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## **Problems in Public Transport of Dhaka City**

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### **Abstract**

Dhaka is one of the biggest and overpopulated cities in the world. Overcrowd is seen in most of the places. The people are to travel many places in the city for various purposes. Most of the people rely on public transport to travel in the city. Public transport is overcrowded also. Bus is the main public transport in Dhaka city. Most of the passengers are to reach their destination timely. So, they try to get into the buses at any cost. But the number of buses is low compared to the number of passengers. There is the demand-supply gape. Problems begin from here. The passengers are to compete with each other to get into the buses. Old people and women are to suffer a lot. Moreover, the passengers who get the opportunity to get into the buses face many other types of problems. This study explores that transport services in Dhaka city are congested, insecured and unreliable. The current transportation environment in Dhaka city is not passenger friendly at all. Government's initiative, passenger friendly attitude of bus owners and staffs and passengers' attachment to morality can solve most of the problems.

**Keywords:** public transport, public transport service, unfit vehicles, passengers unfriendly environment, sexual harassment.

### **Introduction**

Dhaka is one of the overpopulated cities in the world. Dhaka is the capital and largest city of Bangladesh which has a population of over 16 million. In this city, the dwellers face many types of problems. Transportation problem is one of the common problems (The Financial Express, 2012). The public transport issues of mobility, congestion, safety etc. aspects are becoming increasingly important and critical in Dhaka city. The transport services are insecured, unreliable, congested and unsafe in the city. It is difficult for women to compete with men for the congested space on the buses (Esdo, 2015). Female passengers who use public transport regularly in the city have bitter experience of sexual harassment (Ntv online, 2015). Most of the transport companies are unable to press fit or new buses on city roads while the people find it difficult to go to places of work and return home without hassle (Dhaka Mirror, 2013). In short, the current transportation environment in Dhaka city is not at all passenger friendly. This is the interest of the study to know about the types of problems faced by the passengers in public transport in their everyday life. This study is also an initiative to explore the causes and remedies of these problems.

### **Methodology of the Study**

To achieve the aims and goals of the study this research has been conducted by following qualitative methodology.

### **Sources of Data**

Both primary and secondary sources of data have been used. Primary data have been collected by direct interview from the people who rely on public transport to reach their destination around Dhaka city. For this study, questionnaire has been designed in such a way that the respondents can describe their views properly. Semi-structured questionnaire has been used to collect primary data. Secondary data have been collected from different books, journals, articles and internet sources.

**Sampling**

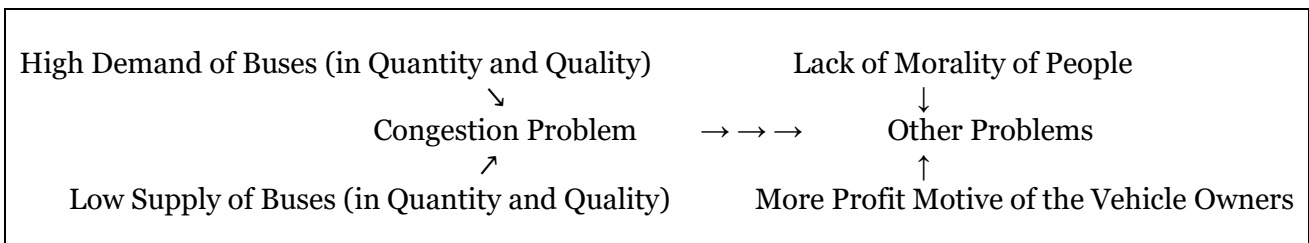
The respondents have been selected by purposive and quota sampling method. In purposive sampling the researcher purposively choose subjects who, in their opinion, are thought to be relevant to the research topic. In quota sampling, the researcher sets a quota of respondents to be chosen from specific population groups, by defining the basis of choice like gender, marital status etc. and by determining its size like 50 male and 50 female (Sarantakos, 1998). It was not possible to study the whole area of Dhaka city and to conduct interview of all people who could be relevant for the study. Interviews were conducted on people of some selected areas. The selected research places of Dhaka city for conducting interviews were Gulistan, Motijheel, Mirpur-2, Gabtoli and Farmgate. Samples of 90 people who rely on public transport to reach their destination around Dhaka city have been interviewed. From each area of these five selected research areas, 12 male passengers and 6 female passengers were selected for interview. Generally more male people use public transport than female people to reach their destination.

**Conceptual Note**

Public transport is a shared passenger transport service which is available for use by the general public on fixed routes. Buses, trains, etc. are public transport that is provided by the government or by private companies. Public transport is different from private transport like taxicab, auto rickshaw or hired buses which are not shared by strangers without private arrangement (Wikipedia, 2016).

Public transport service means how public transport serves its passengers or how much it fulfills the demand of the passengers. Public transport service in Dhaka city is not suitable for the dwellers of the city. Buses are the only available public transport in Dhaka city. The frequency of bus service is not satisfactory. The buses mostly remain over-crowded which are not accessible for all specially for elderly or disabled people as well as for the women (Rahman, M. Shafiq-Ur and Nahrin, Kasphia, 2012).

The over-crowded public vehicles cannot fulfill the demand of the passengers. The demand and supply gap of public buses is high (Ntv online, 2015). Congestion problem arises due to this gap. Congestion problem creates other problems like pick pocketing, harassing the women sexually etc. Ill motive of few passengers and bus owners and their staffs are also responsible for the problems.



**Figure 1.** Problems in Public Transport of Dhaka City

Transport companies are unable to press sufficient passengers’ friendly buses on city roads while the passengers find it increasingly very difficult to go to places of work and return home happily (Dhaka Mirror, 2013). The drivers of these unfit buses are unqualified also. Passengers, standing and sitting in the buses are afraid of their reckless driving (The Financial Express, 2012). It is commonly noticed that people continuously struggle to compete with each other for limited space and seats on the public buses. The situation of women and young girls is worst. They have to have to compete with men and face harassment in different tiers. Some of them also refuse to use the transport for fear of facing sexual and physical abuses (Mallick, 2015). This can easily happen due to over-crowd in the buses.

**Findings and Analysis**

Findings of a research are brought out by analyzing the data in various ways. During the field work, semi-structured questions were used to know different types of problems faced by the

passengers in the public transport of Dhaka city. The answers of the respondents have been categorized and showed in different tables.

### Types of problems faced by the passengers in public transport

In Dhaka city the public transport users face many types of problems. The problems are very common now-a-days. The problems faced by the passengers in public transport in Dhaka city have been presented in the table-1. Responding to the question what types of problems are they facing in the public transport of Dhaka city, the respondents gave their opinion. Most of the respondents said about some specific issues. Both male and female respondents said about overcrowd and low number of buses. These problems create other problems like problem in getting into and getting off, sexual harassment on women, pick-pocketing etc.

**Table 1.** Types of problems faced by the passengers in public transport

Respondents→ Types of Problems↓	Male (60)	Female (30)
Overcrowd	58 (96.67%)	26 (86.67%)
Quantity and quality of buses are low	54 (90%)	21 (70%)
Problem in getting into and getting off due to overcrowd	54 (90%)	25 (83.33%)
Many passengers are to travel standing to reach their destination	58 (96.67%)	25 (83.33%)
Sexual harassment on women	41 (68.33%)	23 (76.67%)
Fare chart of buses fixed by BRTA is not followed most of the time	51 (85%)	19 (63.33%)
Pick-pocketing	53 (88.33%)	13 (43.33%)
Problems arise between commuters and bus conductor in terms of half-fare (for students) and pass	16 (26.67%)	3 (10%)
Many times bus drivers, conductors and helpers behave roughly with the passengers	48 (80%)	14 (46.67%)
Sometimes male passengers occupy the reserved seats which are for women, children and disabled persons.	-	5 (16.67%)
Sometimes women are not given opportunity to get into the buses	-	4 (13.33%)
Others	17 (28.33%)	4 (13.33%)

(\*Multiple answers were taken).

Source: Primary data.

Most of the bus services do not follow the fare chart fixed by BRTA. Problems also arise between commuters and bus conductor in terms of half-fare (for students) and pass. Female passengers said about some other issues like sometimes male passengers occupy the reserved seats which are for women, children and disabled persons. They also complain that sometimes women are not given opportunity to get into the buses because of the scarcity of reserved seats and they face more problems than male passengers in getting into and getting off the buses. The male respondents said about nothing regarding these issues. The respondents said about some other issues which are also important like many times bus drivers, conductors and bus helpers behave roughly with the passengers, reckless driving, helpers drive buses in many cases etc.

### Reasons behind the problems in public transport

There are some factors or reasons behind the problems in public transport of Dhaka city. The main factor is low number of buses compared to the number of passengers. There is the

demand-supply gap. Most of the buses are remained overcrowded. Many passengers wait for bus but all of them do not get chance to get into the buses at first attempt. The morality of the people is not at satisfactory level. Many passengers harass other passengers, specially the women. The bus owners also look for more profit rather than providing better service.

**Table 2.** Reasons behind the problems in public transport

<b>Respondents→ Reasons of the Problems↓</b>	<b>Male (60)</b>	<b>Female (30)</b>
The Number of buses is low compared to the number of passengers	52 (86.67%)	27 (90%)
Lack of morality of people	45 (75%)	22 (73.33%)
Propensity to make more profit of the bus owners	54 (90%)	18 (60%)
Improper monitoring of the government body	57 (95%)	25 (83.33%)
Others	6 (10%)	3 (10%)

(\*Multiple answers were taken).

Source: Primary data.

The government bodies are supposed to monitor the public transport service. But they do not perform their duties properly. As this way the ill motive people get the opportunity to fulfill their interest. Table-2 shows the same thing that is discussed here.

### **Measures to minimize or solve the problems in public transport**

The respondents not only said about the problems but also gave their opinion how to minimize or solve the problems. Both male and female respondents said at first about the quantity and quality of buses. Most of the respondents gave more or less same opinion regarding minimizing the problems (table-3). Some female respondents said about increasing the number of reserved seats for women.

**Table 3.** Measures to minimize or solve the problems in public transport

<b>Respondents→ Measures↓</b>	<b>Male (60)</b>	<b>Female (30)</b>
Increasing quantity and quality of buses	53 (88.33%)	24 (80%)
Formulation and application of specific rules regarding public transport service	51 (85%)	22 (73.33%)
Ensuring proper monitoring of the government bodies	54 (90%)	25 (83.33%)
Increasing reserved seats for women	1 (1.67%)	8 (26.67%)
Proper application of rules regarding fare, half-fare (for students) and pass	26 (43.33%)	9 (30%)
Increasing morality and awareness of the people	14 (23.33%)	17 (56.67%)
Others	11 (18.33%)	9 (30%)

(\*Multiple answers were taken).

Source: Primary data.

But male respondents are not concerned about this. The respondents also said about formulating and application of specific rules regarding public transport service, ensuring proper monitoring of the government bodies etc. Female respondents gave more emphasis on increasing morality of the people compared to male respondents. In many cases, ill motive people harass the female passengers. There is the problem regarding fare, half-fare (for students) and pass. The respondents said about proper application of rules regarding fare, half-fare (for students) and pass.

#### **Satisfaction level of the passengers**

The commuters of public transport of Dhaka city are not satisfied with the services provided by the transport authority. Their satisfaction level is very low. None of the respondents are satisfied with the services of the public bus. Moreover, about 50 percent respondents are highly dissatisfied with the services.

**Table 4.** Satisfaction level of the passengers

<b>Respondents→ Satisfaction level↓</b>	<b>Male (60)</b>	<b>Female (30)</b>
Highly dissatisfied	33 (55%)	14 (46.67%)
Dissatisfied	27 (45%)	16 (53.33%)
Satisfied	-	-
Highly satisfied	-	-

*Source: Primary data.*

On the other hand, they are also not satisfied with the behaviors of the passengers. The passengers have to compete with each other to get into the buses. In this way everyone has to face the problems. Few passengers harass the women intentionally. The passengers' experiences have been reflected in the result of compiled data (table-4).

#### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

Public transport is pivotal to the livability of any city. Economic and social benefits extend beyond those who use it regularly (Ptv, 2016). In Dhaka city, many people use public transport to travel to work, to educational institutions, to see friends and relatives or to do many other works. But public transport has become synonymous with chaos and problems. The experience of the public transport users' is not good at all. In this study, users' opinion regarding how to minimize or to solve the problems has been mentioned. Their valuable opinion should be considered by the government to minimize the problems. It should not expect that the problems will be minimized in a day. Because Dhaka is the overpopulated city and overpopulation is the main cause of all other problems. The government should think deeply about the problems and can take a master plan to solve the problems gradually.

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