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Original Article

# Citizen Perceptions of Municipal Services in Sangli District Evidence from a Survey of 624 Respondents

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***Abstract***

*Municipal services play a significant role in ensuring the quality of life, public health, urban development, and overall well-being of citizens. The effective delivery of essential municipal services is an important indicator of good urban governance and administrative efficiency. The present study, entitled "Citizen Perceptions of Municipal Services in Sangli District," aims to examine citizens' perceptions, satisfaction levels, and experiences regarding the availability, accessibility, quality, and efficiency of municipal services. The study focuses on essential services such as drinking water supply, sanitation, solid waste management, drainage systems, street lighting, road maintenance, public health facilities, and grievance redressal mechanisms.*

*The research also attempts to identify major challenges faced by citizens in accessing municipal services and evaluates the responsiveness of municipal authorities towards public needs and expectations. Particular attention is given to citizens' participation, awareness of municipal programmes, transparency in administration, and accountability in service delivery. The study may adopt a descriptive and analytical research approach using primary data collected through structured questionnaires, interviews, and secondary information obtained from municipal reports, government publications, and relevant research studies.*

*The findings are expected to highlight variations in citizen satisfaction, identify gaps in service delivery, and provide insights into the factors influencing public perceptions of municipal administration. The study will also suggest appropriate measures to improve service quality, strengthen citizen participation, enhance administrative transparency, and promote responsive and sustainable urban governance. Ultimately, the research seeks to contribute towards making municipal institutions more accountable, efficient, inclusive, and citizen-oriented.*

***Keywords:*** *Municipal Services, Citizen Perception, Public Satisfaction, Urban Governance, Service Delivery, Municipal Administration, Drinking Water Supply, Sanitation, Solid Waste Management, Citizen Participation, Public Accountability, Sangli District.*

## Introduction

Residents experience municipal services through their availability, accessibility and reliability. Survey responses can indicate which areas warrant closer attention. Administrative indicators can then help identify the specific service gaps. The Government of India's service-level benchmarking handbook describes operational indicators for urban services including water supply and solid waste management [2]. This paper uses survey responses to examine perceptions across four service areas and considers separate questions about expenditure adequacy and priorities.

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**Research Questions**

Which of the four service items received the most positive and negative assessments? How did respondents describe sanitation expenditure and funding for waste management? Which areas did respondents select when asked to prioritise expenditure for better public services?

**Data and Method**

The study uses descriptive analysis of tabulated responses from a primary survey of citizens across five urban local bodies in Sangli district [1]. The survey included 461 respondents (73.9%) from Sangli–Miraj–Kupwad Municipal Corporation, 63 (10.1%) from Islampur, 45 (7.2%) from Vita, 32 (5.1%) from Jat and 23 (3.7%) from Palus.

The four service items use a five-category response scale. The tables preserve all categories and also show combined positive and negative responses. The positive total combines highly positive and somewhat positive responses. The negative total combines somewhat negative and highly negative responses. Percentages are calculated from the reported counts using 624 as the denominator. The expenditure and priority items use their original categories.

**Assessments of Four Service Areas**

**Table 1. Response frequencies by service area**

| Service area | Highly positive | Somewhat positive | Neutral | Somewhat negative | Highly negative |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education facilities | 81 | 441 | 16 | 78 | 8 |
| Health services | 62 | 347 | 25 | 172 | 18 |
| Sanitation and waste management | 76 | 277 | 23 | 227 | 21 |
| Parks and recreational facilities | 53 | 213 | 39 | 288 | 31 |

Source: Primary survey tabulations [1]. Each row totals 624.

**Table 2. Combined positive and negative responses**

| Service area | Positive count | Positive (%) | Negative count | Negative (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education facilities | 522 | 83.7 | 86 | 13.8 |
| Health services | 409 | 65.5 | 190 | 30.4 |
| Sanitation and waste management | 353 | 56.6 | 248 | 39.7 |
| Parks and recreational facilities | 266 | 42.6 | 319 | 51.1 |

Neutral responses remain in the denominator. Combined percentages were calculated from counts before rounding.

**Interpretation of Service Assessments and Spending Priorities**

Education received the highest combined positive share, but 441 of the 522 positive responses were somewhat positive. For health services, 409 respondents gave a positive assessment and 190 gave a negative assessment. Both distributions show the importance of retaining response intensity alongside combined shares.

Sanitation and waste management received 353 positive assessments (56.6%) and 248 negative assessments (39.7%). On the separate sanitation spending item, 123 respondents (19.7%) answered yes to adequacy, 139 (22.3%) answered no, 342 (54.8%) selected somewhat adequate, and 20 (3.2%) did not know [1]. The most frequent response indicates qualified approval of the expenditure level.

For waste management funding, 229 respondents rated availability very good and 233 rated it adequate. Together they represented 74.0% of the sample. Another 127 (20.4%) described availability as low and 35 (5.6%) did not know [1]. Perceived availability of funds and assessment of the service itself answer different questions. The aggregate survey tables cannot establish whether the same respondents reported favourable funding and unfavourable service experiences.

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**Table 3. Preferred expenditure priorities for better public services**

| Priority | Respondents | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Education services | 169 | 27.1 |
| Security and transport management | 168 | 26.9 |
| Sanitation and environment | 135 | 21.6 |
| Smart services and e-governance | 88 | 14.1 |
| Basic infrastructure services | 64 | 10.3 |

Source: Primary survey tabulations [1]. Percentages may differ slightly from 100% in total because of rounding.

Education led security and transport by one response. Education can therefore receive both favourable service assessments and frequent selections for further spending. The priority question asked respondents to choose among specific categories, so its results describe choices within that list. They do not measure the budget share that respondents would allocate to each area.

Parks and Recreational Facilities

Negative responses for parks and recreational facilities accounted for 51.1%, compared with 42.6% positive and 6.3% neutral. The gap was 53 respondents. The tabulation identifies an area for closer examination. Access, maintenance and proximity could be examined in a follow-up survey that asks about these factors directly.

**Intensity and Direction of Service Assessments**

The combined positive share is useful for comparing the four items because they use the same five response categories. It can, however, conceal differences in how strongly people responded. A supplementary measure, the net positive balance, subtracts the negative share from the positive share. This is a percentage-point difference based on all 624 respondents. It summarises the direction and size of the gap while leaving neutral responses visible in the original frequency table.

**Table 4. Net positive balance and intensity of positive responses**

| Service area | Positive count | Negative count | Net balance (pp) | Highly positive among positive (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Education facilities | 522 | 86 | +69.9 | 15.5 |
| Health services | 409 | 190 | +35.1 | 15.2 |
| Sanitation and waste management | 353 | 248 | +16.8 | 21.5 |
| Parks and recreational facilities | 266 | 319 | -8.5 | 19.9 |

Source: Calculated from Table 1. The last column uses the positive count for the corresponding item as its denominator.

**Education and health**

Education had a net positive balance of 69.9 percentage points, compared with 35.1 for health. Only 15.5% of the positive education responses and 15.2% of the positive health responses were highly positive. The difference between the two services therefore reflects how many respondents assessed them favourably, even though the mix of stronger and moderate responses among positive respondents was similar.

Sanitation and recreation

Sanitation retained a positive net balance of 16.8 points. Parks and recreation had a negative balance of 8.5 points. About one in five of the positive responses on each of these items was highly positive. The overall difference was driven by the greater number of negative assessments for parks. Parks also had 39 neutral responses, the highest of the four items. The neutral category records the response given and leaves the reasons for that response open.

These measures compare response distributions. They are descriptive and provide no statistical test of differences between services. The aggregate tables do not show how one respondent answered across multiple items.

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**Reading Service and Funding Responses Together**

The survey asked separately about the perceived effect of sanitation and waste management, the adequacy of sanitation expenditure, and the availability of funds for waste management. The three questions offer different perspectives on the same broad area. Each uses its own response options, and the wording determines what the resulting percentages can support.

**Table 5. Three survey questions relating to sanitation and waste management**

| Survey item | Selected responses | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|
| Sanitation and waste management | 353 positive (56.6%) and 248 negative (39.7%) | Assessment of the service area |
| Sanitation expenditure | 123 yes (19.7%), 342 somewhat adequate (54.8%) and 139 no (22.3%) | Perceived adequacy of expenditure |
| Funds for waste management | 462 very good or adequate (74.0%) and 127 low (20.4%) | Perceived availability of funds |

Source: Primary survey tabulations [1]. The table displays selected categories. The denominator is 624 for each item.

**What the differences mean**

The largest group on the sanitation expenditure question chose somewhat adequate. Combining this group with unqualified yes responses would produce a broader positive figure but would conceal the distinction that respondents made. Keeping both categories visible shows the extent of qualified approval.

Likewise, the 74.0% figure for favourable perceptions of waste-management funding reflects two categories on a separate question. Comparing that figure with the 56.6% positive service assessment can identify a question for further investigation. Individual response records would be needed to determine whether people who viewed funding favourably also reported unfavourable service experiences.

**How the survey could inform service review**

A review of sanitation performance could examine collection schedules, coverage, frequency of missed collections and the handling of complaints. Operational records could indicate whether problems cluster in particular locations or time periods. A parallel expenditure review could identify which activities the recorded spending covered. Matching the service area and reporting period across these records would make the comparison more meaningful [2].

**Spending Priorities and Preferences for Budget Management**

The spending-priority question records where respondents would direct attention within a list of five choices. Education services received 169 selections and security and transport management received 168. The one-response gap supports describing the two as nearly tied. Sanitation and environment accounted for 135 selections. These results indicate the relative frequency of choices among the options offered.

A separate question asked respondents which improvement they preferred in expenditure management. Long-term planning received the most selections, followed by a transparent budget. The question concerns how expenditure is managed. It complements the question about which service areas receive priority.

**Table 6. Preferred improvements in expenditure management**

| Preferred improvement | Respondents | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Long-term planning | 201 | 32.2 |
| Transparent budget | 146 | 23.4 |
| Priority-based fund allocation | 128 | 20.5 |
| Efficient expenditure management | 91 | 14.6 |
| Public–private partnership | 58 | 9.3 |

Source: Primary survey tabulations [1]. Percentages are calculated on 624 responses.

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**Implications for presenting budget information**

Long-term planning and budget transparency concern two aspects of municipal expenditure. A multi-year project schedule can show the sequence of investments and the recurring costs of keeping facilities open. A clear budget can show approved allocations, recorded expenditure and the work or services associated with those amounts. Presenting these together could help citizens follow a project from allocation to service delivery.

The available totals cannot show which spending priorities were selected by respondents who also favoured a given management reform. For example, the study cannot determine whether those who selected sanitation and environment also preferred priority-based allocation. Such questions require cross-tabulations at respondent level. The reported choices can nevertheless inform the topics included in future budget consultations.

**Implications for Municipal Service Assessment**

**Measure access and reliability**

The comparatively favourable education responses provide a starting point for asking which facilities respondents had in mind and whether they used them directly. A follow-up survey could record proximity, frequency of use and perceived accessibility. Recording the agency responsible for each facility would improve the interpretation of responses where municipal, state or other providers operate in the same area.

Health-service assessments could be examined alongside indicators such as opening hours, waiting times and accessibility. The existing survey item describes respondents' perceptions of health services in broad terms. More specific questions could identify which aspects of service delivery account for the different assessments.

**Investigate parks at the neighbourhood level**

The negative response balance for parks and recreational facilities gives a reason to examine local access and upkeep. A ward-level inventory could record which sites are available, their opening hours, their condition and their accessibility. Follow-up survey questions could distinguish residents who lack a nearby facility from those who have access but are dissatisfied with its maintenance or usability.

Improve the basis for institutional comparison

The municipal corporation accounts for 461 of the 624 survey respondents, leaving 163 across the other four institutions. A future comparison should report the respondent count and the percentage within each institution for every service item. Small institutional counts should be visible in each table because a few responses can materially change a percentage. Consistent wording and fieldwork procedures would make comparisons across places and survey rounds easier to interpret.

When linking spending to service assessments, the expenditure category, service area and reporting period should match. A subsequent survey could ask about recent use of specific services and collect responses over comparable periods. Combined with ward-level operational records, this approach would support a clearer account of where service gaps occur and how they change over time.

**Interpretation and Limitations**

The survey tables describe the realised sample. The municipal corporation contributes nearly three quarters of respondents, so pooled percentages largely reflect that sample composition. The service tables used here do not provide institution-by-service cross-tabulations. Institution-level comparisons would require the original response records, validated institutional codes and within-institution denominators.

This study uses aggregate survey tabulations. The underlying response records and any imputation affecting the selected items were not independently rechecked. The article reports descriptive percentages and makes no causal or statistical significance claim. The service response scale records perceived effects or assessments as recorded in the survey. It does not furnish a common direct satisfaction score across all municipal services.

The sanitation findings illustrate how a municipality could use survey responses with operational data. Service schedules, ward-level coverage and complaint resolution records could help examine possible reasons for unfavourable assessments. For parks and recreation, facility condition and access by ward would provide relevant context. Linking those records to survey responses would require compatible service areas, periods and geographical units.

**Conclusion**

Within the surveyed sample, education facilities received the most favourable assessments among the four items, while parks and recreational facilities received more negative than positive assessments. Sanitation expenditure was most often rated somewhat adequate. The findings identify service areas that warrant closer examination and show why perceptions of service quality, funding and spending priorities should be interpreted according to their respective questions. Long-term planning was the most frequently selected improvement in expenditure management. Reporting the strength of responses and keeping service, funding and priority questions distinct

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makes the survey evidence more useful for identifying what to investigate next.

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**Conflicts of interest**

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of thesis paper.

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