

5th Conference on Public Policy and Governance in South Asia

Conference Theme: Subnational governments as the Defender of Democratic Governance and Service Delivery

Date: March 29, 2024 (Chaitra 16, 2080)

Nepal Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur, Nepal

Background and Rationale

The current era of multi-level governance has stressed the role of sub-national governments in promoting democratic governance and service delivery which is also pertinent in South Asia. Despite variations in political structures and powers, sub-national governments are playing significant roles across the region in meeting the demands for improved governance and smooth service delivery and are also serving as the cornerstone of democracy and service provision. Entrusted with translating national policies into tangible actions that benefit communities, sub-national governments play a crucial role in addressing the diverse needs of their constituents, from healthcare to infrastructure. Though sub-national governments are recognized as the defenders of democratic governance and service delivery, they have been facing a myriad of challenges such as imbalances in functions and funds mobilization, lack of autonomy, administrative arrangements, and poor intergovernmental coordination, among others.

Building on previous conference proceedings, Nepal Administrative Staff College, in collaboration with various government, non-government and academic partners, is organizing this fifth edition on public policy and governance. This conference presents an opportunity to exchange knowledge and experiences among delegates from different countries, shedding light on the vital roles of sub-national governments as the defenders of both democratic governance and service delivery.

Aim

This conference aims to provide a forum where scholars from South Asia will join together to share their knowledge on the functioning of the sub-national governments, the good practices, the challenges, and prospective solutions.

Objectives

- Provide a platform to discuss and share practices as well as experiences of public policy management, development activities, and governance,
- Provide an interactive venue for discourse on the functioning and role of local government as a governance unit in the federal setup,
- Discuss the roles of sub-national governments in meeting the SDGs 2030; inclusive governance and service delivery.

Keynote Speech

Theme: Deepening Democracy: Reflecting on the Foundation Years of Federalism in Nepal

Session Chair: Dr. Rajan Khanal, Executive Director, NASC

Speaker: : Prof. Dr. Bipin Adhikari, Constitutional expert and policy analyst

The key note speaker will highlight on the role of subnational governments in federal system, fundamental principles of democracy and the roles subnational governments play in upholding democratic practices at local scale. He will also share the challenges that subnational governments encounter in delivering services to citizens. He will conclude by highlighting the role of subnational governments to deepen the democratic values in federal system.

Thematic Sessions

- 1) Sub-national Governments: Structures, Innovations, and Empowerment:** In this session, the speakers will delve into the roles and structures of provincial and local governments, enriching our understanding of subnational governance dynamics and emphasizing strategies for decentralization, service delivery, and citizen engagement.
- 2) Intergovernmental Relationships: Opportunities and Practices:** In this session, the speakers will unveil effective practices that foster collaboration and optimize governance structures, policy coordination, and resource allocation among the different tiers of government.
- 3) Role of Subnational Governments in Meeting 2030 SDG Targets:** In this session, the speakers will highlight the role of local government in meeting 2030 SDG target in this south Asia.
- 4) Inclusive Governance and Service Delivery at the Subnational Level:** In this session, the speakers will endeavor to explore mechanisms for fostering inclusivity and enhancing service delivery within regional and different tiers of governments, ensuring equitable access and participation, particularly for marginalized populations.
- 5) Local Leadership Development and Functioning during Disasters:** In this session, the speaker will accentuate the role of local leadership in disaster response and recovery and discuss on the strategies for strengthening capacity and facilitating community resilience amidst crises, including pandemics.

Panel Discussion

Theme: Strengthening Subnational Government for Deepening Democracy

Panelist: Hon'ble Pradip Paudel, Member of the Federal Parliament of Nepal

Panelist: Mr. Dormani Paudel, Former Chief Minister, Bagmati Province

Panelist: Mr. Krishna Prasad Sapkota, Former Member of Constituent Assembly

Panelist: Ms. Laxmi Devi Pandey, Chairperson, Hupsekot Rural Municipality

Moderator: Mr. Bishnu Prasad Lamsal, Deputy Executive Director, NASC

This session aims to discuss and analyze the experiences of federal, provincial, and local governments in implementing federalism and practices to achieve public aspirations from administrative, fiscal, and political perspectives in Nepal.



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