



# The Lumbini Journal of Business and Economics

Peer Reviewed

## ***Public Perception Towards Service Delivery System of Government Organization: A Study of Birendranagar Municipality***

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### **Abstract**

#### **Article Info**

#### **Received:**

24 December 2024

#### **Revised:**

23 March 2025

#### **Accepted:**

25 March 2025

**Purpose:** This study explores how residents of Birendranagar municipality, Nepal, perceive government service delivery, focusing on Citizen Charter, responsiveness, grievance redressal, and service quality. The purpose is to assess public perceptions of these aspects and understand their impact on overall satisfaction with government services.

**Methods:** A descriptive research design was employed, involving a survey of 152 clients from government organizations in Birendranagar. Data were collected using a self-designed questionnaire with closed-ended questions on a five-point Likert scale. The analysis utilized correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis.

**Results:** This study explores the factors influencing public perception of government services in Birendranagar Municipality. The findings reveal that the Citizen Charter significantly enhances public perception, while Employee Responsiveness, Grievance Redressal, and Service Quality show weak or non-significant correlations. The Citizen Charter is the key factor influencing public satisfaction.

**Conclusion:** Enhancing the citizen charter and grievance redressal mechanisms improves public perception. Government organizations should focus on increasing transparency, accessibility, and efficiency in service delivery. By addressing these areas, policymakers can build greater trust and satisfaction among residents, leading to more effective and citizen-centric governance.

**Keywords:** Service delivery, government organizations, citizen charter, employee responsiveness, grievance redressal mechanisms

### **I. Introduction**

Public service refers to key services provided by the government, including healthcare, education, transportation, and social welfare, which are vital for democratic governance. Effective delivery of these services is essential for fulfilling government responsibilities and ensuring the well-being of society (Bovaird, 2015). However, delivering public services involves complex processes that face challenges like bureaucratic inefficiencies, resource constraints, and varying capacities among different government organizations (Umeh &

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Ugwogebu, 2023). Public perception of these services is crucial, as it directly influences trust in government institutions and levels of citizen engagement (Wright, 2007).

In many developing countries, including Nepal, public service delivery faces inefficiencies, procedural complexities, and transparency issues, with citizens often struggling to access services due to bureaucratic barriers and lack of information (Makanyeza, 2013). Over time, governments have formalized service delivery through bureaucratic structures and agencies, evolving to meet societal needs and technological advancements (Wollmann, 2020). In this context, responsive public administration has become essential, requiring administrators to promptly address citizen concerns and ensure efficient service delivery (Kettl, 2019).

Citizen charters have been introduced globally, including in Nepal, as mechanisms to promote transparency, accountability, and efficiency in public service delivery (Deep, 2021; Pandey, 2017). These charters outline the government's commitment to citizen-centric governance, improving service quality and fostering public engagement. Additionally, employee responsiveness and effective grievance redressal systems are critical components in enhancing service quality and building trust with the public (Melhem, 2018; Steilen, 2017). Grievance redressal is a formal process for addressing complaints from citizens or customers, crucial for ensuring accountability, transparency, and citizen engagement (Kumar & Kaur, 2020). An effective system can enhance trust, while inadequate handling can damage public perception. Meeting or exceeding citizen expectations is a key factor in evaluating public services, and it is essential for ensuring long-term satisfaction and trust in government services (Zekiri, 2021).

Public service delivery encompasses services provided by the government, either directly through public institutions or indirectly via support to private or non-governmental entities (Engdaw, 2019). Despite global initiatives to enhance service delivery, challenges like inefficiency, inaccessibility, and unresponsiveness persist. Addressing these issues requires accountability from both policymakers and service providers, as well as fostering trust and encouraging citizen participation in government institutions (Engdaw, 2019).

Public services are essential for government functioning, encompassing both tangible goods like infrastructure and intangible services such as healthcare and education. These services address citizens' needs but often spark debates over their quality. Pokharel et al. (2017) argue that citizens often assess the effectiveness of government based on the quality of these services. Government agencies are responsible for delivering efficient and effective services, yet the nature and quality of these services are frequently contested (Farquhar & Robson, 2017). Quality assessments of public services are subjective and context-dependent, with citizens expecting continuous improvements and cost-effectiveness. Public services can be delivered directly by the government or through partnerships with private or non-governmental organizations, but the government's role in ensuring their effectiveness remains central (Pokharel et al., 2017). The relationship between the state and citizens is often conceptualized as a social compact, where citizens accept the state's authority in exchange for certain rights (Rousseau, 2008). The quality of public services directly influences this relationship. In Nepal, the government is primarily responsible for service provision, yet challenges like pricing disputes and a lack of clear service design criteria hinder effective delivery (Pokharel et al., 2017). Services are often defined by providers, limiting citizens' influence on quality and service processes.

Effective public service delivery requires not only efficient services but also ensuring that citizens perceive them as fair, reliable, and trustworthy, fostering public trust and encouraging citizen participation (McCourt, 2007). Services should be transparent, responsive, and delivered with integrity, particularly for vulnerable groups, allowing citizens to assess quality and express their needs (Ringgold et al., 2012). SERVQUAL, a widely used framework for assessing service quality, is based on five key dimensions—reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness (Van der Wal et al., 2002).

Despite the widespread adoption of citizen charters and a focus on service quality, there remains a significant gap in understanding public perception, particularly in regions like Birendranagar municipality, Nepal. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring factors influencing residents' views on government service delivery in the municipality. It specifically examines perceptions of citizen charters, employee responsiveness, grievance redressal mechanisms, and overall service quality. The study seeks to provide valuable insights into local attitudes and challenges, which can help policymakers improve service delivery, address grievances, and enhance citizen satisfaction in Birendranagar municipality.

## II. Review of Literature

Mengste et al. (2020) examined customer satisfaction with public services in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, revealing a moderate relationship between key service delivery factors and overall satisfaction. Despite positive correlations between service dimensions and satisfaction, challenges such as poor service mentality, low employee motivation, corruption, ineffective grievance systems, and insufficient resources hindered service quality. The study recommended improving stakeholder cooperation, regular customer feedback, and addressing these systemic issues to enhance public service delivery. Bekerom et al. (2021) examined how biases affect citizens' views on public service performance, discovering that people tend to criticize public organizations more than private ones, particularly if they prefer private services. Their findings highlight how biases shape public perceptions and the need for more research on these dynamics in public administration.

The World Bank (2014) highlights that the push for decentralized governance arises from the need for more efficient public service delivery, with many countries moving toward decentralization to meet these demands. The ongoing debate on federalism and decentralization suggests that while federalism can align with decentralization, it is neither a prerequisite nor sufficient on its own. In Nepal, Adhikary (2010) notes that despite numerous political changes and development strategies, decentralization efforts have often failed due to ineffective approaches. Local government bodies, although elected independently, lack fiscal decentralization and administrative power, which leads to dependence on the national government and hinders their ability to be responsive and accountable. Ultimately, decentralization aims to enhance service access, resource utilization, administrative efficiency, transparency, and participatory democracy.

Regmi et al. (2010) argue that local governance involves managing resources and making decisions that affect public affairs, with decentralization enhancing governance by improving efficiency, accountability, and opportunities for participation. It aims to strengthen democracy and the effectiveness of public service delivery. Dahal et al. (2001) emphasize that local governments can only deliver services effectively if they maintain autonomy, including the ability to make contracts, manage property, and raise revenue. However, their autonomy is often compromised by central control and political fragmentation. In the business context, Stone et al. (2000) highlights the importance of public retention, noting that it is more cost-effective to retain existing customers than to attract new ones. Public satisfaction, which can be gauged through both qualitative and quantitative methods, is crucial for fostering loyalty and guiding strategic decisions.

West (2023) examined the impact of e-government on public-sector service delivery and citizen attitudes. The study reviewed how new technology has affected service delivery, democratic responsiveness, and public attitudes over the past three years. It assessed whether e-government has utilized the interactivity of the web to enhance these areas. A national public opinion survey explored the influence of e-government on citizens' views of government and confidence in service delivery. The findings suggested that while e-government has not fully met expectations in transforming services and public trust, it has potential to improve democratic responsiveness and perceptions of government effectiveness.

Manaf et al. (2023) investigated citizen perceptions and public servant accountability in Malaysia's local government services, finding general satisfaction but highlighting issues with

accountability, low citizen participation, slow complaint resolutions, and infrastructure delays. They recommended greater citizen involvement in decision-making to improve service delivery. Similarly, Makanyeza et al. (2013) examined the causes of poor service delivery in Kajiado Local Authority, identifying political interference, corruption, and inadequate citizen participation as key challenges. Their proposed solutions included increasing citizen engagement, improving human resource policies, addressing corruption, enhancing accountability, and strategic partnerships for better service outcomes.

Makalela (2020) examined the challenges in implementing the integrated development plan (IDP) and improving service delivery in the Lepelle-Nkumpi municipality, Limpopo, finding that the municipality struggled to meet its goals due to insufficient community participation and organizational capacity. The study recommended enhancing community involvement and strengthening organizational structures to improve service provision. Similarly, Ramasamy (2020) investigated how government quality, institutional performance, and impartiality affect public service access for minorities in Sri Lanka's ethnically polarized plantation community. The research highlighted that discriminatory laws and practices obstruct minority access to services, underscoring the importance of government quality and impartial institutions in safeguarding minority rights.

Ahsan and Huque (2020) examined the impact of citizen charters in Bangladesh, noting minimal effectiveness due to low awareness and poor implementation. A citizen charter outlines the services and standards a government or organization promises to deliver, aiming to enhance transparency, accountability, and trust between the public and the government (Ohemeng, 2010). It empowers citizens by clearly defining service standards and promoting government responsibility. Singh et al. (2019) highlighted a significant gap between citizens' high expectations and negative experiences with e-governance services in Papua New Guinea and Fiji. Shareef et al. (2019) found that SMS-based service delivery in the USA, India, and Bangladesh led to citizen satisfaction, emphasizing market segmentation and timely information. Hasan (2019) focused on e-service delivery in Bangladesh, revealing a preference for e-government services over traditional methods, with occupational background influencing perceptions. Gumah and Aziabah (2020) emphasized the importance of efficient public services in enhancing quality of life, advocating for policy measures to address challenges like corruption and funding issues.

Several studies have explored the challenges and impacts of public sector reforms, particularly citizen charters, across various countries. Haque (2005) emphasized that while citizen charters in India aim to enhance service delivery, they frequently neglect socially excluded groups, highlighting the need for initiatives to bridge this gap. Similarly, Saguin (2018) identified significant shortcomings in the Philippines, such as a lack of stakeholder involvement, inconsistent information, and poor customization, suggesting that these charters often fail to align with New Public Management (NPM) principles and require substantial improvements. In Nepal, Kharel (2018) noted a disconnect between policy intent and actual practices in local government service delivery, which is exacerbated by political instability and low public satisfaction. Andrews and Van de Walle (2013) found that in England, public-private partnerships within NPM frameworks negatively affected citizens' perceptions of service quality, although performance management and entrepreneurial strategies yielded positive outcomes, varying according to local socio-economic conditions. Additionally, Vivier and Wentzel (2013) examined community participation and service delivery perceptions among Cape Town residents, utilizing qualitative data from focus groups across four areas of the Cape Town Metro. Their findings revealed diverse views on the necessity of engaging with local government, with many participants expressing dissatisfaction with current engagement levels; notably, interest in improved engagement was sometimes independent of perceptions of service quality, underscoring the complexity of governance and the critical role of trust in officials.

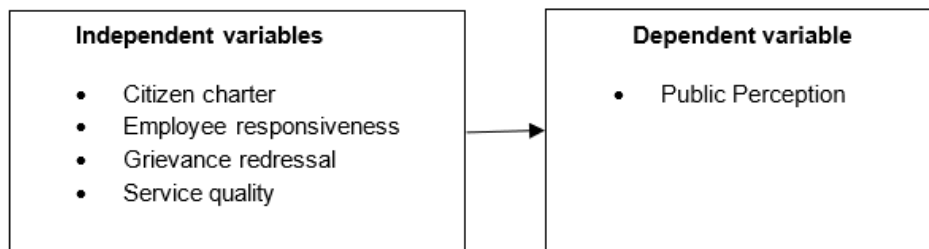
West (2004) conducted a study on 'E-government and the transformation of service delivery and citizen attitudes'. The main objective of the study was to find out the impact of new

technology on public-sector service delivery and citizens' attitudes about government has long been debated by political observers. This article assesses the consequences of e-government for service delivery, democratic responsiveness, and public attitudes over the last three years. Research examines the content of e-government to investigate whether it is taking advantage of the interactive features of the World Wide Web to improve service delivery, democratic responsiveness, and public outreach. In addition, a national public opinion survey examines the ability of e-government to influence citizens' views about government and their confidence in the effectiveness of service delivery.

Using both Web site content as well as public assessments, I argue that, in some respects, the e-government revolution has fallen short of its potential to transform service delivery and public trust in government. It does, however, have the possibility of enhancing democratic responsiveness and boosting beliefs that government is effective.

### Conceptual Framework

Conceptual framework has been constructed as below:



The conceptual framework examines the relationship between four independent variables—Citizen Charter, Employee Responsiveness, Grievance Redressal, and Service Quality—and their impact on the dependent variable of Public Perception. It suggests that the effectiveness of public service delivery, as influenced by clear commitments in the Citizen Charter, timely and effective responses from employees, efficient handling of grievances, and overall service quality, plays a critical role in shaping how the public perceives the performance of these services. Positive experiences in these areas are expected to enhance public satisfaction, trust, and the overall perception of public institutions.

### III. Methodology

Researchers applied descriptive research methods including analytical approaches to understand Karnali Province citizens' feelings about government service delivery. The population encompassed all clients of government organizations while Slovin's formula determined 152 participants as the sample. A closed-ended questionnaire was designed by the researchers to collect primary data from participants while their survey options used Nepali and English language versions to accommodate all participants. A five-point Likert scale appeared in the questionnaire to assess respondent satisfaction across different government service dimensions. Data collection lasted a month period during which participants learned about the study goal and received assurance their responses would remain confidential. The researchers analyzed the accumulated data to extract findings about public perception while confirming their research objectives had been fulfilled.

## IV. Results and Discussion

### Correlation analysis

After observing the descriptive statistics, the variables under the study, Pearson correlation coefficients are computed and the results are presented in table below more specifically, it shows the correlation coefficients of Independent Variables (Citizen Charter - CC, Employee responsiveness - ER, Grievance redressal - GR and Service Quality- SQ) and dependent variable (Public Perception-PP).

**Table 1**

*Correlation Result*

	PP (Public Perception)	CC (Citizen Charter)	ER (Employee Responsiveness)	GR (Grievance Redressal)	SQ(Service Quality)
PP	1				
CC	.528**	1			
ER	-.088	-.254**	1		
GR	-.194**	-.249**	.273**	1	
SQ	-.150*	-.142*	.027	.168**	1

*\*\*.* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *.\** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation analysis indicates a significant positive relationship between one of the factors and public perception, with a correlation coefficient of 0.528 ( $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that improvements in this factor are strongly associated with a more favorable public perception. Conversely, another factor shows a weak negative correlation of -0.088 with public perception, indicating a minimal impact on how the public perceives the situation.

Additionally, another factor has a moderate negative correlation of -0.194 ( $p < 0.01$ ) with public perception, suggesting that issues related to this factor are associated with less favorable perceptions. There is also a weak negative correlation of -0.150 ( $p < 0.05$ ) with public perception for another variable, showing that poorer outcomes in this area are slightly related to a more negative public perception. The relationships between these factors and public perception vary in strength, highlighting different degrees of impact on overall public sentiment.

### Regression Analysis

To identify relationship between Independent Variables (Citizen Charter - CC, Employee responsiveness - ER, Grievance redressal - GR and Service Quality- SQ) and dependent variable (Public Perception-PP).

**Table 2**

*Model Summary of Regression Analysis*

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.550a	.302	.589	.87569

a. Predictors: (Constant), CC, ER, GR and SQ

The regression analysis model with predictors CC, ER, GR, and SQ shows a moderate relationship between the observed and predicted values, as indicated by the correlation coefficient (R) of 0.550. The R Square value of 0.302 suggests that approximately 30.2% of the variability in the dependent variable is explained by these predictors. However, the Adjusted R Square value of 0.589 provides a more refined measure, adjusting for the number of predictors, and indicates that about 58.9% of the variance is explained by the model. Overall, the model demonstrates a moderate level of explanatory power, with a better fit when considering the number of predictors used in the analysis.

**Table 3**

*ANOVA of Independent Variable and SME*

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	85.002	5	17.000	22.169	.000b
	Residual	196.311	256	.767		
	Total	281.313	261			

a. Dependent Variable: PP

b. Predictors: (Constant), CC, ER, GR and SQ

The ANOVA table for the regression model with predictors CC, ER, GR, and SQ shows a significant overall model fit. The regression sum of squares is 85.002, with 5 degrees of freedom and a mean square of 17.000. The F-value of 22.169, with a p-value of 0.000, indicates that the model is statistically significant in predicting the dependent variable PP. The residual sum of squares is 196.311, with 256 degrees of freedom, while the total sum of squares is 281.313. This suggests that the predictors collectively explain a significant portion of the variance in the dependent variable.

**Table 4**

*Coefficient of Multiple Regression Analysis*

	Model	Unstandardized Coefficients B	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.735	.241		3.053	.003
	CC	.488	.053	.508	9.132	.000
	ER	.085	.088	.054	.964	.336
	GR	-.079	.073	-.061	-1.088	.278
	SQ	-.055	.079	-.038	-.692	.490

a. Dependent Variable: PP

The regression analysis results reveal that the constant term is significant with a coefficient of 0.735 and a p-value of 0.003. Among the predictors, only the variable with a coefficient of 0.488 and a p-value of 0.000 shows a significant impact, with a standardized beta of 0.508. The other predictors, with coefficients of 0.085, -0.079, and -0.055, are not statistically significant, with p-values of 0.336, 0.278, and 0.490 respectively. This indicates that while



one predictor significantly affects the outcome variable, the others do not have a statistically meaningful influence. Hence, citizen charter is the only variable among the four independent variables (CC, ER, GR, SQ) that has a significant positive impact on public perception growth. The other three variables, Employee Responsiveness (ER), Grievance Redressal (GR), and Service Quality (SQ), do not show a significant relationship with increase in public perception. The lack of significance in the other variables may be due to factors such as insufficient variation in the data, ineffective implementation of these services, or less direct influence on the public's overall perception compared to the citizen charter.

Hence, citizen charter is the only variable among the four independent variables (CC, ER, GR, SQ) that has a significant positive impact on public perception growth. The other three variables, Employee Responsiveness (ER), Grievance Redressal (GR), and Service Quality (SQ), do not show a significant relationship with increase in public perception.

### Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the significant impact of the citizen charter on public perception, while other factors such as employee responsiveness, grievance redressal mechanisms, and service quality showed limited or no significant relationships. This aligns with previous studies emphasizing the effectiveness of citizen charters in promoting transparency and accountability. For instance, research by Deep (2021) and Pandey (2017) underscores the importance of clear service commitments outlined in citizen charters for fostering trust and satisfaction among citizens. Similarly, Ohemeng (2010) emphasizes that citizen charters enhance public engagement by clearly defining government commitments, which corresponds with the positive influence observed in this study.

However, the weak or non-significant relationships of other variables diverge from existing literature. For example, while Melhem (2004) highlight employee responsiveness as a critical factor in building trust and enhancing service experiences, this study found no meaningful correlation. This could reflect contextual challenges in Birendranagar, such as limited resources, insufficient training, or a lack of awareness among public. Similarly, grievance redressal mechanisms, often regarded as pivotal for accountability and trust (Kumar & Kaur, 2020), displayed a weak negative relationship with public perception. These findings align with challenges reported in Dire Dawa City (Mengste et al., 2020) and Malaysia (Manaf et al., 2023), where inefficient grievance systems hinder public satisfaction.

The weak relationship between service quality and public perception also contrasts with widely accepted frameworks like SERVQUAL, which emphasizes the importance of service quality in shaping trust and satisfaction (Van der Wal et al., 2002). This inconsistency could stem from the subjective nature of quality assessments or structural issues in Birendranagar's service delivery systems. Studies in Nepal, such as those by Pokharel et al. (2017), have highlighted similar challenges, including bureaucratic inefficiencies and inadequate public awareness of service quality standards, which might explain the observed weak correlation.

Interestingly, the strong influence of the citizen charter in this study suggests its unique effectiveness within Nepal's governance context, particularly in decentralized structures like Birendranagar Municipality. While some studies from other regions, such as India (Haque, 2005) and the Philippines (Saguin, 2018), critique citizen charters for inadequate implementation and stakeholder engagement, the results here highlight the charter's potential as a tool for improving public perception. These findings suggest that, despite challenges in other areas, the citizen charter holds considerable promise for enhancing trust and satisfaction if implemented effectively.

Overall, the results underscore the need for context-specific strategies to address the gaps in employee responsiveness, grievance redressal, and service quality, while further strengthening the citizen charter to maximize its impact on public satisfaction. These insights provide a valuable basis for designing targeted interventions to improve service delivery in Nepal.



## V. Conclusion and Implication

This study examined the relationship between key factors influencing public perception of government services, with a particular focus on the roles of Citizen Charter (CC), Employee Responsiveness (ER), Grievance Redressal (GR), and Service Quality (SQ). The findings reveal that Citizen Charter (CC) has a significant positive impact on public perception, while the other factors as Employee Responsiveness, Grievance Redressal, and Service Quality demonstrated either weak or non-significant relationships with public perception.

Citizen Charter emerged as the most influential factor in shaping public perception, with a positive correlation and a significant impact on improving citizens' trust and satisfaction. This supports existing literature that emphasizes the role of citizen charters in promoting transparency, accountability, and public engagement.

On the other hand, Employee Responsiveness, Grievance Redressal, and Service Quality had weak or no significant correlation with public perception. These findings suggest that while these factors are commonly associated with better service delivery, their current state in Birendranagar may not be sufficient to positively impact public sentiment or they may be constrained by local context factors, such as limited resources, inadequate training, or ineffective implementation.

The regression analysis further confirmed that Citizen Charter was the only variable significantly contributing to public perception, while the other factors did not show a meaningful influence. This highlights the central role that clear, well-communicated service commitments play in shaping public opinion.

The findings of this study offer crucial insights for policymakers and future research, emphasizing the need to strengthen Citizen Charter implementation by increasing transparency and trust through awareness campaigns and robust monitoring mechanisms. Enhancing service delivery requires improving employee responsiveness through training, fostering accountability, and streamlining grievance redressal systems with clear processes and capacity-building. Regular assessments of service quality and the development of tailored strategies to address local challenges are also critical. Future research should focus on investigating barriers to service delivery, comparing regional results to identify best practices, and uncovering areas for improvement. In conclusion, while the study underscores the significance of Citizen Charters in shaping public perceptions of government services, it also highlights the necessity for broader systemic improvements in employee responsiveness, grievance handling, and service quality. By addressing these areas, policymakers and local governments can foster higher public satisfaction and strengthen trust in public institutions.

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