

Understanding Governance Dilemma from Institutional Disparity: An Investigation into the Informal Floating Food Supply System in Metropolitan Dhaka

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Abstract

Theoretically, it has been argued that institutions are critical to the effective management of cities and the delivery of efficient urban services and infrastructure. The challenges are increasingly complex and integrated particularly for metropolitan areas that include multiple jurisdictions. However, unlike many other constraints underlying institutional and governance issues stand out majority of the metropolitan governance problem raises from existing institutional paradoxes. To grasp the institutional paradoxes scenario, we consider the Informal Floating Food Supply System (IFFSS) of Dhaka as case study. Vending fresh vegetables in Dhaka is an old tradition and integral part of Dhaka's food culture. However, the study discloses, the urban management law describes the IFFSS as illegal, obsolete and disorderly on the other hand, in the absence of a lead organisation there is no rational evaluation how to formally acknowledge IFFSS within their institutional directives. Hence, the IFFSS's governance in Dhaka is not only connected to food supply organisation, it is further connected to distinct sectors, namely transport, environment, urban management that have no direct role to play but impact significantly on the performance of the IFFSS. Thus, institutional polycentricity creates a political dilemma that lies at the heart of the IFFSS's governance. Hence, it navigates through delicate local governance regimes where the actors within the IFFSS are not sharing the same frame and with conflicting interactions, many new points of uncertainty are uncovered, resulting from the IFFSS's governance system being more fragile and exposed to risk.

Keywords: Governance, Informal floating food supply system, Dhaka

Subject classification codes: Informal Food Supply, Governance

Introduction

Like many other metropolitan cities in the world, Dhaka is transforming through rapid and unplanned urban growth, accompanied by a high prevalence of inequality, rapid sprawl, pollution and environmental degradation (Capps, Bentsen and Ramirez, 2016). Existing governance mechanisms decree due to unplanned urbanization, urban expansion, social and political conflict over resources, the city is growing drastically and faces various challenges that include high percentage of slums, high cost of living, dominance of informal sector, and increased level service of inadequacy (Rahaman, Kalam, Al-Mamun, 2023). Generally, it has been argued that inadequacy of public

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services and inequality within governance structure result increased levels of informal sector within metropolitan governance structure. Since, there is no one-size-fits-all solution to reducing inequality within the governance institutions, Dhaka's metropolitan governance faces different degrees of struggles and challenges from diverse performance of institutions.

The urbanisation process, however, has brought pressing urban challenges towards sustainable cities and communities. The challenges associated with metropolitan governance arrangements are increasingly complex and integrated since the institutions has to render traditional municipal boundaries, and, by extension, traditional governing structures and institutions (Tasan-Kok & Ozogul, 2021). However, our empirical investigation on Dhaka's metropolitan governance sketches majority of the metropolitan governance problem raises from the absence of institutional consensus about the demarcations of a unique territory, different visions as well as political positions of authorities and legal restrictions beyond their politico-administrative jurisdictions. Meanwhile, functions of fragmented institutions with asymmetrical fiscal systems elevates the challenges such as deficiencies in critical infrastructure, the growing need to address equitable development of public services such as health, decent shelter, education, water, sanitation and food supply system. However, it remains difficult to understand what are the paradoxes within the institutions that creates governance dilemma within metropolitan Dhaka.

To grasp the institutional paradoxes that creates dilemma in governing Dhaka we propose an original thesis and argue how institutional ambiguity has escalated deficiencies to address equitable public services. We consider the informal floating food supply system (IFFSS)³ as case study to systematically analyse institutional paradoxes in Dhaka. The Informal Floating Food Supply System (IFFSS), also known as the mobile market for vending fresh vegetables and seasonal fruits, is an integral component of Dhaka's urban food supply chain offering easy access to a wide range of fresh vegetables and seasonal fruits in public spaces. In Dhaka, the IFFSS is not only a marginal economic activity, but is a normal and highly visible social practice that has developed from history of tradition and runs parallel to the formal food supply system (Keck, Etzold, Bohle, & Zingel, 2014). Over the last three decades, IFFSS has seen a spectacular expansion in the city. Besides flowing into the city centre, IFFSS has settled and developed its activities into the neighbourhood, newly developed peripheral areas, and public places. At present trading is carried out in public spaces that are not specifically designated for trade, and as such, enters into competition with other urban services such as traffic flow, access to buildings, and other commercial activities in the city (Baud & Post, 2018).

Despite the significant contribution to the urban economy IFFSS's performance is inextricably linked with unanticipated consequence from institutional constraints and consequent organization's legitimacy and policy discourse. Pure Food Ordinance 1959; Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance 1976; Dhaka City Corporation Ordinance 1983, explains, selling perishable vegetables in the streets is illegal by law. However, the

³ Worldwide street food is well recognized for selling fast food or cooked readymade food. The term informal floating food supply system (IFFSS) has been coined instead of street food to segregate the types of products sold namely fresh vegetables and seasonal fruits those are sold in the streets.

vegetable as product supplied is legal (Retrieved August 15, 2019, from <http://bdlaws.minlaw.gov.bd/>). Not only do policy legitimacy and regulations imposed by government organisations shape the basic incentive structure of the IFFSS, Dhaka's vision towards urbanity and modernity have further legitimised the IFFSS's performance through metropolitan organisations and their ever changing planning and governing regulations.

Through empirical observation, we reveal how the IFFSS's performance relies on complex governance linkages or nested polycentric institutionalisation, where all the actors within the IFFSS are not sharing the same frame and with conflicting interactions, the IFFSS's governance system being more fragile and exposed to risk (Bushouse, 2011). We disclose the IFFSS in Dhaka is not only connected to food supply organisation, it is further connected to distinct sectors, namely transport, environment, urban management that have no direct role to play but impact significantly on the performance of the IFFSS. Thus, institutional polycentricity creates a political dilemma that lies at the heart of the IFFSS's governance. On the one hand, urban management law describes the IFFSS as illegal, obsolete and disorderly on the other hand, the IFFSS is protected by local patrons and the informal institutional rules that govern the street.

Although IFFSS in metropolitan Dhaka is expanding at a rapid rate, little is known about the existing actors and institutional arrangements in Dhaka. It could be argued that part of IFFSS governance remains unclear. In contrast we operationalise (i) the way the IFFSS is operated in Dhaka and (ii) investigate existing actors and institutional arrangements and legal arrangement that are an integral part of IFFSS governance and (iii) finally discusses governance dilemma from institutional paradoxes. Altogether, governance dilemma from institutional paradoxes point to the underlying infrastructure of governance and further pointing out at the participation of wide range of actors and institutions with their varied level of position, policy directives, legal discourse and areas jurisdiction that shape their interaction. On the basis of the qualitative analysis and applying institutional analysis and development (IAD) framework developed by Ostrom we investigate the governance dilemma from institutional paradoxes: An investigation into the informal floating food supply system in metropolitan Dhaka.

Therefore, at first place this paper investigates how the existing IFFSS operates in Dhaka as primary context to analyse the existing IFFSS, actors and institutions. Then after we investigate the relationship between existing actors, institutional arrangements. To investigate the IFFSS governance this paper illustrates existing literature to describe the overall governance system the IFFSS is embedded in. Also, it scrutinizes a variety of IFFSS actor and institutional arrangements, laws and norms analogous to IFFSS in Dhaka. Finally, it discusses findings from the empirical evidences and states how the institutional arrangements within the IFFSS consequences co-evolving relationships from institutional ambiguity that further described as governance dilemma within the IFFSS.

Understanding IFFSS informality, institutionalisation and governance context

Scholarly literature on the IFFSS informality, governance and institutionalisation states that the problem is often not with the activity of vending itself, but mostly with the activities through which vending takes place (Keck et al. 2014, Tacoli, 2017, Xue & Huang, 2015 and Saha, 2017). The categorization of IFFSS as either legal, illegal or

informal is a part of the conceptual and symbolic politics of informality (Tacoli, 2017). In general IFFSS's informality rationale characterised as the lack of formal business registration, taxation, or licensing documents (Brown & McGranahan, 2016). However, the core informality cohesion of the IFFSS refers to the production and sale of goods or services that are by themselves considered legal, whereas the activity of producing or selling those goods is not registered or regulated by formal governance institutions (Roever & Skinner, 2016). Additionally, IFFSS informality may raise because the poorly designed formal arrangements and regulations by existing institutions or discrimination against certain segments of society (Carbone, 2017). Despite of its existing informality, the existing literature reviewed and portrayed that the IFFSS is pervasive across the globe and admitted as an increasingly important component of urban informal economies (Datta & Christopher, 2011). Over the last few decades, IFFSS has seen a spectacular expansion in the city. Besides flowing into the city centre, IFFSS has settled and developed its activities into the neighbourhood, newly developed peripheral areas, and public places (Keck, Etzold, Bohle, & Zingel, 2014). Trading is carried out in public spaces that are not specifically designated for trade, and as such, enters into competition with other urban services such as traffic flow, access to buildings, and other commercial activities in the city (Baud & Post, 2018).

The governance of the IFFSS and especially the study on its institutions is comparatively a new and unexplored area for research and it still lacks a clear definition. However, existing literatures clearly indicates its governance relies on the role of the institutions as well as their organisations. If institutions are the rules of the game, organizations are the players (North, 1994). He further explains, they are the structure that humans impose on human interactions. Since, IFFSS's disagreement with the legality and formality explains the constraints imposed by the existing institutional framework together with the other constraints define IFFSS's opportunity set. Therefore, IFFSS come into existence consisting of formal rules, informal constraints such as development of norms of behaviour, conventions, and self-imposed codes of conduct and the enforcement characteristics of both. Hence, the effective enforcement of IFFSS's institutional setting depends on the degree to which there is an identity between the objectives of the institutional constraints and the choices individuals.

Although IFFSS is pervasive across the globe having significant impact following urbanisation and its governance settings, underlying relations and structure of formulation of the institutions is absent in the literature. However, it is very important to connect existing IFFSS governance with institutional policy and legal dimension to form a full picture of IFFSS governance especially in cities like Dhaka. Because, Dhaka's urbanisation, metropolitan governance and fragmented institutionalised can best capture the scenario. That is how existing organisations and their scattered policy regulations along with Dhaka's extensive urbanisation derived IFFSS governance more complex to that can be describe as institutional contradictions. Thus, the governance dilemma from institutional paradoxes within the IFFSS as a study leads towards the idea that the IFFSS is shaped by versatile regulations and policy environment without having direct and consistent links between policies and organizational set-ups. The study hence focuses on three issues existing IFFSS, organizations and institutions involved, policy environment and regulations of the existing actors related to IFFSS. Aforementioned

narrative issues allow us to uncover the institutional relationships that is shaping existing IFFSS in metropolitan Dhaka.

Methodology

The IFFSS in Dhaka is about interpretation or understanding of the governance system. The qualitative research method has been applied using a case study approach and was conceptually inspired by the institutional analysis and development framework (IAD) by Elinor Ostrom. Dhaka has been selected as case study area. Data collected from semi-structured questionnaires, semi-structured interview, and unstructured questionnaires. A purposive sampling plan was conducted among 45 IFFSS agents from 9 distinctive locations (Figure 1). To tap the experiences of IFFSS professionals, an open-ended semi-structured interview with government representatives was conducted. Subsequently, three unstructured interviews were conducted with the market cooperatives.

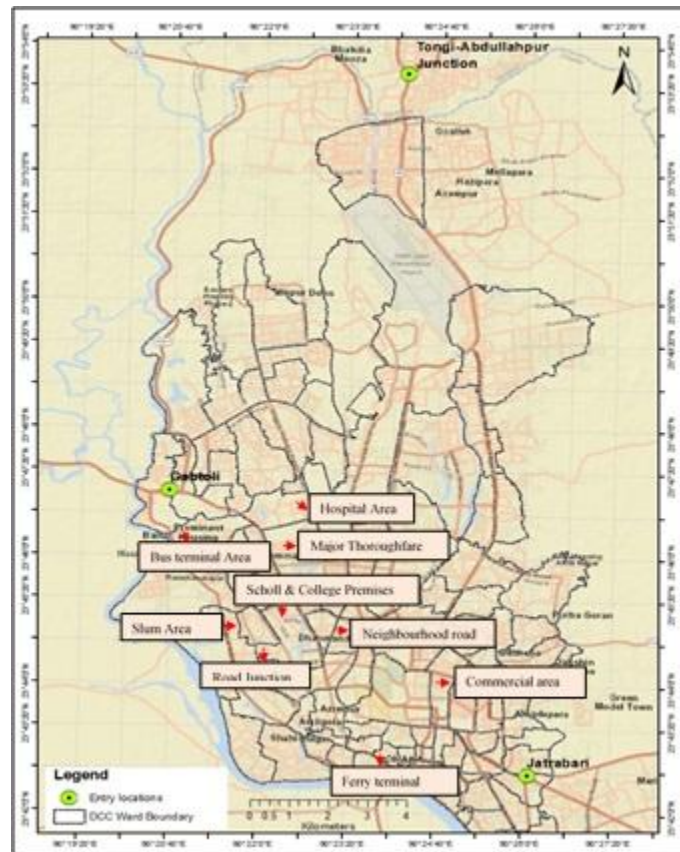


Figure 1: Study area (source: author)

These individuals are not selected because of their membership in a given population, but because of their experience with the IFFSS agents. Following that taking an inductive approach, we compiled a database of all public sectors policy, law, regulations concerned with the IFFSS. Thus, we collected 43 policies, regulations, laws from the concerned

organisations. We categorised them as primary (those directly affect the IFFSS), secondary (has no direct relation but influence IFFSS significantly) and tertiary (has no direct relation but has minimal impact on the IFFSS). The semi-structure interview although was open ended but it focused on policy guidelines, internal decision on IFFSS, collaboration and negotiations of the IFFSS and their relationship with other concerned organisations. Finally, we compiled all documents and analysed them using Nvivo. Nvivo was conducted from 19 preselected group and 6 thematic areas (Figure 2).

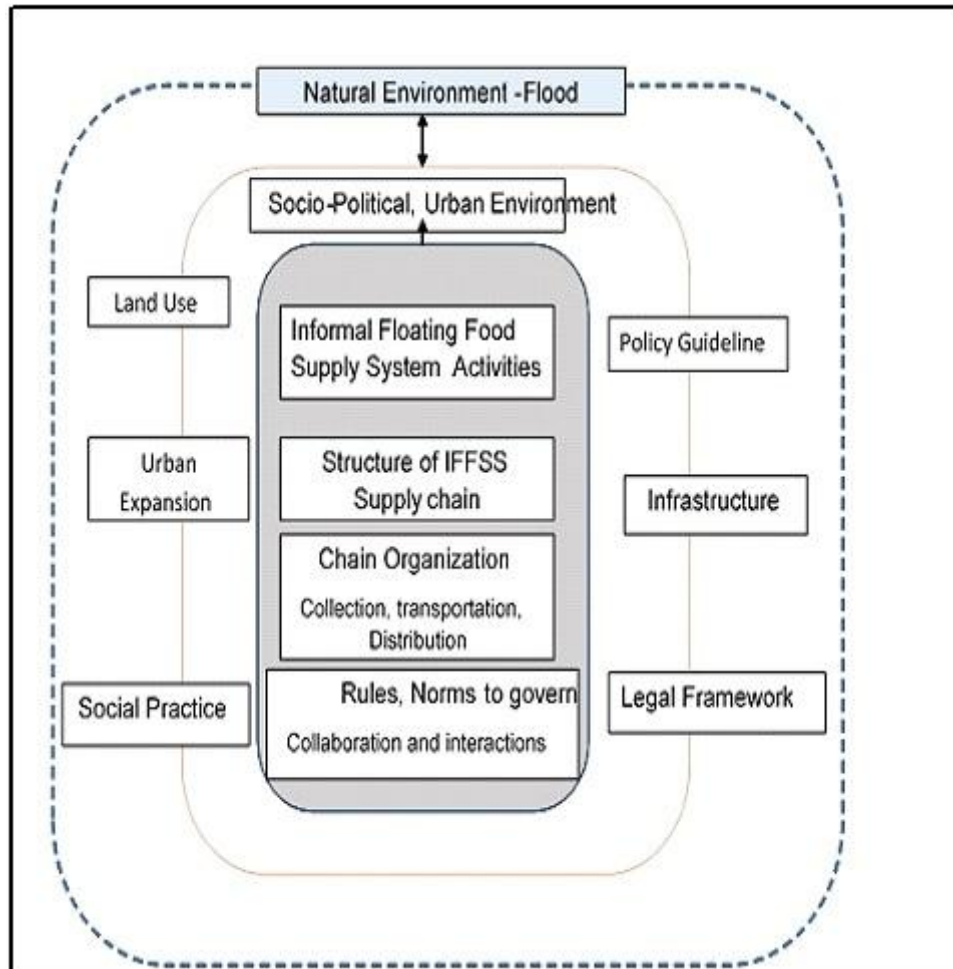


Figure2: Conceptual Framework (inspired by Ericksen, 2008)

Analysed data therefore authenticated applying the IAD framework developed by Ostrom to see IFFSS's institutional relationship among the set of actors acting in metropolitan Dhaka and addressing problems with given resources. IAD framework is appropriate for this study since it has its origins in a general systems approach to understand policy processes, in which inputs are processed by policymakers into outputs that have outcomes that are evaluated, with feedback effects (Ostrom,2011). By broadly

adopting that the IAD framework we addresses the complexity of institutional development such as informal norms and rules of the IFFSS (Ostrom, 2011).

Informal Floating Food Supply System in Metropolitan Dhaka

The IFFSS is one of Dhaka's oldest and most widespread occupations and an integral part of urban food systems. The presence of IFFSS can be traced back in Dhaka's 400 years of history (Keck, et al., 2014). Although IFFSS is traced back in history, the concept of IFFSS as the managed network began to emerge since the 1970s (Keck, 2015). Development of the readymade garment sector attracts huge numbers of disadvantaged and marginal people in Dhaka to sustain their livelihood. One of the first business activities of these marginal people to engage in, that is they start with bartering in temporarily selling fresh vegetables in Dhaka's extended urban areas.

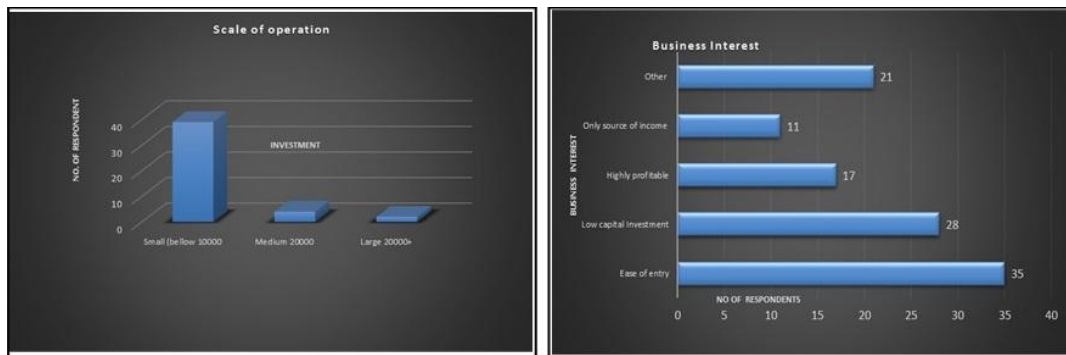


Figure 3: Scale of operation (source: Author) Figure 4: Business Interest (source: Author)

Figure 3 and figure 4 explains, a total of 62.22% The IFFSS respondents from the research replied low investment below 10,000 Taka (equivalent to 175 AUD) is one of the prime reasons for selecting the IFFSS. A total of 86% of the respondents admitted to the statement that they prefer a short-run business because they are in migrants from disaster-prone districts. Further 98% of IFFSS agents affirmed IFFSS offered the flexibility to the business, 77% of agents answered ease of entry to the business.

The IFFSS in Dhaka refers to the coalition based and independently owned and managed institutions, each of which is concerned with its short-run performance. IFFSS trade chain operates mostly in undesignated areas for trade and because they do not have a physical address or permanent structure. Vending usually takes place in areas of population concentration. Such as in the early morning they can be found at lakes side roads, parks targeting noted place with wide walkways and footpaths where people go for their morning walk between 5 a.m. and 7 a.m. The IFFSS vendors gather at each corner of the cross section to attract people. After 7.30 a.m. until 2.00 p.m they start vending in and around the residential area, local neighbourhoods, school and college premises areas and where their homes are close to their workplaces. After a short break at around 2 p.m. for lunch they are back to the road junctions, lakes and neighbourhood junctions and they return home by 10 p.m. or 11 p.m. Thus, an IFFSS agent works 13-15 hours a day, which constitutes 68.88%. They prefer to sell for many hours and travel long distances for two reasons. The first reason is maximising profit, and the second reason is, it is the best way to reach the maximum people while facing fewer problems. In this case, 57.77% of

respondents answered they want to attract a large target population and 53.33% prefer IFFSS because there is less of a problem in selling their goods.

Thus, the IFFSS in Dhaka characterises existing IFFSS is involved in the food supply business at Dhaka's multiple locations and peri-urban hinterland, transporting and distributing food in the formal and informal retail market, trading with and selling it, processing, and preparing it, and transporting it again. The IFFSS trade chain refers to the linear supply chain structure connected horizontally to all phases in the formal supply chain (Figure 6). IFFSS's dependence on formal proximity relations highlights there is no strict separation between formality and informality, rather, there is a continuum and where there is barely any line to differentiate them.

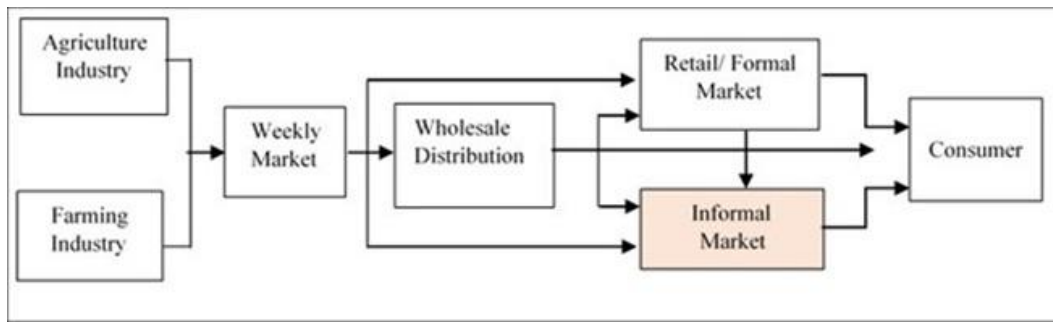


Figure 5: Informal Floating food supply system (source: author)

The IFFSS agents break down the trade chain into small heterogeneous supply groups and limited separate stocks that are relatively homogenous and break down into smaller lots so that transaction is routinized as the transaction is subject to bargaining, and to avoid loss of efficiency.

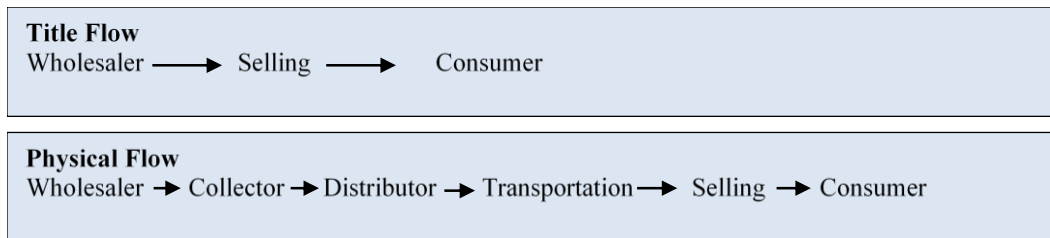


Figure 1: IFFSS trade chain in Dhaka (source: Author)

Actor and Institutional Arrangement

Government institutional arrangement outlined the IFFSS is operated at three levels, the state level, administrative level and local level (Figure 7). Ministry of Labour and Employment (MoLE), Ministry of Commerce (MoC) and Ministry of Food (MoF) are core organisations for nationwide food supply system. MoLE, MoC, MoF are three ministries directly linked to the administration and management of IFFSS following the state constitution through the development of policy guidelines, legislation, and laws. However, Dhaka's metropolitan definition confines the jurisdiction of aforementioned three ministries to exercise their authority and enforcement capacity. Rather they

encourage outpost agencies such as Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development (MLGRD) and Ministry of Home and Affairs (MH&A) to administer the IFFSS in Dhaka.

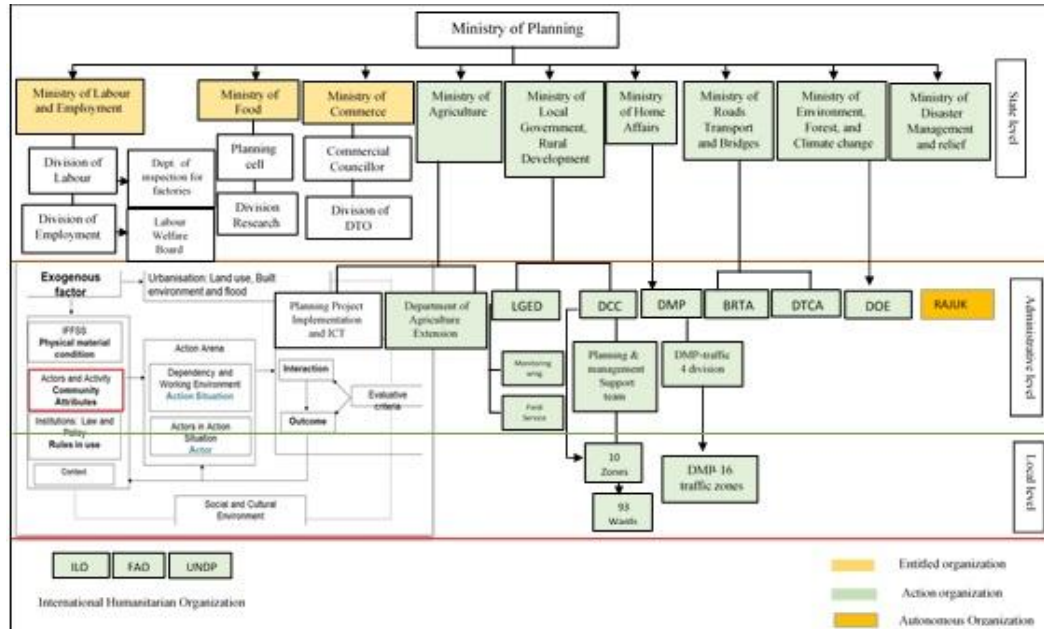


Figure 7: Actor and Institutional Arrangement

Figure 7, further explains involvement of outpost agencies those plays most influential role in IFFSS. Since the have no direct association with IFFSS, the are grouped in, (i) institution with higher level impact and (ii) institute with lower-level impact. Ministry of Home Affairs (H&A), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Ministry of Local Government Rural Development (MLGRD), Ministry of Roads Transport and Bridges and City development authority (RAJUK) are institution with a higher-level impact on the performance of IFFSS in Dhaka. As local government executive at the metropolitan level these institution and their local level organisations are responsible for the day- to -day running of city functions; and the territorial management. However, these institutions are notionally responsible for overseeing urban development issues in Dhaka but its focus has historically been on the administration and delivery of public services. The MLGRD and MH&A exercises extensive oversight authority over IFFSS through City corporations and Dhaka metropolitan police (DMP). However, its mandate is not specific to cities and urban areas; hence, its policies and programs are designed for and implemented among the broad universe of these institution. Likewise, the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate change and Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief has no direct relation to IFFSS's performance; however, their policy actions and programs namely Environment policy 2018 and Disaster action plan have a lower-level impact on the performance of the IFFSS.

At the administrative level the Department of Agriculture (DoA) and Division of trade organisation (DTO) under MoA and MoC, Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) under MH&A, Dhaka City Corporation (DCC) and the Local Government Engineering

Department (LGED) under MLGRD acting as local level organisations play the most influential role in governing IFFSS (Figure 7). The DoA is working directly with the IFFSS; their department deals with kitchen market products and price and licencing. Dhaka City Corporation (DCC⁴) and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) at the local level guide urban development and direct public interventions in urban areas, running municipal affairs, providing infrastructural facilities, administering people and activities at metropolitan Dhaka. Subsequently, the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) build liaison with state ministries initiate programmes and conduct research and development work through NGOs and CBOs on IFFSS.

Policy actions and laws to govern the IFFSS

IFFSS's regulatory action and policy action indicates Dhaka's informal floating food supply system is complicated rather than affected by institutional policy actions. State regulatory actions with different set of actors all three levels have no direct policy to address IFFSS. Institutions namely LGED, RAJUK, MoLE, MoF and MoC's to manoeuvre IFFSS through their correlated policies such as (i) spatial planning, (ii) infrastructural development (iii) environment protection, (iv) transportation planning and (v) land use. Heretofore, policies endure IFFSS as a 'undesirable element' that causing 'nuisance or obstruction' form 'illegal activity' establishing it as a nuisance disapproving its cultural legacy. Thus, the policy remains a method to spatially regulate IFFSS in public space and forces to govern IFFSS via legal regimes.

Labour rule, 2015, form the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Dhaka City Corporation Ordinance, 1983 (ordinance no XL of 1983) and the Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance, 1976 [Ordinance No.III of 1976 (Amended) are core laws to administer the IFFSS. Where Labour Rule 2015 addresses IFFSS via, '*Unlawful but an integral part of the urban retail trade since labour can only be recognised if they are working legally (211/5.01/3 - 13/01).*' Meanwhile DCC act 1983 declares, '*The sale or preparation of any specified article of food or drink in any place or premises not licensed by the Corporation (Chapter 3) and orders that, 'No person shall make an encroachment, movable or immovable, on, over or under a street except under a license granted by the Corporation (Chapters7).*'

Subsequently, section 33 of The Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance, 1976 takes the IFFSS under, '*The police shall have free access to every such place, assembly or meeting to give effect to the provisions of sub-section and any direction given thereunder.*' Section 33 applies subsection 63, 67, 68, 77, 80 and 84 to regulate the IFFSS through '*Penalty for obstructing or annoying passengers in the streets and public places.*'

Existing policy actions and laws declare IFFSS as an unwanted element in the metropolitan area and subject to obstruction and nuisance. Although it has deep rooted political dimension to it that will be described in the following sections.

⁴ DCC-Dhaka City Corporation is divided in two corporations Dhaka north and Dhaka South. The study applied DCC since it discusses IFFSS territory rather discussing municipal affairs of Dhaka.

Governance Dilemma from institutional paradoxes

Policy directives towards the IFFSS and its institutional constituency discussed in the earlier sections explains Dhaka has always lacked in effective and comprehensive urban policy that can clearly define the IFFSS and clear vision supported by strategies and linked action to address the IFFSS, to realize the potential and to tackle the problem arising from it. Absence of effective policy guidelines opens institutional fragmentation among various ministries and sectoral agencies resulting several oversight national agencies to interfere into the IFFSS. However, no single agency is accountable for the development and enforcement of urban development policies for the IFFSS.

Thus, there is absence of a lead agency for the IFFSS in Dhaka and it is split between 10 ministries and its institutional arrangement has identified four major actors IFFSS urban management actors, transport management actors, environmental management actors and emergency management actors (Figure 8). Dhaka City Corporation (DCC), City Development Authority (Rajuk) and Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) are urban management actors. 119 local government organisations from DCC and DMP and RAJUK as an autonomous agency (totalling 120 organisations) are entrusted to administer IFFSS following their individual metropolitan jurisdictions.

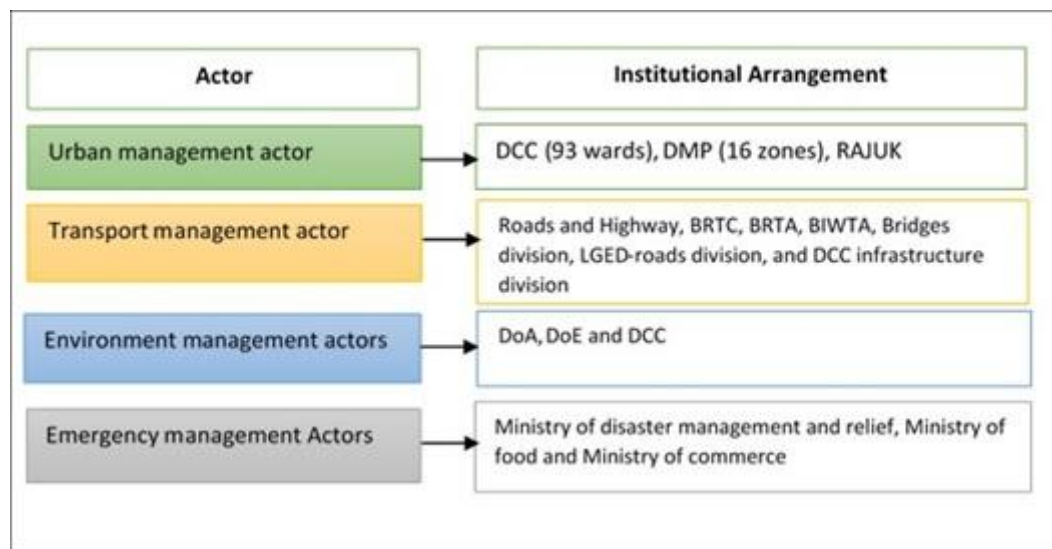


Figure 8: Actor and Institutional arrangement (source: Author)

Further, our studies identified seven transport management organisations: Roads and Highway, BRTC, BRTA, BIWTA, Bridges division, LGED-roads division, and DCC infrastructure division. Although no direct role has been observed 11 transport management actors including transport unions, vehicle union and transport cooperatives interfere into the IFFSS for activities such as vehicle permit, road permit, route permit and licencing consequences for the IFFSS. Therefore, 11 transport management were found to have a direct influence on IFFSS.

Three environmental management actors DoA, DoE and DCC were identified as having different degrees of contact with the IFFSS since its performance is linked with

environment and sustainability. The strong regulatory stance of these actors was the only time the IFFSS was recognised. Three state government agencies, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Relief, Ministry of Food and Ministry of Commerce, were identified as stakeholders due to their role as emergency service first responders.

Evidences from the existing institutional policy directives, institutional guidelines as well as interview form the metropolitan authority outlines, the IFFSS in metropolitan Dhaka has no national, whole-of-government approach to address issues of the IFFSS neither has any lead agency to govern the IFFSS. Rather it is a form of responsibility sharing between organisations resulting in the involvement of 159 organisations. Thus, institutions to govern the IFFSS frequently outlines conflicting scenario between the mandated organisation, acting organization and autonomous organisation

In the absence of a lead organisation there is no rational evaluation how to formally acknowledge IFFSS within their institutional directives. Discordant policy forces institutions to adjust IFFSS with the existing policy directives. Therefore, the IFFSS is subject to micromanagement of government ministries, departments, and divisions. All government organisations work under individual geographically agreeable areas. Sharing responsibility allows each government organisations to interfere with the IFFSS under their policy actions and legislative regime resulting involvement into 159 government institutions at state, administrative and local level. Considering no organisational agreement or accord between organisations the IFFSS in Dhaka is operated by nested institutional arrangements and distribution of authority at multiple levels that are defined by Ostrom as polycentrism (Ostrom, 2011). The concept of institutional arrangement is further enriched by an interviewee. He stated,

'IFFSS's polycentric governance is characterised by not just multi-level units but also in multi-type units (formal market retailers, hierarchies, partnership alliance), multi-sector activities (built environment, transportation and social recognition).'

Hence, there are too many organisations in a small territory, where line agencies are not clear. The governance of the IFFSS is temporary and dependent on the partial allocation of responsibility and authority. The division between the IFFSS and formal food supply system appears more of as a "cross-sector". There is no rational evaluation of how rules function and adjust with existing policy rule to understand and examine the IFFSS.

Discussion

IFFSS in metropolitan Dhaka explains that it is following the spatial pattern of urbanization in Dhaka and has developed from over concentration of metropolitan Dhaka. Due to the absence of a comprehensive national urban policy, their effectiveness as policy instruments to govern the IFFSS is very limited. Institutional fragmentation among various oversight and sectoral agencies at the national level has exacerbated the dysfunctional institutional environment for the IFFSS. Absence of formally defined coordination mechanisms for relevant administrative and local agencies within metropolitan and urban areas, has led to duplications and overlapping mandates among the IFFSS organizations.

In the absence of a functional institutional framework, including a clearly designated national agency and inter-organisational jurisdiction mechanism the IFFSS is governed

under the particular metropolitan system of governance in Dhaka. Given the system of governance the IFFSS is operated by two major metropolitan organisation DCC and DMP via local police and local ward representatives. DCC and DMP as metropolitan organisation directly deal with IFFSS through their local level organisations ward offices and DMP zones. Planned Dhaka initiative enforces DCC and DMP to accord with Dhaka metropolitan development plans by the City Development Authority (RAJUK) for Dhaka Metropolitan area. DCC and DMP's focus has historically been on the administration and delivery of municipal service and law and enforcement respectively. DCC exercises extensive oversight authority over IFFSS. However, its mandate is not specific towards IFFSS, the local level organisations from DCC and DMP such as wards office and traffic zones has continued to advocate for food systems reform in an ad-hoc basis without higher-level government support.

DCC ordinance has no direct parameter hence DCC controls IFFSS under 'mass public gathering' and 'public nuisance' act since the IFFSS cluster in a place to sell their goods. Hence, the IFFSS dealt as 'subject to encroachment' by creating, obstructing, and occupying the populated area, markets, public spaces, and distorting urban landscape. Additionally, 'The Dhaka Metropolitan Police Ordinance, 1976' has no jurisdiction hence, DMP controls the IFFSS through the traffic section of the police that empowers the police to fine unlicensed vehicles of IFFSS for obstructing roads during peak hours in public areas. DCC and DMP are entrusted to spatially regulate Dhaka their role is more focused on management and control hence legal restrains become the key tool to govern the IFFSS. Thus the 'IFFSS is absent from working right or entitlement and it is to be conducting criminalised activity since the meaning is not relevant for IFFSS.' Hence, IFFSS thus is seen as an ambiguous category recognised by the law and therefore has to rely on the legal actions of the city administrations such as DCC and DMP, that are most of the time hostile and aggressive.

To simplify, legislation and institutional discourse are challenged by what is considered the fundamental dilemma of IFFSS governance. Additionally, our studies on legislation, law, and policy outlined new reforms were adjusted with the archaic legislation, law, and policy. Such adjustment has led to a further conflicting situation since the laws are outdated and to some extent not appropriate to each other. In practice, this dilemma that characterises the IFFSS is subject to contestation where the open-ended definition allows different actors and groups to saturate the term with specific conceptions of informality.

Conclusion

In general, institutional or informal literature studies ends in statement institutional ambiguity creates governance paradoxes. However, this study has made an attempt to go deeper and explore what are the constraints that creates the ambiguity. Taking the IFFSS as case study this paper explains, the governance of the IFFSS rests on the intersection of two trends. The first of these are the aspects of processes, policies, procedures by government organisations. Existing policy actions and legislative regimes dictate the IFFSS is absent from legal entitlement and considered as ad-hoc service and shared responsibility. Thus, the ambiguous identity of the IFFSS further consolidates with urban management perceptions towards a modern cityscape that has developed an ex-facto relation with IFFSS. The IFFSS is continuing to grow under its social jurisdiction,

however, it is contested by the government. The second is that many of the processes generated from governmental practices, regulative dependency, and urban environmental risks. The sectoral orientation of the government institutions introduces the polycentric approach. However, the polycentric approach focuses on IFFSS as a source of the problem and accepted ignorance enforces multiple organisations to act individually to govern the IFFSS.

Hence, IFFSS is seen as an ambiguous category recognised by the law and therefore its governance must rely on the legal actions of the city administrations namely DCC and DMP, that are most of the time hostile and aggressive. The scenario further governs a paradoxical scenario comprising multiple organisations carrying out their authoritative regime simultaneously. Thus, governance of the IFFSS in metropolitan Dhaka can no longer be viewed as a unique and persistent relationship rather it appears as organic and interdependent organisms where the IFFSS agents try to gain competitive advantage through cooperative co-evolving relationships from the local political network and local government network.

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