Brief Progress Update on Evidence Based Policy Debate Series on Land Issues in Nepal  
(October 2012-September 2013)

In collaboration with all ILC members in Nepal

Submitted to  
International Land Coalition (ILC)  
Rome, Italy

Submitted by  
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2013
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Context and Background
ILC developed the strategic plan (2011-2015) to intervene in land issues at global level in which National Engagement Strategy (NES) was formulated for intervention strategy. As per the description of NES Paper (2012-2016) - Year I - formulated by ILC and ILC members of Nepal, COLARP organized "Evidence based policy debate on Land Issues in Nepal" in collaboration with International Land Coalition (ILC). Conceptually, the NES paper has been conceived in multi stakeholder efforts to engage on land issues of Nepal in coherent and coordinated manner to produce synergic effects.

These kinds of evidence based policy debate series provide platform for the common understanding of the land issues between the researcher and different stakeholders. It helps for informed policy based analysis and evidenced based decision making and policy reform through empirical evidence from the grassroots level. As policy debate is not only a technical issue but also a political process, contestation and bargaining among social and political actors exists. Different dimensions of policy analysis is important i.e. informing better and more realistic policy formulation and programming, enhancing policy dialogue, promoting participation and stakeholders engagement, and identifying entry point to support reform efforts against odds and evidence as learning and policy making below. These well planned policy intervention by all the members from grassroots to policy level generated strong, valid and reliable evidence for informed policy reform.

Objective
The objective of the evidence based debate is to promote informed policy debate on pertinent land issues by generating scientific evidences on specific dimensions of issues so as to facilitate informed analysis and decision making for land related policy reform.

Methods Employed
Methods include the following successive steps. They are: i) Discuss on pertinent land issues and their prioritization; and finalization of theme; ii) Research for the evidence generation through the high level researchers and professionals from academic, researchers and renowned practitioner (activists); iii) Evidence based policy debate series among multi-stakeholders; iv) Finalization of paper by the author; v) Peer review from national independent experts; vi) National level policy debate series on the thematic issues of papers with comment of peer review; and vii) Publish the discussion paper and brief policy highlights electronically.

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier about planned policy intervention in context and background, policy advocacy was employed as a method and tool for informed analysis, decision-making and policy reform.
Achievement, Output and Outcomes

Under this project, COLARP conducted series of policy debates on contemporary land issues (2 debates for each 5 themes). The policy debate series were based upon the following issues, where different experts prepare the paper on the following issues:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Paper Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
<th>Peer Reviewer</th>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Issues of Rural and Urban Squatters in Nepal.</td>
<td>Dinesh Dhakal</td>
<td>Shiva Sharma, PhD</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Absentee Landlordism and Agrarian Stagnation in Nepal: A Case from the Eastern Terai.</td>
<td>Dr. Ganesh Gurung</td>
<td>Suresh Dhakal, PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>State of Art in Land Research and Land Reform in Nepal.</td>
<td>Dr. Purna Nepali and Jagat Basnet</td>
<td>Mohan Man Sainju, PhD</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Rural Diversification in Nepal: An Overview.</td>
<td>Dr. Sagar Raj Sharma</td>
<td>Devendra Chapagain, PhD</td>
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Two debates (16 April and 29 May, 2013) were organized where above five themes were discussed – 2 papers in one debate and 3 on other debate simultaneously. Based upon the findings and insights drawn from two debates, addressing the comments of peer reviewer, a final national level policy debate is conducted on 4 September 2013. And finally, all the papers will be electronically published soon.

COLARP expects that this series of contemporary debate has provided the platform where all stakeholders from academician, experts, I/NGOs, government personnel, activists, students to media etc. have actively attended. Thus, it has also promoted the engagements from different stakeholders. Many issues and grievances were raised, confusions and difficulties faced by victim were shared, research findings were presented, professional experiences were shared, suggestions and advice to different stakeholders were made, update the current status, activities future plans were shared etc. And, there were more than 180 participants from wide range of field and expertise attended the policy debates.

Further, evidence based documents in the form of discussion paper under these five themes, will be the reference guide that helps policy makers for informed decision making. Hence, policy debate, to some extent, influenced the land policies and other sectors like foresters and agriculture issues also directly or indirectly.

It is important to mention that personnel from land steering committee, working committee, thematic expert committee have frequently participated in all these debates. Also professors and vice chancellors from Agriculture and Forestry University have provided the special
remarks mentioning that these debates, to some extent, influence the existing land polices and will also be able to influence upcoming policies related to land. All these debates seem useful for influencing ongoing policy making process.

**Reflection and Learning**

From the evidence based policy debate series, the following brief reflection and learning has been noted down: i) Actively engaging with land policy steering committee in planning and coordinating in land issues is instrumental in shaping policy processes; ii) These wide range of activities mentioned in methodology provides reliable and valid evidence for informed analysis and decision making, iii) It provides micro-macro linkages as policy making process from below truly reflect scenario of grassroots level, iv) Consultation and meeting with concerned stakeholders (e.g. MoLRM and CSOs) reduces the differential understanding among stakeholders, academicians and practitioners.

These wide ranges of planning, policy debates and activities are generating evidences for informed analysis, decision making and respective policy reform (e.g. National land policy formulation process). The national land policy formulation process believes on some principles such as land policy formulation from below, evidences provides reliable and valid basis for informed debate and analysis, evidence is the key to informed decision-making, learning from below. Thus, all planned interventions by all ILC members are directed towards “evidence generation from below for land policy”. In fact, it is new approach that promotes informed debate with diverse stakeholders from academician to practitioner. It has been appreciated by stakeholders as a pioneering initiation for informed policy reforms and can be replicated in other sectors also.
Annexes

Annex 1: Contract with Authors (Sample Contract)

Consortium for Land Research and Policy Dialogue (COLARP)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member Organizations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Department of Geography, Tribhuvan University (CDG-TU)</td>
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<td>Community Self-Reliance Centre (CSRC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Human and Natural Resource Studies Centre, Kathmandu University (HNRSC-KU)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nepal Institute of Development Studies (NIDS)</td>
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<td>South Asia Regional Coordination Office of NCCR-N-S</td>
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<tr>
<th>Ref. No.</th>
<th>Date: 5th February, 2013</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dear Dr. Bishnu Raj Uperti,</td>
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We are pleased to announce a series of Evidence based Policy Debates on Land in Nepal organized by our organization, the Consortium for Land Research and Policy Dialogue (COLARP), with assistance from the International Land Coalition (ILC).

The debates will have focus on different themes on land issues in Nepal.

We would like to thank you very much for your willingness to contribute a discussion paper, its presentation in the forthcoming debates and a policy brief. May we suggest you the following title for your discussion paper?

Title of your discussion paper: political economy of land policy in Nepal

The deadline for the submission of the discussion paper is end of May, 2013 and the date for policy debate based on the title given to you will be informed to you once the date is fixed. We request you to prepare power point presentation for the debate.

There is a nominal honorarium of NRs 60,000.00 to cover some of your expenses.

Following is the preliminary outline of the discussion paper with some specifics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tentative Outline of Discussion Paper</th>
<th>Tentative Outline of Policy Brief</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract: within 250 words</td>
<td>Background</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction and Review of relevant policies</td>
<td>Issues</td>
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<td>Issues subject matter (Thematic areas)</td>
<td>Key Featured Cases</td>
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<td>Methods</td>
<td>Key Policy Messages (in box)</td>
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<td>Results and Discussions (Analysis)</td>
<td>Policy Implication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conclusions/Lessons Learned</td>
<td>Conclusion and Way Forward</td>
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<td>References</td>
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These discussion papers and policy briefs will be uploaded in the COLARP’s website. We would also like to inform you that, COLARP is also planning to publish these discussion papers in near future if we receive funding for its publication.

Thank you.

...............  

Chair  

COLARP

Secretariat/Seva National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR-N-S, South Asia Coordination Office), Benmorea, Kathmandu Tel: 977-1-554756, 560083, Fax: 977-1-554756

This contract has been concluded between Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti, hereinafter called the author and COLARP for writing discussion paper and policy brief for "Evidence based Policy Debates on Land Issues in Nepal".

1. **Scope of Work:** The author will contribute a discussion paper and policy brief on titled "Political economy of land policy analysis in Nepal" for "Evidence based Policy Debates on Land Issues in Nepal". Author will have to present the paper two times i.e. one presentation after the draft is ready and another after final paper is ready. Final paper will be peer reviewed by independent experts and author will have to incorporate the comments and suggestions received from peer reviewer. The final discussion paper and policy brief will be published.

2. **Consultancy Period:** The author will complete the write-up work from 1st February-31st May, 2013.

3. **Consultancy Fee:** The author will be paid NRs. 60,000 (in words Rupees Sixty Thousands only). The amount is inclusive of income tax. The COLARP will deduct the tax as TDS according to rules of Government of Nepal (tax on consultancies is 15%) and forward the same to the tax authorities. Final payment (100%) will be done upon submission of final papers.

4. **Other expenses related to the Consultancy:** No other expenses will be reimbursed.

5. **Timing and Reporting:** The final discussion paper and policy brief shall be handed over to COLARP not later than 31st May, 2013.

6. **Ownership of Consultancy:** Once the write-up is completed, the resulting work is the property of COLARP. The author cannot use it for other purposes.

7. **Suspension:** COLARP may, by written notice to the author, suspend, in whole or in part, the disbursement of funds under this contract if the author has failed to carry out any of his/her obligations. The written notice must specify which obligations are not met and should give the author five working days in which to comply.

8. **Termination:** COLARP may, by written notice, terminate this contract immediately in the event that the author does not perform the agreed assignment. The author may, by notice to COLARP, terminate this contract if COLARP is not meeting its obligations under the contract, and provide that the author has specified in writing to COLARP which obligations have not been carried out and given to COLARP five working days in which to comply therewith.

9. **Settlement of Dispute:** Any dispute or difference arising in relation to this contract shall be solved by amicable discussion. If amicable settlement cannot be achieved, then the said dispute or difference shall be finally settled under the standard legal practices of the Government of Nepal.

10. **Validity:** This contract shall come into effect on the date on which it is signed and shall remain in full force and effect until it is terminated or until all responsibilities there under have been fulfilled and all accounts between the two parties have been settled. The contents of this contract can be put aside by mutual written agreement.

Signed in agreement,

Date: 01-02-2013

Date: 01-02-2013

Dr. Ganesh Gurung
Chair, COLARP

Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti
Author
Annex 2: Biography of Authors and Peer Reviewers

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<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti</td>
<td>Dr. Upreti is actively engaged in conflict transformation and peace related research and teaching with 32 years of work experience. He is engaged in teaching and research at University of London and University of Surrey in the UK, and Kathmandu University, Nepal. He worked in different international organizations such as DFID, SNV, WWF, IUCN, DANIDA, Action Aid, CARE, WFP, FAO, UNDP, Asian Development Bank, and MS, in the capacity professional staff, resource person and consultant. He has also spent some years in government service selected from the Public Service Commission. He is a prolific writer and has several books to his credit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Gopikesh Acharya</td>
<td>Gopikesh Acharya (Gp Acharya) has completed MA in English Literature. He has published some op-ed articles regarding water issues in South Asia in some national dailies. Land issues have also been his area of interest. Likewise, he has written about politics and literature also. He has been working at Nepal Centre for Contemporary Research (NCCR) as a Research Associate since two years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Dinesh Dhakal</td>
<td>Dinesh Dhakal is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics at Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science, Rampur, Chitwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Dr. Ganesh Gurung</td>
<td>Dr. Gurung is a Sociologist by training and founder of NIDS with above 22 years of work experience. He was also a former member of National Planning Commission, Government of Nepal. He has been involved in migration issues since 1990 and has the credit of being author to a number of Books and Researches on varied issues related to migration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Dr. Purna Nepali</td>
<td>Dr. Purna B. Nepali has a Ph.D from the Human and Natural Resources Studies Centre (HNRSC), Kathmandu University and Human Geography, University of Zurich. He completed his Ph.D. research on land reform in Nepal with the financial support from the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), North-South. Presently he is the Executive Director, Consortium for Land Research and Policy Dialogue (COLARP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Jagat Basnet</td>
<td>Jagat Basnet is well-known land right activist in Nepal, and Executive Director of CSRC. He is supporting peasant organizations focusing on capacity building of tenants, educating tillers about land related conflicts and also training them to become leaders, campaigners, negotiators and facilitators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Dr. Sagar Raj Sharma</td>
<td>Dr. Sharma has worked extensively in the field related to Foreign Aid, Development, Private Sector and Land Reform in Nepal. He has the experience of working in the development sector both as an academician and a practitioner. He also has the experience of teaching in Fukuoka University, Japan and Kathmandu University, Nepal. In</td>
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addition, he has worked as an Economic Advisor at the Nepalese Consulate office in Japan and as the National Development Consultant for the UN HABITAT.

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<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Prof Bhim Prasad Subedi, PhD</td>
<td>Prof. Subedi has 30 years of teaching experience at Tribhuvan University. Besides Tribhuvan University, he has also taught at the Department of Geography, University of Hawaii, USA. He has worked as Research Scholar at University of Michigan USA, University of Bergen Norway and University of Oxford UK. His research interests and publications include population environment relations, migration, population ageing, child labour and ethnic diversification. He has offered consultancy services to various organizations such as the UNFPA/N, MOPE/UNFPA, ICIMOD, and IUCN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Shiva Sharma, PhD</td>
<td>Dr Sharma is a development researcher, and is Executive Director of National Labour Academy-Nepal. His major contributions are in the fields of land and labour, and macro policy in Nepal. He was a Member of the High Level Land Reform Commission of Nepal Government in 1995; advisor to the National Planning Commission for 9th and 11th plan, and was Chairman of Informal Sector Services Center (INSEC) between 1999 and 2004.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Suresh Dhakal, PhD</td>
<td>Dr. Dhakal is a faculty member at Department of Sociology at Tribhuvan University. He has a PhD degree in Anthropology. He is also the vice president of Community Self Reliance Centre (CSRC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mohan Man Sainju, PhD</td>
<td>Dr Sainju was the first director of 1964 land reform department. He was also the full bright scholar and has expertise in development economic and international relation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Devendra Chapagain, PhD</td>
<td>Dr Chapagain is a natural resource economist with nearly 30 years of experience working in Nepal and abroad in areas of policy planning and evaluation. He specializes in socioeconomic and institutional aspects of common property resources. He has led various professional teams for formulating national policies and plans including the Agriculture Perspective Plan (1995).</td>
</tr>
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Annex 3: Executive Summary of Paper

Political Economy Analysis of Land Resource in Nepal: Cursory Observations
Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti and Gopikesh Acharya
Peer Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Bhim Prasad Subedi

Brief Background of Paper
Having land has been regarded as a key asset in the economic, social, cultural and political spheres of life in an agrarian country like Nepal. This paper talks about how land resource has been distributed and utilized from history to the present. The reform initiatives taken in the different times from history to the present are at cross road, which is discussed in this paper. Likewise, this paper also talks about how the ideological differences among the different political parties in Nepal have left the concerns of land reform unaddressed thereby hampering the institutionalization process of the reform initiatives. There have been debates on whether land rights, or increased productivity, are important. Land reform and transformative reform both have been discussed, so the land issue has been analysed through the perspective of Political Economy Analysis (PEA).

Research Objective and Research Questions
The most important objective of this paper is to study about the land policy from the ‘political economy perspective’ with specific focus on a) features emerged out from the structural factors such as social structure, historical legacy, and distribution of land in society; b) institutions, formal laws, and regulation that shape economic and political outcomes; and c) power relations at different levels.

Research Method and Analytical Framework
This study is a pragmatic analysis of the political economy of land resource. The politico-economic dynamics has been studied using a detailed dataset and policy analysis.

Key Research Findings
Unlike the expectation, the government interventions regarding land issue have been proved unsuccessful. The land-right-based political or peoples’ movements have gone unaddressed. The ideological differences of different political parties have created the environment of confrontation rather than mutual understanding. The political instability, on the other hand, has hampered the implementation aspects of the different commissions’ policy reports.
Key Policy Message and Recommendation
The government of Nepal needs to implement its commitment on land issues regarding administrative arrangement and institutionalisation of policies and laws. This, in fact:
1. makes land dealings such as registration, transfers and leases easier
2. reinforces the individual land rights
3. reconciles the disputes related to land
4. improves the services

For detail

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Issues of Rural and Urban Squatters in Nepal
Dinesh Dhakal
Peer Reviewer: Dr. Shiva Sharma

Brief Background of Paper
Issues of rural and urban squatters has been realized long before for the promotion of social harmony, national goal of poverty alleviation, income generation and food security through provision of land, housing and livelihood rights to the landless squatters. Considering this reality, COLRP has carried out a study on “Issues of rural and urban squatters in Nepal” in the year 2013.

Research Objectives
- Explore issues of urban and rural squatters
- Identify causes and consequences of squatters in Nepal
- Recommend strategic policy instruments to solve the squatters issue

Research Methods and Analytical Framework
Chitwan district was purposively selected for this study whereas two locations from the district one was Diyalo Marg, Narayangardh which represents the urban squatter area and another Narayanpur representing rural squatter area were selected. There were 75 households in Narayangardh settlement while 150 families in squatter settlement of Narayanpur VDC. Methodological tools such as desk studies, field visit to carry out case studies, observation, focused group discussion and eventually stakeholders’ workshops were used to accomplish the objectives of the study. Descriptive statistical tools such as mean, frequency and percentage were used to analyze the primary information.

Key Research Findings
- Rural – urban migration, stagnant agricultural growth, political instability, transferability in land, historic feudal land distribution system, limited livelihood opportunities, marginality induced squatters
- Unplanned urbanization, environmental degradation, poor livelihood conditions are main consequences of current squatter settlement
- Major issues of the squatters are identification of real squatters and lack of political consensus among major parties to solve the problem
- No legal basis for housing rights within Nepal though the right to adequate housing is mentioned in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Nepal became a party on 14 May 1991.
Key Policy Message and Recommendation

- Address the issues prioritizing land and housing rights through political consensus among major political parties.
- Identify real squatters and distribute appropriate land compatible with the seven core components of adequate housing endorsed by UN committee.
- Land distribution could not be an optimal solution to solve the issue; land distribution should come with integrated package of livelihood improvement of poor squatters.
- Government can approach to national and international financial institutions to implement integrated approach for achieving seven core components of adequate housing.

Further Readings


For detail

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Absentee Land Ownership and Agrarian Stagnation in Nepal: A Case from the Eastern Terai

Dr. Ganesh Gurung

Peer Reviewer: Dr. Suresh Dhakal

Brief Background of Paper and Objective
From Shah Rule onwards till 1950 the semi-feudal landownership in Nepal had two distinctive forms; Raikar or the state ownerships of land and the communal landholdings called Kipat. The post 1950 governments tried to alter this landownership structure with introduction various land measures like The Tenancy Rights Act, 1951 and land ceiling of 1960 period. In the given context the study aims to explore causes and reasons for the failure of post 1950 land policies and measures and their role in the creation of absentee landownership in the context of terai region and the Morang district of the country.

Research Method and Analytical Framework
Historical analysis of development of absentee landownership under different political regimes and a case study on the state of landownership in terai especially in the Morang district three village committees.

Key Research Findings
- Failure of post 1950 land measures and policies failed to provide lands to the cultivators and small farmers in the absence of supportive programs on issues of citizenship and because of fraud and collusion with state officials.
- Caste and ethnicity as major factors behind landownership as majority of the absentee landlords and big farmers are high caste hill Hindus, except Tharus majority of other indigenous natives are landless and only few dalits are small farmers.
- Absentee landownership as biggest obstacle in the upgrading of farming techniques due to the lack of incentives and profit for farmers, regardless of any outcomes.

Key Policy Message and Recommendation
- The tenancy reforms and the regulation of rent levels are more possible than an outright overturning of the system.
- Banning sharecropping could help promote investment into better farming methods.
- Cooperatives like grain banks will help to reduce the debts and increase the purchasing power of farmers.
- The grassroots movements of farmers themselves can only effect major changes in the landownership situation in Nepal.

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E-mail: info@colarp.org.np, Web: http://www.colarp.org.np
Brief Background of Paper
Land issue is complex, dynamic, and contentious in Nepal. Since Nepal was declared as a democratic country in 1951, land reform has been an issue of discussion for each government. Slogan like "land to the tiller" has become a popular agenda for each political party with different understandings and interpretations. Despite efforts of land reform, it could not bring the fundamental changes at the grassroots level i.e. changes in the life of rural people. Moreover, it is fact that scattered land researches are not able to bring the stronger (valid) evidences about land reform and related polices for informed policy reform.

Research Objective and Research Questions
In a given context, the paper aims to contribute to understand state of art in land reform and land research in Nepal. Based on analysis (issues and gaps identified), an attempt has been made to examine the relationship between land research and land reform in Nepal i.e. how land research is contributing for informed analysis of land reform in Nepal.

Research Method and Analytical Framework
Agrarian Political Economy (APE) and State-Society Interaction/Relation Perspective have been employed to understand the phenomenon related to land reform. Desk study, key informant interview, personal interview etc. were done to prepare the discussion paper.

Key Research Findings
- Transfers of land based wealth and power from ‘elite to elite’ rather than ‘elite to poor’ during (re) distribution were found (Anti-poor and anti-subaltern groups). Landed interests are always forefront in every socio-political and economic transformation.
- Target groups or beneficiaries of land reform are multi-dimensional (beyond the notion of class) in a sense that they have diverse background, orientation and own substantive issues (of landless, land poor, bonded laborers, indigenous people, women, and small holders etc).
- Land reform from below has two implications i.e. active mobilization of land poor from below (i.e. with peoples’ power and autonomy-it can counteract the anti-reform waves), and decentralized land governance/administration (i.e. pro-poor service delivery at grassroots level).
- Land reform discourse within limited/scarc agricultural land is insufficient to address the prime concerns (historical injustice and inequity) of landless, land poor (alternative to agricultural land).
- Landscape of stakeholder is dynamic and diverse. So, following state-society analytic perspective, strengths of state and societal actors can complement and contribute each other to precede land reform processes.
Land issue is not only technical, but also political issue i.e. political engagement (leadership, support etc) in land issue. But, it is missing in current land and agricultural related affairs.

Land research and land reform should have mutual and symbiotic relationship. Importantly, conceptual research is needed to guide the land right movement in track.

Key Policy Message and Recommendation

- One time redistributive land reform is must for addressing historical injustice and inequity faced by land poor and subaltern groups for long centuries. It is one of the promising ways to address the historical and chronic problem as well as mass poverty and unemployment in an agrarian society like Nepal.
- Special precautions measures during (re)distribution should be taken into consideration to avoid the consistencies, irregularities, and lapses for benefit of all sections of land reform beneficiaries. (Tactical politics: Rewarding the supporter and punishing the opponents)
- Differentiated land policies should be in place to understand and address the substantive issues of all sections of subaltern groups (‘One size fits for all’ does not work’ for existing social diversity).
- Enhancing access to land and land based natural resources (public land, forest, water etc.) is an alternative way to secure the livelihood of poor people (pro-poor livelihood intervention).
- Land research should be institutionalized in state’s machinery and university system to shape land right movement (for informed choice) as well as for informed policy reform in Nepal.

Further Readings (References)


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E-mail: info@colarp.org.np, Web- http://www.colarp.org.np
Rural Diversification in Nepal: An Overview
Dr. Sagar Raj Sharma

Peer Reviewer: Dr. Devendra Chapagain

Brief Background of Paper
Recently, agricultural intensification and off-farm diversification have combined each other in orienting rural people’s adaptive response to short-and long-term environmental, economic, political and socio-cultural changes. This approach makes it possible to promote small rural enterprises as a means to achieve more sustainable rural livelihoods. This paper has attempted to discuss these issues from the perspective of the current trend of rural diversification that is taking place in Nepal.

Research Objective and Research Questions
• How are people adapting to socio-economic changes that are taking place in the current context of Nepal?
• What sort of coping strategies are rural people adapting to meet these changes?
• What types of livelihood diversifications are people adopting and what can be done to make them sustainable?

Research Method and Analytical Framework
Literature Review; Analysis of Secondary Data (Various National Census Data and Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics)

Key Research Findings
• Significant shift is taking place in today’s Nepal from agriculture to non-agriculture uses of land.
• People are readily adopting livelihood options that do not have to depend on land (share of non-farm income the and the percent of households receiving remittance has increased significantly in the last 15 years; while the share of agriculture, both in wage and self employed, has decreased).
• Migration, non agricultural wage, community-based tourism and employment opportunities are providing new possibilities, however, in some parts of the country, people who do not have these opportunities have become more vulnerable due to weakening of traditional safety nets in the rural areas.

Key Policy Message and Recommendation
• Optimal use of land needs to be rethought in today’s context.
• Livelihood diversification without increasing productivity will be difficult to sustain.
While it is extremely important to increase productivity from land, it is equally important to maintain the safety nets of the rural people.

Need for exploring and pursuing diversified uses of land as well as create off-farm opportunities.

Only with a proper land use policy that takes into consideration the changing livelihood diversification choices of its people, will Nepal be able to handle the current socio-economic pressures.

Further Readings (References)


For detail

Consortium for Land Research and Policy Dialogue (COLARP)
Tel/Fax: +977 1 5000649; GPO Box: 9236 Kathmandu Bhanimadal, Jawalakhel, Kathmandu, Nepal
E-mail: info@colarp.org.np Web- http://www.colarp.org.np
Title of Paper
Rural Diversification in Nepal: An Overview

Strength of Paper
The paper is organised into five logically connected sections, namely, Introduction, Rural Diversification in Nepal, Drivers of Diversification, Recent Trends and Characteristics, and Looking Ahead. The arguments and evidences presented in Sections 2 through 4 are well articulated and this can be regarded as the main strength of the paper. The author identifies changing consumer demand, changing demographics, export potential, changing marketing opportunities, availability of key assets, and urbanisation as drivers of diversification. Growing outmigration and declining shares of agricultural employment and incomes are cited as evidences of changing trends in rural diversification.

Weakness or Areas to be Improved
The author cites organic farming, rural homestay tourism and outmigration as examples of livelihood diversification in rural Nepal. However, in the absence of supporting data, one wonders about the importance and magnitude of the first two in the overall rural economy. If possible, it would be desirable to provide some data on these. Similarly, wherever relevant, presentation of quantitative information on the identified drivers of diversification would enhance the strength of the paper. It would also be desirable if the author could be more specific about policy options and implications.

Special Remarks
It is an overview paper and it needs to be appreciated in that it would help in generating further initiatives toward expanding the scope and evidences regarding the observed diversification trends occurring in rural Nepal. More is analytical work would be required in order to be able to prescribe evidence based policy options.
Title of Paper
State of Art in Land Research and Land Reform in Nepal

Strength of Paper
The Paper aims to contribute to understand the state of art in Land Reform and Land Research in Nepal. Land reform is a major issue that comes periodically at forefront in every political change. Yet we have no data that explains the reasons as to why our analysis is handicapped by the lack of data and research.

Yet, as the paper says these are about 62 Acts and 23 legislations within the period of sixty years or so that waited for real implementation and results.

Hence, the paper tries to analyze the important relationship between land reform and land research in order to bring "symbiotic and reciprocal relationship" in order to generate "synergic effects".

The paper rightly argues and calls for a "systematic engagement of universities, research based organization for generating stronger and powerful evidence on different aspects of land issues".

Weakness or Areas to be Improved
Due to lack of data, the authors must be having difficulty in presenting evidence based analysis, yet efforts should be made to present evident based analysis particularly in land research part of the paper.

Data on land and land reform related issues coming out of regular National Census and Agricultural Census could bring out much reliable picture on many issues related to land policy and land reform.

Thank you for asking me to comment. Wish you all the success in your endeavors.
Title of Paper
Absentee Landlordism and Agrarian Stagnation in Nepal: A Case from the Eastern Terai

Strength of Paper
- Relevant topic, which was grossly overlooked so far; explores yet another dimension in the study of land and agrarian relations in the country
- Based on field survey/primary data
- Potential in terms of policy implications
- At the end, the paper advocates that, “…reform is unlikely to come from the top; it will remain up to the farmers themselves to create a grass-root movement capable of instigating the necessary changes”. This justifies that the mere ‘policy dialogue’ or ‘lobbying’ at the centre or top has limited scope unless it is connected with the peasants’ movements at the ground. Thus, paper implicitly concludes that there has to be a constant interplay and synchronization between the two; however, this demands a further explanation; but has appropriately concluded the paper.

Weakness or Areas to be Improved
- Absentee landlordism has been loosely used as a term (sometimes, less than a concept) without defining it in the specific given context
- Readers are not adequately informed about the methodology used: rational of site selection, sample size, and sampling procedure for survey, different tools used, etc.
- Primary data should have been presented in a more illustrative way
- Due to the ‘avoidance’ [or, lack] of reference citation, the paper misses its academic rigor and credibility

Special Remarks
- Considering the importance of the issue, which has not been adequately explored yet, however, has a significant policy implications for the land and agrarian reforms, in particular, the author is expected to make the paper more concrete and convincing
- On conceptual aspect:
  - Absentee landlordism should be defined in the given context; all other than owner-cultivator cannot be put into a single basket, hen who are the absentee landlords! the paper indicates but is not explicit to the readers; sometimes the term can be contentious, the paper should mention, it too,
‘Absentee landlordism’ and ‘agrarian stagnation’, as suggested by the title, are taken up as two analytic categories, but analysis of the findings and the conclusions drawn out of it do not adequately justify this; rather, spares more than half of the effort to describe the emergence of ‘absenteeism’, but less so in explaining the dynamics of absentee landlordism.

Owing to absence of proper referencing/citation, some statements have appeared to be too general, rhetorical, and therefore, trivial; which eventually questions the credibility of the paper in terms of academic rigor and its relevance for its policy implication.

So what are the issues/agenda/evidences for the ‘policy dialogue’, needs to be underlined, in the concluding part.

Linking micro – the field observations and evidences to the macro- larger socio-political and economic structure, could provide some ground to come up with issues/agenda as discussed in the preceding point.

**On methodological aspect:**

- Introduction of study sites/VDC is important here, as the district is so diverse and the evolution of the land-tenure history is also diverse.
- Rational of selection of study VDC, samples and sampling procedure is necessary.
- The field data can be presented in a more illustrative way.
- Some of the facts and statement presented in the text should be substantiated with ‘evidence’ or ‘data’, that can be accessed from the secondary sources.

- A serious editing - of the content is required, looks like the paper was prepared in a rush.

- Despite some weaknesses, this is a commendable initiative, many thanks and congratulation!

For detail

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Peer Reviewer: Dr. Shiva Sharma

Title of Paper
Issues of Rural and Urban Squatters in Nepal

Strength of Paper
- Presents international context,
- Has empirical information from Chitawan issues.
- Connects political changes to squatter issues in Nepal

Weakness or Areas to be Improved
- It talks the issue of squatters/slums—but too sketchy; problem in rural area is more pressing as million households are in squatters there.
- Landlessness, urbanization/migration not covered in detail
- No analysis of urban squatter situation; use empirical data from Chitawan to portray socio-economic picture of squatter dwellers
- NGO efforts are not mentioned; CSRC and Lumanti efforts should be included.
- Recommendations are too sketchy; nothing to learn from. Specially take following points in consideration: a. how to identify, b. what can be done to rural problem, c. what space can be given in urban development.

Special Remarks
Needs to be reworked to reflect the intensity of problem of squatters both in rural and urban Nepal. More probe with Chitwan field data will inform readers.
At the outset, I would like to thank Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti & Gopikesh Acharya, the authors for preparing a very interesting paper on “Political Economy Analysis of Land Resource in Nepal.” As a reviewer and as per the outline provided, my cursory observations are presented in three parts: the strengths of the paper, areas to be improved and some remarks.

Title of Paper
Political Economy Analysis of Land Resource in Nepal: Cursory Observations

Strength of Paper
This 23 page review document (paper) is a welcome document in the ongoing debate on land and land related issues and policies in Nepal. The central argument of the paper revolves around land as an important asset and its ownership or control over as the source of power. The paper is very informative to the general readers as well as to those interested in land issues in Nepal and the political economy approach.

The paper is divided into five sections. The sections progress well. The paper captures land related policies and practices from ancient period to as recent as 2012. Thus, readers can follow historical timelines and trace the treatment of land by the successive ruler to date.

The text inside covers wider areas than land resource while explaining the land use and land policies during different periods. The contemporary discussion is more on land ownership, land reform and politics of land in the country.

CPA and interim constitution are examined for their coverage and consideration of land as one of the critical issues of the country and that without addressing land issues the restructuring of the state may not materialize.

One of the main strengths of the paper is its analysis of land issues taking political economy approach as an analytical framework. As a result, despite being a review document the attempt is to add value in the existing literature on land and its various facets.

As the authors mention, land is not only the means of livelihoods of millions of Nepalese, but also it has remained as a symbol of power and the prestige in Nepal.

Literature citation is extensive. In a 23 page document 4 page is exclusively devoted to references. This is one indication of extensive readings of the authors and thereby comprehensiveness of the paper.
Weakness or Areas to be Improved

• The term “agricultural transformation” is used very frequently but it is neither defined nor described anywhere. The authors have used it as taken for granted but the strengths of many statements of the paper depend upon conceptual clarity of the term “agricultural transformation.” This applies to other terms such as state restructuring as well. These terms are loaded ones and interpretations may differ according to the perspective of the researcher.

• The period of political instability before signing the 12-point peace agreement has been referred to variously in the paper. In some paragraphs, the term “civil war” is used while in others “armed conflict” is used. Furthermore the term “Maoist insurgency” is used. Of course all these terms are used in the literature related to this period but there are clear political ramifications on the use of these terms and at times the use of some of these terms have been debated. Therefore, except in the case of quoted texts, a consistency in the use of these terms is preferred in the academic paper.

• Land resource is a laudable concept or terminology. As such the title is very catchy or trendy. But the use of the term land resource also raises the expectation of the reader. To this reviewer, the interest of such readers is not justified as the text focuses only on the issue of cultivated and/or owned land only.

• The sources of information are missing in many places. Statements are placed as if they are originally those of the authors. A few examples,

  i) “…while the genuine farmers were always deprived of the opportunities [to] land possession and land rights “(p.4).

  ii) “Nepal is an agricultural country where 23 percent of land (out of a total of 147,181 km²) is being cultivated” (p.15). Not only the source is missing but also authentic source needs to be cited. According to the Department of Forest Research and Survey, 2001, the proportion of agriculture land is 28 percent with cultivated land 21 percent and non-cultivated land 7 percent.

  iii) “Simple land disputes filed in the court take, on average, approximately five years to settle” (p.18).

• Though land issues at the policy level are a recent topic in Nepal (p.5). This statement may defeat the whole argument of the paper especially the historical.

• There are inconsistencies in the paper in providing the “facts” and they need to be sorted out. For example, take 3 following statements:

  “Even today, nearly 80% of the total population in Nepal depends on land and agriculture” (2010) (p.3)

  74% people in Nepal are primarily dependent on agriculture as their occupation (2010) p.2.
Approximately 3.4 million households in Nepal are dependent on agriculture .... (2010?) p.8.

Since all three statements above refer to the same year, readers are confused of the proportion of population dependent upon agriculture. These statements also reflect the haste or overlooking of authors while preparing the document.

- Uneasy statements such as “State restructuring has become an important ..... as it is concerned with addressing land issues to promote economic growth and alleviate poverty” need to be carefully examined before making such a definitive statements. This is because the Interim Constitution 2007 Part 17 article 138 (1) states “to bring an end to discrimination based on class, caste, language, gender, culture, religion and region by eliminating the centralized and unitary form of the state, the state shall be made inclusive and restructured into a progressive democratic federal system.

- The whole section on Land from state restructuring perspective (Section 3.4) is weak. It is full of prescriptive statements, conjectures and weak or incomplete statements. For example, the first paragraph contains “in the state restructuring, exploited people of society (Haruwa, Charuwa, Kamaiya, Haliya, Doli, Balighare, Dalits, Kamlary) should be rehabilitated and granted land. State restructuring has to take these issues into account. Likewise, there is a mix-up of “facilitating smooth functioning of restructured state” and restructuring of state itself, see “state restructuring is extremely difficult without opting for transformative land reform (p.10) and state restructuring is difficult if land reform is not undertaken .....” (p.10-11). Without clear explanation of land reform per se, esp. in the context of generational change in the meaning and value of land and without clarifying what is meant by state restructuring, these statements could be at least incomplete if not debatable.

One may argue that it may not be necessary to restructure the state simply to address land issues. It is because the land issues can be and should be addressed irrespective of restructuring of the state.

- The paper recognizes that the Land Act 2021 was progressive in spirit at the time (p.15). It would be better to mention some of the points that reflect its progressiveness. Otherwise the statement could be incomplete. In addition, the texts on p.15-18 need to be revised and made more analytical. At present there sections appear as simple listing of points and suggestions of Commission and Consortium.

- The bits and pieces (in the form of paragraph) still need to be tied up together to develop a coherent argument of the sections. Some unnecessary paragraphs enter into sections which disturbs the flow or argument of the paper.

Page 15 2nd para statements such as Nepalese political parties focus on relations with foreign entities such as India, China and US when they need to place ......making process secondly” are unwanted. As per this draft, they stand alone and do not reflect any link with land issue. Likewise, p.5 3rd para: “Even today, nearly ......in-migration and urbanization.” This appears as independent para. It could be either deleted or rephrased (linked) so that its placement is justified.
The authors have cited extensive literature and most of them are review articles. However, some empirical research works on land could have been included in the paper. It could be that there are not many empirical works but the extensive field based works of INSEC 2007 on landholding pattern in the Mid-western Nepal and livelihood at risk could be useful document to mention especially for its empirical findings on contemporary landholding, land tenure plus caste/ethnicity and gender issues on land.

The elaborate history of Bhim Dutta, and reigning period and town development by several dynasties could have been made brief and explained from PEA, if possible.

**Special Remarks**

Since this is a draft document it needs to be thoroughly edited in view of the four guiding principles of political economy approach (dynamic, broad, longitudinal, and explanatory) as the paper states “this study employs PEA to analyze Nepalese rural agrarian structures and power relations with a focus on land use and land policy” (p.1)

Some reflection on intergenerational change in the meaning and value of land at some point would add value of the document. Otherwise, there is a risk that the notion of land reform will be understood in the traditional sense such as land ceiling, redistribution, rights to tenants and so on only.

The added value in the discourse of land and agrarian reform with PEA needs to be clearly reflected in the conclusion in the final version.

Overall this is a very good draft. The authors do not claim to be comprehensive as they mention cursory observations on land resources in Nepal through political economy approach. I think the analysis, despite some weaknesses, goes beyond cursory observation to explain many facets of land issues in Nepal. Some of the weaknesses (or areas to be improved) identified above are but natural in the draft version and also because the land issue is a wide ranging and can be examined through various perspectives. The weaknesses identified are believed to improve the quality of the paper and the depth of the argument adopted in the paper and can be addressed without much difficulty. Once again, the authors deserve commendation and I look forward to revised final version in the published form.

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**For detail**

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Annex 5: Program Schedule of Evidence Based Policy Debate Series

Evidence Based Policy Debate Series on Land Issues

Organized by

COLARP and International Land Coalition (ILC)

**Date:** 16th April, 2013  
**Venue:** Direction Exhibition & Convention Center,  
4th Floor, United World Trade Center  
Tripureswor, Kathmandu

### Programme Schedule

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration/ Tea</td>
<td>2:00-2:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and Objectives by Dr. Purna B. Nepali, Executive Director, COLARP</td>
<td>2:15-2:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sharing Research Evidences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Presentation on &quot;<strong>Political Economy of Land Policy Analysis in Nepal</strong>&quot; by Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti, Regional Coordinator, South-Asia, NCCR North-South</td>
<td>2:30-2:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation on &quot;<strong>Absentee Land Lordism/Ownership in Nepal</strong>&quot; by Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Chair, COLARP and Dr. Fraser Sugden, IWMI</td>
<td>2:40-2:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor Discussion</td>
<td>2:50-3:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response from Presenter</td>
<td>3:40-3:55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote of Thanks and Closing</td>
<td>3:55-4:00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evidence Based Policy Debate Series on Land Issues

Organized by
COLARP and International Land Coalition (ILC)

Date: 29th May, 2013

Venue: Direction Exhibition & Convention Center,
4th Floor, United World Trade Center
Tripureswor, Kathmandu

Programme Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration/ Tea</td>
<td>8:00-8:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and Objectives by Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Chair, COLARP</td>
<td>8:15-8:25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation on &quot;State of Art in Land Research and Land Reform in Nepal&quot;</td>
<td>8:25-8:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by Dr. Purna Nepali, COLARP and Mr. Jagat Basnet, CSRC</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation on &quot;Land based Enterprise Diversification&quot; by Dr. Sagar Raj Sharma, HNRSC- KU</td>
<td>8:40-8:55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation on &quot;Issues of Squatters (Urban and Rural) in Nepal&quot; by Mr. Dinesh Dhakal, Department of Agriculture and Economics, Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science</td>
<td>8:55-9:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor Discussion</td>
<td>9:10-9:40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response from Presenter</td>
<td>9:40-9:55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote of Thanks and Closing</td>
<td>9:55-10:00</td>
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</table>
# Evidence Based Policy Debate Series on Land Issues

Organized by
COLARP and ILC

**Date:** 4th September, 2013  
**Venue:** SAP FALCHA, Babarmahal, Kathmandu

## Programme Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Registration/Tea</td>
<td>2:00-2:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and Programme Objectives by Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Chair COLARP</td>
<td>2:15:2:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview of “Evidence Based Policy Debate Series on Land Issues” by Dr. Purna Nepali, Executive Director, COLARP</td>
<td>2:20-2:25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sharing Research Evidences

| Presentation on "State of Art in Land Research and Land Reform in Nepal" by Dr. Purna Nepali, COLARP and Mr. Jagat Basnet, CSRC  
Peer Reviewer: Dr. Mohan Man Sainju | 2:25-2:32     |
| Presentation on "Issues of Rural and Urban Squatters in Nepal" by Dinesh Dhakal, Institute of Agriculture and Animal Science, Rampur, Chitwan  
Peer Reviewer: Dr. Shiva Sharma | 2:32-2:39     |
| Presentation on “Absentee Land Ownership and Agrarian Stagnation in Nepal: A Case from the Eastern Terai” by Dr. Ganesh Gurung, COLARP/NIDS  
Peer Reviewer: Dr. Suresh Dhakal | 2:39-2:46     |
**Peer Reviewer:** Prof. Dr. Bhim Prasad Subedi

**Presentation on "Rural Diversification in Nepal: An Overview" by Dr. Sagar Raj Sharma, HNRSC- Kathmandu University**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comment by Peer Reviewer</td>
<td>3:00-4:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor Discussion</td>
<td>4:00-5:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response from Presenters</td>
<td>5:00-5:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Remarks</strong></td>
<td>5:15-5:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Krishna Raj BC, Land Policy Steering Committee, MoLRM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Bharat Shrestha, CDS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Baburam Acharya, Former Secretary, MoLRM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Yam Malla, Country Representative, IUCN</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Ganesh Raj Joshi, Secretary, MoFSC</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Special Remarks</strong></td>
<td>5:35-5:55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Kailash Nath Pyakuryal, Vice-Chancellor, Agriculture and Forestry University</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vote of Thanks and Closing/Hi tea</strong></td>
<td>5:55-6:00</td>
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Annex 6: Photo Gallery

Evidence Based Policy Debate Series on Land Issues banner

Dr. Ganesh Gurung presenting his paper

Dr. Purna B Nepali presenting his paper
Dr. Sagar Raj Sharma presenting his paper

Dr. Ganesh Gurung, Dr. Sagar Raj Sharma and Mr. Jagat Basnet (Sharing his findings)

Mr. Dinesh Dhakal presenting his paper

Closing remarks by Dr. Ganesh Gurung

Floor Discussion

Dr. Bishnu Raj Upreti Presenting his Paper
Evidence Based Policy Debate Series on Land Issue Programme