

## **BARRIERS TO ACCESS TO PUBLIC SERVICES FOR THE URBAN POOR: AN ENQUIRY INTO DHAKA SLUMS**

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**Abstract:** The article attempts to enhance understanding on the barriers to access to public services for the urban poor living in slums in Dhaka. Departing from the conventional conceptualisations, the investigation into the barriers to access to public services is built on the conceptual framework which is compatible with justice and rights, underwritten by at least three dimensions: commutative justice, distributive justice and social rights. The paper finds that access to both kinds of services – universal form of services (i.e. services are to be made available to all citizens on a uniform basis regardless of income, status or power such as universal free primary education, the fire service, etc.) and those services where income, position or influence have the capacity to leverage particular individuals or groups– is affected by financial circumstances, creating different levels of access and situations in which the urban poor are disadvantageous from the outset. The interviewed population points out that access to public services by slum dwellers is driven by hierarchical framework of power. A change in the reverse direction, according to them, means a transformation of socio-spatial relations, a production of a new, emancipatory space.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Barriers to access to public services can be defined in a number of ways and each definition has its consequential implication for policy. In one approach, barriers to access to public services have been interpreted as a problem of there being not enough services in aggregate terms or in per capita terms. Barriers to access to public services in this approach are a result of providence and population. It may turn policy makers into *fatalists* (e.g. this approach would present water scarcity as a problem of nature and population, both beyond the control of policy, especially in the short run.

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Another often conceptualisation of the barriers to access to public services is built as a symptom of poverty. The corollary policy conclusion of this view is that economic development will (in due course) lead to improvements in supply of public utility service and hence, there is no need to worry about specific symptoms of poverty. Thus, recourse to this approach may turn policy makers into *patient optimists*.

A third approach which also sees barriers to access to public services as problem of poverty, but as something that needs to be addressed quickly and not something that can be left to the trickle down effect of economic development. Pursuance of this approach may lead to interpret barriers to access to public services as a problem of there being enough (e.g. water) but not enough money or technology or human resources to bring that (water) to the people. For example, much international financing of water resources and water supply projects during the period 1950 to 1990, reflects this thinking. This approach has turned policy makers into *enthusiastic engineers*.

A fourth approach could be to consider access to public services (e.g. education, health, water) as a capability deprivation.

The paper, departing from the abovementioned conventional approaches, investigates into the barriers to access to public services proposing a conceptual framework which is compatible with justice and rights. The conceptual framework entails *rights* underwritten by at least three dimensions<sup>1</sup>: commutative justice, distributive justice<sup>2</sup> and social rights. Fundamentally this premise is concerned with just and equitable distribution of economic goods and services. It is both process and outcome oriented (as opposed to positive economics which is focused primarily on outcome) and stresses the importance of an egalitarian outcome. Economic justice argues in favour of a just economy, which provides equal access to primary goods and services versus an efficient economy constructed on unfair tax burdens, and inequality of income. It also captures elements of sustainable livelihoods, which is based normatively on ideas of capability, equity and sustainability.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Commutative justice: fairness in all agreements and exchanges; distributive: allocation of income, wealth and power; and social justice: obligations to be active/productive participants in society.

<sup>2</sup> This is contrary to the conservative economic thinking (neo-liberal economics) about the libertarian conception of distributive justice. In such framework the state plays a night watchman role of simply protecting a narrowly defined set of (mostly property) and corporate rights. Other conservatives within this tradition applies a utilitarian notion of distributive justice that relies totally on the free market to maximize utility, allocate resources and distributes rewards.

<sup>3</sup> Capability refers to ability to perform certain basic functioning such as coping with stress and shock, making use of livelihood opportunities, and responding to adverse changes in conditions. Equity is usually measured in terms of income distribution, but it also implies an equal distribution of assets, capabilities and opportunities. Social sustainability implies an ability to maintain and improve livelihoods while maintaining and enhancing local and global assets and capabilities on which livelihoods depend (Chambers and Conway, 1992).

Any attempt in conceptualising any issue involving slums centres on the politics of space. By producing a space<sup>4</sup> according to its own nature, a society not only materializes into distinctive built forms, but also reproduces itself.

Slum is a settlement on a land, especially public or unoccupied land, without right or title. Land and its advanced capitalist relations of production, "real estate," constitute a *second circuit* of capital, even though a separate class of landowners no longer exists (Lefebvre, 1974). That is, the channeling of money, the construction of housing, the development of space, financing, and speculation in land constitute a second means of acquiring wealth that is relatively independent of the "first" circuit, industrial production. Lefebvre shows that this second circuit is one of the fundamental forces of society and a source of surplus value creation. Space is, thus, hierarchical in a framework of power.

Against this background, the objectives of the research is to enhance understanding on the barriers the urban poor faces in accessing public services in the slums of Dhaka.

## II. BARRIERS TO PUBLIC SERVICES: STORIES FROM SLUMS

Slums, according to UN-Habitat (2003), are highly congested urban areas marked by deteriorated, unsanitary buildings, poverty, and social disorganization. Squatters settle on land, especially public or unoccupied land, without right or title. Squatters include those who settle on public land under regulation by the government, in order to get title to it. *Slums* refer to the environmental aspects of the area where a community resides, while *squatters* refer to the legality of the land ownership and other infrastructure provision.

Dhaka's urban problems have reached a crisis level. Its poor live in miserable conditions, breathe polluted air, and traffic congestion and poor infrastructure services are diminishing the quality of life. A few statistics which illustrate the dimensions of the crisis (World Bank, 2000):

- 70% of the city's population are poor, and they have access to only 20% of the land area;
- 56% of the city's population live in slums and slums-like conditions less than 30% of the houses have piped water supply, and less than 20% have access to proper sanitation;
- in slums, about 90% of the men and almost all the women and children suffer from disease;

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<sup>4</sup> The "production of space" means what Giddens calls the "duality of structure." That is, space is both a medium of social relations and a material product that can affect social relations. This dialectical idea is a major tenet of the "new urban sociology."

- only 20% of the school-age children of slum dwellers are actually enrolled, and their drop-out rate is 80%; and
- in slums, about 95% of the men and 60% of the women have no jobs.

#### **Living on the Edge: The Story of Shefali<sup>5</sup>**

Her tiny two-roomed bamboo shack has been constructed next to dozens of others. With so little land available, settlements like Mirpur have sprung up above Dhaka's many emerald-green lakes.

"Seven days ago there was heavy rainfall and the water came up through the bottom of my house. It rose up to my legs," Mrs Sefali said.

But it is not just the floods that transform life for the slum-dwellers of Mirpur into a watery hell. It is the sanitation: there isn't any. Mrs Sefali and her family do not have a toilet. Instead they use a hole in the bottom of their shack that leads directly into the lake below.

Some of her neighbours have devised a system of "hanging latrines" - precarious bamboo platforms raised a few feet above the water and screened by rags.

The tiny alley to Mrs Sefali's house goes past four or five other shacks, where families of up to 10 people live packed together. The smell is appalling: just outside her front door, human faeces sitting in nearly a metre of water bob up to meet you. All the slum-dwellers are forced to use the lake as a collective latrine. They use the same water to clean their cooking pots, to wash clothes, and to bathe in. "We know this water is not good for washing ourselves in. But what can we do?" Mrs Sefali asked. "We don't have much choice."

It is hardly surprising that the inhabitants of Dhaka's sprawling slums suffer from a variety of diseases. In the rainy season they get jor - a debilitating fever. And then there is diarrhoea, dysentery and tuberculosis. Both of Mrs Sefali's children have scabies - a universal complaint - while her husband has TB.

"My neighbour's child died recently of diarrhoea," Mrs Sefali said. Only the carp that feed off the excrement floating in the city's slum-ponds appear healthy.

Bangladesh is one of the poorest, most squalid, most corrupt, and most densely populated countries on earth. Millions of people face the same problem as Mrs Sefali and her neighbours.

### **2.1 Public Services: What the Slum-dwellers Say**

One of the first questions in interviews sought a definition of public services. A range of possible interpretations resulted from this, and these were employed within focus groups to test their 'face validity', to gauge reactions and to refine definitions. It became clear quite quickly that a general consensus about the term 'public services' would be difficult to achieve. For some the term could be defined in a quite precise and narrow (perhaps personal) way; while, for others, no single understanding or agreement about it was possible - almost by definition. This range was illustrated by the

<sup>5</sup> Luke Harding, *The Guardian*, Monday December 16, 2002

response that *'everyone has a good idea what is important to them'*. They also use interchangeably terms such as public service, essential service and basic service.

However, there was some evidence that people considered the notion of public essential services often to be linked to social class. In one middle class group, for example, there was protracted discussion about definitions, and a majority view that *'everyone's essential services are different'*. More specifically, someone in the same group said *'Just because people in Kamlapur don't see things as essential services, doesn't mean someone else somewhere else won't'*. This group also felt that, while public transport was not an essential service for them, it would be for many low income groups.

Despite such variations, a core set of essential services, focusing on healthcare and the emergency services, was almost always listed. For some the services were related to crises or emergency situations: for example, one person said *'the things that people can access in emergencies'*. In other words there was a view that essential services were things needed in 'life threatening situations'. However, others provided wider definitions and talked about those services needed to *'prevent the quality of life being threatened'* or *'the framework for maintaining an area's quality of life.'* As a consequence of these discussions, a general definition of public (basic or essential) services was proposed as:

*'Public services are basic services provided for the general public at large by key government departments and non-departmental public bodies.'*

## **2.2 Uniformity of Access to Services**

Some services, in theory and principle, are to be made available to all citizens on a uniform basis regardless of income, status or power. Examples include universal free primary education, the fire service, etc. A distinction, thus, are to be made between this universal form of service, and those services where income, position or influence have the capacity to advantage particular individuals or groups. But our research finds based on experience of the slum dwellers that access to both kinds of essential services is affected by financial circumstances. This is seen by the urban poor as creating different levels of access and situation in which they are disadvantageous from the outset.

## **2.3 Decisions made at the centre**

The familiar perception that decisions are made 'at the centre', and do not take account of local views and concerns, is voiced on a number of occasions *'the people that make decisions (about changing public services) leads to the usual outcome of people benefiting in Gulshan and not in Kamlapur Busti' or 'no body (from public bodies) ever asks ordinary people about changes for their areas.'*

This epitomised by the failure of policy community in prioritising and making services. *'I am not sure whether the night classes are any help to farmers and women losing their jobs in factories.'*

For many people the systems in use appeared to be unnecessarily complex and inaccessible. Perhaps because of the complexity of the procedures some groups felt that systems operated very slowly, feeding into the concerns about delays outlined above. Where the provision of service involves contacts with several departments or agencies, people feel that they are often *'shunted around', 'passed from one department to another'.*

#### **2.4 Anxiety about Stigmas: approaching 'people in authority'**

There is also evidence that some slum dwellers have experienced genuine fear and anxiety about approaching 'people in authority'. In many cases these feelings arose from the perceived stigma of having to seek certain sorts of help. A number of people said that they were actually afraid when they had to go to offices because of treatment they had received in the past.

Using the services of the police often generated a particular set of difficulties. For example, in some areas people indicated that, because of *'community disapproval'*, they did not feel able to contact the police even when they had been the victims of crime. *'People who have contacted them have often received threats or the cold shoulder.'*

#### **2.5 Time Restrictions**

The times and periods when many services are available are thought to be either limited or inappropriate. Healthcare was reported most frequently as causing difficulties. The service provision hours at doctors' post (*sabuj chhata* clinics) cause great concerns for slum dwellers since it coincides with their working hours as a missed-working day is directly contingent upon their income. It is furthered by cost of transport. Thus the opening hours for many services did not suit people living in informal employment, characterised by earn as you sell labour and the fact that many services are not available at weekend is seen as a specific barrier to access. *'The opening hours just don't suit everyone, if you're unemployed you're laughing' or 'if you're working it's not that easy to even bother trying to access a service because of lack of flexibility.'*

#### **2.6 Difficulties Accessing Information about Services**

Very often, it was argued, the difficulties began at the very first stage, that is the process of finding information about a particular service. This was expressed by one person as follows: *'It's one thing to have an entitlement. It's another thing to actually know about it.'*

Discussion suggested that there were three possible levels of difficulties. First, finding out where the information about the particular service concerned is available, and in what form. There is hardly any information

post. Important information is not made readily available by frontline staff, for a range of reasons. Second, in some cases very little useful information is actually available in any form, and sometimes these are out of date. Third, when documents, forms or posters are in fact available, these are difficult to read, badly presented, and generally lacked clarity.

In some cases lack of privacy or sensitivity can be seen as actually putting people at risk. For example, in cases relating to domestic violence, reading out new addresses of victims makes available information that can create the danger of further attacks.

### **III. COST BARRIERS TO ACCESS PUBLIC SERVICES: RESULTS FROM INTERVIEWS**

The following section of the paper measures the cost barriers to access the public service by the urban poor to test as to whether access to both kinds of services - universal form of services (i.e. services are to be made available to all citizens on a uniform basis regardless of income, status or power such as universal free primary education, the fire service, etc.) and those services where income, position or influence have the capacity to leverage particular individuals or groups - is affected by financial circumstances, creating different levels of access and situations in which the urban poor are disadvantageous from the outset.

#### **3.1 Education**

The government's stated education policy in Bangladesh is to ensure that all children receive basic primary and lower secondary education, of reasonable quality. The right to universal, equitable, and free access to education and the right to admission to any educational institution regardless of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth are enshrined in Bangladesh's constitution.

According to government policy, there is no official fee charged in primary schools registered with the government and every child is entitled to receive free textbooks, except for students attending non-formal schools run by non government organizations. However, from the survey it appears that, for all school types, official fees are demanded, it is difficult to obtain textbooks free of charge and students do not get good grades unless their teacher is charge as a tutor.

To better understand the cost barrier to education, respondents were asked how much money they spent on average for education expenditure. Respondents provided information on expenditure, some of which were paid once annually, and other on monthly expenditure. In analysing average monthly education expenditure of the respondents, it is evident that respondents' average monthly education expenditure comprise of number of items such as tiffin, house tutor, writing paper, pencil, electricity and school

fees. The highest amount of taka 161 was spent for house tutor, while tiffin and electricity / cost of kerosene amounted to 93 and 83 taka respectively (Table – 3.1).

**Table 3.1 Average Monthly Educational Expenditure**

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Taka</b>
Tiffin	93
House Tutor	161
Writing paper/Pencil	93
Fee	66
Electricity/Kerosene	83
Conveyance	2
Others Book	3
Fine-Arts	4

**Table 3.2 Average Yearly Educational Expenses**

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Taka</b>
Book	496
House Tutor	221
Admission Fee	444
Bag	98
Dress	225
Admission Form	55
Entertainment	24
Examination fee	27
Sports	7
Library	1
Writing paper/Pencil	51
Picnic	14

As regards, average yearly educational expenditures, respondents spent large amounts for books, tuition fees and dresses. On average respondents spent Taka 496 for books, Taka 444 for school fees, Taka 225 for dresses and for house tutor Taka 221. Other expenses include bag (taka 98), admission form (taka 55), writing paper/pencil (taka 51), picnic (taka 14), entertainment (taka 24), examination fee (27), sports (taka 7) and library (taka 1) (Table – 3.2).

When asked whether respondents received any sponsorship for meeting the education expenditures from philanthropists/NGO, only 6 percent of the respondents answered in the affirmative. This implied that the cost burden was carried out by majority respondents.

When asked what were the problems faced if any as a resource poor student, a good number of respondents responded that they faced different sorts of discrimination including mental harassment as a slum dweller and gender discrimination in continuing education. About 15 percent of



respondents informed that they failed to continue education as because they were girls. About 27 percent respondents cited the cause of house work burden that led them to leave school (Table- 3.3).

**Table 3.3 Problems Faced as a Resource-Poor-Student**

Question	Answer (%)
Have faced discrimination	9
Have faced mental harassment as a slum dweller	11
Have faced problem to continue education for being girl child	7
Failed to continue school for being girl child	15
Left school for house work	27

### 3.2 Health

The provision of basic necessities, including medical care, is an obligation of the government of Bangladesh under the constitution. Health services are provided by both the public and private sector. There were nearly an equal number of public and private hospitals in Bangladesh by 1999 (528 public and 568 private), although public hospitals have a much higher concentration of beds (29,824) compared to private hospitals (11,371). The private sector hospitals generally serve client who can afford to pay, while the vast majority of the poor depend upon the public sector for health care. While the "normal" route requires no up-front payment, other routes include paying a fee to the doctor at his private chamber, paying money directly to a hospital employee and/or using a personal connection with hospital administration staff.

Respondents spent about on average Taka 395 for medicine, while cost of diagnosis remained the second highest amount (Taka 112) in their average health expenditure. The fee for traditional healer and clergy remained in the range of taka 15 and taka 10 respectively, Doctor's fee constituted on average taka 35 (Table – 3.4).

**Table 3.4 Average Health Expenditure**

Fee	Taka
Hujur (clergy)	10
Kobiraj (Healer)	15
Doctor	35
Satellite-Clinic	10
Govt-Hospital	5
Medicine	395
Diagnosis	112
Connivance	38

Respondents visited doctors for medical care of different diseases. The highest number of visit of respondents to doctors has been for viral fever. Other consultation with doctors related to diseases like dysentery, stomach ache and diarrhoea (Table 3.5).

**Table 3.5 Reasons for Consultation with Doctors**

Disease	Consultation with doctor (%)
Viral Fever (After 5 days)	61
Tonsil	37
Dysentery	48
Worm (Stomach-ache)	38
Diarrhoea (After 20)	28
Gonorrhoea	7

### 3.3. Water

According to the 1977 Pourashava Ordinance, it is obligatory for city corporations to ensure availability of safe drinking water to households, since the provision and regulation of water supply and prevention of infections performed by the pourashva.<sup>6</sup>

Respondents of the study mainly uses water supplied by WASA. About 19 percent of the respondents' sources of water is tube well, while a majority (79 percent) uses water from WASA. However, only 16 percent respondents answered that one tube well was being used by 1 to 4 households. Whereas, 30 percent respondents were sharing one tube-well with 5 to 10 households. Access to tube-well was rather constrained by the fact that about 54 percent of the respondents had to share one tube well with 11 to 30 households.

**Table 3.6 Sources of Water**

Source	Uses (%)
WASA	79
Tube well	19
Others	2

**Table 3.7 Tube Well Uses per Households**

One tube-well use	Answer (%)
1-4 Households	16
5-10 Households	30
11-20 Households	29
21-30 Households	25

When asked from where the respondents collected the tube wells, it was found that respondents collected the tube well from various sources

<sup>6</sup> Pourashava Ordinance, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh 1977

including government and NGO. A good number of tube well were also been collected from the market and financed by the respondents themselves (Table 3.8).

**Table 3.8 Sources of Tube-well**

Sources	% of Respondents
Government	32
N.G.O	25
Market (own)	27
Others	16

In answer to question who collect water that are being used in household of the respondents, it is evident that female members mostly collect water. About 31 percent interviewee and 16 percent of respondents' son/daughter collected water for household uses. Many of the interviewees are female themselves, thus, implies that the main responsible person to collect water are women (Table 3.9). Respondents also reported that they on average spend 23 minutes to collect water (Table 3.10).

**Table 3.9 Responsibility of collecting water**

Person responsible	Answer (%)
Interviewee	31
Female Member	43
Son/Daughter	16
Others Member	10

**Table 3.10 Waiting Time for Water Collection**

Waiting time	Minute
Collecting water	23

Many of the respondents reported that the tube-well they use for household uses remained broken for days ranging from less than 7 days to more than 22 days. About 64 percent respondents informed that the tube well they use remained broken for up to seven days. About 9 percent of respondents reported that their tube wells did not function more than 22 days (Table 3. 11).

**Table 3.11 Number of days tube-well remained broken**

Number of Days	Percent of respondents
< 7 days	64
7-14 days	17
15-21 days	10
>22 days	9

*Average Water Uses Expenditure*

Focus group participation's from slums explained that the best way to get a connection was through a third person, preferably a *mastan* who could manage the whole process. WASA official explained that the lengthy wait for connection in some cases motivated people to install hand pumps on the Dhaka WASA pipeline without permission. The more well-to-do residents also install illegal suction pumps on the line in order to increase their water pressure, creating problems for other households.

In terms of monthly average water uses expenditures, it was found that respondents spent Taka 30 for purchase of equipment and Taka 20 for monthly rent. On average Taka 10 was also paid monthly as rent to extortionist (Table 3.12). This rent if calculated on an yearly basis, it becomes Taka 200. In terms of average yearly expenditure for water uses, establishment/set-up cost was Taka 1000 and repair cost amounted to Taka 200 (Table 3.13).

**Table 3.12 Monthly Average Water Uses Expenditure**

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Taka</b>
Purchase of equipment	30
Monthly rental	20
Rent to extortionist	10
Others	5

**Table 3.13 Yearly Average Water Uses Expenditure**

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Taka</b>
Establishment/Set-up	1000
Repair	200
Rent to extortionist	100
Others	120

**3.4 Sewerage**

The survey asked respondents about their use of sanitation facilities. About 57 percent of respondents had sanitary toilet for their own use, while others used unhygienic sanitary facilities such as open field and *kaccha* toilets (Table 3.14).

**Table 3.14 Use of Sanitation facilities**

<b>Sanitation Facilities</b>	<b>Answer (%)</b>
Sanitary Toilet	57
Open Field	21
Kaccha Toilet	13
Hole	6
Others	3

*Ownership of the Toilet*

As regards the ownership of the toilets being used by the respondents, it was found that most of the respondents who use sanitary toilets do not own those. The majority of the respondents share toilet with one or more households (Table 3.15). Respondents also informed that the toilets of their use were quite far from their home. Only 32 percent of respondents had their toilets within a reach of 17 feet, while for others the distance was from more than 18 feet to more than 80 feet (Table 3.16).

**Table 3.15 Ownership of sanitation facilities**

<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Answer (%)</b>
Owner	21
Share	47
Others	32

**Table 3.16 Distance of the Toilet from House**

<b>Distance</b>	<b>Answer (%)</b>
< 17 feet	32
18-40 feet	23
41-80 feet	30
> 80 feet	15

*Average Sanitation Expenditure*

Average sanitation expenditure comprises of different charges including monthly charge for user, cleaning charge and rent to extortionists. This range from Taka 21 to Taka 5 on average monthly (Table 3.18). The rent to extortionists are Taka 130 if calculated on yearly basis. The yearly one-off cost of establishing the sanitation facility for the respondents is Taka 380, while equipment and repair cost amounted Taka 380 and taka 250 respectively (Table 3.19).

**Table 3.18 Monthly Average Sanitation Expenditure**

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Taka</b>
Charges	21
Cleaning	5
Rent to Extortionist	5
Others	4

**Table 3.19 Yearly Average Sanitation Expenditure**

<b>Expenses</b>	<b>Taka</b>
Establishment	380
Equipment	250
Repair	155
Broker/Extortionists' Rent	130
Others	136

### 3.5 Electricity

The survey asked respondents a series of questions about electricity access, monthly and yearly expenditure. A total of 91 percent of respondents have electricity lines at their household. Within which only 26 percent own electricity arrangement of their household. Although 77 percent respondents reported that they have regular electricity service at day times, a very limited number of respondents (23 percent) did not have regular electricity services at night, when they require most (Table 3.20).

**Table 3.20 Access to Electricity Services**

Question	Answer (%)
Have electricity Line?	91
Own Electricity arrangement	26
Regular Electricity Service in Day	77
Regular Electricity Service at Night	23

Focus group discussions undertaken to supplement survey data revealed, that most bosti dwellers acknowledged that their electricity connections were illegal and they had detailed knowledge of how illegal connection are made. They are generally aware that 'holding numbers' are required to get a legal electricity connection, which includes the installation of a meter. Since most bostis do not have holding numbers, bosti dwellers buy connections from people with legal access to electricity in their house and pay charges for connection and use at "market" rates.

#### *Average Electricity Expenditure*

Respondents were asked to provide information on their average electricity expenditure. The information on monthly expenditure and one-off yearly cost to electricity were collected. Their responses indicate that respondents, on average month, spend taka 127 for electricity bills, Taka 40 for equipment and Taka 35 for other expenditures related to electricity services (Table 3.21). Respondents also informed that they paid as one-off payment of Taka 250 for connection, Taka 125 for repairing of electric wires and lines. Respondents also paid Taka 150 as bribe for getting connected (Table 3.22).

**Table 3.21 Monthly Average Electricity Expenditure**

Expenses	Taka
Electricity Bill	127
Equipment (Bulb, Switch etc.)	40
Others	35

**Table 3.22 Yearly Average Electricity Expenditure**

Expenses	Taka
Connection (Wire, Materials)	250
Bribe For Connection	150
Repairing	125
Others	120

#### **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

What emerges from preceding sections is the fundamental contradiction between poor people's demand for accessible quality essential services and the elite's strategy to supply such services. At issue is the alimentionation of bureaucratic states' policy entrepreneurs from the grassroots and their concentration and accumulation of capital and power.

The paper finds that access to both kinds of services - universal form of services (i.e. services are to be made available to all citizens on a uniform basis regardless of income, status or power such as universal free primary education, the fire service, etc.) and those services where income, position or influence have the capacity to leverage particular individuals or groups - is affected by financial circumstances, creating different levels of access and situations in which the urban poor are disadvantageous from the outset.

For many people the systems in vogue is complex and inaccessible. People feel that they are often 'shunted around', where the provision of service involves contacts with several departments or agencies. There is also evidence that slum dwellers have experienced genuine fear and anxiety about approaching 'people in authority'.

The interviewed population points out that access to public services by slum dwellers is driven by hierarchical framework of power. A change in the reverse direction means, according to the interviewed population, is a transformation of socio-spatial relations, a production of a new, emancipatory space.

**Note**

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## **Appendix 1 A Note on Methodology**

There is no simple or agreed definition of *essential services*, and indeed it is likely that interpretation of the concept will vary according to the groups being considered and the contexts in which they operate. The research has, therefore, been designed using a *bottom up* approach, in order to allow the organisations and individuals taking part to define what is essential for them, and to identify contexts in which problems about access occur. Therefore no prior assumptions were made as to what constitutes an essential service for any one person.

The main focus of the data collection was on the experiences of individuals from a range of sections. However, there was also a secondary focus on the views of community and voluntary sector organisations working with specific groups across the community, since they have a particularly intimate knowledge of what are likely to be the important issues for those whom they represent. The information sought relates to a wide range of issues including the following:

- the definition of essential services;
- the experience of attempting to access services;
- difficulties experienced in making contact with providers;
- the identification of physical, social, economic and cultural barriers to service provision, and suggestions about how these can be removed;
- analysis of the major problems involved in ensuring equal access and outcome, and how these can be removed or ameliorated.

### ***Elements***

The research methods used in the study were chosen to allow a broad spread of both individual and group participation, and to reflect a wide range of views, opinions and perceptions. The main elements of the study were as follows:

- desk research involving the identification and examination of background and contextual matters, using policy documents, previous researches, parallel studies;
- setting up a large number of focus groups, structured according to a range of relevant variables;
- the collection of data within focus groups;
- selecting key informants from a range of relevant and informed voluntary and community groups;
- the collection of data from these key informant interviews;
- the analysis of all collected data;
- writing reports.

### ***Focus Groups and Interviews***

Interviews and Focus groups were used as the tool for identifying and establishing the views, experiences and suggestions of a range of individuals and groups. Focus groups are especially apposite in this work, because they diminish the pressure, sense of isolation, and perceived vulnerability of individualised data-gathering, and allow ideas to be generated and expressed through reaction and response to other views. They therefore generate their own unique stream of discussion and interaction, can bring to life ideas not fully articulated before, and can uncover individual perceptions of experience previously hidden.

**Composition and Organisation of Focus Groups**

Study respondents were almost equally divided by gender, 49 percent respondents were male, while the other 51 percent respondents were female (Table 1). About 56 percent of respondents were unmarried while data was collected. About 40 percent were married while 4 percent of the respondents were either widowed, divorced or separated (Table 2).

Among the all respondents, 34 percent male and 35 percent female were literate. Although, about 24 percent respondents were illiterate, about 13 percent were functionally literate, meaning they can sign their names, read and write a short sentence and can count what is required at their day to day living. About 37 percent completed primary education. Only 5 respondents had education up to SSC or higher level up to graduation (Table 3).

**Table 1 Gender Distribution**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>percent distribution</b>
Male	49
Female	51
Male (Literate)	34
Female (Literate)	35

**Table 2 Marital Status**

<b>Marital Status</b>	<b>percent distribution</b>
Married	40
Unmarried	56
Separated	2
Widow	1
Divorced	1

**Table 3 Academic Qualification**

<b>Academic Qualification</b>	<b>percent distribution</b>
Illiterate	24
Can sign	13
Primary	37
Secondary	14
S.S.C	2
H.S.C	1
Graduation	2

**Table 4 Respondents' Profession**

<b>Profession</b>	<b>% distribution</b>
Day-Labour	5
Business/Self-Employed	6
Maid-Servant	10
Service (Govt,Org. etc)	6
Skilled -Labour	4
Shop-Keeper	2
Garment-Labour	2
Unemployed	4
Fisherman	1
Others	14
Student/Child/Retired	46

In terms of main profession, respondents had a wide variety of professions ranging from day-labour, business/self-employed, maid-servant, service, skilled -labour, shop-keeper, garment-labour, unemployed, fisherman etc. (Table 4).

Within the all respondents, about 12 percent lived in building, among which 7 percent were the owner of the house while other 5 percent respondents were tenants. A large number of respondents lived either in semi-*pucca* building or in mud huts. Most of the respondents lived in rented houses (Table 5).

**Table 5 Respondents Residence Type**

<b>Types</b>	<b>Owner (%)</b>	<b>Rent (%)</b>	<b>Others (%)</b>
Building	7	5	
Semi-Building	6	26	5
Hut (mud)	13	27	4
Thatched house	3	5	

### ***Gathering, Analysing and Reporting the Data***

The data from the focus groups and the face-to-face interviews were initially in the form of answer sheets, transcripts and moderator notes. These were analysed using *two* distinct methods – (a) computation through spreadsheet using statistical package and (b) content analysis.

In the *content analysis*, the material was screened for key statements and phrases, which were then extracted and coded. Statements and phrases were categorised taking account of the headings under which discussions in the focus groups were conducted. They also allowed for the creation of new response categories suggested by the data itself.

The volume of data provided by the focus groups and individual interviews was very extensive, and considerable thought had to be given to presenting findings in a way that would not only reflect the wealth of detail available, but would also provide a clear structure. The two approaches considered were: first, *reporting in terms of the data of individuals about specific services* - such as cost barriers to access to universal free primary education; and, second, *reporting the inferences of experiences, understanding and concerns in coherent manner which is analytically resounding as well as builds linkages with the policy problematique*. Both approaches pose difficulties in terms of providing a coherent structure, yet it is hoped that it would allow us to reflect the range and complexity of the evidence.