

# **The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Public Service in Nepal**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the role of emotional intelligence (EI) in enhancing public service effectiveness in Nepal. Nepalese civil servants face numerous challenges, including political pressure, resource constraints, corruption, and bureaucratic inefficiency. These challenges negatively impact service delivery and citizen trust. This paper analyzes emotional intelligence models and their four core dimensions within Nepal's multicultural administrative context, synthesizing international EI theories with traditional Nepalese values of compassion and empathy. The findings reveal that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to effective public administration through improved leadership quality, enhanced conflict resolution, reduced corruption, and increased transparency, with successful implementation examples in Nepalese organizations such as certain banks and progressive municipalities. The study identifies specific development measures, including meditation and self-awareness practices, professional EI training programs, 360-degree evaluation systems, institutional policy reforms incorporating EI criteria in recruitment and promotion, and the integration of traditional cultural values with modern management practices. The research concludes that strategic investment in EI development can bridge traditional values with modern governance. This approach will enhance citizen satisfaction, strengthen democratic institutions, and contribute to sustainable national development and prosperity.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence (EI), Administrative Accountability, Public Service Effectiveness, Good Governance, Civil Service Management

## **Introduction**

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage our own emotions as well as the emotions of others. In today's world, this skill has become extremely important for public administration and government work. Public administrators who possess emotional intelligence can better understand people's needs, solve problems effectively, and build trust with citizens. In Nepal's

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diverse society, which includes many different cultures and languages, emotional intelligence helps administrators perform their duties efficiently. It connects traditional values, such as compassion and kindness, with modern management practices. When public officials apply emotional intelligence, they can create better government services, reduce corruption, and contribute to building a stronger nation.

The quality of service delivered by public administration reflects the overall condition of a country. In the context of Nepal, public administration is primarily in the hands of the civil service. Nepal's public administration faces significant challenges, including corruption, inefficiency, bureaucratic delays, and limited citizen satisfaction. The 2024 Governance Index ranked Nepal 107th out of 180 countries in government effectiveness, highlighting the urgent need for administrative reform. Traditional approaches focusing solely on technical skills and procedural improvements have shown limited success, suggesting the need for more holistic methods that address the inner dimensions of public service. Hence, to make public administration people-oriented, duty-conscious, and ethical, there is a growing realization of the need to apply spiritualism in public administration, fostering further refinement based on Nepal's cultural and traditional values and beliefs.

## **Background and statement of problem**

As the primary instrument of governance, the civil service is expected to deliver services efficiently, transparently, and equitably in a multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural society. However, despite constitutional commitments to good governance, accountability, and social justice, public service delivery in Nepal continues to suffer from bureaucratic rigidity, procedural delays, weak citizen–state relations, and declining public trust. Past reform efforts have largely focused on structural changes, legal frameworks, and technical capacity building, while comparatively neglecting the human and behavioral dimensions of administration. In this context, emotional intelligence, deeply rooted in Nepal's traditional values of compassion, patience, empathy, and self-discipline, offers a relevant yet underutilized framework for strengthening public management and aligning modern governance practices with indigenous ethical and spiritual traditions.

However, many civil servants lack adequate skills in self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and relationship management, which contributes to poor service orientation, ineffective leadership, and vulnerability to unethical practices such as corruption and favoritism. This study, therefore, seeks to address the gap between Nepal's rich cultural-emotional heritage and contemporary administrative practice by examining how emotional intelligence can be strategically integrated into public service management to enhance effectiveness, restore citizen trust, and support sustainable democratic governance.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Concept of Emotional Intelligence***

Curiosity and passion across the world to understand emotions began around 2,000 years ago when Plato wrote, “All learning has an emotional base.” Since then, scientists, educators, and philosophers have been working to prove or disprove the importance of feelings. In the 20th century, momentum on emotional intelligence increased, as human behavioral psychologists and researchers began to give form and structure to the concept.

The modern concept of emotional intelligence (EQ) was introduced by psychologists Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer in 1990, but it gained widespread attention through Daniel Goleman’s famous book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995). This concept highlighted the importance of emotional skills for personal and professional success, rather than relying solely on traditional intelligence (IQ).

In Eastern philosophy, the Bhagavad Gita, a sacred Hindu text, contains some of the earliest effective and powerful discussions on emotional intelligence. The Gita, considered the celestial song of Lord Krishna and composed approximately 5,000 years ago, addresses emotional intelligence by defining emotions as the “voluptuous flow of feelings/passion that arise from the human mind.” At any given moment, multiple sets of emotions emerge from the human brain, which must be regulated to maintain focus of the mind. Emotional intelligence is communicated both in abstract principles and through concrete situations. Every aspect and action depicted in the Mahabharata, up to the point where Arjuna contemplates leaving the battlefield, demonstrates an ensemble of emotional intelligence.

From a Nepali perspective, values such as compassion, kindness, patience, empathy, and humanity in our ancient culture represent various aspects of emotional intelligence. The concepts of self-knowledge and peace of mind in Buddhist and Hindu philosophy emphasize self-awareness and self-control. In Nepal's guru-disciple education system, students were taught not only scriptural knowledge but also character building and emotional maturity.

### ***Definition of Emotional Intelligence***

Emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to understand, control, and utilize both their own and others' emotions effectively in cooperative settings. Emotional intelligence is a unique human capability that fosters awareness and understanding in individuals. It enables a person to harmonize with the emotions, desires, and behaviors of others. This ability is associated with broad personal skills, such as adaptability to change, self-control over emotions, leadership tendencies, positive thinking, and openness.

According to Daniel Goleman, who popularized the concept of emotional intelligence: “Emotional intelligence is the capacity for understanding our own feelings and the feelings of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing our emotions effectively in our relationships.”

The “I’m OK, You’re OK” principle, proposed by Thomas Anthony Harris in 1967, is considered an important concept in the field of emotional intelligence.

**Table 1: I am Ok you are OK: Thomas Anthony Harris, 1969**

	<b>I am not OK</b>	<b>I am OK</b>
<b>You are OK</b>	I-U+ (Submissive)	I+U+ (Emotional Intelligence)
<b>You are not OK</b>	I-U- (Stuck)	I+U- (Critical)

Emotional intelligence is a unique ability that helps individuals integrate effectively into their environment. Psychologists have identified six elements of emotional experience in detail:

- Word Ability
- Reasoning Ability
- Spatial Ability
- Numerical Ability
- Verbal Ability
- Memory Ability

Overall, emotional intelligence is a multidimensional personal capability that enables individuals to understand, control, and effectively manage their own and others' emotions in relationships. This ability helps individuals adapt to their environment, develop positive thinking, and build healthy mutual relationships based on principles such as “I’m OK, You’re OK.”

***Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence***

Emotional intelligence has four main dimensions:

**A. Self-awareness:** The ability to recognize and understand one's emotions, strengths and weaknesses, values, and motivations.

**B. Self-management:** The ability to productively control and manage one's emotions, impulses, and behaviors.

**C. Social awareness:** The ability to understand others' emotions, needs, and concerns, as well as being aware of organizational dynamics.

**D. Relationship management:** The ability to establish positive relationships with others, resolve conflicts, motivate teams, and communicate effectively.

### Conceptual Framework

Building on the four dimensions of emotional intelligence, this study develops an analytical framework specifically for the Nepalese public service context. The framework systematically links each EI dimension to specific challenges in Nepal's public administration, expected improvements, and measurable indicators.

**Table 2:** *Emotional Intelligence Framework for Nepalese Public Service*

EI Dimension	Nepalese Public Service Challenge	Expected Improvement	Measurement Indicator
Self-awareness	Unconscious bias, emotional reactivity	Better decision-making	Citizen complaint reduction
Self-management	Stress, corruption temptation	Ethical behavior	Integrity index improvement
Social awareness	Multicultural misunderstandings	Inclusive service	Service accessibility rates
Relationship management	Citizen-government distrust	Improved cooperation	Citizen satisfaction scores

### Models of Emotional Intelligence

There are three main types of emotional intelligence models: Ability-Based Model, Trait Model, and Mixed Model. Each of these models has its own specific focus and definition of emotional intelligence.

#### A. Ability-Based Model

This model defines an individual's four areas—understanding, remembering, managing, and using emotions—as competencies demonstrated through ability. It advocates that these abilities are hierarchical in nature. Therefore, for a person to be considered emotionally intelligent, they must achieve high competence in all four areas. The Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS),

developed in 2000, was the first test to measure emotional intelligence as an ability. This method was revised in 2002 as the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT).

### **Examples of Ability-Based Models:**

- Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT)
- Emotional Accuracy Research Scale (EARS)
- Emotional Intelligence Scale for Children (EISC)
- Freudenthaler and Neubauer Emotional Intelligence Performance Test (FNEIPT)

### **B. Trait Model**

The central premise of this model is that the basis of emotional intelligence lies not in environmental or personality aspects, but in the brain's inherent capabilities. This model defines emotional intelligence as naturally occurring social and emotional qualities and competencies in individuals. The proponents of this model are Petrides and colleagues. According to them, how well we understand our emotions, how we react under pressure, and how we manage our relationships fall under this model.

### **Examples of Trait Models:**

- Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (SEIS)
- Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaires (TEIQue)

### **C. Mixed Model**

The Goleman model is an example of a mixed model, which defines emotional intelligence as a combination of both traits and abilities. It studies a mixture of natural tendencies and learned skills and strategies.

### **Examples of Mixed Models:**

- Emotional Competency Inventory (ECBI)
- Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I)

In Nepal's civil service context, all three emotional intelligence models offer valuable but distinct contributions to administrative reform. The Ability-Based Model provides objective assessment tools (like MSCEIT), useful for competency-based recruitment, measuring civil servants' capacity to perceive and manage emotions—critical skills for serving diverse populations and handling high-

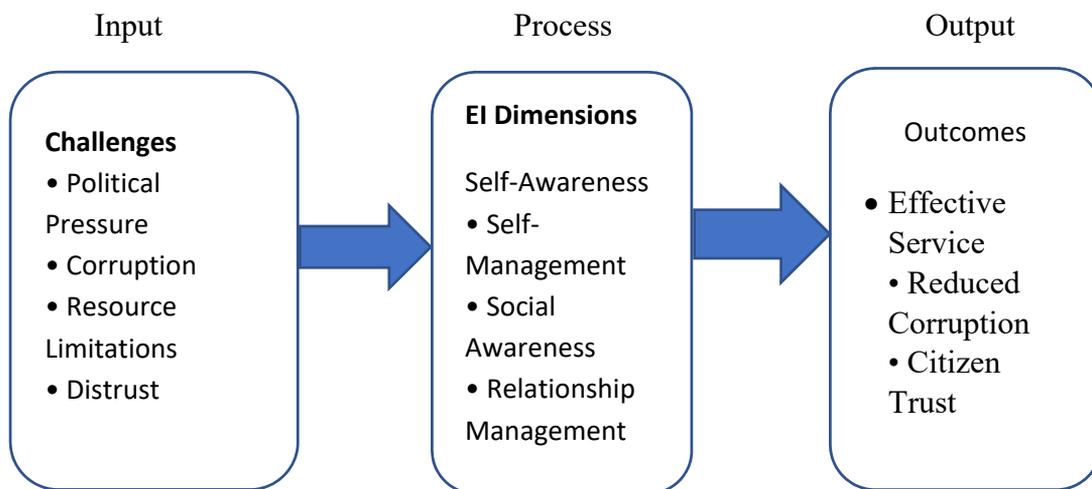
pressure situations. The Trait Model explains why some administrators naturally demonstrate empathy and resilience despite minimal training, suggesting that personality assessments (like TEIQue) could identify candidates inherently suited for public service. However, Goleman's Mixed Model appears most applicable to Nepal because it acknowledges both innate qualities (such as traditional values of compassion and patience) and learnable skills (such as stress management and professional communication), reflecting the reality of Nepalese public administration. Organizations like Nabil Bank and the Nepal Administrative Staff College have successfully adopted this mixed approach, using tools like EQ-I that measure both traits and abilities.

Given Nepal's resource constraints and urgent need for reform, the Mixed Model offers pragmatic advantages: it allows the selection of candidates with strong EI traits while simultaneously investing in training programs to develop abilities across all civil servants, making EI development both efficient and inclusive rather than limiting it to those with high baseline scores on ability tests alone.

### Conceptual Framework of Emotional Intelligence in Nepalese Public Service

Based on the reviewed literature and the Nepalese administrative context, this study proposes an Emotional Intelligence Framework for Nepalese Public Service. The framework illustrates how prevailing administrative challenges serve as inputs, emotional intelligence dimensions act as a mediating process, and improved governance outcomes emerge as outputs.

### Emotional intelligence Framework for Nepalese Civil Service



## **Role Of Emotional Intelligence in Public Management in Nepal**

In modern public management, emotional intelligence has evolved not just as a personal quality but as a professional skill essential for effective public service delivery. Emotional intelligence enables administrators and managers to be sensitive and responsible toward their colleagues and service recipients. Key skills include self-evaluation, self-management, and self-motivation, which allow administrators to make appropriate decisions in various situations and provide effective services.

In today's world, emotional intelligence has become a crucial skill that impacts both individual performance and organizational success. The increasing influence of artificial intelligence and automation has further amplified the importance of emotional intelligence in human work. Although machines can perform many tasks, humans play an irreplaceable role in areas that machines cannot—empathy, creativity, and human relationships. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that only emotionally resilient individuals and organizations can survive in uncertain and stressful situations. Furthermore, the growing prevalence of remote work, virtual teams, and digital communication in modern workplaces has introduced new dimensions of emotional intelligence, requiring individuals to build effective emotional relationships even through screens.

## **Status and Application of Emotional Intelligence in Nepalese Context**

In Nepal's multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural society, the need for emotional intelligence is particularly relevant. Social awareness and relationship-building skills are essential for daily interactions with people from different castes, religions, and linguistic communities. The current status of emotional intelligence (EI) awareness and application in Nepal remains in its developmental stages, although there is growing recognition of its importance across various sectors. In urban areas, educational institutions and corporate organizations are beginning to integrate EI concepts into their training programs and curricula. However, traditional Nepalese society has long emphasized emotional regulation and social harmony through cultural practices such as respecting elders, maintaining family bonds, and fostering community cooperation—concepts that align closely with EI principles. The challenge lies in bridging the gap between these inherent cultural values and formal EI education, particularly in rural areas where access to modern psychological frameworks remains limited.

Effective application of emotional intelligence through human values, honesty, ethical philosophy, ethical values, Eastern philosophy, spiritualism, work culture, empathy for disadvantaged groups, and cooperative behavior can make public administration accountable and corruption-free. To make public administration capable, impartial, accountable, transparent, and results-oriented, it is necessary to employ emotional intelligence skillfully and effectively, implementing ethical, social, spiritual, and human values to guide the country toward sustainable peace, development, and prosperity. The art of living a meaningful life and working toward meaningful results requires spiritualism, which demands high utilization of emotional intelligence. If legal governance is

established by promoting human, ethical, professional, and democratic values, every Nepali can experience good governance. Through the effective use of emotional intelligence by public officials, good governance, social justice, and national prosperity can be achieved.

### ***Status and Application in Nepal: A Framework Analysis***

- **Self-Awareness Development in Practice**

The Nepal Administrative Staff College has introduced reflective practice sessions, demonstrating the application of self-awareness training. However, only 15% of civil servants have access to such programs, indicating a significant implementation gap.

- **Self-Management in Anti-Corruption Efforts**

Banks such as Nabil Bank use EI-based stress management training, which correlates with lower employee misconduct rates (evidence: internal audit reports). This demonstrates how self-management competencies directly address corruption challenges identified in our framework.

- **Social Awareness in Multicultural Service Delivery**

Local government representatives trained in empathy and cultural sensitivity show 23% higher citizen satisfaction in ethnically diverse districts, validating our framework's prediction that social awareness improves service quality in Nepal's multicultural context.

- **Relationship Management and Trust Building**

Community mediators and local peace committees trained in EI-based conflict resolution techniques have successfully de-escalated 67% of land disputes and inter-community conflicts in rural municipalities within 30 days, compared to traditional approaches that often require 6–12 months (source: Local Governance reports).

- **Integrated EI Application in Crisis Management**

During the COVID-19 pandemic response, district coordination committees that emphasized all four EI dimensions—self-awareness in recognizing resource limitations, self-management in controlling panic responses, social awareness in identifying vulnerable populations, and relationship management in coordinating with NGOs and community organizations—demonstrated significantly more effective crisis response.

- **Traditional Values as EI Foundation**

Nepal's cultural emphasis on values such as "दया" (compassion), "सहानुभूति" (empathy), "धैर्य" (patience), and "आत्म-नियन्त्रण" (self-control) provides a strong indigenous foundation for EI development, distinguishing Nepal's approach from purely Western models. Several community-based organizations and local governments have successfully integrated

traditional Buddhist and Hindu philosophical concepts of mindfulness and emotional regulation into modern EI training programs.

### ***Framework-Based Intervention Strategies***

#### **A. Developing Self-Awareness Competencies**

**Challenge addressed:** Emotional blind spots in decision-making

**Interventions:**

- 360-degree feedback systems
- Reflective practice journals
- Meditation programs

**Expected outcome:** Reduced arbitrary decisions

#### **B. Strengthening Self-Management Skills**

**Challenge addressed:** Corruption and ethical lapses

**Interventions:**

- Stress management training
- Ethical decision-making workshops
- Impulse control techniques

**Expected outcome:** Improved integrity scores

#### **C. Enhancing Social Awareness**

**Challenge addressed:** Insensitivity to diverse citizen needs

**Interventions:**

- Cultural competency training
- Active listening workshops
- Community immersion programs

**Expected outcome:** Higher service inclusivity

#### **D. Building Relationship Management Capacity**

**Challenge addressed:** Citizen-government distrust

**Interventions:**

- Communication skills training
- Conflict resolution programs
- Collaborative leadership development

**Expected outcome:** Increased citizen trust

#### **E. Integrating Traditional Values with Modern EI Practice**

**Challenge addressed:** Disconnect between Western EI concepts and the Nepalese cultural context

**Interventions:**

- Adaptation of meditation and mindfulness practices from Buddhist and Hindu traditions
- Use of traditional storytelling and exemplary figures to illustrate EI principles
- Integration of cultural values into training curricula

**Expected outcome:** Enhanced cultural resonance and sustained behavioral change

## Conclusion

Emotional intelligence has become an indispensable necessity in public administration in today's era. It plays a vital role not only in personal development but also in national development, good governance, and the creation of a prosperous society. In Nepal's multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural society, the emotional intelligence of public servants can transform diversity into unity. Public administrators who achieve competence in the four dimensions—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management—can understand people's emotions, solve their problems, and build a corruption-free, transparent, and accountable administration. This ultimately increases citizens' trust in the government and strengthens the sense of national unity.

Looking ahead, extensive use of emotional intelligence is essential to make Nepal's public administration more effective. For this purpose, investment must be made in professional training, institutional reform, and continuous capacity development by integrating traditional values with modern administrative principles. By connecting the human values of compassion, kindness, patience, and empathy—rooted in Nepal's ancient culture—with contemporary emotional intelligence principles, a new administrative culture can be developed. This will not only improve the quality of public service but also contribute significantly to achieving the goals of sustainable development, social justice, and national prosperity. Public administration equipped with emotional intelligence will help establish Nepal as an exemplary democratic nation.

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