



National Survey October 2008 and March 2010

The Local Government System

Citizens' Perceptions and Preferences

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

BHUs	Basic Health Units
CCBs	Citizen Community Boards
DCO	District Coordination Officer
DHQ	District Headquarter Hospital
LGO	Local Government Ordinance
NRB	National Reconstruction Bureau
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
RHCs	Rural Health Centers
THQ	Tehsil/Taluka Headquarter Hospital
TMA	Tehsil/Taluka Municipal Administration
TMO	Tehsil/Taluka Municipal Officer
TI	Transparency International
UC	Union Council
UI	Urban Institute
USAID	US Agency for International Development

## The Local Government System

### Citizens' Perceptions & Preferences

#### Executive Summary

There is a lively debate on the reform of the system of local government in Pakistan. With the return to democracy in 2008 and the resurgence of provincial political power, the provinces began to call for changes in the Local Government Ordinance (LGO) promulgated by the Musharaf government in 2001. Some elected officials and senior bureaucrats even called for the outright abrogation of this law and a return to the 1979 LGO, justified by “the failure of the 2001 LGO”. By mid 2010 the status of local governments in Pakistan is still ambiguous, although it now seems clear that they will continue to exist in some form. The Zardari government failed to hold local council elections in August 2009; the Local Government Ordinance 2001 (LGO) is no longer under constitutional protection as of December 31, 2009; and each of the four provinces has amended the 2001 LGO, appointing administrators to perform the functions of nazims and councils as assigned to them under the LGO. Another major development has been the unanimous passage of the 18th amendment to Pakistan’s constitution and its signature into law by President Asif Ali Zardari on April 19, 2010. The amendment mandates local governments in all the four provinces, but provides little clarity on their administrative and financial autonomy or how they will be constituted.

What do citizens have to say about this? Is there public support for the argument that the local government system needs to be rolled back and decision making over local affairs returned to the province? To answer this question, the Urban Institute and AC Nielsen, with the support of USAID Pakistan, carried out a national opinion poll looking at citizens’ perceptions and preferences for local government reform in October 2008 and in January/February 2010. The overall objective is to introduce citizens’ voice into the ongoing policy debate.

**Survey Methodology.** The survey was based on a nationally and provincially representative sample of 4002 households in 2008 and 3992 households in 2010. A multistage stratified cluster sampling method was used to select the target cities and villages for the urban and rural sample in each province. The margin of error for the urban sample was 2.19% and the rural sample 2.20% at a 95% confidence level in both 2008 and 2010.

**Main Findings.** The survey results are grouped into four areas: perspectives on institutions of governance at the federal, provincial and local level; opinions about the coverage and quality of services provided by local governments; preferences for policy reform; and perceptions of public safety/law and order. This last area describes results from a new module in the 2010 survey, while the previous three areas summarize responses in 2008 and 2010.

**Governance.** The survey found that citizens were critical of institutions of governance. Less than half of the respondents in both 2008 and 2010 thought that federal, provincial or local governments were

accountable, accessible and responsive to citizens needs. No level of government scored high in this respect, although union councils received better evaluations.

- A majority in both 2008 and 2010 reported that neither federal, provincial nor local governments were interested in knowing citizens' views, or consulted citizens on policies and priorities.
- Despite the provisions of the 2001 LGO requiring public budget consultations, very few people reported that local governments applied these provisions for pre-budget consultations.
- In resolving their problems, citizens reported that they preferred to access local elected officials, particularly union council members and nazims, rather than bureaucrats. Few respondents thought that bureaucrats were responsive to their needs.
- People in rural areas, and particularly in Baluchistan and NWFP, showed least understanding of government structures and functions, and were often the most critical of accountability, access and responsiveness.

*Service Delivery.* Again, the survey found many issues of coverage and quality in service delivery. In health and education, many survey respondents identified problems with location, infrastructure and equipment, and absence of professional staff and needed inputs (books and desks in schools, or medicines in basic health units) and widespread petty corruption.

- In explaining why they did not use public primary health care facilities (BHUs), the most common responses were "I prefer private facilities", or "the BHU is too far from my house".
- Of those who used BHUs, almost half across both 2008 and 2010 (41% to 44%) said that medicines were not available and one-quarter said that there were no doctors available.
- In explaining why school-age children were not in school, the most common responses in both years were "the school is too far", or that the quality of education was not adequate.
- Of those with children in government schools, in both 2008 and 2010 about half said that the school did not have bathroom facilities and forty percent said that there were not adequate desks and chairs.
- With respect to household services in urban areas, in 2008 only 59% of people had connections to government water supplies; only 17% said that their neighborhood had covered drains; and only 35% had garbage disposal/collection service from their house. In 2010, 65% of respondents had connections to government water supplies; only 18% said that their neighborhood had covered drains; and only 42% had garbage disposal/collection service from their house.

*Preferences for Reform.* The survey asked a series of questions on priorities for improvement of services and preferences for policy reforms. Overall, the responses to these questions do not support the idea of broadly felt disenchantment with local governments.

- Not surprisingly, in both 2008 and 2010, the survey respondents identified as priorities for improvement basic health facilities, education facilities, water supply, drainage and sewerage and garbage collection and disposal.
- Despite the deficiencies in governance practices and problems with service delivery, the respondents did not support returning responsibility for services to the provincial level. Only one-quarter of respondents in both 2008 and 2010 supported a greater provincial role.
- Roughly half of the respondents in both 2008 and 2010 wanted local governments to be responsible for social services (health and education).
- Up to three-quarters of respondents in both 2008 and 2010 wanted local governments to be responsible for household services (water, basic sanitation).
- The responses also show that people want the government responsible for service delivery to be as close to them as possible, with many respondents favoring delivery by union councils.
- In both 2008 and 2010 about one third of respondents favored direct elections of district and TMA governments, while about three quarters favored election of unions (higher than MPAs or MNAs, which are about 60%).
- People in rural areas and especially in Sindh, Baluchistan and NWFP were less knowledgeable of existing government responsibilities for provision of services, but showed a strong preference for local control.

*Perceptions of Public Safety/Law and Order.* The 2010 UI/Nielsen survey asks a series of questions about the perception of public safety/law and order, including how changing perceptions have affected every day behavior, perceptions of safety at home and in public, and where people get their information about public safety/law and order – and how much they trust these sources of information.

- About three quarters of all respondents say that public safety/law and order is worse than it was a year ago. In Balochistan less than half report that that the situation has worsened, while a slightly larger percentage say that they don't know.
- People who responded that public safety/law and order is worse today than a year ago were asked to identify who is most responsible for the deterioration. Of these 42% say that the federal government bears the greatest responsibility for the deterioration.
- Respondents in Punjab and Sindh are most likely to identify the federal government as having primary responsibility for deterioration in public safety/law and order, while those in NWFP and Balochistan are most likely to say that terrorists had primary responsibility for deterioration in public safety/law and order.
- Overall, 85% of citizens in the four provinces say that in the past year public safety concerns have never caused them to stay home from work or school.

**Implications for Policy.** The survey reports for each of the four provinces and the national report include a discussion of the policy implications of some of the important findings.

- From the viewpoint of the citizens, there is no prima facie case for returning control of local affairs to the provinces because they are more accountable, transparent or responsive. All levels of government were poorly evaluated on these aspects, except union councils.
- The responses on issues of governance support conclusions of other studies that the provisions in the 2001 LGO for ensuring accountability, transparency and responsiveness of local elected officials were generally not implemented.
- The survey results reinforce conclusions of other studies, such as those of Transparency International, about the prevalence of corruption in local governments, but also in provincial and federal governments. It is systemic and involves both elected and non-elected officials.
- Another general conclusion that can be drawn from the survey results is that a large proportion of the population is not satisfied with the services now being provided by local governments.
- Education, health, water, drainage and garbage collection continue to be the highest priorities for service improvement. These are local government responsibilities at present; the improvement of services provided by other levels of government was ranked as a much lower priority overall.
- Many people are confused about who actually has responsibility for services. There might be a need to consider eliminating or reengineering the federal vertical programs so that implementation is under the effective control of the responsible local government and accountable to local people.
- A policy issue of particular concern is the quality and coverage of services in rural areas, which is worse than in urban areas. This reinforces the view that the existing provincial/district/tehsil division of functions is not working.
- The majority of people do not support increased provincial control over service delivery. In social services more than half support local government control, and in household services three-quarters support local control across 2008 and 2010.
- There is no strong public support for the idea of increasing bureaucratic control over local affairs; rather, the survey shows that the majority of citizens are generally critical of the lack of responsiveness of bureaucrats and prefer to interact with local elected officials to resolve problems.
- Finally, the responses from Balochistan on questions of governance suggest that it may be prudent to emphasize measures to establish a much stronger formal state presence throughout the province. Strengthening responsive, transparent and accountable local governments might be one way of achieving this.

**NATIONAL SURVEY OCTOBER 2008 AND MARCH 2010  
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM  
CITIZENS' PERCEPTIONS AND PREFERENCES**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Since the 2008 elections, there has been a lively debate in Pakistan on the reform of local government. In its initial stages, this debate involved stakeholders from many levels of government – federal government ministries, parliamentarians, provincial departments, and members of provincial assemblies. Later, as federal and provincial positions came to be known through media reports, other voices have joined in the debate, including nazims and local government council members, academics and policy analysts, columnists and media commentators, and representatives of civil society organizations. What is missing is a voice for citizens. To bring in citizens' voice, an opinion survey of citizen views of local government in Pakistan was carried out in October 2008 by the Urban Institute (UI) and AC Nielsen (Nielsen). The 2008 UI/Nielsen survey was carried out at a moment in which all of the provinces in Pakistan were undertaking a formal review and reform of their local government systems in order to improve the delivery of services to the people.

The status in April 2010 is different. The Zardari government failed to hold local council elections in August 2009; the Local Government Ordinance 2001 (LGO) is no longer under constitutional protection as of December 31, 2009; and each of the four provinces has amended the 2001 LGO, appointing administrators to perform the functions of nazims and councils as assigned to them under the LGO. Pakistan has also experienced deteriorating law and order in the country and has taken strong military action in SWAT and the tribal area of Waziristan to take back control from the Taliban. Another major development has been the unanimous passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment to Pakistan's constitution and its signature into law by President Asif Ali Zardari on April 19, 2010. The amendment mandates local government in all the four provinces, but provides little clarity on their administrative and financial autonomy or how they will be constituted.

Given the uncertainties, knowing citizens' perceptions and preferences on local government is even more critical. In January and February 2010 UI/Nielsen conducted a second opinion survey of citizens' views. The results presented in this report include the consolidated results across all provinces for both 2008 and 2010.

While policy makers face many other urgent problems requiring immediate solutions, devolution reform can provide solutions to critical issues in management of law and order, poverty alleviation, access to social services, efficiency in government spending, taxation, etc. By definition, local governments are the level of government and public administration closest to citizens and for that reason can be effective in the provision of many categories of public services. Furthermore, effective

local governments are an important determining factor in the overall legitimacy and stability of institutions of democratic governance.

The intent of both the 2008 and 2010 survey is to solicit and present the citizens' voice – which needs to be taken into account as the provinces and the federal government move forward with the review and reform of local government systems. The survey results are invaluable to elected political leaders and senior bureaucrats in their overall policy deliberations on the form and function of local government in Pakistan. At the same time, by incorporating people's voices into the design of the new local government systems, policy makers can ensure greater ownership of the new system by all levels of society.

Following this introduction, the report is divided into four main sections: a short background on the current debate on local government reform; a methodology section describing the sample design; a detailed presentation and discussion of the survey results; and a brief section on conclusions and implications for policy reform. In addition, there is a technical annex that goes into greater detail on the survey design.

## **2. THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT SYSTEM IN PAKISTAN**

The Local Government Ordinance 2001 (LGO) enacted by the Musharaf government to devolve powers from the central to local governments is not the first attempt to strengthen local provision of services, fiscal autonomy, and accountability to citizens in Pakistan. Both the Basic Democracies System of the late 1950s and the New Social Contract of the mid-1990s had similar objectives, but they broke down as power was recentralized. The LGO was unique, however, in the constitutional protection given to its reforms. By acting in December 2003 to incorporate the local government changes into the 1973 Constitution, President Musharaf cushioned the structure of devolution against amendment or repeal for six years, except with the approval of the President. This protection expired on December 31, 2009, and, as seen in the earlier section, all four provinces have already amended the 2001 LGO and passed amended Acts. The unanimous passage of the 18<sup>th</sup> amendment to Pakistan's constitution and its signature into law by President Asif Ali Zardari on April 19, 2010, also mandates local government in all the four provinces.

In order to carry out the reform process at the beginning of the decade, the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) was directed to implement the Devolution Plan. Beginning in March 2000 with the publication of a discussion paper, the NRB laid out a plan that combined "top-down" centrally led devolution with elements of "bottom-up" citizen involvement through a system of direct and indirect elections for different types of sub-national governments, the establishment of Citizen Community Boards (CCBs), which were granted the power to identify and initiate local capital investment projects, and the creation of local devolution and service monitoring committees.

Thus, the 2001 LGO put into place a three-tiered system of local government [union, tehsil/taluka municipal administration (TMA), district] below each province with the union nazim (mayor) and union naib nazim (deputy mayor) the only directly elected officials; devolved 10 sectors/functions to the districts, including health and education; and devolved municipal services, including water, to the tehsils/talukas.

The official goals for devolution put forward by the NRB were known as the “Five Ds”: Devolution of political power, by which elected politicians would articulate the goals of their communities; Decentralization of administrative authority, by giving autonomy to district departments; Distribution of resources to districts and municipalities, both through taxation powers and transfers; Deconcentration of management functions, underpinned by specialization of staff and performance-based appraisal; and Diffusion of the power authority nexus by establishing checks and balances through monitoring by citizens.

However, according to several assessments carried out in recent years the 2001 reform failed to meet these goals.<sup>1</sup> While there was devolution of political power, in many localities this reinforced local elite capture by influential families and strengthened patron-client relationships rather than promoting political participation. The decentralization of administrative authority was only partial, as the provincial government maintained control over allocation of financial and human resources for operations (non-development budgets). The distribution of resources gave precedence to transfers over taxation powers. The deconcentration of management functions was constrained by the lack of provincial buy-in and weak policy coordination with districts and TMAs. And finally the checks and balances were not put into place.

In fact, referring to this last point, most of the important governance innovations in the 2001 LGO were not implemented. These include: the freedom of information provisions in Article 137, which guaranteed access to public documents; the provision for public access to the sessions of the council; the establishment of council monitoring committees to oversee administration; the accounts committees to review audit findings and initiate remedial actions; the requirement for public consultations on budget priorities; the requirement that nazims and DCOs/TMOs present periodic performance reports to the public sessions of their respective councils; and the establishment of district ombudsmen.

Admittedly, under the Musharaf government there were also amendments to the 2001 LGO, aimed at correcting perceived weaknesses. The amendments included the creation of the Provincial Local Government Commissions (PLGC) to exercise oversight of local governments; nazims who defied provincial directives, or who were guilty of misconduct, could be suspended or removed after an enquiry

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<sup>1</sup> “Local Government Assessment,” Pakistan Districts That Work Project, June 2008; “Social Development in Pakistan,” Social Policy and Development Centre, 2007; “Assessment Report: Pakistan Devolution Support Project,” Ritu Nayyar-Stone, Robert Ebel, Sonia Ignatova, Khalid Rashid with Harry Hatry and George Peterson, The Urban Institute, Project No. 07862, February 2006; “Social Audit of Governance and Delivery of Public Services. Pakistan 2004/05. National Report,” A. Cockcroft, N. Andersson, U.U. Chaudhry, and S. Saeed. Islamabad, September 2005, Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment and Community Information Empowerment and Training.

by the PLGC. District councils were also vested with the authority to recall the nazim through a no confidence motion. Local council resolutions and orders of the nazim could be suspended if against the public interest. However, the provisions for provincial oversight and a stronger oversight role of the councils were largely ignored.

This failure points out the inherent difficulties in establishing democratic local government in the context of a non-democratic polity, both nationally and in the provinces. In other words, there was insufficient democratic space for effective implementation of the key governance components of the 2001 LGO because the essential attributes of a democratic system were missing both nationally and locally. The activities of opposition parties, civil society organizations, and independent media organizations, to name a few, were all severely constrained.

Why was this factor so significant in determining the success or failure of the reform? The effectiveness of a local government system depends on it being closely linked to local governance – a political market that stresses the importance of effective and efficient service delivery by opening spaces for participation and dialogue between elected officials and the community; making elected and unelected officials accountable to citizens; and creating pressure for responsiveness of the government to citizen priorities and needs. This link between the efficacy of local governments and governance is often overlooked, resulting in governments that are unable to deliver and citizens that mistrust their government.

With respect to local governance, the main problems have been: excessive executive (mayoral) powers at the expense of the elected local government councils; non-functioning oversight and internal control mechanisms; weak external controls; clientelistic manipulation of investment budgets through the assignment of budget “quotas” to individual council members; emphasis on infrastructure projects offering possibilities for manipulation of procurement; and massive leakage of public resources whether through manipulation of procurement, kickbacks and commissions, or outright embezzlement. Also, anecdotal evidence from the field suggests that this massive leakage of public resources has significant implications for security in some regions, as local militant groups are able to pressure local government for access to resources.

Not surprisingly, all of this had a detrimental impact on service delivery. Appointments, transfers and postings of government employees (especially teachers and medical staff) became subject to control by nazims; there is evidence of widespread absenteeism in all sectors; many infrastructure projects are left unfinished or substandard; insufficient resources are allocated for operations and maintenance; schools, clinics and other government facilities have been taken over by local elites for private ends; and water and sewer systems have been entirely abandoned owing to lack of maintenance. There has not been sufficient research to claim that service delivery deteriorated with devolution, as is often stated in the press and by politicians. Both the SPDC study and the CIET social audit examined citizen satisfaction with services at two points in time after the 2001 LGO was implemented. Both studies suggest that there has been only marginal improvement in some service delivery and little or no improvement in health services. Both stress the wide disparity in service provision within each province.

Another critical weakness in the implementation of the 2001 LGO was the absence or weakness of mechanisms for coordination between the provinces and local governments, in particular the failure to develop procedures for implementing the ordinance and clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government. Indeed, the Local Government Commissions created under the 2001 LGO were rarely formed, and if formed, were not active. For its part, the Provincial Finance Commission awards did not include any significant performance component. Overall, the provinces did not exercise their legally mandated role of oversight and inspection. Finally, the 2001 LGO also lacked political support from provincial authorities who nonetheless played a large role in the staffing and funding of many aspects of service delivery, and contained parallel decision structures. It therefore did not instill ownership among those whose cooperation was needed for its success.

*The Devolution Debate.* The February 2008 elections brought a new democratically elected coalition to government, the restoration of the four provinces in all aspects of policy and decision-making with respect to local governance, and eventually the resignation of President Musharaf. Following the elections, federal policies were redefined in terms of intergovernmental interests and positions. Simultaneously the provinces moved quickly to reassert authority over local governments, challenging the authority of the nazims, replacing and transferring a large proportion of senior managers (DCOs, EDOs and TMOs) and re-centralizing day-to-day administration, especially in key sectors such as health and education. These changes were felt most in the districts and city districts and less in the smaller and rural TMAs.

The amendments to the 2001 Local Government Ordinance (LGO) by the provinces are meant to correct the perceived political bias in the Musharaf government's devolution policies, which can be summarized as follows: the LGO was imposed by the federal government with no consultation; in fact, the LGO was designed to undermine the powers of the provincial governments and legislatures and to neutralize the opposition parties (particularly the PPP and PML-N); central government manipulation ensured that local government elections in 2001 and 2005 were neither free nor fair. These issues were aggravated by other problems, owing to the devolution of authority for policing; discretionary powers in bylaw enforcement; and administrative control over land registry and revenue collection. In many regions of the country this has accentuated existing tendencies towards elite capture and contributed to a deterioration of law and order and increased crime in some areas.

Local elections that were supposed to be held in August 2009 did not take place. Thus far, only the Balochistan Local Government Amendment Act 2010 stipulates that local elections will be held in the province no later than one year from the dissolution of local councils. In the interim all four provinces have chosen to appoint administrators in both TMAs and districts. The provincial governments are now positioned to play a dominant role in local governance and service delivery; at the same time, the federal government is likely to acquiesce to the pressures from the provinces for constitutional and legal reforms to give them more autonomy and more control over local government.

The 18th Amendment to the Constitution, made effective upon presidential assent on April 18 2010, has retained article 140- A requiring each Province to establish a local government system and devolve political, administrative and financial responsibility and authority to the elected representatives of the

local governments. The 18<sup>th</sup> amendment also empowers the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to hold local government elections in addition to the National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies. Notwithstanding the termination of constitutional protection to the Local Government Ordinance 2001 under the sixth schedule, these two amendments underpin the continuation of a vibrant local government system in Pakistan. The conduct of local election by ECP will be instrumental in lending credence, transparency and objectivity to the local election process in Pakistan.

The provinces are entitled to review their Local Government Ordinances and implement appropriate changes without any other approval or oversight by federal government after termination of constitutional protection provided in the sixth schedule. In order that any future system is appropriate for the needs of the people, an objective and consultative review by each of the provinces of their Local Government Ordinances is critical, taking into account improving and protecting service delivery and ensuring citizens' access and participation in governance processes.

The idea of an open and inclusive dialogue met with resistance from some quarters. Initial policy statements from some of the newly elected provincial officials and senior provincial bureaucrats in March and April 2008 referred to the intention to immediately abrogate the 2001 LGO and return to the 1979 LGO. This has not happened. However, the critical areas in which the failure of local government was manifested, according to these officials, was the deterioration of law and order and the inability of local governments to enforce laws and regulations. The only viable solution, according to provincial officials, was to return control of local affairs to the bureaucracy. In this first phase of the debate, in fact, a large number of the official policy statements and press reports had to do with the relationship between nazims and public servants (DCOs and TMOs), reflecting the success of the senior provincial bureaucrats in shaping the debate in their favor.

With time other important policy issues began to emerge, such as corruption in administration, taxation and land registration, worsening coverage and quality of basic services, and the need to maintain effective political representation at the local level.

As well as incorporating new themes, the policy debate started to include other voices, often counterbalancing the provincial position. Provincial officials were taken to task for wanting to push through a counter reform with no substantial debate or consultation – in the same way that the 2001 LGO was enacted under a military government. Some columnists and editorial writers also observed that, while the law and order situation might well justify taking away the policing role, this had nothing to do with other local government roles and responsibilities, whose reform would have to be evaluated on its own merits. Researchers also lent their voices, arguing for the merits of the system, although admitting that it had not been fully implemented.

The federal government, too, has intervened in the debate, sometimes with contrasting views expressed by different ministries and executive agencies as well as parliamentarians. While recognizing the paramount role of the provinces in the area of local government reforms, the federal government's Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD) took a measured position, suggesting the need for a common legal framework that could be adapted to the needs of each province and the

need for formal inter-governmental consultation and coordination on the reform process. The NRB also weighed in, presenting specific proposals for amendments to the 2001 LGO. Further, for their part, the district and tehsil/taluka nazims, initially silent after the 2008 elections, also mounted a counterattack through incipient local government associations in Punjab and NWFP and through legal actions in the courts to oppose provincial initiatives to restrict their administrative and financial powers.

This lively and sometime acerbic policy debate in the national and regional press has demonstrated the merits of a democratic process. Indeed, it contributed to forestalling immediate abrogation of the 2001 LGO and has generated a more reasoned and reasonable discussion about policy options. The terms of the debate, initially dominated by senior bureaucrats, have broadened, as has participation and voice as different actors have joined in.

*Citizens' Voice in the Policy Reform Process.* The function of a consultative dialogue in the policy process is to ensure that the proposed policies have the support of the stakeholders and to ensure that the system of devolution is that which is most appropriate to serve the needs of the people in each of the provinces. All four provinces have established Provincial Working Groups (PWGs) to undertake inclusive consultative processes to review the constitutional and legal framework for local government and to propose policy reforms.

This dialogue reflects a commitment to pluralism and inclusiveness in policy making. Democratic governance is not just about elections to choose a government. It is also about what happens between elections, when decision makers have to respond to a series of complex issues on which there is no explicit mandate and about which there is no clear political consensus. Public debate and dialogue has the function of building consensus and generating pressure for policy makers to explain and justify their decisions, which should reinforce public trust in democratic institutions. In other words, policy is about both substance and process.

In the course of the debate on devolution reform, it is common to hear elected and unelected officials and civil society representatives talk about “what people want”. But policy making at the federal and provincial level is constrained in directly involving citizens. While the Provincial Working Groups established to review the policy options for devolution reform include both elected and administrative officials as well as representatives from civil society organizations, the feedback and views of the citizens are lacking. The objective of the UI/ACNielsen surveys is to provide objective and statistically representative data on citizens’ perspectives on the operation and form of local government in support of the discussions in each of the four provinces. It aims to inform discussion and to provoke additional efforts to consider how options will affect the provision of services to citizens.

Both the 2008 and 2010 survey elicits citizen responses in seven areas: (i) access to different levels of local government in Pakistan and citizens’ value of such access; (ii) perceptions of the responsiveness of different levels of government in regards to citizens’ priority service needs; (iii) opinions of the ability of different levels of local government in Pakistan to effectively represent them and the degree to which representative bodies are held accountable for their decisions; (iv) performance in terms of the coverage, quality, and efficiency of core public services; (v) perceptions of

the capacity of different levels of local government to effectively carry out their duties; (vi) trust of different levels of local government and their perceptions of issues of corruption in regards to different levels of local government; and (vii) perceptions regarding the demographical and geographical appropriateness of local government structures. The 2010 survey also asked a series of questions about the perception of public safety/law and order, including how changing perceptions have affected every day behavior, perceptions of safety at home and in public, and where people get their information about public safety/law and order—and how much they trust these sources of information. The methodology and findings from the survey are discussed in the following sections.

### 3. SURVEY METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

#### *2008 Survey*

The National Survey on Citizens’ Perceptions about Local Government was conducted in October 2008 by ACNielsen Pakistan in collaboration with the Urban Institute, to obtain citizens’ views on the form and structure of the local government system as well as access to, coverage, and quality of essential government services.

The survey was based on a total sample of 4,002 nationally and provincially representative households across the country. The respondents represent a mix of urban and rural dwellers, male and female, from all provinces of Pakistan. The selected cities and villages were identified based on the geographical spread. The table below shows the distribution of the sample size as per the key variables, that is, provinces, urban/rural settings and gender:

Table 3.1: UI/ACNielsen survey sample size 2008

Province	Urban		Rural		Total Sample
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
<b>Punjab</b>	456	475	500	508	<b>1939</b>
<b>Sindh</b>	363	355	191	192	<b>1101</b>
<b>NWFP</b>	108	112	192	193	<b>605</b>
<b>Balochistan</b>	69	72	110	106	<b>357</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>1014</b>	<b>993</b>	<b>999</b>	<b>4002</b>

Teams of qualified enumerators administered the survey questionnaire by conducting face-to-face interviews in both Urdu and Sindhi languages. The data was collected from 78 districts across the four provinces including 35 urban localities and 166 rural localities. The detailed methodology is attached as an Annex.

The national sample has 39% of respondents living in city districts, 12% in other urban areas, and 50% in rural areas. It is comprised of 50% male and 50% female respondents, with the largest number of respondents – 28% – belonging to the age group of 25 to 34. Eighty-three percent of

respondents have a household size of 5 or more individuals. The literacy level is 54% and of those literate, the majority of the respondents – 47% (40% male and 60% female) – have some primary or completed primary education. The highest level of education attained by the respondents (25%) is Secondary–Higher Secondary. Within this group, the ratio of male and female is 57% and 43%, respectively. Twenty-four percent of respondents fall within the income bracket of PKR 3001 to 7000 per month.

### **2010 Survey**

The 2010 survey is based on the same questionnaire as the 2008 survey. In addition, as mentioned above, it has a new module on public safety and the law and order situation in the country. The survey is based on a total sample of 3,992 nationally and provincially representative households across the country. The respondents represent a mix of urban and rural dwellers, male and female, from all provinces of Pakistan. Due to security reasons and some refusals from community members to participate in the survey, replacements had to be made to the original sample in Punjab and Balochistan. These replacements did not change the characteristics of the sample. The table below shows the distribution of the sample size according to provinces, urban and rural areas, and gender.

Table 3.2: UI/ACNielsen survey sample size 2010

Province	Urban		Rural		Total Sample
	Male	Female	Male	Female	
<b>Punjab</b>	465	465	504	504	<b>1938</b>
<b>Sindh</b>	355	355	192	192	<b>1094</b>
<b>NWFP</b>	110	110	192	192	<b>604</b>
<b>Balochistan</b>	70	70	108	108	<b>210</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>3992</b>

The questionnaire was conducted via face-to-face interviews in both Urdu and Sindhi. The detailed methodology is attached in the annex.

In 2008 the national sample was split evenly between urban and rural areas as well as gender, with the largest number of respondents – 28% – belonging to the age group of 25 to 34. Eighty-three percent of respondents had a household size of five or more individuals. The literacy levels was 54% and of those literate, the majority of the respondents – 47% (40% male and 60% female) – had some primary or completed primary education. The highest level of education attained by the respondents (25%) was Secondary–Higher Secondary. Within this group, the ratio of male and female was 57% and 43%, respectively. Twenty-four percent of respondents fell within the income bracket of PKR 3001 to 7000 per month.

In 2010 the national sample was 35% urban and 65% rural. Males accounted for 52% of the sample, and females 48%, with the largest number of respondents – 29% – belonging to the age group of 25 to 34. Eighty-three percent of respondents have a household size of five or more individuals. The literacy level is 59% and of those literate, the majority of the respondents – 49% (37% male and 60% female)

have some primary or completed primary education. The highest level of education attained by the respondents (22%) is Secondary–Higher Secondary. Within this group, the ratio of male and female is 28% and 16%, respectively. Twenty-three percent of respondents fall within the income bracket of PKR 3001 to 7000 per month.

## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.A Governance

The UI/Nielsen surveys includes a series of questions about different dimensions of democratic governance, asking respondents about the degree of accountability, openness, access and responsiveness of provincial, district and municipal governments throughout the country. It takes as a starting point the premise that the majority of Pakistanis support democratic government – although there is a significant minority that is quite critical of the functioning of these same democratic institutions. Other surveys conducted after the 2008 elections show that the majority of Pakistanis want democratic government; they believe that things will improve under a democratic government; and they give relatively high approval ratings to the newly elected national government and the national assembly. Nevertheless, these same surveys show that the majority of people also believe that the government has not effectively addressed major problems facing the country; that the country is “heading in the wrong direction”; and that their personal situation has worsened and will continue to worsen in the coming year.<sup>2</sup>

The results of the UI/Nielsen survey on local government reflect this same mix of optimism about the return to democratic government and very critical attitudes with respect to the actual performance of government institutions, whether federal, provincial or local (districts, TMAs, and unions). The survey asks the respondents to evaluate these levels of government on several dimensions of governance.

**Accountability.** The concept of accountability can be understood in different ways. It is now customary to distinguish between “vertical accountability” of public institutions to citizens, and “horizontal accountability” of one public institution to another. Modern states combine multiple institutional arrangements, legal frameworks and organizational structures to ensure both vertical and horizontal accountability. In Pakistan, like other democratic countries, the elections to the national parliament and provincial assemblies, and the direct and indirect elections to district, municipal and union councils are the most visible mechanisms for ensuring vertical accountability. But there are other important

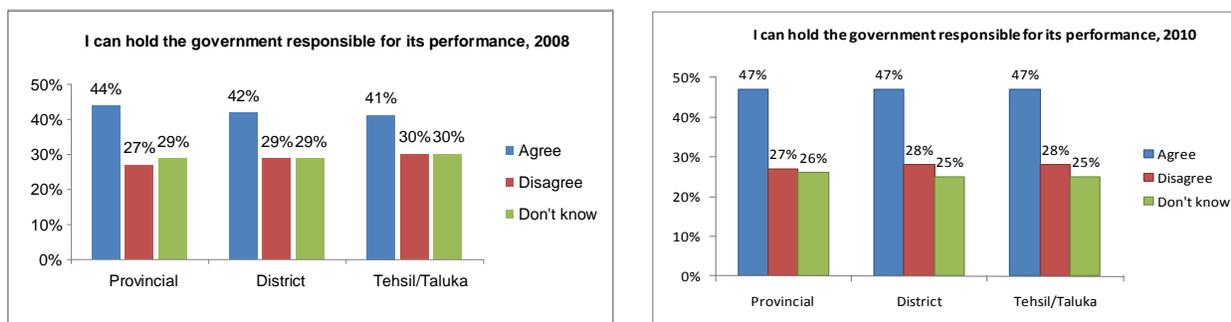
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<sup>2</sup> See International Republican Institute. 2008. Pakistan Public Opinion Survey June 1-15, 2008. Washington, DC: IRI; and United States Institute of Peace and World Public Opinion. 2008. “Pakistani Public Opinion on Democracy, Islamist Militancy, and Relations with the US “. Washington, D. C.

institutions, such as civil society organizations, research institutes, “think tanks”, and communications media that exercise oversight of government.

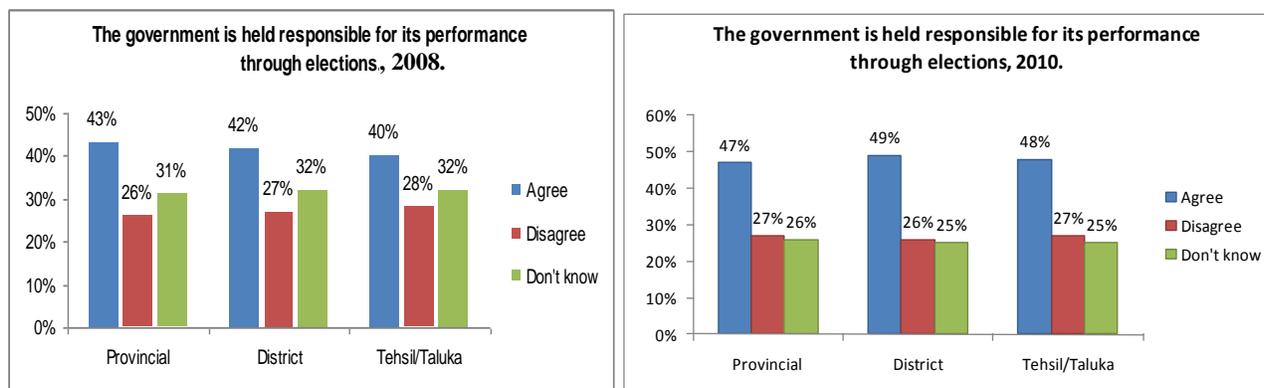
The UI/Nielsen survey focuses on vertical accountability, asking the respondents whether they agree/disagree with the statement “I can hold provincial/district/TMA government responsible for its acts”. In 2008, the results show about 30% of respondents answering “Don’t know”, with respect to accountability of these three levels of government. At the same time, 44% considered that they could hold provincial governments accountable; falling slightly to 42% for district and 41% for TMA levels of government. In 2010, the percent of respondents answering “Don’t know” falls to about 25%, and a higher percent, 47% agreed that they can hold the government responsible for its performance.

Figure 4.A1: Accountability of provincial, district and TMA governments



The survey also asked respondents about electoral accountability: “The provincial/district/TMA government is held responsible for its performance through elections”. As Figure 4.A2 shows, the results for each level of government are more or less similar to the responses to the more general question on accountability.

Figure 4.A2: Electoral accountability of provincial, district and TMA governments



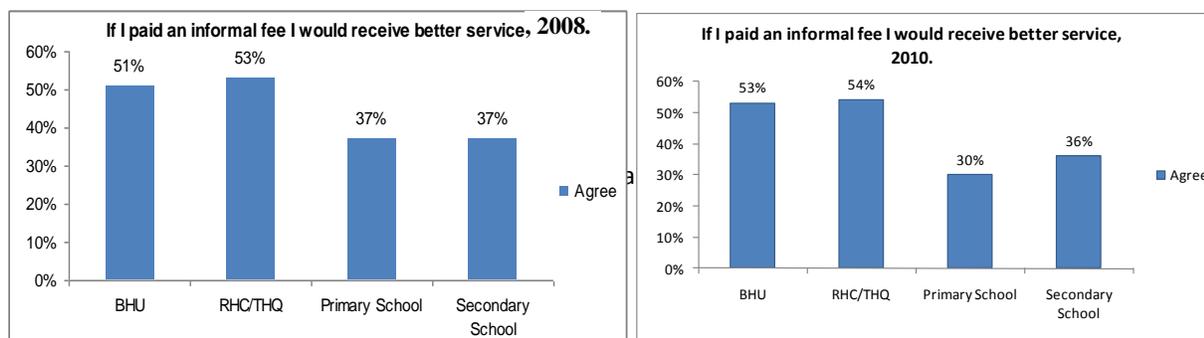
While it might be expected that the 2008 elections would have reinforced citizens' expectations for electoral accountability in the newly elected provincial governments, in fact the survey respondents rated the provinces and local governments more or less equal in this respect.

**Transparency.** The survey has included a number of questions about government transparency, which can be understood as the extent to which citizens have access to information that can facilitate their understanding of decision-making (policies, budgets, projects, etc.). Transparency is important because it generates pressure on public officials for greater accountability for their decisions; and to the extent that it allows access to information, it serves as a check on corruption.

One of the most common results of low transparency in government decision-making is corruption. There is a difference between perceived levels of corruption and the frequency of "victimization", i.e., the direct experience of corrupt acts (for example, paying a bribe). Transparency International carried out a survey of corruption victimization in Pakistan in 2006 and 2009; the results show high levels of corruption in most interactions between citizens and government. The 2006 results show that of those respondents reporting transactions with police in the two years previous, 90% paid bribes; in legal procedures involving judicial authorities, 78% paid bribes; in land administration 92%; in getting access to health services from public hospitals, 67%; and in public school admission/registration 50%. The 2009 survey results show a slight decrease in the percent of respondents paying bribes for health and public school services, which are down to 51% and 46% respectively. However, for the first time, local government was ranked as the 8<sup>th</sup> most corrupt government department; they were not mentioned in the 10 most corrupt government department in the country neither in 2002 nor in the 2006 Transparency International survey.

There are also other TI results for 2009 that focus on perceptions of corruption within local governments. For example, about 26% of respondents found public officials / civil servants to be the most corrupt institution; 67% of respondents perceived that the present district government was more corrupt than the previous provincial government system; and when asked which local government department was most corrupt, 39% said the sanitation / road department and 28% said the birth and death certificate department.<sup>3</sup> One reason for local governments to be added to the list of corrupt departments is the large publicity given to the financial corruption of TMAs in Punjab in 2009 and the subsequent audit and freezing of all TMA budgets.

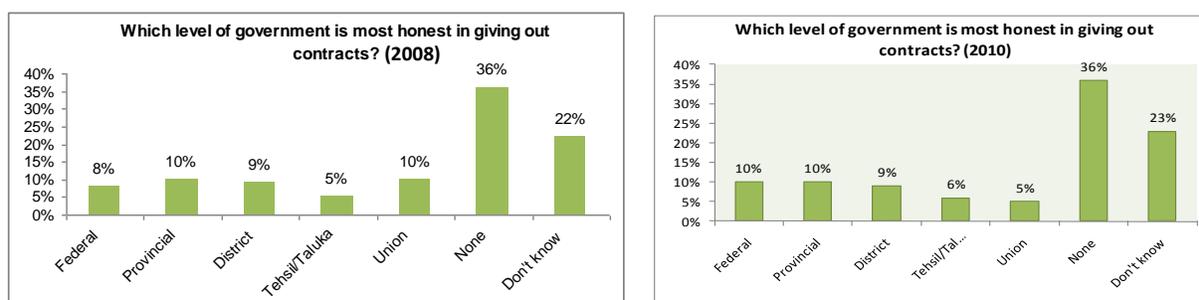
Figure 4.A3: Informal payments for better social services



However, the responses to questions about the prevalence of corruption in specific areas of service delivery are difficult to analyze since responsibility for social services is split between provinces and districts. While education and health are devolved to district administration, the managers and staff are provincial employees. We did not examine the mechanisms of corruption in these areas of service to identify the specific institutional arrangements and administrative norms that lead to particular instance of corruption. As with other findings reported here, these outcomes identify important issues that policymakers might delve more deeply into.

To the UI/Nielsen question whether they would receive better services if they made an informal payment, more than 50% of survey respondents in 2008 said yes for health services and 37% said yes for education, for both primary and secondary schools. In 2010, there is a decrease in the number of survey respondents who said they would receive better services if they made an information payment for primary school services. This parallels the findings of the Transparency International survey, which shows somewhat higher levels of corruption victimization in health services than in education.

Figure 4.A4: Honesty in contracting in federal, provincial and local government

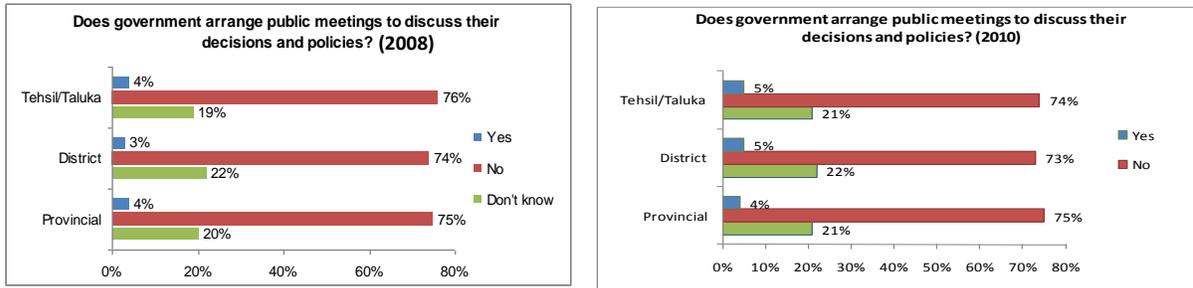


Finally, the UI/Nielsen survey also asked respondents about their perceptions of corruption in government contracting across different levels of government. One question asked “Which level of government is honest in awarding contracts, construction projects, licenses, etc.?” The responses to this question do provide a gauge of how citizens perceive different levels of government in this respect. Given the results of other surveys, it is not surprising that the most frequent response to the question is again “None” for both 2008 and 2010. In fact, as Figure 4.A4 shows, the maximum responses provided for any level of government is just 10%. Clearly, the respondents are very skeptical about government’s contracting and procurement practices at the federal, provincial, district, TMA, and union levels.

*Openness to Consultation and Dialogue.* One of the most important justifications for decentralization and local government is that it brings government closer to the people, in that it offers more opportunities for interaction – including face-to-face meetings – between decision makers and citizens. However, as mentioned above, recent assessments of local government in Pakistan have pointed out that many of the most important provisions for transparency in the 2001 LGO were not implemented.

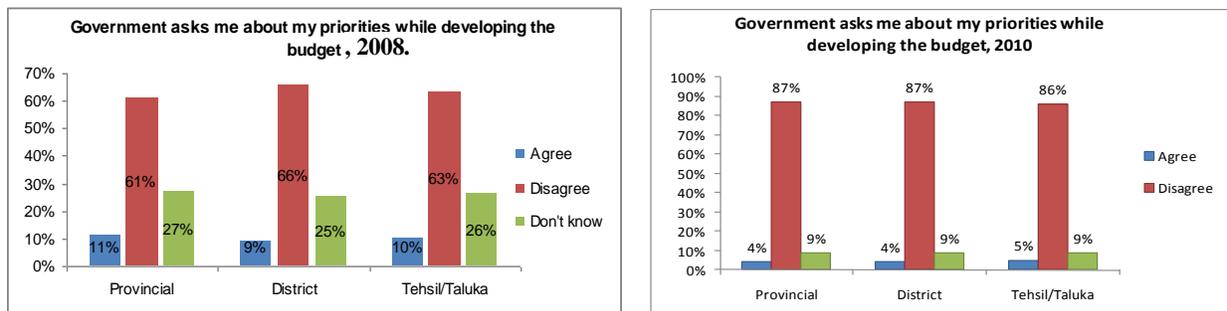
In particular, it has not been a practice of local governments in Pakistan to allow public access to council meetings; to present periodic reports in open council meetings; or to hold consultative meetings on budget priorities – even though all of these are formal provisions of the 2001 LGO. Nor is it a practice of nazims and councilors to hold informal meetings with constituents, or to convene public hearings on important decisions, the kinds of practices used by local governments in many other countries to improve accountability, transparency and responsiveness.

Figure 4.A5: Public consultations by provincial, district and TMA governments



Responding to the question, “Does the provincial/district/TMA government arrange public meetings to discuss decisions and policies?”, there is no significant change in respondents answers for 2008 and 2010. Only 3% - 5% of the UI/Nielsen survey respondents across four provinces answered affirmatively. On average, 21% of respondents said that they don’t know. Overall, these results point to the almost complete absence of formal mechanisms for consultation and dissemination of information to citizens, whether in provincial or local governments.

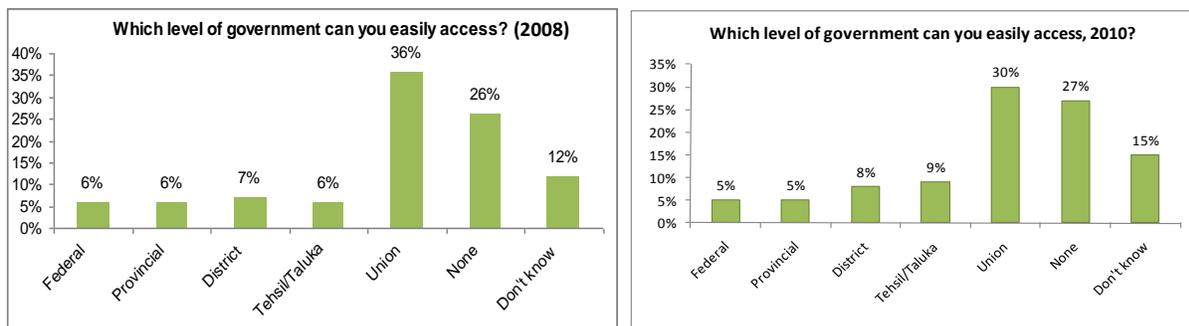
Figure 4.A6: Consultation on budget priorities by provinces, districts and TMAs



With respect to the practice of consulting with citizens on government budget priorities, the survey results are only marginally more positive. Even so, as Figure 4.A6 shows, in 2008 only between 9% and 11% of respondents say that provincial, district or TMA governments do consult with citizens on budget priorities. This decreases to 4% in 2010. The differences between provincial and local governments are negligible, again suggesting that local governments did not effectively apply the provisions of the 2001 LGO for public budget consultations.

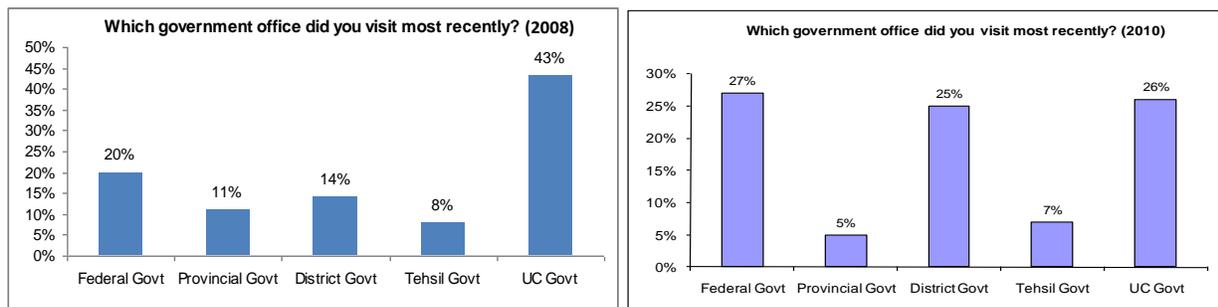
**Access to Government.** When faced with problems, where do citizens go to resolve them? One of the survey questions asked “Which level of government can you easily access?” As shown in Figure 4.A7, about 38% of the responses were “None” or “Don’t know” in 2008 and this increased to 42% in 2010. Comparing the different levels of government, 36% and 30% of the respondents said that the union councils can be easily accessed in 2008 and 2010 respectively. In 2008 6% said that the tehsil/taluka can be easily accessed, and this increased to 9% in 2010. There is practically no change in results for federal, provincial, and district government between 2008 and 2010 with less than 8% of respondents saying they can easily access these levels of government. This difference is not surprising, given the relatively small size of union councils and opportunities for direct interaction between officials and citizens.

Figure 4.A7: Access to federal, provincial and local government



These opinions were reflected in the responses to the question “Have you visited any government offices or elected officials during the last one year”; to which about 13% of respondents in 2008, and 14% of respondents in 2010 replied affirmatively. As can be seen in Figure 4.A8, in 2008, majority of the visits occurred at the union council level, with 43% of respondents stating that they visited the union council. This is followed by visits to the federal government, 20%, district governments, 14%, provincial 11% and lastly TMAs, at 8%. In 2010 the results are different with about quarter of the respondents each visiting the federal, district, or union council. Of those visiting a government office, 20% said they did this to make a complaint.

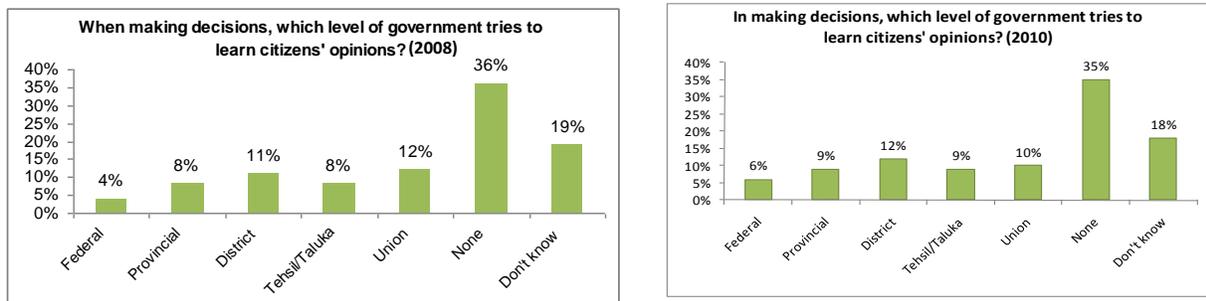
Figure 4.A8: Visits to federal, provincial and local governments



In 2008, about 59% of most recent visits to government offices or officials were to elected officials. In 2010 it was 37% (note that local government elections did not take place in August 2009 which explains the decrease in recent visits). While this might seem high, it reflects the high proportion of visits to union councils, which are centered almost exclusively on interactions with the nazim or elected council members.

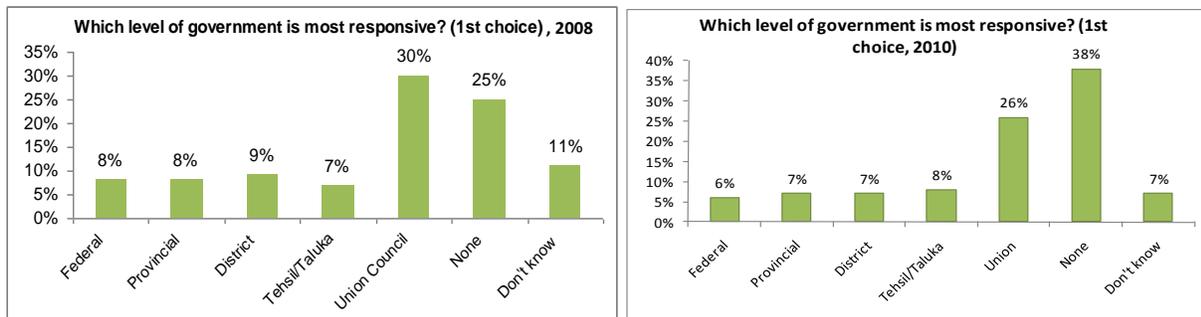
**Responsiveness.** This aspect of governance refers to the degree to which citizens see government decisions – policies, budgets, projects, etc. – as responding to their preferences, and their perceptions on whether they, as citizens, can influence government decision-making. In reply to the question of which level of government tries to take into consideration citizen’s opinions in decision-making, a majority of respondents said either “None” or “Don’t know” – 56% in 2008 and 53% in 2010. There were marginal differences between levels of government, with a slightly higher percent of respondents saying “union councils” and “districts” in both 2008 and 2010, which suggests that people see them as somewhat more responsive than the federal, provincial, and taluka government – all under 10% in both years (see Figure 4.A9 below).

Figure 4.A9: Government interest in knowing citizens’ opinions



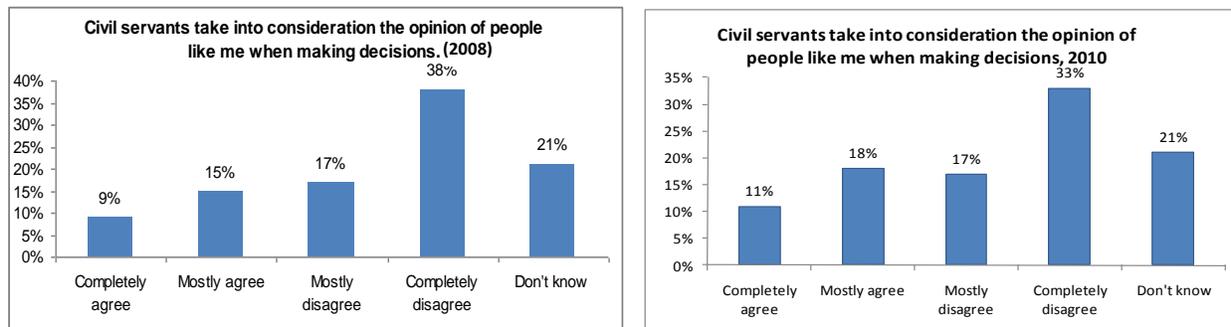
Despite this, survey respondents still tend to see local governments, and particularly union councils, as more responsive to their needs. As shown in Figure 4.A10, union councils receive 30% of mentions, compared to a maximum of 9% for any other level of government in 2008. However, the most frequent response was “None” and “Don’t know”, again reflecting the prevalence of very critical attitudes on the quality of governance at all levels. In 2010, respondents are more critical about the responsiveness of all levels of government, with 38% saying that no level of government is responsive.

Figure 4.A10: Responsiveness of federal, provincial and local governments



**Bureaucratic Responsiveness.** The UI/Nielsen survey asked respondents to indicate agreement or disagreement with the statement, “Civil servants take into consideration the opinion of people like me when deciding”. The results are presented in Figure 4.A11. In 2008 only 24% percent of respondents say that they “Completely agree” or “Agree”, whereas 55% say that they “Mostly disagree” or “Completely disagree”. In 2010, 29% of respondents say that they “Completely agree” or “Agree” and 54% say that they “Mostly disagree” or “Completely disagree.”

Figure 4.A11: Responsiveness of civil servants to citizen needs



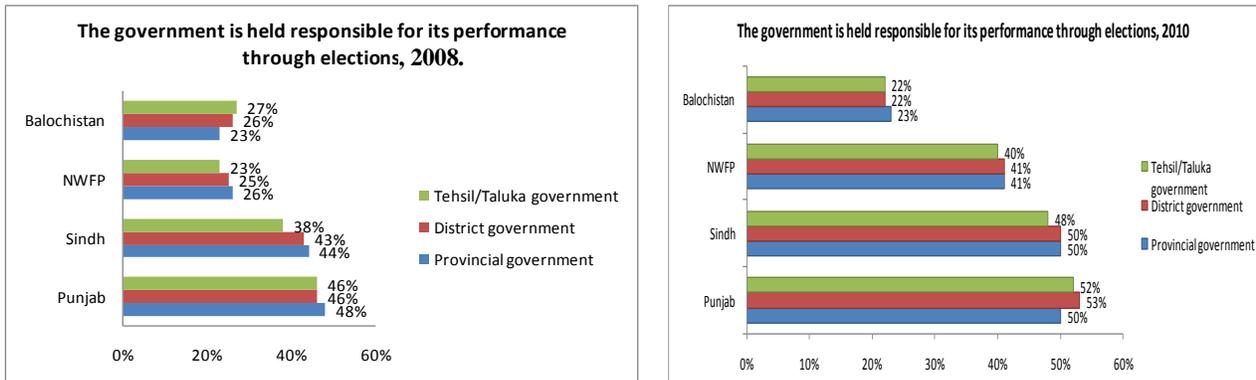
Of course, in most instances the elected official is a union nazim, naib nazim or councilor. Compared to the middle and senior ranks of the bureaucracy who are appointed by federal and provincial governments and rotated among districts and TMAs on a regular basis, these local political representatives are probably seen as much closer to their community. They are also part of a patron-client network that stretches upwards through locally powerful people and families connected to provincial and federal politics.

Another explanation might be the quality of the local administration itself. Mostly without exception, districts and TMAs have not established formal processes and procedures for attending the general public. Nor is there written information or sign boards in government offices on regulations or requirements for routine transactions. For example, in both 2008 and 2010, only a small proportion of respondents – 12% to 15% – considered that the provincial, district or tehsil/taluka administrations had an “open door” policy which would allow them to access government officials. In 2008, almost one-third said that they didn’t know, and about 54% said that they “Mostly” or “Completely Disagree” that the government has an open door policy. In 2010 the percent saying that they “Mostly” or “Completely Disagree” that the government has an open door policy increased to 65% while 23% said they “Don’t Know”. Finally, as the Transparency International surveys have indicated, most transactions, requests for rectification of errors, or registering of complaints with district and TMA managers and employees require paying a bribe. Generally the local political representatives do not require bribes from constituents.

**Interprovincial Differences.** The UI/ACNielsen survey included separate provincial samples, allowing for the disaggregation of results for each province and the analysis of inter-provincial differences. How different are the responses in the four provinces on questions about governance?

For example, in 2008 to the question whether different levels of government can be held responsible through elections, on average 46% of survey respondents in Punjab agreed. As Table 4.A12 shows, this frequency was significantly lower in Sindh, 42%; NWFP, 25%; and Balochistan, 25%. In 2010, while the percent of respondents who agree that the government can be held responsible for its performance through elections marginally decreased to 22% in Balochistan, it increased to 41%, 49%, and 52% in NWFP, Sindh, and Punjab respectively.

Figure 4.A12: Inter-provincial comparison of electoral accountability of provincial, district and TMA governments



On questions of transparency, the results summarized in Table 4.A1 demonstrate a very high level of skepticism about government integrity across the board. In 2008, the respondents in Punjab were somewhat more positive; with 31% of respondents answering “None” to the question what level of government is most honest in awarding contracts. In NWFP the result was similar to that of Punjab, but in Balochistan it increased to 42%, and in Sindh 45%. The results are quite different in 2010 due to the large publicity in the newspapers about allegations of corruption within the local government in Punjab and an audit of all local government finances in end 2008, early 2009. Thus we see a substantial increase in the percent of respondents stating that that “None” of the local governments are honest in awarding contracts – from 31% to 44%. In all other provinces, the percent of respondents saying “None” has decreased, with 38% and 31% in Balochistan and NWFP respectively and the lowest in Sindh at 19%.

Table 4.A1: Inter-provincial comparison of most honest level of government in awarding contracts

Government	Punjab		Sindh		Balochistan		NWFP	
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010
Federal	8%	8%	8%	13%	3%	12%	9%	14%
Provincial	11%	8%	8%	15%	8%	3%	10%	13%
District	9%	5%	10%	15%	6%	15%	8%	10%
Tehsil/Taluka government	5%	4%	2%	6%	1%	10%	9%	12%
Union council	13%	4%	8%	6%	1%	8%	5%	7%
None	31%	44%	45%	19%	42%	38%	33%	31%
Don't know	23%	26%	18%	24%	33%	14%	22%	13%

Despite the transparency mechanisms established by the 2001 LGO, local governments were not particularly well evaluated in comparison to the provincial and federal levels of government in 2008. The only governments that received more than 10% of positive responses were the provincial government in NWFP (10%); district government in Sindh (10%); provincial government in Punjab (11%), and the union councils in Punjab (13%). Overall local government (districts, TMAs and union councils) were evaluated the worst in Balochistan relative to other provinces. In 2010 except for the federal government which remained the same, all other levels of government received lower positive responses to the question which level of government is most honest in awarding contracts in Punjab. In contrast, a larger percent of respondents gave all levels of government a positive response in Sindh, NWFP, and Balochistan.

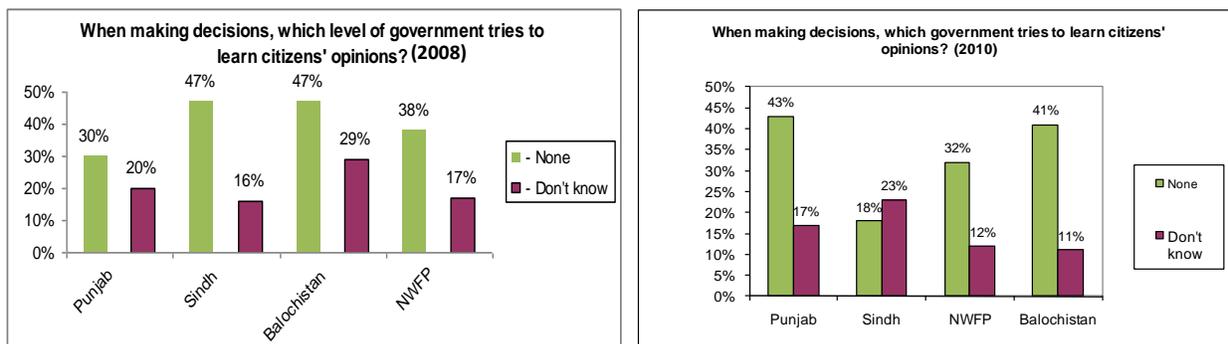
On the question of access to government, there were also sharp differences between the four provinces, as Table 4.A2 indicates. To the question, which level of government can you easily access, in 2008 15% of respondents in Punjab answered "None", compared to 36% in NWFP, 42% in Sindh and 44% in Balochistan. Federal, provincial, district, and TMA government got a few positive mentions in the range of 2% to 8%. In 2010, in Punjab, except for a slight improvement in TMA government, all other levels were considered less easy to access. In Sindh a higher percent of respondents found all levels of government easier to access while results are mixed in Balochistan and NWFP.

Table 4.A2: Inter-provincial comparison of which level of government is easiest to access

Government	Punjab		Sindh		Balochistan		NWFP	
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010
Federal	7%	5%	2%	4%	0%	2%	8%	5%
Provincial	7%	6%	3%	4%	3%	1%	7%	8%
District	8%	7%	6%	11%	3%	6%	9%	8%
Tehsil/Taluka government	6%	8%	5%	10%	3%	10%	7%	8%
Union council	44%	31%	31%	34%	18%	26%	13%	20%
None	15%	28%	42%	18%	44%	43%	36%	39%
Don't know	11%	15%	10%	17%	25%	11%	18%	12%

As was presented above in this section, the UI/Nielsen survey results show that the union councils are the most frequent point of contact of citizens with government; on average, 30% of respondents said they can easily assess union council members. There are some important differences between the provinces in responses to this question: In Punjab, union councils were mentioned by 44% of survey respondents in 2008, but this fell to 31% in 2010; and in the province of Sindh it remained about the same in the two years, 31% in 2008 and 34% in 2010. In NWFP and Balochistan the frequency fell considerably in 2008, to 13% and 18% respectively – again this seems to be in part the result of such a large percentage answering “None”, but increased in 2010 to 20% and 26%, respectively.

Figure 4.A13: Inter-provincial comparison of government interest in knowing citizens' opinions



To the question, which level of government tries to understand citizens' opinions, the answers in Figure 4.A13 again show a high level of skepticism in all provinces: in Punjab 30% of survey respondents said “None” in 2008 which increased to 43% in 2010; in NWFP it was 38% and 32% in 2008

and 2010 respectively; and in Balochistan it was 47% and 41% in 2008 and 2010 respectively. The most improvement is seen in Sindh with 47% of respondents saying no level of government tries to understand citizen's opinion in 2008, but this falling to 18% in 2010. However, some of this decrease is offset by a larger percent saying "Don't know" 2010 compared to 2008. Again, on this question the union councils in all of the provinces received more positive ratings.

It should be noted that on many of the questions in 2008 the respondents in Punjab, and to a lesser extent Sindh, showed a more positive assessment of government institutions (except on questions of transparency in Sindh). Overall, this seems to suggest a weaker presence of government institutions in NWFP and Balochistan. These results are also consistent with other research, which has shown that in some regions of NWFP and Balochistan, the traditional tribal structures of power and authority continue to be more salient and relevant than the formal structures of government, whether federal, provincial or local. However, in 2010 respondents in Punjab gave a less positive assessment of government institutions, perhaps in large part due to allegations of corruption in elected local government officials and the audit of local government finances. On the other hand respondents in Sindh are more positive and there is also slight improvement in Balochistan and NWFP.

#### **4.B Service Delivery**

The services that local governments provide are fundamental to determining their composition, their roles and the form which they take. The underlying logic of decentralizing service delivery to local governments is that they are closer to the citizens, and are better positioned to determine citizen needs and priorities, thereby providing more efficient and effective services. Two key determinants of effectiveness in decentralization is the capacity of local government to provide services and clarity in allocation of roles and responsibilities between levels of government regarding service delivery.

One of the major criticisms of devolution in Pakistan has been that service delivery has suffered, particularly in health, education, water supply and sanitation, all services devolved to local governments under the 2001 Local Government Ordinance. Corruption, a lack of trained staff, jurisdictional arguments, political interference and lack of resources have all contributed to this alleged decline in service coverage and quality. Even if service provision has not deteriorated, argue the critics of the 2001 LGO, it certainly has not kept up with citizens' needs. In particular, according to this argument, districts and TMAs have squandered large amounts of investment resources on schemes that have little impact on the overall quality of life. It is also argued that local governments are reticent to spend sufficient resources to maintain and repair existing facilities – preferring investments in new infrastructure.

Are these criticisms of local government service delivery supported by broad public opinion? What do citizens think about service delivery under devolution? What services are provided well and which aspects of service delivery are weak?

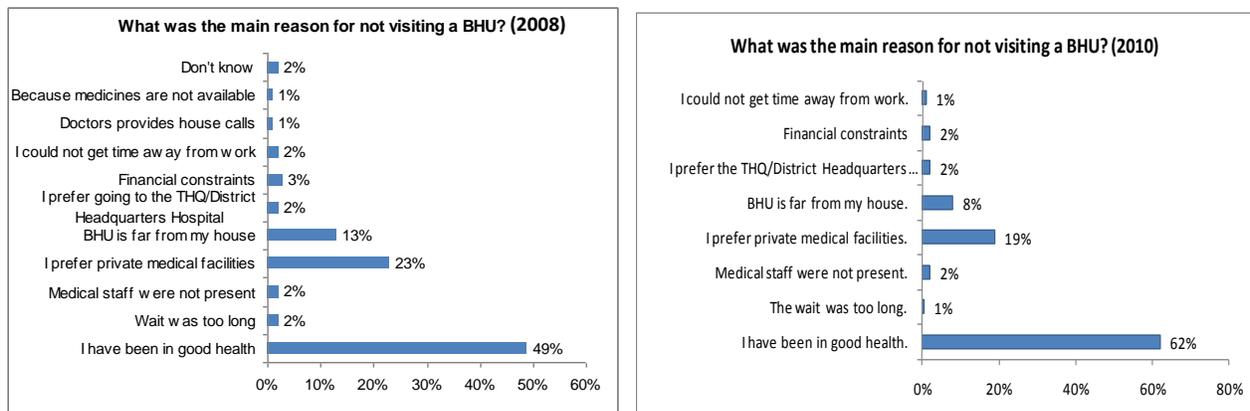
**Social Services—Health.** Under the 2001 LGO, the district governments were given responsibility for providing key social services such as healthcare and education. The expertise and financial capacity to

provide these services was to be made available at the district level, while newly formed political bodies were empowered to make decisions regarding investment as well as to respond to citizen concerns and needs.

Districts are responsible for the management of primary and secondary healthcare facilities—Basic Health Units (BHUs), Rural Health Centers (RHCs) and TMA and District Headquarters (THQ/DHQ) Hospitals. This includes issues such as the equipping and maintenance of facilities, assuring a supply of medicine, attendance of staff at facilities and construction of new facilities. Provincial health departments, however, also have important roles to play in these facilities, specifically in the posting and transfer of staff and other critical aspects of human resource management.

In Pakistan, a country of over 160 million people, primary healthcare is critical for maintaining the productivity and well-being of the population as well as promoting Pakistan’s progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. The utilization of Basic Health Units is an important indicator in measuring the effectiveness of primary healthcare programs in Pakistan.

Figure 4.B1: Reasons for not visiting a Basic Health Unit

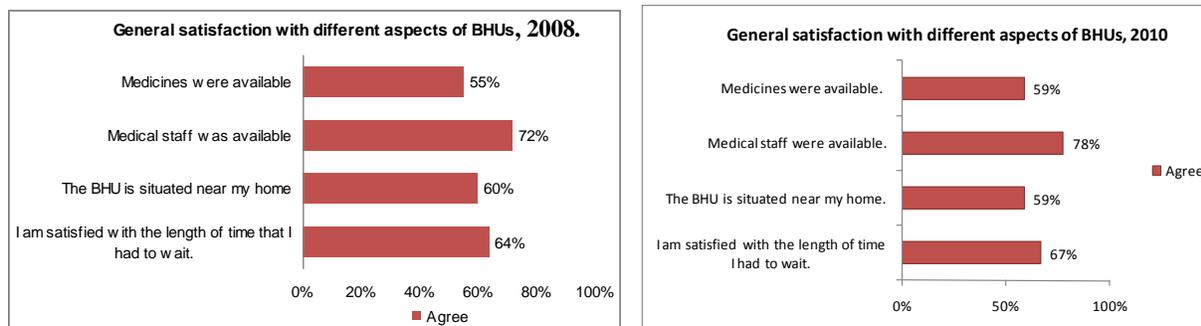


The UI/Nielsen survey asks a series of questions regarding utilization of BHUs including reasons why people say that they did not use BHUs. According to the results of the survey 20% of citizens across four provinces say that they have visited a Basic Health Unit in the past 6 months. Of the people who did not visit a BHU, the percent who say it is because they have been in good health and did not need medical treatment was 49% in 2008, and 62% in 2010. People in urban areas say that they are relatively healthier than in rural areas. In 2008, 53% of urban respondents said that they did not go to a BHU because they were in good health, compared to 45% in rural areas. In 2010 66% of the urban population said that they did not need medical treatment because they have been in good health. In 2008 people in urban areas preferred private medical facilities relative to rural areas with 26% of urban residents responding that that is the reason that they did not go to a BHU compared to 19% in rural areas. In 2010, 20% of respondents in urban areas said they preferred private medical facilities compared to 18% in rural areas. In 2008, 19% of respondents in rural areas said that they did not to go to a BHU in the

past six months because it is too far from their home compared to only 7% in urban areas. In 2010, this decreased to 10% in rural areas and 4% in urban areas.

The UI/Nielsen survey asks a series of questions about respondents' visits to the BHU. These questions, including questions on citizens' perceptions of staff capacity, facility quality and overall satisfaction with the visit, are designed to provide an insight into how citizens perceive the quality of primary healthcare services provided through Basic Health Units.

Figure 4.B2: General satisfaction with different aspects of BHUs



While none of the results are a resounding endorsement of citizens' satisfaction with primary healthcare services, a majority of people are generally satisfied with their visits to BHUs with 64% and 67% of respondents agreeing with the statement that they received good medical aid from qualified staff in 2008 and 2010 respectively. The aspect of BHUs that people are most satisfied with are the availability of medical staff, with 72% of respondents agreeing with the statement that medical staff was available during their visit to the BHU in 2008, and 78% agreeing with this statement in 2010. Citizens are less satisfied with the length of time they had to wait at BHUs as well as the distance of the BHU from their house with 64% and 60% of respondents stating that they are satisfied with these aspects respectively in 2008. In 2010, 67% and 59% of respondents respectively agreed that they are satisfied with the length of time they had to wait at BHUs and the distance of the BHU from their house. People are most dissatisfied with the lack of medicines at the BHU, with only 55% of respondents in 2008, and 59% in 2010 saying they were satisfied with the availability of medicines.

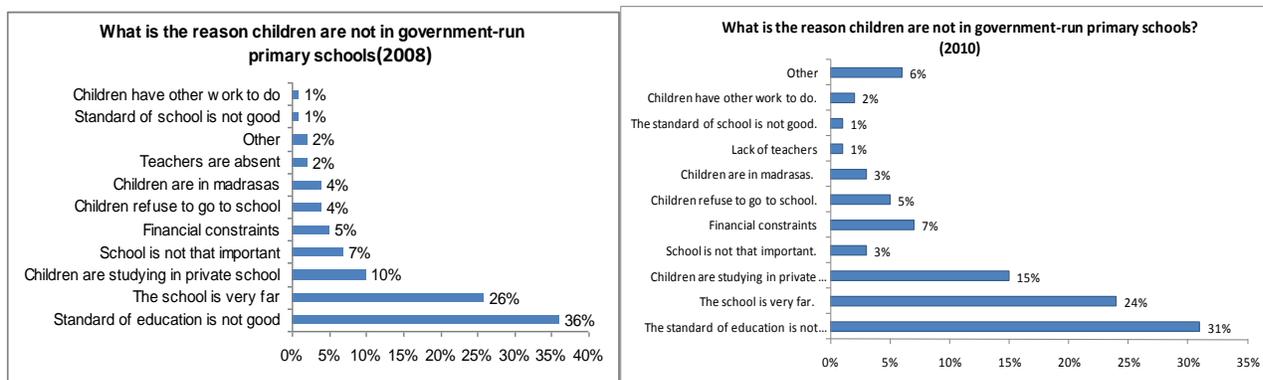
**Social Services—Education.** Education is another crucial social service that was devolved to district governments. Similar to the roles devolved in regard to health, district governments are responsible for the maintenance and management of both primary and secondary schools, but the provincial government retains control over key human resource issues such as transfers and posting.

In 2008, according to the results of the UI/Nielsen survey, 57% of households across four provinces have children that are of primary school age, with a maximum number of six children of primary school age in the household. Of the households with children of primary school age in them, 54% have some or all of their children in government-run schools. In 2010, 58% of households across all provinces have children that are of primary school age, with a maximum number of 10 children of

primary school age in the household. Of the households with children of primary school age in them, 57% have some or all of their children in government-run schools.

The reasons that people stated they do not have their children in government primary schools include poor education services and difficulty of accessing schools, which are often at a distance. Of households that had children of primary school age, but have none of the children enrolled in government-run schools, 26% say that the school is very far and 36% say that the low standard of education in government schools is the reason that their children are not enrolled in 2008. In 2010, 24% say that the school is very far, and 31% that the standard of education is not good. In addition, in 2008 10% of respondents state that their children are studying in a private school, and this increases to 15% in 2010. This reflects a general dissatisfaction with the quality of the education services provided.

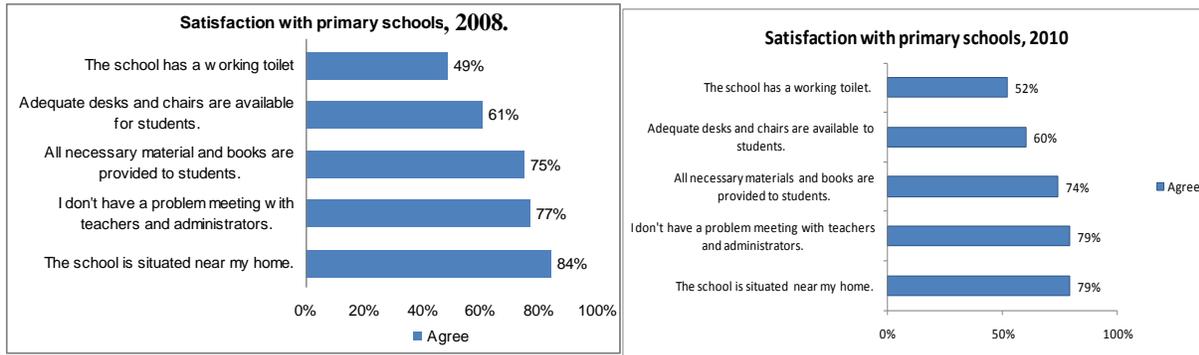
Figure 4.B3: Reason for children not attending government primary schools



The UI/Nielsen survey asks respondents who have primary age children in government-run schools a series of questions regarding their satisfaction with primary schools. These questions cover issues such as the respondents' opinions of the physical conditions of the school, the availability of books, as well as perceptions of the professionalism and availability of the teachers and administrators.

While quality is a major issue in deciding whether or not to send your child to a government school, the majority of households that do have children in government-run primary schools are generally satisfied with the quality of the education. In 2008, Seventy-four percent of respondents agreed that their children receive a quality education from qualified teachers, while in 2010 this was 69%.

Figure 4.B4: Satisfaction with primary schools (households with children in government schools)

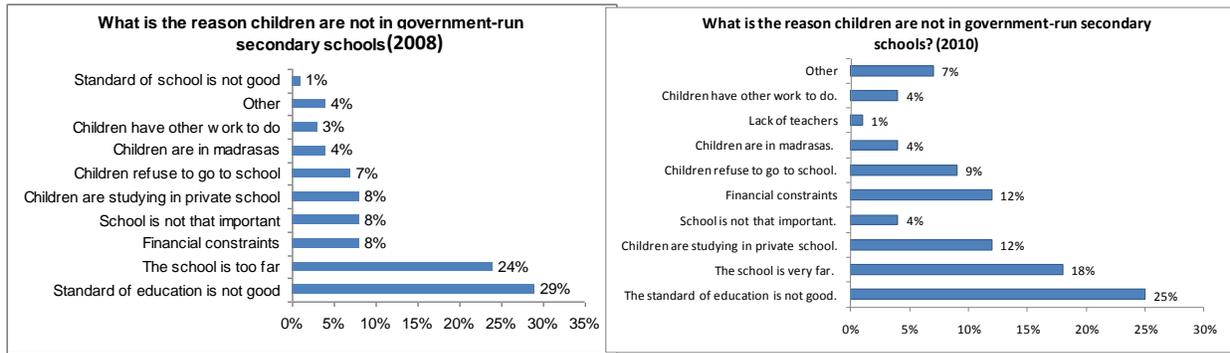


Households with children in government primary schools are also generally satisfied with the access they have to primary education services. In 2008, 84% of respondents say that the school is situated near their home and 77% say that they do not have a problem meeting with teachers and administrators. Respondents are, however, less satisfied with school facilities with only 61% agreeing that adequate desks and chairs are available for students and 49% saying that their children’s school have a functioning toilet. In 2010, 79% of respondents say that the school is situated near their home and 79% say that they do not have a problem meeting with teachers and administrators. Respondents are, however, less satisfied with school facilities with only 60% agreeing that adequate desks and chairs are available for students and 52% saying that their children’s school have a functioning toilet.

The UI/Nielsen survey also explores people’s opinions regarding government-run secondary schools. According to the results of the survey, in 2008 36% of households had children of secondary school age, and the maximum number of children per household was six. Of the households with children of secondary school age in them, 62% of them had some or all of their children in government-run secondary schools. In 2010, 38% of households have children of secondary school age, and the maximum number of children of secondary school age per household is 5. Of households with children of secondary school age, 59% of them have some or all of their children in government-run secondary schools.

Similar to primary schools, the reasons that people do not have their children in government secondary schools focus on access and quality. Social reasons that emerge across four provinces for children not attending government secondary schools are 8% and 4% of respondents saying that “school is not that important” and 3% and 4% saying that “children have other work to do” in 2008 and 2010 respectively. In 2008, of households that have children of secondary school age, but have none of the children enrolled in government-run schools, 29% say that the poor standard of education is the foremost reason that their children are not enrolled in government schools. 24% percent respond that the distance of the school from their house is the reason their children are not in government schools. In 2010, 25% say that the poor standard of education is the foremost reason their children are not enrolled in government schools, and 18% respond that the distance of the school from their house is the reason their children are not in government schools.

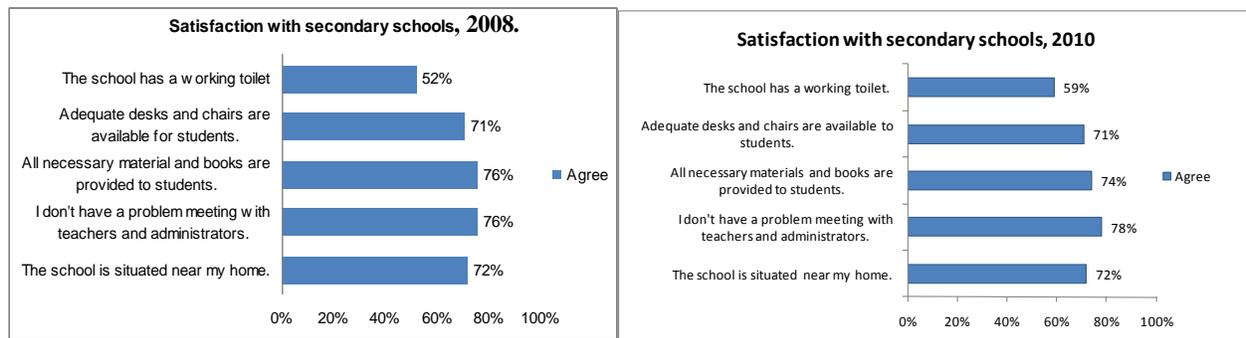
Figure 4.B5: Reason for children not attending government secondary schools



The UI/Nielsen survey also asks respondents who have secondary age children in government-run schools the same series of questions regarding their satisfaction with secondary schools as is asked of respondents with children in primary schools. These questions covered such issues as the respondents' opinions of the physical conditions of the school, the availability of books, as well as perceptions of the professionalism and availability of the teachers and administrators.

The majority of households that have children in government-run secondary schools are generally satisfied with the quality of the education. Seventy seven percent of people in 2008 and 75% in 2010 responded affirmatively that their children are receiving a quality education from qualified teachers. In 2008, 72% of respondents say that the school is situated near their home and 76% said that they do not have a problem meeting with teachers and administrators. In 2010 this was 72% and 78% respectively. Respondents are also satisfied with some aspects of secondary school facilities with 71% agreeing that adequate desks and chairs are available for students across both years. Other aspects of school facilities are not seen in such a positive light, with 52% saying that their children's school has a functioning toilet in 2008, which increases to 59% in 2010.

Figure 4.B6: General satisfaction with different aspects of secondary schools



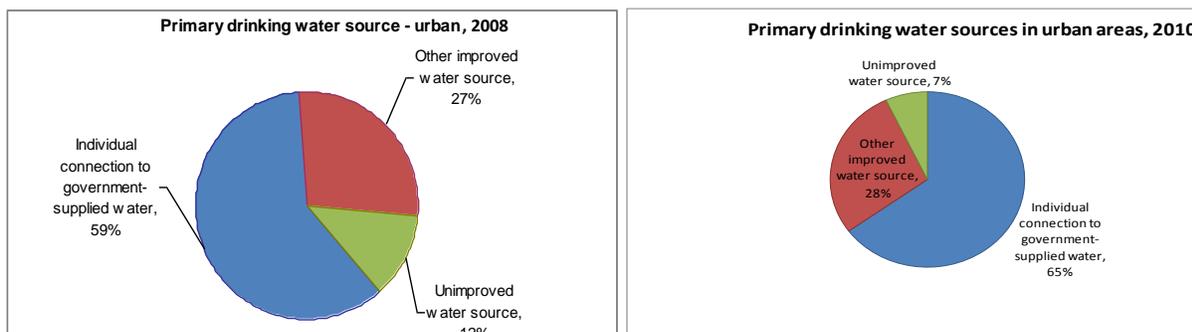
**Household Services.** Household services such as drinking water, sanitation, drainage and sewerage, are vital for the health of communities as well as creating an environment which promotes investment and economic growth. Through the 2001 LGO, the responsibility for providing household services was

devolved to TMAs. In theory, TMAs were to receive staff from both previous Municipal Committees as well as from provincial departments such as Public Health Engineering, but many of the staff as well as financial resources have yet to be transferred to TMAs. Since then, critics of the LGO say funds for maintenance are not provided by TMAs and investment by TMAs is often seen as politically motivated leading to a decrease in service quality, particularly in the rural areas.

The UI/Nielsen survey examines questions of both coverage and quality of services, two key indicators of how successfully services are provided. Citizens' responses about whether they use and have access to government services, as well as their perceptions of the quality of that service provide important insight into how citizens view government performance overall.

Drinking water is an essential household service which is technically complex and often difficult for local governments to provide effectively, especially in rural areas. In 2008, 59% of people in urban areas say that their primary source for drinking water is an individual connection to a government water scheme. An additional 27% say that they receive their water from other types of improved water, and 12% receive their water through unimproved water sources. The situation seems a bit better in 2010 with 65% of respondents in urban areas saying that their primary source for drinking water is an individual connection to a government water scheme. The percent getting unimproved water has fallen to 7%, and the percent getting water from other improved water sources is steady at 28%. It is important to keep in mind that access to an improved water source does not necessarily equate with access to a clean water supply.

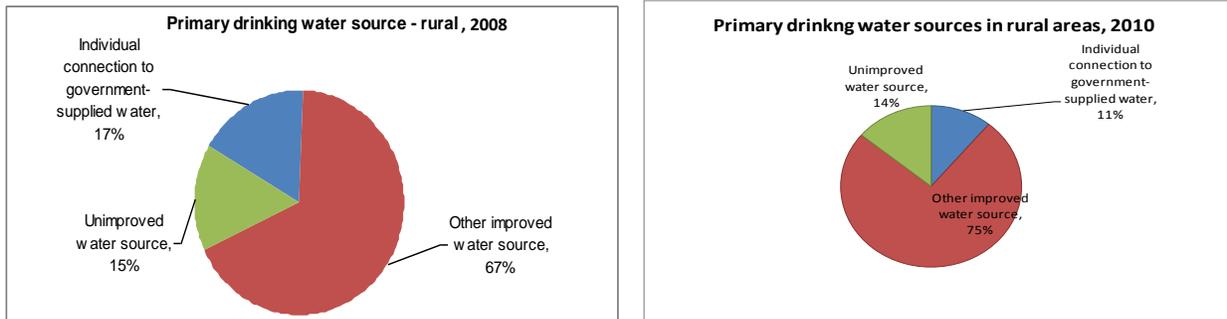
Figure 4.B7: Primary drinking water sources in urban areas



According to the survey, people in rural

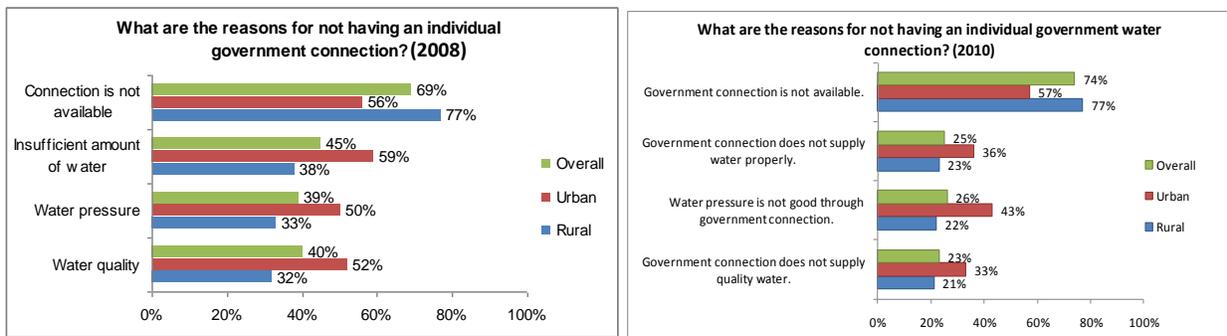
areas of Pakistan have almost the same access to improved water sources as in urban areas. Government-run water schemes, however, have considerably less coverage with only 17% and 11% of respondents saying that they receive their water through an individual connection to the government water supply in 2008 and 2010 respectively, and 67% and 75% saying that their primary drinking water source is other improved water in 2008 and 2010 respectively. These other improved services, such as bore holes and other types of protected wells, may have been installed by the government, but in general require little in terms of continued investment and maintenance. Thus in rural areas a larger percent of respondents have had to rely less on the government and choose alternate supply of drinking water in 2010. Fifteen percent cite water source through unimproved water sources in rural areas in 2008, which remains at 14% in 2010.

Figure 4.B8: Primary drinking water sources in rural areas



As seen in Figure 4.B9 below, in 2008 when people are asked why they do not get their water from a government water scheme 69% reply that there is no government connection available. Seventy-seven percent of respondents in rural areas cite this as the reason they are not connected to a government connection, while a smaller percent – 56% of people in urban areas cite this. The amount of water supplied is also important to people in choosing not to be connected to a government connection with 45% of people saying that the government connection does not provide a sufficient amount of water and 39% of people saying that the water pressure provide by government connections is not good. These reasons are similar across both urban and rural areas. Water quality is also important to people, with 40% of respondents stating that this is a factor in why they do not use government water. Surprisingly, the problem seems to be worse in urban rather than rural areas. In 2010, a smaller percent of respondents cite problems with insufficient amounts of water, water pressure or water quality compared to 2008. The issue is just that government connections are not available.

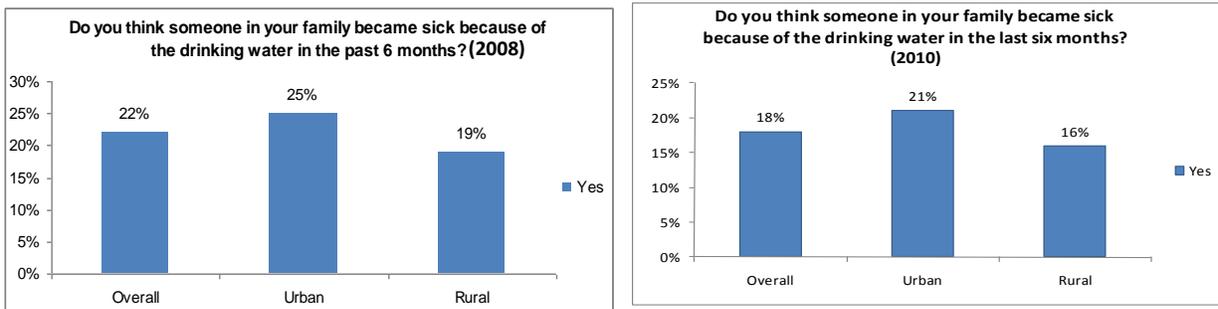
Figure 4.B9: Reasons for not having an individual water connection



The availability of water is an important measure of citizens' satisfaction with their water supply. When asked whether they receive a sufficient supply of water, 37% of survey respondents said that they rarely or never have a sufficient supply of water in 2008. In 2010 this was 33% of all respondents. There is a difference between urban and rural areas with 44% urban and 31% rural respondents saying they rarely or never have a sufficient supply of water in 2008, and 35% urban and 31% of rural respondents saying they rarely or never have a sufficient supply of water in 2010.

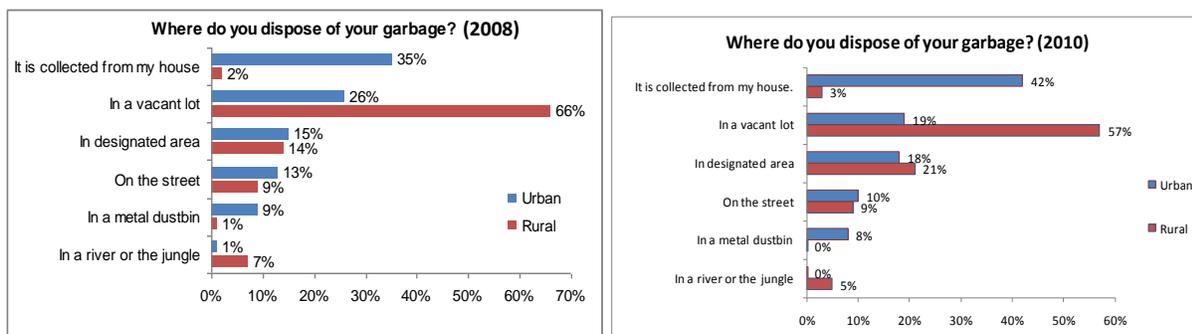
The quality of drinking water is also an issue across the four provinces. When asked whether they thought anyone in their household had become sick in the past 6 months from the drinking water supply, 22% of households stated yes in 2008 and 18% in 2010. In 2008, 25% of respondents say this in urban areas while a slightly lower percent, 19% in rural areas think someone in their household had become sick from the drinking water supply. In 2010, 21% of urban and 16% of rural respondents think that someone in their household had become sick from the drinking water supply. Given that individual connections to government supplied water are considerably more prevalent in urban areas than in rural areas, this raises important questions about the local government’s ability to supply clean water.

Figure 4.B10: Perceptions of water-borne disease by urban/rural



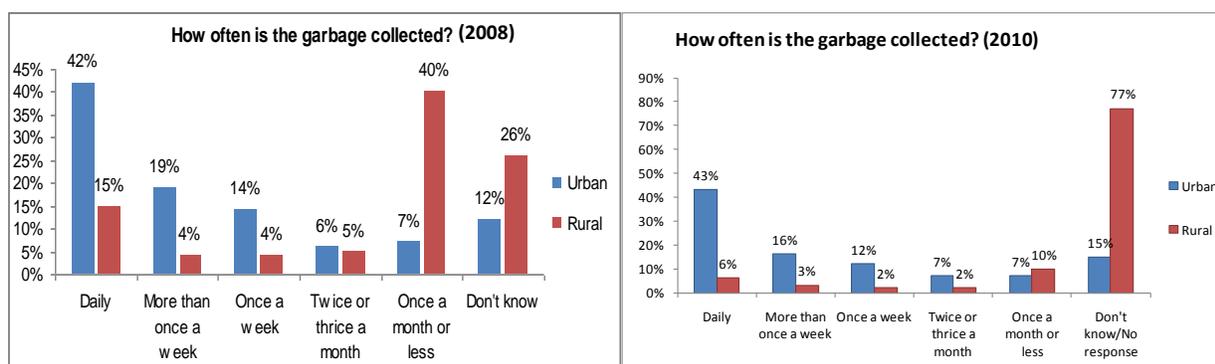
Street cleanliness and sanitation are another key household service investigated by the UI/Nielsen survey. Access to these services is firmly divided along urban and rural lines with urban areas having considerably higher access to services. In 2008 35% of urban respondents said that they have door to door trash collection, 15% stating that they dispose of their garbage in designated areas and 9% saying that they put it in metal dustbins. In rural areas 66% of people say they dispose of their garbage in vacant lots, 9% dispose of it in the street, 7% in a river or the jungle, and 14% say they dispose of their garbage in designated areas. Even in urban areas, 26% of people state that they dispose of their garbage in vacant lots, 13% on the street and 1% in the river or the bush. This high rate of chaotic trash disposal has serious implications for the cleanliness of communities throughout the province. In 2010 access to street cleanliness remains divided along urban and rural lines, but there seems to be a slight improvement in rural areas, with 21% in rural areas saying they dispose their garbage in designated areas in 2010, compared to 14% in 2008. In percent who dispose of their garbage in a vacant lot also decreased from 66% in 2008 to 57% in 2010.

Figure 4.B11: Disposal of garbage by urban/rural



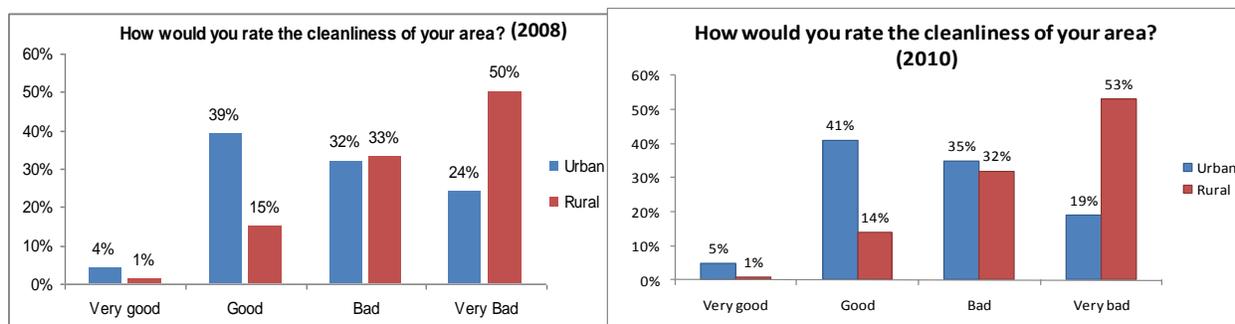
Frequency of services also varies considerably between urban areas and rural areas. People who dispose of their garbage in dustbins, designated areas or who have door to door collection service were asked about how frequently their garbage was collected. In 2008 in urban areas, with its higher percentage of door to door service, 42% of people say that their garbage is collected daily, with an additional 14% stating that it is collected at least once a week. In rural areas this frequency drops considerably with 40% of people stating that their garbage is collected once a month or less and only 15% stating that their garbage is collected daily. It is striking that 26% of respondents in rural areas do not know how often their garbage is collected, and in fact this increases to 77% not knowing how often their garbage is collected in 2010. Else garbage collection in 2010 in urban areas remains similar to 2008. In rural areas it falls to 6% of respondents saying that their garbage is collected daily, and only 10% saying that it collected once a month or less (down from 40% in 2008).

Figure 4.B12: Frequency of garbage collection by urban/rural



Does this urban bias in the coverage and frequency of trash collection translate into higher satisfaction levels with street cleanliness in urban areas? Indeed, the results of the survey show that people in urban locations generally rate the cleanliness of their areas higher than in rural areas. In fact, in 2008 43% of respondents in urban areas say that the cleanliness of their area was good or very good while in rural areas this drops to only 16%. In 2010, 46% of respondents in urban areas say that the cleanliness of their area is good or very good, while in rural area this drops to 15%.

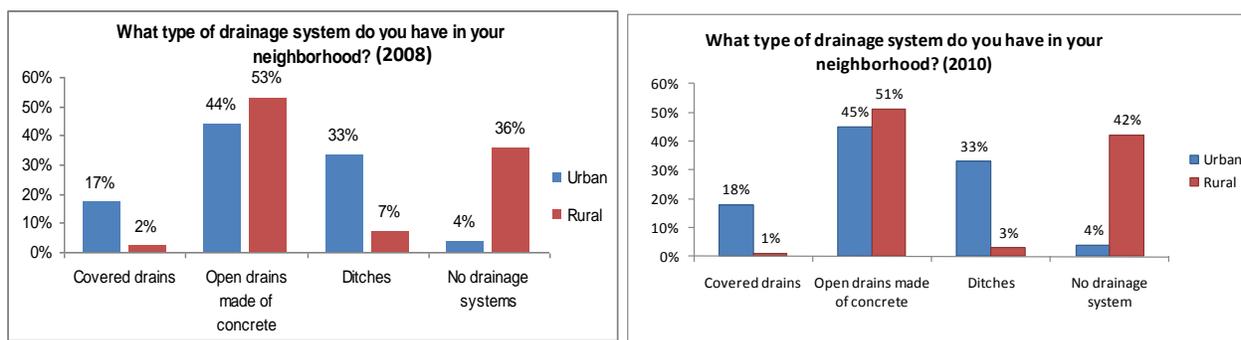
Figure 4.B13: Rating of street cleanliness by urban/rural



Such a marked difference in the quality of service provision between rural and urban areas, as well as the relatively low level of service provision throughout the province, requires serious consideration about the future of sanitation services.

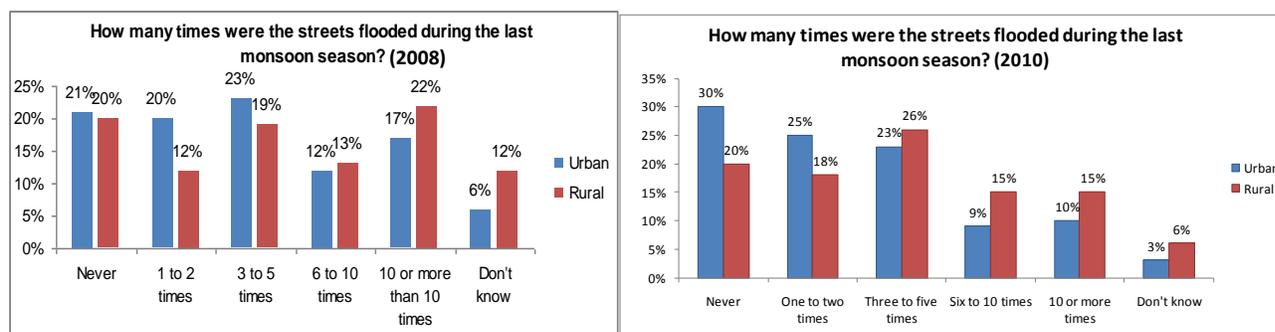
Drainage is another household service that has a large impact on public health outcomes. Flooding during the monsoon season increases the incidence of waterborne diseases and malaria as well as directly reducing the potential for economic activity.

Figure 4.B14: Coverage of drainage systems by urban/rural



As expected, people in urban areas indicate that they are better covered by drainage infrastructure with 61% and 63% saying they have covered drains or open drains made of concrete in 2008 and 2010 respectively, compared to 55% and 52% in 2008 and 2010 respectively in rural areas. Although they are better covered with infrastructure than in rural areas, 37% still say that they either have ditches or no drainage system at all in their neighborhoods. Rural areas are substantially worse off with 43% of rural respondents saying that they either have ditches or no drainage system at all. These results are similar for both 2008 and 2010.

Figure 4.B15: Frequency of flooding of streets by urban/rural



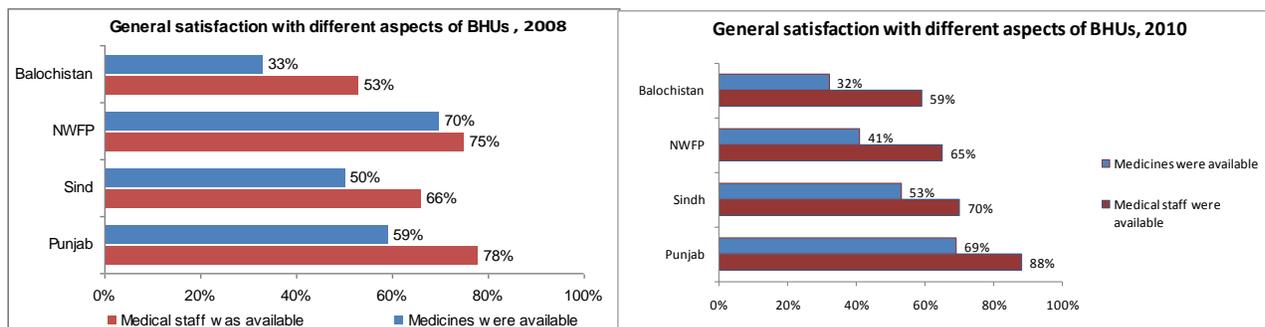
While the coverage of drainage infrastructure is considerably lower in rural areas, rural areas do not face considerably higher incidences of flooding. While rural respondents are slightly more likely to say that their neighborhood flooded 10 times or more during the last monsoon season, these responses do not have a significant relationship with whether respondents say their neighborhood has drainage infrastructure or not. That is, the frequency of flooding is not connected with the type of drainage provided, but instead with other factors such as geography and even maintenance of infrastructure.

The results of the UI/Nielsen survey show substantial levels of dissatisfaction with services presently provided by local governments both in social services such as health and education as well as in household services of water supply, sanitation and drainage. While the LGO was meant to make districts and tehsils/talukas responsible for the provision of these services, as we will see in the next section citizens do not clearly attribute services to these levels. This lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities has far reaching implications on responsiveness and trust in government.

**Interprovincial Differences.** While this survey was intended to highlight issues in local government, comparing the results on service delivery issues across the four provinces of Pakistan also underscores the considerable disparities in the level of development in these regions, which is a matter for concern of both federal and provincial policy makers.

In identifying the reasons for not using a BHU in the last six months, respondents in Balochistan were more likely to emphasize distance/location as the problem in both 2008 and 2010: in 2008, 26% said that the BHU was too far, compared to 14% in NWFP, 13% in Sindh and 11% in Punjab. In 2010, 21% in Balochistan, 12% in NWFP, 11% in Sindh, and 6% in Punjab say that the BHU was too far. This of course points to the geographical terrain in Balochistan as well as population densities and dispersion.

Figure 4.B16: Inter-provincial comparison of general satisfaction with different aspects of BHUs

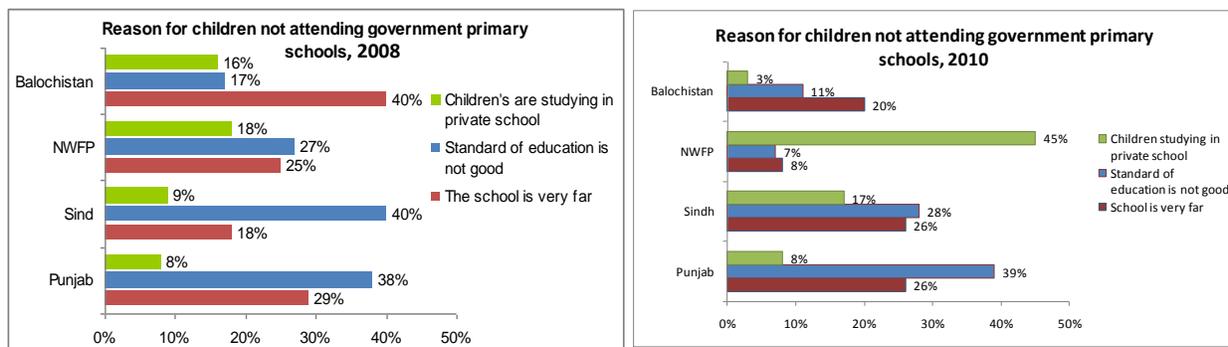


On the questions referring to the quality of the services received from BHUs, in Punjab and NWFP, these services are better evaluated than in Sindh and Balochistan, where a larger proportion of the respondents across both 2008 and 2010 reported that medical staff and medicines were not available. In Balochistan another significant problem was the length of time people have to wait – which

would of course be a significant issue for patients having to make long journeys to and from the closest BHU. It is interesting to note that availability of medicines and staff has deteriorated in NWFP in 2010 compared to 2008, but have improved in Punjab. The situation in Sindh and Balochistan in 2010 is very similar to that in 2008.

There also emerge significant differences between the provinces in the evaluation of education services as seen in Figure 4.B17. In explaining why their school age children do not attend a government primary school, the explanation “low standard of education” is mentioned by 38% and 40% of respondents in Punjab and Sindh in 2008 and by 39% and 28% of the population in Punjab and Sindh respectively in 2010. While the Punjab results are similar across the two years, in Sindh a larger percent of children are studying in private school in 2010 relative to 2008.

Figure 4.B17: Inter-provincial comparison of reasons for children not attending government primary schools



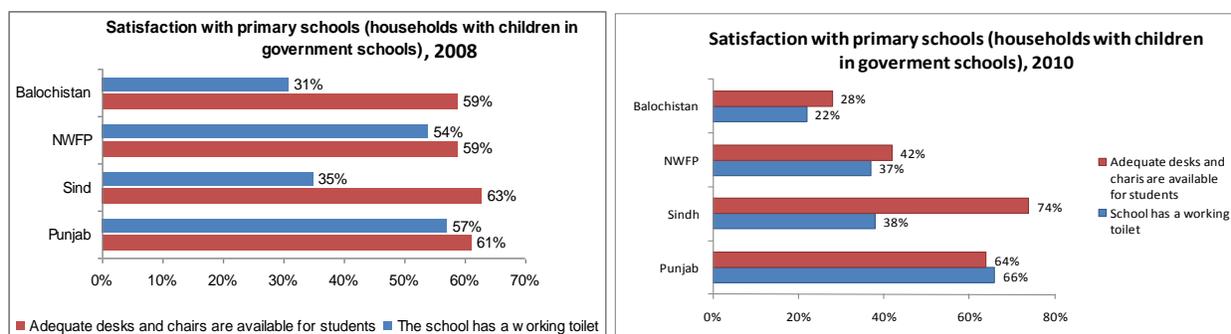
This problem is both less salient in NWFP and Balochistan in 2008, and a different reality has emerged in 2010. In the latter province the most frequent response in 2008 was the “the school is very far” at 40%, which drops down to 20% in 2010. In fact, in 2010, the highest percent of respondent in Balochistan reported “financial constraints”, 28% for the reason why children are not attending government primary schools. In Punjab, Sindh and NWFP this is less of an issue. Balochistan and NWFP also have a larger percent of respondents with children in private schools compared to Sindh and Punjab. In Balochistan 10% of respondents who have school age children not in government schools report that they are in madrasas in 2008 which increases to 14% in 2010. In NWFP the most significant change is that from 14% of respondents saying that their children study in private schools in 2008, in 2010 this has increased to 45%. One of the reasons for this shift is the systematic closure of schools by the Taliban across several districts in this province.

In terms of inter-provincial differences, the survey responses on questions about secondary schools are more or less similar to the results for primary schools. Thus, these tables and figures are not presented here. In 2008 it is worth noting that in Punjab and Sindh, 26% and 41% of parents say that low education standards are the reason for their child not attending government secondary school, versus 13% and 9% in NWFP and Balochistan. In 2010, the largest percent of respondents in NWFP, 34% said that the reason their child is not attending government secondary school is because they are

studying private schools; in Balochistan 25% of the respondents said that the school is too far; and in Punjab and Sindh, 32% and 27% respectively said that the standard of education is not so good.

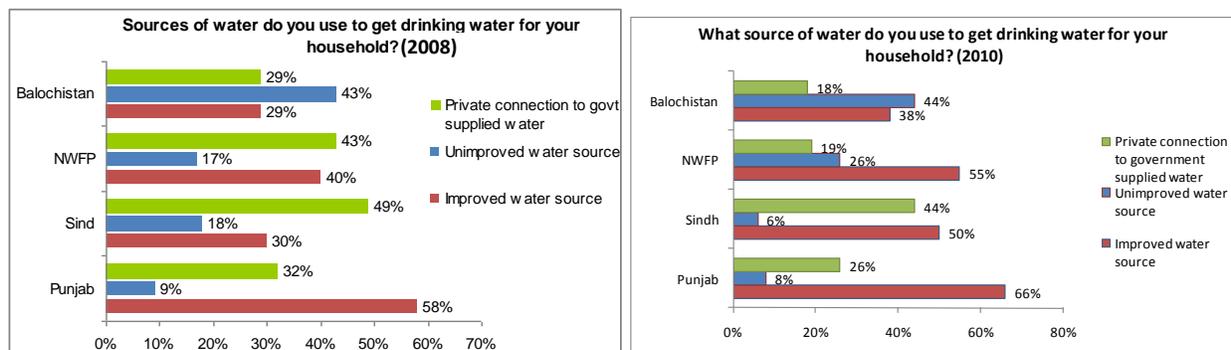
The responses from all four provinces also suggest that there remain many problems with the provision of equipment and adequate education infrastructure: in 2008 on average 40% of respondents say that there are inadequate desks and chairs; and 40% to 70% of respondents say that there are no working toilets in the school. In 2010, on average 52% of respondents say that there are inadequate desks and chairs; and 33% to 78% of respondents say that they are no working toilets in the school. The summary results presented in Figure 4.B18 suggest that on issues of infrastructure, schools in Balochistan and Sindh are rated worse by parents than those in Punjab and NWFP.

Figure 4.B18: Inter-provincial comparison of satisfaction with the infrastructure of primary schools (households with children in government schools)



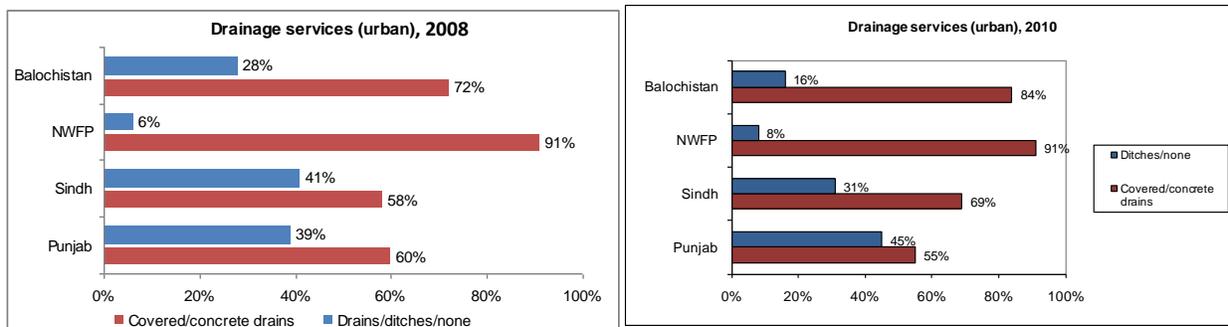
Finally, turning to household services, the interprovincial differences appear to be similar. As Figure 4.B19 shows, in Punjab, Sindh and NWFP a larger proportion of urban and rural families have access to either a government water connection or another improved water source in both 2008 and 2010. In 2008 in Balochistan 43% of survey respondents have to use unimproved water sources. This remains about the same in 2010, but there is improvement in the availability of improved water source across all four provinces.

Figure 4.B19: Inter-provincial comparison of the sources of water used to get drinking water for the household



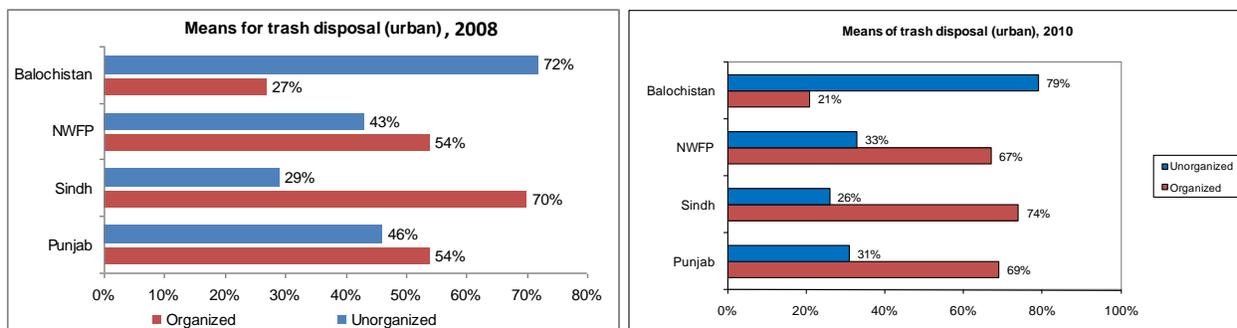
In Sindh, however, there are relatively more problems with water quality. In 2008, among all provinces, the largest percent of respondents in Sindh – 49% said that they rely on private connection to get government supplied water. Also, 28% of the survey respondents in this province reported that someone in their family had been ill from waterborne diseases recently, compared to 25% in Balochistan, 21% in Punjab and 9% in NWFP. In 2010, the percent of households relying on a private connection fell in all provinces and a larger percent across all provinces have access to improved water source. Despite this, the largest percent of respondents in Sindh, 44%, continue to rely on a private connection to get drinking water, compared to 18% in Balochistan, 19% in NWFP, and 26% in Punjab. However, the largest percent of respondents, 44% reporting that someone in their family had been ill from waterborne diseases were in Balochistan, compared to 22% in Sindh, 16% in Punjab, and 8% in NWFP.

Figure 4.B20: Inter-provincial comparison of drainage system types (urban)



With respect to drainage services, the responses again show significant inter-province differences. The responses summarized in Figure 4.B20 are only for urban areas. Both Balochistan and NWFP show better coverage of improved drains (covered drains and concrete lined drains) compared to both Sindh and Punjab in both 2008 and 2010. These two latter provinces have a larger, rapidly growing urban population; clearly the tehsils/talukas have not been able to keep up with these increased service needs in urban places. With respect to the survey questions about solid waste management, the summary of results in Figure 4.B21 show that overall a large proportion of urban respondents report disposing of their garbage in the street and vacant lots (“unorganized disposal”). The issue of solid waste management is particularly acute in the urban places in Balochistan.

Figure 4.B21: Inter-provincial comparison of mechanisms for garbage disposal (urban)



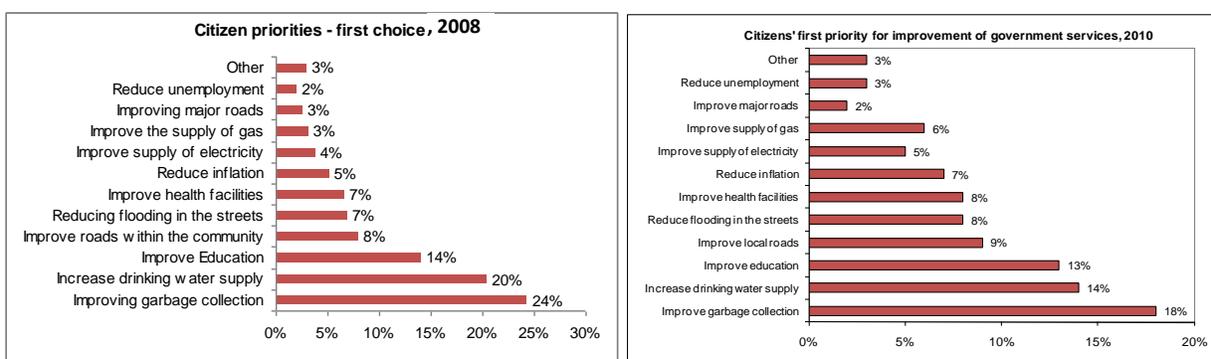
It is impossible to say whether the interprovincial differences in service coverage and quality discussed in this section reflect the specific regional contexts or disparities in their resource bases and revenues. No doubt, in comparison to Punjab, the provinces of Balochistan and Sindh and to a certain extent NWFP lag behind in terms of their resource base and own source revenues. However, good service coverage and quality can also be the result of better governance and management of service delivery.

#### 4.C Citizen Expectations for Improvement

This section is about what citizens across four provinces think of their government, more specifically about the roles and responsibilities of their local governments. The results of the survey presented in the previous sections of the report indicate that citizens are critical of government at all levels, but less in local government; they also report numerous problems with coverage and quality of services provided by local governments. This section looks at citizen views on improvement of government: priorities for improvement of services; which level of government should be responsible for service provision; how local governments should be elected; and whether citizens are optimistic about improving local government performance through better governance.

**Priorities for Service Improvement.** Usually one of the stated objectives of devolution reform is improvement of the capacity of government to provide public goods (law and order, justice, transport and communications infrastructure, social services, and household services). It is useful to look at what survey respondents say are their priorities for improving government services. The survey question stated that while there is room for improvement in any or all services, there are insufficient funds, and asked the respondents to suggest three priority areas for improvement.

Figure 4.C1: Citizens’ first priority for improvement of government services

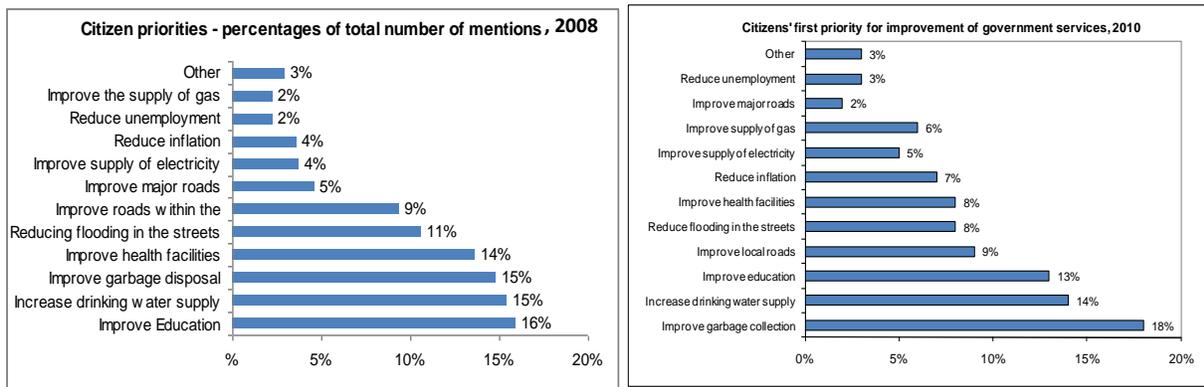


“Improving garbage collection” and “Increase drinking water supply” has the most mentions as first priority for service improvement, with 24% and 20% respectively in 2008 and 18% and 14% in 2010 respectively. In urban areas in 2008, it was mentioned by 29% and 22% of survey respondents respectively and in rural areas 19% for each of the two priority services. The remaining two most frequently mentioned services include improving: education, 14%, and improve road within the community, 8%. In 2010, improve education and improve local roads are mentioned by 13% and 9% of respondents respectively. In urban areas the highest mentions are for improving education at 15% and in rural areas for improving health facilities at 17%.

Another way of looking at this is to examine how many times a specific service is mentioned as either first, second or third priorities for improvement. As Figure 4.C2 indicates, this changes the top five priorities slightly in both 2008 and 2010, as does the ordering. In 2008, education is in first place with 16% of total mentions as either first, second or third priority, followed by improvement of water supply and garbage disposal, 15% and then improvement in health facilities at 14%. In 2010 this changes to improve garbage collection with 18% of mentions as either first, second or third priority, followed by increase drinking water supply at 14% and improve education at 13%

Either way, education, health, water, drainage and garbage collection continue to be the highest priorities for service improvement. All of these are local government responsibilities at present. It should be noted that this was an open question – i.e., the responses were not suggested in the questionnaire and there was no mention at all of local government services. Nevertheless, the improvement of services provided by other levels of government was ranked as a lower priority.

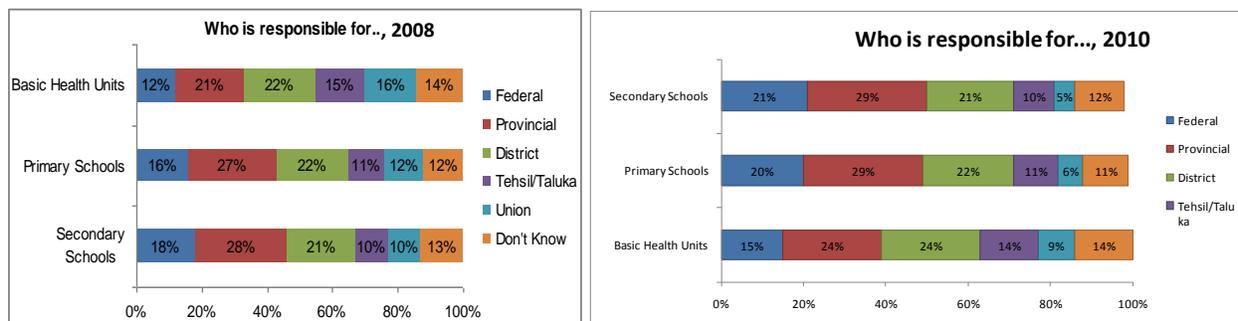
Figure 4.C2: Citizens’ top three priorities for improvement of government services



**Who is Responsible for Services?** Many assessments of the 2001 LGO and of the way in which it was implemented suggest that it left ambiguities in the management of service delivery, in that local governments were not free to decide on non-development expenditures or critical aspects of human resource management. At the same time, the federal and provincial governments continued to fund large-scale health and education and basic sanitation programs, usually with support from donor agencies, and local governments were mandated with their operation and maintenance.

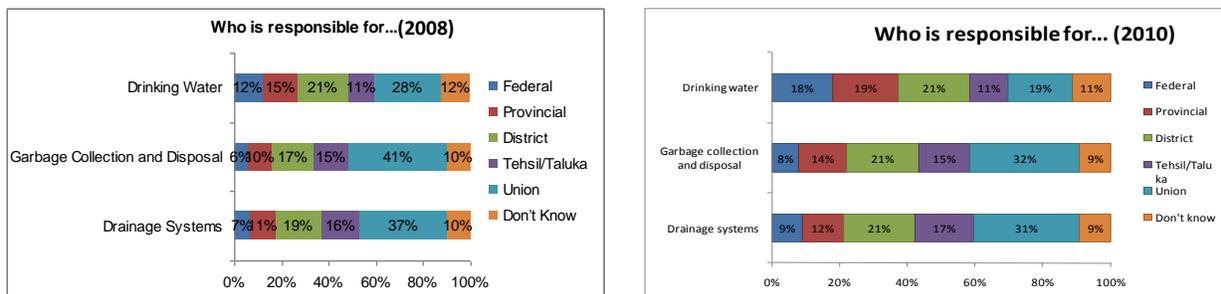
The overlapping responsibilities for service provision are reflected in the dispersion of the responses to the questions on responsibility for provision of health and education. In 2008 while about 13% of responses are “Don’t know”, the remainder is dispersed among all five levels of government, including 33% to 46% mentioning federal and provincial governments. More than 10% of respondents assign responsibility to union councils for BHUs. In 2010, 12% of responses are “Don’t know” while 39% to 50% mention federal and provincial governments.

Figure 4.C3: Perceived responsibilities for provision of health and education



The answers on the perception of responsibilities for the provision of household services show a different pattern of dispersion. As shown in Figure 4.C4, relatively few respondents ascribed responsibility to federal or provincial governments. However, there was considerable disagreement with respect to the roles of districts, TMA’s and union councils in provision of water, garbage collection and drainage.

Figure 4.C4: Perceived responsibility for water, garbage and drainage services



This is not to imply that the majority of citizens are in some sense “wrong”; rather it underscores the confusion caused by the numerous overlapping responsibilities and jurisdictions between levels of government. However, it is important to note that even when authority has been clearly assigned, there is still perceived confusion – for example, while TMA’s do in reality have the authority and responsibility to provide drinking water, only 11% of respondents were able correctly identify that. This has important implications for democratic governance – accountability, transparency and responsiveness. The dispersion of real or perceived authority makes it very difficult to establish accountability for low

coverage; to press government officials to be more responsive to service users; or even to ascribe responsibility for misuse of public funds.

Theories of government decentralization argue that improvements in management and service delivery will be the result of better – more timely and more accurate – information flowing between public officials and citizens. That public officials at the local level, whether elected or unelected, can understand citizen preferences better; at the same time, citizens can access public officials more easily. But this advantage is reduced when government responsibilities are ambiguous. And this same ambiguity might help explain some of the survey results presented in the previous section on governance with respect to citizen access to government.

The UI/Nielsen survey also revealed that most citizen interactions and consultations with government officials and offices – 43% of total interactions in 2008 and 52% of total interactions in 2010 – were with either union nazims or union council members. Not surprisingly, when asked to identify the most accessible level of government, 36% and 30% mentioned union councils respectively in 2008 and 2010. This is despite the fact that under the 2001 LGO the union councils were assigned a very limited role in providing services. This issue will be discussed in the concluding section on implications for devolution policy reform.

**Who should provide services?** The UI/Nielsen survey also asked citizens their preferences as to which level of government should provide social and household services. With respect to social services, 56% of survey respondents in 2008 favored provision of primary health services by local governments; 47% for primary education; and 45% for secondary education. In 2010, 51% of survey respondents favored provision of primary health services by local governments, 46% for primary education, and 44% for secondary education.

Figure 4.C5: Preferences for provision of social services by all levels of government

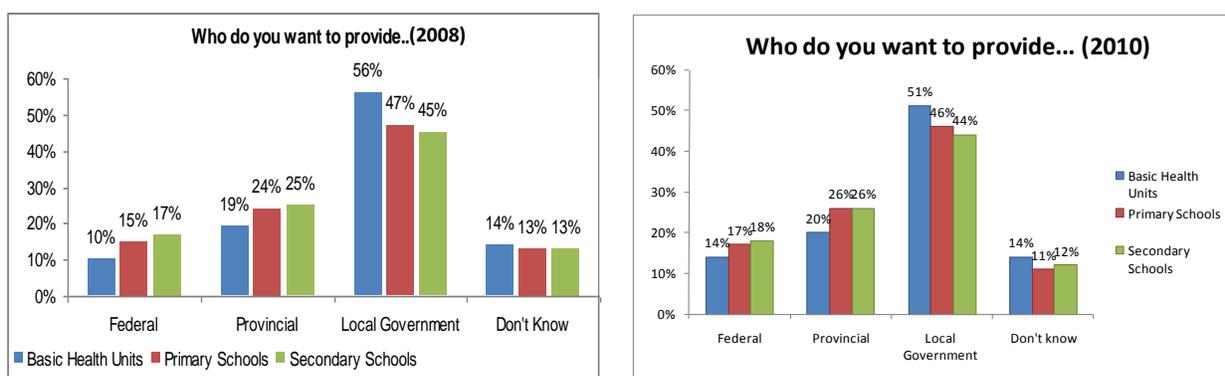
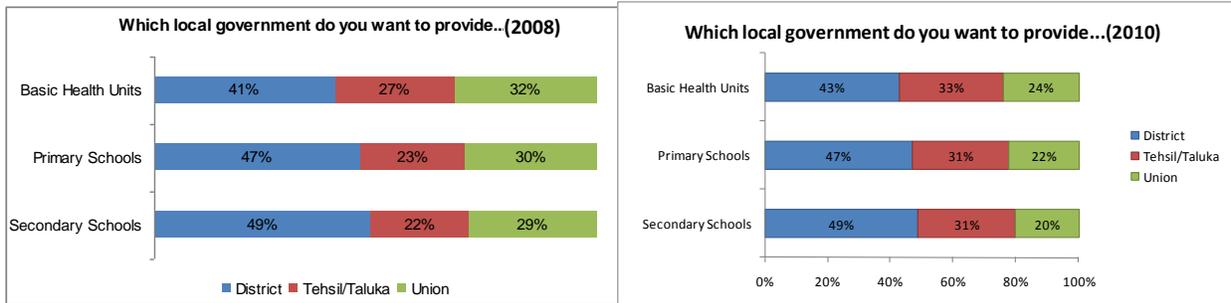


Figure 4.C6 disaggregates these responses. In 2008, of those survey respondents who favored giving responsibility for BHUs provision to local governments (56%), 41% said they preferred district government to provide this service, while 27% and 32% said they would prefer TMAs and union councils to provide this service respectively; for primary school 47%, 23% and 30% of respondents would like the

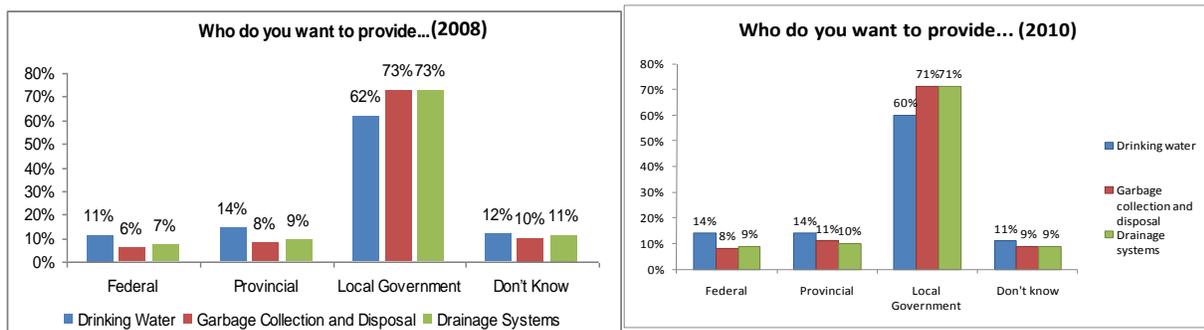
service to be provided by the districts, TMA, and union council respectively; for secondary schools the break up is 49%, 22%, and 29% would like service provision by the districts, TMAs and union councils respectively. A relatively small proportion of the respondents said “Don’t know”. In 2010 respondents again show a high preference for social services to be provided by the district government; 43% say that basic health units should be provided by the districts, 47% would like districts to provide primary schools, and 49% secondary schools.

Figure 4.C6: Preferences for provision of social services by local governments



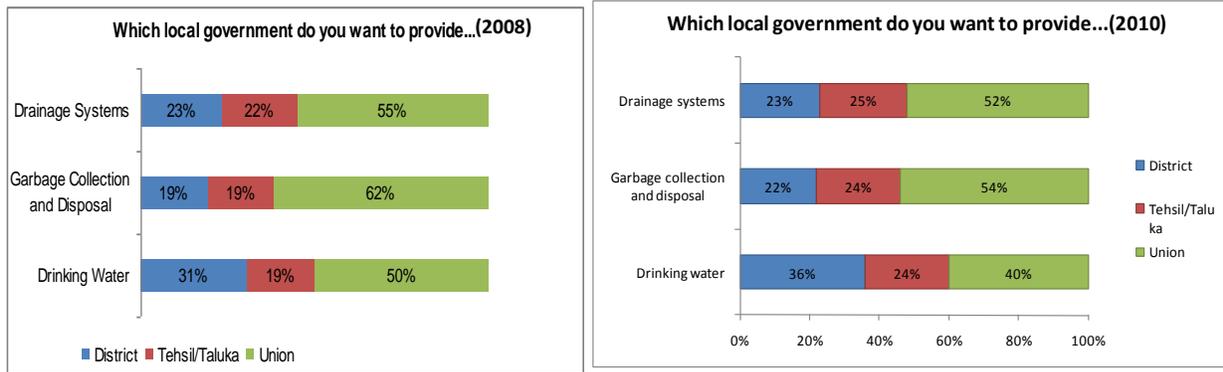
A similar pattern emerges insofar as citizen preferences for the provision of household services. Figure 4.C7 shows that there is a strong consensus among the UI/Nielsen survey respondents on giving local governments responsibility for water, garbage collection and disposal, and drainage.

Figure 4.C7: Preferences for provision of household services by all governments



It is useful to disaggregate the responses favoring local government provision. As can be seen in Figure 4.C8, the responses on the provision of household services differ considerably from the preferences for provision of social services reported above. In 2008, of the survey respondents who prefer local government provision of water, garbage disposal and drainage services, 50% to 62% would assign the responsibility to union councils. In 2010, 40% to 54% would assign the responsibility of household services to union councils.

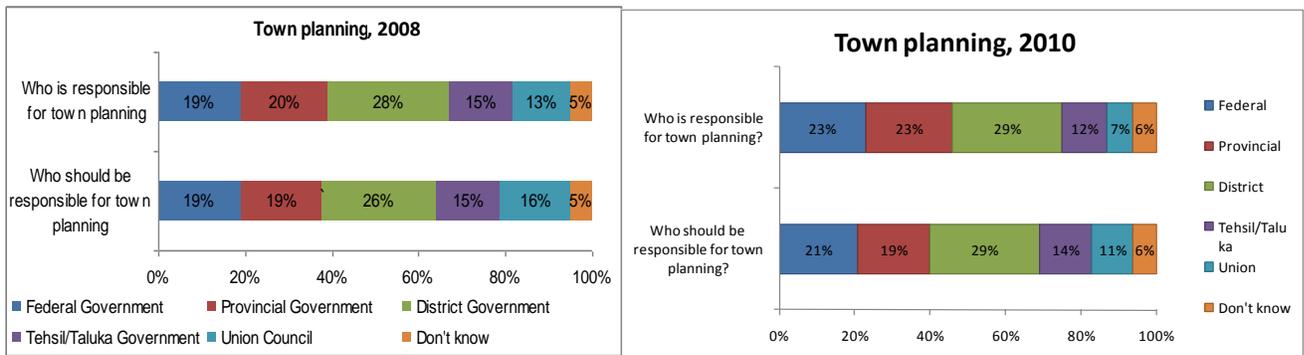
Figure 4.C8: Preferences for provision of household services by local governments



What is particularly striking about these results is the low proportion of respondents in favor of assigning both social services and household service responsibility to TMAs among the local governments. It also echoes the responses to some of the questions on governance, access to government, and responsiveness, in which TMAs fared significantly worse than unions. In fact, TMAs emerge as the level of government with the lowest number of interactions with citizens, most confusion of present roles and responsibilities and fewest respondents in favor of assigning them responsibility for service provision.

Another indicator of the ambiguities inherent in the TMA structure established by the 2001 LGO is the degree of confusion about the roles and responsibilities with respect to town planning, which is one of the most basic functions of a municipal authority. As Figure 4.C9 shows, there is a wide dispersion of views as to which level of government is responsible for this function; only 15% of respondents say that this is and should be the responsibility of TMAs in 2008; and in 2010 12% say that this is the responsibility of TMAs and 14% say it should be. In fact, the survey respondents are more likely to see it as a function of districts or higher levels of government in both 2008 and 2010.

Figure 4.C9: Present and preferred responsibility for town planning by level of government



Of course, this may reflect the current state of urban planning in most municipalities in Pakistan. Many TMAs do not have qualified planners; and few TMA councils have not approved urban development plans (i.e., for service areas, land use, transport, environmental protection, etc.). In other words, citizens do not perceive a clear role for TMAs in this area because to date, TMAs have failed to exercise their legal and regulatory mandate under the 2001 LGO.

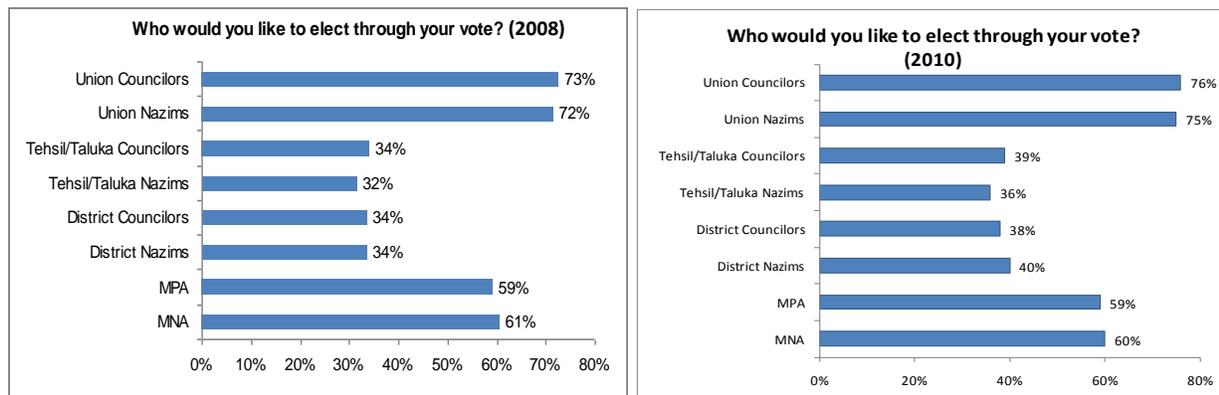
**Local Government Elections.** The section on governance showed that citizens are quite critical of issues of accountability, transparency, access and responsiveness of government. While local governments fared somewhat better than national and provincial governments, the differences were not large, with the exception of union councils. And in this section we saw that citizens are clear on their priorities for improving services provided by local governments; while they are not always sure of who is presently responsible for service provision, the majority of respondents think that services should continue to be provided by local governments, again giving priority to union councils.

But how should local governments be elected and governed? And who would citizens like to directly vote for? Under the terms of the 2001 LGO, only union councils were directly elected. The union council nazims and naib nazims were the members of the district and TMA councils and select the nazims of these councils. This might explain why in the UI/Nielsen survey results the union councils were seen as a preferred site for interaction with government, and for resolving problems; and why they are perceived by so many respondents as responsible for service delivery and preferred by most to be assigned greater responsibilities.

In 2010, each of the four provinces has already amended the 2001 LGO, appointing administrators to perform the functions of nazims and respective councils as assigned to them under the ordinance. Sindh has already appointed administrators in all the districts and talukas; notification for appointment of administrators is still pending in Punjab and Balochistan; and in NWFP appointment of administrators has been notified, but actual appointment still to be made.

The perceptions of respondents about the relative importance of union councils might be explained by several factors. First, upon abolishing the municipal and town governments, the 2001 LGO probably reduced, to a considerable extent, the opportunities for face-to-face interactions with public officials, in that TMAs typically administer several urban and rural areas that are widely dispersed geographically. Second, union council nazims and naib nazims have a significant role in selection and implementation of development schemes in their unions, but funded out of both district and TMA budgets. This gives the union council nazims and naib nazims considerable political power, in spite of the limited formal roles and fiscal resources assigned to unions.

Figure 4.C10 Preferences for direct election of government officials by level



For their part, most districts are not sites for face-to-face interactions between citizens and public officials. As discussed in the section on governance, districts have not utilized the legally mandated mechanisms for citizen consultation on budgets, dissemination of policies and priorities, and access to information. For most citizens, districts are probably seen to be as distant and inaccessible as federal and provincial governments.

The UI/Nielsen survey asks respondents which levels of government and which public officials should be directly elected. The results are presented in Figure 4.C10 above. A majority of survey respondents say that union councilors and union nazims should be directly elected – 73% and 72% respectively in 2008 and 76% and 75%, respectively, in 2010. This is considerably higher than nazims of districts and TMAs, mentioned by 34% and 32% of respondents in 2008 and 40% and 36% of respondents in 2010 respectively. The support for direct election of MPAs and MNAs by respondents is 59% and 61% in 2008 and 59% and 60% in 2010, respectively.

Again, these results highlight the critical governance role of the union councils in the local government system established by the 2001 LGO. The union nazims, naib nazims and council members are “gate keepers”, interacting daily with local people, responding to questions, and interceding to resolve problems with higher levels of government. And it is this role that explains the high level of support for the maintenance of direct elections to union councils.

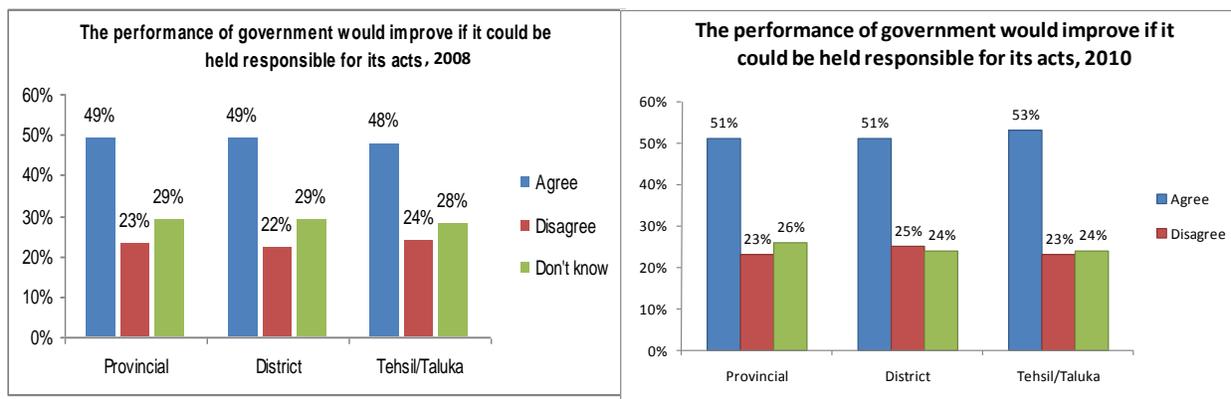
**Improving Government Performance.** The section on governance, above, included citizens’ response on the question as to what level of government was “most responsive”; in 2008 30% responded “Union councils” and 25% said “None”. All other levels of government were considered responsive by less than 9% of respondents. In 2010 26% responded “Union councils” and 38% said “None”. All other levels of government were considered responsive by less than 8% of respondents.

The UI/Neilson survey also asked citizens if the government can be made more responsive. The survey asked respondents whether they agree that the different levels of government responsible for delivering services – province, district and tehsil – would improve if they could be made accountable.

Given the highly critical assessment of current governance practices, the answers to this question are surprisingly.

The responses are presented in Figure 4.C11 below. Between 48% and 49% of respondents, depending on the level of government, replied that they “completely agreed” or “agreed” with the statement in 2008, and a smaller range of respondents, 22% to 24% replied that they disagreed. A large proportion answered “Don’t know”. In 2010 between 51% and 53% of respondents replied that they “completely agreed” or “agreed” with the statement, and a smaller range of respondents, 23% to 25% said that they disagreed.

Figure 4.C11: Can government performance be improved through accountability?



The survey went on to ask whether the respondents agreed with the statement that government projects would be more effective if people’s opinions were taken into consideration during implementation. In 2008, about one-fourth of the respondents across all levels of government did not express their opinion; 48% to 51% agree, and 22% to 26% answered disagree. In 2010, 20% of all respondents replied “Don’t know”, 17% to 59% completely or mostly agree, while 23% to 42% answered completely or mostly disagree.

**Inter-province Differences.** As might be expected, similar to the responses on governance and service delivery, there are inter-provincial differences in the survey responses on priorities for improvement of government and preferences for management of service delivery. As Figure 4.C12 shows, on the question about who should provide the basic health services, in 2008 the highest response in Punjab was for the district government, 26%, while in Sindh it was for the provincial government. In both Balochistan and NWFP “Don’t know” received the highest response. In 2010, the highest response in NWFP was for the provincial government, 34% while in Sindh it was for the district government at 30%. As was discussed above, provision of this service is a district government function at present.

Figure 4.C12: Inter-provincial comparison of preferences for provision of service - Basic Health Units

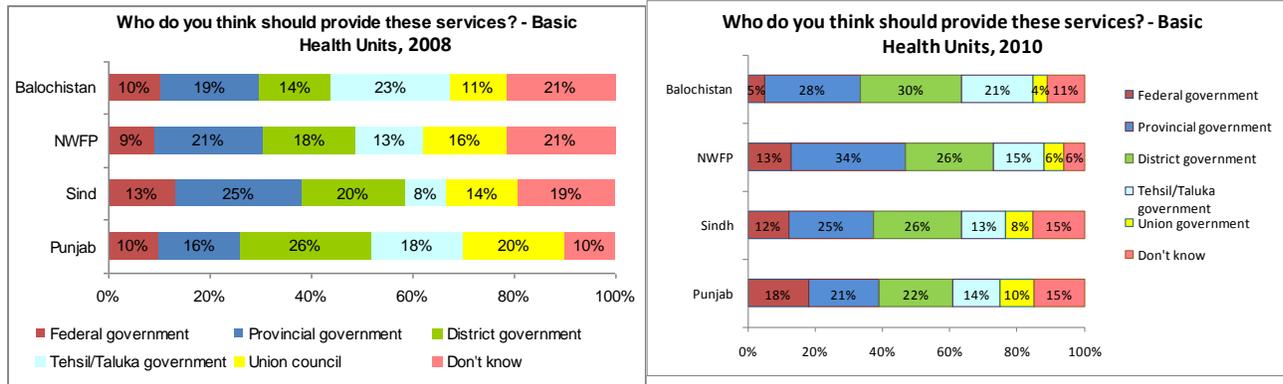


Table 4.C1 below shows citizen rankings/priorities for improvement of government services by province. In 2008 in Punjab, for example, the top priorities were improving education, improving garbage collection and disposal, and increasing the amount and quality of drinking water. This contrasts with Balochistan, in which the respondents chose increasing the amount and quality of drinking water, improving education, and improving health facilities. In 2010, except for Punjab where the top priority remains improving education, there is a change in citizen’s priorities in the remaining three provinces. The top priority in Sindh is drinking water in 2008 which changes to garbage collection and disposal in 2010. In Balochistan, the top priority in 2008 is drinking water which changes to improving education in 2010. Finally, in NWFP the top priority in 2008 is garbage collection which changes to drinking water in 2010.

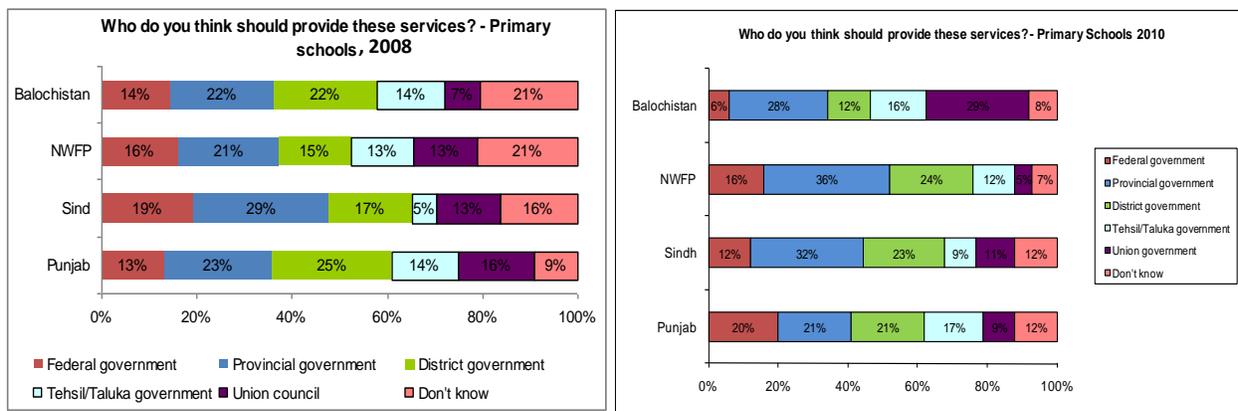
Table 4.C1: Inter-provincial comparison of citizens’ priorities for improvement of government service

Citizen Priorities	Punjab		Sindh		Balochistan		NWFP	
	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010	2008	2010
Improving education	1	1	2	2	2	1	3	6
Improving garbage collection and disposal	2	2	3	1	5	4	1	2
Improving health facilities	4	3	3	3	3	2	2	4
Increasing the amount and quality of drinking water	3	4	1	5	1	3	3	1
Reducing flooding/standing water in the streets	5	5	4	4	6	4	5	5
Improving roads in the area of our community	6	6	5	6	4	5	4	3

On who should provide different services, a large proportion of respondents answered “Don’t know”, especially in Balochistan, NWFP and Sindh, suggesting less understanding or interactions with the local governments responsible for providing these services.

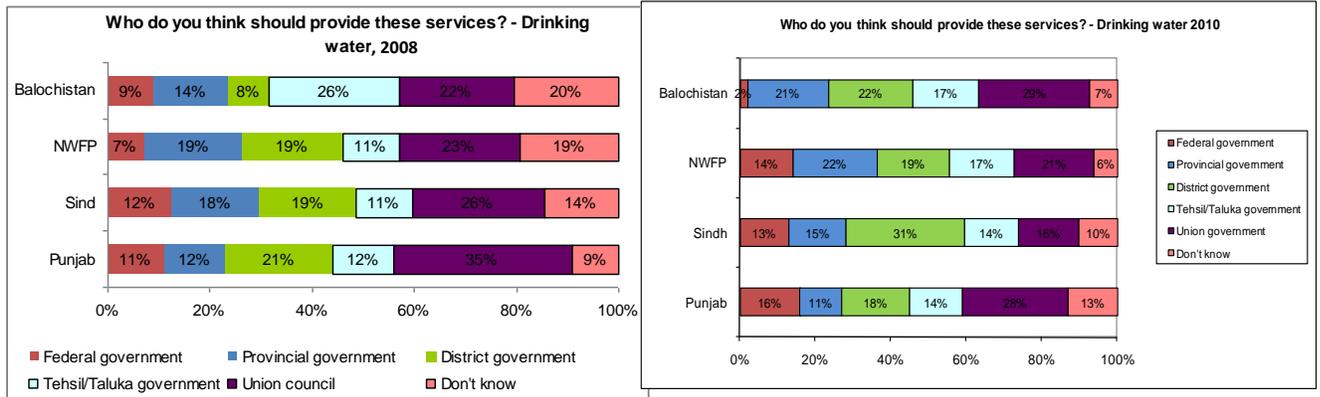
In education, as was discussed above, summing the responses for all levels of local government shows a strong preference for local provision of services. But in 2008 Punjab stands out with a high proportion favoring provision by districts, and Sindh, again emphasizing provincial and federal provision. In 2010 NWFP, Sindh and Punjab provinces show a preference for primary education being provided by the provincial rather than the local government. However, in Balochistan 29% prefer provinces of primary schools by the union government and 28% by the provincial government.

Figure 4.C13: Inter-provincial comparison of preferences for provision of service – Primary schools



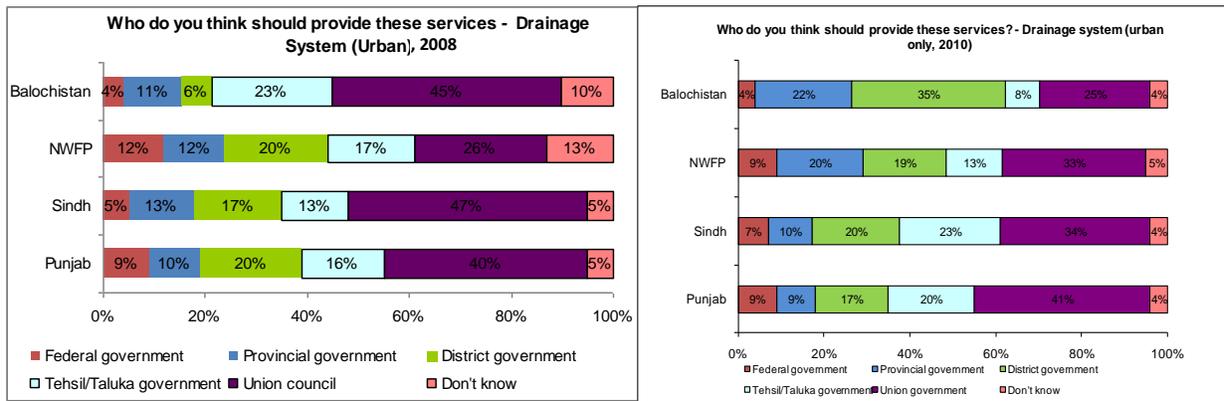
In drinking water, respondents showed even clearer preference for provision of the service by local government in 2008: preference for federal and provincial provision was less than 30% overall and there were as low as 23% of mentions in Balochistan and Punjab. In all the provinces, except for Balochistan, preference for provision of the service by union councils, is the same or higher than that for TMAs. The situation is different in 2010. In NWFP preference for provincial provision of drinking water is 36% and as low as 23% in Balochistan. In all provinces, the preference for provision of the service by union councils is higher than that for TMAs.

Figure 4.C14: Inter-provincial comparison of preferences for provision of service – Drinking water



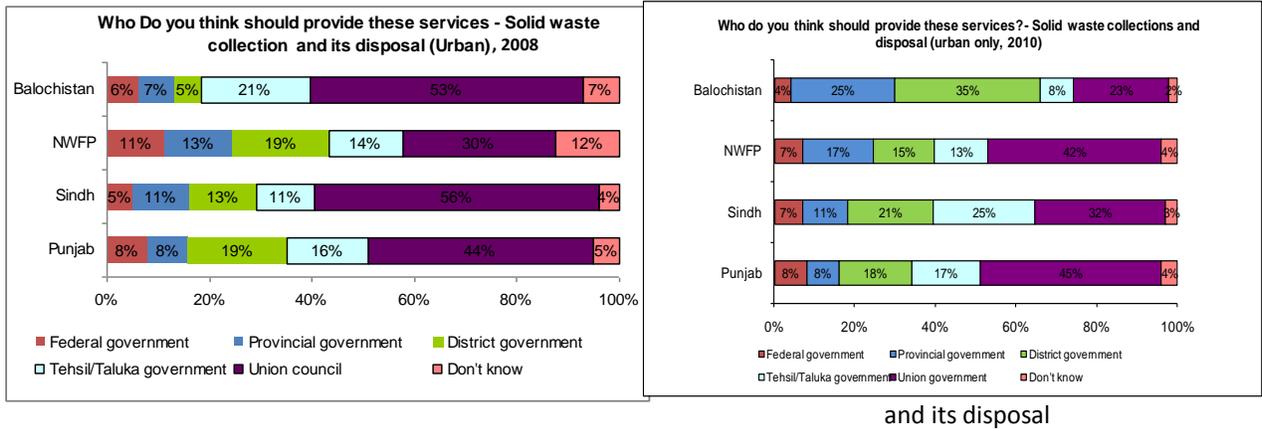
In the case of drainage, among respondents living in urban areas, there was a very strong preference for union council to provide drainage infrastructure across all four provinces in 2008, even though this function is currently assigned to the TMAs. In 2010 there is a change in Balochistan with 35% of respondents preferring districts to provide this function.

Figure 4.C15: Inter-provincial comparison of preferences for provision of service - Drainage system



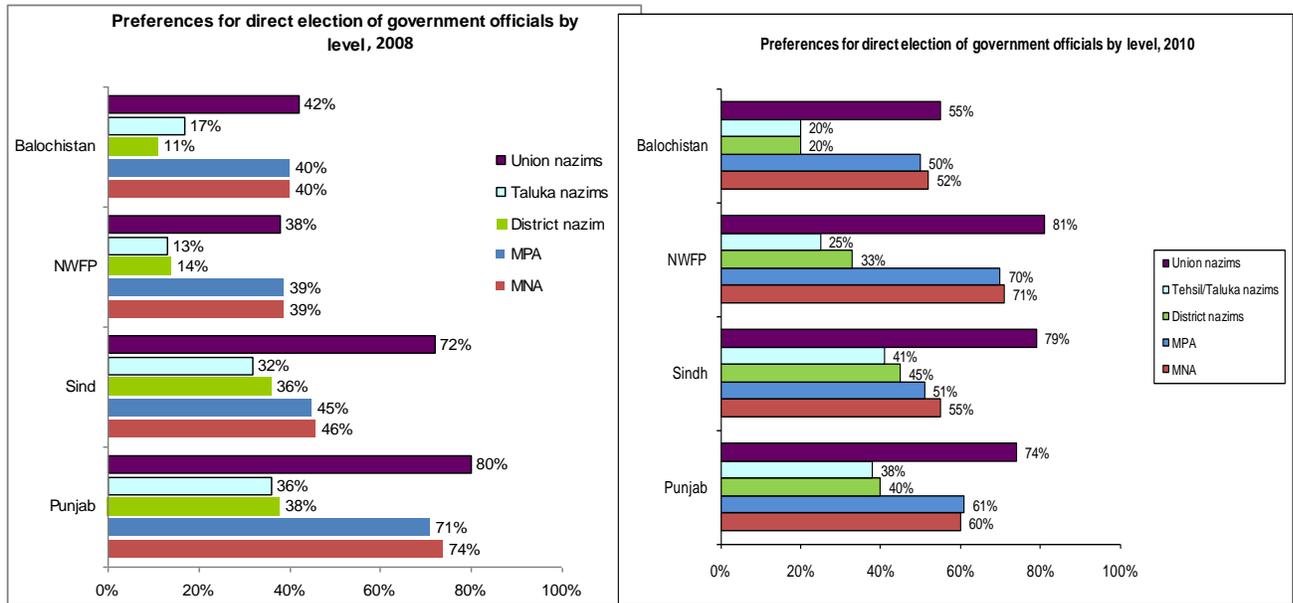
Responses for garbage disposal are the same as for drainage systems, with 30% to 56% preferring union councils, as against 11% to 21% for tehsils/talukas in 2008; and 23% to 45% preferring union councils in 2010 as compared to 8% to 25% for TMAs and 15% to 35% for districts.

Figure 4.C16: Inter-provincial comparison of preferences for provision of service – Solid waste collection



Finally returning to the discussion of governance, as was discussed above, with respect to electoral representation, there is a strong preference for electing representatives to national and provincial bodies, and also to union councils. There is less emphasis on the district and tehsil/taluka levels. Yet, sharp inter-province differences again highlight the relevance of institutions of representative government versus other institutions.

Figure 4.C17: Inter-provincial comparison of preferences for direct election of government officials by level



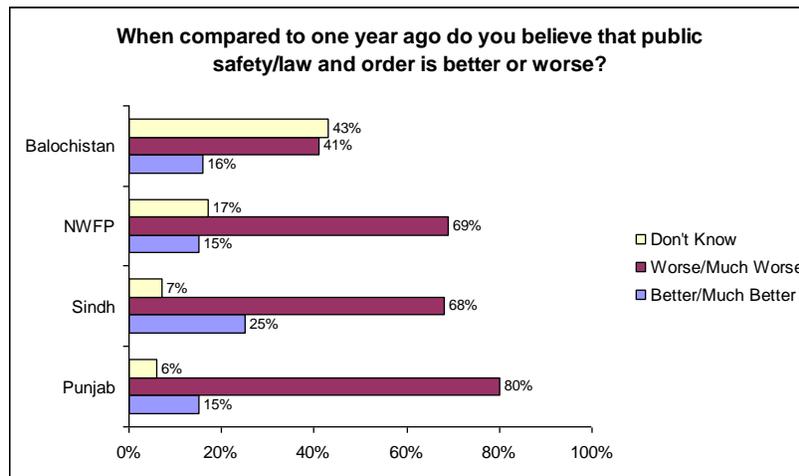
#### 4.D Public Safety/Law and Order

Under the 2001 LGO, the district governments were given responsibility for ensuring law and order, with the senior district-level police officer reporting to the district nazim. In the lead up to the expiration of the 2001 LGO, this arrangement was singled out as particularly flawed, leading to a deterioration of law and order in the country. To better understand if these criticisms were supported by public opinion, in 2010, questions on public safety/law and order were added to the survey.

The UI/Nielsen survey asks a series of questions about the perception of public safety/law and order, including how changing perceptions have affected every day behavior, perceptions of safety at home and in public, and where people get their information about public safety/law and order – and how much they trust these sources of information.

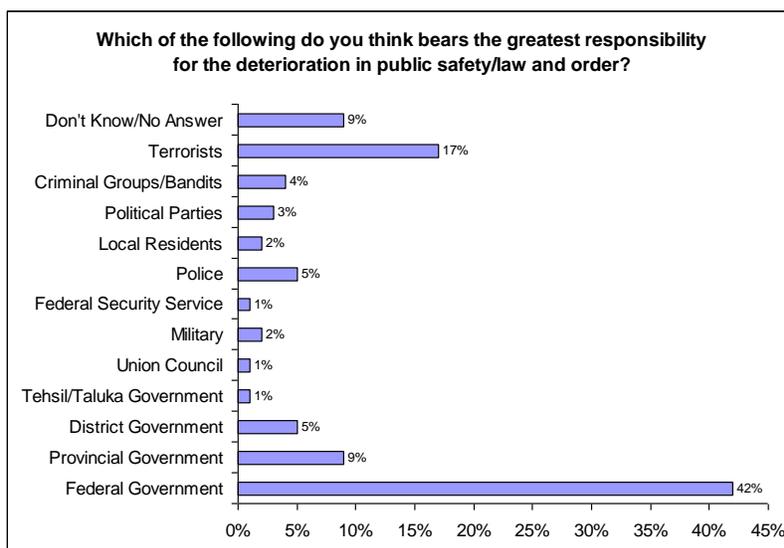
**Perceptions of Public Safety/Law and Order.** According to the results of survey, 73% of citizens across four provinces say that public safety/law and order is worse than it was a year ago. While respondents in all provinces are much more likely to report that the law and order situation had worsened rather than improved, there are still substantial differences among the provinces. Most notably in Balochistan less than half report that that the situation has worsened, while a slightly larger percentage say that they don't know.

Figure 4.D1: Inter-provincial comparison of perception of changes in public safety/law and order, 2010



People who responded that public safety/law and order is worse today than a year ago were asked to identify who is most responsible for the deterioration. Only 5% cite district government, with a total of 16% identifying any level of sub-national government– provincial, district, TMA, or Union Council – as bearing the primary responsibility for the worsening public safety/law and order situation. Forty-two percent of respondents say that the federal government bears the greatest responsibility.

Figure 4.D2: Inter-provincial comparison of perception of responsibility for the deterioration in public safety/law and order, 2010



Again, there are interesting differences among the provinces. Respondents in Punjab and Sindh are most likely to identify the federal government, while those in NWFP and Balochistan are most likely to say that terrorists had primary responsibility for deterioration in public safety/law and order. Eleven percent of respondents in Balochistan say that local residents are responsible, while the same percentage in Sindh identify the police as the responsible party.

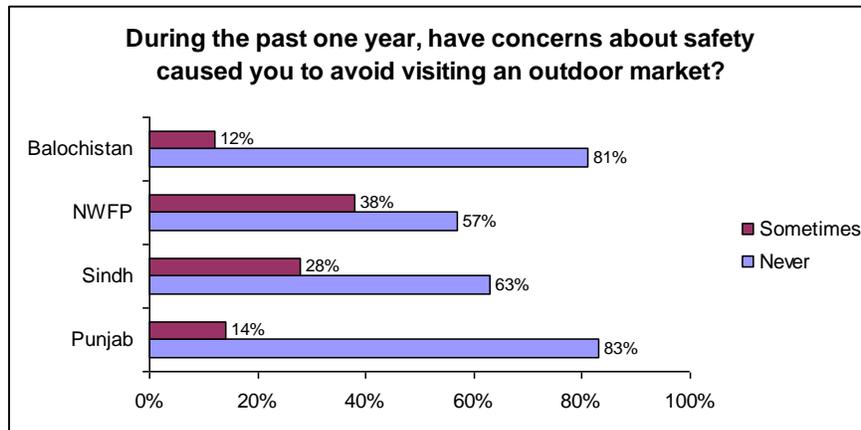
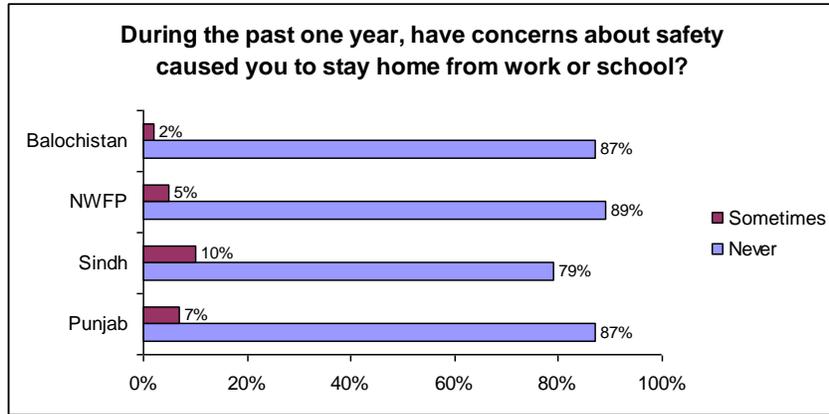
Table 4.D1: Inter-provincial comparison of perception of responsibility for the deterioration in public safety/law and order, 2010

	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan
Federal Government	54%	23%	20%	8%
Provincial Government	8%	12%	5%	8%
District Government	5%	4%	2%	4%
Tehsil/Taluka Government	2%	1%	-	-
Union Council	-	2%	4%	-
Military	2%	1%	9%	3%
Federal Security Service	-	3%	1%	1%
Police	4%	11%	2%	4%
Local Residents	-	5%	-	11%
Political Parties	2%	4%	1%	5%
Criminal Groups/Bandits	2%	9%	4%	11%
Terrorists	13%	18%	36%	27%
Don't Know/No Answer	8%	7%	15%	17%

**Effects on Daily Life.** To understand better the effects on daily life of perceptions of public safety/law and order, the UI/Nielsen survey asked if concerns about safety caused respondents to keep children home from school, postpone or cancel a trip to a neighboring town or village, avoid visiting a government office, police station, or outdoor market, postpone a trip to the doctor/clinic, or stay home

from work or school. Overall, 85% of citizens in the four provinces say that in the past year public safety concerns have never caused them to stay home from work or school.

Figure 4.D3: Inter-provincial comparison of concerns about safety on daily life, 2010



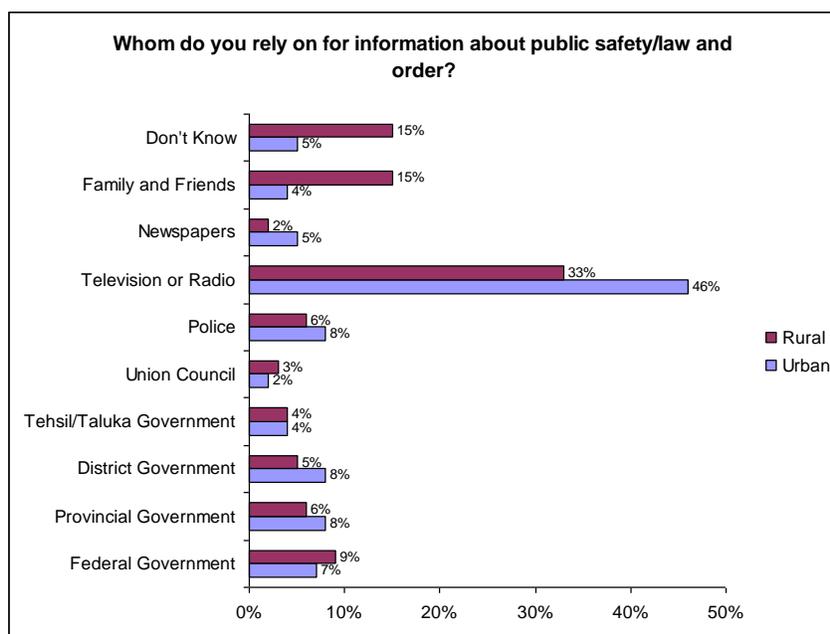
It is interesting to compare the results shown in Figure 4.D3 with the results in Figure 4.D1. While citizens in Punjab are most likely to say that public safety/aw and order has gotten worse over the last year, they do not report the largest changes in behavior.

Nationally, when asked to agree or disagree with the statement, “Compared to one year ago I feel safer in my home today”, respondents are split almost equally, with 52% reporting that they agree with the statement. A much smaller percentage (28%), however, feels safer in public places compared with a year ago.

**Sources of Information.** Where people get their information – and how much they trust those sources – can affect their perceptions; the UI/Nielsen survey therefore also looks at people’s sources for information about public safety/law and order.

Overall, the most common reported source of information is television and radio; this holds true for respondents from each of the four provinces, all education levels, men and women, and rural and urban residents. However, rural residents report a lower reliance on television and radio and are more likely to rely on family and friends than urban respondents.

Figure 4.D4: Rural/urban comparison of sources of information on public safety/law and order, 2010



There are also some distinctions among the provinces. In particular, as Table 4.D.2 shows, respondents in NWFP are much more likely to report relying on the police and the federal government for information (see also Table 4.D.3) and less likely to rely on family and friends.

Table 4.D.2: Inter-provincial comparison of sources of information about public safety/law and order, 2010

	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan
Federal Government	8%	6%	13%	1%
Provincial Government	7%	9%	5%	1%
District Government	4%	13%	3%	8%
Tehsil/Taluka Government	4%	4%	6%	1%
Union Council	2%	3%	6%	4%
Police	4%	9%	15%	15%
Television or Radio	43%	29%	34%	21%
Newspapers	3%	5%	2%	3%
Family and Friends	11%	11%	8%	16%
Don't Know	12%	11%	8%	26%

With respect to which sources are most trusted, 41% of respondents in the national sample identify television/radio as the most trusted source for accurate information on public safety/law and order, followed by family and friends (15%). Television/radio is most likely to be identified as the most trusted source by both urban and rural respondents; however, far more urban respondents report that television/radio is the most trusted source (50%) than do rural respondents (36%).

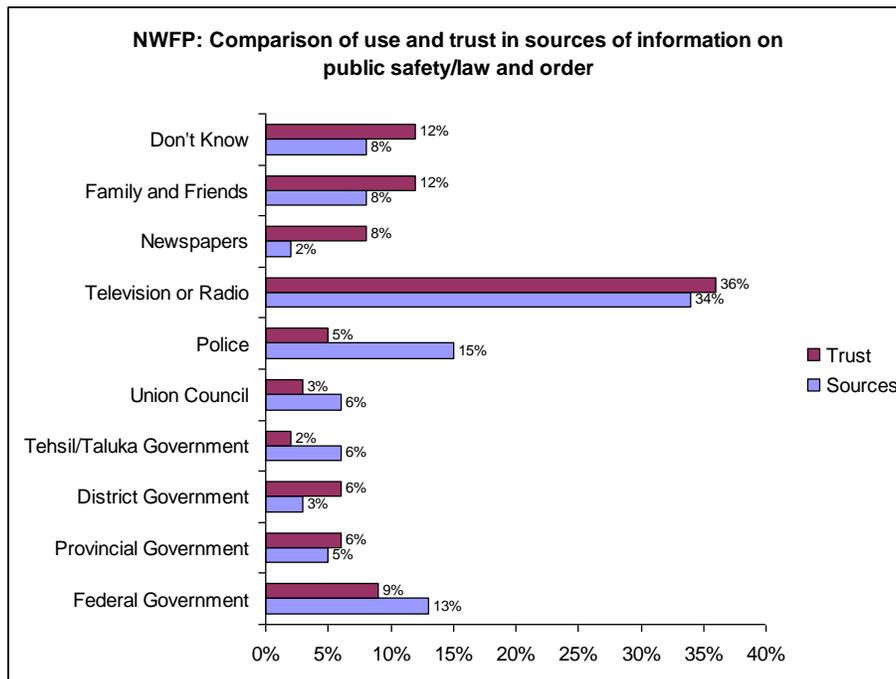
Again there are also differences among the four provinces: although respondents in all four are most likely to select television/radio as the most trusted source, the percentage ranges from 45% in Punjab to 23% in Balochistan, which is also the only province in which “Police” is reported to be a relatively important trusted source.

Table 4.D3: Inter-provincial comparison of trust in sources of information about public safety/law and order, 2010

	Punjab	Sindh	NWFP	Balochistan
Federal Government	4%	3%	9%	2%
Provincial Government	3%	5%	6%	3%
District Government	2%	7%	6%	3%
Tehsil/Taluka Government	1%	3%	2%	1%
Union Council	3%	5%	3%	5%
Police	6%	3%	5%	14%
Television or Radio	45%	36%	36%	23%
Newspapers	4%	5%	8%	2%
Family and Friends	17%	13%	12%	16%
Don't Know	13%	16%	12%	26%

Comparing which sources are relied upon with which sources are trusted yields some interesting discrepancies in NWFP (the results of the comparison in the other three provinces more or less matches – that is, the level of trust in a particular source is similar to reported reliance on that source). Of particular interest is the disparity between the relatively heavy reliance on police as a source of information and the much lower level of trust in this source and the similar, if less dramatic, pattern with respect to the federal government.

Figure 4.D5: Comparison of “reliance on” with “trust in” sources of information on public safety/law and order, 2010



## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

The 2008 elections were fought on a campaign *against* unaccountable, arbitrary and undemocratic government. In that sense, there was a clear mandate for change. But there was no specific mention of policies for local government and it would be erroneous to claim a mandate for rolling it back. Rather voters supported the democratic election of new leaders to lead in a democratic manner and to formulate policies in an open, consultative manner on this or any other area of policy. It is hoped that the results of this survey will be of some help in that undertaking. Likewise, as was argued in the introduction to this document, transparency, accountability, and consideration of citizens’ voice are important elements of democratic governance. While governments are elected to lead, good leadership in a democratic context is predicated on dialogue, consultation and consensus. In this regard, surveys are critical tools for governance, in that they can provide reliable evidence of broad citizen preferences on difficult and potentially conflictive themes.

This section looks at the implications of the UI/ACNielsen survey results across four provinces for the ongoing policy debate on the reform of the local government system and it asks what results are most relevant for decision makers at the national and provincial levels. Space limitations necessarily restrict the discussion to a few broad issues. There are many more conclusions and policy implications that might be drawn from the results of the survey. However, that should be the work of the other participants in this debate.

**The first general conclusion that can be drawn from the UI/ACNielsen survey results is that a large proportion of the population is not satisfied with services provided by local governments.** A substantial number of people referred to problems with access and quality in explaining why they did not use government education and health facilities. In education, among families with children in government schools, 22% to 38% of the survey respondents in 2008 and 26% to 41% of survey respondents in 2010 identified problems with infrastructure, books, and furniture. In health, similarly, 27% of the respondents in 2008 and 22% of respondents in 2010 said that medical staff was unavailable and almost half in 2008 and almost 40% in 2010 said that medicines were unavailable.

Survey responses for household services are better, but still have problems of coverage and quality. There are still people without access to water from improved sources in rural areas, instead relying on surface water and unprotected wells. The majority of citizens rate their towns and cities as dirty and susceptible to flooding because of poor drainage.

**Not surprisingly, education, health, water, drainage and garbage collection continue to be the highest priorities for service improvement. These are local government responsibilities at present; the improvement of services provided by other levels of government was ranked as a much lower priority overall.** In this sense, the present policy debate on devolution reforms is of critical importance, because its final resolution will determine how and to what extent government will respond to public demand for better services. While federal and provincial governments design ambitious reforms to improve education, health and household services, and take on long-term debt from multilateral and bi-lateral lenders to fund these reforms, their success or failure has been determined by the implementing arrangements at the local level. And many of the policy reforms carried out in this decade have failed on this account, because of local implementation.

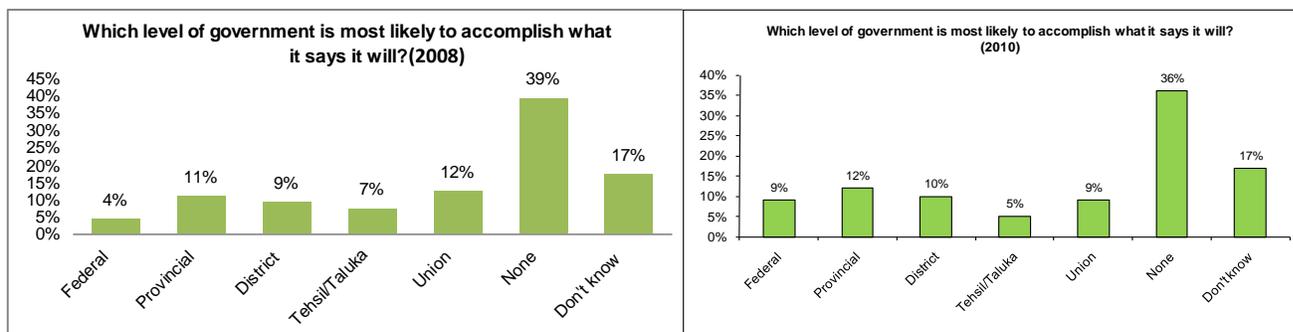
**A policy issue of particular concern is the quality and coverage of services in rural areas, which is worse than in urban areas.** This reinforces the view that the existing provincial/district/TMA division of functions is not working. As is often the case, when several levels of government have overlapping responsibilities, some issues get sidelined. For example, TMAs are not able to keep up with citizen demand for improved household services in urban areas, much less for the dispersed rural population, but the district sees this as a TMA responsibility and does not make investments in this sector. Policy makers will have to revisit this issue in deciding on the distribution of functions and resources between different levels of government.

Few people would dispute the argument that the local government reforms promulgated by the Musharaf government in 2001 have not met their stated objectives, whether in terms of strengthening governance or improving the delivery of essential services. Indeed, the results of the UI/ACNielsen survey suggest that many citizens are dissatisfied with services they receive. However, the survey results can also provide an explanation as to *why* these reforms have failed – and that explanation is at odds with the views and opinions of some of the major stakeholders in the policy debate, particularly the senior bureaucracy.

In the background section above on the 2001 LGO and the current debate on devolution reforms, it was noted that in its initial phase the debate was dominated by the views of senior bureaucrats and provincial officials, who were arguing for immediate abrogation of the law. In justifying their position, they referred time and again to the failure of “political accountability”, i.e., the subordination of the bureaucracy to elected local governments. The solution, they argued, was to take back control to the province, which in practical terms would mean returning control of local affairs to unelected provincial bureaucrats.

This justification ignores one vital fact, that none of the provisions for ensuring the accountability, transparency and responsiveness of local elected officials was implemented under the Musharaf government. It is not possible to assess the success or failure of “political accountability” when these provisions were never implemented. It also ignores another inconvenient issue, that there were – and still are – very strong constraints to effective democratic governance across the board, at all levels of government.

Figure 5.1: Perceptions of government efficacy in accomplishing stated goals

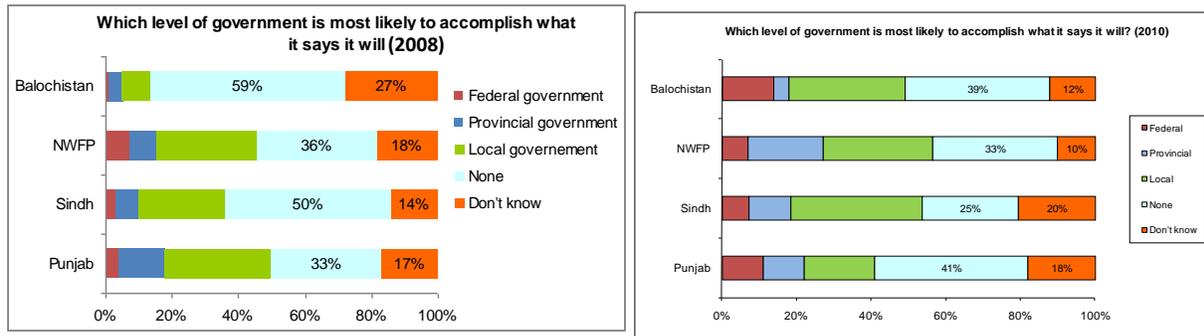


It is useful to return to the discussion of government efficacy. Another dimension of efficacy – and linked to the concept of accountability – is the degree to which governments are perceived to follow through with their public commitments, for example, meeting campaign promises or implementing their stated policy objectives. The UI/ACNielsen survey asks a general question: “Which level of government is most likely to accomplish what it says it will?”

As Figure 5.1 shows, 56% and 53% of responses to this survey question were “None” and “Don’t know” in 2008 and 2010, respectively. No level of government is well evaluated. The federal and provincial governments received 4% and 11% of responses, respectively, in 2008 and 9% and 11% of responses, respectively, in 2010. On this question some levels of local governments were rated somewhat better in 2008: union councils were mentioned the most, with 12% of the survey respondents saying they are most likely to accomplish what they say, but only 9% of the respondents said “Districts”, and 7% “TMAs”. In 2010, 10% of respondents said that the district government is most likely to accomplish what it says it will, 5% said TMAs, and 9% said union councils.

However, as was discussed above, there are also significant differences between the provinces on the responses to questions about governance. Figure 5.2 shows comparative results across provinces on the responses to this same question, “Which level of government is most likely to achieve what it says it will?”.

Figure 5.2 Perceptions of government efficacy in accomplishing stated goals by province



One striking result of the Balochistan results is the very high proportion of survey respondents who answered “Don’t know” to many of the questions on governance. On issues of accountability, transparency and responsiveness, on average about two-thirds of people replied in this way. This result suggests that most people in the province do not think of their relationship with government in these terms. Rather, traditional, tribal structures of authority and intermediation are much more salient and relevant for everyday life. **This also suggests that for policy makers, it may be prudent to emphasize measures to establish a much stronger formal state presence throughout the province, alongside of these traditional structures. Building more effective, transparent and accountable local governments might be one way of achieving this.**

However, Sindh also does not fare well on this question in 2008, with 50% of respondents answering “None”. In 2010 this falls to 25%, with a larger percent in Punjab, 41%, saying that no level of government is likely to achieve what it says it will.

As was presented above, this general skepticism about the efficacy of government reflects other highly critical attitudes of citizens with respect to government accountability, transparency, access and responsiveness. Provinces are seen as only slightly better than local governments on any of these dimensions of governance. **From this it can be concluded that from the viewpoint of the citizens, there is no *prima facie* case for taking back control of local affairs to the provinces on the justification that they are more accountable, transparent or responsive.** In fact, on questions of access, they fare much worse than local governments.

In addition, the survey results are clear that citizens want to use mechanisms of political representation – elected councils – to interact with their local governments. For example, most interactions with local governments to resolve specific problems or complaints go through the elected union councilors. **Whatever the senior bureaucrats in the provinces might think about it, these results**

**suggest that there is no strong public support for the idea of increasing bureaucratic control over local affairs; rather, the survey shows that the majority of citizens are generally critical of the lack of responsiveness of bureaucrats.**

A question for policy makers is how the reform of the existing local government system can generate better local governance, enhance accountability, reinforce transparency, reduce corruption, improve citizen access and increase responsiveness. One possibility is to review the provisions for democratic governance in the existing law and ask how these can be effectively implemented in the context of democratic governments at the federal and provincial levels: Would local governance improve if council meetings were in fact public? If there was public access to critical information on budgets, revenues, taxes, development schemes, contracting, etc.? If districts and TMAs consulted the public on budget priorities? If elections to district and TMA councils were direct, instead of the indirect elections that favor collusion and corruption. Or if there were procedures for public recall of local governments?

In both 2008 and 2009 there were numerous press reports about the discovery of widespread corruption in districts and TMAs, with some provinces announcing actions against individual nazims. **The UI/Nielsen survey results show that citizens are critical of local governments in this respect, whether in relation to small bribes for services or corruption in contracting.** Survey results in 2010 show that, even though a smaller percent of respondents report that they are paying bribes for public services such as health and education, for the first time local governments were ranked as the 8<sup>th</sup> most corrupt government department; 67% perceived the district government to be more corrupt than the previous provincial government system. Nevertheless, it should be pointed out that corruption is systemic, involving both elected officials and civil servants. Other studies suggest that small scale corruption in service delivery is tolerated by senior bureaucrats and elected officials – who have opportunities for large-scale corruption in contracting, supply of medicines, purchase of desks and books, etc.

On this point, it should be noted that corruption is not just a matter of “leakage” of funds. Small scale corruption in services is an important determinant of coverage and quality. Poor households may not use a service because of the additional payments required. Doctors and teachers are able to avoid attending their posts because mid-level officials in the districts are willing to take bribes to look the other way. Essential medicines are stolen from BHUs and resold in local pharmacies; desks do not get delivered in the quantity and quality contracted, etc. The large scale corruption in districts and TMAs operates through the distribution of budgets among nazims and council members, who often use their “quotas” for small infrastructure projects instead of purchasing inputs to improve social services. **Without improvements in accountability and transparency, widespread corruption in local government will continue unabated and service coverage and quality will not be substantially improved.**

The majority of citizens continue to believe that local governments can be more effective if they were more accountable, and that their budgeting and project management would improve if they were to take into consideration the opinions of the people – which also might explain why they continue to support keeping service delivery at the local level. **In this respect, perhaps the most important finding**

**of the UI/ACNielsen survey is the overwhelming support for maintaining control of service delivery in local governments. Only a small minority support federal or provincial control.** This finding contradicts the statements from some provincial authorities that the “general public” wants the local government system to be rolled back. The survey results suggest the exact opposite.

This applies to all of the services prioritized by the respondents, whether education, health, water or basic sanitation. In health and education, there was a preference for keeping these services at the district level. As was discussed above, the federal and provincial governments might have good reasons to justify a decision to take back control of policing, or to reinforce the enforcement of price regulations, or to curb corruption in land registration and taxes. But these are separate issues from being responsible for actual service delivery and should be treated as such.

In the provision of household services, the TMAs did not fare well – the respondents favored a strong role for the union councils. As was discussed above, this might be explained by the structure of the TMA governments created by the 2001 reforms. These governments manage services for several urban areas, sometimes many kilometers apart, and with differing service needs, citizen demands, etc. **The survey results suggest that citizens want more localized service provision, which would lend support for going back to local governments for each urban area by reactivating the town and city governments.**

Another policy-relevant finding was with respect to the role of the union councils. On almost all measures of accountability, access and responsiveness they received the most positive mentions of any level of government. **Despite the fact that the unions do not provide any social services or household services, by virtue of their frequent face-to-face interactions with their community they appear to play a key role in representing citizens’ concerns and resolving specific problems with higher levels of government.** This might also help to explain why the respondents did not feel strongly about the need for direct elections to districts and TMAs – in contrast there was a large majority in favor of keeping the direct elections to unions.

It should be noted that this finding does not mean that policy makers who are reviewing the current local government system should try to devolve service delivery to the unions. Other questions of economies of scale and organization have to be taken into consideration. Rather, the policy question here has more to do with ensuring adequate political representation and access to local decision-making. This access, alongside of other reforms to improve accountability and transparency, is what will make local government responsive to citizens’ needs.

Returning to the question of elections, for the present discussions about devolution reform, this raises a dilemma. It is generally acknowledged that the current system of indirect elections of district and TMA nazims offers opportunities for collusion and corruption and erodes the political accountability of the local government executive. **But any proposal for direct elections in all local governments would have to look carefully at the design of the electoral system to guarantee effective political representation in the other levels of the local government system, whether districts, TMAs, town and city committees and corporations, etc.**

Holding district or municipal-wide elections on a single party list would undermine the existing practices of direct, face-to-face interactions between constituents and their elected representatives. A better electoral system for local governments might be a system based on a separate ballot to elect the nazim on a district or municipal-wide basis, and another, separate ballot for council members to be elected in smaller constituencies (similar to the ward system). These constituencies might be the existing union council divisions or larger jurisdictions (for example the markaz divisions in some provinces).

Another, more general issue that emerges from the survey findings is the confusion about roles. The responses to questions about the current division of responsibility for service delivery showed a wide dispersion. To some extent this probably reflects limited knowledge and access to information about the structure and workings of government, especially among people with low levels of formal education. But it also reflects the overlapping roles and responsibilities between federal, provincial and local governments. The federal government continues to operate “vertical” programs in education and health, which override both districts and provinces and cause problems of accountability. One example is the People’s Primary Health Initiative (PPHI), which completely sidelines district health decision-makers and has caused deterioration in preventative health programs even while it has tended to improve access to curative services.

**One final policy implication of these results is the need to consider eliminating or reengineering the federal vertical programs so that implementation is under the effective control of the responsible local government.** This would reduce confusion among service users and make for clearer lines of accountability. While the federal government has continued to insist, rightly, that the provinces conduct a careful review of the local government system before deciding on reforms, federal ministries should also be required to adjust or eliminate their vertical programs. While a definitive solution to this problem would be of course the reform of the concurrent list in the constitution, even before this happens the federal government could take measures to reform the implementing arrangements for all of these programs.

## ANNEX 1: SURVEY METHODOLOGY, 2008 and 2010

A comprehensive questionnaire was designed keeping in view the core objectives of the survey and characteristics of the respondent population. The questionnaire was later translated into Urdu and Sindhi and pre-tested in 30 households in Sukkur, Sindh and Rawalpindi, Punjab in 2008. In 2010 it was pre-tested in 22 households in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Dhamial. In 2010 the questionnaire was expanded to include a module on law and order/public safety.

The draft questionnaire was tested and evaluated in each language, by the field teams of enumerators. The overall objective of the pre-test was to determine the length of the questionnaire and its overall fluidity, applicability of content, correctness of skipping and coding patterns, and ease of comprehension in both languages. Following this, enumerators and supervisors provided useful input based on empirical knowledge during in-house training sessions. This feedback allowed for the correction of various issues that had surfaced before finalizing the questionnaire in each language.

**Sampling.** A random sample of nationally as well as provincially representative households was selected, while maintaining a specific margin of error. A multi-stage stratified cluster sampling method was used along with Probability Proportionate to Size (PPS) technique to select the target number of cities and villages for the urban and rural sample. The total sample size for this survey was 4,002 in 2008 with approximately equal representation of both genders and urban and rural dwellers. In 2010 it was 3,992. Due to some security reasons and refusals from community members to participate in the survey, replacements had to be made to the original sample in Punjab and Balochistan. These replacements were provided by Nielsen’s Statistics Unit keeping in mind that the original characteristics of the sample do not change.

**Margin of Error.** The margin of error for the city sample was 2.19% and 2.20% for the rural sample at a 95% confidence level in both 2008 and 2010. To give adequate representation to urban/rural dwellers and all four provinces, a disproportionate allocation was required.<sup>4</sup> However, to accommodate this disproportionate allocation, the final data was weighted back to the actual proportions. The following grid provides the details of the sample sizes and splits which were used during this analysis.

Table A.1.1: Distribution of the sample by demographic variables, 2008

Province	Urban			Rural			Total Sample
	Male	Female	Error Margin	Male	Female	Error Margin	
Punjab	456	475	4.56%	500	508	4.88%	1939
Sindh	363	355	5.20%	191	192	7.07%	1101
NWFP	108	112	9.34%	192	193	7.07%	605

<sup>4</sup> Based on population, the sample from Balochistan was very small. The size was increased to ensure meaningful analysis for the provincial data.

<b>Balochistan</b>	69	72	11.71%	110	106	9.43%	357
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>1014</b>	<b>3.10%</b>	<b>993</b>	<b>999</b>	<b>3.27%</b>	<b>4002</b>

Table A.1.2: Distribution of the sample by demographic variables, 2010

Province	Urban			Rural			Total Sample
	Male	Female	Error Margin	Male	Female	Error Margin	
<b>Punjab</b>	465	465	3.21%	504	504	3.09%	1938
<b>Sindh</b>	355	355	3.68%	192	192	5.00%	1094
<b>NWFP</b>	110	110	6.61%	192	192	5.00%	604
<b>Balochistan</b>	70	70	8.28%	108	108	6.67%	356
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>2.19%</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>996</b>	<b>2.20%</b>	<b>3,992</b>

## Sample Demographic Profile

The following table presents the key demographics of the sample.

Table A.1.3: Sample Profile

Category	Groupings	2008		2010	
		Number	%	Number	%
Gender	Male	1989	50%	2064	52%
	Female	2013	50%	1933	48%
Age	18-24	957	24%	875	22%
	25-34	1118	28%	1171	29%
	34-44	962	24%	985	25%
	45-54	542	14%	515	13%
	55-64	254	6%	253	6%
	64+	169	4%	198	5%
Household size	2	112	3%	130	3%
	3	225	6%	214	5%
	4	350	9%	339	8%
	5+	3315	83%	3313	83%
Education	Primary or Below	1863	47%	1940	49%
	6-9 years of school education	797	20%	860	22%
	Secondary and Higher Secondary education	1018	25%	887	22%
	Graduation and above	324	8%	310	8%
Community	City District	1548	39%	1078	27%
	Other Urban	462	12%	314	8%
	Rural	1992	50%	2605	65%
Income	PKR 3000 or less	158	4%	186	5%
	PKR 3001 to 7000	974	24%	934	23%
	PKR 7001 to 11000	766	19%	704	18%
	PKR 11001 to 15000	321	8%	315	8%
	PKR 15001 to 20000	169	4%	191	5%
	PKR 20001 to 25000	66	2%	92	2%
	PKR 25000 and above	149	4%	163	4%