



1st SAARC CCI  
**YOUNG**  
**ENTREPRENEURS**  
**FORUM** Vision 2020

*In Collaboration with:*  
**Federation of Nepalese Chamber of  
Commerce and Industry and  
Nepalese Young Entrepreneurs Forum**

*Supported by:*

**Friedrich Naumann  
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With globalization and the rapidly changing market dynamics, it is imperative that South Asia nurture young, visionary business leaders who are aware, articulate and willing to serve a larger cause of socio-economic development of South Asia. To engage the Young Entrepreneur of South Asian Society, the SAARC Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SAARC CCI) under its vision 2020 organized the 1st SAARC CCI Young Entrepreneur Forum program as a strategic initiative to bring together young entrepreneurs so as to groom them to be the next generation of business leaders for South Asian Region, the program brought together successful entrepreneurs from region for transformation of best practices to young entrepreneur.

The 1st SAARC CCI Young Entrepreneurs Forum was organized in collaboration with Federation of Nepal Chambers of Commerce & Industry and Nepalese Young Entrepreneurs Forum on 11th November, 2010 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, President, FNCCI, who was the Chief Guest, delivered a key not speech at conference, which was attended by over 100 young entrepreneurs from the region. The Inaugural session was followed by two working sessions wherein experts and the young Business Leaders from India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka shared their views in context of their respective countries.

The conference commenced with lighting of oil lamp by Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal) followed by introductory remarks of Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI.



**Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI while addressing inaugural session of forum.**

**Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI,** during his introductory remarks gave a brief introduction to SAARC-CCI and highlighted its major activities. He focused on Young Entrepreneurs Forum as a platform to bring together young Entrepreneurs from different regions and help them reach their full potentials. He quoted a UNDP research, which says that the top constraints for young entrepreneurs today is finding qualified employees and easy access to international market. One major reason is inclination of market towards managerial skills rather than entrepreneurial skills resulting in lack of experienced business persons, lack of financial assets and lack of knowledge-based economy. He expressed strong need for youth empowerment and focus on business leadership for South Asian economic development. He concluded with the thought that youth are the backbone of business leadership and can change the economies in South Asian countries with regional cooperation.

**Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal)** presented his views on the program focusing on the future of youth in Eastern Region. The major objective, he said is Building Future for Youth and Youth for Future. Youth of today, to him, are most capable of making things happen rather than wait for things to happen. The resources and guidance provided to the youth today have prepared them to face different challenges and change them into opportunities, he said. With the bizarre political scenario, he emphasized the role of private sector to do their bit and to pass on the business culture to make new business leaders of the nation.



**(Mr. Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal) while addressing at Inaugural session of forum).**

He said that the program is a platform for young entrepreneurs of different nations to interact and communicate different business ideas and current issues. He highlighted the major challenges to be overcome:

- i) Nepal Tourism Year 2011, which is a great challenge as well as an opportunity for Nepal to generate revenue and show its potentiality to the international market.
- ii) Enhancing education in terms of quality and quantity.
- iii) Strengthening Bilateral Trade among member countries, developing infrastructure to support trade and so on.



**(Mr. Subodh Kumar, Executives Accounts, FNF, While addressing at the inaugural session of forum).**

**Mr. Subodh Kumar, Executives Programs FNF,** started with a small description of FNF and the reasons for supporting SAARC-CCI. He explained that FNF is a liberal foundation which intends on promoting liberal values and believes that it is best when businessmen take charge of business activities, keeping aside political issues.

He said Freedom and Responsibility comes hand in hand and Young entrepreneurs today have good knowledge about balancing these two. He expressed that before liberalization was introduced in India and Nepal; parents encouraged their children to take up government jobs and services. However, today the scenario is different. People look up to private enterprises for the opportunities they provide. He prioritized the importance of training workforce, infrastructural development, and technological development as the backbones of South Asian development.



(Mr. Shahrukh Malik, Chairman SYEF, & Director Guard Group, while addressing at the inaugural session).

**Mr. Shahrukh Malik, Chairman, SYEF** urged that the like-minded young entrepreneurs of South Asia should work together for a common goal. He highlighted on the need to look at raising capital from public's money so that businesses can grow more and also can be more popular among the public. He also stressed that capital injection must be formalized as it is usually from various informal sources till date. Finally, he concluded requesting everyone to believe in the true potential of South-Asia, which is far more than what we expect.

**Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, President FNCCI**, and Chief Guest of the event, gave a short inaugural speech. Mr. Joshi commented that full liberalization and economic integration among the SAARC nations has not yet taken place and that the young entrepreneurs of today have to come together to make it happen. He also stressed on the need for networking and the business people of the SAARC countries to come together to work as closely as possible.



(Mr. Kush Kumar Joshi, President, FNCCI, while addressing at inaugural session of the conference).



(Mr. Anuj Kumar Shrestha, President Nepalese Young Entrepreneurs Forum while delivering vote of Thanks at Inaugural session).

Finally, **Mr. Anuj Kumar Shrestha, President NYEF**, delivered the concluding remark of the inaugural session. He introduced NYEF as the forum to bring together young entrepreneurs into one platform collectively for socio-economic development of the nation. Established in 2003, the NYEF has given opportunities to young entrepreneurs to work beyond the country. He concluded his speech with his best wishes to the young entrepreneurs and the success of the program.

## Session I. Youth Entrepreneurship in South Asia: Experience Sharing

**Mr. Saurabh Jyoti, Vice Chairman, SAARC CCI (Nepal)** started his presentation with a brief background of Nepal and its economy:

- Country with second highest potential in hydropower
- Ranked 48th in terms of population size
- 50% of people in the country are under age of 50 (which is a huge asset for the country)
- Recently over from 10 years of insurgency
- In the process of new government formation

Mr. Jyoti explained that the economic future of the country was largely dependant on the political future. The constitution and peace process were acting as the major hurdles to socio-economic development of Nepal. He highlighted on the key sector of the country's economy:

- Agriculture: country rich in various herbs and agricultural products
- Hydropower: 80,000 MW capacity and 40,000 MW commercially viable
- Tourism: rich in natural beauty and thus attractive to tourists from all over the world. He also took the opportunity to welcome everyone for the mega-event of inauguration of tourism year 2011 on 4th Jan 2011.

Mr. Jyoti also informed that NYEF has been promoting 'Made in Nepal' campaign and further suggested that a similar 'Made in SAARC' exhibition can also be organised which would be one-of-its kind initiative and would help in increasing the trade of the region.

Mr. Jyoti further explained that the SAFTA should be reviewed and various changes in the treaty should be made to make it more effective. He also urged the following needs of the young entrepreneurs:



(L-R) Mr. Sanjaya Jayaratne Vice Chairman-SYEF (Sri Lanka), Pradeep Kumar Shrestha, Vice President, SAARC CCI (Nepal), Mr. Amandeep S. Sahney, Vice Chairman- SYEF (India) Mr. Saurabh Jyoti, Vice Chairman-SYEF (Nepal) during first working session of forum.)

- Need to create job opportunities for others
- Need to be at the forefront and drive the economy of the country
- Need to be the catalyst for the change
- Need to talk to the policy makers and government to pressurize them to consider economy as the major consideration

Finally, he conveyed that we had achieved a milestone by having the summit here in Nepal. This beginning would now be a very important step for networking.



Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bader, Vice Chairman, SYEF (Pakistan) & Mr. Amandeep S. Sahney, Vice Chairman- SYEF (India) during conference.



**Mr. Amandeep S. Sahney, Vice Chairman, SYEF (India)**

highlighted the issues of competitiveness and compassion, attitude that measures the altitude of a person. He further mentioned the following qualities, which are essential in the young entrepreneurs of today:

- Teamwork
- Problem solving
- Adaptability
- Flexibility
- Advocacy
- Idea-exchange etc.

He said that it is important that one should be able to turn an obstacle into an opportunity. It depends on how a person tackles it. S/he can either overcome it and be a winner or not able to overcome the problem and be a loser. Mr. Sahney explained that the value of entrepreneurs lie in the fact that they not only create job for the self but also for hundreds of other people and thus contribute positively towards the country's economy.

Mr. Sahney highlighted that entrepreneurs increase competition in the product market, they lay the foundation for growth and thus they are very important to each country. Finally, he urged everyone to act from today itself as tomorrow would be too late. He urged everyone to work with the character of iron as only iron can sharpen iron

**Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bader, Vice President, SYEF (Pakistan)**

underlined the importance of meetings and interactions between member countries of SAARC-CCI. He expressed his gratitude towards senior members of SAARC-CCI for their active participation, inspiration and motivational output and for setting great path for the youth generations. He pointed out the major aim of SAARC which is to build contact between South Asian country members, to enhance their relationship and promote free trade among them.

He emphasized on the need to get to know more of each member by one another, direct interaction from person to person, to build a stronger family-like relation, a need to continue friendship, generation after generation.

He highlighted on the importance of Free trade among SAARC nations, followed by trade from other non-member countries to SAARC nations, and to reap maximum benefits from developed countries like US, Europe and China.

He explained the current Obama visit to India as one of the greatest achievements to a SAARC nation. In his words, 'It is a message for all SAARC nations, that if India could do it, we can do it too.'

**Mr. Sanjaya Jayaratne, Vice Chairman-SYEF (Sri-Lanka)**

outlined the major opportunities that are building up in Sri-Lanka since its recovery from 3 decade old war, opening many doors of opportunities for business activities. He highlighted great opportunity for stock-market, tourism, constructions and other industries. He updated the audience, since May 2009, the government of Sri-Lanka is aligned with the FNCCI for the economic development of the nation.

He also informed that a local forum for young entrepreneurs is already actively working in Sri-Lanka to promote unity and brotherhood among the young members of the nation. It consists of 110 members, which helps entrepreneurs from rural area to start new business by helping them financially, sharing practical experiences and giving access to new market. He concluded saying, 'Greatest success comes for people, who recognize problems and change them into opportunities.'

**Mr. R. B Rauniar,** Presented his view points on Trade Facilitation in South Asia, emphasizing on the least developed countries and their problematic areas. He discussed different constraints acting as barriers to these developing nations.

First Internal Problems of Least developed countries:

- Geographical constraints causing high expense routes
- Lack of exposure to international market
- Inadequate trade measures especially in Non- tariff trade between nations
- Lack of competitive ability
- Implementation problems regarding different policies and regulations
- Exclusion from knowledge based economy
- Conflict in government parties
- Lack of connectivity and transaction means between nations.

Finally he concluded his speech saying that 60% of the business across borders in the South Asian nations is based on family relations across borders. Thus, people to people networking and contacts are very essential among the South Asian countries.

## SESSION II: PROSPECTS OF YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTH ASIA

The need for trade Facilitation

- Unhindered transit points
- Harmonization of Documents and elimination of different compilation of documents for different countries
- Harmonization of working hours and working days
- Duty free access
- Infrastructure development
- EDI connectivity eliminating person-to-person contact and making automated processes

Problems faced by landlocked countries

- Energy shortage
- Lack of skilled labors
- Lack of infrastructure development
- Poor Education system

He highlighted these major problems to the youth entrepreneurs encouraging them to think upon these issues and take actions to eliminate them.

**Mr. Iqbal Tabish**, the respondent and final speaker of the experience sharing session, spoke towards the end of the session. He proposed two economic models and a trade theory:

- Gravity model: Likelihood of more trade among countries sharing the same border.
- Trade theory: Absolute advantage of a country in a specific sector
- Trade diversion theory: If you intend to drive your trade across region, you can add more.

All these models advocate that free trade can be promoted. He quoted the examples of Canada-US free trade, Sri Lanka-India free trade where the analyst and policymakers were reluctant in the beginning to agree for bilateral trade but once implemented, it turned out to be very successful. For example: Sri-Lanka is the biggest South-Asian investor in Indian market.

Mr. Tabish further explained that the bilateral trade agreements should complement and supplement the regional trade bloc of SAFTA. Data have shown that the bilateral trade is more in volume and amount than the regional trade in South-Asia. He also stressed in the importance of Construction and infrastructure development in the South Asian region. Since it is a difficult job for only the government to look after it, it is a great opportunity for the private sector to involve in construction phase.



Mr. Padma Jyoti, Past President SAARC CCI, Mr. Sujeev Shakya, Prominent Economic Analyst and Management Consultant from Nepal & Mr. Anil Chitrakar, Social Entrepreneur, Ashoka Fellow, while making presentations during 2nd working session of forum.

The second session “Prospects of Youth Entrepreneurs in South Asia” was chaired by Mr. Padma Jyoti, Past President, SAARC CCI. Mr. Sujeev Shakya, Prominent Economist Analyst and Management Consultant & Mr. Anil Chitrakar, Social Entrepreneur, Ashoka Fellow.

**Mr. Sujeev Shakya** presented his perspectives on Entrepreneurs of South Asia on the basis of four major pillars:

1. Acceptance of Entrepreneurship
2. Private Wealth and right to Entrepreneurship
3. Challenges
4. Opportunities

## 1. Acceptance of Entrepreneurship

Historically, entrepreneurship was well accepted in the societies, where individuals could make their own money for their own use and living. The idea of Entrepreneurship was disrupted by the introduction of various theories suggesting The State should own Enterprises and wealth of nation.

Mostly in South Asian countries the acceptance of Entrepreneurship is still in conflict. However, India has well-received this concept since 2002. Nepal and other South Asian countries are still working on giving this concept a more positive significance.

## 2. Private Wealth and Right to Entrepreneurship

In past seven-eight years the perspective towards private wealth ownership and entrepreneurship is changing gradually to a positive view point. Before that money-making businesses were looked down-upon. The most common examples available are the Indian Bollywood movies, which used to deliver entrepreneurs, money makers and businessmen in a negative perspective, but this has gradually changed since 2002-2003. In Indian context, there is a greater acceptance of private wealth concept than collective wealth generation. But in Nepal, this is still a conflicted issue and wealth building is still looked in a negative way.

## 3. Challenges faced by Entrepreneurs

He highlighted the most common challenges faced by entrepreneurs to enter the market. They are:

- Absence of Incubation centers
- Lack of Funding institutes
- Negative approach towards Mentoring and Coaching
- Political Hassles
- Lack of Sustainability and Transparency of business

## 4. Opportunities for Entrepreneurs in South Asia

- The demographic structure of South Asia has more than 60% of its population below 30 years of age. This demographic structure represents a high potential for markets of Motorbikes, cell phones, play stations, fashionable garments, converse and so on.
- For Nepal, there is a huge agro-based business opportunity. Research has shown that if private sectors manage forest, it will return 20 times of current production by government.
- Women Empowerment is another growing opportunity

**Mr. Anil Chitrakar** focused his presentation on energy and energy planner operated in the rural areas of Nepal. He expressed his belief that the social projects should always be designed for sustainability. He further highlighted the importance of mobilizing local people for the community development. He explained that he worked with ideas in relation to social context.

He then moved forward with his presentation by showing several interesting visuals of:

- Adjustable reading glasses
- Solar panels in rural areas
- Biogas plants
- Saving and cooperatives in rural areas etc

His first visual was about the adjustable reading glass, with which one could fix the power of the lens as per the need and thus reducing the job of the eye specialists. This glasses would solve the problem of the people living in the rural areas where the access to doctor is very minimal. With these glasses, they would not require any eye specialists.

He then showed the visuals of the solar panels used in rural areas of Nepal to create and store electricity. He showed how the solar panels were kept in the roof of the schools and thus the children had to come to school to charge their lamp. This would help to achieve 100% attendance in the schools.



He further showed the visuals of Biogas plants and how it was increasingly used in rural and urban areas of Nepal and how it helped in maintaining a clean environment. There were 230,000 units of biogas plants constructed all over Nepal and 40,000 units constructed every year. He also showed visuals regarding saving and cooperatives being functional in the rural areas of our country.

In this way, Mr. Chitrakar explained about various innovative concepts applied in the social context to develop the socio-economic condition of the country. The interesting visuals provided by him explained more than his words and it made the presentation very exceptional.

## Floor Discussion

Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bader, Vice Chairman, SYEF (Pakistan) Mr. Bader commented on the presentation by Mr. Anil Chitrakar. He appreciated the concepts that were explained and was also impressed by the various marketing strategies followed. He further notified that there was a lot for Pakistan to learn from it, about how to use the various alternative sources of energy.

Mr. Ajay B. Pradhanang a participant shows his concern while responding to the presentations that the Political Boundaries between nations are fading away gradually. How can we place SAFTA in such scenario for Free Trade and how is it progressing? Mr. Sujeev Shankya presented his opinions highlighting the facts about booming IT and its Telecommunication applications. He gave a simple example of Skype communications, which is used worldwide. But no one knows where the revenues from use of Skype are collected and no one cares either. Another example is online booking and purchase of air-tickets. Customers are least concerned about who takes the revenues. This somehow describes the scenario of a paperless money transaction. He concluded if all monetary transactions are commercialized on the internet, SAFTA can be moved unnoticeably.

**Mr. Iqbal Tabish, Secretary General, SAARC CCI** outlined the establishment of SAFTA as an outcome of a study conducted by SAARC in 1981, emphasizing on the need of an institute for protecting economies of nations. The formation of SAARC-CCI was recommended as a body to control and eliminate trade limitations and encourage Free Trade between the member countries.

One fundamental reason for the formation of SAFTA was to increase co-ordination and interactions between different organizational bodies, affiliated with SAARC. There was no collaboration between the member countries and were operating in isolation.

The desire for success of SAFTA remains unfulfilled until we have:

- a. Harmonization of customs of standard
- b. Harmonization of monetary policy
- c. Harmonization of Fiscal policy
- d. Standard Economic Union and Customs Union

Mr. Sanjaya Jayaratne, Vice Chairman-SYEF (Sri-Lanka) appreciated the presentation by Mr. Anil Chitrakar. He expressed that though some of the ideas were being followed in Srilanka as well, it had a lot to learn from Mr. Chitrakar's presentation. The marketing skills and also the various innovative rural development techniques were exceptional.

Mr. Shrestha from NB insurance query about this age of on going changes that do we still need to stick to agriculture for our development, while quoting the example of Mr.Shakya, presentation in which he showed Nepal has a good scope in agriculture. However, we all are aware that the reason for China's super speed growth is its shift from agriculture to manufacturing. While responding to Mr. Shrestha concern Mr. Shakya firstly made it clear that in his presentation, when he talked about agriculture, it was not just the plantation and growing part but the processing and manufacturing as well. For example: Dabur Company. He made it clear that agriculture sector meant the entire value addition process. So, the whole process must be developed and must be stressed upon for development. It is not just growing, but the processing, packaging, branding, marketing, distributing etc that has to be considered in development.

Finally after the open discussion program, the Chair concluded the session with vote of thanks to all participants



(Group photo taken at SAARC CCI 1st Young Entrepreneurs Forum.)



## **SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SAARC CCI)**

Permanent Headquarters:

House No. 397, Street 64, I-8-3,

Islamabad, Pakistan

Tel: +92-51-4860611-3, Fax: +92-51-8316024

Email: [info@saarcchamber.org](mailto:info@saarcchamber.org)

Website: [www.saarcchamber.org](http://www.saarcchamber.org)