

## **Enhancing Indigenous People and Minority Participation in Decentralized Decision-Making; Strategies for ensuring the inclusion of marginalized groups in decentralized structures**

Governments around the world have implemented various programs to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples and minorities in decentralized decision-making. These programs aim to empower marginalized groups and ensure their voices are heard in shaping their communities.

Decision making is most pivotal when in the hands of local leaders over the local community, and community leaders are generally those most familiar and well equipped to deal with and resolve decision making conundrums among such groups.

Firstly a preliminary introduction as to why indigenous participation is important, must be set forth. For this, reference must be taken with the theories persisting along self-determination, environmental sustainability and social justice. Quite simply, indigenous participation is good for democracy, for the propagation of environmental conservation and sustainable use as well as the slow but sure resolution of historical and ongoing injustices.

To frame a reference point in comparison to Nepal, a comparative analysis to foreign decentralized structures are necessary. The comparisons can be made with

The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 in the Philippines which recognizes the rights of indigenous peoples to their ancestral domains and self-determination. The law mandates that indigenous communities must be consulted and given free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) on any development projects that affect their lands and resources

The Indigenous Peoples' Mandatory Zones (IPMZs) are areas in the Philippines where indigenous peoples have exclusive rights to their ancestral domains. IPMZs are established through a process of community consultation and consensus.

In Nepal, The National Dalit Commission (NDC) is a government agency tasked with protecting the rights of Dalits, Nepal's largest minority group. The NDC has been working to mainstream Dalit issues into government policies and programs and to promote Dalit participation in decentralized decision-making processes.

An analyzation of the effectiveness of these programs and their successes and failures as well as the causes thereof are necessary to draw conclusions to the prospects of improvement for the concept in Nepal.