The Centre of Canadian Studies, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla are inviting paper proposals for the national academic conference on “Public Policy, Governance and Democracy-Experiences from Canada & India”, to be held on 28–29th March, 2014 in Shimla. Proposals (up to 250 words) should be submitted by 25th February, 2014. Selected conference papers will be published in a special issue of the academic journal of Himachal Pradesh University.

Public Policy:

Public Policy clearly is a critical stage of the planning process which also is an explicit subject of policy design. The public policy making is part of the pre-decision phase including crafting the goals and priorities and options, costs and benefits of each option, externalities of each option. It involves identifying a set of policy alternatives and public policy tools to address a problem as a result that a prepared set of solutions is done for the final solutions from which decision makers actually choose by judging the feasibility, political acceptance, costs and benefits. In other words, the public policy formulation process will need the motivation and participation of different actors with their entrances of new actors and new ideas who will actually play their roles in the policy design process. Thus, the structure of the sub-system with two components of the discourse community and interest network will decide the participation of different policy actors and final chosen public policy solutions.

The involvement of businesses and civil society - consumers, private entrepreneurs, employees and citizens and community groups, NGOs in designing public policy is critical if the Governments are to improve the transparency, quality and effectiveness of their policies as well as establishing the legitimacy of the public policy. Socio-economic and political environment of a country determine or shape the network of a particular policy, so we would like to explore recent research which examine linkages between models of economic development and welfare regimes in developing countries who are known as weak institutional capacity, lack of accountability to the citizen to predict the policy formulation in developing countries.

Governance:

Generally political theory uses the term ‘government’ to refer to the formal institutions of the state and their monopoly of legitimate coercive power. Government is characterized by its ability to make decisions and its capacity to enforce them. In particular government is understood to refer to the formal and institutional processes which operate at the level of the nation state to maintain public order and facilitate collective action.
Theoretical work on governance reflects the interests of the social science community in a shifting pattern in styles of governing. The traditional use of governance and its dictionary entry define it as a synonym for government. The processes of governance lead outcomes that parallel those of the traditional institutions of government. Governance is ultimately concerned with creating the conditions for ordered rule and collective action. The outputs of governance are not therefore different from those of government. It is rather a matter of a difference in processes.

The academic literature on governance is diverse and relatively disjointed. Its theoretical roots are various: institutional economics, international relations, organizational studies, developmental studies, political science, public administration and Foucauldian inspired theorists. Insights can be drawn from the literature but its very diversity requires the development of a governance perspective.

**Democratization:**

The relationship between representative democracy and governance networks deserves closer scrutiny. There is only limited scientific evidence available to date. In the absence of evidence, the debate has been polarized. One view sees networks as arenas that offer new ways of connecting public policy-making to citizens and stakeholders, overcoming the constraints and limitations of representative democracy and party politics. The literature on this view emphasizes the pluralist notion of networks as consisting of horizontal interdependencies through which actors steer the development of policy and its implementation. Such networks are understood to be flexible and fluid, able to adapt in order to accommodate the new forms of interest representation associated with deliberative practices. The contrasting view is that networks are centres of power and privilege that give structural advantage to particular private interests in the process of making or shaping public policy decisions. This critique of the pluralist position emphasizes the strong managerial character of governance networks, their incorporation of strategically powerful actors, and the opacity of their formal rules and constitutional position. There has been a growth in research that sets out to investigate more systematically the democratic dimension of governance networks, and the partnership boards through which many find formal expression. Networks in this literature are instrumental in getting good service through contracting by public principals. One could even say that the relation between governance networks and representational democracy is not problematized at all. This developing stream of research on the democratic dimension of governance networks has thus far failed to trace through the range of theoretical linkages between governance networks and representative democracy.

**Various Themes for the Conference**

- Implementation and Public Policy
- Public policy – how Effective and Democratic
- Social Movements and Political Resistance or the vice-versa
Government to Governance
Governance and the blurring boundaries of socio and economic issues
Democratic Governance
Gender and Governance
Democracy from Below
Democracy and Civil Society
Democracy and Participatory Politics
Narratives of Public Policy, Governance and Democracy
New Forms of Democratic Empowerment

Abstracts for papers (up to 250 words) should be submitted by 25\textsuperscript{th} February, 2014. There is a registration fee of Rs1000 for students and Rs1500 for others. Limited free accommodation during the conference is available at the guest house. Please indicate your need for such services when submitting your paper proposal. At this time, there is no travel support available for participants.

For paper submissions and any further information regarding the seminar please contact the academic conveners \textit{Prof. Meenakshi Faithpaul} and \textit{Dr. Anupama Singh} at office of Centre of Canadian Studies, ICDEOL Block, R.N.-314 or ppgdconf@gmail.com