



Institute of Social Sciences

Capacity Building for Effective Governance and Administration: Perspectives from South Asia

Call for Papers for a Mini-Symposium on Public Policy, Public and Non-Profit Administration

The main purpose of this mini symposium is to feature the perspectives of South Asia scholars and practitioners on capacity building to revitalize administration, civil society, and governance in that region. While work on capacity building has already gained traction in South Asia (see for example, Vaishnav & Khosla, 2016; Singh, 2020; Bali & Ramesh, 2020) additional insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with capacity building are necessary. This mini symposium will feature conceptual and empirical/applied work on capacity building in the public and nonprofit domains and how it relates to the continuity of democratic norms and sensibilities.

The symposium is sponsored by the South Asian Section for Public Administration, (USA), Bengal Institute of Political Studies, (Kolkata) and the Institute of Social Sciences, (New Delhi).

Almost a decade ago, Farazmand (2009) observed that “building administrative capacity is a new imperative of our time”. His essay alluded to *hyper-changes, hyper-complexities, and hyper-uncertainty* and called for the need to revitalize *traditional administrative capacities*. More than a decade later, with a pandemic raging across the world and political turmoil threatening many regions, his observations still hold true. The need to *retool* for effective public governance and administration is more essential now than ever before. Our current reality, though rife with threats and challenges, presents numerous opportunities to build capacity and thereby pave way for renewal, revitalization, and innovation.

The question of managerial capacity is also tied in with the broader systemic changes needed to sustain democratic institutions and their vibrancy. As Larry Diamond and

others such as Sumit Ganguly have pointed out, many countries of South Asia are an exception to the theory that low levels of economic development and high levels of social diversity are incompatible with democratic ways of being (Ganguly, Diamond & Plattner, 2007). We are witnessing several challenges to these assumptions as rule of law, media freedoms and the like are being threatened across the region, in many countries of South Asia.

As Ansell et al., (2021) observe, “capacity is typically an ensemble of ingredients—people, knowledge, infrastructure, resources, processes, and authority.” Public organizations, according to them, should be capable of at least four types of ensemble capacities: 1) response capacities 2) monitoring capacities 3) anticipation capacities and 4) learning capacities. Other capacities include strategic, institutional, political and policy capacity (Farazmand, 2009).

We invite reflections on how systems of institutions, civil society groups and nonprofits can be revitalized and reconstituted, given the new challenges. As several contemporary scholars of South Asia have pointed out, we are witnessing new ways of conceptualizing one’s self, public space, governance mechanisms and public policies (Giri, 2013; Roberts, 2010; Basu, 1989; Varshney, 2013). The call for renewing and refocusing one’s social contract and public policies are being made in the context of increased focus on the effects of globalization, impacts of local and national institutional arrangements and how the self and community are being reconceptualized.

Call for Papers

Symposium papers may address **CAPACITY BUILDING in the context of Institutional development, Innovation, Human resource management, Organizational learning, Strategic planning, Public finance and budgeting, Health services, Performance measurement, State capacity, Sustainable development, Transportation, Technology, Information, Communication, and Digital capacities.**

Please send in a 200-word proposal to saspa.aspa@gmail.com on or before 7th January 2022. The symposium will take place via zoom February 19th and the 20th from 9:00am-1:00pm IST which is February 18th and February 19th 9:30pm-1:30am US Central Standard Time

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