INNOVATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES

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Interviewee:	Mr. Ram Prasad Ghimire
Interviewer:	Rushda Majeed
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MAJEED: This is Rushda Majeed on 13th of July, 2011, I am with Mr. Ram Prasad Ghimire
               who is an Under Secretary of the Ministry of General Administration. Mr. Ghimire,
               thank you so much for speaking with us. Could we please start this interview by
               talking about what you do now and the experiences that brought you to this
               particular position?

GHIMIRE: *Thank you. Currently I am in charge of Organization and Development Section of
               the Ministry of General Administration. Basically this section is responsible for the
               conduct, organization and management survey. It also handles position
               management of Nepalese civil service. It initiates and coordinates curriculum
               design for new intake. It coordinates with the Public Service Commission to
               design the curriculum for new intake in Nepalese civil service. It also carries out
               tasks related to performance-based management system in civil service.
               Similarly, it also requires submitting projects or program proposals for civil
               service reforms. Basically I am concerned with these duties and facilities.*

MAJEED: And how long have you been at the Ministry of General Administration, or at least
               this time?

GHIMIRE: *At this time it is more than one year. I was also working in this ministry before,
               from December 2003 to June 2006, I was working in that period. Before coming
               here I worked in different units of the government, for example, National Planning
               Commission for about two years, in the Ministry of Finance for about four years. I
               started my career in the civil service as a Finance Officer in 1995. After that I
               moved to several ministries, for example Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil
               Aviation and Ministry of General Administration. I was also in charge of the Nepal
               Academy of Tourism and Hotel Management. So ultimately I am here after quite
               a long time.*

MAJEED: Thank you so much. Before we discuss the Governance Reform Program, can
               you describe a little bit about how the Ministry of General Administration is
               structured? What are the departments within it? What are the units and what is
               the function of the Ministry of General Administration?

GHIMIRE: *The Ministry of General Administration is the central personnel agency of the
               Nepal civil service. So it is a staff agency basically. It has to assist the line
               ministries in the area of human resource management. It is the central personnel
               ministry, agency responsible for administrative management function. It also
               coordinates for human resource development as well. So it is responsible to
               provide the human resources to different line ministries. It also is a secretariat; it
               works as a secretariat of the promotion committee, which is headed by the
               Chairperson or a member assigned by the Chairperson of the Civil Service
               Commission.*

               *It is responsible for governance reform, what we used to call administration
               reform in the past. So basically it is involved in all aspects of human resource
               management from recruitment to retirement. Under this ministry there is one
               department called the Department of Civil Personnel Records. It is responsible to
               capture the data and information on personnel information system of the
               Nepalese Civil Service. So there is only one department under this ministry.*

               *So far as the structure of this ministry is concerned there are two broad divisions.
               Actually there were three broad divisions and it was restructured the last time*

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when I was here and it was squeezed into two divisions rather than the three divisions in the past.

MAJEED: So this is between 2003-2006?

GHIMIRE: *Yes, when I was here at that time. Also, as part of the governance reform program because one of the conditions was the retrenchment of civil service and rightsizing the civil service. So we also restructured the Ministry of General Administration at that time. Now at the moment we are two broad divisions. One is Personnel Administration Division which looks after promotion, management audit, and recruitment and placement and other personnel management functions.*

There is another division called Administration Reform Division. Under that division—I am working under that division— there are broadly three areas of functions. One is organization and management, or what we call organization and development, what currently I am doing. There is an administration reform section and a human resource development and planning section. Under that division there is also internal management of this ministry. So this is the broad structure of this ministry.

MAJEED: Very good. Looking back to when you joined the Ministry of General Administration in 2003, actually even before that, can you speak, based on your experience and knowledge about what triggered the Governance Reform Program and what were its main goals, main components?

GHIMIRE: *If we really go back to the documents, to the literature, we find that administration reform was included in the sixth plan, periodic planning itself, the sixth periodic plan that commenced in 1981 and ended in 1985. So the plan talks about administration reform and administration reform through organization management. It was organizational method at the beginning, now it turned to be organizational management. So in the whole plan there were certain targets assigned for this ministry, a number of issues in the way to be surveyed in terms of administration capacity. So the idea, the concept of administration reform started even before that because we had a number of administration reform commissions arise particularly in this area of development that we interpret the commission in light of the reforms.*

Particularly in terms of development administration the idea was included in the sixth plan. The seventh plan was more specific and there was a dedicated chapter on administration reform.

MAJEED: Which year was the seventh plan?

GHIMIRE: *The seventh plan was '85 to '90, '86 to '90. So that plan specifically mentions that governance reforms should contribute to make development administration more supportive for the administration of development projects, as an objective of enhancing efficiency of administrative units of the government. So after that then there were a number of other commissions as well, but so far as GRP is concerned, so immediately before the GRP there were certain PPTAs, for example, ISGR, Institutional Support for Governance Reform. There were several studies carried out by the consultants under that ISGR.*

MAJEED: Which year was the ISGR?

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GHIMIRE: *It started in 1998. I forgot one thing. Before that also we had a Nepal Aid Group. So the meeting held in Paris that showed the need of administration reform to make the civil service more results-oriented. So that Nepal Aid Development Forum which was held in Paris, that also identified the government of Nepal should give priority to administration reform.*

MAJEED: Which year did you say that was?

GHIMIRE: *It was in 2000.*

MAJEED: So the ISGR was before the conference.

GHIMIRE: *It continued after the conference as well.*

MAJEED: So the timeframe would be 1998 to 2000.

GHIMIRE: *Yes, 2000, and later another TA also was a part of that PPTA of ISGR.*

MAJEED: And that was the team that was the consultant from Australia.

GHIMIRE: *Also one of the consultants from Australia and some of the consultants from Singapore also.*

MAJEED: You said PPT?

GHIMIRE: *Yes, PPT, since it was a program not a project. So if you ask me how it was generated, I would rather say that need for reform was realized by the government but the recipe were mainly externally driven. The recipe of the Governance Reform Program, components were mostly prescribed by the development partners let's say. But the government itself in the plan documents and later on in the pilot group meetings and other things realized the need of the reforms.*

            Since the recipe was externally driven, at the beginning it was a bit difficult to grasp the intended outcome of that GRP to the people who were responsible to implement the program. That was one implication. The other implication was that the implementer didn't have genuine commitment.

MAJEED: When you say implementer you're talking about—.

GHIMIRE: *The implementation mechanism, as we said last time GRCU (Governance Reform Coordination Unit) and Change and Efficiency Units and all the line ministries as well. So it was that the government's entities were responsible for implementation. So since the implementers didn't have much in the design phase, in one way they couldn't grasp the intended outcome, how it was designed, and the next thing is that they didn't have much feeling of ownership. So that's how it generated. So the history is long.*

MAJEED: So starting in 2002, what happened, or actually when GRP was formulated, or the Governance Reform Program was created, what were some of its main components?

GHIMIRE: *Basically there were five objectives of GRP. For example the first one was to develop institutional capacity, internal capacity within the government, the first objective was that. The second was to improve the efficiency of the civil service. The third was to improve governance and reduce corruption. The fourth was to*

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enhance the competence and motivation of the civil service and the last one was to establish processes for improving performance in key ministries that were supposed to be replicated later in other ministries. So basically there were five components.

Though it was named as governance reform it was more or less confined to civil service reforms, which would be people-centered, which would be result-oriented, and would be gender-friendly. That was the basic thrust of this program. So in a way it was a departure from the previous administration reform because it looked, administrative reform at the big frame. However, the contents of reform they were still confined to the civil service reforms.

MAJEED: Very interesting. When you mentioned that it had the five main areas, components, building institutions within the government, increasing efficiency, how did that translate into action? What would be done for example to increase the motivation of civil servants or increase the processes within ministries? What were some of the ideas?

GHIMIRE: *To develop an internal capacity of civil service the program, the GRP initiated certain institutional setup. That institutional setup is to be capacitated to lead reforms. So in that line ARCMC (Administrative Reform Coordination and Monitoring Committee) was established, that was headed by the Prime Minister himself, comprised of different ministers and secretaries from different ministries. Below that there was ARC, Administration Reform Committee headed by the MOGA (Ministry of General Administration) minister, the minister from the Ministry of General Administration.*

MAJEED: Who else was on the ARC?

GHIMIRE: *At that time?*

MAJEED: Yes.

GHIMIRE: *Actually there were many governments from 2001 to 2007, there were seven governments actually.*

MAJEED: So it was basically headed by the—.

GHIMIRE: *By the minister, the MOGA minister.*

MAJEED: With about six to seven—.

GHIMIRE: *Other ministers, no six to seven ministers were changed during that phase. One was Mr. Krishna Lal Thakali and to name another Mr. Dharma Nath Prasad Shah, I forget several. So basically the first objective was supposed to be fulfilled by establishing certain institutional framework in order to lead the reforms in different ministries. The first one as I said earlier was ARCMC, the second one was ARC, the third one was GRCU, Governance Reform Coordination Unit. That was under this ministry and I was the Member Secretary of that GRCU. Besides that there were change units in different piloting ministries, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Ministry of Education and Sports at that time, and Ministry of Population and Health.*

There was efficiency unit in the Ministry of Finance to facilitate all these ministries with resources, financial resources. So basically the first objective was supposed to be fulfilled with these setups.

MAJEED: How is, when you say change units, who headed the change units within each pilot ministry? The secretary of that particular ministry?

GHIMIRE: *The Joint-Secretary of that particular ministry.*

MAJEED: Okay.

GHIMIRE: *Besides that there were also gender focal points.*

MAJEED: In all the pilot ministries?

GHIMIRE: *Yes, in all the pilot ministries and later they were extended to all the other ministries as well.*

MAJEED: When you say gender focal points it means a team dedicated to—.

GHIMIRE: *Gender issues.*

MAJEED: Gender issues within that ministry?

GHIMIRE: *Yes, within that ministry.*

MAJEED: How big is the team usually?

GHIMIRE: *From each ministry there was on gender focal point who was supposed to coordinate within that ministry, one person assigned to that.*

MAJEED: So that was for the institutional setup. But what were some of the other mechanisms for increasing the motivation—you mentioned the other four-five objectives.

GHIMIRE: *To improve the efficiency in the civil service the government was trying to rightsize the government. So the government introduced different types of retrenchment tools and techniques. For example, voluntary retirement schemes(VRS) and freezing the vacant positions, those things. At that time I think all together around 8000 positions were eliminated at that time. In VRS there were 2300 people I think. The impact was different, (that means the ministries manipulated while eliminating positions. Mainly they eliminated the lower positions and again they hired people through service contract. Actually it didn't reduce the cost of the civil service.)*

                The people were saleable in the market, mostly they resigned, others they didn't.(under the voluntary retirement scheme, it means only the competent persons who could get more lucrative jobs in the job market, resigned not the medicores. In this way this also didn't serve much the objective of rightsizing.)

MAJEED: So they lost good quality people.

GHIMIRE: *Yes, in terms of target we fulfilled but in terms of impact we couldn't get it.*

MAJEED: Because you lost qualified people.

GHIMIRE: *We also freezed some of the positions.*

MAJEED: When did this happen? This was not pre GRP, this was during GRP?

GHIMIRE: *Yes, during GRP.*

MAJEED: So 2002 it may have started you said?

GHIMIRE: *Yes, from 2002 it started. We froze a number of positions at that time, for quite a long time.*

Another tool to enhance efficiency was to strengthen—to establish and strengthen the Personal Information System and teachers' Personal Information System, to strengthen the decision-making system through informed decision making. Basically retrenchment, right-sizing and establishment of the personnel information system were adopted to improve the efficiency of the civil service. Later I will discuss what was the impact of this. Were the tools and techniques valid in terms of these objectives? But we can discuss that.

The third one was to improve governance and reduce corruption. I think to a large extent GRP was successful in this front because it created solid foundation for anticorruption measures. So it established a Special Court to deal with anticorruption and there were remarkable changes in the jurisdiction of this special court. In the past it was confined to the civil service, lower level of civil service. Later on it could file the cases to even the ministers and the prime minister. So the jurisdiction and the scope were widened at that time.

During that time National Vigilance Center was also established during that time period. There were a couple of acts that were amended or enacted. For example, there were amendments in the CIAA Act, Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority Act that was amended and Anticorruption Act itself was amended during that period. Anti-Money Laundering Act was enacted during that period. Right now we just established a department, a dedicated department for anticorruption for anti-money laundering functions of the government. During that period a solid foundation was built. But if you look in terms of impact, again, you can question.

If you look at the transparency international report last time and this time, there is no significant difference but let's hope that institutional mechanism will help, will be more effective in the days to come. But in terms of foundation, GRP created a solid foundation for anticorruption mechanisms in the country.

MAJEED: Interesting.

GHIMIRE: *In terms of enhancing the competence and motivation of civil servants there were a number of measures. For example, introduction of succession planning in civil service. So it was incorporated in the amended Civil Service Act to be implemented to full swing. There is a provision in the act itself but it has to be materialized. So it is easier to get the intended impact. So a number of other directives for example, grievance handling directives, organization and management survey directives, a number of other directives were formulated during that period. Especially regarding the competence and affirmative acts and measures were quite successful in my observation.*

Whereas the motivation is concerned GRP recommended to review the pay structure and to introduce DRS allowances to the civil service because if we compare the salary structure and benefits of civil servants it is one of the lowest, I think not one of the lowest but the lowest in the South Asia region and the one I

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suppose, the one with the lowest in the world. So it was incorporated in the Civil Service Act, which was amended in 2007.

In a sense it was implemented, but now implementation often is easier to be done. Every year we give recommendation to the government, to the prime minister, as the Civil Service Act, it says that the Minister of General Administration is to coordinate this function and submit a report to the government. So this time also we hand over the report by calculating the consumer price index and so on. But it is not fully implemented on the ground that we had limited resources in terms of limited implementation. So this is what has been done to enhance competence and motivation of civil service.

The next one, the last objective was to establish processes for improving performance-based management system in key ministries. It was introduced on a pilot basis in the Ministry of Population and Health, Ministry of Education and Sports and Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives. So a mechanism was designed for that. Two of the consultants, they gave a report how to introduce performance-based management system in these ministries. Actually they started it. But it could not continue. It terminated in 2008 itself. It started in 2006 if I correctly remember. It started in 2006 and it was not that much successfully implemented and ultimately it was canceled in 2008. So in that front I think GRP was not that much successful primarily because there was no solid foundation to implement performance-based incentive system, performance-based management system in those ministries. One of the foundations was job description itself, and the job itself. A job was not specified, so there was lack of specifically measurable quantifiable indicators to evaluate the task performed. So there was no mechanism for job-load analysis, there was no—nothing was done on job load analysis and those things, which were the foundation of introducing performance-based management system.

So just reading the reports from the consultants, it could not work. That's what it was. So the program itself, the objective itself was good but the infrastructure to implement the objectives was not in place at that time, that's why it could not work. That's how the objectives were designed—.

MAJEED: To be translated into action?

GHIMIRE: *Yes.*

MAJEED: When you came to MOGA in 2003, December 2003, early 2004, GRP had already been underway for two years.

GHIMIRE: *Yes.*

MAJEED: Then you mentioned that you were the member secretary of the GRCU, which is the unit—what are the responsibilities of the GRCU?

GHIMIRE: *At that time GRP had already commenced so the first was already released by the time I came to this ministry. As a member secretary I had to coordinate the development partners, mostly the ADB, and in some cases Swiss Development Corporation as well, and all the development ministries including the Ministry of Finance and other pilot ministries. In some cases we had to coordinate all the central level officials of the government. As the loan agreement itself, it said that MOGA was assigned as a program-executing entity. So as a program-executing entity, MOGA had the overall responsibility for the timely implementation of GRP. So that is one area that I had to concentrate on that.*

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The next one was member secretary of GRCU. I was responsible for the overall coordination and monitoring of all the program actions, all the program activities. Thirdly, MOGA was specifically assigned to be responsible for the adoption of appropriate and necessary measures to mainstream gender in civil service. Basically there were three key areas that were to be addressed by GRCU and as member secretary I was responsible for that.

MAJEED: Interesting. When you came to MOGA and when you joined, what was the status of the Governance Reform Program at that time? What structures, institutional set up had already been in place and what was the status for implementation of or not for the next steps?

GHIMIRE: *Implementation was already started at that time. For example, for retrenchment, targets were fixed to all the ministries by the time I came here, I just implemented to retrench the positions. The target was already fixed by the time I came here by ARCMC, no ARC: 7500 and something. It is there in the ADB report, it is 7500 something. So targets were fixed to all the ministries. What I did was I just carried out—I just implemented the targets with all the ministries. Initiation was already carried out to amend Civil Service Act at that time.*

MAJEED: So the amendment of the Civil Service Act was part of the GRP?

GHIMIRE: *Yes, part—.*

MAJEED: One of the conditions of GRCU.

GHIMIRE: *Yes, one of the conditions. And institutional set up was already there in place by the time I came here, GRCU, ARCMC, ARC, gender mainstreaming and other things. But GFP, that was assigned when I came over here.*

MAJEED: The GFP?

GHIMIRE: *Gender Focal Point. Otherwise all these set-ups were already in place when I came to this ministry. As I said earlier, the first tranche was already released because the first tranche was to be released once the loan was effective.*

MAJEED: Which was in 2002?

GHIMIRE: *In 2001.*

MAJEED: Then the second tranche was released?

GHIMIRE: *Later in 2006 when I was here. I had to fight for that. The roadmap for Governance Reform was in place, it was prepared by the time I came here, I just implemented it. It was already designed when I came here. Policy metrics were also prepared. We had some changes on that because it was prepared by the government, but policy metrics were already there. So by the time I came here institutional setup was already there. Some of the decisions were made to amend the rules and regulations pertaining to governance reform. Policy metrics and roadmap were already designed by the time I came here. That was the situation when I came here.*

MAJEED: So what, how did you proceed forward with the implementation phase when you had these committees in place and functioning? How was the implementation carried out when you were here? What did you see? For example, were there

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weekly meetings, were there monthly meetings between the different units? Were you talking to the ministries every day or how did things work out on a day-to-day basis?

GHIMIRE: *Because the policy metrics itself indicated the responsible agencies to implement certain conditions or certain policy measures. So we just looked on the policy metrics and which one is due. We had contact with that particular ministry. We also had regular meetings. Specifically the GRCU we had regular meetings. For ARCMC, we didn't have frequent meetings because the committee itself was too huge to meet frequently as it was headed by the prime minister himself. So I think in the whole period ARCMC, the meeting of ARCMC was held two or three times. I think it was two times when I was here. I'm not sure if there was another meeting when I left this ministry.*

ARC meeting used to be held almost on a quarterly basis, every three or four months, though it was not regular. In some months it was held even within a month but in some cases it was held after four or five months. So on average it was held on four months, the ARC meeting.

So far as the GRCU is concerned, the meeting was held every month. There were monthly meetings of the GRCU.

MAJEED: And the change units? Were they the responsibilities of the ministries?

GHIMIRE: *The change units and efficiency units, they were also called in the GRCU meetings, to coordinate those ministries. So specifically we used to look at the specific actions that were designed in policy metrics. So on the basis of that policy metrics we used to go to the ministries. We used to call them. So one of the interesting things is that at that time the Ministry of General Administration was in high profile. Usually they used to obey what the—let's not say the—they used to comply with what the Ministry of General Administration suggested them to do.*

MAJEED: The other—.

GHIMIRE: *The compliance level was tremendously high at that time.*

MAJEED: That was my next question, what was the relationship of MOGA to the pilot ministries and to the Ministry of Finance as well because that ministry was also involved and how was this inter-ministerial coordination carried out?

GHIMIRE: *During the implementation phase I think there was very good coordination among the ministries, especially among the Ministry of Finance and three key ministries. We concentrated on those ministries. Actually we didn't concentrate on all the ministries, we didn't focus on other ministries. So far as the pilot ministries and the Ministry of Finance are concerned, I feel that we really had very good coordination with them though they had some reservation regarding the resource allocation. They used to be demanding with us because we were the focal unit to implement the GRP; we were the implementing agency—the executing agency. That is why they used to ask for resources. They used to tell us that without resources we cannot implement our plans or something like that. Otherwise we had perfect coordination though we could not fulfill some of their demands. But later on they were to realize.*

MAJEED: And how did the coordination happen? Basically it was in terms of the monthly GRCU meeting?

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GHIMIRE: *Yes.*

MAJEED: Were there any other mechanisms in place to coordinate the change units or make sure that they were complying?

GHIMIRE: *That was the formal mechanism to coordinate the ministries, otherwise we used to have certain seminars and meetings, other types of meetings as well. For example, capacity development meetings, training programs specifically designed for the gender focal points. We used to discuss some issues, gender issues in the civil service with them. In some of the cases there were certain other types of seminars, for example seminars on performance-based management system. So we used to discuss, informally, the participants from different ministries.*

         Primarily it was GRCU but in different workshops and seminars also we used to discuss on the implementation status and implementability of the GRP.

MAJEED: Who ran these workshops or seminars and how many were held?

GHIMIRE: *Mostly Ministry of General Administration coordinated that and most of the training center workshops were held in the Nepal Administrative Staff College.*

MAJEED: So the trainers were from the ministry?

GHIMIRE: *Yes, and some other seminars were also held outside the Nepal civil service and required hiring external consultants.*

MAJEED: And how often would there be a seminar? Every month or were they held quarterly or on a demand basis?

GHIMIRE: *On a demand basis really.*

MAJEED: Can you describe to me, and you've hinted this as we were going through, how the implementation really played out for the different components? Can you comment a bit on how things were dealt in reality the three, four years that you were there?

GHIMIRE: *Considering all the areas?*

MAJEED: Yes, if you can go through all the areas one by one that would be wonderful.

GHIMIRE: *If we look through the conditionalities, I feel that most of the conditionalities were fulfilled, though ADB had some reservations. They say that some of the conditionalities were partially fulfilled like that. Given the political situation at that time and given the quality of the conditionalities themselves, some of the conditionalities they were not, let's say, appropriate. For example, one of the conditionalities was that constitutional council was to make rules of procedure. So constitutional council was too high to be dictated by the development partners. The rules of procedure, nothing else. So rules of the procedures, that is internal thing. So some of the conditionalities, they were not that much in terms of quality. They were not that much appropriate.*

MAJEED: And they came up with the conditionality or was there a back and forth in terms of deciding what they would be?

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GHIMIRE: *No, actually I wrote a letter. We wrote a letter to waive that conditionality because we did feel that was not appropriate at that time.*

MAJEED: But how—?

GHIMIRE: *We talk about the autonomy. Who are we to dictate the rules of procedure of the constitutional council which is headed by the prime minister and where there is— and which is represented by the opposition leader as well and chief justice that is too high to be dictated by us as a small governance reform program.*

MAJEED: I see.

GHIMIRE: *This small Governance Reform Program. So we requested, though in a diplomatic way: "So it is not feasible in this transition period and this and that." But what I mean is that not all the conditionalities were appropriate at that time.*

MAJEED: Who came up with these conditionalities? Was it solely ADB or was it a consultation earlier with the government?

GHIMIRE: *Of course it was signed by the government itself, but they were not that consulted at the beginning because at that time we used to feel that the government was supposed to be successful with attracting much of the foreign aid. So there might not be that much cautious on the conditionalities.*

                The next thing is that there might not have been deliberation on those conditionalities as well. The government is also responsible, because it is one of the signatories of that.

MAJEED: Very interesting. Also in terms of the conditionalities, can you give me a few more examples of some of the conditionalities for the first tranche and the second tranche? You mentioned the second tranche you had to—you were here.

GHIMIRE: *Yes.*

MAJEED: Just a few examples would be great.

GHIMIRE: *I can give you a few examples of the tranche conditions. Let me go specifically to the tranche conditions. The first tranche conditions, there were six and they were mostly complied by the time the loan was effective. So there were not that difficult conditionalities the first tranche condition; they were easily complied.*

                The second tranche there were nineteen tranche conditions in the second tranche. So there were too many tranche conditions. Mostly they were, for example, the cabinet was to approve policy on teacher recruitment and remuneration. That was one condition. The cabinet shall have revised voluntary retirement scheme to introduce VRS, voluntary retirement scheme to right size the government. So to name all nineteen that's quite long.

MAJEED: That's good.

GHIMIRE: *Some of the tranche conditions were quite interesting. As I said, one tranche condition that the constitutional council shall have adopted the rules of procedure including on recommendations for appointments of members of constitutional bodies. That was quite interesting. ADB said it was not implemented, it was partially implemented. There were too many.*

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MAJEED: So we were talking about how things worked out eventually and what was the status of implementation of each of the five components, how they worked out in reality.

GHIMIRE: *Yes. Most of the tranche conditions, I'm not sure whether they were to be complied or not if there was no GRP. Some of the recommendations they could have been carried out even in the absence of GRP; however, most of the conditionalities, they were relevant to the time when governance reform program was carried out.*

               But the thing is that there was no proper homework before putting the conditionalities in the agreement. For example, right sizing. We talked right sizing and we didn't calculate what the right size is. What is the right number of civil servants in terms of GDP, in terms of population growth? So we just bluntly said that civil service is too huge so it should be right-sized. But later on, it is at our backs, the last NPPR meeting, the last performance management portfolio review meeting, I was there. I had to furnish answers to the queries from the floor themselves.

               One of the participants from an influential development partner, she said that in terms of economy, size of the economy or in terms of population, civil service size is too small. So this is a paradox. We started right sizing with the recommendation from our development partners but now they are telling that the size of the Nepal civil service is too small in terms of population and in comparison with other countries. You may find it on the website itself, NPPR2010, Nepal Performance Portfolio Review. [Actually it is Nepal Portfolio Performance Review].

MAJEED: We were talking about how the, what of the components were successful or not.

GHIMIRE: *Most of the components regarding the amendment of the rules and regulations—.*

MAJEED: For example—.

GHIMIRE: *Otherwise it would not come into place as it was not the part of the conditionalities for example, Civil Service Act would not have been enacted, amended. Anti-money Laundering Act would not have been enacted if there was no GRP, I'm sure. It would have been enacted; it may have taken a number of years later on.*

MAJEED: So the Civil Service amendment was 2007?

GHIMIRE: *Yes.*

MAJEED: And then the Anti-Money Laundering amendment was passed recently right?

GHIMIRE: *The Anti-Money Laundering was passed at that time in 2008. It is fully implemented by establishing a dedicated department in the Ministry of Finance. So a number of rules and regulations were enacted as an outcome of GRP, I think. There were a number of very good policy measures that were introduced by the GRP. For example, one remarkable thing is the introduction of governance rules, governance action rules, which it has incorporated—. If you go through the governance acts and regulations, if it is fully implemented, so we don't need further reform, at least for five, ten years. It is quite comprehensive. So that is basically an outcome of GRP.*

MAJEED: The Governance Act.

GHIMIRE: *Yes.*

MAJEED: When was it passed?

GHIMIRE: *It came into force I think in 2005 or '06 as an ordinance. At that time there was no Parliament. Later on again it came as an Act in 2008.*

MAJEED: It went through Parliament.

GHIMIRE: *So it has very good features of governance.*

MAJEED: Like what, for example?

GHIMIRE: *For example, it delimits the jurisdiction of the political authority and the administrative authority and it introduces service charter along with the compensation mechanism. Before that also we used to talk about the service charter but there was no compensation mechanism. Governance Act actually, it is called Governance (Operation and Management) Act [Actually it is Governance (Management and Operation) Act] 2008. It incorporates for example, and specifies the jurisdiction and responsibilities of even the political advisors.*

                 You see in Nepal, if there is anybody who uses authority without any accountability, these people are the political advisors. They are accountable to none. They are not from the people, they are not elected, and they are not selected by any merit-based system or something like that. So they must be made accountable if we want to promote good governance in the country.

                 So that provision is incorporated in the Governance Act, 2008. That is, I think that is remarkable if it is fully implemented but so far it is not fully implemented, even in this year. The Governance Act it says that they need to come under the institutional mechanism of the government. They should be registered because if they commit some mistakes, they commit corruption, then later on they can be caught, legally caught. Right now they don't need to come to the office. They can or they may not come. So what are the benefits they get, it was not specified at that time. So this Act, it specifically says that they must be made accountable. Their benefits and allowances should be fixed. So the Governance Act, in all respect I think in terms of public service delivery it has a number of provisions to make the politics more accountable, to make the administration more accountable. There are a number of provisions which are essential in the contemporary world, let's say, under governance.

MAJEED: What about the amendment, the 2007 amendment to the Civil Service Act? What was that amendment and what is the status of its implementation?

GHIMIRE: *Before that also there was ordinance of the Civil Service Act amendment. That ordinance itself introduced certain provisions for general administering and civil service. For example, a certain percentage was allocated for the female candidates out of the positions to be fulfilled by open competition. Thirty-three percent of the vacant positions, out of the 45% were to be fulfilled by female candidates only. Similar percentage was allocated for the people from disadvantaged groups and other ethnic minorities. So that was one remarkable thing.*

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There were certain changes in the performance evaluation system as well to make it more realistic. It was made open. In the past it was supposed to be confidential.

After an amendment in 2008 and even in the ordinance before, performance evaluation can be, is open now. So if I want to know how my performance is rated by my senior boss, if I get an application, if I have any doubt, so I can ask what are the basis, what are the criteria in which my performance is rated. So another thing is that.

The next thing is in the promotion system itself. For example in the past there was only 10% allocated for internal competition. So it increased to 20%. So basically that Civil Service Act improved the general administrating in civil service promotion system. It also introduced performance-based management system.. Now they can come into contract with the department heads under performance contract let's say. So it introduced the concept of performance-based management system in civil service.

MAJEED: In 2007?

GHIMIRE: *Yes, in 2007. It also introduced grievance-handling mechanism in civil service. Before that there was no grievance handling mechanism. It also introduced succession plan, the concept of succession planning though it is yet to be fully implemented. There is a committee headed by the secretary of this ministry and including the chief of the Nepal Administrative Staff College as a member, but it is not fully functional. So it introduced a number of modern concepts in civil service.*

MAJEED: Did the GRP also include—apart from of course you mentioned the Civil Service Act and it had some components of performance-based management—did the GRP include any specific provisions for depoliticizing civil service?

GHIMIRE: *Yes. The GRP specifically it mentioned that roles and responsibilities of the administrative leader and political leader should be clearly demarcated.*

MAJEED: Did that translate into any of the amendments? You would say that the governance—.

GHIMIRE: *It would go in the Act itself.*

MAJEED: Could you talk a little bit about the performance-based management system that was introduced here and in the pilot ministries and how successful it was?

GHIMIRE: *As I said to you earlier that if we talk about the implementation status introducing performance-based management system in the pilot ministries, yes it was implemented. All the piloting ministries they implemented it.*

MAJEED: When you say implementation what did they do? Did they develop indicators in different ministries? How did the consultants work with change, what did they do?

GHIMIRE: *The consultants, they gave reports in these ministries that indicated what would be the criteria for performance evaluation in those ministries. For example, in the Health Ministry, the consultant, because the time was too short for them, they could not work—and it is almost impossible to give each and every detail of each and every position under that ministry. So they were indicative. The ministry was not capacitated, so they could not further elaborate that performance-based*

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management system in the ministries. It was the consultant who gave the reports. It was the consultant who indicated how it could be implemented in that particular ministry. The recipient ministries, the pilot ministries, they tried to translate as and when they received the report. But later on they could not extend it into practice.

MAJEED: What was the timeframe? You said the consultants had a short timeframe.

GHIMIRE: *Very short timeframe, I think not even a year. Three months?*

MAJEED: When was this?

GHIMIRE: *Timeframe, it was 2006.*

MAJEED: One year.

GHIMIRE: *And it was implemented in 2006 in all piloting ministries and as I said earlier it was terminated in 2008 or '07 because it was not capacitated. The ministry was not capacitated. There was no solid foundation to implement performance-based management. As I said earlier, there was no specific job description, no specific criteria to evaluate the performance. So there was no practice of job load analysis. So they were confused what to be given incentive. For example, additional performance or existing performance. What is existing performance and what is additional performance? If you don't have a mechanism to measure job load, you cannot say that this is existing workload and this is additional workload that is to be paid.*

Another thing is that the approach of this performance-based management system at that time was that the ministries would be paid rather than the individual. So it was implemented on institutional basis rather than individual basis. If the ministry it cut down the cost, for example recurrent cost, in the particular fiscal year, it would be rewarded for that. So it was not on the individual level. That was another thing, I think, shortcoming of performance-based management system at that time. I would rather say that in terms of GRP, performance-based management system, it was partly successful in implementation but its impact was not long-lasting.

Later on we introduced a performance incentive system in other institutions. So that is still working. For example, in the department of civil personal records itself which is under this ministry it is being implemented and it has been effective in the Ministry of Finance in different tax offices. The targets are clearly identifiable in terms of—. For example, last year, the revenue was this tax revenue, non-tax revenue was this and this. So this year if they increase to this level so they will be paid and that is very easy to implement. But in some of the organizations it is very difficult to implement.

This year I think, tomorrow, we will have another budget. This year we will have more institutions, more organizations where performance incentive system will be implemented. At the moment I think there are five institutions. It has mixed results though it is not the direct outcome of GRP. But the concept, it came under GRP. During that period the government had, I think the government had the concept from GRP itself and they initiated to a point shows the parastatals what we call public enterprises on the basis of performance contract.

There were a number of institutions where CEO was well recruited, CEO was appointed on the basis of performance contract at that time. That also could not

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last long because of political reasons. So this is what about the performance-based management system under the GRP.

MAJEED: Similarly, can you talk about the personnel information system that was introduced?

GHIMIRE: *The personnel information system, there was a different personnel information system designed under the department of civil personnel. A number of tasks were carried out to update the personnel information system in civil service. If we go back to the sixth plan also it is mentioned in the sixth plan, updating the personnel information system was started in the sixth plan. During the sixth plan 68 offices' data were captured in the department of Civil Personnel Records. So what I—even before the GRP, the task of updating personnel information was commenced.*

There was a census of civil personnel even before the GRP. So as I said to you earlier that there were around 66,000 employees' data was carried out from different, various districts. But later on when we implemented GRP we didn't build on that asset that we already had. We designed our separate system, personnel information system. So far we have captured almost all the data but we have updated only about 50% of the data is reported at the last time. So its going on.

And now the tempo of updating PIS system, I think it is likely to go up along with the MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) between the Department of Civil Personnel Records and the various ministries. This ministry, Ministry of General Administration self-initiated into that one and the first one, the first ministry to come into agreement to sign the MOU with this department. Now other ministries have also signed on. Under this arrangement, the ministries—when the data is generated, it is inserted; it is entered into the system, PIS system itself by that particular ministry. That particular ministry has been given certain passwords.

So let's say it works, it will be updated in the days to come. So so far we have around 74,000 civil personnel, though the position number is quite higher. The position is around 100,000 but there are certain positions, which are not fully filled. There are certain positions, which are contracted out. So that's why it is not counted. The positions of those contracted out personnel are yet to be I think to be released from the system itself, so that's why it seems quite high but at the moment there are 74,000 civil personnel working in the civil service. Out of that only 43,000, data has been, these files have been updated so far.

There is another system similar to the personnel system, that is, Teacher Personnel information system. The situation is similar to that as well. We used to go in the department, in that particular department under the Ministry of Education. The process is somewhat similar. They are yet to update their data. The reason of their not being able to update the system in such a long period of time, is that there are still some flaws in the design itself because we didn't pay much attention during the design phase. Some of the— and we didn't pay much—in some of the validation mechanism, in general, the database all the database we have. So still we have to rectify some of the mistakes that we did in the past. So gradually we are rectifying this. When I just asked one of my colleagues to give me the data for all the ministries, how many employees, ministry-wide report. It showed that there is one, only one person in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. So it was not updated. Before that, the reason was that before that there was no separate group for foreign service, the foreign service was one sub-group in administrative service. But now it has been made a separate group

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and so they have not updated it. So still we have to do a lot. But still the system is in place so far. If the MOU, it works, let's hope it will be updating in a very short span of time.

MAJEED: Very good. What about some of the other components. We talked about the PBA, MSN and the PIS system that you talked about and you already talked about the general component that has been implemented to the Act as well. What are some of the other things that have been implemented or not, that have worked or not.

GHIMIRE: The things that are implemented well and the things that are not implemented well?

MAJEED: Yes.

GHIMIRE: I think, as I said to you earlier, I think the reforms related to anticorruption, they were implemented very well. The reforms, for example, in enhancing capacity in that. The objective itself was limited to the GRCU, CU and the other things. One was that it had very limited scope. For example the internal capacity was supposed to be enhanced only by establishing the institutional set up rather than capacitating them. So I think that was not successfully implemented.

MAJEED: Are these units still in place in the different ministries? At least in the change units and the GRCU here, GRC?

GHIMIRE: The GRCU is here, still there is ARC, sometimes administration reform committee, commission, that is, the meeting was held last time here in the ministry. Change unit results, they are not named as Change Unit, even in the Ministry of Finance. There was efficiency unit but now, you cannot see efficiency unit. So though it was supposed to be a program, it was treated like a project itself. So that's why, once the project was completed, terminated, so everything was done.

MAJEED: So 2008.

GHIMIRE: Yes, 2008. So basically the reform measures which were concerned with the overall governance improvement and implementing anticorruption measures those were successfully implemented though the impact is mixed. So we cannot say that our, the report of, we have not improved our position in transparency in international support only because the GRP was not successfully implemented. There are a number of other intervening variables that need to be considered as such the GRP and its activities are concerned so that front is impressive. So far as the performance-based management system, it is mixed though the concept is replicated now in the ministries. But the piloting ministries themselves were not successful since the scheme was terminated prematurely. Because everything needs a certain cycle, so the cycle was not completed. In two years' time the cycle could not succeed. That's where we need to improve.

I think so far as the efficiency is concerned, efficiency was confined to again right-sizing and other things because efficiency has to do a lot of things. So by making place PIS, TPIS, or right-sizing, or introducing VRS, Voluntary Retirement Scheme, so it is not necessarily efficiency again in the civil service. So the objective itself might have some limitations. There might not be direct link with the objective and outcome. So I think the first and second objectives, they were not that much valid in terms of outcomes. The objectives themselves were not.

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Even if you successfully completed, accomplished the objectives, the outcome would not have been achieved. That's what we call validity. So enhancing competencies and motivation, again, in terms of motivation there was clearly specified mechanism for salary increment in Civil Service Act there is a committee headed by the chief secretary comprising the secretaries from the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of General Administration, the committee that is institutionalized. Every year that committee submits their report and so in that front as well, it rightly identified the problems, the problem of civil service, Nepal civil service. GRP could do only that. It is the government that is supposed to implement.

So in that front also I think GRP was successful in introducing a clearly spelled mechanism in the Act itself, Civil Service Act where the dearness allowances would have been determined on the basis of consumer price index in the year. So on the basis of consumer price, if the consumer price index is increased by 100%, then 25% of that consumer price index would have been increased in the dearness allowances. Similarly the situation, similarly the provision with the salary implement. So that was remarkable I think. So that can be replicated in other countries as well.

So it didn't say that lower cap or upper cap of the salary, but there should be certain specific criteria to determine salary and to determine the increment, the dearness allowances that—in that front, I think it was successful. Overall similar to other commissions before GRP was introduced much of the focus was on the structural aspects rather than the behavioral aspects in governance. So that's my overall impression. It didn't get much emphasis behavioral part because if you are not committed to serve the people, then you are not going to serve the people even if you have competencies to do so.

So I think one of the major problems of Nepal civil service in terms of service delivery is that even in, at the time of recruitment you have to test the aptitude. If I am not inclined to public service, why should I enter into civil service. So that part is missing even in the recruitment itself. After recruitment also you have to be molded in that way by trainings. The trainings that are carried out by Nepal Administrative Staff College lacked this part. So even the reform programs, they overlooked this part, the behavioral part of reforms. They must be focused on the structural side, for example, right-sizing, the number of civil personnel employees, number of ministries and those things. So that's what I perceive.

If you ask me what are the biggest obstacles of governance reform, I think that is the genuine commitment and priority from the top level. That is the one single most obstacle in governance reform program and other programs, not limited to this program. There is still lack of genuine commitment and as I said to you earlier that if we are to take a bath we have to pour water on our head. Only in that way the whole system is cleaned and the whole system works. So that is biggest obstacle of every reform, it is not confined to governance reform.

The outcome was that governance administration was politicized and politics was bureaucratized. That's what I see in Nepal civil service and Nepal administration, the major problem. The bureaucracy is politicized and politics is bureaucratized. You see politics has much more interest on bureaucracy because of the shortsightedness. They want to grab as much as they can. Their focus is on the operational part rather than policy part. They don't have passions for long-lasting policies and the things we need. That's one area.

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Another area, especially for the civil service reforms is the greatest obstacle is bureaucratic politics. So the bureaucrats were influential. They designed policies in a way that helped them because the politicians, either they are ignorant or they are indifferent to the reforms. So they started the position of bureaucrats. So these are the biggest obstacles of civil service reforms.

So if you want more issues, by concentrating on governance reforms, so I think one of the issues was political instability as I said to you earlier. During the period of 2001 to 2006 there were six or seven governments so there is no question of continued commitment. As I said to you there was no high-level political commitment or ownership on the part of the government. There was a certain shortcoming in the design itself because it was designed without proper groundwork. So the program was huge to be implemented in a very short span of time and the program was designed in a very small, a very short period of time. So we, in GRP said that the recruitment should be merit-based and it never defined what is merit-based system. It never demarcated what is the real interrelationship between inclusion and merit-based recruitment system. So these are certain evidences, which tells us that there was no proper groundwork before we really started implementing GRP. That was another issue I think.

Similarly the case with designing PIS and TPIS as I said earlier. The time we spent was also too short to implement such a comprehensive program, you see, that was another thing. Another issue was some of the conditionalities were not, were quite impractical as I said to you earlier, conditionalities regarding constitutional council, rules of procedure of the constitutional council. There were similar conditionalities, MOGA was to carry out—was to conduct at least one annual random check of property, asset and income declaration. It was out of MOGA jurisdiction. It was to be carried out by the NVC, National Vigilance Center or officials of the prime minister and cabinet secretaries. So it was out of the jurisdiction of this ministry. So there was no question of implementing that conditionality. That's why some of the conditionalities were not practical.

The next issue was, it was externally driven. I elaborated, I think on this point. Still another issue is the lack of capacity and measures, which were not built in the GRP itself. So that is another thing. Another issue is staff turnover in the ministries since we don't have ministerial cadres. So people, they might be transferred in different ministries even in a very short span of time as we don't have ministerial cadres like in the case of Thailand and a number of other countries.

In India they don't have ministerial cadres but transfer rarely takes place there. But in our case, since it is highly politicized, as I said earlier, the bureaucracy is highly politicized so transfer takes place frequently. So that is another issue. There was lack of proper strategy for implementation. For example if you see the policy metrics they're easy. If you go through the risk factors—a number of things that are taken for granted. Let me give some of the examples in that place. For example, the assumption factors. Some of the assumptions are quite relevant, for example Government commitment to reform, it should be sustained, to successfully implement this GRP and political and economic stabilities and we can really understand the assumptions risk factors. But there are a number of other factors which should not have been taken as granted. For example, 'the staff are able and motivated to provide better services'. That is one risk factor, assumptions factor. 'People have confidence in government services'. 'Ministries and top level civil servants are committed to reform'. 'Secretaries in central ministries and other ministries are competent'. What does it mean?

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So these are the risks and assumptions It came that the assumption factor, these assumption factors are not realistic in many instances. So that was another issue that I see.

There is also lack of proper strategy. For example, if you go deeply into the GRP program, so GRP program's implementation model is based on linear way of thinking. Once the policy is implemented, it is implemented automatically. So in that way it is designed. So you can give an example, for example, it says that [Indecipherable] staff are able and motivated to provide better service. Rather than putting it in as an assumption you could have certainly studies to motivate the staff, to motivate the people who were in charge of implementing the system. That's what I say, what I have done at the strategic communication. During that phase also we, on our one part, we initiated to implement strategic communication because we found that most of the implementation, without the disposition of implementer, we cannot get implemented what we actually, what had to be implemented. That's another issue.

The strategies of implementation itself were not properly worked out. Another is a sustainability issue. There was no inbuilt method for sustainability as well. So even if it was a program it was designed like a project. So it was not clearly in built in the government structure itself. So people, they felt that changing it is only for three or four years of the project period. After that we don't need to carry it out. For example, succession plannings and those things. So the approach is basically linear approach.

If we initiate certain reforms, if we initiate certain provisions, that will be automatically implemented like that. So there is no clear strategy devised to implement GRP. These are some of the issues I think of the Governance Reform Program.

If you ask me about overall success or failure, so if we go through the conditionalities, I think that it is almost 100% successful, but impact is another thing. ADB has also, ADB evaluation report also, it is fairly successfully implemented. They have certain reservations, one in this constitutional council conditionalities, another is Whistle-blower Act provision, it was not implemented. It was adopted, the act was adopted. It was a part of the conditionality of the GRP. It was drafted in 2007 itself, no before 2007, 2006. It was drafted by the Law Reform Commission but later on the government didn't feel that , we need to promulgate it, we need to enact it and it was not, it did not come into force. It was partly because the government felt that as we enacted Right to Information Act, it already had certain safeguard measures to the people who furnish information. So that may be one reason. But still ADB it says it is not fulfilled.

I think mostly in terms of conditionalities it is fulfilled. In terms of impact it is mixed. So many reform measures were incorporated in rules and regulations which are quite relevant in the contemporary governance reform, let's say in the world. Before1998 we used to call it [indecipherable 01:24:34] administration reform after that global reform. So the reform measures were in line with the global trends. So that's what I see.

MAJEED: But in terms of assessing the overall impact as you say it would be mixed.

GHIMIRE: *It is mixed.*

MAJEED: What strategies do you think, knowing what you know now and looking back at some of the things that were tried, what do you think could have worked? Was

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there anything that could have been done a little differently? You've discussed some of these already but I just want to get an overall picture.

GHIMIRE: *One thing, until and unless you capacitate the people who are directly or indirectly involved in the implementation. So even if it is a very good policy, act or programs, it never gets implemented, I'll tell you that. The next thing is the priority. So before you introduce this type of program you need to be pretty sure that there is commitment of the higher level of the authorities. I think we have to do much more groundwork in getting support before we start the programs, an ambitious program like GRP. For example, we would organize a certain program or certain seminar involving all the high-level authorities. For example, parliamentarians or the ministers themselves or the journalists who could always push the authorities to get implemented the policies and programs. We have to consider in advance whether it is going to be implemented or not, so we should not take for granted that once the government agrees in principle, it will be implemented. That means we have to do proper homework.*

The second thing is that we need to give considerable timeframe for the implementation of such a huge program. In a three or four year span, it was tremendous, in three, four or five years you see such a huge conditionalities were accomplished by the government when the enactment of the law. It takes a long time doesn't it?

So what I see is that in the design phase, in the design phase we have to be very consultative because it is the bureaucratic mechanism that is supposed to be implemented. So we should not design programs only on the basis of the recommendations by the study reports from the consultants themselves. It has to be disseminated and it has to be discussed among the top-level bureaucrats and politicians. That is one thing I see.

The next important thing I can see is that we need certain strategies, for example, strategic communications. I never expect that without the disposition, clear disposition on the part of the implementers, we cannot implement what we design. So we need to create certain ownership on the part of the implementers. There could be different measures to get ownership for that.

The third one is that we have to understand the sentiment of the recipient country itself, the sentiment of the implementing area itself. We have to think time and again because in our cases what happens is that the top-level authorities and development partners they talk with each other, but they don't go deep into the reality. They don't know the reality at the ground level. The higher-level authority, they just hear the consultants and development partners, not subunits and not the people who are working at the grassroots level. That is why many of the policy measures are not realistic. So that would be more realistic.

Overall I don't term it as an unsuccessful project but impact and outcome are mixed. It is successful on the ground that it accomplished almost all the activities that were supposed to be carried out. But the intended impact was not achieved. So successful implementation does not ensure what you expect, create what you expect. That is the result I see.

MAJEED: Thank you so much Mr. Ghimire. Is there anything else that you would like to add or anything that I've missed or any advice that you would like to offer to others in similar situations?

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GHIMIRE: *I think we all of us, the government and the development partners should be well aware of the particular social-cultural reality before designing these types of reform programs. We cannot directly inherit any reform measures from one country to another country. So we have to consider the ground reality first hand before introducing the reform measures. If people are, if we do not have ownership from the people or from the bureaucracy, we cannot get it implemented, even if it is very good. So we have to consider cultural factors.*

The next thing is we have to consider behavioral aspects rather than concentrating on structural parts of reforms— What we didn't do in the last sixty years or so. We mainly concentrated on the structural part of reforms. So, another thing is building environment and gaining support for governance reforms is critical to implement such type of programs. Strengthening public sector capacity is another critical factor to implement these things.

The government is convinced and the civil service employees are also convinced. If they don't have capacity to implement that, it never gets implemented. So we should not overlook implementation capacity on the part of the bureaucracy: whether they are really able to carry out reforms or not. We have to consider that in many countries in the third world the government is under unprecedented pressure for reforms. So reform is inevitable but it should be designed in a participatory way with the respective governments, the respective countries. As I said, high-level political authorities, a genuine commitment is needed. Also sequencing of reforms is also critical, is also extremely important I think. Without proper sequencing you cannot get the intended impact; so sequencing is another important factor.

MAJEED: How did that affect the GRP, this particular fact?

GHIMIRE: *The GRP for example, if we—some of the activities were sequenced, for example issues of set up was carried out at the beginning. But after that we had to capacitate them, we had to pay attention to their capacity, we didn't do that. Some other examples, after promulgating the laws, so you need to carry out and study whether—how to implement the laws in practice so we never did that. Once it is in the law it is compulsory to implement. In that way we thought. And I think that patch-work and half-cooked agenda are rather counterproductive. So it should be given to complete the whole cycle. So if we do not give to complete the whole cycle and we just stop in the patch-work so it is rather counterproductive. For example the people might be reluctant to hear the reform itself. So later on it is very difficult to get ownership on the part of the reform if we subsequently fail to reform.*

Rather than carrying out reforms and get failed, it is better not to carry out, to initiate any reforms at all. That's what I see as very important. Internally-driven reforms are in dire need. Only with the—we need substantial, technical input from the external development partners. Other things that need to be designed internally, only the technical part which the developing countries lack should be given by the external development partners or external expatriates.

To sum up here in Nepal, mostly administration reforms or governance reform measures are externally driven. As I said at the beginning, realization is done by the government but the conditionality of reform CPR are supplied by the development partners mostly. The top-level bureaucrats are not that much cautious. On this front I might seem like a freelancer, being a bureaucrat I should not—. But until and unless you realize the problem—so realization is the first stage of reform—without realizing the shortcomings and problems you cannot

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reform yourself. So that's why sometimes I'm a bit critical, even being a part of the bureaucracy. So that's what I want to say at the moment.

MAJEED: Thank you so much. This is really, really helpful.