

LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYNERGIES AND PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE: ADVANCING RETAIL REFORM THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL BACKING

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Abstract

This paper discusses the ways in which the Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) has used local government partnerships to provide cost-effective, large-scale, and incremental public retail infrastructure in Pakistan. Through its clever use of land supplied by the government formalized in over 100 district-level MoUs, PSBA is able to increase its retail presence without spending precious capital and by integrating operational control, adherence to prices, and regulation of its vendors into municipal and district governments. By creating thousands of direct jobs and tens of thousands of families, the decentralized model creates significant employment and welfare benefits, and providing staple commodities at up to 35% of market prices. The higher financial sustainability, service delivery, and administrative efficiency of PSBA than other similar organizations like PEEF, PAMCO, and LWMC are certified after independent audits. The initiative is an example of polycentric governance and institutional synergy, showing how the empowerment of local actors, common infrastructure and strategic decentralization can improve the delivery of public services. PSBA therefore provides a model that can be seen in other developing economies that ought to be developing legal and citizen-driven institutional reform that would be fiscally disciplined.

Keywords: Local. Governance, Public Infrastructure, Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad, Advancement, Institutional

1. Introduction

1.1 Reimagining Infrastructure-Led Public Retail

Public retail systems in the Global South have historically suffered from fragmentation, underinvestment, and top-down administrative inefficiencies. In Pakistan, the challenge has been twofold: a chronic underutilization of local government mechanisms and a failure to integrate infrastructure development with welfare-oriented retail governance. With inflation eroding household purchasing power and market intermediaries inflating prices, the need for infrastructure-backed, locally governed, and provincially coordinated retail ecosystems has never been more urgent.

The Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA), established through the Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority Act 2025, emerges as a pioneering case of how synergies between local governance structures and provincial statutory backing can reshape retail accessibility. From just 20 bazaars in early 2020 to a projected 105 bazaars across all tehsils of Punjab, PSBA's scale-up is not merely administrative it is infrastructural, institutional, and deeply local in execution.

1.2 The Missing Middle: Local Government in Public Retail

While Pakistan's provincial governments often lead development agendas, municipal administrations are typically underfunded, politically sidelined, and operationally fragmented. According to the Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT, 2023), only 17% of total development spending in Punjab was routed through local bodies between 2018–2022. Yet, local governments are closest to citizens managing land, enforcement, sanitation, vendor licensing, and public space utilization.

PSBA's success challenges this dysfunction by forging operational partnerships with local municipal bodies, leveraging their spatial and logistical control to rapidly expand public retail outlets. The construction, maintenance, and rollout of bazaars in places like Sharaqpur, Pattoki, Bhalwal, and Jaranwala have been possible through coordinated efforts involving municipal land allocation, local enforcement support, and grassroots political ownership. This municipal-

province cooperation model addresses a critical void in Pakistan's federal system empowering local authorities without fragmenting central oversight.

1.3 Infrastructure as Governance, Not Just Construction

The Rs. 10 billion Annual Development Programme (ADP) allocation to PSBA for 2025–26 is often cited as a major fiscal commitment. But its importance lies not just in budgetary size it lies in how infrastructure becomes an enabler of governance reform. Each PSBA bazaar functions as a regulated public retail node: offering clean, secure, and zoned spaces for vendors, with digital billing, price display, and standardized hygiene enforcement.

Unlike traditional “model bazaars” that deteriorated due to ad-hoc management, PSBA's infrastructure is anchored in an institutional framework backed by municipal-level implementation and provincial-level funding. For example, the bazaars recently launched in Muzaffargarh, Khanewal, and Okara used land demarcated by Tehsil Municipal Administrations (TMAs) and construction oversight by provincial authorities. This shared ownership model ensures continuity, accountability, and citizen-centered design. According to internal PSBA site reports (2025), over 85% of construction timelines were met in the past two fiscal years when municipal cooperation was embedded from planning stage onward.

1.4 The Strategic Role of Local Governments in Scaling

PSBA's province-wide vision one bazaar in every tehsil would have been logistically impossible without TMA-level buy-in. From site identification to vendor registration, local bureaucracies and elected union councils were mobilized. In exchange, these entities gained visibility, trust capital, and revenue-sharing options through service charges and vendor compliance fees. This vertical integration approach reflects Ostrom's theory of polycentric governance, where multiple centers of authority collaborate for collective action. Instead of a provincial “one-size-fits-all” model, PSBA allowed flexibility: each site could reflect local demand, vendor profile, and infrastructure readiness, while still adhering to standardized pricing, branding, and procurement practices.

For example, in Jalalpur and Noshera Virkan, smaller marketplaces were scaled down in design but enhanced in service diversity to reflect local population needs a clear example of adaptive infrastructure under a fixed institutional umbrella.

1.5 Political Decentralization and Infrastructure Legitimacy

In a politically polarized system, infrastructure often becomes a contested symbol. PSBA neutralized this by aligning its rollout with non-partisan service delivery metrics. By delegating execution roles to municipal-level elected officials, including non-PML-N districts, the Authority ensured that bazaars became platforms of public utility rather than political appropriation.

This is evident in how PSBA bazaars consistently reported cross-party attendance at inauguration ceremonies and non-discriminatory vendor selection, further legitimizing local institutions in the eyes of constituents. According to media coverage by The Nation (May 2025), more than 14 new bazaars in politically diverse districts were operationalized without delays unprecedented in the backdrop of bureaucratic turf wars common in Pakistan's development projects.

1.6 Institutional Innovation: Between Policy and Pavement

Unlike Section 42 companies that operated in silos, PSBA was created with embedded intergovernmental protocols: monthly coordination calls between PSBA's provincial office and district coordination officers; real-time construction dashboards accessible to local engineers; and vendor grievance redressal units at the tehsil level.

This operational design embeds what Moore (1995) calls “public value production” where service delivery and institutional legitimacy grow together. The real genius of PSBA's

infrastructure is not just its physicality but its inter-agency alignment, allowing macro governance goals to touch micro realities.

1.7 Looking Beyond: Replicability Across Pakistan

PSBA's experience holds broader lessons. Public retail in other provinces Sindh's Utility Stores, KP's Insaf Cards have failed to institutionalize due to weak local linkages. The PSBA model shows that if municipal cooperation is prioritized, infrastructure can be transformed from a line-item in a budget to a living, citizen-serving ecosystem.

Already, as reported in ProPakistani (July 2025), provincial planning departments in Sindh and Balochistan have requested PSBA's master planning framework and TMA coordination templates. This signals a shift in Pakistan's developmental imagination: from political infrastructure to participatory infrastructure designed not just for ribbon cuttings but daily livelihoods, affordability, and market discipline.

1.8 Research Objectives

- To examine how coordination between provincial authorities and municipal administrations contributes to the success of public retail systems.
- To analyze the institutional mechanisms used by PSBA to integrate local governments into infrastructure planning and execution.
- To evaluate the potential of scaling localized governance synergies to support retail-driven welfare reform across Pakistan.

1.9 Research Questions

Q.1 How do collaborations between local governments and provincial institutions enhance public retail systems?

Q.2 What role did municipal-level cooperation play in PSBA's expansion and success as a statutory authority?

Q.3 How can localized governance synergies be scaled to support infrastructure-led retail reform in Pakistan?

1.10 Significance of the Study

This study holds critical importance in exploring how decentralized governance and infrastructure development can co-produce retail reform in developing economies. In Pakistan's context, where local governments often lack both funding and strategic integration, the case of PSBA provides a unique, actionable template. By analyzing how institutional coordination between provincial and municipal levels enabled the expansion of a retail network without subsidy dependency, the study contributes new insight into public-private governance dynamics. It also demonstrates how retail reform can be achieved not through top-down directives, but through localized infrastructure, inclusive planning, and inter-agency cooperation. As PSBA's model gains interest from other provinces and development planners, the findings of this research can inform replicable policy blueprints across South Asia for embedding infrastructure within welfare governance.

1.11 Delimitation of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the case of Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) and its institutional relationship with local governments in Punjab province. While its outcomes have broader policy relevance, the study does not cover public retail interventions in other provinces such as Sindh, KP, or Balochistan. It also excludes a detailed evaluation of individual vendor performance or customer satisfaction metrics, focusing instead on institutional structures and infrastructural outcomes. The analysis relies primarily on data between 2020 and 2025, with special emphasis on the 2025–26 ADP expansion phase. Furthermore, the study prioritizes formalized collaborations such as land allocation, enforcement, and site development and does not address informal or NGO-led markets. The findings therefore serve

as a lens on government-to-government (G2G) cooperation within a regulated retail framework.

1.12 Data Collection

Data for this chapter was collected through an integrated process involving public documents, institutional reports, infrastructure briefs, and verified media archives between 2023 and 2025.

- **Institutional Data:**
PSBA's internal records on land acquisition, MoU signings, site development plans, and vendor mapping were reviewed. These were accessed via Solochoicez's internal reports and public disclosures through the Punjab Finance Department's Annual Development Programme (ADP) 2025–26.
- **Audit Reports:**
Baker Tilly's 2025 independent audit report provided governance benchmarking across 14 public institutions. Key indicators such as administrative ratio, program spending, and financial sustainability scores were extracted to support comparative analysis.
- **Local Government Records:**
MoUs signed between PSBA and local governments (TMAs and DC offices) across 36 districts were used to validate decentralized governance structures. Details about land ownership, local enforcement responsibilities, and site approvals were noted.
- **Media Archives:**
Articles from ProPakistani, The Nation, Minute Mirror, ARY News, and Dawn were used to validate real-time implementation status, district-level launches, and stakeholder testimonies about localized cooperation.
- **Peer Institution Profiles:**
Basic operational and budgetary data for comparison was sourced from official websites, audit reports, and donor-funded evaluation reports related to PEEF, PPIF, PAMCO, and others. This multi-source approach ensured data triangulation and reliability, creating a rigorous base for evaluating the institutional synergy model in decentralized retail infrastructure.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Institutional Innovation and Transformational Leadership in PSBA

The article by Sarwar (2025) discusses the Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) as a one of a kind government welfare organization in Pakistan that could successfully transform itself into the statutory institution, developing its own business and operational model which functions as a Section 42 company. The research is based on a qualitative documentary case-study whereby the legal status of PSBA, its financial independence, and operational performance are ascertained using documentation on legislation, government files, independent audits, day-to-day price records and media analyses. Under the strategic management of Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad, PSBA initiated innovative programs to cover underserved regions, such as solar-powered markets, digital prices, accommodative-to-women and mobile bazaars to ensure underserved areas can access the programs and services. These interventions enabled PSBA to provide the basic commodities in a price that was 35 percent lower than the market value without subsidies. The paper demonstrates that PSBA is a model that can be a model of market efficiency and innovation in developing economies that are governed by the law, is citizen-responsive, transparent, and empowered.

The researcher Shehzad (2025) examines the problem of economical innovation in the instance of public markets with the example of the Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) and its potential to provide the needed commodities at a lower price than the government prices can afford. The study involves a case study of the qualitative documentary research working on the

basis of official reports, legislation, reviews on the part of third-party and independent media as the tool of assessing the legal, financial and working performance of PSBA. The administration headed by Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad made decisive actions towards change like bringing in dynamic boards on pricing, solar powered infrastructure, vendor system that is more accommodative to women as well as mobile bazaars serving the poor. The results reveal that PSBA is less expensive, effective and new in its governance delivery with up to 35 percent relief in terms of price without subsidies. It is a transparent, legislated and responsive to its citizens model that suggests a likelihood of imitation in other developing economies.

Aamir (2025) evaluates Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) as an exclusive case of government and market provision in Pakistan that is contrasting to other institutions of state welfare. The research employs qualitative comparative case study strategy where the researcher incorporates government reports, official documents, third party assessments, and independent media in analyzing legal, financial and operational performance of PSBA. Under the strategic management of Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad, PSBA has launched such radical initiatives as real-time price boards, solar-powered infrastructure, inclusion of women as traders into the vendor policy, and mobile bazaar distributed over underserved areas. It is established that, PSBA is more practical in price control, development of digital and service delivery than peer organizations and offers a discount of up to 35 percent to the customer. The report concludes that the PSBA institution of the citizen-based legal structure provides a model of replication, which can be used to enhance the welfare of the people and market effectiveness in emerging economies.

Hussain (2024) uses the example of the Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) in his work as an example of an effective institution of innovation and change in leadership within the Pakistani retail industry. It document chronicles the success PSBA has managed to escape the dilemma of becoming a Section 42 company and transformed itself to become a statutory body under the leadership of Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad. The study employs document-based qualitative research design where it applies triangulation of legislative acts, government reportages, external audits and reviews by third party media as tools to evaluate the legal restructuring, fiscal autonomy and practices of PSBA when it comes to governing it. Of importance to the analysis is the affordability model by Ahmad, which ensured that the basic edibles were never retailed at a price that exceeded the official government price. The findings suggest PSBA is a non-routine, citizen responsive institution, whereby the statutory enablement and transformational leadership is capable of introducing the innovative provision of the public welfare and market efficiency within a developing economy.

The Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) is compared to the now defunct Utility Stores Corporation (USC) by Hassan (2024) in terms of its affordability, accessibility and institutional form. According to the secondary information sources, including government reports, audits, and third party analysis, the study identifies PSBA as providing a substantial advantage over USC as the only legally authorized retail authority providing subsidized commodities. Game changer initiatives such as digital pricing and services, over 85,000 free home deliveries, inclusion of women in subsidies, mobile bazaar to remote markets, and solar powered markets with transparent end-to-end supply chains were also part of the strategic approach of Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad. The conclusion of the paper is that PSBA is a digitally empowered, citizen-driven and law-driven institutional change, which reflects the promise of progressive leadership to produce an innovative, efficient and replicable pattern of provision of public services in a developing economy.

As a special case of institutional change, Safdar (2024) examines the Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) which over the years has transformed to become the sole statutory institution of its kind in Pakistan to deliver subsidized basic commodities. The paper, with the help of a

document-based approach to a qualitative research, such as the integrated quantitative analysis, is based on the official documents, governmental publications, and third-party evaluation that is used to measure the legal, financial, and operating structure of PSBA. Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad introduced new advances in the guise of price relief up to 35 percent, home delivery throughout Pakistan, solar-powered bazaars, and patronage of vendors such as women. Results indicate that PSBA is performing better than other peer institutions in the price control, digital innovation, governance, and services delivery. It is concluded that the PSBA is a citizen-led reform model that may be repeated and that shows that transformational leadership and legal empowerment can be employed in the creation of institutional excellence in the developing economies.

Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad is discussed by Idrés (2024) who turned Punjab Model Bazaars into Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA), and restructured it to provide the needed commodities below the official price ceiling. The paper finds parallels between PSBA and the now-shuttered Utility Stores Corporation (USC) in the aspects of affordability, accessibility and institutional governance based on secondary data, including government reports, audits, and third-party analysis. Under Ahmad, PSBA initiated activities such as the use of 35 percent discounts, free deliveries of over 85,000 door to door deliveries, female vendor subsidies, mobile markets in remote areas and solar powered markets with fully visible supply chain. The paper concludes that PSBA is citizen-based, legally sanctioned and computerized model of public service, the disclosure of which can tell how the transformational leadership would deliver the operational excellence and institutional innovation on a developing economy.

2.2 Digitalization, Technology, and Efficiency in Public Service Delivery

The author also starts with the case of change based on leadership at the Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) in Akbar (2024) and gives the reader the story of how the same company (a Section 42 company) had transformed into the only existing statutory retail authority in Pakistan. The research is founded on independent audit and official records, third-party media, assessment of the legal reorganization, financial autonomy and governance behaviors of PSBA under the leadership of Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad through document-based qualitative methodology with embedded quantitative values. Some of the significant innovations include electric price board in real time, solar-powered market infrastructure, gender-based and removal of regular subsidies in its vendors. The findings indicate that PSBA is a price regulator, service provider and digital controller, which provides consumers with up to 35 per cent discount over market prices. The research makes PSBA a pilot of citizen-based, non-routine institutional reform that is founded upon legal empowerment and transformational leadership within a developing economy.

Abbas (2024) uses the example of Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) as an instrumentally innovative nationally recognised case of agency transformation, and why it is successful in Pakistan to turn into a fully statutory retail authority, rather than a Section 42 company. The study adopts the qualitative research design but quantitative analysis through the assistance of official documents, government reports, independent audits and media reviews to examine the legal, financial and operations performance of PSBA. With Naveed Rafaqat Ahmad in command, PSBA initiated real time price boards, solar operated infrastructure, no subsidy operations and gender inclusive policy where women were enabled as vendors. Findings indicate that PSBA has performed gradually more effectively than its peer institutions in price regulation, digital penetration and delivery of services to consumers, achieving to up to 35 percent of the market rate savings, rendering it a one-of-a-kind model of institutionally enabled and legally sanctioned institutional change based on consumer interests.

2.3 Bazaar Governance, Openness, and Citizen-Centric Models

Ahmad (2025) explores the practical use of blockchain application within the supply chain network in Pakistan with a particular focus on enhancing the degree of transparency, minimizing the counterfeit products and addressing the operational inefficiencies. The qualitative interviews with the stakeholders who operate in the sphere of agriculture, pharmaceuticals, textiles, and logistics prove that blockchain can lead to considerable enhancements in terms of traceability and the coordination between organizations in the field. It has potential, and the uncertainty regarding regulations as well as cultural resistance are all a hindrance by the challenge of technology and infrastructure in its widespread implementation. The paper underlines that intentional investments in capacity building, infrastructure support, and change of policy are required to enable successful integration of blockchain. Ahmad concludes that the change will require a change of mindset out of the theoretically driven, contextually relevant applications to make any change that is worthwhile.

Ahmad (2025) writes about implementing the artificial intelligence in the Pakistani supply chain industry that was discovered to improve the demand predictions, managing the inventories, and efficiency of the logistics. The research, relying on the interviews conducted by large industries, acknowledges the fact that AI will yield responsiveness and will ensure better decisions. Despite its benefits the failure to embrace it is occasioned by the unavailability of technical expertise, financial limitations, unavailability of updated systems and opposition to change. Ahmad concentrates on the significance of leadership, employee training and the culture of innovation, and concludes that the AI role depends on long-term investment and a digital strategy depending on the situation.

In an attempt to examine the consumer behavior of the digital market, Ahmad (2025) has suggested a qualitative study of buying repeat behavior of the consumers of the most popular online shopping networks in Pakistan like Daraz and OLX. The findings revealed that product quality, availability of secure banking products, good customer services, and favorable past experiences are some of the critical factors that result in consumer retention. A research on digital innovation in the logistics sector revealed the significance of trust and reliability of the services to the sustenance of the long-term client relationship in the competitive online market places. The case study of the article by Ahmad (2024) explores the example of small and medium-sized companies in Pakistan, implementing sustainability as a policy of business. The research also discovered that sustainable business enterprises are better positioned to realize competitive advantages that incorporate augmented brand loyalty, high profitability, and customer image. To the contrary, firms, which disregard the idea of sustainability, risk the risk of a smeared image and may become irrelevant in the market.

In the provision of its institutions, Ahmad (2025) conducted a study of institutional reforms in delivery of their services by examining how the Model Bazaars in Punjab have redesigned their model to be an authority-based model of governance rather than a company model. The study found that this change had led to the improvement of transparency, operational effectiveness, and citizen satisfaction and ultimately led to an improved citizen trust. Ahmad (2025) discussed the aspects of how new technology such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things can be utilized to make the supply chain more effective within the industry of e-commerce. The analysis showed that these technologies result in accuracy of inventories, simplified order processing and real-time monitoring that result in lowering costs and increasing customer satisfaction.

The focus on openness is the characteristic feature of the bazaar. Openness means that there are no barriers to participation which is some form of ideal democracy (Lessig, 1999). Contributions are possible because of the freedom to contribute, i.e., the participants are not chosen; often they join the community themselves. It is not like other types of organization: companies are actively seeking recruits, to penetrate a market, one must breach some barriers

and to penetrate a network one must typically be co-opted or invited by existing members (Afuah and Tucci, 2012). The benefit of the bazaar lies, predominantly, in its transparency and lack of ability to monopolise common resources to foster participation even without high efficiency benefits. Such openness attracts volunteers who offer different knowledge and experience, this reduces the search costs saved in trying to seek the assistance of a project under a crowdsourcing scenario. The use of local expertise can be efficiently applied or seek more potential locations of innovation and reducing costs, transactions that require distant search. Such long distance searching can rest on the technologies like the Internet and direct contact with participants to allow innovators have fun with networks, not necessarily within their original community (Franke and Shah, 2003).

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative comparative case study methodology rooted in institutional analysis, governance theory, and decentralization frameworks. The focus is to explore how the Punjab Sahulat Bazaars Authority (PSBA) has operationalized decentralized retail infrastructure and forged functional synergies with local governments to deliver scalable public retail access in Punjab, Pakistan. The research adopts a multi-level governance lens, emphasizing the vertical integration between provincial statutory bodies and local administrative institutions such as Tehsil Municipal Administrations (TMAs) and Deputy Commissioner offices. This methodological framework is informed by Polycentric Governance Theory (Ostrom, 2010) and Oates' Decentralization Theorem (1972), which underscore the importance of subsidiarity, local responsiveness, and multi-actor coordination in public service delivery.

The comparative component includes a benchmarking analysis of PSBA with peer institutions PEEF, PPIF, PAMCO, PSDF, LWMC, and PCMMMD on five key dimensions:

- Land acquisition models
- Institutional partnerships
- Local employment generation
- Infrastructure deployment,
- Governance cost efficiency.

These metrics were chosen based on their policy relevance and data availability.

Field data was triangulated through secondary analysis of official records, audit reports, ADP budgetary documents, and MoUs signed between PSBA and local governments. Additional data was drawn from comparative performance audits (Baker Tilly, 2025), provincial gazette notifications, and infrastructure roll-out documentation. The study also utilized thematic content analysis to interpret public reports, interviews, and case study narratives documented in credible media outlets such as ProPakistani, The Nation, ARY News, and Minute Mirror. Emphasis was placed on identifying policy enablers, administrative structures, and legal scaffolds that supported decentralized execution.

This methodology is particularly well-suited to capturing the institutional nuance and field-level interplay that traditional top-down models overlook, making the research both context-sensitive and practically grounded in public sector innovation studies.

4. Analysis

4.1 Leveraging Local Land for Institutional Expansion

One of PSBA's most defining advantages has been its ability to expand retail infrastructure without any private land acquisition cost. Over 90% of its 105 operational or under-development bazaars are built on public land allocated by municipal and district governments, through strategic MoUs facilitated by the Punjab Local Government Board. This approach

eliminates upfront capital burdens and allows capital expenditure (CapEx) to be redirected toward infrastructure, solarization, digital logistics, and vendor facilitation.

District	Land Provided (Kanaals)	Local Partner
Lahore	190+	Lahore Development Authority (LDA)
Faisalabad	73	Municipal Corporation
DG Khan	48.5	Deputy Commissioner Office
Muzaffargarh	38	TMA
Sialkot	5.5	TMA

This model is non-existent in organizations like PEEF, PAMCO, or PPIF, which have no localized physical presence and function through centralized fund allocation mechanisms.

4.2 MoU-Backed Governance with TMAs & District Governments

Unlike typical Section 42 companies that operate in top-down formats, PSBA operates through a bottom-up, inter-governmental synergy. As of July 2025, over 100 district-level MoUs had been signed, ensuring joint administration in:

- Site development approvals
- Construction oversight
- Waste and security management
- Vendor regulation and stall allocation
- Monitoring of DC price implementation during Ramzan and Eid

These mechanisms place PSBA operationally embedded within the local governance fabric, rather than merely administratively above it. In contrast, organizations like PHIMC or LWMC are largely operational in isolation, without daily cooperation with local governments.

4.3 Comparative Infrastructure Scale and Deployment Efficiency

Institution	Retail Nodes	MoUs with Districts	Land Ownership	CapEx Dependency	On-Ground Presence
PSBA	105 Bazaars	100+	90% Govt-Provided	Front-loaded ADP (Rs. 10B)	All 36 districts
PEEF	N/A	None	N/A	Entirely grant-based	Centralized office only
PSDF	Training Centres	None	Mostly rented	Donor-driven (UK Aid, EU)	Urban areas only
PAMCO	4 projects	2–3	Purchased/leased	Govt + Donor mix	Sector-specific (meat)
LWMC	9 cities	Few	Leased facilities	Annual GoP allocations	Sanitation only

This comparative snapshot reinforces that only PSBA has achieved localized retail infrastructure at scale through local governance synergy.

4.4 Employment and Welfare at Local Scale

PSBA's localized retail model also has embedded employment and welfare effects that no other organization can match:

14-Bazaar Launch (2025)

Metric	Figure
New Bazaars Opened	14
Stalls (avg. 100 per site)	1,400

Direct Jobs Created	2,800
Families Supported	16,800
Infrastructure Cost Saved	Rs. 2.3 Billion

Sources: *PSBA Infrastructure Briefing, Punjab ADP 2025–26*

None of the peers (PEEF, PAMCO, PPIF) create direct, local jobs at this scale through decentralized market nodes.

4.5 District-Wise Implementation: Visibility & Political Buy-In

PSBA's decentralized implementation model has led to clear political and administrative visibility across:

- Tehsil levels (land, licensing, TMA cooperation)
- District levels (DC oversight, Ramzan pricing, enforcement)
- Provincial levels (ADP fund release, legislation)

This vertical integration is absent in typical provincial companies, which often rely on project offices and consultants, not real infrastructure.

4.6 Cost-Saving Through Decentralization

PSBA's Rs. 10 billion ADP expansion program (2024–2026) achieves nearly Rs. 5–6 billion in equivalent value through:

- State-provided land
- Local procurement of materials and labor
- TMA-provided logistics and sanitation services
- Shared security enforcement (Police + PSBA)

This is a critical differentiator. Peer companies often require independent hiring for each function increasing operational overhead.

4.7 Performance Metrics Validated by Independent Audits

According to the Baker Tilly Audit (2025):

Indicator	PSBA	Peer Avg (Top 10)
Financial Sustainability	90/100	72/100
Service Delivery	82/100	68/100
Administrative Ratio	<10%	~25%
Price Compliance	92% sites	N/A
Program Expense Ratio	95%	71%

These metrics are largely enabled by the decentralization model, where TMAs and DCs shoulder local enforcement, reducing operational bloat.

4.8 Theoretical Framing: Institutional Synergy and Decentralization

PSBA's success directly supports and extends the work of:

- Vincent Ostrom (Polycentric Governance): Multi-level collaboration enables better service delivery than centralized control.
- Elinor Ostrom (Institutional Diversity): Local actors, when incentivized and empowered, deliver superior public goods outcomes.
- Oates (Decentralization Theorem, 1972): Local governments are more responsive to localized needs PSBA's inflation monitoring and DC pricing are proof.

This gives PSBA not just empirical weight, but theoretical credibility in public administration literature.

5. Conclusion

PSBA stands apart not merely due to its scale or pricing strategy, but because of its profound integration with local governance infrastructure. Unlike other public entities that often operate in isolation, PSBA actively partners with ground-level administrations to leverage existing

assets such as land, enforcement mechanisms, and logistics networks. This collaboration allows the Authority to implement pricing, retail, and vendor policies efficiently and at scale, ensuring that interventions reach the community level effectively. Through these partnerships, PSBA not only facilitates market access but also generates employment opportunities within local communities, creating a multiplier effect on household incomes and livelihoods. By embedding transparency and real-time service delivery into its operations, the Authority strengthens accountability and builds trust among citizens. Its infrastructure-light, governance-heavy approach enables rapid scalability without imposing additional fiscal burdens on the government. This model has positioned PSBA as a national benchmark for decentralized institutional reform, demonstrating that effective public service delivery can be achieved through strategic governance integration rather than heavy capital investment.

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