NR39 / Balancing Innovation and Regulation in Developing Economies: Rethinking Governance, Digital Public Infrastructure, and Policy Capacities in the Global South

Topic : Research

Chair : Varun Chhachhar (University of Lucknow)

Second Chair : Swikar Sankrit (University of Lucknow)

Third Chair : Karishma Verma (University of Lucknow)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Developing economies across the Global South face the challenge of harnessing technological innovation for inclusive development while ensuring regulatory safeguards, democratic accountability, and institutional coherence. This tension is particularly visible in areas such as digital public infrastructure, e-governance reforms, data governance, welfare delivery, fintech ecosystems, and emerging technologies. As these countries become producers of governance innovations, from India's Aadhaar-enabled service delivery to Brazil's participatory budgeting and Kenya's M-Pesa, the question of balancing innovation with effective regulation becomes central to public policy praxis.

Aligned with the conference theme, "Public Policy Praxis in Global South: Building Coherence and Capacity for Future Challenges," this panel foregrounds the governance capacities required to regulate fast-moving technologies without hindering developmental gains. While scholarship has examined digital governance (Masiero 2020), regulatory governance (Levi-Faur 2011), state capacity (Centeno et al. 2017), and policy experimentation in the Global South (Mukherjee & Bali 2019), systematic analysis of how innovation and regulation can be co-designed through adaptive, participatory, and context-specific frameworks remains limited.

This panel seeks to address that gap by bringing together multidisciplinary contributions that explain how innovation–regulation tensions unfold in practice, how legal and policy frameworks respond, and what lessons can advance future-ready state capacity.

Research Questions:

a. How can developing economies design regulatory frameworks that enable innovation while safeguarding rights, transparency, and accountability?

b. What legal-policy tensions arise in the governance of emerging technologies (e.g., fintech, AI, digital welfare systems, smart cities)?

c. How do institutional capacities, political economy constraints, and administrative processes shape innovation–regulation trade-offs?

d. What comparative insights emerge from the Global South on balancing experimentation with oversight?

e. What methodological approaches best capture these rapidly evolving governance dynamics?

General Objectives:

a. Examine governance challenges in integrating technological innovations.

b. Analyse regulatory structures that support innovation while ensuring accountability and rights.

c. Explore comparative insights illustrating diverse innovation–regulation pathways.

d. Identify theoretical, empirical, and methodological approaches to studying these dynamics.

e. Highlight case studies demonstrating successes and failures of innovation led reforms.

f. Foster dialogue among legal scholars, policymakers, and practitioners on building adaptive regulatory capacities.

g. Contribute to debates on strengthening institutions for equitable technological transitions.

Context & Scientific Relevance:

Rapid technological transitions in developing economiesshaped by state led digitalisation, private-sector innovation, and civil society engagement have produced pioneering governance models. Yet such innovations often outpace legal readiness and administrative capacity, leading to exclusion, accountability gaps, and governance asymmetries. By examining cases across welfare delivery, fintech regulation, and digital governance, this panel offers comparative, context-sensitive insights into how states can balance experimentation with oversight. Its scientific relevance lies in advancing theoretical and empirical understanding of innovation–regulation dynamics, expanding methodological approaches for analysing adaptive regulation, and positioning the Global South as a producer of governance knowledge capable of reshaping global debates on public policy and technology governance.

Brief Biography of Chairs:

Chair 1: **Dr. Varun Chhachhar** is a Professor at the Faculty of Law, University of Lucknow, and Director of the Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma Institute of Democracy, University of Lucknow. He specialises in Public Policy and Governance, Constitutional Law, Public Law, and the Right to Information. Dr. Chhachhar has authored books, contributed to international volumes, and published widely in reputed journals. He has delivered over 100 lectures at leading academic and policy forums across India and abroad.

E-Mail: chhachhar_varun@lkouniv.ac.in

Chair 2: **Swikar Sankrit** is an advocate and a Ph.D. Research Scholar in Public Policy and Governance at Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma Institute of Democracy, University of Lucknow, where he is undertaking Doctoral Research on the topic “E-Governance and Public Distribution System in the State of Uttar Pradesh: A Critical Anecdote with Reference to Antyodaya Anna Yojana.” Swikar holds a keen interest in public policy research, formulation and analysis, stakeholder engagement and broad-based consulting for various stakeholders, and has contributed various research articles and book chapters on important matters of policy and governance.

E-Mail: rs2023dsdsid_swikar@lkouniv.ac.in

Chair 3: **Karishma Verma** is a Ph.D. Research Scholar at the Faculty of Law, University of Lucknow, where she is undertaking Doctoral Research on the topic “Reservation Policy in India: A Socio-Legal Study Regarding Distributive Justice and Sub-categorization of Reservation for SC/ST in the State of Uttar Pradesh with Reference to the State of Punjab.” Her primary research interests lie in Affirmative Action, Constitutional Law, and Environmental Law. She has published various papers in reputed journals, contributed 3 book chapters, and presented her work at several national and international conferences.

E-Mail: rs2022law_karishma@lkouniv.ac.in

CALL FOR PAPERS

This panel invites scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and interdisciplinary researchers to explore the urgent question: **How can developing economies balance innovation and regulation in policymaking?**

The panel seeks to uncover how states navigate the tensions between rapid technological advancement and the need for robust legal, regulatory, and institutional safeguards. We are particularly interested in contributions that highlight the lived realities of governance in the Global South, examine law–policy intersections, and provide context-rich evidence on how regulatory frameworks evolve in response to innovations that frequently outpace them.

We welcome theoretical, empirical, and methodological contributions that address (but are not limited to) the following themes:

• Regulation of digital welfare systems and state-led technological innovation

• Fintech ecosystems, data governance, cybersecurity, and regulatory sandboxes

• AI, algorithmic decision-making, and their legal–policy implications

• State capacity, institutional design, and adaptive regulation

• Comparative governance experiences across India, Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia

• Rights-based considerations: privacy, inclusion, accountability, and transparency

• Methodological approaches for studying innovation–regulation dynamics in developing contexts

Expected Paper Contributions:

The panel particularly encourages submissions engaging with:

• Theoretical frameworks that reconceptualize innovation–regulation tensions in the Global South

• Empirical case studies grounded in fieldwork, administrative data, digital governance projects, or sectoral reforms

• Methodological innovations for evaluating regulatory capacity and technological governance

Submission Invitation:

Researchers, faculty, policy practitioners, and advanced doctoral scholars interested in the governance of new technologies, regulatory design, comparative public policy, and Global South innovation ecosystems are invited to submit paper proposals.

Your contributions will help advance a deeper understanding of how developing economies can build coherent, adaptive, and future-ready governance systems capable of managing rapid technological change.

Potential Papers:

a. " **State Capacity and Technology Adoption: A Comparative Study of Digital Governance in Indonesia and the Philippines**"

Dr. Alok Kumar Yadav, Professor, Faculty of Law, University of Lucknow

Masoom Ali, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Faculty of Law, University of Lucknow

b. " **Regulating Digital Welfare: Innovation, Accountability, and Algorithmic Governance in India's Public Distribution System (PDS)**"

Shubham Shukla, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Public Administration, University of Lucknow

c. "**Balancing Rights and Innovation: Legal Frameworks for Data Governance in the Global South**"

Prashant Singh, Ph.D. Research Scholar, Faculty of Law, University of Lucknow

d. "**Fintech Innovation and Regulatory Sandboxes: Lessons from India, Kenya, and Brazil**"

Dr. Ashok Kumar, Assistant Professor, Department of Statistics, University of Lucknow

Dr. Ritu Kumari, Assistant Professor, Career Medical Institute, Lucknow

Additional submissions will be welcomed through an open call, ensuring a diverse set of perspectives and methods.