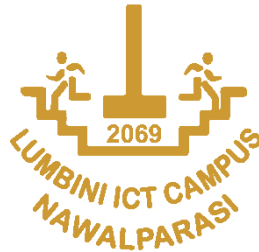


**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE OF
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**A PROJECT REPORT ON
SITUATION OF E-PASSPORT IN NEPAL**

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ABSTRACT

This case examines the current status of e-passport implementation and the progress of e-governance in Nepal, focusing specifically on the District Administration Office Kaski. The study investigates the challenges encountered during the implementation of e-passports, such as infrastructure requirements, data security concerns, and public awareness. It evaluates the effectiveness of e-governance initiatives in streamlining administrative processes, enhancing transparency, and improving citizen services within the District Administration Office.

The research draws upon primary data collected through interviews with key stakeholders, surveys among office staff and citizens, as well as secondary data analysis of relevant government reports and policies, online journals and blogs. The findings offer valuable insights into the successes, limitations, and potential future prospects of e-passports and e-governance in Nepal, providing recommendations for further enhancement and wider implementation across the country's administrative landscape.

The District Administration Office is a general administration of government in each district of Nepal. The government of Nepal appoints a Chief District Officer in each district to function as a Chief Administration Officer which serves as the executive at the district-level. In addition to this each district also has a District Administration Office which oversees the general administration of each district.

E-passport, electronic passport or biometric passport is the international travel document with identity details such as passport number, name, surname, nationality, and date of birth, as well as an electronic microprocessor chip containing data such as fingerprints, photos, and signatures. Biometric passports are scanned through special devices.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The District Administration Office is a general administration of government in each district of Nepal. Each of the **77** districts in Nepal has their own district coordination committees in. District Administration means the management of the task of government so far as it lies within an area legally recognized as a district. The District Administration Office is a general administration of government in each district of Nepal. The government of Nepal appoints a Chief District Officer in each district to function as a Chief Administration Officer. The Local Administration Act, 2072 (1971) was implemented to conduct local administration in accordance with the decentralized administration system to effectively operate peace and order. Section 5 of the Local Administration Act was constituted to be a district administration office in every district to conduct general administration of the district. The DAO in each district of Nepal works under Ministry of Home Affairs. The main function of the DAO is to maintain peace, order and security in the district and provide assistance in development activities run by the federal government, provincial government, District Coordination Committee, urban municipality and rural municipality. For a long time, the District Administration Office (DAO), commonly called the CDO office, worked directly under the government and was quite important.

The Chief District Officer (C.D.O.) is an administrative rank under Ministry of Home Affairs in Nepal who is appointed by the government as the senior-most executive magistrate and chief in-charge of general administration of a district. The main guideline to C.D.O. for his/her administration is the Local Administration Act, 1972. The C.D.O. is responsible for proper inspection of all the departments in a district such as health, education, security and all other government offices. In case of threatened public security conditions like riots, she/he can mobilize security forces and take other actions like imposing curfew order, fixing restricted area, arresting anyone according to law, hearing some cases as a quasi-judicial body. Distributing the Certificate of Nepalese Citizenship, processing and recommendation for passports, maintaining peace and security, law and order, acting as a representative of government, enjoying the authorities provided by more than 90 prevailing acts make a Chief District Officer powerful. The C.D.O. is the most powerful position in Nepalese administrative service. Likewise, Assistant Chief District Officers enjoys almost all the authorities as delegated by C.D.O. and other laws.

The main functions of the district administration are maintaining law and order in the district. They Provide relief work in case of emergencies like flood and famine, maintenance of land records and revenue collection, Providing civic amenities and monitoring the overall development process.

On 17 November 2021, the first electronic passport, or e-passport was introduced and

Nepalese writer Satya Mohan Joshi was the first to receive the e-passport. An ePassport contains an electronic chip. The chip holds the same information that is printed on the passport's data page: the holder's name, date of birth, and other biographic information. An e-Passport also contains a biometric identifier.

According to the finance minister, these chip-enabled e-Passports have advanced security features and would give citizens a better experience. The e-passports will protect biometric data and facilitate travel through immigration checkpoints around the world. E-passport is more secure and internationally recognizable. Electronic chips and antennas will make it easier to travel. It is because they are connected. It would be much easier to track the records of all the passport holders. This helps to authorize the passport of a Nepalese citizen while travelling abroad. In Nepal it takes to get an e-passport in urgent processing is done by the ministry of foreign affairs and takes 2 to 3 days. Normal processing takes around 4 weeks but sometime it may take up to 6 weeks and is done from the Chief District officer's office.

1.2 Problem of the Study

The implementation of e-passports and the adoption of e-governance in Nepal present a range of challenges and issues that need to be addressed. Firstly, the successful implementation of e-passports requires robust infrastructure, including reliable internet connectivity and secure data storage systems. However, Nepal's infrastructure limitations, especially in rural areas, pose a significant obstacle to the widespread adoption of e-passports and hinder the efficient functioning of e-governance initiatives.

Some of the issues that public are facing are:

1. Tokens are not available to fill the ePassport form online independently. So citizens have to bear a lot of costs to fill up the form in cyber.
2. Citizens have to wait a long time in queue to get their work done in government offices.
3. Most of the online ePassport forms filled up by citizens are rejected.

Overall, addressing these challenges is crucial for the effective implementation of ePassport's and the successful integration of e-governance practices within the District Administration Office in Kaski and across Nepal. This case study aims to explore and analyze these problems in order to provide recommendations and strategies for overcoming these obstacles and advancing the e-governance agenda in the country.

History of e-passport in Nepal

Nepal has started issuing e-passports for the first time. Foreign Minister Narayan Khadka inaugurated the e-passport personalization center at the Department of passports and handed over the country's first-ever e-passport to Satya Mohan Joshi, a 102-year-old historian, the department said in a press statement. E-passports will ultimately replace the machine-readable passports, which were introduced in 2010 to replace the decades-old handwritten passports in Nepal. The department plans to issue e-passports in a full manner within three weeks, while District Administration Offices and other offices authorized to issue passports in various parts of the country will start issuing e-passports by December, and Nepali diplomatic missions abroad will issue ePassport's in January 2022, according to the press statement. Currently we are having some technical issues on our e-Passport online application system while filling out online form for passport renewal. Some applicants are complaining of getting an error message "Not Enough Capacity" while trying to submit their application.

The e-passports may have arrived in Nepal a bit early. Last year, however, the KP Oli administration canceled three global tender notices in a row. The department is now ready to issue them, and the new passports will be produced by the French company IDEMIA. Furthermore, LOK BAHADUR THAPA, Director General of Department of Passports of says, "With the issuance of new passports, Nepal's status will grow in world's passport ranking". He added, "We are going to issue one of the best passports in Asia in terms of security, design, and other features". For those who are unaware, Nepal is ranked 110th on the Henley Passport Index for having one of the world's weakest passports.

Applying for an e-passport requires the applicant to have a national id card. The government has not completed distributing national ID cards, but it can be obtained from concerned district administration offices.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The basic purpose of this case study is to examine the current situation of e-passport implementation and the progress of e-governance within the District Administration Office in Kaski, Nepal. The roadmap to E-Governance is not easy and straight, rather it is too difficult especially when it comes to developing countries context. There is no doubt that there exist very limited prospects and many challenges for the development of EG in Nepal. Hence, the purpose of the study is to find out several hurdles, problems, and challenges present in the country obstructing the EG implementation that must be overcome to attain Nepal's EG dream. The implementation of E-passport is not easy and straight, rather it is too difficult especially when it comes to implementing in developing countries context.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general purpose of the study is to know the importance and implementation of E- passport in Nepal. Some of the specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Assess the status of e-passport implementation within the District Administration Office in Kaski, Nepal.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of e-governance initiatives in improving administrative processes and citizen services.
3. Identify the challenges and limitations faced during the implementation of ePassport and e-governance.
4. Analyze the impact of e-passport implementation and e-governance on transparency, accountability, and service delivery.
5. Examine the infrastructure requirements and limitations for successful e-passport implementation.
6. Assess the data security and privacy measures in place for protecting citizens' information.
7. Evaluate the level of public awareness and digital literacy regarding e-passports and e-governance.
8. Identify the opportunities and potential benefits of e-passports and e-governance within the District Administration Office.
9. Provide recommendations for addressing the identified challenges and maximizing the benefits of e-passport implementation and e-governance.
10. Contribute to the existing knowledge and understanding of e-passport implementation and e-governance in Nepal, with a specific focus on the District Administration Office, Kaski.

1.4 Research Methodology

The research methodology for this case study involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches to gather data and analyze the current situation of ePassport implementation and e-governance within the District Administration Office in Kaski, Nepal.

The following research methodologies has been implemented

1. **Interview:** Key stakeholders, including government officials, administrators, and IT experts, are interviewed to gain insights into their perspectives on e-passport implementation and e-governance.
2. **Surveys:** Surveys are conducted among office staff and citizens to assess their experiences, opinions, and levels of awareness regarding e-passports and governance.
3. **Literature Review:** A thorough review of existing literature, research papers, and case studies on e-passport implementation and e-governance in Nepal and other countries are conducted.

1.5 Research Design and Methodology

1.5.1 Research Design

The research design for this case study encompasses the overall plan and structure of the study, outlining the steps and procedures that will be followed to gather and analyze data. The research design provides a framework for achieving the objectives of the study and ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings. In this case, the research design incorporates the following elements:

1. **Descriptive Research:** The study aims to describe and assess the current situation of e-passport implementation and e-governance within the District Administration Office, Kaski, Nepal. Descriptive research involves observing and documenting the phenomena under investigation without manipulating variables. It helps provide an accurate representation of the existing conditions and practices.
2. **Data Collection:** The research design includes the collection of primary and secondary data. Primary data will be collected through interviews with key stakeholders and surveys among office staff and citizens. Secondary data will be gathered from government reports, policies, and relevant literature. The use of multiple data sources enhances the validity and reliability of the findings.

1.5.2 Nature and Sample

This research mostly represents qualitative nature of data but later on it is quantified to represent the facts. In this study, both primary and secondary sources of data are used.

a. Primary source

The primary data collection is conducted with the help of the following tools:

1. **Questionnaire:** Participants are supplied the questionnaire to collect their views and expressions on the subject matter. The questionnaire included the perception, awareness, and factors affecting the daily life of people and the governmental processes, and also including the effect of EG on the government services.
2. **Observation:** The site observation has been done for understanding the actual working of the EG system, which is currently implemented at NIDMC in DAO. The participation of the officers, employee, and public in the actual implementation of the system has been observed and the questionnaires have been filled.

b. Secondary source

The secondary data collection is conducted with the help of the following tools:

1. **Reference Books:** Various books and references related to EG has been studied with an objective to collect the relevant data and their respective source and origins.
2. **Journals & Newspapers:** Few research papers and journals were studied to drag out relevant information.
3. **Internet Source:** Various internet sources such as Wikipedia, and other blogs have been accessed to collect information related to government policies, scope, and schemes.
4. **Government and Non-Government Reports:** Many Government & Non- Government reports have been witnessed to understand government policies for the implementation of EG.

Descriptive research was conducted and the primary data was collected using a questionnaire survey and was managed to obtain quantifiable data. Both the paper-based survey and electronic survey were conducted for timely data collection and ease of access.

2. Analysis, Interpretation and Evaluation of Data

Based on the questionnaire; we have chosen several questions, which is taken for the measurement of significance of the respondent's awareness on the subject matter of EG, among the data collected within the respondent's size of 50.

Below presented are the related questionnaires to Citizens:

1. Do you know about EG?

The majority of the respondents answered that they have knowledge of EG while few respondents answered no and maybe. Only 10 out of the 50 respondents answered no, meaning they do not have an idea of EG and most of them were of elder age {55+}.

The youth and young population have idea about the E governance.

2. Have you ever used services related to EG in Nepal?

The majority of the respondents answered that they have used the services related to EG, also a group people seems confused in either they have used the services or not. While few respondents answered that, they have not used the services related to EG.

3. Do you know that the government has implemented the E- passport system in Nepal?

Based on the data collected regarding the knowledge of E-passport implementation by government, it seems half of the respondents we asked had the knowledge while the other half are completely unaware of the implementation of the system.

4. Do you think that the E-passport system will ease the process and general activities of the citizens of Nepal?

Based on the data collected to know the opinion of respondents about the ease of the process and general activities of the public through the implementation of E-passport system in Nepal, all the respondents seem optimistic, as no one selected the no answer. However, more than 50% answered maybe, meaning they are not certain about the upcoming facilities that EG system might have to offer to public. Some of them are also concerned about its success as there is problem for public on getting services, they have to face different problems and difficulties.

5. Do you think it is possible to implement the e-based system instead of the current paper-based system in governmental organizations?

The majority of the respondents answered that yes for this question, which means the respondents are sure about the fact of the e-based system is possible to substitute with the existing paper-based system.

6. Do you think there is a need for implementing EG in Nepal?

It is very interesting to note that every one of the respondents answered that there is a need to implement EG in Nepal. None of the respondents chooses no for this option, which means that the public is waiting to get the EG system being implemented in Nepal at the soonest possible.

7. Have you applied for the National Identity Card and EPassport?

Most of the youths seemed to have applied for NID and EPassport while rest haven't. This is because almost 90% of the youths we asked were applying for the foreign countries which require EPassport and for EPassport the NID is compulsory.

Below presented are the related questionnaires to the assistant CDO of Kaski, Ramesh Kumar KC

1. What are the EGovernance services offered in DAO kaski?

DAO kaski has been providing various Egovernance services like Online entry of vital registration, EPassport, national ID card etc.

2. What is the history of Passport in Nepal?

The modern passports were issued in 2012 BS. The first of this kind was issued in 10 Shrawan 2012 BS which was issued by the secretary of the ministry. These passports were in a form of sheet paper. Nepal stopped issuing hand-written passports on 31 March 2010 AD. And then Machine-Readable Passports (MRP) were issued. On 17 November 2021 AD, the first electronic passport, or e-passport was introduced. Since then, they have been issuing Epassports in Nepal.

3. Are the citizens aware about the Epassport? Are they utilizing it properly?

- The citizens around 20 lakhs who are already in foreign countries are using MRP. However, the concerned authorities have been conducting various awareness programs regarding the EPassport. It is estimated that the number of citizens using EPassport will gradually increase in coming years.

4. What are the steps that are followed from the beginning of filling epassport form to the distribution of the ePassport?

The steps that are followed are:

- Citizens fill up the EPassport form through online portals along with their personal details (must have National Identity Card) and choose the appointment Date, Location and Time.
- Once they submit the application form, they have to print it.
- The citizen can pay the passport fee through esewa (Rs.2500 for children below 10, Rs. 5000 for age above 10 and Rs. 12000 for emergency passport) or directly in the office and print the receipt.
- The citizen should go to the office in chosen appointment time with all the required documents.
- Then, they should verify the passport form is correct.
- Once verified, they should go to the Live Appointment room for Biometric, Photograph and Digital Signature.

- After 3 to 4 days citizen will get the message that their passport is printed and they should visit the office to get the passport.
- During the office visit date, the citizen has to get the token for getting their ePassport.
- ePassport is distributed to the citizens in order of their token.

5. What are the major issues related to epassport? Why most of the forms are rejected?

One of the most common issues that are faced related to epassport is that the citizens do common mistakes while filling up the form which includes unclear photo, spelling mistakes, different names in national identity card and epassport form, etc.

6. What are the approximate days to receive epassport by public, and mechanism to notify public after receiving passport in DAO?

It generally takes 2 to 3 working days after the enrollment. However, if the details of citizenship, National Identity Card, old passport, etc. are not verified or photograph as per ICAO criteria is not met, further investigation is required.

3. Results and Conclusion

3.1. Results:

The results of the case study indicate that there is a clear trend among Nepalese youths residing abroad to possess Machine Readable Passports (MRP), while an increasing number of youths who are currently applying for foreign countries opt for Epassports. This suggests a shift towards the adoption of Epassports among the younger generation. It is expected that this trend will continue in the coming years as citizens become more aware of the advantages and convenience offered by Epassports. The District Administration Office (DAO) in Kaski has been actively involved in various activities related to Epassports, including raising public awareness, facilitating the application process, and ensuring the efficient implementation of the system. These efforts by the DAO have contributed to the increasing usage of Epassports and have the potential to further accelerate its adoption among Nepalese citizens in the future.

The result of the analysis opens up a wide space for the researchers to carry out the experiment in order to find out the critical success factors for the successful EG implementation in Nepal. Since the collected data shows younger age people of Nepal has much idea and experience with the use of electronic services, also the ER index of Nepal has increased to a significantly higher rank, there is a lot of opportunity in coming days for the successful implementation of e-services and promoting the use of EG services. The extensive usage mobile devices have been getting more demand and usage in Nepal, so there is a greater chance of getting the EG services being implemented very soon in Nepal.

3.2. Conclusion:

In conclusion, the current situation of ePassport services in the District Administration Office of Kaski presents significant challenges for citizens. The inability to fill up online forms independently due to constantly full appointment dates and the requirement to rely on cyber cafes for form submission incur additional costs for the citizens. Furthermore, the high possibility of form rejection due to small mistakes made during the filling process adds to the frustrations faced by individuals. The long waiting times in queues and crowded environments for obtaining ePassports further compound the difficulties experienced by citizens. The Government of Kaski has recognized these issues and has undertaken various awareness programs to address the problems surrounding ePassport services. However, despite their efforts, the current system falls short of meeting the needs and expectations of the citizens.

3.3. Future Recommendations:

To improve the situation, it is essential for the government to take immediate actions. This can include expanding the capacity of the online appointment system to accommodate a higher number of citizens, ensuring that there are sufficient resources and infrastructure for citizens to independently fill up online forms. Simplifying the form filling process and providing clear guidelines can reduce the likelihood of form rejection due to small errors. Furthermore, the government should consider implementing measures to streamline the ePassport issuance process, such as increasing the number of processing counters, employing advanced technology for faster verification and approval, and introducing separate queues or time slots for different stages of the process to minimize wait times and overcrowding. By addressing these issues and making the necessary improvements, the government can significantly enhance the efficiency and accessibility of ePassport services in the District Administration Office of Kaski, providing a more convenient and user-friendly experience for the citizens.

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