

**Analysis of Strategic Management Practices in the
Public Sector of Afghanistan:
Challenges & Solutions**

By

Abdul Moqim

Supervised By

Mr. Kaleemullah Khan Bangash, PhD

Jan-2020

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree
of MBA at Kardan University, Kabul, Afghanistan**

Declaration of Authorship

I hereby certify that, the work embodied in this thesis project is the result of original research and has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Name: Abdul Moqim

Registration Number: 912-1704048

MBA Thesis – Kardan University

Supervisor: Mr. Kaleemullah Khan Bangash, PhD

Abstract

This research examines the implication of strategic management practices in the public organizations of Afghanistan, in order to highlight major challenges toward implication of strategic management practices and suggest recommendations for its improvement.

This qualitative research investigates the implication of strategic management practices of 11 governmental ministries randomly out of 51 public organizations through face to face in-depth interviews with senior officials of SM related departments. Collected data further analyzed in a thematic analysis.

It was found that, fragmentation in the planning systems across different governmental organizations, lack of coordination and strategic thinking and applying poor environmental scanning techniques are main challenges of the successful implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan.

This research paper recommends that, establishing unique planning system and authority to enhance coordination among different governmental organizations and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of strategic plans, enhancing understanding about strategic management and promoting strategic thinking and setting measurable and realistic goals are effective measures to improve the implication of strategic management practices in the public organizations of Afghanistan.

Acknowledgement

I would like to present my special thanks and gratitude to my supervisor Mr. Kaleemullah Khan Bangash, PhD, who gave me wonderful opportunity and guided me kindly to complete this MBA thesis on “Analysis of Strategic Management Practices in the Public Sector of Afghanistan: Challenges & Recommendations”.

I am also thankful to the Kardan University administrative staff, my dear friends and colleagues who were always being supportive. During the study I came to know so many new things about strategic management and public administration of Afghanistan, it was not possible without generous and valuable information provided by esteemed interviewees I am very much gratified to them as well.

Thanks,

Abdul Moqim

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1. Background of the Study | 1 |
| 1.2. Problem Statement | 3 |
| 1.3. Research Questions | 3 |
| 1.4. Objectives of the Study | 3 |
| 1.5. Significance of the Study | 4 |
| 1.6. Limitation of the Study | 4 |
| 1.7. Scheme of the Study | 5 |
| CHAPTER TWO: LITRATURE REVIEW | 6 |
| Introduction..... | 6 |
| 2.1. Purpose of the Literature Review..... | 6 |
| 2.2. Definition of Strategic Management..... | 6 |
| 2.3. Importance of Strategic Management | 7 |
| 2.4. What is Difference between Strategic Management and Strategic Planning? | 7 |
| 2.5. What are Strategic Management Practices..... | 8 |
| Strategy Formulation | 8 |
| Strategy Implementation | 8 |
| Strategy Evaluation & Control..... | 8 |
| 2.6. Strategic Management Practices in Other Countries | 9 |
| Latvia: | 9 |
| India: | 10 |
| Tanzania:..... | 10 |
| Indonesia: | 11 |
| Kenya: | 11 |
| 2.7. Strategic Management in the Public Sector | 11 |
| 2.8. Strategic Management in Non-Governmental Organizations | 12 |
| 2.9. Public Organization of Afghanistan..... | 13 |
| 2.10. A Glimpse on National Strategic Plans of Afghanistan..... | 14 |
| Millennium Development Goals (2004-2020):..... | 14 |
| Afghanistan National Development Strategy: | 15 |
| Afghanistan National Peace & Development Framework (2017-2021): | 15 |
| Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030):..... | 15 |

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 2.11. Strategic Management Practices in the Ministries of Afghanistan | 16 |
| 2.12. Theoretical Framework | 16 |
| Hypothesis and Variables | 17 |
| 2.13. Conclusion from Literature Review..... | 17 |
| CHAPTER THREE: RESERCH METHODOLOGY | 18 |
| Introduction..... | 18 |
| 3.1. Nature and Approach of the Research | 18 |
| 3.2. Purpose of the Research is exploratory | 18 |
| 3.3. Sources..... | 18 |
| 3.3.1. Primary Data | 19 |
| 3.3.2. Interview Protocol..... | 19 |
| 3.3.3. Population | 19 |
| 3.3.4. Sampling | 19 |
| 3.3.5. Sample Size..... | 19 |
| 3.4. Data Analysis Procedure..... | 19 |
| 3.5. Limitations of the Study..... | 20 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS & FINDINGS | 21 |
| Introduction..... | 21 |
| 4.1. Respondents Profile | 21 |
| 4.2. Analysis of Research Question One..... | 22 |
| 4.2.1. Analysis of Interview Question One | 22 |
| 4.2.2. Findings from interview question one | 24 |
| 4.2.3. Analysis interview question two: | 24 |
| 4.2.4. Findings from interview question two | 27 |
| 4.2.5. Findings from Research Question One | 29 |
| 4.3. Analysis of Research Question Two..... | 30 |
| 4.3.1. Analysis of Interview Question Two | 30 |
| 4.3.2. Findings from Interview Question One | 32 |
| 4.3.3. Analysis of Interview Question Two | 32 |
| 4.3.4. Findings from Interview Question Two..... | 35 |
| 4.3.5. Analysis of Interview Question Three | 35 |
| 4.3.6. Findings from Interview Question Three..... | 37 |
| 4.3.7. Findings from Research Question Two | 39 |

| | |
|--|-----------|
| 4.4. Analysis of Research Question Three..... | 40 |
| 4.4.1. Analysis of Interview Question One..... | 41 |
| 4.4.2. Findings from Interview Question One | 43 |
| 4.4.3. Analysis of Interview Question Two | 43 |
| 4.4.4. Findings from Interview Question Two..... | 46 |
| 4.4.5. Findings from Question Three | 48 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION..... | 50 |
| Introduction..... | 50 |
| 5.1Recap and Summary of Findings..... | 50 |
| 5.2. The extent of implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan (Objective One) | 51 |
| 5.3. Major challenges of applying strategic management practices in the public organizations of Afghanistan (Objective Two) | 51 |
| 5.4. Recommendations for improving the implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan (Objective Three)..... | 52 |
| 5.5. Study limitations | 52 |
| 5.6. Implications of the study..... | 53 |
| 5.6.1. Establishing National Strategic Planning System/ Structure | 53 |
| 5.6.2. Strategic Plans to be Environment Responsive..... | 53 |
| 5.6.3. Developing Researches and Data Collection Systems | 54 |
| 5.6.4. Promoting Strategic Thinking..... | 54 |
| 5.6.5. Setting Realistic and Achievable Goals | 54 |
| 5.7. Future Research | 54 |
| 5.8. Conclusion | 54 |
| References..... | 55 |

Table of Figures

| | |
|--|----|
| Figure 1. Process of Strategic Management..... | 9 |
| Figure 2. Model of Developing SPs in Tanzania | 10 |
| Figure 3. Influence of SMPs on the performance of NGOs..... | 13 |
| Figure 4. Theoretical framework of the study..... | 17 |
| Figure 5. Basic Theme of: vision and mission statements are not clearly communicated..... | 22 |
| Figure 6. Basic theme of: not involving stakeholders/ beneficiaries in the process of developing vision and mission | 23 |
| Figure 7. Basic theme of: all the programs and projects are not designed based on vision and mission of the organization..... | 23 |
| Figure 8. Basic theme of: Lack of well-organized and standard vision and mission statements ... | 24 |
| Figure 9. Basic theme of: not considering strategic plan as an important organizational development tool..... | 25 |
| Figure 10. Basic theme of: Most of long-term plans are not responsive to the needs of the environment | 26 |
| Figure 11. Basic theme of: Lack of unique, standard and defined planning system/mechanism .. | 27 |
| Figure 12. Summary of RQ1..... | 28 |
| Figure 13. Basic theme of: not applying environmental scanning techniques..... | 31 |
| Figure 14. Basic Theme of: not predicting future accurately..... | 32 |
| Figure 15. Basic theme of: strategic plans of all public organizations are not based on or linked with National Strategies | 33 |
| Figure 16. Basic theme of: lack of coordination in inter-ministerial programs | 34 |
| Figure 17. Basic theme of: Strategic plans are not being supported by national annual budget.... | 34 |
| Figure 18. Basic Theme of: Inappropriate Formulation of Strategic Plans | 35 |
| Figure 19. Basic Theme of: Ineffective implementation of strategic plans | 36 |
| Figure 20. Basic theme of: Strategic Plans are not Being Properly Evaluated in a Regular basis. | 37 |
| Figure 21. Summary of RQ2..... | 38 |
| Figure 22. Basic Theme of: formulating decent vision and mission statements..... | 41 |
| Figure 23. Basic Theme of: Scanning the environment effectively | 42 |
| Figure 24. Basic Theme of: Establishing SMART Objectives | 43 |
| Figure 25. Basic Theme for: Enhancing Coordination | 44 |
| Figure 26. Basic Theme of: Communicating Strategic Documents..... | 45 |
| Figure 27. Basic Theme of: Monitoring Evaluating Strategic Plans | 45 |
| Figure 28. Basic Theme of: Effective Evaluation Process..... | 46 |
| Figure 29. Summary of RQ3..... | 47 |

Acronyms

| | |
|--------|---|
| SMPs | Strategic Management Practices |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| ANDS | Afghanistan National Development Strategy |
| ANPDF | Afghanistan National Peace & Development Framework |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| ASDGs | Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals |
| BCG | Boston Consulting Group |
| MoE | Ministry of Economy |
| IFE | Internal Factor Evaluation |
| EFE | External Factor Evaluation |
| CPM | Competitive Profile Matrix |
| SWOT | Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats |
| SPACE | Strategic Position & Action Evaluation |
| PESTEL | Political Economic Social Technological Environmental Legal |
| SPs | Strategic Plan |

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Strategic Management is considered as an important organizational tool not only in private sector but in the governmental organizations as well. This study discussed importance of the implication of strategic management practices in other countries and further analyzed implication of strategic management in the public sector of Afghanistan, major challenges and possible solutions highlighted as well.

This chapter is going to discuss problem statement, research questions, objectives, significance and limitation of the research.

1.1. Background of the Study

Strategic management is being practiced in public sector since 1980s as a significant organizational tool McBin and Smith (2010). Examining the importance of applying strategic management in public sector Birinci and Eren (2013) believed that, implication of strategic management in public sector is equally important in public organizations as it is in private sector as an organizational development tool. However, considering enhancement of public services, utilizing public resources and achieving long-term goals implication of SMPs has greater impact on the performance of public administration than private one.

In a study titled “A Guide to Government in Afghanistan” it was found that, recently re-established public administration of Afghanistan which consists of 51 different institutions including 25 ministries, tried to apply strategic management practices in past 19 years both at national level as well as in various sectors (Evans et al 2004).

In past 19 years several national strategic plans were developed such as: Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (ASDGs) and Afghanistan National Peace

and Development Framework (ANPDF), all public organizations were ordered to follow above mentioned strategic documents and formulate their organizational strategic plans accordingly. MoE (2013).

Keeping in mind afresh administrative system, some other factors such as: lack of experience in formulating, implementing and evaluating strategic plans, lack of accurate data and statistics, unique and standard planning system, and even unavailability of qualified human resources at each level of management came together as major challenges toward implication of strategic management practices successfully in the public sector of Afghanistan Cookman and Wadhams (2010).

A study titled “Civil Service Reform in Afghanistan” carried by Hashimi and Lauth (2016), highlighted lack of coordination among government programs and organizations as one of main drawbacks of public administration in Afghanistan. Actually this, lack of coordination mainly rooted in poor implication of strategic management practices. The same study uncovers the fact that most of strategic and well- formulated documents of public organizations have been placed in shelves of certain ministries and never had been in action which leads to the huge gap between planning and implementation.

Daqiq (2016) in a study of Improving Coordination Among Government Ministries in Afghanistan, demonstrated that; due to the lack of coordination among governmental organizations and their mandates, certain government programs are duplicated and costly, the rate of spending development budget by governmental organizations remains low, and cross- cutting issues have not been addressed by any of governmental agency.

Country Strategy Paper of Afghanistan by European Commission (2013) demonstrates that; However, since 2001 major steps were taken toward establishing a stable and well organized public administration in Afghanistan, many foundations laid out and many organizational development tools being used. Applying strategic management practices in the context of Afghanistan, where subtle and unpredictable changes occurred in Political, Environmental, Social, Technological and Legal environments frequently, access to adequate and accurate data is limited, strategic thinking is not presented in the mind of public employees, roles and mandate of certain public organization is not clear even in mind of their top managers etc... it is not an easy task to formulate, implement and evaluate strategic plans effectively and successfully.

Going through above cited studies it is determined that, strategic management is an important organizational development tool both in private sector and in public sector as well. And recently re- established public administration of Afghanistan struggles with directing all public resources to a specific direction and enhancing coordination among governmental programs and organizations. This study is going to study implication of SMPs in the public sector of Afghanistan, examine its challenges and propose suitable recommendations in a qualitative research through face to face in-depth interviews with higher officials of the planning departments of public sector.

1.2. Problem Statement

Strategic management practices are considered as one most important organizational development tool, both in private sector and in public as well. This study aims to find out and recommend appropriate ways for improvement of the implication of strategic management practices in the public organizations of Afghanistan

1.3. Research Questions

To understand the level of implication of strategic management practices in the public organizations of Afghanistan, major challenges to SMPs' implication and looking for solutions, following three research questions designed and tried to answer them in the research:

- 1) To which extent strategic management practices are applied in the public organizations of Afghanistan?
- 2) What are main difficulties in applying strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan?
- 3) How to improve strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation in the public organizations of Afghanistan?

1.4. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To know how much strategic management practices have been applied in the governmental organizations of Afghanistan.

- 2) To find out major constrains of the implication of strategic management in the public sector.
- 3) To suggest some effective approaches and methods for better implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan.

1.5. Significance of the Study

Generally practicing strategic management in the public sector is a newly introduced technique. In the context of Afghanistan, it is difficult to find out enough academic works and researches in the areas of public administration, especially looking for analysis of strategic management practices in the public administration of Afghanistan is not an easy task. This research might be an effective attempt to pave the way for further studies on the better utilization of SMPs in the governmental organizations of Afghanistan.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

Carefully and professionally analyzing details of the implication of strategic management practices in all governmental organizations and its impact on their performance is a difficult and time-taking task. And it is not possible to analyze the performance of all governmental organizations and to know how their productivity was influenced by SMPs with the selective approach.

Getting answers to the interview questions of this research from a common and low level manager is almost not possible. Because SM is a technical process and it is required to have both conceptual and technical knowledge of implementing strategic management to know its process and challenges.

So, accessibility and interviewing top level and SM relevant managers was another limitation of this study.

1.7. Scheme of the Study

This research paper consists of five chapters as follow:

Chapter One: is about general introduction of strategic management practices and its implication in the public sector. Main objectives, difficulties and the reasons of why this topic is important discussed in the first chapter briefly.

Chapter Two: embodied of literature review in which we examined introduction to the SMPs, its implication in the public sectors of other countries and some of strategic documents of Afghanistan as well.

Chapter Three: this chapter explained the way of how research was conducted. Research approach and methodology, sourced of data and protocol of sampling stated in the third chapter.

Chapter Four: analysis and findings from the collected data through face to face interviews are presented in this chapter.

Chapter Five: this is the last chapter of the study which states recommendations based on literature review and analysis of the data.

CHAPTER TWO: LITRATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Prior developing framework of the study, related literature and published material have been reviewed both in the international and Afghanistan's contexts. In the first part of literature review strategic management, its practices, implication and importance in the public sector discussed at all, then public administration of Afghanistan is briefly introduced and some national strategic documents are examined as well.

2.1. Purpose of the Literature Review

Related literatures have been reviewed to have a look at strategic management first, then to know the experience of other countries how the utilized strategic management practices as an organizational development tool and to find out the ways how we can apply strategic management practices in the public organizations of Afghanistan in order to enhance performances and better utilize resources.

2.2. Definition of Strategic Management

Strategic Management is both science and art of formulating, implementing and evaluating long-term cross functional and integrated decisions and plans to achieve the organization's objectives Palladan (2018).

Strategic management is a continuous process of strategic analysis, strategy creation, implementation and monitoring, used by organizations with the purpose to achieve and maintain competitive advantage Athapaththu (2016).

According to Jofre (2011) the ultimate goal of strategic management is better utilization of strengths, overcoming weaknesses of a firm and grabbing opportunities and avoiding threats in the environment.

Strategic management aims at creating opportunities and success at them.

Through a thematic study it is concluded that; Strategic thinking involves three main issues such as; having a definite objective purpose in mind, analysis or understanding of environment's forces and creative thinking in developing responses to the environment's forces for achieving defined goals. (Zaei et al 2013).

2.3. Importance of Strategic Management

Study carried out by Mayilvaganan and Raviselvam (2016) concludes that; both financial and nonfinancial benefits can be derived from strategic management approach to decision making. Datta and Mathew (2014) highlighted that; strategic management enables organization to predict future accurately, and be proactive instead of reactive. It also enhances knowledge about competitors' strategies and increase mutual understanding and cooperation within an organization.

Strategic management provides a clear direction to the organization to survive, improve and compete in the contemporary competitive era. And it enables an organization to enhance coordination among all cross functional levels and departments.

2.4. What is Difference between Strategic Management and Strategic Planning?

According to Rao and Williams (2013) Strategic management and strategic planning concepts are often used interchangeably while there is clear difference between the two. Strategic management consists of three phases; Strategy formulation, Strategy implementation, Strategy evaluation While strategic planning refers only to the strategy formulations process.

Simply we can say that strategic management is a broader term which used in academic fields, while strategic planning is narrower term and part of strategic management, commonly used in the business.

2.5. What are Strategic Management Practices

In a research project conducted by Tracy (2011), strategic management practices are defined as: habits, customs, routines and methods of an organization relates to the strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation.

Implementing strategic management practices depends on context, requirements and type of organization. Generally, strategic management practices with consist of scanning the environment, formulating strategy, implementing strategy and ends with strategy evaluation and control.

According to David (2011) Strategic Management Practices differ on the bases of context and requirements, generally talking Strategic management is practiced and implemented in three main phases, each phase consists of several practices which are also called process of strategic management:

Strategy Formulation

This is the first stage which consists of; developing vision and mission statements, analyzing the environment, identifying long-term objectives and selecting suitable strategy.

Strategy Implementation

Most critical and important practice of strategic management is implementing strategies. Strategy formulation is a process with stated roles and techniques but implementation of strategy is a complicated art dealing with people and is action oriented.

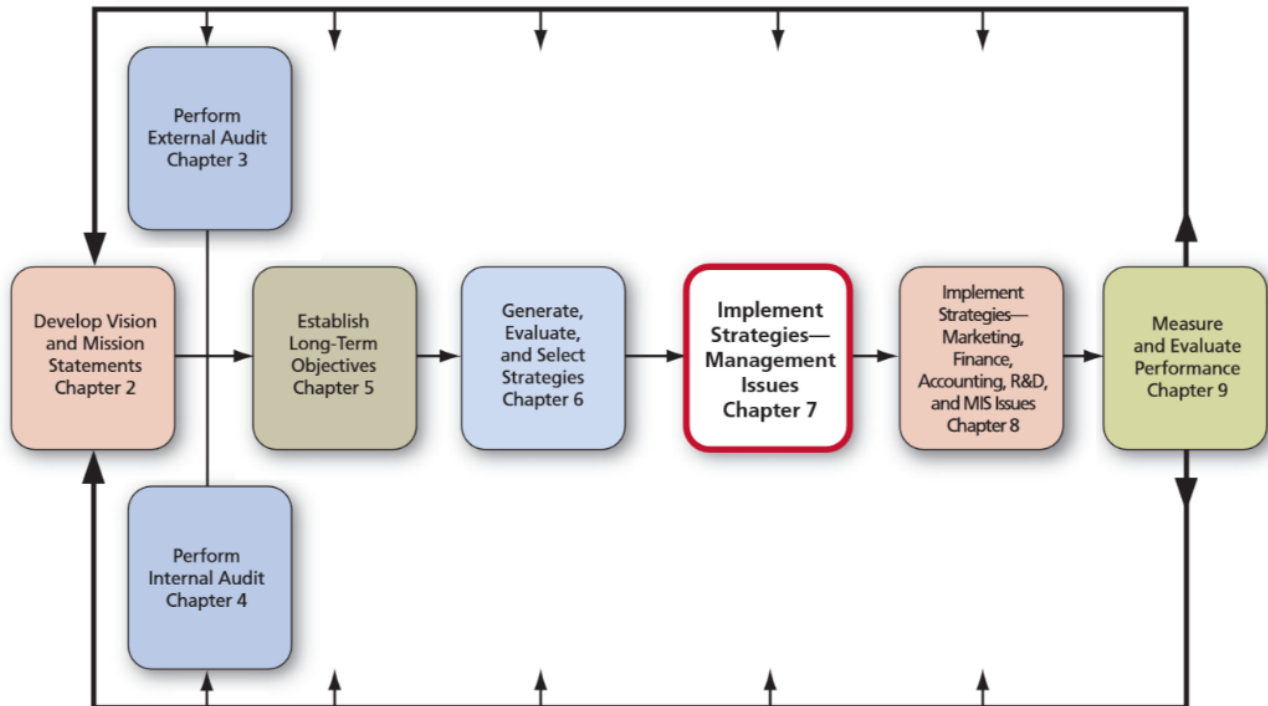
Strategy implantation depends on effectively performing functions of the following fields; Management, Marketing, Finance, Research & Development, Human Resources, Operations, Production

Strategy Evaluation & Control

Reviewing and evaluating strategy is the final phase of strategic management. When factors of external environments changes or because of change in internal strengths and weaknesses current strategy may not work anymore. That's why we need to review and evaluate strategy frequently.

Strategy evaluation and control consist of three practices; reviewing bases of strategy, measuring organizational performances and taking corrective actions.

Figure 1. Process of Strategic Management



2.6. Strategic Management Practices in Other Countries

Latvia:

In 2001 government of Latvia adopted a comprehensive policy planning guideline. After successfully conducted pilot projects of strategic management in the ministry of agriculture the government of Latvia developed Strategic management system in 2006 for the public administration in following three categories:

- National Level Strategy (Strategy for Sustainable Development of Latvia)
- Budget Plan (National Development Plan)
- Ministry level Action Plan (all public organizations are responsible to develop 3 years Action Strategy)

The main objective of introducing strategic management practices in Latvia was; focus on results and efficient utilization of public resources by defining specific goals and objectives.

The positive and important point of strategic management practice in Latvia is that; they developed budget plan according to the national strategy and to support it. This linkage of

budget and strategy is too much crucial for successful implementation of strategic planning (Nartisa et al 2012).

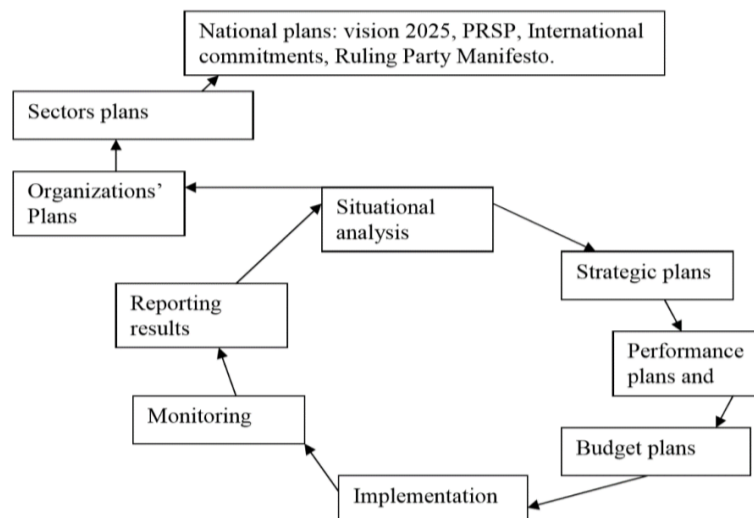
India:

In a study on strategic management approach of Indian companies Dutt (2016) concluded that; strategic management as an organizational development tool being used in private sector since mid-1950s. while public administration was depending on constitutions and national laws, later in 1980s practicing of strategic management introduced in the public institutions as well.

Tanzania:

According to Sulle (2009) in 1990s with several other socio-economic reforms strategic management system was also introduced to the public administration system of Tanzania. Two major documents or strategic plans; The National Poverty Eradication Strategy (NPES) and The Tanzania Development Vision 2025 developed in 1997, and all government entities were ordered to develop organizational strategic plans accordingly. In order to coordinate and look after strategic management practices in the public sector of Tanzania, the government established a responsible ministry called Public Service Management. Mentioned ministry issued a model for developing strategic plans in Tanzania as follow:

Figure 2. Model of Developing SPs in Tanzania



Lack of enough financial resources, unavailability of exact data and low capacity of government employees are major challenges to the SM in Tanzania.

Indonesia:

Implication of strategic planning affected national contractor industries of Indonesia in terms of services development, capacity and competitive power in global market. (Ratnaningsih et, al 2010)

Kenya:

Study done by Maroa & Muturi (2015) indicates that practicing strategic management positively influenced the performance of floriculture firms in Kenya. They also highlighted that implementation of strategy is too much important for other two practices (evaluation and control), in fact without implementation it is not possible to evaluate and control strategies.

And regular evaluation of strategic plans is vital as well for proper utilization of strategic management practices in any sector or any kind of organization.

2.7. Strategic Management in the Public Sector

A study carried out by Salkic (2014) suggests that; modern public organizations must be familiar with internal and external factors which affect their business. Keeping balance between those two factors is the key tool for organizational development which enables it to survive and progress in today's competitive and challenging environment.

Strategic management is comparatively new innovation into the public sector, for better utilization of public resources Sulle (2009).

Initially practicing SM as a standard organizational development tool used in private sector since 1950. In private sector everything is about the willing of client and many says that customer is the king. Recently in public sector also client is the center of all programs and most of public strategies are client-oriented. This client oriented approach pave the way for strategic management practices to be introduced in the public sector as well. Especially in past two decades enough interest was shown by governments to use

strategic management in public institutions to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in delivering public services McBain and Smith (2010)

According to Aboramadan & Boronovi (2016) strategic management practices are as much important in public sector as in private sector. Public sector serves the public and must develop plans and policies according to the need, values and priorities of the community.

Public agencies use strategic management for controlling managerial activities, allocating and utilizing resources effectively and to enhance performance of the organization.

The use of strategic management is triggered by governments' desire to control public expenditure via enhance efficiency of public organization.

According to Birinci and Eren (2013) here are some unique features of strategic management in public sector:

- More sensible to the politics
- Having broader range of customers, consumers and society
- Difficult to measure results
- Employees have more complex responsibility

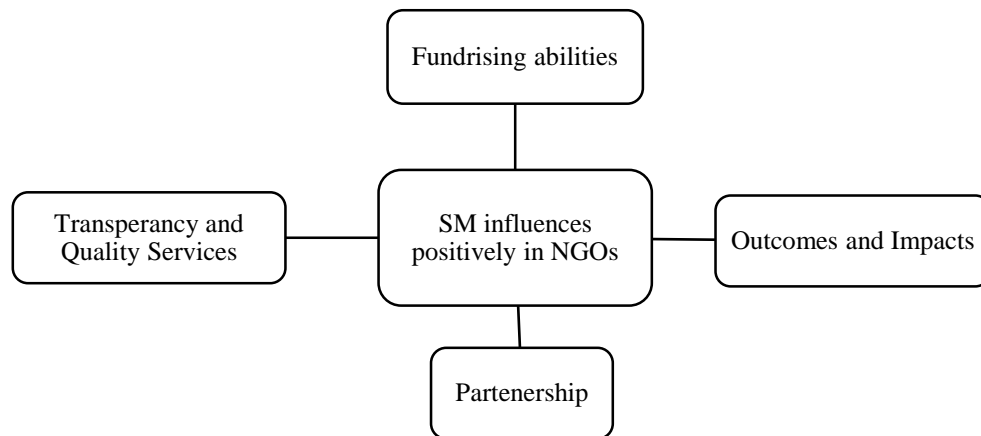
In a study of BCG, it is demonstrated that, following techniques contribute in a better implication of strategic plan with highest impact in the public sector; giving ample consideration to reconcile organization's responsibilities with its resources and setting clear priorities accordingly, analyzing environment along with the face and scale of changes in it, formulating a strategic plan which delivers the impact, communicating strategy throughout organization and with stakeholders as well, promoting strategic culture, adopting the process to support the strategy, developing a system for execution and learning (Boland et al, 2018)

2.8. Strategic Management in Non-Governmental Organizations

Strategic management is a vital organizational tool, not only for profit and governmental organizations but also it has its positive influence on the performance of Non-Governmental Organizations as well.

Study carried out by Abo mohammad (2016) in Palestine concluded that; NGOs which identified Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, define their strategies accordingly, implement strategic plans effectively and evaluate it regularly, would have better performance from a financial aspect in terms of generating funds and utilizing these funds efficiently and effectively.

Figure 3. Influence of SMPs on the performance of NGOs



2.9. Public Organization of Afghanistan

As this study focuses on strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan, and more specifically it aims at public administration after Bonn conference 2001. Since then Afghanistan has made some significant progresses such as drafting new constitution, political system, administrative reforms and many other development programs (Hashimi & Lauth 2016)

Afghanistan has centralized form of government and the present administrative structure of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is comprised of fifty-one different governmental institutions, including: Twenty-five Ministries, Five General Directorates, Five Independent Commissions and other independent entities.

All of the above mentioned public organizations are mainly located and functioning in the capital city Kabul and have branches in all 34 provinces of the country.

2.10. A Brief Introduction of National Strategic Plans of Afghanistan

As this research is examining implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan, it is essential to have a look on recently formulated national level strategic plans, in order to know how they developed, implemented and linked to the organizational plans of public sector.

Millennium Development Goals (2004-2020):

Fighting for freedom, dignified life with basic standards, equality and eradication of poverty in the world stage were issues of debate in United Nations. In 2000 millennium summit all UN members adopted eight following goals to be achieved till 2015.

Eradication of poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality rate, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, other diseases and ensuring environmental sustainability and developing a global partnership for development.

As in 2000 Afghanistan did not had a recognized and functioning government, so Afghanistan adopted MDGs later in 2004. And UN extended deadline only for Afghanistan to 2020 also added one more goal (Security) as ninth one to the Afghanistan's MDGs.

Ministry of Economy was as a responsible public organization for coordinating and implementing MDGs, and government of Afghanistan strives a lot to achieve MDGs through ANDS and NPPs and align all governmental organizations' programs accordingly. But Security, lack of accurate and reliable data, low capacity of government employees and lack of coordination among public organizations and donors were some of most critical constrains in achieving MDGs in Afghanistan MoE (2013)

Afghanistan National Development Strategy:

Afghanistan National Development Strategy focused on Security, Governance, Rule of Law, Human Rights, Economic and Social Development. ANDS was launched by ex-president Hamid Karzai in 2005.

In fact, after the agreement of Bonn Conference which laid out a political vision for Afghanistan, ANDS was first public strategic plan developed and adopted by the government of Afghanistan. All ministries were responsible to develop their strategic plans according to ANDS.

But as ANDS itself stated that; main reason for developing ANDS was to attract and convince donors and to eligible Afghan government to meet condition of the World Bank for debt relief and concessional loans. So we can frankly comment that ANDS was not an effective strategic plan for the needed development and reforms programs of the public administration in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan National Peace & Development Framework (2017-2021):

ANPDF is Afghanistan's five years' Strategic plan aiming at development, peace and stability in the country. ANPDF is well designed national level plan which highlights key investment and targeted areas, striving for sustainable development through increase in revenue generation, and decrease in government expenditures.

ANPDF focuses on self-reliance economy and poverty reduction programs it also aims at aligning national budget with national priority programs.

Afghanistan Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030):

After MDGs, World's agenda of SDGs developed from 2015 to 2030. SDG consists of 17 goals, and Afghanistan also adopted it after Cabinet approval in 2015. The government of Afghanistan assigned Ministry of Economy as focal point and coordinating body for SDGs' affairs.

Since 2015, Ministry of Economy is working on ASDGs to align it to the Afghanistan context. In Identifying baselines, aligning all public programs and projects to the ASDGs, lack of accurate data and statistics, coordinating and financing are main challenges to the ASDGs as they were challenging MDGs too.

2.11. Strategic Management Practices in the Ministries of Afghanistan

Most of public organizations in Afghanistan use strategic management practices into some extent and they are trying to align and plan their programs and major projects according to the above mentioned national strategies.

In literature survey for this research, we also gone through several ministries' strategic plans such as: Ministry of Education (National Education Strategic Plan), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Information and Culture.

Studying strategic plans of ministries, one may reach to the point that; all public organizations of Afghanistan tried to identify vision and mission statements and long term objectives somehow, but they were struggling to analyze the environment evaluate it and choose strategies accordingly.

2.12. Theoretical Framework

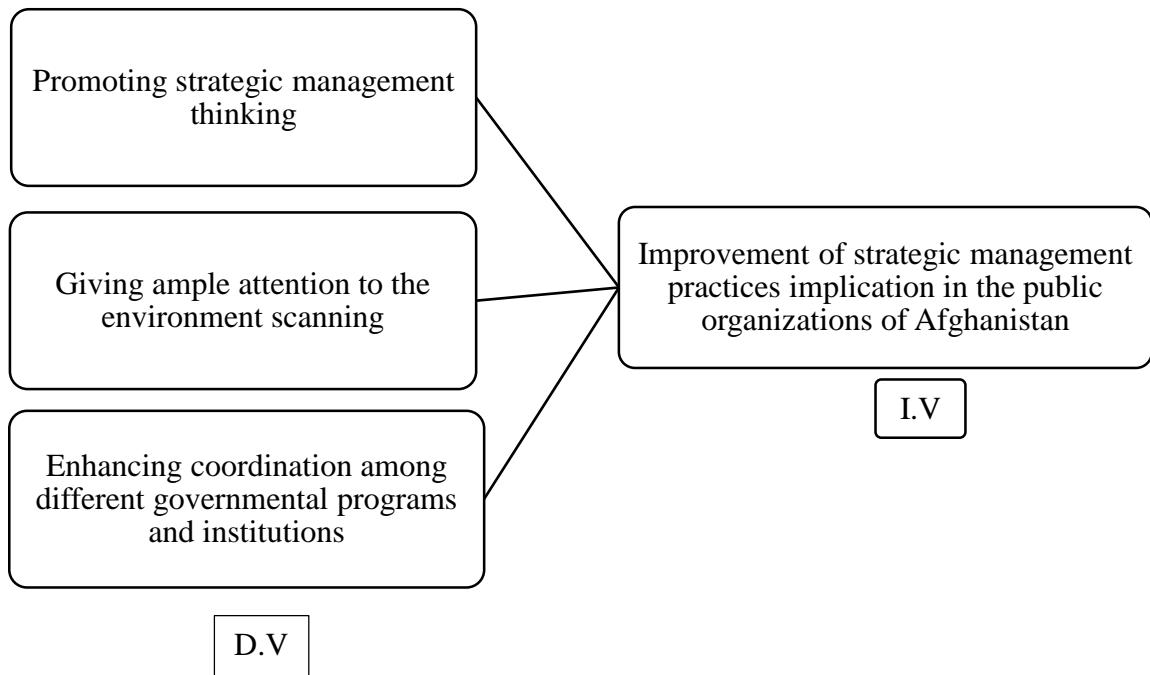
Sekaran (2010) stated that theoretical framework is the foundation on which entire research project is based. Theoretical Framework is a conceptual model of making sense of the relationship among several factors effecting the problem. In theoretical framework we identify variables and develop a testable hypothesis.

Hypothesis and Variables

Hypothesis is logically estimated relationship between two or more variables expressed in the form of testable statement. The hypothesis of qualitative research will also be tested in thematic analysis, so we will be testing our hypothesis after data and while developing themes.

Lack of strategic management thinking, inefficient process of environmental scanning, lack of strategic management knowledge and not communication strategies across all levels of organization leads to Poor Implication of Strategic Management Practices in the Public Sector of Afghanistan.

Figure 4. Theoretical framework of the study



2.13. Conclusion from Literature Review

Going through related literature and experiences of other countries by applying strategic management practices in the public sector, we conclude that; As Afghanistan's public administration system is new and need to be proactive, flexible with changes and all the projects and programs implemented by public organization must be utilized effectively, this is possible with applying standard strategic management techniques in all government organizations and programs.

Especially as mentioned in literature review, that strategic management enables organizations to eliminate conflicts and resistance to change and apply result based management successfully. Above mentioned are the points public organizations of Afghanistan need too much than anyone else.

CHAPTER THREE: RESERCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter explains the research method, tool of data collection and sampling. This part also highlights limitations to the study.

3.1. Nature and Approach of the Research

Carefully comparing both qualitative and quantitative types of research; it was decided to go for qualitative research. Due to the fact that, focus and goal of the research is to describe quality of strategic management practices have been applied in the public sector of Afghanistan and will also explore human experiences to highlight main challenges to the SMPs.

The philosophical root and descriptive nature of the research is constructive and interpretive and design of collecting data also needs to be flexible not too much structured and limited to the figures and statistics. That's why qualitative nature with an inductive approach was selected for carrying out the study.

3.2. Purpose of the Research is exploratory

This is an applied and exploratory research, aims at finding solutions to the problem of how to improve the implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan?

3.3. Sources of Data

The research is generated from both primary and secondary data.

3.3.1. Primary Data

The primary or first-hand data collected through In-depth interviews, where open and non-directive questions were asked from informants. The logic behind using this method of data collection is to encourage respondents to express themselves truly and freely and to collect more detailed and depth answerers to the interview questions.

3.3.2. Interview Protocol

Interview questions were developed for all three research questions and in-Depth face to face Interviews were used as main tool for collecting first hand data from the employees of public organizations of Afghanistan.

Researcher tried his best to interview senior managers of public organizations and the estimated time for each interview is 20 minutes.

3.3.3. Population

Population of the study is 22 ministries of the Islamic republic of Afghanistan. While the Universe of this research is studying strategic management practices in all 51 public organization of Afghanistan, which includes 22 governmental ministries.

3.3.4. Sampling

Population elements do not have any probability chance to be investigated, instead this research involves the choice of subjects who are most favorably positioned, such as directors of planning and policies of different ministries.

So, this research is based on nonprobability Judgment Sampling technique.

3.3.5. Sample Size

From the population of 22 ministries 11 selected by judgement in a non-probable manner for interviews as a sample size.

3.4. Data Analysis Procedure

Thematic analysis technique is used to analyze the data.

Thematic Analysis is the process of identifying, analyzing and representing themes within a large amount of qualitative data. (Maguire & delhunt 2017)

Thematic analysis approach was used in this research to analyze collected data in the following stages:

- 3.4.1. **Generating Basic Themes:** after typing all recorded interviews and read the transcript, the text was further reduced and basic themes were developed for each interview question.
 - 3.4.2. **Organizing Themes:** from the exploration of basic themes, organizing themes were developed in this stage.
 - 3.4.3. **Global Theme:** after identifying organizing theme and integration of already explored data the overall objective of the study (Global Theme) is developed.
- Data analyzation process of this study done on the basis of above mentioned thematic analysis techniques.

3.5. Limitations of the Study

Following are some of major limitations of this study:

- a) It was tough to get technical information regarding SMPs from low level employees of the public sector.
- b) Researcher is working with a public organization as a senior manager of planning and policy directorate, so his own perception may affect the analysis process.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS & FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter analyses data of the research and states main findings of the study. Three research questions which embodied from 7 interview questions are being discussed and analyzed in details. Result of the data collected through interviews with the top level strategic managers of the public sector is examined and presented in this chapter, in order to answer the question of; To which extent strategic management is used and how to improve its implication in the public administration of Afghanistan.

4.1. Respondents Profile

Eleven respondents who are working directly in the directorates of planning or involved indirectly with strategic plan with 11 different governmental organizations (Technical Vocational Education and Training Authority, Afghanistan Cricket Board, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Ministry of Information and Culture, Ministry of Tribal and Border Affairs, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Higher Education) interviewed and prior going to analysis of collected data here is the demographic profile of respondents. For proper organizing of the data collection and analysis process, respondents were given codes and instead of their names the codes will be used. Detailed table of respondents is as follow:

Table 1. Respondents' profile

| No | Code | Gender | Age | Education | Experience | Department |
|----|-----------|--------|-----|-----------|------------|--------------|
| 1 | 001-TVET | M | 32 | Master | 5 years | Not Planning |
| 2 | 002-ACB | M | 40 | Master | 12 years | Planning |
| 3 | 003-MRRD | M | 33 | Bachelor | 6 years | Planning |
| 4 | 004-MoIC | M | 32 | Master | 8 years | Planning |
| 5 | 005-MoBTA | M | 38 | Bachelor | 5 years | Planning |
| 6 | 006-MoWA | F | 40 | Bachelor | 10 years | Not Planning |
| 7 | 007-MoEd | M | 45 | PhD | 12 years | Planning |
| 8 | 008-MoT | M | 29 | Master | 4 years | Planning |
| 9 | 009-MoLSA | M | 30 | Bachelor | 2 years | Not Planning |
| 10 | 010-MoE | M | 42 | Master | 8 years | Planning |
| 11 | 011-MoHE | M | 44 | Master | 10 Years | Planning |

4.2. Analysis of Research Question One

The very first objective of research is to analyze that; how much strategic management is being used in the public sector, thus first research question is designed as; To which extent strategic management practices are applied in the public organizations of Afghanistan? Finding relevant answers of the above mentioned research question, further interview questions were designed and asked from 11 interviewees.

4.2.1. Analysis of Interview Question One

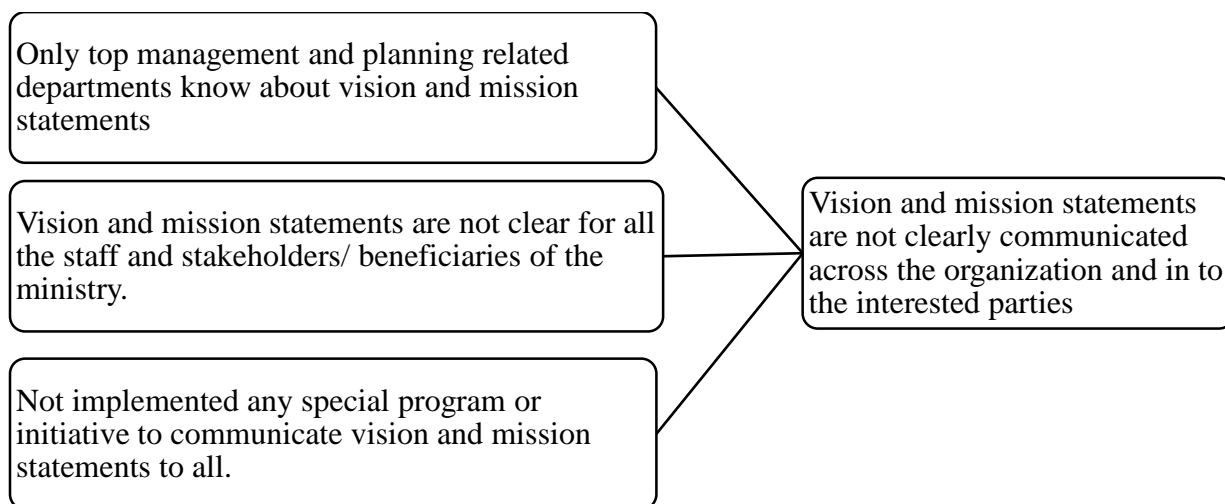
Here are interviewees' answers to the first interview question (Does your organization have vision and mission statement? If yes, please say how it was developed and communicated across the organization?)

(005-7MoEd and 004-MoIC) interviewed on January 3rd answered:

“our organization developed vision and mission statements. And are printed on the document of five years' strategic plan and mostly communicated among top management and the departments which are related to the strategic issues of the organization.

Generally talking, purpose of existence of our ministry is clear but I am not sure that all the staff of the ministry and departments across the country may know exactly what is the vision and mission of the organization.” [007-MoEd & 004-MoIC]

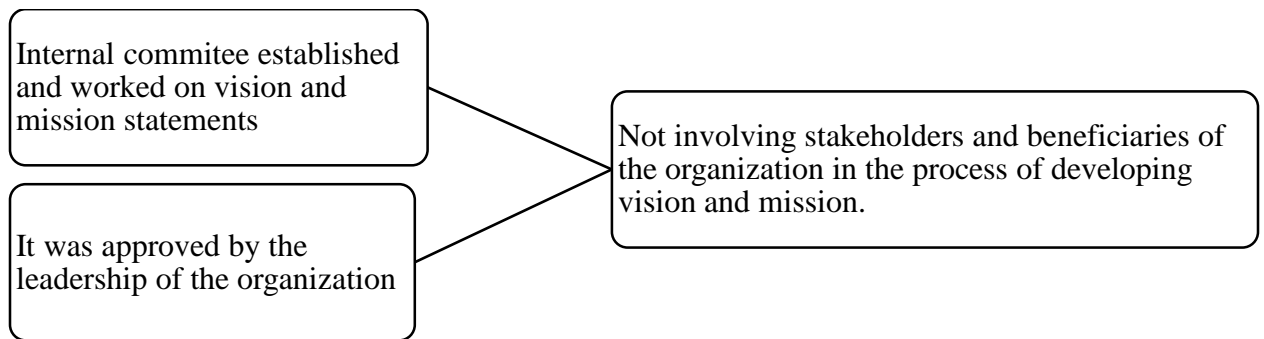
Figure 5. Basic Theme of: vision and mission statements are not clearly communicated



Other two respondents interviewed on January 5th answered first question as:

“Of course, we do have vision and mission. An internal committee was established to work on developing vision and mission statements along with the strategic plan of the ministry. The internal committee worked under direct supervision of the leadership of the ministry and the came out with a vision and mission, then it was approved by the leadership of the organization.” [001-TVET & 002-ACB]

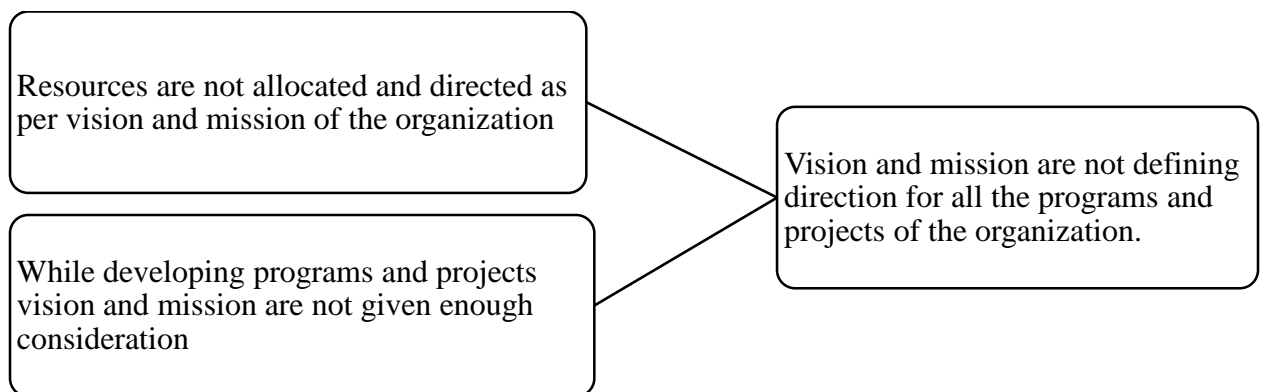
Figure 6. Basic theme of: not involving stakeholders/ beneficiaries in the process of developing vision and mission



Interviewee asked on 4th January, answered:

“We have vision and mission statements, but they are only on papers. Our resources are not allocated based on the vision and mission and while developing programs and projects it is not matched or directed by the vision and mission of the ministry all the time.” [006-MoWA]

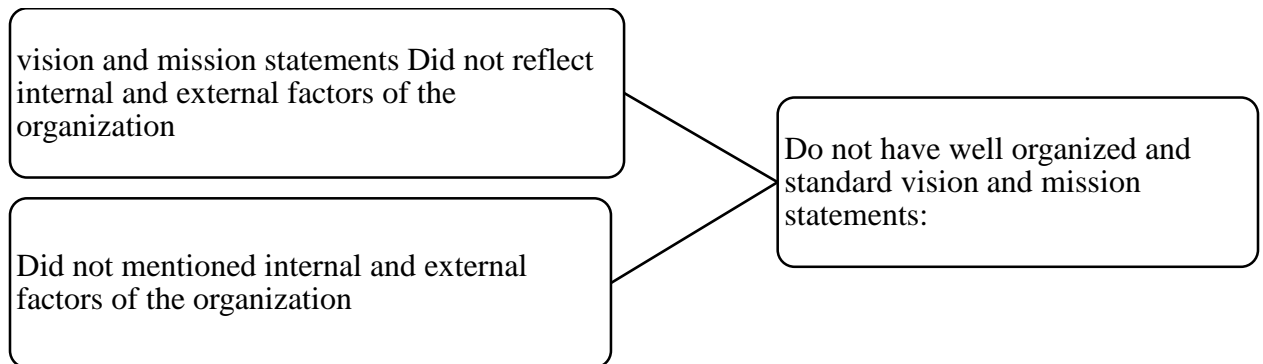
Figure 7. Basic theme of: all the programs and projects are not designed based on vision and mission of the organization



Other two respondents interviewed on 6th of January answered:

“Yes, our organization recently developed vision and mission statements and it is communicated to all the employees. Our vision and mission statements did not clearly mention internal and external factors of our organization and it is also not clear in vision and mission statements that what are our competitive advantage and who are our customers/ beneficiaries exactly” [005-MoBTA & 004-MoIC]

Figure 8. Basic theme of: Lack of well-organized and standard vision and mission statements



4.2.2. Findings from interview question one

Majority of respondents said that; vision and mission statements are not being communicated across the organization as well as in to the related parties/ customers.

It was also found out that in most of the cases vision and mission were developed only by the top managers and a few people in the organization without involving all the employees and stakeholders.

The programs and projects of the ministries are not designed based on vision and mission. And in most of the cases vision and mission statements did not met standards.

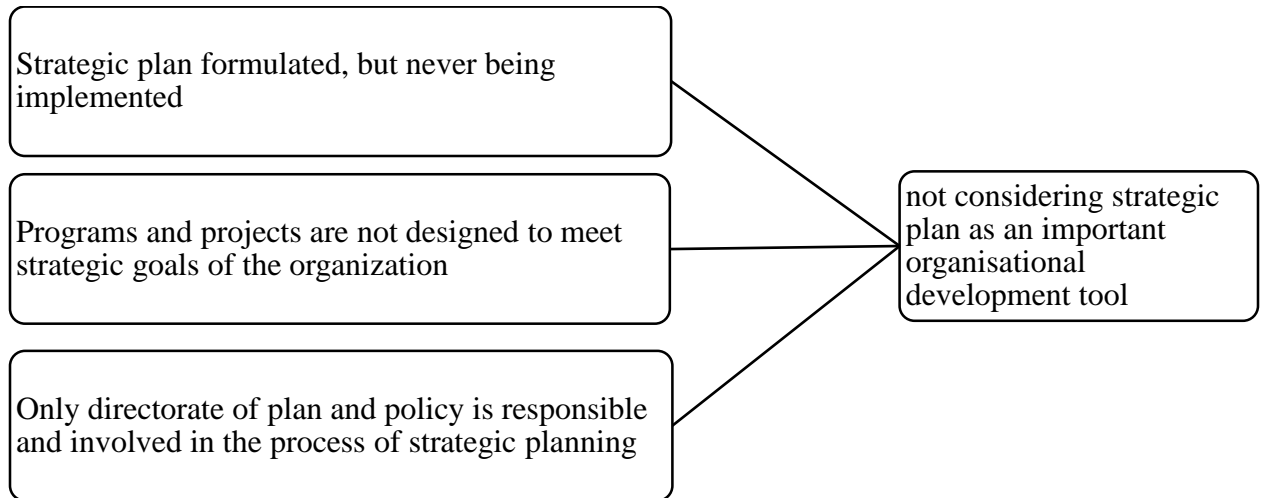
4.2.3. Analysis interview question two:

Second interview question is: Does your organization has long-term plan? And how it was developed? Two respondents interviewed on 4th January answered as below:

“Our ministry formulated 5 years’ strategic plan several years ago, but never have been implemented. Now the directorate of Plan and Policy drafted strategic plan and will be finalized in near future.

Our organization also design and implement several development projects each year, so as long-term plan is not being implemented, our projects and programs are not based on strategic goals” [005-MoBTA & 004-MoIC]

Figure 9. Basic theme of: not considering strategic plan as an important organizational development tool



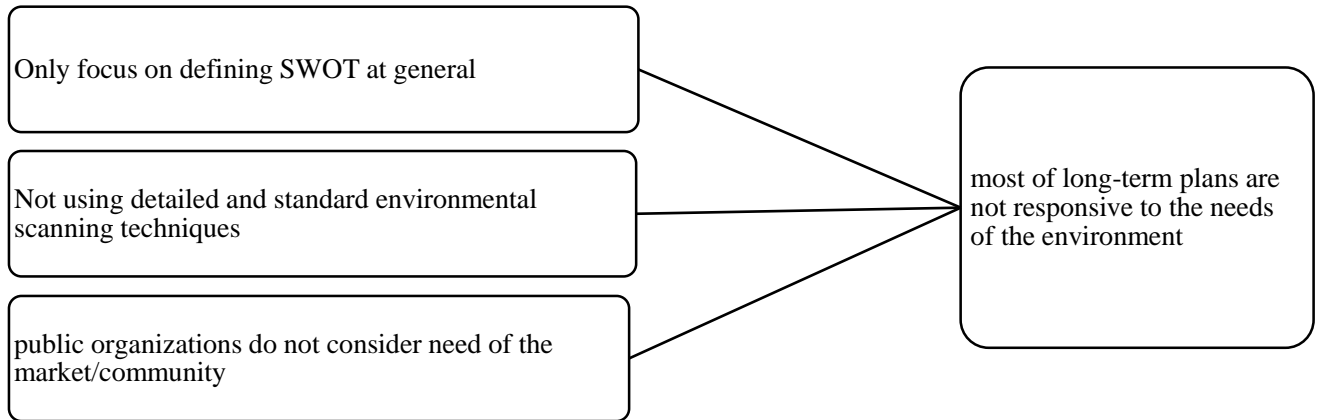
Respondents interviewed on 5th January replied:

“Yes, we have long term plan. Central and provincial departments and other develop and strive for clarification of this strategic plan and consolidates its work plans in the coming years, to provide most effective and useful services to the people in ministry’s strategic areas.

We analyzed the environment by simply defining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. And as this is a public organization so it is not common to use further detailed methods and matrixes of assessing internal and external factors.” [007-MoEd & 011-MoHE]

Figure 10. Basic theme of: Most of long-term plans are not responsive to the needs of the environment

Other interviewee, whose organization is comparably at the best position regarding



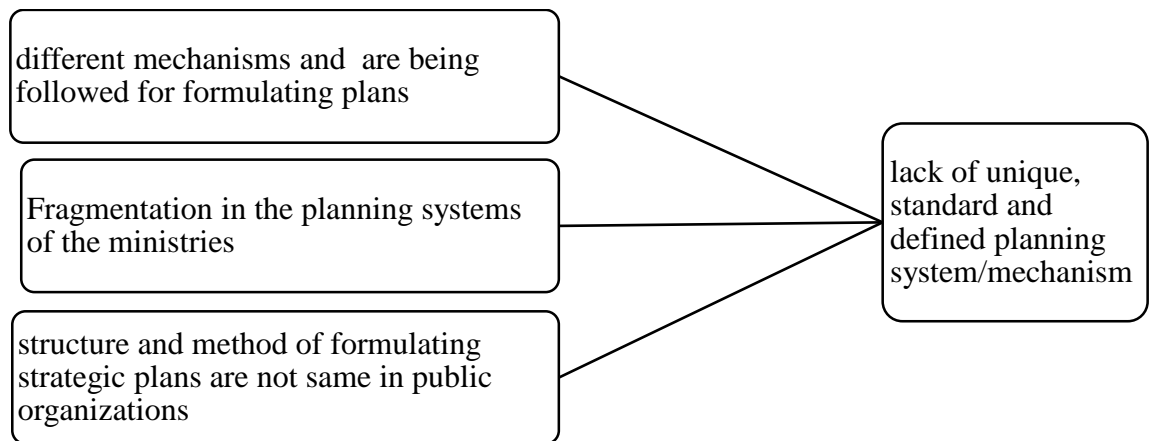
formulation and implementation of strategic plans answered the same question as:

“Yes, we are currently working to develop 3rd Strategic plan of our ministry. There is a steering committee for developing strategic plan leads by the minister and all related departments are its members. First we analyzed the environment and sector analysis, we also had an overview of previous strategic plans, and then we set goals in technical committees. And used projection method to predict future and set achievable targets. All of our stakeholders, beneficiaries and managers from all level are involved in the formulation process of the strategic plan.” [009-MoT]

Respondent asked on January 7th replied:

“As, our organization mostly formulate strategic plans and strategies but each are in different settings and working areas. There is not yet any proper functional system which could be counted as an official process for developing a policy, strategy and/or strategic plan. Which means that the policy and planning section mostly suffers fragmentation and cannot unify the overall system track on one way to achieve the overall goals.” [009-MoLSA]

Figure 11. Basic theme of: Lack of unique, standard and defined planning system/mechanism



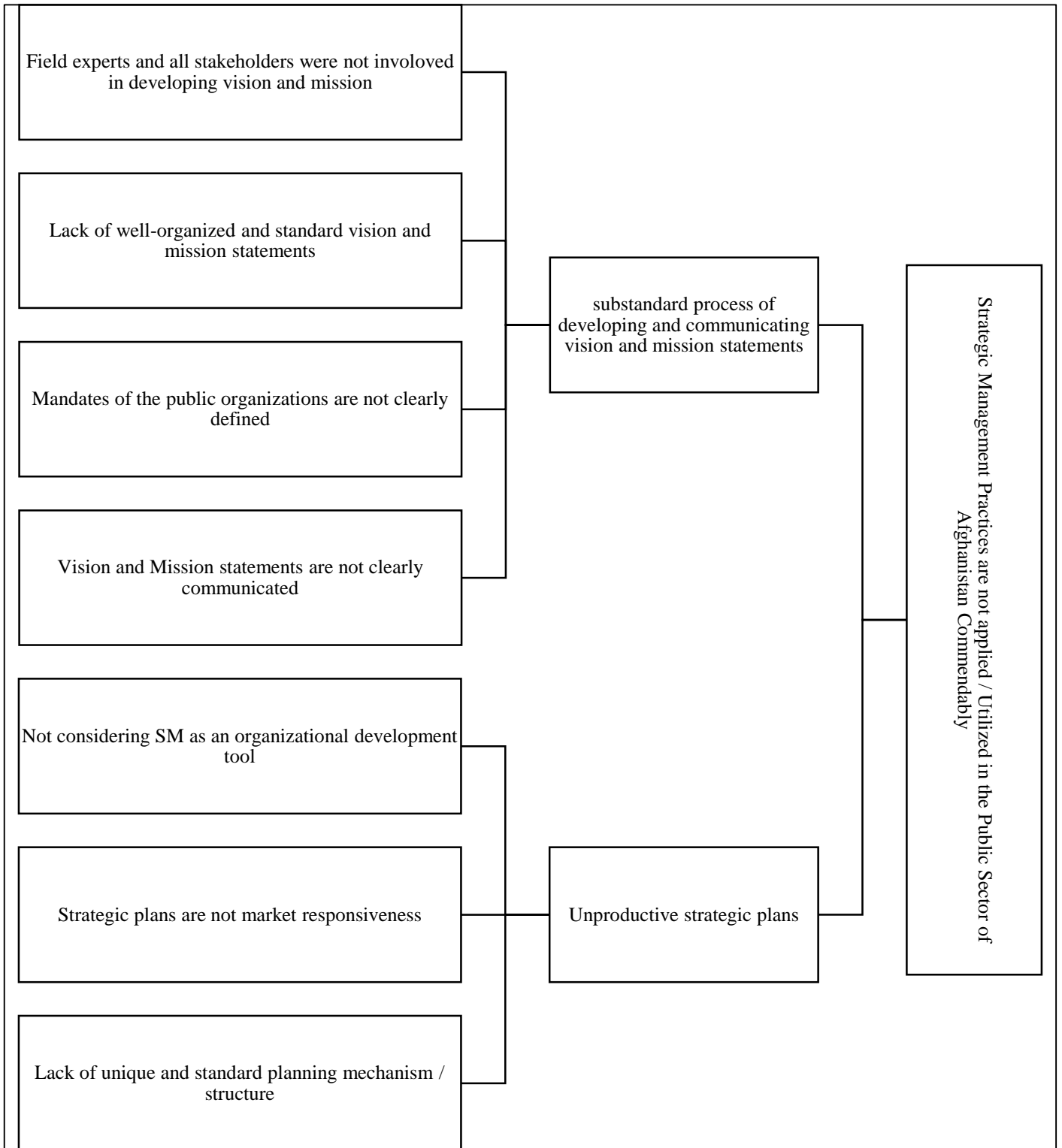
4.2.4. Findings from interview question two

As found out in the study, most of public organization do not have strategic plan or just formulated it but there was no any interest to implement and evaluate it. This indicates that still there are public institutions which do not consider strategic management as an important organizational development tool.

Not properly analyzing the environment and calculating internal and external factors carefully was another issue found in the research. Absence of unique and defined planning formulation mechanism and system was another issue of concern observed in the research.

During the study it was also perceived that there are limited ministries which are doing very well at formulating long term plans and scanning the environment.

Figure 12. Summary of RQ1



4.2.5. Findings from Research Question One

Research question one in general and its interview questions in details highlight some findings to figure out how much strategic management practices are being implemented in the public organizations of Afghanistan.

From the following findings we can say that; strategic management practices are not fully applied or utilized in the ministries of Afghanistan.

4.2.5.1. Vision & Mission statements are not clearly communicated

As we interviewed both top level strategists of the ministries and other employees, it was revealed that most of the employees do not know exactly what is the vision and mission of their organization. Vision and mission statements along with other strategic documents are kept only with the planning departments and the top management, they are not being clearly communicated across the organization and its branches in 34 provinces.

5.2.5.2. Key stakeholders and experts were not involved in the process of developing vision and mission statements

Most of the ministries established internal committees or only departments of planning prepared vision and mission statements and were approved by the top authority of relevant ministry. It was observed that in most of the cases the inputs or views of the key stakeholders, beneficiaries and sectoral experts were not being considered while developing vision and mission statements.

4.2.5.3. Ministries' programs are not aligned with their visions and strategic goals

During research and interviews it was observed that in some cases the annual development projects and other programs of the ministries are far away from their vision and mandates. This issue of do not having clear vision and not aligning programs as per strategic goals caused duplication of tasks among different governmental organizations.

4.2.5.4. Not considering strategic management as an organizational development tool

Most of public organizations do not consider the importance of strategic management practices as main and important tool of organizational development. Strategic plans are being formulated by the planning departments and remained in the papers, not implemented effectively.

4.2.5.5. Strategic plans are not responsive to the actual needs of the environment

It was observed in the research process that; unlike private sector, public organizations commonly do not care about examining stakeholders, beneficiaries, need of the market and environment at all. That's why most of the public strategic plans do not meet needs of the society and public resources are not utilized effectively.

4.2.5.6. Lack of unique and functional formal planning system in the public sector

Fragmentation and using different methods of strategic management were found out in the study. Each ministry has its own perception of the environment and the way they apply strategic management practices.

4.3. Analysis of Research Question Two

The second objective of the research is to look out for failures of the strategic management. Thus, the second research question designed as: **(What are main difficulties applying strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan?)** This question was further discussed with (11) top level managers of the planning departments of different ministries.

4.3.1. Analysis of Interview Question Two

The first interview question is: (How your organization is scanning the environment, and if you could please say that; which standard method of analyzing the environment you are using?)

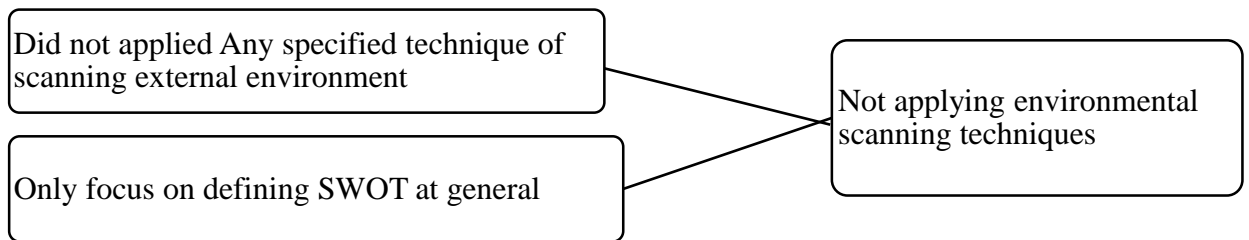
Two respondents (001-TVET & 008-MoT) asked on January 6th and 7th respectively replied:

“Our organization held a round table discussion among both central level and provincial level managers and discussed the environment. Written questionnaires were also distributed among participants to have their ideas regarding strengths and weaknesses of the organization. We have not applied any specific matrix or method to analyze the external or internal environment.” [001-TVET & 008-MoT]

Other interviewee asked on the same day, said:

“We analyzed the environment by simply defining strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. And as this is a public organization so it is not common to use further detailed methods and matrix of assessing internal and external factors.” [010-MoE]

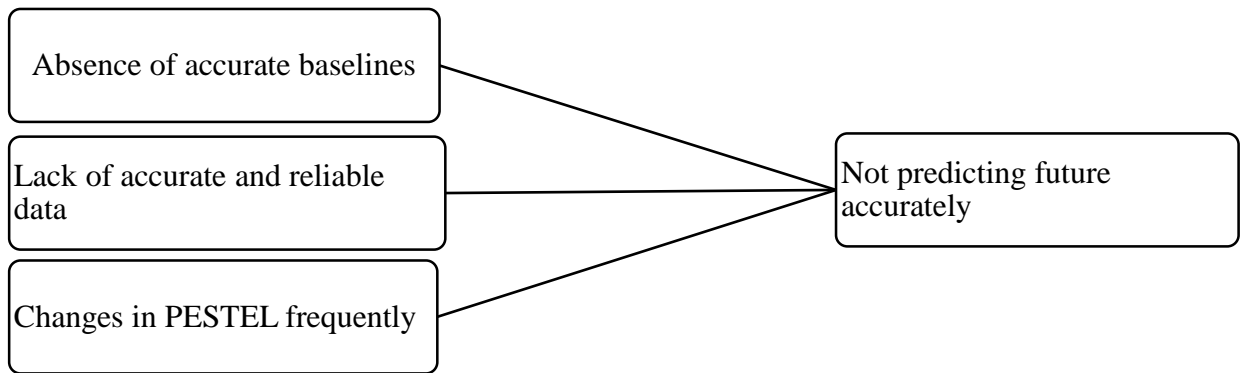
Figure 13. Basic theme of: not applying environmental scanning techniques



Respondent interviewed on January 6th answered this question:

“We are giving too much importance to the environmental scanning, and this is the vital stage for formulating strategic plans. We are using different methods to find out most important issues for instance we have direct interviews with out stakeholders and beneficiaries to collect data. The challenge is that; unfortunately, in Afghanistan we do not have enough and reliable data to predict the future accurately and formulate plans accordingly. Political, economic and social trends are changing frequently.” [007-MoEd]

Figure 14. Basic Theme of: not predicting future accurately



4.3.2. Findings from Interview Question One

From the answers given by respondents to the interview question one we can find out that; there are difficulties with environment scanning. Some of the major constrains highlighted are: lack of well-defined and adopted mechanism for environment scanning, not using all needed matrixes and methods of scanning both internal and external environments. And was also found out that due to lack of accurate data and information it is difficult to predict future accurately.

4.3.3. Analysis of Interview Question Two

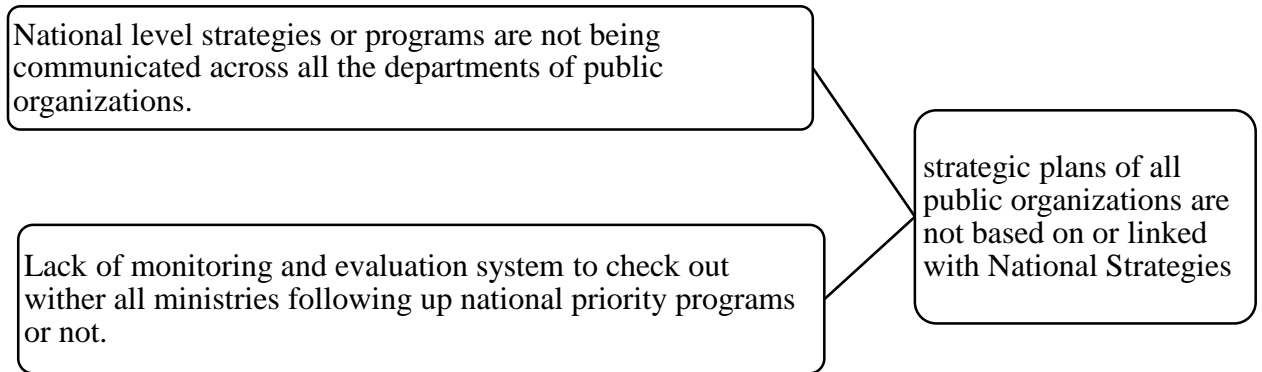
In second interview question we tried to find out the link between strategic plans of the ministries and national level strategies. Question was (How your organization’s strategic plan is matched/linked with national plan and national budget?)

Two respondents asked on January 8th answered:

“Some of the major activities of our ministry’s strategic plan is linked with national strategies such as: ANPDF, ASDGs and others. But the problem in this case is all of the departments and employees do not have enough understanding about national level strategies. A few ministries which have clear role in ANPDF may have linkage but overall I have not witnesses any awareness and alignment program of linking ministries’ activities and programs with national level strategies. And the role of each public organization is not clearly identified in the national level strategies. There is no any

monitoring system to check out that all public organizations must formulate their strategies aiming at NPPs.” [009-MoLSA & 008-MoT]

Figure 15. Basic theme of: strategic plans of all public organizations are not based on or linked with National Strategies



Other interviewee replied on 5th of January:

“Yes, strategic plan of our ministry is designed according to the 6th, 10th and 13th articles of the constitution and the developing goals, enduring globalization and national priority programs. Regarding coordination among ministries and national budget, two major challenges are to be said are: specialized tasks are not given to the relevant ministries, for example the national project of promoting information technology in schools must be carried out by Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology not by Ministry of Education itself. Now in coming plans we are trying to involve all specialized organizations in carrying out our strategic plans.” [003-MRRD]

Figure 16. Basic theme of: lack of coordination in inter-ministerial programs

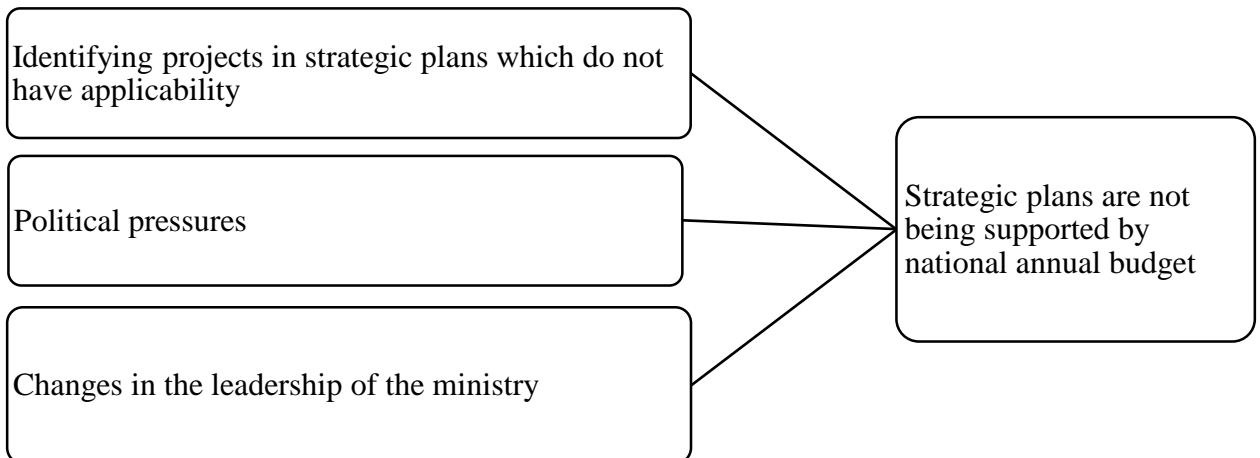


(011-MoHE), interviewed on 7th of January replied:

“The national budget is commonly based on strategic goals of the ministries, but sometimes the political pressures from MPs are affecting the allocation of national budget and projects. Sometimes it happens that with the change in leadership of the ministry they insist to bring changes in annual budgets as well, and trying to implement the new projects which were not in the priority list of strategic plan. It is also possible that; in some instances, projects identified in strategic plans do not have applicability.”

[011-MoHE]

Figure 17. Basic theme of: Strategic plans are not being supported by national annual budget



4.3.4. Findings from Interview Question Two

From the answers of interviewees, it was observed that: there is a large gap between strategic plans of the different ministries and there is no linkage between ministerial plans and national level strategies. National budget is not allocated as per strategic goals of the ministries as well.

4.3.5. Analysis of Interview Question Three

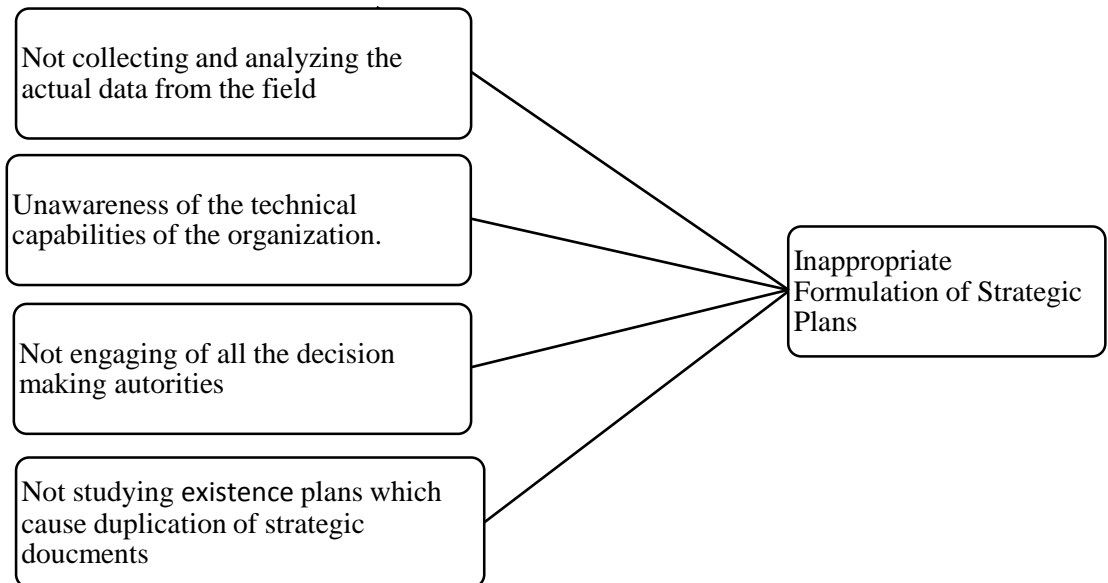
The third interview question of second research question was: what are main reasons behind failure of strategic plans in the public sector of Afghanistan?

Respondents replied to this question as below:

The interviewee asked on January 8th said:

“A strategic plan will fail based on the following reasons: None alignment with national strategic documents. Not collecting and analyzing the actual data from the field. Unawareness of the technical capabilities of the organization. Non-engagement of all the decision making authorities. No prior extensive and comprehensive study of the existing plans, policies, strategies and programs which mostly brings duplication that may lead to failure of strategic plan.” [007-MoEd]

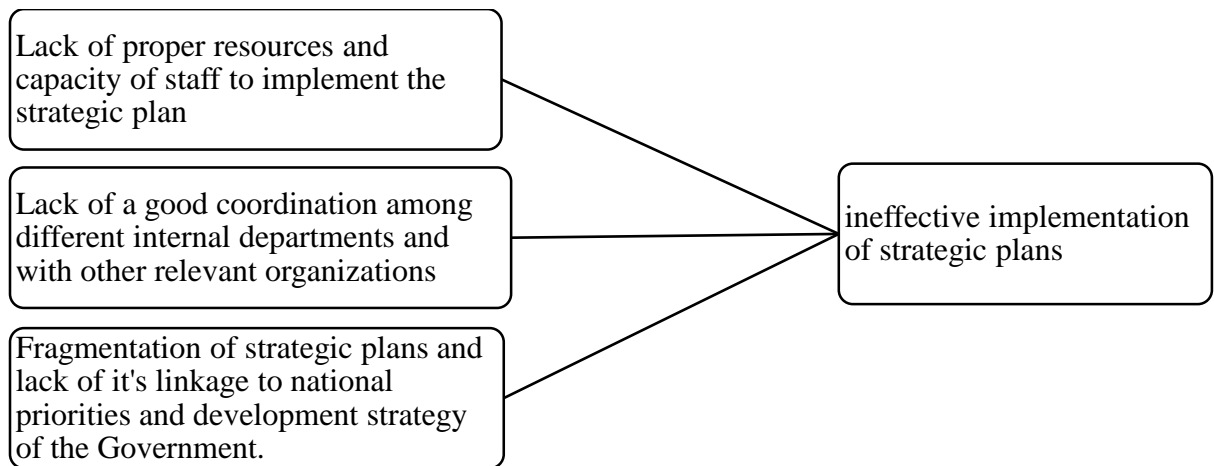
Figure 18. Basic Theme of: Inappropriate Formulation of Strategic Plans



Other two correspondents asked on January 8th replied:

“There are several reasons behind failure of strategic plans, important of those could be: Fragmentation of strategic plans and lack of it's linkage to national priorities and development strategy of the Government. Lack of proper resources and capacity of staff to implement the strategic plan and coordinate its implementation among different departments and/or organizations. Lack of a good coordination among different internal departments and with other relevant organizations.” [009-MoLSA & 010-MoE]

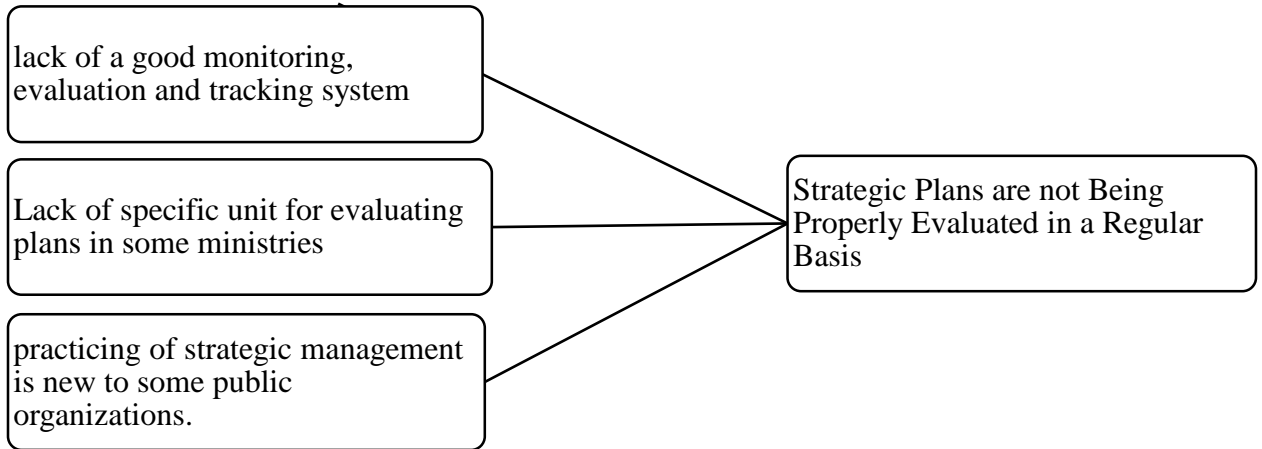
Figure 19. Basic Theme of: Ineffective implementation of strategic plans



Two other interviewee asked on January 8th answered:

“There are different reasons behind failure of strategic plans the most important is lack of a good monitoring, evaluation and tracking system. Actually our first strategic plan is still in the implementation stage and in our organization chart we do not have any department or unit looking for the evaluation of strategic plan.” [001-TVET & 006-MoWA]

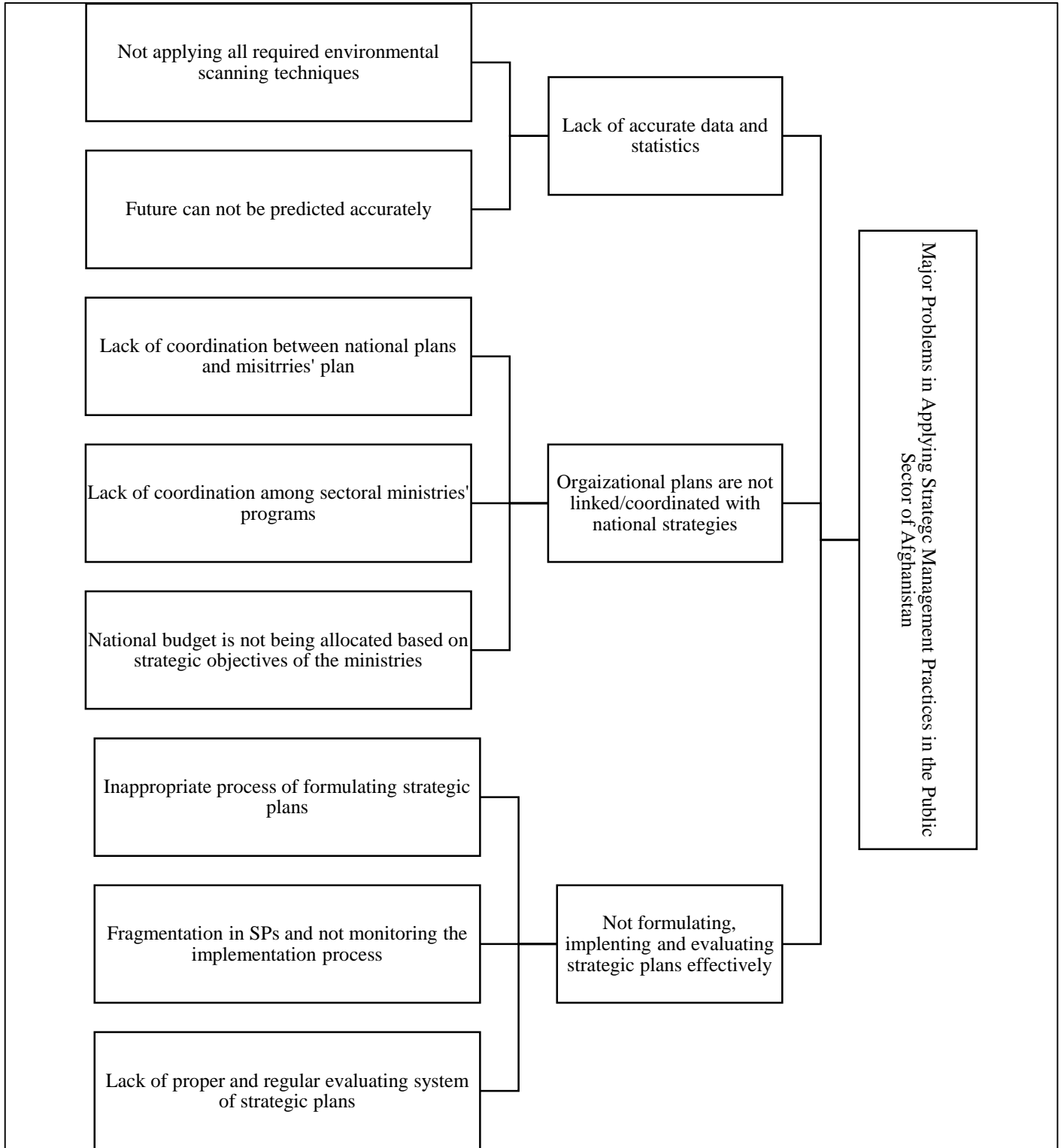
Figure 20. Basic theme of: Strategic Plans are not Being Properly Evaluated in a Regular basis



4.3.6. Findings from Interview Question Three

Lack of accurate and reliable data, and data collection systems, not considering environment and setting unrealistic goals are some of challenges or drawbacks of formulation of strategic plans. Lack of coordination and financial support are highlighted problems in the implementation stage of strategic plans and lack of regular and proper monitoring and evaluating system is the reason for not evaluating strategic plans effectively.

Figure 21. Summary of RQ2



4.3.7. Findings from Research Question Two

Answering second research question, study looked up for figuring main obstacles and difficulties of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan. Here are some of findings came out from the analysis of interview questions of second research question:

4.3.7.1. Environment is not Examined Properly

It was revealed in investigation that most of the ministries just finding out strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats at general. They did not consider detailed scanning of the environment both internally and externally. Most of the plans are not adoptable or responsive to the PESTEL changes in the environment.

4.3.7.2. Due to Subtle Changes, Future cannot be predicted accurately

One of the main challenge which faces implication of strategic management practices in Afghanistan is; lack of previous accurate and reliable data. Even in most of the cases while formulating plans and talking about indicators, strategic managers faced with lack of baselines. Without clear and exact data and statistics it is almost impossible to hope for effective strategic planning.

4.3.7.3. There is no linkage between ministries' plans and national level strategies

It was observed that a few public organizations may have a clear part in national strategies (ANDS, ANPDF, ASDGs...) but generally, strategic plans of most of the public organizations do not have any linkage and coordination with other sectoral plans or national plans. And it was found that all public strategic plans are not aiming at one specific direction.

4.3.7.4. Strategic plans have not been supported by national budget

Most of public organizations do have strategic plans and identified strategic goals, but allocation of each year's budget is not based on strategic objectives of each ministry.

Setting unrealistic goals, not considering strategic plan as a direction of all activities, political perceptions are some of the main causes that national budget is not being allocated to meet strategic goals of the relevant public organization.

4.3.7.5. Strategic plans are not formulated properly

It was noted during study that due to the limited understanding about strategic management, unavailability of data and not matured public administration, most of strategic plans did not formulated properly. Strategic goals are unrealistic, indicators are not identified and they are neither result based nor resources based.

4.3.7.6. Strategic plans are not implemented effectively

Public organizations which have developed their strategic plans, are not successful at implementing them effectively or in achieving their objectives. Lack of communication and coordination across the organization and with other stakeholders discovered as a main obstacle toward successful implementation of strategic plans.

4.3.7.7. Lack of proper and in a regular basis monitoring and evaluation system

Other difficulty found in the study was absence of unique and proper evaluation mechanism or system in the public organizations. Through which management can evaluate and track the progress toward achieving strategic goals and milestones in a regular basis.

4.4. Analysis of Research Question Three

Third and last objective of the research is to figure out some of reasonable recommendations for better implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan. In order to catch out the views of most senior managers of the public administration of Afghanistan, third research question is designed as:

(How to improve strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation in the public organizations of Afghanistan?) This research question will be further discussed and analyzed in the following interview questions.

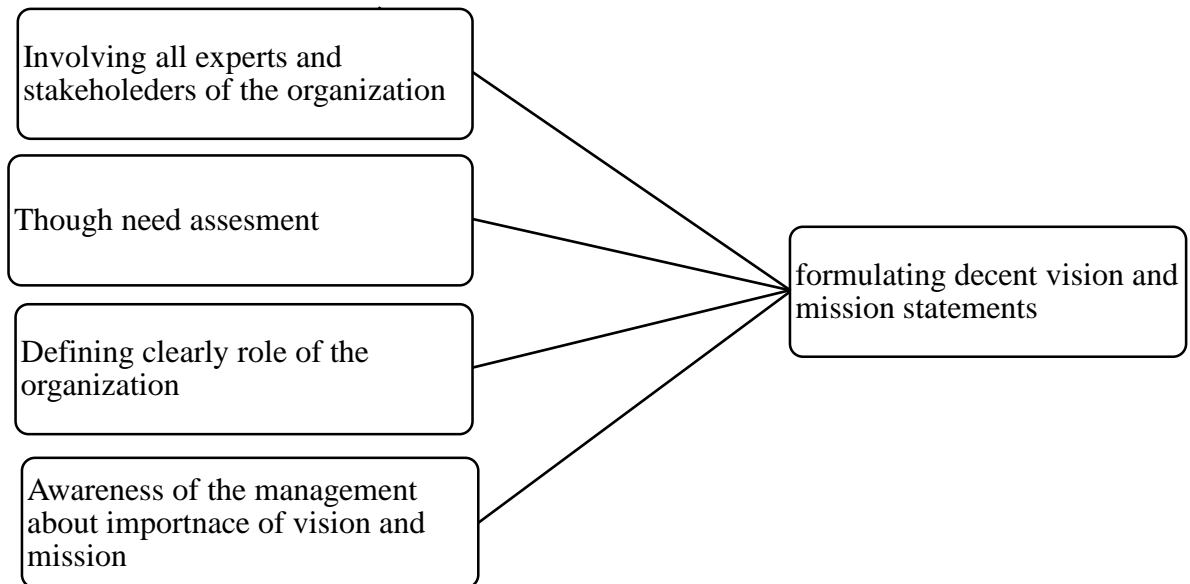
4.4.1. Analysis of Interview Question One

The first interview question of last research question is (How to improve the formulation process of strategic plans in the public sector of Afghanistan?)

Two respondent interviewed on January 7th replied:

“The best way for formation of strategic plan is to involve all the experts in TVET system. Conducting a thorough needs assessment of the organization, carefully defining SWOT analysis and understanding exactly what is the role of the reverent public organization and convincing all three level of management that without having a clear vision and mission statements organization will go nowhere are some of points to be considered while formulating strategic plan.” [001-TVET & 004-MoIC]

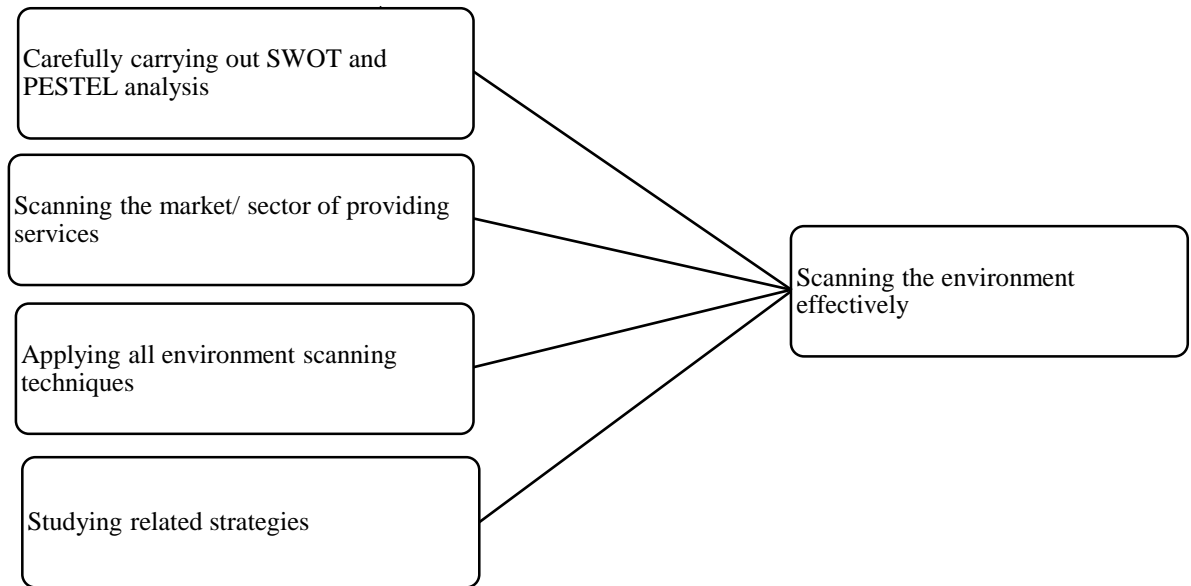
Figure 22. Basic Theme of: formulating decent vision and mission statements



Other interviewee asked on January 5th said:

“All the challenges and opportunities must be examined and PESTEL analysis will help the strategy development team understand how to develop the strategy. For scanning the environment and need of the market (customers/ beneficiaries and competitors) of the public services standard scanning techniques and matrixes such as: BCG, IFE, EFE, CPM and SPACE must be applied in a professional manner. Related national and other sectoral strategies must be studied as well while developing a strategic plan” [009-MoLSA]

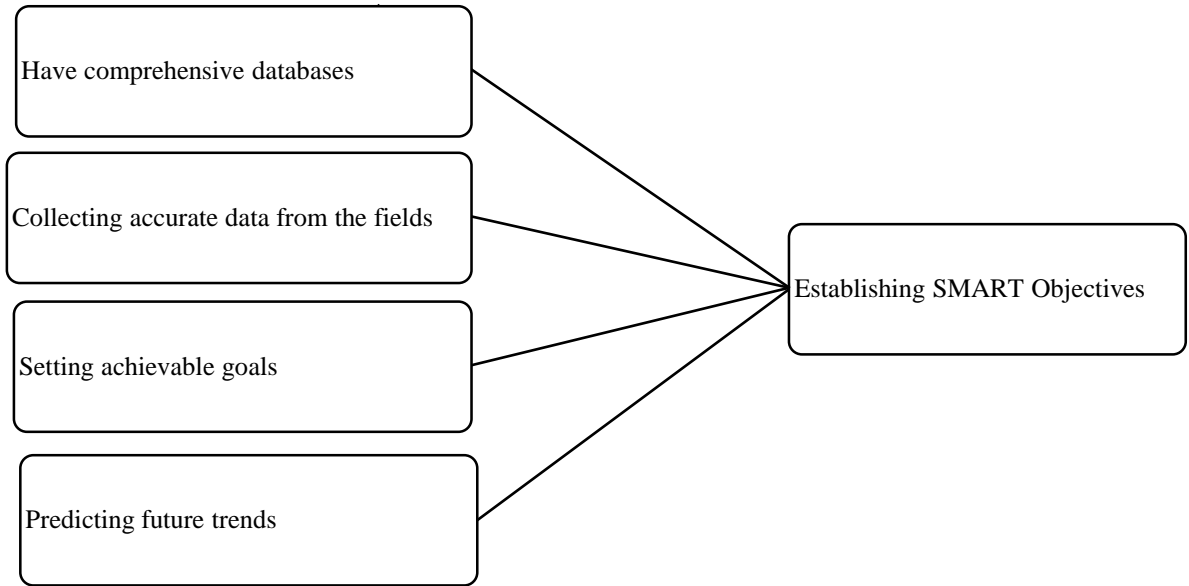
Figure 23. Basic Theme of: Scanning the environment effectively



Other interviewee replied on January 4th:

“having proper and comprehensive data banks are very much important for data collection and processing, collecting and analyzing real data from the field will enable public organizations come with a feasible and realistic strategy. Goals must be identified on the light of accurate data which is collected from the field. Strategist must not be too much optimistic, they should think logically and set goals accordingly” [008-MoT]

Figure 24. Basic Theme of: Establishing SMART Objectives



4.4.2. Findings from Interview Question One

Analyzing of responses to the first interview question give as following findings:

Establishing standard vision and mission statements can help an organization to set all other strategic management practices effectively and all the employees will be able to know for what they are striving and how. Scanning the environment professionally and setting smarter goals on the basis of reliable and exact data are major steps for successful formulating of strategic plan.

4.4.3. Analysis of Interview Question Two

The second interview question of last research question (how to implement and evaluate strategic plans successfully?) designed to find out ways and methods by using which public sector of Afghanistan may impalement strategic plans effectively. Respondents reacted to this question as follow:

Respondent asked on January 7th replied:

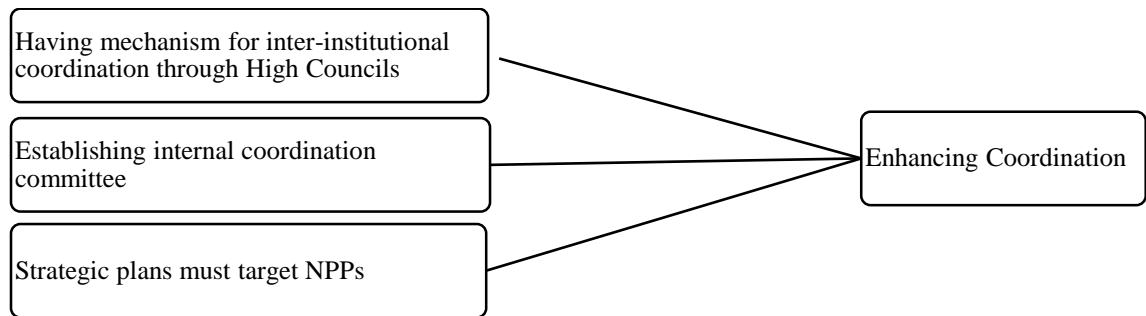
“First of all, a coordination committee of strategic planning should be established within the ministry which may represent each and every single department/directorate, which may first evaluate the current status of strategic planning for the overall

ministry. Then the coordination of all strategic planning including policy and strategy development of all departments and deputy ministries is important.” [002-ACB]

Other respondent said on January 8th:

“Having a unique and workable mechanism of coordination both in the ministry and with other public institutions is too much crucial for better implementation of strategic plans. And all strategic plans should be targeting national level goals of NPPs. We have very good foundation in the form of High Councils to coordinate national level plans” [005-MoBTA]

Figure 25. Basic Theme for: Enhancing Coordination

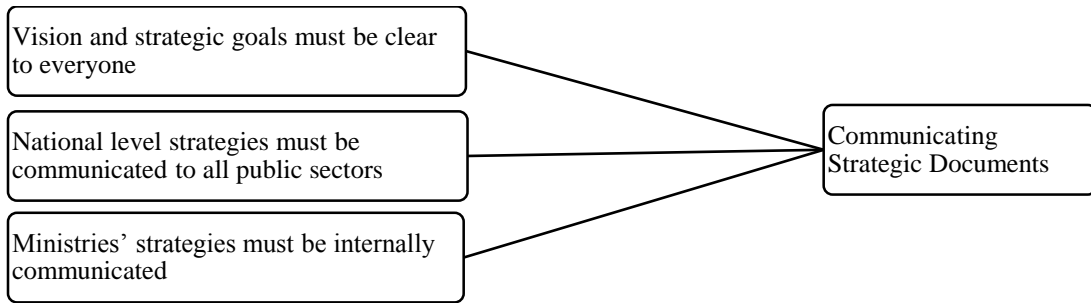


Other interviewee asked on January 6th replied:

“in most of the public organizations their strategic documents are not communicated properly, so it will help a lot to communicate and share the vision, mission and strategic objectives of the organization to all departments in central level and in to all provincial departments. While an employee does not know about the vision of the organization how it is possible to act and perform accordingly.

National level plan and National Priority Programs must be communicated and being clear to everyone working in the public sector, even top management do not have enough information about national level strategic plans.” [007-MoEd]

Figure 26. Basic Theme of: Communicating Strategic Documents

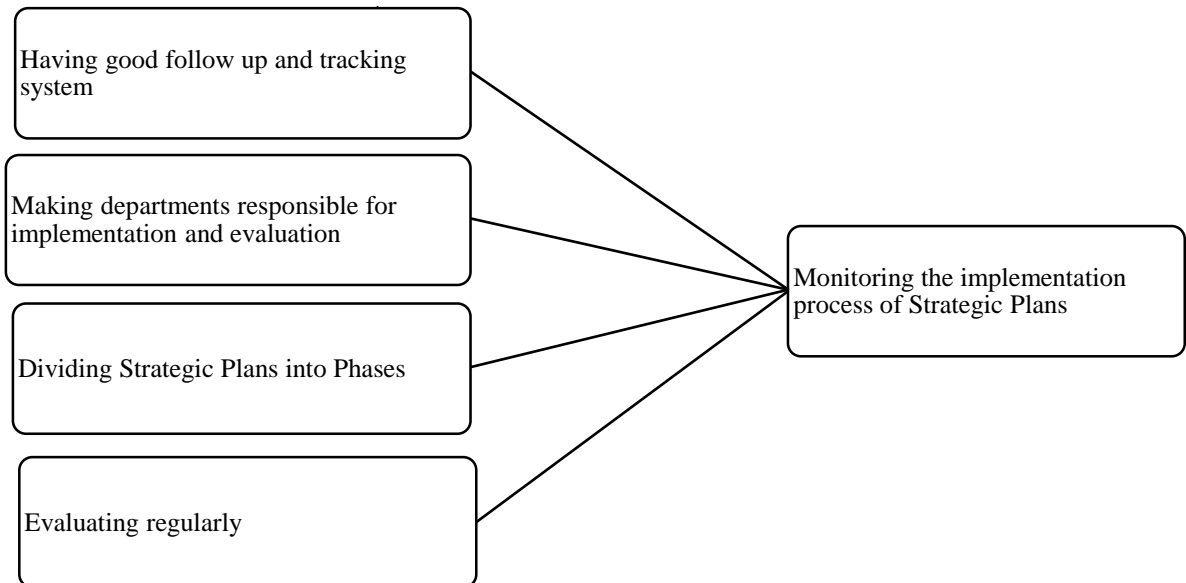


Other two respondent interviewed on January 3rd answered this question:

“All departments of the administration must be responsible to implement and evaluate their part in the strategic plan, each part of plan can be divided into groups, seek out the necessary ways to implement the plan and begin the planning phase with their possibilities. Each section has technical aspects of the plan that is relevant to the planner of each organization.

A good follow up and tracking system and module should be developed which could even be the committee I mentioned earlier to inspect which component is being implemented and which is not? What are the reasons and what should be done to fix it, in a regular basis” [003-MRRD & 009-MoLSA]

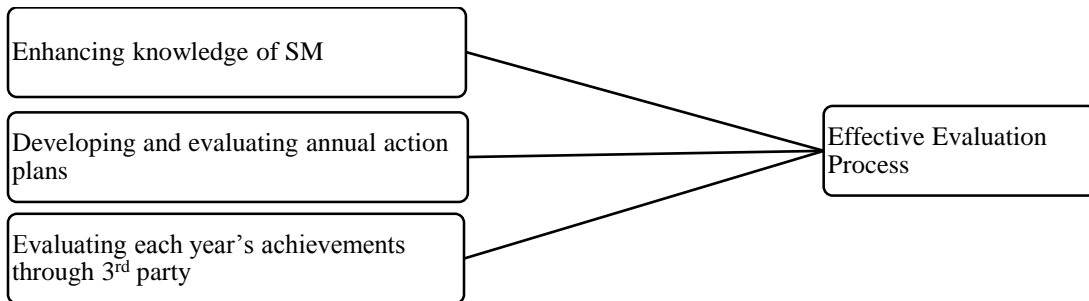
Figure 27. Basic Theme of: Monitoring Evaluating Strategic Plans



Other respondent asked on January 7th said:

“As earlier mentioned, this is the third strategic plan of our ministry so we have enough experience with how to successfully implement and evaluate strategic plans; I recommend that understanding of strategic management must be enhanced and as we experience in our ministry, short term capacity building programs of SM help a lot in this regard. Developing annual action plans based on strategic plan and reviewing milestones annually is the main tool to monitor implementation process of strategic plan. We also collect data from the field through third party evaluation to know that how much we have reached our strategic goals.” [006_MoWA]

Figure 28. Basic Theme of: Effective Evaluation Process

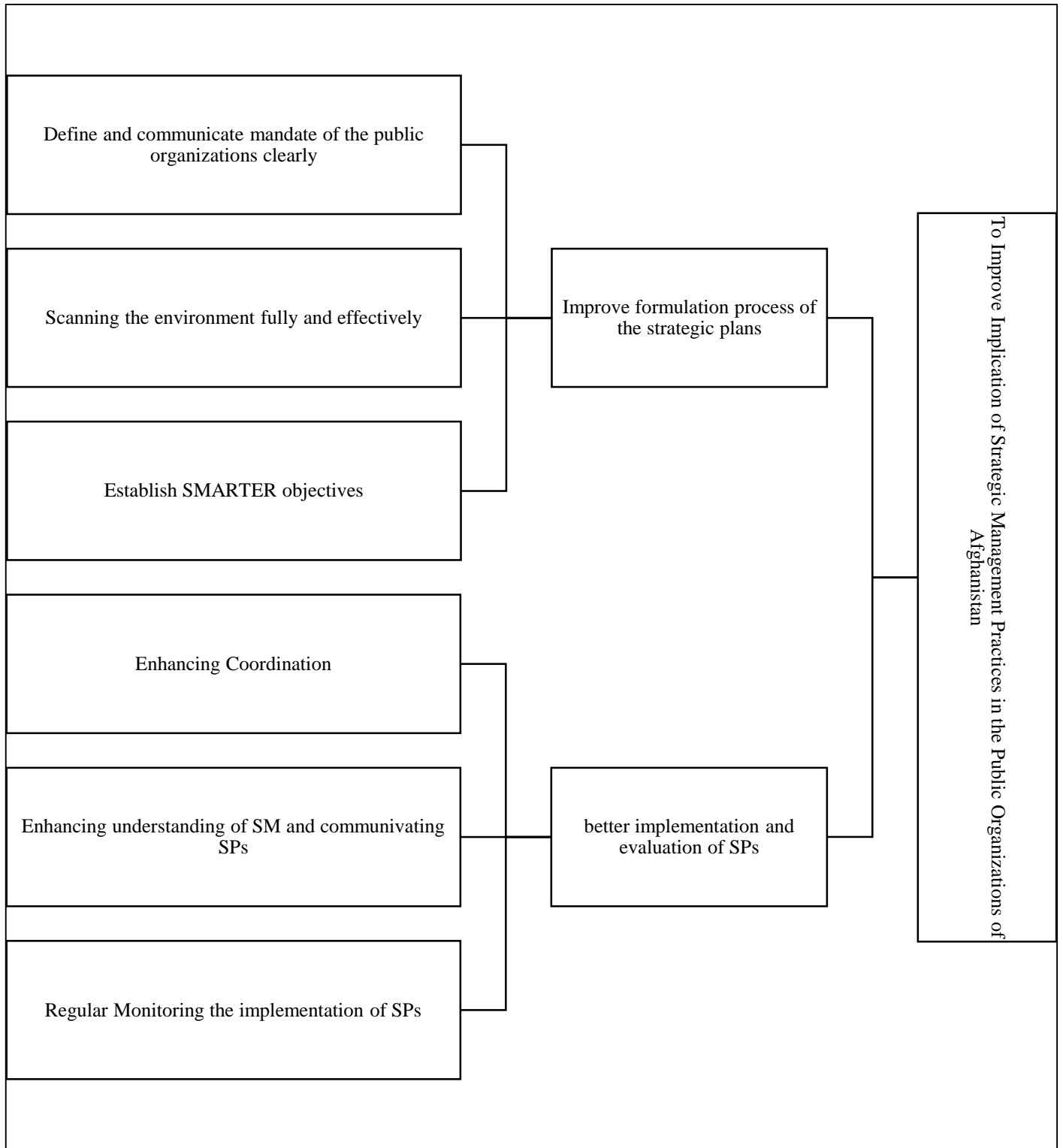


4.4.4. Findings from Interview Question Two

From the replies of respondents, it was noticed that; coordinating and communication of strategic plans both within the ministries and among different public sector is much important for successful implementation of SPs. Especially High Councils are the best foundations to be utilized to give a definite direction to all public activities and programs.

Enhancing knowledge of public workers and related departments about strategic management and evaluating annual action plans through 3rd party on the basis of facts and figures will also contribute to better monitoring and evaluation process of strategic plans in the public sector.

Figure 29. Summary of RQ3



4.4.5. Findings from Question Three

4.4.5.1. Having a clear and decent vision and mission statements

As found in the study, it is suggested that if there is clear and decent vision and mission statements of the public organizations which clearly express their mandates and philosophy of existence it will help a lot to achieve strategic goals of that particular organization and will mobilize all resource into that specific direction which is communicated in the form of vision and mission statements in to the employees of all levels.

4.4.5.2. Scanning the Environment Effectively

Study found that; for formulating a good strategic plan the first and most important task is to know the environment exactly. In contrast to the private sector, in public sector strategist do not give sufficient consideration to apply all professional techniques of environment scanning, if here in the public sector we apply them and examine environment carefully it will help a lot in drafting an applicable and workable strategic plan.

4.4.5.3. Establishing SMARTER Goals

It was found that, in some cases goals are not realistic and achievable with the available time-frame and other resources available, so study suggests if public organizations set their strategic objectives, specific, having measurable indicators, achievable within the given time and available resources and capacity it will help to achieve them, otherwise the culture of setting highest goals and not meeting them in several strategic plans may remain unchanged.

4.4.5.4. Coordinating Through High Councils

Study found that, in national level Afghanistan has a better platform of High Councils such as: High Council of Economy, High Council of Health etc. for coordinating all sectoral strategies and giving direction to all the ministries it is suggested to coordinate through these High Councils, it will utilize public resources effectively and will enhance cooperation among ministries as well.

4.4.5.5. Enhancing the Knowledge of Strategic Management

Most of the problems of applying strategic management tools are due to the lack of professional knowledge of strategic management both in the planning departments and in the top management.

By providing short-term and inter-service capacity building programs it is very much applicable to enhance the understanding level of strategic management application.

4.4.5.6. Monitoring & Evaluating Strategic Plans frequently

It was found that, most of the strategic plans formulated but did not implement properly or there is no data available about their evaluation. So it is recommended to monitor strategic plans regularly and evaluate them at the end of each year, compare progress with last year and share the findings with relevant departments. Even, if possible to evaluate and monitor strategic plans through 3rd party it will assure transparency and fairness of the process.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

Chapter five concludes the result of the study along with proposed recommendations. This chapter concisely describes achieved objectives and answers of the research questions as well as limitations and implications of the study.

5.1 Recap and Summary of Findings

This qualitative and a descriptive study guided by three main research questions:

- RQ#1. To which extent strategic management practices are applied in the public organizations of Afghanistan?
- RQ#2. What are main difficulties in applying strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan?
- RQ#3. How to improve strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation in the public organizations of Afghanistan?

The very first objective of the research was to examine that, how much strategic management practices have been applied in the governmental organizations of Afghanistan. Second objective is to highlight and find out major constrains of the implication of strategic management in the public sector and the last objective of the study was to propose some effective approaches and methods for better implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan.

As discussed in details in the chapter #3, this is a qualitative and descriptive kind of research. Data was collected through in-depth face to face interviews with 11 senior officials of different governmental organizations. Each research question was further divided into several interview questions in order to grasp research objectives comprehensively. Collected data was analyzed through thematic analysis network.

Study found that; ambiguity in mandate of public organizations, and lack of standard and effective strategic plans lead to the poor implication of strategic management practices in the public organizations of Afghanistan. Lack of accurate data and statistics, lack of

coordination among national and ministries' levels strategic plans ineffective formulation, implementation and evaluation process of strategic plans are major challenges in implementing SMP in the public sector. And it was recommended that; through defining and communicating mandate of public organizations, scanning environment effectively, establishing smarter goals and enhancing coordination will lead to the better implication of strategic plans in the public administration of Afghanistan.

Three research objectives, answered through research questions are concluded as following:

5.2. The extent of implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan (Objective One)

Lack of coordination among government programs and organizations, keeping most of strategic plans in the shelves of certain ministries instead of having implementing them with effective practical mechanisms and absence of strategic thinking, gap between planning and implementations, duplication of tasks etc. indicate inappropriate implication of SMPs in the public sector of Afghanistan Hashimi and Lauth (2016).

Analyzing first research question, findings are concluded as; lack of standard and well communicated vision and mission statements, not considering strategic management as an important organizational development tool by the top management, fragmentation in the planning systems of the ministries and developing plans only by a few people at planning units without consultation process lead to the fact that; all practices of strategic management are not being utilized effectively and professionally by the public organizations of Afghanistan. However very few ministries established some sort of satisfactory mechanisms for applying strategic management practices.

5.3. Major challenges of applying strategic management practices in the public organizations of Afghanistan (Objective Two)

A study carried out by European Commission in 2013 said, in the context of Afghanistan, where subtle and unpredictable changes occurred in Political, Environmental, Social, Technological and Legal environments frequently, access to adequate and accurate data is limited, strategic thinking is not presented in the mind of public employees, roles and

mandate of certain public organization is not clear even in mind of their top managers etc... it is not an easy task to formulate, implement and evaluate strategic plans effectively and successfully.

Major challenges on the way to applying strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan discovered in this study are concluded as: unavailability of accurate, comprehensive and reliable data, unpredictable environment and PESTEL trends, newly established administrative systems, lack of coordination between ministries' strategic plans and national level strategies, not considering strategic goals of the ministries while allocating national budget, tasks duplications among public organizations.

5.4. Recommendations for improving the implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan (Objective Three)

In literature survey it was found that; giving ample consideration to settle organization's responsibilities with its resources and setting clear priorities accordingly, analyzing environment along with the face and scale of changes in it, formulating a strategic plan which has the ability to deliver the impact, communicating strategy throughout organization and with stakeholders, promoting strategic culture, adopting the process to support the strategy, developing a system for execution and learning leads to successful implication of SMPs in public sector (Boland et al, 2018)

Findings of the present study suggests that, increasing understanding level and knowledge of strategic management, enhancing coordination through High Councils, aligning national plans with ministries' plans, establishing logical and achievable objectives and evaluating plans frequently are some of important measures which can improve the formulation, implementation and evaluation process of strategic plans in the public administration of Afghanistan.

5.5. Study limitations

Keeping in mind that, present study highlighted some of major difficulties of applying SMPs in the public sectors of Afghanistan and proposed applicable recommendations as well, however, comprehensively and professionally analyzing all the details of implication of strategic management practices in all governmental organizations and its

impact on their performance is a tough and time-taking task. So, following limitations were perceived in carrying out this study:

Firstly. As applying SMPs is a task of high level and conceptual process, thus it was not easy to catch out all information from low-level and common employees of the public organizations. Secondly. Unavailability of sufficient previous studies regarding implication of SMPs in public sector in the context of Afghanistan was another difficulty of the study. And the third limitation is; researcher is working with one of public organization as a senior manager in the planning department, so his own perceptions may be reflected in the study.

5.6. Implications of the study

Based on the findings from chapter four and literature reviews, this study recommends top management and departments of planning of the public organizations to Consider SM as an important organizational development tool and take major steps in improving the implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan.

Following are summarized recommendations of the study in this regard:

5.6.1. Establishing National Strategic Planning System/ Structure

In literature survey it was found that earlier there was a ministry of planning in the public administration of Afghanistan. Some other countries, have a unique and defined system of national planning. For aligning all strategic plans of the different governmental organizations, achieving unique national goals and enhancing coordination both among ministries and national plans and sectoral plans; it is recommended to have a well-organized national planning authority.

5.6.2. Strategic Plans to be Environment Responsive

Examining both external and internal environments is the crucial stage of the strategic planning. It is recommended that; all public organization of Afghanistan, prior setting goals and defining objectives must analyze the environment carefully through applying different techniques of environmental scanning.

5.6.3. Developing Researches and Data Collection Systems

One of the major problem highlighted in the analysis is; unavailability of reliable data and statistic. By promoting culture of researches and establishing standard data collection methods and systems; will enable strategists to predict future accurately and formulate strategic plans accordingly.

5.6.4. Promoting Strategic Thinking

Providing short-term courses on strategic management to levels of the public organizations' employees and communicating all strategic documents among them, will enable everyone think strategically, know exactly for what their organization is and what their strategic goals are.

5.6.5. Setting Realistic and Achievable Goals

Most of plans failed due to establishing unrealistic and unspecific goals, which were never achievable nor measurable. That's why it is recommended; while formulating a strategic plan, objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timely, evaluative and re-adjustable. This will enable public organizations to achieve their goals with available resources and time and adjust them whenever required.

5.7. Future Research

This research paves the way and encourage researchers and even institutions to pay full attention to examine implication of strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan. Furthermore, future researches may focus on investigating direct relationship between performance of public organizations and implication of SMPs through applying different qualitative and quantitative research methods and ground studies. Above mentioned suggestions will contribute a lot in exploring challenges and solutions of the implications of SMPs in the public sector of Afghanistan, which directly impacts on the performance and enhancement of public services.

5.8. Conclusion

The context of this research was to examine the implication of strategic management practices in the public organizations of Afghanistan. Study was aiming to achieve these

specific objectives: to know how much SMPs are being applied in the public sector, what are their main challenges and how to improve the implications of SMPs in the governmental institutions. For obtaining above mentioned objectives qualitative and descriptive kind of research adopted and data was collected through in-depth face to face interviews with senior officials of planning departments of 11 different governmental organizations, then data were further analyzed and examined through thematic analysis network.

After analysis, it was revealed and concluded that; strategic management practices are not being applied and utilized by all public organizations at their best. Some of major challenges toward successful implication of strategic management highlighted in the study are: fragmentation in the planning systems across different governmental organizations, lack of coordination and strategic thinking and poor environmental scanning techniques. And it is recommended that; by establishing unique planning system and authority to enhance coordination among different governmental organizations and to monitor and evaluate the implementation of strategic plans, enhancing understanding about strategic management and promoting strategic thinking and setting measurable and realistic goals it is possible to improve the implication of strategic management practices in the public organizations of Afghanistan.

References

Athpaththu, H.K.S. Hasnasini (2016) an Overview of Strategic Management: An Analysis of the Concepts and the Importance of Strategic Management. International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications, Vol 6, Issue 2, ISSN 2250-3153.

Aliyu, Ahmad (2018) An Overview of Strategic Management Practices. Austin Journal of Administration & Management, Volume 2, Issue 3 – 2018.

Jofre, S. (2011). Strategic Management: The Theory and Practice of Strategy in Organizations. Kgs Lyngby: DTU Management 2011, No.1.

Yarahmadzahi, M. E, Zaei, M.H. & Abtin, A. (2013). Strategic Management Practices in Local Authorities. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*. Volume, Issue 3-2013.

Datta, Saroj & Mathew, Mercy (2014). *Strategic Management*. New Delhi, India: Jaico Publishing House.

Williamson, R. P.C. Rao, J. (2013). *Strategic Management & Business Policy*. Hyderabad, India: Paramount Publishing House

David, Fred R. (2011). *Strategic Management: Concepts and Cases*. Francis Marion University Florence, South Carolina, USA: PEARSON.

Nartisa, Ieva, Putans, Romans and Murvaska, Tatjana (2012). *Strategic Planning and Management in Public and Private Sector Organizations in Europe: Comparative Analysis and Opportunities for Improvement*. University of Latvia, European Integration Studies. No 6. ISSN 1822-8402.

Dutt, Dr. Sunel (2016). *Strategic Management Approach of Indian Companies*. *International Journal of Business Management and Scientific Research*. Volume 18, ISSN 2394-6636.

Sulle, Andrew S. (2009). *The Use of Strategic Management in Public Sector Organizations in Tanzania: A Survey of Four Executive Agencies*. Catholic University of Leuven, Public Management Institute.

McBain, Luke and Smith, Dr. Jonathan (2010). *Strategic Management in The Public Sector*. Institute of Management Berlin, School of Economics and Law, Germany.

Boronovi, Mohammed Aboramadan and Elio (2016). *Strategic Management Practices as a Key Determinant of Superior Non-Governmental Organizations Performance*. *Problems of management in the 21st Century* University of Pavia, Italy. Volume 11, No 2, ISSN 2029-6932

Eren, Mehmet Birinci and Erol (2013). The Effects of Strategic Management Practices on the Performance of the Universities in Turkey. *Journal of Global Strategic Management*. Volume 7, No 1. JGSM. 20133715673

Hashimi, Sayed Hashmatullah and Lauth, Gerhard (2016). *Civil Services Reform in Afghanistan*. AREU, Kabul, Afghanistan.

Cookman, Colin and Wadhams, Caroline (2010). *Governance in Afghanistan*. Center of American Progress.

Ministry of Economy (2013). *Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Millennium Development Goals Report*.

Ratnaningsih, Anik, Anwar, Nadjadji, Suwignjo, Patadono (2010). Balance Scorecard of Daid's Strategic Modelling at Industrial Business for National Construction Contractor of Indonesia. *Journal of Mathematics and Technology* No 4, ISSN 2078-0257

Maroa, Jacob Getende and Muturi, Willy (2015). Influence of Strategic Management Practices on Performance of Floriculture Firms in Kenya. *International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management*. Volume 3, Issue 7, ISSN 2348 0386

Frank, Tracy. (2011). *Contemporary Strategic Management Practices of Leading Organizations*. University of Pretoria: Gordon Institute of Business Science.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Administrative Office of the President (2020 January, 15). *Government*. Retrieved from https://aop.gov.af/en/ministries_list

Sekaran, Uma. (2010). *Research Methods for Business* 4th Edition. New Delhi, India: John Wiley, Inc.

De Wit, Bob. Meyer, Ron. (1998). *Strategy (Process, Content, Context)* 2nd Edition. London, UK: International Thomson Business Press.

Daqiq, Moein. (2016). Improving Coordination Among Government Ministries in Afghanistan: University of Central Asia. Bishkek, Kergyz Republic.

Boland, Matt. Thomas, Troy and Werfel, Danny. (2018). Four Steps to High-Impact Strategic Planning in Government: Boston Consulting Group.

Annex-1. Interview Protocol:

Section One: Opening Quires

| | | | |
|--------------|--|------------|--|
| Organization | | Gender | |
| Position | | Age | |
| Code | | Experience | |
| Education | | Department | |

Section Two: Interview Questions

| No | Research Questions | Interview Questions |
|----|--|--|
| 1 | To which extent strategic management practices are applied in the public | Does your organization have vision and mission statements? If yes, please say how it was developed and communicated across the organization? |
| 2 | organizations of Afghanistan? | Does your organization have long-term plan? and how it was developed? |
| 3 | What are main difficulties in applying strategic management practices in the public sector of Afghanistan? | How your organization is scanning the environment, and if you could please say that; which standard method of analyzing the environment you are using? |
| 4 | | How your organization's strategic plan is matched/linked with national plan and national budget?) |
| 5 | | What are main reasons behind failure of strategic plans in the public sector of Afghanistan? |
| 6 | How to improve strategy formulation, implementation and evaluation in the public | How to improve the formulation process of strategic plans in the public sector of Afghanistan?) |
| 7 | organizations of Afghanistan? | How to implement and evaluate strategic plans successfully? |