Bridging Research and Policy: Advancing the Nepal Public Policy Review's Role in Policy-Relevant Scholarship

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Abstract

The Nepal Public Policy Review was launched as a multidisciplinary journal to provide an academic platform for research relevant to public policy. It has published three volumes, including a special issue arising from a symposium. Following a critical review of the journal's policies, we identified the need for better alignment between academic research and public policy. In response, we redefined the journal's purpose to bridge research with policy, updating the Aims and Scope to encourage collaboration between researchers and the policy community. This shift emphasizes the importance of clear and accessible communication for policymakers. To facilitate this, we introduced new manuscript requirements, including sections for *Policy Recommendations* and *Suggested Course of Action* to translate research findings into actionable policy steps. We also introduced an initial formative editorial assessment for manuscripts before peer review. This aimed to enrich the research and ensure its alignment with relevant policies. Piloted in Volume 4, the manuscript improvement initiative successfully enhanced five articles by translating their conclusions into detailed policy recommendations. Positive feedback from authors and reviewers affirmed the success of this approach. We consider the manuscript improvement a success and will expand it in future volumes, along with exploring broader mentoring for both academics and policy professionals.

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Editorial

अनुसन्धान र नीति जोड्ने सेतु: नीति-सान्दर्भिक प्राज्ञिक अध्ययनमा नेपाल पब्लिक पोलिसी रिभ्यू जर्नलको विस्तारित भूमिका

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सार

नेपाल पब्लिक पोलिसी रिभ्यू जर्नल सार्वजनिक नीतिसँग सम्बन्धित अनुसन्धान प्रकाशित गर्ने एक प्राज्ञिक मञ्चको रूपमा बहु-विधात्मक जर्नलको रूपमा आरम्भ गरिएको हो । यसले हालसम्म संगोष्ठीमा आधारित एक विशेष अङ्कसहित तीन नियमित अङ्कहरू प्रकाशित गरिसकेको छ । यस यता हामीले जर्नलको नीतिहरूको गहिरो समीक्षा गर्‍यौं र के पायौं भने प्राज्ञिक अनुसन्धान र सार्वजनिक नीतिबिचको सम्बन्धलाई अझ मजबुत बनाउने आवश्यकता रहेछ । यस कुरालाई ध्यानमा राख्दै हामीले जर्नलको उद्देश्य पुनर्परिभाषित गर्दै जर्नललाई अनुसन्धान र नीतिबिचको सेतुको रूपमा पुनर्संरचना गर्नुका साथै अनुसन्धानकर्ताहरू र नीति पेशाकर्मीहरूबिचको सहकार्यलाई प्रोत्साहन गर्ने गरी जर्नलको उद्देश्य र दायरा अद्यावधिक गरेका छौं । यस परिवर्तनले नीति निर्माताका लागि स्पष्ट र सहज भाषामा अनुसन्धान सञ्चारको महत्त्वलाई ध्यान दिएको छ । यसै पक्षलाई सहज बनाउन हामीले शोधलेखमा *नीति सिफारिस र सुझाबित मार्ग* भन्ने नयाँ खण्डहरू अनिवार्य रूपमा समावेश गर्नुपर्ने व्यवस्था गर्दै पाण्डुलिपिको ढाँचा परिवर्तन गरेका छौं । यसले अनुसन्धानका निष्कर्षलाई कार्यान्वयनयोग्य नीतिमा रूपान्तरण गर्न मद्दत पुर्‍याउँछ । अर्को परिवर्तनको रूपमा विज्ञसमीक्षाको प्रक्रियाअघि प्रारम्भिक सम्पादकीय मूल्याङ्कन र पाण्डुलिपि सुधार सहयोग गर्ने काम सुरु गरिएको छ । यस पहलको उद्देश्य अनुसन्धानलाई अझ समृद्ध बनाउनु र सम्बन्धित नीतिसँग बलियोसँग जोड्नु हो । चौथो अङ्कमा परीक्षण गरिएको यस पाण्डुलिपि सुधार पहल अन्तर्गत पाँच लेखहरूलाई विस्तृत नीतिगत सिफारिसमा रूपान्तरण गर्दै प्रकाशन गरिएको छ । यस सम्बन्धमा लेखक र समीक्षकहरूबाट सकारात्मक प्रतिक्रिया पाएका छौं । हामी यो नयाँ पहललाई सफल मान्दै भविष्यका अङ्कहरूमा समेत विस्तार गर्नेछौं । साथै, अनुसन्धानकर्ता र नीति पेशाकर्मीहरूका लागि व्यापक मार्गदर्शनको सम्भावना पनि खोज्नेछौं ।

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The Nepal Public Policy Review was launched as a multidisciplinary journal to serve as an academic platform for researchers contributing knowledge relevant to public policy. We have published two regular volumes along with a special issue dedicated to agricultural policy and practice. The special issue stemmed from the symposium "Agricultural Policies and Practices in Nepal: Pathways for Transformation," organized in January 2023 by the Policy Research Institute and the Nepalese Agricultural Professionals of America (NAPA). The first volume included nine research articles and six policy commentaries, while the second volume featured thirteen research articles and four policy commentaries. The special issue of the third volume produced twelve research articles. However, the next issue of this volume contains only two articles due to low submissions.

Following the publication of the third volume, we critically reviewed the journal's policies and publications to assess how well it fulfilled its mission and explored opportunities for stronger alignment with public policy.

Based on this review and drawing from the policy research conducted within the Policy Research Institute and disseminated in formats such as research reports and policy briefs, we identified a pressing need to better align academic research outputs with public policy. Achieving this alignment would require revising the journal's policies and, in the case of manuscript submissions, assisting authors in improving their work to make it more policy-relevant. Consequently, we redefined the journal's purpose to focus on bridging research with public policy. Additionally, we updated the Aims and Scope to encourage the creation and co-creation of policy-relevant and policy-ready knowledge, fostering collaboration between researchers and policy professionals while expanding the intersection of research and policy.

The philosophy underlying this shift is that communication must be accessible to policymakers. It is widely recognized that policy research should be communicated using clear and accessible language (Aiyede, 2023; Barreto et al., 2024). To facilitate this, we introduced a new manuscript format, which includes mandatory sections for *Policy Recommendations* and *Suggested Course of Action*. These components are designed to transform the objective conclusions of research into actionable policy recommendations, which are further elaborated by specifying the responsible agencies and the actions they should undertake.

As part of our journal policy improvements, we also implemented an initial formative editorial assessment of submitted manuscripts before peer review. This assessment serves two purposes: to enrich the research with as much relevant data as possible and to ensure its connection to appropriate policies. While providing

this kind of assistance is a complex task, the Policy Research Institute, with its ongoing multisectoral policy reviews and multidisciplinary research, is uniquely positioned to offer valuable insights at the research-policy interface. We have leveraged this strength to assist authors with manuscript improvement when deemed appropriate by the editorial team.

Starting with Volume 4, we piloted the manuscript improvement service. We provided varying levels of assistance for all submissions. The revised manuscripts underwent peer review, and those recommended for acceptance—whether with minor or major revisions—were revised again by the authors in collaboration with the journal's editorial team. As a result, out of 11 submissions, we successfully published five articles in Volume 4. The key distinction between these articles and those in previous volumes lies in the conclusion section, which has been meticulously translated into policy recommendations. These recommendations were then elaborated on in the Suggested Course of Action, which typically includes specific recommendations, responsible agencies, and proposed actions.

The feedback we received from authors and reviewers has been overwhelmingly positive. Reviewers have praised the research's clarity and enhanced policy relevance, while authors have appreciated the additional policy data and perspectives integrated into their work.

Supporting academic writing and mentoring has been shown to improve research productivity and quality in resource-limited communities (Sharma, 2025). Similarly, providing support to bureaucrats has demonstrated potential to enhance the impact of policy research (NASC, 2025; Shrestha et al., 2019; Šimić et al., 2021). This suggests that expanding our support model could be an important journal policy agenda for us to move forward. Achieving this would require broader collaboration between scholars, bureaucrats, and the policy research community, desirably as part of a larger research collaboration and community engagement effort. Engaging with the community and fostering partnerships is essential in contexts with limited knowledge resources, including funding, knowledge creators, and knowledge brokers. With growing demand for research-based evidence for public policy (Tiwari, 2021; Vagoni, 2021), the emergence of a cooperative policy research ecosystem looks inevitable.

In conclusion, we consider the manuscript improvement initiative a successful experiment and plan to continue and further strengthen this support in future volumes of the journal. We also aim to explore the possibility of expanding the

mentoring model, which, as discussed above, has been successfully implemented in the academic community and attempted for policy professionals as well.

Editor

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He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Policy Research Institute and the Executive Editor of Volume 4 of the Nepal Public Policy Review.

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