

# Role of Small Initiatives in Public Service Delivery: A New Concept of Citizens' Satisfaction in Bangladesh

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## Abstract

An enormous number of citizens are neglected in public service delivery in Bangladesh. Under this circumstance, some citizen-friendly field-level officers adopted small-scale work improvement in their office to satisfy citizens through their own initiatives. Citizens' satisfaction with the public service delivery is the key point of those initiatives. These are commonly known as small initiatives. Bangladeshi service providers are adopting TQM in their country's practice. Service receivers become happy and think that these initiatives may help to improve the public service delivery. Easy information flow, system reform in accordance with the citizens' needs and improvement of the working environment are among the signs of recognizing the citizens' problems in relation to the service delivery system. Small initiatives have multidimensional advantages for the citizens and provide a new concept for satisfying citizens' needs.

**Keywords:** Small Initiatives, Kaizen, TQM, Citizens' satisfaction

## 1. Introduction

In Bangladesh, the public sector provides a significant part of necessary services, such as health, education, land management, law and order. In most of the cases, citizens have no alternative options. The public sector is regulated by the old rules and regulations. These policies are outdated. Citizens are not happy to get these services in the traditional ways. In addition, the private sector is increasing their services with the top priority on citizens' satisfaction. So the public sector faces a considerable

challenge. Dissatisfaction decreases the level of confidence in public services, and it is a significant challenge to establish good governance in Bangladesh.

One of the reasons is that the current administrative laws are usually those introduced by the British 50 to 100 years ago. Bangladeshi civil servants commonly claim that “their system” follows “the British system”; such claims are made with pride and are to demonstrate the pedigree and quality of their civil services. They fail, however, to note that they are based on a British colonial model (rather than the British domestic model) and that, 50 years from now, modifications might well be desirable (Turner and Hulme, 1997). In comparison with the Singaporean and South Korean governments’ performance, the Bangladesh government’s performance is much poorer, especially regarding the cost, efficiency, and quality of services (World Bank 1996).

Studies by many individuals and different international donor agencies found that the public service delivery in Bangladesh was not up to the mark compare to the other country. For example, the public telecommunication system is one of the examples of poor service delivery in Bangladesh. About 49 faults were observed per 100 telephone lines per month. That is much higher than that of Indonesia (3 faults), Pakistan (9 faults), India (18 faults), and Sri Lanka (25 faults) (Hossain, 2000). A survey report of the World Bank (2002) refers, “less than 28% of the households are satisfied with the education system, 12% with the electricity service, 18% with the quality of health care, 20% with the transport services, 11% with the quality of drinking water, 17% with the quality of sanitation, 2% with the police services, 8% with the judicial service and 10% with the land services.” By any standard, this survey report indicates a very low level of satisfaction.

Traditionally policies are formulated by the top management without getting any feedback from the field-level officers. That is why people’s demands and opinions are not reflected in the formulated policies. In most cases, citizens’ satisfaction is overlooked. There is no guideline to collect data about the feelings of citizens about existing rules and regulations. Out of box thinking, doing something different, empathy for the service receiver and individual initiatives are always discouraged by the traditional bureaucracy. However, some innovative, need-based, low-cost small ideas and initiatives can improve the situation. Officers in their respective field can easily implement them by changing their traditional mentality. For example, establishing a

help desk to provide information and one-stop service delivery in the office compound, providing necessary information on a website can help to create equal opportunities for all citizens.

## 2. Basic Concepts

### 2.1 Small Initiative

In general, the synonyms of initiative are plan, scheme, project, and idea. The Oxford Dictionary defines “initiative” as “*The ability to assess and initiate things independently*” or “*An act or strategy intended to resolve a difficulty or improve a situation; a fresh approach to something.*” Moreover, obviously, the word “small” indicates all the things in “*little scale*” or “*operating on a modest scale.*” These are all literal meanings.

However, this study regards “small initiatives” as what is commonly known as “*kaizen*” or “TQM.” Basically, in the Bangladesh administrative practice, “small initiatives,” “small improvement” and “small change” are frequently interchangeably used. At the practice field-level, “innovation” is also known as a small initiative.

In Bangladesh, the Improving Public Service through TQM (IPS-TQM) project briefing paper in 2009 mentioned that “a unique feature of the TQM approach is *kaizen*.<sup>1)</sup>” *Kaizen* indicates continuous improvement. For achieving this continuous improvement, the way is a *small improvement*. Initially, it means work performed smartly with the help of a small official team (public officers). Tachiki (2010) described it that “this is a simple adaptation of Japanese style small group activities to fit the local Bangladeshi culture.”

Now the question is raised, why “*small*” not “*big*.” This is because the adoption process starting from the field-level public officials. The typical portfolio of those officers is lower level or entry-level officers. They are the implementer of the government policy in the field level. They have very few or no discretionary power and insufficient prescribed budget and resources. Moreover, the most important thing that they have no power of policy endorsement. This lower level of authority is not permitted to change many things at that level. Small-scale improvement is the only feasible way.

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1) Project for Enhancing Capacity of Public Service Training in Bangladesh (February 2009), Project Briefing Paper No. 1, Page No.-3 (<http://ipstqm.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/BriefingPaper1.pdf>) [Retrieved September 26, 2018]

During the implementation phase, the field-level officers think about the PDCA cycle. The differences or gap between before and after the implementation of small initiatives is analyzed and planned for the next improvement. Continuously these small-scale changes all over the country might create an opportunity for significant improvement or change. That is the philosophy of *kaizen* practice in Bangladesh. According to the JICA project paper “*This cycle is repeated—that is, returning to the plan phase—by addressing the next largest root cause of delays and bottlenecks until the desired goals is achieved. This step-by-step process of ‘continuous improvement’ is called kaizen.*”<sup>2)</sup> The field-level officers primarily think to improve their routine or day to day work by implementing small initiatives in their offices as a smart solution to the problem.

Some examples of the small initiatives in the field level may help to remove confusion regarding in this issue. Like, organized official documents according to the year, area, and serial number for quick short. In case of AC (Land) office, it was organized record room. Marking of an arsenic contaminated tubewell in red colour for safe drinking water; road divider for avoiding road accident. Setting arrangement for the citizens in the field-level public offices. Open budget meeting for the rural citizens to inform the actual government allocation and expenditures. Cleanliness and improvement of garbage management system in the rural hospital for improving health care system.

The last National Convention in 2016<sup>3)</sup> and Internation Convention in 2014<sup>4)</sup> of TQM was held in Dhaka. The Chief Representative of JICA in Bangladesh, Mr. Mikio Hataeda said in his speech about the ongoing activities in the field level, “*Each of these practices is indeed a small improvement, but they required neither big investment nor big reforms. They just needed dedicated public servants. The officials concerned are all respectable unsung heroes*”.

Tachiki (2010) observed the entire implementation process of TQM in Bangladesh

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2) Ibid.

3) JICA webpage (<https://www.jica.go.jp/bangladesh/english/office/topics/speech160125.html>) [Retrieved September 26, 2018]

4) JICA webpage (<https://www.jica.go.jp/bangladesh/english/office/topics/speech141218.html>) [Retrieved September 26, 2018]

and reviewed the existing practice in comparison to Japan and conventional TQM practice. Finally, he concluded that the present TQM practice in Bangladesh is: “*Bangladized version of TQM.*”

## 2.2 TQM Initiatives in Bangladesh

The different sectors of Bangladesh face an enormous challenge due to the lack of quality service delivery, especially in the public sector. Many developing countries have already adopted different management approaches for further improvement. Singapore and Malaysia implemented TQM as tools of development. In Bangladesh, the government is the leading service provider. Social services and rural-based poor people are entirely dependent on public sectors.

Some private organizations adopt different work improvement system for organization. Some organization is partly following the fundamental principle of TQM. To some extent, they achieve customer satisfaction and a good reputation. To address the public sector challenges, in August 2006, the Government of Bangladesh requested the Government of Japan to introduce TQM approach in public sector management. After that in March 2007, JICA and BPATC officially launched the “Project for Enhancing the Capacity of Public Service Training in Bangladesh (ECPST-BD)”.

This project was the beginning of the quality service delivery process. In the first stage, this project created a good number of resource pools in different training academies of Bangladesh. After that, they focused on in field-administration to import the TQM knowledge and starting the real service improvement through the field-level officers. Based on this model, the second phase of this project titled IPS-TQM has been started.

Through this project, they provided the basic knowledge of quality improvement and TQM through the Foundation Training Course (FTC) of all Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) cadre officers. Individual training courses (short course), module incorporated in different core courses for the higher management, and this project the different initiative were taken by this project for dissemination the knowledge about TQM. Bangladesh public sector adopts TQM in the form of *kaizen*. It is analysis to gap the immediate service delivery (Figure 1) and after improving service delivery. For this

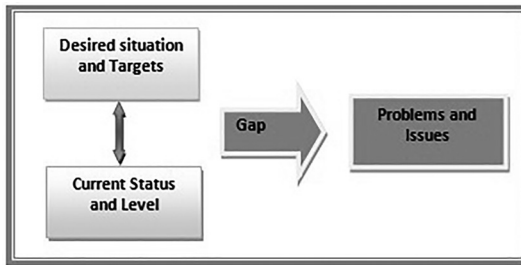


Figure 1: Problem identification process (Source: Haque 2012)

IPS-TQM project initially arranged a five-day long workshop at the district level for the district level officers of all government departments. After that, district-level officers organized a dissemination workshop with the help of project personnel at Sadar Upazila. All other Upazila officers attended that workshop and took a small initiative (one year one project) at their respective Upazila. For achieving this positive result, they follow *kaizen* action plan. A quality *kaizen* action plan must be pragmatic, executable, result oriented and time-bound (Haque 2012).

The Upazila level officer formed a Work Improvement Team (WIT) and implemented those small initiatives with the help of the work improvement team. It takes three to four months. By this process IPS-TQM project initiated around 12 thousand (24 departments in an Upazila x 1 small improvement from each department = 24 x 489 Upazila) small improvement work at Upazila level for better service delivery. PDCA cycle (Figure. 2) (which is known as Plan, Do, Check and Action) is the management approach to all *kaizen* activities.

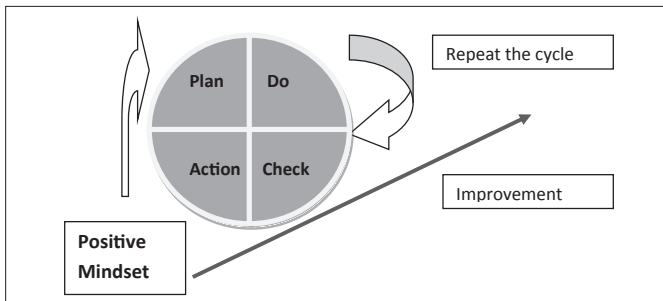


Figure 2: *kaizen*/ Small initiatives process in Bangladesh (Source: Author)

Due to the effectiveness of those small initiatives, each ministry agreed to the theme based on the implementation of small initiatives. The IPS-TQM project published an Impact Evaluation Report in 2017. They found a positive impact on awareness of management concepts, information management but no significant change in work environment perception and office management practice in Bangladesh.

### 3. Review of Literature

In Bangladesh, the government has a dilemma; how to satisfy citizens and the way of improvement. Governments are squeezed between two emerging trends. Fiscal revenues are not growing as fast as demanded by citizens for social services. If they try to raise revenues through taxes, politicians must face the wrath of the voters. If they try to reduce public services, the government faces social unrest. Caught between these conflicting demands, a third way for loosening the fiscal vise is through total quality management or small improvement (Tachiki 2010).

#### 3.1 Small Initiatives in the JICA Literature

If Japan can achieve high-quality products and services, why can't Bangladesh? That is the key point of TQM adaptation through IPS-TQM project in Bangladesh. According to JICA project literature "Total quality management is a systematic approach for delighting clients through policy deployment, employee involvement and continuous improvement<sup>5)</sup> .

5) IPS-TQM website [JICA project] (<http://ipstqm.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/BriefingPaper3.pdf>) [Retrieved September 26, 2018]

Delighting citizens using a TQM approach requires systematically eliminating an organizational bottleneck that hinders the delivery of public services by following the PDCA Cycle—that is plan, do, check, and action<sup>6)</sup>. This cycle is repeated—that is, returning to the plan phase—by addressing the next largest root cause of delays and bottlenecks until the desired goals is achieved. This step-by-step process of “continuous improvement” is called *kaizen*<sup>7)</sup>.

On the other hand, the small initiatives is the output of the *kaizen* activities<sup>8)</sup>. Put simply, small initiatives follow the PDCA cycle and continuous improvement process. That means small initiative is the application form of the *kaizen* in the field level of Bangladesh. This process is initiated for citizens' satisfaction, best utilization of resources with the help of limited manpower, and upgraded public services according to the feedback of the citizens. That is why small initiatives follow the basic principles of TQM.

### 3.2 Citizens' Perception: Bangladesh Practice

Citizens' perception of the public servants and quality of the public service is not up to the mark. Different reports and surveys indicate that the public service as “over centralized, unaccountable, inefficient, overpaid, coercive, unethical and rent-seeking” (World Bank 1996, Zafarullah *et al.* 1997, Zafarullah 1998). The country's bureaucratic efficiency is rated at 4.7 on a 0 to 10 scale (10=best) (Mukherjee *et al.* 2001). Individual encounters with officials brought “unnecessary harassment, procrastination in deciding simple problems, discourteous and arrogant behavior, keeping customers waiting for hours before attending to their needs, frequent absence from office, not maintaining appointments, ignoring pleas for reconsideration of a problem, unwillingness to correct mistakes and making unabashed approaches for pecuniary benefits” (Zafarullah 1998).

Nevertheless, Gopakumar mentioned, there are no exit options available to these

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6) Ibid.

7) IPS-TQM website [JICA project] (<http://ipstqm.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/BriefingPaper1.pdf>) [Retrieved September 26, 2018]

8) IPS-TQM website [JICA project] (<http://ipstqm.net/about-project/>) [Retrieved July 4, 2018]



users to seek another provider in case of displeasure with the service provided” (Gopakumar 2002). Consequently, without alternative options, the services are provided on a “take it or leave it” basis.

In case of level of satisfaction of the service recipients after small initiatives adaptation, a six-point scale was used to measure the tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy issues. Most of the service recipients expressed their satisfaction in “Pleased” (4th point) scale. Service recipients were not “Highly Pleased” or “Delighted” with the service providing activities which means that service providing agencies could not satisfy one of the important values of TQM “Not only meet customer expectation but delight the customer in the process” (Kashem *et al.* 2014a).

This review found three things; first, the existing public service delivery is not satisfactory and below the standard. Second, the necessity of service delivery is required according to the response of citizens. Moreover, third, after some small initiatives adaption, citizens became happy.

### **3.3 Various Study Report on TQM Activities in Bangladesh**

There was a study conducted by the BPATC in 2014 about the TQM activities in Bangladesh public sector. The findings are TQM courses help to improve performance. 16.7% respondent has increased their Key Performance Indicator (KPI) by 10%, 30% of respondent have increased their KPI by 11-20%, 25% of respondents have increased KPI by 21-30%, 15% respondents have increased their KPI by 31-40%. It is important that more than 13% respondents have increased their KPI from 41-100% (Hussain *et al.* 2014).

TQM trained officers (86%) recommended TQM course for their colleagues. 90% of the respondents said that TQM approach should be incorporated in civil service. From the same study, supervising officers around 80% of the respondents said that they are facing problems in performing official duties. Most of the controlling officers face problem due to a shortage of workforce, lack of training, and de-motivation of the officials. 80% of respondent said that a trained workforce is significant for timely service delivery. 80% of superior officer appreciate TQM course and find positive change for those who participate in this course.

66.7% of the beneficiaries said that they got services from the various offices of the

Upazila within the usual time (e.g., 1-10 days), and 11.4% respondents said they do not get services within the usual time (e.g., more than 21 days). 17.1% of the respondents do not get services from the Upazila offices within the usual time which is not a negligible number. 63 respondents out of 70 said that they faced no problem in getting services from the Upazila officers. 87% are happy now. 94% of respondents are happy in getting services from the Upazila offices within usual time. Around 85% of respondents noticed that after participating in the TQM course, the attitude of the Upazila, officers changed. (Hussain *et al.* 2014)

A study was conducted at the Upazila level by Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) in 2013 to measure the satisfaction of service recipients. According to the study –“service recipients received services by spending 0 days to 1-10 days and also a notable number of the respondents received services by spending more than 60 days from the submission of application till receiving the services”.

Another relevant study also conducted by BARD in 2014 at Comilla Sadar Upazila. This study mentioned that most of the public service providers (government officials) faced challenges during the distribution of different allowance (e.g., maternity, old age, disability) due to the enormous demand. It indicated that a shortage of resources in terms of demand. This type of service delivery also faced difficulties due to the shortage of workforce in a different government office. (Kashem *et al.* 2014b).

After completion of IPS-TQM project, this project published an “Impact Evaluation Report” in 2017. In this report, they are trying to find five specific answers. This report confirmed positive impacts of the project on office’s awareness of management concepts, information management, and collaboration with stakeholders. International *kaizen* convention and different TV program help to create awareness about the TQM concept. In case of work environment perception and office management practice, no significant result were found. This report concludes that staff of those offices could not respond to the modifications smoothly (IPS-TQM Project 2017).

#### **4. Research Methodology**

##### **4.1 Research Area and Sample Size**

This is a qualitative research. Most of the data were collected from the different

public offices of Poba, Phuthiya Upazila of Rajshahi, Rangpur Sadar Upazila of Rangpur, Shibganj Upazila of Bogra, Jessore Sadar Upazila of Jessore, Mymensingh Sadar and Phulpur Upazila of Mymensingh, Satiya Upazila of Pabna and Mirzapur Upazila of Tangail districts. The reasons for choosing those Upazila and Upazila level office is *because those offices have already adopted small initiatives for their service delivery process*. That is why those offices were chosen as the source of the primary data.

Total sample size of the research was 111. The breakup of the sample size of data collection was service receiver (60), service provider (34) and service expert (17).

The service receivers (demand side) and the service providers (supply side) were interviewed to shed light on the actual scenario of service delivery process. Service providers are directly related to the service delivery process. They provide the services according to the existing rules and regulations. They know the present situation. They have directly observed the suffering of the citizens at the field level. The empathized service providers took initiatives to implement the small initiatives in their workplace. On the other hand, service receivers are the pressure group to change the existing service delivery process. Their satisfaction is one of the vital points of the change-making process. In the case of service experts, data was collected from the district level offices, different ministries level and from different training institutions all over the country.

For analyzing the data from service providers and service receivers, another group named as service experts were also interviewed; those have adequate knowledge about small initiatives and the field-level situation. Service expert (SE) are mainly service providers at a higher level, like, the ministry level- Senior Assistant Secretary (SAS), Deputy Secretary (DS), District level- Deputy Commissioner (DC), Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), District level officers, trainer from different training institutes and project personnel of IPS-TQM and Access to Information (@2i) project. They provided various data, information, and opinions especially about the implementation, dissemination, institutionalization practice and helped to validate various data.

#### 4.2 Data Collection

In this study, both primary and secondary data are used. Secondary data was collected from many different sources to understand the present service delivery system in Bangladesh. For this, different government publications like the Sixth Five Year Plan (2011-2015) books, reports, journals, web-pages, projects reports are used as a source of secondary data. In addition, the observation method took into account the overall attitude with which service was given to the citizens from different public offices at the field level. Primary data was collected through questionnaires. For the above mentioned, three groups, three different sets of questionnaires were used. In that case, one-to-one interview is the primary data collection process. In a very few cases, focus group discussion was used for data validation, especially for the service receivers.

#### 4.3 Characteristics of the Questionnaire

Data was collected through the predetermined questionnaire. The questionnaire was a combination of both structured and open-ended questions. The qualitative question was used to know the opinion of the respondent about the particular issues as much as possible. In many matters, the respondent expressed their own opinion according to their own experiences. On the other hand, quantitative questions were used to collect some specific data. While designing the questionnaire, it was intended to cross-check the data of the respondent by themselves. So, some questions were asked two or three times differently. Not only that, but the same issue also urged the different stakeholders. It helps to know the answer of the various stakeholders in the same question. In addition, it helps to cross-check the existing data.

In the questionnaire, *there are multiple answers to many questions*. In many cases, respondents response is more than one answer. That is why during the data analysis period, the total sum of the response are counted. *Each response was calculated as one single response*.

#### 4.4 Data Processing and Analysis

For ease of data analysis, the data were edited, coded, tabulated and classified

according to the objectives and purpose of the study. Recorded data were classified using broad patterns like qualitative, chronological or stakeholders difference and systematically organized on the basis of the predetermined sections. Data for different stakeholders were classified according to the relevant section.

All of the recorded data collected from structured questionnaire were transcribed into excel for ease of data analysis. For synchronization of collecting primary data, Microsoft Office Excel (MS Excel 2007) was used. By using MS Excel, quantitative data were organized. Results were presented through different types of the graphs, charts, diagrams, Paretoanalysis, and logical reasoning.

## 5. Result and Discussion

### 5.1 Existing Service Delivery System in Bangladesh

The service provider thought that the existing service delivery process was not citizen-friendly. It is complicated, has the insufficient scope of citizens' acknowledgment and is impossible to fulfill citizens' demand. Around 18% of the service providers thought that the existing service delivery process did not satisfy the citizens' demands (Figure 3). 15% of that thought, a very few opportunities for citizens' acknowledgment. Service providers have thought that around 13% said it took a long time, 12% thought the system was not so transparent, 10% of them thought this existing system was old, outdated and not citizen-friendly. They also felt this current system was complicated and manual (5%), low level of accountability (8%) and highly process oriented and low discretionary power (2%).

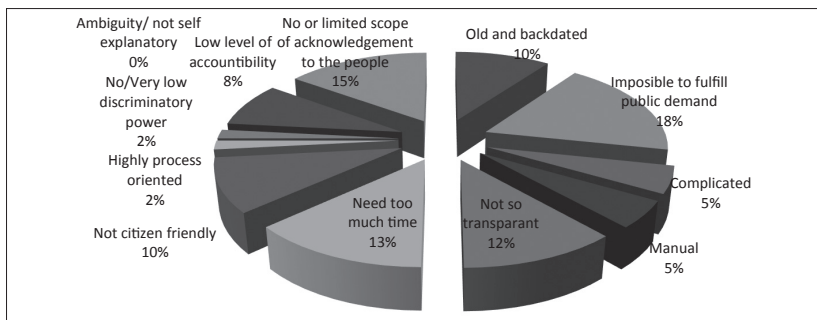


Figure 3: Comments on present service delivery system in Bangladesh (Source: Author)

Different initiatives were taken by the Government of Bangladesh to improve the service delivery process. It was astonishing that those offices already made some small initiatives in their office; the citizens became happy due to this.

Around 92% of service receivers expressed their satisfaction (Figure 4). They think that those offices were citizen-friendly. Only 1% of the total respondents were not happy with the service. “Unnecessary harassment” was the reason of that the respondent mentioned. 7% of the respondents have no idea about satisfaction. Most of them mentioned that citizen-friendly means; “the easy access and getting service faster.”

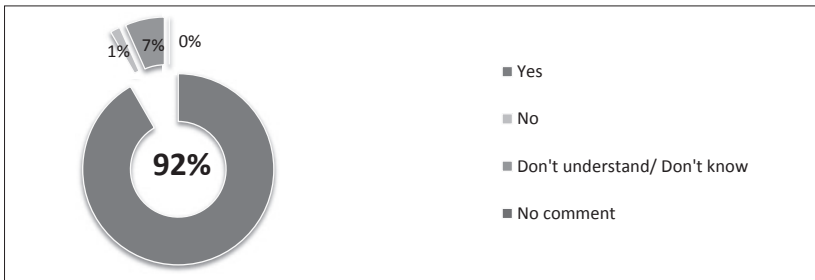


Figure 4: Comments on citizen-friendly office (Source: Author)

**Findings:** In this section, two specific findings come out. First, traditional service delivery is old, outdated and unable to meet the citizens' demand. The service providers referred to many negative points of the existing service delivery process. That indicates a probable change to the existing service delivery. Moreover, second, after the adoption of small initiatives, service providers became happy. Around 92% of the respondent thought that those offices were citizen-friendly. These two findings help to realize the actual scenario of existing service delivery.

## 5.2 Availability of Small Initiatives in the Field Level

**Table 1: List of the available small initiatives taken by the field-level officers**

(Source: Author)

Small initiatives taken by the field-level officers	
<i>1. Establish information and help desk</i>	<i>8. Different types of information and signboard for providing information to the citizens</i>
<i>2. Building apps for disseminating information</i>	<i>9. Sitting arrangement for the service receivers</i>
<i>3. Creating software for different social security issues</i>	<i>10. Identification card for the office staff</i>
<i>4. Create beneficiary's database to avoid duplicity</i>	<i>11. Record room synchronization</i>
<i>5. Effective citizen charter and complaint box</i>	<i>12. Specific service improvement (primary service of this office)</i>
<i>6. Office environment improvement</i>	<i>13. Regular information upgrade</i>
<i>7. File shorting and improvement</i>	<i>14. Increase use of ICTs (computer-based work, digital database, guard file, software, CCTV operation, frequent use of the internet.)</i>
	<i>15. Public hearing</i>
	<i>16. Positive attitude/mindset change</i>

Table 1 is the answer to the question of -“what changes have you brought in your office?” to the service provider. They mentioned about 16 (sixteen) different types of small initiatives. That was an open-ended question, which is why respondents answer they do in their office. That graph was from the service receiver side answer. In Figure 5, different small initiatives data was accumulated, which were available in the field-level public office. 53 respondents think that sitting arrangement for the service receivers was useful for them. Those activities were nothing but the recognition of the service receivers. They mentioned about 13 different types of small initiatives in the field level. Top 6 small initiatives were easy to access the office head (47 respondents), increase utility services, like- facilities of drinking water, toilet (46 respondents), easy to recognized the service provider, for example, provide identification card, air-mark the staffs room, specific duty chart etc. (37 respondents), establish help desk (31 respondents) and availability of service-related information, form and paper (25 respondents). The first four initiatives create an enabling environment for getting service smoothly.

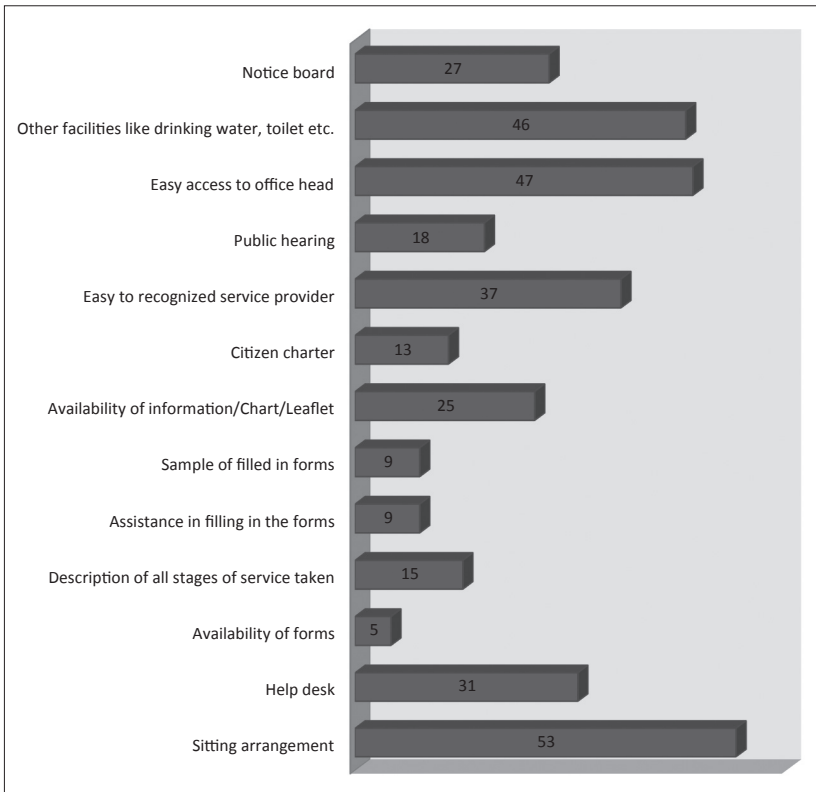


Figure 5: Small initiatives in the public offices (Source: Author)

Service receivers become confident and think that those changes may help to improve the public service delivery system. On the other hand, establishing a help desk and service related information's availability helps to get services easily. Noticeboard, public hearing and the description of all stages of service delivery process was also helpful for the service receivers.

**Findings:** Table 1 and Figure 5 represented the same data. It is a cross-check that small initiative are now at the field level. The field-level officers take the initiatives, and the citizens recognize those. This indicates that citizens have become to be aware of those initiatives. It is an evidence that what type of activities are known as



small initiatives/ improvements/changes at the field level. Analysis of the list of the small initiatives also indicates which types of facilities are not available in public service delivery.

### 5.3 Benefits of the Small Initiatives

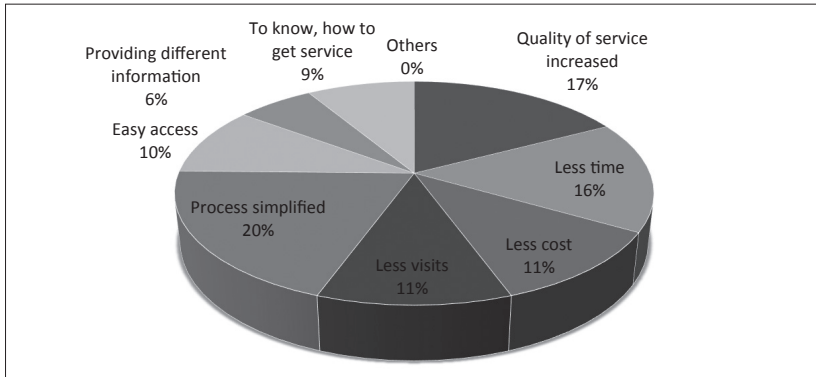


Figure 6: Benefits from small initiatives by service provider's context (Source: Author)

Service providers expressed their opinion that they took actions because citizens' benefited by these initiatives (Figure 6). Around 20% of them thought that it helps to simplify the service delivery process and service quality also improved (17%). These initiatives help to reduce citizens' service related cost (11%), visits (11%) and time (16%). It helps to create easy access to the office, getting information and the process of getting service easily.

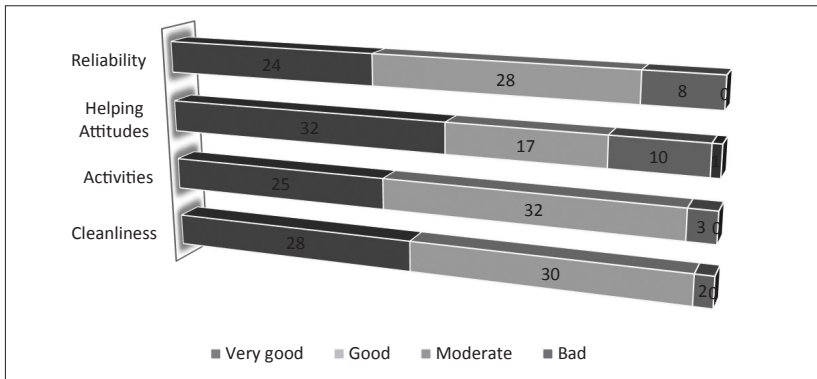
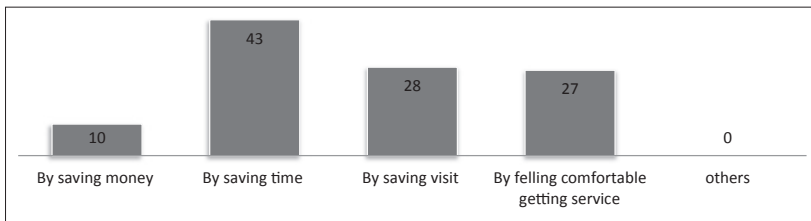


Figure 7: Overall comments about the office environment (Source: Author)

Citizens are not happy about the public office environment. It was remarked in many studies and surveys. On the other hand, service receivers mentioned that they were satisfied by small initiatives adopted by office environment (Figure 7). They expressed their opinion on four different indicators. Those are reliability, helping attitude of the office staff, activities of quick service delivery and cleanliness. Most of the respondents expressed that the situation of all indicators was perfect. Around 40-53% of respondents have mentioned that overall office environment was “very good”. That was a high satisfaction level. 28-53% of respondents have also expressed that the overall office environment was “good.” In case of helping attitude of the office staffs for getting public service, around 2% of respondent expressed the situation was bad. Though around 56% of respondent expressed helping attitude of the office staff for getting public service was “very good”. Around 3-17% of respondents think that overall office environment was “moderate” which means not up to the mark. According to Figure 8, service receivers also think that small initiative helps them to get service quickly. 43 respondents out of 60 believe that small initiative “save time”. That means they get service earlier than previously. As well as saving time it indicates that service receivers use this time for other purposes. It may increase his/her business and opportunity cost also decrease. Around 50% of respondents think that the above mention initiatives “save visiting time” and “feeling comfortable with getting service”. Different initiatives, like, establishing help desk, service process

simplification (SPS), use of information and technology (ICT), dissemination of service-related form and information helps to reduce office visits tremendously. Service related information and process simplification diminish harassment and acknowledgments of the public office staff create a comfortable service delivery environment.



**Figure 8: Small initiatives impact on service delivery (Source: Author)**

Though the small initiatives are not so new in Bangladesh public service delivery, the service providers, service receivers, and experts think that this process will help to provide better service. In a different dimension and practice of service delivery also improved through small initiatives. In comparison to the traditional service delivery system, small initiatives may provide quality service with less time, cost and visits. Citizens become delighted and benefited.

**Table 2: Thoughts of service experts about the usefulness of small initiatives**

(Source: Author)

- *It helps to improve the system; as a result, people benefit continuously.*
- *Improve service quality; Insure less time, cost and visit; service process simplification, easy access to the service provider, easy access to information, reduce middle-man, create an environment of transparency and accountability and helps to prevent corruption.*
- *It provides adequate and efficient results to people, such as quick services, user-friendly tools, easy access, Thus, people can be comfortable.*
- *People are benefitted by the incremental improvement which will have ultimately achieved decent work and harmonized livelihood.*
- *Citizens suffering decreasing; service quality improvement.*

**Findings:** In this section, the answer to the four question from three different stakeholders, the service providers, experts, and receivers are analyzed together. Service providers opinions are reflected in the Figure 6 and 8. They thought that small initiatives help to get services at less cost, time and visits. These things are measurable. Not only that, it helps to improve service quality, simplify the service delivery process, create easy access and receivers get service comfortably. The service receivers expressed their opinion about the overall office environment, and it was satisfactory. Reliability is indicated by providing service on time, and accurately. Helping attitudes of the service providers refer to an improving mindset. Satisfactory activities help to reduce visits that have a direct correlation of reducing cost. Moreover, the expert's opinion in Table 2 mentions the same benefits that were discussed before. In a sentence, citizens will benefit from small initiatives.

#### 5.4 Small Initiatives Consider as TQM in Bangladesh

Small initiatives for improving public service delivery are a new phenomenon in Bangladesh. It is one kind of demand-driven (service receiver point of view) thinking. Though, officially TQM is a decidedly broader category of change management in the form of *kaizen*. However, in the Bangladesh scenario, the service providers and the experts thought that small initiative one kind of Bangladeshi version of TQM. Small initiatives also are known as *kaizen* in Bangladesh. During the interview period, one of the experts mentioned that

*“TQM is useful for organizational development. The most powerful approach in TQM is small changes which are referred as kaizen. Kaizen does not always mean innovation, but in some cases, kaizen may bring about innovation. However, people are usually not prepared for a big change thus small changes are more appropriate to change our way of working and living than innovation”.*

The overall comment from the service providers and the experts, mention two things very clearly. First, the whole service delivery system is not up to the mark and second, the small initiative may be the alternative (Table 3).

**Table 3: Comments of the respondents about TQM/ Small initiative (service provider and service expert) (Source: Author)**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Small change/initiatives for improving the situation and that is why service will be provided firstly, less cost and visit.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Continuous positive developments to improve those factors are responsible for the change.</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Within the legal framework, institutionalized the administrative system that may reduce public cost, time and visit.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Changing of traditional service delivery system for service process simplification and improve client satisfaction.</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Changing of service delivery system to reduce public sufferings.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Improve service quality and increase transparency by changing small things.</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Equal attention is to the less important work.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Small changes to improve service quality and reduce cost.</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It is a process of simplification of a work.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Small changes to improve service quality.</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It helps to improve the work environment, but according to the institutional point of view in many aspects, it is absent.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>TQM means small improvement in public office which helps to improve service quality.</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>TQM is a management tool where small improvements become an overall development.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Service quality improvement and positive change.</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Service at citizen doorsteps.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It is an essential and feasible method to improve any works</i></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Such types of change which help to improve the situation</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Small changes to improve service quality and create an opportunity for a significant change.</i></li> </ul>

**Findings:** In this section service providers and the experts mentioned that according to their understanding they recognized “small initiatives” as a Bangladeshi version of TQM. In Bangladesh, most of the public officers well know the term *kaizen* rather than TQM. This *kaizen* activity is widely known as “small initiatives,” “small improvements,” “small changes.” Small initiatives help to improve the service delivery process. A very recent study about management practice in the public sector of Bangladesh finds that TQM, *kaizen*, and PDCA are associated with a higher degree of management practices and more collaboration with stakeholders (Arimoto *et al.* 2017).

### 5.5 Dissemination of the Small Initiatives

Small initiatives at the field level are a problem-solving solution. The field-level officers do small initiatives in their office. For this, there is no such guideline. In most of the

cases, some empathetic officers implemented small initiatives in their way. So it is quite impossible for the field-level officer to disseminate those work all over the country. However, for the betterment of the nation, *dissemination is vital*. The service providers and the service receivers expressed their opinion in favor of diffusion of small initiatives at the national level. They firmly believe that it is good for the nation.

Around 80% of respondents expressed their opinion that public offices provided excellent services. However, the remaining 20% expressed that they felt harassments due to service received. Extra money was also demanded during that time.

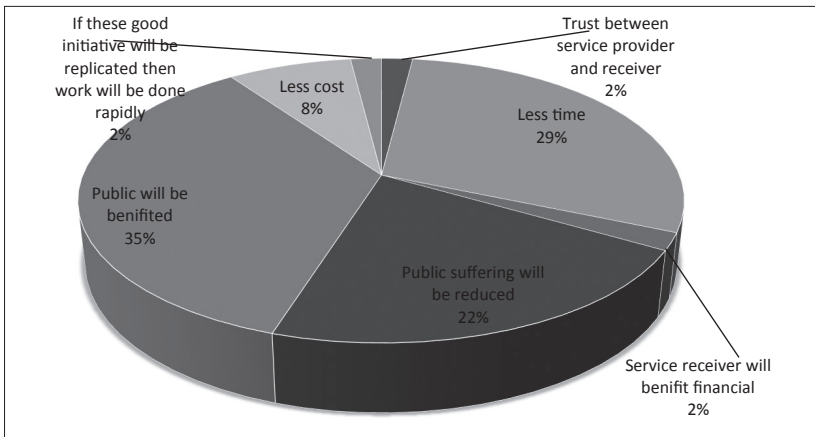


Figure 9: Service receiver's opinion about small initiatives dissemination (Source: Author)

If small initiatives were to be disseminated all over the country, 35% of service receivers thought that people would benefit. 22% of respondents thought public suffering would be reduced through the small initiatives (Figure 9). 29% of respondents believe that these initiatives help to reduce traditional service delivery time. About 8% of respondent's opinion was that due to the small initiatives, service delivery related cost will be reduced and citizens will get service less cost than before. Moreover, 2% of respondents think that for this trust between service provider and the service receiver will be increased. Not only that service receiver will get services rapidly and benefit financially.

**Table 4: The service receiver's observation about the improvement of service delivery**  
(Source: Author)

Comments	No. of respondents	Percentage
Service improved than previous	13	36%
Increase use of ICTs in office work	9	25%
Citizen-friendly environment	7	20%
Quick and less time for service delivery	3	7%
Fast and effective service delivery	2	6%
Establishing help desk	1	3%
Process simplified	1	3%

A hundred percent of service receivers noticed that service quality had improved due to the small initiatives. They observed in case of personal service delivery, which enhanced than previous (36% of respondents) (Table 4). Service receivers noticed that service provider's increase the use of ICTs in service delivery process (25% of respondent). The office environment became friendlier (20% of respondents).

The recent trends of small initiatives are not so much organized. According to the dissemination point of view, some factors are directly related, like, government instruction or circular, budget allocation, recognition of the excellent work, accumulation of a good job, and institutionalization of the small individual's small initiatives at the field level. Service receivers expressed that from the institutional point of view or dissemination of small initiatives; "government instruction/circular" is significant. According to the Pareto analysis, this single step helps to solve around 47% of the problems. Budget allocation for the field-level small initiatives is the second critical step for institutionalization. Recognition of the small initiative activities is also a vital part of the dissemination process to the different public offices.

As a whole, these three things; government instruction, budget allocation, and recognition may solve 80% of the problem of small initiatives dissemination (Figure. 10). For a long run or sustainable point of view if small initiatives are suitable for service receivers and it creates a comfortable and meaningful change of service delivery process, then the service receivers think that the government should adopt those changes.

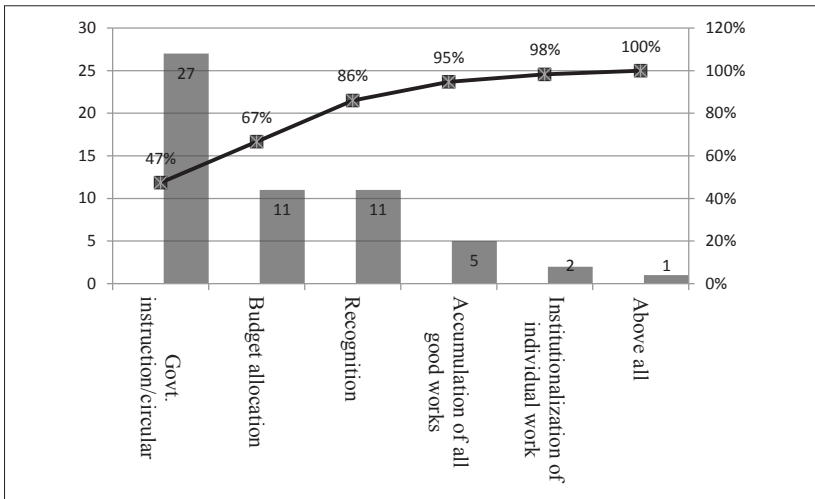


Figure 10: Pareto analysis of the factors of dissemination (Source: Author)

A brief circular or instruction from the government may increase the small initiatives disseminations and institutionalization. Most of the field-level officers have no or insufficient budget allocation power. However, in many cases for establishing small initiatives money is needed. So budget allocation for that purpose helps to implement small initiatives at the field level.

**Findings:** Improving public service delivery is very significant. Around 57% of the service receivers thought small initiatives dissemination might help to reduce public suffering and they will benefit. Due to incorporating the small initiatives in the service delivery process, service receivers observed the service quality had improved than before (39% of the respondents). The most significant part is that service receivers identify the essential factors of dissemination. With the help of Pareto analysis, the vital one is proper government instruction or circulars for small initiatives dissemination. Budget allocation and recognition can boost the dissemination process. Many studies have previously mentioned the necessity of those three factors.

## 6. Conclusion

This study mentioned one thing very strongly that is *citizens become unhappy about*



*the existing public service delivery system.* That hampers the good governance of Bangladesh. To improve this unfortunate situation, *some empathetic public service providers adopted small initiatives as the name of TQM* in their respective field office.

According to the study data, the service receivers and the service providers are not happy about the existing service delivery process. They expressed their dissatisfaction and concluded that they are unable to meet the citizens' demand. Service receivers are welcoming of the small initiatives, *92% of them expressed their opinion that this service delivery process is citizen-friendly.*

By their own initiatives at the field level, public service delivery officers implemented some small initiatives in their workplace for improving their routine/ day to day work. Service receivers recognized around twenty various small initiatives in the field level; like, record room improvement, establishing help desk, sitting arrangement, information chart, use of ICTs.

The trend of implementing small initiatives at the field level for improving public service delivery is the *Bangladized* version of TQM; one kind of customized adaptation in the Bangladesh practice. *Opinions of the different stakeholders (citizens) help to find out the effectiveness of small initiatives adaptation.*

This field-level initiative is the gateway to citizens' satisfaction, *which demands institutionalization and a higher level of dissemination. Government instructions or circular, need-based budget allocation and recognition;* these three factors are the principal instruments of small initiatives dissemination all over the country.

Through this study, three significant points come out: *First*, the service delivery process will be changed according to the feedback/ concern of the service receivers and the field-level officers. As a result that will be effective, participatory, and both provider and receiver will be satisfied. *Second*, due to the policy level change, it makes the process stable, sustainable, and easy to replicable all over the country. It will create a win-win situation for the providers and the receivers. Mistrust will be reduced. Moreover, *third*, this process will insist on adopting the field-level situation and recommendations, that will create a bottom-up policy adaptation.

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