

Original Article

Practicing E-Governance in Nepal: Challenges of Civil Service

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Abstract - The approach of e-governance is constantly changing the way the government system executes its service to the people. E-service encompasses a series of necessary steps for institutions to develop and administer to ensure the successful implementation of services. This paper discusses the growing trend of e-service, its effectiveness, and the challenges to overcome the situation for effective service delivery. Content analysis and survey approach was used to generate data in the case study. The study claims that the virtual nature of the Internet, and its dynamic aspects, can multiply government service to the people and novice users to its considerable capacity not to harm e-service. The study has concluded that e-government service is essential for managing future complications and responding to current and past incidents to build trust. The insight on reducing current and future inefficiencies, the probabilities of effectiveness, and the costs associated with potential outcomes support their mitigation. Some of the issues related to e-service can be regulatory, legal, technical, and procedural measures, civil service personnel's education, capacity building, and continuous upgrading of the technology. Manage the three-level levels of employees and administration smoothly way that is Federal, provincial, and local levels, and coordinating and cooperating are the major challenges of civil service.

Keywords - E-governance, Upgrading Technology, Efficiency, and Effectiveness, Capacity Building

I. INTRODUCTION

The use of the Internet and its applications used for official purposes has given us a new idea of creation to use it for the better service for people by the government called e-governance. The use of electronic communication started after implementing the invention of the Telephone by Alexander Graham Bell in 1876. Internet applications have been an inevitable part of our personal and official life. The Internet and its applications have been used for personal, social, and

official purposes. The use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) for the government activities has helped for the better governance like better transparency, the effectiveness of work performance, accountability, and public participation in the development of government policies reducing cost and reduction of corruption while performing the government processes [1].

E-government has been considered a narrower discipline in dealing with the development of online services to the citizen, more the 'e' on any particular government service - such as e-tax, e-education, e-tourism, e-transportation, or e-health [2]. E-governance is a wider concept that defines and assesses the impacts technologies are having on the practice and administration of governments and the relationships between public servants and the wider society, such as dealings with the elected bodies or outside groups such as not for profits organizations, NGOs, or private sector/corporate entities. E-governance encompasses a series of necessary steps for government agencies to develop and administer to ensure the successful implementation of e-government services to the public [1]. The world is rapidly transforming into one society driven by an outstanding increase in the amount of communication between civilizations. In every region of the globe - from developing countries to industrialized ones - central and local governments are putting critical information online, automating bulky processes, and interacting electronically with their citizens [4].

Civil servants are often charged with not providing effective service through they have sufficient resources and technological know-how. However, Nepal has been facing numerous challenges during e-governance implementation. The unnecessary influence of intermediaries and syndicates created by some hidden groups makes government service holdup. Needless expansion of government agencies and their employees; too many layers in the decision-making process; more process-oriented service delivery rather than result-



oriented are some challenges [1]. There is a wide curiosity among citizens about e-government. E-government encompasses explaining the relation and benefits through e-government to provide various services to its people via public administration from bureaucracy to service provider [5].

ICTs have significantly enhanced our capabilities to collect, process, and distribute information [2]. Almost all developing countries regard ICTs as an important factor when preparing their national development plans. This paper discusses the area which has been given outstanding attention regarding the use of ICT in the quest for good governance, usually termed e-governance, and the challenges of civil service in Nepal [30].

II. CIVIL SERVICE ARCHITECTURE IN NEPAL

Article 153 of Part 22 of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2063 has managed the provision on the constitution of Civil Service. The article mentions, "The Government of Nepal may, to run the country's administration, constitute the Civil Service and such other government services as may be required. The constitution, operation, and service conditions shall be as determined by an Act." In the past, this service was named the 'Civil Service,' including all government service holders except those defined as not in civil service. As mentioned in the Article 126 of the Interim Constitution of Nepal, all services or positions in the Government of Nepal, other than the services and positions of army officers or soldiers and armed police and police personnel and such other services and positions are excluded by an Act from the civil service or positions thereof, shall be deemed to be the civil service or positions thereof [12].

III. ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM SCENARIO

During the five-decade-long history of Nepal's public administration, some ambitious tasks have taken place. Generally, the high-level administrative commissions are formed every 10 years, and recommendations have been received. The given recommendations are also received. The given table can help the comparative study of the recommendations and their implementation in different periods.

Name of the Administrative Reforms Commissions	Number of given recommendations	Number of implementation	Number of partial implementation	Number of non-implementation
Butch Commission, 2009	12	2	-	10

Acharya Commission, 2013	15	13	-	2
Jha Commission, 2025	38	8	11	19
Thapa Commission, 2032/33	17	4	4	8
Koirala Commission, 2048	23	2	11	10
Governance Reforms Programme, 2061	69	2	26	41
Total recommendations	164	31	53	80

Source: PTA Journal 2018

While analyzing the received recommendations, only 31 have been completely implemented, which is just 18.9 percent of the total recommendations. Likewise, 53 (32.31%) are partially implemented, while the number of completely not implemented is 80 (48.79%). The recommendations not implemented partially also failed to pay heed to their essence and relevance. Civil service, not becoming competitive compared with the non-government sector, is also becoming less lucrative. The aspects of its quality, etiquette, and attractions from the beginning of inviting the applications to the public through the medium of publicity were not done, which ultimately has prevented the commoners from their easy and accessible access to the service [11].

IV. EFFORTS TO MAKE SERVICE DELIVERY EFFECTIVE

The country could not move ahead whenever government and citizens are not ready to improve the public service delivery. There might be many reasons for improving service delivery, but the essential thing is the government's willing power dedication of government employees and people's interest in national building. A technology-friendly working environment at the workplace, e-administration at the organization, equal opportunity for all staff, necessary Rules and Acts, and proper monitoring, supervision, and control mechanism are necessary for improving service delivery [15].

After the popular movement in 1990, democracy was restored in Nepal. The election of the House of Representatives was conducted, and the Nepali Congress party got the majority in the house and

formed the government. The government has constituted Administration Reform Commission under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala. This commission submitted its report in 1992 and presented many suggestions to make the civil service strong, effective, qualitative, result-oriented, and people-oriented. One of the suggestions of this commission is about service delivery. The commission has suggested initiating a performance contract system, empowering the field level office, and involvement of service consumers and the non-government sector to make the service delivery effective. But its suggestion about service delivery was not implemented in letters and spirits [13].

V. CHALLENGES AND TRENDS OF NEPALESE CIVIL SERVICE

Civil service is the policy implementing an important permanent mechanism of the state. The state's effectiveness mostly depends on the strength and capability of its civil service [20]. Political executives changed from time to time, but civil servants remained in their posts for a fixed and competitively long period. So, they are called permanent governments. In a democratic political system, civil service is the role of the main adviser and the impotent supporter of the government. Civil servants support the government in formulating the policies and implementing them with their expertise. In totality, civil service is in the key position of service delivery, supporting the government in the decision-making and strengthening the effectiveness of the governance. So, the success of government and the country's prosperity mostly depends on the civil service's efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

Civil service is the important administrative segment of the state [28]. It has its characteristics. Impartiality and neutrality are its main characteristics. Civil service always has political neutrality. Merit system-based is its another specialty. Recruitment, posting, and promotion are all dependent on the merit system. To establish civil service as a permanent government, there is a provision of proper job security, retaining civil servants to a certain age. There is a proper arrangement of career development to attract capable individuals to its society. There are also some additional arrangements in the service to motivate civil servants to their duties. Not only these but there is also a provision of pension for the livelihood after retirement. Professionalism is the necessary condition of the civil service, which is impossible without being impartial, accountable, and providing qualitative service to the people [14b].

Nepalese civil service still could not be established. Frequent change in structure and size, lack of the development of the working culture depending

on values and norms of professionalism, lack of institutional development, lack of adequate motivational factors, the tendency to avoid accountability and responsibility, political interference, instability in the name of reform and lack of proper use of reward and punishment are the reasons responsible for it. In a democratic governing system, civil service should be independent, impartial, professional, respective, and result-oriented. Despite the past effort to make it competitive, responsible, and result-oriented, Nepalese civil service could be developed strongly. The politicization suffers it. Due to the competition to make it in favor of political parties, it could not be developed professionally. Politicization in civil service is overall through the trade unions. Civil service's basic norms and values could not be established, enhanced, and standardized.

Works and efforts are more process-oriented rather than result-oriented. In civil service, posting, transfer, promotion, and award and punishment could not be system-oriented and predictable. Due to not being able to make the transfer and promotion transparent and objective, civil service credit could not be increased. There are challenges of working in the political instability, the lack of professional values and norms, the effect of political parties' influence, and the lack of intention of reform with farsightedness. Civil service act, 2049 was formulated to make civil service more capable, strong, service-oriented, and responsible. But due to political instability, political interference, unhealthy exercise to retain in the lucrative offices and the number and the role of the personnel trade unions and their working tendency with the political influence and due to be unable to set a scientific and objective standard for posting, promotion, transfer and study leave, Nepalese civil service still could not be institutionalized as a professional and result oriented service. The law-breaking tendency can be seen in the bureaucracy, which is responsible for enforcing the law. If this tendency could not be stopped, people's belief in the rule of law could be hampered. Reforms should be done by realizing the relation and the differentiation between politics and the administration. Like this, both politics and bureaucracy should be committed to the rule of law [14a].

Laksman Kumar Pokharel, Former secretary of the Nepal Government, Claims that Service Delivery Framework (SDF) has to be formulated for effective service delivery. SDF is a set of principles, standards, policies, and constraints used to guide the design, development, deployment, and operation of service delivered by the service provider to offer a consistent service experience to a specific user community.

The service delivery situation in Nepal is not quite satisfactory. The cost is high, and parameters for service delivery are not determined, there is duplication

in service delivery, information and communication technology is not fully utilized for information dissemination, lack of regular monitoring, scattered human settlement, and process of getting any type of service from government unit is lengthy and cumbersome, service seeker could not get due attention and response from service delivering unit, lack of flexibility in resource utilization and lack of separate rule for expenditure, procurement, and administration of service delivery are some of the problems encountered by government service delivery unit in Nepal.

To overcome all these hurdles and make the service delivery effective, qualitative and citizen needs monitoring of the service delivery should be entrusted to the civil society organization with ample resources and authority, the establishment of multipurpose telecenters at least one in each village development committee to use the latest information technology by rural people for service delivery purpose, the process for getting service from the government officials should be simplified and parameter of service delivery should be fixed, the citizen should be responded if service declined or late service with the fixed timeline to get it, separate law for procurement, expenditure and administration of service delivery unit should be formulated, client empowerment through sector-wise participation should be initiated [29].

A. Working System and Operational Modalities

The basic functions of the government can be categorized as core and non-core functions. They mainly include maintaining law and order, regulating and implementing laws, ensuring the supply of essential goods and services, providing social security, and undertaking development and capacity-building activities in non-core functions. The public services include social and economic services, infrastructure development, administration services, and activities related to poverty alleviation and promoting social mobilization, inclusiveness, and the empowerment of people, particularly the down-trodden and disadvantaged, and capacity building.

Many bodies have developed a Management Information System (MIS) to disseminate proper information and facilitate proper decision-making. These information systems include the Personnel Information System (PIS) related to civil servants, the Financial Management Information System (FMIS) related to the budget and financial aspects of the Ministry of Finance, the Health Management Information System (HMIS), and the Education Management Information System (EMIS)[13].

B. Roles and functions of civil service

The government's roles and functions may be categorized into four categories: governance, economic, social, and infrastructural. The governance activities include administrative support services, logistics management, internal security and peace, foreign affairs and defense, human and other resources management, and ensuring and promoting coordination and control.

VI. RECENT TRENDS IN TECHNOLOGY -RTT

ICT master plan plays a vital role in developing ICT in the country [6]. With the rapid growth of the Internet, network security has become a major concern for policymakers & regulators worldwide [7]. The Internet is constantly changing the way we live and conduct business. Protection of services and the consumers from data theft, fraud, denial of service attacks, hacking, cyber warfare, terrorist, and anti-national activities has become a challenge [8]. According to an international estimate, one in 295 emails is virus-infected, and 3 in 100 emails carry malware [9]. All sorts of scams and many methods are used to spread malware, make use of social engineering techniques, target human desires & fears, and just plain curiosity to get past the caution one should be exercising when online. The critical data of an organization containing personal data, critical enterprise resources, etc., are a potential source of attack for the following two main reasons. Overall ingenuity and knowledge required by hackers are drastically reduced, and for a hacker, it is much easier to create applications that can be distributed on Internet [3].

VII. ICT POLICY AND LAW

Policies are used to set a standard for performance. It provides a framework for consistent actions regardless of nation. Federal, provincial, and local government laws set a policy framework for using technology within the country [27].

IT law or Cyberlaw is the law that has a spread of problems associated with the web and different communication technology, as well as belongings and jurisdiction which control the cyber space[6], [21]. In Nepal, cyber law is called as Electronic Transaction Act (ETA) 2063 [22], which was passed in 2004. Cyberlaw is the law governing the facts that happen in the intangible digital world, such as giving legal status to the intangible information in cyberspace [23]. Cyber laws area unit vital and valid for controlling cyber matters [24]. The government needs to be transparent in its function and [25]. The state's accountability is to bring insufficiently strong legislation to discourage cybercrime and threat and attract and put down the abuse of the Internet and other cyber media for any illegal activities [26].

VIII. DATA SECURITY ISSUE

For the protection of e-governance projects, there is a need for information security-based practices. Security policies and plans are required to help protect e-government systems against threats and attacks and detect abnormal activities services [15].

Data security should protect against the unauthorized use, disclosure, access, destruction, modification, and loss of data. Confidential password security and regular monitoring of passwords are very necessary. User and password security have not been maintained satisfactorily [18]. One of the preliminary steps in the assessment is to classify the data according to risk factors [19]. The E-government system should be reliable, and reliability can be maintained by sufficient existence and proper implementation of e-government law [17]. There is a need for information security best practices to protect e-government projects. Security policies, practices, and procedures must be in place and utilization of security technology. It helps protect the e-government system against attack, detect abnormal activities services, and have a proven contingency plan in place [16].

IX. CONCLUSION

The virtual nature of the Internet, and its dynamic aspects, can support civil personnel and novice users to its considerable capacity to do effective and efficient service through e-governance. The most serious consequences are sometimes due to negligence resulting from incompetence, misconceived or poorly implemented technology, excessive authority for system administrations, and mismanagement. E-governance is essential for managing future risks and responding to current and past incidents and attacks to build trust among people. Some of the issues for consideration related to e-governance can be licensing and regulatory measures, legal measures, technical and procedural measures, and customer education and capacity building. The insight on reducing current and future inefficiencies, the probabilities of effectiveness, and the costs associated with potential outcomes support their mitigation. Some of the issues related to e-service can be regulatory, legal, technical, and procedural measures, civil service personnel's education, capacity building, and continuous upgrading of the technology. Manage the three-level levels of employees and administration smoothly way that is Federal, provincial, and local levels, and coordinating and cooperating are the major challenges of civil service.

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