Tracking a Complaint: Administrative Handoffs in Rural Water-Service Repair

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Abstract

Rural residents often report water-service failures through several offices before a repair is authorised. This study follows complaint handling in twelve union parishads across two Bangladeshi districts to identify where administrative delays accumulate. Researchers reconstructed 173 repair cases from registers, interviewed 39 officials and residents, and observed service desks for eight weeks. Event-history analysis distinguished time awaiting inspection, approval, procurement, and final verification. Cases requiring confirmation from more than one office remained unresolved longer, even when recorded repair costs were similar. Interviews showed that residents frequently carried documents between offices because staff lacked a shared way to track responsibility. A locally maintained referral ledger shortened some handoffs but did not resolve shortages of replacement parts. The findings connect service delays to fragmented information as well as material constraints. Incomplete registers may underrepresent complaints that were abandoned early. Improving rural maintenance requires clear ownership of referrals, accessible progress information, and separate monitoring of administrative waiting time and procurement delays.

Keywords: public service delivery, complaint handling, rural water, administrative coordination, union parishads

1. Introduction

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2. Methods

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