

Governance and service delivery system in federal Nepal: a discourse on accountability and responsibility of province and local governments

Abstract

This paper is an attempt to discourse the effects and impress of service delivery structure and functional hierarchy of federal government of Nepal focusing on policy frame, legal framework, administrative structure and service delivery to the people with respect to policy, institutional structure, functions, programs, implementation processes, overall outcomes and determinants. Its main aim is to trace out the state input process and community level output scenario and impressions undertaking principles of good governance as to analyze roles, responsibility and accountability of three tier governments. The paper is concentrated to clarify what implementing policies and process involve in complex delivery system to ensure quality, access and equity of government services at all levels, building on institutional infrastructure in different local government units and provinces. Efforts were delved into the reasons behind the failure to provide effective service delivery and suggest measures to develop the concept of good governance and pro-people service delivery mechanism in federal system which could be a purposeful analysis and multidirectional change process to put a specific policy into practice that bring out significant changes in relation to accountable, responsible, transparent, development friendly government mechanism across the country.

Applying qualitative method of inquiry, descriptive research design and content analysis technique the paper found that there are many challenges and issues to provide effective service to the service receivers due the unclarity of legal rights and duty of local governments to formulate their needed policy provisions, development guidelines, and resource mobilization. Similarly, lack of proper coordination and collaborative culture among the local, province and federal governments prescribed duties, and responsibilities of all tier governments have not translated accordingly. The existing scenario of policy, politics, public, and compact conditions of federal government of Nepal has not reflected the good governance performance and overall situation demands to make radical changes in service delivery institutional structure and functional mechanism in order to build the impress and impacts of federal governments service delivery system is more accountable, responsible transparent, and being pro-people. Paper highlighted the important task of government to facilitate the process and institutional set up of service delivery system under four dimensions smart policy design, inclusive stakeholder engagement, conducive context and a coherent implementation strategy. Based on these dimensions, the efforts further require a generic framework and a complementary set of applicable plans for action that can guide policy makers to design, analyze and carry out their policy implementation processes.

Keywords: federal system, good governance, government responsibility, smart policy, functional hierarchy

Volume 6 Issue 4 - 2022

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Received: July 19, 2022 | **Published:** July 25, 2022

Introduction

Nepal has been transformed from a unitary state consisting of five development regions and 75 districts to a federal system of government. Given the recent political upheaval in the country, the new federal structure is composed of seven province, and 753 local governments. The federal constitution of Nepal has prioritized good governance in relation to effectiveness of public service delivery to all three levels of governments.¹

Service delivery and provide basic state facilities and duties are assigned to all three levels. The functional assignments of the three tier governments under the new system of federal government include the functions of the former ministries of council at central level, province level and local government level. The former departments, centers, and allied agencies are restructured for the effective service delivery. The federal or central government has also shifted from focusing on policy and regulation to monitoring sector developments, providing guidelines and tools for training, and supervising local governments.

At the provincial level, seven ministerial government structure and functional tie up has been built to provide effective service to the local people.

There is a great potency of federal system as a mode of collective sharing of power and resources in the sense of self and others to gear human life's possibilities and perils. Federal government is useful to capture the specific and chanting meaning of the three most basic and formative dimensions of social organization, spatiality, time and being as the spatial, temporal and social orders of human civilization² as to basic to improve service delivery leading to participatory, transparent, and collaborative working mechanism with a strong political commitment, better policy and institutional coordination and coherence, and good governance in all tiers of government by providing demand-driven socio-economic services.³ Regarding this, Nepalese federal government has undertaken a series of initiatives in order to better integrate and improve the delivery of services to its citizens which seen to initiate at the province and local government

level. Undertaking initiations taken by three tier governments and their roles and responsibilities it is necessary to see the effectiveness and facing challenges that hinder to implement the designed policies and programs at federal, province and local government level in terms of setting the goals, vision and strategies to integrate the delivery of services across these administrative systems.

The effective intervention and service delivery is one of the most talked issues of federal system today. Increasing importance and legal regulations on service delivery systems have drawn growing attraction to the researches on these subjects have increased tremendously because it contains matters such as family-centered practice, children, service provider, natural environment, inclusion, transition, and evaluation.

The transition from a unitary to a federal system of governance remains challenging with several laws and regulations, institutional arrangements at all government levels, and policies and guidelines. Substantial overlaps, duplications, and ambiguities among government tiers remain as the big challenges for implementing development activities accordingly. Most sector ministries and departments at the federal level have been downsized or restructured as several functions have been devolved to subnational governments (SNGs). Executing and implementing agencies of previous government system have been changed, and regional and district offices under federal sector ministries have been closed. This has disrupted service delivery as the provincial governments are only newly established and local governments do not have adequate institutional capacity undertake all the assigned functions. The functioning of the SNGs has also been affected by the lack of human resources and low capacity of several staff members.⁴

Conceptually, service delivery and governance can be understood as the set of incentives, accountability arrangements, and rules that affect the way key actors including policy makers and provider organizations and their managers and staff—are held accountable for their behaviors and ability to deliver high-quality services with efficiency and responsiveness.⁵ In this regard, governance can be seen as a set of principal-agent relations that are defined by the incentives facing each of the agents and the accountability mechanisms that are available to the principals in the spatial organizations so that the term policy makers refer to the high-level elected political representatives, officials or civil society responsible for carrying out legislative and regulatory responsibilities, and providers are the program managers, local officials, and others involved in the administration and delivery of services, as well as frontline providers, such as doctors, teachers, and social workers, who interact directly with the public. The accountability framework of the 2004 WDR provides useful starting point for identifying the entry points for influencing the quality, efficiency, and responsiveness of service delivery. The main channels for strengthening accountability are the institutions and relationships between the three sets of actors: policy makers and politicians, service providers, and citizens.⁶ First, the compact between politicians and providers depends on the quality of the institutions, rules, regulations, and incentive arrangements made through channels such as intergovernmental institutional relations, civil service and human resource policies, budget planning and execution, public financial management, transparency and information mechanisms, regulatory systems, monitoring and evaluation, and formal controls, such as external audits.

Generally, the government structure in federal system is assumed multi-party functioning democracy adopting planning measures that genuinely regard the prevailing sentiments of people to capacitate

the entire economic and social development to bring uniformity in national, standard and a balanced regional development in integrated and organic way for the overall modification of the physical landscape into compact cultural landscape. In the social and economic fields, the federal set-up has to rise ensuring the evolution of very disparate patterns of development among the states of federation where provincial sentiments are relatively strong to demand social account which needs to resolve with special arrangement through sole planning and development of local economics in uniformity. Thus, the social and economic development and the impress of federal government is the function of governmental structure, process and the stage of resource mobilization by underlying cultural geography and social philosophies.⁷

Governmental spending is a major element that influences individual lives and life chances in modern societies which is directly impressed by the public policy and government presence in every sphere of citizen life is necessary from the cradle to grave in the welfare model of federal government prior to protective and productive functions. The productive functions of federal government involve in creating policies that maintain the health of countries' economy, providing the conditions for an expansion of its capacity to improve the overall standard of living and act to restimulate an economy. Thus, public expectations towards federal government are providing protection of economy, producing state social as well as economic functions.⁸

Regarding above mentioned interdisciplinary approaches to discuss the effectiveness and impress of federal government service delivery study could become the benchmark to ensure quality in service in terms of access, equity and comprehensive of newly introduced federal government system. The pillar of the quality and demand-driven government service is the architecture of the whole political system that is expected to deliver the desired outcomes with assistance from various stakeholders including administrative machinery and most importantly the citizen lying on the bottom-most layer of the pyramid. Our federal governments in all three tiers are struggling with a big challenge to ensure demand-driven quality service which needs to incorporate approaches, principles and modalities of good governance to find a solution to ensure gainful territorial identity and spatial process as the enhancing factors of reflective service delivery with an ability to execute a specific task in planned way. Therefore, this article stressed on desired framework has to be developed for the effective service delivery to flourish the novelty of locals as the beauty of federal government system.

Methodology

The paper focused to investigate the nature of the impact of service delivery in federal administrative mechanism where the adopted policy framework, planning design implementing procedures and impression of service receivers were reviewed in-depth. The process of effectiveness review was taken as an objective reality that can be studied empirically, as well as a subjective and unique process through which individuals make sense of their own experiences.⁹ The mixed method framework combines both qualitative and quantitative methods has been designed to collect the needed information. Actually, this attempt was a sequential exploratory strategy, where national policy framework and literature available at global level and analyzed to generalize findings as described by Aarons.¹⁰ Service delivery and the citizen-centric approach have been employed to analyze the key processes, principles practical guidelines and tool in the area of service delivery which play a vital role to reflect the vision of democratic services on the enlargement policy. Thus, it

was exploratory and comparative in design nature to trace out the overall impress and effects of service delivery mechanism at local, province and federal levels. Interdisciplinary study approach was used to identify and overcome the issues related to service delivery system for legitimizing the location specific innovative practices. Here, local novelty can be taken as the interdisciplinary approach or citizen science to utilize service receivers' perception and conception on service delivery structure and functional hierarchy of the federal system.

Results, discussion and interpretation

Spirit of the constitution

After promulgation of the Constitution Nepal 2015, Nepal embraced the federal structure of government comprising seven provincial and 753 local governments, each with their own legislative, judicial, and executive powers. The federal structure of government has postulated to provide wider frame work for socio-economic development in an inclusive way to provide equal opportunities and resource supports to across the country through the dynamic process of functions of three-tire governments. However, its bottlenecks are rooted in poor implementation of policies and plans, low levels of investment, uncertain political commitment and weak governance, especially a lack of an effective service delivery mechanism to social development and infrastructure sectors. Around five years services delivery system of federal government and its impress and effects need to be analyzed how the service delivery system impact on the institutional arrangements and governance of the social and economic development and infrastructure extension.¹¹

Federal government of Nepal is struggling to prove its success in all spheres of political economy of the country however, the decentralization and devolution of power and authorities especially from federal to province and local governments has not seen smooth or without strings attached. Therefore, the slogan of federalism brings government at the doorstep of the people is not felt by the common in practice and it exists only on paper till now. The local governments lack full control over and capacity for managing their administrative and finance staff based on transparency, accountability, and responsibility from sound governance, revenue generation, and satisfactory budget expenditure. This, situation indicates to fully institutionalize the federal system as enshrined in the country's constitution especially in social and economic development and infrastructure facility extension. Conceptually, there is a clear socio-political as well as eco-ecological productivity increase if all three levels of governments are worked adopting the principles of collaboration and cooperation. But the change and achievement at the implementation level is not seen which need to improving the local government leadership and institutional arrangements based on the principles of competency and the solidary role of institutions that are working toward meeting the goal of effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the system. Beside this, all three tires' governments have to be worked for one common vision and outcome of economic development and political cohesion, ecological stability and social security by improving the entire set of activities from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation of the development activities. Regarding the issues and challenges to implement effective service delivery system demands to provide a snapshot of the prevailing situation in all provinces and local governments in order to improve the functions of all level governments.¹²

Socio-political activities leave their impress upon the organizations of space in deep and widely ramified effects on landscape which is

stamped by the functioning of effective service delivery system of political system and administrative structure.

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Theoretical framework provides an understanding of how the concepts of open government devolution, transparency, accountability and service delivery are defined, and how they relate to larger theoretical concepts and debates, the empirical literature that supports a relationship between these ideas is slightly less complete. As noted above, existing situation of Nepal is often aspirational or speculative in nature, and do not provide sufficiently rigorous evidence that how the federal government policy inputs translate into accountability or service delivery outcomes. Moreover, the situation-specificity of this attempt provides limited external validity for other contexts. A big drawback to this system is a paucity of analysis of the proximate conditions in place that is, defining what is necessary and sufficient from a political economy perspective to ensure that federal system has its intended impacts. Likewise, with respect to the empirical literature, numerous studies have been completed at global level using sophisticated large experimental and quasi-experimental designs to link service mechanism in particular to changes in levels of government accountability or the provision and outcomes of services. However, in Nepalese context, there are many lacking and drawback to implement effective services in terms of transparency and accountability initiatives such as participatory budgeting, and social audits and collaboratives government functions. As is the case with such granular qualitative analysis, many issues related to province level service in particular moments in time, again, reduces their comparability to other contexts.¹³

Function of federal administrative structure

Poor information has been found in Nepalese context as the major roles of welfare policies of federal government to provide a minimal level of substance for all, operate various social security schemes with a view to mitigate insecurity and risk, provide public provision of social services and income surrogates, and redistribution of income from the relatively rich to the relatively poor through various policy instruments and action plan of development.¹⁴ As Bahl, et al.,¹⁵ noted that development of a capacity improvement strategy to support long-term capacity enhancement and educational and advocacy programs to the elected representatives, officials and civil society focusing on deepening the understanding of the representative and officials on the principles and mechanisms of federalisms ensuring province and local governments (PLGs) that have necessary with the required skills in areas such as public financial management, procurement, public investment management, citizen engagement, supporting national training institutes to provide formal training for public officials on federalism; and developing mechanisms and processes to boost coordination between and/or among PLGs and the federal government. However, the government performance at all tire governments did not impress the good governance or effective service delivery system at community level.

Considering the view of Dikshit,⁷ on the effective functions of government should bring modification of space through expressions of security, special features of people services, expressions of development activity and the effects of the legal system on cultural landscape. However, at the province and local level there is no any impressed on system and structure of administrative functions and hierarchy of political organizations in Nepal.

The work of Frost¹⁶ shows that federal government generally performs political acts directly transfer natural environment to cultural environment through administrative structure, process and pattern to mobilize territorial resources for connecting alignments of territory to produce uniformity in socio-cultural impress and build uniform function and form for commonplace. The government has put its stamp upon its capitals focusing of roads, canals, health institutions and educational movement for the economic evolution by improving surrounding values. The form and structure of government thus, is fundamental in determining effectiveness as local agent for the location of socio-economic services and government acts as an agency of geographical change. It is, therefore, important to study how federal and province internal administered is organized and functioned on spatial distribution of social services like education, health and infrastructure development. Role of local government units is equally emphasized to the local administration under the broad outlines set by federal and province governments for empowering locals to plan social and economic development in the entire territory. Thus, the federal structure of government should adopt social philosophy and concentrate on economic location and well-being focusing on spatial patterns of social and economic activities.

GSU¹⁷ noted that infrastructure development and social facility improvement plan of actions is the prime focus of federal government to boost capacity of politicians a, officials and citizen at large which is major challenge all province and local governments that continue face during the transition to federalism relates to limited physical infrastructure facilities, administrative equipment and efficient manpower which further caused limited funding for the purchase of adequate quality facilities, identify government priorities for improving the infrastructure capacities to secure administrative facilities with required quality and quantity in a timely manner. Since this requires both a long-term strategy and large-scale investment, a well thought out planning process that can not address this gap in a more systematic and realistic manner.

Pokhrel¹⁸ stated that that in every corner of the globe there are considerable spatial variations in the pattern of government spending and the nature of benefit accruing to the people living in different geographical regions. However, the state financed services like education, health and social security have no regional variation as compared to other sector like in infrastructure, payment of social security benefit and enterprises development. Considering the main principles of government spending in province and local level in federal government of Nepal and its administrative structure it is the matter of investigation whether the patterns of expenditure on social sector specially in educational services have provincial proportionate or not and what are the main impacts of federal government administrative service system on the road to quality insurance of education and inclusive development of cultural geography (ethnic elements within state) that may greatly modify the state-of-art-of -the provincial development affairs through locally based socio-political philosophies and spatial development agendas. Variables of state-local needs, resources and dispositions create the geography room for searching demand in respect of local tax volume and property collection trends of local and province governments where local

school financing is based on local resource capacity or geography of spending i.e., geography of demand for expenditure. Such effectiveness assessment helps to provide future guidelines for better school facilities by allocating resources for all spheres of educational sector.¹⁸ This spatial ethic can lead to a spatial framework that include units of local governments (cities, towns, schools and other service districts), provincial government and federal governments for the economic growth, social change and technological development in sustainable way.

The three-tire hierarchical structure of federal government has to weaken the drives of regionalization through centrifugal forces and increase tie of the all-level governments through centripetal forces from federal and local hierarchical structure that led to new and higher level of development i.e., integration. Such a development could turn produce a socio-cultural and political landscape by man's transactions with environment. The cognition and valuation of impress and effects of federal government role and functions to translate the pre-existing landscape through political process and administrative function is crucial to answer the questions or inquiries whether federal government effective or not to provide needed services to enhance the quality of education in all province level in the principles of equality and inclusion.

Adhikari¹⁹ remarked that the power sharing in federalism refers to the transfer of policy-making and legislative powers from the central government to autonomous subnational assemblies and local governments that have been democratically elected in their respective constituencies. It aims to provide constitutional rights to the local government for more decision-making so that they can be more accountable to their territorial area. Such democratization process makes general citizens more responsible and more influence in the formulation and implementation of development plans strategies and policies. It is further increased well-informed participation with the degree of relevance in decision-making to address the diverse interests of the society by strengthening of legislatures, creation of local political organizations and the encouragement of effective public interest groups.

It is evident from the above-mentioned literature on federal impress and effectiveness of public service delivery to bring out the significant changes in service delivery system in federal government structure and functional hierarchy an unique cross-disciplinary and cross-sectorial overview is urgent need for the state-of-play at the central, province and local government levels which could reveal potential weaknesses and identify possible transferrable answers and the existing best practices and solutions by and for different levels of service delivery administrative structure. Such efforts further help to identify provincial and local level challenges and opportunities underpin the even stronger importance of future cross-sector as well as cross-border public services, their interoperability and reuse of common building blocks. The richness of location-specific service delivery modality could be the basis for further benchmarking and bench learning among different levels and sectors within the federal administrative structure and hierarchy.

Service delivery and good governance

The service delivery is the pivotal to citizen-centered approach in the federal government where the actions are guided by the welfare state. Public administrations and public institutions in the federal system have to be open, efficient and inclusive, providing borderless, personalized, user-friendly, end-to-end digital public services to all citizens in the respective state territory. This can be materialized adopting innovative approaches to design and deliver

better services in line with the needs and demands of citizens by providing opportunities to all in fair environment to facilitate their interactions with stakeholders and with each other. This is clearly stated in Federal Constitution of Nepal that all provinces and local governments have awarded to make their public administration service citizen friendly in which citizens, residents and enterprises (hereafter referred to collectively as citizens) can feel the government support in all spheres of their life and seek information of their affairs easily. Simultaneously, constitution focuses on orientation towards citizens to understand and recognize the tasks of government and duty of responsible citizen in the administrative procedures of good governance with legal traditions. It notes that the concept of good administration is fundamental principles of federal government to set out the standards and inspiring the behavior of public servants in institutions and administrative procedures at all levels of the federal administrative hierarchy. Good governance in terms of effective service delivery has to ensure reliability and predictability (legal certainty), openness and transparency, accountability, and efficiency and effectiveness.

Thus, developing good administration structure is seen an integral part of the welfare state and Constitution of Nepal rightly stresses on political commitment, vision, strategy, defining of priorities and the right sequencing of actions which needs to be translated into practice, with public services designed, delivered and constantly reviewed based on the needs of the user, rather than for the convenience of the administration. However, lacking is appeared to frame proper policy for the development and monitoring mechanisms at all level that has to be in proper place for the service delivery to be coherent, effective and efficient, as well as ensuring equal treatment. Strategic policy documents and action plans are not the goal in themselves, but rather prerequisites for providing citizens with high-quality, easily accessible services. Sound administrative procedures that are applied in practice are essential element, but they have to be accompanied by continuously improved quality of services and equal access to them. The operational translation of effective service delivery has to follow the principles of citizen-oriented service delivery policy, fairness and efficiency of administrative procedures, existence of enablers for public service and access to public services.²⁰

As Ringgold et al.,²¹ mentioned the case studies in low- and middle-income countries, Nepal is failure country in the quality of public service delivery which is demonstrated by high rates of absenteeism among teachers and doctors; leakages of public funds intended for schools, health clinics, or social assistance benefits; and short ages and stock-outs of pharmaceuticals and textbooks. These failures have driven the agenda for better governance and accountability in which governments, civil society, and donors have become increasingly interested in the idea that citizens can contribute to improved quality of service delivery by holding policy makers and providers of services accountable that involve close interactions between providers and the citizens who use their services. The major issue of strengthening capacity in Nepal for effective transition to federalism to manage the implementation of services with devolution of authority to the province and local governments. A comprehensive capacity building program is becoming prime focus to help the implementation process, by enhancing knowledge and delivery capacity of the core teams of government officials and technocrats managing the transition to federalism. Thus, the important national task is appeared to build shared understanding of the design and implementation experiences of various models and aspects of the federalism, the political, economic, social, and cultural considerations underpinning choices pertaining to federalism, real and potential impacts of fiscal decentralization

on development outcomes, success factors of fiscal decentralization in the target sectors, and instruments and value addition of citizen engagement and participation, as well as mechanisms for transparency and downward accountability in the federalism context.²²

Closer and better inclusion of stakeholders is another important aspect of successful federal government to create the basis for truly integrated service delivery. A more inclusive and integrated approach is therefore crucial for making the reform of the public administration a success in Nepal.

Accountability and responsibility of all tier governments

Undertaking above mentioned issues related to service delivery mechanism and its effects, of federal government structure in Nepal three tier governments initiations need to be concentrated to address this by overbridging the traditional policy silos approach within and beyond public administration. Service delivery needs to be undertaken in the country assessed by civil society organizations, development activists, private sector, donors and the public administrations themselves. Such assessment by the public administration complements the in the multi-disciplinary perspective it is to be fully integrated to improve the quality of public services delivered as the joint responsibility and a continuous endeavor of all tier governments, citizen and stakeholders. Therefore, a more systemic and regular monitoring mechanism for reviewing the quality-of-service delivery in the federal administrative structure and hierarchy is needed. This can be translated into practice using given framework of service delivery in federal system (Figure 1).

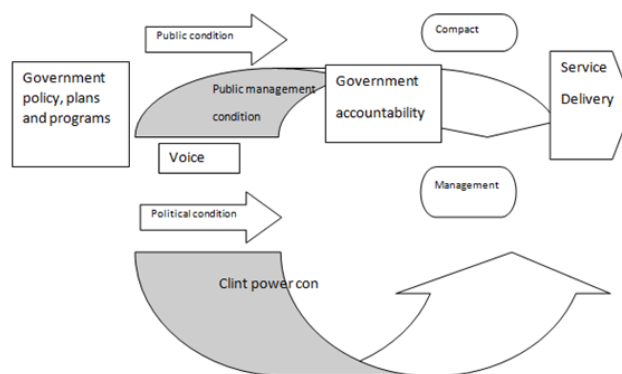


Figure 1 The key premises of federal government service delivery system (Adopted from Michael Christopher Jelenic, 2019 and modified).

This framework is translated into a set of questions and principles for action to guide policy makers to think through, design and analyze their policy implementation process.²³ Answering the question posed in effectiveness of service delivery in the federal system in Nepal, this framework would evaluate four different propositions or premises that can be extrapolated from the implementation experiences, and theoretical contributions on transparency, accountability, and service delivery. This could also ensure the test of the political economy conditions, that are necessary and/or sufficient for the purported relationships to hold including the role played by the larger information-availability environment i.e., publicity condition, citizen voice, government accountability as well as government capacity, and public sector management condition and informal social accountability channels client power condition.

Under the premises of good governance involving citizens can be better performed on how service delivery system makes be effective

for it to be a type of clear, transparent, responsible and accountable in all tier government levels. Service system firstly needs to include information on sectoral performance, both in terms of provision of services (human resources) as well as service delivery outcomes (completion rates and citizen satisfactory level), Secondly, in order for the efficiency of such service provision and outcomes to be determined, transparent information is needed both on how much was budgeted for these services as well as how much was actually spent on these services (e.g., execution rate). Only by having both types of data can demand-side that is, citizens, civil society organizations, researchers, journalists, and other infomediaries make informed judgements as to whether the government is adequately executing its mandate and meeting its responsibilities. However, the transparent access to sectoral and budgetary data is just one element in order to hold government officials accountable, citizens need mechanisms to exercise their voice, either formally or informally. In line with the voice channels could provide a degree of answerability and enforceability which is crucial to ensuring a principle-agent element in the citizen-state interface. Thus, accountability of the all-tier government mechanism is the crux of good governance in Nepal and need is to follow the framework of accountability and responsibility relationship of service delivery mechanism in Nepal (Figure 2).

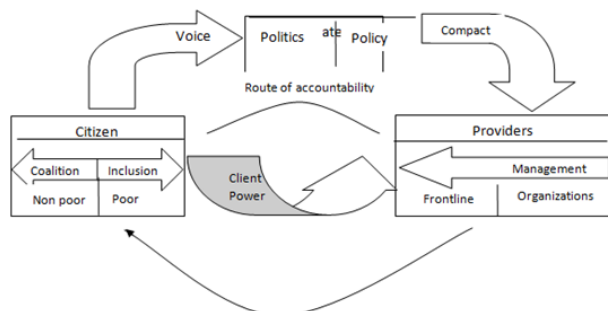


Figure 2 Accountability and responsibility relationship in service delivery (Adopted from World Bank, 2003 and modified).

The accountability and responsibility relationship framework is the proper guide which directs the need of compact between politicians and providers that depends on the quality of the institutions, rules, regulations, and incentive arrangements made through channels such as intergovernmental institutional relations, civil service and human resource policies, budget planning and execution, public financial management, transparency and information mechanisms, regulatory systems, monitoring and evaluation, and formal controls. Equally, the interaction of citizens and policy makers takes place through channels for expressing voice, and representation in parliament and other political bodies. Voice can be facilitated by making information available to citizens, through national-level legal frameworks providing for access to information and by more micro-level tools as report such cards, which provide people with information about how services they use are performing. Similarly, client power refers to the direct influence that citizens can have on service providers. Citizens can exert influence through participation in service delivery, perhaps by assuming some responsibility for delivery, contracting, or involvement in the governance of provision by joining community associations. Choice is an important way in which citizens can express their client power although it is often overlooked as an expression of accountability.²⁴ Client power can also be exercised through the types of social accountability mechanisms including interventions that equip people with information about their rights and services and grievance redress mechanisms. Thus, citizens and users of services can affect social services by influencing the decisions of policy makers

through voice and by influencing the behavior of service providers through client power.²⁵ To exert this influence, they need access to information about services and the capacity and opportunities to use the information and transform it into action. Increasing transparency and providing access to information require efforts to improve the availability of information, as well as investments in the quality, relevance, and timeliness of information. Expanding opportunities for using information also involves building the capacity of users to understand and leverage information for action and opening channels to use it. Individual efforts are translated into collective efforts to hold providers and policy makers accountable choice, and participation in service delivery are potentially important channels for improving accountability. The focus should on social accountability interventions that are increasingly being incorporated into government programs and supports to inform citizens and provide them with opportunities to use information and influence service delivery.

Stakeholders of service delivery system viewed on discussion that the radical transformation in the relations between public authorities and service users is to happen by re-engineering back office and front office functions, ensuring interoperability between systems, and achieving a seamless user interface, by engaging in systems thinking. They further stressed on committed service standards including the accessibility of public services with special attention to the vulnerable groups that correspond to the reasonable expectations, according to user feedback and the whole service portfolio, whether systems remain relevant or could be updated and upgraded, in dialogue with enterprises, citizens and civil society representatives.

Conclusion

The federal government of Nepal has launched an overall program through federal administrative structure and functional hierarchy to improve public services, as one of the top national priorities. There are many legal challenges, policy base issues and service delivery modality, resource mobilization rights and ownership development at the implementation level of socio-economic and political services. The main action related problem is to take fast-paced institutional set up as to federal system to the completion of the first inventory of central government administrative services and their classification and codification according to best U practices; the establishment of the province and local government institutional collaborative set up for delivery of integrated service delivery as a dedicated agency to guarantee public care standards in service delivery to citizens and entrepreneurs. The setup of a citizen- feedback modality, remapping of resource relation and resource endowments, the initiation of a standardization and simplification process in service delivery and the opening of a nationwide information network on services delivery are the main aspects that need to address immediately by the federal, province and local governments in close coordination and collaborative mechanism.

Thus, the institutional set-up for public sector service delivery coordination is to be top priority to make progress towards establishing the accountable, responsible, transparent and pro-public as well as smart techno-efficient administrative structure and functions, as well as the human resource base are the requisite for the effective and efficient management of services delivered to citizens. At the operational level, the key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the citizen-centric services reform include the agency for the delivery of integrated services and public service providers. The federal administration should procedure and develop a systemic approach and action plan for aligning laws and regulations to ensure their proper enforcement. awareness raising activities and target both

civil servants and the general population. Participation of civil society and the academic network in improving public service delivery should be encouraged to propose innovative ideas, actions and policies and launch effective innovation modalities and frameworks. The federal government needs to develop the smart policy framework for effective service delivery mechanism by implementing the reengineering process (reducing the administrative burden for citizens) by approving the draft legal enactments; completing the institutional reform and putting in place citizen voice as shown in Figure 3.

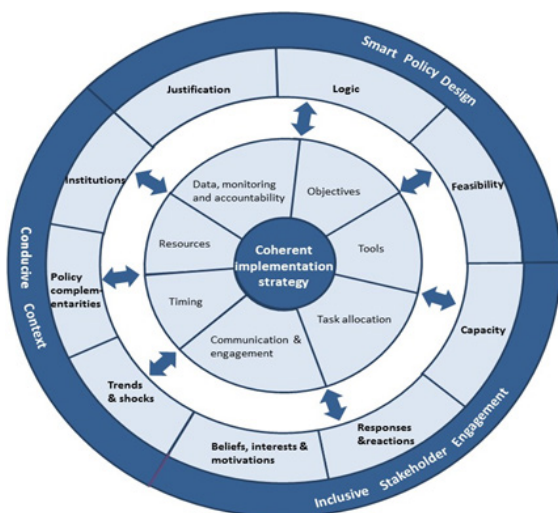


Figure 3 Proposed framework for effective service delivery system in federal administrative structure and hierarchy of Nepal.

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicting interests declared by the authors.

Funding

None.

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