

Service Delivery Practice in Dire Dawa City Administration: Evidences from Selected Institutions

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Abstract

The issue of service delivery and its challenges are overwhelming concerns for Africa. Public institutions have the responsibility and obligation to provide quality service to the public fairly, equitably, honestly, efficiently and effectively. However, the public opinion survey on good governance images and Performances of Dire Dawa City Administration (2013), indicates that the public is at high level of dissatisfaction with the public services delivery practices by the public institutions. Therefore, the study was conducted with the general objective of assessing the existing service delivery practice of selected institutions. In this regard relevant data were collected both from primary and secondary sources. The study result has revealed that the culture of providing service as per the standards they set is weak, institutions did not meet customers' expectations and there is no complaint handling unit in all the institutions. But there is improvement in working culture and communication with customers. Thus, the implementation status of the service delivery program is somewhat improving, but in an infant stage.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction, Customer Expectations, complaint, Service standard

Introduction

The role of the civil service as an instrument in a country's socioeconomic and political development is indisputable. In some parts of the world, however, the civil service seems unable to cope with the prevailing ideological, political and economic changes. In relation to Africa, the institutional and capacity weakness of the civil service is considered to be one of the major causes of social, political and economic crises. Based on this fact, fundamental changes in the structure and operations of the civil services were introduced in many African countries. (Paulos. C, 2001)

Ethiopia is one of those African countries having similar problem of service delivery and different reforms were introduced to overcome the challenges related to the institutional structure and operation. To this end Ethiopia undertook comprehensive measures to restructure its civil service as part of its general political and economic reform programs. The aim of restructuring was to enable the service provider institutions to deliver effective, efficient and equitable service to the public. After the overthrow of the Dergue regime, Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) has engaged in series of reform programs starting from the ideological shift from centralized command economy to free market economy. The government took a structural adjustment program, which includes Civil Service Reform Program (CSRP) in 1990 as one of the components of the program. The first phase of the reform (1991-1996) focused on the restructure of government institutions. The second phase of CSRP which includes Service Delivery & Ethics was launched in 1996 (*Fekadu.N, 2013*).

Dire Dawa City Administration is one of the country's two chartered cities, the other one being Addis Ababa. The Dire Dawa City administration is structured with two administrative levels. These are the city administration and the kebele Administrations (Dire Dawa Government Charter Proclamation No. 416/2004). Even though the City Charter's introduction clearly aspires to create an environment which is conducive for effective public service delivery, residents are complaining with the provision of service delivery.

The Dire Dawa City is located in the eastern part of the country and 515 km to the east of Addis Ababa, 55 kms to the north of the historic city of Harar, and 311 kilometers to the west of port Djibouti. Regarding its climate, the city has a hot climate with annual maximum of 31.4^oc and minimum of 18^o c temperatures, and it has the average annual rainfall of 604 millimeters. In addition to this, the range of altitude of the land is between 960 -2500 meters above sea-level (CSA, 2008). According to Central Statistics agency the result of the house and population census of May, 2008 showed that the administration has a population of 341,834, from whom 170,461 are women and 171,461 are men; 233,224 or 68.23% of the population are urban inhabitants and the rest are rural inhabitants, (CSA, 2008).

Dire Dawa City Administration is among the newly emerging tourism destination of the country. It has embarked upon a vision to make Dire Dawa City one of the active trade centers, industry and service area of the country. The city administration has tourist attraction sites that entertain tourists.

Public institutions have the responsibility and obligation to provide quality service to the public fairly, equitably, honestly, efficiently and effectively in order to satisfy the service users. Contrary to this, public opinion survey on good governance images and Performances of Dire Dawa city Administration (2013), reported that the public is not generally satisfied with the public service delivery practices. Therefore the problem of the study is to determine the status of service delivery in the selected, public institutions of Dire Dawa. Then the

following research question will guide the study: What is the implementation status of the service delivery reform program in the institutions?

Theoretical and Conceptual Review of Literature

According to Lawrence.F, (2006:5) Customer service is the process of ensuring customer satisfaction with a product or service. It is the interaction made between the customer and a service provider. Customer satisfaction is the extent to which results produced for customers and the process they went through to secure these results meet their expectations.

The relationship between expectation and perceptions is often expressed as an equation, that is, Customer satisfaction= perception – expectations.

According to Robert and Graham (2005) Good service process, not only creates satisfied customers, but also reduce costs, enhance value added and underpin financial performance. Therefore, excellent customer service is defined as service that treats customers with a friendly attitude and tries to resolve their problem or question as efficiently as possible.

Principles in developing service standards:

A standard is a “basis of measurement” and “a definite level of excellence”. A Departmental service standard is something desired (by the Department and citizens) and achievable. A ‘Norm’, on the other hand, is defined as a “usual or average level of performance”. A Service standard is a reasonable and measurable expectation from the side of the recipient, and an honest commitment by the service provider, to meet or exceed that expectation. A service standard has qualitative aspects, such as: **Appropriateness** – refers to the service the individual community needs and expects; and **Acceptability** – when services are provided to satisfy the reasonable expectations of the client, community or taxpayer; as well as the eight principles, i.e:

1. Consultation: Citizens should be consulted on the level and quality of public services they receive and, wherever possible, should be given a choice on the services that are offered.
2. Service standards: Citizens should be told what level and quality of public service they will receive.
3. Access: All citizens should have equal access to services.
4. Courtesy: Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration.
5. Information: Citizens should be given full, accurate information about services.
6. Openness and transparency: Citizens should be told how Departments are run, how much they cost and who is in charge.
7. Redress: If the promised standard of service is not delivered, citizens should be offered an apology and a speedy and effective remedy.
8. Value for money: Public services should be provided economically and efficiently.

A service standard is not a service standard if it does not meet S.M.A.R.T.E.R. criteria, i.e.: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound, empowering and Revisable (Batho Pele White paper, 1997).

According to A Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP, 2006) Service Delivery (SD) is concerned with the development and introduction of a comprehensive service delivery policy, complaints handling mechanisms, and service standards to facilitate positive changes in the culture, attitude and work practice of government officials towards the provision of effective and equitable public service. If the following principles are practiced by the civil servants, the provision of service in terms of quality could be improved.

The principles are:

- Legality: the public service is required to act within the rule spirit of legislation and regulation.
- Impartiality: public servants are required to administer government policy impartially
- Fairness and being responsible: public servants are required to act fairly and responsibly taking into account only relevant consideration
- Access to personal and officials information: public servants are required to give citizens access to personal information about themselves and official information on request unless there is a good reasons for withholding.
- Protect of political and civil rights: public servants are required to protect and have regard to human right fundamentals freedoms in accordance with the constitutional convents, and ads consistent with other legislation.
- Protection of personal and individual privacy: public servants have a duty, to protect official information to the extent consistent with the public interests and preservation of personal privacy.
- Efficiency, effectiveness and economy: public servants are required to use resources effectively, efficiently and economically (PASDEP, 2006).

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) Service Delivery Policy document (2005) briefly

elaborates problems and drawbacks of the civil service delivery. According to the policy document there are several problems that contributed to poor service delivery. Some of them are as follows: Positive attitude towards public service has not developed to the desirable extent; Insufficient recognition that citizens have rights to receive services from the government.

The public is seldom given clear and adequate information on the availability of a particular service and the condition required to get these services; Service users are rarely consulted about their need; Inconsistency of regulation guidelines governing institution that provide related services as well as lack of coordination and cooperation among various departments within an institution often hampers efficiency in service delivery (FDRE, 2005).

Therefore the overall objective of the policy on service delivery is to attain user satisfaction in service delivery in civil service. Its specific objectives are to ensure:

- ✓ Efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the Civil Service thus reducing the burden of providing and receiving services and thereby facilitating economic and social development;
- ✓ Equity in access to government provided services and in the treatment of service user; Those institutions are managed in such a way as to provide better quality service and are accountable for failure to do so (FDRE,2005).

Conceptual Framework

Public service delivery has a key role to play in determining effective public service delivery scenario of any public organization. Standard and effective public service delivery promotes the existence of satisfied customers. Effective service provider institutions are characterized by transparent and participatory public service delivery process whereby effective decisions are made and implemented and resource are efficiently used with sense of accountability. This can bring about better public service delivery and improved public lives.

Moreover, there are issues of organizational aspects like man power, organizational structures, compliant handling mechanisms, contents of the office plan of service delivery, standards for the delivery of service, participatory public service delivery process, ethics and budget and its utilization. These factors can be either opportunities or challenges to the organizational public service delivery scenario. If public organizations can properly manage them, they can deliver improved public services to their customers. On the other hand, if they fail to do so, they can be challenges that negatively affect the public service delivery status of the organization.

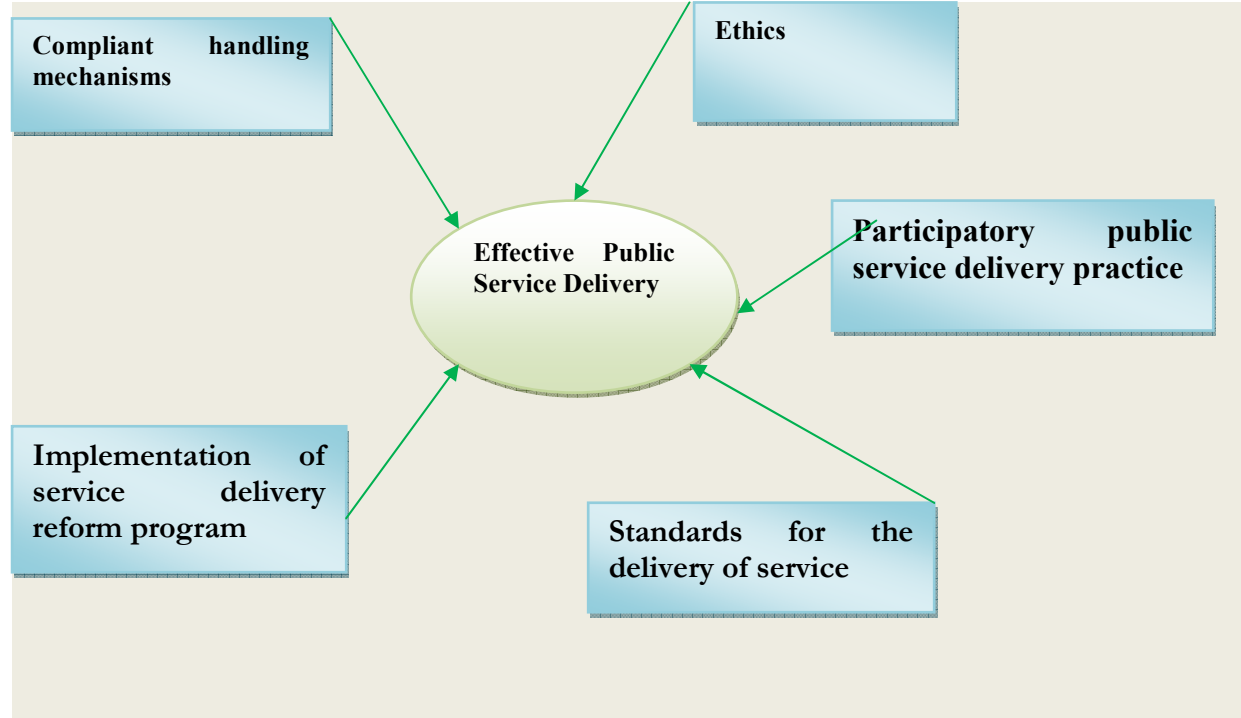


Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework
Source: Researcher's own Design

Research Methodology

This study is descriptive, focused on portraying the existing service delivery practice of public institutions of the City Administration. The intention of this research is to assess the existing service delivery practice of the city

administration, so descriptive method is more appropriate to picture the situation clearly.

The research approach was entailed with mixed method concurrent triangulation strategy. In conducting this research both, qualitative and quantitative research approaches are used to link the gap that may arise from each approach. The data sources were both primary and secondary data sources. The primary data were gathered from employees, customers and concerned officials by using different techniques such as, questionnaire (to customers and employees), interview (to officials) and observation. Moreover, the study also used secondary data sources through reviewing policy documents and books to make the study more tangible.

The target population for this study was all employees and customers of the public institution of Dire Dawa city administration. Whereas, the framed population is 610 employees and customers who are working and served in five purposively selected public institutions. Moreover, the sample unit of this study includes participants such as individual employees, customers and concerned officials of selected institutions. The sample frame of the study was the payroll list of employees in purposively selected institutions and the average number of daily served customers of the five selected institutions as indicated in the following table.

Table 1: The average number of daily served customers of the five selected institutions

Sample institutions	Daily served customers in the year 2007budget year		Average
	Minimum	Maximum	
Civil service bureau	30	60	45
Labor and social affairs office	25	75	50
Youth and sport commission	20	60	40
Bureau of land development	110	200	155
Kebele 04	60	100	80
Total	245	495	370

Source: Field survey March, 2016

Respondents from the three groups (customers, employees and management officials) were the major subjects of the study. Systematic random sampling technique was used to draw samples of the employees. This is because random sampling gives equal chance for all members of the population to enable representativeness. Stratified sampling technique was also used to take proportional number from all institutions. The study also used convenience method for the average daily served number of customers. It also employed purposive sampling to choose key informants from higher officials of the bureaus.

Sample Size Determination

Kothari (2004) recommends the following formula to get a representative sample size, if the total number of the target population is assumed to be less than 10,000.

The representative sample size (n) for the study was determined by using the following formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(0.08*0.08)} = \frac{610}{1 + 610(0.0064)} = \frac{610}{1 + 3.904} = \frac{610}{4.904}$$

$$n = 124$$

n= Sample size

N= population

E - level of acceptance, error

The sample size of the study population was then 124 both from customers and the employees.

Discussion and Results

The study focused on five selected institutions in Dire Dawa city Administration, namely, Labor and social affairs office, Youth and sport commission, Land development bureau and Civil service bureau and Kebele 04. As a result, the data presentation and analysis is made based on the response of 71 customers and 46 employees of the selected institutions through questionnaire and interview of five higher officials of the institutions.

Table 2: Summary of the characteristics of Employee respondents

Variables	Name of the Institution	Frequency	Percent
Share of employees of Institutions' respondents	Labor and social affairs office	4	8.7
	Land development bureau	16	34.8
	Civil service bureau	10	21.73
	Youth and sport commission	8	17.39
	Kebele 04 administration	8	17.39
Sex of Employees	Male	30	65.2
	Female	16	34.8
Age of employees	18- 28	3	6.5
	28.1 – 38	22	47.8
	38.1-48	14	30.4
	48.1– 58	7	15.2
Educational status of employees	Certificate	4	8.7
	Diploma	17	37
	First degree	20	43.5
	Second degree and above	5	10.9
Work experience of employees	Below 1 year	6	13
	1 – 10 years	22	47.8
	11 – 20 years	11	23.9
	21 – 30 years	5	10.9
	Above 30 years	2	4.3
Marital Status of employees	Single	26	56.5
	Married	16	34.8
	Divorce	3	6.5
	Others	1	2.2

Source: Field survey, 2016

Regarding the work experience and qualification of employee respondents, majority employees 33 (71.7%) has greater than one year service and 42 (91%) employees have diploma and above.

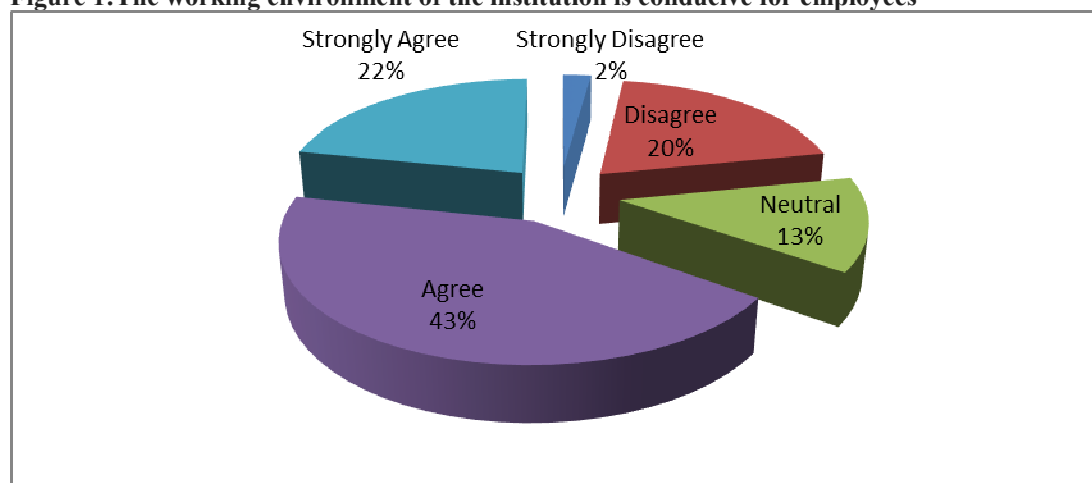
This indicates that institutions are in a better position to provide effective and efficient service to their customers.

Table 3: Summary of the characteristics of customers' respondents

Variables	Name of the Institution	Frequency	Persent
Share of customers of Institutions' respondents	Lbor and social affairs office	9	12
	Land development bureau	32	42.66
	Civil service bureau	10	13,33
	Youth and sport commission	8	10.66
	Kebele 04 administration	16	21.33
Sex of Employees	Male	48	67.6
	Female	23	32.4
Age of employees	18- 28	2	2.8
	28.1 – 38	6	8.5
	38.1-48	15	21.1
	48.1– 58	27	38
	Above 58 years	21	29.6
Educational status of customers	Certificate and below	40	56.3
	Diploma	17	23.9
	First degree	11	15.5
	Second degree and above	3	4.2
Work experiance of customers	1 -10years	27	38
	11 – 20 years	30	42.3
	21 – 30 years	8	11.3
	Above 30 years	6	8.5
Marital Status of customers	Single	3	4.2
	Married	59	83.1
	Divorce	7	9.9
	Others	7	2.8

Source: Field survey, 2016

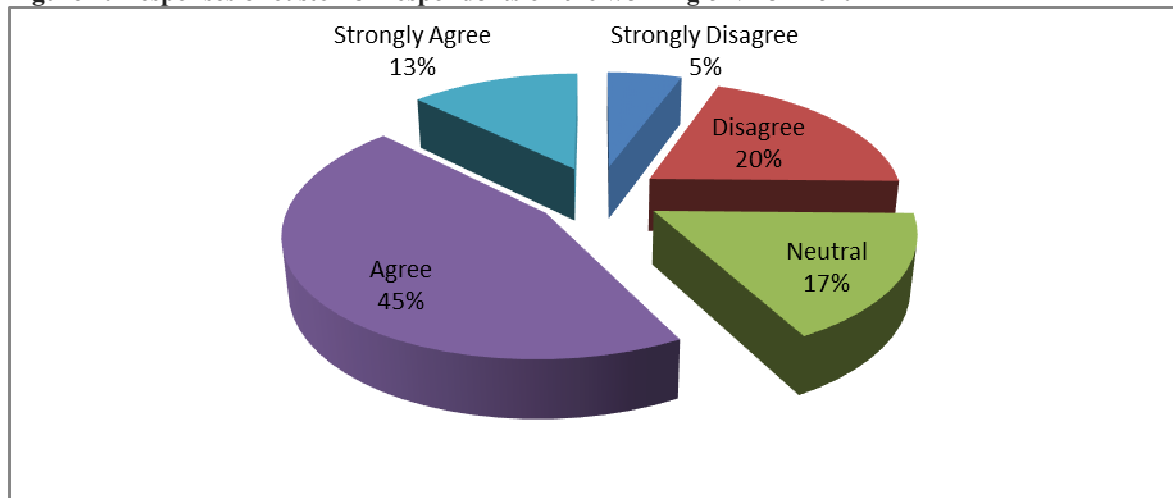
Figure 1: The working environment of the institution is conducive for employees



Source: Field survey march (2016)

Based on the data illustrated on the figure, 30 (65.2%) of employee respondents express their agreement as the working environment is encouraging for employees.

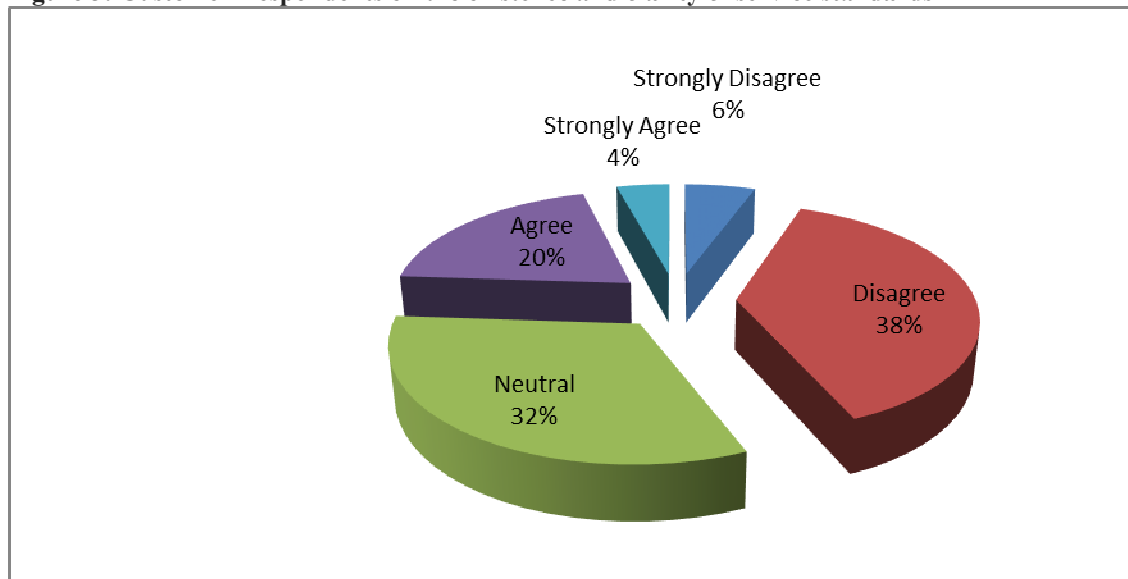
Figure 2: Responses of customer respondents on the working environment



Source: Field survey March (2016)

Regarding the working environment of the institutions, 41(57.8%) customer respondents show their agreement on the conduciveness of the working environment.

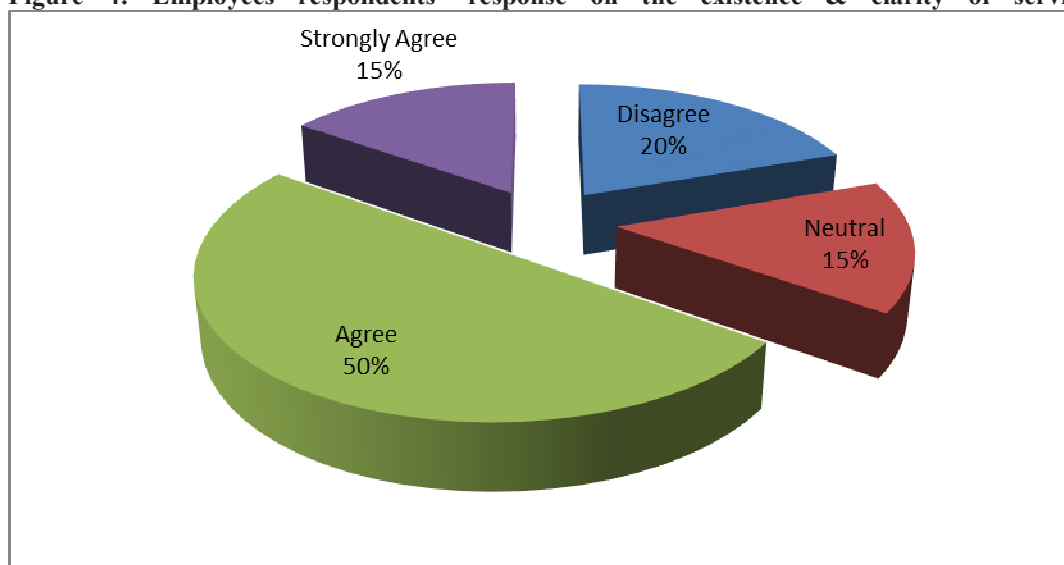
Figure 3: Customer Respondents on the existence and clarity of service standards



Source: Field survey March (2016).

In order to bring service improvement, service providers should set and monitor service standards and make them known to their employees and customers. Customer respondents were asked to express their stand regarding the existence of service standards in the institutions but 38% disagreed and 32% remain neutral.

Figure 4: Employees respondents’ response on the existence & clarity of service standards.



Source: Field survey March (2016).

Regarding the existence of clear service standards, contrary to customer respondents 30 (65.2%) employee respondents confirmed that there is a clear service standard in the institutions.

Generally, even though the data result from majority of employees and interviewed officials confirmed the existence of pre-determined standards, the data result of the majority of customer respondents assure that there is no clearly written and posted service standards. So, this shows that majority of the institutions do not have clearly written and posted standards.

Table 4: Response of employees on service provided meet customers’ expectation.

Option	Frequency	Percent	
Strongly disagree	7	15.2	
Disagree	18	39.1	
Neutral	5	10.9	
Agree	11	23.9	
Strongly agree	4	8.7	
Total	45	97.8	
Missing	System	1	2.2
Total	46	100.0	

Source: Field survey, 2016

As shown in the above table, 25(54.3%) employee respondents disagreed that the service provided to customers did not meet customers’ expectations.

Table 5: Response of customer respondents on the service meeting expectation

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	5	7.0
Disagree	35	49.3
Neutral	21	29.6
Agree	10	14.1
Strongly agree	0	0
Total	71	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2016

40 (56.3%) customer respondents disagreed on the service meeting expectations. So the data result confirmed, that the service given by the institutions did not meet the expectation of the customers.

Table 6: Response of Employee respondents about the existence of complaint handling unit

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	9	19.6
Disagree	20	43.5
Neutral	7	15.2
Agree	7	15.2
Strongly agree	3	6.5
Total	46	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2016

Majority of the employee respondents 29(63.1%) disagreed on the existence of complaint handling unit.

Table 7: Response of customer respondents about the existence of complaint handling unit

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	9	12.7
Disagree	23	32.4
Neutral	12	16.9
Agree	19	26.8
Strongly agree	8	11.3
Total	71	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2016

As it can be observed in the above table majority 32(45.1%) of customer respondents gave their witness by confirming the absence of complaint handling unit in the institutions while 12(16.9%) remain neutral.

At the same time, majority of the interviewee officials confirmed that there are different mechanisms to solve customers' complaints, but there is no formally established complaint handling unit in the institutions. So the overall data result confirmed that all institutions did not establish a unique complaint handling unit.

Table 8: Responses of customer respondents about responsiveness level

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	10	14.1
Disagree	37	52.1
Neutral	9	12.7
Agree	11	15.5
Strongly agree	4	5.6
Total	71	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2016

Regarding responsiveness of the institutions to customers, majority of the customer respondents, 47(66.2%) disagreed on the presence of responsiveness of the institutions. Contrary to this the interviewees from the selected institutions' higher officials confirmed that though there are problems in being totally responsive, the institutions are always looking to serve the customers as responsive as possible to their complaints.

Table 9: Responses of employee respondents about Cooperation and communication between the staff and customer

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	5	10.9
Neutral	11	23.9
Agree	20	43.5
Strongly agree	10	21.7
Total	46	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2016

From the above table, we can see that majority of the employees 30 (65.2%) indicated agreement on having good cooperation & communication. The data collected from the interviewees also substantiated the existence of cooperation and communication.

Table 10: Response of customer respondents, on the level of their satisfaction

Option	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree	10	14.1
Disagree	29	40.8
Neutral	14	19.7
Agree	12	16.9
strongly agree	6	8.5
Total	71	100.0

Source: Field survey March, 2016

Regarding the level of satisfaction, majority of the customers' respondents 39 (54.9%) was dissatisfied with the service they were given by the institutions. But most of the interviewees confirmed that customers are satisfied with the service given by the institutions.

Table 11: Response of employee respondents about having skilled manpower

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	1	2.2
Disagree	9	19.6
Neutral	6	13.0
Agree	20	43.5
Strongly agree	10	21.7
Total	46	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2016

Regarding the existence of adequate skilled man power, majority of the employees 30(65.2%) confirmed their agreement on the presence of enough skilled manpower in their institutions. Almost all interviewees of higher officials assure that there is adequate number of skilled manpower in the institutions.

Table 12: The existence of Employees Motivation in the Institution

Option	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	8	17.4
Disagree	17	37.0
Neutral	8	17.4
Agree	9	19.6
Strongly agree	4	8.7
Total	46	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2016

The data result above indicates that most respondents 25 (54.4%) confirmed that the motivation level is low because of less salary, absence of incentives and the interference of politically appointed officials.

Conclusions

The main objective of the public sector is to deliver standardized public services that favor the interests of customers. Public service delivery is one of the major areas, mostly affected by factors such as, lack of awareness, complaints handling, lack of clearly stated standards, adequate skilled manpower, and lack of commitment of employees, political commitment of the officials and lack of transparent & participative working culture.

The study findings on the existing status of service delivery practices revealed that there is an improvement in service delivery as compared to the past. Even though considerable number of institutions has developed service standards, the culture of providing public services as per the standards is weak. The awareness level of customers on the standards is minimal. Regarding the issue of fairness, meeting customers' expectations, the result remains weak.

At the same time the result shows that there is no complaint handling unit in all the institutions and the level of responsiveness is not in a position to fully and quickly respond to customer complaints. In majority of the institutions the cooperation, communication and participation of staff members to serve their customers is good, whereas in some, it is still on the infant stage. The study result shows that there is an improvement in service delivery, but there is still a gap in satisfying and meeting customers' needs. There is adequate skilled manpower with low motivation level.

Therefore the main factors that hinder the effective service provision are poor complaint handling mechanism, lack of satisfaction of the employees, unable to provide the service as per the standards, lack of creating awareness to both customers and employees regarding the service delivery program, and problems

related to incentives and trainings.

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