

Geographical Coding of States, Districts and Local units

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Introduction

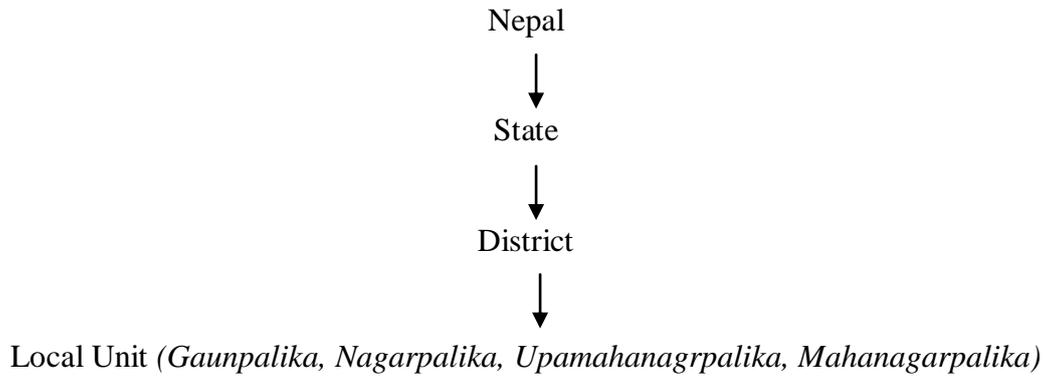
Every country has a different set of administrative units for which census and survey data produced by the National Statistical Office (NSO) are being reported. Not only NSO, other agencies also report their information for the administrative units of the country. An administrative unit is a geographical area that needs to be related to the data produced or used by NSO and other agencies. Such relationship between geographic area and database occurs through the mechanism of coding called geographic coding.

“Geocoding” is also used as a synonymous for geographic coding. The United Nations definition of “geocoding” is broader. It represents the connection between statistical observations and real-world locations expressed in terms of latitude and longitude or other locational attributes (UN, 2009). But, geographic coding is a way to represent specific geographical area for which data is reported. In other words, geographical codes or geocodes stand for geographic area which is in fact a unique numerical address of a geographic area. It is essential for not only data reporting but also for data processing, analyzing and sharing data produced by different agencies.

In Nepal, geographic codes for districts has been used by different agencies such as Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Department of Survey, Ministry of Finance (MoF) but the codes are not uniform. In the context of changed administrative structures of the country, CBS is developing geographic codes for districts and local units so that a uniform set of geographic codes can be practiced in the country.

Methodology

There is no any standard rules and format for developing geographic codes of administrative units. It depends upon the country as every country has its own specific administrative hierarchy. The administrative hierarchy of Nepal is given below.



The geographic codes for different layer of administrative units can be described as follows.

1. State: Upto now there is no naming of states. So, 1 to 7 is assigned as a geographic code for state 1 to 7 respectively.
2. District: Firstly, districts are numbered from 1 in each state and as much as possible; the numbering starts from the district of north east side of the state and continues in

S direction. Then, the geographic code for a district is manipulated as an

alignment of state geographic code and district serial number. For example, the serial number of *Taplejung* district is 01 and it falls in state 1, then its geographic code will be 101.

3. Likewise, local units are also numbered in each district like the ways the districts are numbered in the state. Then the geographical code for a local unit will be the alignment of state, district, and serial number of the local unit. For example, the geographic code for *Kathmandu Mahanagrpalika* will be 30603 where first one digit i.e. '3' indicates state 3, next two digit '06' is the serial number of Kathmandu district and the last two digit '03' is the serial number of *Kathmandu Mahanagarpalika* local unit.