UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC SECTOR GOVERNANCE
A course designed for PhD Fellows on ‘Locating Public Finance Dynamics in Nepal’
August 2016
Course Facilitator: Uma Pradhan

Objectives
This course aims to develop a critical understanding of the ways in which public sector governance works. It will question the rule-based rational model of state and bureaucracy, and instead approach public sector governance through an examination of intersection of actors, networks and interests.

Format
A total of 6 weekly-sessions will be held at Martin Chautari. Each session will be for 2 hours. The participants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the readings before the session. Each session will start with a 2-min informal presentation by each participant based on the assigned readings. We will then move on to discuss the themes and issues highlighted in the readings. The final 15 mins will be devoted for individual reflections on the activities listed at the end of each session.

SESSION 1: State and Bureaucracy (1 August 2016, Monday)
In the first session, we will interrogate the various ways of studying the state. Our discussion will range from understanding the ‘image’ of state as a strong and unified authority to the ‘practice’ of state as a diffused process of establishing authority. We will question the taken-for-granted idea of the state while not underestimating its authority in people’s lives and its importance as an analytical category.

- Caplan, Lionel. 1971. Cash and Kind: Two Media of ‘Bribery’ in Nepal. Man, Vol 6, No 2, pp 266-278. (This paper presents a historical account of cash and kind exchanges with the state official and the public in a relational context, where status differential between parties could play important role in the nature of transaction.)
- IDS. 2010. ‘Introduction and Chapter 1: A fresh look at governance’ in ‘An upside down view of governance, Centre for the Future State, IDS. pp 1-14. (encourages the researchers to look at the the structures, relationships, institutional spaces, interests and incentives that underpin the creation of formal institutions’)

Activity: Review your research proposal. 1. Identify ‘state’ in your research area. 2. Would you make any revisions on concept, method, or approach? Why?
SESSION 2: Implementing Public Services Delivery (5 August 2016, Friday)

In this session, we will investigate the everyday lives of the bureaucrat to understand the functioning of the public office. The readings for this session focus on analyzing various opportunities & constraints, authority & powerlessness, and coherence & paradoxes that challenge the delivery of public services.


- Aiyer, Y. 2016. Post Office Paradox: A Case Study of the Block Level Education Bureaucracy, Economic and Political Weekly, 51(11): 61-69. (investigates the everyday experiences and motivations of bureaucrats who see their role as ‘post offices’ – ferrying messages between different layers of education bureaucracy)

- Gupta, A. ‘Structural violence and the State’, pp 22 – 26 and ‘Chapter 6: Literacy, Bureaucratic Domination and Democracy’. In Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence, and Poverty in India. Duke University Press. (discusses how the very process of bureaucracy results in the arbitrary outcomes for the beneficiaries)


Activity: Identify government official/s, in your research area, who interact with the public directly. Who do they usually interact with? What kind of fiscal responsibilities do they have? What opportunities and constraints might they face?

SESSION 3: State – Non State Divide (8 August 2016, Monday)

The readings for this session analyse the connection between state institutions and non-state entities. In this session, we will seek to understand the ways in which state-non state relationship could influence the management of public service delivery.

- Evans, P. 1995. *Embedded Autonomy, States and Industrial Transformation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pp. 3-18 and pp. 47-50. (advances the concept of ‘embedded autonomy’ to explain the dense links of the state with the industrial capital in order to pursue developmental outcomes. This study draws on the example of Brazil, India and Korea.)

• Farah, I. and Rizvi, S. 2007. Public-private partnerships: Implications for primary schooling in Pakistan, in Social Policy and Administration. Vol 41 Issue 4. Pg 339 – 354. (This paper discusses the limitation of public private partnership in the context of unequal hierarchical structure between the partners)

• Prinsen, G. and Titeca, K. 2008. Uganda’s decentralized primary education: Musical chairs and inverted elite capture in school management committees. in Public Administration and Development. Vol 28 Issue 2, pp 149 – 164. (This paper describes the ways in which the balance of formal and informal rule determines the nature of ‘elite capture’ in the SMCs of Ugandan primary schools)

Activity: Are there any non-state actors who are present in your research area? Who are they? What are their roles? How will they influence the functioning of public office? Discuss the role of local level bodies based on the interview excerpts in Stephen Carney, Min Bista and Jytte Agergaard. 2007. ‘Empowering’ the ‘local’ through education? Exploring community-managed schooling in Nepal, Oxford Review of Education, 33:5, 611-628

SESSION 4: New Public Management (15 August 2016, Monday)

This session will evaluate the emerging trend of marketization, privatization, managerialism, performance measurement and accountability in education, also known as New Public Management.

• Tolofari, S. 2005. New Public Management and Education. Policy Futures in Education, Volume 3, Number 1, 2005. (This paper traces the origins, theories, and characteristics of NPM and analyses its implication for education)


• Ball, Stephen. 2000. Performativities and Fabrications in the Education. (This paper explores the ways in which the emphasis on data, audit, and regulations produce certain kind of ‘performativity’ in education.)

Activity: Reflections on Social Audit processes in school education.

SESSION 5: Accountability and Transparency (22 August 2016, Monday)

This session will critically evaluate the concept of accountability and transparency in public sector governance. We will continue to reflect on the idea of performativity, from the previous session, but also consider the ideas of trust and informal accountability in public sector governance.

• Kolstad, Ivar and Arne Wig. 2009. Is Transparency the Key to Reducing Corruption in Resource-Rich Countries? World Development. (It highlight the conditions under which transparency might have effect on corruption)

355-372. (This paper elaborates on the role played informal institutions of accountability, such as solidarity groups, even when formal institutions of accountability are weak.)

- Joshi, A. and Moore, M. 2004. Institutionalized co-production: unorthodox public service delivery in challenging environments, in Journal of Development Studies. Vol 40 Issue 4, pp 31 – 49. (This paper advances the idea of ‘institutionalized co-production’: the provision of public services through regular, long-term relationships between state agencies and organised groups of citizens, where both make substantial resource contributions. It draws on the case study of citizen committee in Pakistan and Ghana)


Activity: What kind of (formal and informal) accountability and transparency measures are there in your research area? What are the specific activities? Who is responsible to conduct them? What are the roles of other actors? Are the results publically displayed?

SESSION 6: Negotiating Everyday State (29 August 2016, Monday)

In this final session, we will approach the issue of public governance from the point of view of people who live in the conditions of illegality. The readings for this session reflect on the issue of corruption and the ways in which it is negotiation in everyday life.

- Anjaria, Jonathan S. 2011. ‘Ordinary States: Everyday Corruption and the Politics of Space in Mumbai.’ American Ethnologist 38 (1): 58–72. (This paper studies the ways in which ‘unlicensed’ hawkers interact, through corruption, with the low-level state functionaries in order to ensure their substantive rights to the city space)

- Das, Veena. 2015. Corruption and Possibility of Life. Contributions to Indian Sociology, 49 5: 335-343. (This paper how the morality shapes the discourses on corruption and yet it is ever-so-present in the very process of securing live for the poor)


Activity: Discuss the ‘Corruption Acceptance Study’ by Truex, Rory (2011). What does it tell us about corruption, state, and society?