atkinson (1999), one of the requirements for a workable project is the benefits to users. His research also found that the quality of the project's service and product significantly impacts end users' happiness. Thus, it is noted that there are two different ways to define project success (Baccarini, 1999; Cooke-Davies, 2002). According to the first and more traditional viewpoint, the management's success determines the project's success. Its scope, cost and duration determine a project's success. The happiness of a project product's end consumers is the foundation of the second and more recent viewpoint. This study uses the most recent definition of project success. However, in the case of UP, the patron-client relationship is largely bolstered by political influence that impacts project success.

According to Slevin and Pinto (1987), project implementation is impacted when contracts and projects are chosen based on political factors. According to Ashley et al. (1987), sociopolitical context is one of the most important factors influencing project success. Political influence, for instance, disrupts grassroots socioeconomic initiatives carried out by local governments, according to Dang (2015). However, little research hasn't been done on how political influence affects residents' satisfaction with local government projects in Bangladesh. Nevertheless, research on administrative culture, customs and practices demonstrates that the political interface has developed from the sociopolitical environment and has been deeply ingrained in the community (Jamil *et al.*, 2013; Jamil, 2007).

People actively interested in Bangladeshi politics have an informal political impact on LGIs. Local powerful interests attempt to influence UP politically, socially and economically for their benefit. Other people's engagement is significantly hampered by this behaviour (Samad, 2002). According to Mohammad (2010), the interests of the local bureaucrats and senior political leaders take precedence over other factors and are the most important deciding factor. The entire project selection process is shaped by the interest of the local top political leaders, not by the satisfaction of the general populace in the area. The local community in Bangladesh has been influenced by political culture (Mohammad, 2010).

3. Objectives of the Study

The study's primary goal is to evaluate the efficacy of the Union Parishad's drainage construction project. The specific objectives of the study are:

- To find out the influential factor of this project;
- To investigate the satisfaction level of local people from the projects;
- To identify the challenges on the way of construction;
- To deliver some recommendations.

4. Justification of the Study

One of the primary growth areas in Bangladesh is the enhancement of rural infrastructure. The main purpose of government spending is to satisfy its citizens. Through Union Parishad, the government invests significant money in developing rural infrastructure. The money is set aside to support several government goals, including enhancing rural communities' infrastructure, generating jobs there and raising rural residents' standard of living. Nonetheless, it is noted that the general public has a low level of satisfaction at the local level. This trouble may have roots in the execution process of development actions. This research attempted to observe the benefits received by the local people through effective project management. It may be helpful in the academic discipline of students and regional and national development. The government's policymakers might benefit from the research findings for decision-making. The research would also discover the problems or impediments to strengthening the local economy and overall development of Union Parishad.

5. Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted in Bijoypur Union under the Cumilla district. One of the study's significant limitations was the poor cooperation of UP representatives and government officials. Both elected representatives and government officials seemed to hide facts. They were not fascinated by sharing correct information with the investigator to avoid future impediments. On the other hand, the local citizens hesitated to reveal their current circumstances and problems as it would probably damage their future relationships and the possibility of non-cooperation from the UP administrative centre. It could be not easy to contact them as long as they are inundated. Along with pertinent secondary sources, time and money were also limitations for the study. Furthermore, it has been noted previously that little research has been carried out on the concern.

6. Literature Review

This paper explores available literature to identify the knowledge gap regarding effective project management in Bangladesh. To this end, it reviews many research papers, articles, books and project management documents, focusing on different indicators of project management effectiveness. The paper also reviews project management issues and the role of Union Parishad projects in rural local government.

A project is a task with a beginning and an end. It is finished in a set amount of time and broken down into smaller timeframes for each work item under the plan. Furthermore, a project's mission is to accomplish a specific objective (Maylor, 2010). Most projects were contested because they failed, meaning they were not implemented, had fewer features or had time and expense overruns (Chaos Manifesto, 2013).

According to Pinto and Slevin (1988), several factors should be considered while implementing a project. These factors may be categorised into three primary areas: technical, budgetary and human. If a project meets the goals specified in the project documentation, is approved and utilised by the clients and is finished within the allocated budget and time frame, it may be considered effectively implemented. This concept accurately covers the fundamental concerns of project implementation. It considers the elements that comprise a project's internal and external environments. Sterman (1992) states that nearly every project has time and expense overruns. Additionally, he discovered that exceeding the budget and timeline is not an exception but a standard practice in these initiatives.

Impact of schedule and cost overruns on ADP Project. A few projects had cost overruns of over 300 per cent. Additionally, he said that the most important factors in putting ADP into practice are political commitment, influence and pressure. Procurement delays, procedural complexity, a slow project approval process, a lack of funds and personnel, defects in project design (primarily in construction projects) and project documentation, a lack of technical and skilful knowledge of PD, ineffective contractors, a lack of coordination between agencies, etc. are all included in this study (Ahmed, 2010).

A project is a team effort aimed at achieving certain goals. A project completed within a constrained budget and time frame and exhibits some performance is characterised by its uniqueness, enormous scope, high expenses and significant risks. According to Steiner (1969), a project has certain objectives and resources to achieve them. A project is an endeavour that combines human and other resources to achieve a certain goal. While a project, in its most basic form, refers to achieving certain objectives, project implementation is the process by which project inputs are transformed into project outputs.

UP projects face noteworthy challenges during accomplishment. To carry out projects effectively, an implementing agency needs assistance from both internal and external contexts. Regretfully, these circumstances provide difficulties for UPs in Bangladesh. High-level activities like project execution are difficult for UPs to do internally due to lacking ability and resources (Adhikari, 2011). Additionally, some forces, primarily from political contexts, impact various activities, including executing UP projects (Aminuzzaman, 2014).

7. Analytical Framework

The analytical framework has been strained to clarify the study's variables in a healthier method and to understand their causative-result relation. The research's analytical framework has been settled and grounded in previous analyses. It suggests that the association is pretentious because of the independent variables, such as service delivery criteria, challenges and possible remedy structure. These variables will affect the dependent variable, which denotes the UP project.

Table 1. Research Matrix

Research Objectives	Independent Variables	Indicators
To find out the present status of UP Project	Present status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Demand fulfillment ➤ Timeframe maintenance ➤ Extent of accountability ➤ Transparency ➤ Quality ➤ Expertise of Contractor
To identify the challenges of UP Project on the project execution	Challenges of UP Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Awareness of the citizen ➤ Skilled manpower ➤ Equipment ➤ Monitoring & Feedback mechanism ➤ Training ➤ Publicity and Awareness Building ➤ Qualification of the Contractor ➤ Political affiliation and influence
To deliver possible remedies.	Remedy Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Selection of Contractor ➤ Monitoring & Feedback mechanism ➤ Publicity and Awareness Building ➤ Training ➤ Word Committee ➤ Standardization of Project

8. Methods of the Study

The detailed methods followed by the study have been presented below:

8.1. Methods of Data Collection

This research utilised both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data and information were obtained via structured surveys, observations, focus group talks and interviews. Secondary data was collected from books, project documents, annual budgets, reports and journals.

8.2. Tools of the Study

A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary information. Data were collected through the following methods:

- ❖ Interview
- ❖ Structured questionnaire
- ❖ Key informant interview

8.3. Selection of the Study Area:

From Gushgaw Bimol Debhnath Bari to Salim Miya's Bari under 1 no Bujoypur Union Parishad.

8.4. Selection of the Respondents

For primary data collection, mainly the citizens of the Union were the respondents. Therefore, 100 respondents were local citizens, 90 and government officials 7, and the remaining 3 were UP representatives from the selected unions as primary respondents for the questionnaire survey. Moreover, data was collected from local-level institutions like local NGOs, officials, chairman and members of Union Parishad.

8.5. Data Processing

After receiving the completed questionnaires and observation data from the field, experienced data processing staff coded, entered, and cleaned the data. The data were then analysed using quantitative data software. Collected qualitative data were also analysed using the qualitative data analysis approach. First, the audio and handwritten notes were transcribed, and then the transcribed transcripts were checked and validated.

8.6. Data Analysis

Combining the qualitative and quantitative methods, data were analysed and interrelated, and interviews were transcribed. Transcripts were randomly checked against audio recording to ensure the transcription quality. The data from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were analysed to explore experiences with the interventions, attitudes, perceptions and practices related to the interventions, and acceptability. For this study, primarily tabular analysis was conducted. Simple descriptive statistics such as percentages and averages were used to analyse the quantitative data. The qualitative data were presented according to the object of the study.

9. Data Analysis (Result and Discussion)

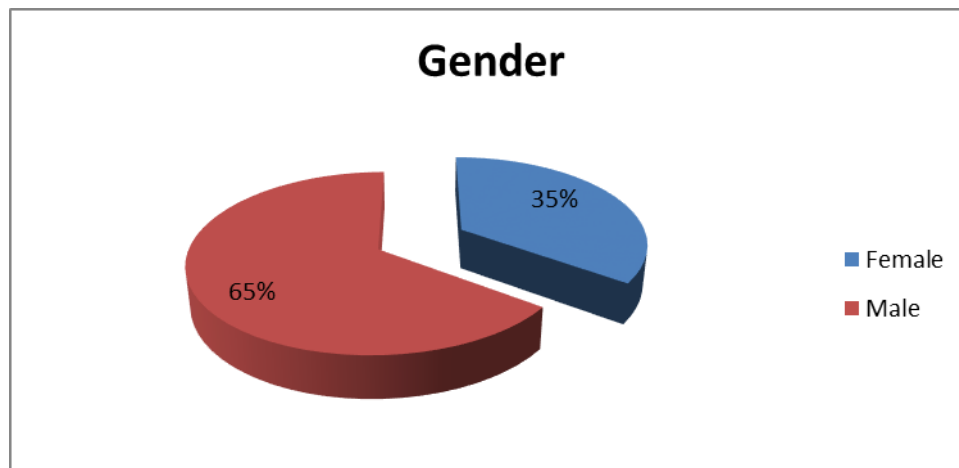


Figure 1. Respondents Gender

For this study, primary data has been collected from 100 respondents from Bijoypur Union Parishad, who are 65% male and 35% female.

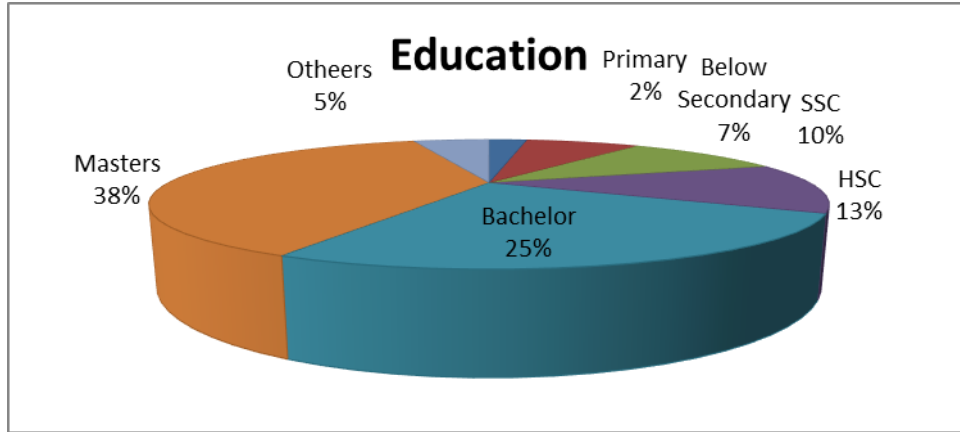


Figure 2. Respondents Education

Primary data are collected from various people. The above pie chart shows that 37% of respondents are highly educated, 25% of Respondents have a Bachelor, 12% are HSC pass, and the rest are below HSC.

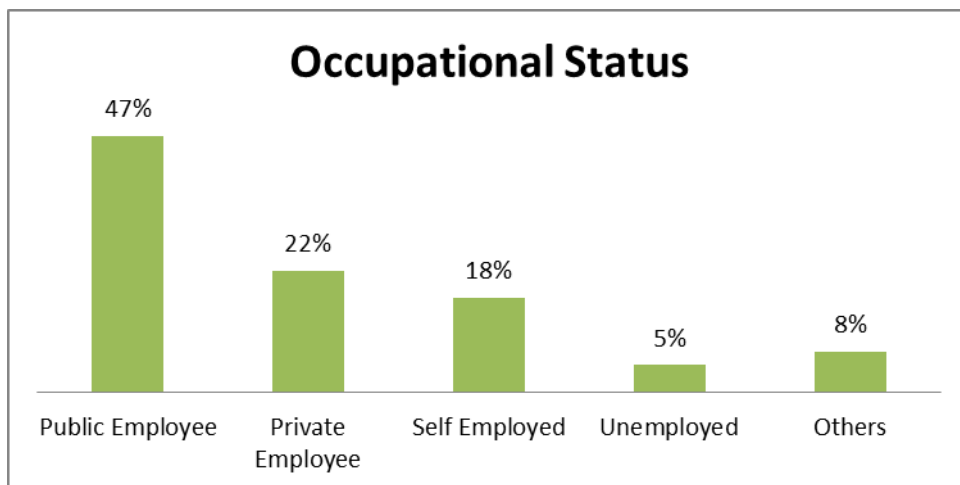


Figure 3. Respondents Occupational Status

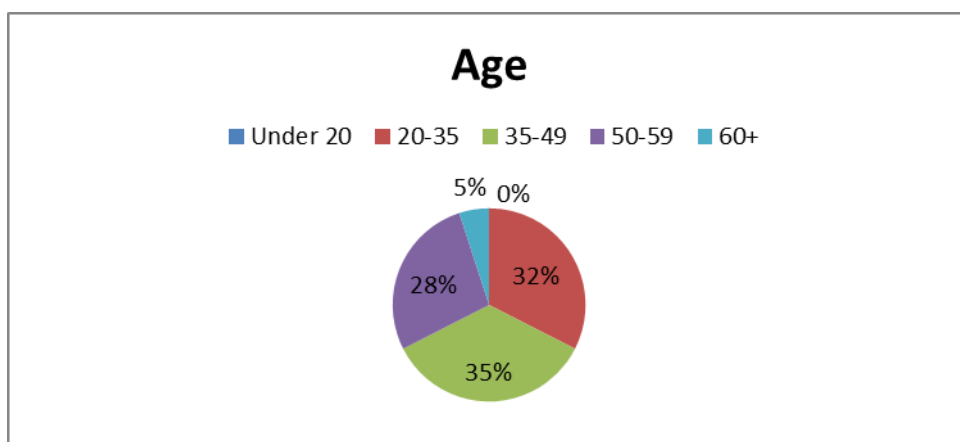


Figure 4. Respondents Age

Among the 100 respondents, 47% are public employees, 22% are private employees, 18% are self-employed, 5% are unemployed, and 8% are others. Thus, most respondents have very good occupational statuses and lead high-standard lives.

The majority of respondents are aged 35-49. Primary data are collected from the respondents who live in the Gushgaw area.

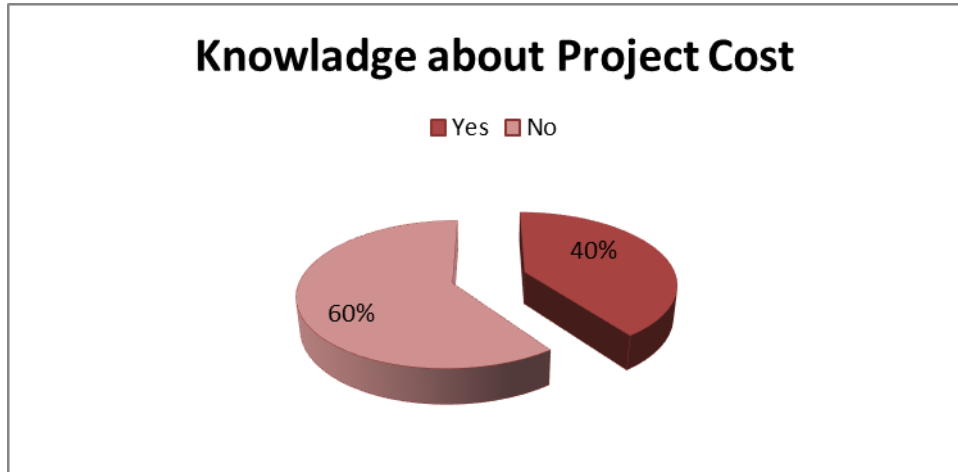


Figure 5. Knowledge about project cost

The above pie chart shows that 60% of citizens said they are not concerned about the project Budget. However, the rest of the people (40%) replied that they knew about the project cost.



Figure 6. Employee Experience

The graph shows the employee experience in the phase of construction. Firstly, we can see that about 22% of people said that the employee has the experience and their working performance was excellent, 50% of respondents agree that staff experience is good, moderate staff experience 23%, poor staff experience 3% and inferior staff experience is 2%. The condition of staff experience is average good which cannot express perfect position.

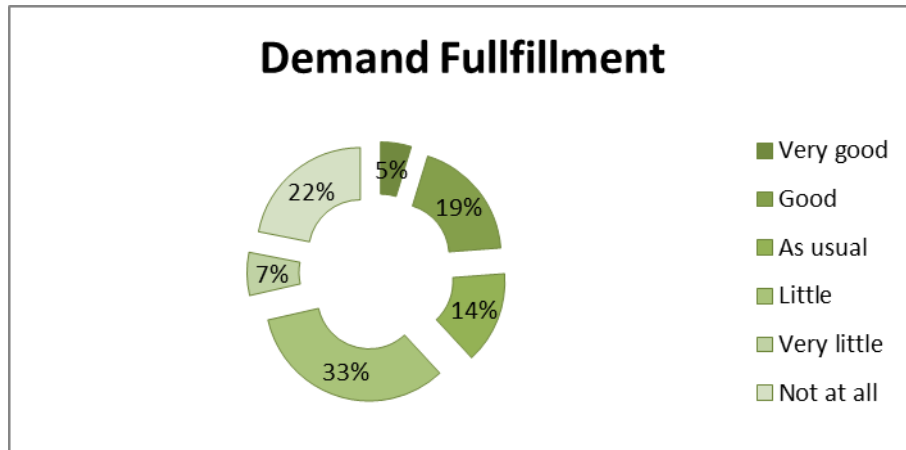


Figure 7. Demand Fulfillment

Figure 7 shows the demand fulfilment by the citizens of the Union Parishad project. UP provides various Projects to citizens. According to the figure, most of the respondents said they fulfilled little demand of people because their projects were not sufficient. They were delayed in implementing the project. 14% said this was as usual, 19% said they fulfilled people’s reasonable demands, and 5% said very well. But, 22% said they couldn’t fulfil the people's demand.

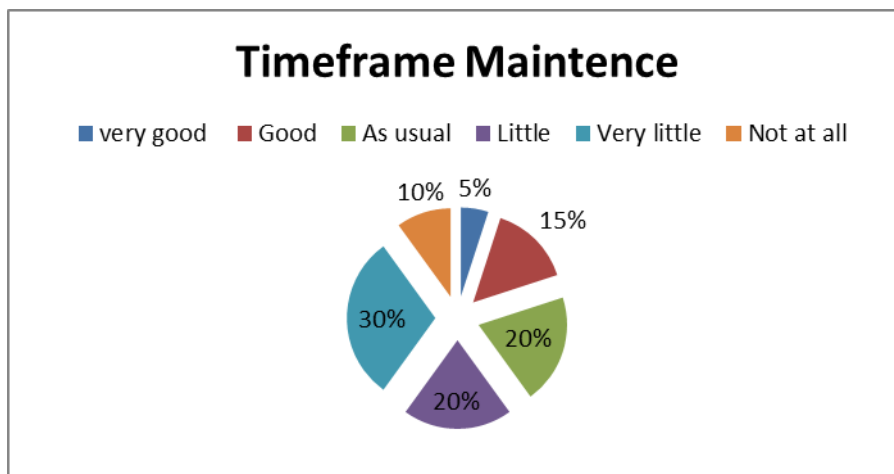


Figure 8. Timeframe Maintenance

Figure 8 shows the timeliness of the Union Parishad project. Most Union Parishad respondents assumed they didn’t maintain in due time, which is 30%. Only 5% of respondents expressed very good and 15% said good comments. However, another 20% said that UDCs were not maintained due time because of local influence and existing projects were too slow and tardy.

The figure illustrates the quality of the implemented-UP project. According to the table, most respondents are satisfied with the quality of the implemented projects. However, only 4% and 16% of respondents said the quality of the implemented UP projects was ‘very high’ and ‘high’, respectively. 17% of respondents said it was ‘little’ and 11% said it was ‘very little’.

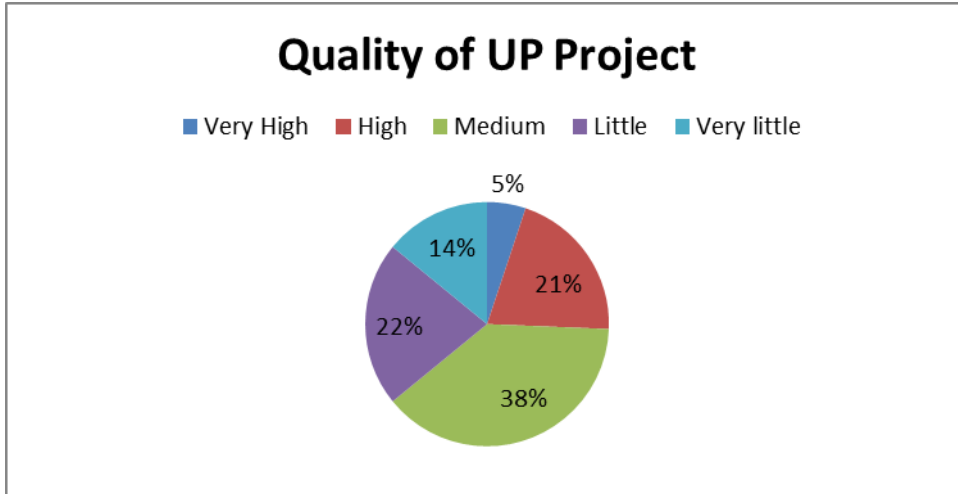


Figure 9. The quality of the implemented UP project

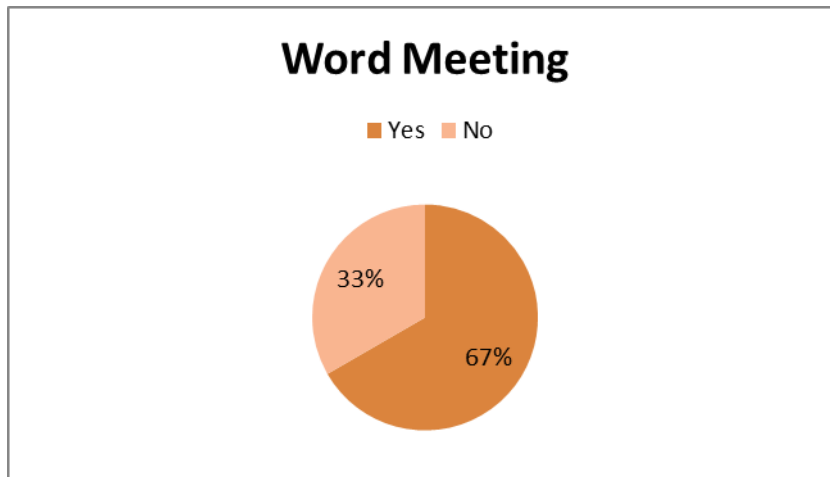


Figure 10. UP project prioritised in any ward meeting

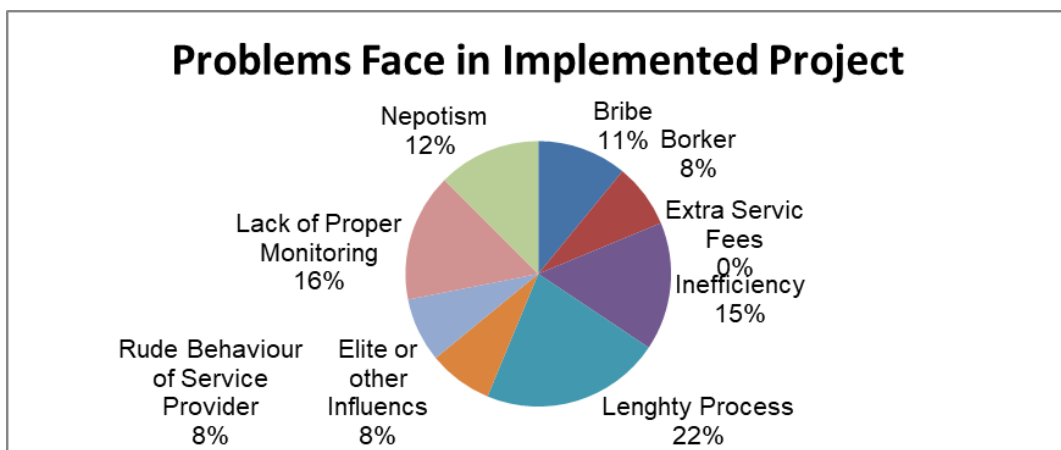


Figure 11. The problem faced in implementing the project

Figure 10 shows that the Union Parishad's ward meeting was held locally. The meeting discussed the Union Parishad's projects, with the most prioritised topics discussed. Researchers observed that 67% of respondents stated that the projects were discussed in the UP-ward meeting.

The primary purpose of the UP is to provide better service to the citizens. Respondents said UP projects vary by several factors, and 18% said inefficiency is another reason. Projects are priorities based on nepotism and favouritism, which is 12%. Sometimes, the local elite influences the project that is 8%.

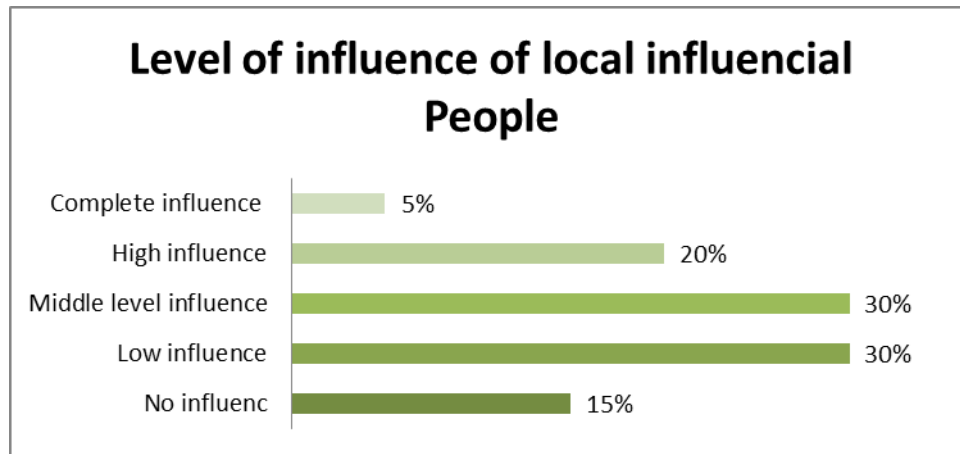


Figure 12. Local people's influence

Local people influence the implementation of projects for various reasons, such as political participation, employee nepotism and Elite class influence. The above diagram shows that there is no influence of 15%. Middle-level influence by local people is 30%, High-level influence by local people is 20% due to political influence, Elite Society and nepotism and complete influence is 5%.

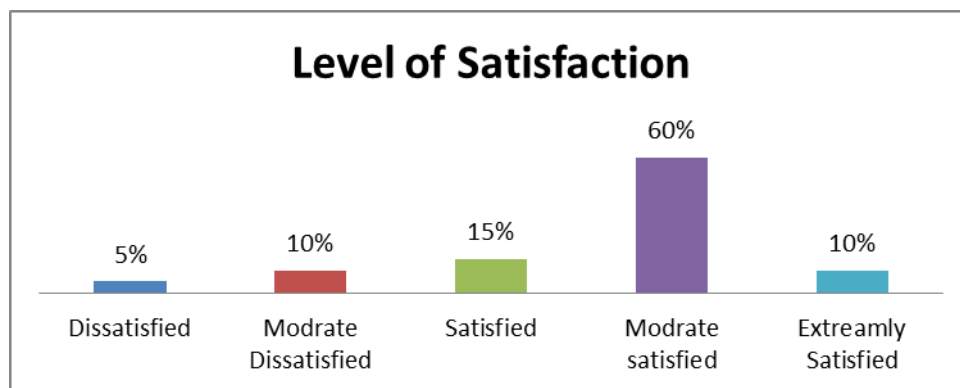


Figure 13. Level of satisfaction

The UP project's satisfaction level is high enough. This chart indicates that different kinds of focused satisfaction have different levels. Satisfaction depends on many factors, and the chart explains the actual condition.

The Challenges of the UP Project

There are various obstacles in this UP. The most crucial problem is the Knowledge gap among Citizens. The main reasons for this gap are lack of public awareness, illiteracy, and superstition. Other issues include digital instruments, elite class influence, and financial and political influence.

Recommendations

Govt public employees and general people should work together for development. Govt should give financial support for this work. Govt should work properly, and people should help govt and obey their responsibility and duty properly for everybody and every sector. Govt should reduce corruption, support improving SDGs, and notice working conditions for SDGs (Momen & Ferdous, 2023) - to increase workforce skills. Increase budget. Reduce corruption. Give proper service for developing activities. Need a budget for development, but budget money use adequate sector. Reduce unemployment, ensure education value, ensure democracy and manage the workplace properly. Take innovation activities and properly finish all activities, reducing corruption and decreasing unemployment. Ensure proper service for development. Decrease nepotism-corruption-rude behaviour and lengthy process. Ensure appropriate service as well as employees should be given adequate training. Increase social awareness. Enhance communication skills, use resources appropriately and provide any permanent and social-related development service. Enhance interrelation and interdependent service among all departments for speedy development service and need use of proper utilisation of all resources. Need a strong mindset for SDGS. Ensure accountability for duties. Provide employee facilities.

10. Conclusion

This study aims to examine the efficacy of UP's projects. This study aims to evaluate the success of UP's projects. To guarantee citizen satisfaction with time, cost, scope and the patron-client relationship, it seeks to identify the barriers to project success. It aims to understand how internal factors affect the local population's level of satisfaction. UP faces challenges in time management, cost management, scope management and patron-client interaction procedures. The study's primary objective is to determine the challenges brought on by internal problems that exacerbate external variables. It is assumed that it is equally challenging to satisfy users when there are problems with scope management, cost management, time management and patron-client interactions. One Bujoypur Union project in Cumilla Sadar Dakshin Upazila has been studied. The project documents contain four criteria for distinguishing between successful and difficult projects. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been incorporated into a hybrid methodology. A parallel collection of qualitative and quantitative data was done for this project and an integrated design was used for analysis. Here, various qualitative data are utilised to support, clarify and validate the conclusions drawn from the quantitative data.

To gather information, the authors visited one out of every fifteen homesteads and requested everybody living there to fill out a questionnaire. Additionally, 10 KIIs were obtained from field-level government officials, UP representatives, PIC/WC members, civil society activists and officials from relevant ministries. The triple constraints theory and Van Meter and Van Horn's (1975) policy implementation model serve as the study's foundation. The reciprocal reinforcement of these two theoretical constructions formed a

strong theoretical notion for the investigation. Union Parishad's difficulties in successfully executing projects are the subject of the first major research topic. The difficulties are seen in scope management, cost management, time management and client-customer interactions. The investigation has found several difficulties. Rules, norms and processes about the projects are the source of some of these difficulties. There are two aspects to these difficulties. Regulations, policies and processes can provide difficulties at times. Their differences can occasionally cause difficulties.

However, some challenges are due to the projects' implementing bodies' capabilities. The second major study topic is whether these difficulties affect consumers' pleasure. Qualitative and quantitative analyses demonstrate that the challenges affect consumers' pleasure. These difficulties impact the confidence, dependability, respect, trust and creditability of the local population in UP and PIC/WC. In addition, the respondents have grown frustrated with things like poor service, being excluded from the service and having their personal choices and participation influenced. These difficulties have an impact on consumers' pleasure. However, it has been discovered that occasionally, barriers unrelated to UP influence users' pleasure. These difficulties stem from project-related regulations, policies and practices. Researchers find the UP and PIC's shortcomings in these difficulties, nevertheless. This suggests that people do not fully comprehend the initiatives. It has been discovered that achieving project management success alone is insufficient to satisfy consumers. There are additional factors that also affect user happiness. These factors can turn even a project that fails in terms of budget, schedule and scope into a successful one. Two factors are identified in this study: involvement and the service value that the initiative adds. Projects have the same connections with residents' satisfaction regarding time, cost, scope and patron-client relationships. As a result, UP's projects are nearly the same regarding scope management, cost management, time management and patron-client relationships.

Nevertheless, it is also noted that, when it comes to correlation, patron-client relationships have a greater (bad) impact on residents' satisfaction than time, cost and scope. However, rather than a patron-client relationship, the projects were carried out with certain flaws and shortcomings. This is attributable to UP and PIC/WC's effectiveness.

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