

<http://dx.doi.org/10.222.99/arpap/2020.64>

## Representative Bureaucracy in Nepali Civil Service: Exploring the Encounters of Women

**ANIL KUMAR GUPTA, GOBINDA BHANDARI, SHUSHMA MANANDHAR**

---

### **ABSTRACT**

*Representative bureaucracy is a sign of inclusive or democratic governance. Different country of the world including Nepal has adopted different policies to confirm meaningful representation of women in civil service. Civil service organization should be gender-sensitive/friendly legally but in reality, women official's experiences gender influenced behaviors. In this regard, this study explored different encounters of women officials experienced in Nepali civil service. This study employed a qualitative approach where the case study was adopted as a strategy of inquiry. Six information-rich cases were selected purposively, and in-depth interviews were carried out. The result of the study showed that invisible gender stereotypes are prevalence in Nepali civil service. Women officials are experiencing gender inclined behaviors because of gender-biased mindset. Despite this, women officials are feeling proud to be a part of civil service and are prepare to face the gender inclined behavior and qualifying themselves to defense challenges with oozing self-confidence.*

**Keywords:** *Representative bureaucracy, civil service, socio-cultural value, and women*

Received: 3 November 2019  
Accepted: 15 December 2019  
Published: 20 March 2020

Corresponding author:  
Anil Kumar Gupta.  
Nepal Administrative Staff  
College  
Email:  
cdps10gupta@gmail.com

Gobinda Bhandari, Shushma  
Manandhar  
Nepal Administrative Staff  
College.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is an extensive debate in the bureaucracy literature regarding the representation of different groups of people in the civil service. Some scholars argue to continue representation while others argue that civil service cannot, and should not be a representative (Adusah-Karikari & Ohemeng, 2014). Its supporters reason that representation of a diverse group is not only appropriate in modern diverse societies but also help to resolve conflicts that have absorbed such societies through a sense of belongingness (Esman, 1999; Meier & Hawes, 2009 cited in Adusah-Karikari & Ohemeng, 2014). That may be the reasons that many governments of the world have developed and implemented an inclusive policy to increase the representation of diverse groups of people in the civil service, and Nepal is not exceptional. For fair gender balance in the civil service, the Government of Nepal has developed and institutionalized inclusive policy in 2007 as suggested by the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 via the second amendment of civil service act 1993. Although issues of women were first introduced in the sixth five-year plan (1981-1985), their representation in civil service was not legalized until 2007 when the amendment of civil service act 1993 was enacted. This act has clearly provisioned that 45 percent of the seats should be filled by reservation, out of which 33 percent of seats filled by women. As a result, the representation of women in civil service is gradually increasing. As per Department of Civil Personnel Records and Public Service Commission of Nepal (2018), women constituted only 8 percent of the total civil servants in 2003; this increased to 15 percent in 2010, to 18 percent in 2015, and to 23 percent in 2018. But most of the women work at lower levels and their participation at the top level and the policy level are extremely low and negligible. The highest percentage of the population working in higher positions in the civil service is occupied by upper-caste men, which is deemed rich, educated, and privileged (Askvik, Jamil, & Dhakal, 2011; Acharya, 2017). Men are governing as a hierarchy leader and women are working at a lower level as their subordinate.

Unquestionably, increasing the number of women in civil service is important but should not forget that there should be democratic gender practice. Democratic gender practice should be established as organization culture and women should be treated equally as their men counterparts in civil services without any gender influenced behavior. However, the administrative culture in Nepal is gender-biased (Jamil & Dangal, 2009). The administrative culture favors men as a ruler and leader. Men in administrative levels remain hegemonic, not only because of them being a men figure but also because of the socially constructed gender images that keep men on top

and women at the bottom (Acharya, 2017). Almost all men officials do have knowledge and awareness about gender-sensitive organization behavior. However, they demonstrate intentionally or unintentionally gender influenced behaviors. It reflects that there is a prevalence of seen and unseen masculine organization culture. This culture support man more than women. It is said that civil service organizations should be gender-sensitive but in practice, it is not as sensitive as expected. Perhaps, many of women officials have more or less experienced gender inclined behavior in civil service. In this regard, this study aimed to explore different encounters of women officials experienced in the Nepali civil service organizations.

### *REPRESENTATIVE BUREAUCRACY*

J. Donald Kingsley in the 1940s first time coined the term representative bureaucracy to examine the representativeness of the British civil service during World War II. After this, it has received much scholarly attention in public administration literature. The representative bureaucracy is the notion that governments should represent the population that they serve (Kingsley, 1944). Mosher (1982) argued that representative bureaucracy is mirrored the citizenry and has symbolic value, signifying open access to government, equality of opportunity, and government by the people. Representative bureaucracy can lead to the legitimatization of government. The legitimacy of the government is not questioned if the citizens feel that they are well represented in the bureaucracy (Thieleman & Stewart, 1996). The representative bureaucracy signals that diverse communities have access to the policy-making process, leading to greater governmental legitimacy (Naff, 2007). Hence, public organizations should look like the population that they serve. Organizations are being more responsive to the public if they reflect the demographic characteristics of those they serve (Mosher 1982). Government administrative and governing structure should recognize the diversity of its people. Diversity within the public workforce help to ensure that the interests of diverse groups are represented in policy formulation and implementation processes. A demographically diverse workforce leads to a policy outcome that reflects the interest of all groups represented. The bureaucracy that reflects the demographic composition of society incorporates a greater spectrum of opinions and preferences into the agenda-setting and decision-making processes and, as a result, should be more responsive to those groups (Selden, 1998). When members of distinctive groups become public officials, they become legitimate actors in the political process with the ability to shape public policy (Selden 1998). Bureaucracy could come to threaten democracy if the bureaucracy is unrepresentative and undermines or

refuses to adhere to the demands and goals of the party in power (Kingsley, 1944). In general, when the bureaucracy is representative of the public, policy decisions can be broadly reflective of the public interest because representative bureaucracy allows making decisions on behalf of others like them. A fundamental assumption of representative bureaucracy is that passive representation would lead to active representation (Meier, 1993; Mosher, 1982). However, the assumption that passive representation based on demographic characteristics leads to active representation is a simplistic understanding of the theory.

### *PASSIVE AND ACTIVE REPRESENTATION*

The theory of representative bureaucracy includes two types of representation namely passive and active (Mosher, 1968). Passive representation is a characteristic while active representation is a process (Meier, 1993). Passive representation is also known as a demographic/descriptive representation. According to Mosher (1968), passive representation refers to the bureaucracy mirroring demographically the public that they serve. Bureaucracy having the same demographic origins as the population it serves is identified as passive representation. It indicates that the presence of civil servants of various social groups. Hence, it is abstracted as demographic or descriptive in nature. Passive representation may be regarded as an aspiration in the sense of making the bureaucracy more democratic or alleviating social tensions (Groeneveld & Walle, 2010). As per Selden (1997), passive representation reflects equal access to power and confers legitimacy on bureaucratic institutions. It symbolizes equal opportunity and access to bureaucratic positions as well as the extent to which government is accessible to the citizenry from all backgrounds (Meier, 1993; Riccucci & Saidel, 1997). It is said that passive representation promotes the legitimacy of the bureaucracy because it demands the citizens from specific groups who were underrepresented.

Passive representation leads to active representation (Mosher 1968). Active representation is also known as policy/administrative/functional representation. This representation is more associated with the behavior of civil servants. Active representation occurs when a bureaucrat presses for the interests and desires of those whom he/she is presumed to represent (Mosher, 1968). It takes a step further; supposing that such passive representation by these administrators will lead to a desired output or outcome for a group sharing similar traits (Mosher, 1968). Active representations take actions in the interests of those whom they are presumed to represent (Naff, 2007). In this representation, bureaucrats take an effort or act in the bureaucracy to

confirm that the interests and desire of people they represent. Active representation is where individual bureaucrats advocate or press the interests of social groups with whom they share similar identities in ways that produce substantive benefits for that section of the population (Dolan & Rosenbloom, 2003; Lim, 2006; Mosher, 1982; Meier, 1975; Saltzstein, 1979; Selden, 1997). Active representation is expected to translate group interests into policy decisions in favor of the groups they passively represent. Active representation takes the assertion attributes which lead to early socialization experiences and, in turn, shape the values and attitudes of bureaucrats (Sowa & Selden, 2003).

### *WOMEN ISSUE IN THE CIVIL SERVICE ACT 1993*

Although the issues of women first time officially focused in the sixth five-year plan (1980-85), their representation in civil service is legalized by the second amendment of civil service act 1993 in 2007. This act was amendment after the promulgated of the Interim Constitution of Nepal in 2007. Article 21 of the constitution has clearly made a provision that women shall have the right to participate in state structures on the basis of the principle of proportional inclusion. Based on this, the second amendment of civil service act 1993 (now 4th Amendment) has allocated 45 percent of a seat for reservation of different groups in which 33 percent was allocated for women alone. This act has also set the maximum age for a woman to enter civil service is 40 years and 35 years for men. Similarly, a one-time waiver of the maximum age limit for sitting in Public Service Commission examinations has been provided to those women who have been in public service without a break for the last five years. Likewise, the time limit for probationary periods has been set at six months for women and one year for men. Moreover, efforts have been made to transfer husband and wife to the same district when both are in government service and women become eligible for promotions one year earlier than men. Women also get 98 days of delivery to leave twice during the whole service period. These are some good provisions made by this act to ensure gender justice in civil service. Similarly, the constitution of Nepal 2015 has ensured the representation of women in state institutions.

### *WOMEN REPRESENTATION IN NEPALI CIVIL SERVICE*

Eight percent of the women participated in civil service in 2003. They were 15 percent in 2010 and 18 percent in 2015 (Paudel, 2016). The women's share has gradually decreased as the level of civil service increased (Paudel (2016). For example, one to three percent of women were represented in the special positions assumed as policymakers. In contrast, 97 to 99 percent of

men were represented in crucial positions. The highest share of women's participation or entry to civil service is observed at the non-gazette level, 11 percent women share in 2003, 22 percent in 2010 and 21 percent in 2015. In the fiscal year 2017/18, 20334 women held various government-office positions in Nepal, making it 23 percent of civil service jobs held by women (Public Service Commission, 2018). In the fiscal year 2008-09, there were just 32457 women applicants but this figure is raised to 296704 women (271,149 men applicants) in the fiscal year 2019-18. Although women applicant in the fiscal year 2017-18 represented 52 percent of the total, some 33 percent of those recommended (5253 men and 2465 women) as civil service officials. According to the Public Service Commission, 5728 women were joined in civil service through the 33 percent of reservation quota since the introduction of reservation policy. In the present context, women now comprise 20334 of the 87753 civil service employees. This increase began after an amendment to Civil Service Act-1993 in 2007. The increase in the number of women in government offices has raised the interest of younger women to apply for civil service. The trend of women's representation has been found to be increasing from 2003 to 2018 longitudinally in each position. The reservation of 33 percent of seats for women encouraged women to take Public Service Commission exams.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study was based on interpretivist paradigms where we assumed the reality about encounters of women officials experienced in the Nepali civil service was subjective and multiple. To dig it, we followed an inductive path informed by the naturalistic and subjective landscape which favors qualitative research approach. Within qualitative research approach, we used a case study as a research strategy because it intensively and deeply probes the issues in depth-detail in a real-world context. Similarly, it is focused on how and why questions (Yin, 2003; Myers, 2009) which help to divulge different encounters of women officials experienced in Nepali civil service by dint of natural setting as suggested by Stake (2005) and Creswell (2009). Postpositivists and nonpositivists (interpretivist/constructivist) two different logical directions are seen in the case study research literature (Bhattarai & Maharjan, 2017). However, we set up our position as a nonpositivist (interpretivist/constructivist) because it is flexible in nature which allows us to uncover different ground realities via subjective standpoints. We chose six information-rich cases in discussion with the civil service officials by employing purposive sampling techniques as suggested by Merriam (1998). During the selection of cases, we considered socio-cultural, age, and position diversities

to capture varied perspectives of women officials, assuming that they could give us more width of insight. We collected information by interacting and engaging in an in-depth interview (Stake, 1995; Merriam, 1998) without access by outsiders and interviews were in forms of informal conversation between the research participants and us. We considered the impact of social and physical setting in which in-depth interview took place (Alvesson, 2003). During the interview, we created an enabling/ convenient environment to offer ample space to express and share their point of view and experiences freely and we presented there as a sensitive audience. Similarly, we were aware of the words (what says) and the gestures (how it says) of the research participant's which provided some critical insights. We transcribed the recordings in the same order that we conducted promptly after each interview (Peräkylä, 1997) and reviewed and summarized field notes immediately. During the transcription, we noted every interesting and surprising issue that came in our mind because the human mind tends to forget quickly (Lofland & Lofland, 1999). After that, we edited transcribed information and coded and categorized to develop themes and subthemes. We formed a number of anecdotes and we reflected and generated meaning.

## **FINDINGS AND RESULTS**

This part presents data and discussion on the different encounters of women officials experienced in the Nepali civil service which is as follows:

### **Feeling/Experiencing Civil Service**

The civil service is frequently the first choice of young university graduates in Nepal (Paudel, 2013). Nepali civil service is the government body, works by the non-elected/merit-based appointed officials for managing the nation administration and executing the policy for the welfare of the people. It is also perceived as a permanent mechanism of the nation. Feeling and experience of civil service women officials towards it seems positive and satisfactory. Women officials are feeling proud to be a part of civil service. They believed themselves as a state actor to provide public service to people, backings the government in making and fixing policies, and guarantee the effectiveness and efficiency in the modern democratic governance system. They also expressed that the profession of civil service is better than other services because Nepali society places it as a high value. Similarly, they perceived that there are various benefits like scholarship opportunities, leave, job security, pension, and so on.

In the Nepali civil service, significant progress has been made in addressing structural gaps between men and women participation at all levels.

The Government of Nepal has not any discrimination in the recruitment of women in civil service by guarantying 33% reservation quota. Although this reservation quota reflects the increasing status of women representation in Nepali civil service, it is insufficient to predict if there is a democratic gender practice in civil service. Active representation is not as much as expected in Nepali civil service because after the recruitment and being as a part of civil services, women officials experience gender influenced behavior. Men come in civil service organizations with gender influenced values, beliefs, and attitudes. Behaviors of men officials towards women officials are different. In this context, women official expressed:

Principally, there should be gender-sensitive behavior in all places at all levels. However, gender inclined behavior can be seen everywhere. Many times men officials don't want to show gender influence behavior with us but it comes naturally because of their family and society socialization. Men senior officials have less trust in women officials as compared to men officials. They perceived women officials do not have a high capacity to execute administrative function independently. They just provide us supportive work. They give less responsibility to us, which in turn, have a long term impact on professional career growth and development.

These are the gender images reflected in civil service. Valuing gender differences and treating women fairly in the civil service organization is a symbol of gender justice. Legally, there is no question that men and women official should be treated equally. However, in reality, women officials experience gender inclined behaviors in organizations because of gender-biased mindset. Women officials are aware of gender-sensitive behaviors of men officials but alleged that the behavior of men officials guided by family and society socialization. Doubtlessly, the organization is the miniature of society. Men officials demonstrate behavior in an organization which they learn from society and Nepali society is patriarchy in nature. Hence, gender inclined behavior in civil service is directly/indirectly or intentionally/unintentionally guided by family's and society's symbolic values.

### **Decision Making**

Representative bureaucracy is critical in the civil service to ensure equal access and opportunity, especially in administrative decisions (Adusah-Karikari & Ohemeng, 2014). Administrative decision-making is an integral part of civil service and it is made at every level of administration to confirm goals are achieved. Civil service officials have to take several decisions for efficient and effective administration. Even if there are some encouraging examples of

women engagements in decision making in Nepali civil service, they do not enjoy the same opportunities for decision making as men officials. Their role in decision making remains of little significance. As per Bhattarai & Maharjan (2016), women's are culturally not decision-makers and they need the consultations for the right decision. Nevertheless, they are becoming more conscious and demanding greater decision making opportunity at home and at all level of administration equally. But problem is that the higher echelon executive positions of Nepali civil service by tradition are occupied by men and remain to be ruled by men despite the representation of women is increasing day by day at all level. Women officials have an only auxiliary role in the process of decision making. In this scenario, women official argued:

Generally, almost all top executive positions of civil service are occupied by men. Hence, naturally, men more dominant in decision making than women. Some men office heads listen and involve equally women in decision making but the decision is small not big. Even in small decision making, some of them are imposed rather than adopting a participation mode of decision making. Women officials neither have a say nor the power to modify or adjust decisions. As a women official, we are just receiving decisions made by men and works as decision implementers.

Generally, decision in Nepali civil service is made by top level and top level position is occupied by men officials. Women representation in top level position of civil service is less. It is interesting to note that biased cultural-social attitudes and beliefs play an adverse role for women to pursue a career in civil service in the past but this scenario is changing steadily in the present context. This low participation of women in the administrative level is the result of weak policy on women and empowerment, less involvement of women in politics, and the prevalence of patriarchal values in Nepali society (Acharya, 2017). In the same line, Paudel (2017) argued that education and family orientations appear to be crucially important reasons for underrepresentation. Further, he argued that women were culturally confined within the household in the past due to the prevalence of patriarchal values and prejudices. As a result, the top executive post of civil service is occupied by men and the top-level administrative decision-making process is subjugated by men.

### **Women Leadership**

Every civil service organization has a leader who sways and boosts subordinates to work for the grasp of goals. In civil service organizations, a leader may be men or women. In general, most of the Nepali civil service organizations are led by men. However, there is also a civil service

organization which is led by women officials. In this respect, we also interviewed women officials who lead civil service organizations. Women officials are committed to breaking the traditional beliefs which streaked them from obtaining a leadership position. Even though Nepali traditional beliefs favor men leadership but in present time many women officials proved that leadership is not gendered specific. Civil service leadership demands preparedness, commitment, and inherent or cultivated qualities to lead administration. This preparedness, commitment, and qualities can exist either in men or women. In the context of administrative leadership, women official said:

Definitely, working as an administrative leader is challenging for everyone and I am not exceptional. I always inspire my team to accomplish organizational goals within time and equally care for their personal growth and development. I tried to work by adopting the principle of participation, cooperation, and collaboration. Being a women administrative leader, subordinates sometimes take me lightly because of men ruling attitude and mindset guided by socio-cultural norms and values. It is also interesting to note that subordinates and service users who are older than me generally called me sister due to the prevalence of gender stereotyping. In the same place, if men, they said sir to him. In sum up, women have less control than men in administrative leadership culturally or socially.

Women can also become an administrative leader is not socially and culturally inserted in the mindset. Socially and culturally constructed gender image of leadership is taken for granted and never questioned. Traditionally, women were not taken as administrative leader. It is result of patriarchal society where leadership and power are assigned to men (Wenniger & Conroy, 2001). As a result, men are always on upper in civil service and they are directing, controlling, and governing the organization. In spite of this, the pattern of being women's leadership in Nepali civil service is slowly increasing. Women leadership is also taking as positive in civil service in present days which is a good symbol for society and administration transformation. Equality in administrative leadership is important for efficient and effective administration.

### **Family and Work-Life Balance**

The family and work-life balance is the equilibrium attained between the demands of a person's work and private lives. The work environment and the family have become the two important institutions in life (Sundaresan, 2014). Definitely, balancing family and work life is not easy but even more difficult

when it comes to women. The difficulty of balancing family and work life is not new for Nepali women who are working as a civil service official. Women officials who are working in Nepali civil service is facing a serious problem in balancing family and work-life due to triple roles, reproductive, productive, and managing, as expected by society. Women's natural biological reproductive role has also been used in the attempt to confine them to the home (Adusah-Karikari, & Ohemeng, 2014). Traditionally, women are supposed to have greater roles related to maintaining and managing a family than men. Women tended to dedicate more hours for family activities rather than men (Eby et al., 2005).

Men are a line up their work responsibilities in excess of their family responsibilities to afford monetary reward to support their families while women fulfill their domestic commitment to maintaining their family life. If women officials want to work outside, she has to consider family work as primary and professional life as secondary. Traditionally, women have suffered from the stereotypic perception that women as wives, mothers, and daughters are expected to support and to be directed by men (Tompkins, 1988). In Nepali society, even today women consider it their duty to obey their men and to comply with their duty is what they think (Acharya, 2017). Social and cultural impediments also did not allow many women to do any outside work; they were expected to remain at home and do only household chores (Paudel, 2017). Women are expected to do domestic work, child caring and rearing, adult care, caring for the sick/elder, entertaining the guest, water and fuel-related work, and other household affairs. Ignoring these responsibilities for official work creates a clash in their family. Unseen socio-cultural and organizational surrounding norms and values influence family and work-life balance for women officials in Nepal. Hence, it is not easy for women to manage a successful career and a happy family life. Regarding family and work-life balance, women official said:

As women official, maintaining equally family and work life is challenging for me. I must perform all the household chores before and after office hour as early as possible. If I failed to perform household chores before and after office hour it creates sometimes quarrel in my family. Our socio-cultural tradition and values consider the family work first and official work second and I must comply with. I felt more difficulty when I have to work late especially after office hours to meet a deadline and also care of my children in the absence of childcare center in office premises. I always think if I were men I would not be as restricted as to where I am today. I said this not because of a lack of competency but a traditional division of gender role.

Women officials are becoming more aware of their family and work-life balance. Mostly, two main issues are seen for the balance of family and work-life of women officials. First supporting/unsupporting family and second is the organization environment/culture. If a family is supportive and helpful, women are getting easier to balance family and work life and vice-versa. The women officials who are receiving full backing and assistance from their family are enjoying their working life which in turn helps them in professional growth and development. Similarly, the role of organizational environment/culture in family work-life balance cannot be ignored. Gender-sensitive working environment/culture and facilities like motivation, stress-less assignments, maternity leave, lactation areas, extended childcare holidays, on-site childcare center, job sharing, part-time work, drop/pickup from home and flexi-time/flexible working can help women officials to maintain family and work-life balance.

### **Women's Career Development**

Career development is very important for civil service officials. Every civil service officials adopt different strategies for learning and improving knowledge and skills for career development. Women's career development in civil service is not as easy as men. Many women officials seem unhappy about their career development opportunities. Family work-life balance, mentorship, training are some of the issues which are responsible for women career development in civil service. Similarly, women's own view of themselves and their attitude to work are also potential barriers to their career progress (McStravog, 2006). As per Worrall et al. (2010), lack of work-life balance as the main barrier to women's career advancement. Women officials commonly find themselves in a problematic situation for career development because of family duties as we mentioned in family work-life balance section. Women's reproductive roles and household responsibilities hamper women from focusing on their career success (Naff, 1994; Newman, 1993). Similarly, these roles and responsibilities force women to pay greater social costs than their men counterparts and eventually to make their careers secondary, if not sacrificed altogether (Alkadry & Tower, 2011; Lennon & Rosenfield, 1994; Noonan, 2001). Women officials have to maintain all their reproductive and household duties and responsibilities properly before perusing the carrier development opportunity nationally or internationally which is the main challenge for many women officials. As per Acharya (2017), Nepali culture places men in the center in any social, political, and institutional life, and women are always marginalized as women are allowed limited freedom.

Further, he argued that the view of the men at the center has influenced the political and administrative culture of Nepal.

Similarly, mentoring is another issue which fixed career development in civil service. Mentors are frequently characterized as individuals who are committed to providing support to junior members in an effort to remove organizational barriers and to increase the upward mobility of their protégés (Higgins & Kram, 2001). Definitely, mentoring is important for both men and women officials but it is more serious for women. Mentoring programs can enhance women mentees' career development subsequently contributing to improving the gender balance in management (Maxwell, 2009). Women in men-dominated organizations often have limited mentoring opportunities (Klenke, 1996). During the interview, women officials were reported that women are not well incorporated into mentoring and give less attention and support for career development. Women officials need mentorship for effectively and efficiently executing of their defined duties but much time they don't get mentorship as they expected which in turn hamper their career development.

Likewise, the role of training and education cannot be ignored in the career development of civil service. Education and training enhance knowledge and skill as well as a positive change of attitude for the career development of civil service officials. As per Tharenou, Litmer, and Conroy (1994), training is most favorable to men as compared to women. In this context, women officials reported that generally men officials are nominated for international training which is completely biased and unfair. Even in national-level training, men are nominated although civil service act clearly mentions that official should be nominated based on their seniority but sometimes this rule is violated. Further, women officials argued that for the career promotion training which is provided at Nepal Administrative Staff College; clearly mention in their letter that nomination for the participating civil service officials is based on their seniority. It is also violated which in turn adversely influence career development. Women should be given equal opportunities for training the same as men for their career development without any constraints.

### **Acceptance of Innovative Ideas**

Innovative idea in a civil service organization is a new thought which strengthens and boosts the efficiency and effectiveness in the performance. It is a burning issue in the civil service organizations which is demanded by people for their welfare nation. Every civil service organizations want innovation in their workplace but awkwardly, the majority of the civil service

organizations failed to create an innovative culture because of resistance for change. Doubtlessly, innovation is seen as a positive vibe in civil service organization but it is perceived as undesirable by many officials as argued by research participants. There is a question that people can benefit from innovation. Civil service organizations should not be afraid to think differently and deliver public service innovatively. Women officials are aware of innovation in civil service. They want to change the traditional or classical way of service delivery but they realized that innovation is hard to achieve alone; collective/team actions, support and time are required. In this regard women official argued:

I had an innovative idea to support the existing store service delivery process in my organization. I shared with colleagues and my senior. Initially, I was blamed by colleagues. I convinced my immediate supervisor. He supported me and created an enabling environment which helps me to change store service delivery mechanism. For this, I was praised by my supervisor which motivated me to execute my defined duties differently.

Each and every innovative idea should be valued and accepted by organizations whether ideas come from men and women. An innovative idea is not gendered specific and should not be labeled as gender. It comes in every person mind who wants to see positively and differently change in the organizations. Nepali civil service organization is blamed for its traditional style of working. Hence, there is an immediate need for innovation in civil service organizations. Any employee, whether men or women, comes with innovative ideas, organizations should create enabling environment and give them the responsibility with full support to execute it. Definitely, civil service officials are competent because they are merit-based appointment. Employees of civil service are human assets which must be positively used. For this, civil service organizations should create a favorable environment to share their knowledge, experience, skills, proposals, and suggestions to make civil service effective and efficient.

### **Field Level Problem**

Women officials who work in civil service organizations have to work in field-level equally as men. The field level experience of women officials is different than desk work and produce positive and/or negative experiences. Before deploying women officials to the field level work, organization head and immediate supervisor give more priority to men as argued by research participants. There may be various reasons like frequent travels, security issues, and physical challenges. As a result, women officials get less priority

in field-level work as compared to men. Having fewer opportunities to work at the field level, make women officials lag behind in experiencing firsthand the real ground reality which in turn hamper in career growth and development indirectly. Regarding field level work, women official argued:

Unquestionably, working in the field level is very important for strengthening knowledge and skills for everyone. But the problem is that the opportunity to work at the field level for women officials is less available. Many times, we women officials ourselves do not prefer to work in the field because of various family life issues but it does not mean that we do not want to work in the field. We need motivation, support, and the favorable environment from the office as well as from family to work in the field level. I have also worked in field level during the 2015 earthquake. I experienced a negative attitude of society as well as colleagues. In my view, this may be an effect of men/patriarchy influenced mindset and lower status of women in the community. As being women official, I expected more support and help but I got less from colleagues and community people as well.

Women officials should not be treated as a gender basis to work at the field level. They are also equally capable as men and only require an equal opportunity and the favorable environment as well as support. Certainly, working in the field level as a women official has both opportunity and challenges. If women officials get favorable and enabling environment from organizations, they can translate their challenges into opportunities for career growth and development. Problems and challenges at field level work are inevitable but be committed and prepared to face it.

### **Coping Strategies**

There are various visible and invisible issues and challenges for women in civil services at all levels. Many issues and challenges appear due to gender inclined mindset and masculine organization culture. This inclined mindset is the result of traditional cultural value-based social and family socialization which is also reflected in organization culture. Principally, it is said that organizational culture should be gender-sensitive and friendly at all level at any cost. However, in practice, evidence shows that organizational culture has not been gender-sensitive and friendly as expected. It is hidden and unhidden gender influenced behavior which is experienced by women officials at various levels in civil service organizations. During the interview, we also asked with women officials about coping strategies of gender inclined behavior. We found that coping strategies adopted by women officials are determined by family socialization and their socio-economic setting. The women officials who

brought up and socialized without any gender discrimination in the family with high socio-economic status; they directly or indirectly resist gender inclined behavior by raising their voice with organization head and supervisor. Hence, family socialization and socio-economic status matter in contending gender tendentious behavior in the organizations. It is also interesting to note that women officials are also using laws and policies to combat gender inclined behavior in organizations. There are also women officials who just changed the organizations if they do not find it suitable. However, many women officials are prepared to face the gender inclined organization behavior and qualifying themselves to defend challenge with oozing self-confidence.

## **CONCLUSION**

Representation of women in the civil service is the symbol of gender justice. Women representation in Nepali civil service is increasing gradually at all levels of administration than ever before. There is little disagreement that women should be equally enjoying civil service as their counterpart. Conversely, in practice, Nepali civil service is controlled with unseen masculine organization culture which hampered woman official to manage professional life efficiently and effectively. Women officials are experiencing gender inclined behaviors because of gender-biased mindset. This biased mindset is molded by family and society socialization. Social and culturally constructed gender image and value possess men on top and women at the ground in the organizations. This is because Nepali society is patriarchy in nature which shapes the masculine attitude, perception, and viewpoints in the civil service directly or indirectly. Civil service is only democratic and representative when meaningful and valuable representation is guaranteed and deconstructed traditional socially-culturally constructed gender image. Changed and modified cultural gender image and value is required in civil service for the efficient and efficient representation of women.

---

## **REFERENCES**

- Acharya, T. (2017). Nepal Himalaya: Women, politics, and administration. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 18, 197-208.
- Adusah-Karikari, A., & Ohemeng, F. L. K. (2014). Representative bureaucracy in the public service? A critical analysis of the challenges confronting women in the civil service of Ghana. *International Journal of Public Administration*, 37, 568-580. doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2013.879882
- Alkadry, M. G., & Tower, L. E. (2011). Covert pay discrimination: How authority predicts pay differences between women and men. *Public Administration Review*, 71, 740-750.

- doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2011.02413.x
- Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond neopositivists, romanticists, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review*, 28, 13-33. doi: 10.2307/30040687
- Askvik, S., Jamil, I., & Dhakal, T. N. (2011). Citizens' trust in public and political institutions in Nepal. *International Political Science Review*, 32, 417-437.
- Bhattarai, P. C., & Maharjan, J. (2016). Ethical decision making among women education leaders: A Case of Nepal. In *Racially and Ethnically Diverse Women Leading Education: A Worldview*, 219-233. doi.org/10.1108/S1479-366020160000025013
- Creswell, J. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Sage Publications.
- Dolan, J. A., & Rosenbloom, D. H. (2003). *Representative bureaucracy: Classic readings and continuing controversies*. Armonk, New York, USA: ME Sharpe.
- Eby, L. T., Casper, W. J., Lockwood, A., Bordeaux, C., & Brinley, A. (2005). Work and family research in IO/OB: Content analysis and review of the literature (1980–2002). *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 66, 124-197. doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2003.11.003
- Government of Nepal. (1993). *The civil service act 1993 (second and fourth amendment)*. Kathmandu: Nepal Law Commission.
- Government of Nepal. (2007). *The interim constitution of Nepal 2007*. Kathmandu: Nepal Law Commission.
- Government of Nepal. (2015). *The constitution of Nepal 2015*. Kathmandu: Nepal Law Commission.
- Groeneveld, S., & Van de Walle, S. (2010). A contingency approach to representative bureaucracy: Power, equal opportunities and diversity. *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 76, 239-258. doi.org/10.1177/0020852309365670
- Higgins, M. C., & Kram, K. E. (2001). Reconceptualizing mentoring at work: A developmental network perspective. *Academy of Management Review*, 26, 264-288. doi.org/10.5465/amr.2001.4378023
- Jamil, I., & Dangal, R. (2009). The state of bureaucratic representativeness and administrative culture in Nepal. *Contemporary South Asia*, 17, 193-211. doi.org/10.1080/09584930802346497
- Kingsley, J. D. (1944). *Representative bureaucracy: An interpretation of the British civil service*. Yellow Springs, OH: The Antioch Press.
- Klenke, K. (1996). *Women and leadership: A contextual perspective*. Springer Publishing Company.
- Lennon, M. C., & Rosenfield, S. (1994). Relative fairness and the division of housework: The importance of options. *American Journal of Sociology*, 100, 506-531.
- Lim, H. H. (2006). Representative bureaucracy: Rethinking substantive effects and active representation. *Public Administration Review*, 66, 193-204. doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00572.x
- Lofland, J., & Lofland, L. H. (1999). Data logging in observation: Fieldnotes. In A. Bryman & R. G. Burgess (Eds.), *Qualitative Research (Vol. 3)*. London: Sage.
- Maxwell, G. (2009). Mentoring for enhancing females' career development: the bank job. *Equal Opportunities International*, 28, 561-576.

- doi.org/10.1108/02610150910996407
- Mcstravog, D. (2006). Barriers to female progression to senior positions within the 26 district councils in Northern Ireland. Women's Development Steering Group, Regne Unit [http://www.womeninlocalcouncils.org.uk/research].
- Meier, K. J. (1975). Representative bureaucracy: An empirical analysis. *American Political Science Review*, 69(2), 526-542.
- Meier, K. J. (1993). Latinos and representative bureaucracy testing the Thompson and Henderson hypotheses. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 3, 393-414.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Qualitative research and case study applications in education. revised and expanded from" case study research in education.* Jossey-Bass Publishers, 350 Sansome St, San Francisco, CA 94104.
- Mosher, F. C. (1968). *Democracy and the public service.* New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mosher, F. C. (1982). *Democracy and the public service.* Oxford University Press on Demand.
- Myers, M. D. (2013). *Qualitative research in business and management.* Sage.
- Nachmias, D. & Rosenbloom, D. H. (1973). Measuring bureaucratic representation and integration. *Public Administration Review*, 33, 590-597.
- Naff, K. C. (1994). Through the glass ceiling: Prospects for the advancement of women in the federal civil service. *Public Administration Review*, 507-514. doi: 10.2307/976669
- Naff, K. C. (2007). Passive representation in the South African bureaucracy: A lot has happened, but its a lot more complicated. In a presentation at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association.
- National Planning Commission. (1980). *Sixth plan (1981 -1985).* Kathmandu: National Planning Commission.
- Newman, M. A. (1993). Career advancement: Does gender make a difference?. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 23, 361-384. doi.org/10.1177/027507409302300404
- Noonan, M. C. (2001). The impact of domestic work on men's and women's wages. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 63, 1134-1145. doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2001.01134.x
- Paudel, B. (2013). *Inclusion in civil service: Issues and initiatives.* Government of Nepal, Ministry of General Administration Project to Prepare Public Administration for State Reforms.
- Paudel, N. R., (2016). Women's participation in Nepalese civil service: A comparative analysis from gender perspective. Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Paudel, N. R. (2017). Limits of inclusion: Women's participation in Nepalese civil service. In *Women in Governing Institutions in South Asia* (pp. 193-208). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Perakyla, A. (1997). Reliability and validity in research based on tapes and transcripts. *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice*, 201-220.
- Public Service Commission. (2018). *Public service commission's fifty-nine annual report.* Kathmandu: Public Service Commission.
- Riccucci, N. M., & Saidel, J. R. (1997). The representativeness of state-level bureaucratic leaders: A missing piece of the representative bureaucracy puzzle. *Public Administration Review*, 423-430.

- Saltzstein, G. (1979). Representative Bureaucracy and Bureaucratic Responsibility: Problems and Prospects. *Administration & Society*, 10, 465-475. doi.org/10.1177/009539977901000404
- Selden, S. C. (1997). The promise of a representative bureaucracy: Diversity and responsiveness in a government agency. New York/London: ME Sharpe.
- Sowa, J. E., & Selden, S. C. (2003). Administrative discretion and active representation: An expansion of the theory of representative bureaucracy. *Public Administration Review*, 63, 700-710. doi.org/10.1111/1540-6210.00333
- Stake, R. E. (1995). The art of case study research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.) (pp. 443-466). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Sundaresan, S. (2014). Work-life balance—implications for working women. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 7, 93-102.
- Tharenou, P., Latimer, S., & Conroy, D. (1994). How do you make it to the top? An examination of influences on women's and men's managerial advancement. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37, 899-931. doi.org/10.2307/256604
- Thielemann, G. S., & Stewart Jr, J. (1996). A demand-side perspective on the importance of representative bureaucracy: AIDS, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. *Public Administration Review*, 168-173. doi: 10.2307/977204
- Tompkins, J. (1988). Sources of measurement error and gender bias in job evaluation. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 9, 1-16.
- Wenniger, M. D., & Conroy, M. H. (2002). Gender equity or bust!: On the road to campus leadership with women in higher education. John Wiley & Sons.
- Worrall, L., Harris, K., Stewart, R., Thomas, A., & McDermott, P. (2010). Barriers to women in the UK construction industry. *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*, 17, 268-281. doi.org/10.1108/09699981011038600
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks (CA).
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed). Thousand Oaks.