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Democratic Governance and Service Delivery”

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ABSTRACT BOOK



Theme 1: Subnational Governments: Structures, Innovations and Empowerment

Innovation in Public Service Delivery at Metropolitan City Offices in Nepal: A Case of Bagmati Province

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Abstract

Innovation is something that is new, capable of being implemented, and has a beneficial impact. Effective government and public services depend on successful innovation to develop better ways of meeting needs, solving problems, and using resources and technologies. Government in today's context can provide quality services and perform better by no other means other than innovation. However, public sector of Nepal must have the conditions necessary for innovation if it wants to innovate. The objective of this study thus, was to analyze the conditions necessary for innovation at Metropolitan city offices in Bagmati Province of Nepal. For meeting the objectives, key informant interviews were carried out. The findings suggest that the three metropolitan city offices seem to have been innovating but the deeper look into the pre-requisites for innovation- ability and motivation to innovate dimensions need to be focused for the better service delivery. It is concluded that the metropolitan city offices have inadequate conditions necessary for innovation, nevertheless, it can be enhanced via adoption of different techniques.

Keywords: innovation, public service delivery, conditions

Does E-Government Service improve Public Service Delivery? - A case of Department of Passport (DoP), Nepal

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Abstract

The COVID pandemic compelled governments and citizens to use technology. Use of technology has revolutionized public service delivery in many countries. Government of Nepal (GoN) is adopting technology in service delivery mechanisms. During the COVID pandemic, citizens' engagement on online activities increased. The government provides passport service in Nepal, and to get a passport applicant has to send application to the Department of Passport (DoP) with verified information through District Administration Office (DAO). For quick processing of the passport, applicant can visit DoP. The information verification of the applicant is sensitive, paper based and lengthy. DoP has an online pre-enrollment system that facilitates passport application processing. Assumption is that the introduction of technology improves service delivery. In this research work, the online pre-enrollment system of DoP is analyzed using E-Government Maturity Models (E-GovMM) and SWOT analysis. A survey is conducted with the officials from DoP on the use of the system. The findings showed that the maturity level of the pre-enrollment system is in alignment with the E-Government maturity model, and the online pre-enrollment system implementation in the DoP has improved the traditional passport processing process.

Keywords: e-government, passport processing, public service delivery, pandemic, system thinking

Relationship of Organizational Structure with Transformational Leadership Practice in Public Sector: Evidence from Local Governments of Nepal

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Abstract

This research examines the relationship between organizational structure components and transformational leadership practices in municipalities of Bagmati and Madesh provinces. Transformational Leadership is measured using a set of four items of charismatic leadership subscales - vision, role modelling, inspirational communication, and intellectual stimulation developed by House (1998). Similarly, the organizational structure dimension consists of hierarchical authority structure, weak lateral/upward communication, human resource red tape, procurement red tape and performance measurement. Data was collected using an online and physical survey questionnaire, and analysed using linear regression analysis. The study finds that weak lateral/upward communication and performance measurement has a significant positive relationship with transformational leadership behaviors. However, hierarchical authority structure, human resource red tape, and procurement red have no significant impact. The presence of red tape is noted but its influence on transformational leadership is minimal, likely due to its external nature and legal compliance.

Keywords: transformational leadership, local government, organizational structure, public sector leadership

Case Study on Low Bidding in Public Procurement: A Case of Dharahara Reconstruction Project

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Abstract

Frequent criticism in Nepal revolves around the practice of low bidding, which is often held responsible for project delays, compromised quality, and scope issues. In light of this, the primary goals of the case study are to assess the performance of the Dharahara Reconstruction Project, uncover the factors motivating contractors to engage in low bidding and analyze the impact of low bidding on project timelines. The research, conducted in an explorative manner, relied on in-depth interviews for data collection. The findings of the study reveal that multiple factors have collectively contributed to the project's delays.

Keywords: public project, project delay, Dharahara, contractor, bidding

Effectiveness of Accountability Mechanism of Local Governments in Nepal

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Abstract

This paper analyzes into an examination of the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms within the local governments of Nepal, with a primary focus on evaluating their influence on governance and the delivery of public services. Employing a descriptive analysis, the study scrutinizes various accountability structures such as the municipal executive committee, the council, monitoring committee, legal committee, etc. It investigates the implementation and execution of these mechanisms and assesses their outcomes. Through case studies and situational analyses, the research highlights the strengths and weaknesses inherent in these systems, pinpointing key factors that either contribute to or impede their success. The findings contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse surrounding the enhancement of local governance in Nepal, providing actionable recommendations for policymakers and stakeholders to bolster accountability practices and foster improved public administration at the grassroots level of the country.

Keywords: local government, accountability, good governance, irregularities complaints

नेपालमा संघीयताको अवस्था र सवलीकरण

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Abstract

वि.सं. २०७२ मा जारी नेपालको संविधानको कार्यान्वयनसँगै संघीयता संविधानको एक महत्वपूर्ण आधार स्तम्भ बनेको छ। संघीय लोकतान्त्रिक गणतान्त्रिक शासन प्रणालीको पहिलो कार्यकालसँगै नेपालको संघीयताले नयाँ सिकाइका आफ्नै अनुभव बटुलिसकेको छ। संघीयता कार्यान्वयनका बारेमा मूल्यांकन प्रभावकारिता अध्ययन गर्न हामीसँग प्रारम्भिक छ वर्षको अनुभव सामुने छ। यद्यपि संविधान कार्यान्वयन र संघीयताको संस्थागत विकासमा भने अपेक्षाकृत प्रगति हुन नसकेको बुझाई छ। गणतान्त्रिक राजनीतिले बृहत्तर रूपमा उत्पन्न गर्न नसकेको ऊर्जा र आशाको मारमा प्रदेश सरकारलाई सजिलो निशाना बनाइएको पाइन्छ। एकातर्फ संघीयता महँगो व्यवस्था भन्दै प्रदेशको औचित्यमाथि नकरात्मक धारणाले प्रशय पाएको छ भने अर्कोतर्फ प्रदेशले आफ्नो अधिकारको समेत कार्यान्वयन गर्न नसकेको अवस्था छ। संघीयताको यस अवस्थामा आइपुग्दा प्रदेशको अधिकार, संघ र प्रदेशको साझा अधिकार, संघ, प्रदेश र स्थानीय तहको साझा अधिकारमा भएको अस्पष्टता, दोहोरोपनका बारेमा बुझेर संघीयताको कार्यान्वयनको अवस्थाको अध्ययन (विश्लेषण, देखा परेका समस्या र विशेषतः प्रदेशको सवलीकरणका लागि सुझाव प्रदान गर्ने यस अध्ययनको मुख्य उद्देश्य रहेको छ। संघीयतासम्बन्धी कानूनसँगै अन्य सामाग्री विश्लेषण प्रयोग गर्दै प्रदेश सरकार संचालनका क्रममा सिकाई, अनुभवको संश्लेषणको माध्यमबाट अध्ययन गर्ने विधि प्रभावकारी हुन सक्ने भएकाले Key Informant Interview (KII) शैली अपनाउँदा मुख्यमन्त्री, पूर्व मुख्यमन्त्री, सभामुख, समिति सभापति, मन्त्री, प्रदेश सांसद, प्रमुख सचिव, सचिवलगायत अन्य सँगको छलफल र विज्ञसँगको कुराकानी गरिएको छ। संघीयताको कार्यान्वयनको अवस्थाको प्रारम्भिक अध्ययनका क्रममा अस्पष्ट कानूनी अधिकार र आवश्यक कानून निर्माणको अभावले निम्त्याएको अन्तर्द्वन्द्व, कर्मचारी व्यवस्थापनको अन्योलता, बजेट तथा योजना तजुमी र कार्यान्वयनमा दोहोरोपनको समस्या, श्रोत व्यवस्थापन, वित्तीय उत्तरदायित्व र सुशासनको अभाव एवम् संवैधानिक निकायको कमजोर भूमिका र कार्यान्वयन जस्ता विषयहरू रहेको पाइएको छ। यस अध्ययनले प्रदेश सरकारले सामना गरिरहेका नीतिगत, कानूनी र संरचनागत चुनौती, संघ र स्थानीय सरकारसँग समन्वय, सहकार्य गर्दा आइपरेका बाधा व्यवधानको विषयलाई राजनीतिक, प्रशासनिक र वित्तीय संघीयताको आधारमा विश्लेषण गर्नेछ।

प्रमुख शब्दहरू: संघीयता, प्रदेश सरकार, कानूनी व्यवस्था, राजनीतिक संघीयता, वित्तीय संघीयता, प्रशासनिक संघीयता, सवलीकरण, अधिकार।



Theme 2: Intergovernmental Relationships: Opportunities and Practices

Local Governments in Response to COVID-19 Second Wave in Nepal: A Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Study on the Coordination and Support with Higher Level Governments

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the activities carried out by local governments (LGs) and challenges they faced while responding to COVID-19, as well as the coordination and support received from the federal government and respective provincial governments. This study adopts sequential explanatory mixed-methods. The quantitative data collected from 656 mayors or chairpersons by the collaborative study of Yale University, the London School of Economics, Nepal Administrative Staff College, and the Governance Lab was used in this study. This data was collected between March and May 2021, reflecting the second wave of the pandemic in Nepal. To collect the qualitative data, a case study approach was adopted using cases from 21 municipalities, mayors, chairpersons, and/or chief administrative officers from all seven provinces of Nepal. The major activities LGs carried out were: support for community health services possible at their level; management of vaccination programs; and enforcement of home isolation, followed by other regular activities. During this course, they faced challenges of poor coordination from higher-level governments and within themselves, a lack of resources such as funds and health facilities, the management of returnee migrants, safety protocols, and bureaucratic hurdles. The level of coordination from higher-level governments in regular activities was very poor, and support from them in various needed areas was also minimal, which severely affected their performance. Further, delays in support and false promises of support from higher-level governments declined their trust in higher-level governments. The study highlights the role of coordination and support in COVID-19 management and inter-governmental relationships.

Keywords: local governments, Covid-19, intergovernmental relationship, coordination, support

स्थानीय सरकार र सामुदायिक वन: नजोडिएको साइनो

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Abstract

नेपालमा सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता समूह र स्थानीय सरकार जनतासँग प्रत्यक्ष रूपले सम्बन्धीत संस्थाहरू हुन्। नीति निर्माण गर्ने अधिकार संविधानमा नै ज्ञानेन्टी भएकोले स्थानीय सरकारले आफ्नो क्षेत्राधिकार भित्र रहेका प्राकृतिक स्रोतहरूको व्यवस्थापनमा सहजिकरण र नियमन गर्दछ। त्यसै गरी वन ऐन र नियमावली अनुसार सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता समूहहरूले आफ्नो समूह र वन व्यवस्थापन गर्ने योजना बनाई वनको संरक्षण, सम्बर्द्धन, र सदुपयोग गर्दछन्। यो अध्ययनमा दोलखा जिल्लाका गाउँपालिका र नगरपालिकाहरूका प्रतिनिधिसँग गरिएको अन्तर्कृया (दुई वटा), गाउँपालिका नगरपालिका र सामुदायिक वन एबम सामुदायिक वन उपभोक्ता महासंघ विच सामुदायिक वन र स्थानीय सरकार बिषयक अन्तर्कृया गोष्ठी (दुई वटा) र दोलखा जिल्लाका नौ वटा पालिकाका १८ जना जननीर्वाचित प्रतिनिधिहरू बिच गरिएको अन्तर्वाताबाट (Semi-structure interviews) प्राप्त गरिएका तथ्यांकहरूको बिश्लेषण गरिएको छ। यसका अलावा सामुदायिक वन समूहहरू र स्थानीय सरकारहरूको योजना चक्र र तिनिहरू बिच देखिएको तादाम्यता (एबम अनमेलता) हरूको तुलनात्मक विश्लेषणको कसीमा यो अध्ययनका निष्कर्षहरू निकालिएका छ। वन स्रोतको अधिकतम् सदुपयोग गरी समुदायको आर्थिक समृद्धिमा सामुदायिक वनले योगदान पुऱ्याउनु पर्ने र स्थानीय सरकारको छाता भित्र सामुदायिक वन अभियान स्वायत्त रूपमा सञ्चालन हुनु पर्ने हो। हाम्रो अध्ययनले सामुदायिक वन र स्थानीय सरकार विच अपेक्षित रूपमा एक आपसमा समन्वय र सहकार्य हुन सकेको देखिएन।

सामुदायिक वनहरूको अभिलेख राख्ने, कार्यक्रम तर्जुमा एवं कार्यान्वयनमा सहयोग गर्ने, कार्ययोजना निर्माण परिमार्जनमा सहयोग गर्ने जस्ता काममा स्थानीय सरकारको भूमिका देखिन्छ। सामुदायिक वन र स्थानीय तह विच समन्वय र सहकार्य हुन जरूरी छ। अन्यथा यी निकायहरू विचको असमझदारी बढ्ने र नागरिकको दैनिक सरोकारका सेवाहरू र वन व्यवस्थापन अवरुद्ध हुनसक्नेछ।

मुख्य शब्दहरू: स्थानीय सरकार, सामुदायिक वन, वन स्रोत, समन्वय, सहकार्य, योजना चक्र

Perceived Organizational Support of Higher Level Governments and its Effect on Trust of Local Governments

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Abstract

The decentralization of authority from the federal and provincial levels to local governments resulted in a corresponding rise in the roles and responsibilities of local governments in providing value oriented and citizen centric services to the public. The organizational support and guidance from both levels are considerably significant and are critical in establishing the foundation of ability, benevolence, and integrity as these are the three key dimensions of trustworthiness. In this backdrop, this research examined the effect of organizational support of PGs and FG perceived by the LGs on their trustworthiness. Survey was carried out on the chief administrative officers (CAOs) of the rural/municipalities across the country using self-administered questionnaire. Results obtained from 203 LGs showed they perceived only modest level of support from higher level governments and their trustworthiness towards higher level governments were also in the average level. Results further showed statistically significant effect of perceived organizational support (POS) on two dimensions of trustworthiness for both PGs and FG: ability and benevolence at moderate level. However, there was no significant effect of integrity in case of both PGs and FG. Among them, the effect of support of PGs perceived by LGs were higher on their benevolence and ability. Research and practical implications for provincial and federal level government are discussed in the paper.

Keywords: local governments, provincial government, federal government, trustworthiness, perceived organizational support

Relationship of Emotional Intelligence with Job Satisfaction and Burnout in Public Service Jobs of Nepal

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Abstract

In the modern workplace, there is great interest in the concepts of emotional intelligence (EI) and job satisfaction. EI provides a competitive advantage in both personal and professional life. Investigating the relationship between EI and job satisfaction is therefore crucial for effective human resource management and achieving results in organizations. In this context, this study was conducted to analyze the relationship between emotional intelligence and job satisfaction and burnout using linear regression analysis. The respondents of this study are Class III and equivalent employees working in public sector companies in Nepal. EI is measured along four dimensions: appraisal of one's own emotions, regulation of emotions, use of emotions, and appraisal of others' emotions. The main result of this study confirms the significant and positive influence of emotional intelligence on job satisfaction and a negative influence on burnout. Of the four dimensions of EI, only self-emotion appraisal and emotion regulation have a significant positive effect on job satisfaction. Likewise, only emotion regulation has a significant negative impact on burnout. Various public enterprises and capacity development institutions can thus integrate EI-related programs into their capacity building activities to increase job satisfaction. The study also attempted to examine an under-researched area in the public sector, thereby expanding the literature in this area.

Keywords: self-emotion, emotional intelligence, job satisfaction, public services, quantitative method

नेपालमा सरकारी स्रोत वितरणको अभ्यास र राजनीति

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Abstract

नेपालमा राजनीतिक रुपमा भएका बिभिन्न परिवर्तनहरूले नागरिकको जीवनमा सार्थक प्रभाव पारे नपारेको सम्बन्धमा तथ्यगत बहस र विश्लेषण हुनु आवश्यक छ । त्यसैले कसले के भने भन्दा पनि पछिल्लो राजनीतिक परिवर्तन पछि बिभिन्न राजनीतिक विचारधारा लिएका प्रधानमन्त्री र अर्थमन्त्री भए तिनीहरूले सरकारी स्रोतको प्रयोग केमा गरे? कसरि गरे ? र कस्कालागी गरे ? त्यो जान्नु जरूरी छ । यो अध्ययनमा सोहि बिषयमा विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । नेपालमा बजेट विनियोजनमा राजनीतिक विचारधाराको प्रभाव अध्ययन गर्नु यो अध्ययनको प्रमुख उद्देश्य हो । साथै, बजेटमा दीर्घकालीन योजना र सरकारको नीति तथा कार्यक्रमलाई के कति समेटिएको छ त्यसको पहिचान गर्नु हो । यो अध्ययन विवरणात्मक विधि र डेस्क review मा आधारित छ । परिमाणात्मक साथै गुणात्मक तथ्यांकहरूको प्रयोग गरिएको छ । आर्थिक वर्ष २०६९ र ७० देखि २०८० र ८१ सम्मको बजेट बक्तव्यमा समावेश भएका कार्यगत व्यय अनुमानको विवरणमा उल्लेखित बिभिन्न कार्यगत क्षेत्रमा भएको विनियोजनको विश्लेषण गरी बिभिन्न अर्थमन्त्रीको प्राथमिकता विश्लेषण गरिएको छ । अध्ययन अवधिमा जम्मा सात जना अर्थमन्त्रीले बजेट बनाएका थिए । ति मध्ये तिन जनाले एक वर्षको मात्र, तिन जनाले दुई वर्ष र एक जनाले तिन वर्षको बजेट बनाएका थिए । अधिकांश अर्थमन्त्रीले निश्चित योजनाका साथ र लक्ष हँसिल गर्ने उद्देश्य लिएर भन्दापनि सामान्य परम्परा धान्ने अभिप्रायले कार्यगत क्षेत्रमा बजेट विनियोजन गरेको पाइन्छ । आर्थिक मामिला, सामान्य प्रशासनिक सेवा, शिक्षा र स्वास्थ्य अधिक बजेट थप घट भएका कार्यगत क्षेत्र हुन । प्रत्येक अर्थ मन्त्रीले आफ्नो कार्यकालको शुरुको वर्षमा बनाएको बजेट वितरणको कार्यगत क्षेत्रको प्राथमिकतालाई पछिल्ला वर्षमा परिवर्तन गरेका छन् । तर थोरैले मात्र आर्थिक मामिलालाई प्राथमिकता दिई बजेट विनियोजन गरेका छन् । सामाजिक सुरक्षामा राष्ट्रको उल्लेख्य स्रोतको प्रयोग प्रत्येक वर्ष बढ्दै गएको छ, शिक्षामा घट्दै गएको छ भने स्वास्थ्य पनि प्राथमिकतामा परेको देखिदैन ।

महत्वपूर्ण शब्दावली: बजेट विनियोजन, कार्यगत व्यय, आर्थिक मामिला



Theme 3: Role of Subnational Governments in meeting 2030 Target of SDGs

Analysing SDG Target of Child Mortality and its Determinants in Indian States

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Abstract

In countries where public health care and, more importantly, primary health care is the major responsibility of the government, it becomes the major concern for managing the public health system. India has achieved a significant and consistent reduction in all child mortality rates with vast disparities at the sub-national level. For instance, Infant Mortality has declined from 57 to 35 per thousand live births between 2005-2021. Moreover, low-income states have much higher mortality rates revealing the problems in management of primary health care provisions. This paper aims to analyze the sub-national public healthcare spending and its differential impact on child mortality rates, using sub-national data between 2005-2021. Further, this study uses the panel least square regression model with fixed and random specifications to understand the determinants of Child Mortality at the sub-national level. The finding indicate that the child mortality rates are higher with wide state wise variations in India against the Target 3.2 of the sustainable development goals of 25 per 1000 live births. The panel regression result shows that one percent increase in per capita public health spending reduces the infant mortality rate by almost ten percent. Access to primary health centres, ante natal care female literacy and stunting are the significant determinants of child mortality at the state level.

Keywords: child mortality, health access, public health expenditure, SDG3

Determinants of Child Marriage in Bangladesh: Evidence from five ‘Disadvantaged’ Upazilas

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Abstract

Early marriage is a serious concern in Bangladesh despite the declining prevalence in the last few years. Marriage involving males aged younger than 21 and females aged younger than 18 is considered early marriage in Bangladesh under the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 2017. The study applies data from a larger research that analyzed the status of SDG targets in five selected Upazilas (sub-unit of a district) that are behind in multiple SDG indicators. Using logistic regression and linear probability model, the household data revealed multiple determinants of early marriage. The findings indicate that nearly half (47.67%) of the households in the five upazilas had at least one female member aged between 20 and 24 years (n=1,307) who experienced early marriage. Different socio-demographic determinants, including education level, location of residence, monthly income, parental education, and husband's educational level, are significantly associated with early marriage. The findings will allow governments and policymakers to make data-driven policies on what kind of interventions should work in reducing early marriage in the most vulnerable communities and achieve SDG Goal 5.

Keywords: early marriage, marriage registration, dowry, female education, Bangladesh

Endeavors for Quality Education in Koshi Province

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Abstract

Federalism and decentralization have enabled sub-national authorities to contribute proactively in the development. The paper aims to explore what changes have occurred towards attainment of quality school education in Koshi Province. This paper analyses of policies and programs of the Ministry of Social Development in Koshi Province executed in the year 2018-19. It investigates the progress made towards fulfilling two targets (4.6 and 4.a) of SDG 4, which are related to literacy rates and building effective learning environment in schools. The finding of the study showed that the increase in enrollment is due to policy interventions of the provincial government in 2018-19. The grants for the construction of separate girls' toilets in secondary schools seem to play the most significant role in the surge of enrollments. However, the literacy rate in males is significantly higher than that in females in the year 2021 which is an issue to be further analyzed through the lens of equity in policy outcomes.

Keywords: quality education, Koshi province, SDG 4, literacy, enrollment

Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Opportunities and Challenges for the Local Government: Insights from Khokana, Lalitpur

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Abstract

The Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act, 2017 has replaced the institutional structure set up by Natural Disaster Relief Act- 1982. The DRRMA (2017) has provisions for institutional set from national to local level thereby delegating the authority for disaster risk management to different tiers of government. The Local Government Operation Act (2017) authorizes the local government to evaluate and implement DRRM policies and plans. Such delegation of authority to the local level has opened possibilities for a context sensitive DRRM policies and plans. Analysing the disaster policies and plans of Lalitpur Metropolitan City office (LMC), and its implementation in Ward-21 (Khokana) through a critical vulnerabilities paradigm, this paper identifies three broad interrelated disaster risk reduction and management challenges. First, despite opportunity to contextualize, the local DRRM policies fail to do so and hence do not consider the local and context specific vulnerabilities. Second, the understanding of the disaster predominately remains 'hazard-centric', and hence the policies are oriented towards disaster preparedness and response, rather than risk and vulnerabilities reduction. And finally, rather than in an integrated approach, the DRRM work in local level function within departmental silo. Such stand-alone approach to DRRM can limit long term risk and vulnerabilities reduction opportunities to a more short-sighted and reactionary disaster preparedness and response efforts.

Keywords: DRR&M, DRR governance, vulnerabilities, hazard

Leveraging Data for Localizing and Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into Local Plans

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze the role of data in localizing and integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into local plans. The study used both primary and secondary sources of information. The secondary sources were Nepal's SDG baseline report, the SDG status and roadmap 2016-2030, the national SDG review, the 14th plan, the 15th plan, and other sources. The primary information was collected through key informant interviews with local government officials. The findings showed that localizing and integrating SDGs into local plans and budgets requires good quality data. However, producing and using data for local plans and budgets is very challenging for local governments. Many local governments have prepared municipal profiles based on the 2011 census, which has minimal information and does not cover most SDG indicators. This highlights the data gap in understanding the local situation for localizing and integrating the SDGs. While local governments collect some data on education, health, agriculture, and vital registration, the coverage is limited and scattered across different sections. There seems to be a low tendency to use such data for localizing and integrating SDGs.

Key Words: SDGs, data, local level, Nepal



Theme 4: Inclusive Governance and Service Delivery at the Subnational Level

Competency of Local Government Officials and Organizational Performance at Local Levels

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Abstract

The constitution of Nepal has delegated many state functions and powers to the local governments. Studies have hinted towards the importance of competency in fulfilling the mandates and accomplishing functions of the local governments. To have a better understanding of constitutional provisions and functions of local government the officials from that government should be competent enough to fulfill the assigned roles and responsibilities. The question is: do capacity enable public sector performance at local level? This study seeks to answer this question by establishing links between competency and performance from 54 local governments, and draw lessons for other local governments as all of them aspire to fulfill demand of citizens through quality services. Step-wise regression model was run on the secondary data to study the relationship between the three proxies of performance and seven first and second level proxies of competency. The result of this study supported the prediction of significant positive relationship between local government institutional self-assessment value and number of laws enacted. Local government institutional self-assessment value and performance evaluation value were found to have significant negative relationship with BERUJU. Whereas, local government institutional self-assessment value and performance evaluation value were found to have insignificant relationship with the proportion of capital to total expenditure. Findings suggest that local government should not neglect the competency since there is positive link between competency and performance.

Keywords: competency, capacity, performance, local government, local government officials

Decision-Making Practices at the Local Government: An Inquiry through Inclusive Decision-Making Framework

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Abstract

Nepal has recently adopted a three-tier decentralized federal system of governance through the 2015 constitution. The new architecture of state governance transforms the erstwhile centralized unitary system into a decentralized governance system, allowing opportunities for inclusive decision-making practices at the subnational level. Tracking the past eight years of practices, this study documents fresh insight into inclusive decision-making in the local governments of Nepal. Using a qualitative case study approach as a mode of inquiry in one of the local governments of Nepal, this study acknowledges the significance of diverse perspectives and engagement of executive council members, particularly women and marginalized individuals in decision-making. The constitutional arrangements for promoting inclusive and collective leadership have created a base for a safe and supportive environment in which women and marginalized council members find space for expressing their opinions. The local government invested in capacity development initiatives to bridge the skill gaps and build confidence among its members. Despite the structural arrangements for promoting inclusive leadership in the local governments of Nepal, our study concludes that the theory of submissive inclusion prevails for a number of reasons.

Keywords: inclusive decision making, decentralization, local government, women and marginalized executive council members

Inclusive Governance in Nepalese Civil Service: Comparative Analysis in South Asia

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Abstract

This paper examines the landscape of inclusive governance in the civil service of Nepal. Through a systematic analysis of policies, practices, and outcomes, the paper seeks to identify key factors influencing inclusive governance and to offer insights into potential strategies for improvement. The finding showed that Nepal has adopted inclusive policy since 2007, after the second amendment of the Civil Service Act, 1993 to bring the disadvantaged groups such as women, ethnic minorities, Dalits, disabled, etc. who are socially, economically and politically marginalized into the governing system. Until 2023, only 27% of Nepal's public sector employees are women, with men making up the remaining 73% (NIC, 2022). According to data, the government service employs up to 63.50% Khas/Aryas, but only 0.60% Muslims, 2.50% Dalits, 15.40% Madhesis, and 19.5% indigenous people are represented (Bhul, 2021). In recent years, there has been a growing incentive among public sector employees to involve women and people from diverse economic classes and ethnic groups, and it is believed that this trend would help the bureaucracy become more inclusive of the nation as a whole.

Keywords: governance, inclusion policies, civil service, South Asia, Nepal

Navigating Gender and Governance: An Intersectional Examination of South Asian Women in the Bureaucracies

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Abstract

This study examines the representation and participation of women in the bureaucracies of four South Asian Countries -Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bhutan through an intersectional lens, focusing on the barriers and facilitators affecting their roles. Employing a qualitative approach, the research utilizes interviews, focus group discussions, and document and statistical analysis to collect primary data. The analytical framework, grounded in Intersectional Theory and Cultural Dimensions Theory, aims to understand how overlapping social identities influence women's experiences in bureaucracy. Preliminary findings suggest that despite policy initiatives like quotas and affirmative actions, women predominantly occupy lower-tier positions with limited decision-making influence. The study identifies systemic challenges and gender biases that hinder women's advancement in civil services, reflecting a common scenario across these South Asian countries where trends in women's participation are yet to showcase substantial empowerment and equitable representation in higher bureaucratic roles. This research contributes to the discourse on gender equality in governance and supports advocacy for policy reforms to address the underrepresentation of women, fostering a more equitable administrative landscape. It concludes that for genuine progress, reforms must go beyond mere inclusivity to ensure women's empowerment and leadership within the bureaucratic sphere.

Keywords: gender equality, bureaucracy, South Asia, intersectionality, decision-making

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Urban Water Governance in Nepal

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Abstract

Studies have shown that the water crisis is looming globally with prominent impacts in urban areas under climate change and rapid population growth. Ensuring effective water supply service under the coupled impacts of urbanization and climate change and accelerating progress towards SDGs call for inclusive and climate-responsive local water governance. Devolution of authorities through federalization and proliferation of gender-inclusive policies have fostered opportunities for re-examining gender roles and promoting inclusion in water governing bodies in Nepal. In this context, this paper aims to explore gender equality and social inclusion in urban water governance in Nepal. Our over a decade long research engagement analyzing the urban water issues in multiple municipalities of Nepal, through qualitative approach (adopting methods as Key informants' interviews, Pani Chautari discussions, observations), however, shows creating a gender-transformative space in local water governance is complicated and slow. With existing underlying patriarchal social structures, urban water management at the household level still falls primarily under the women's responsibility. Furthermore, the notion that women are adept at managing limited water further add to their workloads as urban areas become increasingly water scarce. Secondly, techno-scientific engineering and masculine decision-making continue to predominate and impede those "included" to actually influence the water governance decisions. Third, as urbanization intensifies competition for water, gender and caste-class (or other) intersections make water access, meaningful inclusion, and influence in local water governance even more challenging for the marginalized groups (e.g., poor Dalit communities).

Keywords: urban water security, water governance, gender equality, social inclusion, Nepal

Inclusive Governance and Service Delivery of Subnational Governments

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Abstract

Nepal being a country with rich diversity, has proudly institutionalized inclusive governance in the constitution. With the restructuring of the state into federal democratic republic of Nepal, one of the prime goal has been to endorse suitable (effective and efficient) inclusion tools and instruments in front line service delivery, to mainstream the historically marginalized population and to deliver service based on social justice. Sub-national functions in Nepal are mainly responsible in front-line service delivery; incorporating the value of inclusive governance in service delivery means promotion of customized services to the target group and inclusive dialogue between the service receivers and service providers. This research article explores the policy instruments introduced and implemented in sub-national governance in Nepal (local level) to address the concern of inclusive governance. Through participatory service delivery approach intrinsic values of democracy can be built among service receivers establishing inclusive governance. Survey and first-hand questionnaire have been used in a sample of 15 random local bodies situated in Bagmati province (rural municipalities and municipalities), to understand the underlying scenario of inclusive service delivery mechanism followed by a comparative study within the South Asia Sub-National governance focusing on SNGs of India (Haryana state) and Bangladesh (Dhaka Division).

Keywords: sub-national governance, inclusive governance, policy instruments, marginalized population



Theme 5: Local Leadership Development and Functioning during Disasters

Marginality Shaping Vulnerability and Risk of Disaster in the Southern Kathmandu Valley

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Abstract

This paper, taking a case of a peri-urban town of rapidly urbanising southern Kathmandu valley, analyses how the underlying socio-economic positionalities of individuals and households exacerbate their vulnerability and unequally expose them to the risk of disaster. Despite hazards affecting all indiscriminately, their impact disproportionately affects individuals based on such unequal positionalities, access to resources, knowledge and local politics, and their living status i.e., local or migrants. The study analyses the profound influence of various factors like deeply engrained social discrimination, limited access to resources and entitlements, coupled with a dependency on others for livelihoods, that perpetuates socio-economic marginalisation within low-caste communities, exacerbating vulnerability and risk to disasters. Simultaneously, land ownership contributes to vulnerability among both high and low-class/caste individuals with the escalating control over land by real estate and development endeavours. Moreover, the increasing urbanisation trend tempts Khokana residents to trade their lands, integral to their livelihoods, threatening not only their identity as farmers but also their culture and traditions. Likewise, gender-based inequities and entrenched patriarchal structures exacerbate the vulnerability of women by reinforcing traditional gender roles, wage disparities, and unequal power dynamics restricting women's access to and control over resources. Additionally, migrants confront social marginalisation, encountering difficulties assimilating into the close-knit Newar community, further compounded by the reluctance of locals to accept their existence, thereby hindering their civic participation. As diversified factors are responsible for creating marginality, recognising and resolving these underlying factors through community-based urban planning remains pivotal in achieving an equitable and risk-resilient city.

Keywords: urbanization; unequal social positionalities; vulnerability; exposure to hazards; reproduction of risks; uneven disasters

Citizen Charter as Governance Reform Initiative for Quality Service Delivery

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Abstract

Citizen Charter (CC) is applied to upgrade the capabilities of local government in delivering services to people. CC is the official commitment towards the public for quality services and all service recipients need to have clear and succinct information about the services and goods being provided. Central to the discussion of governance reform and CC is the question of whether public institutions are conducive to the creation, dissemination and processing of knowledge on CC which could leads to the quality service delivery. Hence, this study examines the role of institutional factors such as the procedural transparency and clarity; timely delivery of services; and grievances handling system on municipal service delivery after the implementation of CC. This study employed a sequential explanatory mixed method. The findings prevail that there is greater procedural transparency and timely delivery of services is gradually improving whereas grievance handling system is still found weak in the municipality.

Key Words: Governance, Reform, Citizen Charter, Good Governance, Service Delivery

Fostering Leadership Development in Subnational Governments: A Study of Effective Initiatives and Challenges

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Abstract

Subnational governments play a vital role in nurturing leadership within democratic systems, serving as laboratories for leadership development. This research delves into the efficacy of leadership initiatives within municipal structures, focusing on enhancing economic governance and policy leadership while addressing youth unemployment. By exploring the intersection of leadership development and local governance, this study aims to shed light on the role of subnational governments in fostering effective leadership. The research employed outcome harvesting tools to assess the impact of leadership initiatives within subnational governments. Data collection methods included interviews and focus groups. The finding showed that that increase in informal authority among rapid results initiatives team members and heightened stakeholder awareness of innovative techniques. The Knowledge Skills and Abilities of elected representatives improved, particularly in project management, time management, interpersonal communication, and resource mobilization skills. Stakeholders demonstrated a better understanding of local economic development and strengthened relationships among themselves and with municipal stakeholders. However, challenges such as a gap between modules and RRI were identified, suggesting a need for further integration and institutionalization of leadership initiatives within municipal governance structures.

Keywords: subnational governments, leadership development, rapid results initiatives, municipal governance, outcome harvesting

Frontline Healthcare Professionals' Work Effectiveness During COVID-19 in Nepal: What Matters?

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the economy and health care system all over the world including Nepal. The healthcare system of Nepal is facing different challenges while coping with this pandemic. Healthcare professionals, the frontline warriors, have been playing major role in the management of the COVID-19. In this regard, this study examined the determinants of work effectiveness of frontline healthcare professionals during COVID-19 in Nepal. The study assessed the effect of leadership, work place, family & societal, and communication & coordination dimension on work effectiveness of frontline healthcare professionals during COVID-19 in Nepal. The quantitative research design was used to examine the effect of independent variables into a dependent variable. In total 131 frontline healthcare professionals were surveyed through structured self-administered questionnaire via google form and the response was analyzed by applying descriptive and inferential statistics through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. Finding shows that over work pressure, inadequate physical facilities, shortage of competent staffs, inappropriate work division, mental stress, anxiety and physical threat are the major risk and challenges that frontline healthcare professional face during the COVID-19. Similarly, leadership, family & societal and, organizational communication & coordination dimension has effect on work effectiveness whereas work place dimension and frontline healthcare professionals' socio-demographics have no effect on work effectiveness of frontline healthcare professionals during COVID-19 in Nepal.

Keywords: COVID-19, work effectiveness, healthcare, frontline healthcare professionals, perceived risk and challenges

Early Phase of Federalism: Exploring the Experiences of Administrative Leaders of Local Governments in Nepal

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Abstract

The first five years since the implementation of federalism has brought a ray of hopes among the service users and service providers at local level. The optimism, was however, coupled with certain challenges for the service providers, especially administrative leaders to manage their local level amidst the resource constraints and dilemma. In this context, this study aimed at exploring those challenges regarding employee engagement and managing networks and relationships with various stakeholders as well as the strategies they had adopted to overcome these challenges. The study was based on qualitative approach in which in-depth interviews were taken with a total of six participants who were Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) with the first five years' experience. They were taken into consideration for study on the grounds of substantial experiences of working as the administrative leaders at local level and still in the government service. The study represented participants from rural/municipalities of three provinces. Using thematic analysis, the study found majority of challenges faced by CAOs were under-staffing and even over-staffing due to employment adjustments by federal governments. They were able to manage the employees through extrinsic motivation, role-modelling, providing training and development opportunities, keeping open environment for discussions and inspiring them for effective public service delivery. However, managing relationships various stakeholders, mostly political leaders was among their biggest challenges to which they strategize using rules and regulations or got transferred.

Keywords: CAOs, federalism, challenges, employee engagement, political relationship

Perceived Level on Efforts of Municipals on COVID-19 Pandemic Management and its Association among Teachers of Community Schools

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Abstract

As per federalistic constitution 2015 of Nepal, subnational governments/municipalities are responsible for the delivery of basic services of health, education, drinking water, sanitation, clean environment, housing, livelihood, and other developmental activities. Corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic had distracted these basic services like health, education etc. In such situations, municipality has roles in providing immediate responses/efforts to build resilient society. This study aims to identify efforts of municipality on the COVID-19 pandemic management and reoperation of schools in community. This cross-sectional survey was conducted among 737 community school teachers of Gandaking province. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results showed that teachers had perceived inadequate efforts on COVID-19 pandemic management from municipality. Municipality differentiated response efforts on COVID-19 pandemic management for different Ethnic groups/ social construct. Therefore, interventions considering social justice help to resilient society/community for future disasters like COVID-19.

Keywords: perceived level, municipality, responses, COVID-19, ethnicity



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