Research Paper

Investigating Representative Bureaucracy in Nepal's Civil Service

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Abstract
This article examines the contemporary impact of representative bureaucracy in Nepal, focusing on the potential of the civil service following the implementation of a reservation system in 2007. The study employs synthesis methods, utilizing a scoping review of secondary data to analyze and interpret information. In Nepal, societal norms have positioned men predominantly at the top, relegating women to lower positions due to entrenched gender stereotypes. Achieving equal gender representation within the civil service not only promotes societal gender equality but also enhances government accountability through a lens of fairness. However, the Nepalese bureaucracy currently reflects a disproportionate representation, with Khas/Arya comprising 63.50%, while Muslim, Dalit, Madhesi, and indigenous groups are significantly underrepresented at 0.60%, 2.30%, 15.40%, and 19.5% respectively. Traditionally, males have dominated all levels of the civil service. To foster a truly representative civil service in Nepal, there is a pressing need to increase the presence of women and marginalized groups. This diversification would empower these groups, allowing for their perspectives to influence policy-making and create an inclusive workplace conducive to a diverse workforce. Furthermore, the article underscores the importance of academic exploration into representation that goes beyond gender, encompassing intersectional identities such as caste, religion, and other demographic factors. Currently, there is a notable gap in such research, which limits a comprehensive understanding of representation in Nepal's civil service.
 Political Interference, Nepotism and Favoritism, Lack of Capacity Building, Bureaucratic Red Tape, Corruption, Inadequate Infrastructure, Political Instability, Ethnic and Caste Divisions, Gender Inequality, and Resource Constraints have been identified as the major obstacles in improving the civil service of Nepal. Addressing these obstacles requires concerted efforts from policymakers, civil society, and stakeholders to promote transparency, accountability, meritocracy, and inclusivity within Nepal's civil service. It involves reforms in governance, legal frameworks, capacity building, and cultural change to foster a more effective and responsive bureaucracy.
Enhancing Diversity and Representation, Merit-Based Recruitment and Promotion, Capacity Building and Training, Transparency and Accountability, Modernization and Technology Adoption, Decentralization and Local Governance, Strengthening Legal and Regulatory Frameworks, Engagement with Civil Society and Stakeholders, Performance Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms, and Promoting Innovation and Creativity have found as the ways of improving the civil service of Nepal's bureaucracy.
Keywords: affirmative task, bureaucracy, civil service, diversity, transparency.

I. Introduction

Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated that when bureaucratic institutions reflect minority groups, they can significantly enhance policy outcomes in critical areas such as education, child protection, and law enforcement (Favero and Molina, 2018; Grissom, Kem, and Rodriguez, 2015; Hong, 2017; Riccucci and Meyers, 2004). Extensive research has explored the diverse mechanisms through which bureaucratic representation fosters favorable outcomes, alongside the conditions required for representation to exert influence on results. Studies have examined key demographic variables, bureaucratic hierarchies, and governmental entities in this context (see Bishu and Kennedy, 2020; Kennedy, 2014). Recent research has endeavored to differentiate and highlight the importance of representation at both the individual and organizational levels (see Meier and Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2016; Favero and Molina, 2018; Vinopal, 2018). Most of the

existing research has primarily focused on bureaucracies within the United States or Western Europe (although see Agyapong, 2018; Song, 2018; Zhang, 2019), and has also examined individual-level factors that influence the relationship between representation and outcomes. This emphasis may explain why numerous governments worldwide, including Nepal's, have adopted inclusive strategies aimed at enhancing the participation of diverse groups in public service. In 2007, the Government of Nepal introduced an inclusive strategy through the second amendment to the Civil Service Act of 1993, as outlined in the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007, with the aim of achieving gender equity in the civil service. Despite the initial recognition of women's issues in the sixth five-year plan (1981-1985), women were not formally allowed to participate in the civil service until the legislative amendment of 2007. According to the statute, 45 percent of positions are reserved, with 33 percent designated for women, leading to a gradual increase in women's presence in government. Data from the Department of Public Personnel Records and the Public Service Commission of Nepal (2018) shows that women constituted only 8% of all civil servants in 2003. This figure rose to 15% in 2010, 18% in 2015, and reached 23% by 2018. Despite these gains, the majority of women continue to occupy lower-level positions, with their representation at senior levels and in policymaking remaining notably low and insignificant. According to Jamil and Dangal (2009), Nepal's administrative culture exhibits a strong bias towards men, who are predominantly favored as leaders and decision-makers. This bias persists not only due to the prevalence of male figures in administrative roles but also because of deeply ingrained social constructs that prioritize men over women. The society's norms and values often uphold male dominance, marginalizing women. Although there is an expectation for civil service organizations to be mindful of religion, caste, region, and gender, this awareness does not consistently translate into practice. Many officials within the public service have witnessed instances of bias based on caste, culture, and gender. Therefore, the aim of this study was to explore the experiences of women and other marginalized individuals working within Nepali civil service organizations regarding these challenges (Jamil & Dangal, 2009). The various challenges found in the Nepali civil service organizations have to be addressed through the inclusive representation in the civil service.

Improving Representative Bureaucracy

The concept of "representative bureaucracy" pertains to the extent to which a nation's bureaucratic structure mirrors specific segments of its population (Kingsley, 1944; Mosher, 1968; Sowa & Selden, 2003). The central premise of the concept is that when a bureaucracy reflects the demographic characteristics of the populace it serves, it is more inclined to meet the expectations and aspirations of the people (Meier & Nigro, 1976). Moreover, it enhances the legitimacy of bureaucratic functions (Selden, 1997), and increases individuals' confidence and willingness to engage in governmental activities (Riccucci et al., 2014). The inclusion of African Americans within the police force enhances African Americans' trust in the institution (Theobald & Haider-Markel, 2009). This increase in trust may stem from the expectation that police officers will provide fair treatment. This underscores the significance of gender representation in bureaucracy, particularly considering that women comprise approximately half of the population in many countries. Meier and Stewart (1992) and Meier (1993a) found in their early empirical studies that the presence of minority public school teachers correlated positively with improved educational outcomes for minority children. Meier (1993a, p. 411) specifically examined how Latino teachers could advocate for the interests of Latino students, providing substantial evidence that passive representation could evolve into active representation.

Representative bureaucracy is a fundamental concept in public administration, referring to a civil service that mirrors the demographic composition of society (Jamil, 2019). In Nepal, the government aims to enhance inclusivity and representation within its bureaucracy, believing that a more diverse bureaucracy can lead to improved service delivery performance. This initiative was underscored by the implementation of reservation policies. Despite being a relatively new concept, inclusivity in bureaucracy has garnered significant attention in recent years, although there remains no consensus on its exact nature or theoretical foundations. The extent to which bureaucrats advocate for the interests of clients who share similar characteristics or backgrounds is referred to as active representation. The idea posits that officials' actions, rather than their personal backgrounds, impact citizens' responses (Selden, 1997). Despite institutional factors that may deter minority bureaucrats from prioritizing their own group's interests (Wilkins & Williams, 2008), their discretion in policy implementation allows minorities to benefit when served by bureaucrats who share similar backgrounds. In these instances, minority clients receive active representation instead of passive representation (Nicholson-Crotty et al., 2016; Selden, 1997; Wilkins & Keiser, 2006). Based on several empirical studies, the reservation policy has led to greater representation of women and other marginalized groups within the Nepali bureaucracy (Chaudhary, 2013; Poudel, 2016; Khadka & Sunam, 2018). However, Chaudhary (2013) pointed out that the strategy was primarily implemented through a top-down approach, which has limited its effectiveness in fostering cohesion, connection, and integration among marginalized groups in society. Similarly, Poudel (2016) argued that several privileged families have exploited legal provisions meant for disadvantaged groups to secure benefits. Dhakal (2013) noted that while the reservation policy for women has successfully attracted more female applicants to the civil service,

there is a need for capacity-building programs to enhance their competitiveness. According to research by Jamil and Dangal (2009), nepotism and favoritism based on familial, caste, and social affiliations persist within the Nepalese Civil Service, undermining the goal of inclusive representation. To address these challenges, Nepal introduced affirmative action or quota policies in 2007 to ensure diverse representation from across the country in its civil service. In 2007, the Government of Nepal introduced an inclusive strategy through the second amendment to the Civil Service Act of 1993, as specified in the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007, to achieve equitable gender representation in the civil service. Despite the initial recognition of women's issues in the sixth five-year plan (1981-1985), women were formally permitted to join the civil service only after the legal amendment of 2007. This amendment mandates that 45 percent of positions be reserved, with women occupying 33 percent of those reserved seats.

The Research questions
The critics and the aforementioned researchers have analyzed about the benefits of the bureaucracy and improving the representative civil service. However, the concept of the inclusive civil service and its effectiveness in Nepali civil service has not been explored properly and effectively. So, the research has attempted in answering the following research questions:
A).   What are the huddles and obstacles of improving the civil service in Nepali bureaucracy?
B).   How can it become possible in enhancing representative bureaucracy in Nepal's civil service?

The objectives of the Research
The objectives of the research have been applied in exploring the modes and policies of avoiding the huddles and obstacles found in the civil service in Nepal's bureaucracy. It has identified the possible way of enhancing the representative bureaucracy in Nepal. The specific objectives of the research are:
A)   To explore the huddles and obstacles of improving the civil service in Nepali bureaucracy.
B)   To investigate the possible ways in enhancing representative bureaucracy in Nepal's civil service.

Methodology of the Research
        This article has sought to examine the state of representative bureaucracy by assessing the capability of the civil service in Nepal. The study has employed synthesis methods, conducting a scoping review of secondary data and information gathered from reports, policy documents, journal articles, books, and other pertinent publications available in both Nepali and English languages. The various reports have been presented through the different tables and it has been analyzed critically on the basis of the information collected through the resources. It has adopted five different tables and it has been scrutinized the facts and analyzed all of the data presented in the tables and it has been compared as well as contrasted with the provided information of the data.

Major Findings
        Major findings of the research have been attempted in enhancing diversity in Nepal's civil service and strategies for inclusive representation for the entire improvement of the country's administrative condition and to serve the nation properly.

Enhancing Diversity in Nepal's Civil Service and Strategies for Inclusive Representation
        In developing nations, where bureaucracies are often perceived as predominantly staffed by elites and therefore not reflective of the interests of the general population, the issue of representative bureaucracy and the attitudes, norms, and values of bureaucrats may be particularly relevant (Hyden, 2005). Moreover, the privileged social backgrounds of bureaucrats may foster norms and beliefs that hinder the development of inclusive policies. Nepal is characterized by significant diversity in gender, caste, culture, language, religion, and geography. The country is home to 125 castes and ethnic groups, 131 spoken languages, and ten religions (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Reservation is a tool used in inclusive policies to enhance government participation by including diverse and historically underrepresented groups. Nepal was selected as a case study to exemplify bureaucratic representativeness due to its unique status as the world's only Hindu state until 2006. Additionally, to ensure the involvement and representation of numerous marginalized groups in public service, Nepal introduced a quota policy in 2007. Affirmative action was initially introduced during the 1995 budget speech, designating 16 socio-economic groups as disadvantaged (Dong, 2016). In August 2007, the second amendment to Nepal's Civil Service Act of 1993 mandated that 45 percent of all vacancies be reserved. These reserved positions were to be filled through separate competitions among candidates from six specified categories, including women (33 percent), Adibasi janajati (27 percent), Madheshi (22 percent), Dalit (9 percent), people with disabilities (5 percent), and others (4 percent). This affirmative action policy was implemented following the abolition of the monarchy in 2006 by the newly established government. According to Paudel (2013), Nepal's Interim Constitution of 2007 includes various inclusive measures aimed at ensuring the participation of all societal groups in national affairs.

Article 21 of the constitution guarantees the right of women, Dalits, Adivasi Janajatis, the Madheshi community, oppressed classes, impoverished farmers, and underprivileged workers to participate in the state structure through proportional representation. Subsequently, the government implemented a policy in the same year mandating 45 percent reservation for disadvantaged individuals through the second amendment to the Civil Service Act of 2007 (Dong, 2016; Paudel, 2013). The various huddles in civil service in Nepal's bureaucracy have been pointed out to be addressed for the improvement of it in the form of the list:

Political Interference: Political influence in civil service appointments, transfers, and promotions undermines meritocracy and professionalism.

Nepotism and Favoritism: Recruitment and promotion based on personal connections rather than qualifications or merit leads to inefficiency and demoralization among competent civil servants.

Lack of Capacity Building: Insufficient training and development opportunities hinder civil servants' ability to acquire new skills and adapt to evolving challenges.

Bureaucratic Red Tape: Complex and lengthy bureaucratic processes delay decision-making and hinder effective service delivery.

Corruption: Widespread corruption within the civil service erodes public trust and diverts resources away from intended beneficiaries.

Inadequate Infrastructure: Lack of modern infrastructure and technology impedes efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery.

Political Instability: Political instability and frequent changes in government can disrupt policy continuity and institutional reforms.

Ethnic and Caste Divisions: Deep-rooted ethnic and caste divisions impact recruitment, promotion, and workplace dynamics, affecting unity and cohesion within the civil service.

Gender Inequality: Gender disparities in recruitment, promotion, and working conditions limit women's representation and participation in decision-making roles.

Resource Constraints: Limited financial resources and budget allocations constrain the implementation of reforms and improvements in civil service operations. Addressing these obstacles requires concerted efforts from policymakers, civil society, and stakeholders to promote transparency, accountability, meritocracy, and inclusivity within Nepal's civil service. It involves reforms in governance, legal frameworks, capacity building, and cultural change to foster a more effective and responsive bureaucracy.

Likewise, some of the ways of improving the civil service in Nepal have been argued in pointwise:

Enhancing Diversity and Representation: Implementing and enforcing inclusive policies that ensure representation of various demographic groups (women, ethnic minorities, marginalized communities) at all levels of the civil service.

Merit-Based Recruitment and Promotion: Strengthening meritocracy in recruitment and promotion processes to ensure that candidates are selected based on qualifications, skills, and performance rather than nepotism or favoritism.

Capacity Building and Training: Providing continuous training and capacity building programs to enhance the skills and competencies of civil servants, ensuring they are equipped to handle diverse responsibilities effectively.

Transparency and Accountability: Establishing transparent procedures and mechanisms for accountability within the civil service to promote integrity, reduce corruption, and build public trust.

Modernization and Technology Adoption: Embracing technological advancements and modernizing administrative processes to improve efficiency, service delivery, and accessibility for citizens.

Decentralization and Local Governance: Empowering local governments and promoting decentralization to ensure efficient service delivery tailored to local needs and priorities.

Strengthening Legal and Regulatory Frameworks: Enacting and enforcing robust laws and regulations that govern civil service operations, ensuring compliance with ethical standards and best practices.

Engagement with Civil Society and Stakeholders: Fostering partnerships with civil society organizations, private sector entities, and other stakeholders to promote participatory governance and responsiveness to citizen needs.

Performance Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms: Establishing comprehensive performance evaluation systems and feedback mechanisms to assess civil service performance, identify areas for improvement, and enhance service quality.

Promoting Innovation and Creativity: Encouraging innovation and creativity within the civil service to address emerging challenges, improve service delivery models, and adapt to evolving societal needs. By implementing these strategies, Nepal can enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and inclusivity of its civil service, ultimately contributing to improved governance and public service delivery.

Table 1
Ethnic Representation in Special and Gazette Class of the Civil Service of No. Caste/Ethnicity Nepal

No.	Caste/Ethnicity	Population	Representation in the Civil Service
1	Babuns	12.74	72.00

2	Chhetris	15.80	15.89
3	Newar Janajatis	5.48	7.14
4	Non-Newar Janajatis	30.83	164
5	Madhesi	12.32	1.17
6	Dalit's	14.99	0.67
7	Muslims	427	0.1
8	Others	3.57	139
	Total	100	100

Source Ministry of General Administration, cited in Dong (2016)

Since the implementation of a quota system in Nepal, the representation of ethnic groups in the public sector has steadily increased. However, the civil service in Nepal remains predominantly occupied by Bahuns and Chhetris, as indicated in Table 1. Despite Bahuns constituting only 12.74 percent of the population, they hold 72 percent of civil service positions in Nepal. Similarly, Chhetris, comprising 15.80 percent of the population, occupy 15.89 percent of public service jobs in the country. These statistics encompass positions across Nepal's higher-level civil service categories (special and gazetted).

Table 2
Women's Position in the Civil Service of Nepal

Rank	2003			2010			2019		
	Male	Female	Female (%)	Male	Female	Female (%)	Male	Female	Female (%)
Special class	41	1	2	67	2	3	67	3	4.29
Gazetted I	304	4	1	416	13	3	522	40	7.12
Garetted II	1399	52	4	2474	113	4	2985	259	7.98
Gazetted III	4909	304	6	7129	593	8	8357	1578	15.83
Non-gazetted	38,596	4224	11	34,813	7632	22	21,106	4953	19.01
Classless	23,385	1432	6	20.366	1446	7	11,667	1218	9.45
Health/ Local	-	-		-	-		20,701	14,866	41.80
Total	69,134	6017	8	65,265	9799	15	65,405	22,917	25.94

Source: cited by Bhul B (2020)

Table 2 illustrates that women's participation in the Nepalese Civil Service is predominantly concentrated in the 'non-gazetted' category, comprising 21% of female public servants. Despite the implementation of the quota system, women continue to be underrepresented in higher-level positions. In 2003, women accounted for 2% of the 'Special Class' and 1% of the 'Gazetted I' class, figures that had only slightly increased to 3% and 7% respectively by 2019. At the Gazetted III level, women's representation grew from 6% to 12% during this period. Women and marginalized social groups have historically faced underrepresentation in Nepal's public sphere, prompting significant advocacy for their inclusion in political and bureaucratic institutions in recent decades, particularly led by women and marginalized communities. Legal measures and constitutional provisions have partly addressed the inclusion of these groups. Intersectional exclusion has amplified support for the inclusion agenda across politics, public discourse, development sectors, and academia in recent years (adapted from Dhakal, 2019; Gurung, 2019).

Table 3
Regions Based Representation in the Top-level Civil Service of Nepal

Geographical Regions	Secretary (%)	Joint Secretary (%)	Undersecretary (%)	Population (%)
Eastern	18	19	23	22
Central	42	39	34	36
Western	29	36	34	19
Mid-Western	8	3	5	13
Far-Western	3	3	4	10
Total	100	100	100	100
N	65	458	3,282	26.5 million

Source: Adapted from Ministry of General Administration (2014)

However, the quota strategy in Nepal has not yet achieved the intended representation from various regions. According to Nepal's Civil Service Act, 2049, nine districts categorized as "backward" have specific allocations for public service appointments. These districts include Accham, Kalikot, Jajarkot, Jumla, Dolpa, Bajhang, Bajura, Mugu, and Humla. This targeted approach may prove more effective than population-based

geographic quotas in ensuring the inclusion of individuals from underserved regions. Table 9 indicates that a majority of government employees hail from Eastern/Province 1, Central/Bagmati, and Western/Gandaki and Lumbini regions, with comparatively fewer from the Mid-Western/Karnali and Far-Western/Sudurpaschim provinces.

Table 4
Current Status of Reservation System in Civil Service of Nepal

F/Y	Open Quota	Employees Selected from Reserved Quota						
		Women	Janajati	Madhesi	Dalit	Disables	Remote	Total
2075-076	2394	625	509	409	168	95	77	1883
2074-075	4007	1088	858	711	292	163	132	3244
2073-074	5273	1383	1026	901	385	189	142	4026
2072073	3300	797	629	503	213	101	95	2338
2071/072	2783	639	547	454	168	95	76	1979
2070/071	2767	626	509	384	173	91	71	1854
2069/070	1707	372	318	254	106	51	335	1136
2068/069	1805	352	280	212	99	40	30	1013
2067/068	2487	471	371	300	105	59	43	1349
2066/067	2080	495	368	319	142	64	43	1431
2065/066	840	117	94	91	36	15	12	365
2064/065	2228	366	245	183	84	33	17	928
Grand Total	31671	7331	5754	4721	1971	996	773	21546

(Source: PSC, 12 years Reports)

In the early history of Nepalese public service, a small segment of Nepalese society held significant control, as depicted in Table 4. During the Rana period, a patronage system was prevalent, with complete allegiance to the monarch at the time. According to data from the Public Service Commission, since Fiscal Year 2064/065, 31,671 employees have been recruited through open quota competitions, while 21,546 have been recruited through reserved quota competitions. This includes 7,331 women, 5,754 Adibasi/Janajati, 4,721 Madhesi, 1,971 Dalit, 996 persons with disabilities, and 773 employees from remote areas. Over the past 12 years, statistics indicate that 60 percent of employees were recruited through open quota competitions, while 40 percent were recruited through reserved quota systems.

Table 5
Caste/ethnic Breakdown of civil Servants in Civil Service of Nepal

Caste Ethnicity	Classless	Non-gazetted	Gazetted			Special Class	Chief Secretar	Total	%
			Third	Second	First				
Dalit	842 (2.75%)	569 (1.93%)	175 (1.20%)	17 (0.48 %)	2 (0.38%)	-	-	1605	2.036
Janajati Newar	2046 (6.67%)	1838 (6.23%)	1361 (9.35%)	376 (10.71%)	56 (10.61%)	5 (10.20%)	-	5682	7.21
Janajati Tharu	1215 (3.96%)	818 (2.77%)	347 (2.38%)	27 (0.77%)	1 (0.19%)	1 (2.04%)		2409	3.05
Other Janajati	4213 (13.74%)	2001 (6.78%)	706 (4.85%)	97 (2.76%)	14 (2.65%)	1 (2.04%)	-	7032	8.92
Madhesi	4697 (15.31%)	4105 (13.91%)	2731 (18.75%)	363 (10.34%)	53 (10.04%)	1 2.04%)	-	1195	15.18
Muslim	196 (0.64%)	140 (0.47%)	106 (0.73%)	20 (0.57%)	5 (0.95%)	-	-	467	0.60
Khas/Arya	17463 (56.93%)	20049 (67.92%)	9130 (62.72%)	2610 (74.36%)	397 (75.19%)	41 (83.67%)	1 (100%)	4969	63.0
Total	30672 (38.90%)	29520 (37.44%)	14556 (18.46%)	3510 (4.45%)	528 (0.69%)	49 (0.062%)	1	7883	100

(Source: DoCPR)

In Table 5, despite comprising 13% of Nepal's population, the Dalit minority is significantly underrepresented in the government service. They constitute only 2.036% of civil servants, distributed as follows:

2.75% in classless positions, 1.93% in non-gazetted positions, 1.2% in gazetted third-class positions, 0.48% in gazetted second-class positions, 0.38% in gazetted first-class positions, and 0% in special class and chief secretary roles. Similarly, Muslims represent the smallest percentage in the civil service, comprising just 0.6%. Their distribution is as follows: 0.0064% in classless positions, 0.47% in non-gazetted positions, 0.73% in gazetted third-class positions, 0.57% in gazetted second-class positions, 0.95% in gazetted first-class positions, and 0% in special class and chief secretary roles. The ethnic composition of government servants underscores the dominance of the Bahun and Chhetri ethnic groups in Nepal's civil service. The Newars, who constitute 38 percent of the Adivasi Janajati population, are prominent. High-caste Tarai individuals outnumber other Madhesi ethnic groups, while Madhesi Dalit participation is minimal. Dalits and Muslims have lower representation percentages in the civil service. The ethnic diversity of Nepal is not adequately reflected in government service. Despite Nepal having had a reservation policy aimed at fostering inclusivity for a decade, there remains a lack of formal data from the government on the representation of various ethnic groups in the civil service.

Following the second civil revolution in 2006, concerns over inclusion and exclusion became prominent in public discourse and a significant concern for policymakers in Nepal. Subsequently, in 2007, Nepal's Interim Constitution introduced the concept of "proportional inclusion" to address issues of social justice, mandating the participation of all segments of society in every organ of the state with the aim of achieving inclusivity across state institutions. Representative bureaucracy emerges as a critical concept in promoting normative standards related to diversity and enhancing the participation of historically underrepresented groups in government. Researchers argue that when bureaucracies reflect the demographic characteristics of the populations they serve, it often leads to positive outcomes for those groups. To foster greater inclusivity, there is a call for increased recruitment of people of color and women into government roles.

However, there is a notable lack of focus on how to retain and support the current predominantly male workforce in embracing these changes. Transforming organizational culture away from entrenched masculine norms is essential for promoting fairness and improving outcomes for underrepresented communities. Government efforts should include not only aggressive recruitment and promotion of minorities and women but also training existing staff on social equity and fostering inclusivity. Exclusion of upper-caste males, who currently dominate the government workforce, widens disparities between upper and lower castes, genders, and other marginalized groups, perpetuating a sense of otherness rather than inclusion.

Future research on representative bureaucracy should therefore explore strategies to both diversify the workforce by recruiting more individuals from underrepresented communities and empower existing government employees to actively support marginalized groups.

II.   Conclusion

Political Interference, Nepotism and Favoritism, Lack of Capacity Building, Bureaucratic Red Tape, Corruption, Inadequate Infrastructure, Political Instability, Ethnic and Caste Divisions, Gender Inequality, and Resource Constraints have been identified as the major obstacles in improving the civil service of Nepal. Addressing these obstacles requires concerted efforts from policymakers, civil society, and stakeholders to promote transparency, accountability, meritocracy, and inclusivity within Nepal's civil service. It involves reforms in governance, legal frameworks, capacity building, and cultural change to foster a more effective and responsive bureaucracy.

Enhancing Diversity and Representation, Merit-Based Recruitment and Promotion, Capacity Building and Training, Transparency and Accountability, Modernization and Technology Adoption, Decentralization and Local Governance, Strengthening Legal and Regulatory Frameworks, Engagement with Civil Society and Stakeholders, Performance Evaluation and Feedback Mechanisms, and Promoting Innovation and Creativity have found as the ways of improving the civil service of Nepal's bureaucracy.

The representation of women and marginalized groups in the civil service of Nepal has been found to stand as a symbol of gender and social justice. Their increasing presence across all levels of government indicates progress towards equitable participation in public service, mirroring the aspirations for gender parity observed among their male counterparts. However, the Nepalese civil service is influenced by an entrenched masculine organizational culture that poses challenges for women officials in effectively managing their professional lives. Gender and caste-based biases persist in the workplace, shaped by societal and familial norms. In Nepalese society, traditional gender roles place men in authoritative positions while relegating women to subordinate roles, reflecting deeply ingrained cultural attitudes.

Achieving equal gender representation in the civil service not only promotes gender equality in broader society but also enhances government accountability from a justice-oriented perspective. Nevertheless, ensuring comprehensive representation of all ethnicities, religions, regions, and genders at every level of government necessitates significant reforms in recruitment and promotion practices. Some procedural adjustments, like establishing online application portals or streamlining testing processes, may be relatively straightforward to

implement. However, addressing deeper societal biases embedded within recruitment and promotion procedures poses more complex challenges.

In summary, while strides have been made towards inclusivity in the Nepalese civil service, sustained efforts are required to reform organizational cultures and systemic biases that perpetuate inequalities based on gender, caste, and other social identities.

Therefore, the existing system will continue to favor those who currently hold power within it as long as it remains unchanged. The caste system exacerbates these challenges and should be addressed as part of broader societal transformations. Merely introducing representative bureaucracy is inadequate; its effectiveness must be demonstrated through policy outcomes and the delivery of public services. To achieve a truly representative civil service in Nepal, there must be a concerted effort to increase the proportion of women and marginalized individuals. This would not only enhance legitimacy and ownership but also foster a public service that is more attuned to caste, cultural, and gender sensitivities in policy formulation and as a supportive environment for a diverse workforce. Scholars should explore representation beyond gender, including intersectional identities and various demographic, religious, and caste backgrounds that have been underrepresented in current literature. It is crucial to move beyond recruitment efforts to include comprehensive initiatives aimed at educating and empowering the existing workforce to embrace inclusivity and accommodate diverse communities.

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