

Visit Report on Honorable MoFAGA Minister Mr. Amanlal Modi to Koshi Pradesh

1. Background

The PLGSP is a national flagship program of the Government of Nepal and aims at building institutional, organizational and individual capacity at all levels of government, with particular focus on the provincial and local levels. The Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration (MoFAGA) serves as its executive agency, whereas provincial governments, local governments and provincial level training centers are its implementing agencies. The program is supported by five international development partners (DPs), namely the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) of UK, the European Union (EU), the Government of Norway, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the United Nations.

The PLGSP's goal is to attain functional, sustainable, inclusive, and accountable provincial and local governance. It aims to contribute to the delivery of quality services at provincial and local levels, promote local development, and enhance economic prosperity. For this, it works through three outcome areas and 14 outputs. To attain the goal of program, there are six governing bodies where all the program implementation is carried out. Among them National Steering Committee is the supreme governance body of the program and is chaired by Minister of MoFAGA at a federal level. It acts as a supervisory board that provides guidance on the type and nature of activities to be undertaken, amongst others, by discussing and approving ASIP and by monitoring the quality of the field implementation. The steering committee would deal with overall program objectives and also oversee the functioning of the PPIU and PCGG including assessing the quality of implemented programs in respective provinces.

To create enabling environment for PLGSP implementation in province and monitor ongoing activities of PPIU and PCGG, Honorable Minister of MoFAGA, Mr. Aman Lal Modi have visited Koshi Province from 3rd April to 5th April, 2023.

2. Visit Objectives

The main purpose of the visit of Hon. Minister is create synergy between federal, provincial and local government to implement the PLGSP program. The specific objectives are as follow.

- Monitoring of PLGSP supported plans and programs in local government and assess the program effectiveness.
- Monitoring and reviewing of Innovative Partnership Fund Program being jointly implemented by local and provincial government.
- Interact with the government officials and elected representatives of local government and visualize their views and progress towards implementation of federalism.

3. Date, Time and Participants

The visit was organized in between 3rd April to 5th April, 2023 (Annex 1) in a team of 4 officials and 2 Team Leader of PLGSP (Annex 2) headed by Hon. Minister of MoFAGA.

4. Place visited

Team has visited Kathahari Rural Municipality Office of Morang, Suryodaya Municipality of Ilam and Sundarharaicha Municipality of Morang.

5. Key Highlights of Visit Program

Day I

Reception Program at Biratnagar Airport, Morang

Mr. Krishna Prasad Sapkota, Provincial Program Director, Mr. Kshitish Bhattarai, Provincial Program Manager, Mr. Pranay Sharma, Team Leader, PPIU and Ms. Anita Guragain, Team Leader, PCGG, Jhapa have received and welcome Honorable Minister and his team at Biratnagar Airport and provided briefing about the PLGSP progress status and visit schedule.

Day II

Katahari Rural Municipality Office, Katahari, Morang

The team has visited Kathahari Rural Municipality Office and have participated in sharing program organized by rural municipality office where Board Members and officials were present. Ms. Sita Devi Rajbanshi, Deputy Chairperson of municipality have welcome visiting team. Chief Administrative Office have presented key progress made towards development plans and program of current FY with following key highlights

- 11 acts, 2 bylaws, 28 guideline drafted
- Total financial progress of FY 2079/80 till March 43.49%
- Major activities are focused on agriculture, livestock, education, health., most of the activities related to infrastructure development are with financial aid of Province and federal gov.
- Audit arrear has been settled down to 95%
- Digitization in service delivery at (planning, revenue, store management etc)
- CAO highlighted the PLGSP initiatives and its enormous contributions in overall governance of the Municipality-GESI mainstreaming, RIAP, CD activities to elected and staffs

Key Remarks of Hon. Minister, Mr Amanlal Modi

After the progress and status presentation, Hon. Minister, Mr. Amanlal Modi have interacted and discussed with the elected representatives, government official and community representatives about the ways for effective implementation of federalism and strengthening inter-governmental relationship in Nepal. Following are the key points outline from the discussion with inputs from Hon. Minister.

- Expressed happy to see all in his own political constituency and hoping to provide them remarkable support in transforming lives of people.

- Local governments have important role in strengthening and effective implementation of federalism in Nepal.
- MoFAGA is committed to coordinate and partnering with local government in policy formulation process.
- Local governments should focus to make themselves strong and self-dependent.
- Local government need to make instinct focus to solve the issues and problems of citizens.
- Local government need to avoid such activities with small volume of budget during planning process. Small budget-based activities cannot contribute sustainability of development programs as well as can't contribute to achieve prosperity and long-term vision of government.

Closing Remarks by Mr. Dev Raj Chaudhary, Chairperson of Katahari Rural Municipality

Mr. Devraj Chaudhary, Chairperson of Katahari rural municipality expressed happy to see MoFAGA Minister and receive the valuable inputs for further movement of local government. He also committed to accomplish all the planned activities within time frame and improve the financial, administrative and planning system in Katahari Rural Municipality.

Day III

Suryodaya Municipality, Fikkal, Ilam

Field Monitoring and observation Visit

As per the schedule, team have visited and ongoing progress of Kanyam Dundegaira -Purne Danda Cycling Track an IPF Project implemented by Suryodaya Municipality, Fikkal, Ilam. During the visit, detail field observation was made from the starting point of the project-Dundegaira, Kanyam cycling track to the end point. Hon Minister and team also observed Glass Bridge construction site, home stay program and interacted with the local homestay owners. Team also visited main touristic spot of Kanyam and have observed infrastructures, spot management and citizens' engagement in local tourism promotion.

Program Interaction and Sharing Program at Suryodaya Municipality Office

After field observation visit, team have participated in interaction and sharing program organized at Suryodaya Municipality Office in presence of Municipality board member and officials. The program was chaired by Mr. Rana Bahadur Rai, Mayor of Suryodaya Municipality. Mr. Durga Kumar Baral have welcomed all the visiting members. Chief Administrative Officer, Mr. Milan Bhattarai have shared major achievement of municipality with following brief.

- Out of 197 number of staffs positions, 67 positions are still not been fulfilled.
- Expansion of road network at all ward, this program has been taken in priority as a Municipal Pride Program, till date all wards are now made accessible with the road network
- Major programs are prioritized for tourism development under IPF program like construction of glass bridge, renovation of monuments park, cycle track, health park etc.

- IPF program aligned with the municipal annual program and has helped to boost the local tourism and economy development activities
- Digitization of service delivery and administrative operation is functional.
- Municipal effort for developing Shree Antu for sunrising view point including homestay program and dairy product development for local economic development is operational and municipality is supporting for marketing of tourism product.
- Acquired success to introduced Suryodaya Municipality as product place of 5 “A” (*Aduwa, Alan (milk), Alaichi, Amlisho and Akabare*).
- Municipality have been constructing Tea Testing and Processing Building to support tea producers and traders in Kanyam, which is expected to accomplished by this FY.
- Regular live telecast of board meeting of municipality to insure transparency of decisions and process among the citizen.
- PCGG have supported various training to develop the capacity of existing staffs along with institutional capacity development initiatives.

Remarks from Mr. Bhupendra Sapkota, National Program Manager, PCU/PLGSP

Mr. Bhupendra Sapkota, NPM have clarified the questions and queries raised from participants and shared decisions of PLGSP about the ongoing IPF programs as below

- PLGSP is going to end its program duration by July 2023. So, program has decided to keep continue in next FY under no cost extension model.
- There will not be provision of IPF program budget from PLGSP for next year. LGs are suggested to allocate the budget to keep continue to generate result and outcomes of the program.
- PLGSP is under the process of formulating plans and programs for next FY, so LG need to be in close contact with PCGG and PPIU.
- Municipality should submit its IPF financial report to PPIU periodically.

Key Remarks of Hon. Minister, Mr Amanlal Modi

Honorable Minister has kept remarks in the floor in brief.

- MoFAGA have two areas of work, one is strengthening federalism in Nepal and another is operating general administration. As realized, more time is given to maintaining general administration. So onward will maintain balance between two areas, more focus will be provided for strengthening federalism in the country.
- He appealed that campaigning of strengthening federalism need to be started from land of rising sun i.e, Suryodaya Municipality which is located in the eastern most part of the country.
- After being elected from the citizen, all the political leaders should be neutral in serving for citizen.
- Prime Minister’s pic should be kept along with President of Nepal in each municipal office.
- Planning and budgeting system must be visioned based so not to consider small project/program as for distribution purpose. This practice is discouraged in order to insure to achieve five years goal of municipality.

- Transfer and posting procedure of Civil Servant (staffs) must be based on justice.
- Municipality should work more to improve governance system for better service delivery and citizen satisfaction.

Closing Remarks by Mr. Rana Bd Rai, Mayor of Suryodaya Municipality, Fikkal, Ilam

Mr. Rana Bd. Rai, Mayor have kept his closing remarks focusing to improvement of governance system in the municipality

- Municipal staffs are very important to insure governance system in service delivery and office operation.
- For effective implementation of federalism in the country, the coordination, cooperation and relation among the three level of government is much important to bring change in equal and strong existence of all. So MoFAGA should take lead role.
- There is high need of such laws formulation which can catalyse connectivity mechanism among three level.
- National level sensitization campaigning is needed to improve the tax payment system in the country.

Interaction and Sharing Program at Sundarharaicha Municipality Office

IPF focal person Mr. Niraj Neupane presented IPF program and municipal program status with below major highlight

- IPF project concept, its objectives and ongoing progress
- Field survey for developing baseline is ongoing where 84 surveyors are engaged and expected to completed by 15th Baisakh 2080.
- PCGG have supported different subject based capacity development initiatives to elected representatives, officials and other staffs.
- Out of 114 planned activities of municipality, 55% have been completed. Rest are under implementation process.
- O&M report have been sent to MoFAGA
- Uniform standards and guideline to mainstream the Digitization of service delivery is important need of all local governments.
- Municipal expectation from PLGSP/MoFAGA
 - Continue support in CD activities to elected and govt officials, CD plan development, MTEF preparation, planning and budgeting
 - Laws/guideline support in realistic implementation of LISA and FRAP
 - In service training and scholarship for further studies to municipal staffs.

Key Remarks of Hon. Minister, Mr Amanlal Modi

- The IPF project concept of digitization in service delivery is very impressive and appreciated the Municipality initiatives through IPF

- The overall concept of SMART *palika* really helps the local citizen to realize the Singhadurbar at local level.
- More focus should be given to strengthening federalism and improving municipal governance system in administration, financial management and service delivery
- Municipality need to set target to become self-reliant as per the constitution.
- MoFAGA is rigorously engaged to drafting the civil servant act with provisioning of level system for all working staffs.

Closing Remarks by Mr. Kedar Prasad Guragain, Mayor of Sundarharaicha Municipality, Morang

Mr. Kedar Guragain, Mayor has express gratitude and happy to see MoFAGA Minister with following closing remarks

- Budget status of Sundarharaicha Municipality is low to address the rising demands from citizen. Need to explore the possibilities of join working areas with federal government in upcoming planning and budget formulation period.
- Staff fulfilment is still pending so expected to receive support from MoFAGA
- We are effortful to convert municipality from conventional operation system to digital and IT friendly municipality. For this IPF program of PLGSP is supporting to establish system and will be completed all the activities by this FY.
- Mayor expressed “On behalf of municipality and citizen of Sundarharaicha best wishes and many thanks to Hon Minister, Mr. Amanlal Modi for your valuable steps into the municipality and inputs. Expecting same opportunity will be given for next time before planning session starts in municipality”.

6. Conclusion

The three days visit program of Hon. Minister was very successful to bring synergy between PLGSP and local government as well as major focus to sensitize local governments to put more efforts in plans and program to strengthen federal governance system. Valuable inputs and suggestions have been received from Hon. Minister to PLGSP and visited local government.

Report Prepared and submitted by

Mr. Pranay Sharma

Team Leader, PPIU, Koshi Province

Annex 1

Visit schedule for Honorable Minister of Federal Affairs and General Administration Amanlal Modi's visit to Koshi Province.

Day 1: Sunday, April 2, 2023

- 01:20 PM: Departure from TIA
- 02:00 PM: Arrival at Biratnagar Airport and Departure for the hotel (or any other accommodation)
- 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM: Rest and refreshments

Day 2: Monday, April 3, 2023

- 7:30 AM to 8:30 AM: Breakfast
- 9:30 AM: Departure for Katahari Rural Municipality
- 10:00 AM to 01:00 PM: Interaction and review of development projects and programs in Katahari Rural Municipality
- 01:00 PM to 02:00 PM: Lunch
- 02:00-5:30 PM – Departure for Suryodaya Municipality, Fikkal, Ilam
- 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM: Rest
- 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM: Dinner

Day 3: Tuesday, April 4, 2023

- 7:30 AM to 8:30 AM: Breakfast
- 9:00 AM 10:00 AM: Field Monitoring of IPF programs in Suryodaya Municipality
- 10:30 AM to -12:00 PM: Interaction and review of development projects and programs in Suryodaya Municipality, Ilam
- 12:00-01.00 PM: Lunch
- 01:00 PM to 4:00 PM: Departure for Sundarharaicha Rural Municipality
- 4:00 AM to 6:00 PM: Interaction and review of development projects and programs in Sundarharaicha Rural Municipality
- 6:00 PM : Departure for Biratnagar Airport
- 7:00 PM: Flight back to Kathmandu

Annex 2

Visiting Team Member

MoFAGA/PCU Team

1. Honorable Minister, Mr. Aman Lal Modi, Ministry of Federal Affair and General Administration
2. Mr. Bhupendra Sapkota, NPM, PCU, Provincial and Local Governance Support Program.
3. Mr. Tajim Ansari, Personal Secretary of Minister, Secretariate Office
4. Mr Buddha Lopchan, Press Advisor of Minister, Secretariate Office

Province Team

1. Mr. Krishna Prasad Sapkota, PPD, PLGSP, Koshi Province
2. Mr. Kshitish Bhattarai, PPM, PPIU, Koshi Province
3. Mr. Pranay Sharma, Team Leader, PPIU, Koshi Province
4. Ms. Anita Guragain, Team Leader, PCGG, Koshi Province.

