Verifying Effectiveness of Social Welfare Services in Pakistan through Methodological Triangulation: A Qualitative Analysis of Public Sector Institutions in Punjab

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Abstract

The study aimed at evaluation of social welfare services in Punjab, Pakistan. Five randomly selected social welfare services meant for women, children and the general poor in three districts of the province were evaluated through In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) being main strategy of evaluation. The results of the analysis were triangulated by SERVQUAL scale. The scale was administered to 150 service-recipients from the sampled districts. The results of the study show Medical Social Services Projects (MSSPs) as best performing institutions in the province while Center for Lost & Kidnapped Children (CLKC) as the low performing. The rest fall in between. On-site witnessing of the institutions helped the researchers in further verifying the results to be more or less the same. As far the reasons of this residual performance are concerned, lack of funds and bad governance came out to be the main causes.

Keywords: women welfare, child welfare, welfare forth senior citizens, SERVQUAL

I. Introduction

Pakistan occupies an important geostrategic position (Rizvi, 1986) in the ESCAP region. The ESCAP (Economic and Social Co-operation of Asia and Pacific) being the home of approximately 66% of the world’s poor (United Nations, 2010) no doubt made noticeable progress towards United Nations’ Millennium Development Goals but still is exposed to a number of risks such as natural disasters, illness, disability, violence, crime and unemployment (MHHDC, 2010). In order to ward off these risks the experts most of the time stress ESCAP countries to have a non-viscous and lubricated system of social welfare services (Rawlings & Rubio, 2004) because such an efficient welfare system is non-existent in these countries especially in Pakistan. Rehmatullah (2002) has rightly said in this context that social welfare in Pakistan is in doldrums at present. The growth and buoyancy that it experienced during the seventies and eighties started to slow down in nineties and now have almost come to a grinding halt (Rehmatullah, 2002).
There are, no doubt, so many other factors which contribute to this situation but proper monitoring and evaluation of social welfare programs and services has always been found non-existent. It can be witnessed that:

i. The situation and demands in which the programs were started are not the same but the mode of services being delivered is almost same especially in case of medical social work, child welfare and services for the senior citizens of Pakistan.

ii. Most of the programs had been started haphazardly without having studied their needs and feasibility. A new service called ‘school social work’ was started in the whole province without studying its need or feasibility (ibid).

It is evident that if the Pakistani institutions had the proper evaluation system they would have their services at par with the changing needs of the people. The proper evaluation not only gives an assessment whether the program is on the right track but also provides basis for improvements. To unveil the situation and deficiencies in the existing evaluation system in the Pakistani social welfare institutions we have taken the case of social welfare net-work within the province of Punjab. This is the first ever consolidated academic pursuit to study social welfare in Pakistan.

Punjab is the largest province of Pakistan in terms of population (Salamat, 1997; Talbot., 1988; Sanaullah, 1983). It comprises of 57 percent of country’s total population. Its estimated population was 81 million in 2010. It consists of 36 districts, 127 tehsils and 371 provincial assembly seats (http://en.wikipedia.org).

It is the second largest province with an area of 205,344 square kilometers after Baluchistan. Lahore is the capital and the largest city of the province. Other important cities are Multan, Faisalabad Sheikhpura, Sialkot Gujranwala, Jhelum, Rawalpindi and Sargodha. But Lahore is the main hub of all cultural, administrative and economic activities (ibid).

Social welfare services in Punjab include both at public and private levels. The public level services consist of four major types (i) Women Welfare, (ii) Child Welfare, (iii) Welfare of the Senior Citizens, and (iv) Welfare of the Less Privileged (i.e. the poor). The private level services include NGOs on: (i) Women Welfare (ii) Child Welfare (iii) Welfare of the Senior Citizens. Lahore tops all the districts in Punjab regarding welfare services. Nearly all the services are found here. The second slot consists of Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Bahawalpur and Multan. The rest fall in the category of low welfare. Chiniot and Nankana Sahib are two newly emerged districts.

II. Methodology

The study was designed to verify the effectiveness of public level social welfare services in Punjab, Pakistan. It’s a common observation that the service givers at their own claim that there is an in-built evaluation system in the social welfare institutions in Pakistan but as a matter of fact no such thing exists. And if at all it had existed, it would have uncovered the gap between the service-recipients’ expectations and the reality. Moreover, services wouldn’t have been the same as had been sixty years ago. The purpose of the study, hence, is to show a graphic picture of social welfare services in Pakistan. For this purpose two widely accepted procedures have been used to verify what
is happening in the institutions and what is the inside story of the institutions. These procedures are: (a) Case Examples of the Institutions; and (b) SERVQUAL Analysis of the Institutions. The first procedure is the main evaluating strategy and the second is verifying measure of the results. The procedures are further explained as under:

It has been further divided into (i) On-site observation; and (ii) In-depth Interviews (IDIs) of the Service Beneficiaries. On-site observation encompasses the service effectiveness with a view to: (a) accessibility to the service; (b) its coverage; (c) governance; (d) funds etc. which are common indicators of an effective service.

Accessibility determines the performance and coverage of the service. Any intervention to a client’s problem is human-based and human beings are its providers. The intervention process fails to start without the contact between the persons at giving and those at receiving ends. Coverage, in turn, depends upon accessibility of the service. It is a proxy to the performance of service rendering agency. The factors like budget, personnel, process and evaluation contribute to the coverage.

No doubt an alert and empirical observation by a researcher can help him draw a true ethnographic picture of the situation. But observation alone does not paint the true picture because of the fact that extra-human things fail to respond verbally. It is ultimately left with the human beings who speak and give their opinion about the effectiveness of services because services are for them. Therefore in order to measure the satisfaction level of the recipients their In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) are of utmost importance.

The following social welfare institutions in Punjab were randomly chosen for above two purposes i.e. for on-site observation and for IDIs. These institutions were:

1. District Industrial Home (Sanatzar)
2. Shelter Homes/Rescue Homes (Dar-ul-Aman)
3. Centers for Lost and Kidnapped Children (Nigehban)
4. Homes for Old-aged and Infirm People (Aafiat)
5. Medical Social Services Project

On-site observation demands keen observations and taking field notes on the part of observer (usually a researcher). Most of the qualitative researchers develop ways to take note either in real time (at the spot) or to retreat to a quiet space as soon as possible while the memories are still afresh (Royse, et al., 2001). On-site observations of this study included face-to-face interviews of the beneficiaries of the institutions. The researchers have coded such interviews by putting the letter ‘B’ for beneficiaries and ‘O’ for official of the institution after the abbreviated name of the institution. e.g., for a beneficiary of District Industrial Home the code had been ‘DIHB’ and for an official it had been ‘DIHO’.

In order to triangulate (i.e. to verify the results) the researcher(s) used SERVQUAL Scale. The scale consists of Tangibles; Reliability; Responsiveness; Assurance; and Empathy as its dimensions. Among the many evaluation methods prevalent round the world, it is one of the most efficient procedures that equally holds good to all categories of services from hospitality to even courier services. The reason
lies in the fact that service-delivery is a sensitive issue and its evaluation is rather more sensitive. Some people are annoyed at the attitude of the staff. Some others feel teased at the non-availability of the tangibles. Still others expect assurance from the service-givers. The scale is so comprehensive that it encompasses all aspects of the service recipients’ behavior. Therefore in order to enhance the reliability of results and to verify or even re-verify the findings, which Denzin (1970) called as methodological triangulation, SERVQUAL scale has no match (Wisniewski, 2001; Asubonteng et al, 1996; Dotchin & Oakland, 1994a; Lewis & Mitchell, 1990).

Service quality, through this scale, is determined as the difference between client’s expectations and perceptions about service. If expectations are greater than performance, then perceived quality is less than satisfactory and hence client’s dissatisfaction occurs (Parasuraman et al, 1985). More about the measurement Parasuraman et al. (1988) argued that, with minor modification, SERVQUAL can be adapted to any service organization. The tool consists of 5 characteristic factors of a welfare service regarding its quality which have been further operationalized through a 22 items attached to a 7-point Likert scale. The dimensions have been defined as:

i. **Tangibles** include appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communications materials;
ii. **Reliability** is the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately;
iii. **Responsiveness** is the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service;
iv. **Assurance** is the competence of the system and its credibility in providing a courteous and secure service; and
v. **Empathy** is the approachability, ease of access and effort taken to understand customers' needs.

The gaps between client’s expectations and perceptions of the service are calculated for each dimension in the questionnaire. The evaluator can measure the performance of the service by adopting either of the following two ways or both:

i. Computing the ‘gap’ for each statement pair in all the 5 dimensions as follows:
   
   \[
   \text{Gap} = \text{Service Expected} - \text{Service Perceived}
   \]

   It is to be noted that the higher the gap the lower will be the performance and vice versa.

ii. Computing the performance in dimensions scores for each institution by calculating the percentage from total scores of all the statements.

### III. Data Collection

The researcher(s) conducted In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) of total 30 respondents (including both beneficiaries and officials) as well as on-site observations of the above institutions located in Lahore, Sargodha and Khushab. The three districts were selected through multi-stage sampling. Similarly 150 service recipients were selected through simple random sampling from those other than selected for IDIs. For on-site observation the researcher(s) personally visited the welfare institutions, sometimes scheduled and sometimes unscheduled so that to reduce the observation bias. However, to administer SERVQUAL tool prior permission from the administrator was sought. In order to follow the research ethics anonymity of the beneficiaries as well as employees of the institutions
was also maintained. Besides mobile phone recording memory recall was also used to transcribe the conversations with the respondents. In order to ensure privacy, respondents were accessed out-of-venue after working hours too.

IV. Data Analysis
A. The Case Examples:

Case Example No. I: District Industrial Homes (Sanatzar)

District Industrial Homes (DIHs) are known in the society as Sanatzars. The role of Sanatzar is quite important in economic empowerment of the poor women. Here they are provided opportunities of training as well as earnings. The researcher(s) has personally visited the three industrial homes of Punjab and gathered data on the effectiveness of this service as follows:

a) Accessibility: All the three District Industrial Homes (of Lahore, Sargodha and Khushab) are situated at the main roads and can easily be accessed as being few paces from the wagon/bus stop.

b) Performance and coverage: The coverage of DIHs needs more attention of the management as an official of DIH expressed his views in these words: “We invited applications for admission through cable network, we put advertisements in national as well local dailies, and we got announced in the mosques but failed to raise enrolments in DIH.” (DIHO/4)

Regarding measures to enhance coverage another official of DIH said: “Sanatzar of Sargodha had sent a case regarding a cash amount for the trainee girls as stipend.” (DIHO/1)

c) Funds: The above problem may be due to lack of funds. Lamenting dearth of funds another DIH official said in these words: “We lack resources. That is why the services are same as that had been 30 years ago.” (DIHO/2)

Upon asking the measures regarding income enhancement a trainee at the DIH is quoted answering in these words: “How can Sanatzars compete with the garment industries and boutiques? Sanatzars have their machinery and equipment of 30 years old while the competitors have most modern ones.” (DIHB/1)

Similarly: “The display centers of the Sanatzar are away from the shopping malls. Who will approach to these out-of-the-way display centers? Why should a display centers be housed in Sanatzar at all costs? Why not at some eye-catching point?” (Ibid)

No doubt, these are the pre-requisites of attracting public attention. But it is probably due to the financial constraints that the display centers cannot be hired in the shopping malls.

d) Governance: The governance issues are intact but not so hard.

Although there have been so many other instances contributing to poor governance yet most of the officers the researcher(s) interviewed seemed to be very pleased with the performance of the District Industrial Homes. One of the Directors in the Department of
Social Welfare, Women Development & Bait-ul-Maal, Government of Punjab, Lahore is verbatim quoted here: “No matter the NGOs and INGOs out-numbered the government’s programs and services focusing upon different issues of women, from basic needs to political participation, the women empowerment through different state-run institutions especially the District Industrial Homes (SANATZAR) is remarkable”.

(DIHO/9)

It can be deduced from the above case study a few, not all; of the district industrial homes in Punjab stand at a residual level of performance. Their coverage is limited. Budget is meager and tangibles are out dated. The governance issues are also intact.

Case Example No. 2: Shelter Homes (Dar-ul-Aman)

In the beginning shelter homes were established at all divisional headquarters to provide necessary services for rehabilitation of women in litigation and family disputes. But due to its popularity now it has been established at district level in Punjab. These shelter homes are known as “Dar-ul-Amans”. Dar-ul-Aman is an Arabic word which means ‘Refuge Home/ Shelter Home’. The researcher visited three Dar-ul-Amans of Lahore, Sargodha and Khushab keeping in view the following variables of performance:

a) Accessibility: Except a few in Punjab, nearly all the Dar-ul-Amans are not situated at an easy access. A potential recipient of the service has to reach the institution traveling through the labyrinth of twisting streets, retreating from dead ends and usually halting to seek guidance from the strangers. Being out of approach may be for security of in-mates.

As far as security of the institution is concerned a woman inmate of the institution at Lahore praised the security in these words: “I am (N). ----My parents live in Lahore. I have come to Sargodha after getting married to a person named (S) ----six months ago. Since the day I arrived in Sargodha my husband has been doing sodomy with me. I applied to the court for separation. But my parents compelled me to continue living with my husband. I tried my best to reside with my married sister. But because of life threats from my father and brothers, I came to Dar-ul-Aman. I am secure here.” (SHB/1)

b) Coverage: The popularity of the institution has grown so high that the number of women seeking shelter to Dar-ul-Aman, during the year 2010, had increased by 30 percent (Daily Nawa-i-Waqt, 6.4.11). The coverage of all Dar-ul-Amans is, no doubt, encouraging which the researcher(s) had particularly endorsed at the time of their visit.

c) Funds and Governance: As usual the institution lacks funds. Social Welfare Department in Punjab is sufferer in this case.

Previously GTZ, a German NGO had been funding to Dar-ul-Amans. But, at present, a French NGO namely Medecins Du Monde (MDM) is providing all the tangibles like food items, bed sheets, kitchen utensils etc. to these institutions. Every Dar-ul-Aman provides services of food and shelter to almost 50 women simultaneously. One should not be in the dark that these institutions are capacity crowded. A lion’s share of the average annual budget of a Dar-ul-Aman (almost Rs. 4 million) goes into the head
of salaries, diet, and utility bills etc. Nothing is spared for the other things. It goes without saying that due to lack of funds these institutions fail to impress the visitors.

Besides lack of funds one should take down the lapse in administration also. Criticizing administration an inmate (L) of Dar-ul-Aman (not to disclose identity) gave his or her views as: “This institution is promoting moral corruption and it should be closed forthwith”. (SHB/2)

An inmate (J) of Dar-ul-Amans has put forward a simplest solution to resolve the bad impression in the society in these words: “Women must be interviewed prior to admission”. (SHB/3)

Another measure to bridle such an issue is religious education. The job of a religious teacher cannot be overlooked in the sense that if she is sincere in her duties she can bring about a change in the personalities. When the researcher contacted the religious teacher, she told (upon promise not to disclose her name) the researcher: “I have been here (at Dar-ul-Aman Sargodha) for the last four years. During my stay I counseled more than 100 women. As a result of my counseling a good number of women are leading a peaceful life and enjoying the charms of good marital relations within their families. No doubt this institution is playing a positive and correctional role for the women folk of the society”. (Ibid). More similar measures can be helpful to remove inherent faults chiefly related to governance.

The above discussion reveals that Dar-ul-Amans are low-accessed, secure, ill-governed but their popularity and coverage is increasing day by day. No doubt these institutions are notorious in the society for promoting moral corruption but efficient measures can reverse the situation.

Case Example No.3: Social Services Centers for Lost and Kidnapped Children (Nigeban)

Social Services Centers for Lost and Kidnapped Children (Nigeban) have been established at all divisional headquarters to provide lodging and protection to the run away, lost and kidnapped children. Nigeban is a Persian word which means ‘an entity that gives security’. Some children at their adolescence are indulged in bad company and run away from their homes. They are kidnapped by the gangsters to be used in different sorts of crimes. The parents despite their hard struggle fail to search them out. It is Nigeban which not only provides such a children the lodging, foods and other basic needs but also enables their parents to find them.

a) Accessibility: Like Dar-ul-Aman accessibility to these institutions is also not so easy. However, the informed parents of their kept children will find no difficulty in reaching these institutions. As far as accessibility to the staff during working hours is concerned it is very difficult. It may be due to the fact that field staff goes early in the morning to their assigned places and the office staff comes late because of reportedly least work-load.

An anonymous client describes his personal experience of visiting a Nigeban (refusing to reveal the identity of the institution) and to have an access to the
staff in these words: “In December 2009, I visited a Nigheban. I reached at 10.00 am. Of the total 9 staff members, nobody except a peon (F) was there”. (CLKCB/1)

Upon asking about the staff the peon in turn asked him: Bacha leny aye ho (Have you come to receive the lost child)?” (Ibid)

He said: “Yes.” (Ibid)

The peon said: Saray officer aikghantay k baadaajainge. Madam aaj chhutti per hain (All the officers of this institution will reach after one an hour. Madam (superintendent) is on leave today).” (Ibid)

The source said: “I waited till 4.00 pm but nobody reached.” (Ibid)

This is an ample proof of clients’ accessibility to the staff.

b) Coverage: A retired official (A) from Nigehban, described the coverage of the institution in these words: “No doubt this service was started in good vein. But when one Javed Iqbal claimed, in 2001, to have murdered 100 children the popularity of the institution especially that of Lahore, dropped to zero. It was revealed afterward that all the victims of that callous person were from poor families who had left their homes either to look for a labor or to escape the cruel treatment of some family member”. (CLKCO/3)

Another person from among the service recipient told about the overall performance of the institution. “It may be due to lack of publicity that a least number of people are aware of its purpose of being in the society.” (CLKCO/2)

c) Funds and Governance: Importance of Nighebans cannot be denied in the sense that these are the only centers in society which act as a ray of hope for the parents of runaway or kidnapped children. No doubt, it is a sheltering place for those at the mercy of this cruel world. Praising the comfort of this snuggled place two of the runaway boys staying at Nigheban, Lahore compared their before and after state in these words: “After having run away from home (Arifwala) we spent nights at hotels, auto workshops, video centers and bus terminals. The owners of the establishments had sex with us just to give us food and a place to stay, and sometimes for only rupees 10’. We have been brought here day before yesterday. We feel comfort here”. (CLKCB/1)

But, on the other hand, it is inefficiency of the field staff that kidnappers and gangsters do their action prior to the arrival of the Nigheban staff. On the contrary, the auxiliary workers defend them arguing that they have to do without funds. A source confirms their stance in these words: “There is only one Nigheban in Lahore with a capacity to house up to 30 children at a time. It suffers from a lack of funds and skilled workers.”(Mahmood & Nasir, 2008).

The above discussion reveals that accessibility to the institution is high but due to absenteeism accessibility to the staff is nil. Inefficiency of the field staff is also vivid.
Case Example No.4: Homes for Old and Infirm Persons (Aafiat)

The homes for old and infirm persons are known in the society as Aafiat. It is an Arabic word which means ‘Comfort’. The researcher(s) visited Aafiat of Lahore as there were no Aafiat in Sargodha and Khushab.

Most of the people are unaware of old age homes as according to Islamic point of view it is imperative for adult children to look after their parents.

The researcher(s) visited the Old Age Home at Township and during their visit contacted both inmates and the staff to analyze the performance of the institution.

(a) Accessibility: Reaching institution is a big problem both for the old aged and for their visitors. It is in Township Lahore and only a wagon No.16 stops there.

(b) Coverage: According to a high ranking official of the Directorate General of Social Welfare Punjab, all the three old-aged homes are performing well. He is verbatim quoted as: “The AAFIAT of Lahore is capacity crowded with 50 inmates, almost same number in Rawalpindi. But there is lesser member in AAFIAT of Multan which is due to an issue of the building AAFIAT housed in”. (HOIPO/2)

Despite due to the opposing cultural and societal values its coverage is very high. It may be perhaps due to very limited number of AAFIATS.

(c) Governance: While contacting the inmates of the institution so many facts were revealed pertaining to governance.

An inmate told his views in these words: “Food is not good. It is usually sub-standard. The doctor has advised me to use cooking oil, as I am heart patient. But the kitchen of this institution does not favor me” (HOIPB/1)

Whereas another person (M) praised the quality of food in these words: “The food is good. It is absolutely free. We must not find fault in God-gifted things. Rather we should thank Him”. (HOIPB/2)

No doubt, this institution is best for those who have none in this world to look after. Another (P) shared his experience in these words: “I have none in this world to look after me, to wash my clothes, to give me medicine. This is the only peace for me to live. I shall spend rest of my days here. It is my Jannat (Paradise).” (HOIPB/4)

But some inmates showed their dissatisfaction over the attitude of the staff. One of the inmates (A) showed his dissatisfaction over the attitude of the staff in these words: “I shall leave this place soon. The staff is stubborn and obstinate”. (HOIPB/7)

Asking another person (F) (who was a retired headmaster and was writing a book six months ago) about peace and comfort in the institution he replied: “I belong to Azad Kashmir. My wife is no more in this world. I have a daughter the only issue. She is married and resides in Samanabad. Her husband is a good mannered person. He forced me to live with them. But due to disturbance I could not complete my book. I am in AFIAT
The above discussion reveals that accessibility to the institution is difficult. Governance issues are also there. As far as coverage is concerned it is sufficient with respect to the norms of home-based care in Punjab.

Case Example No. 5: Medical Social Services Projects (MSSPs):

Medical Social Services Units were introduced during the First Plan period and since then they are functioning; in conjunction with hospitals. These units provide case work, after-care and convalescence services to the needy and poor patients and thereby cut returns to hospitals, prevent spread of disease and breakdown in patient's family, make medical treatment more meaningful and effective, undertake rehabilitation of the patients, and activate community action for the benefit of the patients (First Five-year Plan).

The project has a long list of recipients whom it provided multiple services like free medicines, blood, artificial limbs and concession in bed-fee etc. The project provides these services by the financial assistance from the Zakat fund.

The researcher analyzed the project through personal observation, interviews of the staff as well as beneficiaries of the service.

(a) Accessibility: The projects are housed in the hospital premises and usually situated at a stone’s throw from the bus/wagon stop and a few paces from the main gate of the hospital. One finds no difficulty in reaching the office of the project. Accessibility to the office is, therefore, no problem for a new comer.

(b) Coverage: The coverage of this institution is vast as there are total 110 such projects in the whole province and during 2008-09 the total number of beneficiaries had raised to 1.2 million. The coverage, therefore, is more than the other social welfare institutions in Punjab.

(c) Funds & Governance:

An official during an informal discussion revealed: “The major constraint is budget. The voluntary sector has, no doubt, out-performed the public sector. But the story ends at funds”.

It has also been observed, personally, by the researcher that the project is quick in response to the clients’ problems. But the views of the beneficiaries of the service are vice versa. A beneficiary (A.H.), resident of a nearby town Ajnala, was a laborer by profession. He brought his seriously injured son (13) to the DHQ hospital. He applied to the project for medicine and bed-fee concession as he was too poor to pay the same. But according to him the project did not pay any heed to his request. During his interview he said all this in these words: “I am a very poor man. I have nothing to spend on the treatment of my son who fell down from the back grill of a bus when he was going to school. He got injured badly. In a pursuit to get financial assistance from the project I tried my level best but despite the lapse of 18 days I failed to receive a single worthless tablet from this office.”
We can conclude that the accessibility to these institutions is no problem. The coverage of this institution is vast as due to the presence of a project in the hospital and there are total 110 such projects in the whole province. No doubt the performance of the project is excellent but the governance issues are as such which are related to budgetary constraints.

B. The SERVQUAL Results

Of all the dimensions gap of each between perception and expectation was calculated. On the basis of the gap, mean performance of each of the following institutions was calculated:

1. District Industrial Home (DIH)
2. Shelter Home (SH)
3. Center for Lost and Kidnapped Children (CLKC)
4. Home for Old and Infirm Person (HOIP)
5. Medical Social Services Project (MSSP)

A total of 150 SERVQUALs were administered by the researcher. The summary scores for each dimension are shown in Table No.2, with mean scores per dimension and the overall SERVQUAL score.

The Gap

As can be seen from Table No.1, the highest gap scores were for EMPATHY which is ranked V and ASSURANCE which is ranked IV. As can be seen from the results, the client expects most from the EMPATHY dimension. This means that there is a large gap between expectation and perception. This shows that client demands more individual attention from the agency, personal attention from the workers, focus on needs and interests and above all, demand more compatible operating hours of the agency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Dimension/Construct</th>
<th>DIH</th>
<th>SH</th>
<th>CLKC</th>
<th>HOIP</th>
<th>MSSP</th>
<th>Mean Gap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Tangibles</td>
<td>-3.23</td>
<td>-2.66</td>
<td>-2.74</td>
<td>-3.23</td>
<td>-2.22</td>
<td>-2.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>-2.57</td>
<td>-3.24</td>
<td>-3.75</td>
<td>-3.49</td>
<td>-2.03</td>
<td>-3.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>-2.25</td>
<td>-3.28</td>
<td>-3.46</td>
<td>-3.31</td>
<td>-2.10</td>
<td>-2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>-2.72</td>
<td>-3.42</td>
<td>-3.78</td>
<td>-3.32</td>
<td>-2.14</td>
<td>-3.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>-2.81</td>
<td>-3.32</td>
<td>-4.03</td>
<td>-3.27</td>
<td>-2.44</td>
<td>-3.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Client is an organism which is more receptive to the behavior of others. Second largest gap is between ASSURANCE items which mean that the client demands behavior of the employees’ that instills confidence in him/her, demands more safety, more courtesy and more satisfaction through employees’ behavior.

Then comes Reliability, Responsiveness and Tangibles constructs which are ranked III, II and I. As these dimensions are with least gap they would need less attention.
The Performance

It has been vivid through the SERVQUAL responses that of all the five constructs of service quality the level of Tangibles in all the institutions has been higher i.e. 56.07% whereas that of Empathy has been lower i.e. 47.04%.

Being not par excellence, nearly half of the institutions analyzed have not yet switched over to modern equipment, physical facilities and appealing service delivery systems. Most of the institutions are still devoid of modern computer devices, office accessories and evaluation tangibles. Among the worst hit institutions in this regard are HOIP. Where this ratio of Tangibles is alarmingly low i.e. 45.37% (as shown in Table No.2)

Lower ratio of Empathy, as has been said above, is due to the reason that except DIH & MSSP, all the three institutions show a lower ratio of the construct while CLKC is at a very low percentage i.e. 34.87%. In all the institutions in general and in SH, CLKC & HOIP in particular the employees fail to perceive the clients’ particular needs and interests.

Least number of clients receives agency’s individual attention and least number of clients receives workers personal attentions. Above all the operating hours of the agency are not convenient to the majority of the clients.

Table 2: Performance Comparison of Service Quality in Punjab

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Dimension/ Construct</th>
<th>DIH</th>
<th>SH</th>
<th>CLKC</th>
<th>HOIP</th>
<th>MSSP</th>
<th>Mean (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>Tangibles</td>
<td>61.58</td>
<td>57.33</td>
<td>53.70</td>
<td>45.37</td>
<td>62.39</td>
<td>56.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02</td>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>56.15</td>
<td>46.53</td>
<td>37.53</td>
<td>41.13</td>
<td>65.66</td>
<td>49.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03</td>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>60.73</td>
<td>45.02</td>
<td>40.96</td>
<td>43.86</td>
<td>63.48</td>
<td>50.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04</td>
<td>Assurance</td>
<td>55.50</td>
<td>42.98</td>
<td>36.56</td>
<td>39.50</td>
<td>62.93</td>
<td>47.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>52.69</td>
<td>42.86</td>
<td>34.87</td>
<td>45.47</td>
<td>59.32</td>
<td>47.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Performance (%)</td>
<td>57.33</td>
<td>46.94</td>
<td>40.72</td>
<td>43.07</td>
<td>62.75</td>
<td>50.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responsiveness, as shown in Table No.2, is the second higher construct in this study i.e. at 50.81 percent. It is as usual higher in DIH & MSSP i.e. 60.73% and 63.48% respectively but fluctuates around 43% in the rest three institutions. Whereas, the worst hit institution is CLKC at 40.96%. In all the three institutions more than half of the clients face problems associated with Responsiveness of the agency’s employees. These problems include lack of positivism to clients’ problems, delay in service delivery, lack of willingness on the part of employees to help the clients and proper response to their requests.

Reliability is the third higher construct in all the institutions i.e. at 49.40% percent. It has highest percentage (65.66%) for MSSP and the lowest for CLKC i.e. 37.53% (as shown in Table No.2). Again all the three institutions (SH, CLKC & HOIP) are labeled with unreliable and unscheduled activities, lack of sincerity to solve clients’ problems, service delivery not based on reliable principles, avoidance of service-delivery promise and unreliable records.
Percentage of Assurance construct is also higher in DIH & MSSP (55.50% and 62.93% respectively) while lowest in case of CLKC i.e. 6.56% (as shown in Table No.2). Client receives maximum Assurance in DIH & MSSP. While in case of SH, CLKC and HOIP no confidence is instilled in the clients, clients do not feel safe during their visits to these institutions, employees are discourteous and they have insufficient knowledge to answer clients’ questions.

The overall SERVQUAL results, shown in the Table No.2, reveal that MSSPs comes out to be the institution with best performance i.e. 62.75% while DIHs come next with 57.33% performance. All the rest three institutions (SH, CLKC & HOIP) are poor in performance with 46.94%, 40.72% and 43.07% respectively (as shown in Table No.2).

On the basic of these results, the mean performance of the provincial social welfare system comes out to be at 50.16 percent. It means that the services are at half way to the par excellence performance.

V. Conclusion

This is first ever study to evaluate the existing services in Punjab. The study leads us to the following conclusions:

(1) It has been deduced from their case examples that most of the Sanatzars (Industrial Homes) in Punjab show residual performance due to out-dated tangibles, meagre budget and limited coverage coupled with governance issues. Whereas Dar-ul-Amans (Shelter Homes) are low-accessed, secure, ill-governed but popular in the society. Absenteeism, poor governance and inefficiency of staff in Nigheban (Centre for Lost & Kidnapped Children) lead them to poor performance. The major reason for the relatively low coverage of Aafiat (Home for Old & Infirm People) is due to better home-based care provided by the families. The other reasons include inefficiency of the caring staff. The institutions namely Medical Social Services Projects (MSSP) show best performance.

(2) Results of case examples of social welfare institutions in Punjab triangulated with SERVQUAL scale confirm their performance of residual level. The overall SERVQUAL results shown in the Table No.2 reveal that Medical Social Services Projects (MSSPs) come out to be the institutions with best performance i.e. 62.75% while District Industrial Homes (DIHs) runner-up i.e. 57.33%. All the rest three institutions i.e. Shelter Homes (SHs), Centers for Lost & Kidnapped Children (CLKC) and Home for Old & Infirm Persons (HOIP) are poor in performance with percentage 46.94%, 40.72% and 43.07% respectively.

VI. Recommendations

Keeping in view the conclusions, following recommendations seem apt to be made:

1. The government should frame a new social policy at national level as the same was given in 1994 and since then the affairs are being run without such an important document.
2. Social welfare policy in Pakistan may also be evaluated from the ideological level down to the implementation level. In this way, gaps between the conceptual and practical levels can be unveiled.

3. Evaluation of the services is a spontaneous phenomenon in the West, especially, in USA, Canada, UK and Nordic countries. Opinion about the services by the service-recipients is automatically recorded for the purpose of evaluation and henceforth for improvement. Similar procedures may be practiced here.

References


The Express Tribune, July 14, 2010.
