7. NEPALESE MUNICIPAL GOVERNANCE: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF KATHMANDU AND LALITPUR METROPOLITAN CITIES

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Abstract

Kathmandu and Lalitpur are two metropolitan cities of the Capital of federal Republic Nepal. Both cities have many identical similarities in culture, language, taste, and preferences. However, there are substantial differences in governing facilities. So, to compare the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) infrastructure, human resource capacity, opportunities and threats to adapt governance in Kathmandu and Lalitpur. Methodologically, in depth interview with IT officers of both metro cities and library method have been conducted. The information has been verified in the legislative declaration (Council Report). ICT Infrastructure and ICT based human resource capacity are better in Kathmandu whereas ICT Adaptation opportunities and threats both are higher in Lalitpur. In comparison, Kathmandu is more advanced. Both metro cities need to work a lot to provide smart facilities to people in global context.

Keywords: *E-governance, Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Metropolitan city*.

Background

Electronic Governance (E- Governance) is the governance led by ICT. Here, ICT are electronic technologies used for information storage and retrieval. The rapid rates at which ICTs have evolved since the mid-20th century, the convergence of ICTs provides them a strong role in development and globalization. ICTs have a significant impact on all areas of human activity. The field of education has been affected by ICTs. It has affected all three aspects of education: teaching, learning, and research. A great deal of research has been conducted which proved the benefits to the quality of education. ICTs have the potential to accelerate, enrich, and develop skills to motivate as well as engage students, help to relate school experience in work practices, create economic viability for tomorrow's workers, along with strengthening teaching and helping schools change. In a rapidly changing world, basic education is essential for an individual to become able to access and apply information. Such knack must come across to include ICTs in the global village (Karmacharya, 2010). Kathmandu and Lalitpur are two metro cities within the Kathmandu valley – the capital city of Federal Nepal. Culturally, linguistically and geographically both cities are attached with each other.

The Kathmandu Valley is largest urban area in the country which has the highest literacy rate and negligible gender gap. The name Kathmandu city is named after the Kasthamandap temple, which stood in Durbar Square. In Sanskrit, Kāṣṭha means "wood" and Maṇḍap means "covered shelter". This temple is also known as 'Maru Satta': in the Newari language. This temple was built in the period of King Laxmi Narsingh Malla in 1596. The two-story structure was made entirely of

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wood and used no iron nails nor supports (Shrestha & Singh, 1972). According to legend, all the timber used to build the pagoda was obtained from a single tree. The structure collapsed during a major earthquake on 25 April 2015.

The ancient history of Kathmandu is described in its traditional myths and legends. According to Swayambhu Purana, Kathmandu valley was once a lake named "Nagdaha", as it was full of snakes. The lake was cut and drains by Manjushree with his sword, and evacuates water from there. Then after valley was named as Manjupattan, and Dharmakar was the ruler of the valley. After some time, a demon named Banasur closed the outlet, and the valley was again a lake.

Then lord Krishna came to Nepal, killed Banasur, and again drained out the water. He brought some Gopals along with him and made Bhuktaman the king of Nepal. Kotirudra Samhita of Shiva Purana, Chapter 11, shloka 18 refers to the place as Nayapala city, which was famous for its Pashupati Shivalinga. The name Nepal probably originates from this city Nayapala. Initially overall Nepal was the valley and the two big cities were in the same regime. Later on rulers divided the country as their private property to their children so it became Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu, Lubhu, Sankhu etc. and from that practice now there are 19 municipalities (Shrestha & Singh, 1972).

Lalitpur Metropolitan City, historically Patan, is the third largest city of Nepal after Kathmandu and Pokhara. It is located in the south-central part of Kathmandu Valley which is a new metropolitan city of Nepal. Lalitpur is also known as Manigal. It is best known for its rich cultural heritage, particularly its tradition of arts and crafts. It is called city of festival and feast, fine ancient art, making of metallic and stone carving statue (Shrestha & Singh, 1972).

Lalitpur is believed to have been founded in the third century BC by the Kirat dynasty. Kirat King Yalambar had ruled the state so it is also called Yala in local Newari language. It was later expanded by Licchavi's in the sixth century. It was further expanded by the Malla's during the medieval period (Shrestha & Singh, 1972).

There are many legends about its name. The most popular one is the legend of the God Rato Machhindranath, who was brought to the valley from Kamarup Kamachhya, located in Assam, India, by a group of three people representing the three kingdoms centered in the Kathmandu Valley.

One of them was called Lalit, a farmer who carried God Rato Machhindranath to the valley all the way from Assam, India. The purpose of bringing the God Rato Machhindranath to the valley was to overcome the worst drought there. There was a strong belief that the God Rato Machhindranath would bring rain in the valley. It was due to Lalit's effort that the God Rato Machhindranath was settled in Lalitpur. Many believe that the name of the town is kept after his name Lalit and pure meaning township (Shrestha & Singh, 1972).

Comparison Table

Comparative ICT facilities of two Municipalities

SN	Details	Kathmandu	Lalitpur	Differences
1	Population	975,453	284,922	690,531
2	Area (KM Sq.)	49.45	36.12	13.33
3	Density	19726	7888	11,838
4	Staffs	2225	1276	949
5	No of wards	32	29	3
6	ICT Budget	35 lakh	12 lakh	23 lakh
7	ICT Programs	8	10	
8	ICT Department	Yes	Only Unit	
9	ICT Staffs	Seven	Two	Five
6	Website	www.kathmandu.gov.np	www.lalitpturmun.gov.np	

Source: (KMC, 2018)**,** (LMC, 2018)

Objectives / Methodology

The study aims to compare the ICT infrastructure, human resources capacity and opportunities and threats to adapt E- governance between Kathmandu and Lalitpur Metropolitan cities. Methodologically, the study was conducted in the two metro cities of valley - Lalitpur and Kathmandu. Direct interview has been conducted with ICT officers of both metro cities. Their responses have been matched with the plan and programs (Council's Published Report) of respective metro cities. The study is based on the responses of ICT officers, valid plans and program of legislative body of local government (Council) and wide library methods.

Literature Review

The history of ICT in Nepal is not very long. A broad range of factors that can influence the use of technology in learning has been mentioned in the literature. Successful implementation of ICT change is not about equipment or software but influencing and empowering teachers; it is not about acquiring computer skills but supporting teachers in the ongoing engagement with students in their learning's.

Demographic profiles, their positive attitudes, their awareness of successful and effective ICT integration in teaching, and their positive perceptions on the usefulness and ease-of-use of ICT, contribute to higher levels of ICT adoption (Augustine, Josheph, & Sunday, 2015).

Robert Heckman (USA) in 2005 said that "The learning industry is undergoing a transformation

process through the use of innovative products and tools from the ICT revolution. However, it is important that the tools are evaluated for appropriateness, effectiveness and usability from the user's point of view.

This understanding can assist educators in choosing the best product and in managing the tools for optimum benefit." Mojgan Afshari said that the success of implementation of ICT is not dependent on the availability or absence of one individual factor, but is determined through a dynamic process involving a set of interrelated factors. It is suggested that ongoing professional development must be provided for teachers to model the new pedagogies and tools for learning with the aim of enhancing the good governance (Caluza, Verecio, Funcion, Quisumbing, & Marmita, 2017). Naser Jamil Al-Zaidiyeen found that officers had a low level of ICT use for educational purpose. They hold positive attitudes towards the use of ICT, and a significant positive correlation between teachers' level of ICT use and their attitudes towards ICT was found. The findings suggest that ICTs use for educational purposes should be given greater consideration than it currently receives. In general, the results were consistent with those previously reported in studies related to the use of ICT in the educational settings

Kiruthika Ragupathi, in 2007, in his study entitled "Factors Affecting the Adoption of Information Technology (IT) in Higher Education" shows that faculty need to realize the advantage and value of using IT. Even though the infrastructure and new technologies are available, faculty will not use IT if they do not perceive any enjoyment or benefits to their teaching and learning experience. And he recommends that attempts in IT integration should focus on using technology to make a greater impact on the educational experience rather than the acquisition of infrastructure. Time and perceived benefits of using IT to develop courses will continue to be an ongoing issue. The university should think of creative approaches to ensure that faculty members have more time to experiment with integrating IT into their lessons.

The development of Nepal's IT Policy was an important achievement for the Government and for the IT sector. Virtually unprecedented in the country's history, the Information Technology Policy 2000 was crafted through a participatory process that involved most of the key stakeholders in the policy area (Burton, 2003). This process facilitated the buy in of participants, and fostered a better relationship between the Government and other actors, particularly the private sector. The policy was written during an era of global IT optimism, and signified the Government's desire to mold Nepal into a knowledge-based society, and to promote the country's IT sector on international markets (Burton, 2003). The private sector had lobbied for years to elevate information technology on the Government's agenda, and was able to point to neighboring countries such as India, as examples of the sector's potential. The policy itself was the culmination of these events, and has been heralded by many as a foundation piece for development of the sector.

Another of the Government's goals is to use IT as a tool for social development, although an IT Bill outlining clear action plans has yet to be approved by Parliament. Implementation of the Policy has been slow to date, due to large political and social instability in the country (Burton, 2003).

Resulting financial constraints mean that for the foreseeable future the Government is unlikely to make much progress on its plans, although small steps are being taken in human resource development and on an IT park located in the capital city. There is still considerable optimism amongst stakeholders (including the Government), and a sense of shared interest which seems to have been fostered by the policy development process (Burton, 2003). In fact, the process itself is perhaps more important than the policy in the long run, since it has helped to create a network of policy actors who will likely collaborate in the future, under this and subsequent updates of the IT Policy.

Discussions

ICT Infrastructure in Kathmandu is higher than Lalitpur. ICT infrastructure means the facilities available in metro cities about information, communication and technology. The above stated table shows that an ICT infrastructure in Kathmandu Metro city is high. Kathmandu seems more advanced than Lalitpur in present status of ICT infrastructures. ICT is a general–purpose technology and thus has wide applicability in various manufacturing and services sectors. It has strong spread effects and extensive linkages with the rest of the economy. Its potential forward linkages extend to custom–made configuration while its backward linkages extend to material sciences. It thus has the potential to affect virtually all sectors of the economy by imbuing greater information and development content in products and processes. The presented graph shows the comparison among the infrastructure related on ICT (Burton, 2003).

The Comparative Bar Graph
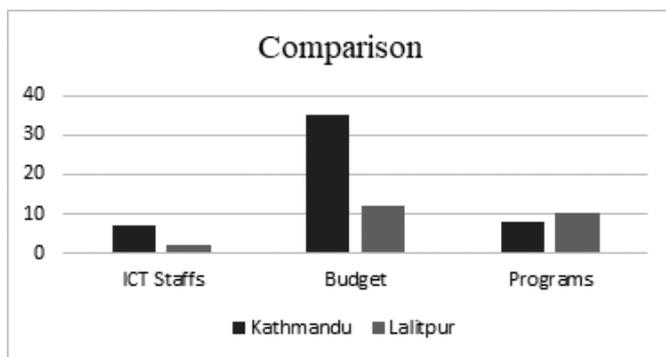
(Source: Developed by Author in 2018)

Lalitpur has to work a lot to compete with Kathmandu though the literacy rate is equal. This means people want exact service as soon as possible as they get from Kathmandu. There are no specific differences with the people of Kathmandu and Lalitpur in terms of languages, culture, tastes and preferences. Both the cities can be adjoined as a megacity with special authority.

ICT Based human resource capacity is higher in Kathmandu than Lalitpur. Although Kathmandu is the oldest and the capital city of federal government the metro city has got many

privileges than Lalitpur. It has very big human resource capacity. It has 2225 full time working staffs among them seven are the ICT related officers.

Comparative Pie Chart
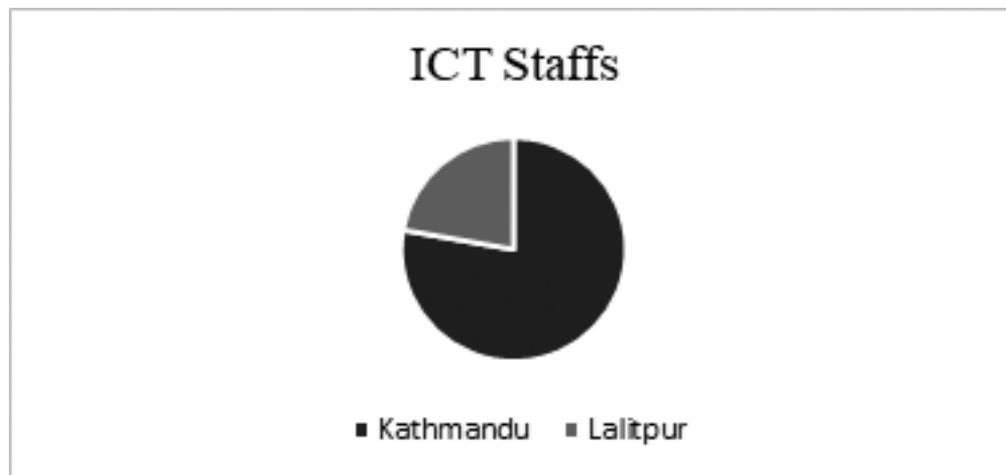
(Source: developed by the Author, 2018)

On the other hand, newly organized metro city Lalitpur has only 1276 staffs which are almost 50% of Kathmandu Metropolitan and only two IT officers are assigned. From the perspective of human resource capacity, Lalitpur has to work a lot.

ICT Adaptation opportunities and threats both are higher in Lalitpur: Lalitpur is newly upgraded as metro city so it has many threats and opportunities as well. From the limited staffs and budget, the city is able to provide the smart services to the people. Kathmandu is previously established metro city; it has outstanding plans, threats and opportunities however Lalitpur has to be established as a metro city at first then the smart city to compete the Kathmandu.

Conclusions

In conclusion, ICT Infrastructure in Kathmandu is higher than Lalitpur, ICT based human resource capacity is higher in Kathmandu than Lalitpur and ICT Adaptation opportunities and threats both are higher in Lalitpur. In comparison Kathmandu is more advanced than Lalitpur, although both metro cities need to work a lot to provide smart facilities to the people in global context. People are highly educated so they want prompt service and it is only possible through the ICT adaptation. Hence, entire metropolis mechanism should be ICT friendly.

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