

Himalaya, Climate Change and Development

A Seminar Series

Support by the British Academy International Partnership and Mobility Award

2013-2015

The seminar series is intended to bring together a committed group of scholars to intellectually engage with the challenges presented by climate change as it interfaces with contentious politics and development. The political transition in Nepal coincides with evidence that the Himalayas will suffer some of the most significant impacts from climate change, raising fears about Nepal's long-term ability to adapt to such rapid political and environmental changes. In addition, the Himalayas are portrayed as the 'water towers' of Asia, with glacial melt water feeding all the major river systems of Asia. As such, Nepal's adaptive capacity (or lack thereof) is rapidly becoming a major focus both nationally and internationally when climate change issues arise.

The seminar series therefore seeks to build a trans-national learning platform to tackle the question: how can we understand and improve the relationships between resource governance, adaptive capacity and political transition in Nepal? And how can we reframe current approaches to research, policy and practice for better results? Our focus is on exploring ways to achieve inclusive, equitable and resilient approach to tackling the intertwined challenges of climate vulnerability and political instability.

The seminars are intended to provide a forum for learning and reflection on key topics related to the overall theme. They capitalise upon the presence of visiting scholars in Kathmandu together with leading Nepali intellectuals interested in these topics. This seminar series is primarily meant for young and emerging researchers, civil society activists and academics, who are keen to take interdisciplinary and reflective approach to research, policy analysis and activism. Participation is open to all post-graduate scholars (MSc and above, or equivalent experience) but applications are required.

In Collaboration with:



University of Edinburgh Centre for South
Asian Studies



ForestAction Nepal



Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies
(SIAS)



Women Leading for Change in Natural
Resource Management



Wind Power Nepal

Seminars will be held approximately every two months over a 24 month time frame. Participants are expected to attend all the seminars, do the prescribed reading in advance, and arrive prepared for active engagement.

This seminar is part of British Academy supported initiative, the key aims of which are to enhance capacity in the partners on political transition and environmental change research, to understand the role of research in conflict resolution, and to train a new generation of Nepali and UK scholars equipped with research expertise for tackling complex social-environmental issues.

Presenters will be from various backgrounds with multidisciplinary professionals and currently engaging in extensive research, policy advisory and academic activities. Participants are encouraged to write an essay and give a presentation at the end of the series. Those who are keen to advance the research will have the opportunity of having their writings considered for a publication (an edited volume or a Journal special Issue).

Participation is free and no compensation will be provided to speakers or participants.

Tenth Seminar Details

Topic: “Doing’ climate change projects in Nepal: aid regimes, project design and implementation practices at the district level”

Date: Sunday, Aug 23 2015 (2:00-4:00 PM)

Venue: Union House, Anamnagar, Kathmandu

By: Dil Khatri

Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden

PROFILE



Dil Khatri is a researcher associated with ForestAction Nepal and Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS) where he is involved in different researches on climate change and local institutions, options of ecosystem governance and process and politics around climate change related projects. His specific research interest lies on governance of natural resources, process and politics of public policy, climate change and aid governance. He engages with concept of resource politics, power and bureaucracy for framing the inquiry. He has published widely in these fields that include about half dozen of peer reviewed journal articles, book chapters, policy briefs and research reports. In addition, he delivered about a dozen conference papers. Earlier, he had worked with Swiss Agency for Development and Corporation for more than six years. Mr Khatri is currently pursuing PhD from Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Uppsala, Sweden with research project on examining politics and process of climate change related projects in Nepal.

This presentation draws from an ongoing research project ‘Climate Change and Rural Institutions’ funded by DANIDA through the Danish Institute of International Studies.

'Doing' climate change projects in Nepal: aid regimes, project design and implementation practices at the district level

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how the climate change projects are designed and implemented in Nepal and the extent to which the projects engage with local context and organizations. Paper draws from a comparative analysis of three different climate change projects in adaptation and disaster risk reduction in three districts in Nepal (Dolakha, Rupandehi and Lamjung). Analysis, drawing from project documentation, interviews and field level observations, focuses on the design processes of these projects, the mechanisms of implementation including the partnerships established, the activities undertaken and the claims made about impact and relevance.

The projects differ in terms of design and implementation modalities. The projects designed by the donors and international agencies are implemented through parallel structures at the district level and use local NGOs, and government agencies in an instrumental way to deliver project activities. Whereas the project designed with national and local government give more opportunity to local parties to influence implementation processes and practices. However, irrespective of the design process, the three cases clearly demonstrate that the projects' framing of climate change problem and interventions are primarily driven from donor or implementing agencies (influenced by their historical mandate). The development of local adaptation or disaster risk management plans, which forms a key interventions, are primarily driven from the technocratic process and externally driven template and standards with limited account of local climate related risks and institutional capacity. Moreover, the community organizations are mobilized in more instrumental ways in this planning process to fulfill the project achievements. This leaves a space for doubt that if the externally driven technocratic and bureaucratic process of planning fulfills the purpose of adaptation or disaster risk reduction needs at local level.

It is concluded that climate change projects responding to the frameworks and interests of donor and international agencies and driven from technocratic and bureaucratic process provide limited space for reflection of national and local interests and provide limited opportunity address the local issue of climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction.