

SUSTAINABLE CITY GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC SENSE AMONG CITIZENS

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ABSTRACT

The city that we live on is comprised of community of people. In order to serve these people we have the government which leads the activities of the state and the activities of the state are in turn run by the people. This refers to intensive involvement of the government with the society of people of the country. Thus, there is continuous overlapping of governmental and social factors in day to day life. While there are laws and orders prescribed by the government to do something in a certain way, there might be contradicting values or mindset of society against that act. To build a sustainable beautiful city the government should perform in coherence with the society; likewise, the people belonging to the society should be respectful towards the authority through their proper code of conducts and way of living. This is where the matter of civic sense of the people of the society come to be an important phenomenon. When any person is doing anything that is against his civic sense, this means there are some factors that have influence over him. These factors are identified in this study through analyzing the primary data which depict the real scenario of civic senses of the people in various aspects of their lives. The study includes the relationship between people's civic sense and following the rules set by the government to maintain the continuous development and proper management of the city. The study reveals the social, economic, political and legal aspects of civic sense of the citizens that may impact upon upholding a sustainable city governance.

Keywords: community; government; civic sense; sustainable city governance

Introduction

Being the home to more than half of the world's population the cities are very significant and important for any country. Thus the city governance system comprises of the crucial tasks of planning of urbanization and managing the cities resources, depending on which the city dwellers' conditions are pivoted. But the condition of those citizens is not only dependent on promoting these aspects of urbanization but also maintaining sustainability. Urban sustainability thus presents vast challenges to be critically important for the governance system. This includes economic, social and ecological sustainability in order to ensure better livelihood to the city dwellers. But sustainable city development cannot be achieved if civic sense among citizens is not kept at the center of the targeted activities. People are driven by their civic senses and their actions can bring impact upon the way to uphold sustainable city governance. Therefore, the significant correlation between the sustainable city and civic senses among people is studied herein and the extent of challenge that decline in people's civic sense poses in sustainable city governance is identified and analysed from responses received from the respondents of the study.

Defining Sustainable City

Typically defining, a sustainable city presents a good quality of life to the current inhabitants but does not curtail the opportunities for the future generations to enjoy their survival. Thus, to make cities sustainable, the city planners try to ensure that while developing the city and meeting the present needs, the ability of future residents to live happily in this city and meet their own needs are not held at stake. A sustainable city is also called "eco-city", which is designed with necessary concerns of any impacts on the environment inhabited by people, and it aims to minimize any such detrimental long term effect. There are no completely agreed upon statement defining what a sustainable city is, neither are there any well-defined prerequisites or components for becoming a sustainable city. Generally, developmental experts say that a sustainable city should meet the needs of the present without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The ambiguity within this idea leads to a great deal of variation in terms of how cities carry out their attempts to become sustainable.

Indicators To Build Sustainable City

Sustainable city governance is a relatively new concept that many cities have embraced. However, many still struggle combining or adapting their strategic plans to incorporate the sustainability aspects. There is an organization called the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) that is functioning to develop a universal urban strategic guidelines. The UCLG has precisely identified 13 global challenges for attaining sustainability for cities. These are demographic change of the city, migration, globalization of the job market, poverty and unattained Millennium Development Goals, exclusion or separatism among population, uncontrolled urban growth, mismanaged metropolisation, lack of devolution of power to local authorities, new actors for developing a city and providing services, diminishing public funding for development, environmental threats and climate change, innovative and accessible construction technologies, uncertainty avoidance tools and parameters of growth and global communications. These challenges can be considered as indicators as their attainment indicates development of sustainability.

Sustainable City And Civic Sense Of People

Civic sense is basically social ethics. It is the thoughtfulness of the people of the society for the implicit norms and values persisting in a society. Civic sense is not just about keeping the roads clean but also act of abiding by laws of a country, showing respect to the people, and maintaining proper code of conduct in public places. Many countries can smoothly function because of the existence of strong civic sense among its people. Lack of civic sense can yield to serious national problems such as racism. Such problems causing discrimination is against the principles of sustainable city.

Statement Of The Problem

According to Phillip E. Johnson, “A constitutional democracy is in serious trouble if its citizenry does not have a certain degree of education about civic virtue.” Declining civic sense has become one of the major threats in governance system. Dhaka, being the capital city of the Bangladesh, and densely populated with around 16 million people does not serve its city dwellers a healthy place to live on. Absence of proper city design, lack of implementation of policy for maintaining the hygiene and social security, worrisome public transport, insufficient and inactive system to check and control pollution and many such issues vastly degraded quality of living for Dhaka city dwellers. The dwellers themselves are also significantly responsible for making this situation worse. This paper aims to identify such roles of the citizens affecting the governance system and factors influencing their civic sense, which in turn impacts on the sustainability of Dhaka city.

Objective Of The Study

The objective of the study titled “Sustainable City Governance & Civic Sense among Citizens” are mentioned briefly below.

- Relate sustainable city governance with civic sense among citizens
- Find out the driving forces of people to act against civic sense
- Find out the restraining forces of people to act according to civic sense
- Find out the intensity of how far these forces influence people’s civic sense

Review Of Literature

There has been many research relating to governance and environmental performance at both national and international levels in different countries. But little research has been done on sustainable city governance taking into account different particular cities as case study. There were researches and articles written on Dhaka city and its conditions regarding pollution but most of them usually aimed in assessing government’s environmental policy and their implementation initiatives. In addition to that, no influential research has yet been done concerning the decline of civic sense. We can find a number of articles on city planning and civic sense online but the impact of several factors on civic sense on sustainability of city governance was not highlighted in any kind of research work.

Research Methodology

Case Study

Dhaka city is selected for the case study as it includes a good representation of people’s ignorant attitude towards environmental damage which is majorly caused by them and continuous declination of civic sense among them. Though it is engaged in effective planning effort under a sustainability framework but has not done any considerable work in developing indicators and tracking them in a continuous basis.

Methods Of Data Collection

Collection of data is done from primary sources of data only and the process that has been followed for data collection is Questionnaire Method. A Questionnaire containing ten questions has been distributed among the sampling population to collect data required in this study.

Sampling

The sampling population has been selected as follows based on the age limit and sex from the citizen of Bangladesh dwelling in the capital city Dhaka, keeping gender parity and equality among the numbers of respondents under each strata.

Basis of selection		No. of respondents
Male	Age 20-30	15
	Age 30-40	15
Female	Age 20-30	15
	Age 30-40	15
Total No. of respondents		100

Data Presentation And Analysis

The questionnaire survey was done among 100 respondents in total according to the strata mentioned before. The respondents were asked 8 closed-ended questions, and 2 questions involving rating. The data from the respondents were compiled and illustrated in the following tables and the answers are analyzed for each of the questions.

Question1. Suppose, you need to cross the road and you are in hurry. You saw there is an over-bridge that you can use,			No. of respondents			
			Male (50)		Female (50)	
			Age 20-30	Age 30-40	Age 20-30	Age 30-40
You will use over-bridge	i	You are conscious about your safety even when you are in hurry.			5	14
	ii	You know the law and are afraid to break it				
	iii	You think it's your duty and responsible to follow the law.				
	iv	You are driven by your cultural integrity.				
	v	Your education gave you values to rationally decide what is right and wrong.				
You will not use over-bridge	i	You are not conscious enough about your safety while you are in hurry	12	3		
	ii	It is not compulsory to use over-bridge by law	3	2	1	
	iii	You are not responsible to follow laws because you are powerful enough not to be suffered if you break any laws.				
	iv	You think not using over bridge is adventurous.				
	v	You think it is just not necessary to use the over bridge		10	9	1

The question been asked here refers to a situation to examine the fact that whether or not people are driven by civic sense and abide by the laws when they are in rush. From the answers of the respondents it is seen that 100% of both male and female unanimously said they will not use the over bridge under the mentioned circumstances. 80% of the younger group of male respondents were found not conscious regarding their safety whereas 66.7% of the older age group were found to disobey the law just because their mindset drove them to think that it is not necessary to use the over bridge. The same reason is found behind the responses of the majority (60%) of younger age group of the females. But older females are found to be more law abiding as 93.3% of them said they are conscious about their safety the most.

Question 2. Suppose, you are stuck in traffic jam and you saw an ambulance behind, you will—			No. of respondents			
			Male		Female	
			Age 20-30	Age 30-40	Age 20-30	Age 30-40
Make space for the ambulance to go before you	i.	You are conscious about the patient inside the ambulance	11		15	13
	ii.	You think you are legally right to help the patient				
	iii	You think it's your duty and responsibility to help the patient.		10		
	iv	You are driven by your cultural integrity.				
	v	Your education gave you values to rationally decide what is right and wrong.	4	5		2
Remain indifferent	i	You are not conscious enough about the patient inside the ambulance				
	ii	It is not compulsory to let the ambulance go before you by law				
	iii	You are more important and powerful than the patient in the ambulance so you will go first				
	iv	You are driven by a self-centered nature.				
	v	You think it is just not necessary to be such unconditionally helpful to others.				

This question aims to analyze the drive of civic sense and humanity among people. When a patient is stuck in ambulance in traffic jam, civic sense tells that everybody should help the ambulance to move forward. 100% of the respondents were found to response positively. The factor for such response was "consciousness for the patient" in case of majority of the younger group of males (73.3%) and 100% of that group of females. This reverberates that there is significant evidences of humanity among the citizens which restrict them from acting against their civic sense.

Question 3. Suppose, you moved to a new house. You saw there was a dustbin at little away but the other residents put their garbage nearby openly. You will put your garbage—			No. of respondents			
			Male		Female	
			Age 20-30	Age 30-40	Age 20-30	Age 30-40

At the dustbin at distant	i.	You are conscious about keeping the environment clean	4	6	13	15
	ii.	You know the law and are afraid to break it				
	iii.	You think it's your duty and responsible to follow the law.		2		
	iv.	You are driven by your cultural integrity.				
	v.	Your education gave you values to rationally decide what is right and wrong.	2	1	2	
At the open place along with the other residents	i.	You are not conscious about keeping the environment clean				
	ii.	There is no strict execution of laws against putting garbage in open places	4	4		
	iii.	You are not responsible to follow laws because you are powerful enough not to be suffered if you break any laws.				
	iv.	You are ok with the fact that the residents put their garbage in open place				
	v.	You think there is no point in giving effort to keep the environment clean by putting your garbage in dustbin, while the others are polluting the place already.	5	2		

This question analyses the civic sense of people towards maintaining hygiene to keep the environment clean. 100% of all the female respondents were found to maintain cleanliness whereas 30% of all the male respondents responded negatively on this issue. The mindset of 33.3% of males of younger age group was such that they thought there was no point in giving effort to keep the environment clean by putting their garbage in dustbin, while the others were polluting the place already. Although the majority respondents from other strata of were conscious about keeping the environment clean. This shows that the young males are potential threats for sustainable city regarding the issue to keep the city clean.

Question 4. Suppose, you went to a restaurant by your car and found that there is no place for parking, you will—			No. of respondents			
			Male		Female	
			Age 20-30	Age 30-40	Age 20-30	Age 30-40
Park on street	i.	You are not conscious about what problems the other people can have due to your parking				
	ii.	There is no strict execution of laws against parking on street				
	iii.	You know that even if the traffic police cause any problem, you can negotiate in exchange of your money and power	2	4		5
	vi.	You think parking on street is cool				
	v.	You think its tiring and hazardous to search for parking lots when you can park on street	3			1
Search a parking lot somewhere near or far to park	i.	You are conscious about creating traffic jam on street due to your parking		1		1
	ii.	You are afraid of breaking the traffic laws	10	10	15	8
	iii.	You think it's your duty and responsible to follow the law.				
	iv.	You are driven by your cultural integrity.				
	v.	Your education gave you values to rationally decide what is right and wrong.				

This question is related to traffic rules and responsiveness of people to those traffic rules based on their civic sense. The response received were indeed surprising and unexpectedly positive. Majority respondents of all the groups (66% of both groups of males, 100% of younger females and 53% of older females) were found to abide by the traffic rules and park in appropriate place due to the fear of breaking traffic rules. This significant change occurred in Dhaka city recently as the traffic police are seen to be more vigilant and filing more cases, be it as it may, for their own interest, but the consequence of their action has positively made the citizens more law abiding.

Question 5. Suppose, you went to a date with your girlfriend/boyfriend. You saw a tree with beautiful flowers in it and you felt to give her/him a flower. Then you noticed the tree has the tag on it "Don't pluck flowers", you will—			No. of respondents			
			Male		Female	
			Age 20-30	Age 30-40	Age 20-30	Age 30-40
Tear a flower	i.	You are not conscious of exploiting other people's property for your own interest				

	ii.	You know you will not be sued for tearing just a flower	5	9		
	iii.	You are not responsible to follow laws because you are powerful enough not to be suffered if you break any laws.				
	iv.	You have seen heroes do that to their heroines on satellite channels				
	v.	You think it's OK to do so as you don't have to pay for the flower	10	5	7	
Not tear a flower	i.	You are conscious that it's morally unethical.				5
	ii.	You know the law and are afraid to break it				
	iii.	You think it's your duty and responsible to follow the law.				
	iv.	You are driven by your cultural integrity.				
	v.	Your education gave you values to rationally decide what is right and wrong.		1	8	10

This question illustrates a simple case of testing civic sense by which people may/may not harm others while looking for own benefit. All the males were seen to be responding against civic sense whereas majority of the females were found to be ethically right. 66.6% of younger males had a mindset which let them think that it is OK to pluck flower from another's territory because they do not have to pay for the flower. 60% of older group were found to be less concerned about the laws and believed that as they would not be sued for tearing just a flower so it was not a crime. The factors which restrained the females from doing so included moral consciousness and educational values.

Question 6. Suppose, you are in car with your friend. Your friend is playing loud rock music while passing by a hospital and a mosque. You will—			No. of respondents			
			Male		Female	
			Age 20-30	Age 30-40	Age 20-30	Age 30-40
Tell your friend to turn the music off	i.	You are conscious about maintaining serenity around hospital and mosque	6	11	14	15
	ii.	You know the law and are afraid to break it				
	iii.	You think it's your duty and responsible to follow the law.				
	iv.	You think it is against our culture and religion				
	v.	Your education gave you values to rationally decide what is right and wrong.	4	4	1	
Enjoy the music as it is	i.	You are not conscious about others' being disturbed by you				
	ii.	There is no proper implementation of any law on this note to restrict you	5			
	iii.	You are not responsible to follow laws because you are powerful enough not to be suffered if you break any laws.				
	iv.	You think playing loud music while travelling gives you an impressive attitude				
	v.	You think it is just not necessary to stop the music				

This question involves the cultural and religious aspects related to civic sense of people in relation with creating sound pollution. Under the given situation, all the respondents were found to act according to their civic sense and stop the loud music from playing around hospitals and mosques. The common reason behind such response of the majority population of all the groups (40% of younger and 73.3% of older males, 93.3% of younger and 100% of older females) was consciousness to maintain serenity around those places.

Question 7. Suppose, you and your friend went to TSC after your class. Your friend started smoking after a while. You will—			No. of respondents			
			Male		Female	
			Age 20-30	Age 30-40	Age 20-30	Age 30-40
Ask your friend not to smoke	i.	You are conscious about incurring environmental pollution			15	15
	ii.	You know the law and are afraid to break it				
	iii.	You think it's your duty and responsible to follow the law.				
	iv.	You are driven by your cultural integrity.				
	v.	Your education gave you values to rationally decide what is right and wrong.				
Don't bother	i.	You are not conscious enough about harming others				

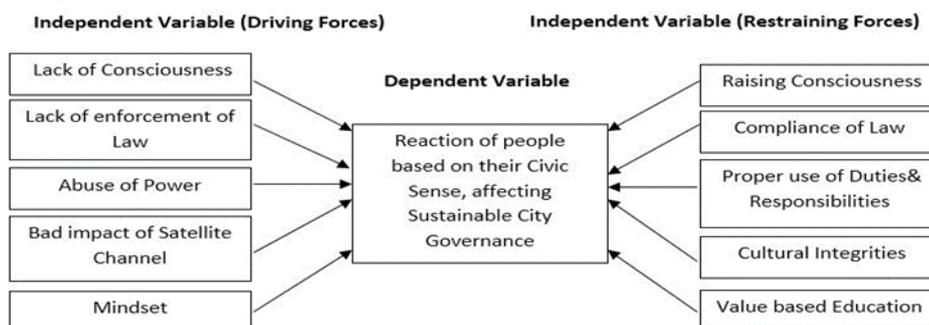
about it	ii.	The law is not strictly implemented.	11	2		
	iii	You are not responsible to follow laws because you are powerful enough not to suffer if you break any laws.		5		
	iv	You think smoking is cool	1			
	v.	You think it's your friend's personal right and freedom	3	8		

TSC (Teachers-Students Centre) located in University of Dhaka at the heart of Dhaka city. Smoking in public places such as TSC has been prohibited by law but this has come to subtle implementation, and this question aims to highlight the real scenario relating this in viewpoint of people's civic sense. 100% of both the female age groups responded that they are conscious about incurring environmental pollution so they will ask their friend to stop smoking in a public area. But 100% of the male respondents answered negatively. 73.3% of younger male group said there was no strict implementation of this law so there is no point in stopping their friends from smoking and 53.3% of the older group believed that smoking is one's personal right and freedom. This shows that women mostly suffering from passive smoking attempt to stop it from the society whereas the men continue to hamper the sustainability of the city and cause degradation of civic senses.

Question 8. Suppose you are walking by a street. Suddenly you saw a mob chasing a man. Soon they caught him and started beating him violently. You learned that he was a hijacker. You will—			No. of respondents			
			Male		Female	
			Age 20-30	Age 30-40	Age 20-30	Age 30-40
Beat the hijacker along with the crowd	i.	You are not conscious that the hijacker is also a human.				
	ii.	You think as he has done wrong so it is legally right to beat him				
	iii	Beating is a means to show you are more powerful than him				
	iv.	You think your action is heroic	5	3		
	v.	You think the mob can give a perfect lesson to the hijacker.	6	2	1	
Try to stop people from hitting	i.	You are conscious that the hijacker is also a human.			2	4
	ii.	You think the lawful authority has the right to punish him, not the citizens.	4	4	3	5
	iii.	You think it's your legal duty and responsibility to stop the fight.				
	iv	You are driven by your cultural integrity and humanity		2	5	5
	v.	Your education gave you values to rationally decide what is right and wrong.		4	4	1

This question denotes to social violence and drive of civic sense of people to act in such situation. The women and the majority of the male belonging to the older group said that they will try to stop the violence but 40% of the young males were found to have a cruel mindset which made them think that the mob can give a perfect lesson to the hijacker by beating him up. By this it is reflected that the young males can easily damage the tranquility of society and boost up violence, disrupting the sustainable city governance.

Thus, from the discussions it is seen that the questions which were asked mainly had two options which determined how a respondent reacts to a situation concerning his/her civic sense. One option denoted the reaction which went against his/her civic sense, and another option denoted reaction which positively supported his/her civic sense. When a person is driven to do something that is against his/her civic sense, this means there are some factors that have influence over him/her. We named them Driving Forces. When a person is not driven by these factors and remains susceptible to his/her civic sense and do the right things, this means there are some factors which restrict him/her from going against civic sense. We named them Restraining forces. Hence, reaction of people based on their civic sense depends on these forces, and these are reflected in the options mentioned in each of the questions asked.



These forces influence the civic senses of people in various intensities. Influence can be simply defined as the impacts of something on others, and intensity is the extent of that impact. Therefore, in the next questions the respondents were asked to score these factors based on how much intensely these factors influence the reactions of a person relating to his/her civic sense.

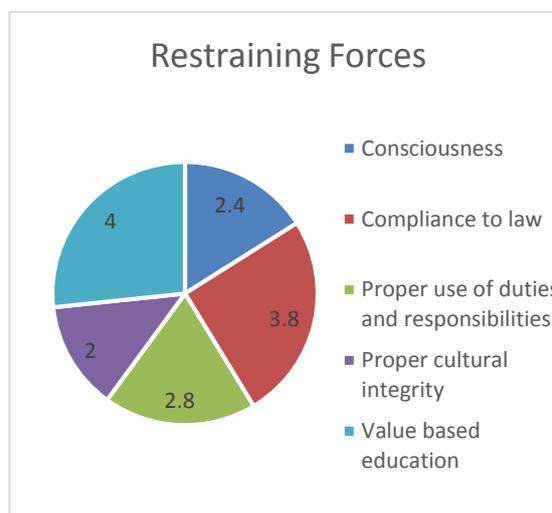
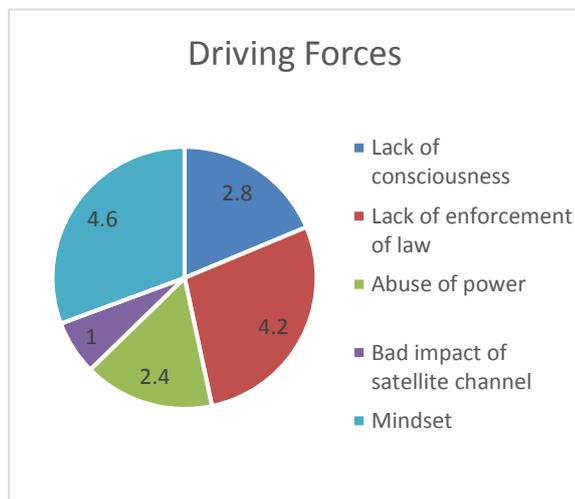
Question 9: Score based on the intensity by which you are driven to do something which is against your civic sense.
(Score 5 for the most intensity and 0 for the least. For example if your *Mindset* drives you the most, then score it 5; if *Lack of enforcement of law* drives you the least to do something which is against your civic sense, then score it 1; and similarly score all the factors according to their intensity of impact on you.)

Driving Factors	Score	1	2	3	4	5
• Lack of consciousness						
• Lack of enforcement of law						
• Abuse of power						
• Bad impact of satellite channel						
• Mindset						

Question 10: Score based on the intensity by which you can restrict yourself to do something which is against your civic sense.

Restraining Factors	Score	1	2	3	4	5
• Consciousness						
• Compliance to law						
• Proper use of duties and responsibilities						
• Proper cultural integrity						
• Value based education						

Compiling the scores of both males and females of each strata and measuring the relative scores, it is found that how much intense each of these factors are to drive one against his/her civic sense, or restrain one from not going against his/her civic sense. The relative scores are illustrated graphically below.



The pie chart shows that mindset of people has greatest influence to drive a person against civic sense. That is, the mentality of people and their mindset are impacted by various cultural and traditional aspects and values rather than logical facts. Changing the mindset of a person is tremendously difficult and civic sense seems to be futile if anyone has a stern mindset related to an idea. The most influencing restraining factor is education which enlightens people and provides values and morals to be rational through which one can enrich his/her civic sense.

Major Findings

The study aimed to find out how much influencing the civic sense of the citizens is in order to abide by the rules that were made on the part of the city governance system with the view to reach sustainability. On asking the respondents about several situation regarding the studied issue some major findings have been deduced from their responses, which illustrated how much influence the civic sense of a person has in making that person obey the laws and order or disobey them on the contrary. The major findings are briefly mentioned as follows.

Young people being studied preferred not to use over-bridge while crossing the road in hurry because their civic sense is affected by such a mindset that using over-bridge is time consuming, no matter what the law is. So proper implementation of law is needed to make these groups dutiful towards sustainable city governance.

The older group female prefer to use over-bridge in this respect as they are more conscious of their safety than the males, thus these females have greater restricting forces and act positively to civic sense.

Civic sense involving humanitarian aspects is seen to be prevailing among people. The reason behind instigating of civic sense to help a patient stuck in traffic jam is mostly consciousness for the patient from the respondents, and also values that they received from education. Thus mass education for the citizens can be an effective tool for accomplishment of sustainable city.

The older groups of people have stronger civic sense involving keeping environment clean as they are more conscious of the adversities of pollution.

The younger males are even less law-abiding regarding proper disposal of waste, and the main driving factor for such degradation of their civic sense is lack of strict implementation of laws. This calls for a proper monitoring system of waste disposal from the city government.

Civic sense to follow traffic rules and park in proper parking lot rather than beside streets are well perceived among the respondents. This is due to their compliance for traffic laws that are recently being strictly maintained in the city.

There are still evidences of money-nexus between the traffic police and the citizens breaking rules, and the females of the younger group were surprisingly found to be involved in such cases more than the males. This shows the traffic police may sometimes tend to loosen the laws for women.

All the males were seen to be responding against civic sense whereas majority of the females were found to be ethically right regarding tearing a flower from other people's property without consent. The reason for the responses of the women was mainly values and morals based on education, and that of men was lack of enforcement of law.

The majority of the respondents were respectful to the law for maintaining silence around hospitals and mosques, and such response raised due to their consciousness. Although some portion of young males are found to be lacking their civic sense and breaking the law, driven by the temptation that there is no strict execution of law on this regard and no provision of punishment for breaking it.

The total female respondents were found to be conscious about environmental pollution caused by smoking in a public area. But all the male respondents answered negatively. The reason included no strict implementation of anti-smoking laws in public places, and a mindset by which they believed that smoking is one's personal right and freedom. This shows that women mostly suffer from passive smoking, hence, they attempt to stop it from the society whereas the men continue to hamper the sustainability of the city and cause degradation of civic senses.

On the note of social violence regarding beating of a hijacker by a mob, the civic sense of the women and the majority of the male worked on the humanitarian ground and they said that they will try to stop the violence. But some of the young males were found to have a cruel mindset which presents a significant threat of the society and may boost up violence, disrupting the tranquility of a sustainable city.

The greatest influence to drive a person against his/her civic sense is his/her mindset or the mentality of that person, which may be shaped by various cultural and traditional aspects and values rather than logical facts.

The greatest influence to restrain a person from going against his/her civic sense is education by which one obtains values and morals to be rational through which one can enrich his/her civic sense.

Limitations Of The Study

The major limitation of the study involves the sample size and sample population. Such a limited number of respondents chosen from a specific city cannot properly provide precise deductions of the relation between civic sense of people and city governance system. Bridging the gap between academic understanding about sustainability, city planning by authorities and public psychology was a huge challenge.

Conclusion And Recommendations

Being a fast growing megacity the capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka City is significantly gaining attention in recent times. Despite existence of laws and order, achieving sustainable city governance includes overcoming certain gaps, which involves the alarming issue of declining civic sense among people. Several measures can be taken, which may include creating awareness among people relating to the issues critical for sustainable development, stimulating innovation in urban design, promoting participatory governance to involve people in government decision so that their civic sense can sharpen to bring about betterment of the city. The pivotal role should be played by the government to establish effective system in order to monitor pollution level, waste management, ecosystem management, and take firm actions accordingly. If strict implementation of policies cannot be

ensured then people's traditional mindset of "everyone does it" can never be changed, and further degradation of civic senses among people will continue to stab the path to sustainable development in the country.

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