Nationwide Deliberative Polling on Constitutional Amendment of Mongolia, 2017

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Brief Description

After adopting the first liberal constitution in 1992, Mongolia's democracy was facing corruption, abuse of power, and a lack of citizen contribution to government policy decisions. So, the Mongolian government looked for a good methodology to overcome this problem to amend their constitution with much focus on citizen participation. On April 28-30, 2017, with the help of 'The Centre for Deliberative Democracy of Stanford University, Govt. of Mongolia arranged the nationwide 'Deliberative polling' to institutionalise or legalise the system of Deliberative process/Polling into their newly adopted constitution, so that by this Law in future, Govt. Mongolia must arrange deliberative polling of citizens before making any public policies as well as a further constitutional amendment.

Problems and Purpose

After the formal constitution was adopted, there was mass politicization and corruption in the government, civil service, and many independent institutions. The government was not able to implement key public policies to continue Mongolia's resource-based growth *(The Asia Foundation, 2017)*. Even though the first constitution was adopted through an inclusive, deliberative process, the constitution was first amended in 2000 behind closed doors without any public consultation or participation and in a non-inclusive way *(CDD, 2017)*. On top of that, from 1992 to 2016, there had been 13 Prime Ministers on average two years terms, furthermore, government instability and intergovernmental friction, created problems to implement sound public policies concerning widespread socio-economic problems of the citizens in the country and citizens criticized the amendment of the constitution heavily. *(ConstitutionNet, 2016).* So, after years of backlash from the people of Mongolia, to resolve these issues in the country, Parliament decided to finally arrange a 'public engagement process' to pursue a good constitutional reform in 2016 *(Idea. int, 2017).*

There were six main purposes and themes were decided for constitutional reform (*Naran, 2019) -*

1. Ensure effective checks and balances between the Parliament and the government.
2. Modifying the rights and responsibilities of the President for strengthening national solidarity and eliminating overlapping responsibilities.
3. Strengthening civil service so that it is free of politics, merit-based, skilled, and professional.
4. Improve the country's structure of administrative and local governance systems.
5. Strengthening the responsibility, accountability, and discipline of the government, and improving the rule of law.
6. Creating a bi-cameral Parliament, with two chambers: a people's representative body (People's Great Khural) and a legislative body (State Minor Khural)

Moreover, this deliberative polling was mainly implemented by The Parliament to identify socio-economic issues with the assistance of the citizens and to provide much knowledge to citizens about public affairs.

Background, History, and Context

Mongolia is a unitary state, and the state power is equally divided into legislative, executive, and judicial branches between State Great Khural (Parliament), the Government, and the Judiciary respectively, where the responsibilities are divided into enacting laws, enforcing laws, and monitoring the laws if it is violating the constitution. If state power is centralized into only one institution, then it has some risk to keeping a balance between power, liberty, and human rights, that is why in 1992 Mongolia adopted its first formal constitution dividing power equally in all these three sectors *(CDD, 2017).* Also, since 1992 there were two main political parties switched power in parliament between **Mongolian People's Party (MPP)** and **Democratic Party (DP)** *(ConstitutionNet., 2017).*

Even after the first constitution, civil service lacked responsibility, there was an intensive political influence, and civil servants were getting corrupted, which was eventually affecting ground level governmental work and causing a socio-economic problem for citizens. Economic development was deteriorating, and rule of law was undermined. So, the public demanded drastic changes to the government system and constitution to overcome these challenges. Although In 2000, the Parliament amended the constitution, the public did not support it as it was made in a small political sphere without any public consultation *(CDD, 2017).*

After so many challenges faced by the Government, following the Govt. of Mongolia Action Plan (2012-1016), in December 2016 after having a study through public consultation and research by a working group consisting of researchers, experts and members of Parliament (cross-party committee) decided that this Government urgently need some crucial amendments in the constitution. Depending on that rationale, to overcome critical socio-economic challenges and as an amendment in the constitution in 2000 had no public opinions and engagement, The Parliament passed a law (Consultative Survey, 2017) on February 9, 2017, to organize 'Deliberative/Consultative Polling'. The law took effect on March 1, 2017 *(Naran, 2019);* where it was stated that deliberative polling will be required for future constitutional amendments and other development projects to be funded in the country where public opinions and discussions will be given the highest priority. The working group submitted six key proposals (detailed in 'Problems and Purpose') like 'affecting the legislature, the role of the president, the powers of the prime minister, and the issue of protecting the civil service and the judiciary from politics' *(Fishkin, 2018),* these resolutions were adopted on April 7, 2017 *(CDD, 2017).*

On top of that, back in December 2015 Mongolian Government organized deliberative polling with special help from James Fishkin, the main originator of deliberative polling and The Asia Foundation *(The Asia Foundation, 2017).* It happened in the capital city Ulaanbaatar and was focused on 14 major infrastructure projects in Ulaanbaatar as its city master plan. More than 300 citizens of Ulaanbaatar deliberated for 2 days, city mayor declared that the deliberative poll was successful and deliberative polling was included in

the action plan for the city master plan prioritizing 14 infrastructure projects ranked by citizens *(Naran, 2019).* The success of this first deliberative polling in 2015, allowed the Mongolian Government to pass a law to organise the deliberative polling on the amendment of the constitution of Mongolia.

Organizing, Supporting, and Funding Entities

First and foremost a member of parliament and former minister of foreign affairs and trade Gombojav Zandanshatar contacted Professor James Fishkin, the main person behind deliberative polling in the Centre for Deliberative Democracy of Stanford University, and they both discussed this critical issue in Mongolia and decided to take on a public opinion polling for amending Mongolia's constitution *(Stanford.edu, 2017).* So, a team from the Centre for Deliberative Democracy of Stanford University led by James Fishkin with the Asia Foundation agreed to help the Mongolian Government, especially the organizer to conduct this deliberative polling by giving technical assistance and recommendations. *(CDD, 2017)*

The Deliberative/Consultative law passed by Mongolian Govt. on 9th February 2017 *(Consultative Survey, 2017)* helped to establish a 'Deliberative Council' as the main organizer consisting of eight researchers and several other legal experts, a task force who were independent professionals with relevant knowledge and experience, also there were some independent research organizations and local NGOs. The council was also responsible to build a relevant questionnaire based on the six themes/proposals of the deliberation to be asked by citizens. Also, this Consultative/Deliberative council was responsible for the preparation, monitoring of the two-day event, compiling citizens' opinions, and developing recommendations *(CDD, 2017).* The total funding came from the Mongolian Government and US Aid for organizing the two-day event. *(ConstitutionNet, 2017). The national* statistics office (NSO) of Mongolia has done an excellent job of conducting the census and the survey work, also selecting and gathering random samples of citizens from all over the country to conduct the initial interview as well as collecting random samples of citizens for the deliberation in the government palace in Ulaanbaatar *(CDD, 2017)*

## Participant Recruitment and Selection

This initiative happened in two stages, where the main participant were the citizens of Mongolia, in both stages the initiative was not open to all. The National statistics office (NSO) of Mongolia used the 'gold standard' method of scientific sampling, which means, the NSO randomly selected households from randomly selected geographical areas and then randomly selected an adult person (over 18 years old) from each of those households by conducting fieldwork and asking for interview questions. That means each adult person from each household had an equal random chance of being selected. Although there is a drawback of this kind of sampling technique, if the response rate is low, then this technique is fruitless; however, surprisingly the first stage interview response rate was astonishingly high. So, there was a high level of transparency in the results *(National Statistics Office of Mongolia, 2017).*

The government had the voters list and details of all its citizens as the last regular elections happened for the parliament, state, and district levels in Mongolia, which helped NSO to

pick citizens randomly for this initiative. Therefore, through that random sampling survey, NSO selected 1570 households out of 860000 households around the country. Among these NSO selected 1570 adult citizens out of 2 million citizens for conducting the first stage of polling. Out of which, 1515 citizens agreed and participated in the first polling on the suggested amendments to the constitution. After which the second stage, according to the law **(Discussed in Background, History, and Context)** on deliberative polling; about half of the respondents of the first poll were selected randomly by the 'Stratified Random Sampling' technique, in this 'two-stage' random selection method, randomly selected population of the first poll sorted out to about half of the population, so, 785 respondents were randomly selected from 1515 participants of the first poll to participate in the second and final deliberative polling. 669 citizens out of 785 respondents agreed to participate in the second deliberative polling or main deliberation process which happened in Parliament House in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia *(National Statistics Office of Mongolia, 2017).* All the travel expenses and incentives, as well as accommodation, and food were provided by the Mongolian Government, but no honorariums were offered to the 669 citizens who participated in the second polling *(11.10.2, Consultative Survey, 2017).* On top of that, the second random sample of respondents was highly representative of the citizenry in both attitude and demographics *(Fishkin, 2018).* Interestingly, this had an extraordinary and highest rate of participation in any nationwide deliberative polling first time happened in any country *(CDD, 2017).* Further will be discussed about the first and second polling process in the 'What Went On: Deliberation, Decisions and Public Interaction' section.

<u>Fig:(1)</u> (National Statistics Office of Mongolia, 2017)

FIGURE 1. PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST DELIBERATIVE POLLING BY AGE GROUP, SHARE TO TOTAL
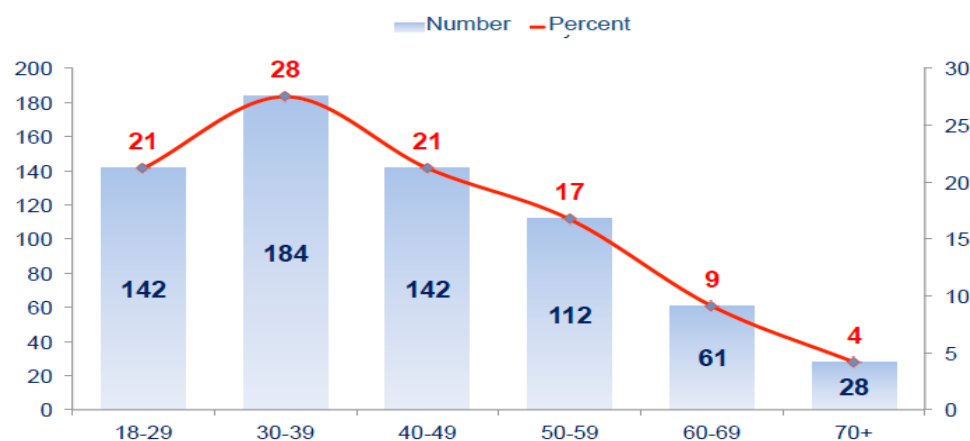
All age groups are covered in the polling as population aged 30-39 represented 28% of all participants.

Table:(1) (National Statistics Office of Mongolia, 2017)

TABLE 1. PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST DELIBERATIVE POLLING BY AIMAG, SHARE TO TOTAL

| Aimags/Capital	Number			Share to total		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Ulaanbaatar	309	128	181	46.2	40.8	51.0
Eastern region						
Dornod	17	8	9	2.5	2.5	2.5
Sukhbaatar	13	7	6	1.9	2.2	1.7
Khentii	18	9	9	2.7	2.9	2.5
Central region						
Tuv	22	12	10	3.3	3.8	2.8
Gobisumber	5	2	3	0.7	0.6	0.8
Selenge	21	10	11	3.1	3.2	3.1
Dornogobi	13	10	3	1.9	3.2	0.8
Darkhan-Uul	23	13	10	3.4	4.1	2.8
Umnugobi	12	6	6	1.8	1.9	1.7
Dundgobi	10	4	6	1.5	1.3	1.7
Khangai region						
Orkhon	21	11	10	3.1	3.5	2.8
Uvurkhangai	28	15	13	4.2	4.8	3.7
Bulgan	11	8	3	1.6	2.5	0.8
Bayankhongor	17	5	12	2.5	1.6	3.4
Arkhangai	23	14	9	3.4	4.5	2.5
Khuvsgul	22	11	11	3.3	3.5	3.1
Western region						
Zavkhan	17	7	10	2.5	2.2	2.8
Gobi-Altai	12	6	6	1.8	1.9	1.7
Bayan-Ulgii	21	12	9	3.1	3.8	2.5
Khovd	17	7	10	2.5	2.2	2.8
Uvs	17	9	8	2.5	2.9	2.3
Total	**669**	**314**	**355**	**100.0**	**100.0**	**100.0**

Table:(2) (National Statistics Office of Mongolia, 2017)

TABLE 2. EMPLOYMENT OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST DELIBERATIVE POLLING, BY SEX, SHARE TO TOTAL

	Number			Share to total		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Employed	389	200	189	58.1	63.7	53.2
Unemployed	280	114	166	41.9	36.3	46.8
Total	669	314	355	100.0	100.0	100.0

Of the participants, 58.1% are employed and 41.9 % are unemployed.

Fig:(2) (National Statistics Office of Mongolia, 2017)

FIGURE 2. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE FIRST
DELIBERATIVE POLLING, SHARE TO TOTAL

No education	Primary	Basic	Secondary	Vocational	Higher
1.9	6.0	14.9	31.8	15.5	29.7
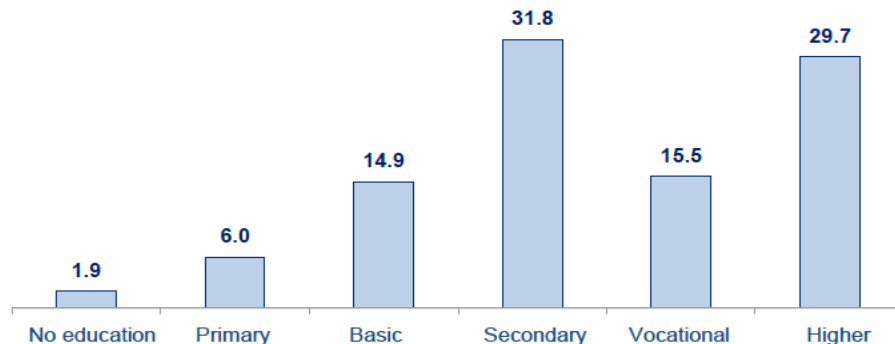
Of the participants, 31.8% have secondary education and 29.7% have higher education.

Methods and Tools Used

In the first stage of the initiative, there was huge 'field work' carried out by small teams of NSO Mongolia around the country after selecting random samples of a population of 1570 citizens. In the fieldwork in the first stage, a 'questionnaire' *(Questionnaire, 2017)* was used to interview the first sample of the population relevant to the themes of the six main proposals discussed in 'Problems and Purpose'. In this first stage, all the information of the respondents or the interviews and all the given answers to the questions of the questionnaire were recorded and kept track of the progress of the overall interview process by 'tablets with GPS' *(Constitution Net, 2017),* so that having the record, it helped the NSO to collect a second random sample of citizens for the second stage of the initiative.

The main part of the initiative was this second stage, where 'Deliberative Polling' was used as the main method. This deliberative polling is a fair political process where any decisions of the government are taken by consulting with citizens and their opinions. The role of the 'Deliberative/Consultive Council' was important as it was responsible to administer the polling process, this council uses the method of 'small-group deliberation', as the sample of citizens was as big as 669 citizens. In the first stage polling or opinion survey of those 1515 citizens were collected without giving them any information or prior knowledge, but in the second stage,669 citizens were provided with balanced information on the six main themes and the objective of this initiative and then again those citizens were surveyed the same questions to collect their updated opinion as in the first stage questionnaire, significantly provided information and knowledge in the deliberation process changed citizens' mind and opinions in the event.

Especially, both in the first and second stage the questions and suggested opinions relating to those six key themes contained in the questionnaire were evaluated on a scale of 0 to 10,

where '0' means the type of strongly opposed the opinion, '10' means the type of strongly agree to the proposal, and finally '99' means no opinion or don't know the response about the opinion *(Constitution Net, 2017)*. Below there is an example of one of the questions from the questionnaire.

Fig:(3) (Questionnaire, 2017)

QUESTIONAIRE													

| A6. Person ID | | | | | | | | | | |

201	To begin with, on a 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is extremely poorly, 10 is extremely well, and 5 is exactly in the middle, how well or poorly would you say the present system of democracy in Mongolia works these days?

Extremely poorly					Middle					Extremely well	Don't know
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	99

In the first stage, there were about 83 questions and opinions in the questionnaire in total, where 69 questions and opinions were designed to clarify or point out the six key themes of constitutional amendments; in the second-last part, 7 questions were designed to know citizens' general knowledge about their domestic politics, and last 7 questions were regarding how the citizens keep them up to date with the political matters of Mongolia. In the second stage, the first part of the survey questions and opinions were also the same as the first 76 questions, however as the second stage was the final and closing of the event, there were 10 questions in the last part about how citizens felt about the deliberative polling and overall event. So, in total there were 86 total questions and opinions in the final stage *(Questionnaire, 2017)*. Further will be discussed about the first and second polling process in the 'What Went On: Deliberation, Decisions and Public Interaction' section. Most of the questions in the questionnaire in both stages were designed to clarify each theme of the six key themes and consequently, a group of questions were divided to clarify each key theme. For example, 17 proposals were designed under the theme of controlling the power and balance of parliament and government, which accounted for 34% of the total questions in the questionnaire *(National Statistics Office of Mongolia, 2017);* the rest of the questions and opinions were divided under other 5 key themes.

So, consequently, citizens marked their opinions on those questions. Hereafter vast discussion section between all the citizens and the legal experts, and task-forces; each citizen took an opinion survey to show their views on the topics they discussed, those collected opinions helped the NSO to construct quantitative results of citizens' preferences and opinions from highest to lowest, which consequently assisted deliberative council, State of great Khural (The Parliament) to determine which opinions of the citizens should be added in the constitution and shape the process in the constitutional amendment *(The Asia Foundation, 2017)*.

What Went On: Deliberation, Decisions and Public Interaction

In the first stage, after selecting 1570 residents randomly, 1515 cooperated with the NSO by giving interviews. In early April 2017, several teams of NSO and other trained government staff started their fieldwork around the country by interviewing and taking the first poll by

asking the citizens questions and having done opinion surveys. In that preliminary stage, those citizens were provided information in writing papers to make them aware, that government is collecting public opinions to shape the process of constitutional amendments. After the opinion survey was completed, NSO picked about half of the participants to participate in the second and vital deliberative polling, It has to be noticed that, those 1515 participants in the first polling, who agreed to the question from the questionnaire if they can travel to Government Palace in the capital city for second deliberative polling, those were further selected for random sampling, from them 785 citizens were selected, but out of those 669 people turned up for the consultative polling in Ulaanbaatar.

It was not an easy task to bring 669 people from all over the country to the Government Palace, because in Mongolia, people live in small, isolated communities. Even though so many difficulties, and poor transportation; people came to the capital city by bus after a full day's journey on the **28th of April** overcoming complicated logistical problems *(The Asia Foundation, 2017).* That full day was reserved for citizens' settlement in Government provided accommodation.

On **29th April**, before everything started, everyone was given a booklet full of written explanations or briefing materials of the six key themes and their supporting proposals, the briefing materials were prepared by experts and researchers to inform about the small-group discussion. After that, all the participants came to the government palace, where the plenary session happened, a preliminary panel discussion. This panel discussion was also broadcasted live on television *(Naran, 2019).* In that discussion period, members from both political parties, experts, and researchers from the deliberative council, 25 international observers, and 30 domestic observers were present, and they discussed and informed the citizens about the meanings of those six key themes and their supporting questions and proposals. Citizens also asked their concerned questions and doubts regarding the themes and proposals, as well as doubts about group discussions, how they will proceed further, and how their opinions may impact the future of the constitutional amendment. Experts tried to give oral responses to all the doubts the citizens had. Especially, in the plenary session, the experts explained to the citizens the arguments for and against the six key themes and their supporting proposals, as they tried to give citizens a balanced view of the themes and proposals in a meaningful way to help citizens to make their independent decision about the proposals after learning the required information of both sides of the arguments.

After the plenary session, moderators and other Govt. staff divided those 669 participants into approx. 49 small groups, selecting 14 to 15 participants randomly in each group *(Consultative Survey, 2017)* for using the technique of 'small-group deliberation' method. Through this method, people engaged in a small group discussion with each other about those topics and proposals regarding the overall power structure of the president, independence of the civil society, frequency of district elections, a system of the civil service and many more *(Naran, 2019).* People were listening to each other's opinions of the proposals; each participant got an equal chance to show their views regarding six key issues in a small-group discussion under the watch of moderators. From the discussions, it was clear that people were concerned about the issues of transparency, accountability, and

corruption in the Governmental working process *(Idea. int, 2017).* Experts and other professional Govt. staffs were also there, who clarified concerns, and questions relevant to the themes and proposals. This group discussion helped those people to understand the key issues regarding the constitutional amendments and consequently helped to take their second opinion survey properly. Especially the deliberation process was employed to identify the effectiveness of the process and changes in the opinions of the citizens from first stage polling to second stage polling.

Through mass public engagement, those six key themes of the constitutional amendments generated mainly 18 important questions about specific aspects of the given proposals out of those 69 main questions from the questionnaire, which means the public gave more importance and discussed mostly the 18 questions for ca constitutional amendment in the deliberation process *(CDD, 2017; pg. 8).*

On **30th April,** after the deliberation or small group discussion on 29th April, those 669 participants came again to the Govt. palace for the second and final opinion survey to answer the same questions and give opinions on the proposals. The govt. statistical agency NSO conducted the opinion survey on ballot papers. According to the govt. law, each and everyone's opinion was independent & confidential, there was not any kind of external influence in deciding citizens' opinions *(Consultative Survey, 2017).* This second stage was all about measuring how citizens' opinions shifted in response to the deliberation that happened on the 29th of April *(Fishkin, 2018).* At the end of the main question-answer session, there was a feedback option, where citizens were asked the last 10 questions *(Questionnaire, 2017)* to know their opinions, how they felt about the overall 3 days event, and how moderators helped them to clarify the issues of constitutional amendments, how meaningful their participation was in the group discussion, etc. which helped the deliberative council and the Mongolian govt. to understand the publics' view of this nationwide deliberative polling, which happened for the first time in any country, with this mass public participation.

Influence, Outcomes and Effects

After the deliberation, NSO compiled the quantitative data of both first and second stage opinion surveys, and then they compared the quantitative results of both stages' opinions, as the opinion questions were measured under the mark between 0 to 10 scale. After analysing and comparing the results of both stages, NSO found that; out of those 18 key proposals generated under those six key themes from the questionnaire, 10 proposals (noted below) were given the highest priorities and mostly supported by those 669 participants for considering the constitutional amendment. Among those 10 proposals, citizens gave more importance to the issues of protecting civil service from political interference and corruption as well as the transparency, accountability, and meritocratic operation of various aspects of the government, including the judiciary system *(CDD, 2017).* The top 10 proposals were [Percentage refers to the given number of people out of 669 citizens who supported the proposal] -

Fig:(4) (CDD, 2017).

1. *Adding that the Public Service Commission should regulate recruitment, promotion, and security of tenure based on merit (91.3%)*
2. *Adding that public servants cannot be dismissed because of election results or on the basis of their political views (90.4%)*
3. *Adding that the public service should be professional, merit-based, and independent from political interference (90.3%)*
4. *Creating mechanism in the Constitution for state responsibility and accountability (89.2%)*
5. *Creating more clear procedures and principles for appointment of judges and chief justice (82.6%)*
6. *Adding a clause to the constitution that protects the independence of the Public Service Commission (78.2%)*
7. *Adding the structure of the Cabinet ministries in the Constitution (78.9%)*
8. *Establishing a parliamentary body to strengthen state accountability and ensure implementation of anti-corruption policies (75.8%)*
9. *Granting the Prime Minister the authority to appoint and dismiss the members of his/her Cabinet (72.7%)*
10. *Expanding membership of the General Judicial Council responsible for ensuring the autonomy of the judiciary (70.8%)*

Based on the result of this deliberative polling, NSO gave the compiled result of the proposals detailed from highest to lowest rank, to the Deliberative Council, after the Deliberative council considered the highest-ranked proposals (described above) and decided to give these proposals as a recommendation for amending the constitution to The State of Great Khural (Parliament) on 3rd May 2017. Then Parliament set up 26 members working group for drafting the constitutional amendment, especially this working group had the authority from the Parliament to accept, reject and further modify these recommendations. On 25th May 2017 this working group submitted its proposed amendments to the Chairperson of the Parliament to officially consider the amendment *(Idea. int, 2017).*

Unfortunately, in July 2017; of a critical internal political turmoil between the two ruling parties of MPP and DP, MPP lost the presidential election, and the Prime Minister was unseated for a no-confidence vote. However, after re-election, the reformed ruling party and the new Prime Minister from MPP and President from DP came to power in the government *(Freedom House, 2018).*

After a year, The new government still considered the results of that deliberative polling for constitutional amendment valuing the opinions and views of the citizen's demand, and finally, on 14th Nov 2019 *(Amendments, 2019)* the Mongolian Government adopted the constitutional amendment which added some proposals into the constitution according to citizens demand and highest-priorities in deliberative polling; which strengthened the overall power of the Prime Minister, the amendment will also limit future presidents to a single six-year term beginning in 2025. *(Freedom House, 2020),* building and funding local

projects for development will happen after consulting with the public and taking proposals from the public, there will be five members from the Supreme Court, province, and capital city courts, soum or inter-soum and district courts in the general council of the judiciary serving four years term, Govt. fund expenditures will be transparent to the public *(Amendments, 2019).* But there were some other changes and added proposals to the constitution which did not reflect the results of the 2017 deliberative polling this amendment did not give importance to the protection of civil service from external political influence, which was highly prioritised by the citizens in the final polling result. So, the results of the Deliberative Poll and people's demand partially served effectively on the proposals for which the parliament decided on the constitutional amendment.

Analyses of the impact on the democratic and institutional goods

In this first-ever nationwide Deliberative Polling in any country, Mongolia did reflect efficiently on the latest constitutional amendment in 2019, but it was effective partly because the problems connected to the transparency of the public service were mostly not considered in the amendment. However, citizens who participated in this deliberation expressed excitement about how their voices were being heard in the amendment process and their opinions on the various issues for the country's development. People were also excited to come to the Govt. palace and discussed various proposals with other citizens from different provinces *(The Asia Foundation, 2017).*

Based on this case, it can be analysed under some basic goods of a democratic institution, but firstly; it must be noted that any institutional design cannot fully realise or accomplish all the significant ingredients and basic goods *(Smith, 2009).*

Firstly, in terms of '**inclusiveness'**; it is best served when the deliberation process is 'open to all, there were no restrictions that can undermine the equal right and opportunity to participate *(Smith, 2009).* But it was not open to all as in the selection process in both stages, participants were selected randomly by the NSO. However, if we see the statistical data *(**Table:2**)* of the second stage, male and female participation in the deliberation was balanced even after randomly getting selected, so the selection had no gender biasedness hugely. However, most of the participants in the deliberation were from the capital city of Ulaanbaatar, and there were few from other provinces *(Table:1),* so there was a major shift of participants from the capital city and fewer from other provinces. Even after the huge participation, with the help of the 'small-group deliberation' method; supervised by the moderators and Govt. staff, all participants effectively participated in the discussion and were able to give their independent views of the six key themes without any external influence from other participants as well as their opinions were free from any interferences of both political parties of DP and MPP. In the feedback session on how participants felt about the event **(discussed in the 'what went on' section - last 10 questions),** out of 669 participants, 76.1% thought the small group discussions were valuable, 95.8% agreed that the group moderator provided the opportunity for everyone to participate in the discussion *(CDD, 2017).*

In terms of '**popular control**', it was not the event for taking a collective decision, it was about collecting individual opinions, and then understanding what most people think of an opinion. After gathering all the collective opinions, it was the government, that was solely responsible for implementing new laws and making changes to the updated constitution. Participants only could control their own opinions and give suggestions to Govt., but not had the control to make official changes to the constitution. Moderators were responsible for maintaining equal participation *(Consultative Survey, 2017)*. 92.5% agreed that the members of the group participated relatively equally, as well as 88.2% agreed that they learned a lot about other peoples' views different from each other *(CDD, 2017)*. So, participation and participants' opinion survey in the questionnaire were not much manipulated by political elites.

In terms of '**considered judgment**', through the 'plenary session,' the moderators and participants' interaction process helped the participants to gain information about the six key themes and clarify doubts about the questions in the questionnaire which helped the participants in the second opinion survey where they changed their views and opinions of various proposals significantly. The small group deliberation process helped participants further to answer their second stage questionnaire. For example, through deliberation a proposal of 'Granting the Prime Minister the authority to appoint and dismiss the members of his/her Cabinet' increased significantly from 57 per cent to 73 per cent, and there were also so many huge opinion changes after deliberation *(Constitution Net, 2017)*. However as per Smith, considered judgement does not mean participants only need facts and vast knowledge about the deliberative process but need reflective assessment on that issue *(Smith, 2009)*, so it was unclear how intense participants' assessment was of those proposals and gathered information before giving their second opinion survey.

In terms of **'internal transparency'**, in the plenary session participants elaborated on the deliberation process and arguments for and against the six key themes by the Govt. staff. During the time of small group deliberation further doubts about the questionnaire were solved and how to give their response independently was discussed. This first-ever nationwide deliberation process was broadcasted on national TV, as well as Govt. the published the official results of the deliberative polling and mentioned top proposals which have been sent to the deliberative council for consideration into the amendment publicly. However, it was not clear how sincerely the Govt. working group drafted the constitution and took the public input of the deliberative process seriously *(Idea. int, 2017)*. So, it can be argued that this process was not so transparent.

In terms of '**transferability**', the same type of successful deliberative polling happened before by the Mongolian Govt. in 2015 for planning and allocating funds for building 14 infrastructure projects by receiving opinions from citizens and ranking projects as per citizens' opinions. So, it was not that critical for the Mongolian Govt. to transfer the process of opinion survey and deliberative polling in the 2017 constitutional amendment. Furthermore, this design of the deliberative process further can be applied for other purposes, like the economic development process of any area, mitigating corruption in governmental work, etc. However, the design needs to be open to all and this design can be adopted elsewhere with good funds, event management and technical assistance, which they received here directly from the Mongolian Govt. and from 'The Centre for Deliberative

Democracy' of Stanford University. Otherwise, managing this massive deliberation process will be impossible.

In terms of **'Efficiency',** this whole event was sponsored by the Govt., which helped the participants to attend the deliberative poll in the capital city for 3 days. 89.3% said, **"the event as a whole"** was valuable, and 93.8% agreed that the important aspects of the issues were covered in the group discussion *(CDD, 2017).* As we as the opinion survey has taken opinions from all of the citizens, which was later used by the Govt. to conclude what changes citizens wanted in the constitutional amendment. Although all the opinions were not taken after a year later to make amendments to the constitution, the trade-off between cost and benefits of doing first-ever nationwide deliberative polling was partially fulfilled.

Mongolian Govt. employed this deliberative polling primarily for effective and equal public views for constitution forms, first-time normal public from different provinces with different diversity in any country together discussed their country's constitutional amendment. Even though finally public proposals affected the amended constitution partially, it can be learned that; this first-ever nationwide deliberative polling remained a good example for further employment of well-designed deliberative polling by the Govt. where they need to give more importance to the public's needs, demands and opinions before taking the final official decision without having any internal political turmoil between different political parties.

See Also

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Notes

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