Transparency without inclusion: Civil society experience of e-Governance in local government institutions in Ratnapura district, Sri Lanka

H.D.H. Jeewanthi[1]*, Osantha N. Thalpawila[1]

[2]*Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Kelaniya*

Abstract

Local government institutions constitute the foundational arenas of democratic governance. Although Sri Lanka's local government system has created opportunities for ordinary citizens and marginalized groups to take part in decision-making, these spaces are now facing new challenges with the rise of e-governance. This study takes a closer look at the tension between transparency and exclusion in Sri Lanka's transition toward digital governance, with particular focus on how local government institutions operate in the Ratnapura district. This research explores how digital governance tools such as open data outlets, online citizen service platforms, and participatory digital forums impact political inclusion and exclusion patterns. It was observed that even though digital governance tools facilitate engagement due to transparency and integrity pledge databases, civil society actors still come across structural barriers, namely limited digital proficiencies, inequality of infrastructure access, and bureaucratic hindrances that undermine meaningful participation. Transparency often proceeds from being a democratic deed to a technical one. The study argues that without intentional strategies to include marginalized voices, digital governance can reinforce existing power hierarchies and deepen political exclusion at the local level. By situating the Ratnapura case within broader discussions on e-governance, civil society, and democratic legitimacy in Local government institutions, this research highlights the importance of understanding transparency not merely as the disclosure of information but as an inclusive process that empowers citizens and strengthens participatory accountability.

Keywords: Civil society, e-governance, local government institutions, political inclusion

Introduction

Local government in a state is the governance exercised at the local level for the common good of the community. According to the broad definition of local governance, it is a developed system that includes responsibility, accountability, and responsiveness. It promotes efficiency, good management, decision-making based on autonomy, and the active involvement of the local community (Faguet,2005). Mawhood (1993) emphasizes that local government institutions are important not only for local participation but also for the broader process of state democratization. He points out that no political system can be considered comprehensive and complete without local government institutions. E-governance can be introduced as a crucial concept in local governance. It refers to the use of information and communication technologies to improve the delivery of information and services in the public sector, encourage citizen participation in the decision-making processes, and make governance more accountable and effective (Karism, 2002). In addition, e-governance refers to the provision of services to the public through the internet, telephone, public access centres, wireless devices, or other communication and information systems. Considering the relationship between local government and e-governance, e-governance is implemented to deliver more efficient services to the citizens. Studies have shown that approximately 35% of developing countries utilise e-governance systems as a means of delivering enhanced services to their citizens (Alexander, 2003). Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, developing countries have faced multiple challenges in using e-governance systems. As a result, many local government institutions have failed to adopt e-governance effectively. Saugata (2007) points out that, globally, the use of e-governance systems, especially in developing countries, remains very low. However, the use of e-governance by local governments, particularly when targeting citizens in both rural and urban areas, has the potential to improve access to services for citizens anywhere (Morris, 2005).

In the Sri Lankan context, the relationship between local governments and e-governance is not very strong, as local governments face various challenges in implementing e-governance and often fail to improve accessibility in providing services to citizens (Wanasinghe, 1999). Therefore, it is important to study the implementation of e-governance by local government institutions. Civil society plays a central role in both local government and e-governance. Civil society, based on individuality, expresses the specific aspirations of individuals (Hegel,1967). At the same time, the moral life of the community needs to achieve common aspirations. Habermas also conceptualized "the capitalist public sphere as consisting of spaces where individuals gather to discuss matters of common concern and organize against arbitrary and oppressive state and political power" (Habermas, 1989). Local governments can act as bridges, connecting citizens with decision-making processes and working to make governance more inclusive. They represent a substantive level of rural democratic governance that promotes politics leading to egalitarian socio-political transformation (Dainis, 2015; Uyangoda, 2012).

In the state and governance structure of Sri Lanka, the most important institutions for citizens to achieve rural democracy are the local government system. The modern local government system in Sri Lanka was initiated by the British rulers in the second half of the 19th century as an administrative arm of the central government under the colonial state (Leitan, 1979). The further entrenchment of local government in the country's political system during the early twentieth century occurred alongside the process of democratization of the colonial state. Key milestones

in this process included the introduction of universal suffrage, a legislature consisting of people's representatives, and the establishment of a separate executive committee for local government within the State Council, all introduced by the Donoughmore Constitutional Reforms of 1931.

Over the past few decades, digital governance has become a cornerstone of public sector reform, particularly in developing democracies, where governments seek to enhance transparency, accountability, and efficiency through technology-driven innovation (Heeks, 2006; Bannister & Connolly, 2012). Promoted under the global discourse of good governance, such reforms are often portrayed as mechanisms for democratizing state–citizen relations and fostering participatory decision-making (Arato & Cohen, 1992). MIT Press. However, critical scholars question whether digital transformation genuinely empowers citizens or instead reproduces existing hierarchies of power in new technological forms. In this context, civil society occupies a pivotal role as an intermediary actor that mobilizes public participation, demands accountability, and contests exclusionary governance practices (Edwards, 2014).

In Sri Lanka, the adoption of e-governance initiatives, such as local e-service delivery systems, reflects the state's ambition to modernize administrative structures and improve transparency at both central and local levels (ICTA, 2019). These initiatives are aligned with the goal of digital inclusion. Yet, their implementation often occurs within a political culture marked by clientelism, bureaucratic inertia, and persistent inequalities in access to digital infrastructure (Gunawardena & Lekamge, 2019).

As mentioned above, this article examines the role of local governments as governing bodies serving local public needs in the context of the shift to e-governance. It explores civil society's experiences with digital governance, how people are politically included or excluded, how digital reforms are reshaping political dynamics, and whether these reforms genuinely deepen participatory governance or reinforce exclusionary structures under the guise of transparency. To examine this concept, the Institutional Approach is incorporated into the qualitative data analysis.

Methodology

This study employed interpretivist research methods, specifically using an institutional approach. The interpretivist method provides a basis for understanding how civil society experiences and interprets e-governance processes within local government institutions. The institutional approach lays the foundation for examining the nature of services based on the local government's institutional structure, e-governance methodologies, and implemented digital strategies.

In line with the methodological orientation of the study outlined above, qualitative primary and secondary data collection methods were used for this study. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory observation were used to collect primary data. The focus was on participants' experiences with digital governance tools such as online service delivery, e-participation mechanisms, and open data platforms. The study area included the Ratnapura municipal council, Balangoda urban council, and Pelmadulla pradeshiya sabha in the Ratnapura district of the Sabaragamuwa province. A purposive sampling method was used to select 60 participants. This sampling strategy targeted individuals directly involved in local government

processes, those affected by the project, and members of the general community. Ethnicity, gender, occupation, and geographical location were taken into consideration when selecting participants.

Academic books, journal articles, and government-published acts and ordinances were used as secondary sources. A descriptive analytical method was employed to analyse the data.

Results and Discussion

The study revealed the nature of the relationship between e-governance and civil society within local government institutions. This relationship emerged through several key themes.

Legal provisions and local government institution services

The question has arisen as to whether civil society organizations should operate in alignment with the local governance process. Local government institutions have the authority to control, regulate, and oversee the public sphere, but they should not undermine the freedom and democratic functioning of civil society. It was observed that frequent crises occur in the transmission of information to civil society groups, as well as in communication from civil society to local government institutions.

However, these institutions have been established as legal entities under the laws governing the formation of local governments, which grant them legal capacity. Accordingly, several legal provisions have been introduced to ensure the participation of civil society in the local governance process. Within this framework, a committee system has been established to support the functioning of local government institutions and to guide them in policy formulation by conducting in-depth analyses of relevant issues and providing recommendations. The Council may appoint Standing Committees under Section 26 of the Municipal Council Ordinance, Section 29 of the Urban Council Ordinance, and Section 12 of the Pradeshiya Sabha Act to advise the General Assembly on matters concerning the powers, functions, and duties of the Council. Furthermore, every local government institution guarantees each citizen's right to information through constitutional provisions. The Right to Information Act No. 12 of 2016, which was incorporated into the 1978 Constitution, must also be implemented by local government institutions.

In addition, Local Government By-laws are formulated to formalize the functions assigned to local government institutions and to address various community needs within the framework of local governance. To ensure citizens' right to access information, Section 124 of the Pradeshiya Sabha Act mandates that copies of all by-laws be maintained at both the relevant Pradeshiya Sabha office and the office of the Commissioner. These bylaws must be made available to the public upon payment.

In this way, local government institutions are bound to provide their services within the legal framework.

The functions and responsibilities of each local government institution are outlined in Section 46 of the Municipal Ordinance, the Urban Council Ordinance (Chapter 255), and Sections 3 and 19 of the Pradeshiya Sabha Act. Local government institutions typically provide residents with a wide range of services within their jurisdiction. Local authorities, under their respective ordinances, are vested with specified duties and permissive powers, following the traditional functions of local government in Sri Lanka. Each local authority performs these functions according to its capacity. For example, municipalities, under the provisions of the Municipal Councils Ordinance, are required to: (I) maintain and clean all public streets and open spaces vested in the council or under its management; (II) enforce the proper maintenance, cleanliness, and repair of all private streets; (III) supervise and provide for the growth and development of the municipality through the planning and widening of streets, reservation of open spaces, and execution of public improvements; (IV) abate all nuisances; (V) establish and maintain any public utility service required for the welfare, comfort, or convenience of the public; and (VI) generally promote the health, welfare, convenience, development, sanitation, and amenities of the municipality (Section 46, Municipal Councils Ordinance).

Thus, the services of local government institutions are implemented across a wide range of areas. Local government institutions are currently focusing on providing online services to the public to deliver these services more efficiently, as they must act in accordance with the policies implemented by the state. For example, online services provided by each government organization should ensure high availability depending on the nature of the service implemented (ICTA, 2022). The study identified a trend of local government institutions engaging in e-governance and adopting the above-mentioned services.

E-Governance transformation is a technological exercise rather than a democratic practice

All three local government institutions studied have adopted e-governance principles. For example, Balangoda Urban Council has directly addressed the e-governance process. The following table (Table 1), prepared based on the information obtained from the study, can be used to identify the e-community services provided by the local government institutions.

Table 1: E-Governance Practices

Local Government Institution	Service Type	Relevant Uniform Resource Locator (URL)/ web link
Ratnapura Municipal Council	E-public library	https://ratnapura.mc.gov.lk/public-library/lang=en
	Supplier Registration	https://ratnapura.mc.gov.lk/downloads/lang=en
Balangoda Urban Council	E-Wedagedara (Ayurvedic Treatment)	https://www.balangoda.uc.gov.lk
	e-library Balangoda	https://www.balangoda.uc.gov.lk
	e-complaints (Public complaints and grievances management system)	https://complaints.balangoda.uc.gov.lk
	e-balangoda - IT for Your Life (IT awareness Program)	https://www.balangoda.uc.gov.lk

The Ratnapura Municipal Council and the Balangoda Urban Council have provided the public with the opportunity to make payments online. A respondent stated that all payments to the Ratnapura Municipal Council can be made through the People's Bank Internet Payment Gateway. The study also revealed that the Balangoda Municipal Council has introduced a payment app and a QR code system to facilitate payments. In addition, GPS technology is used to provide services to the community, allowing residents to access real-time information about the Balangoda Municipal Council's gully bowsers and garbage collection tractors. The study further revealed that various digital communication strategies are being employed. For instance, a member of the Youth Lion organization, a civil society group operating under the Pelmadulla Pradeshiya Sabha, stated, "The public is informed of all notices, messages, tender calls, and various administrative circulars issued by the Pradeshiya Sabha through the WhatsApp group."

According to the Electronic Transactions Act No. 19 of 2006, no data message, electronic document, electronic record, or other communication shall be denied legal recognition, effect, validity, or enforceability merely because it is in electronic form. Thus, the state has established legal frameworks for electronic communication. Local government officials acknowledged that these institutions have achieved positive institutional outcomes by conducting official communications through electronic platforms. An officer of the Balangoda Municipal Council stated, "To disseminate information to the public, our municipal council maintains an official blog, Twitter page, YouTube channel, and Facebook account."

Questionable and problematic situations have arisen from the contradiction between institutional ambitions and citizens' capabilities. As informed by local civil society leaders during the interviews, "Not everyone has access to Facebook and WhatsApp, nor does everyone have the knowledge to use them." They pointed out that this constitutes a form of citizen suppression and significantly affects individual activities. An examination of public complaints revealed that local government institutions are currently facing severe criticism for the symbolic exclusion of citizens resulting from weaknesses in communication. Benjamin Barber (1998) presents several ideas on e-governance. He argues that the public space created through computer technology can help sustain democracy more effectively and emphasizes that this space can be used meaningfully to enhance citizen participation in the decision-making process. However, Barber also warns that the risk of this approach is a possible decline in the quality of decision-making. He suggests that digital tools shape citizens' perspectives by confining them to a framework of personal opinion, thereby weakening the collective and deliberative nature of democratic decision-making. In this regard, Barber (1998) argues that e-government is a form of governance that restricts collective community action and does not embody the principles of strong democracy. He emphasized that democracy depends not only on voting or clicking a button, but also on reflection, debate, and mutual persuasion. In contrast, Habermas (1962) presents an opposing view, arguing that the manipulation of information and communication media is carried out by ruling-class elites. By subordinating these channels to their authority, the ruling class seeks to further isolate citizens from local government activities. In other words, rather than involving citizens in the governance process, local government institutions risk disengaging them and relegating them to the private sphere. In e-governance, local government institutions often operate without adequately managing communication activities. When conveying information through electronic media, they frequently overlook citizens' ability to access and use these tools. This results in the inclusion of those with access and the exclusion of those without communication resources. Furthermore, essential information about services and opportunities for public participation is often

inadequate, limiting the space for political engagement and restricting the ability of excluded communities to express their views, effectively confining them to the private sphere. In this situation, individuals' freedom to participate in the democratic processes is constrained, forcing them to operate primarily within the family sphere, either unwillingly or without meaningful involvement in governance. This poses a threat to citizens' rights. In many cases, information about services and public notices is not properly communicated, resulting in lost opportunities for citizen participation.

For example, a member of a community-based organization in Ratnapura criticized that many people were unable to attend the meeting held at the institutional premises to provide public input on the budget report because the message was disseminated only through social media. Sen (2012) argues that such spaces allow people to mobilize against governing institutions. He further explains that social media has been instrumental in civil society movements, particularly in promoting democracy, and plays a significant role as a platform for organizing social protests. Although these spaces exist for citizens to respond to the governance process, only a minority 24% of respondents, are actively engaged. However, social media has provided an avenue for those who normally avoid political dialogue or abstain from political discussions due to cultural restrictions to express their opinions. Civil society has been given opportunities to communicate their problems, complaints, and suggestions to local government institutions via the internet (Banaji & Buckingham, 2013). The following diagram illustrates the online platforms created by local government institutions for these services and shows how people are using them.
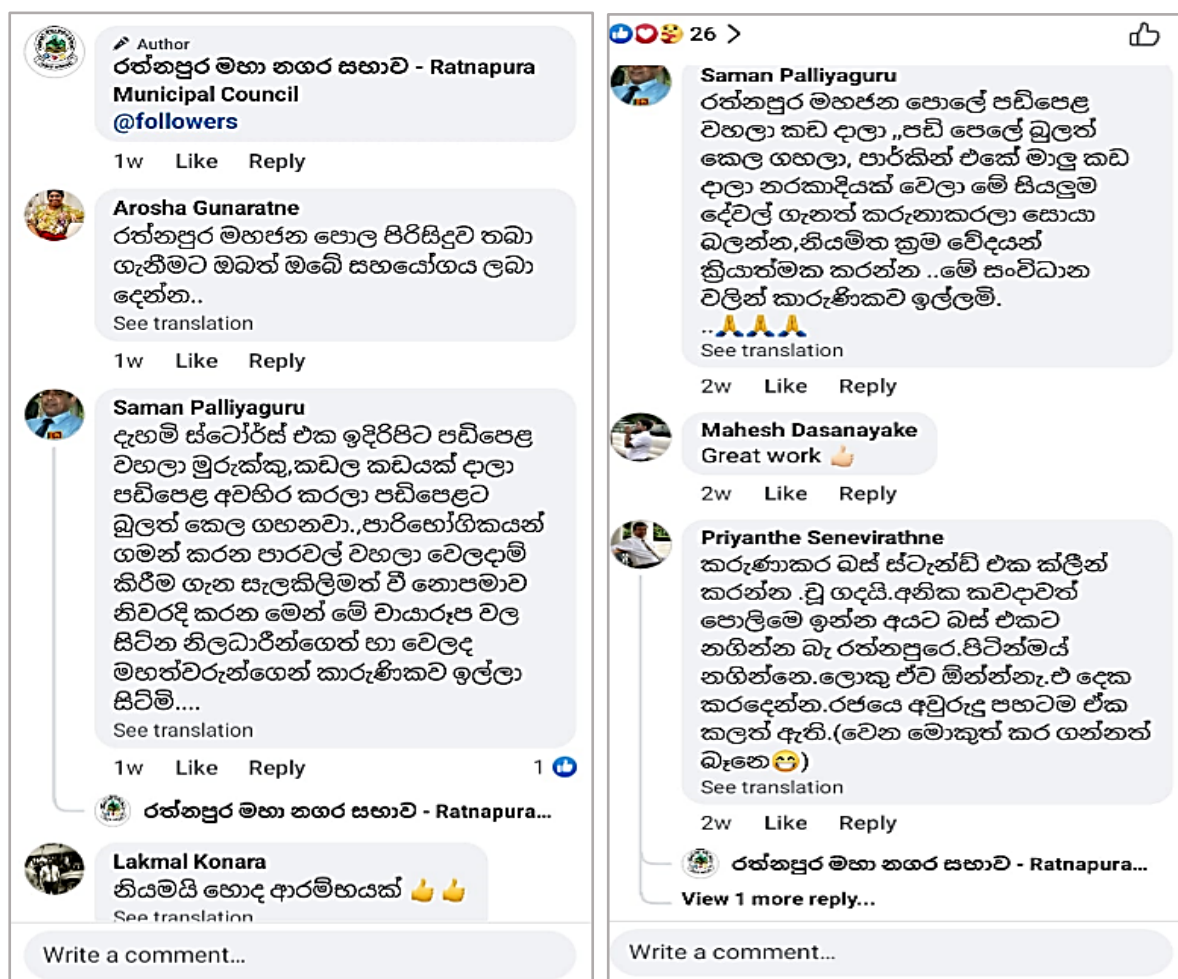
Author
රත්නපුර මහා නගර සභාව - Ratnapura Municipal Council
@followers
1w   Like   Reply

Arosha Gunaratne
රත්නපුර මහජන පොළ පිරිසිදුව තබා ගැනීමට ඔබත් ඔබේ සහයෝගය ලබා දෙන්න..
See translation
1w   Like   Reply

Saman Palliyaguru
දැහැමි ස්ටෝර්ස් එක ඉදිරිපිට පඩිපෙළ වහලා මුරුක්කු,කඩල කඩයක් දාලා පඩිපෙළ අවහිර කරලා පඩිපෙළට බුලත් කෙල ගහනවා.,පාරිභෝගිකයන් ගමන් කරන පාරවල් වහලා වෙළඳාම් කිරීම ගැන සැලකිලිමත් වී නොපමාව නිවැරදි කරන මෙන් මේ වීඩියෝරූප වල සිටින නිලධාරීන්ගෙන් හා වෙළඳ මහත්වරුන්ගෙන් කාරුණිකව ඉල්ලා සිටිමි....
See translation
1w   Like   Reply   1 👍
රත්නපුර මහා නගර සභාව - Ratnapura...

Lakmal Konara
නියමයි හොඳ ආරම්භයක් 👍👍
See translation

Write a comment...

❤️😊 26 >   👍

Saman Palliyaguru
රත්නපුර මහජන පොළේ පඩිපෙළ වහලා කඩ දාලා „පඩි පෙළේ බුලත් කෙල ගහලා, පාර්කින් එකේ මාලු කඩ දාලා නරකාදියක් වෙලා මේ සියලුම දේවල් ගැනත් කරුණාකරලා සොයා බලන්න,නියමිත ක්‍රම වේදයන් ක්‍රියාත්මක කරන්න ..මේ සංවිධාන වලින් කාරුණිකව ඉල්ලම්. .. 🙏🙏🙏
See translation
2w   Like   Reply

Mahesh Dasanayake
Great work 👍
2w   Like   Reply

Priyanthe Senevirathne
කරුණාකර බස් ස්ටැන්ඩ් එක ක්ලීන් කරන්න .වූ ගඳයි.අනික කවදාවත් පොළිමේ ඉන්න අයට බස් එකට නගින්න බෑ රත්නපුරේ.පිටින්මයේ නගින්නෙ.ලොකු ඒව ඕන්නෑ.එ දෙක කරදෙන්න.රජයේ අවුරුදු පහටම ඒක කලත් ඇති.(වෙන මොකුත් කර ගන්නත් බෑනෙ😊)
See translation
2w   Like   Reply
රත්නපුර මහා නගර සභාව - Ratnapura...
View 1 more reply...

Write a comment...

Figure 1. E-Complaint Services

The study concluded that civil society is using digital platforms to influence governing institutions to some extent. However, it revealed that local government institutions are not fully attentive to the needs of the community, creating conflicting views between the two parties. Despite the transmission of information to citizens through newspapers, television, radio, and local government channels, there is a public perception that undemocratic practices are occurring, as political authorities manipulate media in the provision and receipt of information. Thus, it can be argued that no matter how influential civil society may be, it still faces limitations. Even when citizens raise awareness among local government institutions, these institutions cannot always be regarded as acting responsibly. The study further indicated that, given the current economic situation, not all communities can engage in the same way. Communication is a social phenomenon, and no individual should be excluded from it. Although society is divided between those with and without economic privileges, most respondents (68.3%) believe that such divisions should not be an obstacle to communication. Furthermore, a distinctive feature observed in the Pelmadulla Pradeshiya Sabha area under study is that only a small number of adults with significant economic resources, as well as some youth, have limited exposure to digital technology. In contrast, individuals living in urban areas, even with lower economic status, tend to be more technologically literate. The study revealed that adults with significant economic resources are reluctant to participate in governance, preferring to operate within their personal circles. It also showed that they have not received the necessary guidance to engage effectively in the political community.

E-Governance and citizen participation

The active participation of civil society is essential to subject rural governance to a more thorough process of demarcation (Chandhoke, 1995). The study examined various dimensions of citizen political participation through electronic media within the local government institutions under review. It was found that civil society's participation is influenced by various factors.

The study found that e-governance has deprived many citizens of the opportunity to participate equally and collectively. As a result, social justice has become a privilege for the advantaged, and it has also led to the isolation of individuals. Interviews with a group of physically disabled individuals living in the Pelmadulla Pradeshiya Sabha area revealed that they have been marginalized in the decision-making processes by local government institutions. Since public hearings, consultations, and referrals for local projects are conducted entirely online, these communities face significant challenges in navigating digital platforms. They also expressed that local government institutions lack a direct relationship with their communities. This situation has emerged as a serious issue, with e-governance contributing to the isolation of citizens from local government institutions. Table 2 illustrates the forms of political participation for the study area.

Table 2: Forms of political participation

Dimension	Media	Percentage
Access to information	WhatsApp and institutions' websites	28%
Communication channels	Facebook, WhatsApp, online petitions, digital screens	7%
Mobilizations and Advocacy	Facebook, WhatsApp	13%

The transparency that should characterize democratic governance has become concentrated within the rural elite power structure. Although e-governance enhances efficiency, the exclusion of individuals from this process has resulted in an incomplete form of democracy, as mentioned above.

Thus, at the core of the crisis facing the local government system lies the fundamental issue that e-governance has become a practice largely inaccessible to the community and, even today, remains a technical exercise that communities must learn to navigate. However, it is also a reality, though not fully captured through this study, the efficiency of disseminating information and services through e-governance practices has increased to some extent.

Bureaucratic authority, public consent and political exclusion

The participatory observation conducted in local government institutions revealed a high level of authority exercised by the bureaucracy within these institutions. Officials regularly interact with the community in governance activities, and 41.6% of the respondents surveyed believed that these operations occur within strict legal and formal frameworks. Their strong focus on e-governance is fundamental to this approach but has also led to a certain degree of political exclusion of communities. This has limited opportunities for citizens to gain insight into what is happening in the political sphere. The study revealed that e-local governance does not effectively reach poor and low-income social classes, and communication about local government services is not properly transmitted to them. For example, transparency has been compromised in local government institutions, as officials advertise committee meetings and project implementation announcements online. In a discussion with a shoe vendor on the street near the clock tower in Pelmadulla town, he stated, "Welfare services are provided by those who are friendly with officials and those who have phones." He further commented that officials for various projects and welfare services are selected based on their digital literacy. By relying on digitalization to create efficient services, people are often unable to challenge these practices. As Gramsci (1971) pointed out, bureaucratic authority is maintained through the consent of the people. The study revealed that bureaucracy in local government institutions has placed local democracy in crisis.

Ethnic and linguistic identity

The failure of bureaucracy to consistently address linguistic identity based on ethnicity has led to the political marginalization of ethnic minorities.

A trilingual administrative language system is needed, yet local government messages, announcements, and other materials are released on social media only in Sinhala. It was also observed that advertisements displayed on the roads were printed solely in Sinhala. Interviews with Tamil and Muslim ethnic groups indicated that, even today, the loss of language rights prevents them from fully asserting their identity and rights. This has relegated citizens to an unequal status, viewed not only as second-class citizens but, more profoundly, as second-rate human beings. The study revealed that in accessing information, seeking awareness of institutional processes, and discussing issues of concern, individuals in civil society frequently encounter ideological conflicts. Explaining this situation, Habermas (1962) emphasized the need for undistorted communication as a solution.

E- local governance

Instead of fostering transparency in governance, e-governance has been confined to a limited mobilization of people, lacking broad public engagement. The study revealed that the involvement of local government officials in mobilizing citizens who are not digitally literate in political processes remains relatively low. Although civil society continues to demand greater community awareness and institutional explanations regarding e-governance, considering the inequalities in digital capabilities, the solutions proposed and implemented thus far have proven largely impractical. As expressed by a driver from the Ratnapura Three-Wheeler Society (Three-Wheeler Sangamaya), these initiatives have failed to address ground realities. The findings indicate that communities have experienced discrimination, marginalization, injustice, and exclusion as citizens within the framework of e-governance. Under the influence of bureaucracy, civil society organizations lack the space to operate democratically. Therefore, e-governance practices have negatively affected public inclusion in political mechanisms. Consequently, the gap between the community and local government has widened, resulting in a state of incomplete political democracy.

Conclusions

In a democratic political context, a multifaceted civil society can be identified. The study revealed that the mobilization of civil society for the common interests of communities is being threatened by the practices of modern provincial e-governance. Institutional and bureaucratic regimes that prioritize administrative transparency often fail to promote the political inclusion of citizens in administrative reforms. In some ways, e-governance has been unable to fulfil its democratic functions within local government. However, the potential role of local e-governance in strengthening democracy in Sri Lanka is far from over. It is essential to create spaces that provide technical knowledge and digital literacy to citizens at the institutional level. New institutional reforms are needed to address the political exclusion of communities in e-governance and to overcome weaknesses in its implementation. E-governance should not be abolished but transformed into a more democratic structure, one that is closer to the public, responsive to their needs, and infused with new vitality. Local government reforms must be envisioned within a broader framework of democratizing e-governance.

Declaration of Funding Sources:

Conflict of interest statement:

References

Alexander, D. (2003). E-government in developing countries. World Bank Publications. https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/317081468164642250/pdf/320450egovhandbook01public12002111114.pdf

Arato, A., & Cohen, J. (1992). *Civil Society and Political Theory*. MIT Press.

Banaji, S., & Buckingham, D. (2013). The civic web: young people, the internet, and civic participation. MIT Press. https://doi.org/10.7551/mitpress/8949.001.0001

Bannister, F., & Connolly, R. (2012). Defining e-governance. *e-Service Journal*, *8*(2), 3–25. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259733772_Defining_e-Governance

Barber,B.(1998). Which Technology and Which Democracy? *Political Science Quarterly,*113(4),573-589. https://www.jstor.org/stable/2658245

Chandhoke, N. (1995). *State and Civil Society: Explorations in Political Theory*. SAGE. https://www.amazon.com/State-Civil-Society-Explorations-Political/dp/8126938641

Dainis, A.P. (2015). Strengthening Local Government: Issues, Constraints and Proposal for Reform. In J. Uyangoda (Eds.), *Local Government and Local Democracy in Sri Lanka; Institutional and Social Dimensions.* (pp.73-97). Social Scientists' Association.

Edward, M. (2004). *Civil Society*. Polity. https://www.politybooks.com/bookdetail?book_slug=civil-society-4th-edition--9781509537341

Faguet, J. P. (2005). Governance from below: A political economy of decentralization in Bolivia. *Journal of Public Economics*, *88*(3–4), 867–893. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727(02)00100-6

Gramsci, A. (1971). State and Civil Society. In Q. Hoarse & G. N. Smith (Eds.), *Selections from Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* (pp.206-275). International Publishers. https://ia600506.us.archive.org/19/items/AntonioGramsciSelectionsFromThePrisonNotebooks/Antonio-Gramsci-Selections-from-the-Prison-Notebooks.pdf

Gunawardena, C., & Lekamge, D. (2019). Digital transformations in Sri Lanka's public sector: Opportunities and barriers*. Sri Lanka Journal of Social Sciences, 42*(1), 15–29.

Habermas, J. (1962). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*. MIT Press. https://mitpress.mit.edu/9780262581080/the-structural-transformation-of-the-public-sphere/

Hegel. H.W., & Hegel, G.W.F. (1821/2008). *Philosophy of Right.* Cosimo Inc. https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/works/pr/philosophy-of-right.pdf

ICTA. (2019). *National e-Government Strategy of Sri Lanka 2020–2025.* Information and Communication Technology Agency of Sri Lanka. https://www.icta.lk/icta-assets/uploads/2019/06/01.-Digital-Government-Strategy.pdf

Karim, M. R. (2002). E-government in developing countries: An analysis of implementation, challenges and opportunities. *International Journal of Information Management, 22*(2), 111–124. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0268-4012(01)00043-4

Leitan,T.(1979*). Local Government and Decentralized Administration in Sri Lanka.* Lake House Investments Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1002/pad.4230030110

Mawhood,P.(1993). *Local Government in the Third World: the experience of decentralization in tropical Africa.* Africa Institute of South Africa

Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils. (2009). National Policy on Local Government: The Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka Extraordinary. Department of Government Printing.

https://www.preventionweb.net/files/28587_localgovernmentpolicy.pdf?startDownload=true

Morris, D. (2005). E-governance and service delivery in local governments.

Municipal Council Ordinance. (1947). Ceylon Government Printing. https://www.parliament.lk/files/ca/19._Municipal_Councils_Ordinance.pdf

Pradeshiya Sabhas Act. No.15 of (1987). Department of Government Printing. https://documents.gov.lk/view/acts/acts_1987.html

Report of the Commission on Local Government (Choksy Commission). (1955). Department of Government Printing. https://fslga.lk/report-of-the-commission-on-local-government-1955/

Uyangoda, J. (2012). Reframing *Democracy: Perspectives on the Cultures of Inclusion and Exclusion in Contemporary Sri Lanka.* Social Scientists Association.

Wanasinghe,S.(1999). *Effective Local Governance: The Foundation for a Functioning Democracy in Sri Lanka.* Institute of Policy Studies. https://www.ips.lk/wp content/uploads/2017/01/05_effectivelocalgovernance-ips.pdf

Heeks, R. (2006). Information systems and developing countries: Failure, success, and improvisation. *The Information Society, 18*(2), 101–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/01972240600567170

Morris, D. F. (2005). Advancing e-government at the grassroots: Tortoise or hare? *Public Administration Review, 65*(1), 64–75. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2005.00431