

Navigating Bureaucracy: Principles, Practices and Strategies for Effective Engagement

Govinda Prasad Guragain Ph. D¹,  | Saroj Pokharel²,  | Bhawani Shankar Adhikari Ph. D³ | Sabita Kumari Mallik⁴

¹Associate Professor, Tribhuvan University, Padmakanya Multiple Campus, Department of Political Science, Bagbazar, Kathmandu, Nepal

²Lecturer, Tribhuvan University, Active Academy College, Department of Sociology, Basundhara, Kathmandu, Nepal

³Associate Professor, Nepal Sanskrit University, Department of English, Balmiki Campus, Exhibition Road, Kathmandu, Nepal

⁴Assistant Professor, Tribhuvan University, Padmakanya Multiple Campus, Department of Political Science, Bagbazar, Kathmandu, Nepal

Received 08-08-2024

Revised 09-08-2024

Accepted 03-09-2024

Published 04-09-2024



Copyright: ©2024 The Authors. Published by Publisher. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Abstract:

Since time immemorial, bureaucracy has existed worldwide in various forms, evolving in style and function to adapt to changing societal needs. Initially, societies in both the East and West employed guardian, caste-based, and patronage systems. Today, however, nearly all nations have shifted towards merit-based bureaucracy, where individuals' academic qualifications determine entry into civil service, replacing caste and patronage considerations.

Bureaucrats, often referred to as the permanent government, are paid officials crucial for the success of governance. The fate of a nation often rests in the hands of honest, experienced, and efficient bureaucrats. Nevertheless, bureaucracy worldwide is plagued by issues such as rampant corruption, bureaucratic red tape, and administrative delays, albeit to varying degrees.

Although the term "bureaucracy" was coined by French economist Vincent Drouney, it was Max Weber who elevated its understanding and popularity globally. In Nepal, meritocracy in bureaucracy was adopted in 1956 to replace the oligarchic and aristocratic structures of the Rana regime. The United States pioneered merit-based bureaucracy with the Pendleton Act of 1883. Bureaucrats serve as the executors of government policies, essential stakeholders, and agents of societal change and development. They are expected to act as catalysts for societal transformation through effective governance.

Keywords: Bureaucracy, Government, Paramedical, Impersonal, Patronage

Introduction:

Bureaucracy serves as the administrative branch of the executive government, tasked with implementing national plans and policies across the country. This involves the work carried out by paid officials commonly known as bureaucrats or civil servants. They handle critical functions such as recruitment, promotion, dismissal, grading, and standardizing working conditions, regulated uniformly by central bodies like ministries and public service commissions in Nepal and other nations. Denhardt, & Denhardt (2009) have offered the concept of bureaucracy in detail and the role of it.

In democratic states, bureaucrats fulfill diverse roles and responsibilities crucial for the government's functioning and survival. Their efficiency and effectiveness are pivotal to ensuring the government's success and operational efficiency throughout the country. Bureaucrats are not merely executors of governmental policies but are also regarded as the permanent foundation of state governance. O'Leary, & Vij (2012) have identified that the bureaucrats are the permanent foundation of the functioning body of the state.

The origin of the term "bureaucracy" can be traced back to the French word 'bureau', which originally referred to a writing table or desk. Therefore, 'bureaucracy' literally translates to 'desk government', indicating a system where governance is conducted by paid officials known as bureaucrats. There is a common perception that bureaucracy represents a government controlled by bureaucrats, for bureaucrats, and of bureaucrats, contrasting with elected representatives who form the government. However, bureaucrats are crucial for implementing policies and delivering services at all levels of government, symbolizing individuals valued for their experience, knowledge, and responsibility. Stillman (2010) has focused the significance of the bureaucrats and their duties of their expertise for the nation.

The term 'bureaucracy' was first used by French economist Vincent D. Gourney in 1945 with a negative connotation, describing it as a problematic

condition akin to necromania. (Bhimdev Bhatta, 2005, Development Administration, p. 50). Max Weber, a German sociologist, later popularized the concept with his influential writings.

Bureaucracy stands as a crucial element of public administration, shaping government policies and plans aimed at enhancing governance within the state. Public administration is tasked with ensuring equitable access to opportunities for the populace by managing affairs that cater to their needs. Bureaucrats carry out administrative functions across all levels and sectors of government, concentrating administrative authority within government bureaus or departments. Kettl (2015) has explained the administrative function of the bureaucrats for the effective form of the government to run smoothly.

The term 'bureaucracy' is derived from 'bureau' and 'cracy', indicating a government managed by paid officials termed bureaucrats. It reflects a system where bureaucrats sometimes perceive themselves as masters rather than servants of the people. They often see their role as guardians and custodians of public welfare, with the prosperity and progress of the people influenced more by bureaucratic decisions than by governmental actions. Lipsky (2010) has identified the role of the bureaucrats as the guardians of the public welfare and the effective decision makers of the governmental tasks. In the same way, Goodsell (2017) has pointed out the importance of the bureaucrats for prosperity and progress of the state. Discussing about the navigating bureaucracy and practices, principles, and strategies for effective government in Nepal has turned out as complicated work. It has become as hard as Adhikari et al (2020) have claimed in keeping the ecology and the environment of the world in a balanced form for security of humanity and it is as complex as Adhikari et al (2022) have discussed about the global condition of the system of the government and it has turned out as beyond the control as Adhikari (2020) has analyzed about the existing condition of the world's deteriorating system of the environment and ecology due to the governments of the world. It has become one of the most

complicated tasks in enhancing the bureaucratic administration as Adhikari, (Academia. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.25058/179400x.1709>) has discussed about the difficulties of transforming from one religion to another one in his "Fear in Religion." But it has become essential to improve the bureaucratic system by exploring the facts of the lapses that have been taking place in the country and in the entire globe. However, it has become quite essential for the managing of the effective bureaucratic system in Nepal. But the researchers have not brought the way of enhancing the bureaucratic and strengthening form of bureaucratic system in the country properly and effectively for the overall development of the administrative reformation yet. So, the research has attempted to fulfil the gap of the research by answering the following research questions. However, they have not well investigated about the concept of bureaucracy on the global scale, how it has been implemented worldwide and what the theoretical insights and the practical knowledge are for the policy makers so far. Hence, the research has attempted to fulfill the unanswered questions and fill the gap for the readers.

Statement of the Problem:

Navigating bureaucracy, its principles, practices, and strategies for effective engagement has become essential to explore and to identify the possible ways of improving the bureaucratic service to the public but it has not been investigated its unidentified issues. Hence, the following research questions have been focused in exploring and enhancing the principles of the bureaucratic condition.

- A) What is the concept of bureaucracy on the global scale?
- B) How has been of bureaucracy implemented worldwide?
- C) What are the theoretical insights and the practical knowledge for the policy makers?

Objective:

The primary goal of this study is to examine the concept of bureaucracy on a global scale and

explore its implementation worldwide. This research aims to offer theoretical insights to its readers and practical knowledge to policymakers. The specific objectives of the research are:

- A To examine the concept of bureaucracy on the global scale.
- B To explore how bureaucracy has been implemented worldwide.
- C To identify the theoretical insights and the practical knowledge for the policy makers.

Methodology:

This article employs both descriptive and exploratory research designs. It aims to investigate the historical evolution, current status, and various forms of bureaucracy over different periods. Additionally, the article seeks to examine the emergence of merit-based bureaucracy in various regions, including Nepal. It also endeavors to outline the advantages and disadvantages of bureaucracy experienced by nations globally.

Definition:

Various scholars have articulated their perspectives on bureaucracy:

E.N. Gladden described bureaucracy as "a government of officials."

Max Weber defined bureaucracy as "a system of administration characterized by expertise, impartiality, and the absence of personal feelings."

Pfiffner characterized bureaucracy as "the systematic organization of tasks and individuals into a structure that can most efficiently achieve collective goals."

Laski viewed bureaucracy as "a system of government control so thoroughly in the hands of officials that it threatens the liberties of ordinary citizens."

According to the Oxford Dictionary, bureaucracy is "the system of official rules and procedures that a government or organization has."

Willoughby defined bureaucracy as "a group of public servants organized in a hierarchical system that operates beyond effective public oversight."

Bureaucracy:

Bureaucracy represents a group of professional officials structured in a hierarchical and scalar system, operating according to impersonal and standardized rules and procedures. It is a form of government where administrative control rests predominantly with officials, leading them to perceive themselves as masters responsible to the people, yet potentially compromising people's freedoms and liberties through their operations.

Characteristics of Bureaucracy (Max Weber's Theories):

The foundational principles of bureaucracy were initially systematized by the German sociologist Max Weber (1854-1920), whose concepts and theories laid the groundwork for understanding bureaucracy. Weber systematically categorized the characteristics of bureaucracy as follows:

a. The division of labor in the organization:

A key feature of bureaucracy is its highly developed and scientifically organized division of labor, achieved through detailed and precise definitions of duties and responsibilities for each position and office status. The allocation of functions within each office strictly adheres to fixed jurisdictional principles set by administrative regulations.

In bureaucratic organizations, relationships between superiors and subordinates are characterized by rational and impersonal regulations. This contrasts with traditional forms of administration where relationships are often personal, and authority is legitimized based on beliefs and traditions.

b. Bureaucratic authority structure:

The bureaucratic organization is structured in a hierarchical pyramid and operates according to impersonal and standardized rules and regulations governing relationships between superiors and subordinates, unlike traditional forms of administration. Authority is legitimized through belief in administrative rules, and bureaucrats' loyalty is oriented towards the position of authority itself rather than the individual occupying it.

c. The position and role of the individual member:

The characteristics of a bureaucratic position begin with the method of recruitment. Bureaucrats are chosen based on formal qualifications that demonstrate their necessary knowledge for effectively carrying out specialized duties. Selection is not influenced by family background or political allegiance. Upon entering the bureaucratic organization, the office becomes their primary occupation, pursued on a long-term basis (permanent), allowing for career development. Promotion within the bureaucracy typically follows an elaborate system based on principles of seniority and merit. Bureaucrats generally receive a salary commensurate with the status of their position rather than being tied to individual productivity performance.

d. The type of rules that regulate the relations between organizational member:

One of the crucial traits of bureaucracy is its reliance on rational rules designed to structure and govern the entire organization based on technical expertise, aimed at maximizing efficiency. Max Weber posited that bureaucratic administration fundamentally entails control grounded in knowledge, which distinguishes it as notably rational. These key aspects of Weber's ideal bureaucratic model are observable in actual bureaucratic structures, with organizations varying in their adherence to this ideal depending on how closely they approximate it.

F.M. Marx, one of the prominent scholars, has characterized bureaucracy in four senses:

- I. Bureaucracy is a specific type of organization primarily designed for public administration.
- ii. Bureaucracy can act as a hindrance to effective management within an organization.
- iii. Bureaucracy, in the context of 'Big government', can be observed in large-scale corporations, trade unions, political parties, and governmental bodies with extensive operations.
- iv. Bureaucracy is often perceived as a detriment that negatively impacts liberty, as the actions of

bureaucrats can significantly affect the freedoms provided to the people.

Laski also characterizes the features of Bureaucracy as:

- a. Strong adherence to established routines in administration,
- b. Prioritization of rule adherence over flexibility,
- c. Slowness in decision-making and reluctance to pursue experimentation,
- d. Implementation of a system characterized by rigidity, mechanization, and a formal, impersonal approach.

Type of Bureaucracy:

The evolution of bureaucracy varies from state to state. In the past, government positions were frequently assigned based on personal connections or patronage rather than on merit and efficiency in performance. F.M. Marx has categorized bureaucracy into four distinct types (Bhatta, pp. 56-57).

I. The Guardian Bureaucracy:

Bureaucrats perceive themselves as guardians and custodians of public welfare and public opinion. They are expected to be efficient, competent, incorruptible, and possess authority. Chinese bureaucracy during the Sung period around 460 A.D. and in Prussia from 1640 to 1740 A.D. was noted for its role as a guardian bureaucracy.

ii. The caste Bureaucracy

Caste-based bureaucracy is commonly found in oligarchic or aristocratic political systems where caste serves as the primary criterion for entering bureaucracy. Only individuals from upper or higher castes are eligible to become civil servants within government organizations. This system was prevalent during colonial rule in India and continues to persist. The United Kingdom also maintains a similar system to this day. Despite Nepal adopting a merit-based system since 1956, elements of caste-based bureaucracy are still observed in practice within Nepal today.

The increasing bureaucratization of modern society, along with the rise of totalitarian regimes

in both Eastern and Western countries, has often been viewed critically as a system of political dominance. Bureaucracy, instead of remaining a tool of governance, can transform into a dominant political entity that transcends capitalist and socialist ideologies. Max Weber criticized bureaucracy's potential for problematic political domination, while German sociologist Robert Michels (1876-1936) argued that this dominance is an inevitable outcome inherent in the internal dynamics of bureaucracy. In his thesis, Michels has focused on the aspect:

"Iron Law of Oligarchy" posits that as modern organizations grow in complexity and bureaucratization, all power becomes centralized at the top in the hands of a small elite group within the organization, ruling in a dictatorial manner. Michels acknowledges that organizational oligarchy can lead to societal oligarchy. If political parties fail to operate democratically, they can evolve into oligarchic political regimes, where organizational and other social elites with shared interests form powerful groups resistant to demands for change from the masses. Once in control, Michels argues, organizational oligarchies consistently seek to strengthen their own power positions.

iii. The Patronage Bureaucracy

Patronage bureaucracy is characterized primarily by its method of recruitment. Bureaucrats are chosen based on factors such as family status or political allegiance. Nepotism and favoritism play significant roles in the selection process within administrative organizations. This system resembles the "spoils system," where public positions are granted as political rewards to individuals who align with a specific political party's doctrine. However, unlike the spoils system, patronage typically ensures stability of tenure. Prior to the adoption of the merit-based Pendleton Act in 1883, the United States was known for its traditional spoils system. By the mid-19th century, patronage had become commonplace in the United Kingdom.

In the past, government positions were often filled through a patronage system, where individuals secured employment based on personal or familial connections rather than their skills and competence. Patronage posed a significant challenge for many countries in the 19th century, as political loyalty outweighed personal effectiveness as the primary qualification for bureaucrats. In the United States, efforts to address this issue included the enactment of the Hatch Act in 1939 and subsequent amendments in 1940, which prohibited bureaucrats from engaging in political campaigns. For instance, in 2001, President Bush appointed approximately 8,000 individuals to patronage positions with the advent of a new administration, while President Obama appointed around 16,000 patronage positions during his tenure.

Since the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990, Nepal continues to practice a patronage system through political appointments of CEOs in public corporations and projects. The transfer of civil servants frequently occurs to organizations that are convenient and beneficial, which goes against the rational rules intended to structure the entire administrative organization based on meritocracy.

iv. The merit Bureaucracy:

The predominant and widely accepted form of bureaucracy is meritocracy, where bureaucrats are chosen based on their qualifications and merit. Selection criteria typically include formal qualifications such as diplomas and university degrees, which validate the applicant's capability to effectively perform specialized duties. Upon joining the bureaucratic organization, their office becomes their primary focus and forms the basis of their career, implying a commitment to stability, continuity, and lifelong dedication to their work.

The United States implemented the merit system in 1883, the United Kingdom in 1870 A.D., and Nepal adopted it in 1956 A.D. through the Civil Service Act of 1956 and the Civil Service Regulation of 1964, establishing rational rules to govern the entire administrative system. Bureaucrats are selected based on various channels:

a. Internal sources of recruitment refer to the practice of filling vacant civil servant positions from within the organization's existing workforce. This process often involves transferring and promoting employees from within the organization to fulfill these roles.

b. External sources of recruitment involve hiring bureaucrats from outside the organization, typically selecting fresh candidates based on merit through a competitive process.

a. Internal recruitment sources involve appointing civil servants to vacant positions from within the organization itself. This includes transferring and promoting existing employees to meet these needs.

b. External recruitment sources refer to the practice of hiring bureaucrats from outside the organization, typically selecting new candidates based on merit through a competitive system.

Scope of Bureaucracy:

Bureaucrats serve as the administrative personnel of the executive branch of government. They are paid officials, collectively known as the bureaucracy, whose roles include managing aspects such as pay, grading, dismissal, retirement, personnel facilities, training, and working conditions. These elements are governed by uniform regulations established and enforced by governmental bodies throughout the nation where they operate.

Classification of Bureaucracy F.M. Marx further classifies bureaucracy into following categories on Political ground (Krishna Joshi, Public Administration: Modern study, PP-291,292).

a. Depoliticized Bureaucracy: This type of bureaucracy operates free from political intervention, governed by impartial rules, and dedicated to serving the public.

b. Semi-Politicized Bureaucracy: Similar to the spoils system, this bureaucracy involves appointing bureaucrats based on political loyalty by the winning party, while top officials retain decision-making authority.

c. Committed Bureaucracy: Bureaucrats are committed to implementing government policies, yet they may participate in politics as members of a party. Political involvement influences bureaucracy, including recruitment, promotions, and transfers, often accompanied by corruption.

d. Fully Politicized Bureaucracy: In this system, political parties and bureaucrats intertwine, allowing individuals to move between roles, including bureaucrats running for office. This setup occurs in both single-party and non-partisan environments.

e. Participatory Bureaucracy: Developed by F. R. Riggs as "Balanced Policy," this model involves a political party maintaining a balanced relationship with bureaucrats, sharing power in a specific domain.

The Great Depression in the 1930s led to an increased prominence of bureaucracy, which posed challenges to democratic principles. In the later part of the 1970s, Western nations, including the United States, began focusing on "Participatory Bureaucracy," which incorporates the following significant elements.

Representation: Ensuring a diverse representation within the bureaucracy that reflects the demographics of the society it serves.

Democratic Structure: Organizing the bureaucracy in a way that promotes democratic values, including transparency, accountability, and adherence to legal standards.

Public Engagement in Policy-making: Involving the public in policymaking through open debates and consultations, allowing their input to influence decision-making.

Civic Engagement: Encouraging active participation of citizens in governance, fostering a sense of civic duty and involvement in public matters.

f. Military-Led Bureaucracy: This form of bureaucracy involves bureaucrats serving under military rulers, carrying out directives as observed during military regimes in nations like Pakistan.

g. Autocratic Bureaucracy: Bureaucrats operate under autocrats and dictators, prioritizing service to the ruler rather than the public good, seen during periods such as the Panchayat rule in Nepal and in countries like India and Uganda.

h. Colonial Bureaucracy: Bureaucrats in colonial states functioned as de facto rulers on behalf of colonial powers, exercising authority in territories like India, the USA, and other colonized regions.

I. Mock Bureaucracy (Feigned Loyalty): Bureaucrats pretend loyalty to rulers out of fear of consequences, deliberately delaying decisions to showcase governmental ineffectiveness.

Merits of Bureaucracy (Shrestha, 2069 B.S P-229):

a. Advisory Role in Policy Making: Bureaucrats provide advice in government decision-making processes.

b. Legislative Implementation: They carry out laws and governmental regulations.

c. Development Administration Delivery: Bureaucrats oversee the distribution of development policies aimed at societal progress.

d. Efficient Service Provision: They ensure prompt delivery of services to citizens on behalf of the government.

e. Adaptation Challenges: Bureaucrats may struggle with adapting to change due to their adherence to strict rules and procedures.

f. Hierarchy and Authority: Bureaucracy operates with a hierarchical structure focused on centralized decision-making authority rather than service orientation.

g. Formal Procedures and Command Unity: It follows formalities and adheres strictly to rational rules and regulations, emphasizing unity of command.

h. Resistance to Change: Bureaucracy often exhibits resistance to change and innovation in operations, preferring strict adherence to established governmental rules and regulations for efficient service delivery.

Scope of Bureaucracy:

The Public Service Commission in Nepal, the Office of Personnel Management in the USA, and the Civil Service Commission in the UK play a crucial role in recruiting bureaucrats, overseeing key functions within the bureaucracy, which can be categorized as follows.

I. Recruitment (Appointment):

The essence of bureaucracy centers on the recruitment of bureaucrats who are integral to public administration. Bureaucracy employs a significant workforce across government ministries, departments, corporations, and other agencies nationwide. The selection of bureaucrats should be based on formal qualifications like university degrees or diplomas, confirming their capability to perform specialized duties effectively. Upon joining the bureaucratic system, individuals typically embark on long-term careers within the organization, emphasizing stability and continuity in their professional journey.

Patronage, spoils, and merit systems are approaches used for selecting and recruiting candidates within bureaucratic organizations. The USA traditionally employed the spoils system until its abandonment in 1883. Nepal adopted the merit system in 1956 A.D., but patronage still persists to some extent. Several recruitment sources are utilized in practice.

- a. Internal Sources: Bureaucrats are appointed to vacancies within the organization. Transfers and promotions of civil servants are employed for this purpose.
- b. External Source: Bureaucrats are recruited externally based on merit, involving subjective and objective tests (such as IQ tests and interviews) to assess their qualifications.
- c. Promotion: While recruitment and promotion methods may vary across countries, promotion remains a key incentive within bureaucracy. It serves as a significant recognition for exceptional performance, marking progression from one grade or level to a higher rank and status, often accompanied by increased remuneration and

responsibilities. Promotion is integral to the career progression of bureaucrats.

Principles of Promotion:

Promotion is based on following principles:

I. Seniority

This principle dictates that individuals are promoted or rewarded based on the duration of their service or tenure within the organization.

II. Merit and Performance

These criteria involve selecting individuals for advancement or recognition based on their proven skills, accomplishments, and effectiveness in their respective roles.

III. Seniority-Based Fitness:

This concept involves evaluating suitability for promotion or other advantages within the organizational structure based on a combination of seniority and demonstrated performance. Promotion within bureaucracy follows two main principles: seniority and merit. Seniority-based promotions are granted based on the accumulated length of service, prioritizing longer-tenured staff members. Conversely, merit-based promotions hinge on the effective performance of staff, determining their suitability for advancement to higher positions.

Transfer is an essential component of civil service, primarily driven by organizational needs. It serves to prevent staff monotony and indifference by providing them with fresh responsibilities and opportunities for development. Nonetheless, transfers can sometimes result in staff dissatisfaction and subsequent frustration.

Training:

This approach focuses on improving and expediting the working capabilities of staff by equipping them with essential technical skills to advance their knowledge. It encompasses various principles, including pre-service training, which introduces new recruits to the organization's staff and environment, facilitating their adaptation to responsibilities and surroundings.

Retirement:

Retirement is a pivotal element in bureaucracy, guided by the principle that individuals reach a stage where they may no longer perform their duties effectively and need rest. Retirement typically becomes mandatory upon reaching a specific age (e.g., 50 years in Nepal, 65 years in European nations), often accompanied by pension provisions to support their retired life. Dismissal, on the other hand, involves disciplinary action taken against employees involved in misconduct and can sometimes be voluntary.

Limitations of Bureaucracy:

Democracy represents a symbiotic relationship between the government and its people. Likewise, bureaucracy embodies a strong interrelation among political leadership, citizens, and officials working towards shared objectives. Bureaucracy emphasizes personal capability, adherence to office protocols, and compliance with legal frameworks. Bureaucrats are paid professionals who embark on lifelong careers within bureaucratic structures, bound by regulations governing their conduct from recruitment to retirement.

The Modern Theories of Bureaucracy:

The concept of bureaucracy can be understood through structural and functional lenses. Structurally, bureaucracy is defined as an administrative system structured by hierarchy, specialization in tasks, and competent personnel responsible for executing governmental policies. Carl Friedrich and Victor Thompson emphasize bureaucracy's hierarchical structure, division of labor, and assignment of responsibilities based on positions. Functionally, bureaucracy operates as a subsystem within the larger social framework, focusing on its operational dynamics. Michael Crozier and Laski Manager critique bureaucracy for its bureaucratic red tape, rigid adherence to rules, mechanical routines, and conservative tendencies.

Morta Albro categorically classifies the concept and theories of bureaucracy into:

a. Bureaucracy as a rational organization: Bureaucracy is described as an organized and

efficient administrative structure guided by rational principles in its functioning.

b. Bureaucracy as rule by officials: Bureaucracy involves governance and decision-making conducted by appointed officials rather than elected leaders.

c. Bureaucracy as ruling administration: Bureaucracy denotes the administrative authority or system responsible for governing and implementing policies within a defined structure.

d. Bureaucracy as an organization: Bureaucracy is understood as a structured and formalized entity operating within governmental or institutional contexts, aiming to achieve systematic objectives through hierarchical arrangements and standardized processes.

Theories, idea and concept of Max Weber: - Max Weber, the pioneer of modern concept of bureaucracy has characterized the features of bureaucracy as followings:

a. Clear division of labor: Bureaucracy ensures distinct roles are assigned to optimize efficiency in task execution.

b. Hierarchical structure with defined authority and accountability: Bureaucracy operates within a structured hierarchy where roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, ensuring clarity in organizational management.

c. Consistency in standardized rules: Bureaucracy follows uniform regulations across all functions, ensuring fairness and predictability in its operations.

d. Well-defined functions for each office: Each office within bureaucracy has clear roles and responsibilities, facilitating coordinated efforts and effective functioning.

e. Emphasis on efficiency: Bureaucracy prioritizes effective and prompt execution of tasks to maximize productivity.

f. Long-term career opportunities: Bureaucracy offers stable employment with opportunities for advancement based on merit and experience.

g. Commitment to formal impartiality: Bureaucracy maintains a formal and impartial approach, focusing on adherence to rules and procedures over personal considerations.

h. Recruitment based on merit: Bureaucracy selects and promotes individuals based on their qualifications and competencies.

I. Compensation for officials: Bureaucracy provides salaries, pensions, and graded benefits to its members according to their roles and service contributions.

j. Strict discipline and code of conduct: Bureaucracy enforces rigorous discipline and a code of conduct to ensure organizational order and ethical behavior.

6. Contemporary theories of Bureaucracy Many contemporary theories have emerged to define bureaucracy and they are (Toyce 22001. chapter-10):

I. Oligarchic Theories:

The increasing bureaucratization of modern societies and the rise of totalitarian regimes have often portrayed bureaucracy as an oligarchic system of political control. Bureaucracy shifts from its role as a servant to becoming the dominant authority.

Robert Michels was one of the first theorists to connect the expansion of bureaucratization with oligarchic tendencies in contemporary society. His theory, known as the "Iron Law of Oligarchy," suggests that as organizations become more bureaucratic, power consolidates at the top among an elite group that governs autocratically. This elite continually aims to strengthen its power and status, leading Michels to argue that organizational oligarchy can extend to encompass societal oligarchy.

According to Michels, when democratic entities like political parties and trade unions fail to operate democratically, larger-scale organizations may evolve into oligarchic political regimes. The organizational elite, along with other societal elites sharing similar interests, forms a powerful

coalition that opposes any calls for change originating from the general population.

ii. Bureaucratic collectivism:

Theorists contend that bureaucracy represents more than just a privileged and oppressive group—it constitutes a new exploiting class distinct from both capitalist and socialist systems, with a global presence. Italian Marxist Bruno Rizzi sought to elaborate on this concept. He argued that Soviet bureaucracy formed a novel ruling class that exploited the proletariat similarly to historical capitalists. What set this system apart was its basis not just in individual ownership but in collective ownership of the means of production, held by both the state and the bureaucrats who controlled it. Rizzi highlighted that these bureaucrats, including party officials, directors, and specialists, occupied crucial roles within both party and state administration. They exploited the proletariat and appropriated surplus value generated by their labor. Rizzi termed this arrangement "bureaucratic collectivism," which he believed could be observed in fascist regimes and even in Western capitalist democracies.

iii. Conflict Theories:

Organizations naturally harbor groups with conflicting interests, each striving to promote its own agenda through diverse strategies. These groups wield influence over policies based on their power and positioning within the organization. According to American sociologist Melville Dalton, within organizations, antagonistic groups compete for greater power to secure more substantial rewards. In contrast, French sociologist Michel Crozier challenges Dalton's viewpoint by proposing that each group's strategy revolves around manipulating regulations to bolster its own advantages and achieve autonomy from higher authorities. By exerting control over unregulated domains, these groups seek to enhance their power within the organization.

iv. Dysfunctional aspects of Bureaucracy:

Weber identifies division of labor as a defining feature of bureaucracy, organized hierarchically. In

contrast, Robert K. Merton critiques bureaucracy for its bureaucratic tendencies and inefficiencies. Bureaucratic organizations operate mainly under rational rules, often sacrificing flexibility and sometimes converting means into ends. Procedural rules may prioritize their enforcement over achieving actual objectives, resulting in "goal displacement."

The strict adherence to bureaucratic rules can both support and hinder organizational efficiency, offering predictability as a functional outcome but also introducing rigidity as a dysfunctional consequence.

Role of Bureaucracy and their linkage with Decision Making Process of the government:

Bureaucrats play an essential advisory role by maintaining close ties with decision-makers in the political executive. This role encompasses several critical functions within the bureaucracy:

- a) Offering guidance to political leaders and executives.
- b) Effectively executing rules, plans, and policies.
- c) Serving as the backbone of the administrative framework.

Demonstrating specialization, technical competence, and strong commitment to their respective fields, which contributes to achieving superior results.

b. Change Agent Development Administration:

Development activities rely heavily on the competence of civil servants.

Development must encompass all regions, sectors, and demographics, facilitated by bureaucrats.

The concept of development administration was embraced in Nepal in the 1970s, integrating bureaucrats as key stakeholders.

Bureaucrats, as paid officials, serve as instruments of the government, implementing policies and plans nationwide.

c. The Machinery of the government:

The process of bureaucratization within administrative organizations evolves gradually due to the dominance of bureaucratic elites extending into the political arena. Governments establish and introduce new departments through legislation, and they reallocate governmental tasks among these departments. It operates as a hierarchical organization that employs standardized structures such as position classification and grading systems to establish a clear chain of command. Bureaucrats carry out their responsibilities across various departments and ministries, adhering to formal reporting procedures. Governments enforce their policies across ministries, departments, regional offices, and specialized units with the assistance of bureaucrats.

d. Bureaucrats Influence over policy making:

They offer advice and recommendations to policymakers or politicians. Occasionally, they exert pressure to influence the content of public policies. They play dual roles as both policy makers and implementers. Ministers or policymakers often accept their decisions to validate them. At times, they collaborate to prevent policymakers from deviating from their recommendations. This trait is universally observed across the globe.

e. Bureaucrats act as a pressure group:

They focus on specific sectors of public policy. They resemble typical interest groups but with specific agendas. They apply pressure through strategic tactics, including deliberate delays in implementing government directives and policies. They may rally opposition against government policies. They advocate for particular interests such as improving working conditions, status, benefits, and ensuring the survival of their organization. Senior officials maintain connections with high-level leaders of political parties to enhance their influence. They have a vested interest in self-promotion, which brings them into contact with policymakers and ministers to articulate their views. Like any organized group, bureaucrats engage in political activities. Given their specialization, technical expertise, and proficiency,

policymakers should depend on bureaucrats for formulating new policies.

f. Political control of the Bureaucracy:

Ministers sometimes counter the influence of bureaucrats by appointing their own advisors. Around the year 2000, approximately 2000 experts were appointed across various government departments. The Chief Executive (Prime Minister) may seek to exert influence over civil servants by participating in their recruitment, appointments, promotions, transfers, and dismissals, aiming to prevent bureaucrats from becoming politicized. The legislature possesses skilled competence and expertise, enabling them to influence the government through methods such as strikes, pen-down strikes, and other forms of union action.

g. Bureaucracy as Ruling Elite:

When the state heavily relies on bureaucracy, important policies are formulated and decided by administrative leaders within the bureau. In such circumstances, there is limited participation by the general public. Career bureaucrats are not directly accountable to voters but play a crucial role in decision-making processes. When bureaucrats wield significant influence in bureaucratic governance, it can resemble military rule. Bureaucrats, often from middle to upper-class backgrounds with strong academic qualifications, hold sway over the government. In France, the bureaucratic elite holds a dominant position, leading it to be termed an administrative state. Similar dynamics exist in countries like India and Nepal even today. Bureaucrats are stakeholders in development processes. Leveraging their experience and expertise, senior civil servants exert influence over political leaders. Due to limited knowledge about specific domains, elected representatives often rely on bureaucrats to make informed decisions. The success of government development policies heavily relies on bureaucratic performance; without a robust bureaucracy, development efforts may falter.

h. Criticism of Bureaucracy:

Ram Say Muir critiques bureaucracy in his book "How Britain is governed," arguing that while bureaucracy initially thrives within democratic

systems, it eventually becomes a threat to the very democracy that nurtured its growth (Joshi, PP-302). Chester Barnard and Herbert Simon offer criticism of Max Weber's bureaucratic model. In contrast to Weber's emphasis on hierarchical formal structures, Barnard and Simon advocate for fostering interpersonal relationships and informal interactions among bureaucrats. Robert Morton criticizes bureaucracy for its inefficiency and excessive red-tape. Joseph La Palam bara suggests that American and European bureaucracies could benefit from improvements. William Delaney favors classical bureaucracy over legal bureaucracy, emphasizing its adherence to established rules and formal structure (Bhatt, 2050: 1.5-58). Bureaucracy faces criticism for its resistance to embrace concepts like 'Corporate Culture' and 'office at home'. In contrast, the modern emphasis on good governance promotes values such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, and public participation. However, bureaucracy often remains resistant to change, adhering strictly to established rules and exhibiting rigidity. This reluctance to adapt has led to critiques suggesting that bureaucracy is outdated, yet indispensable. Max Weber defended bureaucracy's structured and conservative nature, acknowledging its essential role as the executor of government policies and regulations without which administrative services would falter, and governance would stagnate.

Conclusion:

Bureaucracy is often referred to as the enduring apparatus of government managed by salaried officials. The success of public administration hinges entirely on the competence and ethical performance of bureaucrats. Civilization can thrive only through effective administration, and administration itself can flourish solely through proficient bureaucracy. Therefore, there exists an intrinsic connection between administration and bureaucracy; they are interdependent and cannot prosper independently of each other. While governments may change through political processes over time, efficient bureaucracy ensures

that the nation remains governed and administered continuously.

The types and characteristics of bureaucracy can vary significantly from one country to another. While most democratic nations emphasize meritocracy within their bureaucratic systems, some countries still adhere to systems based on caste or patronage. Even today, American Presidents and British Prime Ministers appoint individuals to patronage positions within their administrations. Bureaucrats play crucial roles in translating government visions and policies into practical realities. They serve as sources of information, covert policy makers, and implementers of governmental directives. Furthermore, they are stakeholders in development initiatives and catalysts for societal transformation.

Red tape, corruption, delays, rigidity, lack of accountability, and conservatism are widespread issues within bureaucracy. Unless these problems are effectively addressed and eradicated by the government, the country cannot progress, and citizens will continue to feel underserved with their basic needs unmet. Good governance is essential for addressing these challenges and ensuring effective administration.

In Nepal, issues such as corruption, delays, and bureaucratic red tape have become widespread within both politics and administration. Despite public outcry against rampant corruption, the government has shown indifference to these problems. Transparency International has categorized Nepal among the most corrupt nations globally. International donor nations and organizations have made good governance a condition for providing aid. Recently, the Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), an ombudsman body, has taken proactive steps to investigate and take strict actions against corruption across all levels of government.

Despite the numerous drawbacks associated with bureaucracy, the government should earnestly endeavor to rectify its flaws. Bureaucrats themselves should strive to adapt to the changing times, as they play a crucial role as service

providers to the people in their respective areas and communities.

Reference:

1. Adhikari, B. S., Subbha B., Kalu, Osina Kachi Akuma (2020). *Eco-Fearism: Prospects & Burning Issues*. Xlibris.
2. Adhikari, B. S., Guragain, G.P., Sharma., B. (2022). *YARSHAGUMBAISM*. Xlibris.
3. Adhikari, B. S. (2020). *Exotic Fearology*. Xlibris.
4. Adhikari, B. S. "Fear in Religion." *Academia*. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.25058/179400x.1709>.
5. Avasthi, A., & Avasthi, S. (1999). *India's administration*. Afra: Laxmi Narayan Agrawal.
6. Bhatta, B. (2050 B.S.). *Development administration*. Kathmandu: Jagadamba Press Pvt. Ltd.
7. Denhardt, R. B., & Denhardt, J. V. (2009). *The New Public Service: Serving, Not Steering*. M.E. Sharpe.
8. Goodsell, C. T. (2017). *The Case for Bureaucracy: A Public Administration Polemic*. CQ Press.
9. Joshi, K. (2036 B.S.). *Public administration: Modern study*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
10. Joyce, P. (2001). *Politics: Teach Yourself*. Hodder Headline Books and Division of McGraw Hill. Oxford University Press.
11. Kettl, D. F. (2015). *The Politics of the Administrative Process*. CQ Press.
12. Lipsky, M. (2010). *Street-Level Bureaucracy: Dilemmas of the Individual in Public Services*. Russell Sage Foundation.
13. O'Leary, R., & Vij, N. (2012). *Public Administration and Information Technology*. Jones & Bartlett Learning.
14. Oxford University Press. (2010). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (7th ed.)*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
15. Sharma, M. P. (1970). *Public administration in theory and practice*. Allahabad: Kitab Mahal.

16. Shreshta, R. (2069 B.S.). Government, institutions and local governance system. Kathmandu: Kshitiz Prakashan.
17. Thapa, P. (2051 B.S.). Political science: Comparative government and public administration. Kathmandu: Bhairab Press.
18. Vaidya, R. K. (2057 B.S.). Public personnel administration: A comparative analysis. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.