

A VISION DOCUMENT FOR THE OPERATION OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMS ON DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN NEPAL

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1.0 Context on Development and Human Resources

One of the main causes of poverty remained as an enormous challenge in the country is the inappropriate mobilization of human and natural resources. Appropriate human resource is essential for the mobilization of natural resources as well. In fact, a number of countries have achieved high human and economic development on the sole basis of human resources in spite of the deficiency in natural resources. Development is not possible unless human resources are mobilized. It is therefore, very essential to consider in advance the type of human resource to be developed for its full and appropriate mobilization. The quality of education in Nepal is criticized to be low, there is no good congruence between education and economic structure, whereas there is unemployment among educated youths on one side and the required capable human power is forced to fulfill from foreign sources on the other. Human powers are not produced as per need with interaction and co-operation of different stakeholders. Importantly, there is an acute lack of study and research oriented education and weak harmonization in the production of basic, medium and higher-level human power in accordance with pace of development.

Development plans envisages the need-based projection of different types of human resources and encourage private sector to develop ultra modern education and raise level of education and discourage tendency of going abroad for studies. The plans further, emphasis to make education time relevant as well as research-oriented, scientific, innovative, productive, and technology oriented and, educational institutes are envisaged to develop as a centre of excellence and to produce internationally competitive and quality human power. It is thus, imperative to go with a participatory development through dialogue and consensus among professionals, political bodies, educational institutions and local people to embrace a new era of human resource development. This allows the development professionals or even fresh university graduates to keep informed of reality and the local people to discover how they understand contemporary issues and can offer for overall development.

2.0 Need of Development Professionals

The GoN's efforts to development through community planning and resources mobilization demands the human resources in social sciences something different than what has been produced by the universities till date. They need to be a change agent by which the community, the civil societies and all the stakeholders at different levels need to be changed as per the need of the development philosophy. Current productions of the human resources from the universities seem to be more conventional who in general does not have capacity to cope with contemporary national and international issues on development without any additional training. They have on the other hand, very limited exposures to the development activities at the ground level although the universities and colleges advocates of having their studies more practical based. Therefore, there is an acute shortage of the development professionals who in prevailing situation can independently arrest the contemporary issues of development both in terms of planning /policy analysis and ground realities of the development activities, the target population and resources mobilization. Development agencies on the other hand prioritize to seek professionals who are more exposed together with their theoretical knowledge and can grasp the situation in a short period of time by which they need no extra investments to train them.

The Local Self Governance Act, 1999 envisage to provide responsibility to the local bodies for formulating, prioritization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of local level plans including resource mobilization through people's participation and involvement of NGOs and CSOs. The situation thus need to be created in such a way to establish links by the educational institutions also with the local bodies in order to ensure the benefits of both the stakeholders of human resources development program.

3.0 Development Studies to cope up with the Contemporary Market

Development studies (DevS) are about understanding the world development and change – the issues of social, political, economic and environmental. It encompasses two scholarly traditions. First, the emphasis is on theoretical understanding as an end in itself and, the second, more applied, focus on how governments, NGOs, international donors, and other development agents can facilitate such change. Apparently, it seeks to capacitate the student in interdisciplinary analysis of major development issues both in theory and practice since the program encompasses divergent concepts and approaches from global and comparative perspectives with focus on national level policy formulation, development processes and practices of contemporary issues and concerns. Gender, marginalized, janajatis and dalit issues are equally conceptualized and equity distributions are highly addressed.

Prevailing market on development sector of Nepal is such that the development professionals are envisaged to tailor and facilitate in meeting the CSO's responsibility on the strategies and the targets set for development by the government with current issues in the plans and MDGs. Thus, the professionals of the social sciences are required to customize to the needs of government, civil society and national and international development organizations in achieving the targets of poverty reduction. Development studies program is thus indispensable because (i) the country is in acute need of development professionals having sufficient theoretical knowledge and exposures of applied work (ii) the national development concern is on local self-governance program to strengthen local bodies – the DDC and VDCs - in terms of local development planning and implementation through community decision making processes. This is one of major targets of the development studies program to train a development professionals who could really face and overcome such challenges and (iii) the development dimensions over the years have changed to need based participatory planning process and implementation. Development professionals working with them need to be trained in a multidisciplinary perspective to make people encourage for responsiveness and change. Development studies in this regard provide an input to make the professionals a change agent having both theoretically knowledgeable and practically exposed and involved. Unless they have such qualities, they will have no platform to work.

4.0 Goal and Envisaged Delivery Mechanisms of Development Studies

Overall development goal of operating the academic programs on development studies is to assist the government by producing gradually in a desirable quantity the creative, innovative, competent mid and high level professionals oriented and trained on development focused policy, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation and who are able to perform independently of the policy analysis, applied research studies and all about development project activities through participatory processes.

4.1 Academic Courses

The courses designed are with combination of different subjects and sectors that enable students to (i) explore contemporary understanding of the problems confronting developing countries in the modern world and the efforts that are made to resolve these (ii) develop specialist knowledge in both key themes in the study of development (iii) facilitate an ability for independent criticism and enquiry which can be applied to policy analysis and practical problem solving and (iv) prepare potential research students theoretically and methodologically for subsequent field work and thesis. Courses prepared are based on a brief survey with the government, national/international NGOs, CSOs, development organizations, the universities, scholars and educationists.

Academic degree for the undergraduate level is 4 years, 8 semesters with 12 credit dissertation work while for the graduate level total course is for 2 years 4 semesters and 12 credit theses. Doctoral courses would be designed as per the need and in the framework of the international standard both course work and research based.

4.2 Delivery Mechanisms of Knowledge and Skills

- (a) DevS program believes that the contemporary methods demand the participatory techniques of lectures. Therefore, it assures that each of the participant students should ensure to play the role in sharing their ideas and experiences. Other techniques applied are the (i) Review Papers on Cases and Situational Studies (ii) Assignments (iii) Classroom Workshops and Presentation (iv) Field Work and Observations for theory vs practice methods based on BOPPS (Beneficiaries Oriented Problem Solving & Planning Strategy) and research (v) Subject-based Seminars and Guest Lectures
- (b) Blending of applied research and professional training programs with regular academic courses bears important role to play for the students to learn simultaneously the aspects and methods to be applied in the real work situation. In DevS program, the lectures are based on highly exposed methods with interactive processes of different activities at local, national, regional and international level. The research studies are conducted in which the students are involved with skills transformation of methodological processes. Findings of the studies are disseminated to them in classroom workshops to find out the gap between policy and practice. Likewise, the training programs of its own or in a jointly venture with other potential organizations are organized on most relevant, critical and contemporary development issues in which the students are involved in variety of ways depending upon need and relevancy.
- (c) Majority the development programs implemented by government, multi/bilateral agencies, I/NGOs and are focused on poverty reduction and its influencing factors. The DevS has thus, regular interaction and dialogue and agreement with those agencies so as to help them in meeting their programs' targets by providing the right types of human power they are looking for.
- (d) The DevS' target is to admit most interested students in becoming a development professional as change agents in the development endeavors of the country. The DevS thus, ensure to admit students from remote areas and marginalized groups. And, the end reality is that this is not possible unless they are financially helped.

5.0 Institutional Structures and Management

The College of Development Studies (CDS) registered with the GoN under Company Act in 2062 BS is currently located at Old Baneshwor, Baburam Acharya Marga, Kathmandu with furnished rooms for the regular classes, research and a seminar cum training hall. A research and training based resource center with sufficient number of resource materials books, journals and reports on latest development issues has been established for use of researchers, teachers and students. The institute is governed by a Management Board supported by the 5 regular staff both on development, research and teaching. There are 4 regular/permanent faculties.

6.0 Long Term Visionary Plan and Policy Strategies

None of the institute can envisage its stability without a vision supported by the strategic policies and plans. The CDS attest itself with long term vision of -

- establishing the institute as the center of excellence with particular emphasis on bridging the gap of qualified development professionals for government and development organizations;
- upgrading the institute itself as a research and training center and,
- promoting as the center of regional/international base for South Asian studies on development dimensions.

The following strategic polices and plans are envisaged to support and achieve the set long term vision of the institute.

1. In order to support the government, the institute expects to establish formal link and sign MoU with the MLD/DDC/VDC as to recognize the potentials of the DevS product as mid and policy level development professional to work as change agent within the government in order to counteract with the development agencies' work at the local level. The DevS products are capacitated with the skills of developing project proposals, design community planning on a participatory approach and associated training, project design, implementation and evaluation.
2. The institute plans to sign the MoU with the VDC adjacent to the Kathmandu valley to adopt a village lab concept for community based problem identification, planning, implementation and evaluation based on LSG rules. Once the local bodies comes effect with the political representatives, the institute will expedite for MoU with matching fund. Agreement with the I/NGOs and development organizations is also equally important
3. Ultimate goal of the institute is to operate the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral courses on development studies. As time demands, the courses will be diversified on relevant courses of development studies. The institute plans to cover the courses on development economics, international relations, natural resources policy studies, community development etc.
4. The institute plans to build the space of its own in order to create the congenial environment for studies, research and training. This institute will remain as a platform for the debate on development policies in future.
5. Currently executing as a city college anticipate to join as a deemed university in next 6-7 years.
6. The institute plans to develop a regular discourse forum on contemporary development issues on radio and gradually on television.

7.0 Assumptions and Factors Ensuring Sustainability

The course program itself is of competitive and highly skill based. It has wider market and students are trained accordingly. Students are made highly motivated and encouraged through the blended programs with research, training and academic courses. Supports are there also from development aid agencies by their views and ideas for improvement on courses, direction and institutional sponsorship for the students. Thus, links have been established with them on promotion of program and employment of the products. There is a monitoring by management committee through regular assessment of the program at class, management, students' activities, facilities, teachers' assessment, students' feedback etc according to a brief progress format showing major indicators. There is spontaneous monitoring from the university though that I not effective. Short evaluation on a yearly basis is desirable with the help of the students, different stakeholders, faculty and management.

8.0 Faculty, Professionals and Resource Persons

1	Bharat Shrestha, PhD (Land, Poverty and Livelihoods)	14	Narahari Dhakal, MS (Project, Micro enterprises)
2	Prof. Pitamber Chhetri, Ph.D (Micro Policies)	15	Gopal Shrestha, Ph.D. (Management)
3	Lokendra Poudyal, Ph.D (Rural Development)	16	Rajan Poudel, Ph.D (Management)
4	Prof.Ganga Thapa, Ph.D (Good Governance)	17	Ms. Nikila Shrestha, MA (Gender)
5	Keshav Kandel, Ph.D (Natural Resources)	18	Ms. Pabitra Subba, MS (NRS Gender)
6	Sindhu Dhungana, MS (Resource Planning)	19	Bishnu Upreti, PhD (Conflict Analysis)
7	Dilli KC (Research, Project Analysis)	20	Rajendra Bhari, M.Sc. (Project Planning)
8	Krishna Pant, PhD (Agriculture & Land Sector Policy)	21	Bishwo Nath Tiwari, PhD (Rural Poverty)
9	Ramji Neupane, PhD (Conflict Analysis)	22	Bishnu Puri (Development Management)
10	Raj Babu Shrestha, ME (Project Implementation)	23	Jagannath Adhikari, PhD (Land and Rural Poverty)
11	Bimal Sharma, MBA (Community Development)	24	Ms. Soni Pradhan, MS, (INGOs and Development)
12	Hemant Ojha, Ph.D (Development and Governance)	25	Bishnu Sharma, MS (Land, Macro Policies)
13	Ms, Prabha Thacke, MS (Gender Policy)	26	Ms. Jaya Sharma, MS (Social Inclusions)