

Expectations of Civil Servants and Public From Civil Service Reform in Bhutan

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Abstract

Periodic reforms of the civil service ensure dynamism, efficiency and effectiveness of the system to serve changing needs of society. This research assesses the expectations of civil servants and the public from the newly proposed civil service reform. Data were collected both from the civil servants and the public. A quantitative research method was used, and data were analysed using SPSS. Findings show that respondents are excited and they expect that the reform will transform civil service into a dynamic institution. While political support is vital for reform, there are concerns that political interference by elected officials could undermine the long-term development of the bureaucracy. Civil servants reported good leadership capacity in the civil service to manage reform but the public have lower confidence in the leadership capacity of the civil service. While the institutional capacity is rated reasonably high in terms of its readiness to manage and implement the reforms, respondents emphasised on the need to develop effective organisational policies, systems, rules and procedures to introduce and sustain the reform. There are concerns on the complacency of civil servants which requires a change in mind-set across the civil service. Having learnt from some of the past reforms within and outside the country, reform must be contextualised to our unique needs supported by prior research works and consultation processes. Adoption of relevant technologies will facilitate the reform process but has to be done carefully as people fear losing their jobs due to the automation process. Respondents have expressed to implement the reform in a phased-wise manner rather than implementing everything together.

Key Words: Changing time, Civil Service, Expectation, Leadership, Reform

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Introduction

Civil service in Bhutan has been playing significant roles since its inception. In 1973, the Department of Manpower was established to manage the affairs of the civil service. The Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) was established in 1982 based on the Royal Charter issued by the Fourth Druk Gyalpo. The Civil Service Act 2010 made the civil service an apolitical institution. A series of reforms were initiated by the successive Commissions in the past with the objective to make the civil service responsive to the changing needs. The cadre system was instituted in 1989 followed by the Position Classification System (PCS) in 2006. The second Commission (2014-2019) introduced reforms to transform civil service from good to great with major focus on: (i) organisational development (OD), (ii) leadership and succession planning, (iii) performance management system, (iv) Bhutan Civil Service Systems, and (v) civil service well-being. The third Commission has been continuing these reforms further to make the civil service more vibrant and dynamic.

In spite of the past reforms undertaken and investment made in the capacity development of civil servants, a number of shortcomings were observed in the civil service including complacency, bloating of the civil service size and lack of accountability. Against this background, His Majesty the King issued a Royal Kasho on December 17, 2020 to restructure the civil service so that it has renewed vision for the 21st century. While the reform is in its early stage and intended to transform civil service into a dynamic institution, it will be interesting to take note of the expectations of the key stakeholders of the reform i.e., the civil servants and public who are the providers and recipients of services respectively. The findings from the study will serve useful inputs for the planners and implementers as the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) is rolling out the reform gradually. Equally, such findings could contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the civil service reforms.

Civil servants are the servants of the state and therefore are expected to promote and protect the interest of the state, uphold the highest professionalism and values, and ensure continuity of governance. His Majesty the King announced the issue of Royal Kasho on Civil Service

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Reform during the 113th National Day Celebration on 17 December 2020 with the intent to re-examine, reorganise and re-strategize the Bhutanese civil service in light of the changing times. Some of the major problems with the existing civil service as highlighted in the Kasho are the risks associated with fragmented approach to management and siloed mentality of the civil servants, proliferation of agencies and increase in civil servants without coherence and direction, lack of proper communication and coordination due to the quest for autonomy by some agencies, sense of complacency and indifference among the civil servants mainly due to the guaranteed employment, administrative rigidity and self-serving attitude of the civil servants which compromise the service delivery to the citizens. Civil service is one of the main institutions of the state through which most of the public goods and services are delivered to the people. Any lapses on the civil service will have adverse effects on the whole economy. Therefore, change in the civil service is important to revamp the existing systems by enforcing higher accountability and ensuring agility of the system to adapt to the changing times. While the need for the change is felt by the public as well as civil servants, it is not sure their expectations do vary or converge.

The objective of the study is to assess the expectations of the civil servants and public on the civil service reform.

This research paper aims to answer the following research questions, amongst others:

- Is the civil service really ready for reform?
- How excited are the civil servants and public to have the reform?
- What are some of the major concerns among civil servants and the public about the civil service reform?

Literature Review

Political Support

Civil service reform possesses one of the most important challenges to the government and its supporters. Satish (2004) says that governments worldwide continuously try to improve the civil service

system to respond to the changing time and needs of citizens. It requires a systematic approach besides the practitioners' ability to craft the reform and make it effective (Repucci, 2014). Even the governments of developed countries are under constant pressure to improve public service delivery (World Bank, 2020). As indicated in the assessment of key variables of civil service reform, the importance of political (political leader here refers to elected leaders by the people) will and leadership features in almost all civil service reform papers. According to Repucci (2014, p. 210), "political leadership provides encouragement, especially over the long length of the process; exerts pressure where necessary; and acts as a final force for accountability." Scott (2011) highlighted that more attention needs to be paid to politics in both the design and implementation of reforms. "Strong political leadership and irrevocable reform policies are key factors in assuring implementation" (McCourt, 2003, para. 1). Manning and Parison (2003) highlighted the need to follow the political priorities to transform the available resources into maximum impact and make it effective and accountable to the public.

Leadership and Change Management

With the changing time, the system of civil service must change too. At present, there are more than 31,000 civil servants in Bhutan and it shares more than a third of domestic revenue as compensation, which is a concern of fiscal sustainability (Dorji, 2021.) Civil servants must adjust to the changing time and must be agile, innovative, data-driven and transparent. If the system is agile in nature, it would be able to adapt and react optimally to unforeseen challenges. According to Dorji (2021, p. 24), "Bhutanese civil servants are less risk takers and there is no reward for taking a gamble which works but plenty of downsides for failure." At times, rule-driven systems prevent civil servants from taking a risk and adopt innovative actions. As of now, there is no reward for taking a risk in difficult decisions. Instead, who takes a risk and happens to fail gets fired from the system.

Kurt Lewin highlighted three stages of the change model. They are unfreezing, changing and refreezing (Hussain, 2018). In the unfreezing stage, each employee must be informed clearly about the reasons and advantages of changes. In the changing stage, the

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organisation must transition or move into a new state of being. While there will be fear of uncertainty among people but they also learn new behaviours, processes and ways of thinking. People must be convinced of the reasons for change for wider acceptability. In the refreezing stage, the changes introduced are reinforced, stabilised and solidified through appropriate systems, policies, rewards, and institutional development processes. There should be proper coordination and change management in the organisation, so that agencies can approach issues holistically through a systems-thinking approach. Civil servants must also be given enough training and awareness when the reform is introduced to enhance the efficiency of systems. This can be learnt from Singapore where every civil servant is required to attend at least 100 hours of training annually (Research Office, 2020.) With changes in time, civil servants also need to have data infrastructure and analytics. Data analysis allows policy-makers to make predictable modelling and it helps to test potential solutions in advance so that there will be a preventive solution, instead of reaction and remediation (Borshchevskiy, 2015).

Institutional Capacity

Strong institutional capacity is vital to enforce and execute the designed reform. For example, Singapore has a robust infrastructure and the least corruption in the civil service organisation (Francesco, 2013). According to IPPR (2013), Singaporean civil servants are one of the highest paid in the world in order to retain the best personnel in the system and to deter corruption. From here, it can be concluded that adequate resources are needed to attract and retain the best in the system. Without firm institutional capacity, good policies cannot be executed during implementation. According to Dorji (2021), the implementation gap happens when civil servants focus too much on the development of organisational structures and processes and lack a proper mind-set. The hierarchical system in the civil service system also causes an implementation gap due to one-way dialogue instead of a participatory approach to management. “Implementation gaps can be addressed through dedicated capacity building and a shift from output-based to an outcome-based operating model, as well as a change from performance measurement to performance management in the civil service” (Dorji, 2021, p. 28). According to Kellough (2006),

recruitment, selection, pay scale and promotion should be merit-based to promote efficient and effective civil service. While introducing reform in China, reform focused on rewards, recognitions, incentives, recruitment procedures and a higher degree of supervision and monitoring (Burns & Xiaogi, 2010). Rupucci (2014) argued that civil service reform must focus on downsizing the system to enhance the efficiency of service delivery. The role of government needs to change from a regulator to a facilitator to enhance service delivery and sustain the system (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2006). Challenges such as lack of resources including human capital, unwillingness to change, and weak monitoring systems are common during the reform process (Kim & Araya, 2012).

Local Context

According to Repucci (2014), one of the driving principles of reform is to give local ownership through the engagement of vital players in the reform process. Repucci highlighted that there were shortcomings in civil service reform in the 1980s and 1990s as the reformers did not take into account the local context while the ideas were adopted from other nations directly. Before reform is implemented, implementers must identify reform opportunities, challenges, and strategies, feasibility in the context of the locality. For example, in Bolivia, people were given three options so that they could choose the one which is feasible and relevant to their local context. Such arrangement will promote responsibility of outcomes besides taking implementation seriously. Many times, reforms fail when the donor implements borrowed models from developed countries to developing countries. A reform model that worked well in developed countries may not work in developing countries. For example, Rao (2013) cautions that a civil service reform model that worked well in Singapore might fail in Bangladesh as Bangladesh may not be at par with Singapore in terms of economic growth, organisational frameworks, advancement of technology and public administration accountability.

Technology

With the advancement of technology, the pace of development and innovation has become speedy. According to the Digital Class (n.d.), the advancement of technology gives greater development pace and

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opportunities. Technology gives the power of innovation, coordination and management, and development paradigm shifts from big organisations in the past to networked individuals in the present (Dorji, 2021.) Citizens also demand better access to information, quicker delivery of services, transparency and accountability. Bhutan's population would continue to rise for the next few decades and by 2047, it would reach 884,000 (Dorji, 2021). On the other hand, civil service size is expected to remain small and compact (Royal Civil Service Commission, 2013.) Therefore, to ensure efficient, transparent and accountable services to the increasing number of citizens by a small number of civil servants, the use of technology is a necessity.

Summary

From the analysis of the overall literature on civil service reform, the most common factors highlighted are political will, leadership and change management, institutional capacity, local context and technology. These factors are identified based on the assessment done in Table 1.

Table 1

Assessment of Key Variables of Civil Service Reform

Variables Authors	Political will	Leadership and change management	Risk averse	Technology	Institutional capacity	Local context	Turf- ism and silos
Dorji, 2021	√	√		√	√		√
Repucci, 2014	√		√		√	√	
Research Office, 2020	√			√	√		
World Bank, 2020	√			√	√		√
McCourt, 2003	√	√	√			√	
Manning & Parison, 2003		√		√		√	√
Scott, 2011	√	√			√		
Rao, 2013	√	√	√			√	
Kim & Araya 2018	√	√	√		√	√	√

Conceptual Framework

Based on the analysis of the literature review on civil service reform, a conceptual framework as given in Table 1 is developed for the purpose of this study. The table shows that civil service reform generally revolves around political will, leadership and change management, institutional capacity, local context and technology. The success or failure of any civil service reform depends on how effectively we manage these key factors.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework.



Methodology

Quantitative methodological approach was used for this research. The study is based on the conceptual framework as discussed above, where

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civil service reform is the dependent variable while independent variables are: political will, leadership and change management, institutional capacity, local context and technology.

Population, Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study population for this study consisted of both the civil servants as well as the public.

Civil servants are people working at various positions in ministries and agencies including the employees of 20 Dzongkhags. According to the Royal Civil Service Commission (2021), there are 31,177 civil servants in Bhutan. “Rule of thumb” was used for the sampling purpose as mentioned in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Rule of Thumb

Size of the population	Sampling percent (%)
0-100	100
101-1000	10
1001-5000	5
5001-10000	3
10000+	1

Source: Population and Sampling, 2006

The size of the civil service population falls in the range of 10,000+. Therefore, 1 percent of 31,177 is 312, which is the sample size of this research. The samples were drawn from the civil servants of all the Dzongkhags. Samples were drawn from each category of civil servants (Executive and Specialist Category ‘ESC’, Professional and Management Category ‘PMC’, and Supervisory and Support Category ‘SSC’).

The respondents from the civil service comprised 10 (2.9%) from Executive and Specialist Category (ESC), 218 (63.2%) from Professional and Management Category (PMC), and 117 (33.9%) from Supervisory and Support Category (SSC).

Respondents from the public were chosen randomly from three regions, Thimphu (West), Bumthang (Centre) and Mongar (East) to get diverse views on civil service reform. Public for this study comprises those people who depend on the services provided by the civil service

agencies. In total, data were collected from 141 public respondents which comprised of 63 (44.68%) respondents from Thimphu (representing western region), 37 (26.24%) from Bumthang region (representing central region), and 41 (29.08%) from Mongar region (representing eastern region).

Data Collection

A survey questionnaire was designed for both the civil servants and public to collect the required information. The main questionnaire is divided into five parts to gauge expectations of the civil servants and public, namely on political support, leadership and change management, institutional capacity, local context and technology. All data were collected through an online questionnaire.

A five-point Likert scale was used with the categories of responses as 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly Agree as shown in Table 3 below. The means were calculated for each question. Further, to compare the views of the public, a survey questionnaire was deployed and data collected from 141 public respondents.

Table 3

Likert Scale

Rate	Likert scale
5	Strongly Agree/Very High/Fully Ready
4	Agree/High/Ready
3	Moderately Agree/Good/Medium/Neutral
2	Disagree/Low/ Not Ready
1	Strongly Disagree/Lowest/Not Ready

Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics features such as means, percentages, frequencies and standard deviation were used to summarise the data in tabular and graphic form.

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Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha was used to test reliability which was 0.92 for 38 statement items, which is reliable.

Table 4

Reliability Test for 38 Items

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.92	38

Results & Discussions

Results and discussions are presented under sub-headings: political will, leadership and change management, institutional capacity, local context and technology besides providing a brief write-up on the respondents' profile and presenting general views and expectations of the civil servants and public.

Respondents' Profile

Data were collected from 345 civil servants, which comprised 67.80 percent (234) males and 31.90 percent (110) females. Respondents were from different educational backgrounds where 2.30 percent have a PhD, 20.30 percent Masters, 48.70 percent Bachelor degree, 14.20 percent class XII and 14.50 percent class X and below educational qualification. Further, 0.90 percent are from the Executive (EXC) position level, 2.00 percent ESC position level, 63.20 percent PMC position level, and 33.90 percent SSC position level. 30.72 percent of the respondents have worked in organisations between 0-5 years, 21.45 percent 6-10 years, 17.39 percent 11-15 years, 12.46 percent 16-20 years, 11.59 percent from 21-25 years, and 6.36 percent have worked more than 25 years. From here, we can conclude that the majority of the respondents have less than 15 years of work experience in their organisations.

Similarly, data were collected from 141 public which comprised 86 (61.00%) males, 54 (38.30%) females and 1 (0.70%) other, in order to make a comparison of views with civil servants.

Table 5

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable name	Group	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	234	67.80
	Female	110	31.90
Educational qualification	PhD	8	2.30
	Masters	70	20.30
	Degree	168	48.70
	Class XII	49	14.20
	Class X and below	50	14.50
Position level	EX/ES	10	02.90
	P	218	63.20
	SS	41	11.90
	S	76	22.00
Number of working years in the organisations	0-5	106	30.72
	6-10	74	21.45
	11-15	60	17.39
	16-20	43	12.46
	21-25	40	11.59
	26 and above	22	06.38

General Views and Expectations from Civil Service Reform

The findings indicate that the majority of the civil servants and the public (i.e., 96.80% of civil servants and 89.40% of the public) are excited about the civil service reform as shown below in the graph. This also answers one of the research questions “how excited are the civil servants and public to have the reform”.

Further, 92.90 percent of civil servants and 94.30 percent of the public think that civil service reform would bring significant changes in the existing system towards transforming it into an effective and efficient body.

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Figure 2

Excitement of Civil Servants and the Public About the Reform

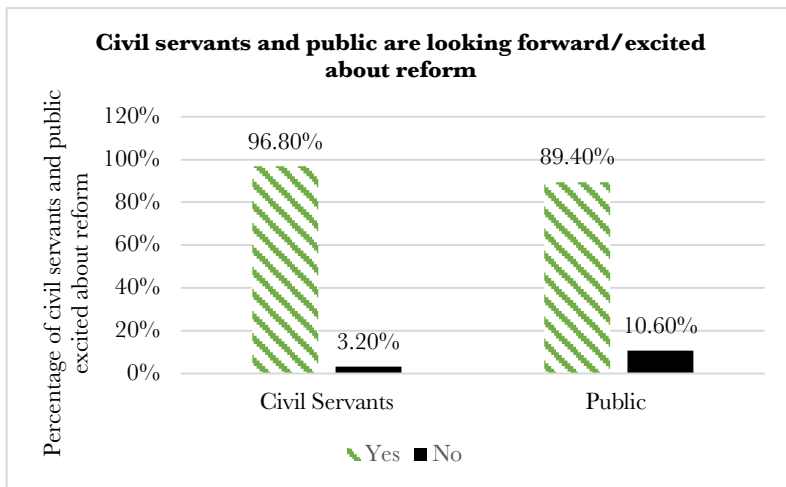
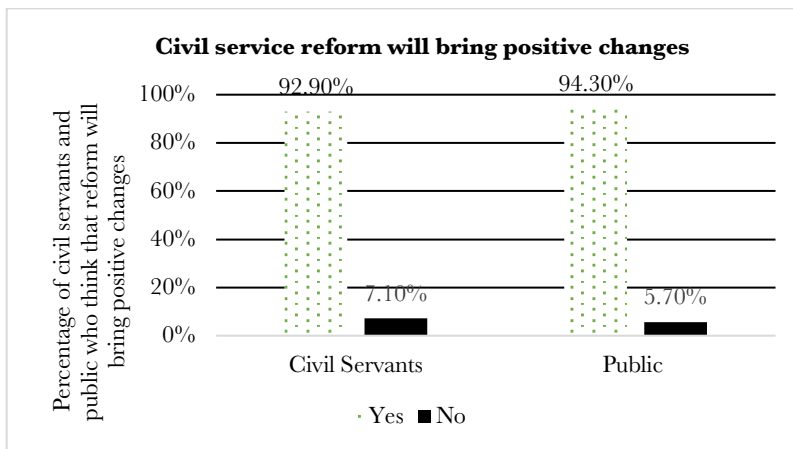


Figure 3

Reform Will Bring Positive Changes in Civil Service

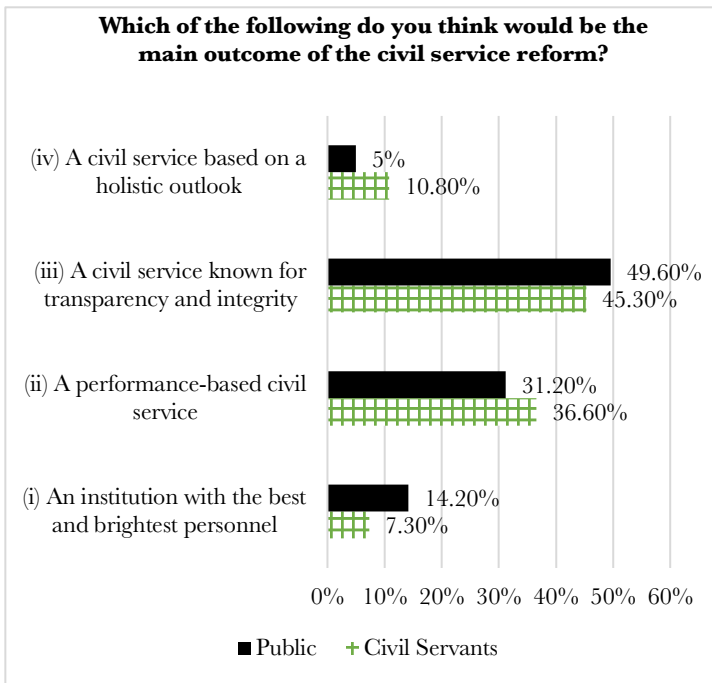


As presented in Figure 4, 45.30 percent of civil servants and 49.60 percent of the public wished to have a civil service system known for

its transparency and integrity followed by performance-based civil service and a civil service based on a holistic approach. These desired outcomes are directly and indirectly reflected in the Royal Kasho (2020) besides the emphasis on such attributes in various Royal addresses of His Majesty the King.

Figure 4

Expectations of Civil Service and Public on the Outcome of the Reform



Political Support

Political support is one of the most important factors that determine the success of civil service reform since it hinges on policies for reform, authority and power to implement reform besides the mobilisation of resources needed for the reform (Repucci, 2014). The majority of the respondents have expressed that political support is important to civil service reform (mean scores are 3.80 and 4.43 for civil servants and

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the public respectively). Similarly, the majority of the respondents have indicated that political leaders do provide encouragement and support to civil service reform as depicted in Table 6 below.

Table 6

Significance of Political Support

Statement	Means		Std. Deviations	
	CS	P	CS	P
Political support is important to the civil service reform	3.80	4.43	1.32	1.05
Political leaders (elected leaders) provide encouragement and support to the civil service reform	3.42	3.31	1.20	0.93

Leadership and Change Management

Leadership and change management are critical components in the management of civil service reform. Table 7 shows the views of civil servants and the public towards leadership and change management of civil service reform.

Table 7

Significance of Leadership and Change Management in the Civil Service Organisations

Statements	Means		Std. Deviations	
	CS	P	CS	P
Leadership at the overall civil service and respective organisational level is important for effective civil service reform	4.52	4.60	0.77	0.81
Change management is important for dynamism in the civil service	4.37	3.98	0.86	0.80
Leaders in my organisation will be able to link the newly proposed reform to the bigger national purpose	3.84	4.28	1.05	0.88
Leaders in my organisation have the aptitude to collaborate with other agencies (where required) during the implementation of reform	3.72	4.04	1.04	0.94
Leaders in my agency have the capacity to mobilize the support of personnel	3.78	3.20	1.02	0.80

working under them to implement civil service reform

Perceptions of leadership as a whole in managing civil service reform 4.05 4.02

Both civil servants and the public consider leadership and change management important for effective civil service reform. Civil servants gave lower ratings compared to the public, when asked about whether the leaders could link and collaborate the newly proposed reform with bigger national goals and other agencies indicating a lower confidence among civil servants on their organisational leadership.

While the average mean scores from civil servants and the public on leadership and change management are 4.05 and 4.02 respectively, however, public rated a mean score of 3.20 only in terms of whether there are trained and committed leaders in the civil service system (this question was asked only to the public). If the public thinks so, this could seriously undermine the effective management of civil service reform. His Majesty has time and again highlighted that it is an example of a bureaucracy that will be followed by others and a strengthened civil service will lay the foundation for a successful democracy. Therefore, the leadership of the civil service is critical in Bhutanese society.

As indicated in Table 8, civil servants and the public rated the leadership capacity as “good” (mean scores of 3.61 and 3.25 by civil servants and the public respectively). This indicates that the civil service system has only medium leadership capacity to succeed in the reform.

Table 8

Rating of Leadership Capacity at Different Levels by Civil Service and Public

Levels	Means		Std. Deviations	
	CS	P	CS	P
Top level leadership capacity	3.59	3.19	1.02	0.98
Middle level leadership	3.60	3.19	0.93	0.93
Supervisory leadership capacity	3.59	3.21	1.02	0.99
Professional capacity of staff	3.70	3.32	0.99	1.06
Change management capacity	3.58	3.35	0.97	1.00
Leadership capacity perception	3.61	3.25		

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In terms of capacity development, 96.50 percent of the public and 83.10 percent of civil servants reported that leaders in civil service need capacity building to manage change. Similarly, 97.20 percent of the public reported that leaders in civil service organisations need to change their mind-set to manage reform while 89.20% of civil servants supported the same opinion (as shown in Table 9).

Table 9

Leadership Capacity Building and the Need to Change Mindset (%)

Statement	CS		P	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Leaders need capacity building to manage change	83.10	16.90	96.50	3.50
Leaders need to change their mindset to manage change	89.20	10.8	97.20	2.80

While summarising some of the major comments made by the respondents, many respondents said that leaders need to have an innovative and growth mind-set. Leaders in the civil service agencies should not stick to traditional ways of management but have to change their mind-set to work across organisational boundaries towards enhancing cooperation among agencies. More so, leaders should be visionary and have clear long-term targets and plans.

Institutional Capacity

As indicated in Table 10, civil servants consider institutional capacity highly important in the reform process. According to Francesco (2013), strong institutional capacity is important to enforce and execute designed reforms. This is strongly supported by the average mean score of 3.99 for the institutional capacity as shown in Table 10.

Table 10

Importance of Institutional Capacity for Civil Service Reform

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Institutional capacity is critical for any reform process	4.32	0.88
Organisation culture of my agency is open and supportive for change	3.83	0.94
My organisation has required institutional capacity to implement civil service reform	3.83	0.96
Perception toward institutional capacity	3.99	

One of the important parts of institutional capacity is the readiness of the organisation in terms of management capacity, availability of resources and required policies and systems.

As shown in Table 11, civil servants have rated the management capacity, human resource capacity, financial and physical resources above the average level while other factors like readiness in terms of organisational policies, systems, rules and procedures are rated lower than other variables (mean=2.40).

Table 11

Institutional Readiness to Manage and Implement Civil Service Reform

Factors	Means		Std. Deviations	
	CS	P	CS	P
Management capacity	3.39	3.22	0.99	0.93
Human resource capacity (expertise and numbers)	3.39	3.20	0.96	0.96
Financial resources	3.01	2.82	1.03	0.89
Physical resources	3.70	3.09	0.94	0.94
Organisational policies, systems, rules and procedures	2.40	3.15	0.88	1.03
Perception toward institutional readiness	3.18	3.10		

On the other hand, public respondents rated the availability of the financial resources below the average mean (average mean=2.82)

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indicating financial resources could be one of the constraints for the reform process.

Local Context

Acceptability and sustainability of the system will be questioned if the reform is not put in the local context (Rao, 2013). Respondents strongly supported the idea of research and development for the introduction of reform in our context. They also emphasised the importance of stakeholder consultation to develop ownership in the implementation of the civil service reform (as shown in Table 12 below). This finding supports the research findings of Repucci (2014) who emphasised on the importance to study about reform opportunities, challenges, strategies and feasibility in the local context. This is further complemented by Rao (2013) who emphasised that the civil service reform model that worked well in one country might not work in other countries due to variation in terms of economic growth, organisational framework and advancement of technology. Both civil servants and the public supported that Bhutanese civil service has the capacity to develop its own model of reform based on the needs of the local context.

Table 12

Views on Localization of the Civil Service Reform

Statements	Mean		Std. Deviation	
	CS	P	CS	P
Bhutanese civil service is open to learn the best practices/ lessons from other countries	3.79	3.55	0.99	1.01
Research and development must be given due importance before introducing any new idea or system in our civil service system.	4.41	4.04	0.79	0.87
Bhutanese have capacity to develop appropriate model/system of civil service reform based on our own needs	4.07	3.84	0.91	1.02
Stakeholder consultation is important to develop ownership in the implementation of the civil service reform	4.26	4.35	0.85	0.70
Perception towards local context	4.13	3.94		

Technology

Technology does facilitate proper management and implementation of any reform as learnt from the experiences of other countries. Respondents were asked to give their views on the importance of technology to support civil service reform and their findings are presented in Table 13 below.

Table 13

Views on the Importance of Technology to Support Civil Service Reform

Statement	Means		Std. Deviations	
	CS	P	CS	P
All civil servants in my organisation are ready to embrace new technology to improve public service delivery	3.86	3.52	0.99	0.96
My organisation is preparing well to cope up with e-governance and digitalization era	3.76	3.56	0.99	0.94
Information communication technology would enhance transparency and accountability in my organisation	4.26	4.08	0.85	1.03
Use of technology would complement RCSC's mission of small, compact and efficient civil service	4.12	4.10	0.94	0.90
Technology enhances efficient delivery of services	4.29	3.90	0.83	0.85
Civil service organisations have adequate professionals to manage required technology to support reforms in the civil service	3.57	3.21	1.00	1.03
Existing information technology infrastructural facilities are adequate to support civil service reform in my organisation	3.16	3.89	1.17	0.89
Perception towards technology	3.86	3.75		

Based on the findings, there is strong agreement on the use of technology to deliver services more efficiently to the public (mean=4.29), enhancing transparency and accountability (mean=4.26) and complementing the mission of the RCSC to maintain small, compact and efficient civil service (mean=4.12). These are in line with the research findings of Dorji (2021) who stated that

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the adoption of technology would outpace the traditional way of innovation and development if we seize the emerging technological opportunities. Amongst all the variables of technology to support the civil service reform, a lower rating is given to the existing information technology infrastructure facilities to support the reform. Further, when open ended questions are asked about the technology in terms of reforms, respondents expressed concerns that some of the leaders in the civil service are complacent and reactive to emerging technologies although young civil servants provide dynamic ideas which indicate that the adoption of technology will greatly depend on how proactive are the leaders in the civil service.

Major Concerns Among Civil Service and the Public About Reform

One of the research questions was to see whether civil servants and the public have any worries about civil service reform. Some of the common observations made by the respondents in terms of their worries are the followings:

- The involvement of elected leaders in the planning of civil service reform would politicise the civil service and undermine the long-term goals of the civil service.
- Reforms in the civil service would be challenging with the complacent mind-sets of the civil servants.
- Copying the civil service reform model from other countries will not be feasible in our country. New civil service reform and incorporation of technology would lead to loss of jobs, especially to the lower position level.
- Civil service reform will not be successful if proper consultations and research are not done before the initiation and implementation of reforms.
- 73.8 percent of civil servants preferred the implementation of civil service reform in a phase-wise or incremental manner rather than implementing the whole reform package together.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Civil servants and the public are excited about the new civil service reform in the country. Majority of the respondents are expecting that the new reform will transform the civil service into an effective institution. Political support is important for civil service reform but there are concerns that political interference by elected officials could undermine the long-term development of the bureaucracy. Respondents from the civil service reported good leadership capacity at various levels in the civil service to manage reform but the respondents from the public have lower confidence in the leadership capacity of the civil service. While institutional capacity is rated reasonably high in terms of its readiness to manage and implement the reforms, civil servants indicated the need to develop proper organisational policies, systems, rules and procedures to introduce the reform, while the public found that civil service is financially not ready to introduce reform.

The need to contextualise the reform to the Bhutanese context through proper research along with wider consultations with relevant stakeholders for wider awareness and acceptability are expressed by the respondents. While the respondents consider the importance of technology in the reform process, however, some do fear losing their jobs due to new technologies which may require more awareness and confidence building measures.

Upon assessing the expectations of civil servants and public about the reform, the following recommendations are proposed for consideration:

Research and Consultations on the Civil Service Reform

Respondents expressed strongly on the need to carry out prior research and development works on the reforms. A number of research findings supports the importance of consultations with stakeholders as it gives ownership and opens up two-way dialogue. Research and consultations could be promoted at different stages of the reform process so that it generates new ideas besides facilitating the implementation of the reform through timely feedback supported by evidence.

Expectation From the Civil Service Reform in Bhutan

Strengthening Organisational Policies, Systems, Rules and Procedures

The existing civil service system needs to develop institutional capacity in terms of organisational policies, systems, rules and procedures as shown in the research findings above. Good policies, systems, rules and procedures are important to institutionalise the reform process and sustain it for the long run. In the absence of proper policies and systems, even the best reforms could be reverted to their old system as people resist change. Secondly, sound policies, systems, rules and procedures are important to safeguard public service values in the civil service organisations including meritocracy, transparency, accountability, equity and justice and sustainability, and thereby ensuring reliable public service delivery to the people.

Need to Change the Mind-Set of the Civil Servants

There are concerns that reform may not be effective if the existing mind-set of the civil servants is not changed. We may introduce the reform, develop new policies, systems, rules and procedures but it could prove futile if the overall mind-set of the civil servants does not change. Mind-set change will require new paradigm thinking for the 21st century institution with change in values and outlook among the civil servants. In other words, it is important to change the conservative mind-set of civil servants. This will require transformational leadership and leadership of the self across the civil service. At the same time, there is also the need to move away from the traditionally siloed mentality to a more cooperative system of governance to make a difference under the reform process in the civil service.

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