International Conference *on*
Local Realities and Regional Futures: Transforming Public Administration & Management in South Asia
30th Oct – 1st Nov 2025
Lahore, Pakistan

Call for Papers

The Institute of Administrative Sciences (IAS), University of the Punjab and the South Asian Network for Public Administration (SANPA) are pleased to announce their upcoming International Conference on *"Local Realities and Regional Futures: Transforming Public Administration and Management in South Asia".* The conference seeks to bring together scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and students from across South Asia and beyond to engage in thoughtful dialogue, research exchange, and knowledge sharing around the critical transformations shaping the region.

South Asia stands at a pivotal juncture. As nations in the region confront pressing governance challenges—ranging from the rise of artificial intelligence to public sector reform and evolving regional dynamics, there is a growing need for collaborative approaches that transcend borders. This conference provides a platform to critically explore these transformations and propose innovative pathways for the future of governance in South Asia.

Objectives

- **To explore theoretical and practical dimensions of indigenizing public administration in South Asia** by grounding governance practices in local contexts, cultures, and knowledge systems.
- **To examine emerging challenges and innovations in digital transformation**, AI, and crisis governance for more resilient and inclusive public service delivery.
- **To foster dialogue on gender, equity, and inclusion in public administration** across South Asia, with a focus on marginalized and underrepresented groups.
- **To investigate the role of decentralization and local governance** in strengthening democratic accountability and participatory governance.
- **To identify and discuss innovative and contextually appropriate governance models**, strategies, and reforms that reflect indigenous realities and respond to contemporary issues
- **To strengthen the South Asian research community** by promoting the exchange of ideas, joint research initiatives, and institutional partnerships across countries

Outcomes

- **A set of context-sensitive policy recommendations** and frameworks to guide **locally grounded public administration reforms** in South Asia.
- **Enhanced regional academic and practitioner networks**, including potential partnerships between universities, think tanks, and civil society organizations.
- **A published volume or conference proceedings** featuring selected peer-reviewed papers that contribute to the discourse on indigenization and transformation of governance in South Asia.

- A **regional research agenda** under SANPA promotes **epistemic diversity, digital inclusion**, and innovative governance models.
- **Increased visibility and legitimacy of South Asian perspectives** in global public administration discourse, advocating for epistemic diversity and locally grounded solutions.

Subthemes

Potential avenues of exploration include, but are not limited to the following themes:

Subtheme 1: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and E-Governance for Public Services

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the rise of e-governance present unprecedented opportunities to revolutionize public service delivery, enhance operational efficiency, and improve citizen engagement. This subtheme invites papers that explore the synergistic application, impact, and ethical considerations of AI and digital governance in various aspects of public services in South Asia, including but not limited to:

- AI-driven governance, digital policy formulation, and decision support systems
- Smart city initiatives integrating AI and e-governance platforms
- AI and e-governance solutions for healthcare, education, and social welfare
- AI in digital law enforcement, judicial processes, and regulatory compliance
- Ethical implications and governance frameworks for AI and e-governance in the public sector
- Addressing algorithmic bias, data privacy, and ensuring inclusivity in AI-driven e-governance
- The role of AI in enhancing transparency, accountability, and citizen trust through digital public services

Subtheme 2: Civil Service Reforms

A robust and efficient civil service is the backbone of effective governance. This theme seeks to examine the challenges and opportunities in reforming civil services across South Asian nations to enhance their performance, responsiveness, and integrity. Submissions are encouraged on topics such as:

- Merit-based recruitment and promotion systems
- Capacity building and professional development
- Performance management and accountability mechanisms
- Digitalization and modernization of civil service processes
- Addressing corruption and promoting ethical conduct
- The impact of political interference on civil service effectiveness
- Comparative analysis of civil service reforms in South Asian countries

Subtheme 3: South Asian Relations in a Changing Landscape

The geopolitical landscape is constantly evolving, presenting both challenges and opportunities for inter-state relations in South Asia. This theme invites papers that analyze the dynamics of South Asian relations in the context of global and regional shifts, including:

- Bilateral and multilateral relations among South Asian nations
- The impact of global power dynamics on regional cooperation
- Trade, connectivity, and economic integration in South Asia
- Addressing regional security challenges and conflicts
- The role of non-state actors and transnational issues
- Cultural exchange and people-to-people connectivity
- The impact of climate change on regional stability and cooperation

Subtheme 4: Indigenizing Governance: Theory, Practice, and Pedagogy

This theme invites critical engagement with how public administration can be reimagined through indigenous knowledge systems, cultural values, and local administrative traditions. Topics may include:

- Postcolonial critiques of administrative models in South Asia
- Culturally grounded public policy frameworks
- Indigenous practices in conflict resolution, leadership, and service delivery
- Decolonizing public administration curricula and pedagogy

Subtheme 5: Decentralization and Local Governance in South Asia

Local governance has become increasingly important in addressing regional disparities and deepening democratic practices. This subtheme explores:

- Comparative decentralization experiences in South Asia
- Capacity building at local government levels
- Community-driven governance innovations
- Interplay between traditional governance and formal structures

Subtheme 6: Gender, Equity, and Inclusive Public Administration

Building inclusive governance systems is vital for resilient societies. This theme focuses on:
- Gender mainstreaming in policy and administration
- Public sector approaches to social equity and justice
- Inclusion of marginalized communities in public decision-making
- Intersectionality and public administration reform

Subtheme 7: Crisis Governance and Public Administration Resilience

South Asia faces recurring crises—from climate shocks to pandemics. This subtheme explores:

- Adaptive governance models in crisis settings
- Public sector preparedness and response mechanisms
- Disaster risk management and institutional learning
- Role of bureaucracy and civil society in emergency governance

Subtheme 8: Islamic Public Administration

Rooted in principles of justice, accountability, and collective welfare, Islamic governance traditions offer a rich and historically grounded perspective for rethinking contemporary public administration. This theme invites papers that explore the theoretical foundations, institutional arrangements, and practical implications of Islamic public administration in the South Asian context and beyond. Topics may include:

- Normative frameworks of governance in Islamic traditions
- Historical models of administration in Muslim societies
- Public accountability, ethics, and leadership in Islamic governance
- Integration of Islamic administrative principles in modern bureaucracies
- Islamic philanthropy and public service delivery
- Comparative analyses of Islamic and Western administrative thought

Subtheme 9: Global Refugee and Migration Governance: Mechanisms, Crises, and Challenges

Migration and forced displacement have emerged as defining global challenges, with significant implications for public administration, human rights, and regional cooperation. South Asia, both as a source and host of migrants and refugees, is uniquely positioned within this global governance landscape. This subtheme invites papers that critically examine the institutional, legal, and policy responses to migration and refugee governance, including:

- Regional responses to refugee flows and statelessness in South Asia
- Governance mechanisms for managing cross-border migration
- The role of International Organizations in refugee protection and burden-sharing
- Migration and urban governance: challenges for local administrations
- Humanitarian governance and crisis response frameworks
- Citizenship, identity, and inclusion in migration policies
- Comparative approaches to migration governance and integration
- Ethical dilemmas and rights-based approaches in migration policy

Subtheme 10: Climate Governance and Environmental Resilience in South Asia

Climate change poses existential threats to South Asian societies, economies, and ecosystems. Effective governance is crucial for climate adaptation, mitigation, and building resilient institutions. This subtheme invites scholarly and practice-based contributions that interrogate the intersections of environmental policy, governance innovation, and local knowledge systems, including:

- National and subnational climate governance frameworks
- Integration of climate policy into public administration and planning
- Institutional capacities for climate adaptation and disaster preparedness
- Climate justice and the role of vulnerable communities
- Public-private partnerships and financing mechanisms for climate resilience
- Traditional ecological knowledge and community-led sustainability practices
- Regional cooperation for transboundary environmental governance
- Monitoring, evaluation, and accountability in climate action

Subtheme 11: Sectoral Governance and Institutional Reforms in South Asia

Robust governance systems in key public sectors—such as healthcare, higher education, water, energy, and transport—are essential for achieving equitable and sustainable development in South Asia. This subtheme invites research that critically examines sector-specific governance frameworks, institutional arrangements, reform initiatives, and public service delivery models. Emphasis is placed on context-sensitive approaches that respond to local realities while aligning with global standards. Topics may include:

- Governance of healthcare systems and public health institutions
- Reforms and challenges in higher education governance
- Public-private partnerships in service delivery across sectors
- Institutional innovations in water, sanitation, energy, and transport
- Regulation, accountability, and quality assurance in sectoral governance
- Financing, planning, and decentralization of sectoral services
- Comparative analyses of sectoral governance across South Asian countries
- Community participation and citizen engagement in sector-specific reforms

Subtheme 12: Contemporary Management Practices and Organizational Innovation

While the conference primarily focuses on public administration, management scholarship provides valuable insights into leadership, strategy, innovation, and organizational development. This general track welcomes papers from scholars and practitioners exploring evolving management paradigms across sectors, including:

- Strategic management and organizational change
- Human resource management and leadership in dynamic environments
- Innovation, entrepreneurship, and knowledge management
- Governance and performance in nonprofit and corporate sectors
- Digital transformation and the future of work
- Ethics, accountability, and stakeholder engagement
- Cross-cultural and comparative management practices
- Management education, pedagogy, and curriculum innovation

Institute of Administrative Sciences - A profile

Institute of Administrative Sciences (IAS), University of the Punjab, stands as a pioneer in public administration and management education in Pakistan. Established in 1962 as the Department of Public Administration, the institute was founded with technical assistance from USAID, in collaboration with the University of Southern California (USC). A team led by Prof. Don R. Larson developed the department's academic programs and trained local faculty, many of whom later completed their doctoral studies at USC. Upon the conclusion of the USAID project, this trained faculty assumed leadership of the department.

The department was upgraded to the **Institute of Administrative Sciences** in **2001**, marking a new era of academic growth. Key milestones include the launch of the **MPA (Executive Program)** in **1998**, and the addition of a broad range of academic programs over the years, such as:

- **BS Management**
- **Master of Public Administration (MPA)**
- **MPhil Management**
- **MS Human Resource Management (MS-HRM)**
- **MS Health Administration**
- **PhD Administrative Sciences**

With a legacy of academic excellence and innovation, IAS proudly holds its place as the **foundational institution for public administration education** and a **leading center for management studies** in Pakistan.

South Asian Network for Public Administration (SANPA) - A profile

SANPA was established to promote academic and professional collaboration in the field of public administration across South Asia. It serves as a platform for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to engage in dialogue, share research, and address governance challenges unique to the region. SANPA is also a member of the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN), which further enhances its global engagement and visibility within the international public administration community.

SANPA's growing membership includes leading universities, research institutes, civil service training academies, and individual scholars from countries across South Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Maldives. This diverse membership base strengthens SANPA's capacity to serve as a truly regional forum, promoting cross-border learning, collaborative research, and the indigenization of public administration practices.SANPA's first international conference, held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, brought together distinguished academics, government officials, and experts from across South Asia to discuss contemporary issues in public administration, governance reforms, and policy implementation. The conference was widely acclaimed for its intellectual depth and regional impact.

City of Lahore

Located at the crossroads of history and modernity, Lahore—Pakistan's cultural capital—offers a rich and immersive experience for our international conference participants. From the grandeur of Mughal landmarks such as the Badshahi Mosque and Lahore Fort to the

vibrant energy of the Walled City and traditional bazaars, Lahore presents a compelling tapestry of heritage and hospitality. Participants will enjoy world-renowned cuisine, welcoming locals, and convenient access to luxury accommodations and modern facilities. As the host city for the IAS-SANPA International Conference 2025 on *'Local Realities and Regional Futures: Transforming Public Administration & Management in South Asia,'* Lahore provides not only a stimulating academic environment but also a unique cultural journey into the heart of South Asia.

Abstract Guidelines

The authors are invited to submit an abstract of 500 words by mailing it to conf2025@ias.edu.pk in Word (.docx) format with the email subject "Conference Abstract". The abstract should include the title of the proposed paper, an overview of the main argument, key literature, research methods, research findings, and theoretical and practical implications.

Key Dates & Deadlines

Abstract Submission Deadline (Extended): 27th July 2025
Abstract Acceptance Notification: 10th August 2025.
Conference Registration: 15th August 2025 – 15th October 2025
Submission of Full Paper: 15th October 2025.

Publication Opportunities

The hosts aim to publish a peer-reviewed volume featuring selected papers from the conference with an international academic publisher. SANPA maintains an active partnership with **Springer, USA**, through which it has been consistently releasing scholarly books on governance and development. The President of SANPA serves as the Series Editor for this publication series. Upon the successful conclusion of the conference, papers demonstrating academic rigor, originality, and thematic relevance will be considered for inclusion in a dedicated volume under the **SANPA–Springer South Asian Series**.

Selected papers from the conference will have the opportunity to be published in the *Governance and Management Review (GMR)*, the research journal of the Institute of Administrative Sciences, without any publication fee. All submissions will be subject to the journal's standard peer-review process. For details on the journal's scope and author guidelines, please visit: http://pu.edu.pk/home/journal/37.

Registration

Conference Registration (National)

Conference Registration Fee (Participants/Faculty/Professionals)	**Rs. 8000**
Conference Registration fee for Students	**Rs. 5000**
Conference Registration fee for IAS Students	**Rs. 2000**

Conference Registration (International)

International presenters/participants	**$ 100**
Students	**$ 75**
Online participation/presentation at the conference	**$ 65**

Please note that registration for the conference closes on **15th October 2025.** The registration fee includes meals during the conference and conference materials/publications for in-person registered participants. Payment details will be shared once registrations open on **August 15, 2025**.

CORE TEAM

Patron
Prof. Dr Muhammad Ali
Vice Chancellor, University of the Punjab

Conference Chair
Prof. Dr. Kashif Rathore
Director, Institute of Administrative Sciences, University of the Punjab

Conference Co-Chairs

Prof. Akhlaque Haque
President, South Asian Network for Public Administration (SANPA) & Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, University of Alabama at Birmingham, US

Prof. Dr. Yaamina Salman
Secretary, Academic Affairs, South Asian Network for Public Administration & Professor, Institute of Administrative Sciences, University of the Punjab

Conference Secretary

Dr. Amani Moazzam
Assistant Professor, Institute of Administrative Sciences
University of the Punjab