

Conference on Public Policy and Governance in South Asia: *Towards Justice and Prosperity*



28-29 June 2018

Nepal Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur

Background and Rationale

The themes of social justice and prosperity, having commanded greater appeal to policy-makers and general population alike, have increasingly become central to national and sub-national policy-making and governance. Furthermore, the adoption of Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 represents a global commitment in favor of these ideals. The goals, especially from SDG 7 to SDG 11, emphasize the need to develop strong, inclusive, and transformative economy. Accordingly, there is growing realization of the emergent need for concerted action by the governments, donor community, civil society and like-minded actors. How will these global calls as well as national and sub-national aspirations be put to work in practice? Are the business-as-usual governance systems and practices help address these calls for action? How should the government behave in this regard? What new policies should be in place?

These are some of the questions that will be critical not only in the context of the SDGs but more generally as public institutions evolve out of the restrictive regimes of the past in South Asia. While there have been important gains made in the “colonial” legacy carried on in the administrations in this region, the countries now face greater challenges as economies grow, governance complexities evolve and as intense social, economic and political transformations are under-way. The knowledge about this dynamics helps shape policies and steer the processes of change ongoing in the region.

Aim

With this in view, this conference is being organized by Nepal Administrative Staff College in partnership with research and development organizations in Nepal and South Asia. The conference for this year is the second of this kind—starting with 2017, the conference is being

envisioned as an annual gathering of interested scholars, academics, and practitioners in the field of public policy and governance in South Asia. The conference will provide a valuable platform to communicate new studies, exchange issues, ideas, and experiences, and explore collaboration opportunities. Accordingly, this conference aims to bring together scholars, policy actors and political leaders of South Asia into deliberate and share experiences on public policy and governance in the region.

Objectives

- Provide forum to discuss and share practices as well as experiences of public policy and governance,
- Support to promote culture of evidence-based public policy making and identify issues and opportunities in public policy process in the region.
- Strengthen the synergy and networking of institutions working in public policy and governance.

Conference Theme

Towards Justice and Prosperity

South Asia together is moving towards achieving social justice and prosperity, after a painful experience of decades-long marginalization, poverty, exclusion, and discrimination within different groups of population. The region shares common problems in many aspects of public and private life and institutions, and can, therefore, have common approaches to address them. In the recent past, each country in South Asia is committed to overcome all these social problems and achieve a destination of prosperity.

Sub Theme

A. Social Justice and Inclusion

Making a nation where all the citizens can realize their dignity, their voices are respected, the reasons for discrimination are eliminated is the need of the day. South Asia together is moving towards making their nation more inclusive and deliver justice. This theme is a space where scholars will elucidate country-specific issues on social justice and inclusion and efforts made to achieve them.

B. Public Sector Management

No better system can be expected without managing public sector effectively. The public sector performance is centripetal that keeps attracting all other sectors. The public sector is said to be accountable for the performance of non-government and private sectors. South Asian countries are working sincerely to improve public sector performance. This theme brings the experience of public sectors management in South Asia and provides opportunity for countries to learn from across.

C. Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations

With the respect on the devolution of power, managing multi-level governments is a common issue for most of the nations. There could be difference in forms and scope of multi-level governments but basic principles of management could be the same. Nepal, for example, is the

youngest country to adopt federalism with an aim to devolve power to the sub-national governments for strengthening democratic governance whereas India is practicing federalism for last 6 decades. Bangladesh, on the other hand, is practicing decentralization to empower sub-national units. This theme will allow the delegates to engage in dialogue to share the experience of dealing with different forms of governance.

D. Addressing Poverty: Innovative Approaches

Although having remarkable improvements in people's lives in recent past, poverty still remains a common problem for South Asia. Each country is having emphasis on poverty reduction strategies to improve living conditions of people. Poverty is considered as a hindrance to realizing all other efforts of justice and inclusion and a major obstacle to prosperity. This theme will allow delegates to engage in a dialogue to share country-specific innovative approaches to address this common problem for South Asia.

Conference Programme *(Proposed)*

Day I

Inaugural

Keynote Address: Towards Justice and Prosperity

Technical Session I: Public Sector Governance

Technical Session II: Public Service Delivery

Policy Dialogue I: Social Justice and Inclusion

Policy Dialogue II: Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations

Day II

Technical Session III: Issues and Practices of Public Policy

Technical Session IV: Public-Private Partnership

Policy Dialogue III: Addressing Poverty: Innovative Approaches

Plenary: Towards Prosperity: South Asia Together

Closing

Key Dates

Submission of Abstract: 25 May 2018

Submission of Article: 10 June 2018

Conference date: 28-29 June 2018

Email: rcsd@nasc.org.np

Conference Venue

Nepal Administrative Staff College, Jawalakhel, Lalitpur, Nepal

Conference Secretariat

Nepal Administrative Staff College

Centre for Research and Development

Organizers



Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC)

<http://nasc.org.np>

Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) is a national institution for the capacity development of government officials. For more than three decades, NASC has been involved in capacity building of administrators, development managers, and public service providers through various training programmes, management development programmes, research works and consulting services. NASC is also preparing to run academic programmes in public policy, development management, and governance.



Niti Foundation

<http://nitifoundation.org>

Niti Foundation is a Nepali non-profit organization engaged in strengthening Nepal's policy process through research, innovations, and alternatives. Niti Foundation's goal is to promote the engagement of Nepalis in the policy-making process and the reformation of Nepal's policymaking process into one that is democratic, responsive, informed and evidence-based.



Institute for Social and Environmental Transition (ISET) Nepal

<http://isetnepal.org.np/>

ISET-Nepal was established in 2001 as a non-governmental and not-for-profit organization to study and analyze developmental issues of rapidly changing social and environmental context that demand new insights into the emerging challenges to manage resources for sustainable development. ISET-Nepal envisions a society capable of addressing the emerging social and environmental challenges through the improved local institutional capacity to respond flexibly using innovative approaches and sustainable solutions as new issues arise.



Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS)

<http://www.sias-southasia.org/>

Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS) was established in 2011 as an indigenous platform for advanced research and scholarly exchange in the South Asia region. It emerges from the pressing need to nurture and promote critical research, scholarship, and teaching in Southasia. It takes an interdisciplinary approach and specializes in advanced studies – research, scholarly publications and seminar series. As an endogenous initiative of the region, it will fill the critical gap in knowledge generation and capacity strengthening by cultivating and promoting more engaged practice of social science in addressing social and environmental challenges.



Institute of Public Enterprises (IPE), India

<http://ipeindia.org>

Established in 1964, the Institute of Public Enterprise (IPE) was established as an autonomous non-profit society with the objective of furthering studies, research and consultancy in Management Sciences. IPE is devoted to systematic and sustained study of issues relevant to the formulation, implementation, review, monitoring, and assessment of policies and programs concerning public enterprises.



Think Tank Initiative/IDRC, India

<http://thinktankinitiative.org>

The Think Tank Initiative (TTI) is dedicated to strengthening the capacity of independent policy research institutions in the developing world. Launched in 2008 and managed by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). TTI currently provides 43 think tanks in 20 countries with core, non-earmarked funding. This support allows the institutions to attract, retain and build local talent, develop an independent research program, and invest in public outreach to ensure that research results inform and influence national and regional policy debates.



BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), Bangladesh

<http://bigd.bracu.ac.bd>

BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University is a center of excellence in post-graduate education and policy research, as well as advocacy based on rigorous research. BIGD conducts multidisciplinary research under the four clusters namely, economic growth and development; policy, democracy and governance; gender studies and social justice; and urbanization, environment, and climate change. On the academic side, BIGD offers four Master's degree programs in Development Studies, Governance and Development, Procurement and Supply Management (MPSM).



North South University (NSU), Bangladesh

<http://www.northsouth.edu>

North South University (NSU), the first private university in Bangladesh, was established in 1992. It visions to be and remain a center of excellence in higher education with aim to gain recognition, nationally and globally and attract students, faculty, and staff from all parts of the world. NSU has a regional research and academic center with the partnership of four South Asian universities called Public Policy and Governance (PPG) program. Since the inception, it has drawn the interest of public sector professionals and researchers from Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. This program could modestly be claimed as one of the pioneering center in the South Asian region for higher learning and research on policy and governance.

Contact Persons

Mr Trilochan Pokharel

Director of Studies, Nepal Administrative Staff College
trilochan.pokharel@nasc.org.np, Ph: 00977-9841502061

Mr Rajendra Adhikari

Director of Studies, Nepal Administrative Staff College
rajendra.adhikari@nasc.org.np, Ph: 00977-9841369243

Ms Shailaja Upadhyaya

Training and Research Officer, Nepal Administrative Staff College
shailaja.upadhyaya@nasc.org.np, Ph: 00977-9851190715