

ETHICS AS VALUE PROPOSITION AND ITS SUSTENANCE AMONG OFFICIALS OF GOVERNMENT OF NEPAL: ANALYSIS BASED ON 31ST BATCH OF BASIC ADMINISTRATION TRAINING



NEPAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COLLEGE

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BASIC ADMINISTRATION TRAINING**



NEPAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COLLEGE

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Abstract

Civil service is a service of public trust. Civil servants or bureaucrats adhering to ethics and morality based value for generating substantial public trust. The context in which Nepal's civil service is being operated is in a continuous change. The promulgation of new constitution and the full operation of 761 governments of Nepal has provided great opportunity for the civil servants or bureaucrats in serving the citizens as per the constitution aspirations and values of Nepali civil service. Realizing the importance of value and its commitment to make civil service trustworthy, Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) initiated 'value commitment program' as one of the key programs of Basic Administration Training (BAT). The 'value commitment program' was first introduced in the 31st BAT in 2017. NASC engaged all the 31st BAT trainee officers collectively in generating the values on their own through participative process. In doing so, NASC believed that they will adhere to it throughout their professional and personal life. It has already been two years since the 'value commitment program' and the researchers believed it is the right time to assess whether they abide by the values which they collectively proposed and committed. Considering all these, this study aimed to identify what the government officials of 31st BAT value most in their profession at this point in time. In doing so, we analyzed whether any change has occurred in their proposition at the beginning of service period and now. By employing mixed method of data collection, this study surveyed 126 officers from 31st BAT and data analysis has been done accordingly. Officers are found to be enthusiastic in adhering to the values in their work place and personal life and bringing changes at organizational and individual levels. They tried to be positive towards any situations and problems and keep on delivering services to the service receivers. The research team found that use of information and communication technology has helped officers in being citizen friendly and transparent. However, we discovered that officers generally fear to take even reasonable risks and blame the socio-political landscape which restricted them from being a change agent.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ethics in Public Service

Public service, which is crucial to a society's smooth functioning, demands ethics and genuine professionalism for success (Lewis & Gilman, 2005). Parry and Proctor-Thomson (2001) stated that it is becoming increasingly apparent that the full integration of ethical standards into practice is not only preferable, but also necessary for long-term organizational survival. Since public service is a particular way of organizing the delivery of goods and services to citizens, and its providers are a particular form of organization designed for public affairs and social relations; ethical values at individual and institutional level are fundamental in public service. What makes ethics so important to public service is that it goes beyond thought and talk to performance and action (Lewis & Gilman, 2005). And, administrative [public service] ethics has been a topic of sustained interest at least since 1940 (Cooper, 2001).

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2000 cited in Lewis & Cilman, 2005):

Public service is a public trust. Citizens expect public servants to serve the public interest with fairness and to manage public resources properly on a daily basis. Fair and reliable public services inspire public trust. Public service ethics are a prerequisite to and underpin, public trust, and are a keystone of good governance.

The recognition and exposition of ethics in public sector have made considerable progress in the last decade[s] (Sherman, 2002). Countries and its governments have taken action to ensure ethical conduct in public service through institutions and systems. Efforts have been made in promoting action to maintain high ethical conduct (OECD, 1998) both from demand and supply side. Today there are increasing expectations from ordinary citizens and civil society organizations that government will establish and deliver higher standards of ethicality and integrity in the civil service, agencies of government and government itself (Whitton, 2001). The expectations of citizens are not met when the person who is employed as a servant of the public depicts behavior that in a particular situation conflicts, or may conflict with the public interest (Zimmerman, 1982).



Codes of ethics are systematic efforts to define acceptable conduct (Plant, 2001), and they are essential to shape public sector conduct. Furthermore, they are essential for achieving the goal of public service (Armstrong & James, 2009) and making the system intact; and that can never be anticipated where the integrity and ethics of an organization is violated or compromised (Taylor, 2000). However, in many instances, political parties are inclined to violation of ethics. For instance, a political bottom line mentality that supports financial success as the only value is evident in public sectors. When it comes to spending money, elected parties are not equal. Most of the time, pork barreling is practiced, where maximum amount of money is spent on the projects that take place in representative home district (Sims, 1992). The bureaucrats working in ministries led by representatives of political parties feel politically pressured to work for them. An ethical system is a mix of institutions, laws, regulations, codes, principles, and procedures that provide a framework of checks and balances, to foster an environment of high quality decision making, and to identify and address inappropriate behaviour including corruption (Aulich, 2011). Integrity and ethics of an individual is the bottom line for the integrity of an organization (Samad, 2010). If an individual maintains integrity and ethics in an organization then its

mission, vision, and values would not be violated or compromised. This implies that the service providers need to be self-disciplined for creating a just society with inclusiveness, liberty and cooperation.

1.2 Code of Conduct for Public Officials

In December 1996, the United Nations adopted an International Code of Conduct for Public Officials and recommended them to its member state as tools to guide their efforts for increasing public service ethics and integrity. The general principles of this resolution are (United Nations, 1996):

1. A public office, as defined by national law, is a position of trust, implying a duty to act in the public interest. Therefore, the ultimate loyalty of public officials shall be to the public interests of their country as expressed through the democratic institutions of government.
2. Public officials shall ensure that they perform their duties and functions efficiently, effectively and with integrity, by laws or administrative policies. They shall at all times seek to ensure that public resources for which they are responsible are administered most effectively and efficiently.

3. Public officials shall be attentive, fair and impartial in the performance of their functions and, in particular, in their relations with the public. They shall at no time afford any undue preferential treatment to any group or individual or improperly discriminate against any group or individual, or otherwise abuse the power and authority vested in them.

The recognition and exposition of ethics in the public sector have made considerable progress in the last decade. Whether or not this has produced higher standards of ethical conduct in public administration is harder to measure (Sherman, 2002).

Chapter 7 of the Civil Service Act, 1993 states about the conduct of civil servants. According to the Preamble, it has been provisioned in order to make the Nepali civil service more service oriented and responsible. Sections 41 to 55A are the provisions regarding conduct. Among them, the provisions directly associated with integrity, service orientation and responsiveness have been listed below:

1. Punctuality and regularity:

Each civil employee must attend his/her office regularly during the time appointed by Government of Nepal and must not remain absent from the duty without having prior sanction of leave as far as possible.

2. Discipline and obedience:

A civil employee must remain in discipline and perform his/her duties with honesty and readiness.

3. Receiving gifts and others

No civil employee shall, without prior approval of Government of Nepal, accept a gift, donation, present or gratification of any kind either by him/herself or through any member of his/her family, or ask for donation or borrow any loan from any person concerned with any government business, in such a manner as to affect the government business.

4. Manner

In discharging duties in his/her office, a civil employee must decently treat all. The civil employee must bear the responsibilities which may arise according to his/her office and post and perform works in an impartial, fair, efficient and prompt manner.

5. Engaging stakeholders

The civil employee must accord decent treatment to the stakeholders related to his/her works. A clear information, inter alia, on the matters and process related with the work of the stakeholders and the time required to perform the work must be given to the stakeholders in due time.



According to the Civil Service Act, 1993, the Government of Nepal has also formed Civil Service Rules, 1993. It was made public through Nepal Gazette on 12 July 1993. In Chapter 16, Miscellaneous; Rule 122A, moral obligation of civil employees has been stated. According to the Rule, in performing duties the civil employees shall pay attention to the following moral obligations:

1. To make equal treatment towards the service recipients,
2. To give priority to greater interests of the nation and the people,
3. To maintain transparency of the criteria and procedures of the distribution of goods and services,
4. To protect public properties,
5. To mobilize means and resources economically,
6. To simplify the process of work performance,
7. To remain effortful to discharge responsibilities within a minimum of time,
8. To respect basic human values and norms, and
9. To make equal treatment and respect with equal perception towards all communities and regions.

The Civil Service Act and Rule are important elements and work as an overall framework within which all civil servants

are expected to work. It sets out the standards required of civil servants in the discharge of their duties. These standards of behavior and values will support a high quality public service, based on high levels of personal performance and responsibility (Standards in Public Office Commission [SPOC], 2008). In other words, to achieve the excellent service, proper implementation of such conducts and standards of behavior are necessary. Equally important is the civil servants' value commitment, because only high levels of individual commitment lead in achieving organizational commitment.

The role of officials of Government of Nepal is crucial to fulfilling the needs and aspirations of people. Serving citizens, as per their expectations, is not an easy task. It demands deep commitments, strong work ethics, and thorough understanding of core value of serving people (Shakya, 2009). Serving attitude is essential in fulfilling the aspirations of people. While serving people, officials need to have clear understanding about the nature of services that they do offer. They need to recognize whether the offerings are sufficient enough in addressing the service receivers' concerns and needs. Knowing the past experiences of service receivers is equally important. It helps in identifying the focus areas for increasing the level of satisfaction of service receiver.

1.3 Proposing (a) Values

The concept of value evolved over time. Originally, values were conceived of as philosophical concepts that were insolubly tied to virtuous living and mortality. Later, they were conceived to be more concrete, terrestrial linking to ordinary activities with a notion that each individual creates a personal and flexible hierarchy out of the values available in culture. Currently, values are conceived as guiding principles in life that transcend specific situations, may change over time, guide selection of behavior and events, and which are part of a dynamic system with inherent contradictions (Debats, 1996).

Values provide potential powerful explanations of human behavior (Kamakura & Mazzon, 1991). They are the qualities that are momentous not only in the individual's life but also for the success of an organization. They are what we think about, what it counts and what we consider to be essential for individual as well as organization. Everyone's values are different and they can be changed over time. They reflect how we need to connect with the world, with the general population around us and with ourselves. Values are like compass directions that we want to head in (Creative Commons, 2016).

The environment in which the public service operates is a constantly changing

one - current dynamics of change include new technologies, growing and changing public expectations, demographic changes, and the effects of economic and social globalization (MacCarthaigh, 2008). To work for public service is to work for the common good. The traditional values of the public service - honesty, impartiality and integrity – are about serving these common goods. Standards of probity are high and must be maintained. These values must be the basis for the official actions of civil servants (SPOC, 2008).

Hutcheon (1972) argues that there is confusion surrounding the concept of value due to the cultural and organizational climate within which sociologists operate and the lack of consensus among them on a conceptual framework within which accumulative research on values could occur. Actually, the confusion seems in its consideration. Some consider the values as norms, whereas, others as cultural ideas; as assessment of action; as beliefs; as objects; as value orientations; as behaviour probabilities; and as generalized attitudes.

Value conflicts occur in all fields and at all levels of the public service (MacCarthaigh, 2008). They arise in various contexts. There is debate about the values that are essential regarding the role of public sector. Considering this debate as a valid one, it can be claimed that ethical values vary across countries and between the



types of public officials. Stating two lists of values (codes and guidelines) of Australia and UK, Sherman (2002) claims that the ethical values will vary from country to country and they will also vary between the categories of public officials to whom they are intended to apply.

1.4 Value Proposition at NASC

NASC initiated ‘value commitment program’ as one of the key programs of BAT. It was first introduced in the 31st BAT in 2017. NASC engaged all the 31st BAT trainee officers collectively in generating the values on their own through participative process. As the value commitments are derived by the officers themselves after rigorous and inductive participation, NASC believed that they will adhere to it throughout their professional and personal life.

While doing the value commitment the officials were in training settings at NASC, whereas, now they are in work place setting. Although it is assumed that the value commitment would not be changed, the context may play a role in creating value

conflict. NASC, as a training institution, has its own value system and it places particular emphasis on certain values, whereas, there are unique arrangements in terms of HR, policy and autonomy in their current workplace. Nevertheless, it is assumed that there is less risk of value conflict because they have chosen to be a part of Nepali Civil Service community and need to do justice with their position and respective responsibility.

In order to probe further the issue of contemporary values, a day long workshop was convened with the newly recruited officers at NASC before the formal start-up of six months long basic administration training program. This was the first time NASC conducted the value commitment or proposition workshop among its trainee officials. Less attention has been given in analyzing the specific value sets of the government officials. Similarly, less attention has been given to identifying and analyzing how values are developed and transferred in the civil service. Moreover, the almost ignored area is identification and analysis of whether or not the value sets of civil service/servant are changing.

2. STUDY OBJECTIVE AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The objective of this study is to identify what the government officials of 31st BAT value most in their profession at this point of time. In doing so, we analyzed whether any change has occurred in their proposition at the beginning of service period and now. This study tried to seek answer to the following research questions:

- Is there any change in the value proposition practiced by the government officials of 31st BAT at the beginning of service period and now? If so, what factors play a role in it? If not, what are the sustaining strategies adopted by them?

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

United Nation's International Code of Conduct for Public Officials, the Civil Service Act of Nepal, and other official documents and publications of Government of Nepal document a range of values associated with the civil service – loyalty, efficiency, integrity, impartiality, fairness and accountability. Moreover, the changes in the context of governance, i.e. after the promulgation of the constitution and institutional arrangement under the federal constitution, will also have a major impact on the way the civil service operates. In this context, to get best results, civil servants

have to be grounded in a public service ethos. Likewise, there is a huge demand for loyal and impartial service from them for the benefit of the county.

The goal of Nepali civil service is to make the civil service more competent, vigorous, service-oriented and responsible. To achieve these goals, the civil servants need to be people and goal oriented. To work in civil service, with them, should be to work for the common good. They are supposed to be actively motivated and directed toward the achievement of people's prosperity. They are also expected to bridge the gap in



trust between the civil service and people by restoring trust through their work. Taking note of all these considerations and to underpin the change process, NASC initiated value commitment as one of the key programs of BAT. It was first introduced in the 31st BAT in 2017. NASC engaged about 397 trainee officers together in generating the values on their own through participative process. As the value commitments derived from the officers themselves after rigorous and inductive participation, NASC believed that they will adhere to those values throughout their professional and personal life.

It has already been two years now, and the researchers believed it is the right time to assess whether they abide by the values which they collectively proposed and

committed. However, the context and the scenario have been changed. While doing the value commitment they were in training settings at NASC, whereas, now they are in work place, mostly under federal government and some under provincial and local governments. The researchers therefore believed this study to be important and virgin one. The following paragraph, cited from the Program Guidelines of 33rd BAT, shows the significance of this study:

“The objective of this process [value commitment] is to ensure that the newly appointed civil servants will adhere by the values of civil service in order to provide qualitative service to citizens of the country in their respective work areas after placement.”

4. BACKGROUND AND METHODS

4.1 Process of Deriving Value

The Nepali civil service is one of the trusted public institutions in Nepal. The Nepal National Governance Survey of 2017/18 discovered that 56 percent of survey respondents had considered civil servants or bureaucrats as ‘to some extent honest’ and 6 percent ‘very honest’, figures that were higher than that of police, business people and political parties. However, these figures were lower than that of army, media and court of law. If civil servants or bureaucrats abide by the Civil Service Act and Rules it helps in generating high level of public trust. MacCarthaigh (2008) also claims that high levels of trust can be maintained through adherence and communication of shared values.

Realizing the importance of value and its commitment to make civil service trustworthy, NASC initiated ‘value commitment program’ as one of the key programs of BAT. In order to probe the values of 31st BAT, 14 separate workshops with the 397 trainee officials were conducted. These workshops helped in discovering

a broad range of values and principles of 31st BAT. Since the values and principles were collectively derived, the trainees are expected to abide by throughout their professional and personal life. The process of generating values and principles was very organic and participatory. It was done in three stages. First of all, an interaction program was organized. In that program, experts from public service shared the philosophical and practical aspects of value and its significance. Trainee officials got opportunity to interact on the challenges in possessing such values. Secondly, trainee officers were divided into 14 workshop groups. NASC faculties facilitated the workshop. Members from each 14 workshop groups were further divided into sub-groups consisting of 5 to 7 members. These sub-groups contested and derived sub-groups values and principles which they shared in group are plenary. After sharing each sub-group’s values and principles in plenary, the entire members from each workshop group were engaged to contest in deriving their group values and principles.

**Table 1:** Values Derived through 14 Separate Workshops

Workshop I • Regularity • Punctuality • Impartiality • Neutrality	Workshop II • Punctuality • Compliance • Honesty • Professionalism • Co-ordination	Workshop III • Punctuality • Impartiality • Accountable • Techno-friendly • People oriented service • Ethics and Morality
Workshop IV • Service orientation • Meaningful participation • Professionalism • Ethics and morality	Workshop V • Prioritizing the services • Punctuality • Customer is god • Putting people first • Pro-activeness • Participation • Transparency • Positive attitude	Workshop VI • Transparency and accountability • Neutrality and participatory service • Managerial skills • Client oriented behavior • Ethics and morality including positive attitude • Timely service
Workshop VII • Service commitment • Respect to service recipient • Participatory • Change from self • Professionalism	Workshop VIII • Avoid procrastination • Equitable public service delivery • Sensitivity in public service delivery • Transparency enhancement • Commitment	Workshop IX • Impartiality and neutrality • Regularity and punctuality • Accountability • Client friendly service • Transparency
Workshop X • Commitment • Neutrality • Professionalism • Transparency • Conscience • Devotion	Workshop XI • Self-evaluation • Respect to client satisfaction • Coordination • Non-discriminatory	Workshop XII • Accountability • Commitment/devotion • Public oriented service • Ethics and morality
Workshop XIII • Commitment • Self-ownership • Self-discipline • Serving attitude • Transparency • Social adjustment • Positive attitude and behavior	Workshop XIV • Pro-activeness and change agent • Self-discipline • Clients oriented service • Morality and ethics • Transparency • Accountability • Customer satisfaction • Non-discrimination • Putting people first: Service receiver as a god • Self-evaluation and self-assessment	

Source: Workshops (14), 2017

Lastly, a workshop comprising two members, one male and one female, from each of the 14 groups engaged themselves and contested to derive core values of the 31st BAT. Again, NASC faculties facilitated this workshop session. At the end of the workshop, the trainee officials proposed with five core values. They had

a common understanding on what they had proposed by operationally defining each values (Table 2 which includes the original Nepali version and a translated version). Each individual (N = 397) has expressed his/her commitment by signing the document.

Table 2: Value Proposition and Commitment of 31st Basic Administration Training Officials



नेपाल प्रशासनिक प्रशिक्षण प्रतिष्ठान
नेपाल सरकारका नव नियुक्त राजपत्राङ्कित तृतीय श्रेणीका
अधिकृतहरूका लागि संवत् २०७३ आद्यारम्भ प्रशासन प्रशिक्षण

मूल्य-मान्यताप्रतिको प्रतिवद्धता

हामी ३१औं आद्यारम्भ प्रशासन प्रशिक्षणका प्रतिभासी (नेपाल सरकारका राजपत्राङ्कित तृतीयश्रेणीका अधिकृतहरू) सार्वजनिक सेवाप्रति समर्पण भावका साथ यसको गरिमा र पैमानात मर्यादा कायम राखी सर्वेस जनता र राष्ट्रको हितका लागि कर्म गर्ने सामुहिक रूपमा तपस्वित कर्मजीविका मूल्य मान्यताहरू निर्माण गरी आफैका निर्निर्देशित व्यवहारमा उतार्ने र सोको प्रदर्शनका लागि जिम्मेवारीका साथ निष्ठावान रहने प्रतिवद्धता व्यक्त गर्दछौं।

समाचार र नैतिकता	हामी उच्च आत्म अनुमानन आधार भई नैतिकतामा बढी प्रयोगित कानून एवम् सामाजिक मूल्यमान्यता अनुकूल अस्वत आचरण र व्यवहार प्रदर्शन गर्नेछौं।
समाचारमक समवेकित	हामी सकारात्मक सोचले जीवनमा ठुला प्रदान गर्ने सम्पदासँगै मनुन् भई आफ्नो कर्मचारी, शुद्ध, 'यसो' र 'गो' भन्ने वाक्यान्तर प्रयोग गर्दै अनुकरणीय रूपमा सेवा प्रदानमा आफ्नोसँग समर्पित गर्नेछौं।
नागरिक नैत्री सेवा	हामी सेवाप्रदातासँग सरोचारी गम्भीरताको आधारवकता र अपेक्षा अनुसार सम्मानजनक व्यवहार, सोझ बस्न र सहज ढंगले सरोचारीसँग सुझसरीप सेवाप्रदान गर्नेछौं।
निष्पक्षता, पारदर्शिता र जबाफदेहिता	हामी कानूनको अधीनमा रही निष्पक्ष रूपमा आफ्नो जिम्मेवारी, कार्यक्षमता र परिचयको बारेमा सरोचारीसँग जानकारी दिनेछौं र त्यस सम्बन्धमा सरोकरवालासँग उठेका प्रश्न एवम् सुझासो तत्परताका साथ सम्मोदन गर्नेछौं।
परिवर्तन प्रयत्न	हामी सेवा प्रदाताको कार्यशैली र ढाँचामा समयानुकूल परिवर्तन गरी सार्वजनिक प्रशासनमा नवीनताम् ज्ञान र सोझका विचारसँगै सामाजिक सञ्चारका लागि सक्रिय र निर्निर्देशित भई सेवाप्रदातासँग महत्त्व हुनेगरी सेवा प्रदाता गर्नेछौं।



Nepal Administrative Staff College

For the newly appointed Class-III officers of the Government of Nepal
31st Basic Administration Training (BAT)

Value Commitment

We, the participants of 31st Basic Administration Training (Gazetted Class III Officers of the Government of Nepal), would like to collectively express our commitment in adhering the following values of civil service, effective from today, in order to maintain the professional dignity with dedication towards our country and people.

Ethics and Morality	WE shall be moral by maintaining high self – discipline and demonstrate good character and behavior guided by the prevailing law and social values and norms.
Positive Attitude	WE shall acknowledge the fact that positive attitude brings energy in life, understand our responsibilities and devote ourselves in extraordinarily delivery of service being inspired by the philosophy of 'Yes', 'We can' and 'We do.'
Citizen Friendly Service	WE shall deliver prompt and quality service in a simple and convenient way with due respecting our sovereign service seekers, their needs and expectations.
Impartiality, Transparency and Accountability	WE shall abide by the law and impartially inform citizen about our responsibility, work process and result and shall address stakeholders' question and grievance.
Change Agent	WE shall be active and creative in developing innovative knowledge and skills in public administration by making timely changes in working procedures and structure and thereby deliver services as service seekers could feel it.



4.2 Methods

Mainly, quantitative methods have been employed in this study. However, open-ended questions were used to collect the views of participants. A questionnaire with both open-ended and close-ended questions was sent to the participant through Google Forms. The targeted population of this study was the government officials of 31st batch of BAT program. Data collection

period was from January to May, 2019. An email was sent to all the officials of 31st batch of BAT program. The email that was in NASC record, collected by NASC during their registration some two years ago, was deemed the authentic address to send the questionnaire. The research team also tried to access the participants through mobile numbers and requested them to fill up the emailed questionnaire (refer to Annex 1 for the questionnaire).

Table 3: Distribution of the Population

S.N.	Group	Number
1.	General Administration	280
2.	Legislative Parliament	5
3.	Audit	10
4.	Foreign Affairs	14
5.	Revenues	17
6.	Accounts	71
Total		397

Source: NASC Record, 2017

The distribution of the population is presented in Table 1. Among the total population, this study aimed to collect information from at least 50% of the

population. However, after multiple follow-ups, we were able to receive information from 126 officials (refer to Table 2).

Table 4: Distribution of the Sample

S.N.	Group	Number
1.	General Administration	94
2.	Legislative Parliament	0
3.	Audit	2
4.	Foreign Affairs	6
5.	Revenues	7
6.	Accounts	17
Total		126

We collected information using both primary and secondary sources. After completing the data collection phase, we tried to triangulate information from different perspectives - sources and methods - during data analysis. Since we are identifying and analyzing whether or not value sets are changing, we thought that triangulation of sources and methods will be useful for this type of study. Quantitative data were managed using Excel and SPSS for descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis. Qualitative data was used for clarifying quantitative findings. In the case of qualitative data, first-level and second-level coding was done. The first-level transcript gave us an overall idea about what and how the officials think

about the values. Since there were several repeated ideas, we created second-level coding by grouping the commonalities between the codes. The first-level coding provided us the findings related with ideas from all the officers. Whereas, the second-level coding helped in generalizing a wider context related to values. After completing the two-levels of coding process, we tried to generate theme for supporting the quantitative findings.

The information gathered in the value commitment workshop to identify the contemporary value has also been used for this study. In total, 397 officials were involved in the value commitment workshop conducted at NASC.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Categorizing Values

In order to better conceptualize and understand, grouping of individual value is required. This grouping helps in generalizing whether these value sets are inclined with the goal of ‘making the Nepali civil service more service oriented, responsible and trustworthy’ as envisioned by the Civil Service Act and Rules, 1993. MacCarthaigh (2008) states that public service values can be classified in several

categories. American Society for Public Administration identifies five groups of public administrators’ values: personal values, professional values, organizational values, legal values, and public interest values. Likewise, Canadian Public Service identifies four categories of public service values: democratic values, professional values, ethical values and people values. Adopting the Canadian Public Service’s four categories of public service values,



we tried to make groups of the values that are presented in Table 3. The ‘groupings’ of values are presented in Table 5. In this study, democratic value is about following written and unwritten conducts guided by legal documents. Likewise, professional

value is competency and skills required in work place settings. Ethical value is guiding principles for an individual to uphold the public trust. People value is about showing respect to peers and being empathetic to service receivers.

Table 5: Grouping of Values

Democratic Values	Professional Values	Ethical Values	People Values
Impartial	Impartial	Impartial	Positive attitude
Neutral	Non-discrimination	Compliance	Co-ordination
Compliance	Social adjustment	Non-discrimination	People oriented
Accountable	Pro-active	Avoid procrastination	service
Participation	Managerial skills	Regular	Citizen is God
Transparent	Timely service	Punctual	Putting people first
Non-discrimination	Avoid procrastination	Honest	Respect to service
Self-ownership	Devotion	Ethics and moral	seekers
Social adjustment	Change agent	Service commitment	Citizen friendly
	Change from self	Conscience	service
	Positive attitude	Self-discipline	Serving attitude

Values like impartiality, positive attitude, and non-discrimination are common to more than one category. This is due to the overlapping nature of some of the values. For example, the Constitution of Nepal, a supreme policy document that ensures

democratic values, does not tolerate any form of discrimination. Moreover, a person may be professionally committed and ethically motivated to perform non-discriminatory activities.

5.2 Background Characteristics of the Respondents

This section presents analysis of data that were collected through mailed questionnaire. Data collection period was from January to May 2019. Emails that were collected by NASC during registration two years ago

were used to send questionnaires to all the officials of 31st batch of BAT program. The research team also tried to contact them through the mobile number and requested them to fill up the emailed questionnaire.

However, only 126 officials submitted the questionnaire. Background characteristics of respondents as well as descriptive data are presented in this section.

In the questionnaire, background characteristics such as age, service group, education, total work experience (in month), gender, previous work experience, etc. were incorporated (Table 6).

Table 6: Background Information of the Respondents

Variable	f	%	Mean	Std. Dev.
Age			31.12	3.65
Age Group				
30 and less	62	49.2		
31 – 35	50	39.7		
More than 35	14	11.1		
Gender				
Female	24	19.0		
Male	102	81.0		
Level of Government Currently Working On				
Local	74	58.7		
Others	52	41.3		
Previous Work Experience in Civil Service				
Yes	93	73.8		
No	33	26.2		
Education				
Bachelor's Degree	19	15.1		
Master's Degree and Above	107	84.9		
Service Group				
General Administration	94	74.6		
Others	32	25.4		
Work Experience (in Month)				
60 and less	75	59.5		
More than 60	51	40.5		
Experience (Month)			56.93	36.46
Total	N=126			

Source: Survey, 2019



The mean age of respondents was 31 years with standard deviation of 3.65. Most of the respondents (74.6%) were from General Administration group. The average months of experience of the respondents were 56.93 months with standard deviation of 36.46. About 59 percentages of the respondents are currently working at Local Levels. Three out of four participants had previous work experience in civil service.

Originally, there were five values proposed by the trainee officers. They were positive attitude; citizen-centric service providing; neutrality, transparency, and accountability; ethics and morality; and agents of change. In addition, the questionnaire had five additional values. It was done to ensure whether the participants recalled the same set of values that they had committed in 2017.

5.3 Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Values

Table 7: Factor Wise Percentage Distribution of Total Respondents Who Have Selected Five Factors Out of Ten Given Factors

Factors (Values)	N	Percent of Total	Percent of Cases
Positive attitude	118	18.7	93.7
Citizen centric service providing	86	13.7	68.3
Neutrality, transparency, and accountability	106	16.8	84.1
Ethics and morality	73	11.6	57.9
Agents of change	22	3.5	17.5
Respect for the law and people	72	11.4	57.1
Innovation	49	7.8	38.9
Impartial	15	2.4	11.9
Efficiency and effectiveness	55	8.7	43.7
Leadership	34	5.4	27.0
Total (N = 126)			

Source: Survey, 2019

Ten principles or standards of behavior were provided to the respondent and asked to check any five of them given the importance in his/her life/work place, in the current context. Table 5 depicts that about 94 percent of total respondents selected

‘positive attitude’ as the top most value in their life/work place. Many respondents have stated that being positive has helped them to cope better under stressful situations at work place. For example, for respondent number 122, female, age of 30

years, and who has had 88 months of work experience; being nice and kind to other people makes her happy. She states that:

“I am committed to my norms and values. In my opinion, positive thinking is most important. I feel honored when a citizen gets satisfied with the service that I provided to them by understanding their problems. I always like to put myself in the service receiver's situation while providing the service to them. In some instances, I feel guilty when I would not be able to provide service to the citizen due to complex legal processes.”

Most of the respondents (82.5% of the total respondents) have not chosen ‘change agents’ as top five most important values in their life/work place. Although change agent was one of the common responses that were revealed from the workshops, the survey findings discovered that there have been some changes in the value. This might be due to change in political and technological environment. ‘Change agent’ as per the definition of BAT 31st group is “being active and creative in developing innovative knowledge and skills in public administration by making timely changes in working procedures and structure and thereby deliver services as service seekers could feel it.”

Respondents have stated that since administrative structure has created a different working environment, it has

been difficult in maintaining such values. Change agents are the values that empower others through developing a culture of leadership and learning. Assessing views of the respondents, we found that bureaucrats or civil servants are not directly involved in decision making process. After the local elections, they are now the helping hands of elected officials in the rule making process. Also, some respondents have stated that provisions that have been included in the Civil Service Adjustment Bill, which is currently at the Parliament Secretariat, is going to not only hamper their future endeavors but also affect their performance in a long run. For example, a 30 year old male respondent with 71 months of experience, currently working at Local level, stated that:

“I am mostly committed to my work as per the value commitment (done when we were in NASC as a trainee officer). But value commitments have been sometimes disturbed caused by the social, economic landscapes and the behavior and objectives of political leadership.”

“I am committed to those values (value commitment done at NASC) in every step of my career. Those are guiding principles. But there are some hindrances to follow them completely. Local levels and other leaders think that they are above law. Literally they feel themselves as a king. That truncates our

view and vision towards a better Nepal. Despite of those hindrances, I am doing my best as I can.” [Respondent number 113, 34 years of age, 65 months of experience].

Likewise, respondent number 116 - male, currently working in Federal level, 38 years of age and having 32 months of working experience - states that

“Recent change in administrative structure (Federal, Provincial and local governments) has created a different working environment rather than individual commitments.”

However, another male respondent who is 29 years old - and currently works at the federal level had a different opinion. He stated that “change is always inevitable.” In this fast growing world, change is necessary for progress, individually and institutionally. If we fail to learn to handle the changes, we cannot live our life successfully. Moreover, what matters most in coping with the change is a positive mind set. From this it can be assessed that the changes in context can bring conflict among the value committers. Moreover, it can influence the professional values of the officials working in civil service.

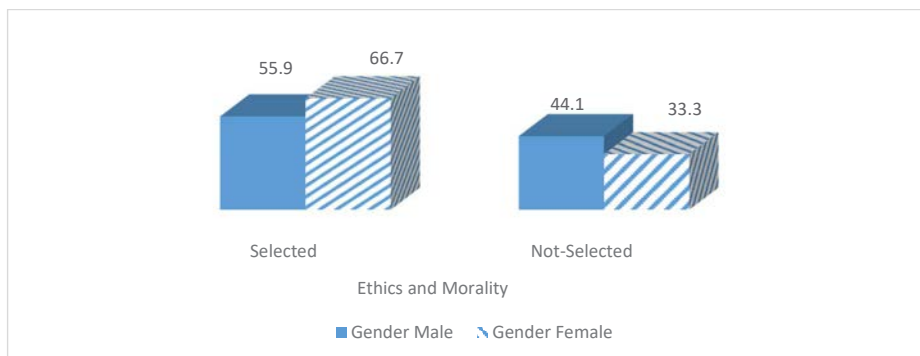
Referring to Table 7, we can see that ethics and morality, which was one of the five value commitments done by 31st BAT trainee officers, is the second lowest

preferred value among the top five values. About 43 percent of respondents have not chosen ‘ethics and morality’ as one of top five most important values in their life/work place. As per the definition of 31st BAT, ethics and morality are “being moral by maintaining high self – discipline and demonstrating good character and behavior guided by the prevailing law and social values and norms”. In this definition, officials have tried to delineate ethics and morality from two aspects – personal and societal. It is not easy to distinguish these two aspects because they occasionally overlap. Personal ethics is all about individual’s moral values, principles and standards; and all these resemble in an individual’s action. Personal ethics can affect all other areas of life, including professional, organizational and social.

Ethics, morality and self-discipline were the values that were repeatedly cited by the trainee officers in the survey responses. We found that a majority of the respondents are committed to ethics and morality. By being punctual and honest to service recipients they are maintaining their ethics. However, there are a few respondents who stated that it is very difficult to stick with the values that have they had committed to. Since we got mixed reactions to commitments to ‘ethics and morality’, it will be interesting to further analyze and see the results at a disaggregated level.

5.4 Ethics as Value Commitment: Bivariate Analysis

Figure 1: Bivariate Percentage Distribution: Ethics and Morality vis-à-vis Gender (equally inclined)



Source: Survey, 2019

Figure 1 depicts those female officers selected ‘ethics and morality’ as one of their top 5 most important values than male officers.

Figure 2: Bivariate Percentage Distribution: Ethics and Morality vis-à-vis Work Place



Source: Survey, 2019

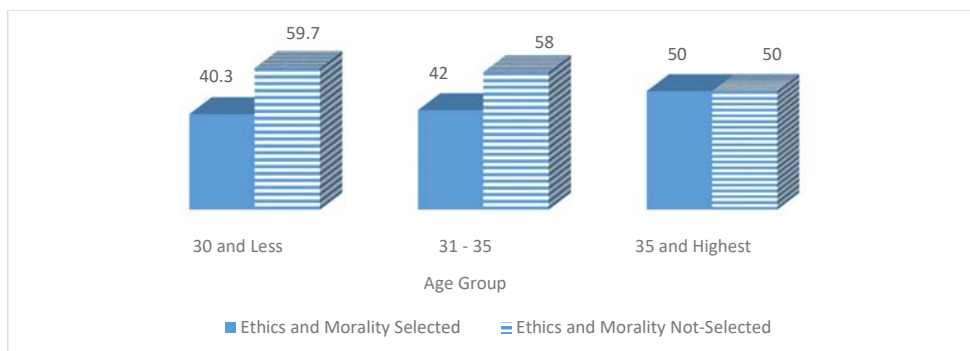
Figure 2 shows that officers working in other than local level have selected ‘ethics and morality’ as one of their top five most important values in their life/workplace than their counterparts who work in local level. This is found to be consistent with what respondents have stated in open-ended questions. For example, respondent

number 125, male and age of 32 years stated that:

“The external environment factor and political pressure shake your commitment and beliefs. There is chaos at the local level and the uncertainty has led to complete bizarreness.”



Figure 3: Bivariate Percentage Distribution: Ethics and Morality vis-à-vis Age Group



Source: Survey, 2019

Figure 3 exhibits that officers who are of age 30 years and less are more inclined towards selecting ‘ethics and morality’ as the top 5 most important value in their life/workplace than their counterparts whose age is more than 30. We observed that more the age of 31st BAT officers who participated in the survey, it is less likely that they will select ‘ethics and morality’ as top 5 most important value.

5.5 Ethics as Value Commitment: Preference Analysis

While analyzing, the research team, was very much eager in discovering how many of the officers have selected the same set of values - positive attitude; citizen-centric service providing; neutrality, transparency, and accountability; ethics and morality; and agents of change - that they have committed in 2017. The survey data revealed that only

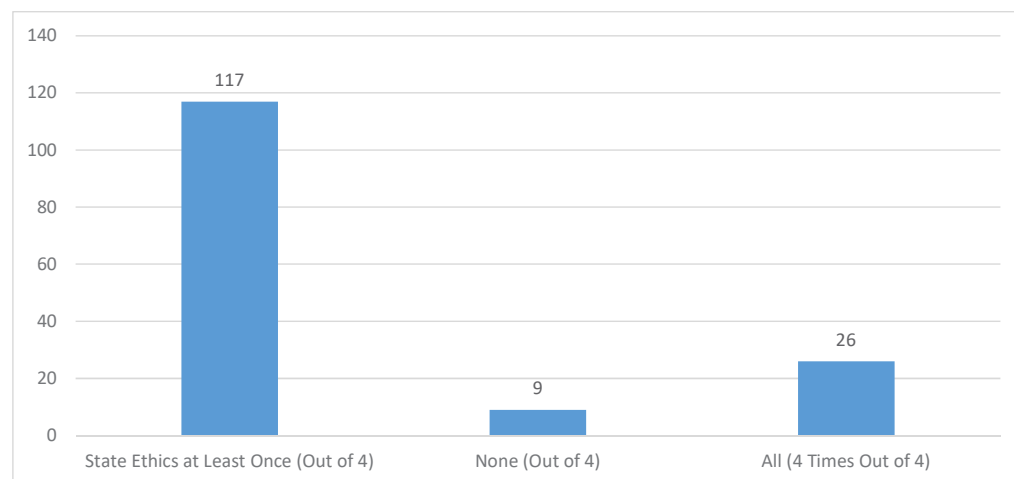
4 out of 126 officers have selected the same set of values (not shown in the figure). Although officers selecting the same set of values are found to be very less, we have observed that 57.9% have included ‘ethics and morality’ in their top 5 most preferred values. It reveals that the majority of the officers are being moral by maintaining high self – discipline and demonstrating good character and behavior guided by the prevailing law and social values and norms. Nevertheless, there is further area to discover why ‘ethics and morality’ have got only 11.6% (out of 20%) of the total votes, whereas ‘positive attitude’ has received 18.7% and ‘neutrality, transparency and accountability’ has received 16.8% of the total votes.

In order to discover and further analyze the preference towards values, officers were provided 2 values (5c₂), one at a time, and asked to choose anyone that is of greatest priority for them in their life. Since, there

were 5 values and they were presented in the combination of 2, there were 10 outcomes – 1) positive attitude versus citizen centric service providing; 2) positive attitude versus neutrality, transparency, and accountability; 3) positive attitude versus ethics and morality; 4) positive attitude versus agents of change; 5) citizen centric service providing versus neutrality, transparency, and accountability; 6) citizen centric service providing versus ethics

and morality; 7) citizen centric service providing versus agents of change; 8) neutrality, transparency, and accountability versus ethics and morality; 9) neutrality, transparency, and accountability versus agents of change; and 10) ethics and morality versus agents of change. Out of these 10 outcomes, ‘ethics and morality’ appears in four outcomes. Figure 4 gives idea on officers’ preferences toward ‘ethics and morality’.

Figure 4: Ethics as Value Commitment and Current Preferences



Source: Survey, 2019. N = 126.

Figure 4 shows that 117 respondents out of 126 have chosen ‘ethics and morality’ at least once, when they were given options to choose either ‘ethics and morality’ or any other four values. Nine respondents have neither of the times chosen ‘ethics and morality’. Whereas, 26 respondents have chosen ‘ethics and morality’ all the four times.

Interpreting the value preference, we discovered that majority of the respondents are inclined towards people's values and democratic values. Regarding the strategies that officers have adopted in being continuously committed towards the values, positive attitude and citizen centric service providing were commonly recited.



5.6 Strategies: Being Committed

In addition to the questions regarding the value proposition and commitment, we tried to collect the overall reaction of officers on the process, content and practical aspects of value commitment. We were motivated by few reasons. First, we wanted to know how the 31st BAT officers perceived the overall process of value commitment and citation. Second, we wanted to know if any changes have been occurred in their

preposition at the beginning of the service period and now. Third, we were interested in knowing the strategies that the officers have been adopting for sustaining the value commitments. Because this would be a guiding principle not only to NASC but also to the Government of Nepal at large. Fourth, we wanted to discover the challenges and draw evidence regarding the value conflict and challenges. The overall responses can be classified into two aspects – encouraging and challenging factors (refer to Table 9).

Table 8: Level of Value Commitment

Level of Commitment	<i>f</i>	%
Very Committed	55	43.7
Mostly Committed	51	40.5
Moderately Committed	18	14.3
Somewhat Committed	1	0.8
Not Committed	1	0.8
Total	N=126	

Source: Survey, 2019

As we have highlighted in earlier sections, officers have displayed mixed responses regarding the application of values that they have committed. To further validate what they responded and articulated, we asked a question on their present level of commitment Table 8 shows that 44 percentages of the respondents are very committed towards the values they have committed. Similarly, 41 percentages of the respondents are found to be committed.

We found that an officer is not committed to the value. He stated that:

“I found my working environment different than I was expecting. I am new at Civil Service. That is why, I was unknown about the practical aspects that I will be facing. I was in dilemma in my course of action in differentiating morals and ethics versus rules and laws. My expectation

during the training at NASC was that I will be made familiar with the context where politician-bureaucrat interact [local context] and with the people from remote areas and their

anticipations. Since I found the context totally different than my expectation, I am not satisfied with the values that I have committed and I am not in favor of it.”

Table 9: Sustaining and Challenging Factors

Values Sustaining Factors
• Putting efforts in removing hurdles for efficient services • Enhancing transparency through participation in public events and receiving feedback regarding services that we provide • Conducting public hearing periodically • Adhering to rules/regulations and job description • Encouraging the use of token to promote transparency in service delivery • Managing and being in team to deliver service in promised time • Working overtime in necessity • Coordinating with related/concerned offices for relevant information and helping citizens in difficult situation • Keeping people at the center while developing plans and policies, esp. in local level • Being cautious and recurrently reminding myself of the commitments made during training • Overcoming the procedural hassles and being attentive to grievances of public and trying to seek a solution within this environment • Cooperating among elected members and fellow colleagues to work within law • Accepting challenges that come through, being part of research for policy intervention • Implementing concept of service with smile and compliance with laws • Being self-motivated and happy • Nothing is stopping from accomplishing duty and work • Being determined and accountable to the profession • Participatory and transparent decision making • Being impartial in service providing, first come first service • Following rule of law • Anticipating and being pro-active to the expected problems • Ethics and morality main tool and positive attitude is the key • Listening to grievances and service with smile • Empathetic in service delivery; sometimes, feel of guilty in failure to provide service due to complex legal process • Always following and respecting the law and people by being impartial. Accountability tools used. Opinion collection, regular staff and representative meetings are used for new innovation and ownership taking. Extra hour working like flexi time, help desk, form format development, service guidelines (for staff and service citizen), citizen charter (audio, video) are applied for citizen centric service, service efficiency and effectiveness etc. Training and programs have held for maintaining ethics and morality, being positive, change agent and leadership development



Values Challenging Factors

- Difficulty in adhering to value commitment because of political pressure, political culture, rules not clear, low morale due to less opportunity, and collapse in the rule of law
- Demotivated due to adjustment ordinance that is against our will
- Value commitment not easy as promised; weak policy formulation; weak social consciousness due to extreme poverty and unemployment
- Difficulty in execution of value commitment due to socio-economic landscape and political environment at the local level
- Difficult to follow law at local level, have to be liberal in local level
- Presence of administrative hassles and unlawful activities
- Difficulty in value commitment due to administrative transition, contradictory interest group, lack of clear administrative guidelines and work load
- Feel of threats and pressure - difficulty in being committed to the values
- Presence of political evils, political limitations, and political pressure
- Change in administrative structure created different working environment
- Real life situation different from the situation when commitments were made, cannot be rigid to rules and regulations entirely

6. CONCLUSION

Values that were committed some years ago may not necessarily resemble the actual values that have been currently practicing at work place scenario. The context in which Nepal's public service is being operated is in a continuous change. The promulgation of new constitution and the full operation of 761 governments of Nepal have provided great opportunity for the civil servants or bureaucrats in serving the citizens as per the aspirations of the constitution and values of Nepali civil service. Nevertheless, literature has warned that values/traditional values will be challenged and/or complemented by

other value sets if there is a new mode of governance, change in human resource management system, and political interference.

Officers are found to be enthusiastic in adhering to the values in their work place and personal life. The first step of adhering values and demonstrating them into behavior is very much determined by the value system that the individual is evolved from. That is why, ethical value – a guiding principle for an individual to be responsive, honest, accountable, effective and efficient - is very crucial in delivering excellence and upholding public trust.

This ethical value works as a base for democratic value, professional value and people value as defined by literature.

We found that officers were very interested in bringing changes at organizational and individual levels. They tried to be positive towards different situations and problems and keep on delivering services to the service receivers. They have acknowledged the fact that positivity brings energy in life and helps them understand and fulfill responsibility. Almost all of the officers surveyed were found to be positive. This positivity has brought motivation in workplace through awakening the self and interpersonal relationship. Many have applied this positivity in coordinating and cooperating among the elected members and fellow colleagues to work in team and increase organizational productivity. Moreover, they always show respect to peers, other stakeholders such as elected representatives and be empathetic to service receivers.

The research team found that use of information and communication technology has helped officers in being citizen friendly and transparent. Using accountability tools and removing the unnecessary barriers that are resisting efficient service delivery, they deliver prompt and quality service simply and conveniently. Doing all these, they are found to be aware that they should abide by the rule of law and address stakeholders'

grievances. Furthermore, we discovered that they have become active in developing/adapting technology for service efficiency and effectiveness.

The study found that among the list of values that officers have committed, considering themselves as a 'change agent' value was deteriorating. They claimed that the reasons for not being able to be a change agent are due to political pressure, political culture and not clear cut rules/regulations. It was expected that each officer will be a person who creates an environment of transforming his/her organization. In most of the cases, we found that officers generally fear to take even reasonable risks and blame the socio-political landscape to restrict them to be a change agent.

Civil servants or bureaucrats are expected to be loyal to the government and citizens. However, the loyalty may on several occasions conflict and be converted into disgrace, if they feel that they have been politicized. This politicization may raise questions in application of values. This has been supported by the remarks collected through survey.

Another crucial aspect that was discovered by this study is that due to the recent provisions related to transfers and promotions of civil servants or bureaucrats as spelled out in the Employee Adjustment Ordinance 2018, they disregard their



value. In their career prospects, each and every officer wishes to become the (chief) secretary of the federal government. However, restrictions in human resource management activities – promotion, transfers and flexibility in working not to be opened for all three tiers of government

– could hamper their career growth and also affect their performance. In this regard, this type of human resource management policy, instead of playing important role in inculcating values, supports in condemning the value and strongly influences their other skills and behavior.

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ANNEX 1

Questionnaire on “Value Commitment: Analysis Based on 31st Batch of Basic Administration Training”

Dear 31st BAT Officers,

Greeting from Nepal Administrative Staff College!

I would like to invite you to take part in a survey about your principles or standards of behavior that you feel is important in your life. You will be asked 4 questions which will take about 4 minutes to complete. Please return the completed form by August 10 (Friday) 2018. I would like to ensure you that your information will be kept confidential and not be shared with anyone except for research purpose.

Thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this survey.



Your Personal Details

Age:

Education:

Total work experience (in Months):

Gender (Male/Female):

Previous work experience in Civil Service before joining Basic Administration Training (Yes/No):

Level of government that you are working these days (Local, Provincial, Federal):

Q.N. 101: The followings are some of the principles or standards of behavior that an individual feels is important in his/her life. Please check any five of these values in view of the importance for you in your work place, in the current context.

S. N.	Factors	
1	Positive attitude	
2	Citizen centric service providing	
3	Neutrality, transparency, and accountability	
4	Agents of change	
5	Ethics and Morality	
6	Innovation	
7	Impartial	
8	Respect for the law and people	
9	Efficiency and effectiveness	
10	Leadership	

Q.N. 102: Which of these two values is greater priority for you at this time in your life?

Positive attitude	or	Citizen centric service
Ethics and morality	or	Positive attitude
Positive attitude	or	Neutrality, transparency, and accountability
Citizen centric service	or	Change agent
Neutrality, transparency, and accountability	or	Ethics and morality
Positive attitude	or	Change agent
Citizen centric service	or	Neutrality, transparency, and accountability
Change agent	or	Ethics and morality
Neutrality, transparency, and accountability	or	Change agent
Citizen centric service	or	Ethics and morality

Q.N.103: Do you remember that you, in your group, have done a value commitment while you were in Nepal Administrative Staff College as a participant of 31st BAT? How committed are you, at this point of time, towards those value commitment?

- Very Committed
- Mostly committed
- Moderately committed
- Somewhat committed
- Not committed

Q.N. 104: Remarks about Question 3



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