



PUBLIC POLICY WORKSHOP

on

“Nurturing Public Policy Research Capacity in Nepal”

3-4 October 2012

Kathmandu, Nepal

Background

While research on public policy has gained considerable momentum globally, it has not received adequate attention in Nepal. Indeed, the undertaking is largely confined to a select group of people within the donor-government nexus. As Nepal passes through a murky political transition, knowledge generation on public policy should necessarily be broad and plural. Not only does policy research require broad participation, it also requires multi-disciplinary understanding of an issue of public interest, and a capacity to rally public opinion and support around policy alternatives. However, the task of public policy research in Nepal is primarily confined to a select number of donor agencies and their consultants. Thus it remains beyond the reach of researchers and more so of ‘ordinary people’, who find a hard time engaging on research issues to make meaningful linkage with public policy. This context poses a challenge to nurturing a policy-conscious community in the country, which would be essential for any future capacity for the country-led policy development, articulation and contestation.

In this context, Alliance for Social Dialogue (ASD) and Nepal Policy Research Network (NPRN) have joined hands to host Nepal Public Policy Workshop on the theme, “Nurturing public policy research capacity in Nepal.” The workshop is expected to bring together Nepalese and outside experts, policy makers, academics, and experienced as well as young policy researchers to deliberate on a range of themes to advance domestic policy research capacity in Nepal.

Rationale

As Nepal passes through a prolonged political stalemate, with the constitutional order in crisis, it faces a lack of assertion of national will in regard to vital policy issues that have immediate as well as long-term implications for the lives of ordinary citizens. As the crisis of legitimacy deepens on the part of the state institutions, it becomes more and more urgent on the part of responsible citizenry to engage in efforts that safeguard public interest. Furthermore, the existing modus operandi of policy-making—involving very limited domestic consultation and engagement—is more than likely to lead to the development and enforcement of policies without enough scrutiny. More generally, it is desirable that national institutions develop the capacity and repertoire of knowledge on policy issues and alternatives. This is possible with nurturing of a community of committed individuals and organizations, who could deliberate and contest on policy issues and offer credible alternatives. This conference is expected to serve as a stepping stone for developing a “community of practice” on public policy in order to eventually enhance domestic capacity to problematize existing policies, develop alternative proposals, and democratize the act of policy making itself.

This conference therefore provides a platform for dialogue between mid-career researchers and experienced researchers as well as international experts on critical themes around public policy research. A particular focus of the conference will be on specifics of policy making in contexts of constitutional disarray and political uncertainty.

Objectives

The overarching objective of this workshop is to bring together experienced and mid-career public policy researchers to deliberate on key public policy issues in Nepal, and methods of conducting policy research, communication and advocacy. It will also provide an opportunity to share the completed and ongoing policy work and solicit critical feedback and comments.

Themes

The following themes will be discussed in this workshop:

- Research on Specific Public Policy Issues
- Policy research methods and tools for engagement and communication
- Policy advocacy strategies and methods

Methodology

The workshop will be conducted in three tracks:

- a. Paper presentation and discussions of completed policy research
- b. Presentation and discussions of ongoing research
- c. Presentation and discussions on policy research methods and tools on policy engagement, communication and advocacy with international and in-country experience

Each of the presentations will be followed by in-depth discussions, feedback and comments from other participants.

Timing and Schedule

Date: October 3-4, 2012

Venue: Park Village Resort, Budhanilkantha

The workshop will be residential. For logistic arrangement, please contact the organizers (information provided below)

A copy of the final schedule will be emailed to the participants before the workshop

Outcome

The organizers seek to produce a special issue of “New Angle: Nepal Journal of Social Science and Public Policy” out of good quality papers presented in the workshop. We also encourage the participants to seek other publication outlets, and engagement strategies through follow-up plans.

For further information, please contact:

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