

# GOVERNANCE DYNAMISM AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT IN SRINAGAR CITY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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**ABSTRACT:** The governance policies in 21<sup>st</sup>-century societies aim to ameliorate poverty, universalize health care facilities, facilitate optimum education coupled with employment opportunities and achieve inclusive development by promoting good governance paradigms. To address the concerns of rising urbanization, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals emphasize a holistic urban planning approach to ensure inclusive and sustainable development in urban regions. Global lockdown during the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, which shattered the livelihood of vulnerable urban population, mandates revisiting development policies. Indian government implemented urban development policies including 'Smart City Mission' and 'Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation - AMRUT' to transform urban landscape and facilitate equitable distribution of socio-economic benefits. In this context, the paper analyzes dynamism of governance and urban development in Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir by exploring the impact of Srinagar Smart city Mission and AMRUT on socio-economic development in the city, identify governance & urban development challenges and explore opportunities for rejuvenation of governance and urban development paradigms in the region. The paper is based on analysis of data collected from fifty respondents, including general public, academicians, administrative practitioners and journalists using an open-ended questionnaire technique. The findings revealed poor public satisfaction about impact of Srinagar Smart City Mission and AMRUT on the region's socio-economic development.

**KEYWORDS:** *Governance, Urban Development, Smart City Mission, Challenges, Srinagar*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of 21<sup>st</sup> century, societies across the world are witnessing transformative changes in socio-economic development and governance paradigms, due to liberalization-privatization-globalization (LPG), unprecedented technological revolution affecting every sphere of human lives and need for re-orientation of development and governance policies to mitigate emerging challenges of global poverty, illiteracy, deficient healthcare, malnutrition, lack of housing facilities, unemployment, rising environment pollution, global warming and climate change. The United Nations facilitates these developments through international collaborations among the member countries by developing integrated frameworks for

amelioration of emerging challenges. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mechanism aims to promote inclusive, participatory and sustainable development across the countries along with reframing of governance policies to ensure citizen-centric, citizen-friendly, transparent and accountable governance policies, particularly in developing countries including India where a large section of population is still marginalized with widespread poverty and deprived of equitable access to socio-economic benefits.

With ever increasing population in urban regions areas because of exponentially growing population and migration from villages towards urban regions in search of better education, job opportunities and quality of life, the cities and towns across the world including India, are facing multiple challenges, predominantly the challenges related to availability of affordable housing facilities, waste management services and environment pollution concerns. It is predicted that with the present pace of urbanization and population growth, 2.5 billion more people will be residing in urban regions in 2050 AD, with approximately 90% of this increase transformation expected in Asian and African nations (UN, 2018).

To address the challenges of increasing urbanization, develop resilient and sustainable urban infrastructure, promote participatory and responsive governance in the cities and towns, and to mitigate associated environment issues, Indian government started several flagship urban planning programs such as Smart Cities Mission & Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation in selected cities & towns including the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir. The prime objectives of these urban development initiatives are to transform the urban landscape with development of basic infrastructure facilities like proper housing, accessible and affordable healthcare services, universalization of education facilities, drinking water services, electricity, waste management, sanitation, drainage, transportation facilities and employment opportunities in formal and informal sectors.

### **1. Governance Dynamism and Urban Development in the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir**

Srinagar city is the epicentre of growing trade and commerce, hub of tourism, abode of ever-increasing urban population, flourishing nucleus of employment and education opportunities; and most essentially the primary seat of regional governance. Being capital city of Jammu & Kashmir, the city has headquarters of almost all government departments apart from central secretariat of Jammu & Kashmir government, main campuses of educational and medical institutions like Kashmir University, Cluster University, National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, Government Medical College Srinagar, Sheri- Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences & Technology (SKUAST) etc. Apart from more than 1.2 Million native residents, the city is witnessing ever increasing immigration of rural population from adjoining districts in search of better educational facilities, health care facilities and employment opportunities.

The basic framework of governance machinery in the Srinagar city and governance mechanisms in Jammu & Kashmir in general, are replica of central bureaucracy with major policy decisions taken by elected representatives. The development and governance story of Jammu & Kashmir is unique blend of prosperous as well as exploitative history, feudalism, public welfare, and political turbulence. Jammu and Kashmir primarily having agrarian economy, post independence, much focus was given towards development of better irrigation and electricity facilities during earlier periods. During later five-year plans, investment in social sector assumed priority thereby improving development indicators of social sectors of health, education, poverty alleviation and women empowerment.

Efforts are being made for revival of socio-economic infrastructure and improvement in human development standards through poverty alleviation programs; better provisions of quality healthcare & nutrition; universalization of education; inclusive policies for socio-economic and political empowerment of women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other backward classes and divyangs; transfer of power to panchayats and municipalities to ensure optimum rural and urban development planning through bottom-up approach; and envisaging administrative reforms for ensuring efficiency, transparency and accountability in regional governance institutions.

Keeping in view the rising urbanization trends in the Srinagar city, the regional government and city administration are aiming at urban development of the city through implementation of Srinagar Smart City Mission and AMRUT Mission apart from improving governance mechanisms for effective and timely public service delivery.

However, proactive policy approach is still needed for achieving faster, inclusive and sustainable development. J&K has been ranked at the bottom among all the states and Union Territories (UTs) in NITI Aayog's Innovation Index 2020, at 36<sup>th</sup> rank in Export Preparedness Index 2020 and 2019 Good Governance Index published by Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions- Government of India placing J&K at bottom 7<sup>th</sup> position with GGI score of 4.04, reflects the grim picture of development in J&K. The primary impediments to development have been volatile political scenario, adverse topography, red-tapism, corruption and lack of participatory governance.

Over the years Srinagar city witnessed skewed planning policies with sluggish implementation and absence of futuristic planning approach. The development of basic infrastructure like roads, open spaces and other public utilities, public health institutions, waste management and sanitation, and social forestry for environment protection have witnessed least focus in urban planning process. The city is ranked at 49<sup>th</sup> position among 111 cities in Union Government's 'Ease of Living Index' for year 2020, at bottom last 49<sup>th</sup> position under Smart City Mission rankings- 2021 and received 16<sup>th</sup> slot under AMRUT mission rankings-2021. Poor air quality, insufficient water availability, waste management and energy demands are the burning demands of urban environment in Srinagar city. The city is also facing ecological and environmental challenges that need to be managed in a systematic and scientific manner as integral part of urban planning process ensuring synergy and operational collaboration between the execution agencies.

## **2. Performance of Smart City Mission in Promotion of Governance & Urban Development Reforms in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir**

Indian government initiated Smart City Mission on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 as pan-India comprehensive urban development program to select 100 cities through nation wide competition under specified target-based development framework and facilitate their development on modern lines through dedicated budgetary support and implementation as well as monitoring in close coordination with respective regional administrations under 'Cooperative Federalism' approach. The Mission focuses on urban renewal & retrofitting program, driving economic growth & improving life quality, harnessing technology for Smart outcomes and selection of 100 cities by All India Smart City Challenge.

The urban development initiative aims at communities-based urban planning, resource efficiency, project implementation flexibility, innovation, integration, sustainability, smart technological interventions and financial convergence of development schemes. It focuses on creation of physical, social, economic and institutional infrastructure including governance setups in the selected cities as well as facilitate effective delivery of various urban services

including drinking water, electricity, sanitation, waste management, affordable housing particularly for poor, smart information and communication connectivity, digitalization and good governance.

The mission adopts various development approaches such as retrofitting i.e. city improvement, city re-development i.e. city renewal, green field development i.e. city extension and smart solutions on pan city basis. The initial budgetary allocation by central government for the mission was 98,000 crore for five years (2015-2019) which was later extended to June, 2023 in view of various languishing projects and delay in development works due to unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Presently, 3052 projects are completed, 5695 projects are at work order stage, 6344 projects are tendered and 5151 projects are proposed under the mission.

Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir got selected for Smart City Mission in 2017 under third phase of pan India competition. The approved plan for Srinagar Smart City Mission includes various infrastructural projects like development of roads & footpaths, facilitation of round the clock availability of drinking water & electricity services, promotion of heritage tourism circuits and markets, increasing green spaces, conservation of water bodies, Jehlum Bund development, beautification of city areas by urban art, robust citizen grievance redressal mechanisms and other innovative technological interventions for improving quality of public service delivery mechanisms. The mission projects are being implemented under guidance and supervision of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) named 'Srinagar Smart City Limited' administered by the Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the said authority.

Despite the challenges of unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic and extra efforts needed for citizen security & life safety, the Srinagar city administration worked proactively starting 'Integrated Command & Control Centre' to facilitate smooth delivery of healthcare services, coordinate various frontline agencies and ensure optimum food security particularly for most vulnerable sections like street vendors, daily waged laborers, widows, orphans and senior citizens. Simultaneously the lockdown period was optimally used for infrastructure development like patchwork of lanes, development of roads & drainage and other allied activities. The recent interventions of Srinagar Smart City Mission include public awareness campaigns through 'Band-Theatre Shows', 'Sunday for Srinagar initiative' and launch of 'Srinagar Smart City App'.

However, the urban development program is yet to have any significant impact on socio-economic development of the Srinagar city as most of the envisaged projects are still not completed due to multiple reasons. As per rankings under Smart Cities Awards Contest (ISAC) 2020 released by the Smart Cities Mission Project, Government of India on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021 commemorating six years of the Mission, Srinagar City of J&K is placed at the bottom last 49<sup>th</sup> position. These rankings are based on several parameters such as governance, socio-cultural aspects, urban environment, sanitation, water, urban mobility, built environment and management models for COVID-19 pandemic viz Integrated Command and Control Centres and governance innovations.

### **3. Performance of Atal Mission for Rejuvenation & Urban Transformation (AMRUT) in Promotion of Governance & Urban Development Reforms in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir**

The flagship urban development program was also launched by Government of India on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 on pan-India basis including the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir, to facilitate comprehensive and integrated planning of cities and towns emphasizing robust urban water

supply networks and sewerage facilities. The Mission focuses on sewerage facilities, water supply, septage management, development of drainage networks to address water logging during floods & storms, development of roads and foot paths, public transport facilities, open spaces, parking slots and promoting aesthetic value of cities through creation and increase in green spaces, recreational facilities and public parks, especially for children. The major components of the initiative are- implementation reforms, promoting developing institutional & personnel capacities, septage management, water supply, drainage of stormwater, urban transport & green spaces.

The mission has shown sub-optimal progress in the Srinagar city as reflected by the recent national rankings under AMRUT Mission released on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2021 in which the Srinagar city is placed at 16<sup>th</sup> rank with score of 57.62. The performance of various projects taken up under the AMRUT mission in the Srinagar city, got affected due to multiple governance challenges including political instability in the region, frequent law & order issues, skewed implementation approach and lack of coordination between public agencies.

#### 4. Objectives of the Study

1. To explore governance dynamism and urban development in the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir.
2. To analyze impact of Smart City Mission and AMRUT on socio-economic development of Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir.
3. To identify governance and urban development challenges in the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir.
4. To provide suggestions for augmentation of governance mechanisms & urban development programmes in the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir.

#### 5. Review of Literature

Governance and urban development are actively discussed and emphasized over the years by academicians, researchers, policy planners and administrative practitioners across the globe, more so due to ever increasing socio-economic inequalities in the post-industrial world, growing concern for amelioration of wide spread poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy and vulnerability of underprivileged communities as well as rapid urbanization trends, mandating focused and integrated urban planning approach to promote resilient, sustainable and participatory development in the urban regions.

According to J. Graham et al (2003), the term 'Governance' denotes a process of social or organisational decision making with participants of decision-making process determined by the respective societies and organisations. Governance is *who should be involved in deciding*. The fundamental principles of Good Governance practices are direction, voice & legitimacy, accountability, performance and fairness. Peter Blunt (1995) analyzes universal applicability of governance approaches and advocate *cultural relativism* i.e. incorporating cultural, institutional and environmental factors in development policies. Moreover, growing needs of human development, climate change, technological innovation, global economic volatility, political stability and democratic vitality, demand dynamic, flexible, robust and adaptive governance systems (Andreas Duit and Victor Galaz, 2008).

Dr. Rahul Tripathi (2017) traced history of governance and good governance in India, their impact on socio-economic development and need for proactive governance reforms. The author suggests governance in India is as old as the Indian civilisation evidenced through texts like *Arthashastra*. Indian government through successive five-year plans have enunciated reforms for promotion of inclusive growth and participatory governance. The

author provided acronym for Governance as- Genuine, Optimistic, Versatile, Ethical, Responsive, Non-partisan, Accountable, Nurturing, Competent and Enterprising. Shahla Ayoub (2016) analysed vision, evolution and challenges of governance in India. According to author, various stumbling blocks such as corruption, illiteracy, divisive tendencies, extremism, unemployment and nepotism kept challenging Indian governance for which various initiatives have been taken by successive governments to keep the wheels of governance moving.

Moinuddin G. (2013) while studying impact of urban development reforms in developing countries advocate effective, efficient and responsive management of basic urban public facilities i.e. sanitation, electricity, water supply, roads etc. as part of urban development process. The city management in developing world is faced with challenges of limited expansion capacity, enfeebled local government, inadequacy of autonomy of elected authority for making policy decision, corruption, continuous imbalance in resources usage, unequal access to services, poor service quality, absence of accountability in public offices and issues of cooperation & coordination between facilitators of various services; which mandates indispensability of integrated metropolitan government approach with comprehensive, clear vision and policy interventions leading to resolution of urban issues and ensuring socio-economic, physical and environmental urban development.

Ulf Ran Hagen & Klas Groth (2012) analysed need for sustainable development in managing integrated and sustainable planning of cities in view of emerging urbanisation trends and increasing social and environmental challenges. The authors referred to cities as drivers of political, economic and cultural development to emphasize role of local representatives in promoting eco-friendly urban planning policies to make cities and towns attractive, safe, healthy and livable for a more sustainable future as well as mitigate issues of climate change. The study suggests 'Symbiocity Approach' as vibrant urban development mechanism for holistic and integrated town and city planning.

Herman van den Bosch (2020) explored elements of smart city policies adapted globally to transform urban areas through the adoption of social and ecological approaches using advanced technologies. The study emphasized evaluation of social and ecological problems of cities before digital technology interventions in solving urban problems and development of humane-centric smart cities and towns.

G. Deep & R. Menia (2018) evaluates trends and evolution of urbanisation in Jammu and Kashmir, India between the period 1901-2011, providing reasons for paced urbanization in the region and allied concerns in the urban landscape such as issues of housing congestion, scarcity of basic resources and services like drinking water, electricity, transportation facilities and most importantly the burden on urban environment. Shivam Singh et. al (2021) assess status, progress and impact of Government of India's flagship urban development programme- AMRUT by analysing its working in cities and towns of Jammu & Kashmir. The study reveals that the mission is aiming to transform the urban landscape, boosting urban infrastructure and facilitating basic urban services such as drinking water, electricity, transportation etc.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The study used data from both primary and secondary sources which includes comprehensive analysis of data received by a public survey in the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir, using simple random sampling technique & structured questionnaire method. The study sample comprised of one hundred research respondents including general public, ward councillors

from Srinagar Municipal Corporation, journalists and members from non government organizations (NGOs) operating in the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir.

Also, significant secondary data sources, including research publications, articles, government reports, books and websites, were consulted to explore multidimensional perspectives about governance dynamics and urban development in the Srinagar city, analyze impact of Smart City Mission & AMRUT mission on socio-economic development of Srinagar city and identify challenges of governance and urban development in the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir.

### **3. RESULTS & FINDINGS**

The collection and analysis of data primarily focused on receiving insights about the challenges of urban development and governance, including financial constraints in the Srinagar city in the context of Srinagar Smart City Mission and AMRUT Mission, the impact of these reforms on socio-economic development of the city along with receiving possible suggestions for rejuvenation of urban development and governance in the capital city of J&K. Accordingly, the issues of basic civic amenities like housing, drinking water, electricity, roads, open spaces, waste management, drainage, communication networks, internet facilities etc. were highlighted during interaction with the research respondents through questionnaires to analyze accessibility, affordability and quality of these public services along with evaluation of public satisfaction about these services. A brief overview of results from the data analysis is presented as follows-

#### **a. Impact of Governance Reforms & Urban Development Policies on Socio-economic Development in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir**

The impact of the governance reforms and urban development policies viz Srinagar Smart City Mission and AMRUT on socio-economic development of the Srinagar city, was evaluated using a 1-5 Likert Scale for gauging satisfaction of various stakeholders (research respondents) about accessibility, affordability and quality of basic public services in the city. The results as presented below, reveal that majority of the citizens are least satisfied about accessibility, affordability and quality of public services delivery in the Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir.

##### **8.1.1 Accessibility of Public Services in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir**

The level of public satisfaction about the accessibility of various basic urban in the city and impact of governance reforms and urban development policies in facilitating accessibility of urban services is presented as below-

Table 1.0

*Impact of Governance Reforms & Urban Development Policies on Accessibility of Public services in Srinagar City of J&K (Scores as per 1-5 Likert Scale)*

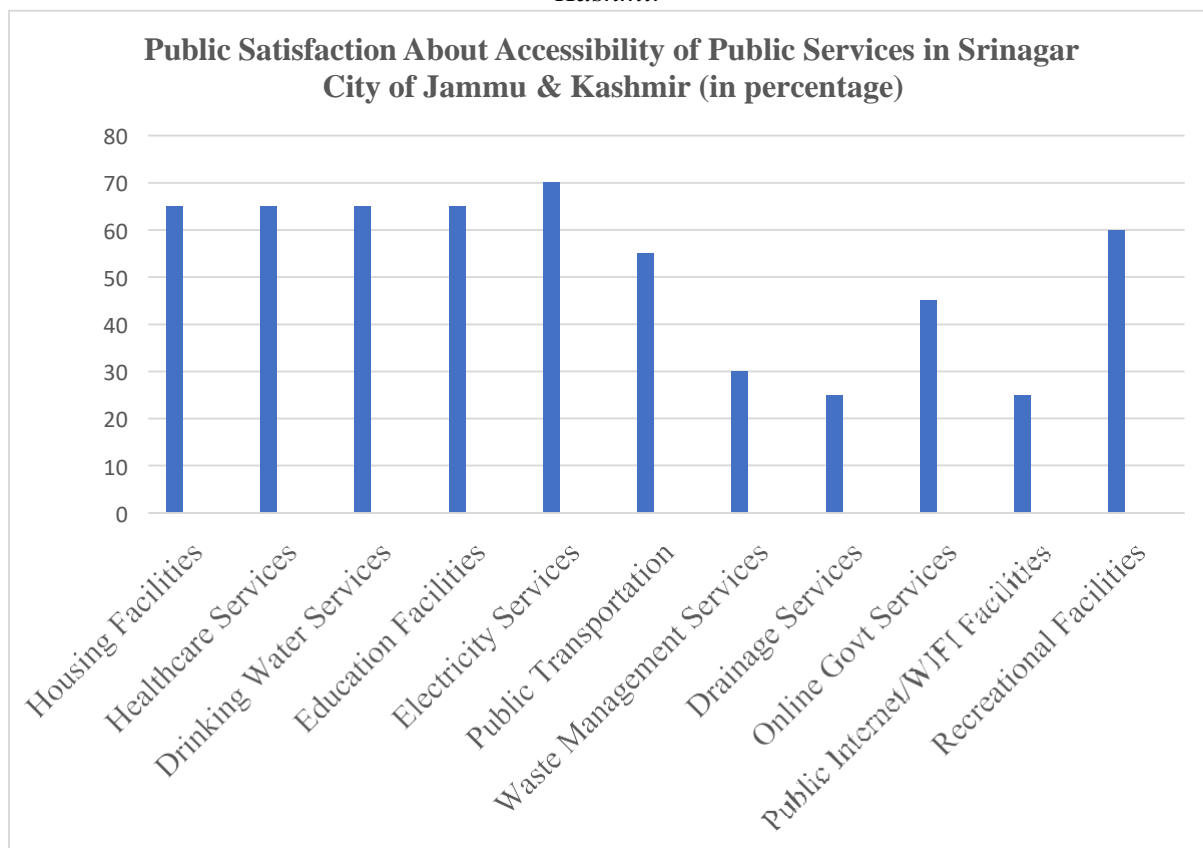
<b>Description of Respondents (→)</b>	<b>General Public</b>	<b>Municipality Ward Councillors</b>	<b>Leading Local Journalists</b>	<b>Local NGO Members</b>	<b>Overall Satisfaction (Mean Value-μ)</b>
<b>Various Services (↓)</b>					
Housing Facilities	3	4	3	3	<b>3.25</b>
Healthcare Services	3	4	3	3	<b>3.25</b>

Drinking water Services	3	4	3	3	<b>3.25</b>
Education Facilities	3	3	3	4	<b>3.25</b>
Electricity Services	4	4	3	3	<b>3.5</b>
Public Transportation	2	3	3	3	<b>2.75</b>
Waste Management Services	1	3	1	1	<b>1.5</b>
Drainage Services	1	2	1	1	<b>1.25</b>
Online Government Services	2	3	2	2	<b>2.25</b>
Public Internet Facilities (Free WIFI Zones)	1	2	1	1	<b>1.25</b>
Recreational Facilities	3	3	3	3	<b>3.0</b>
<b>Mean Value (<math>\mu</math>)</b>	<b>2.36</b>	<b>3.18</b>	<b>2.36</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>2.59</b>

The overall mean value of ( $\mu$ -2.59) reveals that the research respondents, in general, are partially satisfied with the accessibility of public services in the city. The highest mean value of 3.5 for electricity services reflects higher public satisfaction about the accessibility of electricity services in the city. In contrast, drainage services (**Mean Value,  $\mu$ -1.25**) and public internet facilities/ free WIFI zones (**Mean value,  $\mu$ -1.25**) show the least satisfaction of the respondents about the accessibility of these services.



Figure 1.0  
Public Satisfaction about Accessibility of Public services in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir



### 8.1.2 Affordability of Public Services in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir

The level of public satisfaction about the affordability of various basic services in the city along with impact of governance reforms & urban development policies in facilitating affordable public services delivery mechanisms is presented below-

Table 2.0  
Impact of Governance Reforms & Urban Development Policies on promotion of Affordability of Public services in Srinagar City of J&K (Scores as per 1-5 Likert Scale)

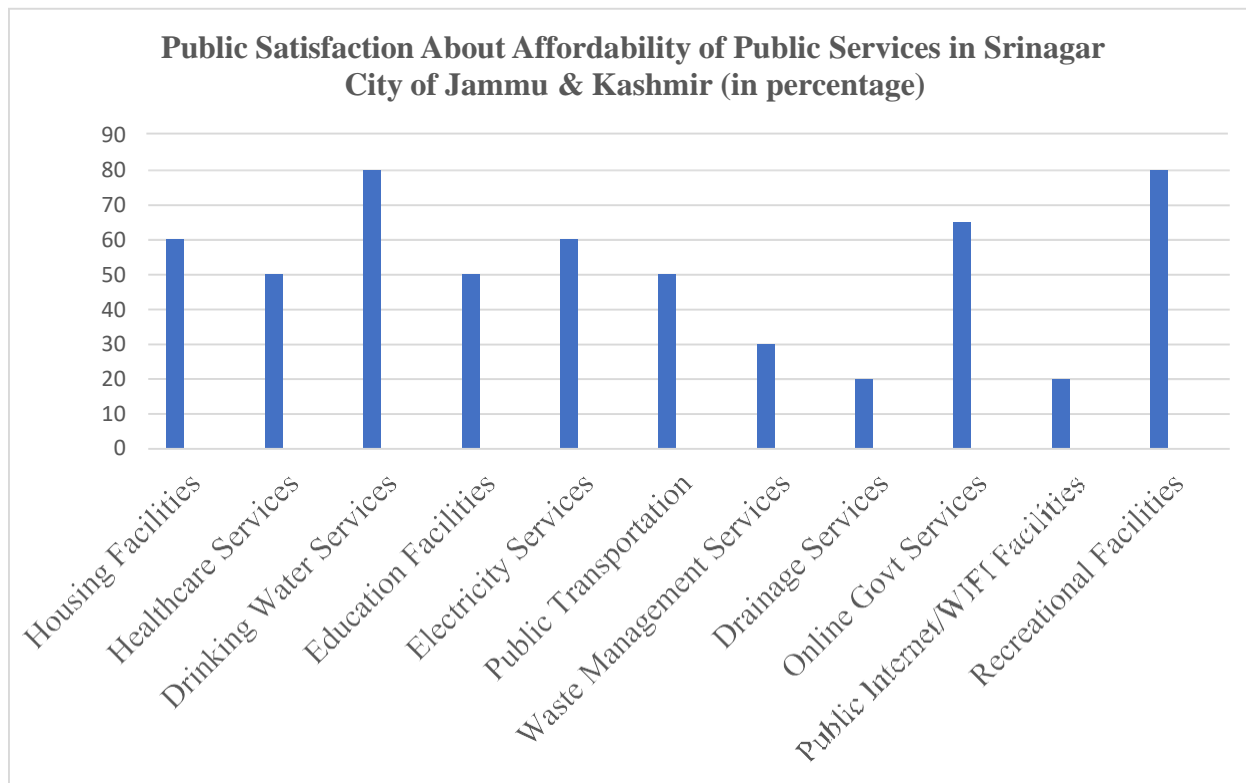
Description of Respondents (→)	General Public	Municipality Ward Councillors	Leading Local Journalists	Local NGO Members	Overall Satisfaction (Mean Value-μ)
Various Services (↓)					
Housing Facilities	3	3	3	3	3.0
Healthcare Services	2	2	3	3	2.5
Drinking water Services	4	4	4	4	4.0
Education Facilities	3	3	2	2	2.5
Electricity Services	3	3	3	3	3.0

Public Transportation	2	3	3	2	<b>2.5</b>
Waste Management Services	1	3	1	1	<b>1.5</b>
Drainage Services	1	1	1	1	<b>1.0</b>
Online Government Services	3	4	3	3	<b>3.25</b>
Public Internet Facilities (Free WIFI Zones)	1	1	1	1	<b>1.0</b>
Recreational Facilities	4	4	4	4	<b>4.0</b>
<b>Mean Value (<math>\mu</math>)</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>2.81</b>	<b>2.54</b>	<b>2.45</b>	<b>2.56</b>

The final mean value of ( $\mu$ -**2.56**) depicts that the research respondents are partially satisfied with the affordability of public services in Srinagar city. The highest mean value of ( $\mu$ -**4.0**) for drinking water services reflects higher public satisfaction about the affordability of these services. This is because drinking water services are provided to the public with only minimal yearly service charges, considering round the year availability of water sources from natural glaciers surrounding the city's large lakes and rivers. However, to check any misuse of the precious drinking water, the government is starting installation of smart water meters in individual households and private buildings for which tenders have been floated, and work is in progress.

Also, the higher mean value ( $\mu$ -**4.0**) for the affordability of recreational facilities reveal that these services are available to the public at lesser expenditure, which is due to the fact that the city is bestowed with a large number of world-famous tourist places, including several Mughal Gardens, public parks, cultural/ heritage markets as well as recently developed community parks. Although most of the municipality areas still lack community parks.

Figure 2.0  
Public Satisfaction about Affordability of Public services in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir



### 8.1.3 Quality of Public Services in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir

The public satisfaction about the quality of various basic urban services in the Srinagar city as well as their satisfaction about the impact of governance reforms and urban development policies in improving quality of these urban services, is described below-

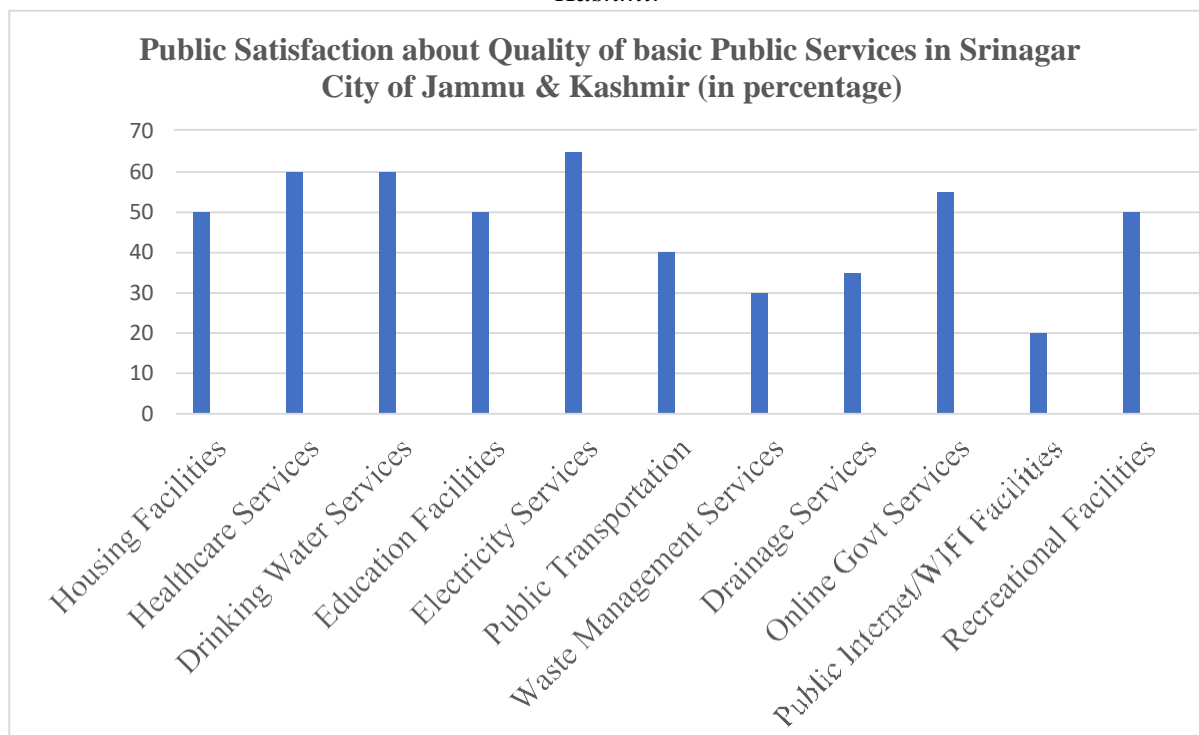
Table 3.0  
Impact of Governance Reforms & Urban Development Policies in improving Quality of Public services in Srinagar City of J&K (Scores as per 1-5 Likert Scale).

Description of Respondents (→) Various Services (↓)	General Public	Municipality Ward Councillors	Leading Local Journalists	Local NGO Members	Overall Satisfaction (Mean Value-μ)
Housing Facilities	3	3	2	2	2.5
Healthcare Services	3	4	3	2	3.0
Drinking water Services	3	4	2	3	3.0
Education Facilities	2	3	3	2	2.5
Electricity Services	3	4	3	3	3.25
Public	1	3	2	2	2.0

Transportation					
Waste Management Services	1	3	1	1	<b>1.5</b>
Drainage Services	1	2	2	2	<b>1.75</b>
Online Government Services	2	3	3	3	<b>2.75</b>
Public Internet Facilities (Free WIFI Zones)	1	1	1	1	<b>1.0</b>
Recreational Facilities	2	3	3	2	<b>2.5</b>
<b>Mean Value (<math>\mu</math>)</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>2.27</b>	<b>2.09</b>	<b>2.34</b>

The overall mean value ( $\mu$ -**2.34**) for the satisfaction of the respondents about the quality of various public services in the Srinagar city reveals that the public, in general, is partially satisfied (below 50%) with the quality of these services. The prime reasons provided by the research respondents for lesser satisfaction about the quality of public services were- red-tapism, corruption, non-responsiveness, lack of intra institutional and inter-institutional coordination among public agencies, delay in development work due to frequent law & order issues and volatile political environment, which mandates proactive administrative interventions in terms of public policy evaluation, bridging the gaps in policy implementation by focussing on prompt, accessible, affordable and quality delivery of public services using innovative and smart technologies, like e-office mechanisms, e-tendering of public works, enhancing the quality of online service portals and bring in structural and operational changes in public organizations to facilitate integration, communication and coordination among these institutions, to ensure good governance paradigms in the urban landscape of the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir.

Figure 3.0  
Satisfaction of public about Quality of basic public services in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir



#### 4. Urban Development & Governance Challenges in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir

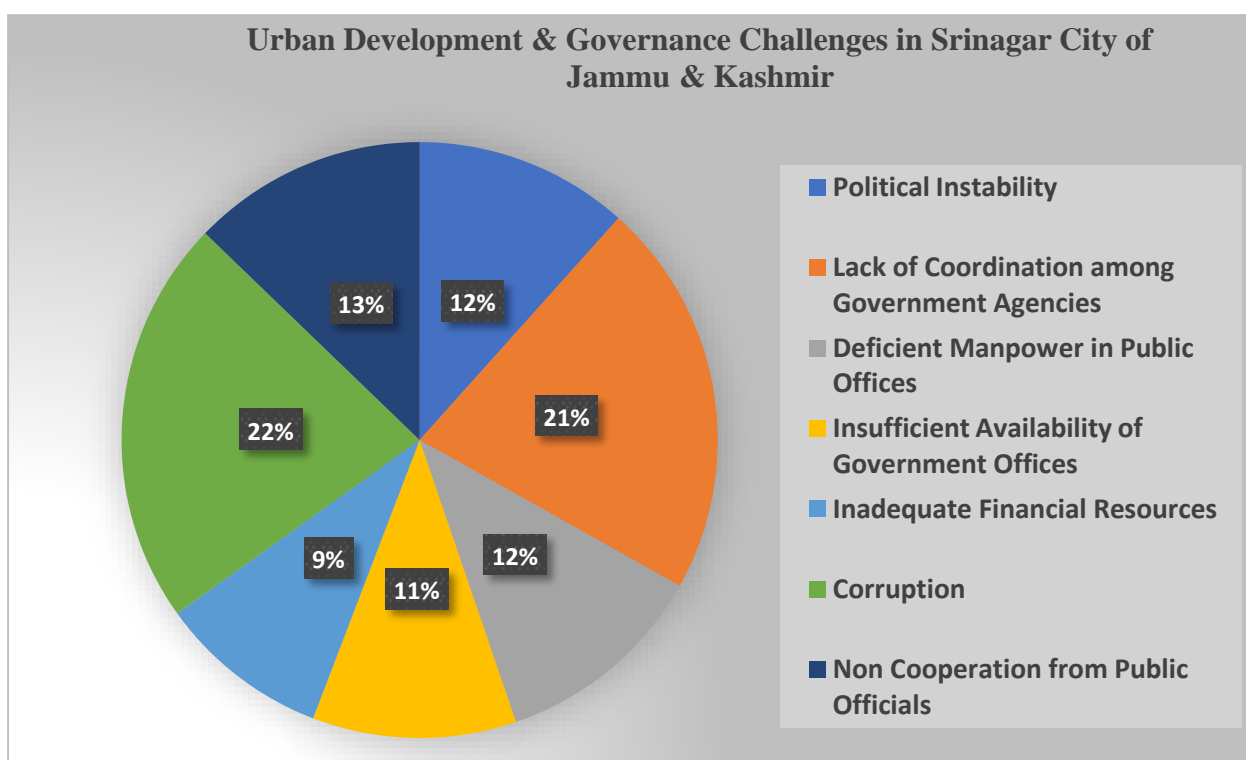
Detailed and comprehensive insights were received from the research respondents about the governance and urban development challenges in the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir. Some major challenges for effective implementation of governance reforms and urban development policies in the city are highlighted below-

- a) **Frequent Law & Order Issues and Political Instability:** One major governance challenge in the city is the frequent law and order issues and political instability which severely affects the governance paradigms as the peace and tranquility are pre-requisite for development of any region.
- b) **Lack of Coordination among Public agencies:** Inadequate intra-institutional & inter-institutional coordination among implementation departments creates conflict of interest, delay in execution of projects and wastage of financial resources.
- c) **Corruption:** Corruption in public institutions and in delivery of basic urban services, has been rated as priority governance challenge in the city by most of the research respondents.
- d) **Lack of Accountability & Transparency in Public Offices:** Red-rapism and undesired delay in delivery of public services is another big challenge for development of the Srinagar city.
- e) **Insufficient Availability of Government Offices at community level:** The residents from peripheral areas of the Srinagar city have highlighted insufficient availability of government offices, which deprives them from availing timely public services.

- f) **Insufficient and uneven financial assistance** for urban development programmes that seriously impact their proper execution.
- g) **Poor infrastructure in concerned departments/agencies** that adversely affects implementation of governance and urban development policies.
- h) **Deficient Manpower:** The deficient manpower in public offices is over-buddening the existing staff which not only affects their mental/physical abilities and morale, but also results in inordinate delay in completion of projects and delivery of public services.
- i) **Non-Responsive Attitude of Administrative Staff:** During the study, concerns were highlighted about non-responsiveness and non-cooperation from the administrative staff in public offices as well as field staff.

Figure 4.0

*Urban Development and Governance Challenges in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir.*



### 5. Suggestions for augmentation of Urban Development & Governance Mechanisms in Srinagar City of Jammu & Kashmir

To promote urban development and facilitate effective, responsive, accountable and transparent governance mechanisms in the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir, the followings suggestions are made-

- a. A strong political initiative is needed to reconcile and unite all groups of people towards development process and curb youth alienation by facilitating optimum livelihood opportunities for them in terms of formal and informal employment.
- b. All the urban development and governance programs mandate centralized 'Command & Control Centres' to be created hierarchically from district level upto grass-root level, to ensure effective communication and coordination among involved public agencies.

- c. The creation of effective ‘Command and Control Centres’ at various levels having members from multiple departments, will promote transparency and accountability also. As all the service matters of the employees including daily assignments, perks, periodic performance appraisals, promotion, transfer and dismissal will be monitored and evaluated by these ‘Command and Control Centres’.
- d. Creation of manpower for public offices in the Srinagar city and ensuring fast track recruitment, will not only provide sufficient staff for public offices but will also address alarmingly rising unemployment rate in the region.
- e. Increasing budgetary allocation for development programmes and welfare schemes to facilitate their optimum outcomes because of the ever-increasing urban population, their diverse needs & frequent rise in market inflation.
- f. Adoption of Management Information System (MIS) technologies in each public office for real-time file tracking, performance monitoring and to avoid red-tapism.
- g. Capacity building programs and trainings on public ethics be introduced as mandatory part of civil service rules to ensure development of responsive and citizen friendly attitude in public servants.
- h. All urban Panchayat Raj Institutions institutions be actively involved in creating public awareness regarding good governance and urban development programs through community meetings, roadshows, IT platforms etc.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Governance mechanisms and urban development reforms are witnessing transformation across the countries due to unprecedented technological revolution and global focus on mitigation of emerging development challenges such as poverty, illiteracy, hunger, malnutrition, lack of housing, issues of environment pollution and climate change. The United Nations emphasized good governance, inclusive development & participatory governance as vital elements for achieving Sustainable Development Goals and highlighted need for paced urban development reforms in view of rapid urbanization trends, particularly in developing countries including India. Keeping in view the large population size, swift urbanization trends in recent years and rising concerns for basic urban facilities, Indian government started flagship urban development programs viz Smart City Mission and AMRUT in the selected cities and towns across the country including the Srinagar city of Jammu & Kashmir. The urban planning reforms aim at developing resilient, smart and sustainable infrastructure as well as adopt innovative and smart technologies for effective public service delivery. However, due to skewed policy implementation, insufficient financial support, & inadequate coordination among public agencies, these initiatives are yet to realize any significant impact on promotion of good governance and inclusive development objectives. A strong political will, integrated policy approach and effective implementation framework are vital for bridging the gaps through a bottom-up approach.

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