

# Social Accountability and the Development of Local Communities: A Field Study in Baghdad Governorate / The Abu Ghraib District as a Model

Taqwa Faleh Mansour, Dr. Adnan Yaseen Mustafa

Department of Sociology, College of Education for Women, Iraq  
Email: taqwa.falih@gmail.com

---

## Abstracts

This study addresses the importance of social accountability and its role in promoting local development in The Abu Ghraib district amidst the political and social challenges facing Iraq after 2003. The study aims to explore the relationship between social accountability and achieving sustainable development goals by highlighting the impact of implementing social accountability principles on improving the performance of local institutions and fostering trust between citizens and government entities.

The descriptive methodology was adopted, utilizing the social survey approach through sampling. The sample consisted of 250 respondents, including employees of The Abu Ghraib District Administration and its service users. Data collection tools such as questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus groups were employed, and the data were analyzed using SPSS software.

The results revealed that administrative and financial corruption, poor infrastructure, and lack of resources represent the main challenges to sustainable development. The study emphasized the importance of social accountability as a key tool to address these challenges by enhancing citizen participation in holding local authorities accountable, improving service quality, and ultimately achieving a better quality of life in the local community.

Keywords: Social accountability, local development, local community.

## 1. Introduction

Social accountability is one of the key developmental concepts for promoting transparency and good governance. It empowers citizens to hold local authorities accountable for how public resources are managed and services are delivered efficiently. In the Iraqi context, especially following the political and social transformations after 2003, social accountability has emerged as a fundamental tool for combating corruption and fostering trust between citizens and government institutions. Social accountability is one of the key developmental concepts for promoting transparency and good governance. It empowers citizens to hold local authorities accountable for how public resources are managed and services are delivered efficiently. In the

Iraqi context, especially following the political and social transformations after 2003, social accountability has emerged as a fundamental tool for combating corruption and fostering trust between citizens and government institutions.

The development of local communities holds particular significance, especially in societies suffering from a lack of basic services and the absence of effective mechanisms for interaction between citizens and the government. The district of The Abu Ghraib serves as a vivid example of these challenges, as its local community faces numerous obstacles such as administrative and financial corruption, weak infrastructure in government institutions, and a shortage of resources needed to achieve sustainable development.

This study aims to analyze the role of social accountability in improving the level of local development in the The Abu Ghraib district. The focus is on highlighting the main challenges faced by the local community in applying the principles of social accountability and exploring the impact of these principles on enhancing the performance of local institutions and strengthening the relationship between government policies and the actual needs of citizens.

The study also aims to:

1. Understand the current state of institutional structures and the nature of their relationship with the studied local community.
2. Highlight the key challenges hindering the application of social accountability in local communities.
3. Identify the primary objectives necessary for the successful implementation of social accountability in the studied local community.
4. Explore ways to enhance citizen participation in decision-making processes and policy formulation.

The importance of this study lies in its analysis of field data collected from the research community, represented by the employees of the The Abu Ghraib district administration and its visitors. The study also aims to:

1. Address the escalating developmental challenges that threaten the opportunities for empowering local communities and ensuring the sustainability of their development.
2. Understand the dynamics through which social accountability can be explored as a fundamental element of governance, enhancing developmental management in local communities by analyzing values, traditions, and how they change over time, as well as how events and social changes influence people.
3. Improve governance by reinforcing accountability and responsibility in administration, promoting democratic processes, and enhancing effective institutional performance.

## 2. Theoretical Framework of the Study

### Definition of Concepts and Scientific Terms

**Social Accountability (Social Accountability):**  
It is the demand for necessary clarifications from officials by stakeholders regarding how they utilize their authority and fulfill their duties, while addressing criticisms directed at them and accepting responsibility for failures, incompetence, or deceit. As a result, accountability is a tool that enables individuals and institutions in positions of authority to assume responsibility and justify their performance to gain the trust of their constituencies. It is a set of tools and techniques for evaluating public policies, embodying the concept of democratic management, and representing a commitment by those in power to bear the consequences of their actions. (Mohammad Al-Jassim, p. 9)

The World Bank defines social accountability as a management approach that involves citizens, civil society organizations, media, and other non-governmental actors in holding the government accountable for its decisions and actions, particularly regarding the use and management of public resources. (Ahmed Abdel Khaleq, 2022, p. 143)

**Local Development (Local Development):**  
It is the process through which effective cooperation is achieved between popular efforts and government efforts to improve the economic, social, and cultural levels of local communities and units, to enhance the quality of life for the inhabitants of these local communities at a level of local administration within a comprehensive and integrated system. (Maryam, 2005, p. 224)

Local development represents policies and programs implemented according to general orientations to bring about desired changes in local communities to raise the standard of living and improve the income distribution system. (Ahmed, 1989, p. 32). In other words, it is a process aimed at encouraging members of the local community to make their material and spiritual lives more meaningful by relying on themselves to address their problems (Al-Zuhairi and Al-Hadithi, 2024).

**Local Community (Local Community):**

A local community is defined as a segment of the national or broader society, consisting of a group of individuals in a specific geographical area who engage in economic exchange, social solidarity, or political organization. They share common characteristics that distinguish them from other groups, as well as mutual interests and fundamental goals. (Omran, 2023, p. 20)

It is also defined as any circle of people who live together and share common concerns and issues. They often share some general values, such as a sense of mutual dependence, belonging, and specific patterns of behavior. (Mona, 2014, p. 14). The social meaning of participation emerges as the individual's mental and emotional interaction in the group context in a way that encourages them to contribute to achieving the group's goals and to participate in bearing responsibility (Abdul-Sada, 2012).

## Previous Studies

### 1. Adnan Yassin Mustafa's Study:

Title: “Community Participation and Local Community Development in Iraq: Challenges and Opportunities, 2022”

This study focuses on strengthening local communities and improving government-provided services by emphasizing the involvement of vulnerable and marginalized groups (youth, women, and individuals with disabilities) in planning, implementation, and monitoring of development projects. The study aims to achieve sustainability by effectively and sustainably meeting citizens' needs to improve their quality of life.

The research covered all governorates of Iraq except the Kurdistan Region and Kirkuk Governorate, encompassing 14 districts. It adopted a social survey methodology, with a sample size of 3,614 individuals representing various segments of society.

#### Key Findings:

- A significant deficiency in basic services such as education, healthcare, and access to clean water.
- Administrative routine and corruption were identified as major challenges faced by citizens.
- Weak governmental response to citizens' complaints and a lack of qualified staff to provide services.

#### Conclusions:

The study highlighted the importance of enhancing transparency and accountability within government institutions to improve service quality and ensure citizen satisfaction. It emphasized achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 by focusing on human resource development and improving the quality of life for future generations.

### 2. Ali Al-Dulaimi's Study Title: “Social Development in the Local Community: Al-Tarmiyah District as a Model, 2010”

This study explores the process of developing the local community in Al-Tarmiyah district by analyzing the developmental changes that occurred in the region's structure before and after 2003. It focuses on examining the developmental status of local communities and the changes experienced by local administrations and development plans.

The researcher employed social survey and comparative methods, collecting data through interviews and observations, and utilizing statistical tools such as arithmetic means.

#### Key Findings:

- The year 2003 marked a significant turning point in development processes, with responsibilities shifting from central authorities to local administrations.

- Improvements were observed in sectors such as education, healthcare, and infrastructure, including an increase in the number of schools, hospitals, and health centers.
- Minor changes were noted in the energy sector.

#### Challenges Identified:

- Weak local leadership.
- Widespread administrative and financial corruption.
- Lack of conscious public participation.
- Emigration of scientific and professional expertise.

### 3. Study on “Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms in Enhancing Social Accountability of Local Governance Bodies from a Community Perspective, 2021”

This study focused on the contribution of institutional mechanisms in strengthening social accountability within Palestinian local governance bodies. It aimed to identify the objectives, characteristics, and factors affecting these mechanisms, as well as analyze the relationship between transparency, participation, and monitoring as fundamental elements of social accountability.

The study adopted a descriptive methodology, utilizing questionnaires and interviews to collect data from a sample of 78 respondents, including members of community committees in three municipalities (Nablus, Tulkarm, and Qalqilya).

#### Key Findings:

- The effectiveness of institutional mechanisms in Palestinian local governance bodies was rated highly, achieving 68.99% based on respondents' views.
- The level of social accountability was rated moderately at 63.54%.
- A statistically significant positive correlation was found between institutional mechanisms and the components of social accountability (transparency, participation, and monitoring).
- The study demonstrated that increasing the availability of institutional mechanisms contributes 22.7% to enhancing social accountability.

#### Recommendations:

The study emphasized the importance of reinforcing institutional mechanisms in Palestinian local governance bodies to achieve higher levels of social accountability. This improvement is expected to positively impact performance quality and ensure greater citizen satisfaction.

1. Ehsan's Study  
Title: “The Role of Civil Society Organizations in Enhancing Social Accountability Mechanisms in Local Governance – The Public's Pen, 2016”

This study addressed the promotion of social accountability by strengthening the relationship between municipalities and citizens. It aimed to highlight the importance of enhancing community participation in local decision-making processes, contributing to improved service quality and fostering trust between citizens and municipalities.

The research focused on four municipalities in the Gaza Strip (Khan Younis, Al-Qarara, Bani Suhaila, and Jabalia) and adopted an applied descriptive methodology. The study utilized a questionnaire distributed to a sample of 950 individuals, with 900 responses retrieved for analysis.

#### Key Findings:

- A need to raise citizen awareness of social accountability mechanisms, with 49.48% of respondents believing that laws exist to support transparent decision-making.
- 45.30% of participants emphasized the necessity of democratic elections to enhance transparency and accountability.
- A deficiency in the evaluation systems employed by municipalities, which inadequately incorporate citizen feedback, was identified as a factor reducing decision-making efficiency.
- Civil society organizations showed modest involvement in strategic planning, with only 44.14% of participants rating their contribution positively.

#### Recommendations:

The study underscored the importance of increasing citizen awareness of social accountability mechanisms, improving the participatory nature of municipal evaluation systems, and encouraging greater involvement of civil society organizations in strategic planning to enhance transparency and democratic practices.

2. UNDP Report, 2021  
Title: "Achieving Sustainable Human Development and Local Accountability: The Decentralization Experience in Malawi"

This report emphasizes the importance of promoting sustainable human development and local accountability through the implementation of a decentralization system. The focus of the report was on achieving the goal of improving citizens' lives at the local level by providing more effective and efficient services, and empowering marginalized populations to participate in local decision-making processes.

The report highlighted that devolving powers to the local level enhances the accountability of local institutions, contributing to a sustainable social and economic transformation, especially in rural areas. It also recommended adopting a strategic approach that balances the needs of local populations with equitable resource distribution.

The report utilized a comprehensive analytical methodology, gathering both quantitative and qualitative data from multiple sources, including economic and national data, citizens' opinions, and consultations with government and local structures.

### Key Findings:

- Local councils face a severe funding shortfall, with deficits ranging from 71-72%, limiting their ability to deliver services.
- A gap exists between urban and rural councils, with urban areas relying more on local revenues, while rural areas depend on government transfers.
- The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated developmental challenges, particularly in education and health, deepening the impacts of poverty and inequality. The poverty rate among women rose to 58.7% in 2016, with significant geographical and gender disparities.

### Conclusions:

- Despite a slight improvement in Malawi's Human Development Index, the country remains classified as having low human development.
- The report recommends adopting strategic measures to improve local financing, strengthen decentralization, and empower local communities to achieve sustainable development and more effective accountability.

### 3. Study Title: "Social Accountability Practices in the Hudeya Area: A Case of the Education Sector – West Badewacho Woreda, Ethiopia, 2017"

This study aimed to assess social accountability practices in the provision of basic public services, with a focus on community participation in the education sector. The objective was to examine how social accountability practices are implemented within the organizational and institutional structures of the education sector, and to evaluate their impact on the quality of services provided. The study also focused on identifying barriers and challenges to the application of social accountability, and offering recommendations to enhance these practices and improve community involvement in the quality of education in the region.

The researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, using Yamani's formula to determine a sample of 197 respondents. Data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires, conducting group discussions, and interviews with local experts.

### Key Findings:

- The level of social accountability practices in the education sector in the West Badewacho area was found to be weak, with only 40.10% of participants reporting a tangible impact from these practices.
- Community awareness of the importance of social accountability was low, with 69.54% of respondents unaware of its significance. This reflected poor engagement with accountability tools and a lack of community initiatives.
- The study also revealed the absence of social accountability committees, weak institutional arrangements and training, and a lack of transparency and access to information related to services, which hindered community participation.

## Conclusions and Recommendations:

- The study emphasized the importance of raising community awareness about social accountability practices, providing necessary institutional support and training, and improving transparency and information access. These efforts would help ensure broader participation and more positive impacts on the education sector in the region.

### **3. Good Governance: Concept and Importance (Rule of Law / Transparency / Accountability)**

The World Bank defines Good Governance as the traditions and institutions by which authority is exercised in a country for the public good (Abd al-Latif, 2015, p. 19).

Good Governance is governance that enhances, supports, and safeguards human well-being, based on expanding people's capacities, choices, opportunities, and freedoms—especially for the poorest and most marginalized individuals (Al-Sharif, 2013, p. 178). Governance: It is a system under which the activities of institutions are subjected to a set of laws, regulations, and decisions aimed at achieving quality and excellence in performance (Al-Shabatat, 2018).

#### Principles of Good Governance:

##### 1. Rule of Law:

The Rule of Law refers to the existence of a stable legal framework and the supremacy of law over all individuals without exception, based on human rights as its core principle. It is the system that regulates relationships between citizens and the state, as well as the interactions between formal and informal authorities. Under this framework, the rule of law aims to uphold democracy, achieve justice, and ensure equality among citizens. This requires clear, transparent laws and consistent application of the law (Shaban, 2011, p. 62).

#### The Importance of the Rule of Law:

##### 1. Rule of Law:

A stable legal system and an independent judiciary strengthen democracy and ensure the application of governance principles and human rights. Fair legal frameworks contribute to achieving justice and accurately enforcing laws, reducing corruption, and ensuring compliance with financial and accounting standards. This enhances trust and credibility, supports institutional development by optimizing resource use, and enables the improvement of state institutions' performance. It also fosters adherence to sound management practices to achieve efficiency and institutional advancement (Rawaha, 2018, p. 59).

##### 2. Transparency:

Transparency refers to the freedom to access information, making it available to stakeholders to help them make informed decisions. The government, official institutions, and public and private economic institutions are the primary sources for the flow of such information. Ensuring



transparency is achieved by publishing information publicly and regularly to expand participation, oversight, and accountability, while also reducing corruption (Basma, 2018, p. 89).

#### Importance of Transparency:

Transparency is an effective tool for combating corruption and minimizing institutional deviations. It helps in achieving the public interest by reducing the opportunities for public employees to exploit their positions for personal gain. It also contributes to reducing administrative costs and chaos during service delivery, preventing citizens from being extorted, and supporting values of cooperation and teamwork. Additionally, transparency enhances sound decision-making and periodic review of laws and regulations, contributing to the sustainability and development of the administrative system (Khoufi, 2012, p. 53).

#### 3. Accountability:

Accountability refers to the ability to hold officials responsible for their management of public resources, the tasks assigned to them, the outcomes achieved during their tenure, and their responsibilities and duties. The goal is to hold officials accountable for public funds and protect them from misuse or the Abuse, thus limiting violations and transgressions that may occur due to unethical behavior by some officials (Basma, 2018, p. 9).

#### The Importance of Accountability:

- **Achieving Political and Material Change:** Accountability enhances the ability of countries to implement policies responsive to the needs of social movements. For example, in São Paulo, the partnership between social movements and the bureaucracy led to tangible improvements in areas such as housing and land use.
- **Building Institutional Capacity:** Accountability contributes to enhancing the capacities of institutions, enabling them to meet the needs of society effectively. This is evident in the development of programs aimed at improving conditions in impoverished neighborhoods and increasing access to essential services such as sanitation. Additionally, it is crucial to harness the potential of young people and motivate them to uphold human values, as they represent the most important segment for fostering community development (Abu Bakr, 2019).
- **Ensuring the Sustainability of Social Movements:** Accountability supports the continuity and influence of social movements on policymaking. Close cooperation between local bureaucrats and movements strengthens their ability to achieve broader goals.
- **Achieving Social Justice:** Accountability contributes to the fair distribution of resources and improved access to services, as seen in efforts to enhance conditions in impoverished neighborhoods and reduce forced evictions, thereby supporting social justice. Moreover, an individual's commitment to a system of ethical values within social structures directly influences the regulation of their social behavior (Jasim and Abdul-Hussein, 2018).
- **Facing Opposition Strategies to Reform:** Accountability helps to address obstacles that hinder reform efforts. In Johannesburg, accountability enabled resistance to business elite strategies that weakened political reform (Bradlow, B. H., 2024).

#### 4. International Experiences in Local Development:

##### The Development Experience in Rwanda: From Genocide to a Model of Sustainable Development

Rwanda, a country located in East Africa, suffered from a long history of ethnic divisions exacerbated by colonial policies under both Germany and Belgium. The colonizers focused on creating distinctions between the Tutsi and Hutu tribes, leading to escalating ethnic conflicts that culminated in the 1994 genocide, during which hundreds of thousands of people were killed, and the country's infrastructure and economy collapsed.

After the conflict, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), led by Paul Kagame, took power, and the country began a new phase of reconstruction and development (Al-Shoura, 2023, p. 31).

##### Development Challenges Faced by Rwanda After the Genocide

1. **Ethnic and Religious Conflicts:** Ethnic divisions contributed to widespread violence, resulting in significant human losses.
2. **Poverty and Economic Backwardness:** The conflicts negatively impacted the economy, leading to a decline in basic infrastructure such as roads, schools, and hospitals.
3. **Social Challenges:** The diversity of ethnicities and cultures made it difficult to achieve consensus and peaceful coexistence among the population.
4. **Reconstruction and National Reconciliation:** Intensive efforts were needed to overcome the aftermath of the genocide and rebuild the country on peaceful and sustainable foundations.

**Main Development Strategies** The Rwandan government adopted an integrated approach to achieving sustainable development, focusing on the decentralization and accountability sectors.

##### 1. Decentralization as a Mechanism for Good Governance:

Rwanda adopted a decentralization policy to transfer power to local levels with the aim of improving services and enhancing public participation in decision-making. This policy was implemented in phases:

- ☐ Formulating clear policies and legal frameworks.
- ☐ Developing administrative infrastructure such as building administrative offices and production facilities.
- ☐ implementing five-year local development plans in 95% of local governments.

**Accountability and Transparency as Pillars of Development:** Rwanda focused on strengthening social accountability and combating corruption by establishing an Ombudsman office in 2003, in addition to strengthening internal auditing institutions and raising citizen awareness. These efforts included:

- Enhancing media freedom.
- Formulating strategic plans to improve transparency.

- Supporting national media to build trust between the government and citizens

Development Achievements: Rwanda managed to:

- Improve the quality of public services such as education and health.
- Enhance the efficiency of local administration and improve transparency.
- Fund infrastructure projects such as roads and sustainable energy.
- Reduce poverty and increase school enrollment and access to healthcare.

Rwanda's development experience is considered a successful example of recovery from major crises. By implementing decentralization and accountability policies, the country was able to overcome the effects of the genocide and achieve significant progress in local development, making it a model that can be beneficial for other countries facing similar challenges.

The Experience of Social Accountability in India: India's social accountability experience represents a pioneering model for improving transparency and enhancing community participation in governance. This experience emerged from active social movements and their integration into public policies, making it an integral part of the government system. The approach relies on engaging citizens in oversight and accountability through various tools such as social audits, ensuring the effectiveness of implementation and transparency in government programs.

Social Accountability Initiatives:

1. Social Audits in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS): Social audits are conducted every six months in "Gram Panchayats," involving document reviews and discussions with the local community to enhance transparency and reduce corruption.

2. Public Grievance Program in Bihar: Weekly meetings are organized to allow citizens to directly discuss their grievances with government officials, fostering trust and transparency.

3. Social Audit, Accountability, and Transparency Unit in Andhra Pradesh: An independent unit conducts periodic reviews and publishes their findings, ensuring the improvement of government performance.

4. Samarthan Campaign to Improve Access to NREGS: An awareness initiative aimed at mobilizing the community and training citizens to demand their rights, ensuring the proper implementation of the program.

5. Right to Information (RTI) Act: This law grants citizens the right to request government information, exposing corruption and enhancing transparency (Schjødt, Rasmus, p.5, 2018).

6. Jan Soochna Platform: An electronic portal enabling citizens to access government information quickly and easily.

7. Community Participation and Public Services Act in Meghalaya: Expands the scope of social audits to include social welfare programs, enhancing transparency and improving service delivery (Swamy, Rakshita, p.7, 2020).

#### Goals and Strategies:

- Enhance citizen participation in governance.
- Increase transparency and accountability in the management of public resources.
- Build the capacity of local communities and provide effective communication channels with the government.
- Raise awareness of citizens' rights and the available accountability tools

#### Achieved Results:

1. Improved Transparency:  
The initiatives exposed cases of corruption and mismanagement, contributing to better resource utilization.
2. Increased Community Participation:  
The initiatives boosted citizen involvement in decision-making and program monitoring.
3. Reduced Corruption:  
They helped hold corrupt officials accountable and improved the management of government projects.
4. Improved Efficiency of Government Programs:  
Complaints were addressed effectively, improving service quality.
5. Built Trust Between Citizens and Government:  
Direct communication channels were provided for problem-solving.
6. Empowered Marginalized Groups:  
Vulnerable groups were encouraged to claim their rights and participate in accountability efforts.
7. Enhanced Access to Information:  
The RTI Act and Jan Sookhna platform facilitated easy access to government information.
8. Improved Government Performance:  
Review mechanisms helped enhance program implementation and effectiveness.
9. Promoted Social Justice:  
Marginalized groups were empowered to participate in decision-making and resource distribution.
10. Fostered a Culture of Transparency and Accountability:  
The initiatives strengthened democratic values and community participation.

5. Analytical Aspect of the Research:

This research is descriptive in nature and utilized a set of methodological procedures, including the social survey method with a sample. The field study relied on a simple random sample of 250 respondents, consisting of employees and clients from the The Abu Ghraib district and its affiliated sub-districts (Al-Nasr and Al-Salam Sub-District Directorate and Al-Bawabat Al-Salam Sub-District Directorate). In addition, several personal interviews and focus group discussions were conducted. Through statistical methods, a set of results was obtained, using tools such as the mean, percentage, and SPSS software for data analysis.

Data Analysis for the Research:

1. Gender: Table (1) shows the gender distribution of the respondents.

Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	166	66.4%
Female	84	33.6%
Total	250	100%

The data from the study sample indicate that the male respondents accounted for 66.4% (166 individuals) compared to 33.6% (84 individuals) for females, reflecting a clear male dominance in the workforce and government service users. This disparity highlights the ongoing influence of stereotypes and traditional systems that limit the roles of women in local community development. As for the age composition of the sample, it is a key factor in understanding the dynamics of the local community and the role of different age groups in promoting social accountability and supporting development. However, further details are needed to fully explain the impact.

2. Educational Attainment:

Table (2) shows the educational level of the study sample.

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	7	2.8%
Intermediate	9	3.6%
Secondary	19	7.6%
Institute	48	19.2%
University	100	40%
Postgraduate	67	26.8%
Total	250	100%

The data in Table (2) show a clear disparity in educational levels among the participants. University degree holders represented the largest group, accounting for 40% of the total sample, followed by those with postgraduate degrees at 26.8%. Those with institute-level education represented 19.2%, secondary school graduates 7.6%, intermediate school graduates 3.6%, and

primary school graduates 2.8%. This distribution reflects the dominance of higher educational levels, indicating their ability to actively participate in development and social accountability processes. On the other hand, the limited representation of individuals with lower levels of education suggests their weaker participation, likely due to limited awareness of societal challenges and reform mechanisms.

### 3. Social Background:

Table (3) shows the social background of the study sample.

Social Background	Number	Percentage
Rural	49	19.6%
District Center	139	55.6%
Other Urban Areas	62	24.8%
Total	250	100%

The data indicate a diversity in the social backgrounds of the participants, with urban residents making up the largest group at 55.6%, followed by participants from other urban areas at 24.8%, and rural participants at 19.6%. This distribution reflects differences in access to services and participation in development, as urban residents have greater opportunities to engage with policies and developmental initiatives compared to rural residents, who face more challenges. Therefore, understanding the needs of each area is a critical step in developing more inclusive and equitable policies that enhance the effectiveness of participation in development.

### 4. Duration of Residency in The Abu Ghraib District:

Table (4) shows the duration of residency within the district.

Duration of Residency	Number	Percentage
Less than 5 years	50	20%
5-10 years	75	30%
11-15 years	47	18.8%
16-20 years	59	23.6%
20 years or more	19	7.6%
Total	250	100%

The data indicate a diversity in the duration of residence among participants in the district. The largest group consists of those who have lived in the area for 5-10 years, making up 30%, followed by those who have lived there for more than 20 years at 23.6%. Participants who have resided for 10-15 years and 16-20 years each account for 18.8%, while those who have lived in the area for less than 5 years make up 7.6%. This distribution reflects the stability of the majority of participants in the region for extended periods, enhancing their connection to the local community and their ability to influence development and social accountability. Meanwhile, the

proportion of new residents highlights challenges in adaptation and participation, suggesting the need for targeted efforts to support their integration into the community.

#### 5. Level of Service Delivery to Citizens:

Table (5) shows the evaluation of the level of service delivery to citizens in The Abu Ghraib.

Response	Number	Percentage
Excellent	80	32%
Very Good	59	23.6%
Good	45	18%
Poor	66	26.4%
Total	250	100%

The data in the table show the participants' evaluation of the level of service delivery in The Abu Ghraib district. The results reveal that 32% of participants rated the services as "Excellent," 23.6% rated them as "Very Good," 18% described them as "Good," and 26.4% considered the service level to be "Poor." This distribution reflects a variation in participants' assessments of the quality of services provided.

#### 6. Key Challenges in the District:

Table (6) shows the main challenges in The Abu Ghraib district.

Response	Number	Percentage
Low financial allocations	77	43.1%
Tribal interventions	50	27.9%
Weak governance and accountability	35	19.5%
Other challenges	17	9.5%
Total	176	100%

The results of the table reveal that low financial allocations are the biggest challenge to the development of The Abu Ghraib district, with 43.1% of participants indicating that the lack of funding is a major obstacle to the effective implementation of development projects. Tribal interventions ranked second at 27.9%, negatively affecting development efforts due to conflicts or the growing influence of tribal power. Weak governance and accountability emerged as the third challenge, with 19.5% of responses highlighting the absence of clear mechanisms for law enforcement and administrative decision-making, which opens the door for corruption and mismanagement. Additionally, 9.5% of participants referred to other challenges gathered through personal interviews and focus groups, which included poor coordination among relevant authorities, bureaucratic complexities, and difficulties in enforcing the rule of law, all of which hinder sustainable development in the region. Collectively, these challenges reflect a mix of financial, administrative, and social barriers, with a direct impact on the development trajectory of the district.

## 7. Citizens' Trust in Local Leaders' Performance and Role:

Table (7) shows citizens' trust in the performance and role of local leaders in The Abu Ghraib district.

Response	Number	Percentage
Very High Trust	75	30%
High Trust	26	10.4%
Medium Trust	82	32.8%
Low Trust	63	25.2%
No Trust	4	1.6%
Total	250	100%

The results of the table reveal that low financial allocations are the largest challenge to the development of The Abu Ghraib district, with 43.1% of participants indicating that the lack of funding is a major obstacle to the effective implementation of development projects. Tribal interventions ranked second, accounting for 27.9%, and negatively affect development processes due to conflicts or the growing influence of tribal power. Weak governance and accountability emerged as the third challenge, with 19.5% of respondents pointing out the lack of clear mechanisms for enforcing laws and implementing administrative decisions, opening the door for corruption and mismanagement. Additionally, 9.5% of participants identified other challenges, gathered through personal interviews and focus groups, which included poor coordination among relevant authorities, bureaucratic complexity, and difficulty in enforcing the rule of law, all of which hinder sustainable development in the region. Collectively, these challenges reflect the intersection of financial, administrative, and social barriers, with a direct impact on the development trajectory of the district.

## 8. Availability of Health and Social Care Services in the District:

Table (8) shows the availability of health and social care services in The Abu Ghraib district.

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	86	34.4%
Sometimes	80	32%
No	84	33.6%
Total	250	100%

The data indicate that 34.4% of participants consider health and social care services to be consistently available in the district, while 32% view them as available occasionally, and 33.6% believe they are unavailable. These figures reflect challenges in providing these services, either in terms of quality or coverage, and highlight the need for improvement to ensure that the needs of the population are met equitably.

## 9. The Importance of Transparency in Local Authorities' Work to Achieve Social Accountability:



The data indicate that 37.2% of participants consider transparency to be an important factor in the work of local authorities to achieve social accountability, while 62.8% do not view it as a critical element. These figures reflect a lack of full awareness regarding the importance of transparency or suggest that other factors are prioritized. Additionally, participants in the discussions emphasized that while transparency exists, it is not effective enough, indicating the need for further strengthening to enhance its role in improving social accountability.

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	93	37.2%
No	157	62.8%
Total	250	100%

10. Preferred Methods of Communication with Local Government in the District:

Table (10) shows the preferred methods of communication with the local government in The Abu Ghraib district.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Tribal Leaders (Sheikhs)	111	44.4%
Mukhtar (Community Leader)	187	74.8%
Social Media	234	93.6%
Civil Society Organizations	139	55.6%
Meeting Officials	101	40.4%

The data indicate that 93.6% of participants prefer using social media as the primary means of communication with local governments, followed by meetings with community leaders (mukhtars) at 74.8%, communication with civil society organizations at 55.6%, tribal leaders (sheikhs) at 44.4%, and finally, direct meetings with officials at 40.4%.

These results reflect an increasing reliance on modern technology and digital communication channels, while traditional methods, such as communication through tribal leaders and mukhtars, still hold significance in some rural areas. This suggests the need to enhance the effectiveness of direct communication and strengthen trust between citizens and officials.

6. Research Results:

1. Gender Distribution in Workforce and Reviewers: The field study results showed a dominance of males among the workforce and reviewers in the The Abu Ghraib District and its sub-districts, with 66.4% males and 33.6% females.
2. Effectiveness of Social Accountability: The results indicate that the implementation of social accountability faces challenges, with 42.4% of participants evaluating social accountability practices as "good," while 30.8% consider them "weak."

3. Awareness of Local Services: 62% of the respondents confirmed that they lack sufficient awareness of the developments in local services.
4. Trust in Local Leaders' Performance: The study showed significant variation in the level of trust among citizens in the performance of local leaders. 32.8% of the respondents expressed a medium level of trust in local leadership, 30% had very high trust, and 25.2% had weak trust.
5. Importance of Transparency for Social Accountability: The results of the study showed that 62.8% of the respondents believe that transparency is not a crucial element for achieving social accountability.

## 7. Research Recommendations:

1. Adopt Strict Anti-Corruption Policies: Implement stringent anti-corruption policies in local administrations, with enhanced oversight measures and strict penalties for those found guilty of corruption.
2. Enhance Community Participation: Stimulate community involvement by intensifying awareness programs that focus on the importance of citizen participation in improving the quality of local services.
3. Improve Public Services Quality: Focus on improving essential public services such as healthcare, education, and electricity, and develop projects to increase citizen satisfaction with these services.
4. Increase Awareness and Participation in Local Decision-Making: Raise awareness and encourage greater community participation in local decision-making processes by enabling individuals to submit development proposals and service improvement suggestions.
5. Strengthen Community Involvement in Development Programs: Promote the participation of residents in development and community programs, particularly in local leadership projects and social initiatives.

## WORKS CITED

---

### Arabic Sources:

- Mohammed Al-Jasim. Community Accountability in Syria, Center for Civil Society and Democracy in Syria, p. 9.
- Abu Bakr, Hunaida Qandil. "The Content of Interactive Media Programs and Their Role in Establishing Human Values: Radio Programs as a Model." *Al-Ustath Journal for Social and Human Sciences*, Vol. 58, No. 4, 2019.
- Al-Zuhairi, Athir Fakher, and Al-Hadithi, Marwa Mustafa. "The Role of the Cooperative Sector in Local Development: Iraq as a Model." *Political Issues Journal*, Issue 78.

- Ahmed Abdel Khalek Abdel Alim Zyada. "Obstacles to Social Accountability for Improving Social Services." *Journal of the Faculty of Social Work for Social Studies and Research*, Fayoum University, 2022, p. 143.
- Al-Shabatat, Ali Mohammed. "The Concept of University Governance and Its Impact on Enhancing Standards of Transparency, Accountability, and Participation." *Journal of the Association of Arab Universities for Research in Higher Education*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2018, pp. 147-159.
- Mariam Ahmed Mostafa, Ihsan Hefzy. *Development Issues in Developing Countries*. Alexandria: Dar Al-Maarefah Al-Jami'iyah for Printing, Publishing, and Distribution, 2005, p. 224.
- Jasim, Alia Abdul Mahdi, and Abdul-Hussein, Asawar. "Tribal Arbitration and Its Relation to Organizing Local Communities from the Perspective of Tribal Elders: A Field Study in Baghdad, Sadr City as a Model." *Journal of the College of Education for Women*, Vol. 29, No. 2, 2018.
- Dawood, Ahmed Fadel Jasim. "Iraq Post-War and the Strategy of Reconstruction: An Analytical Study of Reality and Future Prospects." *Journal of Political Science*, University of Baghdad, Issue 56, pp. 233-264, 2018.
- Ahmed Rashid. *The System of Governance and Local Administration*. Alexandria: Dar Al-Maaref, 1989, p. 32.
- Imran Kamel. "Issues and Problems of Local Community Development: The Case of Rural Community Development in the Jabal Al-Hass Region, Syria." *Journal of Social Sciences*, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, December 2023, p. 20.
- Mona Jameel Salam, Mustafa Mohammed Ali. *Sustainable Development of Local Communities*. Modern University Office, Alexandria, 2014, p. 14.
- Adnan Yaseen Mustafa. *Community Participation and Local Community Development in Iraq: Challenges and Opportunities*. German Agency (GIZ), 2022.
- Ali Hamad Odeh Al-Dulaimi. *Social Development in the Local Community: Al-Tarmiyah District as a Model*. Master's Thesis, University of Mosul, Department of Sociology, 2010.
- Mohammed Basem Shreim. *Effectiveness of Institutional Mechanisms in Enhancing Community Accountability for Local Governance Bodies from a Community Perspective*. Master's Thesis, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine, 2021.
- Ihsan Ali Awad. *The Role of Civil Society Institutions in Enhancing Mechanisms of Social Accountability in Local Governance*. Master's Thesis, Gaza, Palestine, 2016.
- Abdul-Sada, Asawar Abdul-Hussein. "Youth and Community Participation: A Field Study at the University of Baghdad." *Journal of Educational and Psychological Research*, (32), 12-40.
- Abdel Latif Ben Naoum. *The Role of Good Governance in Achieving Local Economic Development: A Case Study of Algeria*. Master's Thesis, Mustapha Stambouli University, 2015, p. 19.
- Omar Abu Hashim Al-Sharif, Osama Mohammed Abdul Alim. *Centralized Electronic Administration: An Introduction to Modern Educational Management*. Jordan: Dar Al-Manahij for Publishing and Distribution, 2013, p. 178.
- Shaaban Faraj. *Good Governance as a Modern Approach to Rationalizing Public Expenditure and Reducing Poverty: A Case Study of Algeria (2000-2010)*. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Algiers, 2011, p. 26.
- Rabea, Mohammed Rashid, and Abdul Redha, Asaad Tarish. "Local Communities and Human Development and the Nature of Their Relationship." *Journal of International Studies*, Issue 91, 2022.
- Rawabah Manwar. *Local Government*. Master's Thesis in Political Science and International Relations, University of Algiers, 2018, p. 59.

- Basma Nizar. Mechanisms for Applying the Principles of Good Governance and Developing Its Local Collective Management. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Sidi Bel Abbes, 2018, p. 89.
- Khroufi Bilal. Local Governance and Its Role in Combating Corruption in Local Councils. Master's Thesis in Political Science, Kasdi Merbah University of Ouargla, Algeria, 2012, p. 53.
- Ahmed Al-Shoury. Developmental States in Africa: Rwanda as a Model. Assiut University, Egypt, 2023, p. 31.

#### Foreign Sources

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Malawi National Human Development Report 2021: Delivering Sustainable Human Development and Accountability at the Local Level: The Experience of Decentralisation in Malawi.
- Tarekegn Tesfaye Dobojo. The Practices of Social Accountability in Nadiya Zone: The Case of West Badoweno Woreda Education Sector, Southern Nations, Nationalities, Regional State (SNNPR), Ethiopia, 2017.
- Bradlow, B. H. "Urban Social Movements and Local State Capacity." World Development, 2024.
- Schjødt, Rasmus. Social Accountability in the Delivery of Social Protection: India Case Study. Development Pathways, May 2018.
- Swamy, Rakshita. From People's Struggles to Public Policy: The Institutionalization of the Bhilwara Framework of Social Accountability in India. Accountability Research Center, Accountability Note, No. 9, October 2020, p. 7.