

Devolution of Power Plan 2000: A Case Study of Bahawalpur District

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Abstract

The local government system introduced in 2000 has its own impact on the provincial as well as the national political, administrative, social and economic structures. To establish a real, on-ground framework of this system and its impact on the district level administration, the following study has been organized to inquire and analyze this issue in its multidimensional aspects. This study provides a practical and analytical approach into the local government system and studies its impact as well as its post-implementation performance through the research focused on Bahawalpur District.

Bahawalpur is one of the largest districts in the south of the Punjab with an area of 15,918 Square miles (Rizvi, 2007). Geographically, Bahawalpur has a significant location i.e., it is centrally located on the national highway leading from Khyber to Karachi. It is surrounded by River Sutluj in North and Cholistan (Desert) on the Eastern and Head Punjnad on the Western front. It shares its boundaries with Bahawalnagar, Rahim Yar Khan and Lodhran districts and serves as an important marketing centre for the surrounding areas. According to the census of 1998, the urban population is 665304 as compared to rural i.e. 1767787 (Adeeb, 2007) and almost 90 percent of the population is Muslim. The overall climate is dry and hot. The area enjoys an average annual rainfall of 200 mm. Saraiki is the local parlance of the area. Urdu and Punjabi are also spoken and understood by most of the people. A few hundred are Pashto, Sindhi and Balochi speaking (Adeeb, 2007).

Historically speaking, the Nawab of Daudputra family Muhammad Bahawal Khan Abbasi founded the city in 1748 (Adeeb, 2007). It was formerly an Indian princely state capital. When West Pakistan was declared to be One Unit in 1955, Bahawalpur State was merged into it. Bahawalpur is known for its historical places e.g Noor Mahal, Gulzar Mahal Daulat Khana, Bahawal Garh Palace and Fort Derawar (Rehman,). It also boasts many reputable educational institutions, namely The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Sadiq Public School and Quaid-e-Azam Medical College.

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Devolution of Power in Bahawalpur

This Saraiki belt is feudal–centric which is why its politics face scanty representation at the grass root level. Political decentralization and devolution have been established i.e. with the implementation of local government system, it is now the right time to analyze the success of the system in Bahawalpur.

With the implementation of the Devolution of Power Plan the district government is giving a high priority to developmental activities. Various development programmes have been started in the district Bahawalpur. This study focuses on the departments within the district government in particular i.e. Community Development Department, health, education, roads, transport and involvement of political parties in local government system, work of NGOs, and role of police, housing and agriculture.

The main objective of the Community Development Department is to deal with the management of social development. Presently it is planned for labour, cooperative social welfare, sports, and culture and community organization offices. The establishment of cooperatives, labour and social welfare has been completely made functional under the Community Development Department of the district government of Bahawalpur. The establishment of the community organization wing has not yet been made functional and is under active consideration of the Punjab government according to the Devolution of Power Plan. The sports and culture department has been empowered by handing over the responsibility of the sports wing to the district sports board, Bahawalpur and by establishing the Bahawalpur Arts Council under the chairmanship of the District Coordination Officer Bahawalpur. He is empowered with authority to implement the Dramatic Performance Act 1876 under the control of the Executive District Officer, Bahawalpur. Domestic institutional development is another area where Community Development Department is providing its support by providing district funds for cost sharing in community development projects e.g. through citizen community boards and by facilitating to enable an environment for the promotion of cooperative societies and their registration (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index>)

The Health Department at the district level has been structured in a fashion to provide comprehensive medical care to masses both curative and preventive. The main stress has been laid on preventive services, which are being made available to the people at their door steps. The main policy decisions i.e. planning of health services, developmental activities, recruitment of paramedics, doctors, specialists, procurement of medicine and equipment has become a project of the district government. Notable success has been achieved in this area. The District Quality Control Board has been established in each district after decentralization by the government under the chairmanship of the District Coordination Officer. It meets once in a month scrutinizes

the reports of provincial drug inspectors with respect to cases of quality-standard violation through Drug Act 1876 (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index>).

The District Housing Committee of Bahawalpur has approved new housing schemes. From these schemes more than 1200 families will get the benefit. At present almost 10 schemes are functioning. All the vacant plots 3-5 Marla have been allotted as per governor's directive (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index>).

Agriculture is the main source of subsistence for almost 78% of the rural population directly or indirectly. Bahawalpur is playing a pivotal role in the agricultural production. The land of the district is very fertile. The Department of agricultural extension is functioning in a proactive manner and its technical staff is always on the go to address any problem related to agriculture at the spot (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index>).

If we take the stock of the functioning of the local government system under the devolution plan we deduce that it has its trickle down effect, making all the departments efficient at the district and Tehsil level. Bahawalpur is making headway under the local government system and continuity of this system is required to mature the whole process. Surely, power distribution at the grass roots level in a feudal-centric region leads towards progress.

Analysis and Discussion

Data was collected from a sample area of Bahawalpur district. Comprehensive and pre-tested interviewing schedule and a questionnaire was used. Table value of Chi-Square against d.f=2 against level of significance 0.05 are 5.99 .The results achieved are presented and discussed as follows:

1) Do you agree that local government system has enhanced the facilities in Bahawalpur?

Table-1

Awareness of Local Government System and Enhancement of Facilities		
	Frequency	Percentage
Much	52	17.33
Good	127	42.33
Sufficient	121	40.33
Total	300	

Graph -1



The data presented in Table -1 shows that the people generally know the local government system. 17.33% respondents were of the opinion of much awareness, 42.33% had good awareness and 40.33% were of the opinion of sufficient awareness. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph-1.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square = 34.74

The result is significant. This means the factor of local government system awareness shows some impact of enhancement and spread of facilities in Bahawalpur.

2) Do you agree there are better and comfortable health facilities available in your area?

Table-2

Health Facilities		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	249	83
No	51	17
Total	300	

Graph - 2

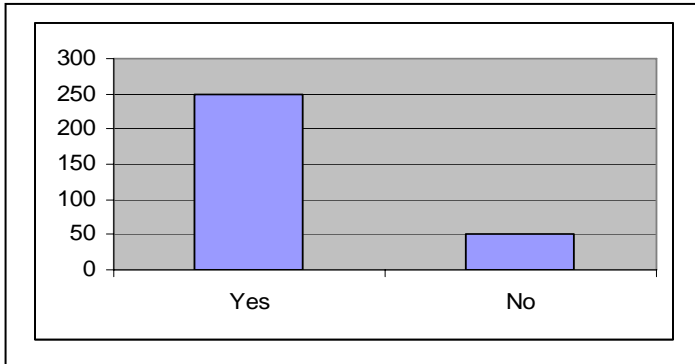


Table -2 indicates that a large number of the respondents i.e. 83% were of the idea of comfortable health facilities provided by the local government and only 17% were of the opinion that comfortable health facilities are not available. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 2.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =130.68

The result is highly significant. This means that the factor provision of comfortable health facilities shows a strong impact of enhancement and spread of facilities under the local government system in Bahawalpur.

3) Do you agree that the educational facilities are better in your area?

Table-3

Educational Facilities		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	136	45.95
No	160	54.05
Total	296	

Graph - 3

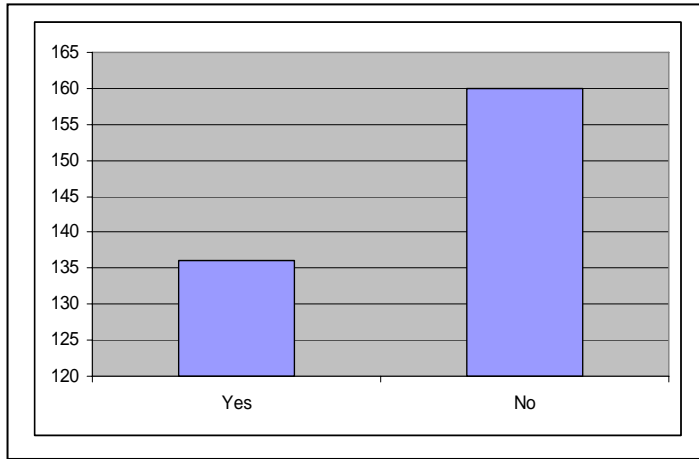


Table -3 reveals that 45.95% respondents were of the opinion of better educational facilities and 54.05% were of the idea of no educational facilities. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph-3.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =1.946

The result is not significant. This means the factor of facility, i.e. educational facilities show that there is no impact of enhancement and spread of facilities under local government in Bahawalpur.

4) What is the condition of roads and transport in your area?

Table-4

Condition of Roads and Transport		
	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	43	14.38
Good	113	44.48
Sufficient	97	32.44
Not Sufficient	46	15.38
Total	299	

Graph - 4

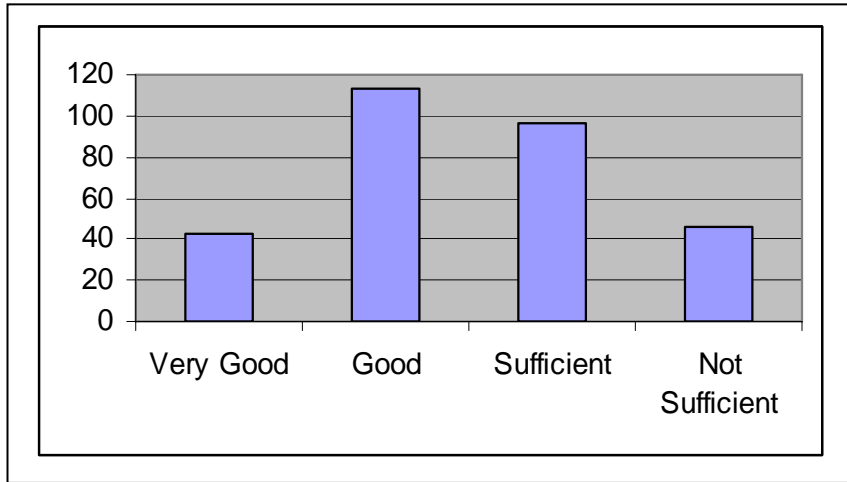


Table -4 indicates that majority of the respondents i.e. 14.38 % were of the opinion of very good transport facilities, 44.48% and 32.44% were of the idea of there being good and sufficient transport facilities are present. Only 15.38% were of the opinion that insufficient transport facilities are present. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph-4.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =50.739

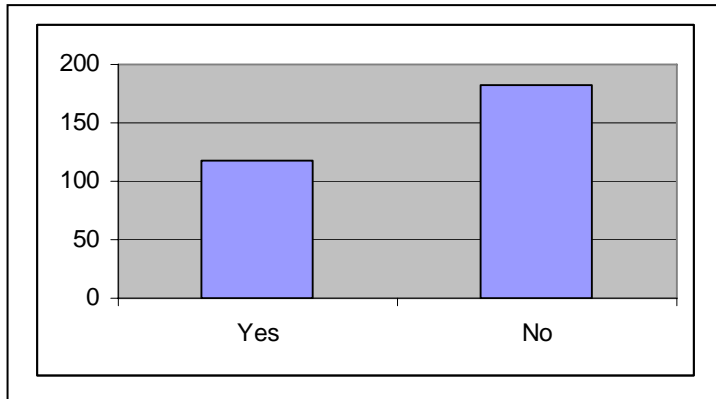
The result is significant. This means the factor of transport facilities shows a strong impact of enhancement and spread of transport facilities in Bahawalpur, Pakistan.

5) Do you agree that clean drinking water is regularly provided in your area?

Table-5

Provision of Drinking Water		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	118	39.33
No	182	60.66
Total	300	

Graph - 5



Data presented in Table -5 reveals that 39.33% respondents were of the opinion of having clean drinking water facility and 60.66% respondents were answering in 'No' to clean drinking water supply. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 5.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =13.653

The result is significant. This means the factor of the facility of the clean water supply, shows some impact of enhancement and spread of facilities under the local government system in Bahawalpur.

6) Do you agree that there is interference of political parties in local government system?

Table-6

Interference of Political Parties		
	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	192	64
Not Agree	37	12.33
No Opinion	71	23.66
Total	300	

Graph-6

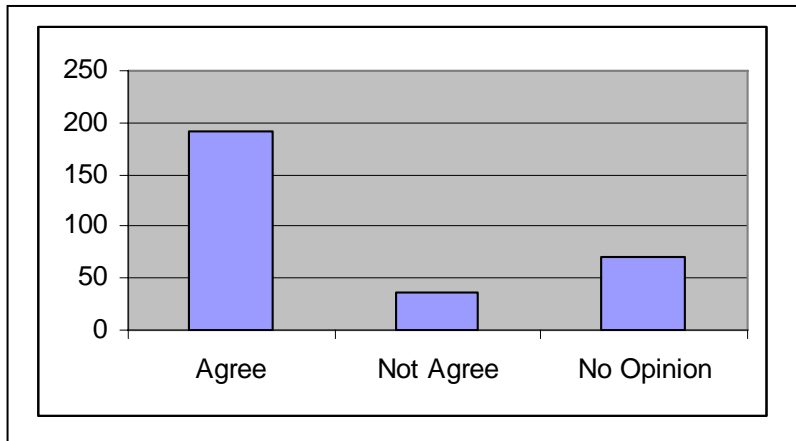


Table -6 shows that a large majority of the respondents i.e. 64 % agreed to the opinion of involvement of political parties in local government system and only 12.33% did not agree to the idea. 23.66% respondents had no opinion. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 6.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =132.74

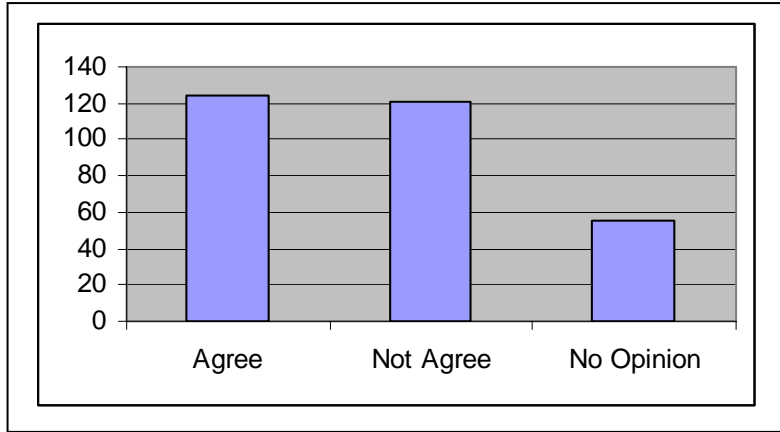
The result is highly significant. This means the factor of facility, i.e. the involvement of political parties shows a very strong impact of enhancement and spread of facilities in Bahawalpur.

7) Do you agree that local landlords in local government system influence the working of local government?

Table-7

Influence of Landlords		
	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	124	41.33
Not Agree	121	40.33
No Opinion	55	18.33
Total	300	

Graph - 7



Data presented in Table -7 indicates that 41.33% respondents agreed to the opinion of involvement of landlords in local government system and 40.33% did not agree to the idea. Only 18.33% respondents had no opinion. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 7.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =30.42

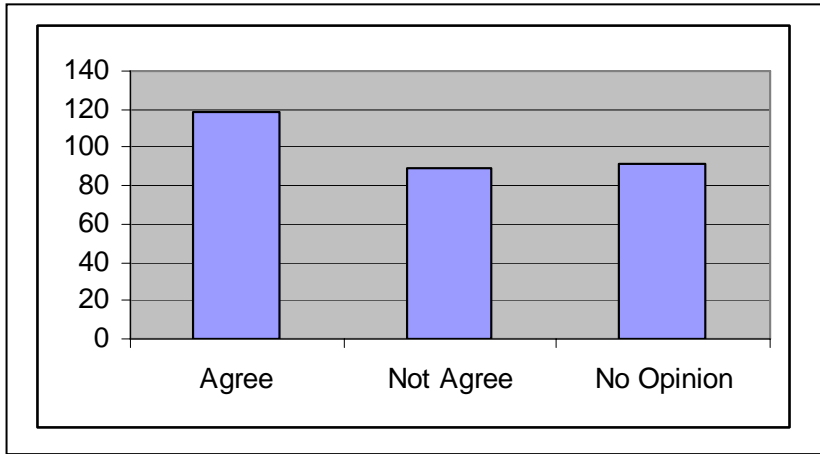
The result is significant. This means that involvement of landlords shows some impact of enhancement and spread of facilities under local government system in Bahawalpur.

8) Do you agree that there is any impact of local government system on national and provincial government?

Table-8

Impact on National and Provincial Government		
	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	119	39.66
Not Agree	89	29.66
No Opinion	92	30.66
Total	300	

Graph-8



Data presented in Table -8 shows that 39.66% respondents agreed to the opinion that local government impact on national and provincial government and 29.66% did not agree to the idea. 30.66% had no opinion. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph-8.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =5.46

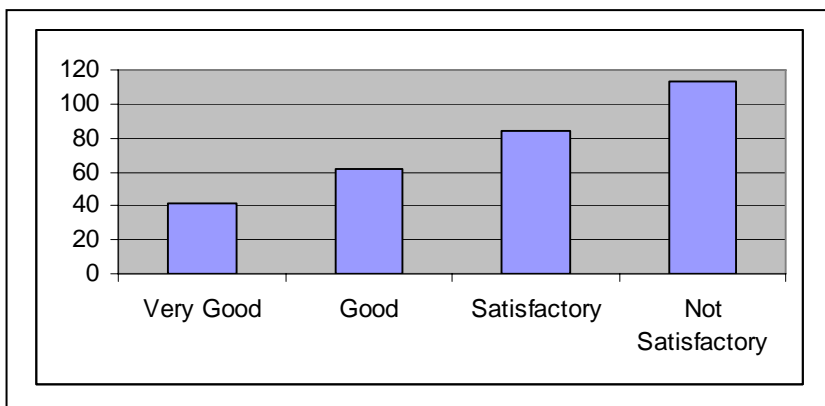
The result is significant. This means the factor of impact of local government on national and provincial governments shows some impact of enhancement and spread of facilities in Bahawalpur.

9) What is your opinion about the work of NGOs in your area?

Table-9

Opinion about NGOs		
	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	41	13.66
Good	62	20.66
Satisfactory	84	28
Not Satisfactory	113	37.66
Total	300	

Graph - 9



The data presented in Table -9 reveals that 13.66% respondents were in favor of very good opinion about NGOs work, 20.66% were of the idea of good and 28% had a satisfactory opinion. 37.66% are not have a satisfactory idea about NGOs work. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 9.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =38.00

The result is significant. This means the factor of reform, i.e. opinion of the work of NGOs, shows some impact of enhancement and spread of facilities by local government system in Bahawalpur.

10) Do you agree that CCB’s are working in your area?

Table-10

CCB Work		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	79	26.33
No	221	73.67
Total	300	

Graph -10

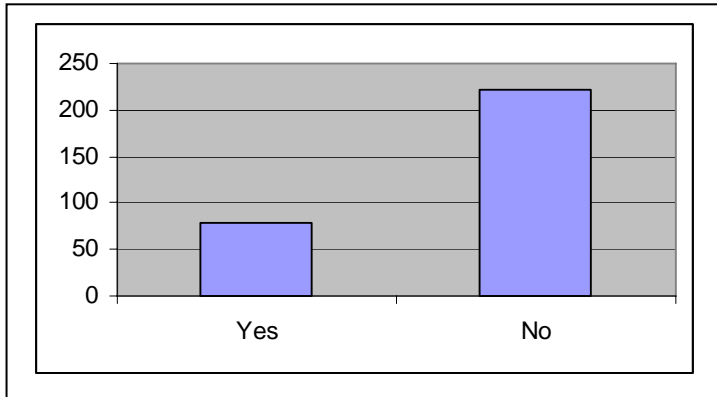


Table -10 shows that 26.33% agreed to the opinion of working CCB and a large majority 73.67% did not agree to the opinion working of CCB. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 10.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =67.213

The result is significant. This means the factor of reform, i.e. CCB work, shows some impact of enhancement and spread of facilities by local government system in Bahawalpur.

11) In your opinion, is there any important role of CCB in local government system?

Table-11

Role of CCB		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	123	41
No	177	59
Total	300	

Graph - 11

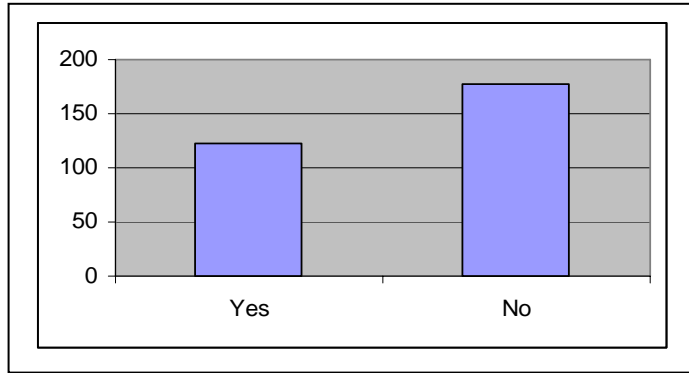


Table -11 shows that 41% respondents agreed to the better role of CCB and 59% did not agree to the important role of CCB. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 11.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =9.72

The result is significant. This means the factor of reform, i.e. important role of CCB, shows some impact of enhancement and spread of facilities through local government system in Bahawalpur.

12) In your opinion does the police and local administration play an important role in local politics?

Table-12

Role of Police and Administration		
	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	237	79
No	63	21
Total	300	

Graph - 12

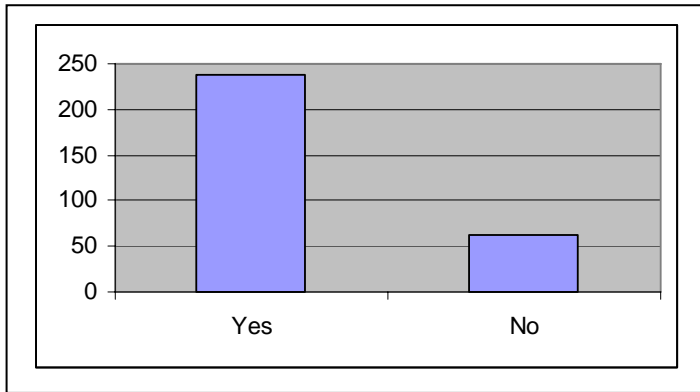


Table -12 indicates that a large majority of the respondents i.e. 79% agreed to the idea that the Police and local administration play an important role and 21% were of the idea of no important role of police and administration. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 12.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =100.92

The result is highly significant. This means the factor of reform, i.e. role of police and administration shows strong impact of enhancement and spread of facilities by local government system in Bahawalpur.

13) Do you agree that due to women’s representation changes are taking place in the status of women?

Table-13

Changes in Women Status		
	Frequency	Percentage
Agree	33	11
Disagree	179	59.66
No Opinion Total	87	29
	299	

Graph-13

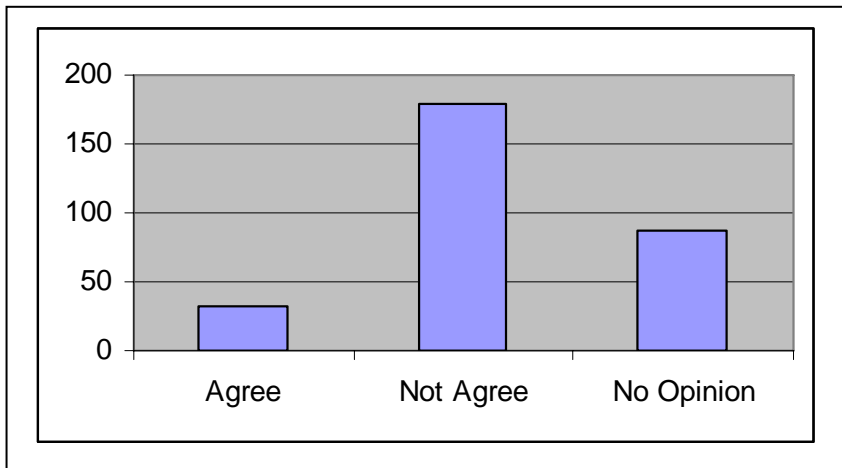


Table -13 exhibits that 11% agreed to the opinion of changes in women’s status and 59.66 respondents did not agree to the idea. 29% of the respondents had no idea in this regard. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 13.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =109.35

The result is highly significant. This means the factor of reform, i.e. change in women status, shows strong impact of enhancement and spread of facilities by the local government system in Bahawalpur.

14) What was the condition of your area before the implementation of the local government system?

Table-14

Condition before Local Government System		
	Frequency	Percentage
Better	41	13.66
Good	62	20.66
Not Good	84	28
No Change	113	37.66
Total	300	

Graph - 14

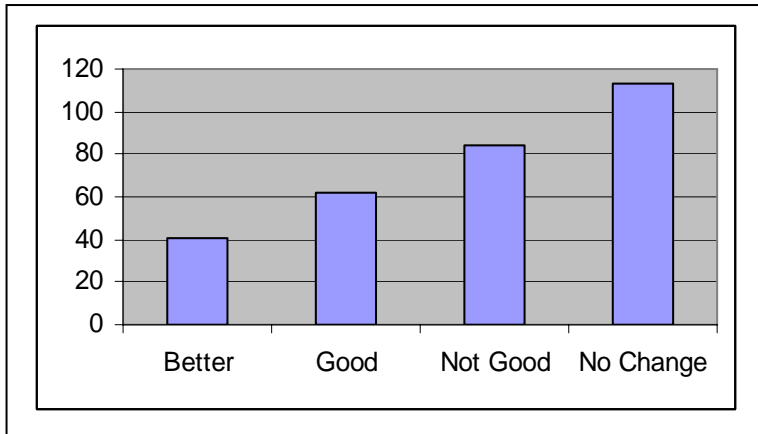


Table -14 shows that 13.66% respondents agreed with the idea of conditions being better before local government system while according to 20.66% the conditions were good before this system and 28.0% were in favour of the opinion that conditions were not good before local government system. 37.66% of respondents have the idea of no change. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 14.

Test Statistics: Chi-Square =38

The result is significant. This means the factor of reform, i.e. Condition before local government system, shows some impact of enhancement and spread of facilities in Bahawalpur.

15) What is the condition of your area after the implementation of Devolution of Power Plan 2000?

Table-15

Condition after Implementation of Devolution of Power Plan 2000		
	Frequency	Percentage
Better	77	25.66
Good	153	51
Not Good	43	14.33
No Change	27	9
Total	300	

Graph-15

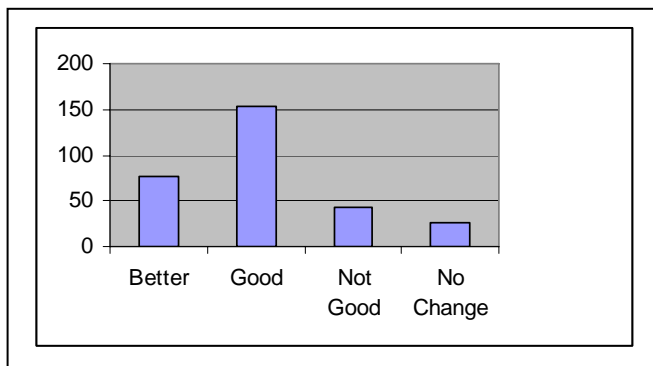


Table -15 shows that 25.66% respondents agreed to the idea of better conditions after local government system while according to 51% respondents the conditions are good after this system and only 14.33% were in favour of the opinion that conditions are not good after the local government system. 9.00% of respondents have the idea of no change. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph- 15.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =125.547

The result is highly significant. This means the factor of reform, i.e. condition after local government system, shows a very strong impact of enhancement and spread of facilities in Bahawalpur.

16) To what extent has the local government system played an effective role for the betterment of people?

Table-16

Effectiveness of Local Government System		
	Frequency	Percentage
Better	151	50.33
Sufficient	82	27.33
Not Sufficient	67	22.33
Total	300	

Graph-16

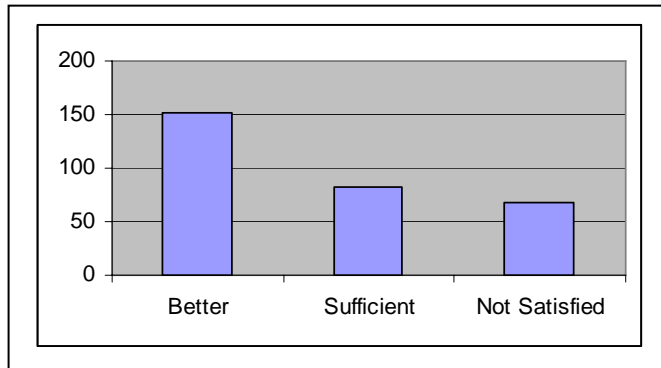


Table -16 reflects the opinion of people about the effectiveness of local government system. A majority of the respondents i.e. 50.3% are of the opinion of better effectiveness of local government system and 27.3% are of the idea of sufficient effectiveness. Only 22.3% of the respondents had the opinion of insufficient effectiveness of the local government system. This is also shown by Bar Charts in Graph-16.

Test Statistics:

Chi-Square =40.14

The result is significant. This means opinion about effectiveness of the local government system, shows strong impact of enhancement and spread of facilities in Bahawalpur.

Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to examine the impact of the local government system. The study also suggests some measures for better implementation of the system. The study was conducted in Bahawalpur district. The population of the present study was male and female councillors, Nazims and Naib Nazims and people of different community sectors. In the light of the objectives of the study a well designed interview schedule was prepared for data collection.

Findings

The data analysis demonstrates the following results:

1. The people generally are familiar with local government system. 17.33% respondents were of the opinion of much awareness, 42.33% had good awareness and 40.0% were of the idea of sufficient awareness.
2. A large number of the respondents i.e. 83% were of the opinion of comfortable health facilities provided by the local government and only 17% were of the idea of no comfortable health facilities are being available.
3. 45.95% respondents were of the opinion of better educational facilities and 54.05% were of the idea of no better educational facilities.
4. Only 14.38 % respondents were of the opinion of very good transport facilities, 44.48% and 32.44% were of the idea of good and sufficient transport facilities respectively. Only 15.38% were of the opinion that not sufficient transport facilities.
5. 39.33.0% respondents were of the opinion of having clean water facility and a large majority of respondents, i.e. 60.66% answered in 'No' to clean water supply.
6. A large majority of the respondents i.e. 64 % agreed to the opinion of involvement of political parties in local government system and only 12.33% did not agree to this idea. 23.66% respondents had no opinion.
7. 41.33% respondents agreed to the opinion of involvement of landlords in the local government system and 40.33% did not agree to the idea. Only 18.33% respondents had no opinion.
8. 39.66% respondents agreed to the opinion that the local government had made an impact on the national and provincial governments and 29.66% did not agree to this idea. 30.66% had no opinion.
9. Only 13.66% respondents were in favour of a very good opinion about NGOs work, 20.66% were of the idea of good and 28% responded that a satisfactory opinion. 37.66% had no satisfactory idea about NGOs work.
10. 26.33% agreed to the opinion of working with CCB and a large majority (73.67%) were not agreeing with the work of CCB.

11. 41% respondents agreed to a better role of CCB and 59% did not agreed with the important role of CCB.
12. A large majority of the respondents i.e. 79% agreed to the opinion that police and local administration plays an important role and 21% were of the idea of no important role of police and administration.
13. Only 11% respondents agreed to the opinion of changes in women's status and 59.66 respondents did not agree to the idea. 29% of the respondents had no idea in this regard.
14. Only 13.66% respondents agreed to the idea of conditions being worse before local government system while according to 20.66% the conditions were good before this system and 28.0% were in favour of the opinion that conditions were not good before the local government system. 37.66% of respondents have the idea of no change.
15. 25.66% respondents agreed to the idea of better conditions after local government system while according to 51% respondents the conditions were good after this system and only 14.33% were in favour of the opinion that conditions were not good after the local government system. 9.00% of respondents had the idea of no change.
16. A majority of the respondents i.e. 50.3% were of the opinion of better effectiveness of the local government system and 27.3% were of the idea of sufficient effectiveness. Only 22.3% of the respondents had the opinion of insufficient effectiveness of the local government system.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Below is a series of suggestions and recommendations based upon the findings of the research study. The recommendations are as follow:

1. The support for local development initiatives should continue because it is more efficient for decisions to be made at the local level to benefit from the information of time and place.
2. A comprehensive report indicating reasons for the poor performance of local government system should be prepared.
3. Implementation capacity should be strengthened and targets should be set.

4. Local government staff should continue to be recruited for training. However the duration of training should be one to three months.
5. The necessary funds and facilities should be provided to all local councils.
6. The system of evaluation of the performance should be introduced.
7. More financial and human resources should be reserved for community development, health facilities, education, housing, roads and transport system.
8. Community Citizen Board's meetings should be held regularly.
9. There should be improvement in women status. Their participation should be ensured in planning, implementing and monitoring the local government system.
10. The effective participation of all stakeholders should be ensured for the betterment of the community.
11. There is a need of streamlining the operations of the local government institutions for improvement and efficiency.
12. Infrastructure planning is required.

Local Government System: Proposed Strategies

The strategies proposed in respect of the local government system are as follows

Strategy No: 1

The improvement of sanitation facilities and the provision of play grounds and suitable security measures etc should be taken under the supervision of Community Citizen Boards.

Strategy No: 2

A number of different components are proposed for improvement of local government system.

- The improvement in quality education requires up-gradation of the competence and applications of technology.
- Community welfare centres should be established.
- Centres for the behavioural training of the local community should be established.
- Beauty care, baking training and vocational centres should be established for women for increase in income.
- A system of keeping record of important events at the ward level should be established.

Strategy No: 3

Women clubs should be established at the ward level for a change in family life.

Local governments should be provided adequate resources at the district level and should be bound to spend their collected funds within their respective district.

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