Intersecting Realities: Social Inclusion, Youth Entrepreneurship, and Geopolitics in Nepal

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The policy brief is the result of research conducted by MPhil students from the department, undertaken as part of the requirements for their Master of Philosophy degree. Each student contributed an article based on their individual research work.

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Policy brief#2@CDPA

Introduction

Intersecting Realities: Social Inclusion, Youth Entrepreneurship, and Geopolitics in Nepal is academically exercised research work that synthesizes the findings of multiple MPhil scholars from Central Department of Public Administration, Tribhuvan University,

Figure 1Questionnaire workshop on 2082.03.07

offering a multidimensional exploration of Nepal's evolving socio-political landscape. Eventhough there are seven articles in the book published by the Central Department of Public Administration based on the Mphil scholars researches, the policy brief is structured around three interrelated themes—social inclusion, youth entrepreneurship, and geopolitics—each examined through rigorous qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The overarching aim is to bridge academic research with policy discourse, thereby contributing to evidence-based governance and inclusive development in Nepal.

Methodology

The policy brief writing process was structured into four key phases: proposal defense, research dissemination, viva-voce presentation, and article writing with peer review. Each student began by defending their research proposal, which outlined the thematic focus and objectives of their policy brief. Topics ranged from social inclusion and entrepreneurial environments within the Nepalese civil service to geopolitical assessments of Nepal's foreign policy. Following the proposal defense, students engaged in a peer-learning activity titled "Learn from your colleagues", where they disseminated their research findings. This phase fostered collaborative learning and constructive feedback. The third phase involved a viva-voce examination, where students formally presented and defended their completed policy briefs before a panel. Subsequently, students were tasked with writing academic articles based on their research. These articles underwent a peer-review process conducted by subject matter experts, followed by professional copy editing to ensure clarity and quality. All these activities were systematically scheduled across various dates in the Nepali calendar year 2081, ensuring a coherent progression from conceptualization to final evaluation. This structured methodology

enabled students to refine their research, engage in scholarly discourse, and produce policy briefs and articles grounded in evidence and relevance. Finally, CDPA produced a book "Intersecting Realities: Social Inclusion, Youth Entrepreneurship, and Geopolitics in Nepal". On the basis of this book, CDPA produced the second policy brief.

The introductory chapter, authored by Narendra Raj Paudel & Shree Krishna Kharel, set the stage by contextualizing Nepal's administrative and demographic realities. It highlights the country's transition to federalism, the decentralization of governance, and the challenges of implementing inclusive policies across diverse regions and communities. The demographic analysis reveals a youthful population with a growing literacy rate, yet persistent disparities in education quality and access. The federal

Figure 2 Book is published by CDPA

structure, while promising in theory, faces practical hurdles such as coordination gaps, limited fiscal autonomy, and elite capture at the local level. Tools like the Local Institutional Self-Assessment (LISA) have been introduced to monitor local governance performance, but results indicate that most municipalities remain in the basic or medium categories, underscoring the need for capacity-building and institutional reform.
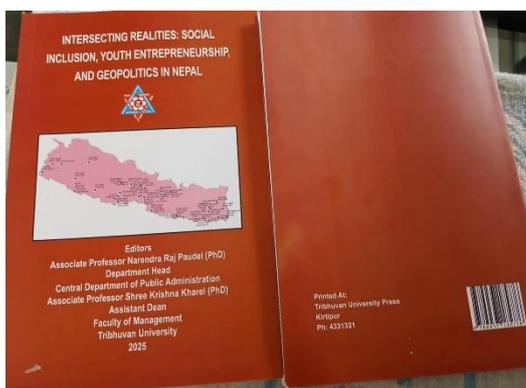
Social Inclusion

Figure 3 Mr. Makar Bahadur Tamang is attending viva voce on2081.09.08

In the realm of social inclusion, the research by Makar Bahadur Tamang and Basanta Bohora delves into the effectiveness of reservation policies in the civil service. Tamang's study focuses on the Tamang community, revealing that while numerical representation has improved, substantive empowerment remains elusive. Historical legacies such as the Muluki Ain of 1854 continue to shape exclusionary practices, and symbolic inclusion often fails to translate into decision-making power.

Bohora's analysis complements this by examining broader trends among marginalized groups, including Dalits, Madhesis, and persons with disabilities. His findings point to elite capture within beneficiary groups, uneven geographical representation, and systemic barriers linked to parental education and socio-economic status. Both studies advocate for reforms such as a one-

Figure 4 Mr. Basant Bohora is presenting his research before his colleagues at LFYCR on 2081.04.05

person, one-time reservation rule, quota redistribution based on need, and robust monitoring mechanisms to ensure equitable access and influence.

Figure 5 Prof. Dr. Lasan Kabir, Dhaka University at Learn From Your Colleague' Research on2081.04.05

Surendra Bajracharya's research on Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) adds a critical dimension to the inclusion discourse by highlighting the social status and lived experiences of individuals with developmental disabilities. Through interviews with parents, educators, and health professionals, the study uncovers pervasive stigma, cultural misconceptions, and institutional neglect. Families often face

Figure 5 Mr. Surendra Bajracharya is attending viva-voce meeting on 2081.03.10

isolation, and access to inclusive education and healthcare remains limited. Bajracharya calls for culturally sensitive public awareness campaigns, policy reforms, and community-based support systems to foster genuine

Figure 7 Surendra Bajracharya is disseminating his research at LFYCR on2081.03.01

inclusion and dignity for individuals with ASD.

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Youth Entrepreneurship

Figure 8 *Mr. Suvash Khanal is disseminating his findings at LFYCR on 2081.01.15*

Youth entrepreneurship, as explored by Suvash Khanal, emerges as both a challenge and an opportunity in Nepal's development trajectory. His mixed-methods study reveals moderate entrepreneurial intent among final-year university students, shaped by factors such as leadership, autonomy, mentor influence, and perceived social support. However, systemic constraints—including poor infrastructure, limited access to finance, and high corruption levels—dampen entrepreneurial drive. Khanal's regression analysis identifies mentor guidance and social support as the strongest predictors of entrepreneurial intent, while risk aversion negatively correlates with it. He recommends integrating

Figure 9 *Mr. Dhadhiram Bhandari is attending Viva-voce meeting on 2081.03.24*

entrepreneurship education into curricula, expanding mentorship networks, simplifying regulatory frameworks, and improving financial access to cultivate a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Geopolitics

The geopolitical chapters by Dadhiram Bhandari and Gyan Bahadur Magar provide a nuanced analysis of Nepal's foreign policy

Figure 10 *Mr. Dhadhiram Bhandari is disseminating his findings at LFYCR on 2081.03.22*

amid intensifying global rivalries. Bhandari's study tracks Nepal's engagement with China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) from 2014 to 2024, using Long's Analytical Scorecard to assess policy divergence, issue salience, and preference cohesion. The research shows that Nepal's

BRI involvement peaked between 2017 and 2019, marked by high-level diplomatic activity and shared strategic goals. However, post-2020, engagement declined due to COVID-19

disruptions, ambiguous financing terms, and growing Sino-Indian and Sino-US tensions. Bhandari argues that Nepal must establish a dedicated BRI coordination office, enhance negotiation capacity, and pursue bipartisan consensus to optimize its strategic participation.

Figure 11 Mr. Gyan Bahadur Magar is presenting his research at viva-voce meeting on 2081.08.13

Magar's chapter examines the relevance of Nepal's non-aligned foreign policy in the context of US-China rivalry. Drawing on qualitative content analysis and expert interviews, the study concludes that while the rivalry resembles Cold War dynamics, it lacks the ideological and military components of the original Cold War. Nepal's non-alignment remains vital for safeguarding sovereignty and maintaining diplomatic flexibility. The research highlights Nepal's strategic balancing act, engaging with both BRI and the US-sponsored Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) while avoiding rigid alignment. Magar recommends continued adherence to non-alignment, strategic hedging, and multilateral diplomacy to navigate superpower competition and protect national interests.

Figure 12 Mr. Gyan Bahadur Magar is disseminating his research before his colleague at LFYCR program on 2081.08.01

Cross-cutting recommendations from the document emphasize the need for performance-based governance tools, inclusive education for children with disabilities, and legal reforms to strengthen civil society governance. The integration of inclusive governance, youth empowerment, and strategic diplomacy is presented as essential for Nepal's equitable growth and national resilience. The scholars advocate for evidence-based policymaking, intersectoral collaboration, and adaptive leadership to address complex development challenges.

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In conclusion, "Intersecting Realities" offers a rich, interdisciplinary analysis of Nepal's socio-political landscape, grounded in empirical research and policy relevance. It underscores the importance of inclusive governance, youth entrepreneurship, and strategic diplomacy in shaping Nepal's future. The document serves as a valuable resource for policymakers, academics, and development practitioners seeking to understand and address the intersecting realities of Nepal's development journey.