Unmasking Nepal's Public Service Riddles: The Paradox of Communication Dynamics

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Abstract

Nepal's public service system faces significant challenges in effectively addressing citizen grievances and raising concerns about accountability, efficiency, and public trust. Simultaneously, while establishing grievance-handling mechanisms, citizens often encounter bureaucratic inefficiencies, delays, and a lack of responsiveness from government agencies. This study examines how Public Service Management functions as a Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) within the Communication and Information Service, evaluating its capacity to ensure fairness, accessibility, and transparency in resolving public complaints. This study uses a descriptive qualitative research design to engage with informants and employs a mixed-methods approach for data analysis. The findings reveal substantial gaps in direct evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy within the GRM framework. These deficiencies obstruct the effective redressal of grievances and contribute to public disillusionment with government institutions. The lack of institutional accountability and proactive engagement further exacerbates systemic inefficiencies within Nepal's public administration. This research argues that without fundamental reforms, the GRM will continue to serve as a symbolic mechanism rather than an effective tool for citizen empowerment. This study contributes to the broader discourse on public service reform by critically analyzing these structural weaknesses. It highlights the urgent need for policy interventions aimed at enhancing grievance-handling processes. Recommendations include improving institutional transparency, strengthening legal frameworks, and adopting citizen-centered approaches to foster greater trust in Nepal's public administration.

Keywords: Management, Public service, Nepal, Grievance Redressal Mechanism

I. INTRODUCTION

Nepal's public service system plays a fundamental role in ensuring effective governance; however, it faces persistent challenges in addressing citizen grievances. As a federal democratic republic, Nepal has undergone significant political and administrative transformations over the past two decades. Nevertheless, inefficiencies in public service delivery, bureaucratic delays, and inadequate grievance redressal mechanisms continue to erode public trust. A well-functioning grievance redressal mechanism (GRM) is essential for ensuring transparency, accountability, and citizen satisfaction, yet existing gaps hinder its effectiveness. This paper critically examines the complexities of Nepal's public service system, focusing specifically on how grievance-handling mechanisms operate within the Communication and Information Service.

The evolution of Nepal's public service system is deeply intertwined with its political history. Historically, governance was centralized under the monarchy, with limited citizen participation in policymaking. The democratic transition of 1990 introduced reforms, yet the bureaucracy remained largely inefficient and unresponsive. The political upheaval of 2006 and the subsequent shift to federalism in 2015 were expected to decentralize power and enhance public service delivery. However, despite constitutional provisions ensuring local governance, administrative bottlenecks persist. The fragmentation of responsibilities between central, provincial, and local governments has led to jurisdictional conflicts, further complicating service delivery.

The government needs to establish public communication channels in the current digital era. This aims to enhance community welfare and serve the public interest.[1] Every citizen of Nepal has the right, as stated in the 2015 Constitution, to request and receive information on any topic of public concern. This communication seeks to expedite the dissemination of information to the public and encourages comments and suggestions regarding policies being developed by the government.

Every person's right to access public information is guaranteed by law, thanks in part to the Right to Information Act of 2007, which promotes transparency in public information. Additionally, this legislation requires all public bodies to respond to and manage public information requests in a timely, cost-effective, and straightforward manner.[2] However, the status of public information is currently concerning, according to insights from the national report. The public has expressed complaints about government entities' lack of transparency in 55% of cases, particularly regarding financial and development plans. Furthermore, it is suggested that government organizations are insufficiently responsive to

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[1] Nurlaela Adiwinarni, Dyah Retna Puspita, and Slamet Rosyadi, 'Membaca Aspek Komunikasi, Sumberdaya, Disposisi, Dan Struktur Birokrasi Dalam Kebijakan Publik: Studi Implementasi Program Pertemuan Peningkatan Kemampuan Keluarga Dinas Sosial Kabupaten Cilacap | Administratio', *Administratio : Jurnal Ilmiah Administrasi Publik Dan Pembangunan* 11, no. 1 (2020): 37–43.

[2] Mahendra Man Gurung, 'The Right to Know', *Kathmandu Post*, 27 September 2021, sec. Columns.

feedback on development-related issues and public services. Perhaps most significantly, between 15% and 17% of individuals are unaware of their eligibility for public assistance.[3]

The public's access to information is the top priority of the Ministry of Information and Communication (MoIC). The MoIC aims to fulfill requests from regional governments for information and communication in accordance with the principles of autonomy and assistance, as well as other requests authorized by the governor under relevant legal provisions.[4] Given the significance of communication and collaboration between the community and the Government, the MoIC created the Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM), a public complaints service.[5]

The MoIC acts as a channel for communication between the local community and the regional administration, accessible via social media, applications, and the official website. The public can use this platform to express their objectives, concerns, opinions, and criticisms regarding matters related to public health, education, infrastructure development, and more. Additionally, the platform enables the MoIC to share information about its achievements and future plans.

While the current system is not equipped to provide a straightforward, quick, and accurate method for addressing every complaint received, the GRM service can efficiently manage complaints from the public. However, community involvement in utilizing the GRM for transmitting grievances remains suboptimal.[6] The GRM can enhance the quality of public services by improving coordination and cooperation among agencies that handle complaints.[7] Nevertheless, there remains a lack of procedural preparedness in routing complaints to the appropriate agencies and in outlining their responses. This situation affects the optimization, effectiveness, and efficiency of public services.

The primary focus of this research is the " Grievance Redressal Mechanism Management, Ministry of Information and Communication". The researcher is keen to explore GRM and data management, having received directives from the MoIC's GRM leadership for an in-depth analysis. This investigation stems from various issues referenced earlier. The objective of this study is to assess the quality of the GRM's public services and identify the challenges that impede it.

Understanding the Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM) plays a crucial role in Nepal's Public Service Management (PSM) by providing a vital platform for citizens to voice

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[3] World Bank, 'Grievance Redress Mechanisms', in *GRM in Social Protection Delivery System* (World Bank Group, 2022), 1–7.

[4] Ministry of Information and Communication Government of Nepal, 'National Information and Communication Technology Policy', 2015.

[5] Ministry of Information and Communication Government of Nepal; UNDP, 'Supplemental Guidance: Grievance Redress Mechanisms' (UNDP, 2017); World Bank, 'Grievance Redress Mechanisms'.

[6] Trilochan Pokharel et al., 'Quality of Public Service in Nepal', Nepal National Governance Survey 2017/18 (Nepal Administrative Staff College, 2018).

[7] Keshav K. Acharya and John Scott, 'A Study of the Capabilities and Limitations of Local Governments in Providing Community Services in Nepal', *Public Administration and Policy* 25, no. 1 (21 March 2022): 64–77.

their concerns. However, challenges in communication and limited technology adoption can hinder the effectiveness of the GRM. To address these limitations, Nepal's PSM is undergoing a transformation that focuses on improving communication and integrating technology. This paper argues that by strategically tackling communication challenges and utilizing technology, Nepal can develop a more inclusive and responsive GRM system, fostering increased citizen participation and trust in government institutions.

To elaborate on the mentioned issues, a descriptive qualitative research technique grounded in phenomenology—that is, analysis based on an understandable object—was employed in this study. The researcher plays a key role in this analysis, which utilizes a mix of descriptive and qualitative data for analysis, along with triangulation methods for data collection. When comparing the qualitative analysis results with the other two approaches, the results are more broadly applicable. Adopting a qualitative research methodology allows researchers to accurately interpret study findings while describing or analyzing a phenomenon through interview data.[8]

This study examines the connection between observed difficulties and problems grounded in theory. Key qualities of a good service include tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, consistency, and empathy. The "Grievance Redressal Mechanism, a public complaint service" served as the research site. Five individuals selected through purposive sampling were the respondents. Data sources include documents, locations, events, and informants. The data analysis strategy used in Masengi et al[9] is based on the Miles & Huberman model, which encompasses data gathering, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

II. GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES ON GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Global Public Service Management (PSM) literature emphasizes the fundamental concepts of accountability, transparency, and public involvement. Research in countries such as South Africa, the United Kingdom, and India has explored the effectiveness of Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs) in addressing citizen complaints and enhancing public service delivery. These studies have identified GRMs as crucial components in improving

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[8] Elvis Lumingkewas and Brain Fransisco Supit, 'Implementasi Kebijakan Pengelolaan Barang Milik Daerah Pada Permerintah Kabupaten Minahasa', *Academy of Education Journal* 14, no. 2 (30 August 2023): 1106–16; Evi Elvira Masengi, Elvis M. C. Lumingkewas, and Brain Fransisco Supit, 'Implementation of Government Regulation No. 53 of 2010 Concerning Civil Servant Discipline in the Finance, Asset, and Revenue Management Office of Minahasa Regency', *Technium Social Sciences Journal* 40 (8 February 2023): 11–22, https://doi.org/10.47577/tssj.v40i1.8404.

[9] Masengi, Lumingkewas, and Supit, 'Implementation of Government Regulation No. 53 of 2010 Concerning Civil Servant Discipline in the Finance, Asset, and Revenue Management Office of Minahasa Regency'.

the responsiveness of public services.[10] To assess the impact of GRMs on service responsiveness and overall satisfaction, empirical studies often apply theoretical frameworks, such as Parasuraman's dimensions of service quality.[11]

At the same time, extensive research has been conducted on the global discussion surrounding the integration of technology into public services. Studies from industrialized nations like Singapore and Sweden examine how technology could transform the process of submitting grievances, tracking them, and enhancing the overall efficiency of services.[12] These investigations illuminate how the use of digital interfaces and online platforms, among other technological advancements, may influence the usability and effectiveness of grievance redress mechanisms (GRMs).[13]

While these worldwide studies contribute significantly to the understanding of PSM and GRMs, a notable gap persists regarding the unique expression and influence of these mechanisms within the Communication and Information Service in Nepal. To address this gap, the current paper presents a comprehensive analysis of Nepal's governance environment, focusing specifically on the communication sector. It acknowledges the lack of targeted research on Nepal's governance landscape and offers an opportunity to present new perspectives within the country's distinct sociocultural and political context.

Globally, public service performance has been evaluated through the widespread use of theoretical frameworks, such as Parasuraman's aspects of service quality. However, the impact and specific importance of these frameworks in Nepal's communication industry remain underexplored in the literature, despite their extensive application. This study aims to address this gap by examining the aspects of service quality within the specific context of Nepal, focusing on the communication industry.

Furthermore, while the topic of governance issues in poorer countries has garnered significant attention, there is a lack of comprehensive studies that explore the specifics of public service management (PSM) in Nepal. Previous research offers a broad perspective

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[10] Fredrika Björklund, 'E-Government and Moral Citizenship: The Case of Estonia', *Citizenship Studies* 20, no. 6–7 (2 October 2016): 914–31; Yunsoo Lee and Hindy Lauer and Schachter, 'Exploring the Relationship between Trust in Government and Citizen Participation', *International Journal of Public Administration* 42, no. 5 (4 April 2019): 405–16; Ricardo Santa, Jason B. MacDonald, and Mario Ferrer, 'The Role of Trust in E-Government Effectiveness, Operational Effectiveness and User Satisfaction: Lessons from Saudi Arabia in e-G2B', *Government Information Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1 January 2019): 39–50; Rupali Dilip Taru, 'Effectiveness of Grievance Handling Mechanism', *International Engineering Journal For Research & Development* 3, no. 2 (2016): 5–5; Vishanth Weerakkody and Jyoti Choudrie, 'Exploring E-Government in the UK: Challenges, Issues and Complexities', *Journal of Information Science and Technology* 2, no. 2 (2005): 25–45; World Bank, 'Grievance Redress Mechanisms'.

[11] A. Parasuraman, Valarie A. Zeithaml, and Leonard L. Berry, 'A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research', *Journal of Marketing* 49, no. 4 (1 September 1985): 41–50.

[12] Björklund, 'E-Government and Moral Citizenship: The Case of Estonia'.

[13] Eva H. Chittende and Christine Ritchie, 'Work-Life Balancing: Challenges and Strategies. Journal of Palliative Medicine, 14(7), 870–874.', *Journal of Palliative Medicine* 14, no. 7 (2011): 870–74; Lee and and Schachter, 'Exploring the Relationship between Trust in Government and Citizen Participation'.

with limited exploration of the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Nepal's Communication and Information Service.[14] This research aims to bridge this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the potentials and challenges within the Communication and Information Service, while highlighting the distinct socio-cultural and political factors that influence public service dynamics in Nepal. Essentially, this study addresses a significant gap in the body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive understanding of public service management within Nepal's Communication and Information Service. By examining GRMs, integrating technology, and employing citizen-centric techniques, the research aims to offer new insights and contribute to the ongoing discussion about public service delivery and governance in Nepal.

III. PUBLIC SERVICE MANAGEMENT IN THE GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM

Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs) have been a fundamental component of efficient government for a considerable time. They provide a formal channel through which individuals can express their grievances, complaints, and opinions regarding public services. GRMs are rooted in the principles of openness and accountability, evolving over time to meet the ever-changing demands of society and the increasing complexity of public administration. The concept of grievance redressal is not new; historical accounts indicate that many societies and civilizations had systems in place for addressing citizen complaints in various formats.[15] However, in the current era, these systems have become more formalized and institutionalized, aligning with democratic governance and citizen-centric service delivery.[16]

At Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs), public service management is vital in shaping the interaction between the public and public institutions. This article examines the management of GRMs to address citizen concerns and comments regarding the quality and delivery of public services.[17] A comprehensive understanding of the needs and expectations of both the general public and service providers is essential for successful public service management within GRMs. This initial step lays the groundwork for developing a coherent and consistent policy and legal framework. Additionally, such a structure not only guides the grievance redressal process but also ensures compliance with legal requirements, thus fostering citizen trust and a sense of justice.[18]

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[14] Naomi Hossain and Suchi Pande, 'Grievance Redress Mechanisms in the Public Sector: A Literature Review' (Accountability Research Center, 2022).

[15] Hossain and Pande; World Bank, 'Grievance Redress Mechanisms'.

[16] Hossain and Pande, 'Grievance Redress Mechanisms in the Public Sector: A Literature Review'.

[17] Pokharel et al., 'Quality of Public Service in Nepal'.

[18] Article19, 'Country Report: The Right to Information in Nepal' (Article19, 26 November 2015).

The essential component of public service management is the use of GRM systems. This system must have sufficient power, capability, and resources to ensure that the grievance redressal process operates smoothly. Effective grievance management relies on solid infrastructure, skilled personnel, and designated authority, which together promote prompt decision-making and resolution. The key to encouraging public engagement is to maintain efficient communication channels. It is crucial to provide various avenues and methods for the general public to submit complaints and track their progress. This includes implementing technical solutions, user-friendly interfaces, and accessible platforms to facilitate broader participation, empowering individuals in the grievance redressal process. The next steps in public service management at GRMs involve acknowledging, evaluating, and assigning grievances to the relevant parties. It is essential to adopt a systematic approach, which entails formulating responses and informing complainants of proposed actions. Obtaining their consent and executing decisions transparently fosters public trust, which is vital for effective grievance redressal.[19]

The public service management at Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs) aligns with Parasuraman's theory, which highlights the crucial variables affecting the quality of public service such as Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. This passage underscores the importance of infrastructure, skilled personnel, delegated authority, efficient communication channels, and transparent decision-making, all of which are fundamental elements of Parasuraman's framework for service quality. We will explore how these identified components enhance the overall quality of public services within the context of GRMs as we delve into the study of public service management using Parasuraman's theory.[20]

It is important to clarify that several hypotheses have been proposed by individuals known as Parasuraman. I derive this from the esteemed marketing researcher and Parasuraman's concept of service quality. His approach, commonly known as SERVQUAL or the gaps model, provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating and improving service quality by analyzing client expectations and perceptions.[21] This theory identifies five characteristics of high-quality service: tangibility, dependability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy. Moreover, it posits that the gap between what clients expect, what they perceive they receive, and what they actually receive determines service quality. Parasuraman's theoretical framework provides a sophisticated understanding of the

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[19] Ministry of Information and Communication Government of Nepal, 'National Information and Communication Technology Policy'.

[20] Adiwinarni, Puspita, and Rosyadi, 'Membaca Aspek Komunikasi, Sumberdaya, Disposisi, Dan Struktur Birokrasi Dalam Kebijakan Publik: Studi Implementasi Program Pertemuan Peningkatan Kemampuan Keluarga Dinas Sosial Kabupaten Cilacap | Administratio'; Masengi, Lumingkewas, and Supit, 'Implementation of Government Regulation No. 53 of 2010 Concerning Civil Servant Discipline in the Finance, Asset, and Revenue Management Office of Minahasa Regency'.

[21] Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 'A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research'.

essential elements mentioned earlier. This conversation will clarify the connections between the main ideas in the paragraph and Parasuraman's dimensions of service quality, emphasizing the critical role each component plays in shaping perceptions of public service delivery within grievance redressal mechanisms.

VI. THE PARADOX OF NEPALESE PUBLIC SERVICES

The quality and enjoyment of public services are influenced by two interconnected concepts at GRM: tangibility and public service management. The term "tangibility" refers to the tangible elements of a service that clients can see, touch, or experience, such as staff, facilities, equipment, or documentation.[22] Public service management at GRM involves the creation, implementation, and evaluation of GRMs in the public sector to address citizen complaints and feedback concerning the quality and delivery of public services. The nation's General Requirements have evolved from traditional to modern systems, replacing the GRMs that existed before the advent of modern technologies like printing, telegraphs, telephones, and radios. Pre-modern GRMs included ancient courts, councils, assemblies, tribunals, and ombudsmen, which addressed various types of complaints, including legal, political, religious, and social issues. These pre-modern GRMs were primarily tangible due to the direct interaction and physical presence of the involved parties, such as complainants, responders, mediators, judges, and witnesses.

On the other hand, GRMs have evolved alongside contemporary technologies such as radio, printing, telegraph, and telephone. Administrative courts, consumer protection agencies, public service ombudsmen, human rights commissions, and civil society organizations manage various grievances, including administrative, consumer, public service, and social issues, which exemplify modern GRMs.[23] The advancement and proliferation of new technologies influence the relevance of contemporary GRMs. Based on the interviews conducted during the research, it can be inferred that Public Service Management at GRM and the increase in complaints received occurred both before and after the transition from physical to electronic formats, as the Information Service has been implemented.

The program for developing Community Complaints facilities through various social media has actively engaged with the community and local administration. Given the volume of complaints, it seems that this program can benefit citizens in this particular instance. It is expected that this will improve public services. According to interview data from the study, effective communication enables outreach to a broader audience. Previously, only 15%

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[22] UNDP, 'Supplemental Guidance: Grievance Redress Mechanisms'; World Bank, 'Grievance Redress Mechanisms'.

[23] Angela Cinalli, 'The Past Sets the Context for the Present', *Greek and Roman Musical Studies* 8, no. 2 (2020): 230–53.

of all complaints were received; in contrast, 50% of complaints were satisfactorily addressed, indicating a 30% to 35% increase in overall complaints. All complaints are managed promptly to ensure thorough verification and to serve as a reliable source of information for the Communication and Information Service in the long term.

However, it is not free of inhibiting factors. Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs) that encounter impediments to their effectiveness find it difficult to maintain their credibility and efficacy, which in turn results in a decline in customer satisfaction, engagement, and confidence. According to a concerned citizen, one significant issue is the inadequate facilities, tools, staff, and paperwork within GRMs: "I tried contacting the GRM, but it felt like they were operating from the Stone Age. Their outdated equipment and insufficient facilities caused me to doubt the quality of their service." A disgruntled user expressed similar concerns regarding the accessibility and usability of GRM channels and procedures, stating, "I attempted to file a complaint, but the process was too complicated. "

The web form was a labyrinth. When the very resources intended to be helpful create additional uncertainty, it is disheartening. To sum up, it is crucial that these challenges are addressed if GRMs are to remain credible and effective. By providing adequate resources, improving channel accessibility and user-friendliness, and enhancing response mechanisms, GRMs can foster an environment that builds confidence, encourages citizen engagement, and improves overall satisfaction with the grievance redressal process. Coordination issues between GRMs and other local or national administrations in implementing communication and information services create gaps and disappoint users.

Within the field of public service management, Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs) are continually being improved to enhance their dependability and better meet the demands of the general public. Good progress is being made to reinforce the reliability of GRMs, ensuring they remain solid foundations of efficacy and responsiveness. Significant strides are being taken in this area, solidifying GRMs as dependable pillars of good governance. The use of cutting-edge technology solutions, including automated case tracking systems, is one noteworthy advancement.[24] These methods not only facilitate the swift management of grievances but also enhance the transparency and reliability of the entire process. With the ability to monitor the status of their complaints in real time, citizens now feel more confident in the dependability of the GRM.

Improvements have occurred, particularly in the shift from conventional, physical procedures to technology-driven alternatives. The transition from manual, paper-based methods to cutting-edge technical tools represents a significant advancement in enhancing GRM dependability. However, despite these improvements, challenges remain in ensuring optimal dependability for GRMs. Respondents' comments about a potential lack of

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[24] Acharya and Scott, 'A Study of the Capabilities and Limitations of Local Governments in Providing Community Services in Nepal'; A. Mulim, 'ICT for Improving Governance in Nepal', *Samriddhi Foundation* (blog), 17 March 2019.

coordination among liaison officers highlight the need for continuous enhancements to internal communication systems. Building on recent improvements, future developments may involve collaborative platforms and technologies that facilitate seamless information exchange between authorities, promoting a more organized and reliable grievance settlement process.

Furthermore, it remains imperative to address the usability and accessibility of GRM channels. The shift to digital platforms has resulted in some beneficial developments; however, ongoing efforts are necessary to enhance interfaces and improve their intuitiveness. GRMs can further bolster the dependability of their services by actively soliciting citizen input and adopting user-centric design concepts. This may involve conducting usability testing with diverse user groups and implementing design changes based on the collected data. By prioritizing user experience, GRMs can ensure their services are accessible and user-friendly for all citizens, regardless of their technological proficiency.

The Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs) implemented by the Nepalese Ministry of Information and Communication have received praise for their outstanding responsiveness and for increasing public satisfaction levels.[25] Respondents have reported positive experiences, commending the GRM's prompt grievance resolution and the open lines of communication. This encouraging feedback highlights the Ministry's success in providing a responsive grievance redressal mechanism that genuinely addresses public concerns. However, despite these advantages, there are drawbacks and challenges that must be addressed. A notable area of concern is the public's varying understanding of GRM services. While some residents have benefited from the effective mechanism, others may not be aware of it or know how to fully utilize it. This underscores the importance of comprehensive awareness initiatives to ensure that all individuals, regardless of location or demographics, are informed about and can access the grievance redressal services.

Another issue is access difficulties, particularly in rural areas. Limitations in digital literacy and internet availability may prevent certain demographic groups from effectively utilizing the online resources provided by the GRM. There is a lack of engagement with rural citizens and marginalized communities. Additionally, it has been observed that capacity constraints may pose challenges, especially during peak times or when addressing complex issues. Instances where overloaded caseloads caused delays in resolutions, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscore the need for the Ministry to continuously assess and strengthen the GRM's capabilities. This involves using resources wisely, potentially leveraging technology further to streamline workflows and efficiently manage increasing demand.

Feedback methods are essential for refining and enhancing GRM responsiveness. Although the Ministry has made progress in gathering input, there is still room for

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25 Article19, 'Country Report: The Right to Information in Nepal'.

improvement to obtain more comprehensive views.[26] Establishing strong channels for public input can help the Ministry gain a deeper understanding of residents' experiences, enabling it to identify problem areas and resolve issues effectively. When examined, we find that the Ministry's efforts to create an effective grievance redressal mechanism have been semi-successful, as evidenced by the positive comments received from residents. This success is, however, largely due to the use of technology, effective communication strategies, and a commitment to prompt resolution. Nonetheless, to sustain and enhance this upward trajectory, it is crucial that the identified limitations be addressed.

The inconsistent level of knowledge about GRM services highlights the need for targeted awareness initiatives and underscores the Ministry's responsibility to ensure that the public is informed and that all citizens are included. Moreover, removing barriers to access and establishing digital literacy programs can broaden the GRM's reach and make it more accessible to a diverse range of users. Capacity limitations reveal the importance of continuously assessing and enhancing resources to meet rising demand. Additionally, leveraging technology, such as implementing advanced case management systems, can improve productivity and expedite grievance resolution procedures.

Therefore, there is a continued need for strategic interventions even though the Ministry of Information and Communication's GRMs in Nepal have shown a remarkable response. By resolving awareness gaps, refining feedback mechanisms, increasing access, expanding capacity, and improving access, the Ministry may strengthen the efficacy and inclusivity of its grievance redressal processes and guarantee a long-term beneficial impact on citizen satisfaction and involvement.

It is expected that guarantees in the complaint process will be managed appropriately, in accordance with the primary responsibilities and functions outlined in the Communication and Information Services bureaucratic structure. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are utilized by Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs) to regulate their operations and ensure compliance with established procedures for public service.[27] By providing a systematic and transparent framework, these procedures ensure that the grievance redressal process is conducted effectively. These guidelines outline specific processes tailored for various aspects of the grievance redressal process.

A crucial component is the grievance filing process, which provides residents with guidance on expressing their issues through internet forums, paper forms, or official channels. Protocols also address the categorization and prioritization of complaints, enabling a systematic approach based on type, seriousness, or urgency of the raised concerns. Mechanisms for acknowledgment and tracking are essential parts of the protocols; they

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[26] Acharya and Scott, 'A Study of the Capabilities and Limitations of Local Governments in Providing Community Services in Nepal'.

[27] Article19, 'Country Report: The Right to Information in Nepal'; Pokharel et al., 'Quality of Public Service in Nepal'; Kenneth Roth, 'Nepal Events of 2021' (Human Right Watch, 12 February 2021).

inform the public that their complaints are taken seriously and allow them to monitor the progress of their cases. Protocols determine which authorities or individuals are assigned to handle grievances as they move through the system and how to evaluate the legitimacy and severity of the complaints.

The phase of resolution follows established protocols that involve engaging in dialogue with complainants, proposing potential solutions, and ensuring a prompt and satisfactory conclusion. These protocols also include methods for feedback and follow-up, facilitating the collection of complainant input, implementation of follow-up actions, and promotion of ongoing process improvement within the grievance redressal system. Such SOPs are crucial for maintaining efficiency, accountability, and consistency in addressing complaints within GRMs. By providing a clear and uniform approach, these protocols minimize the likelihood of errors and enhance transparency throughout the entire process. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they remain adaptable to evolving needs while further improving the grievance redressal system over time.

The study's findings support the idea that GRM has adhered to formal procedures while providing public services through the Command Center. From an administrative perspective, it is crucial to maintain a bureaucratic framework among the Ministry of Information and Communication, GRM administrators, and liaison officials in each agency. According to established standard operating procedures (SOPs), this organization clarifies the survey results—indicating that the Communication and Information Service is performing well—within the framework. This aligns with the thesis proposed by Parasuraman, which states that the effectiveness of public policy administration depends on the implementation of SOPs.

The ability of grievance redressal mechanisms (GRMs) to understand and address the needs, expectations, and emotions of those who file grievances is referred to as empathy. Building rapport and trust with complainants is crucial for GRMs, as is ensuring that grievances are resolved fairly and effectively. Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs) are not just about resolving issues; they also focus on fostering trust and building rapport with the public. A key aspect of this trust-building is empathy – the capacity of GRMs to comprehend and respond to the needs, expectations, and feelings of those filing grievances.

Participants appreciate the GRMs' compassionate communication approach and note that they avoid jargon and formal terminology. Throughout the grievance resolution process, the GRMs build a comforting relationship by communicating in an understandable and empathetic manner. This tailored communication strategy leads to a more compassionate public service interaction. The empathetic approach offers several benefits. Studies indicate that respondents value GRMs who employ compassionate communication. By avoiding jargon and legal language, GRMs create a comforting and relatable environment

during the resolution process. This clear and empathetic communication enhances the public service experience, leaving citizens feeling heard and understood.

However, even with these advantages, there are specific restrictions and challenges associated with the sympathetic aspect of GRMs. Response times are often affected by the sheer volume of cases, making it challenging to maintain an appropriate level of empathy in each situation. GRM officers may find it difficult to balance genuine empathy with the necessity of remaining objective, particularly in cases with complex details or conflicting interests. Additionally, resource constraints can impede the ability to provide truly comprehensive support. Limited staff or time may result in generic responses that do not address the specific nuances of each complaint. This can leave citizens feeling frustrated and unheard, eroding their trust in the system. It is also recognized that maintaining objectivity while demonstrating empathy can be challenging, especially in situations with conflicting interests or complexities. Resource limitations further complicate the delivery of comprehensive support, hindering the complete realization of an empathic ideal. At times, GRMs fail to take the necessary time to understand the specific details of each complaint and repeatedly offer the same solutions, leaving the consumer disappointed. This not only undermines the perceived empathy of the system but also fails to tackle the root cause of the issue, potentially resulting in repeated grievances and further frustration.

Incorporating empathy into GRMs is a complex endeavor. While it offers significant benefits in terms of trust-building and public satisfaction, practical limitations and resource constraints present considerable challenges. Moving forward, GRMs must strive to find a balance between efficiency and empathy, ensuring that each case receives the necessary attention and understanding to achieve a successful resolution. This may involve exploring innovative solutions such as specialized training for grievance officers, enhanced case management systems to streamline processes, and citizen feedback mechanisms to identify areas where empathy can be improved further. By addressing these challenges, GRMs can evolve into truly empathetic systems that effectively resolve grievances while fostering trust and positive citizen engagement.

V. UNPACKING THE COMPLEXITIES

The Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs) under the Ministry of Information and Communication in Nepal are examined, providing a comprehensive study of public service management that considers accountability, empathy, consistency, and openness. Analyzing respondents' responses closely and viewing the results from a critical perspective reveals insights into the GRMs' shortcomings, challenges, and potential areas for improvement. Regarding openness, participants praised the clear and transparent nature of the grievance redressal procedure. It was acknowledged that the formal protocols and Standard Operating

Procedures (SOPs) provide a structured framework essential for ensuring transparent and methodical operating paradigms. This not only demonstrates a steadfast dedication to accountability and equity but also fosters the public's increased confidence in the grievance resolution system.

Moreover, positive feedback regarding the monitoring, acknowledgment, and submission processes shows that GRMs have skillfully integrated user-friendly interfaces, enabling residents to easily express and track their complaints. This intentional use of technology and the availability of multiple channels for filing grievances demonstrate an organization that understands contemporary demands and promotes greater public participation in the grievance redressal system. The discussion of empathy highlights the human-centered philosophy that permeates GRMs.

Research participants praised the benefits of tailored solutions and empathetic communication. When a human element is incorporated into grievance resolution, it transcends formalities and provides citizens with a sense of recognition and respect. However, issues such as time constraints due to high volume and the delicate balance between impartiality and empathy arose. These situations underscore the necessity for GRMs to navigate complex environments and ensure a customized approach while maintaining fairness and effectiveness.

The issue gains a theoretical foundation when Parasuraman's concept of service quality is incorporated into the examination. Parasuraman's dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, and empathy—all align effectively with the important aspects highlighted by the respondents. The focus on effective communication, solid infrastructure, skilled personnel, delegated authority, and clear decision-making reflects the characteristics of tangible, reliable, and certain. Moreover, recognizing empathy's critical role in resolving grievances fits well within Parasuraman's theoretical framework.

In each dimension, the critical analysis identifies obstacles and limitations. For instance, a lack of resources hinders the assurance component, while delays in reaction time impair reliability. In the responsiveness and empathy components, a challenge arises in balancing impartiality with empathy. The issue of delays caused by volume is the most pressing of these difficulties. Although the overwhelming number of complaints indicates that citizens are actively involved, GRMs find it extremely challenging to respond to complaints promptly. The effectiveness of the grievance resolution process is at risk, highlighting the need for GRMs to enhance their capacity to address a range of issues with the appropriate level of empathy.

Within GRMs, achieving a balance between impartiality and empathy presents a complex challenge. Although a sympathetic approach is essential for ensuring public satisfaction, decision-making becomes more intricate due to the need for justice and impartiality. In circumstances with complicated dynamics or competing interests, the

dialectical interaction between impartiality and empathy is especially apparent, requiring careful consideration and thoughtful decision-making to navigate this complexity.

In summary, the research findings indicate that several hurdles were encountered during the procedure, including difficulties in obtaining direct evidence. Since some peer supporters were assigned to other institutions and some were unclear about the purpose of their activities, administrative personnel found it challenging to identify peer supporters within each Regional Apparatus Organization. Moreover, one type of constraint, known as obstacles to reliability, arises from the fact that many individuals lack personal interaction, particularly in rural areas and among the nation's underprivileged groups. Additionally, reporting suspicious activities through postal complaints is regarded as an issue of complaint administration. The lack of a proper response to certain concerns poses another barrier to responsiveness, and the existence of COVID-19 has exacerbated this situation. There are also obstacles to assurances, such as the evaluation process to determine whether complaints have been appropriately addressed, as well as barriers to empathy, like the presence of individuals who are somewhat skeptical about the level of empathy that the government offers.

Another significant obstacle highlighted by the respondents' statements is resource limitation, which includes staffing, technology, and budgetary constraints. The success of GRMs relies on the availability of appropriate resources, and limitations in this area may hinder the provision of comprehensive assistance necessary for an empathic and effective grievance redressal process. Strategically allocating resources becomes essential to meet the system's growing demands and maintain the quality of services offered. While technological accessibility is a commendable feature of grievance filing, it raises inclusion concerns. Not all citizens may have equal access to technology or internet platforms, potentially leading to disparities in how individuals engage with GRMs. It is crucial to address this digital divide to ensure that all segments of society can benefit from technology integration.

This thorough investigation provides a comprehensive understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of GRMs. While praise is rightly given for their openness, ease of use, and compassionate involvement, certain issues remain that need to be addressed, such as volume delays and the conflict between impartiality and empathy. The alignment with Parasuraman's theory underscores the theoretical foundations of GRMs' actions, advocating for a comprehensive and iterative strategy in addressing public service issues. Sustaining improvements, utilizing resources wisely, and implementing quick tactical changes are essential for the ongoing enhancement of public service delivery quality within Nepal's Grievance Redressal Mechanisms.

Nepal's Public Service Management (PSM) is undergoing a crucial transformation, driven by the need to enhance communication with citizens and utilize technology for efficient service delivery. This transformation directly impacts the Grievance Redressal Mechanism (GRM), a cornerstone of accountable governance. As the government seeks to

address communication challenges and facilitate citizen engagement through new technologies, these efforts are embedded in contemporary PSM, specifically focusing on the GRM framework.

Suppose we delve deeper into the corners of the nation. In that case, we discover that the key challenge for the GRM is the limited access to reliable internet and communication infrastructure, particularly in rural areas. This digital divide restricts citizen access to online GRM platforms, hindering their ability to submit grievances and track their resolutions.[28] To bridge this gap and ensure inclusivity, the government has adopted a multi-channel approach. This includes traditional outreach programs, radio broadcasts, and local language support, which are essential for reaching citizens in remote areas with limited digital connectivity.

Additionally, Nepal's rich linguistic diversity requires that GRM procedures and communication channels be developed in multiple languages. Poor communication resulting from language barriers can hinder citizens from comprehending GRM procedures and articulating their grievances clearly. By producing GRM materials in various languages, the government seeks to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their linguistic background, can effectively engage with the GRM system.[29]

Low literacy rates, coupled with language barriers, pose another significant challenge. Many citizens may find it difficult to navigate complex GRM procedures and fully understand their rights due to limited literacy skills. To tackle this issue, the government is implementing capacity-building initiatives for officials, equipping them with the skills necessary to communicate effectively with diverse audiences. This training emphasizes the use of clear and concise language, making it easier for citizens to grasp the grievance redressal process.[30]

The integration of technology into the GRM framework is a pivotal aspect of contemporary PSM. Online GRM platforms allow for easier and faster grievance submission, tracking, and communication between citizens and officials. This technological integration promotes transparency and accessibility, ensuring that citizens can engage with the GRM system more efficiently. Moreover, mobile technology offers significant potential for enhancing GRM accessibility. Mobile apps provide a convenient means for citizens, particularly those in remote areas with limited internet access, to obtain GRM information and submit grievances. By increasing access points and streamlining the submission process, mobile technology can help reduce volume-related delays and improve the overall efficiency of the GRM system.

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[28] Hossain and Pande, 'Grievance Redress Mechanisms in the Public Sector: A Literature Review'; UNDP, 'Supplemental Guidance: Grievance Redress Mechanisms'.
[29] Hossain and Pande, 'Grievance Redress Mechanisms in the Public Sector: A Literature Review'.
[30] Taru, 'Effectiveness of Grievance Handling Mechanism'.

To enhance inclusivity, the government is developing GRM platforms and communication materials in various languages. This multilingual support ensures that citizens can understand the procedures and effectively express their grievances, regardless of their language skills. However, the growing reliance on digital platforms raises concerns about data security and privacy. Strong data protection measures are crucial to building trust in the GRM system and promoting citizen participation.

Equipping citizens with digital literacy skills is crucial for the effective use of online GRM platforms. The government is deploying training programs for both citizens and GRM officials to close the digital literacy gap. These programs aim to ensure that all stakeholders can navigate the digital landscape and interact with the GRM system effectively. Additionally, special considerations are needed to guarantee accessibility for underserved populations, including individuals with disabilities, those in remote areas, and marginalized communities who may encounter additional barriers to digital access.

Contemporary PSM emphasizes citizen participation and responsiveness, principles reflected in the government's focus on communication and technology within the GRM framework. By addressing communication challenges, promoting digital inclusion, and integrating technology, Nepal's PSM can enhance its GRM system, resulting in a more accessible, efficient, and responsive grievance redressal process.

Effective communication and technology adoption are essential for Nepal's Public Service Management (PSM) to fulfill its promise of citizen-centric governance. By integrating these elements into the Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) framework, the government can establish a more inclusive and responsive system for addressing public grievances. This, in turn, fosters trust in government institutions and reinforces the foundation for sustainable development in Nepal. As Nepal continues to advance its PSM, combining communication strategies with technological advancements will be crucial in achieving a more transparent, accountable, and citizen-focused governance system.

VI. CONCLUSION

An effective grievance redressal mechanism (GRM) is essential for addressing public complaints and ensuring accountability in governance. In Nepal, grievance redressal is theoretically integrated within various institutions, including municipal offices, the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), and sectoral departments. However, the practical implementation remains limited due to insufficient direct evidence collection, bureaucratic inertia, and inconsistent responsiveness. Many citizens encounter significant challenges when lodging complaints, as government offices often provide unclear guidelines on grievance resolution. The inefficiency of GRMs not only delays justice but also

exacerbates frustration among the populace, undermining their confidence in state institutions.

Nepal's public service management suffers from systemic inefficiencies that hinder effective grievance redress. A primary challenge is the lack of transparency in decision-making, fostering corruption and favoritism. Bureaucratic inefficiency further exacerbates delays in service delivery as government offices struggle to process requests promptly. Additionally, accessibility remains a significant issue, particularly in rural areas with underdeveloped digital services. Citizens, especially those in marginalized communities, face difficulties accessing government offices due to geographical and infrastructural barriers. The cumulative effect of these challenges results in a growing trust deficit between the government and the public. Despite numerous policy reforms, Nepal's governance framework struggles with poor implementation. Policies intended to improve public service delivery frequently fail due to a lack of coordination among government agencies and political instability. Constant leadership changes have led to inconsistent policy enforcement, complicating the establishment of long-term governance solutions.

Furthermore, the absence of effective monitoring mechanisms allows inefficiencies to persist unchecked. Compared to other South Asian nations, Nepal lags in institutional capacity, particularly in integrating technology to streamline services. This inability to enforce policy measures undermines the credibility of governance institutions, ultimately affecting the country's overall development trajectory. This research explores the complexities of Public Service Management (PSM) in Nepal, focusing on the operation and challenges of Grievance Redressal Mechanisms (GRMs) within the Communication and Information Service. While the GRM system shows strengths in transparency, consistency, empathy, and accountability, its effectiveness is undermined by significant gaps in direct evidence, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These shortcomings, exacerbated by resource constraints and the delicate balance between compassion and objectivity, necessitate strategic interventions.

To enhance the efficacy of Nepal's public service delivery, comprehensive capacity building, optimized resource allocation, and a robust digital infrastructure are essential. Furthermore, fostering public awareness and implementing stringent data security measures are vital. By addressing these challenges, Nepal can bridge the gap between policy and practice, thus improving public trust and satisfaction. A strengthened GRM system is ultimately key to achieving a more responsive, accountable, and citizen-centric public service.

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