

Compatibility of local government's websites with the government of Nepal's websites standards

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Abstract

E-government generally refers to utilizing IT, ICTs, and other web-based communication technologies to improve and develop the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector. It is the utilization of IT, ICTs, and other web-based communication technologies to improve and develop the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector. E-government generally refers to the utilization of IT, ICTs, and other web-based communication technologies to improve and develop the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery in the public sector. Most of the government organizations in Nepal have their own websites and their website has been used as a tool for making information easy to find, for ease of obtaining services, designed with mobile in mind, notify citizens about their recent activities and notices, gather feedback, inter- and intra-organizational information exchange and many more. Since Local Government have started to use their websites as an information center, effective website design and functionality is very important for providing services to the citizens. Developing countries like Nepal are lagging behind in e-government adoption compared to developed countries. During the last 10-15 years, governments from all over the world have tried to take advantage of IT and the Internet to improve governmental administration and communication with their people. Also, Nepal has tried its best to achieve this. As IT offers the opportunity for the government to better deliver information and services and to interact with citizens, businesses, and other government stakeholders in an effective manner. The discrepancy in e-government implementation between regions in Nepal is huge due to a number of reasons, including management, infrastructure, and human factors that vary across this heterogeneous country.

Keywords: *Local Government, ICT, Websites, Website Standard, Website Standard of Nepal.*

Received: 1 october,2022 Revision Accepted: 22 november, 2022 Published: 12 December, 2022

Introduction

There are thousands of websites that belongs to different government agencies and organizations. Unfortunately, local governments that have been slow to adapt and update their websites, may not make a very good first impression on citizens visiting their site. This is just

one of the reasons why it's important to have an effective government website. In fact, your organization's website is one of the most crucial tools you have for meeting the needs of citizens and connecting with your community. These things are arguably the main purpose of a government website, and effective websites do both exceptionally well. It presents information resources and online services from government sources, accessible.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) together with Internet is making it possible to share vast amount of knowledge and information and is driving all round socio-economic changes and growth. E-Infrastructure is the key enabler for the information and knowledge society. E-Infrastructure comprises tools, facilities and resources that are needed for advanced collaboration and includes integration of various technologies such as Internet broadband channels, computing power, bandwidth provisioning, data storage, grid-based resource sharing etc. To sustain the growth of Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) and to meet the challenges of globalization leading to highly competitive markets, there is a continuing need to invest in quality infrastructure, create intellectual property in communications, Internet and broadband technologies, and address the related policy issues. **(DOIT, 2017)** .

The World Wide Web (www), or Web, consists of a worldwide collection of electronic documents. Each electronic document on the Web is called a Web page, which can contain text, graphics, animation, audio, and video. Additionally, Web pages usually have built-in connections to other documents (Shelly, Cashman, & Vermaat, 2008).

Electronic Government (e-Government) is the use of information and communications technology (ICT) and other web-based technologies to enhance access of information and improve delivery, efficiency and effectiveness of service to the public. E-government aims to enhance access to and delivery of government services to benefit citizens. More important, it aims to help strengthen government's drive toward effective governance and increased transparency to better managing country's social and economic resources for development. E-government is a common way of conducting government across the globe. More implementing of e-government means ease of use of governmental services for citizens, enhancing governmental service delivery, simplifying compliance of governmental laws for citizens, improving citizen engagement and trust in public, decreasing fraud and improving cost efficiency for the government. It could also deliver cost savings to people and companies, too. Therefore, it is not surprising that policymakers and executives in the world are looking to embrace e-government, from the most developed to the least developed ones. E-government raises the standards of living and becomes a vital tool for governments and their citizens. E-government is not merely a symptom of the digital revolution, but generates true advantages for governments, citizens, private sector and all other stakeholders of government.

Nepal as a developing country, technology is only the way to compete globally. GoN is trying to make the country technology friendly. Many policies regarding ICT like ICT policy 2072, Directives to design and manage government websites, and the practice of developing the websites is basic steps it has to do. This is to be done to face and compete with the other

developed country. Technology is making the world a global village, where getting information is one of common human right and this right has to be ensured by the government of every nation. For delivering the information within a millisecond, technology in this era can be the best medium. To meet the right to information, and for the rapid development on every field, government of Nepal is practicing the various activities in the field of Information Technology. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 (Schedule 8) gives 22 powers to the local levels to formulate different laws and to implement them. Among those powers to formulate, develop and initialize the e-governance system throughout the using of Information Technology is one of the main aims of the local government. For the citizen-centric, efficient and transparent services being the main challenges to the Local government. the study is designed to provide insights about websites used in local government of Nepal and comparison of it with the directives / standard published by Nepal Government. Nepal Government is continuously working in adopting ICT in their system since many Years. It's a big challenge of Nepal Government to adopt E-government as the part of their daily activities. As Nepal is a developing Country, do not have enough resources (human, Technical). Despite of their lacking in financial, technical and manpower, it has understood that the global enrich can only be possible if it could convert traditional system of government to the Digital government. It helps to government body for make better policy regarding this field and helps to improve the services available on the web via the internet and networking, it will be help to improve service delivery towards citizens of Nepal government, it will help the web developers and the citizens to develop and improve the websites. it shows the current trend of websites designs practices is the main significance of this study.

Objectives of the study

To find out the web compatibility of local government's websites with government standards and to analyze the web standards used in NEPAL's websites are the main objective of the study.

Review of related literature and conceptual framework

Ndou's e-government framework (2004) is detailed and extends other models of e-government, for example, Heeks' (2001) and Grönlund's (2001). Ndou's framework was produced from a thorough analysis of principal definitions of e-government which were available in the literature. According to Ndou, the existing web of definitions of e-government yields to three major components that characterize an e-government framework. Those are: (i) transformation areas; (ii) users, stakeholders and their interrelationships, and (iii) e-government application domains.

Ndou's e-government framework is described in more detail below.

i. E-Government transformation areas: internal, external, and relational

Internal refers to the use of ICT to improve the efficiency of the internal functions and processes of government. For example, e-government connects different departments and agencies, thus making information flow much faster and more easily among different

governmental departments. *External* refers to how ICT opens up new possibilities for governments to be more transparent to citizens and businesses through dissemination of, and access to, a greater range of information collected and generated by the government. *Relational* refers to how ICT adoption may enable fundamental changes in the relationships between the citizens and the state, with implications for the democratic process and structures of the government.

ii. *E-Government users, stakeholders, and their interrelationships*

Ndou (2004) argues that e-government encompasses the following four main groups of stakeholders: citizens, businesses, governments (other governments and public agencies) and employees. The electronic transactions and interactions between government and each group constitute the following e-government web of relationships: G2C, G2B, G2G, etc.

iii. *E-Government Application Domains*

Ndou (2004) argues that the full exploitation and implementation of those complex webs of inter-relationships in (ii) entails three main application domains for e-government (Heeks, 2001): *e-Administration, e-Citizens and e-Services, and e-Society*.

Thus, *e-Administration* – for automation and computerization of administrative tasks and for realization of strategic connections between internal processes, departments and functions. *E-Services* – to realize connections and interrelationships among governments, citizens, businesses and to deliver automated services. *E-Citizens and E-Society* – to enable relationships and interactions among public agencies, citizens and civil community in general (**Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019**)

Finally, at the environmental level, citizens are the beneficiaries of the development of online government, and the development of online government requires the analysis of objective external needs and resources, so environmental factors are important external conditions for the robust development of online government. The contribution of this paper's research mainly focuses on the construction of an analytical model of the influencing factors of local government response based on the TOE theoretical framework. Compared with technical and environmental factors, organizational factors have a greater impact on government e-service capability, which has enlightening implications for the further development of local government online questioning (Reddy, 2022)

Nepal has still many problems in case of using ICT in government and other sectors. For authentication and regularization of the recognition, validity, integrity, and reliability; it is essential to make legal provisions. Nepal requires a bold set of institutional reforms aimed at achieving better governance while enforcing the rule of law. There are several legal instruments created to develop IT sector for augmenting e governance as IT Policy 2000, IT Policy 2004, Electronic Transaction Act 2004, Telecommunication Policy 2004, E-governance Master Plan, IT commitments in different plan periods, Electoral Transaction and Digital Signature Act 2000, Copyright Act 2000, Telecommunication Act and Regulation 1997 and National Communication Policy 1992. The reason of success and failure of e-government is the lack of comprehensive regulatory framework and good coordination

between regulation implementing agencies of government. Citizens play a major role to make government success or failure. There are not sufficient act and policy in ICT sector so different sector wise law, policy and plan should formulate in time for regulating the e-government activities in the nation.

A set of recommendations that can be used to improve further the experience and satisfaction of users of the websites have been compiled. The improvement of websites will be beneficial for both people with and without disabilities and could improve the online experience for all of them. Therefore, investing in the improvement of government websites is likely to have a higher return than expected. We suggest website designers and developers improve websites by doing the following:

1. Use automated accessibility tools, such as WAVE (a suite of evaluation tools that helps authors make their web content more accessible to individuals with disabilities.), to detect accessibility and usability problems, respectively.
2. Apply best practice design standards to existing websites.
3. Develop a usability and accessibility evaluation plan to be performed by act to test the government websites using different devices.
4. Consider annual revising of usability and accessibility of all government websites.

Research Method and Procedure

In this paper, mixed-method of research was used, including both quantitative and qualitative approaches, both quantitative and qualitative approaches was taken into consideration when appropriate. Under the quantitative research design, the descriptive research methods were applied for the research the qualitative data was used for validation of qualitative result and There were a large number of population-related for this topic which is not possible to include in this paper among them four-four Municipality and Rural municipality of Nepal was selected as the research field and taking Information and Technology Officers are selected as the main respondent by using purposive sampling method for this paper, where in this research mostly primary and secondary source was used for collection of data use for additional information. This study was extracted of primary data from the close ended questionnaire only. Secondary data was extracted from Government documents, reports, journals, article and many other relevant books and Total 8 ITOs of each Municipality and Rural municipality of Nepal was selected using the quota sampling method for the questionnaire.

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Perception of websites

perception of websites	Response	
	Yes	No

Do you think websites is useful for your organizations?	100	0
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According to the above table, no 3 shows that there is 100 percent of local level that thinks the websites is useful for them. According to the respondents the websites helps them to gather information, helps to convey information, as the websites makes the service seekers more efficient and more useful. they visited the websites for every information they need like the how to take the service, who is related to services? important notices, information about the office and organizations.

In the above table, the table no 3 shows that the all local level used the websites specially to publish notices, to publish data and information about the local level, also the formulated polices, important books published by them, information about the branches of offices, their locations, periodic plans, important photograph, and may more. The local level of the Nepal used the websites had the contents like Important Notices, photographs, Books, Plans and Policies, information about the services and service-related staffs with details, Forms and formats which means that the local level has the good concept about the websites and its use.

Factors that are that should not be in websites.

In the following table, the table represents the status of the all-research areas government organizations and their nature of websites if some published content that causes adverse effects on any group, tribe, ethnicity, religion and sect or that disturbs social peace and harmony to all the NEPALs of the websites and are represented in percentage, also shows the status about this below in the table.

Table 2: Websites usefulness and harmfulness

Nature of websites	Response	Number	percentage
	not against the constitution of Nepal	8	100
Do you know that websites used in your NEPAL have considered following things during development?	Not related to a personal benefit	8	100
	Data are secured	8	50
	Electronic act 2063 is been considered during developing	8	80
	not upload and publish any content that causes adverse effects on any group, tribe, ethnicity, religion and sect or that disturbs social peace and harmony.	8	100
	Other:		

According to the respondent and collected data, the above table no 2 clearly shows that 100 percent of NEPAL's websites was designed with the consideration that It was not against the constitution, the rule of law. The table also shows that the websites are not designed for the benefit of some person as it is solely designed for the government organizations where the system asks the NEPALs to update the activities of them, information about them, and information about the services provided by them.

The electronic transaction is:

- transactions of electronic records data by using any types of electronic means.
- contains electric records and valid digital medium.
- the exchange of all types of records which are in the form of electronic.

Objectives of the Electronic Transaction Act 2063

1. To make legal provision for authentication and regulation of electronic data.
2. To make a reliable date generation, communication, and transmission.
3. To make a secured and authentic means of electronic communication.
4. To regulate all the relating matters of electronic transactions.

In the Above table and the data shows that a maximum number of the NEPALs was unknown about' if the electronic transaction act 2063' is considered while developing the websites and they assumed that the electronic act was considered while developing the site. Also, the data in the websites are supposed to be safe. Above table shows that almost all respondents find the websites safe.

Therefore, according to collected data and analysis of the data, the result of the table no 2 also show that the websites design is as per the directives to design and manage the government websites.

Contents of Local Level websites.

Web content refers to the textual, aural, or visual content published on a website. Content means any creative element, for example, text, applications, images, archived e-mail messages, data, e-services, audio and video files, and so on.

Web content is the key behind traffic generation to websites. Creating engaging content and organizing it into various categories for easy navigation is most important for a successful website. Also, it is important to optimize the web content for search engines so that it responds to the keywords used for searching.

There are two basic kinds of web content:

1. Text: Text is simple. It is added on the webpage as text blocks or within images. The best written content is unique textual web content that is free from plagiarism. Web content added as text can also include good internal links that help readers gain access to more information.
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1. **Multimedia:** Another kind of web content is multimedia. Simply put, multimedia refers to any content which is not text; some examples include: Animations: Animations can be added with the help of Flash, Ajax, GIF images as well as other animation tools

Successful government websites become a go-to source of information for the community by creating highly useful and relevant content. Take a critical look at the kinds of information your community wants from you. That’s where you can start mining for content ideas. For example, a community calendar that is updated daily with meetings or other relevant community events. Or an FAQ that helps to explain new infrastructure improvements taking place in the community.

The Government of Nepal has published the policy to make the similarities in the all websites operated by the government. Directives to design and manage the government websites contains same criteria that the Nepal government websites has to be. According to the directives the websites of the government should have the organizational goals and objectives, it should contain the detail information chief administrative officers along with staffs details, information about representatives, service related staff details , information of the structure of organizations, services related details like citizen charter, list of services, service details, information related to how to get services , downloadable file and formats , History of organization

Progress and achievement, Ongoing plans and programs work related branch and their details, contact place and contact numbers, FAQs, Notices, tenders and press release published by office. Work related fees and charges, Site map, search engine etc. The table below shows about the status of websites of 8 local level.

Table 3: Contents of Local level websites

Content types in Local Government	Response	No. of NEPALs	Percentage
	Aims and objective of the organization	0	0
	Information about CAO and others	8	100
	information of service-related staffs in details	8	100
	services related rules and regulations	8	100
	structure organization	8	100
	citizen charter, list of services, service details, information related to how to get services, downloadable file and formats	8	100
What types of content are there in your websites?	History of organization	8	100
	Progress and achievement	8	100
	Ongoing plans and programs	8	100
	Work related branch and their details	8	100

Contact place and contact numbers	8	100
FAQS	8	100
Notices, tenders and press release published by office.	8	100
Work related fees and charges	8	100
Site map	8	100
search engine	8	100

According to the above table, the table no 4 clearly show that almost all of the websites of the Local level of the Nepal was as per the features in the directives of government. The websites do not have its objectives/ goal of the organizations in the websites. Rather the websites itself is a government website and the information of the websites reflects its objectives. The websites have the information about the Chief Administrative officer (CAO), Their name, phone number, email address and a photo of them in the home page. The websites also contain information of the main services provided by the local level and the ward offices of the local level. The information includes the name of the service, service provider staff details, fees/ charges for the services and the documents needed for getting the service. The most of all the Local level have the structures of their organizations in hierarchal forms. The websites contain the citizen charter, list of services and service-related information. It was found that the websites have many downloadable files and formats that the users can download while getting services. The history and the establishment details are provided in the websites. The quarter reports and achievements of the organizations are published rarely by the Local government of Nepal. It was found that there was the provision of publishing the ongoing plans and programs, contact places and contact number of the service and service-related staff, frequently asked questions (FAQ) by the users, notices and information published by the organizations, site map, search engine for searching the exact information.

Features of the Local government websites.

In this day and age, government websites serve not only as a resource of information for citizens, but through interactive features, can also provide a range of services such as e-payments, license renewals and social media. So by now, there must be features that are absolutely essential for any government website -- a question we asked of winners from this year's Digital Government Education and Achievement Awards, better known as the Best of the Web.

The event, held in San Francisco at the Renaissance hotel, honored top websites from cities, counties, states, and in education. This year's top city, county and state Best of the Web winners went to Louisville, Ky.; Orange County, Fla.; and Alabama respectively. The awards are presented by the Center for Digital Government and Center for Digital Education, the research division of e-Republic, Government Technology's parent company.

Mobile use grows every year, and more people access the internet today via smartphones and tablets than they do from a desktop computer. Responsive design simply means your website needs to look good and operate well on a mobile (often smaller) device. All the local levels

Responsive sites include these features like; All text is automatically re-sized and re-located for easy viewing, Links and buttons are large enough to click, Re-ordering of content to allow for vertical scrolling and Videos play easily with the entire screen in full view

With a responsive design, visitors have a consistent experience on your website no matter how or where they access it with the Responsive Design. Smart phones and tablets have changed the way people use the internet, Agendas & Minutes Manager. Your residents lead busy lives, Interactive Calendars, Site Search, Accessible Online Forms, Unique, Consistent Design, E-mail Alerts, Intuitive Navigation features.

According to directives to design and manage government websites, government websites should be user friendly. It should be easy to use and should be printer friendly. The documents in the websites should be categorized as per its importance and use. The documents should be found out easily within 3 clicks. The documents kept in the websites should be published till its use. That is expiry date should be kept in the documents and the data should be archived after its expiry. The Respective Nepal should have the authorities to manage the websites. Content has to managed by the local level themselves. Related files and formats should be kept in the websites so the users can download and use them for taking services. Also, the security audit should be done annually for the purpose of evaluation. The documents in government websites should be in two languages (English, Nepali). The government websites also should contain ‘.gov.np’ formats email visibly.

Table 5: Features of Local government websites:

content types in Local Government	Response	No. of Nepals	Percentage
What are the features of your websites?	Easy to use	8	100
	easy to print	8	100
	documents are categorized/prioritized	4	50
	can find documents with in 3 clicks	8	100
	All documents have its expiry date and provision of archive	0	0
	Nepal can handle Content Management System	8	100
	image file/ pdf. files are available	8	100
	security audit is done	0	0
	can find documents in two languages (English, Nepali)	0	0
	.gov.np formats email are visible	8	100

Above table no. 6 clearly states that the contents of Local level websites and the governments standard are almost same buy some of the provisions are not followed strictly by the local

government. The researcher found both groups of the respondents (CAO and ITO) felt easy to use the website, whereas the websites was also printer friendly. The documents are uploaded/ updated whenever it is necessary but were not prioritized. According to the respondents the websites were not audited to till date. Also, the websites in the Nepal do not publish contents in two languages. Even the website themes are same for all the Local level the websites feature depend on the NEPALs activity as they have the authorities for content management. The researcher found that the CAO and ITO have less knowledge about the directives of the government. The features of websites are as per the standard but the CMS system handler that is found to not use the system properly. As the Municipalities were found more active in websites content updating activities in comparison to Rural Municipalities.

Table 4: Provision regarding evaluation of website usage

Provision regarding evaluation of website usage:	Response	No. of Nepal's	Percentage
what Provision regarding evaluation of website usage are there?	record of unique visitors	8	100
	record of frequently visited pages	8	100
	record of most downloaded files	4	50
	record of band width utilizations	8	100
	record of visitors frequency according to the unique IP	8	0

In the above table, it shows that most of the respondent was that the websites are not evaluated as they just update the websites as per the need of the organizations. The record of unique visitors, frequently visited pages, record of the most downloaded files, record of band width with utilizations are not kept by the Local level. The respondents were asked If they are instructed by their higher authorities? But the respondents said that there was no practice of Provision regarding evaluation of website usage.

Updates related facts about Local websites

The two most common ways of updating your website are by: creating and editing webpages on your computer and then transferring them to the webserver using FTP or. Submitting new content for your website through an online web form that you access using a content management system.

Deleting Files: There may now be files on the web site that you no longer need. Select the unwanted files and simply delete. You can also rename files by in a similar way.

Transferring Files: You can drag and drop files and folders to transfer them between the local and remote computers. **(Green Net support)**

It's important to measure your success. Website metrics will tell you everything you need to know about your site's performance. And the answers will be invaluable in helping you determine what is and isn't working.

Questions to measure success:

- How many people are visiting your website? What are their demographics?
- Once visitors find your site, do they stay or leave after a second or two?
- How much time do they spend on each page?
- What are the most popular pages?
- What are the least popular pages?

The Directives includes the Some measures that should be there for evaluation of website usage. It says that the Local government or the government organizations should make the arrangements of to delete the unwanted information as soon as the use of the information date expires. All the activities of the government websites should be updated that includes daily basis information's, Notices, Reports, Achievements, Ongoing plans and programs etc. After the New Plans and Policies gets passed through the assembly It has to be updated within 7 days. If the information on the website needs to be changed, the details will be updated within 3 days after the completion of the work. If the address of the office or staffs is changed, the information will be updated within 24 hours.

Table 7: Updates related facts about Local websites:

Updates related facts about Local websites	Response	No. of Nepals	Percentage
	IT Officers/ web masters are given responsibilities to update websites.	8	100
What arrangements are made to update websites?	Arrangement to delete old information and update new one.	8	100
	upgraded or new plan, policies and programs are updated within 7 days.	4	50
	if the information on the website needs to be changed, the details will	4	50

be updated within 3 days after the completion of the work.
 If the address of the office or staffs is changed, the information will be updated within 24 hours.

According to the above table the websites of the Local government of Nepal was almost found to be similar to the website standard (directives to design and manage government websites). The IT Officers are hired in all the Local level since 2075 to control the CMS of the websites. Every ITO of respective Nepals updates the websites as per the need. websites of the Local level have the provision of deleting the old and unwanted information and update the new. The local level itself is a form of government, so the government has the right to formulate new Nepals land policies as per the need. They have the right to organize the different programs. So, all the days. But the local government was not updating within time limits. As the need is seen the documents gets updated. If the information on the website needs to be changed, the details will be updated within 3 days after the completion of the work. If the address of the office or staffs is changed, the information will be updated within 24 hours.

Figure 24: Updates related facts about Local websites:

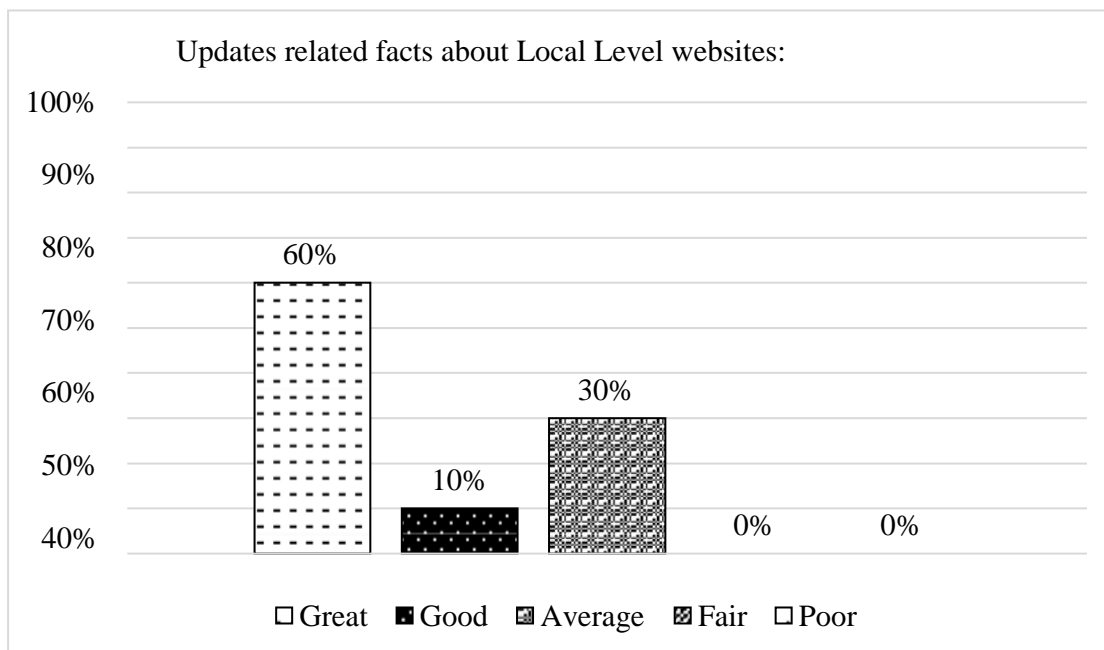


Figure 1: Updates related facts about Local Level websites.

In the above figures the maximum about 60% of the Local level websites are updated regularly and in great way whereas the 10% of the websites of the Nepal are Good in conditions of the websites. The 30% of the websites are average in websites that is they update the websites as the time of need or emergency only. The researcher finds that the

Municipalities of the Nepal are more active in comparison to the Rural municipalities. The rural municipalities' websites are less visited and are also less updated. The Rural municipalities were not updating the new rules and policies as soon as it is formed. Rather some of the rural municipalities only updates whenever needed.

Conclusion

It is found that the websites in the local levels are designed as per the directives. The Electronic transactions act 2063, and constitutions of Nepal are considered while the local level websites are designed. As the Content Management System (CMS) handling is given to the local level. The Local level websites depends on how the websites is handled by them. All the local level of the Nepal has recruited ITO for the sake of websites handling. But Some of the websites of Nepal's are seem inactive in case of websites handling. The Municipalities of the Local level was more actively found updated in comparisons to the Rural municipalities. The local level of Nepal has establishment details, information about the Local level. The websites did not contain the Aims and objective of the organization. The local level websites have the Information about CAO and elected representatives, information of service-related staffs in details, services related rules and regulations. The websites also contain the history of organization, progress and achievement of organizations, Ongoing plans and programs, work related branch and their details, contact place and contact numbers, FAQs, suggestion and complaints, Notices related to tenders and press release published by office, service-related fees and charges, service-related data, services related webpages links, annual / reports, site map, search engine. The websites contain all types of the content that are listed in the Directives to design and manage the government websites. The CAOs of the local level are non-IT personals but all the CAOs of the 8 local level responded that the websites are easy to use and printer friendly. The local are responsible for the CMS, so because of the inactiveness of the local levels the contents are not seen to be prioritized and categorized. The unusual contents also seem to be actively updated in the prioritized list. The documents do not contain the expiry date. So that the unwanted documents that occupied the space and seemed visible in the websites.

There is the provision of annual audit but it is found that the local level websites did not conduct the security audit to till date. There are many defects of local level websites of the Nepal. The local level is responsible for the updates related facts about the websites where as the websites is developed as per the directives. Many standards do not match the local websites are related to the user's side and their performance. It is necessary for the local level to improve their activity to match the government websites. Effective implementation of the websites can help local level to achieve their goal. The proper management of local level website can improve the whole performance of the websites.

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