

**RIGHT TO INFORMATION POLICY IMPLEMENTATION IN  
NEPAL**

**A Dissertation**

**Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of  
Tribhuvan University in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the**

**Degree of**

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

**in**

**JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION**

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**February 2023**

## LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

We certify that this dissertation entitled 'Right to information policy implementation in Nepal' was prepared by Mr. Shree Ram Paudel under our guidance. We hereby recommend this dissertation for final examination by the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATION.



Prof. Parsuram Kharel

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Prof. Shree Krishna Shrestha, PhD

Co-supervisor

Date: March 2022

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Date: March 2022



**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**  
**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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**APPROVAL LETTER**

This dissertation entitled "**Right to Information Policy Implementation in Nepal**" was submitted by Mr. **Shree Ram Paudel** for final examination to the Research Committee of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, in fulfillment of the requirements for the **Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Journalism and Mass Communication**. I hereby, certify that the Research Committee of the Faculty has found this dissertation satisfactory in scope and quality and has therefore been accepted it for the degree.

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Prof. Kushum Shakya, PhD  
Dean and Chairperson  
Research Committee

Date:

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the present thesis entitled 'Right to information policy implementation in Nepal' is all my work and the sources of information and materials I have used have been fully identified and properly acknowledged as required. It is a pioneering work for the award of a degree.

*Shree Ram Paudel*

Shree Ram Paudel

March 2022

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Shree Ram Paudel

March 2022

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## **ABSTRACT**

Although Nepal introduced right to information (RTI) as a fundamental right in the constitution in 1990, it took 17 years for legal arrangements to be made. Right to Information Act (RTIA) enacted in 2007 to ensure citizens' right to obtain information on any issue pertaining to public bodies. It has been one and a half decades since Nepal saw the RTI regime. Implementation of public policies has become an issue of enormous concern in many developing countries including Nepal. Now it attracts the interest of research as to how RTI policy is implemented. The degree of RTI policy implementation is the main research question of this study.

Nepal has emphasized open government through the implementation of RTI since 1990. There is a wider attention of all government and non-government institutions, which are the prime focus for disseminating information for the open government as demanded by citizens.

The study uses the Van Meter and Van Horn model to measure the degree of RTI policy implementation, which includes policy formation, policy standards and objectives, resources, characteristics of implementing agencies, inter-organizational communication and enforcement activities, economic, social and political conditions, disposition of implementers, and performance. Likewise, indicators —confidence, professional image, and performance— for institutional trust are considered to test existing institutional Nepali mechanism for implementing RTI policy.

The study employs a mixed research (Quan-qual) approach. It is based on an explanatory approach, which identifies the cause-and-effect relationship of the policy implementation. For the quantitative analysis, a survey questionnaire filled up by 315 out of 2153 journalists systematically through an online survey. After quantitative analysis, key informant interviews carried out for the analysis of this study.

The study identifies 15 indicators for the analysis of RTI implementation which is the dependent variable. These indicators include proactive disclosure of information, classification of information, access to information, training and orientation, appointment of Information Officer, and other provisions of RTIA. For the policy implementation mechanism, this study analyses policy standards, resources, inter-organizational coordination and communication, characteristics of implementing agencies, and disposition of implementers for RTI policy implementation as independent variables. Likewise, institutional trust is the second independent

variable responsible for RTI implementation, in this study, the relationship between institutional trust and RTI policy implementation is examined. Public institutions' trust, their professionalism, and the behavioral pattern of civil servants are sub-variables of the institutional trust.

The study finds that the RTIA is not implemented properly in public organizations, and the range of indicators has a wide range, with a standard deviation of 1.2 on the Likert scale of 1 to 4. The fluctuation of these indicators is caused by hidden factors such as legal controversies, an apathetic culture of bureaucrats, frequent transfer of civil servants, and lack of punishment to the defaulter.

Among variables for the mechanism, policy standards of the public institution influence RTI policy implementation at significant level. The availability of resources is found as crucial factor for RTI. Although policy clarity, resource availability, and organizational communication are found at a significant level whereas the characteristics of implementing agencies and the cognition of implementers are creating a hurdle to RTIA implementation effectively.

Similarly, institutional trust is correlated to RTI implementation. Among the variables for institutional trust, confidence in the public institution has a significant role in RTIA implementation whereas confidence in media-related institution stands positive but not significant. Likewise, the performance-based trust in civil service has also positive but not to a significant level for RTI. On the flip side, the professional trust of public servants as well as journalists has negative influence. RTIA implementation is not found effective as expected due to lack of professional trust among the public servants.

In the accumulation of both mechanism and institutional related variables, RTIA implementation is not effective due to cognition of implementers- civil servants, and the professional image of both civil servants and journalists cause negative influence. In this study professional trust and civil service trust find below the expected level, which is creating hurdles for RTIA implementation even though people have trust in the public institutions. The study concludes that the whole phenomenon of RTIA policy implementation is circumscribed by the authoritarianism of office bearers.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS /ACRONYMS**

APF	-	Armed Police Force
ARTI	-	Association for Right to Information, Nepal
CCRI	-	Nepal- Citizens' Campaign for RTI, Nepal
CIAA	-	Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority
CDJMC	-	Central Department of Journalism and Mass Communication
CDO	-	Chief District Officer
CSO	-	Civil Society Organization
DAO	-	District Administration Office
DG	-	Director General
DFID	-	Department for International Development [the UK agency which closed on 2 September 2020 and merged with Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)]
DNF	-	Digital Nepal Framework
DoC	-	Department of Customs
DRI	-	Department of Revenue Investigation
EU	-	European Union
FF	-	Freedom Forum
FHI 360	-	Family Health International
FCGO	-	Financial Comptroller General Office
FNCCI	-	Federation of Nepalese Chambers of Commerce and Industry
FNJ	-	Federation of Nepali Journalists
FOE	-	Freedom of Expression

FOI	-	Freedom of Information
GGA	-	Good Governance Act
GIZ	-	The Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GoN	-	Government of Nepal
HR	-	Human Resource
ICAN	-	Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nepal
ICCPR	-	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IEC	-	Information, Education, and Communication
IO	-	Information Officer
IRD	-	Inland Revenue Department
KII	-	Key Informants Interview
MDG	-	Millennium Development Goal
MOCIT	-	Ministry of Communication and Information Technology
NASC	-	Nepal Administrative Staff College
NIC	-	National Information Commission
NID	-	National Investigation Department
NHRC	-	National Human Rights Commission
NGO	-	Non-governmental Organization
NPI	-	Nepal Press Institute
NTC	-	Nepal Telecom
NRB	-	Nepal Rastra Bank
OCR	-	Office of Company Registrar
OECD	-	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OPM	-	Office of the Prime Minister
OPMCM	-	Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers
OSA	-	Official Secrets Act
OnM	-	Organization and Management
PCN	-	Press Council Nepal
PhD	-	Doctor of Philosophy
PPMO	-	Public Procurement Monitoring Office
PDMS	-	Proactive Disclosure Management System
RTI	-	Right to Information
RTIA	-	Right to Information Act, 2007
SC	-	Supreme Court
SDG	-	Sustainable Development Goal
SMM	-	Senior Management Meeting
SoP	-	Standard of Operation
TAF	-	The Asia Foundation
TOR	-	Terms of reference
TU	-	Tribhuvan University
UDHR	-	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	-	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	-	United States of America
USAID	-	United States Agency for International Development