

Evaluating the Performance of Municipality in Terms of Good Urban Governance (Case Study: District 1 and 3 of Zahedan City)

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Abstract

Good urban governance is one of the aspects of urban management that has recently caught the attention of western countries and societies. In fact, there are no other options for management and administration of cities except for paving the way for the development of democracy. In this regard, a new form of governance called good urban governance has been found. Therefore, the objective of the present study was to evaluate the performance of urban management using the approach of good urban governance in Zahedan city. To achieve this, the present study was conducted using analytical-descriptive and field-survey methods. Furthermore, the study population of this research included district 1 and 2 residents of Zahedan city. 200 of them were selected using Cochran's method and questionnaires were distributed among them using simple random method. In order to evaluate urban management in the studied regions, five good urban governance indicators including transparency, participation, accountability, lawfulness, and effectiveness were used. The results of Mann-Whitney test indicated the better condition of district 1 in two aspects of accountability and lawfulness compared to district 3. In addition, t-test results showed that the aspect of effectiveness has the best condition with a mean of 3.21 and the aspect of participation has an unfavorable condition compared to other aspects with a mean of 2.58.

Keywords: Zahedan city, urban management, good urban governance

1. Introduction

The extent and complexity of urban issues and the ever increasing development and growth of cities have made urban management a difficult task. In addition to issues such as environment, transportation, urban planning and safety, urban management is another factor that has an increasing and determinative impact on urban constructive factors. If we consider city as similar to an organization, it is necessary to set an element on top of it for future planning and administration of current affairs. This element could be called urban management (Sarraf & Abdullahi, 2008, p. 121). In fact, the most important objective of urban management is enhancing living and working conditions of residents in the form of different social and economic groups, protecting civil rights, encouraging sustainable economic and social development, and protecting physical environment (Saeidnia, 2000, p. 46). The foundation of urban management includes taking an active role for development, management and coordination of resources in order to achieve urban development objectives (Saeidi, Encyclopedia of Urban and Rural Management, 707). This comprehensive look at development indicates the necessity of considering urban management more than ever. On the other hand and with the introduction of good urban governance approach in urban management during the last decade, the effectiveness of all components that affect urban management along with all mechanisms that move towards the excellence of cities and citizens have been seriously emphasized (Shahidi, 2007, p. 46). Good urban governance is like different methods through which people, organizations, and public and private sectors perform management and planning activities for urban common affairs (Vansant, 2001, p. 5).

Many variables impact the performance of urban management in developed countries, explaining all of which is a very hard and perhaps impossible task. But among them, some indicators that include good urban governance properly reflect urban management. Some of these indicators are participation, transparency, accountability, and effectiveness. This was an analytical-descriptive and field-survey study with the objective of evaluating the performance of urban management using good urban governance approach and its indicators in the city of

Zahedan. The above mentioned five indicators were used in this regard.

2. Theoretical Principles

World population was doubled during 1996-2000 and reached 6 billion. For dealing with issues related to this trend, two major approaches are proposed: Reducing population pressure or improving urban management (Saeidi, p. 707). Urban management is a multilateral and strategic process that can reduce the amount of population problems especially in urban areas. Nowadays, it is related to welfare of all citizens and it should prepare the necessary conditions for providing proper housing, clean water, urban health, education and occupation, nutrition, security, and leisure to citizens. Since municipality is a civil and public organization and it is responsible for urban administration and management, urban management is somewhat the reflection of local governance (Latifi, 2007, p. 27).

The most important objective of urban management is enhancing living and working conditions of residents in the form of different social and economic groups, protecting civil rights, encouraging sustainable economic and social development, and protecting physical environment (Taghvaei, 2009, p. 26). In fact, the current global urban management has a large structure and plays the most important role in the success of all plans and programs of urban development. It is also responsible for meeting population needs, traffic flow in the city, public welfare, housing, land use, recreation, culture, economy, infrastructures and so on (Shei, 2003, p. 38). Good urban governance is one of the aspects of urban management that has recently caught the attention of western countries and societies. In fact, there are no other options for management and administration of cities except for paving the way for the development of democracy. In this regard, a new form of governance called good urban governance has been found (Safaeipour et al., 2013, p. 115).

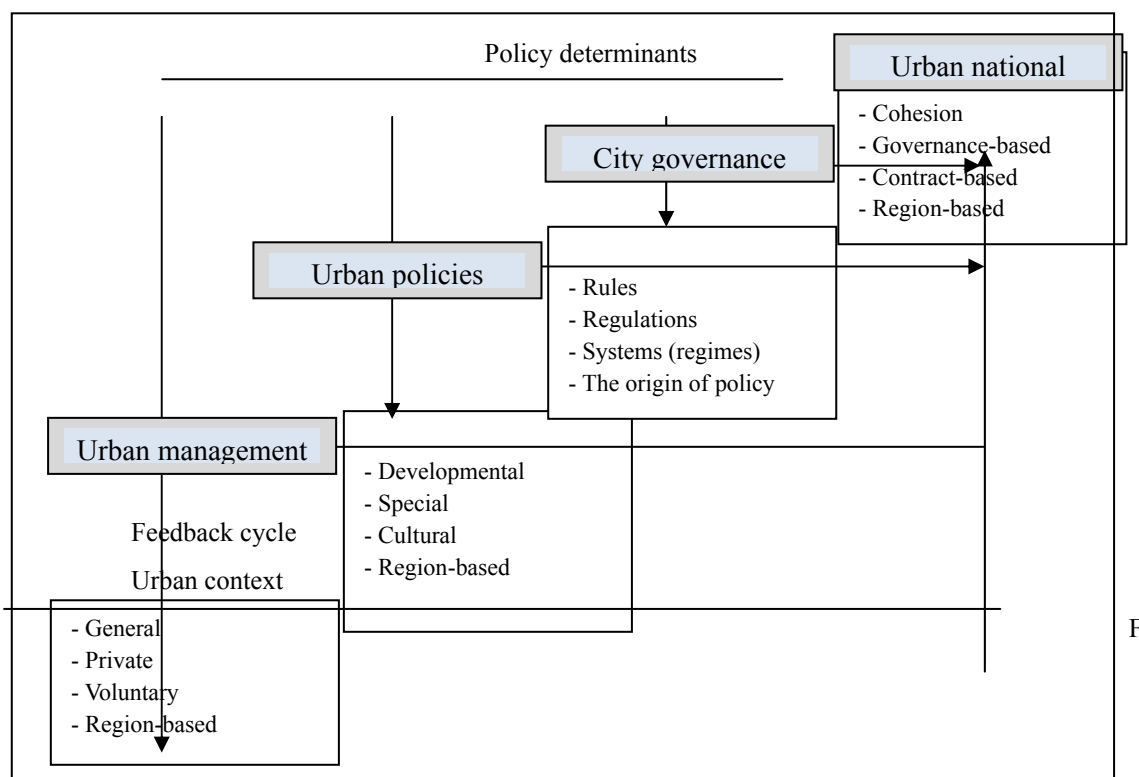


Figure 1. Governance framework and good urban governance (source: Alvani, 2012, p. 47).

Although the concept of urban governance was first started in Africa and during late 80s, Brian Mcline was the first theorist that dealt with this concept (Zibaei, 2008, p. 2). Based on principles of citizenship, good urban governance emphasizes the fact that no citizen should be deprived of access to urban essentials such as adequate shelter, job security, health, and proper environment utilization (Salehi, 2013, p. 47). Furthermore, three regimes namely government, civil society, and private sector cooperate with each other. The formation of consensus and cooperation among these regimes and the act of coalition are presented in Figure 2 (Adinevand, 2013, p. 49).

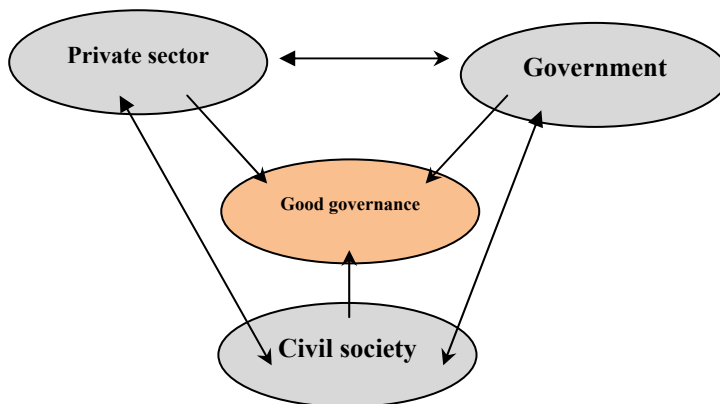


Figure 2. Good governance essentials (source: Gholipour, 2008, p. 116).

According to the ecosystem definition of United Nations, urban governance includes whole methods of urban planning and general management from people, public and private sectors. It is also a continuous process by which contradictory or conflicting interests are synchronized with each other and the conditions for cooperation and interactions are prepared. According to this definition, urban governance consists of both formal institutions and informal measures and social capital of citizens (UN-HABITAT, 2006).

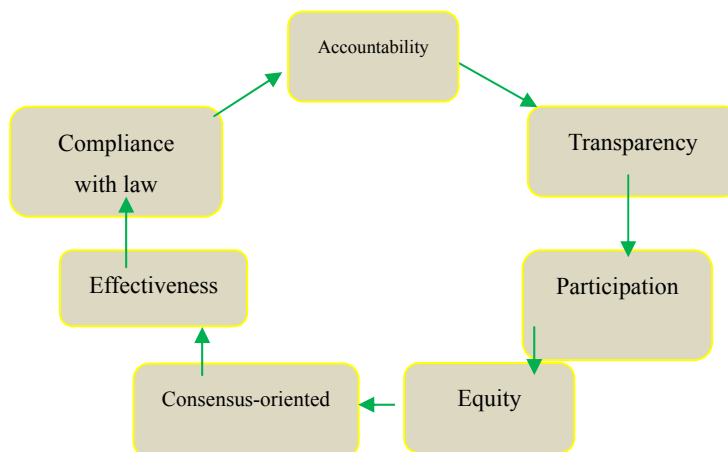


Figure 3. Characteristics of good urban governance (Tirband, 2012, p. 145)

3. Research Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Methodology and Indicators

This was an analytical-descriptive and field-survey study. At first, organized studies were carried out for gathering literature and theoretical principles using library method. In the field study step, data were collected using study required tools (researcher made questionnaire). The studied population consisted of district 1 and 3 residents of Zahedan city. 200 of them were selected using Cochran's method and questionnaires were distributed among them using simple random method. The validity of research tools (researcher made questionnaire) indicated a confidence level of 75% by calculating Cronbach's alpha. Collected data were analyzed using the required tests and statistical methods in SPSS software environment. As mentioned earlier, many indicators could be used for evaluating good urban governance in urban management. Due to the extent of the issue, five indicators of transparency, participation, lawfulness, accountability, and effectiveness were used. Each of these indicators have components themselves that are presented in more details in Table 1.

Table 1. The indicators for evaluating good urban governance and the value of Cronbach's alpha

Criterion	Component	Alpha value
Participation	Preparing urban plans	75%
	Knowing the preparation process of urban plans	
	In urban affairs	
Transparency	Preparing the conditions for public participation	70%
	Transparent operation of municipality	
	Availability of urban regulations	
	Transparent use of funds	
Lawfulness	Publication of reports	80%
	Lawful behavior of citizens	
	Equity of all social groups	
	Explicitness of law	
Accountability	Respecting the law in all aspects	75%
	Convenience in meeting with urban administrators	
	Accountability of municipality to public complaints	
Effectiveness	Effectiveness of people referring to municipality	70%
	Effectiveness of urban plans	
	Effectiveness of services	
	Effectiveness of budget utilization	
	Effectiveness of public referrals	

Source: Research findings, 2015

3.2 Introduction of Study Area

Zahedan is the provincial capital of Sistan and Baluchestan in southeast of Iran and is located near the border of Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan .

This city is the center of Zahedan province and is bordered by Afghanistan from northeast, Khorasan province from northwest, Kerman province from west, Iranshahr county from southwest, Pakistan from east, and Khash county from southeast (Figure 4.3). The area of Zahedan County is 36581 square kilometers and it is geographically located at longitude of 60° 51'25"E and latitude of 29° 30'45"N. Its height above sea level is 1378 meters

4. Results and Discussion

As discussed earlier, decuple indicators are used to evaluate good urban governance. In this study and due to lack of access to complete information of some criteria, five indicators including participation, transparency, lawfulness, accountability, and effectiveness were used. At first, nonparametric Mann-Whitney test was used for comparing optimal urban governance with the approach of good urban governance. Afterwards, t-test was used in SPSS for evaluating quintuplet criteria.

Information provided in Table 3 present the significant difference between some criteria up to the level of 1%. Regarding other criteria, there was no difference between district 1 and 3 of Zahedan in good urban governance. As it can be seen, the level of lawfulness had a significant difference up to 1%. The resulted means showed that lawfulness level is higher in municipality of district 1 (with a mean of 2.70) and lower in district 3 (with a mean of 2.58).

In relation to accountability indicators, significant difference was resulted up to 1%. In this case, the mean for district 1 (with a mean of 3.04) was also higher than district 3 (with a mean of 2.97). No significant difference was resulted for other components. In fact, there were not much difference between district 1 and 3 regarding indicators of participation, transparency, and effectiveness.

Table 3. Comparing mean criteria for good urban governance using Mann-Whitney test

Criterion	Groups	Sample size	Mean rank	Mann-Whitney coefficient	Significance coefficient
Participation	District 1	96	2.59	3.5637	.349NS
	District 3	104	2.56		
Transparency	District 1	96	2.59	8.4879	.128NS
	District 3	104	2.64		
Lawfulness	District 1	96	2.70	7.2389	**.000
	District 3	104	2.58		
Accountability	District 1	96	3.04	9.3412	**.000
	District 3	104	2.97		
Effectiveness	District 1	96	3.23	7.5893	.756NS
	District 3	104	3.19		

** 1% significance NS non-significant

Source: Research findings, 2015

Five scale Likert scale was used in order to evaluate optimal level of urban management using good urban governance approach. For this purpose, the number 3 was selected as the optimal level and then the mean differences resulted from quintuplet criteria demonstrated the desirability level of urban management.

Table 4. Evaluation of mean indicators of good urban governance

Index	Structure	Mean	Variance	Rank
Participation	Preparing urban plans	2.510	1.4768	4
	Knowing the preparation process of urban plans	2.635	0.2345	2
	In urban affairs	2.650	2.4568	1
	Preparing the conditions for public participation	2.540	1.8347	3
Transparency	Transparent operation of municipality	2.715	3.3456	1
	Availability of urban regulations	2.575	0.8798	3
	Transparent use of funds	2.600	2.4568	2
	Publication of reports	2.570	0.3457	4
Lawfulness	Lawful behavior of citizens	2.580	0.4569	4
	Equity of all social groups	2.675	0.2845	3
	Explicitness of law	2.690	1.4987	1
	Respecting the law in all aspects	2.620	0.3487	2
Accountability	Convenience in meeting with urban administrators	2.575	1.5687	2
	Accountability of municipality to public complaints	2.270	0.1239	3
	Effectiveness of people referring to municipality	3.180	1.4538	1
Effectiveness	Effectiveness of urban plans	3.170	1.6734	4
	Effectiveness of services	3.285	0.4670	1
	Effectiveness of budget utilization	3.190	0.3457	3
	Effectiveness of public referrals	3.215	1.4876	2

Source: Research findings, 2015

In the aspect of participation and according to information provided in Table 4, the component of participation in

urban affairs had higher mean compared to other components (with a mean of 2.65). In addition, the component of participation in preparing urban plans had unfavorable condition (with a mean of 2.51). Regarding the aspect of transparency, components of transparent operation of municipality with a mean of 2.715 and transparent use of funds with a mean of 2.60, had better condition compared to other components. Regarding lawfulness it should be said that the component of explicitness of law had the most optimal condition with a mean of 2.69. The component of lawful behavior of urban management with a mean of 2.58 had the worst condition in terms of good urban governance. In the aspect of accountability, the component of effectiveness of public referrals to urban managers with a mean of 3.18 had a better condition compared to other components. Ultimately and in the aspect of effectiveness, the component of effectiveness of urban services had an optimal condition with a mean of 3.28. Overall, the resulted means were lower than the optimal level (i.e. the number of 3), which indicates lack of good urban governance in district 1 and 3 of Zahedan. Only the aspect of effectiveness had means higher than the optimal level (i.e. the number of 3). In fact and from the aspect of good urban governance, urban management had optimal condition in terms of indicators related to effectiveness of urban management plans.

Table 5. Significant difference of available capacities based on difference from the optimal level using t-test

Components	Mean	T-test statistics	Degree of freedom	Significance level	Difference from optimal level
Participation	2.58	-346/8	160	**0.000	770/0
Transparency	2.61	346/6	160	**0.000	416/1
Lawfulness	2.64	-657/3	160	**0.000	180/0
Accountability	3.01	-567/12	160	**0.000	34/0
Effectiveness	3.21	-786/8	160	**0.000	34/0
Numerical desirability of capacity:			3		
** Significance in the level of 1%					

Source: Research findings, 2015

According to the information provided in Table 5 and the obtained means from t-test statistics, the aspect of effectiveness had the most optimal condition with a mean of 3.21. The aspect of participation had the worst condition with a mean of 2.58 in terms of good urban governance. In fact, aspect of effectiveness had a better condition compared to other aspects. Ultimately and after accurate studies, it was determined that Zahedan citizens had unfavorable condition in terms of participation in urban management.

5. Conclusion

If we consider city as similar to an organization, it is necessary to set an element on top of it for future planning and administration of current affairs. This element could be called urban management. The most important objective of urban management is enhancing living and working conditions of residents in the form of different social and economic groups, protecting civil rights, encouraging sustainable economic and social development, and protecting physical environment. Urban management is a multilateral and strategic process that can reduce the amount of population problems especially in urban areas. Nowadays, it is related to welfare of all citizens and it should prepare the necessary conditions for providing proper housing, clean water, urban health, education and occupation, nutrition, security, and leisure to citizens. Since municipality is a civil and public organization and it is responsible for urban administration and management, urban management is somewhat the reflection of local governance. Good urban governance is one of the aspects of urban management that has recently caught the attention of western countries and societies. In fact, there are no other options for management and administration of cities except for paving the way for the development of democracy. In this regard, a new form of governance called good urban governance has been found.

The objective of the present study was to evaluate the performance of urban management using the approach of good urban governance in Zahedan region which was carried out with analytical descriptive and survey methods. The studied population consisted of district 1 and 3 residents of Zahedan city. 200 of them were selected using Cochran's method (96 subjects from district 1 and 104 subjects from district 2) and questionnaires were distributed among them using simple random method. Indicators of good urban governance were studied in five

aspects of transparency, participation, lawfulness, accountability, and effectiveness. After investigations that were performed using Mann-Whitney test, it was determined that district 1 had a better condition compared to district 2 in two aspects of accountability and lawfulness. In addition, application of t-test demonstrated that the aspect of effectiveness has the best condition with a mean of 3.21 and the aspect of participation with a mean of 2.58 has an unfavorable condition compared to other aspects.

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