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Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies

Driving Behavioural Change in Public Service

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1. Introduction

Challenges in the Bhutanese public sector, from civil servants not being motivated or poorly trained to citizens not being happy with the mediocre public services and cumbersome administrative processes, has grown notably over the years. His Majesty The King has constantly shared the vision for a developed Bhutan and what Bhutan's public service should strive for in numerous Royal addresses, finally culminating into the issuance of a Royal Decree in 2020 to reform the civil service.

One of the many concerns highlighted by His Majesty in His National Day Address in 2020 was regarding public service delivery, which is burdened by bureaucratic red-tapism, favouritism and nepotism. The lack of direction and coherence owing to the proliferation of units, divisions and departments whereby 35 per cent of services were delivered by one government agency to another rather than to people was particularly emphasised in the Royal *Kasho*. Many people have helplessly endured for so long the system's inefficiency - it takes days, weeks and months running from one office to another to get a job done resulting in a lot of time and resource wastage. For instance, a survey conducted by the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) in 2017 found numerous flaws in public service delivery. The survey "revealed that services were not systematically linked within and across agencies mainly due to the compartmentalised way of functioning and incompatible systems and technologies in agencies" (Palden, 2017). Additionally, service users feel that public servants must deal with the public more fairly and efficiently. A recent *Kuensel* report highlighted that connections and links are a must to avail timely services, from hospital appointments to any other public services ("Connection and links", 2022).

His Majesty has brought to light some of the key desirable behaviours of civil servants in the Royal *Kasho*. For instance, His Majesty emphasised that "the civil service must prepare for the future by being grounded as a robust organisation that is *meritorious, innovative, resilient, and driven by a culture of research and state-of-the-art technology*." And to promote good governance and social justice, His Majesty once again reminded the civil servants to be "*professional, uphold the highest standards of ethics and integrity, and exhibit qualities of adroitness and compassion*." These behaviours in civil servants are crucial in enabling the civil service as an institution to grow and achieve the level of excellence and sophistication necessary to support the larger national vision of becoming a developed country within our lifetime. This would require not only a fundamental shift in the skillset and mindset of public servants but indeed a re-engineering of our organisational processes and systems to drive the necessary behavioural changes.

2. Objectives of the Study

Given the importance of behavioural change in the public service as a key driver of the reform initiatives in realising our renewed national goals, this study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Understand behavioural deficiencies and desired behaviours in public service
- Evaluate factors that contribute to driving behavioural change
- Propose measures to bring the desired behavioural change in public service
- Create awareness on behavioural change

3. Methodology

This research is a qualitative study based on literature review including media reports and articles. Polis, an online survey instrument, was used to gather ideas to understand what large groups of people in the private and public sectors thought on the topic “*What are the desirable behaviours in public servants?*” and “*What could bring behavioural change in public servants?*” A total of 361 and 536 respondents voted on the statements respectively.

4. What is Behavioural Change?

Behavioural change is about altering habits and behaviours for the long term (Celestine, 2021). There are various types of behavioural change, such as adopting new positive behaviours, stopping negative behaviours, maintaining existing positive behaviours, reducing existing negative behaviours, and refraining from adopting new negative behaviours (“Behaviour Change,” 2022). In most literature reviewed, behavioural change is often associated with changing behaviours for personal development like adopting a healthy lifestyle by quitting smoking, continuing physical exercise, reducing unhealthy food, or refraining from taking fizzy drinks etc. but behavioural change can also be associated with becoming a better public servant or a better citizen. For instance, according to Kotter (2011), organisations must have a clear change vision - whether it is a change in the processes or the people, that is easy for people to understand based on timeless values and principles and timeless behaviour that make organisations succeed. An example of one dimension of that timeless behaviour is the embracing of change itself. Similarly, His Majesty sheds light on the timeless behaviours of effective professionals by subscribing to the highest standards with the highest ethics and integrity and innovation fostered by hard work, commitment, determination and love for the country.

Changing behaviour is not always easy, as behaviours can be highly ingrained and can become a habit, performing automatically when repeated over time (Celestine, 2021). It is easier performing routine tasks than stepping out of the comfort zone to grab new opportunities. Many people want

to change but do not manage to put their intentions into practice - or they take some initial steps but do not maintain the momentum until they reach their goals and develop a new habit (Ratz, 2022). Self-motivation is one of the keys to changing behaviours and sticking with them.

For new behaviours to become habits, they need to be practised over and over. Neuroscience tells us that each time an individual practices a new behaviour, neurons in the brain fire and create new pathways. The more they practice, the stronger the neural pathway becomes and the easier it is for it to become the default behaviour (Marsh, 2019). To change behaviour, it is essential to first understand the elements to change before planning the stages of change. According to Eatough (2021), four of the major elements are i) Willingness to change, ii) Benefits of the change, iii) Barriers to change and iv) Likelihood of relapse.

Behaviour changes have long been the subject of empirical investigation in psychology, and have been adopted with enthusiasm by the cognitive and social neurosciences in the last few decades. Some of the major theories of Behavioural change are as follows (“Theories”, n.d.):

1. Social cognitive theory: A psychologist named Albert Bandura proposes that people are not driven by internal forces, but by the interaction of behaviour, and personal and environmental factors, suggesting that observation and modelling play a primary role in this process. According to Bandura, behaviours are learned through conditioning and cognitive theories, which take into account psychological influences such as attention and memory. This theory recognises that learning alone does not necessarily lead to behavioural change.
2. Theory of planned behaviour: This theory postulates that individual behaviour is driven by behaviour intentions, where behaviour intentions are a function of three determinants: an individual’s attitude toward behaviour, subjective norms (beliefs about what other people think the person should do or general social pressure), and perceived behavioural control (an individual’s perceptions of their ability or feelings of self-efficacy to perform the behaviour).
3. Transtheoretical model (Stages of Change): This model proposes change as a process of six stages: i) *Precontemplation* - this stage is often described as “in denial,” because they claim that their behaviour is not a problem. ii) *Contemplation* - during this stage, people become more and more aware of the potential benefits of making a change, but the costs tend to stand out even more. iii) *Preparation* - during the preparation stage, you might begin making small changes to prepare for a larger life change. iv) *Action* - during the fourth stage of change, people begin taking direct action to accomplish their goals. v) *Maintenance* - the maintenance phase of the stages of the change model involves successfully avoiding former behaviours and keeping up with new behaviours. vi) *Relapse*

- The sixth stage is called the relapse or termination stage. In any behaviour change, relapses are a common occurrence; while relapses can be inevitable, the best solution is to start again with the preparation, action, or maintenance stages of a behaviour change (Call, 2022). *Termination* - the stage where individuals have 100 per cent efficacy and will maintain their behaviour; this stage is the most difficult to maintain, so many people remain a lifetime in maintenance.

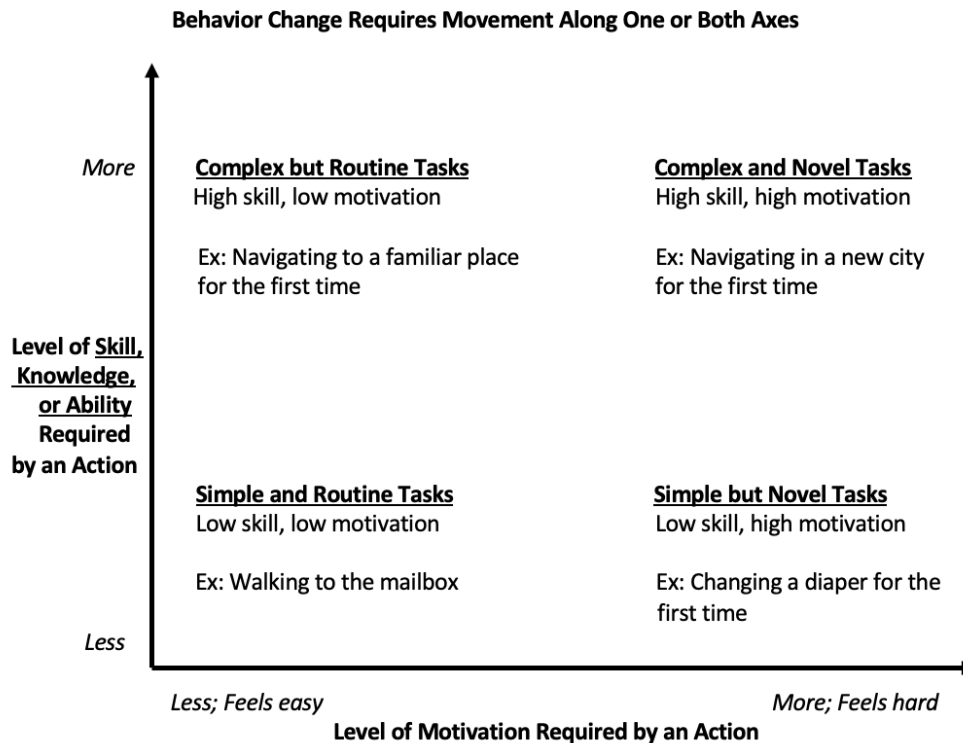


Figure 1: Behavioural change framework (Berkman, 2018)

A study on “The Neuroscience of Goals and Behaviour Change” cites two dimensions that give rise to behaviours, **the way to achieve** and **the will to engage** in a behaviour. And these two dimensions give rise to four broad types of behaviours as shown in the framework above, defined by the level of motivation along the horizontal axis and the level of skill or ability they require to accomplish an action on the vertical axis. The author states that the first step to facilitating behaviour change is to diagnose the source of the difficulty. This could be discerned by understanding the skills required, and by identifying the barrier, whether it is the lack of way or lack of a will (Berkman, 2018). Similarly, a study on “What Motivates Young Civil Servants in Bhutan” states that motivation is a pertinent topic because motivation, as a “mental construct,” drives the actions and work output, leading to increased productivity and efficiency. The study reported that 23.3 per cent of the young civil servants were not motivated and even for those who reported being motivated, only 35 per cent of the total respondents rated on the higher end of the

motivation level, with ratings of 4 or 5 (out of 5). The study noted some of the factors such as *Career Advancement*, *Recognition*, *Office Ambience*, *Feedback System* and *Freedom* as the five least prevalent motivational factors in their workplace, thereby leading to a lack of motivation among the employees (RIGSS, 2022).

5. Behavioural Deficiencies in Public Service

Some of the prominent behaviours lacking in the public service as shown in global literature and from the Polis survey conducted as part of this study are as follows:

i. Service Focus

According to Grönroos (2019), Public Service Organisations (PSOs) are “often considered inefficient with a low level of citizen focus and service orientation. Therefore, privatising is offered as a way of making public service user-centric and efficient.” The study also highlighted that public servants must be service-oriented for fair and efficient service delivery. However, Grönroos also states that PSOs can be just as efficient and effective service-user friendly and service-oriented as their private counterparts. For that, he suggests that it is important for the PSOs to align their efforts in behaviour change towards a service-focused approach in order to offer better service to the public.

ii. Ethical Behaviour

Lack of ethical behaviours of the public servants’ results in corruption, deliberate deception, the gratification of service rendered and unlawful conduct. For example, in Nigeria the ethical problems among the public servants are endemic causing a myriad of problems ranging from lack of discipline among the civil servants, misappropriation of public funds, laziness at work, corrupt practices, to their cold and nonchalant attitude towards their job and colleagues and moral values of the community (Adeyinka, 2014).

Although Bhutan ranks 25th out of 180 countries and territories on the Transparency International’s Corruption Perceptions Index, for a small and developing country, a concerning issue remains in public servants getting involved in unethical behaviours and corrupt practices despite the constant reminder from His Majesty to uphold the highest ethics and integrity. It is evident from *Kuensel* bringing to light unethical behaviours such as corruption, favouritism, nepotism, and embezzlement in the public service on numerous occasions (“Corruption”, 2021; Rai, 2022; Dema, 2022). There are also concerns on civil servants gaming the system. Similarly, the survey conducted for this study shows the desirable behaviours in public servants as setting the highest standards of integrity, inculcating enhanced professionalism and being accountable for one’s actions.

iii. Innovative Behaviour

Lack of innovative behaviours among the public servants is also one of the major concerns, particularly in a resource-constrained country like Bhutan. Public organisations need to innovate to achieve higher levels of output with the same or lower levels of input. In an age of austerity in which public organisations around the globe face an increasingly turbulent operating environment and the challenge to do more with less, innovation has become central to effective service delivery to citizens (Burgess et al., 2017). We can fairly discern the apparent lack of such behaviours upon reflection on the Royal *Kasho*, where His Majesty has shown us a way forward to have a robust organisation that is apolitical, meritorious, innovative, resilient, and driven by a culture of research and state-of-the-art technology, enabling legislation and indeed the highest ethical standards of its leaders and personnel. Similarly, about 95 per cent of the Polis survey respondents cited one of the top desirable behaviours as being innovative, “that public servants must be innovative to solve problems.”

6. Desirable Behaviours in Public Service

A total of 361 people voted in the survey “What are the desirable behaviours in public servants?” Of them, 50 per cent of the respondents were public servants. The majority of the participants agreed on the statements as follows:

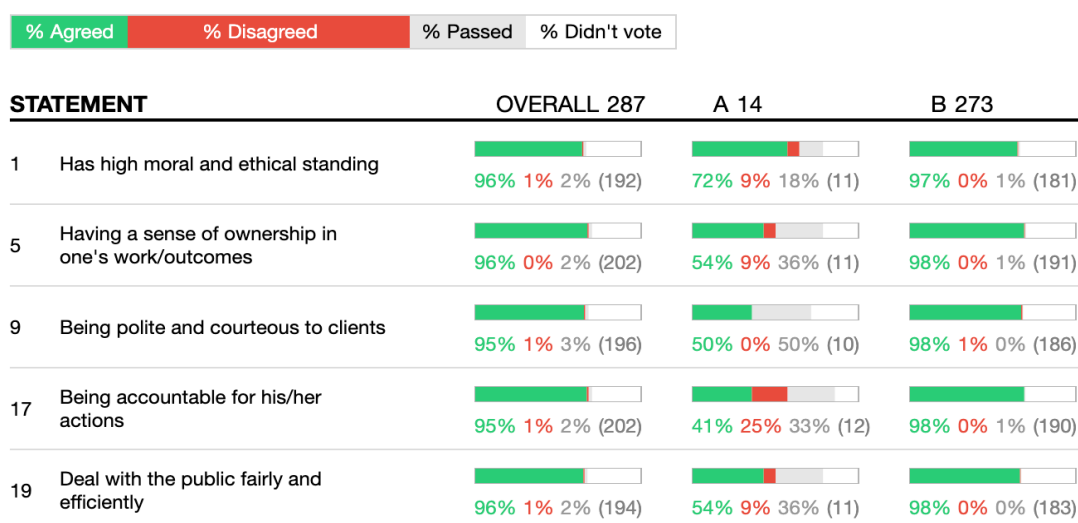


Figure 2: What are the desirable behaviours in public servants?

Across 287 participants, opinion groups emerged, as groups A and B. These groups are made up of a number of participants who tended to vote similarly on multiple statements. Effective and efficient service delivery is one of the major expectations from public servants and likewise, most respondents of this survey have also voted behaviours related to public service delivery as the most

desirable among public servants. The above statements which received the majority votes more or less translate into the behaviours accounting for efficient and effective public services. Being open to feedback and accountable for one's work are other desirable behaviours in public servants. Furthermore, Dasho Karma Tshiteem, former Chairman of the RCSC highlights “proactiveness” and “quest for excellence” as key desirable behaviours in public servants (K. Tshiteem, personal communication, May 16, 2022).

7. Measures to Effect Behavioural Change in Public Service

A follow-up survey was conducted on the topic “What could bring behavioural change in public servants?” Of the 536 people who voted, over 60 per cent of the survey respondents were public servants.

The following are five pertinent statements that majority of the survey respondents voted as important factors in driving behavioural change:

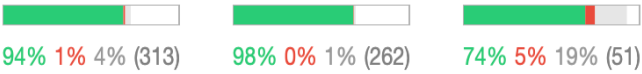
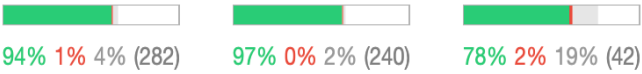
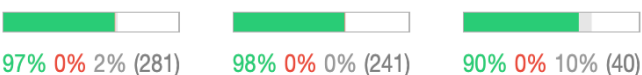
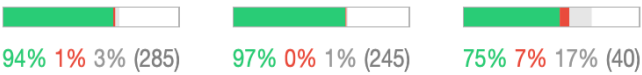
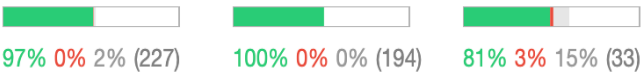
STATEMENT		OVERALL 432	A 377	B 55
5	Creating conducive work environment	 94% 1% 4% (313) 98% 0% 1% (262) 74% 5% 19% (51)		
43	Fairness/justice is key to organizational motivation	 94% 1% 4% (282) 97% 0% 2% (240) 78% 2% 19% (42)		
44	Delegation of power with clear accountability is vital for an efficient civil service	 97% 0% 2% (281) 98% 0% 0% (241) 90% 0% 10% (40)		
49	Transparency and accountability in every decision taken. Conducive environment to work for betterment of the nation. Visionary policies.	 94% 1% 3% (285) 97% 0% 1% (245) 75% 7% 17% (40)		
94	Live up with the examples and not only by preaching	 97% 0% 2% (227) 100% 0% 0% (194) 81% 3% 15% (33)		

Figure 3: What could bring behavioural change in public servants?

In addition to the above factors, some other ways to bring behavioural change are as highlighted below:

i. Organisation Culture

- a) **Conducive work environment:** In the survey, creating a conducive work environment was highlighted as one of the key drivers to bring behavioural change. A conducive workplace culture enables employees to thrive at work and also motivates new employees. Workplace culture refers to the shared behaviour and common objectives that drive an organisation forward (Mooney, 2020). According to Gratton (2009), new employees are sensitive to the cultural and behavioural norms around them. Therefore, it is vital for organisations to develop a set of shared norms and behaviours whereby new employees can learn through observation and modelling, which can further foster positive and healthy behaviours. Polis survey respondents also shared the view that young officers must be mentored to develop the right work attitude.

Kropp et al's (2022) research found that of the 3,500 employees surveyed worldwide in 2021, only 18 per cent indicated that they work in a high-fairness environment. It was also found that the employees experiencing unfairness in terms of hiring, promotion, and compensation only account for one-quarter of their perceptions of unfairness. The majority of these experiences happen in day-to-day work. These results can have significant implications for employers—they noted that perceptions of a fairer employee experience improve employee performance by up to 26 per cent and employee retention by up to 27 per cent (Kropp et al., 2022). Gartner HR research identifies four factors that would help employees feel fair by being informed: i) getting access to information transparently, ii) feeling supported, iii) feeling considered and iv) receiving an acknowledgement (“Gartner Study”, 2022).

According to a McKinsey Global Survey result (2010), companies whose training programs are effective in maintaining or improving employee performance pay more attention to tools such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), IT systems and target setting and metric tracking that support capability building. For instance, SOPs have immense use in proper working, consistency and a decrease in the number of errors made. SOP also helps an organisation evaluate employee performance, save resources and create a safer work environment (Brush, 2021).

In Bhutan, more than ever before, we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic how the use of proper SOPs can aid planning, management and execution. As readers would recall, almost everything we did during the pandemic was guided by an SOP, and it will be safe to assume that the extensive development and use of SOPs played a huge role in Bhutan's successful management of the pandemic. Not only does the consultative process through which SOPs are developed enhance stakeholder participation, there is better clarity on

purpose, delegation of responsibilities, modality of execution and monitoring, and consequences. This clarity eases the entire process of carrying out a task efficiently. The use of SOPs could significantly reinforce the desired behaviours of employees ultimately boosting effectiveness, efficiency and productivity. This is one lesson we could carry forward from our experience in dealing with the pandemic that could be of use to drive better behaviours and outcomes in public service.

Rethinking performance management could be one of the top priorities of the current transformation exercises as a robust performance management system tracks the performance of employees in a manner that is consistent and measurable. Structured and comprehensive performance management processes typically involve goal setting, competency modelling, evaluation of behaviour and results, and implementation (Pulakos et al., 2019). As it is, in Bhutan executing and sustaining a strong monitoring and evaluation system takes real courage and leadership. These systems would eventually change the way employees behave and perform through differentiation between performers and non-performers and dealing with the two accordingly. Studies have shown that a performance management system results in increased workforce productivity, higher employee engagement and lower turnover (“SAP insights,” n.d).

Another integral part of organisational development is the stakeholder engagement and evaluation of stakeholder satisfaction. Stakeholder engagement is a process that organisations can follow in order to listen to, collaborate with, or inform their stakeholders (Sedmak, 2021). Stakeholder surveys are designed to get feedback or understand people’s perspectives on the impact of the programme or the service offered, so that the organisation can better structure the programme or improve the service (“Stakeholder Survey”, 2019). The need to improve the service based on the survey result helps in enhancing efficiency and providing better quality services.

- b) **Team building:** Team building is another important aspect of building a positive organisational culture. Working in a team increases efficiency and productivity. The Polis survey respondents noted that leaders should build trust and positive relationships with their team members to enhance team collaboration. According to Snyal et al., (2018) besides leadership and structure, performance appraisal and rewards, teamwork and team trust have a significant impact on the performance of employees. Likewise, organisations must create psychological safety at the workplace to foster candid and purposeful interaction within the team. Another study on effective team building outlines eight key points which facilitate the effective development of teams. These are i) clear goals, ii) decision-making authority, iii) accountability and responsibility, iv) effective leadership, v) training and development, vi) provision of resources, vii) organisational support, and viii) rewards for team success (Fapohunda, 2013). Similarly, Watson et al., (2020),

highlighted five elements in constructing an effective team - i) supportive environment, ii) compelling direction, iii) diversity of composition, iv) effective practices, and v) psychological safety, which would enable teams to become more productive, continually develop and deliver results.

- c) **Feedback mechanism:** Instituting an effective feedback mechanism is another integral part of building organisational culture. In the Polis survey, 88 per cent of 311 respondents agreed that instituting a healthy feedback system could bring behavioural change in public servants. Respondents also shared the importance of ensuring full confidentiality to encourage honest feedback and being open to constructive feedback. A study noted that receiving feedback can be difficult, but it is enhanced by learning to listen and making conscious decisions regarding implementing the messages heard. It also states that giving and receiving feedback becomes easier with practice (Jug et al., 2019). It is said that the most effective form of feedback comes from frequent conversations between managers and employees (Robertson & Dvorak, 2019).
- d) **Vision(ing):** Every organisation has a vision. It is important for organisations to dissect the organisational vision and see how it can be aligned with the personal vision of the employees. This is because it serves to motivate and enable employees to see how their efforts contribute to an overall inspirational purpose (“Vision, Values, & Reputation”, n.d.). When individuals can find the linkage between what they do and the larger goal, they are likely to become more motivated and productive.

One such example in Bhutan was apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. His Majesty acknowledged the importance attached to the call of duty and the hard work and effort put in by the people of Bhutan in battling the pandemic. During an address to the nation on 12th September 2020, His Majesty has stated thus: “This was possible because of the immense love and dedication that our people have for our country. Our commitment to the wellbeing of our fellow Bhutanese was clearly evident in the hard work, and what we have accomplished in the past six months.”

Compelling visions drive people, organisations and countries. Organisations must have coherent visions with specific and measurable outcomes, and behaviour goals of their employees and clearly defined expectations to achieve those goals. His Majesty elucidated in one of the addresses to the nation that the tasks given should be timeless and of such national importance that they will inspire and motivate people in contributing to the long-term benefit of the country. When the organisation’s goals are aligned with the national vision, and when individuals see the connection between personal, organisational and national goals, it can drive positive behaviours and enhance motivation, accountability and unity in purpose.

ii. Leadership

Good leadership is pivotal to growth and development and in bringing positive change in any organisation and its people. Good leaders provide vision, connect people, inspire purpose-led actions and drive results. They are at the heart of great organisational cultures and high-performance teams; they drive organisations to accomplish their missions and mandates. In the Polis survey, the majority of the respondents suggested having leaders who are visionary and example setters, and not mere preachers. The younger generation of today's workforce draw inspiration by observing and modelling their leaders or seniors who do things authentically. Similarly, Burgess et al., (2017) carried out a study on "Incentives in the Public Sector: Evidence from a Government Agency" and found that public managers can stimulate innovative behaviour among their subordinates by acting as entrepreneurial role-models and that entrepreneurial leadership was found to positively influence employees' innovative behaviour by enhancing their feeling of meaning and impact. Likewise, mentoring and coaching are also important in bringing behavioural change. Boyatzis et al., (2019) mention that change is hard whether it is to switch careers, develop a new skill, or break a bad habit, and during such process support like coaching is critical. Additional opinions in relation to effective leadership were also shared in the Polis conversation that leadership should be based on performance and merit, and not on seniority.

Another key role of leaders is to ignite the passion in their subordinates to accomplish the larger purpose. Deloitte Insights (2020) highlights the "passion of the explorer" as a driver of an individual's motivation for learning. This type of passion is key for employees to be passionate about the work they do, to learn new skills to thrive in a constantly changing work environment and to leverage on emerging opportunities with a desire to create impact.

According to Deloitte Insights (2020), individuals can develop the passion of the explorer through, i) Questing - for challenges and improved performance, ii) Connecting - trust-based relationships and new insights and iii) Commitment to domain - context and increasing impact. These attributes are believed to drive constant and faster learning and sustained performance improvement. The same study also found out that the ones who were passionate were most likely to engage in the behaviours associated with curiosity, imagination, creativity and empathy. Encouragement to pursue interesting work increases the likelihood of passion. For instance, the study reported that some 82 per cent of passionate workers reported being encouraged to pursue projects of interest (Hagel et al., 2020). Thus, leaders must redouble their efforts in creating the right conditions, providing guidance and awareness of opportunities for learning, providing access to resources and encouraging employees to develop this type of passion to perform better and create more impact.

iii. Mindset

Studies have shown that a growth mindset is one of the key factors that enhance life-long learning, workplace engagement and productivity. Joshi (2021) writes about the positive and negative

mindsets during change management. He notes “a positive mind-set is the tendency to focus on the bright side, expect positive results, and approach challenges with a positive outlook.” While there are a lot of uncertainties during the change management process, it is important to have a positive outlook. The paper suggests a model using 4Es by management to shift the employees from a fixed to a growth-oriented mindset. The 4Es are: i) *Educate*; ii) *Enable*; iii) *Empower*; and iv) *Engage*.

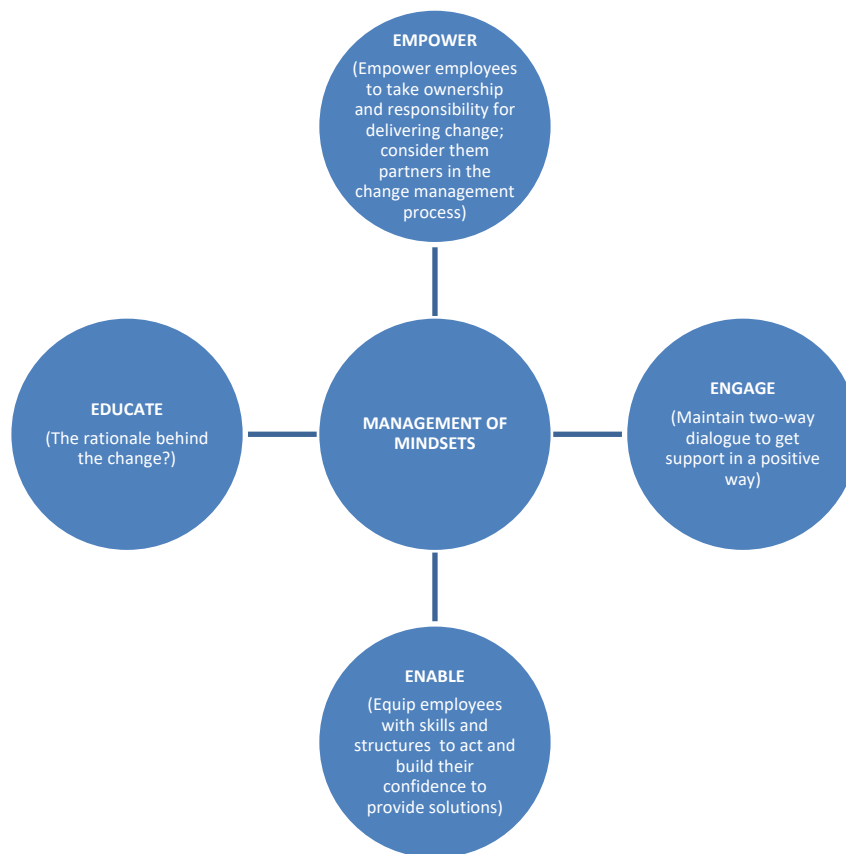


Figure 4: Management of mindsets; use of 4Es (Joshi, 2021)

Likewise, the discussions on how to drive behavioural change often point to changing mindsets. Respondents of the Polis survey expressed the need to inculcate a nationalistic mindset and fix accountability. Views were also shared that the seeds of a positive mindset must be cultivated at home and in schools.

An article on “Civil Servants’ Mindset For 21st Century Bhutan” highlights four mindsets that could be cultivated or promoted in the civil service to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness. These are: i) the servant-leader mindset, ii) the entrepreneurial mindset, iii) the growth mindset and iv) the problem-solving mindset (Rinzin, 2021).

iv. Nudges

Marsh (2019) defines nudge as “any aspect of the choice architecture that predictably alters people’s behaviour without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives.” Further Marsh (2019), reports that nudging can create positive and lasting change in the workplace. With small actions, we can nudge people to adopt behaviours that will make them better at what they do. Digital nudges hold enormous potential to change behaviour. Digital nudging is defined by Weinmann et al., (2016) as “the use of user-interface design elements to guide people’s behaviour in digital choice environments”. Digital nudges use familiar online technologies such as SMS text messages, email, push notifications, mobile apps, and gamification to encourage people to take desired actions. Digital nudges can be an effective part of an organisation’s broader change programmes, as all organisational change is built on getting people to consistently act or react differently, even when no one is watching. Organisations can use digital nudges to adapt to changing economic conditions, new technologies, globalisation, and competition (Dhar et al., 2021).

In the UK, a Nudge Unit was established in the Cabinet Office in 2010 to apply behavioural science to public policy. An article on “Nudging for Good” notes that since the inception of the Nudge Unit, there has been a proliferation of formal and informal nudge groups within government agencies, as hundreds of countries, states, and cities have applied the concepts of nudge thinking to improve outcomes (Shah et al., 2019). Nudges have increased tax compliance in the United Kingdom and the United States, reduced littering in Scotland, and encouraged citizens to save more for their retirement in Oregon, USA and more business to comply with regulations in Ontario, Canada (2019). A simple example of nudge with great success is the significant rise in tax compliance after a reminder letter was simply reworded to say that most people pay their bills on time (Simmons, n.d.). The biometric attendance system which is used in organisations is a nudge for employees to be accountable and reach the office on time to ensure timely service delivery. Another example of nudge is setting up outdoor gyms to promote a healthy lifestyle. In Bhutan, the establishment of an outdoor gym by the Ministry of Health in Phuentsholing, Thimphu and now in Trashigang has benefited the community. It nudges people to exercise as they take morning and evening walks and also to take their children for outdoor activities for fun, thereby promoting a healthy lifestyle.

v. Incentives

Incentive is undoubtedly one of the instruments to bring behavioural change. Incentives are rewards that motivate one to take up an activity and guide the way they perform it (Gneezy et al., 2020). An incentive can help create “desirable” or “adaptive” habits by building up the stock of behaviour. Incentives can also help “kill” undesirable or maladaptive habits by reducing the stock of behaviour (2020).

To bring behavioural change among public servants to be efficient and effective, it is important that public servants are motivated. According to the “Incentive Research Foundation 2022 Trends Report”, given the importance of recruitment, retention and engagement, incentive programmes will be more important than ever. The purpose of the incentive programme is to connect people to organisations and their initiatives.

Besides monetary incentives, other incentives can be giving experience and providing learning opportunities to employees such as payment for online courses on areas employees are interested in and providing social vouchers. According to Carretta (2022), employee morale increases when providing gym memberships, fitness trackers, and incentive programs. Social vouchers have been developed in 40 countries (19 EU Member States) over the last 50 years to facilitate the implementation of social policies and meet the needs of employers, employees, citizens, as well as public authorities (“Social Vouchers”, 2019). Some examples of social vouchers are i) Food and meal vouchers: give access to food during the working day or provide basic goods to people in need; ii) Leisure vouchers: encourage citizens to adopt healthy ways of life and habits guaranteeing them easy access to sports and wellness facilities.

	Financial	Non-Financial
Positive	• <i>Increase salary</i> • <i>Annual bonus</i> • <i>Employee benefits (phone, computer, time off)</i>	• <i>Supervisor says “congratulations”</i> • <i>Team dinner</i> • <i>Trophy or Certificate</i> • <i>New project or promotion</i> • <i>Flexible time</i>
Negative	• <i>Reduction of salary</i> • <i>No bonus</i> • <i>Less benefits</i> • <i>Forced overtime</i>	• <i>Jealous boss and/or team</i> • <i>Embarrassing questions, ridicule</i> • <i>Blaming someone for “wasting” time trying to innovate</i> • <i>Increased monitoring by boss</i> • <i>Less independence</i>

Figure 5: Types of Incentives (Ulrich Allen Leadership Capital)

Similarly, Ulrich Allen Leadership Capital identifies four types of incentives as shown in the figure above. Research suggests that positive non-financial incentives like rewards or recognition, new projects, time off, etc. will likely produce the most motivation and it is also powerful in helping team members be accountable. According to Whillans cited in (Gerdman, 2019), such rewards can tap into three strong psychological needs of employees yearning for autonomy, competence and

sense of belonging. When these needs are satisfied, employees feel more motivated, engaged and committed to their workplace.

vi. Spirituality

In Bhutan, spirituality plays a major role in the lives of so many people. Spirituality can “encompass belief in spiritual values like compassion, peace, and a sense of purpose and connectedness” (Ura et al., 2012). Inculcating spiritual values in professional life would help employees in finding purpose and driving more ethical behaviours at the workplace. Similarly, research conducted by Smith et al., (2013) with adult respondents showed a strong correlation between spirituality and resilience. Participants' spiritual well-being drove their behaviours and connections that act as protective factors leading to enhanced resilience. According to Sarkar et al., (2017), collective research on psychological resilience suggests that enhancing resilience presents a viable means of preventing the potential negative effects of work stress and enhancing wellbeing and performance in the workplace.

An individual's spiritual practices such as meditation, yoga and praying can change their behaviour and the course of their lives. In a study on “Vipassana Meditation: An Effective Way to Enhance Employee Contribution in Fostering Organisational Growth” with a sample size of 240 vipassana meditator and non-meditator employees, the results indicated higher values for meditator employees on nine measures of behaviour, personality and well-being. These scores indicated that they enjoyed higher self-confidence, interpersonal skills, equanimity, empathy, engagement and growth leading to better work ethics and teamwork and growth (Pradhan, 2022). Similarly, studies have shown that yoga has a positive effect on health in the workplace, particularly in reducing stress (Puerto et al., 2019). Integrating behavioural interventions such as mindfulness practice, yoga and meditation into everyday life helps in creating a positive mindset thereby being efficient and effective at the workplace.

8. Role of Training in Driving Behavioural Change

Training and continuous learning and development are powerful drivers of behavioural change, as it enables an individual to acquire new skills, knowledge and abilities. Having the right/relevant skills and knowledge is an important aspect when it comes to engaging in a new behaviour or executing an action (Berkman, 2018). Similarly, training can also motivate employees. Bersin & Zao-Sanders, (2019) report that for employees, after the nature of work itself, opportunities for development have become the second most important factor in workplace happiness. According to the authors, the ability to develop personally and professionally is the reason why employees stick to a particular job. When employees are motivated and have the right skills and knowledge, it is most likely that they will attain the desired behaviours, thereby improving their performance in the workplace (Berkman, 2018). A good 76 per cent of the 346 Polis survey respondents agreed

with the statement of making the minimum number of relevant training mandatory to drive behavioural change of becoming a life-long learner. Organisation culture such as making relevant training mandatory helps in driving employees to take online courses that contribute towards their personal development and bring additional value to the workplace. Studies show that “it is six times less expensive to build technical skills internally than it is to hire them from the job market” (Bersin & Zao-Sanders, 2019).

In a developing country like Bhutan, human resource development is an integral part of national progress and prosperity. According to the Ministry of Finance (MoF), in just one fiscal year (2021-2022), agencies spent Nu. 2.993 billion under ‘training-others’ budget head, which consists of short-term training, seminars, conferences, workshops etc. and Nu 2.280 billion on professional services or consultancies (Lamsang, 2022). While the need for capacity building is indisputable, there is an urgent need to assess how relevant the training is for an employee and whether it would bring practical benefits to the workplace. This is because, currently, both the approving authority and the receiver of the training hardly view it as an opportunity to upgrade skills and knowledge, and unleash potential; rather it is common knowledge that training is often seen as a good opportunity to earn money and credentials without much focus on the actual learning and growth for which it is intended. Moreover, many senior public servants in Bhutan do not see training as consequential and useful to their career progression or development, which is why learning ends up being relegated and thus results in the low impact of the training programmes. The survey respondents raised a similar concern about the need to change notions about attending training.

In this day and age, many high-performing organisations around the world are transforming the way individuals and organisations learn, necessitating new skills and new ways of learning. For example, among the highest performing companies, Deloitte and MIT in one of their studies found that “73 per cent of employees in these companies are updating their skills every six months and 44 per cent are updating them to continue to work effectively in a digital environment” (“Coming of Age Digitally”, 2018). In other words, according to Bersin (2018) today’s successful companies are those who learn fast, learn well, and learn all the time”. Therefore, it is imperative for organisations to implement some form of the continuous learning experience by creating a supportive and transparent environment where people can truly learn in the flow of work and apply their new skills and knowledge acquired through training. Bersin (2018) also suggests giving people an environment to learn; promoting and rewarding development; rewarding experts and leaders for teaching others; and looking at the new learning platforms that let people learn in the flow of work.

To impart relevant training programmes, it is first essential for organisations to understand the current skill gap of their employees, and the practical realities of daily work for people and ensure that services are in tune with those realities. Elfond (2021) suggests the importance of emphasising the individual learning experience of each employee tailored to the development of their

knowledge and the way this newly acquired knowledge is immediately applied. Elfond further stated that with the advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML), today's training leaders can use data to automatically drive behavioural change in the workplace by utilising people analytics to better understand their workforce. The top six identified training strategies that can help tailor learning to individual goals and expectations are to *i) provide personalised learning, ii) deliver learning at the right time, iii) reinforce existing knowledge, iv) present information in bite-sized chunks, v) promote knowledge sharing and vi) design training for scalability.*

On the other hand, post-training engagements and reinforcement are crucial parts of a behaviour change journey. Cloke (2019) notes that many people mistake learning as a one-off event; rather constant learning is a crucial component to success. Refresher courses and applying new information are all crucial parts of training. "We forget 90 per cent of what we learn within one month, so how do we retain a better percentage?" the article suggests a potential solution of using a modern mobile learning app, that can reinforce behaviour change by using push notifications (Cloke, 2019). For example, institutes like the Centre for Leadership Studies (CLS) in the United States offer interesting sustainment programmes with microlearning and gamification on Learning Management System (LMS) for their courses in order to help participants continue to learn post-course and get the most out of the programme. Post-training engagements like assigning participants to develop Individual Action Plans (IAP) enable participants to apply what they learn from the training in their respective workplaces to bring positive change.

Incorporating an assessment component into the training programme is one of the ways to drive behavioural change in the training culture as it will encourage the participants to take learning more seriously. Various training institutes and training divisions organise programmes with the goal to help learners build on their competencies, capacity, and performance by gaining new knowledge and skills. There are many ways to evaluate training effectiveness, or incorporate knowledge and skill assessment into the training programme. Knowledge checks, quizzes or observations can provide evaluation data and reinforce learning at the same time. According to Kirkpatrick (2006), it is important to define the kind of behaviour that the participants should have after the training to be most effective in their daily job while planning and designing the training programme. The strategy is to measure the behaviour before the training programme, while at the same time it is equally important to allow some time for participants to apply their new behaviour at work to measure the behaviour again after the training programme. If this is ensured, it will enable comparing the observed behaviour before and after the training programme. Then it is easier to define if any change has taken place in the participants' behaviour (Kirkpatrick, 2006).

9. Limitations of the Study

- i. Some respondents of the Polis survey skipped some of the statements thereby decreasing the accuracy of the data.
- ii. In the Polis instrument, participants could add statements/suggestions thus some of the statements entered at the end received fewer votes.
- iii. There was limited literature available that is relevant specifically to public servants' behaviour.

10. Conclusion

In the face of a fast-changing world and the stiff competition for growth and survival, governments and the larger public sector are understandably expected to perform and deliver at a higher level than ever before. In Bhutan too, the many reforms that we are currently undertaking aim to achieve just that, to enable us as a nation to keep pace with, or better still, stay ahead of the global forces of change. In the Royal *Kasho* on Civil Service Reforms, His Majesty states thus: “If we are passive, slow, and daunted by the speed and complexity of innovation and change, we will not only fall behind others but our economy also risks being terminally dependent on foreign aid and loans.”

While so much can be envisaged in terms of the macro-level structural and systemic transformation, a fundamental tenet of change remains the human behaviour, driven as discussed in this paper, by one's mindset, skillset and motivation. Hence, driving a sustained behavioural change in people working in mega state machineries such as the bureaucracy to make them more competent, motivated and performance-oriented is crucial in the pursuit of our larger national goals. In some manner, this study identifies the existing behavioural deficiencies in Bhutan's public service and suggests ways to improve them. Striving for behavioural change is not just important to fulfil the mandate of the current reforms, it is indeed the cornerstone of our pursuit of excellence in public service and progress as a nation.

It emerges from this study that driving behavioural change in public service is a rather complex and multi-faceted challenge that demands concerted efforts of different stakeholders, including those whose behaviours we seek to change. At the same time, it is also evident that changing human behaviour for the better is a constant endeavour that individuals and organisations around the world pursue for growth, success and sustainability. Measures proposed in this study to effect behavioural change in public servants are all doable, perhaps within the available resources, so long as public-sector leaders and public servants have the right awareness and the will to engage. Driving behavioural change is one area that organisations need to pay serious attention to as an integral part of the current transformation initiatives.

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