Institutional Capacity Building in Urban Governance in Bangladesh: The case of City Corporations in Dhaka

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Abstract:

The study intents to uncover the barriers in building institutional capacity in the governance of city corporations in Dhaka Bangladesh. The study conceptualized the institutional capacity building in the context of the city corporation governance of Dhaka based on perspective of organizational capacity, strategic capacity and organizational learning within the theoretical framework of Mintzberg’s (1979) organizations structure. The study collected qualitative data through interviewing a total of 26 respondents from three categories of personnel’s including strategic policy makers, middle line manager and techno-structure urban planner working in both Dhaka north and South city corporations. The study concluded that city corporations in the capital city Bangladesh has poor conceptual understanding on institutional capacity building and the role of its strategic apex. Consequently, city corporations are not yet fully capable of ensuring efficient governance and effective service delivery for various practical barriers. The study suggests that the city corporations in Dhaka in need to understand the importance of institutional capacity building in general and the role of its strategic apex in building institutional capacity in terms of organizational capacity, policy capacity and learning capacity.

Key words: Institutional Capacity, Urban Governance, City Corporation and Bangladesh

1. Introduction:

In developing countries like Bangladesh, a weak institutional capacity reduces efficiency and make urban governance ineffective. Institutional context in which urban organizations and individuals operate is therefore important (Alam, 2016). The available literature described the institutional capacity is mainly concerned with empowerment, social capital, and an enabling environment in organization including culture, values and power relations (OECD, 2000; Fukuda-Parr, 2002; GEF-UNDP, 2000). The agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992) defined, capacity building ‘encompasses… human, scientific, technological, organizational, and institutional and resource capabilities’. Brown (2004) considers intra organization development a key factor for institutional capacity building. New thinking about institutional capacity focuses on the webs of relations involved in urban governance which webs interlinked with government organizations, the private sector, voluntary organizations and those in any way involved in governance; that is, collective action (Healey, Magalhaes, & Madanipour, 1999, p. 119). Thus, institutional capacity is clearly a broad concept. It relates to resource (structural, financial and technical) capacity, policy capacity and learning capacity in organizations. The fundamental goal of capacity building is to enhance the ability to evaluate and address crucial questions related to policy choices and modes of governance implementation.

However, to analyze the institutional capacity building in the context of Urban Governance in Bangladesh, definitions givenby the UNDP (1991), OECD (2000) and Bourgon (2010) are considered. In these terms the concept relates to (i) the creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks; (ii) institutional development, including community participation; and (iii) human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems. This study focuses on identifying ‘institutional capacity’ and the ways in which transformations in this capacity are taking place. There are three specific attributes of institutional capacity. (i) The extent to which place, territory and locality displace sector and function as foci of governance activity; (ii) the extent to which the range of stakeholders are involved in governance activity and (iii) the extent to
which changes in institutional capacity increase this capacity. Building collective capacity to achieve public results begins by valuing past developments and preserving existing capacities (Healey, Magalhaes, & Madanipou, 1999, p. 118). According to Bourgon, the hallmark of good government (2010, p. 205) includes: (i) a respect for the rule of law and public institutions, (ii) due process, (iii) public sector values. Together these factors contribute to building the institutional capacity of state apparatus and provides a solid foundation for public organization.

2. Materials and Methods:

Understanding the proper methodology for conducting research in each field is of the utmost importance (Silverman, 2001, 3), the data has been collected through qualitative interview following a case study template for the cases of Dhaka North and South City Corporations in Bangladesh during 2015 for my PhD study, which was defended on November 2016. This paper has mainly been prepared based on those data. A total of 26 respondents were interviewed from three categories following the organization structure of Mintzberg (1979) such as strategic apex, middle-line, and techno-structures. According to concept of Mintzberg (1979), the strategic apex is charged with the overall responsibility of organization and for the development of the organization’s strategy. Middle-line managers, are senior managers just below the strategic apex to the first-line supervisor, perform all the managerial roles of the chief executive in their own unit. Techno-structures, comprising analysts and highly trained specialists, serve the organization by affecting the work of others. Thus, uncovering the limits of institutional capacity building these peoples are important sources to find the answers towards highlighting the academic role on the issues. This study has also used secondary data through consulting the available literature, published articles and reports related to the City Corporations and solid waste management in Dhaka.

3. Organization structure in city corporations in Dhaka: 

In Bangladesh, municipal bodies are called ‘Pourashavas’ and City Corporations as urban governance agents responsible for providing municipal services. In the capital of Bangladesh Dhaka, there are two city corporations (CCs) working as Dhaka North City corporation (DNCC) and Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) for providing municipal services to the city. These CCs are divided into 90 wards under 10 administrative zones. Dhaka North City Corporation (DNCC) works for 36 wards under five (05) administrative zones. Dhaka South City Corporation (DSCC) works for 54 Wards under five (05) administrative zones. By laws, the CCs are composed of two mayors and 120 ward commissioners, 30 of which are female. The mayors and commissioners are directly elected by popular vote. Elected Commissioners represent their respective ward. Thirty reserved women commissioners are elected in a prescribed manner from a list of female candidates. The institutional head of the City Corporation is the mayor. The mayor of City Corporation holds the status of a full cabinet minister in the country. The council of the corporation is comprised of the mayor and ward commissioners. The council lies at the apex of the corporation governance structure. The formulation of policies and strategies, approving the annual budget, undertaking development schemes and executing projects and programs are the main responsibilities of the council in City Corporation. The tenure of the council is also five years’ duration. The mayor chairs the council meeting. In case of his absence the senior member of the panel of mayor chairs the meeting. Adult taxpayers of the municipalities are eligible to vote.

The mayor as the chief executive of the corporation is assisted by the chief executive officer (CEO). Chief executive officer in turn is assisted by the Secretary and other departmental heads to perform day-to-day affairs (Islam et al., 2000, p. 143). The mayor reserves the right to access any records and if needed can request any information from the CEO. The mayor transacts all business of the corporation. Article 26 and part IV of the Dhaka CC Ordinance 1983 provides the legal base regarding the duties and functions of the corporations. Each corporation is governed by separate ordinances, but the characteristics of the responsibilities listed are the same.

It has been mentioned in previous section that DCC is governed through creating ten zones. Each zone is headed by a zonal executive officer (ZEO). The ZEO is assisted by an executive
engineer, a transport officer, a social welfare officer, a community organizer and a slum development officer. The zonal office is responsible for the implementation of development projects within their jurisdiction. Apart from the democratic structure, (both mayor and ward commissioners are elected leaders), the DCCs have administrative setup comprising 17 departments, including a secretariat. The departments are charged with specific responsibilities such as public health, conservancy, estates, engineering, slum development, accounts, education, social welfare, revenue, law and so on.

The functions of ward commissioners are defined by convention instead of ordinance. Some functions are performed by executive order as well as by convention. Likewise, some functions depend on the initiatives taken by and the effectiveness of the ward commissioners. Ward commissioners play an active role in representing the interests of their wards in the council and standing committees. The mayor nominates the word commissioner to act as a member of the strategic apex of the corporation and standing committees. According to the DCC ordinance, word commissioners are responsible to formulate development plans relating to their wards and submit for inclusion in the DCC’s development program. For formulating development plans, they can ask assistance from the staff of the Zonal Executive Office. They are also authorized to sign the monthly salary bills of conservancy staff. Maintenance materials and spare parts required for street lighting in the ward are issued with their approval. Ward commissioners monitor the delivery of a number of ward level services and are involved in both the decision-making process and policy implementation.

Organogram of city corporations is shown in below:

Source:DCCs,2014

4. Findings of the study:

4.1 Organizational capacity

Organizational capacity is the ability of organization to fulfill its goal (Eisinger, 2002, p. 117). Gargan (1980, p. 652) explained organizational capacity as the ability of an organization ‘to do what it wants to do’. Ingraham, Joyce et al. (2003) argue that organizational capacity is concerned with “the extent to which a government has the right resources in the right place at the right time”. Still there is no consensus in the literature about the constitution of organizational capacity. The concept has been interpreted from three perspectives. (i) The resources perspective considers organizational capacity as inputs for production and attracting human, financial and technical resources (Honadle, 1981; Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991; Fredrickson & London, 2000; Ingraham et al., 2003; Christensen &Gazley, 2008). (ii) The capability perspective treats organizational capacity as the ability to absorb, mobilize resources, specify ways for capacity to be utilized and transform input for outputs (Honadle, 1981; Teece et al., 1997; Ingraham et al., 2003; Helfat& Fredrickson, 2007; Harvey et al., 2010). (iii) The competency perspective understands organizational capacity as organizational
effectiveness and performance (Ingraham et al., 2003; Bryson, 2004; Sowa et al., 2004; O’Toole & Meire, 2010).

The concept of organizational capacity has been operationalized as organizational resources, the organizational capability to manage resources effectively and organizational competencies to fulfill organizational goals or mission. Accordingly, the study asked respondents ‘How do you see the present institutional capacity (organizational, technical and financial) of the CCs in Dhaka?’ The answers were diverse and descriptive, but generally shed light on the existing organizational capacity of the CCs. Responses suggested that the existing organizational capacity - in terms of structure, process, human and technological resources – are insufficient and inadequate. City Corporations in Dhaka appear unable to improve governance and its service delivery capacity. For a thematic analysis, responses were coded into different groups: organizational structure, financial dependency, technical and resources capacity and political interference and corruption. A detailed breakdown of findings follows below:

5.1.1 Bureaucratic organizational structure

The organizational structure reflects how governance efficiency effects service delivery. In addition, organization structure also determines the governance process as whole. However, organization structure also depends on organizational policies and strategies for achieving policy goals. From an organizational point of view, the study found the CCs to be a highly bureaucratic organization, much like other public organizations in Bangladesh. Strategic respondents described the CCs as follows “It has a bureaucratic structure. It needs more resources. Financial problems really affect capacity building (R.5)”. “It has a good structure and good staff. But it’s true we have financial deficits and technical limitations as well (R.2)”. According to a middle-line manager, “The structure is okay. Skilled staff is needed. Recruitments of staff is highly political. Policies and strategies do not have any implementation. We need more money, new technology and logistics (R.21)”.

From bureaucratic point of view, according to the respondents, the City Corporations in Dhaka have a good hierarchy to direct, command and govern its affairs through organizational process. The respondents identified a lack of skilled staff, technical resources and appropriate finances as challenges for improving organizational capacity. The existing bureaucratic organizational structure appears to hinder the effectiveness of the CCs as an urban municipal government agent in general and organizational capacity for service delivery. The existing organizational structure also acts as a barrier from a governance perspective. One of the techno-structure interviewees explained, “There is too much political and administrative control from the central government, which hinders performance (R.26)”.

As a result, governance efficiency and performance is subpar. From a structural perspective, it is clear that the CCs in Dhaka have a limited capacity for effective governance and service delivery.

5.1.2 Scarcity in Financial resources

Financial capacity is one of the most important factors in ensuring organizational capacity as a whole; particularly as regards the strengthening institutional capacity. Developing countries typically face financial constraints in this area. Bangladesh is not an exception. The crisis in financial capacity in the CCs in Dhaka is a serious hindrance to its organizational capacity. A strategic apex interviewee has stated that “It is a facts; we have financial deficits. The CC’s income is very low and thus depends on government funding. Government cannot fund us as we want. With limited funds, we are cautious about programs and projects (R.1)” “The process of securing government funding and political interference limit our financial capacity (R.12)”.

According to a middle line manager, “If I say honestly, the DCC right now is not capable in all respects; money, resources, policy and required strategies. But proper utilization of existing financial resources is problematic for various reasons such as politics and corruption (R.20)”.

According to the respondents, the CCs have huge financial gaps. Previous studies have found that its annual earning meet only 50% of its service requirements. The CCs mostly depend on central government funding. The central government does not allocates the budget as the CCs demand.
It also dominates DCC governance through the fund releasing process. In order to access central government funding, the DCCs have to go through the ministry of local government engineering and development (LGED). It is through this ministry that the government dominates the governance of CCs. Political interference and corruption in the utilization existing financial resources are also present financial challenges for the CCs. When implementing programs and development projects, CCs must consider political factors. Corruption among people’s representatives and CCs officials places an additional strain on finances.

5.1.3 Constraints in Technical and resource capacity

Technological and resource capacity have immense affect in expediting organizational capacity as a whole. For efficient governance and effective service delivery, organizations demand the required and appropriate skills, technological supports, and logistics. On the subject of the technological and logistic capacity of the CCs, one respondent from strategic apex stated, “Human resources, technologies are not enough to face existing challenges (R.13)”. According to one middle-line respondent, “In the present situation, we try not to be negligent, but we can’t perform better owing to the resource crisis. We need more skilled personnel, resources, modern technology and a larger available budget (R.23)”.

Financial constraints are a key factor in the scarcity of technological, logistical, and resource capacity in the CCs. However, there are also other factors involved. These include the absence of strategic plan for utilization of existing resources and weak leadership. The strategic plan of an organization has a significant impact on whether programs can be successfully implemented and organizational resources effectively utilized. One strategic reviewee explained, “As an organization, the CC need more specific policies and regulatory guidelines. There is a lack of skilled staff, technology and logistics but there is also a lack of proper planning to use available resources (R.11)”.

According to one middle-line manager, “Institutionally the CC is not capable enough. But existing capacity is utilized effectively (R.24)”. A techno-structure interviewee stated, “Practically, there are institutional barriers such as weak leadership, political interference and widespread corruption. I don’t see the resource crisis as a big deal (R.25)”.

The lack of specific sectoral policies and strategies also restricts the procuring and installing necessary technologies and resources in due time. The absence of a strategic plan is a great drawback in the utilization of existing resources. The weak leadership of CCs is also a product of the resource capacity crisis. According to one interviewee, leaders frequently do not undertake initiatives to increase technical and resources capacity due to lack of knowledges of advanced technologies.

5.1.4 Political interference and corruption

Political interference and corruption have had a strong effect on organizational capacity and governance performance. Strategic apex members stated, “Politics and corruption are obstacles in capacity building. Everything is politicized. In addition the bureaucratic process restricts institutional capacity (R.7)”. “The CC has capable staff. But politics and corruption are big problems in governance (R.14)”. Middle line manager said, “Huge problems here including a limited budget. But corruption and politics are important factors for governance failures (R.19)”.

Poor performance in governance and service delivery have encouraged a culture of political interference and corruption. Central government interference in the CC typically takes the form of political patronage. In addition, corruption in program implementation and spending allocated has also had a negative effect on governance and service delivery.

From an institutional capacity perspective, the CCs in Dhaka are not yet fully capable of efficient governance and effective service delivery. According to one respondent, “I can’t say it is fully capable, but it has capacity to some extent. It needs more political and administrative initiatives (R.8)”. Bureaucratic structure, central government control, financial dependency, lacking proper plan for existing resource utilization, lacking technical and logistics resources, weak leadership, political interference and corruption are the major barriers to institutional capacity building in the CCs. To reduce these barriers, the CCs require proper administrative, political and legal initiatives. According
to one strategic apex member “We are working on new reforms, policy and strategy for institutional capacity building. Presently, we have some governance weakness (R.1)”. The CCs require policies and contextual strategies to identify its gaps and to make plans for effectively utilizing existing resources. Initiatives for increasing revenue sources and reducing financial dependency on the central government are also needed.

5.2 Analysis of strategic capacity

Strategic capacity is an integral part of institutional capacity building. Strategic capacity stands for the various ways in which governance institutions learn about their environment, through which learning and subsequent understandings are spread throughout the governance network and the network’s ability to translate into selection of strategic choices and importantly, action (Leibovits, Bailey, &Turok, 2001). The concept ‘strategic governance’ is described as a dynamic process of policy creation, political and administrative practices. This process reflects interactions between multiple social and economic groups with different interests. It specially search for a sustainable orientation and social contract(s) that make counterbalance among long-term interests of the entire society even for the generations in future (Potucek et al., 2004).

Strategic capacity has also been defined as a ‘strategic capability’. This refers the ability to make decisions about on what to focus in urban economic development in the long term, and thus to set the strategic direction for development efforts (Sotarauta, 2004, p. 46). A study on British urban governance has identified several indicators of strategic capacity in urban governance. (i) The process by which an individual organization learns. (ii) The creation of shared understanding and common conceptions of problems. (iii) The mobilization of common conceptions and understanding in the process of agenda setting. (iv) The capacity to engage in action that is consistent with evidence-based policy goals; and (v) the ability to engage in strategic learning by monitoring and evaluating policy outcomes (Leibovitz et al., 2001, p. 10). Mindful of this theoretical discussion, the study considers strategic capacity in the DCC pertaining to existing policies and strategies. The study posed to respondents ‘From the existing strategic point of view (acts, policies and strategies) how do you analyze CC as an institution?’ Respondents indicated that there are many strategies and policies available in the CC. The contextual usefulness and applicability of those are questionable due to the nature of policy creation and strategy formulation approaches. Interviewee responses were coded into groups for analyzing the strategic and policy capacity theme: (i) the existence of strategic and policy gaps; (ii) complex coordination in resource mobilization; and (iii) crisis in strategic and policy implementation. The detailed findings are as follows:

5.2.1 Gaps in Strategies and policies

Strategic capacity plays an enormous role in speeding up institutional capacity building in organizations. Through this capacity, organization identify gaps, configure overall resources and create appropriate strategies for achieving organizational policy objectives. The City Corporations (CCs) in Dhaka is not yet institutionally capable from a strategic capacity perspective, and suffers from huge strategic and policy gaps. According to strategic apex members, “We have so many policies and strategies but still some gaps exist. We are working to minimize these. JICA and the EU have assisted us with the Clean Master Plan and strategy formation on Solid Waste Management (R.1)”. One strategic apex member who is also a people’s representative stated, “We have so many rules, policies and strategies but not all are appropriate. Most of these were formulated based on government desire and political agendas (R.7)”. One the middle-line interviewee stated, “Sometimes we face strategic crisis for implementation than we depend on management decision (R.15)”.

When implementing programs and plans, managers sometimes face this strategic crisis. In these situations, they implement policies through management decisions. The strategies and policies are formulated mostly based on government instruction and political agendas, not for contextual demands. As a result, current strategies and policies are frequently ineffective.
5.2.2 Complexity in Coordination for resources mobilization and utilization

At least 40 other public agents working in the CC’s jurisdiction provide central government services. The CCs abide by the law to coordinate and compile available rules, policies and strategies when formulating and implementing new policies and strategies. A list of the available policies, rules, acts and strategies have been provided in chapter IV. One strategic respondent explained, “We are implementing pilot projects aiming at cluster coordination strategies and capacity building towards Zero Waste in South Asia funded by European Union (R.12)”. A middle-line manager stated, “There is a coordination and resource mobilization problem from other working agents (R.16)”. A techno-structure respondent stated, “There are so many rules, policies and strategies which are not in use. There needs to be a strategy to use existing internal resources (R.25)”.

The CCs face a multiplicity of problems in coordinating with central government agents. Strategic coordination problem has adverse effects in mobilizing other resources and the utilization of policies and strategies as well. The CCs need a broader strategy for coordinating with other agents to mobilize resources and implement its internal policies and strategic decisions effectively. However, respondents indicated that CCs have been working in formulating coordinating strategies with the assistance of international organizations.

5.2.3 Crisis in strategic and policy implementation

The study found that most existing strategies and policies are not implemented effectively because of administrative, political and financial reasons. As one strategic interviewee explained “I don’t know what gaps exist. Most strategies and policies are not implemented because of financial and resource limitations (R.9)”. A middle-line manager stated, “Policy and strategy implementation is a big problem because of the financial crisis (R.17)”. “The CC still needs more specific rules and policies, especially for coordination in implementation (R.20)”.

The CCs need a strategy to implement its existing policies and resources more effectively. Owing to its limited financial and organizational capacity, the CCs in Dhaka still do not have a proper strategic plan to maximize existing resources, logistics and strategies.

The contextual usefulness and applicability of existing strategies and polices in the DCCs are questionable. Financial constraints, political interference and corruption have left many strategies un-implemented. For appropriate institutional capacity building, the CCs in Dhaka should prioritize the increase of strategic capacity in its practices.

5.3 Analysis on organizational learning

Organizational learning is a significant factor in improving institutional capacity. Schechter (2008, p. 157) states “learning has utmost importance for organizations to achieve their professional mission”. According to Grant (1996), what an organization knows and how well an organization is able to use knowledge determines strategic successes and failures in governance. Scholars argue that an organization’s performance also depends on its ability to generate, combine, recombine and exploit what it has learned (Kogut & Zander, 1992). Learning can be perceived as dependent and independent variables for organization (Getz, 1997; Shpilberg, 1997). As an independent variable, learning affects the activities, structures and strategies performed by the organization. As a dependent variable, learning detects the outcomes in organizational process.

Organizational learning as a capacity within an organization is concerned with knowledge acquisition (the development or creation of skills, insights, relationships), knowledge sharing (the dissemination to others of what has been acquired by some), knowledge utilization (integration of the learning so that it is assimilated), and generalize the new situations (Huber, 1991 cited in Dibella et al., 1996, p. 363). The organizational learning model identifies learning as a multilevel phenomenon including four processes: intuiting, interpreting, integrating and institutionalizing (Crossan, Lane, & Whites, 1999). Organizational learning plays significant role in
institutional capacity building through contextually assimilating new learning for policy and strategic renewal. Respondents were asked ‘How does the CC learn, renew and evaluate its learning?’ Responses reflected a diverse range of opinions. In some cases, interviewees were cases mystified by the concept of organizational learning. Interviewee Responses were coded into three groups: (i) training for skill development; (ii) information exchange; and (iii) absence of evaluation mechanism. Responses suggest that the CCs do not emphasize learning due to a lack of conceptual understanding of its importance. Nevertheless, the study has found that the CCs have different types of learning processes for individual staff development, which are as follows:

5.3.1 Training for skill development

Dhaka City Corporations generally have provisions of training for skill development of staff. Interviewees from strategic apex explained “We provide orientation training for new staff (R.1, 2, 3)”. “Newly appointed staff undergo a short orientation training to continue their office (R.11, 14)”. A middle-line manager stated, “Mainly staff learn their jobs through orientation training and on-the-job training (R.19, 20)”. The CCs organize orientation training for a short period – two to four days depending on the nature of the positions. Through this training, CCs provide the basic idea of duties, responsibilities and organizational rules and regulations. After receiving orientation training, staff take their office and learn more on-the-job.

The City Corporations (CCs) in Dhaka prioritize on-job-the-job training. Respondents from techno-structure stated, “Mainly we learn by doing the job (R.25, 26)”. After holding office, the staff is further trained by senior supervisors if necessary. Mostly, staff learn throughout their professional lives. The practice of on job training is not planned but if staff need assistance, they can ask their supervisor.

For professional skill development, the CCs also organize training sometimes at home or abroad. Strategic respondents who are also people’s representative explained, “We have no idea about learning, evaluation and renewing of learning in governance processes. Sometimes we see staff going to different training programs at home and abroad. Maybe they learn that way (R.8, 10)”. Middle line managers stated, “There are a few professional training programs in the DCC, but not for everyone. Staff are provided the scope for receiving foreign training by the central government (R.19, 20)”. Techno-structures said, “Every year CC spends some money for staff development at home and abroad. Staff attend workshop and conferences (R.25, 26)”. The CCs in Dhaka ensure professional training of staff at home and abroad. Besides, the central government also provides various training opportunities to the CC staffs with other government staffs. However, professional training for skill development at home and abroad is inadequate relative to the demands placed on staff.

5.3.2 Information exchange

For common understanding, CC officials exchange and disseminate information, ideas and personal experiences. Strategic respondents stated, “Staff share learning with other colleagues in staff meetings (R.4)”.

5.3.3 No mechanism for learning evaluation

The CCs in Dhaka have no formal mechanism for learning evaluation and reviewing learning feedback. A strategic respondent confessed, “It’s true, we have no provision for learning evaluation but the staff work well. Still, we don’t see learning a matter in organizational development (R.4)”. A middle-line manager stated, “The CC has some budget for staff development. In 2014, 25 staff were trained at home and abroad. We think trained staff are more skilled. We don’t know about
how CC evaluates and renews learning (R. 15, 17, 18)”. Learning evaluation is clearly still insignificant in CC governance processes due to the lack of proper understanding the role of learning in improving organizational capacity.

The City Corporations in Dhaka considers learning only as a tool for individual staff development. Learning does not receive much priority in the context of institutional capacity building. DCC officials are unaware that learning may affect strategic practices and ensure appropriate strategic choices. For institutional capacity building, the city corporations should prioritize organizational development by renewing its policies, strategies and management decisions.

6. Conclusion:

The evidence presented in this paper concludes that the city corporations in Dhaka have yet to properly understand the importance of institutional capacity building and the role of organizational phenomena such as organizational capacity, policy capacity and learning capacity. From an organizational capacity perspective, the practical barriers in institutional capacity building in the CCs are the highly bureaucratic organizational structure, central government control, financial dependence, a lack of proper planning for existing resource utilization, a technological and resource capacity crisis, weak leadership, political interference and widespread corruption. These factors negatively affect governance efficiency and service delivery. To reduce and minimize practical barriers to improving institutional capacity, the CCs require effective administrative, political and legal initiatives. The policy capacity in CCs is limited and ignored. Existing strategies and policies are in most cases inappropriate and useless in context. Central government instruction, guidance and control of strategic decisions were found to be the reasons for strategic ineffectiveness. Most strategies have yet to be implemented due to financial constraints, political interference and corruption. To improve institutional capacity building, the CCs should prioritize the improvement of its strategic capacity. Organizational learning does not get priority in strategic practices and management decisions. The City Corporations in Dhaka considers learning only as a tool for individual staff development. The CCs do not have any learning evaluation mechanisms, nor does it properly understand the meaning of learning in an organizational context. CCs officials were found to be unaware of learning effects in strategic practices and choices. The CCs should prioritize learning as a dependent variable for organizational development for improving institutional capacity. Organizational learning can play an important role in renewing policies, strategies and management decisions in an appropriate manner, which can have a positive effect on institutional capacity and service delivery. Therefore, for practical organizational barriers the city corporations in Dhaka not yet fully capable of ensuring efficient governance and effective service delivery. Institutional capacity building is a continuous process. The organization should acknowledge and emphasize the importance of institutional capacity in its policies.

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