



## Working of Local Governments in Pakistan: A Case Study of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation 2013

**Samia Jamshed**

Lecturer, University of Home Economics, PhD Scholar , University of Punjab

Email: samiajamshed11@gmail.com

### Abstract

*Local Governments are an essential tier for a successful, stable as well as continuous democracy in a country. Pakistan since independence has a very grumpy record of local governments with an opposite style of working under authoritative governments. Being a basic essence of democracy, Local Government is the most ignored subject while discussing achievements and failures of democracy in the country. The fact that local government have only been active in the country under military regimes made the subject undaunted for the elected governments which lost its actual importance and need to be enforced. The year 2010 brought a major change for the local governments and it was made compulsion for the provincial governments to conduct elections and form local governments after the 18<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendment was passed. The amendment proved to be a ray of hope for the subject of local government, as many powers from central level were transferred to provincial governments. Moreover, the local governments were said to be provided with administrative, political as well as financial authority so that the working would be practicable. The study is conducted to examine the performance of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation formed under Punjab Local Government Act 2013. Lahore was entitled to be only Metropolitan Corporation with on other local government working within it. The working of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation has been observed by performance, responsibilities and functions assigned to the local government and their relationship with the administration and impact on the performance. The Punjab Government has introduced new act by the name of Punjab Local Government Act 2024 after the general elections under which the Metropolitan Corporation as well as district councils has been abolished which requires to study in depth what positive outcomes this structure has brought under previous act of 2013.*

**Key words:** Lahore, Metropolitan Corporation, Local Government, Punjab, municipal services

## Introduction

Lahore as being provincial capital of Punjab has experienced major wave of urbanization for past many years. Urbanization brings more challenges to the countries like Pakistan on one hand but on the other it also creates new opportunities for the development. However, the most affected area due to this urbanization is the governance at local level as it directly affects the masses. The poor governance system and inconsistent local government is biggest a major contributor to poor urban development in Pakistan which results in delayed municipal service delivery (Murtaza Haider and Madhav G. Badami, 2010).

The absence of local government system remains one of the major reasons of poor governance in the country whereas every new elected government aims to bring solution to overcome it. The year 2013 also brought a revival fate in the history of local government in Pakistan as the new elected governments were asked to prepare a local government plan by Supreme Court of Pakistan after the general elections. The Punjab Local Government Act 2013 was passed on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2013 by provincial assembly of Punjab (Amjad Abbas Khan & Samia Jamshed, 2019), the act came up with a new and different status for the provincial capital Lahore as it was entitled to be the only Metropolitan Corporation in the province.

*Metropolitan areas correspond to a spatial formation characterized by the advance of urbanization and concentration of population in cities. They share economic dynamics and thus infrastructure, services, housing, industries and labor force and fulfill an important role regarding the provision of employment and service. (Arturo Orellana & Luis Fuentes, 2019)*

The idea of the metropolitan corporation was to address the issues of big city more effectively and in an efficient manner. The results and performance of Lahore as Metropolitan Corporation was not much achievable due to discontinuous system of power sharing, elections and transfer of funds.

## Composition of Metropolitan Corporation

The Metropolitan Corporation Lahore consisted of Mayors, Deputy Mayors, District members (Chairmen of Union Councils), and other members that were selected on the reserved seats.

Composition of Metropolitan Corporation	
Members	Mode of Election
Mayor & Deputy Mayor or Deputy Mayor as Joint Candidates	Indirect
Chairmen union councils (as general members)	Direct
Twenty five women members	Indirect
Five worker members	Indirect
Three technocrat members	Indirect
Two youth members	Indirect
Ten persons from minority	Indirect

\*Source: Punjab Local Government Act 2013

### Functions of Metropolitan Corporation:

The functions assigned to Metropolitan Corporation under Punjab Local Government Act 2013 few are enlisted here:

- housing, markets, zoning, environment, roads, traffic, tax, infrastructure and public utilities
- proposals for public transport and mass transit systems, construction of express ways, fly-overs, bridges, roads, under passes, and inter-town streets
- Approve development schemes for beautification of urban areas
- Develop integrated system of water reservoirs, water sources, treatment plants, drainage, liquid and solid waste disposal, sanitation and other municipal services
- Execute and manage development plans
- Enforce all municipal laws
- Prevent and remove encroachments
- Regulate affixing of sign-boards and advertisements
- Provide, manage, operate, maintain and improve the municipal infrastructure and services. (*Punjab Local Government Act 2013*)

### Elections of Local Government:

The Punjab Local government act was passed on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2013 by provincial assembly of Punjab (Dr. Amjad Abbas Khan & Samia Jamshed , 2019) whereas enacted in September 2013 however the elections were delayed due to certain political reasons, challenges and legal warnings (Punjab Local Government Election Phase-I FAFEN Preliminary Observation Report, 2015). The local government elections were held between October and December in 2015 into three phases, on October 31, 2015, November 19, 2015 and December 5, 2015 (“*Comparative Analysis of Local Government Laws in Pakistan* , 2019).

### Oath taking of Lahore Mayor and Deputy Mayors:

The elected mayor and deputy mayors of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation took oath on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016. Retired Col Mubashir Javed was the Mayor of Lahore whereas the nine deputy mayors of Lahore were: Chaudhry Bilal, Rao Shahabud Din, Waseem Qadir, Ijaz Ahmed Hafeez, Sawati Khan, Haji Allah Rakha, Mehr Mahmood Ahmad, Arshad Ahmad Hafeez and Mian Tariq (<https://www.dawn.com/news/1305702>)

### Working of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation:

The working of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation under the elected local government was abolished soon after the 2018 general elections held and new government decided to introduce

its own plan in May 2019. Later on the Supreme Court of Pakistan ordered to restore the elected local bodies elected under Punjab Local Government Act 2013. The local bodies once again restored on their charges in October 2021 for a period of two months only as their tenure was to be completed on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

(<https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2021/12/27/the-enigma-of-local-governments-in-pakistan/>)

The following legislation of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation focused in this research is comprised of two assembly session 13-11-2021 and 29-11-2021 when the elected members met for the session conducted at Jinnah Hall (Town Hall) Lahore under the supervision of Senior Deputy Mayor, Mr Nazir Ahmed Khan Sawati. The Chairmen, Deputy Mayors and district members presented resolutions, discussed the issues faced by the masses of their constituencies and were given possible solutions which are explained in the following tables in detail:

**Issues Raised by Chairmen of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation** (Minutes of Meeting, Lahore Metropolitan Corporation ,2021 ):

Sr. No.	Issue Raised	Chairmen	Union Council No. & Name	Decision
01	Challan imposed by Price Control Magistrate against poor worker and action on it	Mr. Shams Baig	69, Sir Ganga Ram	Unanimously Approved
02	i- Complaint against Price Control Magistrate and action against fine imposed on shop keepers  ii- Precautionary Measures for dengue	Mr. Rashid Karamat Butt	182, Dogran Kallan	Should be addressed to Commissioner Lahore Division. Both decisions were unanimously approved.
03	Vacant Seat of Sport's Officer MCL and Limited Extra Curricular Activities regarding Sports. Upgrading of Scale of Assistant Sports Officer to from BS-12 to BS-16	Mr. Ameer Gujjar	81, G.O.R. 1	Unanimously Approved. Director Admin MCL should take action accordingly.
04	i- Request to Ban on High Rise Buildings and Commercialization of Gulberg Area and NOC on it.  ii- Maintenance of Street	Mr. Irshad Ahmed Khan	202, Gulberg-III	Unanimously Approved. Should be forwarded to LDA

	Lights, Dengue Spray in Public Parks, Schools, Mosques			
05	Request for Dengue Prevention Sprays in Union Councils. Developmental Work, Patchwork, Street Lights, Cleanliness and Gutter Manhole must be restructured	Mr. Ch. Muhammad Tariq	92, Union Park, Samnabad	Unanimously Approved
06	<p>i- Khatam-e-Nabuwat content must not be omitted from the school curriculum</p> <p>ii- Electricity work and equipment relevant to it must be handed over to local representatives.</p> <p>iii- Renovation of Schools and Updated furniture in schools</p> <p>iii- Payments to works of MCL who are posted at UC level, as UC do not have active accounts and cheque books to issue pays.</p> <p>iv- Disrespect of Muhammad Ali Jinnah's picture printed on fake notes. it should be printed without his picture</p>	Mr. Ch. Muhammad Younis	86,	<p>Should be forwarded to District Education Authority</p> <p>All raised issues were approved unanimously</p>
07	<p>i- Allocated funds of 2019 must be transferred and developmental work must be done against the approved schemes</p> <p>ii- according to WASA UC 71, 50, 48 &amp; 93 doesn't come under their jurisdiction so they denied to work there</p> <p>iii- Road Blockage in UC</p>	Mr. Malik Muhammad Zeeshan	93,	<p>i- Unanimously Approved MO (I) must take required action.</p> <p>ii- Unanimously Approved. MD WASA must be reported on this</p> <p>Iii-Unanimously Approved.</p> <p>Should be</p>

	93 Shaheen Abad and request to Chief Traffic Officer to recover it			forwarded to Chief Traffic Officer
08	i- Request to conduct operation against encroachments ii-Maintenance of road outside gynae hospital	Mr. Haji Naveed Ahmed	193, Muslim Abad	Unanimously Approved.
09	i-Urgent need of patchwork and speed breakers to control over speeding ii-Sewerage Issues must be resolved	Mr. Mian Jawad Samad	17, Farooq Ganj	Unanimously Approved.
10	i- Urgent need to patchwork ii- specification of two road unnamed roads to “Haji Ghulam Nabi road” and “Mayo road”	Mr. Ch. Ghiyas-un-Nabi Mayo	196, Jahman	i-Unanimously Approved MO (I) must take required action.  ii-Unanimously Approved, Chief PRO, MCL must take action according to Roads Street Naming Rules 1981
11	Resolution to upgrade Sub Engineers, Ex-TMA/CDGL cadre BS-14 to Senior Sub-Engineer BS-16	Mr. Kahlid Mehmood Numberdaar	5, Chah Chamby wala, Shahdra	Unanimously Approved, Director Admin MCL must take action accordingly
12	Increase in divorce cases, divorce fee certificate must be taken from boy’s family instead of girl.	Mr. Javed Iqbal Khan	26, Ikram Park	Unanimously Approved.
13	Modification authorities must be given to UC Chairmen to issues Birth, Death, Divorce Certificate to make things quick and on time	Mr. Ishtiaq Gull	245, Dilo Kalan and Khurd	Unanimously Approved. Should be forwarded to Director Local Government

				Lahore
14	i- Change of Taj Mahal Park road name to Shiekh karam Ilahi road to honour the services of Shiekh karam Ilahi trust ii- Award must be given to members attended the sessions of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation.	Mr. Mian Muhammad Rashid	143, Salamat pura	Chief PRO, MCL must take action according to Roads Street Naming Rules 1981 Both issues approved unanimously.
15	No proper registration process and slips to maintain record at Ichra graveyard	Mr. Ali Anees Ch.	84, Ichra	Unanimously Approved

**Issues Raised by Senior Deputy Mayor Mr. Nazir Ahmed Khan Sawati , Lahore Metropolitan Corporation** (Minutes of Meeting, Lahore Metropolitan Corporation ,2021) :

Sr. No	Issues	Decision
01	Request forwarded by resident of Upper Mall Scheme to upgrade an unknown road after his son's name " Captain Affan Masood Khan Shaheed Road"	Unanimously approved. Chief PRO, MCL must take action according to Roads Street Naming Rules 1981
02	Resolution for granting Risk Allowance , upgradation and back service to MCL employees from appointment	Unanimously approved. Director Admin to take action accordingly
03	Resolution to name an unnamed road after Dr. Jamil Jalibi (renowned scholar, linguist, critic, writer and expert in Urdu literature)	Unanimously approved. Chief PRO, MCL must take action according to Roads Street Naming Rules 1981
04	Proposal to authorize Mayor of Lahore to change, amend, cancel and approve new development schemes for public welfare	Unanimously approved.

### Issues Raised by Deputy Mayors of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation ((Minutes of Meeting, Lahore Metropolitan Corporation ,2021) ) :

Sr. No	Issues Raised	Deputy Mayor	Zone	Decision
01	Maintenance of street lights and permission to grant funds (estimated 20 lakhs per zone) for smooth working	Mr. Ijaz Hafeez	Gulberg	Unanimously Approved. MO (I) should take action as per rules.
02	<p>i- Request to provide access to all zones of MCL to issue 10 Marla house plans instead of 5 Marla for ease of public</p> <p>ii- Increase in payments of MCL electricians and helpers in comparison of other zones</p> <p>iii- request to complete required gang men in town</p> <p>iv- increase budget for cleanliness, street light, manholes etc</p>	Mr.Mian Muhammad Tariq	Samanabad	All raised issues were approved unanimously.

### Issues Raised by District Members (male members) of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation ((Minutes of Meeting, Lahore Metropolitan Corporation ,2021):

Sr. No.	Issue Raised	Name of District Member	Decision
01	<p>i-Correction in reference given in Class 3, Islamiat Book</p> <p>ii- Resumption of</p>	Ch. Riaz Akhtar (Advocate)	<p>i-Unanimously Approved, Should be addressed to Punjab Text Book</p> <p>ii- Unanimously Approved, Should be</p>



	<p>iii- Retired employees must be given pension and their insurance groups must be paid</p> <p>iv- Protection of Walled City of Lahore and removal of encroachments, posters, telephone and electricity poles etc</p> <p>v-Request to evacuate toll plazas, stands, dispensaries, slaughterhouses, petrol pumps etc from Land mafia</p>		<p>addressed to Commissioner Lahore Division</p> <p>iii- Unanimously Approved, MO (Finance) MCL should take necessary action as per rules</p> <p>iv- Unanimously Approved, Should be addressed to Director General Walled City Authority Lahore</p> <p>v- Unanimously Approved, MO ( R ), MCL should take action as per rules</p>
--	---	--	---

Source:

### Issues Raised by District Members (female members) of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation<sup>1</sup>:

Sr. No.	Issue Raised	Name of District Member	Decision
01	Request for cleanliness of garbage drains outside graveyard	Ms. Ghazala Nusrat	Unanimously Approved. Should be forwarded to LWMC
02	Budget Allocation for Women. Provision of funds to women district members for welfare of public	Ms. Imrana Ikram	Endorsed by Ms Rakhshanda Arooj (District Member)
03	Request to address these : i- Urgent need of hospital ii- Clean water iii- playground for kids is used to dispose garbage for 50 years	Ms. Tahira Aziz	Unanimously Approved
04	Request to take action to Clean Lahore	Ms. Hameeda Parveen	Unanimously Approved
05	Request for Street Lights and Cleanliness of the streets	Ms. Fozia Safdar	Unanimously Approved
06	Request to clean garbage over Data Darbar and Bhatti Metro Station	Ms. Mumtaz Raees	Unanimously Approved

	specialy stairs		
07	Overlooking of Smog and Suffocation , sewerage issues specially in Na-133	Ms. Naseem Bano	Unanimously Approved
08	Provision of funds to district members as they are public representatives	Ms. Samra Nazeer	Unanimously Approved

**Issues Raised by District Members (minority) of Lahore Metropolitan Corporation**  
(Minutes of Meeting, Lahore Metropolitan Corporation ,2021) :

Sr. No.	Issues Raised	Member Name	Decision
01	Request for : i- Dengue Prevention Sprays ii- Ration bags for needy Christians on occasion of Christmas	Mr. Sarfaraz	Unanimously Approved
02	i-Request to issue order for sanitary workers to wear masks and other safety kits while cleaning manholes and gutters  ii- request to regularize work charge employees working for 10 years	Mr Suneel Gulzar, Rafaqat Sahutra Aslam Masih Gull  Mr. Syed Hussain Haider Kazmi presented by Mr Suneel Gulzar	i- Unanimously Approved  ii- Unanimously Approved. Director Admin MCL should take necessary action.

The Chairmen of several Union Councils stated that no development work is being done in their areas. The roads specifically need to be rebuilt as people are facing problems. The departments like Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) and Lahore Development Authority (LDA), Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) has been transferred from districts to provinces which indicate more power to provinces (Dr. Amjad Abbas Khan & Samia Jamshed , 2019) The chairmen insisted that these companies should be bound to include elected representatives of the concerned union council while taking any action or decision (Minutes of Meeting, Lahore Metropolitan Corporation , 2021)

The residual functions and powers of local bodies have also been transferred to companies like Punjab Saaf Pani Company (PSPC), Punjab Cattle Market Management Company (PCMM) Punjab Health Facilities Management Company (PHFMC), Lahore Transport Company (LTC), Lahore Parking Company (LPC), and Solid Waste Management Companies (SWMC) etc which affects the performance of elected representatives and challenge their power and authority (Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad & Dr. Miraj Ul Haq , 2021)

The Mayor of Lahore Col. (Rtd.) Mubashir Javed also highlighted the need of provision of allocated grants to union councils. The union council accounts were restored and it was expected that Union Council will be given 25 thousand each (Minutes of Meeting, Lahore Metropolitan Corporation, 2021) Moreover, the sessions ended on a good note by emphasizing to seek solutions for relevant matters too.

### **Recommendations:**

- In order to devolve powers at local level strong coordination between the federal and provincial governments is essential.
- Financial independency at district level is required
- Administrative responsibilities must be dividend
- Awareness, knowledge and training of government officials
- Elections at local level should be on time.
- Masses should be aware and encouraged to participate in local affairs.

### **Conclusion**

Lahore Metropolitan Corporation tried best to work under the elected representatives despite facing challenges at social, political and economic level in such short span of time. The local representatives were not empowered financially and administratively as majority of the decisions were in control of provincial authorities (Awan, M. W., Syed, F. Z., Alvi, A. S., Jabeen, H., & Sajanka, A. D. H. 2023) There was no such economic decentralization and smooth transfer to allocated funds to the local government. Yet, the elected representatives highlighted the matter of concerns and used the platform to discuss the issues faced by people. The session minutes represent a true picture of healthy exchange to ideas and ways to find possible solutions to the local problems.

The issues faced by common man of Pakistan cannot be overcome until the responsible and active transition of power is at local level. After the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment 2010 the provinces have been much more authorized in terms of power however in order to have practical implementation of 18<sup>th</sup> amendment 2010 the powers must be devolved at local level too. The increasing urbanization towards Lahore city has expounded the issues like health, education, transport, residence, cleanliness, water availability, unemployment etc, It requires direction for future urban growth for the city and the people living in it. There is a dire need to install trust in local governments so that fortification of local institutions must be started at some point. It is time that the assembly members at provincial level accept the fact that local bodies must be given opportunities and assistance to function effectively.

---

## References

- Awan, M. W., Syed, F. Z., Alvi, A. S., & Jabeen, H. (2023). The enigma of local government system in Pakistan: A critical analysis of Punjab Local Government Ordinance 2021 (PLGO-2021). *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 7(2), 1002.
- Dawn. (2017, January 2). Local government dilemma. Retrieved from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1305702>
- FAFEN. (2015, November). Punjab Local Government Election Phase-I FAFEN Preliminary Observation Report.
- Haider, M., & Badami, M. G. (2010). Urbanization and local governance challenges in Pakistan. *Environment and Urbanization Asia*, 1(1), 81.
- Khan, A. A., & Jamshed, S. (2019). A holistic view of Local Governments Acts in Pakistan, Analysis of Punjab Local Government Plans 2001 & 2013. *Pakistan Vision*, 20(2), 131.
- Lahore Metropolitan Corporation. (2021, November). Minutes of meeting
- Orellana, A., & Fuentes, L. (2019). Metropolitan area, The Wiley-Blackwell encyclopedia of urban and regional studies. Wiley-Blackwell.
- Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency. (2019). Briefing paper: Comparative analysis of local government laws in Pakistan. *Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency*.
- PIDE School of Public Policy Pakistan Institute of Development Economics. (2021, June). Local governments and sustainable urban development; A case study of Punjab. *PIDE School of Public Policy Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, in collaboration with Higher Education Commission, Islamabad*.
- Punjab Local Government Act 2013.
- Pakistan Today. (2021, December 27). The enigma of local governments in Pakistan. Retrieved from <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2021/12/27/the-enigma-of-local-governments-in-pakistan/>