

## II. INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

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In 1947, the Indian subcontinent gained independence and Dhaka became the capital of the eastern province of the newly created country, Pakistan. In 1971, with the emergence of Bangladesh, it became the national capital of an independent sovereign country.

In recent years, Bangladesh has experienced an unprecedented upsurge of urbanization. The main focus, of course, is Dhaka. Since independence, Dhaka's growth has been phenomenal. It is now a thriving industrial and commercial center, besides being the administrative capital of the country.

The first civic committee created to consider solutions to urban problems in Dhaka was the Committee of Improvement, formed in 1823. It was reshaped as the Dhaka Municipal Committee in 1864 and entrusted with various public works of civic amenities. The concept of administering the municipality through elected representatives was introduced in 1884 and the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and two thirds of the commissioners were elected directly by the people. The municipality was given the status of a corporation in 1978, and in 1990 it was renamed the Dhaka City Corporation. DCC is described in Box 1.

The DCC area of 360 square km is divided into 90 wards. Each ward elects one ward commissioner and the 90 ward commissioners elect 18 female ward commissioners. These 108 ward commissioners, under the leadership of the Mayor, are responsible for managing municipal affairs and the delivery of DCC services. Policy and important

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**Box 1. Dhaka City Corporation at a Glance**

| Historical Background   | Municipal Data                                     |
|---|--|
| Established on 1 August 1864  | Area: 360 sq km                                    |
| Original Name:<br>Dhaka Municipal Committee                           | Population in Metropolitan Area:<br>9.3 million    |
| Established under District Municipal Improvement Act 1864             | Population Density in DCC:<br>16,958 persons/sq km |
| First Chairman: Mr. Skinner<br>District Magistrate (ex officio)       | No. of Officers/Staff: 11,000                      |
| First elected Chairman from 1885-88<br>Roy Bahadur Ananda Chandra Roy | Number of Wards: 90                                |
| Corporation Statute: Dhaka City Corporation Ordinance: 1983           | Number of Ward Commissioners: 90                   |
| Upgraded to City Corporation in 1990                                  | Number of Police Stations: 15                      |
| First Elected Mayor:<br>Mr. Mohammad Hanif                            | Reserved Seats for Women Commissioners: 18         |
| Infrastructure Facilities   | Health Facilities                                  |
| Roads: 1,968 km   | Charitable Dispensaries: 21                        |
| Footpaths: 163 km   | Maternity Centers: 1                               |
| Drains: 2,460km   | Immunization Centers: 69                           |
| Sewerage Lines: 1,431 km.   | General Hospitals: 1                               |
| Modern Asphalt Plants: 1  | Child Hospitals: 1                                 |
| Electric Substations: 10  | Public Toilets: 18                                 |
| Slaughterhouses: 5  | Graveyards: 5                                      |
| Bus Terminals: 3  | Crematoria: 2                                      |
| Traffic Signals: 2,308  |  |
| Solid Waste Management Facilities                                     | Recreation Facilities                              |
| Sweeper Colonies: 8   | Gymnasiums: 12                                     |
| Garbage Trucks: 250   | Number of Parks: 46                                |
| Waste Containers: 300   | Community Centers: 27                              |

decisions are taken in meetings of the Corporation as a whole. In addition, eight committees have been formed, with a maximum of six ward commissioners as members of each committee (one ward commissioner cannot be a member of more than two committees), to deal with the following concerns.

- Finance and establishment
- Education
- Health, family planning, and sanitation (including drainage)
- Town planning and improvement
- Audit and accounts
- Works and buildings
- Water and electricity
- Social welfare and community centers

In the discharge of his duties, the Mayor is also assisted by the Chief Executive Officer (who is appointed by the national government) and a host of other departmental heads. DCC has 20 departments and more than 10,000 permanent and temporary employees.

### **THE PROBLEM: *Parallel Jurisdiction***

Five decades ago, Dhaka became the capital of the Eastern Province of Pakistan. The city grew rapidly as a result of increased socioeconomic and political activities, expansion of the city area, and migration from the rural areas. Since Bangladesh attained independence in 1971, and Dhaka became the new country's capital, expansion has gained further momentum. The rapid growth of DCC in area and population is shown in Table 1.

The constitution of Bangladesh contains a solid promise:

*The State shall encourage local government institutions composed of representatives of the*

*areas concerned and in such institutions special representation shall be given, as far as possible, to peasants, workers and women.*

**Table 1: Growth of DCC in area and population**

| Year | Area (sq km) | % increase | Population | % increase |
|------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1906 | 6            | -          | 104,385    | -          |
| 1961 | 36           | 577        | 550,143    | 527        |
| 1982 | 360          | 1014       | 3,440,147  | 625        |
| 1991 | 360          | -          | 6,105,160  | 177        |

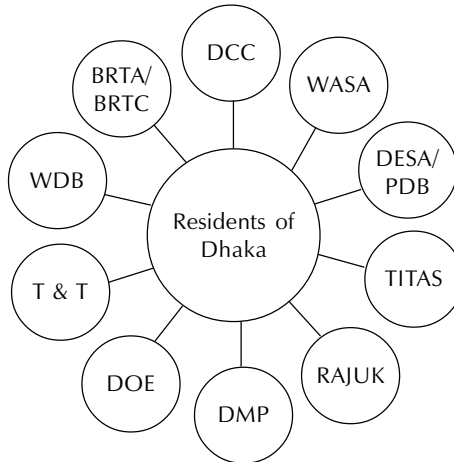
*As many as 40 institutions are involved in various capacities in service provision and development activities in Dhaka.*

To fulfill the requirement, at least for local governance in the DCC area, the latest enacted law is The Dhaka City Corporation Ordinance of 1983, which stipulates as many as 13 major functions for the DCC. But at the same time, due to tremendous increase in area and population and consequent need to extend public services, the government simultaneously created various authorities and handed over many of these functions to them. This sometimes curtailed vital functions of the DCC or created parallel jurisdiction. At present as many as 40 institutions are involved in various capacities in service provision and development activities in Dhaka. The major service providers to Dhaka residents are described in Box 2.

For example, the vital functions of area planning, development, and permission for building construction were assigned to RAJUK. Similarly, the responsibilities of providing drinking water, drainage, and sewerage were given to WASA. While the creation of specialized agencies to cope with the increasing demand for services might have some justification, an overall coordinating agency was clearly needed to administer these services that vitally affected the lives of Dhaka's citizens. As a result of

this parallel jurisdiction, a serious problem of coordination now exists.

**Box 2. Major Service Providers to Residents of DCC**



| Acronym   | Organization  | Service                                    |
|-----------|---|--|
| DCC       | Dhaka City Corporation  | Municipal service                          |
| WASA      | Water and Sewerage Authority  | Pure drinking water                        |
| DESA/PDB  | Dhaka Electric Supply Authority<br>Power Development Board              | Sewerage drainage<br>Supply of electricity |
| TITAS     | Titas Gas Transmission and<br>Distribution Company                      | Gas supply                                 |
| RAJUK     | Rajdhani Unnayan Kartripakyha   | Development plan                           |
| DMP       | Dhaka Metropolitan Police   | Law and Order                              |
| DOE       | Department of Environment   | Environment                                |
| T & T     | Telegraph and Telephone Board   | Telephone service                          |
| WDB       | Water Development Board   | Flood control                              |
| BRTA/BRTC | Bangladesh Road Transport Authority/<br>Bangladesh Road Transport Corp. | Transportation                             |

## THE SOLUTION

Three courses of action are suggested.

### *1. Formation of a Metropolitan Government*

The present Mayor has already submitted a proposal for the formation of a metropolitan government with administrative control over all organizations functioning within the metropolis. His proposal, however, has not found favor with the Government. Cities in Bangladesh, particularly Dhaka, have already played a significant role in political mobilization and movement. Often, events in Dhaka have decided the fate of the Government. No political party in power will therefore agree to concentrating so much power in a single person, who could possibly be 'captured' by the opposition in a free and fair municipal election. In addition, the problem is augmented due to the heterogeneous jurisdiction of different agencies working within the metropolitan area.

### *2. Establishment of a Separate Ministry*

Alternately, a separate ministry, through which all relevant organizations channel the formulation and implementation of their plans, could be set up to coordinate all such efforts. The system would be politically acceptable, because the minister in charge would always be a member of the party in power.

### *3. Strengthening of the Coordination Committee*

The Government established a Coordination Committee in October 1996. It was convened by the Minister of Local Government and Rural Development and the DCC Mayor (who also has the portfolio of a Minister). Of the 22 other members, 8 are Members of Parliament from the DCC area,

13 are heads of various organizations/departments, and the remaining 2 are the Deputy Commissioner and the Civil Surgeon of Dhaka. The function of the committee is to ensure general management of the city and the flow of services. Unfortunately, the committee, has not been very effective. The major reasons are fourfold.

- The leadership of the Mayor is yet to be accepted by the member organizations. During committee meetings, officials from member organizations whose jurisdictions were in conflict with that of the DCC rendered the deliberations ineffective and conclusions unreachable.
- No significant breakthrough in terms of the relationship and cohesiveness of member organizations and the DCC was made.
- Enthusiasm was lacking and meetings were not held regularly (at least once a month) as required in the initiation order.
- Authority to coordinate either formulation or execution of development plans of respective member organizations was absent.

The committee therefore would have to be reconstituted and strengthened to be effective. This would involve:

- handing over chairmanship of the committee to the Mayor, the elected representative of the citizens of Dhaka;
- reconstituting the committee in such a way that the formulation and implementation of all development plans pertaining to the DCC area pass through and are approved by the committee; and
- allowing the committee to operate for the entire metropolitan area.

### **THE PROBLEM: *Decentralization and Delegation of Administrative and Financial Power***

The DCC area was divided into 10 zones and a substantial number of DCC employees were assigned to work at the zone level. Ten middle and senior Government officials were also recruited on deputation and put in charge of each zone. At the time of creation of the zones, a good deal of thought was given to decentralization, and how the zonal officers would facilitate its implementation (Box 3).

Gradually, for various reasons, power began to drift back toward the head office. Eventually, the zonal officers were left only with the authority to supervise work and report to the departmental heads. They had no authority to take action against employees. In financial matters, they were left with a petty cash fund of only Tk10,000. The concentration at the center became so acute that citizens could not even get an application form for obtaining a trade license from the zonal office. Instead, they had to go to the DCC head office. For people spread throughout 360 square kilometers, this was an inexcusable annoyance.

### **THE SOLUTION**

*It is essential that zonal offices be strengthened through delegation of well-defined administrative and financial power.*

To elicit local opinion, BCAS held 10 workshops, one in each zone. In each of them, the participants avowed that they wanted to strengthen the zonal offices. This is clearly what should be done. For the sake of avoiding congestion and nondelivery of services, and also to keep DCC presence within easy reach of the people, it is essential that zonal offices be strengthened through delegation of well-defined administrative and financial power. Up to a certain limit the zonal officers should be able to work and operate on their own.

**Box 3: Duties of the Zonal Officer**

- Acts as the Principal Executive Officer of the concerned zone. The zone office is a self-contained branch of DCC.
- Handles all administrative functions and coordinates zone activities.
- Supervises activities of all departments.
- Takes decisions on zone problems after consulting concerned departmental head and obtaining consent of the Chief Executive Officers (CEO).
- Liaises with the departmental heads concerning zone activities and, through the CEO, remains responsible to the Mayor.
- Presides over interdepartmental meetings of the zone.
- Approves salary and other allowance bills of section chiefs.
- Expends development funds, maintains accounts, and regularly submits returns on routine and development expenditures to the main office.
- Coordinates and supervises all transport in the zone.
- Prepares part of the annual report of zonal section chiefs.
- Considers and sanctions casual leave to all officers and staff of the zone.
- Formulates annual development plan for the zone in consultation with concerned ward commissioners and section chiefs.
- Convenes the Zonal Tender Committee and approves work.
- Takes responsibility for delivery of all public utility service.
- Takes immediate action during emergencies and natural calamities.
- Supervises ordinary or special relief measures/relief projects.
- Develops markets and maintains them.
- By exercising delegated power, ensures imposition and collection of taxes and also proposes new sources of taxation.
- As representative of the Mayor, acts as member of the Zonal Tax Review Council.
- Takes necessary steps for slum improvement, social welfare, health matters, etc., subject to instructions and approval of Head Office.
- Through CEO, takes effective steps for eviction and mobile courts.
- Coordinates interministerial development and maintenance work.
- Supervises fund utilization and implementation of zonal component of development plans and ensures progress to higher authorities.

### **THE PROBLEM: *Lack of Transparency***

During the zonal workshops, the participants opined that there was no transparency in DCC activities. The taxpayers did not often know what was being done with their money. They had no say about the work being done in their area, and more often than not nothing happened when they complained about poor quality of work. Consequent dissatisfaction among taxpayers discouraged prompt payment of municipal taxes.

### **THE SOLUTION**

Citizens who participated in the workshop expressed their willingness to cooperate in municipal activities. They felt that a participatory approach was essential for successful municipal service delivery, and, assuming they were properly approached, would respond enthusiastically.

One corrective step is transparency in formulating work plans. It was vigorously recommended that a bottom-up planning process and involvement of local people would result in better plan formulation, supervision, and execution. In each ward, a consultative committee could be formed consisting entirely of locals: heads of educational institutions, service holders, and representatives of various classes of people residing in the ward. The committee will meet under the chairmanship of the elected ward commissioner to develop their annual work plan.

The zonal office will coordinate and collect recommendations from the wards. The DCC will be the final approving authority. Whatever funds are allocated to the zone will be utilized wardwise in order of their priority. Similarly, in the execution of the approved plan, the local committees can work as watchdogs to ensure quality of work and timely execution. Involvement of local communities will

also bring transparency to DCC activities and provide incentive for better tax payment (and higher revenue collection). Projects of larger magnitude covering more than one zone would of course continue to be dealt with centrally, but the opinions of local people should always be welcome.

**THE PROBLEM: *Need to Strengthen the Ward Commissioner***

DCC presently has 90 directly elected and 18 indirectly elected ward commissioners. Energetic ward commissioners can play an effective role in furthering the interest of their wards. They are authorized to attend DDC and standing committee meetings. They can formulate development plans relating to their wards with assistance from the staff of the Zonal Executive Officer's office and submit it for inclusion in DCC's development program. They are authorized to inspect DCC development work in their wards and recommend payment of bills for such work. They are required to sign the monthly salary bills of conservancy staff. Maintenance materials and spare parts required for street lighting of the ward are issued with their approval. They are even authorized to issue Nationality Certificates for residents. However, several impediments prevent them from fulfilling their potential. We will examine three of the most important of these impediments.

*1. Lack of Human Resource Support*

Under the existing system, each ward commissioner represents 65,000-70,000 people. This is a huge constituency for any elected official. Because the ward commissioners have their own professions to follow, they are available in their ward offices only for limited periods of time. If a citizen wants to meet with the commissioner and does not come at the right time, there is rarely anyone else who can

*Involvement of local communities will also bring transparency to DCC activities and provide incentive for better tax payment.*

satisfactorily attend to the visitor. The three allotted support staff for ward commissioners' offices are a clerk, a helper, and a night guard — hardly suitable as substitutes.

### *2. Transient Offices*

Another problem is that although the ward commissioner is entitled to an office located in community centers belonging to the DCC, if no space is available there, the ward commissioner is obliged to hold office in hired accommodation. In such a case, when the incumbent changes the office shifts from one place to another. As a result, people are unsure how to locate their ward commissioner's office.

### *3. Insufficient Training*

During the zonal workshops, the ward commissioners were asked if they were fully acquainted with the operation of DCC. Invariably the reply was that they had either learned what they knew from their colleagues, or had stumbled on pieces of knowledge as they went along. This is not a happy situation for a person responsible for the civic interests of 70,000 people. However, the DCC has no institute to give the ward commissioners basic training and know-how.

## **THE SOLUTION**

### *1. Recruitment of Assistants*

The human resource pool in each ward commissioner's office needs to be strengthened with a suitable, capable assistant who should be well educated, able to handle visitors, and where possible, deliver the goods in the absence of the ward commissioner.

2. *Identification of Permanent Offices*

Ward commissioners’ offices should be located at a permanent central site. Action must be taken by the DCC to ensure that suitable office space is made available for the ward commissioner and his/her staff.

3. *Provision of Training*

Ward commissioners are the closest city officials to the residents of Dhaka. Their need for training and grooming in their roles as elected representatives cannot be stressed enough. If the ward commissioners are trained in clerical, financial, communication, and managerial skills, everyone wins.

*Ward commissioners are the closest city officials to the residents of Dhaka.*

**THE PROBLEM: Training of DCC Staff**

The need for training of the 108 ward commissioners has been mentioned. The training requirement within DCC itself, if not more important than that of the ward commissioners, is certainly larger in scope. DCC has a huge staff, numbering more than 10,000 (Table 2). Against this backdrop, DCC has no institution of its own, and little access to external institutions like the Local Government Institute, where regular programs for the new officers and refresher courses are available.

| <b>Category</b> | <b>Permanent</b> | <b>Temporary</b> | <b>Total</b>  |
|-----------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| Class I         | 261              | -                | 261           |
| Class II        | 136              | -                | 136           |
| Class III       | 2,495            | 5,576            | 8,071         |
| Class IV        | 1,833            | -                | 1,833         |
| <b>Total</b>    | <b>4,725</b>     | <b>5,576</b>     | <b>10,301</b> |

## THE SOLUTION

The need for establishment of a training institute to take care of DCC's needs can hardly be overemphasized. A detailed study of the training needs and establishments of commensurate training facilities is strongly recommended. Obviously, such an institute could provide the requisite training for ward commissioners.

## **THE PROBLEM: *Lack of Management Information System***

The need for MIS in any organization as large as DCC can be well imagined. During discussions with DCC officials, questions were asked as to whether the exact total number of employees was known, whether information on the amount of revenue collected to date was available, or whether the technical departments had required information (e.g., information on municipal roads, their length and breadth, when these were last repaired, and when repair would become due again). Top officials of the engineering department admitted that for efficient operation they needed such information, but it simply was not there, or if it was there, it was not readily available. The plight of the managers can be well imagined. The lack of computerized MIS information severely hinders the smooth and speedy operation of DCC.

At present DCC has a very small computer cell composed of one programmer and one computer operator. Four or five other computer operators are appointed on an ad hoc basis. DCC formulated a committee to review its requirements and subsequently submitted a proposal to the Government in January 1995. The proposal, despite reminders, is yet to be approved.

## **THE SOLUTION**

The need to computerize, especially as regards MIS capability, is enormous. DCC cannot be reasonably expected to cope with the information requirements of managing a megacity in the 21st Century without greater capacity. The solution to this problem is to dramatically upgrade present capacity as soon as possible.