CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS REPORT

June 28-29, 2018

Public Policy and Governance in South Asia: Towards Justice and Prosperity

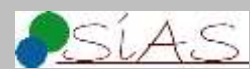NEPAL ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF COLLEGE

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Abstract

The issues of social justice and prosperity, commanding greater appeal to policy makers and general population alike, have increasingly become central to national and sub national policy making and governance. The adoption of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 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. The countries of the South Asia, do not only have a shared past but the present too is similar as most of the countries within the region, evolving out of their colonial past, face greater challenges with growing economies, governance complexities and intense socio-economic and political transformations. The knowledge about the dynamics helps shape policies and steer the processes of change ongoing in the region.

With this background, Nepal Administrative Staff College in partnership with research and development organizations in Nepal and South Asia jointly organized the conference entitled 'Conference on Public Policy and Governance in South Asia: Towards Justice and Prosperity'. The conference, this year, is second of its kind, following the one in 2017. The conference is envisaged as an annual gathering of interested scholars, academics and practitioners in the field of public policy and governance in South Asia. The conference has evolved as a platform to communicate new studies, exchange ideas and experiences and explore collaboration opportunities. The conference has brought together scholars, policy actors and political leaders of South Asia into a dialogue and to share experiences on public policy and governance in the region. The general objectives of the conference are:

- *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.*

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. Acknowledging this shared history and practices of the South Asia, conference is organized under the theme, 'Towards Justice and Prosperity'. Within the broader theme, four sub themes were identified, namely, Social Justice and Inclusion, Public Sector Management, Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations, Addressing Poverty: Innovative Approaches, and Deepening Democracy.

Acknowledgement

Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) would like to acknowledge the excellent work of our seven organizing partners which comprised of the following:

- BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), Bangladesh
- Institute for Social and Environmental Transition (ISET) Nepal
- Institute of Public Enterprises (IPE), India
- Niti Foundation, Nepal
- North South University (NSU), Bangladesh
- South Asia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS), Nepal
- Think Tank Initiative (TTI), India

Gratitude is also extended to all of our distinguished Keynote speakers; plenary speakers and sessions directors. We would also like to acknowledge the important contributions of all of our conference participants.

Lastly, we would also like to appreciate the hard work of all the back ends conference secretariat team for making the conference a successful event.

1. Introduction to the Proceeding Report

The conference on 'Public Policy and Governance in South Asia: Towards Justice and Prosperity" organized by NASC along with its partner organizations brought together scholars, policy actors and political leaders of South Asia to deliberate and share knowledge and experiences on public policy and governance in the region. The conference became a platform to manifest the underlying commonality in the region, both in terms of social problem faced and in approaches undertaken to address them. The scholars and researchers from Nepal, India, Bangladesh, and Myanmar were engaged in the broader dialogue of 'Justice and Prosperity' through policy dialogues and presentation of research work from selected researchers of the participant countries.

The two-day conference was divided into four major sessions- Keynote address, policy dialogues, technical sessions and plenary discussion. Following the inaugural session, the conference started with the Keynote presentations titled 'Towards Justice and Prosperity' by Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, former prime ministers of Nepal and 'Towards Justice and Prosperity: Gender and Justice' by Raseda Choudhary, former advisor of the care taker government of Bangladesh. In the course of two days, five policy dialogues were organized. The panelists-presenters, speakers and chair of these session were pioneer scholars and practitioners of the respective policy themes. The public office holders, Mayors and deputy mayors of different municipalities and rural municipalities (*gaupalika)* were too engaged as speakers in the discussion around democracy. The conference ended with a plenary session chaired by Honorable Pradip Gyawali, Minister of Foreign Affairs who ended the conference highlighting the need for regional cooperation in South Asia.

Different sessions in the conference followed the same modality where the main presenter put forward his/her ideas in the form of multimedia presentation or speech followed by a commentary session from the panelist. The audience then joined in the deliberation by commenting and raising questions on the presentations which later were addressed by the presenters. In case of the technical sessions, in the stretch of two days, six technical sessions were organized. The theme of each session was determined by NASC based on the abstract received after the broader research paper call between the partners. In all the technical sessions, the researcher presented their findings with the help of multimedia presentation followed by discussion session with the audience.

This proceeding report follows the same modality as the conference. The report is divided in four major headings-keynote session, policy dialogues, technical sessions and plenary discussion. The policy dialogue section is further divided into four sub headings as per the theme; the presentations of the main speaker and the panelists are summarized. Based on the notes of the rapporteurs, the deliberation, in the form of

questions and concerns, that followed each presentation are also summarized at the end of each section in the report. Similarly, the technical session is divided into 6 subsections, each containing the abstracts of the paper presented in the respective themes. The   post presentation discussions between the participants and the researchers are also summarized at the end of each section. In case of keynote speeches and plenary discussion, the entire scripts used by the speakers are presented as it is. Finally, the names of all the participants/participating organizations and, the schedule of the program are in the Annexes, at the end of the report.

2. Program Proceedings

i.   Key Note Speech

Chair: Dr. Bimala Rai Poudyal
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Baburam Bhattarai, Former Prime Minister,Nepal
Keynote Speaker: Dr. Rasedha K. Choudhury, Cabinet Member, Care Taker Government, Bangladesh

Summary of the Keynote Presentation-Dr. Baburam Bhattarai

The proposition of social justice and economic prosperity should be placed in a historical context. Looking back at the history, after years of struggle against absolute Rana regime, Nepal embarked towards democratic transformation process in 1950s. The infant democracy didn't last long and was subdued by autocratic monarchial rule that lasted till 1990s. These political developments created a state that was highly centralized, a society that was less plural and an economy that was frail. As a result of number of violent and non-violent struggle since then autocratic monarchial rule came to an end in 2008 and the country entered into a federal democratic system. Finally, Nepal got its constitution through an elected Constituent Assembly in 2015. Federalism, if implemented as per its essence, can be one such means to get an inclusive development for which Nepal has been striving for. At present, with the stable government, there is an opportunity to create a conducive political environment for rapid socio-economic transformation.

The question arises on which path to follow for development and prosperity. The socio-economic indicators such as, HDI, MPI, Gini coefficient, indicate low economic development and high inequality in Nepal. For sustainable development, both social and economic indicators should be in balance, which is the biggest challenge for the general prosperity of a country. Nepal has made progress in decreasing absolute poverty

in last 20 years with consequent better performance in HDI. Despite the progress, the economic performance is still quite disappointing as Nepal ranks at 144 among 188 countries in HDI and the per capita income is US$862(in 2017). The worst of all is the condition of environment protection as Nepal ranks at 176 among 180 countries in EPI. Within the country, the economic disparity is very high as per capita income of Bajhang district is almost one-sixth of that of Kathmandu. The federal restructuring data also show severe disparity both in social and economic fronts.

Within the context, prosperity has to be conceptualized as dynamic process with 4 dimension, i) high economic growth for economic prosperity ii) inclusive development for social justice iii) environmental conservation for the sustainability of the development process iv) spiritual enhancement for personal happiness. These four dimensions constitute the totality of prosperity. Another aspect of development is the relationship between economic prosperity and social justice. Often, the two are understood as contradictory and antagonistic but they are complementary to each other. Economic development is an outcome of collaborative efforts of people belonging to various layers of society. The policies therefore should be designed in such a way that it envisages the functioning of an economic system that restricts the amassing of wealth and the means of production by a few people. In the present context, there is an optimistic prospect of social justice and economic prosperity in Nepal as the constitution, legal provisions, policies and the international commitments are pro-inclusive development with adequate social justice measures. The constitution of Nepal acknowledges the multi-national, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and regionally diverse social reality. The determination to create an egalitarian society on the basis of the principles of proportional inclusion and participation and equitable economy, prosperity and social justice are enshrined in the preamble of the constitution. Similarly, Nepal has also undertaken a number of international commitments to non-discrimination, gender equality and social justice. There are legal provisions but they must be implemented.

The strategies to achieve the goal of prosperity with social justice or inclusive development in Nepal can be first, rapid economic growth. The low level of productivity in all sectors undermines meaningful structural economic transformation. Modernization of agriculture and the expansion of manufacturing services should be the foremost priority. Other priority sectors can be development of infrastructures, tourism development and service sector, development of urban economic centers and human capital development. Other proposition is economic equality and social inclusion. The issues of social discrimination among different caste, class, religion and ethnicity have plagued Nepal historically. With certain section of population facing inequality, prosperity cannot be achieved. Yet another necessary requisite for prosperity is good governance and ethical conduct. Having an accountable and transparent government with ethical conduct is required for socio-economic transformation of the country both as end

and means. Furthermore, the spatial location of Nepal between two powerful neighbors, India and China, also requires having a balanced foreign policy that maintains an equal relationship with both the countries. Nepal can gain by acting as bridge between two large economies. And finally, prosperity and social justice can foster in Nepal through the doctrine of Progressive Socialism. In this system, the government regulates market in a way that it will not unjustly favor certain groups and ensures the distribution of the benefits and resources equitably to its citizens.

The required pre-requisites are present in Nepal, ranging from the constitutional provisions to resource availability for socio-economic transformation of the country through rapid economic development and social justice. What is required is will-power and strong commitment of the government of Nepal.

<u>Summary of the Keynote Presentation-</u> Dr. Rasedha K. Choudhury

When we talk about justice and prosperity, we think of people. But who are these people? The people are men, women and transgender. By people, we mean a young mother abandoned by her husband, or a toiling farmer from India, or an adolescent girl who walks miles for school every day. Justice and prosperity should consider these people.

A recent data published by Reuters Foundation on situation of women has five countries of South Asian region as the worst performers. Such data raises question whether women are getting their fair share of development. The situation, however, is not all too negative. Even without government support, there are evidences of rural women in Bangladesh standing up for their rights. When a 25-year-old new mother was beaten up by her husband, and the village Panchayat refused to listen to her plea, the community women protested through a cooking strike which yielded a 'no beating' commitment from men. In an overarching patriarchal structure, women in their own ways are working for justice. Story as this highlights the importance of the need of discourse on gender and justice in south Asian region. Gender is a social construct but the understanding of the concept and the dimension of its use in different socio-cultural context vary a lot. The understanding of gender, in general, is considered to be limited to women and girls only. Considering the socio-cultural setting and political context, 'gender' encompasses men, women and third gender.

Amartya Sen argued that justice far from being a 'value neutral term' is a relative term. In south Asian region, along with discrimination and inequality, justice is yet another issue concerning women. The situation of women is as varied as the diverse social, cultural and geographical realities of the region. As

much great men thinkers, the region also has women intellectuals such as Begum Rokkaya who have reshaped the patriarchal concepts around women. Therefore, the discussion on gender and justice has to focus on both the history and contemporary context of women and men's status. It is becoming evident that when it comes to gender justice, south Asia becomes a sub-region where progress in reducing the gender gap is as much visible as the lack of equity focused action. Although women make almost half of the total population, they have been subjected to lot of exploitation and deprivation. Women are expected to play the roles of docile daughters, coping wives and submissive mothers. Furthermore, the sub-region is plagued with negative norms such as dowry, early marriage and polygamy which undermine the contribution of women. The atrocities on women are justified with the rhetoric of 'traditional values'. The silver lining, however is, despite the challenges, women's participation in all spheres of life- economy, society, and politics, are not only becoming more visible but women are also gaining recognition both at home and in the state.

It cannot be over emphasized that a huge number of men and women still live in conditions of injustice and inequality. Like girls, boys too, globally, are at risk of illiteracy and underachievement. Therefore, we have to take into account that gender justice does not mean equity for only girls or women. It has to enshrine the spirit of equality for all sexes, men, women and transgender. South Asia has shown many ways forward through various pioneering ventures in promoting human potential development over the years. With strong political commitment, appropriate strategies, meaningful partnership and adequate resources it can definitely provide ways and means of ensuring gender justice.

ii. Policy Dialogues

Policy Dialogue I: Social Justice and Inclusion

Chair: Sayed Lasna Kabir, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh

Speaker: Mohan Das Manadhar, Executive Director, Niti Foundation

Panelist: Anil Kumar Thakur, Secretary, National Women Commission, Nepal; Samar Verma, TTI, India

Summary of the Presentation

Globally, the ideas around inequality and exclusion are understood separate from each other. Inequality, inadvertently, is understood as economic inequality, both in terms of unequal distribution of wealth and of opportunities. Exclusion, in the other hand, is linked to the socio-cultural structure of the society. In South Asian context, reducing poverty is one common goal across all countries and equitable distribution of the wealth is the pre-requisite. Therefore, the design of public policies should address the three major problems, namely, human poverty, inequality and violence. Such policy envisages a prosperous, just and peaceful society. Such is also the end goal of social justice and Inclusion.

Last two decades has been years of unprecedented growth in the South Asian region, especially in case of India and Bangladesh who have significantly reduced the number of poor people in their respective countries. Nepal too is not far behind. Despite such progresses, the income gap between the poor and rich had been never so wide. Such inequality hinders the formation of a just society. The social structure of most of the countries in South Asia is hierarchical. The social stratifications in the likes of caste, ethnicity, race, culture and gender work as exclusionary structure that hinders people from accessing equal opportunities

and services. The structures most significant to South Asian region are gender and caste. These ascribed identities at birth determine the access to opportunities and services in future.

Discrimination works as a vicious cycle as limited access to opportunities negatively affects the access to services and vice-versa. With good social protection policies these negative effects can be averted. Caste based discrimination is a chronic problem in South Asia, mainly in India and Nepal. The governments of the respective countries have safeguarded the right of marginalized through the constitution and also have worked to reform the state laws and policies, however, a lot remains to be done to change the practices of the citizenry. Caste based exclusion can be understood through analyzing the situation of Dalit women in Nepal. Madhesi Dalit females score the lowest in Human Development Index (HDI). In case of Pakistan and Bangladesh where there is no social stratification in the lines of caste, the spatial location has been the basis for exclusion. In Pakistan, Baluchistan province has the lower HDI compared to Sindh and Punjab. Similarly, yet another marker of exclusion in context of Nepal is language. A community can be made better by increasing the access to the public services; however, language stands as a barrier to access the services. Most denigrating form of exclusionary practice is Untouchability, faced by Dalits, which is also a barrier to access basic public services, such as health care and education. Therefore, the scheduled castes score the lowest in all development indicators.

Despite the situation, governments of the respective countries have undertaken positive policy measures to ensure social inclusion. In case of Nepal, the constitution acknowledges multicultural aspects of the country as proportionate political representation is enshrined within it. We have social protection system such as cash transfers for marginalized, scholarships, multilingual education. Further changes can be made in how state budget is allocated. Not limiting to gender responsive budgeting but allocating budget based on the HDI of the place. Such policy changes can make the system more inclusive and just and ensure prosperity for all irrespective of their standing in social strata.

Summary of Panelist's Discussion- I

Social discrimination is in the core of inequality and inclusion. Disparity in the society cannot be denied but there also has been significant work in decreasing the gap between the rich and poor in the society. The internal and external migration for work has not only changed the economic dimension of the country but there are also changes in the mindset of the people. The instances of slavery have decreased not only because of the fear of legal prosecution but also through the changes brought about by migration. It is an understood fact that the state should invest in health and education. There has been economic development in Nepal and in the region but in social change we lag behind because the society is traditional. The social divide in the lines of caste, religion, language still creates divided in our society. However, the inclusive

constitution of Nepal addresses the problem of social discrimination to an extent. Also, the formation of commissions, such as women's commission, Dalit commission, is expected to work to form relevant policies to the groups they are assigned for. Yet another good practice to address inequality and exclusion is the provision of social protection for socially marginalized such as elderlies, single women, children and people with disabilities, to name a few. With federal system in place, the local level will be the main driving force for the policy making and program implementation.

Summary of Panelist's Discussion- II

Inequality lies in the heart of social exclusion and justice. In case of informed public policy making, inequality in production of knowledge or dissemination of knowledge lies at the core of injustice. Knowledge inequality produces exclusionary policies. The inequities in knowledge production exist at two levels. One is on how it is taught, the pedagogy, and the next at the level of practice. A social science that contributes to public policy making is side tracked by Economics, which no more serves to meet the societal goals. Its imitation of the pure sciences with the demands of quantitative data and objectivity has limited it as calculated selfish rationalities. Unlike the economics, objectivity in social sciences is the employment of variety of perspectives and affective interpretation in the service of knowledge and to that interest it sits very integral to the way people behave, to the way politics is played out, to the way decisions are made. Another reason for the dominance of economics over other social sciences is due to the invention of GDP. Accustomed to see GDP as a marker of progress, it is overlooked that GDP is not a measure of human rights. The father of the GDP said, 'the welfare of the nation can be scarcely be inferred from a measure of the national income'.

For just and equal society, the state of the social sciences need to reform. Public agencies need to fund research which then becomes a public good. Knowledge inequities need to be curbed if we want to strike at the root of inequality, social exclusion, and injustice.

Summary of the Deliberation

Dialogue participants noted a number of problems and possibilities in the ideas presented which are enlisted below:

- To reduce inequality, participation of the marginalized such as women is necessary. However, at present, the participation is only limited to physical presence. How can we ensure/increase effective participation?

- When talking about social discrimination, class aspects should also be considered since a particular class has been taking the advantages of policies that should have favored the most marginalized and deprived.
- The political leaders who are elected in public position, if do not act to benefit the people at large, their power should be revoked.
- Government limit the inclusive participation of marginalized as a procedural aspect and cite the number when raised question about effective participation. How do we ensure that the participation is meaningful? Whose responsibility is it?
- Often we discuss from the point of view of inequalities but how do we change the tone of the dialogue and talk about how equalities can be achieved?

<u>Summary of the Responses</u>

Mohan das Manandhar, Presenter: Only policy change will not suffice to ensure behavior change. Two distinct form of change is required in our system. First, the budgetary decision making and the second, the notion of equality. For this change, the existing faulty knowledge system has to be challenged. Political leaders will respond to the needs of the people if they are held accountable for the work they do. Election surely is a way to make the politicians accountable to their constituency but it is a vertical process and may not affect results. Commission are one instrument, and public forums, another. Similarly, to how bills are debated in public forum, public policies too have to be debated among the people it governs. Finally, evaluation of the existing policies is another method to ensure the effectiveness of public policies.

Samar Verma, Panelist: 33 percent representation of women can be considered as tokenism. Such reservation policies are the weapons to challenge the system from within, but through tokenism, the very weapon is absorbed and weakened within the system. Therefore, it is important to go beyond tokenism. However, it doesn't happen overnight so it is necessary to raise questions. And the questioning is not only on other's part, but to ourselves as well. Through introspection in our respective posts as policy makers, researchers, we have to be open towards criticism and also be aware of the kind of questionings that are going on with learning.

Concluding Remark by the Chair

The identity of the excluded groups or the disadvantaged groups is determined by the context they are in. Not every country has the same group of people as disadvantaged. Within South Asia, there may be some similarity but every country should define the excluded within their context. The affirmative action plan for these groups should be enshrined in the constitution. Another way is to address it through international conventions such as CEDAW, SDGs. Policy itself is not an end. Implementation strategy is as important. And finally, a state of equality can be reached only if the societal mindset can be changed.

Policy Dialogue II: Federalism and Intergovernmental Relationship

Chair: Punya Prasad Neupane, Executive Director, Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC)
Speaker: Balananda Poudel, Chair, Local Level Restructuring Commission (LLRC)
Panelist: George Varughese, Senior Policy Advisor, Niti Foundation

Summary of Presentation

The governance system has shifted from unitary to federal system. The constitution of Nepal has declared Nepal as a federal republic. The governance structure is divided into three tiers, namely, central, provincial and local. These three levels of governance operate together as a state power. State power, here means, the power related to the executive, legislative and judiciary functions. This power that was centralized in the unitary model and symbolized as Singha Durbar, is at present, distributed in 761 places. The three tier of government, however, posits one problem; the same territory and people are governed by three levels of

government. Hence, role clarity and intergovernmental relationship is one important aspect of institutionalizing federal system in Nepal.

Among the challenges that lay before us, the coordination between and among the 3 levels of the government stands as the major challenge. Nepal is one of the few countries that have provided common rights to all three levels of government, which can create redundancy of functions. The local governance act, to an extent has defined the role of local bodies, but there hasn't been significant work to outline the role of provincial government. Other sources of contention among different level of the state could be, first, the natural resource sharing and governance. The importance of close coordination among different state level is once again highlighted in the case of benefit sharing. Second, relates to the intergovernmental fiscal relationship. The central government collects the revenue and allocates the fund to lower level, hence, development priorities of each level should be aligned with that of the others. Difference in ideology among the political leaders appointed in offices within three levels of the government could be a potential hurdle for sustainable, balanced and equitable relationship.

Some of the ways to overcome both the structural and procedural obstacles of implementing federalism in Nepal has been provisioned in the constitution. Some examples are:

- Constitution clearly states the structure and the process of federalization. Part 20 of the constitution mentions the relationship of the three federal units should be guided by the principal of coordination, collaboration and cooperation.
- A council of chief ministers has been proposed to be convened under the leadership of the prime minister to facilitate coordination.
- Intergovernmental Fiscal Management Act provisions a council convened under the central finance minister to resolve the issues surrounding budget planning and allocations
- The constitution grants the authority to formulate the law that governs the structural relationship structure between the three federal units solely to the central government. Law can be made more effective by making it more participatory through consultation with local and provincial government.

Summary of the Discussion-Panelist

Federalism is rooted in the idea of self-rule and shared rule. At present, Nepal is trying to enable both self-rule and shared rule. The previous constitution too granted the self-governing capability to the people but it may not have been rightly executed. So, following the new constitution, Nepal is now reorganizing itself into a system of multiple centers of decision making. The federal units are largely autonomous in legal sense but operate in connection with one another. The consequence of the decisions made in one level by

default affects the other levels. In the federal system, it is obvious to recognize the autonomy of the federal units but it is also equally important to acknowledge their interdependence.

Despite the lack of formal arrangement for interaction between the federal units, the interactions are taking place nevertheless. The 3C (cooperation, collaboration and coordination) as mentioned in the constitution falls sort of a fourth C, i.e. Conflict resolution. The interdependence mandates the formal arrangement for cooperation, collaboration, coordination but conflict resolution is totally absent in the present structures. The constitution has three resolution mechanisms for potential conflict; the commission to manage natural resources and fiscal management, the inter-provincial dispute resolution council and the constitutional bench on the Supreme Court, none of which has been set up yet. Federalism can be understood as the ultimate framework of laws and rules that govern the way that we share rule and self-rule. There must be a way to enable cooperation and also healthy competition. In the absence of these, federalism fails.

Federalism is a vast topic to talk about. However, one achievement of the present system that needs to be acknowledged is the participation of women within the federal bodies. They are not only in the dormant posts but are heads of municipal and judicial committees. In this new system, people are elected in almost all of the public positions nonetheless, the elected leaders are falling short of providing the services demanded by the posts due to the lack of relevant expertise and training. For example, the deputy mayors complain of not being trained in mediation. The lack of clarity on roles is another obstacle faced by the public position holders in municipal level. These units do not necessarily have to be a producer of the public service good but can simply be a provider. Delegating the job to the pertinent department/individual should be focused rather than training the elected representative on every technical issue that may arise. Yet another issue in this democracy is the rule of law. Not only leaders but people in individual level also do not submit to the rule of law. Therefore, it is important to maintain a balance between exercising suffrage as citizen and submitting to the rule of law of the nation.

Summary of the Deliberation

Dialogue participants noted a number of key features of the problem presented which are enlisted below.

- District Coordination Committee (DDC) is another power center in the local level as it is constitutionally provisioned to facilitate the relationship between the provincial and local level government. The local government operation act does not mention the role of the DDC. The structures are there without any directives on how to work. What can be the role for DDC in this context?
- It is not clear what kind of federal states do we have. Is it based on ethnicity or geography? Furthermore, no relation has been established between the provincial and local government. Both operational and

fiscal power is centered in the local level. What can be the role of provincial government? This oversight has already become a source of conflict between the local and provincial governments.

- The policy gaps, conflicts and overlaps are common while institutionalizing a new system. While focusing on the problems, the innovations of the local level shouldn't be overlooked. The planning in the local level is not less than in central government. The necessity of the time is to document the local level processes as good practice for replication. Regarding the potential conflicts, it may not be limited to different state levels but there could be conflicts between state and non-state actors. There should be mechanism in place to resolve such potential issues.

- The administrative services of the government referred to as *Singha Durbar*, in federal system has been delegated to 761 municipalities. Will these new units be more accessible to common citizenry than the previous? Furthermore, the federal system that is being unrolled is experimentation. What is the mechanism to collect information on what is happening and how will it be used to strengthen the system?

<u>Summary of the Responses</u>

Balananda Paudel: It is true that there is constitutional provision for District Coordination Council (DDC). It is defined within local level structure. As per the constitution, DDC has four functions, namely, facilitate coordination between federal, provincial and local level governments; facilitate the development of different local level institutions within a district; monitoring and evaluation; perform delegated responsibilities from federal and provincial government. Regarding the functions of the provincial government, unlike the common understanding, there are responsibilities listed out for the provincial government in the schedule 6 of the constitution. The provincial governments are responsible for important agenda such as economic development, trade, industrial development, higher education. However, provincial government has little control over the revenue generated as federal government receives the 80 percent direct tax.

In local governance level, there are infrastructures already established that work as service delivery points which the provincial government lacks. And these service delivery points in the new established system should/will not follow the exclusivity of old *Singha Durbar*. It should/will be more accessible to the common people.

George Varughese: One of the biggest gaps in providing services through sub national government in Nepal is the absence of a provincial architectural government. There are chief ministers and a cabinet but no service delivery unit like a provincial ministry. This interlay is a new creation therefore; there is no physical architecture of governance that can be referred as provincial government, at present. Also, there is a reliable system of data collection in place but it based on district system. How can this data be used for fiscal planning when we want to work through municipal system? Easiest way out of this conundrum is to engage with the old preexisting structure and then adjusting the jurisdiction of the provinces.

A Nobel laureate based her study on shared rule and self- rule in Nepal. The lesson of self-rule can be learned through local government units such as community forestry, irrigation system management. There is a wealth of knowledge on self-governance in Nepal which helps form better policies under the federal system. Regarding the continuation of the *Singha Durbar* syndrome in the 761 municipalities, 60 percent of the people elected in the local level are elected in the public post for the first time. Some of them could actually be accountable towards their constituency. These locally elected leaders will inevitably be more accessible to their constituency because of their spatial locality.

<u>Concluding Remark by the Chair</u>

This review of the implementation of the federal systems in Nepal is very timely as it is necessary to look back on what has been achieved since the promulgation of the new constitution. However, it is not yet time to be frustrated. It is less than a year since the systems are put in place through election. The part of the frustration lies in the pace of the work, and it is not wrong to say that is snail paced. Having said that, it should be clear that the constitution, and for that matter, public policies are not the panacea for all kinds of personal problems and aspirations. Therefore, reviews and evaluation can help the government to realign its priorities based on the needs of its citizenry. The constitution on its part is expected to yield the results that will drive the country towards the path of justice and prosperity.

Policy Dialogue III: Addressing Poverty- Innovative Approaches

Chair: Jagdish Chandra Pokhrel, Former VC, National Planning Commission (NPC),Nepal
Speaker: Y.B.Thapa, Vice Chairperson, Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF),Nepal
Panelist: SK. Tawfique M. Haque, North South University, Bangladesh

Summary of the Presentation

Poverty alleviation issue is highly significant in the South Asian region. Different countries within the region have different approaches to poverty reduction. Based on one of the determinants of poverty, economic growth, distinct pattern can be observed within the countries like Nepal, India, China and Bangladesh. In Nepal, level of income and the rate of economic growth, both are low therefore, the poverty reduction approach is philanthropic. Contrarily, China is a manufacture driven economy with high economic growth rate, hence, they follow development approach for poverty reduction. India's economy is driven by its service providing agency and poverty reduction model too follows the same track as the government is more invested to create productive community infrastructures. In case of Bangladesh, poverty alleviation is driven towards business enterprise development modality. These examples of the model undertaken by neighboring countries can inform poverty reduction approach that is most appropriate for Nepal.

Poverty alleviation should be located within the larger concept of social protection. It should be established as an integral constituent unit of social protection agenda. The social protection policies of Nepal emphasize on the distributive aspects. The challenge is to create a balance between economic growth focused activities and social protection strategies.

There is no other country in South Asia who's both manufacturing and energy sector is in a wretched situation like Nepal. With these drivers of economy in bad shape, it is very difficult to reduce poverty. Furthermore, in an agrarian economy like Nepal, for a growth rate to reach double digit, there should be at least 6 percent growth in the agriculture sector. The agriculture sector has its own problem that ranges from fertilizer dependency to irrigation systems of Nepal controlled by India. Agrarian sector of Nepal cannot be robust without coordination and collaboration with the southern neighbors.

The diagnostic report published by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) has suggested four fundamental priorities for easing economic growth constraints, namely, policy implementation uncertainty, inadequate electricity supply, high cost of transportation, challenges in industry development and labor relations. Another aspect of the economy that is pushing Nepal towards poverty is the devaluation of Nepalese Rupee and trade deficit, with 10 percent export and 90 percent import. The state of macro economy discourages foreign

investment. It is a right time to revisit our development strategies. Nepal has to transform its agrarian based economy to a manufacture based with better environment for entrepreneurship, economic growth and better job opportunities.

PAF in particular is working on poverty concept around hunger reduction, and food security. With the government adopting the SDGs, the concept of poverty is not limited to economic sufficiency. It is multivariate hence mandates poverty alleviation interventions to be multi-pronged as well. Poverty alleviation programs in Nepal are in thousands of number which can be categorized into 16 broad categories such as food transfer, productive asset transfer, micro-nutrients and nutrient security, nutrient education, hygiene education, sanitation education, health insurance, women's empowerment including education, maternity protection, minimum wage rate, occupational and health safety, cash transfers and agriculture insurance and input subsidies. Among these generic typologies, a best intervention mechanism should be identified.

PAF so far has been working as a government's project for poverty alleviation sanctioned under the Parliament act. PAF has the most extensive coverage of the poor people, among 1.4 million people living in poverty; PAF has reached 1 million households. With the enactment of the federal system, local governments are in place to address local level issues. In such condition, one, the work carried out by PAF can be redundant and second, how will the new reporting system work with 3 tiers of government? There is confusion on how donor funded projects work within the new system. Finally, poverty is multidimensional therefore, collaborative funding and integrate working system is required between the donor agencies to address the poverty issues in Nepal.

Summary of the Presentation-SK. Tawfique M. Haque, NSU

Looking back at the history of South Asia, merely 200 years back, China and South Asia together was controlling the GDP of the world. In 1820, China and South Asia contributed 60 percent of the world's GDP. At present, the total share of South Asia is 10 percent and China 17 percent. Therefore, poverty in this region became an issue only after the 1820s. However, despite the prosperity 200 years back, also back then the region was plagued with the issues of economic disparity based on caste and other forms of social discrimination. At present, the conversations in the region is more focused on redistribution of wealth rather than creation. It is better to create wealth which inevitably addresses the poverty issues of any country.

Taking Bangladesh as an example, after the independence in 1972, some economists had dubbed Bangladesh as a 'test case for development'. Meaning, if development was possible in Bangladesh, with its huge population and lack of resource, then development was possible anywhere. In 20 years since 1996,

Bangladesh has doubled its per capita income. And in last 7 years, the per capita doubled again. In last 3 years, Bangladesh's gross domestic products (in dollar terms) grew at a compound annual rate of 12.9 percent more than twice than that of India's 5.6 percent. Along with the economic growth rate, the poverty has decreased from 59 percent in 1991 to 24 percent in 2007. The economists, who previously decreed that development was not possible in Bangladesh, revised their statement. However, they are not assured that Bangladesh could maintain the sustainable development. The reservation on their part was because of the short and long term vulnerabilities afflicting Bangladesh's economy. The economy is predominantly based on remittance sent by foreign labor workers and on women working in garment industries. Similarly, there are long term issues such as land deficit, Infrastructural deficit, energy deficit, external resource deficit, social and governance deficit. Since the focus of the conference is public policy; the discussion too is focused on only the governance deficit.

India and Bangladesh are two exceptional countries where despite negative governance indicators, there is positive economic growth. Lack of good governance doesn't stop growth but it reduces its quality and sustainability. This unique phenomenon of development is more or less true to every country within South Asia. Therefore, a joint approach and connectivity is vital among the South Asian countries. If Europe became one after deep political divide, so can South Asia.

<u>Summary of the Deliberation</u>

Dialogue participants noted a number of problems and possibilities in the ideas presented which are enlisted below:

- If the present poverty eradication policies do not sufficiently address the needs of the people, can we discuss why such policies were made? Also, why is there a big trade deficit in Nepal?
- Poverty is relative and contextual. In case of Dhaka, villagers who migrate to the cities and live in the slum settlements often get categorized as poor. They are not necessarily income poor or have low calorie intake. How is this aspect of urban poverty addressed in the urban policies of South Asian countries? Are these factors considered in designing poverty interventions?
- What are the approaches to address poverty suggested in the Nepalese Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper (PRSP)?
- How do you measure the effectiveness of PAF investment in poverty reduction in Nepal?
- Historically, province 2 (Mohhattari, Morang and Sunsari) have contributed significantly to Nepalese economy. However, why is this province backward in Human Development Index (HDI) and Multidimensional Poverty Index(MPI)?
- What is the status of Poverty Identity Card? Does it have any relation with Farmer's Identity Card?

- Every project requires Poverty Impact Analysis (PIA). However, it is not practiced in Nepal. Therefore, PAF must ensure that PIA is made mandatory to all projects.
- The poverty rate of Dalit is below the par compared to other caste groups. What special work is PAF doing to address this disparity?

Summary of the Responses

Y.B. Thapa: The effectiveness of PAF activities is ensured through independent impact evaluation by the World Bank and also through comprehensive impact evaluation by the National Planning Commission(NPC). Through both report, the work has been deemed satisfactory. The quality of the work assures that even if PAF were to close, all 32 thousand community organizations would function independently. Poverty has different dimension. An example of which is settlement poverty in Dhaka. The professionals working in poverty alleviation are aware of this multidimensionality, however, organizations like PAF, cannot address all the problems in the society. One such manifestation is the issue of economic backwardness in Tarai (province 2). PAF has invested 1.25 million in the form revolving fund, more than the total of revolving fund in entire hilly region. However, the cultural malpractices, political misdemeanor of Tarai hinder the economic development process. Deprivation in case of Dalit is only slightly different than in Tarai. Dalit have been historically exploited but the governments in present times are committed to follow inclusive participatory development.

SK. Tawfique M. Haque: At a regional level, most of the countries of the South Asia are grappling with similar problems, growth and development and poverty reduction. Other regions in the world are progressing fast but this region has lagged behind due to mistrust between the countries. Nepal, like Bangladesh lies in a geopolitically challenging area, between China and India. Therefore, it is vital to make a balanced relationship. Regional connectivity and a more border free south Asia favors the growth of the entire region. Togetherness of South Asia can drive it towards more just and prosperous societies.

Summary of the presentation of the chair

The story of how Bangladesh graduated from being 'beggar's basket' to one of the growing economies in South Asia in spite governance issues is an inspiring story to learn from. In the changing world context, the very concept and definition and understanding about poverty need to be revisited. New indicators, unlike GDP, should show both economic growth and poverty reduction. The understanding of poverty is still located in the post 1990s euphoric political and economic context. The western rich countries defined poverty for the developing ones. As the priorities are shifting and the developed countries are becoming

more conservative, in South Asia, it is time to question whether the countries in the region wait for the development grants from the west or use their own local resources for their own development.

A joint approach for development in South Asia is inevitable as the countries are connected not only through land but also air and water. In case of Nepal and India, anything the one does affect the other. Therefore, for shared prosperity and justice, the public policies should not only be framed within the national interest but it should be more accommodating to international and regional issues.

Policy Dialogue IV: Deepening Democracy

Chair: Balananda Poudel, Chair, LLRC
Speaker: Renu Dahal, Mayor, Bharatpur Municipality, Chitwan; Gyanendra Shrestha, Mayor, Katari Municipality, Udaypur; Bishow Mohan Yadav, Chairperson, Mawarajour Rural Municipality, Siraha; Bishnu Giri, Chairperson, Gaumukhi Rural Municipality, Pyuthan; Dharmananda Manyal,Chairperson, Api- Himal Rural Municipality, Darchula; Kalika Pathak, Vice-chairperson, Kalinchowk Rural Municipality, Dolakha; Nisha Thagunna Dhami, Kedarshiun Rural Municipality,Bajhang

Summary of the Presentation-Ms. Kalika Pathak, VC, Kalinchowk Rural Municipality, Dolakha
The societal context of our country is changing and hence nowadays, women in the villages too freely talk to local government representatives, technicians and can raise their voice if needed. Also women are involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the development projects. Women, backward due to the patriarchal social structures, now have access to the ward offices where they can put forward their grievances. Some societal problems still prevail such as lack of human resources in villages, lack of awareness and empowerment. The understanding of the ward officials regarding development is limited as development is confined to physical infrastructure development. More than 50 percent of the constituency is women; therefore, gender is a prime focus in our work.

Summary of the Presentation – Gyanendra Shrestha, Mayor, Katari Municipality,Udaypur
Democracy is the most appropriate way of governance in the 21st century. Democracy helps to fulfill the need of the locals, ensures good governance, better vision and planning, and curbs corruption. It is a citizen friendly governance system. In the past year, many works have been done but carrying out the development work is a challenge due to the lack of human resources in the villages. There are also cases of financial embezzlement. The municipalities and the rural municipalities (*gaupalika)* are facing administrative hurdles. The policy level decision should also be done in the local level.

Summary of the Presentation-Dharmananda Manyal, Chairperson, Api- Himal Rural Municipality, Darchula

There are number of issues that threaten rightful democratic practice. One is the attitude of the government workers. It is a new system but the government officials are yet to change their old ways. Another is the conflict between the government officials and the local government. In case of Api-Himal rural municipality, the conflict arises because of the different priorities of the conservation area officials and the local government. The local governments want to focus on infrastructure development such as building roads but since it is a conservation area, cutting trees is prohibited. Similarly, the CDO has the authority to transfer the teachers, whereas, in the 23 schools in local level, there are only 68 teachers. The central government should think of measures to prevent such contestation between the local authorities and the elected public position holders.

Summary of the Presentation- Renu Dahal, Mayor, Bharatpur Municipality, Chitwan

The new system comes with both opportunities and challenges. Since the local government has been elected after 18 years, the locals have high expectations from the government. The local governments are struggling to meet the expectation as most of the facilities and services are still limited to the central government. It is of vital importance to functionalize the mechanism to bring the service delivery to the local level as accessible services is the biggest expectation of the people. Bharatpur Municipality wants to set an example therefore; many development works are already underway. A city hall is being constructed. Municipality is providing 20 scholarships for deserving students. Also, within the municipality, ward offices are functioning smoothly.

Summary of the Presentation- Bishnu Giri, Chairperson, Gaumukhi Rural Municipality, Pyuthan

The rural municipalities because of their remoteness lack the basic amenities such as mobile phone network, internet connection. Similarly, there is also shortage of human resources. Among 7 wards of the region, there is only one secretary. Since there are no engineers, the overseers work in their place instead, this compromises the output of the work. Despite these challenges, the rural municipality has been able to deliver to its constituency. Around a thousand poor household will be provided with new roof in the coming year. Despite the work and the enthusiasm for progress, the problem that challenges the democratic values in the local level is corruption.

Summary of the presentation- Nisha Thaugunna Dhami, Kedarshiun Rural Municipality,Bajhang

There are topographical challenges in Bajhang. In few areas within this region, the people are yet to see roads. Similarly, women in this region face specific problems such as early marriage, *chhaupadi*, gender discrimination. Along with the physical infrastructure development, addressing these social problems is as

important. Despite the challenges, the rural municipality has made some headway toward addressing the problems. The municipality organized awareness raising campaigns and trainings for women. It is promoting agriculture in fallow lands to decrease food dependency to the center. Similarly, projects on drinking water and road constructions are also underway.

Summary of the Presentation- Bishow Mohan Yadav, Chairperson, Nawarajour Rural Municipality, Siraha

The management of the human resource has been the biggest challenge as there are only two secretaries between five wards. Corruption is also rampant. The money provided for social security was being utilized for personal benefit. The rural municipality has set some priority area to work which are education, agriculture, and women empowerment.

Summary of the Deliberation

Dialogue participants noted a number of problems and possibilities in the ideas presented which are enlisted below:

- Due to the problems in villages many locals have migrated to the town. What is the local government doing to reduce youth migration?
- How is local government addressing the social evils such as Chhaupadi, girls trafficking?
- How can media function autonomously when local governments have their own F.M.?
- What is the priority of the Bharatpur municipality? Can the 50 crore budget allocated for city hall construction be used for livelihood programs instead?
- Do women in higher political position such as mayor face any kind of discrimination based on their gender?

Summary of the Responses

Renu Dahal: The local level organizations are working within their capacity to engage the young people so as to discourage foreign migration for employment. Yet, it is not a matter to be resolved within a municipal level. Only through both national and local effort youth migrations can be reduced. The municipality, however, is working towards eliminating the community problems through awareness raising, capacity building activities. 10 percent of the budget is allocated for people who are deprived of their social rights. Regarding the issue of the city hall construction, municipality needs a hall that serves multiple functions. It is expected to generate revenue for the government which will ultimately benefit the constituency of Bharatpur. Furthermore, the contention between the bureaucrats and the politically elected

leaders, the chairperson and other executive members in wards, have delayed the planning and budgeting for development programs.

Women have legal rights and they are getting to posts that were previously impossible to reach. Nevertheless, there are specific challenges and difficulties owing to their gender. At present women's participation is 40 percent in local level, 34 percent in province and 33 percent in central level. Although women have public position, the stereotypical thinking about women make the society perceive them as weak. Therefore, it is necessary to challenge and break the stereotypes not by words but through actions.

Concluding Remark by the Chair

Since we are in transition period, the work done by the local and provincial government should be appreciated. There are two transitions taking place simultaneously. First, the locally elected are in public offices after 15 years. Second, the government officials, as of yet, are not adept to the local governance system. Therefore, the hurdles of transition do not lie within a single actor, the government officials. All the stakeholders in the community level should work together to end the transition period.

Local government is the exercise of the real democracy. Since it is a transition phase, it is inevitable for many issues to arise. Despite the complexities in governance system, it is important to acknowledge that local governments, throughout the country, have accomplished important work within a short span of time.

iii.   Technical Sessions

Technical Session I- Public Sector Governance

Attractiveness of Civil Service In Nepal

-Basanta Raj Sigdel, Shailaja Upadhyaya, Krishna   Sigdel, Rameshowr Bhandari.

Civil service is a body of officials who carry out the operations of the largest organization of the country, the government. This study is directed to assess the attractiveness of the Nepalese civil service. The study aims to explore the priority of graduates/employees to join civil service as an officer and to simultaneously assess the perception of senior officer in terms of realization of what they expected while joining civil service. Based on this initial expectation of the new entrants and realizations of the senior officers, attractiveness of the service is assessed. For this, two different set of questionnaire had been prepared and administered to 166 new entrants' officers and 25 senior officers.. Job security was the most important attracting factor for the new entrants. They wish to continue the service even after 10 years and most of them desire to be in the position of joint secretary within that period. Unlike the new officers senior officers (joint secretaries) find the "contribution to nation" factor the most important factor which they have realized

during the period in the service. Remuneration that the profession offers has never been important for them. Most of the senior officers don't recommend their family members to join civil service though they find the profession attractive and this is the area where future study can be carried to explore the intentions behind it.

E-governance Challenges in Nepal: Case of Nuwakot District

-Shital Moktan Tamang

Nepal has the potential to take advantage of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and initiatives such as e-governance. E-governance increases the importance of ICT skills required by public administration. The formulation of E-Governance Master Plan (eGMP) and National ICT Policy 2015 among other major IT policies has fostered the initiation and implementation of digital governance in Nepal. The transformation of Nepal into federal state has presented opportunities and challenges to realize the vision of e-governance. This paper attempts to study the ICT and egovernance scenario of Nepal and understand the e-governance challenges and opportunities in Nuwakot district of Nepal. A survey was conducted to gather data from the government offices in Nuwakot, Bidur. The Central Government Kathmandu is effectively introducing and implementing egovernance in transactional phase while Nuwakot district which is closer to Kathmandu is still in the emerging phases. However, the governmental offices in Nuwakot are also progressively using ICT to move towards e-governance.

Integrity of Public Agency in the Perception of Public Servants

-Shiva Hari Adhikari, Suwarn Kumar Singh, Ashrita Dhital

There are increasing expectations from citizens that public agency demonstrates high ethics and integrity while delivering services. It is said that public services are windows through which public evaluate governance status. Public agency's vision and mission is reflected in public *servants' integrity*. Many positive initiatives are in place to promote rule of law, corruption free and smart administration, financial discipline and efficient management of public work in Nepal. This study aims to analyze integrity of public agency through perception of public servant with regard to effectiveness of policies, guidelines and procedures to promote good standards of conduct. Through a perception survey of employees of central level agencies integrity standard of public institution has been assessed. This study examines relationship between organizational value and individual value; protection from recrimination when reporting corruption; rules and standards of conduct; national regulations and laws; regulations addressing conflict of interest; and internal mechanism for controlling corruption. The results are encouraging however sufficient communication and compliance of values and standards are required to improve integrity standard of public agencies.

Introducing Contributory Pension Plan: Sustainability and Equitability in Nepalese Civil Servant

-Pratistha Koirala, Nabin Chapagain, Pratibha Dhungana, Damodar Bashyal

With improvement in health facility there has not only been an increase in the number of people who survive to retirement age, but also the number of people who live for much longer. This has dramatically increased the cost of providing pensions leading to doubts about the viability of current approaches of defined benefit pension plans where government bears entire cost of pension. Under defined benefit scheme, the budget expenditure on pension for the fiscal year of 2005-06 was NPR 3.439 billion which rose to NPR 27.083 billion in 2016-17. With increasing number of retirees and their increased average life expectancy, the pension burden of government is ballooning and if these trends continue government will be unable to pay pension for its retired employees under the defined benefit pension plan in near future. Under these contexts, the government of Nepal has recently incorporated the contributory pension scheme under its new fiscal program for the year 2074-75. In this scenario, this research has been done in order to assess the fiscal sustainability, adequacy and fairness of defined benefit and defined contribution pension plan from both governments' and employees' perspective. It attempts to identify the key aspects to be considered in pension reforms. The comparative analysis of government's liabilities in terms of its present value for 50 years has been done. The findings suggest that the introduction of contributory pension plan solely could not solve the overall fiscal liability of pension system as it will take more than 50 years to have any substantial effect and rather it will increase short term liability as government has to allocate fund for contribution to new recruits in addition to regular pension to current employees and pensioner. Thus, parametric reform should be considered for existing employees along with introduction of contributory pension system for new recruits.

Reforming Public Sector: Glimpses of Disinvestment Policy in India

-RK Mishra, Geeta Potaraju, Kiranmai Janaswamy

In the post independent era, the Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) played an important role in industrial growth and development of Indian economy. PSEs were the growth engines of economy and tools for fighting unemployment, regional imbalances, bridge the technological backwardness and to bring about a socialistic pattern in the society. India adopted a mixed economy and the public sector were assigned an important role vis-à-vis the private sector. The watershed moment was in the year 1991, when the government of India initiated public sector reforms, though under severe financial crisis facing the country and burdened with huge fiscal deficits and balance of payments problems. That is when the government decided to unlock the huge investments chained in the Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) and came up with a Disinvestment Policy. The policy stated that the government would disinvest part of their equities in selected PSEs with an objective to improve overall performance of the PSEs. The process has seen its own

challenges and hurdles. By the year 2014, when the new government took up the reins of the country, a fresh thrust has been given on the disinvestment process. The idea is to bring in greater efficiency in the PSEs through listing of profitable CPSEs on stock exchanges to unlock the value of the company and promote public participation in PSEs and strengthen the disinvestment process through minority stake sale as well as strategic disinvestment process.

Summary of the Discussion

In the first presentation, discussions highlighted the absence of analysis based on influencing factors such as pensions and retirement mechanisms. The new policies to be introduced by the federal government of Nepal might affect the factors presented in the findings which could lead to a shift in the ranked factors for attraction towards civil service. Researchers of the paper were asked to expand the research by making connection of various findings, facts and figures, trying an interdisciplinary approach and weaving a story that can connect with the mass. In the second presentation, the discussions highlighted the need for a procedure or technique to integrate different platforms in one single interface for easy access and availability of required data. Fund allocation for the development of ICT sector and capacity building of government officials is another challenge GoN has to address immediately. An important aspect to consider while providing capacity enhancement trainings is the generation gap between young and old government officials. In the third presentation, the audience commented that the socioeconomic issues were also not considered in the study, in other words, the pushing and pulling factors for integrity should be identified, acknowledged and studied in the process. One of the audience opined that both the private and public sector human resource should be considered public servants working for the betterment of citizens in the country. After the fourth presentation, the important issue raised in the discussion was the segregation of benefit age and retirement age. For example: if a person retires at the age of 50 he is still deemed eligible to receive pension. The few more years he receives pension could have been utilized as potentially active years within the service therefore a retirement age must be set with proper terms and conditions. In the final presentation, the concerns of the audience highlighted the somewhat similar policy opted by GoN as well often dubbed privatization scheme of 1990s which went relatively unsuccessful. It was also mentioned that the non-budgetary cost is increasing in Nepal. Some government organizations, such as Nepal Telecom, are generating enough revenue and enhancing performance over the years. However, many government organizations are in the process of privatization and disinvestment because of lack of profit. It was mentioned that the GoN is drafting a new policy in regards to disinvestment. It was pointed out that in the context of Nepal and South Asia, the underlying risk of cartel formation while creating ground for competition for better public service, underscores the ambiguity in disinvestment policy.

Technical Session II: Public Service Delivery

Citizen Charter in Nepali Public Sector Organization: What Does Evidence Say?

-Anil Kumar Gupta, Gyan Laxmi Shrestha

Citizen Charter is an instrument of citizen centric governance that confirms quality in public service delivery by holding public sector organizations directly accountable, responsive and transparent. In this regard, this study discloses the current picture of Citizen Charter in Nepali public sector organizations from service users' perspectives. For this, the survey was conducted in key six public sector organizations (Transport Office, Land Revenue Office, District Administration Office, Inland Revenue Office, Metropolitan City and Court) of Lalitpur Metropolitan city by using client exist interview method with the help of semi-structured interview schedule in 2017. The result of the study shows that utilization of Citizen Charter is extensively low. Service users are not fully aware and well informed about its values. They prefer to receive services by asking from duty bearers, intermediate (agent) and previous service users than the Citizen Charter. They believe there is no consistency in promises of Citizen Charter and behavior of duty bearers. However, some service users are demanding services as per Citizen Charter.

Citizen-led Struggle for Equitable Access to Resources: Case of Urban Water Management

-Kaustuv Raj Neupane, Suchita Shrestha, Hemanta R. Ojha

World Bank (2016) reported South Asia's urban population is poised to grow by almost 250 million people by 2030. Between 2000 and 2011 the region's urban population expanded by 130 million. Urbanization has a long term impact by the convergence of living standards between urban and rural areas as economic and social benefits spill beyond urban boundaries. But these positive trends can be undermined by the pressures of urban population growth on infrastructure, basic services, land, housing, and the environment. Estimates suggest that at least 130 million of South Asia's urban residents live in squatter and are disproportionately deprived of basic infrastructure and access to basic services such as drinking water. Based on this contextual setting, we try to argue that this misbalance economy creates tension and triggers 'social movement' eventually enhancing 'spread effect' of urbanization from core regions to peripheral areas to minimize imbalance of resource distribution. This paper examines the challenge of equitable water distribution in peripheral regions and the perspectives and contribution of social struggle to address the unfulfilled water need of peripheral community. The empirical cases have been taken from two towns of Nepal namely Dharan and Dhulikhel cities that has witnessed urban movement to get the access of water from central system in peripheral regions. This paper has drawn out perspectives and experiences on how organized citizens conduct social struggle and how government have responded to these events of protest and engagements. The findings help us to reveal what has been achieved by the social struggle in terms of water access and its redistribution from the central system. The core and periphery theory of regional

development which divides the study cities under two groups- 'core and periphery' and the relative deprivation theory to view a social struggle that led to social change have been used to analyze the empirical cases. Key informant interview (KII), in-depth interview, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), stakeholders' consultation workshops are some of the sources for primary data. Secondary data has been collected through review of relevant reports. Preliminary findings of the research showed that in study cities feeling of disparity due to imbalanced distribution of resources triggered peripheral community led social struggle as a result of which they were able to get access to piped water supply. In Dhulikhel, as an outcome of the protest of periphery region, Dhulikhel drinking water users committee decided to share water to the peripheral region resulting to the direct connection of more than 1000 households with central water supply system. In case of Dharan, as an outcome of struggle of squatter settlements, deprived from the water supply due to the absence of land ownership certificate, reached to an agreement with municipality to provide recommendation letter for installation of individual drinking water pipe connection. Finally, on the basis of the agreement, Dharan Water Supply Corporation provided private connections of pipe. Recently, Asian Development Bank funded drinking water project has provided special attention to squatter settlement for water supply provision.

Dhaka's Middle Income Renters- An Estimation of Hedonic Price and Marginal Willingness to Pay

-Syeda Salina Aziz

Bangladesh is experiencing an unprecedented growth in urbanization. Dhaka, being the capital, lies in the center of this process and alone houses 44 percent of the total urban population of Bangladesh. The city lacks adequate resources and planning to meet the increased demand of the basic utilities and amenities. Housing is one of the many problems the city is currently facing. Role of the public sector is limited in housing sector and private providers play a dominant role in ensuring housing supply. As a result of this overdependence on the private provision along with lack of proper regulatory mechanism and enforcement the city faces an excessive rise in house price and rent. Given this context, it is necessary to study the housing price as it might have important implications for housing policy. This paper aims to investigate the hedonic price of the Dhaka's middle income renters. It also aims to calculate the Marginal Willingness to Pay (MWTP) for structural features of housing, namely the floor size and the number of bedrooms. It uses data from a housing survey conducted by BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) in 2007 on Dhaka City Corporation area. In order to study the hedonic price and MWTP, the study uses Rosen's two step method. The findings suggest that rent is significantly and positively associated with structural features of the house. The infrastructure of the neighborhood and relationship with landlord also play an important role in determining the house rent; however, the role of locational attributes is not significant in determining rent.

Status of Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Civil Service of Nepal

-Pratibha Dhungana, Achala Dahal, Nabin Chapagain

The study was done to identify the status of Organization Citizenship Behavior along with the level of the various dimensions of OCB in the employees of government of Nepal. Primary data were collected by the researchers with the help of structured questionnaire administered to the class I, Class II and Class III officers of Civil service, Nepal and the questionnaires were also distributed electronically. Among all the respondents, most of them were Class III officers. Random sampling method was used to select the sample and the researchers performed the simple percentage analysis to analyze the present status of different dimensions of OCB. We found out that among all the dimensions of OCB conscientiousness is high in the employees of Civil Service, Nepal. Also, the government has to work hard to encourage the employee to enhance "altruism", one of the major dimensions of OCB. Although any one instance of OCB may not appear to be of significance, in the aggregate this discretionary behavior has a major beneficial impact on organizational operations and effectiveness.

Summary of the Discussion

In the first presentation, the discussions highlighted the need to conduct the research in a socially backwards municipality to get the actual idea of the use of the citizen's charter. The audience also suggested the use of demographic factors such as age, gender, literacy to make the findings more disaggregated. In the second presentation, the discussant appreciated the use of the core-peripheral theory. The audience suggested that the paper would be more robust if more information on citizen movement was provided. The discussion on the third paper revolved around novelty of the concept of Hedonic prices. The paper was appreciated for its usability in local level to set prices for houses. The post presentation discussion in the final presentation focused on the methodological challenge of the research. The audience suggested that in behavioral research, qualitative methodologies are more applicable than those adopted by the researchers.

Technical Session III: Issues and Practices of Public Policy

Chair: Khumraj Punjali, Secretary, GoN

Discussant: Sagar Raj Sharma, Dean, KUSoA

Annual Performance Agreement in Bangladesh Public Administration: An Independent Assessment
- Mohammad Sirajul Islam

Effective public administration is critically important for the achievement of national goals (Clark, 2012). A successful public administration emphasizes both individual excellence and institutional outcomes (Saxena, 2011). While the management policies promote individual excellence, the institutional outcomes are maximized by budgetary reforms, measuring and rewarding organizational performance among the other. Along this trend, the Government of Bangladesh introduced the Government Performance Management System (GPMS) in 2014 in order to move the focus of the ministries from process- to result-oriented activities. The main instrument for implementing GPMS is the Annual Performance Agreement (APA) between a concerned ministry and the Cabinet Division. The study aims to assess APA preparation and implementation in 10 sampled ministries/divisions. Based on the qualitative design, the study found the Prime Minister's buy-in of APA as steering factor behind the ministries' attention towards APA. Budget allocation, policy priorities, mandates, government's long term plans, and better provision of services for people generally influenced the ministries to determine targets. However, the ministries allocate more weights on targets that were easily achievable. Losing scores was considered as a prestige issue for the ministries. As a result, the ministries set approximately one-third of the targets below the previous year. Furthermore, lack of timely reporting, absence of mechanisms to cross-check reported claims regarding target achievement, absence of citizens' role in preparing and implementing APA, and lack of coordination between agencies in setting interdependent targets were the key issues for successful implementation of APA by the ministries. In order to overcome these challenges, the study presented specific recommendations including mandatory submission of reliable reference materials against target achievement, digitalized communication and automation of records, distinguishing evaluation from monitoring, joint working for setting interdependent targets, peer learning and capacity building of APA team members and ministries. On implementation of these reforms, APA will emerge as an objective, fair and quantifiable too to evaluate overall performance of the public sector at the end of the year.

Urbanization, Water and Climate Change Policies in Nepal: Linkages and Challenges

-Gyanu Maskey, Chandra Lal Pandey

The impacts of climate change are predicted to undermine the ability of many existing urban water supply systems to meet both the future and present needs of the populations they serve. Concerns have been raised that existing urban water management systems are maladapted to emerging challenges of climate change, rapid population growth, haphazard urbanization, and environmental degradation. The existing water and urban development policies are almost ineffective to deal with the issues of climate change as they have failed to capture the changing climate to promote climate resilient sustainable cities.

In this context, the paper reviews the existing policies on urban development, water resources and climate change to explore how the concerns of climate change are incorporated into urban development and water

resources acts and policies and vice versa in Nepal. The review analysis of the policies will be carried out in the three broad themes, which include, sustainable urban development, urban water management and climate change adaptation. The strengths and gaps of these policies will be triangulated with the national and international literature in the field and findings are presented to address emerging challenges of urbanization, water and climate change and policy gaps. The paper argues that despite having many urban, water and climate related policies in Nepal, the lack of integration of these themes hinders the efficient, adaptive and equitable water management in cities in the context of climate change and unplanned rapid urbanization.

Policy Deficit in Catalyzing Transformative Change in Nepal's Post Gorkha Earthquake Reconstruction

-Ajaya Mani Dixit, Ashutosh Shukla

This paper uses Post Gorkha Earthquake Recovery and Reconstruction efforts as an entry point to explore the notion of transformative path to resilient future. The earthquake occurred in a period of political transition in Nepal: promulgation of 2015 Constitution, unofficial blockade, forthcoming election for local, provincial and federal government as well as continuing institutional dysfunctions and dissatisfaction of the people. It attempts to map opportunities and challenges to transformative changes. In doing so, it highlights the gaps in post-earthquake recovery and reconstruction policies vis-àvis the political and governance changes in the country. It also examines how this gap has impeded opportunities for such changes so far and what policy changes would be essential to catalyze the transformative changes. This analysis carries relevance for three reasons: i) the multi-hazard risk context facing Nepali society and therefore the need to mainstream disaster risk reduction in the development, ii) Nepal's commitment to sustainable development goals (SDGs), and iii) Gorkha Earthquake creating a forensic opportunity for resilience building.

Climate Finance Governance in Nepal

-Rabi Wenju, Yogendra Subedi

The vulnerability of people's lives to catastrophic events due to climate change demands both adaptation and mitigation measures. These measures need additional finances raised within the country and outsourced from other countries or development agencies. In climate finance a suitable governance framework in which accountability, transparency, participation, responsiveness, and respect for the rule of law should become

guiding principles. However, climate financing in Nepal faces challenges both at the policies and institutional levels. One prominent challenge is that Nepal's climate policy documents lacks climate finance governance framework. Many of climate finance documents fail to put effort into planning and decision making processes and agents of implementation at the ground level. The institutional arrangement for climate finance, that is a key to decision making and implementation, has two major gaps. The first is the weak inter-sectoral coordination and linkage between the actors. Second, the tendency to treat climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts are not much difference from regular development or, at best, as an add-on to regular development programs. To this end, good governance in climate finance requires introducing reforms to policies and strategies that are informed by scientific evidence, developing institutional mechanisms and processes for responsive planning, programming, budgeting, and implementation. This can be further achieved by inter-sectoral coordination and mechanisms and processes to track the efficiency and responsiveness of the planning and budgeting processes.

Summary of the Discussion

The post presentation discussion highlighted that the papers should have included the method of performance measurement and indicators used for the study? Do you have capacities for measuring performance? There lies lack of coordination between ministries and people. We could get answer if people are in the middle. Politics and policies many times forget people. For example, houses may be built by government and handed to people but they are not happy. The ownership of public is important. Public administration has failed to put people in center. Not only Nepal many countries facing challenges of water as well as urbanization. It's about proper mechanism. Something is blocking. Many times people blame government and politicians. For its solution all sectors need to sit together and integrate each other. For this policy dialogue is necessary. Nepal needs to be prepared for another disaster but why national reconstruction authority is inefficient and not given expected result. Still there is gap which might be because of the trust and not having people centered approach. Regarding the climate finance governance there exist lot of policies in Nepal. However, there is lot of challenges and gaps to address the gap which is due to lack of knowledge, capacity and resources. We still lack indigenous knowledge on the sector. Finally, chair concluded the session with his opinion on the practices of public policy. Having number of public polices the lack of evidence based polices is the reason why public policies are not effectively functioning. Another reason is not keeping people in the center of policy. Integration participation and monitoring is the key for successful public policy.

Technical Session IV: Organization and Management

Trend Analysis of Financial Irregularities in Nepal

-Sundar Shrestha, Ashish Rai

Government expects all public fund for the development of the nation to maintain the highest ethical standards when dealing with financial transactions and reported financial information. All public organization of the nation are expected to, and have an obligation to, exercise due care and good judgment in the use and stewardship of national funds or assets. Funds are used in different transactions and accounts have to be maintained in a systematic way but some time by mistake or intentionally significant information, records and documents are not maintained or are not recorded. Bearing such aspects in mind, we carry out the trend analysis of Beruju (financial irregularities) of the GoN and compared with Committee and institutions and District Development Committee on the basis of annual reports of the office of the Auditor General of Nepal and also compared of yearly budget with the yearly declared total beruju as well as classification of beruju. The finding of this research is total beruju of both the government and others (Committee, Institutions and District Development Committee) is increasing but the total beruju of the government sectors have increased tremendously as compared to others. It also shows how financial accountability has adopted in the process of recording, tracking and reporting on allocation, disbursement and utilization of financial resources

A Study on Workplace Conflict at Nepalese Government Organizations

-Anita Poudel, Shilu Pradhan, Rameshwor Bhandari

This study aims to explore the dominant factors that influence workplace conflict in government organization along with its perception among civil servants and analyze the various factors of conflict and its relationship based on the hierarchical level of employees. The research also attempts to examine the level of management where conflict occur the most. The research was carried out using quantitative analysis and structures questionnaire has been used to collect primary data from sample size of 100 respondents based on non-probability sampling. SPSS was used for data analysis. Upon analysis of findings, it was found that majority of the respondents view conflict as good. Based on the ranking of various factors, Leadership stands at first. After leadership, "Structure" is considered more priority by the respondents. The respondents have given significant weightage to "External factors" and "Communication" as major source of conflict. Gazetted I, II and III class officers rated Communication factors having higher effect in resulting conflict in workplace. Structure factors and leadership factor seems to have high effect in all class/ position of respondents affecting all class of respondents. Gazetted III class officer stated that most conflict occurs in higher level and all level whereas, Gazetted II class officer stated that most conflict occurs between higher and middle level employees compared to others. Similarly, Gazetted I class officer stated that conflict occurs mainly between higher, middle level and all level.

Factors Impact on Information Behavior of Manager in Nepalese Civil Service

-Binaya Hari Maskey

Information seeking behavior is a growing concern. The study aimed to examine the impact of personal and professional factors on information behavior of Officers/Managers in Nepalese Civil Services. The study followed descriptive research design and date was collected through structured survey questionnaire in the non-contrived settings. The questionnaire contained six person-related variables (i.e. age, sex, education, management level, job experience and information system use), and three information behaviour dimensions (i.e. information characteristics, information types, and information sources). This is a cross-sectional of 84 officers (class II and III) in Civil Service. SPSS was used for descriptive and inferential statistical analysis like frequencies, percentage, ANOVA, MANOVA; and multiple comparisons with the Scheffe test was also conducted to examine the proposed hypotheses. The results showed that age, job experience and information system use are only the contextual variables, which make a difference in all three elements of information dimensions. This means, both null hypothesis (H0) and alternative hypothesis (H1) are partially supported denoting conclusion that there do exist differences among the sub-groups in the case of the impact on information behavior of age, job experience and information system use.

The Customer's Readiness on Mobile Money Solution in Mon State, Myanmar

-Nang Seng Pin

This research paper will explore the readiness of mobile money customers in the recently liberalized telecom sector of Myanmar to be able to utilize innovative financial inclusion solutions to address their endeavors toward improving their livelihood and economic wellbeing. As one of developing countries in Asia, Myanmar has experienced rapid transformation of mobile phone usages among her population of 52 million. Several international organizations including the World Bank, Asia Development Bank as well as the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) put forward mobile money solutions as a core strategy to advance financial inclusion challenges in Myanmar. This study will examine the readiness of the customers and utilization of mobile phone of Myanmar people including the way of the usage and the accessibility of the usage to be able to capitalize on financial inclusion solutions. In terms of readiness, the underlying support infrastructure is also the main requirement for any effective use of mobile money platforms; thus the existing infrastructure such as mobile service coverage and availability of service providers particularly in rural areas with less attractiveness to commercial operators will be a key barrier to address the challenge of financial access facing many rural communities in Myanmar. In addition, the state of public awareness, consumer psychology and community biases – all the soft infrastructure of rural customers on the demand side to utilize existing mobile applications will also determine the actual utilization of mobile money and other innovative financial solutions that target deeply impoverished rural

areas in Myanmar. On the supply side, the enabling policy environment favoring rural coverage or universal coverage of commercial mobile network operators to establish required services in remote regions of the country is critical to deliver the minimum threshold of services available to rural populations. To examine the state of challenges and opportunities supporting the use of innovative mobile money solutions to address financial inclusion problems in Myanmar, this study utilizes a mobile phone user survey in Mon State, an ethnic nationality region of Southeast Myanmar, which seem to possesses all the potential prospects of successful introduction of innovative mobile money solutions in the region.   This short paper presents early findings of the ongoing study to solicit further comments and policy guidance on improving the research study.

Summary of the Discussion

The questions raised in the floor during discussion session highlighted the implications of changes for financial irregularities, why not changing the curriculum of Staff College and can mobile money be used in other sector? Finally, the chair of the program concluded the session giving his views on the presentation. He explained that all the papers are descriptive and hence poses causative questions. Some dimensions like behavior is hard to understand by one question. In coming days, we have to go for why and how not only what. For example, Financial Irregularities is trend or a system but how to regularize the budget is important. Developing capacity of staffs is important for regularizing budget. Mobile money is really effective so further scope of using in other sectors except drawing money also could be analyzed.

Technical Session V: Emerging Issues in Governance

Institutionalizing Local Government in Federal System

-Rajendra Adhikari

The decade of 2005-2015 has been the decade of paradigm shift in the state management affairs with promulgation of new constitution that institutionalized and transformed Nepal into Federal Democratic Republic Nepal. State-power have been constitutionally allocated to the constitutionally recognized three orders of governments—Federal, Province and Local. The major shift is the powerful and autonomous local governments which have been acknowledged as the foundation institutions for effective implementation of federalism in Nepal. Local Governments have been enshrined with numbers of powers and functions in the constitution. These governments, 753 in numbers, have been entrusted with power of making policies and laws (consistent with their jurisdiction), enumerated in constitutional schedule. Hence, these local governments are striving to emerge themselves as autonomous and whole-of-governments in the nearest proximity of the people and communities. In the meantime, there is capacity gap in many aspects of these governments, hence, need support on developing and institutionalizing policy management and governance

system including many others. In this context, NASC took an initiative to support on building capacity of local governments in policy management, resource management, public service delivery and development management.

In this paper, the presenter wants to share the experience and learnings gained through implementation of capacity building initiative for Local Governments, 8 different local governments across 7 provinces, covering 208 elected officials, about 30 civil/public servants working in these governments, and interviews with experts.

Social Accountability in Public Sector Management: An Analysis of Citizen's Involvement in Public Procurement in Bangladesh

-Md. Shanawez Hossain

In many developing countries the capabilities of the public sectors have been questioned not only for their limited resources and poor quality of service delivery but also for inefficiency in fund distribution and administration. In particular, the procurement of public projects which comprise lion's share of public spending, have been identified with manifold problems such as cost overrun, lower quality, schedule failure, lower level of efficiency etc. To overcome these issues, searching for more innovative implementation strategy of public procurement projects have long been pursued by governments worldwide. In this regard, 'Third Party Monitoring (TPM)' through citizen's involvement has come forward as a more competent way to bring true value to society from public initiatives. TPM came into place to establish transparency and accountability of implementing bodies and responsible authorities, along with ensuring high quality of public service delivery. Analysis of this paper shows implementation of TPM in construction of roads and school buildings has significant impacts over the procurement process. Citizens performing the role of watchdogs alongside government officials ensure transparent implementation of projects according to specification, and establish a state of social accountability. This result of civic involvement can inspire relevant stakeholders and policy makers in developing countries to spread out the spirit of assuring socially accountable public service delivery. However, result shows judicious and strategic mechanisms are needed to balance interests of different stakeholders involved.

Political Economy Analysis of Post-Earthquake Reconstruction In Nepal: An Assessment of Emerging Role of Local Governments

-Trilochan Pokharel, Mohan Das Manadhar, Achala Dahal, Tara Prasad Kharel,
Rameshowr Bhandari, Bishal Chalise

This report is an assessment of emerging role of the newly formed local governments in post-earthquake reconstruction. Post-earthquake reconstruction remained in a peril for considerable period with three major

bottlenecks. First, the government was completely unprepared to handle massive disasters and unable to demonstrate leadership in solving the problem. A political maneuvering was transparent from the very beginning as manifested in the forming of the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), formed twice at a mutilation of political negotiation. Second, people did not have a legitimate political institution for echoing their voice as local governments were almost dysfunctional in absence of elected local representatives for almost two decades. This systemic delink between state and citizens consumed most of the efforts of state machinery to establish a viable mechanism to reach to the people, which is still a major challenge. Third, a critical gap exists between state and people in understanding the local needs of reconstruction. The absence of elected local representative exacerbated the legitimate institution for people to reflect their needs. The government could not take this devastation as an opportunity to support people to transform their living towards a modernized life, which people are aspiring for, but controlled people's interests to what the government assumes to be convenient to disburse reconstruction grant.

In sum, the unintended consequences of poorly conceptualized, centrally planned, and ineffectively executed reconstruction programme are having a significant and lasting impact on vulnerable and disempowered groups and communities. Thus, an effective disaster recovery and reconstruction process requires more than good intentions to create general welfare and public goods and should also focus on removing pre-existing socio-economic inequalities underpinned by centralized state structure.

A year after the elections, the local governments have made some progress but have done so slowly amidst huge expectations from the public. They continue to struggle in institutionalizing themselves. Elected representatives agree that they have been unable to deliver as expected. It is imperative to invest in developing the institutional and structural capacity of local government in order to make a disaster resilient society. Four strategic interventions would be useful for enhancing roles of local government in reconstruction and making local government capable of dealing with disaster risk management- 1) assessing and developing disaster risk management capacity; 2) strengthening institutional memory; 3) strengthening communication; and 4) institution building.

Accountability Framework of Local Government

-Hari Dhungana, Shiva Hari Adhikari

The promulgation of the new constitution in Nepal in 2015 and the elections held for local, provincial and federal levels in 2017 herald a new era for the country's democratic future. They led to the restoration of constitutional order and democratic institutions and subsequently offer a new window of opportunity for deepening democracy and achieving accountable governance in Nepal. Doing this, however, requires

credible political commitments for accountability. The local governments, in particular, will have to develop and enforce accountability policies and measures that should be adapted to the provisions of new constitution – especially in regard to the redefinition of state-people relationship through inter-governmental sharing of power and autonomy accorded to local governments.

This paper aims at articulating how local governments in Nepal establish and institutionalize accountability. To do this, this paper first develops accountability relationships in which local government are embedded. It furthers the idea of "local" social contract in light of the constitutional sharing of power between the federal, provincial and local levels. Secondly, it revisits the policy, legal and institutional measures on local government accountability and their manifestations in local government settings. Thirdly, it also reflects on recent practices on local government planning and accountability as well as expectations for change received though the consultation with elected officials, civil service staff, and other local leaders. Fourth, it Identifies existing or potential gaps in local government accountability and proposes a set of recommendation for short, medium and long-term interventions.

Summary of the Discussion

The discussion following the first presentation focused the research findings. The audience commented that the research should have focused on the capacity of local governments rather than other multiple issues. In case of the second presentation, comparisons were drawn between the study site (Bangladesh) and Nepal. The issues of social accountability in Bangladesh and Nepal were found to be similar. In the post presentation discussion after third presentation highlighted the need of research practice from a non-western paradigm. The audience suggested that the researcher get caught in the 'vulnerability' trap and hence overlook important aspect in their research work. Also, the need of gender and caste disaggregated data was suggested. The audience also appreciated the linkage of political economy perspective with the post-earthquake recovery. (The forth presentation was carried out by a proxy presenter therefore, it was not discussed in the discussion session).

Technical Session VI: Democratic Practices and Governance

The Relationship between Democracy and Development: Evidences from Bangladesh

-Sultan Mohammed Zakaria

Since its independence in 1971, much of Bangladesh's history has been mired in political instability, abrupt power transition, and perennial conflicts. Democratic and authoritarian regimes have frequently alternated power during this period. The post-1991 democratic transition, following the ouster of last military regime, has also been volatile and severely suffered from authoritarian tendencies of political leadership. However,

while regimes were unstable and the progress towards a liberal political order remained elusive, the economic development remained constant. The country has enjoyed a fast, steady economic growth. Many scholars find these seemingly two opposite patterns intriguing and have attempted to explain the governance part of this puzzle, which is often referred to as 'Bangladesh Paradox'. There is however no systematic inquiry made to assess the interrelationship between political progress and development outcome. This study attempts to fill that knowledge gap. The paper examines the effect of democracy on economic development, measured in GDP per capita, for Bangladesh in the period of 1972-2016. It analyzes both the long-run relation and the direction of causality using time series regression analysis. The paper uses University of Maryland's Polity IV regime type data as the proxy for democracy, and GDP per capita (constant 2010 US$) as the proxy for development. The estimated coefficients of co-integration equations find no evidence of relationship between democracy and economic development in Bangladesh, whether positive or negative.

Political Economy Analysis of Emerging Education Governance at Local Government

-Punya Prasad Neupane, Trilochan Pokharel, Hari Dhungana, Trilochan Poudyal, Ishwori Ghimire, Anil Kumar Gupta, Anita Poudel

The new constitution of Nepal, promulgated in 2015, devolves the power and jurisdiction on school education to the local level government, which is one of the three levels of polities envisioned under the country's federal make-up. Education comprises a vital public good in a nation's development and well-being. It empowers citizens with necessary life skills, analytic abilities, civic consciousness and moral ethos that underpin the personal well-being as well as the collective good of the broader society. The initial challenges facing the local governments on the assumption of the constitutional obligations on education are contextual.

Through this study, we aim to highlight how the local governments are preparing to take on and deliver their constitutionally recognized responsibilities and functions, and how actors and institutions facilitate and constrain this process. This is carried out by adopting a political economy approach, in which we focused on devolution in education sector by identifying actors and institutions and their incentives in facilitating the transfer of power on education from the "center" to the local governments. We envision this exercise to serve as a credible input for the effort of Nepal Administrative Staff College and its partners in supporting local government capacity and aligned inter-governmental effort for improving educational planning and performance according to Nepal's national and international commitments.

We found that the elections held for local government in 2017 were fought around the agendas on prosperity, political stability and development, and did not involve discourse on specific policy positions regarding education. The elected local officials recognize education as critical responsibility on their part,

and are primarily concerned with the gap in quality of education in private and publicly funded schools. They recognize that significant work is needed in improving quality of education in schools in addition to ascertaining that every child is enrolled into the schools.

The landscape of actors and the conflict and contestation between them make the transfer of education devolution particularly challenging. The conflicts manifest in school mergers, the transfer of education staff, the choice of text books and their procurement, the management of teachers and their training and holding exams by the local government. We also survey the major initiatives and specific efforts that we observed in our visits to the local government jurisdictions. These indicate a good deal of confusion regarding education planning, jurisdictional dispute but also point to greater hopes for more accountable educational governance.

We identify a number of issues that are particularly pertinent in the ongoing moment of constitutional change and power devolution in Nepal. Overall, we suggest that local levels in Nepal provide an encouraging moment – where they are struggling to translate their visions for education improvement through early policy and legislative efforts, which will require technical backstopping and support on planning, execution, accountability, and needed policy and legislative measures.

Emerging Political Economy Analysis of Local Government

-*Mohan Das Manandhar, Rojan Bajracharya, Prabhas Man Singh, Trilochan Pokharel, Rajendra Adhikari*

Despite a high economic boom over the last three decades, South Asia remains a region comprising of low-income and middle-income countries. According to the World Development Indicator 2017, 15% of the population residing in the region is poor. Although there has been a decline in poverty from 41% to 29% over the years 1990 to 2004 – raising the population of the middle-class families[1], chronic poverty still persists in the region (Devrajan and Nabi, 2006; Singh, 2007). Thus there is negligible positive impact of the region's growing economy in uplifting the standard of living of the chronic poor – both in terms of livelihood and income level. What this inequitable economic prosperity masks are an inequitable society masked by multilayered social perils – social exclusion and discrimination, that drive the vicious cycle of poverty in South Asia.

 Summary of the Discussion

After the first presentation, discussions after the presentation highlighted how the quantitative nature of the research overshadowed the prospective qualitative aspects of the study. Why the young people were

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[1] Chun, 2010 highlights that Middle class populations have increased by 8.3, 12.8 and 36.5 percent respectively in Bangladesh, India and Pakiatan,

participating more is a sub-area of the study that needs to be further explored. It was concurred that the situation of minorities and tribal communities are similar in other regions of South Asia particularly in India and Sri Lanka. The domination of evidence based pure science research over social science research was also mentioned. The discussion in the second presentation revolved around issues on education policy of Nepal to introduce courses in mother tongue in schools and continue till the secondary level to be commendable. An enquiry was made whether it was possible to conduct research with an explanatory approach. Upon which the presenter responded that the sole objective of the study was to identify and describe the existing issues, rather than to seek answers to what is causing the phenomena to occur and why. The dire need of the hour is to witness the operationalization of social accountability or role of local people i.e. local mass visiting the public enterprises and asking questions, however, to what extent the local citizens are capacitated and empowered determines that role. Also, it was remarked that two-and-a-half-page executive summary in the paper could have been replaced with a 300-500-word abstract since academic research papers generally contain the latter as opposed to the former. In the third presentation, the discussion highlighted the dearth of political autonomy to be a major problem in South Asia not just Nepal. Locally elected officials shouldering party over people is prevalent in multiple parts of the sub-continent. There is a dilemma in implementing public policy due to lack of political autonomy. Also, the intervention of constitutional bodies – Executive, Legislative and Judiciary – in each other's affair raises the question of who is more powerful among the three.

iv.   Plenary Session

Chair: Pradeep Gyawali, Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nepal

Speaker: Madhu Raman Acharya, Former Foreign Secretary, Nepal

Speaker: Prof. Atiqul Islam, VC, North South University, Bangladesh

<u>Summary of the Presentation- Speaker I</u>

'Happiness and Prosperity' is the declared agenda of the present government of Nepal. There could be many manifestations of the agenda; however, the present focus is on the political and economic side of happiness

and prosperity. The entire South Asian region, in one form or the other has the same agenda. And to an extent progress has been made throughout the region. South Asia is the fastest growing region despite very limited cooperation between different governments. If worked in an integrated approach as a collective, the pace of economic growth throughout the region can be increased. The politics in the region, however, has not allowed the governments to move beyond the historically existing problems and challenges. An example could be the SAARC summit which doesn't take place as scheduled.

At the present times when the world power dynamics is shifting in favor of Asia, estrangement among the SAARC members will not help. China is the power center of the Asia. So far, south Asian countries are dealing with China individually but now we should think of regional engagement to benefit from the economic growth of China. India-China competition for regional supremacy is an open secret. Such competitions are required for growth. The entire region can gain from the India and China's growth. And the question of how we can do that can be answered through the conference and seminars like the present. In this kind of regional forums, we, as a region can reach out to the unchartered territory such as West Asia and Central Asia to establish regional engagement.

Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan are graduating from 'poor man's club'. Bhutan and Bangladesh have already graduated and Nepal is technically qualified to graduate out of Least Developed Countries (LDC). This makes Afghanistan the only country of this region in LDC. These achievements are individual so far. As a collective we can work for a prosperous future. The future of our economies should be based with in South Asia. And it is possible too as this region has the biggest number of young people. Through meaningful engagement of young people in the development process, equitable distribution of development benefits the desired prosperity can be achieved.

Summary of the Presentation –Speaker II

No conversation on prosperity can be complete without talking about justice. In case of South Asia, there are 7 countries. Economic growth of some of the countries has been very significant while others are lagging behind. The major question is how the region can progress together especially when the residing populations are divided along the lines of religion. The religious diversity, rather than as a weakness, should be the strength of this region. The situation, however, is different. Person's belonging to a nation, in particular, and region, at large should be based on the citizenship. If we consider what a person does in personal life, then it could lead to divisive politics.

There is a functional network between the countries of South Asia. If we look at the remittance to India, Bangladesh is the second country after United States that sends remittance to India. This shows that we can

work in each other's jurisdiction. This sort of relationship fosters economic activities in both the countries. Therefore, we have to come out of narrow calculations and strive for regional cooperation. This region already has a good growth. There are certain setbacks in certain countries due to domestic turmoil however, the right leadership and public policy can pull the country out of such situations. There is plenty we can learn from how Europe graduated to European Union (EU) in a span of two decades. Like Europe, we have to start from small regional activities which can be later expanded into macro level economic activities, like shared currency. The regional activities in South Asia started off with ambitious goals which have made us loose hope. Small achievements such as road and rail connectivity, visa free travel, shared port facilities between countries can pave the way for a regional consolidation.

Remarks by the Honorable Pradeep Gyawali, Minister of Foreign Affairs

It goes without saying that South Asia is one of the most dynamic regions in the world. This is a region of abundant natural resources, huge market, talented and laborious men and women. This is a region with rich cultural heritage, enormous diversity and exemplary unity. This is a cradle of civilization, innovation and creation. This is a region of opportunities and hope. As estimated by the World Bank, growth in this region is expected to accelerate to 6.9 percent in 2018 and 7.1 percent in 2019. This shows that South Asia is one of the fastest growing regions in the world. In terms of geo-topography, it is an area of vast diversity from White Mountain to blue oceans, from deserts to tropical islands. It covers about 5.2 million square kilometers i.e. 3.5 percent of the world's land surface area and about one fourth of the world's population, making it the most populous geographical region in the world. South Asia is a region of youth with almost half of its population below the age of 25. This demographic dividend will create an economically active group of young people in many years to come. Availability of abundant natural resources is another economic boon to South Asia. Thus, managing natural resources prudently is critical for achieving socioeconomic well-being of the region. Similarly, Cultural heritage is a core of South Asian identity. It is rich, diverse and time-tested with the capability of creating human values. Our Art, architecture, music, literature, lifestyle, philosophy is an essential part of South Asian culture. "*Basudhaiba kutumbakam*", "*Sarbajana hitaya sarbajana Sukhaya*" are such age-old values that make south Asia unique and that are the most valuable gift to the whole world.

Despite huge opportunities, potential and hope, why South Asia is still considered as one of the Poorest corners of the world? Why development and prosperity are still a far-fetched dream for many people of this region? Why unemployment, illiteracy, disease, backwardness is still hanging in our identity? Why we are unable to prove wrong to those critics who often criticize that most of the regional mechanisms in this region are more formal and less functional. Why this is still one of the least integrated regions in the world?

I think it is high time to contemplate on these issues. A serious contemplation that could reach to the root cause, diagnose the problem and recommend the pragmatic and doable action plan. South Asia has a shared history, shared culture and shared future with common problems and potentials. We know we can go far together, we can grow better together and we can prosper faster together. But why the spirit of regionalism is yet to be workable? Why the SAARC mechanisms are yet to be functional? How closer the SAARC process has brought to us? Why the dream of south Asian integration is yet to realize? where did we reach in the implementation of SAFTA? Where our common dream of Shared prosperity became entangled?

Frankly speaking, regionalism could not take a deep-root in this region. We always talked about regional integration, but do our actions truly follow our words and spirit? Are we ready to deal with several issues that we could handle better regionally? I think intellectuals like you should try to find the answers of these questions. Another important factor that is halting the enhancement of regional cooperation is poor connectivity within the region. Connectivity is the key to regional integration. But in our region, all forms of connectivity, such as road, railways, waterways, air, digital and grid connectivity is not sufficient in terms of both quantity and quality. In the same way, legal infrastructure for the facilitation of the movement of goods and peoples is also not satisfactory. This has ultimately limited the intra-regional trade, investment, people-to-people contact and other areas of cooperation. Our intra-regional trade and investment shows how less integrated region we have been. According to the World Bank Report, it is the least integrated region in the world with intra-regional trade at less than 5% of total trade, dwarfed by East Asia's 35% and Europe's 60%. There are some inherent problems in South Asia. Long-practiced Feudal socioeconomic structure did not promote entrepreneurship and investment. As a result, industrialization process started late in our region and even today overall level of industrialization in all SAARC member countries is low with some exceptions. Thus, import-orientation, labor migration and poor utilization of natural and human resources became our fate and culture. Ultimately our region got trapped in a vicious circle of unemployment, poverty, low saving and low investment. Lower productivity, poorer quality and meager investment in research and development have reduced the competitiveness of the products and services produced in the region. In the same vein, over the time, we could not develop complimentary and supplementary industries in the region. As a result, member states have less temptation to buy goods and services within region. Internal political stability, peace and social harmony in the member countries is also equally important for regional integration. Internal dynamics has definitely far-reaching regional consequences. Confidence between and among the member states is the most critical factor for regional cooperation and shared prosperity. South Asia is prone to non-traditional security threats as well. Water and food security, energy security, environment and climate change, natural disasters and health hazards, cyber and organized crime are some of them to name. Food, water and energy security and climate change

aptly called as "tragedy of the commons", are the most serious non-traditional security threats among others in South Asia. Non-traditional security threats can evolve into traditional security threats if left unaddressed. They are interwoven in many complex ways and cannot be managed effectively without cross-sectoral integration and intra-regional coordination. Above all, poverty is the biggest threat to our region. As the Rt. Honorable Prime Minister Mr. K P Sharma Oli stated while addressing the thirty-Seventh Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers in Pokhara on March 17, 2016. "We have an enemy- a common enemy to South Asia. An enemy that is draining our potentials, an enemy that is ridiculing our collective efforts, an enemy that is threatening the whole of South Asia and an enemy that is testing our abilities and intentions. The enemy called poverty, the enemy called backwardness. At any cost we cannot afford this enemy to win."

In this backdrop, it is an urgent call to take concrete and meaningful steps towards shared prosperity and development in South Asia. As learned speakers of this plenary have already indicated, first of all, we must seriously work to make SAARC process and mechanism more result-oriented and functional. We must review the formalities, bureaucratic processes, areas of cooperation and mechanism/institutions within SAARC judiciously and factually. Second, we need to focus on less contentious but more important areas of cooperation. Let's explore these areas and focus on them on priority basis. Third, all forms of connectivity (physical, digital and human) should be expanded and deepened. Facilitation of the movement of goods and peoples should be given high priority in the region. Needful legal infrastructure should be timely made and duly implemented in this regard. Fourth, SAFTA act as a building bloc of regional prosperity. We must place great emphasis on making SAFTA effective and useful. Fifth, complementarities particularly in industrial sector should be promoted and stalwartly facilitated by all member countries. In the same way, research and development, innovation, competitiveness among others, must be in our regional priority. Sixth, to spur economic growth and reduce poverty in South Asia, industrial activity, particularly manufacturing, must expand. Rural industrialization is vital since large rural population offers significant potential for economic growth, if better policies and institutions are adopted. Seventh, for inclusive and sustainable development, Involvement of the people of different walks of life and consideration of their concerns should be ensured in all dimensions and processes of regional cooperation and integration. For this, private sectors, cooperatives, community and people to people contact and cooperation should be properly channelized and enhanced. Eighth, spirit of we-feeling should be inculcated in society, particularly in children. Our traditional values of accommodation, tolerance, respect, peace, harmony and co-existence should be revived and taught. Ninth, Meaningful engagement with observer countries of the SAARC is another import aspect that adds impetus in our aspiration of South Asian Prosperity. Tenth, above all, South Asian countries should continue regular meetings, dialogues,

negotiations, persuasions and engagements in all levels and in all spheres. This will narrow down differences, wipe out misunderstandings and make a clear roadmap for future cooperation to conquer the poverty, to utilize the resources (natural and human), to promote the industrialization, trade and investment, and to fight the traditional and non-traditional threats in the region together. , Nepal has embarked into an era of stability. Long cherished dream of Nepali people for peace and stability has fulfilled with the promulgation of New Constitution of Nepal and successful completion of three-tier elections at local, provincial and federal levels. These elections have paved the way to form a stable government with the strong mandate from the people. we are marching towards development and prosperity with a slogan of "Samridha Nepal Sukhi Nepali". Prosperity is not only a long-cherished dream of Nepali people but also a foremost priority and focus of the incumbent government. We understand prosperity alone is neither possible nor sustainable. We want prosperity together. We want development together. We eagerly want to walk a journey together-a journey of peace, a journey of prosperity and a journey of development with all SAARC member states. Ladies and gentleman, As many people think, SAARC is not in hibernation. SAARC is not hopeless. SAARC is not futureless. Regular activities of the SAARC process are happening. Several SAARC ministerial meetings are being held. Regular meetings, discussions, trainings are going well. SAARC Secretariat is active and most importantly, SAARC spirit is alive. As the current Chair of the SAARC, we always assure Nepal's full support and cooperation to the SAARC process. I am fully confident that, we, the South Asian countries will walk together and reach the common destination of peace, prosperity and development. I do believe that SAARC will be instrumental to walk this journey. Finally, once again I would like to thank the organizer, eminent speakers and you all for making this plenary a good memory and a success.

Annexes

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Conference Programme	
DAY I (28 June 2019)	
Inaugural	
Conference highlights	Narayan Gopal Malego, Senior Director and Chair, Conference Organizing Committee, NASC
Remarks	Mohan Das Manandhar, Executive Director of Niti Foundation
Remarks	Samar Verma, Senior Specialist of IDRC, Think Thank Initiative
Remarks	Ram Kantha Makaju, VC, Kathmandu University
Remarks	Tirtha Raj Khaniya, VC, Tribhuvan University, Nepal
Opening remarks	Hon'ble Lal Babu Pandit, Minister for Federal Affairs and General Administration
Remarks and vote of thanks	Punya Prasad Neupane, Executive Director, NASC
28 June 2018, 9:00-10:00	*Prithivi Hall*
10:00-10:15	*Tea Break*

Keynote Address: Towards Justice and Prosperity

Chair: Hon'ble Bimala Rai Poudel, MP, National Assembly, Nepal
Keynote Speaker: Hon'ble Baburam Bhattarai, Former Prime Minister of Nepal
Keynote Speaker: Rasedha Choudhury, Former Advisor, Government of Bangladesh

28 June 2018, 10:15-11:45	*Prithivi Hall*
11:45-12:00	*Tea Break*

Technical Session 1: Public Sector Governance

Chair: Shishir Dhungana, Secretary, GoN
Discussant: Ajaya Mani Dixit, ISET Nepal (TBD)

28 June 2018, 12:00-13:30	*Prithivi Hall*

1. Attractiveness of Civil Service in Nepal

Basanta Raj Sigdel, Shailaja Upadhyaya, Krishna Sigdel & Rameshwor Bhandari

2. E-governance Challenges in Nepal: Case of Nuwakot District

Shital Moktan Tamang

3. Integrity of Public Agency in the Perception of Public Servants

Shiva Hari Adhikari, Suwarn Kumar Singh, Ashrita Dhital

4. Introducing contributory pension plan: Sustainability and equitability in Nepalese Civil Service

Pratistha Koirala, Nabin Chapagain, Pratibha Dhungana & Damodar Bashyal

5. Reforming public sector: Glimpses of the disinvestment policy in India

R K Mishra, Geeta Potaraju & Kiranmai Janaswamy

Technical Session 2: Public Service Delivery	
Chair: Yam Kumari Khatiwada, Secretary, GoN	
Discussant: SK Tawfique, Professor, NSU	
28 June 2018, 12:00-13:30	*Rara Hall*

1. Citizen charter in Nepali public sector organization: What does evidence say?

Anil Kumar Gupta & Gyan Laxmi Shrestha

2. Citizen led struggle for equitable access to resources: Case of urban water management

Kaustuv Raj Neupane, Suchita Shrestha & Hemant R. Ojha

3. Dhaka's middle income renters – an estimation of hedonic price and marginal willingness to pay

Syeda Salina Aziz

4. The customer's readiness on mobile money solution in Mon State, Myanmar

Nang Seng Pin

Technical Session 3: Issues and Practices of Public Policy	
Chair: Chandra Kumar Ghimire, Secretary, GoN	
Discussant: Sagar Raj Sharma, Dean, KUSoA	
28 June 2018, 12:00-13:30	*Lumbini Hall*

1. Annual performance agreement in Bangladesh public administration: An independent assessment

Mohammad Sirajul Islam

2. Urbanization, water and climate change policies in Nepal: Linkages and challenges

Gyanu Maskey & Chandra Lal Pandey

3. Policy deficit in catalyzing transformative changes in Nepal's Post Gorkha earthquake reconstruction

Ajaya Mani Dixit & Ashutosh Shukla

4. Climate finance governance in Nepal

Yogendra Subedi & Rabi Wenju

13:30-14:30	*Lunch Break*

Policy Dialogue 1: Social Justice and Inclusion	
Chair: Syeda Lasna Kabir, Professor, University of Dhaka	
Speaker: Mohan Das Manandhar, Policy Analysts	
Panelist: Anil Thakur, Secretary, Women's Commission	
Samar Verma ,Senior Specialist of IDRC, Think Thank Initiative	
28 June 2018, 14:30-15:45	**Prithivi Hall**
15:45-16:05	*Tea Break*

Policy Dialogue 2: Federalism and Intergovernmental Relationship	
Chair: Punya Prasad Neupane, Executive Director, NASC	
Speaker: Hon'ble Shankar Pokharel, Chief Minister, Province 5	
Panelist: Hari Sharma, Political Analyst	
28 June 2018, 16:05-17:20	**Prithivi Hall**
DAY II (29 June 2018)	

Technical Session 4: Organization and Management

Chair: Sri Krishna Shrestha, Professor, TU
Discussant: Prakash Bhattarai, Associate Prof, KU

29 June 2018, 9:30-11:00	*Lumbini Hall*

1. Trend analysis of financial irregularities in Nepal

Sundar Shrestha & Ashish Rai

2. A study on workplace conflict at Nepalese government organizations

Anita Poudel, Shilu Pradhan & Rameshwor Bhandari

3. Factors impact on information behavior of manager in Nepalese civil service

Binaya Hari Maskey

4. Status of organizational citizenship behavior in civil service of Nepal

Pratibha Dhungana, Achala Dahal & Nabin Chapagain

Technical Session 5: Emerging Issues in Governance

Chair: Mahendra Man Gurung, Secretary, GoN
Discussant: Bhim Prasad Subedi, Professor, TU

29 June 2018, 09:30-11:00	*Prithivi Hall*

1. Institutionalizing local government in federal system

Rajendra Adhikari

2. Social accountability in public sector management: An analysis of citizen's involvement in public procurement in Bangladesh

Md. Shanawez Hossain

3.Political economy analysis of post-earthquake reconstruction in Nepal: An assessment of emerging role of local governments

Trilochan Pokharel, Mohan Das Manandhar, Achala Dahal, Tara Prasad Kharel, Rameshwor Bhandari & Bishal Chalise

4. Accountability framework of local government

Hari Dhungana & Shiva Hari Adhikari

Technical Session 6: Democratic Practices and Governance

Chair: Dinesh Kumar Thapaliya, Secretary, GoN
Discussant: Syeda Lasna Kabir, Professor, University of Dhaka

29 June 2018, 09:30-11:00	*Rara Hall*

1. The relationship between democracy and development: Evidence from Bangladesh

Sultan Mohammed Zakaria

2. Democratic participation in Bangladesh: Does it vary across the demographic identity?

Sk. Tawfique M. Haque

3. Political economy analysis of emerging education governance at local governments in Nepal

Punya Prasad Neupane, Trilochan Pokharel, Hari Dhungana, Trilochan Poudyal, Ishwari Ghimire, Anil Kumar Gupta & Anita Poudel

4. Emerging political economy analysis of local government

Mohan Das Manandhar, Rojan Bajracharya, Prabhas Man Singh, Trilochan Pokharel & Rajendra Adhikari

11:00-11:20	*Tea Break*

Policy Dialogue 3: Addressing Poverty- Innovative Approaches

Chair: Jagadish Chandra Pokharel, Former VC, National Planning Commission, Nepal
Speaker: YB Thapa, Vice Chairperson, PAF, Nepal
Speaker: SK Tawfique, Professor, NSU
Panelist: Samar Verma, TTI India

29 June 2018, 11:20-12:45	*Prithivi Hall*

12:45-13:45	*Lunch Break*

Policy Dialogue 4: Deepening Democracy

Chair: Balananda Poudel, Chair, LLRC
Speaker: Ms. Renu Dahal, Mayor, Bharatpur Metropolitan City, Chitwan
Mr. Gyanendra Shrestha, Mayor, Katar Municipality, Udaypur
Ms. Kalika Pathak, Vice-Chair, Kalinchowk Rural Municipality, Dolakha
Mr. Bishow Mohan Yadav, Chair, Nawarajour Rural Municipality, Siraha
Mr. Bishnu Giri, Chair, Gaumukhi Rural Municipality, Pyuthan
Mr. Dharmananda Manyal, Chair, Api-Himal Rural Municipality, Darchula
Ms.Nisha Thagunna Dhami, Kedarshiun Rural Municipality,Bajhang

29 June 2018, 13:45-15:15	***Prithivi Hall***
15:15-15:30	*Tea Break*

Plenary: Towards Prosperity- South Asia Together

Chair: Hon'ble Pradeep Gyawali, Minister, MoFA
Speaker: Madhu Raman Acharya, Former Secretary, GoN
Speaker: Professor Atiqul Islam, VC, North South University, Bangladesh
Panelist: Samar Verma, TTI India

29 June 2018, 15:30-16:40	***Prithivi Hall***

Closing

Key learning	Ajaya Mani Dixit, ISET Nepal
Remarks	Netra Prasad Timsina, Chairperson, SIAS
Remarks	Representative, BIGD
Remarks	Representative, IPE
Remarks	Professor Atiqul Islam, VC, North South University, Bangladesh
Closing remarks and vote of thanks	Punya Prasad Neupane, Executive Director, NASC
29 June 2018, 16:40-17:20	***Prithivi Hall***

Annex 3. Inaugural Session

<u>Conference Highlights by Narayan Gopal Malego, Senior Director and Chair, Conference Organizing Committee, NASC</u>

On behalf of the organizing team, Mr.Malego welcomed all the participants and delegates from different countries of South Asia to contribute to the knowledge exchange in the region. He mentioned that the conference is an initiative of seven like-minded organizations of the region. It is jointly organized by seven organizations from Bangladesh, India and Nepal. He highlighted the importance of the main theme of the conference 'Towards Justice and Prosperity' for its regional importance to achieve sustainable development. He outlined the format of conference for the audience.

<u>Remarks by Mohan Das Manandhar, Executive Director, Niti Foundation</u>

Mr. Manandhar highlighted the aspiration of the South Asia to eradicate poverty and attain sustainable economic growth and prosperity. Both for Nepal and South Asia, poverty is the central issue. He mentioned how the South Asia is grappling with similar problems related to inadequate economic growth and unequal wealth distribution. He said that in this background of challenges faced by all South Asian countries, the conference and its theme around justice and prosperity is very relevant. He added that the public interest should be in the heart of public policy. The new federal system and state restructuring in Nepal, he said, is trying to reach the public at its doors. He believes that the conference will generate more ideas on how to make the public policy more public.

<u>Remarks by Samar Verma, Senior Specialist, Think Tank Initiative</u>

Mr. Verma appreciated the organizers for the timely selection of a relevant agenda. Verma made two headline points in his remark. First, the vibrant and robust political economy cannot be built in unequal and unjust society. He cited few examples of inequality in the world. The failing of the neo-liberal economy around the work is a testimony of the inequality of wealth distribution between the multinational conglomerates and the people at large. Verma said that democracy and equality are two sides of the same coin. His second headline point highlighted knowledge guided reform. He said that evidence based knowledge is required for policy making. Verma further highlighted the knowledge disparity between the west and the south Asian countries as all research is produced and disseminated in the west. Talking about the public policy, he said, the policy making process should be consultative and participatory.

<u>Remarks by Ram Kantha Makaju, VC, Kathmandu University</u>

Mr.Makaju put forward the idea of policy makers as the doctors of the society as they diagnose the maladies in the society, identify the best approaches and devise interventions. He said that the impact of the policy makers in the society is unmatched. Due to this significant role, the policy makers and the academics should work together, he noted. He also added that the policy makers are the backbone of the democracy and it is important to train them in policy related issues. He highlighted how the government as of yet has no plans to train the policy makers. He ended by raising a question on the possibility of collaborative work in the south Asian region to train the policy makers.

Remarks by Prof. Dr. Tirtha Raj Khaniya, VC, Tribhuvan University

Dr. Khaniya appreciated the organizer of the conference as he believes the policy discussion platform is important in developing countries. He also said that the ineffective policies in the region are mainly due to the lack of expertise among the political leaders. He expressed that the conference has brought together government officials, academics and practitioners under the same roof. He highlighted how public policy and governance goes hand in hand in every sector. He reminded the audience that the developing countries have problems in public policy that affects good service delivery. He recommended that the government needs to bring together the agenda of good governance, transparency and public policy. He also added that the governance model of the west may not produce the desired result in the South Asian region. He said that conference will be a good platform to discuss the policy needs within the regional context, the lapses of present policies and reflections on what can be done better.

Vote of Thanks by Punya Prasad Neupane, Executive Director, NASC

Mr. Neupane said that the small initiation started in 2017 between like-minded organizations of the south Asian region is expanding its reach. Citing the participation of Myanmar this year, he asserted that this regional conference should be held annually and engage other interested countries of the region. In a positive note, he said that the countries in South Asia have progressed but no country is in position to be complacent. He cited the example of Nepal saying the federal government has adopted the lofty goal of good governance, development, sustainable peace and prosperity with the slogan 'Happy Nepali, Prosperous Nepal'. However, he mentioned that to achieve those goals the scholars, policy makers and academics should jointly work together with the leaders. At the end, he thanked all the organizers and participants.

Annex 4.

Closing Session

<u>Remarks by Ajaya Mani Dixit, Executive Director, ISET Nepal</u>

Nepal currently is undergoing two transitions. One, the elected government after 15 years and the other is the new governance system- federalism. In the different session of the conference, we discussed the effectiveness of the public policies. The most important discussion was with the local elected representative as they highlighted the challenges and opportunities of the local government. Since it is a new system, the actions of the local government are also a form of learning.

There are many challenges South Asia is facing. Three fundamental challenges related to the research and evidence based policy making are:

1. Research projects are fragmented and hence the results are uneven. The dissemination of the result is unsatisfactory
2. Limited usability of the research.
3. Limited awareness of research and research based evidences among the local government officials and broader community.

There is a potential of collaborative interdisciplinary work among the researchers in South Asia. Cross border research can come in different themes. Researchers and policy makers in the region need to come together with the local community to address the problem and find solution.

<u>Remarks by Netra Prasad Timilsina, Chairperson, SIAS,Nepal</u>

The meaning of prosperity is to have the right to education, employment, social security, equality, justice. Although prosperity has been a long term goal, Nepal as a state and also the entire south Asian region is lagging behind. There is structural barrier that has created political and governance crisis in South Asia, both in national and in local level. Along with policy and research advances, South Asia also needs political solutions to its problems.

<u>Remarks by Sahana Hussain, BIGD, Bangladesh</u>

There is a better engagement of the policy makers in the conference this year, both nationally and internationally. Academics and researchers should be involved more in public policy making process as they help make change possible. Together we can go far therefore, participation, cooperation and collaboration is important.

<u>Remarks by Atiqul Islam, Professor and VC, NSU, Bangladesh</u>

NSU is proud to be associated with this conference. The technical paper presentation session and the policy dialogue session were important for the issues raised and the discussion that ensued after. Public Policy Government Centre(PPGC) is a partner and has supported this event. The participation of the people from government level is very encouraging and they added value to the discussion.

Remarks by Punya Prasad Neupane, Executive Director, NASC

Last year when the first conference was organized, there was a fear if this kind of platform could be continued as it is difficult for active continuation. The successful completion of the conference second year in a row has put some doubts to rest. NASC will work to continue this conference series next year as well and expects same active enthusiasm from the partner organizations. We believe that organizations like NASC can play an instrumental role for regional connections that are lacking.