

Addressing Risks and Vulnerabilities in South Asia and Path to Economic Resilience



20th South Asian Economics Students Meet (SAESM)

November 15-20, 2025

Kathmandu | Nepal

Collaborators



Central Department of
Economics
Tribhuvan University



Nepal Economic
Association



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1 SAESM-2025

South Asian Economics Students Meet (SAESM) is a regional annual meet of the South Asian undergraduate students in economics. The event provides an opportunity for the undergraduate students to develop academic papers on various issues of regional importance, to present the papers and to learn from each other, while promoting knowledge on development and cooperation in the region. The annual meeting normally comprises of a conference, a quiz contest and a budding economist competition. Following the event, the tradition has been to provide a retreat to the delegates by way of visiting the sites of cultural and natural importance. SAESM Nepal is pleased to host the 20th edition of the South Asian Economics Students Meet -2025 (SAESM-2025) in Kathmandu Nepal with the major theme **“Addressing Risks and Vulnerabilities in South Asia and Path to Economic Resilience”**. This year’s event will be hosted by Nepal Economic Association in collaboration with the Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University and with the support from the World Bank.

South Asian economies face growing exposure to a range of covariate shocks such as natural disasters, rising temperatures, and ecosystem stress, which are severely undermining economic stability and development prospects. Despite their limited contribution to global emissions, countries in the region rank among the most vulnerable globally to environmental disruptions and stresses. The melting of Himalayan glaciers threatens freshwater supply for over a billion people, while rising sea levels endanger densely populated coastal areas. Agricultural productivity—critical to both employment and food security—is increasingly disrupted by erratic rainfall, droughts, and heatwaves, putting the livelihoods of over 60% of the region’s workforce at risk.

The region’s adaptive capacity is constrained by economic limitations, weak infrastructure, and governance challenges, making it more susceptible to both covariate and idiosyncratic shocks. Without urgent action, projections by the World Bank suggest over 62 million people in South Asia could fall into poverty by 2030. To build economic resilience, countries must prioritize investments in adaptive infrastructure, strengthen institutions, and implement risk-reduction strategies. Accordingly, there is a pressing need to enhance preparedness and resilience to natural hazards, ensuring that vulnerable communities are better protected from recurring environmental and economic shocks.

South Asian Economics Students’ Meet-2025 (SAESM-2025) aims to bring together young economic scholars from across the South Asian region to engage in meaningful dialogue on some of the most pressing issues of our time — natural shocks, sustainability, and regional economic resilience. As the region faces growing climate-related threats, SAESM-2025 provides a timely platform for students, academics, and policymakers to collaboratively explore sustainable solutions that balance development goals with environmental stewardship.

A total of 80 undergraduate economics students will be selected to participate in this prestigious event. They will present research papers, engage in policy dialogues, and compete in the Budding Economist Competition — a flagship feature of SAESM that nurtures analytical thinking and policy acumen among emerging economists. In addition to

undergraduate students, this event will also bring about 200 delegates — including university students, professors, researchers, policymakers, and development practitioners — during the five-day event hosted in Kathmandu, Nepal.

2 Call for Applications

Applications are now open for the following categories:

- i) Full Paper Submissions
- ii) Budding Economist Competition
- iii) Quizonomics (Economics Quiz Competition)
- iv) Policy (Panel) Discussion

A total of 10 students will be selected from each participating country, in accordance with the eligibility requirements, selection criteria, and process outlined in Section 3 of the call.

2.1 Papers

Full papers under the following themes are invited for submission. The scope and research questions within each theme are indicative- students may write papers with the relevant research questions while ensuring that they fit under the following sub-themes. The length and format of the paper, including the in-text citation and referencing, are provided in Annex 1.

2.1.1 *Environmental Risks, Vulnerability, and Macroeconomic Stability in South Asia*

Impact of temperature and precipitation variability on GDP, natural disasters such as floods, droughts, landslides and their effects on growth volatility, long-term macroeconomic projections under environmental stress, sectoral exposure to environmental risks, role of macroeconomic buffers in managing shocks.

2.1.2 *Covariate and Idiosyncratic Shocks: Implications for Poverty and Welfare:*

Poverty dynamics under covariate (disasters) and idiosyncratic (health, income) shocks, multidimensional deprivation and welfare loss, vulnerability to poverty and risk of downward mobility, role of remittances and household coping strategies.

2.1.3 *Economic Shocks, Trade Disruption, and Investment Risks:*

Exposure of trade flows to global and regional shocks, impacts on foreign direct investment inflows, domestic investment patterns under uncertainty, global value chain vulnerabilities and economic resilience, role of trade diversification and policy buffers.

2.1.4 *Energy Transition for Green and Resilient Economies*

Barriers to renewable energy adoption by households and industries, greening household energy, manufacturing, and transportation sectors, role of energy efficiency technologies, institutional and policy incentives for clean energy transition, energy security and affordability during transition.

2.1.5 Environmental Degradation and Natural Resource Governance:

Economic costs of air, water, and soil pollution, management challenges of common property resources under stress, institutional governance of natural resources, resource depletion and implications for livelihoods, interlinkages between ecosystem degradation and economic losses.

2.1.6 Urbanization and Infrastructure Resilience

Impact of flooding, heatwaves, and waste management crises on urban areas, vulnerabilities of housing, transport, and utilities infrastructure, risk-sensitive urban planning and design, financing and governance of resilient infrastructure, vulnerabilities of informal settlements to disasters.

2.1.7 Health Risks and Vulnerabilities under Environmental Stress

Health outcomes linked to rising temperatures and pollution, disease patterns following floods, droughts, and poor sanitation, health system resilience and adaptive capacity, public health policies addressing environmental risks, access and affordability of healthcare during shocks.

2.1.8 Education Disruption and Behavioral Adaptation to Risk

Education loss caused by disasters and displacement, school dropout risks linked to shocks, integration of risk education and environmental literacy into curricula, role of digital tools in maintaining educational continuity, fostering adaptive behaviors through education.

2.1.9 Financing Mechanism and Building Economic Resilience:

Availability and access to green finance, effectiveness of international and domestic funding channels, barriers to climate finance in South Asia, role of private sector and blended finance models, institutional readiness and policy frameworks for effective fund utilization.

2.1.10 Fiscal and Monetary Policies for Resilient and Green Economies

Green fiscal tools including carbon taxes and green subsidies, role of central banks in green finance and regulation, integrating environmental risks into fiscal frameworks, foreign aid and concessional finance for green growth, budgetary strategies to enhance shock preparedness.

2.2 Budding Economist Competition

Four participants from each country (out of a total of ten) will be participating in DKD budding Economist Competition.

The students have to go through a series of selection processes that include writing an opinion essay, sitting for a written examination comprising core courses in undergraduate economics, attending visual and interview rounds. The budding economist competition includes following activities

2.2.1 *Submission of an opinion Essay*

Students willing to compete for budding economist category shall submit an opinion essay on "**Pollution as Public Bad in South Asia: Need for coordinated Actions**". This will be an opinion or perspective essay. No subheadings are recommended. This will carry 5 % weight in the evaluation. The length of the paper (main body) should not exceed 2 pages.

2.2.2 *Written Exams*

Budding participants will have to sit for two written exams. The first paper will consist of Mathematical Methods, Statistical Methods, and Basic Econometrics. The second paper will consist of: Microeconomics, Macroeconomics and South Asian Development Issues. The details of the course will be shared later. This will carry 50% weight in evaluation.

2.2.3 *Visual Round*

The top ten students evaluated from the opinion essay and written exams (aggregate) will proceed for this round. This will carry 20 % of the total marks.

2.2.4 *Interview Round*

The top five students from the essay, written exams, and visual round will proceed to this round. This will carry 25 % of the total marks. The student with the top overall score will be declared as the Budding Economist 2020 of the region.

2.3 **Policy Discussions**

Two students from each country will participate in panel discussions. The topics for the panel discussion will be announced later. However, the overall theme will be related to Risks and Vulnerabilities.

2.4 **Quizonomics (Economics Quiz Competition)**

A group of SIX teams, each comprising four members from four different nations, will participate in the quiz event. Each country will nominate four students to participate in the event. The content details for the quiz will be announced later.

2.5 **Award and Honor**

- Sen-Haq Award for the best of the best paper
- Best paper Award in each theme
- Deb Kusum Das Budding Economist of South Asia- 2025
- Best Quiz team
- Best Policy Discussant

3 Participation, Eligibility and Selection Criterion

3.1 Country-wise participation

Table 1 presents the country-wise representation for SAESM. Each country team will consist of ten students and two faculty members. Every selected student must choose one of the themes listed in Section 2, ensuring that all ten themes are covered, one by each student. Accordingly, paper submission is mandatory for all participating students.

Of the ten students in each team:

- Four will take part in the Budding Economist Competition,
- Four will participate in the Quiz Competition, and
- The remaining two will engage in the Policy Discussion.

Table1: Participation Details

Country	#Total Students participating in core events	Paper Presentation	Budding	Quiz	Policy Discussion	Faculties	Total
Bangladesh	10	10	4	4	2	2	12
Bhutan	10	10	4	4	2	2	12
India	10	10	4	4	2	2	12
Pakistan	10	10	4	4	2	2	12
Sri Lanka	10	10	4	4	2	2	12
Nepal*	10	10	4	4	2	2	12

3.2 Eligibility

The student must be studying at an undergraduate level, pursuing a core course in Economics at the time of application. Students must have citizenship and residence in one of the SA countries and shall be studying at a university or college in the same country. The age of the students should not exceed 25 years at the time of application. The other eligibility criteria will be as per the guidelines issued by the respective country coordinator.

3.3 Deadlines

The milestone dates are:

Submission Requirements	Deadline
List of Participants (including Faculties) with Passport	September 01, 2025
Details of Participants (as per prescribed form) and abstract of the paper	September 15, 2025
Submission of Full Papers and Essays	October 01, 2025
Submission of Names for Quiz /Budding/Policy Discussion	October 15, 2025
Submission of Presentations	November 10, 2025

3.4 Selection Process

Country coordinators will facilitate the selection of the students from their respective countries. The country coordinators may develop their own guidelines and procedures for the application and selection of the students. They will communicate with the organizer about the final selection. **The application sent directly to the organizer will not be entertained.** The number of students to be selected from each country and the contact details of the country coordinators are provided below.

4 Organization of SAESM-2025

4.1 SAESM Architect

SAESM runs as a regional network. A team of dedicated faculty members representing various academic institutes in South Asia facilitates the organization of SAESM. SAESM's governing council is an apex advisory body that provides vision, guidelines, and framework for the smooth functioning of SAESM. The organizing committee works towards the successful organization of the event, while the scientific committee ensures the academic merits of the conference.

Coordinating Insitutions	Governing Council
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bangladesh: South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM)• Bhutan: Royal University of Bhutan, Sherubtse College• India: SAESM India (Association of South Asian Scholars)• Nepal: Tribhuvan University, Central Department of Economics• Pakistan: Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan• Sri Lanka: University of Colombo, Department of Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prof. Dr. Bishwambher Pyakuryal (President- Nepal Economic Association)– Chairperson (Nepal)• Prof. Dr. Mihir Pandey, Member (Chair- Association of the South Asian Scholars, India)• Prof. Dr. Selim Raihan , Member (Department of Economics, Dhaka University- Bangladesh & Executive Director, SANEM)• Prof. Dr. Sirimal Abayratne, Member (Executive Director-Center for Poverty Analysis, Sri Lanka)• Prof. Dr. Syed Turab Hussain- Member (Department of Economics, Lahore University of Management Sciences- Pakistan)

4.2 Glory of SAESM: 2004 to 2024

Year	Venue	Theme	Main Partner
2004	New Delhi	Economic Developments in South Asia: Which Way Ahead	National Foundation of India
2005	Lahore	Issues for South Asian Development	Syed Babar Ali Foundation
2006	Dhaka	Sharing Ideas for a Better Understanding of South Asian Development	Prime Bank
2007	Colombo	Economic Development and Regional Cooperation in South Asia	The World Bank
2008	New Delhi	Economic Challenges to Make South Asia Free from Poverty and Deprivation	The World Bank
2009	Dhaka	Young Economist's for an Integrated South Asia	National Bank
2010	Colombo	Economic Freedom and Poverty Reduction in South Asia	Friedrich Naumann Stiftung
2011	New Delhi	Development Alternatives in South Asia	Institute for Financial Management and Research
2012	Kathmandu	Towards a Green South Asia	The World Bank
2013	Lahore	The Political Economy of South Asia	The World Bank
2014	Thimphu	South Asian Integration: Prospects and Challenges	The World Bank
2016	Colombo	South Asia in the Asian Century	The World Bank
2017	Kathmandu	One South Asia	The World Bank
2018	Chittagong	Sustaining South Asian Integration	The World Bank
2019	Colombo	Development in South Asia: Challenges and Opportunities	The World Bank
2020	Kathmandu	Towards prosperous South Asia	The World Bank, UNDP-Nepal
2022	Lahore	Equitable, Inclusive and Sustainable South Asian Cities	LUMS/World Bank
2023	Kathmandu	Towards a Resilient South Asia	The World Bank
2024	Colombo	Building Resilient Economies: South Asia's Green Transition to a Sustainable Tomorrow	The World Bank/ UNDP Sri Lanka

4.3 Country Coordinators

Country	No. of Students	Country Coordinators/ Contact
Bangladesh	10	Mahtab Uddin (mahtab.ud@gmail.com), Research Director of SANEM and Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka Shafa Tasneem (shafa.tasneem211@gmail.com) Research Associate, SANEM
Bhutan	10	Mr. Ugyen Lhendup (lhendup@sherubtse.edu.bt), Assistant Professor Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan
India	10	<i>Dr. Rupali Sharma</i> (rupalisharma23@gmail.com), Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, SGTB Khalsa College University of Delhi <i>Dr. Apoorva Gupta</i> (apoorva.gupta4@gmail.com), Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Hansraj College, University of Delhi
Pakistan	10	<i>Dr. Syed Ali Hasanain</i> (hasanain@lums.edu.pk), Associate Professor Department of Economics, Lahore University of Management Sciences, Pakistan <i>Zunia Tirmazee</i> (zuniatirmazee@gmail.com), Assistant Professor, Lahore school of Economics
Sri Lanka	10	<i>Kanishka Werawella</i> (kanishka@econ.cmb.ac.lk), Lecturer Department of Economics, University of Colombo
Nepal (Host Country)	10	Dr. Nirmal Kumar Raut (nirmal.raut@cdec.tu.edu.np), Associate Professor, Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University Mr. Khagendra Katuwal (khagendra.katuwal@cdec.tu.edu.np) Assistant Professor, Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University

4.4 Organizing Committee

SAESM Nepal team will take the lead on the organization of the event. The Nepal Economic Association and The Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University will play advisory role and provide overall supervision and guidance for the smooth conduct of the proposed meet.

- Naveen Adhikari, Executive Member, Nepal Economic Association & Assistant Professor (Conference Convener)
- Khagendra Katuwal, Assistant Professor, Central Department of Economics, TU
- Executive Member, Nepal Economic Association

4.5 Scientific Committee

- Dr. Nirmal K. Raut, Associate Professor, Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University (Coordinator)
- Dr. Gopal P. Tiwari, General Secretary, Nepal Economic Association
- Mahtab Uddin, Research Director of SANEM and Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, University of Dhaka
- Shafa Tasneem , Research Associate, South Asian Network on Economic Modelling (SANEM), Dhaka
- Mr. Ugyen Lhendup, Assistant Professor, Royal Thimpu College, Royal University of Bhutan
- Dr. Rupali Sharma, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, SGTB Khalsa College, University of Delhi
- Dr. Apoorva Gupta, Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Hansraj College, University of Delhi
- Dr. Syed Ali Hasanain, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Lahore University of Management Sciences
- Zunia Tirmazee, Assistant Professor, Lahore school of Economics
- Kanishka Werawella, Lecturer, Department of Economics, University of Colombo
- Dr. Zoe Leiyu Xie, Senior Economist, Office of Chief Economist, South Asia Region, The World Bank

5 Program schedule and Logistics

5.1 Program Schedule

Day	Major events																				
Nov 15, 2025	Arrival of international delegates Welcome Dinner (19.00 PM Onwards)																				
Nov 16	Inaugural Session (9.00-11.00) Plenary Presentation by The World Bank: From Risk to Resilience (11.00-12.30) Lunch (12.30-13.30) Panel Discussion: One South Asia (13.30-15.00) South Asia Economics Quiz Contest & Budding Written Examination (15.00-17.00)																				
Nov 17	Paper Presentations (Parallel Session) 10.30-13.00 <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Theme 1</th> <th>Theme 2</th> <th>Theme 3</th> <th>Theme 4</th> <th>Theme 5</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6 Papers</td> <td>6 Papers</td> <td>6 Papers</td> <td>6 Papers</td> <td>6 Papers</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Lunch (13.00-14.00) Paper Presentation (14.00-16.30) <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Theme 6</th> <th>Theme 7</th> <th>Theme 8</th> <th>Theme 9</th> <th>Theme 10</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>6 Papers</td> <td>6 Papers</td> <td>6 Papers</td> <td>6 Papers</td> <td>6 Papers</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Policy Discussion (17.00-18.00) Dinner: 20 onwards	Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5	6 Papers	Theme 6	Theme 7	Theme 8	Theme 9	Theme 10	6 Papers								
Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4	Theme 5																	
6 Papers	6 Papers	6 Papers	6 Papers	6 Papers																	
Theme 6	Theme 7	Theme 8	Theme 9	Theme 10																	
6 Papers	6 Papers	6 Papers	6 Papers	6 Papers																	
Nov 18	Plenary Presentation: Risk and Vulnerabilities in South Asia (10.30-11.30) Budding Visual (11.30-13.00) <i>Lunch (13.00-14.00)</i> Policy Discussion (14.00-15.00) Budding Final (15.30-17.00) Dinner (20.00 onwards)																				
Nov 19	Retreat /Farewell Speech/ Valediction/Farewell Dinner																				
November 20/21	Retreat/Departure																				

5.2 Financial Support and Logistics

The organizer will seek collaboration with different organizations to provide accommodation and partial airfare to the core participants of the meeting. The participants will be provided with accommodation on a shared basis and the major

meals during the conference. A partial coverage of air fare in most economic routes to the selected participants and faculty. It is expected that the respective country team will be able to partially cover the cost of their air travel. A conference booklet and stationery will be provided during the conference.

5.3 Retreat

A self-financed retreat will be organized during the meeting. It will be held at a hill station in the Kathmandu Valley, with the exact venue to be announced later. The retreat fee is USD 200, applicable to all core participants and anyone else who wishes to join the retreat.

6 Contact

Naveen Adhikari

Conference Convener

Assistant Professor, Central Department of Economics, Tribhuvan University

Executive Member, Nepal Economic Association

naveen.adhikari@cdec.tu.edu.np/ saesm.nepal@gmail.com

Annex-1: Format of the Research Paper

1. Structure of the Paper

The paper should follow a standard academic format commonly used for research articles or discussion papers. The length of the paper shall not exceed 6500 words (excluding preliminaries and annexures). It will include the following components:

A. Preliminaries

- **Front Page**
 - Title of the paper
 - Full name of the author
 - Representing institution
 - Date of submission
 - *All content should be center-aligned*
- **Abstract Page**
 - Abstract (Maximum 200 words)
 - Should summarize key aspects: background, research question, methodology, key findings, and policy relevance
 - Key words (maximum five) separated by semicolon(;)
 - JEL Classification
- **Table of Contents (next page)**
 - Clearly list major sections and sub-sections with corresponding page numbers

B. Main Body

This section should not exceed 6500 words and must include the following:

- a. **Background and Rationale**
 - i. Context of the research problem and its significance
- b. **Research Questions and Objectives**
 - i. Clearly stated research questions and corresponding objectives
- c. **Review of Literature**
 - i. Overview of existing research, theoretical perspectives, and knowledge gaps
- d. **Methodology**
 - i. Research Design
 - ii. Data Sources
 - iii. Theoretical Framework and Empirical Strategy
 - iv. Variables and measurement approach
- e. **Results and Discussion**
 - i. Presentation and interpretation of key findings

- ii. May include tables, graphs, or charts where relevant
- f. **Conclusion and Policy Implications**
 - i. Conclusion and their relevance to policy implications

C. Annexures

- References (see formatting guidelines below)
- Appendices (if needed)
- Supplementary materials such as extended tables, figures, or maps

Note: Authors may use sub-headings within each section as needed, but chapter-wise divisions are not recommended.

2. Technical Formatting Requirements

- **Margins:** 1 inch on all sides
- **Line Spacing:** 1.5
- **Font:** Times New Roman or Arial (consistent throughout the document)
- **Font Size:** 11

2. Referencing and Citation Style

- **In-text citation and referencing style:**
 - APA Style, 7th Edition
 - All sources cited in the text must be included in the reference list