



Britain - Nepal  
Academic Council



**16<sup>th</sup> BNAC Nepal Study Days (Nepal Conference)**

16-17 April 2018

Dawson Building Room D110

Durham University, South Road, Durham, DH1 3LE

Durham, an ancient  
cathedral city with  
UNESCO status



**CONFERENCE PROGRAMME**

**and**

**COLLECTION OF ABSTRACTS**



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## Theme 1: Politics Ethnicity and Culture-I

### Paper 1

#### **How do Perceptions of the Quality of Governance Impact the Incidence and Nature of Political Protests?**

*Richard Bell; Rotary Peace Fellow, Uppsala University*

The end of Nepal's civil war in 2006 has augured in a period of drastically reduced conflict and violence. Another step has been taken towards a representative government for the dozens of identity groups living together in the country, and democracy has been installed. However discontent continues to simmer and various protests have occurred against perceived failures of the State to meaningfully address the commitments to federalism, inclusion and accountability set out in the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (International Crisis Group 2016).

Testing causal factors that result in protest in post-war states is crucial both academically and for practitioners. Practitioners deal constantly with the vexing issue of keeping, building and extending the peace. "Sustaining peace" has emerged as a new terminology of the United Nations, as both an extension of the 'peacebuilding' phase of a sequential process following the end of conflict, and a holistic approach to good/participatory governance as a means to peace (Rosenthal, et al. 2015). SDG 16 groups together and attempts to measure peace, justice and strong institutions in another acknowledgement of the concomitant roles of these variables.

The academic literature identifying grievance as the cause of internal conflict reflects these issues in studying horizontal inequalities (Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug 2013, Selway 2011) and quality of governance (Hegre and Nygård 2015, Teorell 2015). There is a growing literature addressing actual perceptions of grievance – rather than

objective measures of inequality – as a means to better test the causal mechanism (Must 2016, Miodownik and Nir 2016). And in terms of discerning a lower level of mobilisation than a full campaign, there is a political science literature seeking to understand the nature of political institutions and their relation to disruptive protest (Cornell and Grimes 2015, Machado, Scartascini and Tommasi 2011, Matabesi 2017). Combining the best aspects of these approaches and applying them to the sub-national level at Nepal enables a newly refined approach to the current hypotheses, extending in particular the field of research concerning the quality of governance (QoG) peace. The research question is then: How do perceptions of the quality of governance impact the incidence and nature of political protests?

## **Paper 2**

### **Withdrawing from Politics as a Form of Agency: Women ex-PLA Combatants in Nepal**

*Hanna Ketola; Newcastle University*

Feminist engagements with peace and conflict have increasingly focused on the question of agency – how gendered agency emerges in relation to peacebuilding and the various expressions that agency takes. Another prominent theme is a turn towards postcolonial theory – increasing engagement in postcolonial critiques of peacebuilding and employment of concepts such as hybridity. What remains under-explored in the feminist peacebuilding literature is the question of women’s political agency – what does ‘being political’ or ‘acting politically’ entail in the context of peacebuilding? Is women’s political agency necessarily tied with the capacity to resist or subvert regulatory gender norms?

This paper addresses the question of political agency by foregrounding stories of women who fought in the People’s Liberation Army in Nepal.



I explore what is at stake when women ex-PLA fighters ‘withdraw from politics’ in the post-conflict context – what is at stake in ‘being tired of politics’? I explore the move away from active involvement with the party and from the public sphere as a possible site of political agency. I show how withdrawing from politics can be understood as a set of practices through which the political subjectivity of ‘being an ex-PLA’ is pursued in relation to the party as well as in relation to practices of peacebuilding.

Through this move the paper intervenes with the narrative of ‘return’ that persists in policy discourses around gender and peacebuilding: whilst women exercise a form of agency through participating in war, agency becomes ‘lost’ or ‘constrained’ when gender norms are reinstated in post-conflict. In making this intervention the paper contributes to the emerging research agenda on gender and politics in post-conflict Nepal, opening new connections to postcolonial feminist anthropology and feminist critiques of peacebuilding.

### **Paper 3**

#### **Nepal's Twin Transition: Decoding the Peace-Democracy Relationship**

*Monalisa Adhikari; Edinburgh University*

The mutually reinforcing character of peace and democracy is a common claim raised by practitioners and academics alike. Through a detailed exploration of Nepal’s experiments with democracy since the 1950s and the peace process since 2005, this paper argues that there is no causal linkage between democratisation and peace processes. Proposing the concept of “twin transitions”, this paper asserts that countries undergoing double transition, from war to peace and from authoritarian forms of governance to democratic politics, can have four diverse outcomes, including, successful peacebuilding with failed

democratization (e.g. Rwanda), successful democratization with failed peacebuilding (e.g. Myanmar), successful twin transitions (Nepal), and “double faults” (e.g. Afghanistan). Using the case study of Nepal and comparing it to the political transition in Myanmar, this paper argues that what determines how twin transitions of peacebuilding and democratization play out are three contextual factors: (a) the form of elite pacts that emerge between parties to a triangular conflict – the authoritarian regime, the rebel groups and the political parties; (b) the evolution, strength and legitimacy accrued by the three parties; and (c) the regional and international context of the country.

## **Paper 4**

### **Rare Encounters: Gurkhas in the Eyes of Polish Soldiers during World War II.**

*Paulina Stanik; Warsaw University, Poland*

In his book *Arrivano i Gurkha*, Luca Villa describes Gurkhas' military efforts in the Emilia Romagna region in northern Italy between 1944 and 1945. There, he brings together the Nepali and the Polish soldiers of General Władysław Anders' Army as he sheds light on the events leading to the liberation of the city of Bologna. *Arrivano i Gurkha* prompted further research which revealed that the Italian Campaign was not the only instance during World War II when the two parties came together. Although much has been written about the war effort of both nations, the relations between Gurkhas and Poles have never been explored. Most sources concerning the aforementioned period focus on documenting major events rather than on describing the peculiarities of transcultural human interactions.

The aim of the study is to uncover attitudes towards Gurkhas and assemble their picture as seen by the Polish soldiers in the 1940s. It is based on published diaries and memoirs which were searched for any

references to Gurkhas. The authors of over sixty publications which have been examined were either a part of the Polish II Corps consisting of men released from Soviet camps as a result of the Sikorski-Mayski Agreement or exiled soldiers who formed the Polish Independent Carpathian Brigade.

The analysis shows that only a few authors introduced the Nepali to their readers. In the texts of those who did, the lack of cultural awareness affects the perception of Gurkhas. For the purpose of this presentation excerpts from Tadeusz Bodnar's memoir *Znad Niemna Przez Sybir do II Korpusu* were examined for his willingness to portray the Nepalese soldiers is exceptional compared to other authors. While in most of the studied publications Gurkhas are omitted, Bodnar writes about them on four occasions. What were the conditions in which the two met? What was the main focus of his observations? For Polish soldiers, fighting alongside the British Army provided opportunities to encounter cultures different than their own. Tadeusz Bodnar provides a framework for building a representation of Gurkha soldiers from the Polish perspective and for this reason his account is at the core of this study. The analysis of *Znad Niemna Przez Sybir do II Korpusu* can become the first step towards a further enquiry into the meetings of Poles and Gurkhas throughout history.

## **Paper 5**

### **Khas-Arya Identity, Struggles and Achievements**

*Dil Bahadur Kshetry, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Tribhuvan University, Nepal*

Since 1990, Nepal has seen a rapid rise in the politics of ethnicity and indigeneity. In 2007 Nepal ratified the ILO 169 (Indigenous and Tribal People's Convention) and during the first Constituent Assembly (2008-12) there has been fierce debate on who the indigenous peoples are in

Nepal, and why (or why not) Nepal should be divided into single-identity based provinces under a new federal set-up. The politics took a nasty turn posing threat to communal ‘harmony’ maintained among Nepal’s heterogeneous community for a long time.

In the name of the state-restructuring, ethnic politics attempted to undermine the existence, contributions and identity of the Nepal’s majority of people, particularly hill Brahmans, Kshetries, Thakuris and Dashnamis, who were branded immigrants (Aaprabasi) entering into the country only in the 16-17th century, and usurping all the privileges as the ruling class at the expenses of others groups. In the Interim constitution (2007), these groups were relegated to the ‘others’ category, posing existential and identity crisis of these people. This resulted in the formation of various resistance groups and a united Strong Joint Struggle Committee under my leadership.

Despite bourgeoning literature on the study of ethnicity in Nepal, there is very little (with honourable exception of Adhikari and Gellner 2016) has been researched and published on the new developments in Nepal, particularly on the neo Khas-Arya identity.

In this paper I aim to share the circumstances and firsthand experience of formation of Khas-Arya identity, mobilizations, struggles, and achievements. Drawing on my long standing research of the history of Nepal and contemporary politics, and observation as a participant at the centre of the struggle, I aim to set out a case for neo Khas-Arya category in Nepal, and why their claim to be indigenous to Nepal is justified. The paper aims to provoke academic debates on contested ethnicity and indigeneity, offer some conceptual clarity of ethnic categorization in Nepal, and propose how Nepal’s diversity should be handled.

## **Paper 6**

### **Why Blacksmithing does not Fit the Bill for a ‘Culture of one’s Own’**

*Ivan Deschenaux; London School of Economics, UK*

In 2013, Steven Folmar argued that discourses of ‘indigeneity’ in Nepal are framed in a way that excludes Dalits from the identity-centric form of nation-building which has been prevalent in the country over the recent decades. In this paper, which is based on fieldwork conducted in the hills of East Nepal over a period of 18 months, I follow a similar line to Folmar’s, but shift away from the question of national politics.

I ask instead how the specific understanding of ‘ethnicity’ which has developed in Nepal impacts Dalits in their everyday life, in particular as they reflect upon their own cultural practices.

Central to the paper is an assertion which several of my Bishwakarma (Dalit) friends and informants made, according to which they have ‘no culture of their own’.

Initially, this assertion seems surprising, given the many practices which the Bishwakarma engage in which should, on the face of it, count as ‘cultural’. It becomes understandable, however, when considered alongside another claim which the Bishwakarma make, namely, that they share their culture with the upper-caste Khas-Arya people. What the Bishwakarma believe that they lack, therefore, is a ‘culture’ which distinguishes them from other groups, one which they could call theirs and theirs only.

Even this, however, remains puzzling. Indeed, there is at least one activity which the Bishwakarma engage in which is thought by most

Nepalis to be ‘theirs’ in a distinctive sense. This activity is metalwork. In fact, blacksmithing is so strongly associated with the Bishwakarma that they are sometimes euphemistically referred to as ‘those who work with metal’. The final question which I attend to, therefore, is why blacksmithing does not fit the bill for a ‘culture of one’s own’.

## **Theme 1: Politics Ethnicity, and Culture-III: Gender**

### **Paper 7**

#### **Getting Legally Married: A Study of Court Marriage in Kathmandu**

*Claire Martinus; University of Mons (Belgium) and University of Lille (France)*

In Nepal, it is not mandatory to marry civilly. This phenomenon testifies to the evolution of a first system, entirely religious or customary, and the introduction of a second, purely secular one. This presentation will explore issues surrounding matrimonial practices in Nepal, with a specific focus on the second type of marriage, the civil union. When the partners are not too attached to the customs that want a ceremony and a celebration to be organized, they can marry solely at the Court and get their marriage certificate within 17 days for only 210 Nepalese Rupees. The important thing here is the act of getting married, not the way to celebrate the wedding. It turns out that couples who do not have the agreement of their parents sometimes practice this type of marriage.

As part of my PhD research on the topic of mixed marriage in Nepal (inter-cast, inter-ethnic, inter-religious), I carried out surveys at the Kathmandu’s Court in Babar Mahal, where the procedures of civil marriage take place. This research led to discover several elements concerning civil marriage in Nepal. First, the interviews conducted with

the couples made possible to understand why they choose to marry civilly. Secondly, the statistical treatment of records collected in the archives allows having precise data on the average number of marriages per period of a month and the proportion of each type of marriage (mixed marriages, marriages within the same caste or ethnic group, and marriages with foreigners) within these periods. Thirdly, the surveys carried out with the members of the administrative staff helps to understand the legal procedures of marriage.

## **Paper 8**

### **Transforming Effects of War on Women**

*Punam Yadav, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), UK*

Women's agency in Peace and Conflict Studies has received increased policy attention since the formulation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in 2000. Academic attention on this question has, as result, also increased dramatically, in the intervening period. Women today, as a consequence are not just seen as victims of conflict, but also as agents of change. Arguments about the importance of women's participation in peace negotiations, and how this can lead to a sustainable peace are gaining in volume. However, women are not always the victims of war or the agents of change, their lived experiences vary depending on their circumstances. The same person can be a victim and an agent. Therefore, analyzing women's exposure to conflict or peacebuilding through a lens that reflects only a victim/agent binary can limit our understanding of the gendered nature of conflict and the post-conflict space. Despite their vulnerabilities in the situations created by conflict, women may be exposed to new knowledge and opportunities, which may have impacts on their lives. It is therefore important to recognise the ways that conflict may act as a vehicle change for women and may create an enabling environment for them to

exercise agency even amidst experiences of hardship and vulnerability. The proposed research aims to explore the ‘new spaces’ that emerge as a consequence of war and their gendered character. It will specifically investigate conflict-induced structural changes, asking how these changes occur, how they expand the space available for women and how these flexible spaces may then also lead to a wider social transformation during the long-term process of conflict transition. Taking various cases from Nepal, I offer some insights into the new space(s) that has been created as a consequence of the People’s War. This paper is an outcome my ongoing research on Nepal for the past 15 years and is based on my analysis of 150 interviews carried out over ten years.

## **Paper 9**

### **Third Gender Subjectivities in Nepal**

*Kumud Rana; University of Glasgow, UK*

The concept of third gender or third sex has often been used in non-Western cultures to categorise gender variant individuals who identify as neither man nor woman. In South Asia, a third gender identity category has been legally recognised in Nepal (2007), India (2009), Pakistan (2009) and Bangladesh (2013). However, what the third gender constitutes remains contested within different activist circles in these countries. This paper takes the case of Nepal to show how the category has been used within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) movement in a way that is distinct from other countries in the region. Generally understood as a category signifying gender liminality as in the case of hijras in India and Bangladesh or khwaja-siras in Pakistan, the third gender category within the Nepali Supreme Court ruling of 2007 suggested an umbrella category representing diverse gender identities and sexual orientations, including the Euro-American categories of LGBTI. However, the paper shows that even while the category constitutes of multiple subjectivities, it is restricted to specific



groups of people when used as a collective identity, the parameters of which are even more confined when used as a term of self-identification. The paper argues that the emergence and entrenchment of the third gender category as collective and individual identities is a product of political, cultural and economic factors that influence the trajectories of social movements as well as everyday lives. The paper is based on several in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion between October 2016 and September 2017 with activists currently or previously engaged with LGBTI organisations and collectives.

## Theme 2: Earthquake

### Paper 10

#### **The Nepali Poetry of the 2015 Earthquakes and their Aftermath**

*Michael Hutt; SOAS, UK*

In their widely-cited analysis of post-disaster politics, Pelling and Dill (2010) identify three discursive moments in a typical aftermath. The first moment focuses attention on the unequal distribution of losses and can lead to a questioning of development failures and asymmetry in the social contract; the second draws attention to the mobilization of state and non-state actors to champion, direct, counter or capture evolving critical discourses; the third sees the discourse being institutionalized into policy. They discuss the potential for a disaster to provide either a ‘critical juncture’ (a contestation of established political, economic and cultural power) or an ‘accelerated status quo’ (a successful concentration of that power).

This presentation of work in progress will consider a selection of the large number of poems published in Nepali within about three months of the 2015 Gorkha and Dolakha earthquakes. Most of the poems

considered will come from the bhukampa visheshank (earthquake special issues) of the literary journals Madhupark, Shabda Sanyojan, Shabdankur, Dayitva and Kalashri, with additional selections from the online newspaper Setopati and the literary journal Shivapuri Sandesh. I will identify recurrent themes in this body of literature and attempt to assess the extent to which the poetry under consideration articulates a sense that in the immediate aftermath of the 2015 earthquakes a ‘critical juncture’ was looming in the social and political history of Nepal.

## **Paper 11**

### **Global Policy Discourse Meets Local Realities: Resilience, Nepal, and the 2015 Earthquakes**

*Julie Balen, Olivia Crane, Bhimsen Devkota, Sudha Ghimire, and Simon Rushton; University of Sheffield, UK*

‘Resilience’ has become a major preoccupation in disaster risk management policy, as well as in international development policy more broadly. It runs throughout the Sustainable Development Goals, appearing 14 times (Labonté 2016: 679). However, as a concept, resilience is notoriously vague in its meaning (Alexander 2013). Aside from its conceptual imprecision, resilience as a policy discourse has been widely criticised. This work examined how these critiques play out when resilience as a policy programme meets local realities, with data collected from Nepal in March and April 2016 – one year after the earthquake.

We found extensive (and often very moving) evidence of the ways in which people and the community as a whole coped in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. Such coping is not, however, the same as resilience. Especially in the early days, much of this coping was the result of ad hoc initiatives by the community itself and by other agencies, with chance also playing a significant part. We did not find

high expectations of government support. At the policy level the focus was overwhelmingly on the survival of physical infrastructure (health posts, hospitals and so on) rather than the ability to staff and operate them.

We found a significant gap between resilience policy at the national and district level, and the needs and desires of local communities. This work illustrates the general critique of resilience policy's top-down nature, pointing to a 'disconnect' between national policy and local experience, as well as the need for greater community involvement in disaster response and preparedness.

## **Paper 12**

### **Seismic Safety and Kathmandu's Historic Urban Infrastructure**

*Robin Coningham; Durham University, UK*

Durham began a new project in November 2017 aimed at bringing together a team of archaeologists, engineers, geologists, historians, social mobilisers, heritage professionals, policy makers and local stakeholders to co-produce and disseminate a methodology to assess, evaluate and improve the seismic safety of historic urban infrastructure within Kathmandu's World Heritage sites, reducing direct risk to life and livelihoods. Funded by the GCRF Cities & Infrastructure Programme, we have begun by conducted small excavations across the Kathmandu Valley WHS in advance of extracting deep soil cores to assess the geotechnical and seismic conditions of the immediate area. This is coupled with 3D reconstructions of both standing and historical monuments in the Valley, the use of accelerometers to measure building movement and an evaluation of maintenance flaw impacts and timber failure patterns to model structural strength within monuments. The work will continue in April 2018.

## Paper 13

### **The Invisible Victims of an Invisible Problem: Psychological Impact of Nepal Earthquake to People Living with Disabilities**

*Sapana Bista; Liverpool John Moores University, UK*

*Introduction:* Nepal earthquake 2015 made detrimental impact on health and welfare of all affected but even greater on people living with disabilities (PLWDs). Despite getting worldwide attention for the loss and devastation Nepal earthquake caused, the impact of it on PLWDs during earthquake remains under shadow. Additionally, the psychological impact inflicted by the earthquake to this vulnerable group remains invisible to the wider world.

The aim of this study is to highlight issues that, when addressed, will promote more robust policies, processes and programs around mental health literacy, disaster-preparedness and psychological rehabilitation for PLWDs.

*Methods:* A qualitative study with semi-structured interviews with 21 PLWDs during earthquake was conducted in and around Kathmandu valley.

*Results/Discussion:* Results show that PLWD felt especially vulnerable during and post-earthquakes because of the restriction on mobility, socio-economic dependency and health factors inherent to disabilities. Their experiences included complete absence of autonomy; feeling of being ignored, invisible and of being burden; depression resulting from social isolation caused by displacement, leading to many other psychological stresses.

Fear of being abused verbally, physically and sexually while sleeping and staying outside was reported to be one of the major stressor amongst women with disabilities.

Additionally, this study identifies a stark gap in psychological impact

between PLWDs who either earn or are supported by family members for their living to the ones who rely on handouts or beg for money for living. The latter group reported of low psychological impact of the earthquake.

### Conclusion

The role of first response team and disability service providers is crucial to ensure the suffering of PLWDs is minimal during recovery and rehabilitation. Recommendations for mental health integrated trainings on emergency coordination, disaster risk reduction and recovery action planning to all should be an integral part of disaster preparedness program.

### Paper 14

#### **Moving Images: Commemorative Tattoo Art in the Aftermath of the Nepal Earthquakes in 2015**

*Stefanie Lotter; SAOS, UK*

Disaster tattoos have established a powerful form of commemoration. Bodily inscriptions create secondary, moving images, recording loss, nostalgia or trauma through a process of both, painful engagement and artistic expression. Where the consequences of the earthquake are directly depicted, heritage tattoos preserve and honor the memory of destruction through the documentation of personal experience as well as through shaping the collective iconography of the disaster. Recollecting the first weeks after the earthquake, tattoo artists in Thamel, where over 50 tattoo parlors are located, remember in particular two frequently requested tattoo designs. While the first, a heritage tattoo depicts, the dharahara which collapsed in the earthquake, the other has been a memorial tattoo depicting the Richter Scale magnitude of the earthquake. Aside from these two small images inked in the direct

aftermath a rich iconography of larger commemorative tattoos developed over a longer period following the earthquake.

The most prominent form of more substantial commemorative earthquake tattoos have been so called heritage tattoos, a form of tattoo that narrates personal or lineage history. As a statement of identification, heritage tattoos comprise outside of Nepal largely of family crests or coat of arms. By contrast the iconography of heritage tattoos in Nepal is not linked to lineage or caste or even ethnicity, but instead features architectural landmarks, deities and festivals. As such heritage tattoos mark the individual's link to a location and cultural practice rather than his or her relation to family history or social stratification. The second form of commemorative post earthquake tattoos are detailed memorial tattoos, dotwork, usually in the form of portraits of people directly affected by the earthquake.

This paper will unpick the iconography of commemorative tattoos in the aftermath of the Nepal earthquakes of 2015 contributing to the discussion of memorialising disaster.

## **Paper 15**

### **Psychosocialization in Nepal: New Category, Old Afflictions**

*Liana Chase; SOAS, UK*

In the wake of the 2015 earthquakes, Nepal saw an unprecedented expansion of 'psychosocial' programs and interventions. In affected rural communities where such services were previously scarce or non-existent, numerous post-disaster initiatives—funded by international donors and implemented by Nepali NGOs—trained and employed psychosocial workers to identify 'clients', provide 'psychosocial counselling', and educate the community about 'psychosocial problems'. My doctoral research explores how these globalized psychosocial discourses and practices were assimilated into the rural

Nepali context under the auspices of the post-earthquake response. Over fourteen months of ethnographic fieldwork, I traced the multiple translations and transformations psychosocial care underwent on the journey from international guidelines to intervention development in Kathmandu and ultimately implementation in a village in the foothills of Sindhupalchok. This paper draws on fieldwork in the village context to consider how the scope of ‘psychosocial care’ was constituted at the interface of clinicians, clients, and community members. Rather than relying on formal definitions or the Nepali neologism for ‘psychosocial’ (manosamajik), frontline psychosocial workers communicated the object of their care mainly through listing a range of locally recognizable afflictions— from headaches to spirit possession. By grouping these familiar conditions under the heading of psychosocial problems, clinicians were able to establish new explanatory frameworks and pathways to care without undermining or supplanting local ontologies of suffering. In effect, frontline psychosocial workers engaged in a strategic act of brokerage which rendered global and local illness categories commensurable in the interest of broadening the repertoire of therapeutic resources to which individuals had recourse. These findings index a significant shift from the medicalizing narratives of earlier mental health development work in Nepal towards a more flexible and collaborative approach.

### Theme 3: Migration

#### Paper 16

#### **Looking for New Educational Spaces: Nepalese Students and Academics in Poland**

*Anna Sadecka; University of Warsaw, Poland*

Migration culture has been present in the Nepalese society for years: starting from migrating to Punjab for work or in order to join the Indian

or British army (back in the 19th century), up to the contemporary times, in which hundreds of Nepalese seek employment or education in India, South-East Asia, Middle East, Australia, North America or Europe. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate the results of a research project devoted to the analysis of the patterns of academic mobility of Nepalese students and faculty in Europe, focusing on a relatively unpopular destination, such as Poland. While analysing their educational trajectories, the research seeks to explain their motivation and expectations which conditioned their decision to visit Poland, as well as the development of their career paths after their return to Nepal. This qualitative study includes in-depth interviews (conducted in Poland and then, a few years after the interviewees' return to Nepal), participant observation, informal conversations, analysis of documents and literature.

The study proves that the interviewees chose Poland as the destination of their academic mobility rather incidentally. Their goal was to acquire educational capital while studying abroad in an international environment. After the completion of mobility, they tend to return to Nepal, however, they continue to participate in the international scientific community and take advantage of other international academic mobility schemes. What is specific about this group is the fact that their cultural and social capital had been rather high before their visit to Poland and their mobility resulted in strengthening their position in Nepal and subsequent educational and professional opportunities.



## Paper 17

### **Skills Transfer, Employability, and Entrepreneurship of Returnee Labour Migrants in Nepal: A Review of the Literature**

*Padam Simkhada<sup>1</sup>, Edwin van Teijlingen<sup>2</sup>, Pramod Regmi<sup>2</sup>, Nirmal Aryal<sup>2</sup> and Krishna Adhikari<sup>3</sup>; 1. Liverpool John Moores University, UK; 2. Bournemouth University, UK; 3. University of Oxford, UK*

In recent decades, Nepal has emerged as a key contributor to outward economic migration, and particularly in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations. Of its 26.5 million population, approximately 3.5 million Nepalis are working abroad; primarily in Malaysia, the six countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) and India. Remittance is a mainstay of the Nepalese economy currently contributing 32% of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and, Nepal is the first largest recipient of remittances in terms of its share on national GDP. In addition to the remittance, migrant workers also bring back new skills, knowledge and ideas acquired from overseas employment. However, migration also opens up channels to gain high-waged employment and develop entrepreneurship in the migrants' country of origin.

Skills, experiences and knowledge which the returnee migrants possess can also be effectively transferred in the home country context through application or by teaching new skills to non-migrants. These possibilities are of much significance to the sending countries like Nepal whose economic migrants return usually with more skills than when they left.

There is no literature review which examines the new skills of Nepalese returnee migrants, their employment prospects at home, and applicability and portability of acquired skills in the Nepalese labour market. Likewise, there is a limited review of studies which have

examined the challenges and barriers faced by returnees to re-integrate into the workforce.

Against this backdrop, the proposed presentation aims to share key findings from a comprehensive review of out-migration by disaggregating positive impacts (skill transfer, entrepreneurship) of returnee migrants as well as the negative impacts (skill shortage, skill lost, skill redundancy) on the Nepalese labour market. It will assess relevant existing legislations, policies and practices in Nepal, and seek to compare policies across South Asian region, and suggest policy development in Nepal.

## **Paper 18**

### **Migration, Occupational Changes and Changing Inter-caste Relations**

*Krishna Adhikari and David Gellner; University of Oxford, UK*

Over the past decade international labour migration from Nepal to the Middle East and Malaysia has increased significantly. The number of Dalit migrants is also rising rapidly. A large number of studies have been conducted focusing on the economic impacts of international labour migration from Nepal. So far research has not looked at inter-caste relations, and in particular at old institutions of patron-client (balighare) exchanges, and how economic and socio-cultural relations may be changing as a result of labour migration. Based on household and individual surveys and in-depth ethnography, this paper seeks to explore some of these issues.

As a part of the ESRC-funded project ‘Caste, Class and Culture: Changing Bahun and Dalit Identities in Nepal’ (ES/L00240X/1), data was collected in 2015–16 from a census of 632 households, and in-depth

survey from 1,203 individuals. Data was collected in eight neighbouring villages in Kaski district, as well as in migration destinations both in Nepal and abroad. The caste groups included in the study are both non-Dalits (priestly and non-priestly Brahmans, Chhetris, and Gurungs) and Dalits (Kami, Damai, and Sarki). 219 individuals (about half of them Dalits) included in the survey are either currently working in the Middle East or Malaysia or are returnees.

The preliminary results from the study show that most of the patron-client-based balighare links have either been abandoned or transformed to a large extent. Some old caste-based taboos have been broken and roles redefined. While some traditional non-cash-based occupations have been completely abandoned or are practised to a lesser extent, others have adapted to cash and market-based economy. Due to insufficient labour, farming is in decline. With respect to commensality, more than four in five respondents have/had Dalit (or non-Dalit) work or house-mates in the country of their destination. Except for a few cases, caste practices (such as untouchability) did not become a barrier for their commensality. However, over half of them believe that they could/cannot continue the same level of relations in the private domain when they return to Nepal. The study concludes that some radical policy actions, such as mass education through school curriculum reforms are necessary in order for persistent caste-based stigmatisation to be abolished in the foreseeable future.

## Theme 4: Health

### Paper 19

#### **Access and Utilisation of Health and Social Services by Older Gurkha People residing in the United Kingdom**

*Bhakta Gurung; Liverpool John Moores University, UK*

This research investigated the access and utilisation of health and social services by Older Gurkha People (65 years +) residing in UK. It aimed to identify patterns of access and use of the health and social services; explore their experiences and critically analyse the facilitators and barriers to use; and critically analyse the role of social organisations to promote the access and use of these services.

The study employed a survey of 500 participants recruited from Hampshire, Surrey, Reading, London and Kent. The older Gurkha People are retired British Gurkha soldiers. The majority of them have low educational background, limited English language proficiency, experience low service use, lack of social support and less integrated. They have multiple chronic health conditions. They are less likely to access community facilities for physical fitness due to lack of knowledge and information. Their health and wellbeing is affected by poverty and social exclusion.

The survey data showed that the respondents have generally accessed in GPs. The access to dentists are low. They have difficulties to public transportation, which affects their hospital appointments and social connectivity. They are living in substandard housing condition. The majority are satisfied with health professionals' services; however, users, providers and system level barriers means that many go back to Nepal for medical treatments. With dependents in Nepal, Older Gurkha's save money from benefits to send home, which is a source of stress despite being financially better off in UK. The survey found that

they are very active in community networks. The overwhelming majority of respondents are member of ex-Gurkha soldiers' associations and their local community organisations. However, they are almost out of reach of Non-Resident Nepali Association and Nepalese Embassy London.

## **Paper 20**

### **Impact of Healthy Snacks on Children's Health: An Overview of a Pilot Study**

*Jib Acharya; Bournemouth University, UK*

*Background:* Preschool-aged children of disadvantaged households in Nepal have a higher prevalence rate of undernutrition. The major contributing reasons are the inadequate maternal knowledge, existing taboos, and unscientific food recommendation practices.

*Objective:* This pilot study aimed:

- to evaluate the impact of the rice pudding feeding programme on child health.
- to calculate the costs of the preparation.

*Methods:* The study recruited children aged under-five who attended a day-care centre in the remote area of Nepal. Child weight, height, and MUAC (Mid-Upper Arm Circumference) were recorded before and after the rice pudding programme which lasted for 54 days. Data were analysed using SPSS software version 22.0.

*Results:* Of the 42 children, 18 were boys (43%) and 24 were girls (57%), 90% gained the weight whilst the weight of the remaining 10% of children stayed constant. Similarly, 55% of the children had grown in height and 78% had increased MUAC while 12% of children had slight increment. The estimated cost was USD 0.34 per day per child.

*Conclusions:* Regular healthy diet fulfils children's nutritional need. It is important to consider the right dietary practice, including portion sizes, and community awareness about healthy diet and its impact on children's health as well as sustainability of the provisions. The study was inexpensive and likely to be cost-effective.

## **Paper 21**

### **Road Traffic Injuries in Nepal: A Study of Causes, Patterns and Control Measures**

*Khadga Katuwal; Liverpool John Moores University, UK*

*Background:* According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) road traffic injuries (RTIs) are significant burden in public health which adds 1.3 million deaths each year worldwide. It is predicted that RTIs will become fifth leading cause of death by 2030. RTIs have become a silent 'epidemic' in Nepal with highest fatality rate in Southeast Asia Region. Global Burden of Disease 2016 study revealed RTIs as 9th major cause of death in Nepal. RTIs expected to rise as a combined result of increasing motorisation and rapid urbanisation in parallel.

*Objectives:* To quantify, characterise and interpret trends in road crashes and RTIs in Nepal in the past five years (2012-2016).

*Methods:* Mixed-method approach was used. Descriptive analysis of police records of road crashes was performed. In-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders using semi-structured checklist to collect qualitative information and analysed using thematic approach. The result from both studies were utilised to triangulate both primary and secondary information.

*Results:* A total of 73,540 crashes occurred throughout the country in five years resulting 9,808 deaths and 59,501 injuries. On average 5 road users killed each day, male to female fatalities ratio is found 3.3:1 and involved economically active population aged 15-49 years. Almost 71.89% of crashes occur during daytime and involved two-wheeled vehicles (38%) in the country. Police record shows 89% of the crashes occurred with the driver's carelessness; 3.50% drunk driving; 3.17% overspeed; and more young drivers (21-40 years) involved in crashes in Kathmandu Valley. The common view of the stakeholders on the causes of RTIs was violation of traffic rules from both drivers and other road users.

*Conclusion:* Factors resulting to RTIs can be prevented by improving in road facilities and law-enforcement. Majority of the stakeholders suggested that RTIs would decrease significantly if enforced heavier fine system against traffic rule violations.

## **Paper 22**

### **Identifying Factors of Social Determinants of Health in Nepal**

*Govinda Dahal; University of Ottawa, Canada*

The health status of population is a prime asset for a country. Theoretical concept developed by Marmot (2005) and, Dahlgren and Whitehead (1992) clearly shows that social structure influences the living and working conditions of people which shapes one's health and well-being, operating through the social environment, economic, psychological, material and behavioural pathways. Recent evidence also shows, people's health depends only 25% on the effect of genes, associated biology and health behaviour factors. The remaining 75% depends on the influence of socially determining factors (Tarlov, 1999; Dahlgren and Whitehead, 1992). Developing compared to developed countries are in even more fragile situation. They have not even been

able to identify the factors of social determinants of health. For this study, Nepal-a South Asian country, is taken as a case study. The methodology used in this study is literature review. Reviewing health policies of Nepal for the last 50 years shows a gloomy picture of Nepalese health. Nepal has not yet identified factors of social determinants of health – an essential component of today’s global health policy agenda. As a neglected paradigm from Nepal’s health policy agenda, this paper aims to identify and explain key factors of social determinants of health that are directly applicable to Nepal’s population health conditions. In particular, it describes why and how relevant social determinants of health should be considered important.

## **Paper 23**

### **Nepal Injury Research Centre: Building Partnerships for Injury Prevention**

*Julie Mytton<sup>1</sup>, Matthew Ellis<sup>2</sup>, Puspa Raj Pant<sup>1</sup>, Santosh Bhatta<sup>1</sup>, on behalf of NIRC*

*1. University of the West of England (UWE Bristol); 2. University of Bristol.*

The University of the West of England (UWE Bristol) secured funding from the UK National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to establish a Nepal Injury Research Centre (NIRC) which commenced from July 2017. The funding enables the capability of existing Nepalese researchers to be strengthened and capacity to be increased in this neglected area of public health. To achieve these aims the NIRC is working with communities, advocacy groups, academic institutions, inter/national health organisations including World Health Organisation, international researchers, and the central and local Governments of Nepal. The presentation will describe the partnerships that have enabled this project to be funded and the partnerships we are generating to deliver outcomes.



This project is the outcome of collaborations between UWE and a number of Nepalese, UK and other country institutions fostered over many years, and strengthened through professional networks, conferences and meetings. ME, PRP, SB have been working with Mother and Infant Research Activities (MIRA) for 25 years, PRP worked with Nepal Red Cross Society and Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal during postdoctoral research. JM, PRP and SB have worked with the Centre for Injury Prevention Research Bangladesh, who in turn have completed research with a road safety NGO in the Netherlands, Safe Crossings.

Through our funding we will support Professor Sunil Kumar Joshi at Kathmandu Medical College to establish the Nepal Injury Research Centre. We will use a public health approach to provide the evidence for the prevention of injuries; 1) engaging with stakeholders; 2) generating evidence through data; 3) identifying and developing interventions; and 4) building researcher capacity and enabling sustainability for the long term. Key areas of focus will be road danger reduction, first response, and home/occupational injuries. Working in partnership will be essential to the success of our activities.

## Theme 5: Energy

### Paper 24

#### **Energy Crisis and the Poverty Trap among Informal Settlers of Kathmandu Valley** *Sambriiddhi Kharel and Nabraj Lama; Tribhuvan University, Nepal*

Kathmandu valley is a highly urbanized and populated region of Nepal with a population of almost 4 million. It is estimated that around 10 per cent of the urban population lives in informal settlements despite discouragement efforts from the government (Ministry of Urban Development 2016). Most informal settlers have migrated to

Kathmandu for different reasons such as conflict, natural disasters, unemployment, and inflation. They have settled along river banks without legal permission, so they are prone to displacement from there anytime. The informal settlements are characterized by poverty, lack of sanitation facilities, lack of proper drainage, drinking water and lack of sustainable source of energy.

This paper examines the energy practices of poor women, men and young people living in informal settlements in the Kathmandu Valley. Through literature review, in-depth interviews and focus group discussion with research participants in two informal settlements; Thapathali and Balkhu, the paper analyzes the economic impact of energy use and expenditure on which a substantial amount of household income is spent. More specifically, this paper explores major barriers to better energy access and identifies strategies and pathways which can enable such marginal women, men, and youth to move from overwhelming dependence on biomass to more sustainable energy solutions such as solar power or biogas. Finally, using a cost and benefit framework, the paper develops a ‘process map’ on how poor informal settlers access and use energy and the kind of energy they use.

Findings suggest that people living in informal settlements are struggle in managing their energy use for different purposes such as cooking, lighting and running basic appliances such as radio, TV and cell phone charging. They sparingly use LPG because of its high cost and must depend on firewood which is not easily available in the city. Families struggle to prioritize one-room lighting so that their children can study at night. In this way, people are compelled to invest larger sections of their income in managing regular supply of energy which has a backward impact on the economic status of the household. Consequently, they are trapped in poverty. The cycle of poverty and lack of clean and reliable energy brings to question the UN Sustainable Development Goal 7 on Energy for All.

## **Paper 25**

### **Understanding the Link between Energy and Air Pollution**

*Ramhari Poudyal; Swansea University, UK*

The heart of 21st century economy is driven by energy. The energy that brings us convenience, comfort and economic prosperity also brings us pollution and global warming. Our challenge is to maximise the use of energy consumption while minimising the costs incurred together with reducing the pollution and global warming.

Despite the huge energy resources like Hydropower, Solar, Wind and Biomass, Nepal's electricity per capita is very low. According to the World Bank's Data, only 139.14 kWh electricity per capita is used compared with the world average of 3104 kWh. Likewise, the total energy consumption in Nepal was 11,232 Toe in 2015. Nepal heavily relies on traditional energy resources, as it has no significant deposit of fossil fuels. The traditional fuel represents 78 % of the total energy consumption followed by 12% petro – products while the use of modern renewable energy and grid electric sources are 3% each.

The IEA's World Energy Outlook (WEO) special report 2016 illustrates the links between energy, air pollution and population health. It identifies the measures the energy sector can take to improve the air quality. Currently, Air Pollution contributes to the premature death of 3.5 million people around the world. These deaths are linked to energy poverty due to the use of biomass for cooking and kerosene for lighting. Similarly, 3 million premature deaths are linked to outdoor air pollution, mostly in cities.

The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study ranked exposure to ambient fine particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) as the seventh most important risk factor contributing to global mortality, responsible for 2.9 ( 95 % ) uncertainty interval: (2.8 – 3.1 ) million premature deaths in 2013; in East Asia, it

was the fifth largest contributor. Household Air pollution from solid fuel combustion ranked eighth worldwide (Second in South Asia), responsible for 2.9 (2.5 – 3.3) million deaths.

The research is needed to better understand the physical and chemical properties of complex air pollutant mixtures, and to use new observations provided by satellites, and characterise air pollution by real time data analysis. This kind of research quantifies the possible effects on people and mitigation strategies.

Future policy actions will benefit from improved understanding of the intersections and health effects of different chemicals species and source categories. Achieving new understanding requires air pollution scientist and engineers to work closely with public health professional.

## **Paper 26**

### **Current Demands: Work, Time, and Economy in a Nepali Electricity Office**

*Mikkel Vindegg; University of Oslo, Norway*

In this paper, I will explore aspects of work, time, and economy at the local electricity office in a Kathmandu valley town called Lubhu. After the earthquake in 2015, the amount of customers in the office's areas of responsibility has increased by 25% due to migration to and within the Kathmandu valley. The national electricity corporation of Nepal (NEA), of which the Lubhu office is a part, has been operating with a loss since 2003 (NEA 2009, 2017). I did not need a year of participant observation to understand that the scant working conditions in the Lubhu office were connected to the NEA's financial situation. What I did gain from hanging out in the office and joining the technical staff in "the field" was a clear sense of how challenging and frustrating the lack of

resources made the working day. A team of three electricians had a torrid time trying to address and correct a seemingly ever-increasing amount of complaints of no service, as well as electricity meter installations—doing the unenviable work of propping up a frayed system of wires that looks more likely to decay further than improve. The lack of resources necessitated compromising safety in order to get more work done: an acquiescence to “current demands”. These infrastructural conditions have striking parallels with Laura Bear’s work in the port authority in Kolkata (2015), though without the broader economic conditions she calls “austerity capitalism”. It is also reminder that repair and maintenance is a fundamental part of life which is often insufficiently appreciated (Graham and Thrift 2007), and that “people are [also] infrastructure” (Simone 2004). The work of “ordinary” people are as fundamental to energy infrastructures as the copper wiring cajoling current into the right plug at just the right intensity.

## **Paper 27**

### **Energy Innovation and Low Carbon Institutional Agendas: A Case Study of Trialling Biogas for a Yak Cheese Factory in a national park in Nepal**

*Ben Campbell; Durham University, UK*

This paper discusses a slow (bistarey) process of learning and communication between a number of institutional actors concerned with developing a trial biogas system at high altitude in northern Nepal. It discusses the usefulness of collaborative research and action networks, while at the same time recognizing that the multiplicity of institutional stakeholders generates problems in perceptions about project purposes and innovation incentives in an off-grid location, where agendas for action consequently require socio-cultural attention.

The author was approached by community leaders in Rasuwa District from previous ethnographic research on livelihoods and conservation. They requested the author to help with the problem of the Langtang National Park pressing heavily on the yak cheese factory at Chandanbari that fuelwood should not be extracted from the high forest for pasteurizing milk and make cheese. The paper describes learning numerous lessons over seven visits to the fieldsite. The author engaged with the chauri goth herders, the cheese factory local management, the Dairy Development Corporation, the National Park, the Biogas Support Programme, the AEPC, and the finance supporting institutions at Durham University and Newcastle University. With the efforts of the local Tamang herders' cooperative, the biogas digester was commissioned with 3,000 kg of yak-cow dung, and generated gas in September 2017.

The general points to be made from this study concern the clash of agendas (carbon sequestration for climate change mitigation, and support for livelihoods in a migration depleted local economy), and the project network approach, which patiently explores what people are willing to do (and not do) measured by repeat visitation. The paper offers reflections on off-grid socio-technical communities of interest and practice, which could be used as a set of case study training lessons to alert energy innovators of the need to be aware of local institutional dynamics in project locations which outsiders may be tempted to consider as places of energy poverty “where there is no infrastructure”.

## Paper 28

### **‘Rasuwa Tomorrow’: Anticipation, Aftermath, and Infrastructural Hubris in Post-Earthquake Nepal**

*Austin Lord; Cornell University*

This paper considers the material politics of infrastructuring in post-earthquake Nepal, examining ongoing debates about pending hydropower development in two ‘project-affected’ communities that were displaced by co-seismic geohazards (landslides and avalanches). In recent years, the northern district of Rasuwa has become increasingly central within state visions of infrastructural futures perfect—imagined as both a ‘power corridor’ within a nascent ‘hydropower nation’ (Lord 2014; 2016) and a ‘thoroughfare’ (Campbell 2013) that will facilitate Nepal-China relations understood as a ‘handshake across the Himalaya’ (Murton et al 2016). The 2015 Nepal earthquake troubled these visions of futures perfect in Rasuwa, highlighting latent patterns of risk, uncertainty, and vulnerability. In the villages of Mailung and Gogane, a series of landslides triggered by the earthquake destroyed the headquarters of the still-under-construction Upper Trishuli 1 Hydropower Project and the boomtown that surrounded it, killing 95 people and permanently displacing several communities. In the Langtang Valley, a massive co-seismic avalanche buried the ancestral village of Langtang, taking the lives of more than 300 people and releasing half the force of the Hiroshima atomic bomb. Yet, in the wake of these events, preparatory work for hydropower development continues at both sites—the future remains radically open.

Because infrastructures exist in materially and socially demanding environments, they are inherently contingent and precarious—the process of infrastructuring includes the potential for rupture and ruin (Barry 2013; Carse 2014; Howe et al. 2016). Elsewhere, I have argued that systemic failures to reckon the inherent precarity of Nepal’s

imagined hydropower future reflect familiar patterns of infrastructural hubris, speculation, and strategic ignorance (Lord 2017). In this paper, I draw from research conducted in Mailung and Langtang (before and after the earthquake) to consider the ways that project-affected populations and infrastructural publics conceptualize risk, opportunity, resilience, and ruin within landscapes that are simultaneously precarious and promising. Focusing ethnographic attention on the political ecologies of aftermath, anticipation, and uncertainty in Rasuwa, I inquire: Whose futures and uncertainties matter? In what ways are certain futures presented as more ‘sustainable’ or ‘resilient’ than others? What exactly is being ‘built back better’, and for whom?

## Archaeology

### Paper 29

#### **Tilaurakot and the Greater Lumbini Area 2018: Results from Mapping, Geophysics and Excavation**

*Mark Manuel; Durham University*

Archaeological work continued at Tilaurakot in January and February 2018 through the generous private donation of funds from the Kasai Foundation. Within the city we continued to expose monuments within the Central Walled Complex developing a stronger idea of how this unique area of the city was organised; as well as exposing a huge brick platform underneath the Samai Mai Temple. Outside the city we continued to conduct geophysical survey, including at the tentative WHS of Ramagrama, confirming the presence of a monastery below the surface. We have also begun mapping heritage sites using a UAV/drone and exploring the location and spread of cultural material beyond the traditional and protected boundary of sites. 2018 also saw the hosting of our first cultural festival at Tilaurakot, which saw local schools,



stakeholders and handicraft producers come together to celebrate the shared heritage of the region.

## Theme 5: Development

### Paper 30

#### **“I hate the word resilience” – The Lens of Resilience in Nepal**

*Hanna Ruszczyk; Durham University, UK*

The international aid community’s ambivalence towards the problematic resilience discourse framing their work is made visible in this research. This study provides an empirically driven interrogation of how resilience is being conceived and enacted by the international aid community in two distinct ways. Firstly, on a global level as a concept to bridge the gap between different areas such as development, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Secondly, disaster community resilience is utilised as a project management tool of the donors in Nepal. The rubric of resilience is serving the needs of the international aid community (donors and practitioner INGOs).

A mythical resilient urban community is the goal of community based disaster risk reduction programmes in Nepal which leads to the loss of engaging with residents and their social networks. Resilience can be considered another grand plan of donors that ignores the needs of people and their communities. A focus on people, power and politics is lost through the usage of the rubric of resilience and urban dwellers are left to take care of themselves and to create a safe future. This research argues to de-privilege disasters and a conceptual space is created for engaging through time and space with a broader interpretation of urban risk and urban resilience as perceived by actors from the local to the national and to the international scale.

## **Paper 31**

### **Constructions of ‘Community’ in Research on Nepalese Commons**

*Michael Wilmore; Bournemouth University, UK*

The growth of community-based resource management in Nepal, particularly in relation to forests, water resources, and radio broadcasting, is frequently identified as a cause for optimism about the country’s future development, especially following the violence of civil war and the ensuing political turmoil of the new republican period. This growing literature on community management of scarce resources has led to Nepal becoming a reference point for global studies of the community management of commons, and played an influential role in these studies through the provision of empirical case-studies to support contemporary theorisation of commons management. Social scientific data from Nepal is often used as a component of such studies, which are also lauded as exemplars of interdisciplinary research. However, unlike other tropes that have dominated anthropological critiques of the construction of Nepal in the Western imagination—for example, mountaineering, the country’s Gurkha troops, and tourism in the context of Orientalist fantasies of Shangri-la—the concept of ‘community’ has not yet been examined in sufficient detail to determine whether its deployment as a component of analysis in commons research is warranted in the context of the modern Nepalese nation-state or applicable in other contexts. This paper builds on previous critiques of Western social scientific research in Nepal by examining different uses of the concept of ‘community’ in commons research carried out and published over the past 25 years. In parallel to global critiques of development discourse, the paper examines assumptions about the trajectory of Nepalese development and modernisation, and looks at their contestation by different political actors, including Nepali anthropologists and other social scientists. It identifies significant omissions in this body of research, particularly in relation to the

examination of how national and local political actors may influence the operation of community forest user groups.

## **Paper 32**

### **Social Movement Learning: Creativity, Mobilisation, and Social Action in Nepal's Madhesh Movement**

*Tejendra Pherali; UCL, UK*

Social movements are processes of collective action that aim to change conditions of marginalisation, socio-political inequalities and systemic oppression. They build the collective power of an organised constituency of excluded, marginalised, oppressed or invisible people (Batliwala, 2010) to facilitate redistribution of resources, political representation and dignified recognition in state structures (Fraser, 2005). In conflict affected countries, the voices of civil society and the social movements that emerge from them have often been undermined in negotiations and determining the nature of peace agreements and development policies. As a result, peace processes often tend to prioritise security, democratic elections and the promotion of markets as pathways to sustainable peace (Paris, 2004), which often lead to 'negative peace', that only secures cessation of violence rather than addressing its root causes. In the era of increasing global inequality, conflict and rising authoritarianism, social movements serve as the only grassroots defence that seek to protect the fundamental rights of the people. Hence, strengthening social movements should be understood as a process of social transformation and sustainable peacebuilding.

This paper mainly focuses on the aspect of 'learning' within Madhesh movement drawing upon Hay's (1995) dynamic model of strategic learning which provides a way of theorising the learning process. It will specifically focus on mass mobilisation and innovations in resistance activities to highlight three key areas of movement learning: i) learning

about the movement agenda; ii) learning about movement/ resistance strategies and; iii) learning about movement survival strategies. I would argue that the Madhesh uprising capitalised on longstanding grievances of Madheshi people but built on radical sensitisation of structural and ethnic inequalities during the second half of the Maoist insurgency period (1996-2006). These movement processes have significant strategic importance for other social justice movements in terms of building inter-movement solidarity and mutual learning so, the research and theorisation of grassroots knowledge about struggles could be relevant to the movements and activists themselves.

### **Paper 33**

#### **Schooling and Development: Global Discourses and Women's Narratives from Nepal**

*Alba Castelsague and Silvia Carrasco; Universitat Autònoma of Barcelona (UAB), Spain*

Development in Nepal is an unavoidable issue, deeply imbricated in both discourses and practices (Fujikura 2001; Pigg 1993; Shrestha 1995). Education is the privileged ingredient of the dominant development model and the favourite arena for intervention, especially in Nepal, since the country has currently become the top priority worldwide in the development agenda. It particularly applies to the situation of girls and women, through programs targeting the promotion of access to schooling in the rural areas of the country (Robinson-Pant 2000).

Previous research has already identified the need to challenge the colonial assumptions relying in such discourses, but little has been done to tackle them from the microspheres of social interaction, to explore the ideological encounter from grounded social visions (Pigg 1992). This article explores the discursive construction of development and

education categories in Nepal through the analysis of narratives of Nepali women from rural and urban areas, on the way they describe education and development as lived realities. Findings uncover how narratives are intertwined, where education appears to be closely linked to development, and are both conceptualized as external and dichotomous while women apparently situate themselves as passive recipients. Predominant narratives mainly refer to material issues, but some women's views bring about political, personal or social issues and dimensions.

The paper shows how global and institutional discourses are assumed and internalized by the people, as outcomes of cognitive imperialism (Battiste 2005). However, it also reveals how women negotiate, re-signify and challenge such discourses from their particular local realities and experiences as active producers of meaningful cultural forms. That is, we ethnographically show the on-going dialogue of global and local meanings, not only within the discursive arena, but also in women's everyday lives. By doing so, this paper contributes to challenging the idea that a monolithic discourse on education and development exist in Nepal (Robinson-Pant 2001).

## **Paper 34**

### **Debate on Educational Reform in Nepal: Outcomes of the International Conference on Quality of Higher Education in Federal Nepal**

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Nepal is in a transition period, reforming its current central national system to a federal model. There is an ongoing discussion with attempts

to devise a viable model to serve the nation. For example, in educational sector, the national government has a leading role in the restructuring process over, among others, non-governmental education providers such as private institutions, cooperatives and foundations. In this context, an International conference on the theme of "Quality Education in Federal Nepal" was successfully organised in Kathmandu recently (23-24 Feb 2018). Over 300 educators from 18 countries attended the conference and 46 papers were presented by Nepali and international education experts. Several experts expressed concerns regarding the current education system in Nepal, and a lack of evidence-based and research-oriented teaching and learning was identified to be one of the primary causes of the "crisis in Nepali education". The discussion of the conference were focused on;

- Technology-Enhanced Teaching Learning (TEL) and shift on teaching methods from memorization to critical thinking.
- Knowledge is collective heritage of humankind, which should be passed on to succeeding generation and it should be not be treated as a commodity.
- Nepal government should be open minded and should develop the partnership within Nepal and overseas institutions.
- Substantial amount of budget is necessary from the government sectors at Central, Provincial and Local level.
- Balance between the oversight role of the federal government and autonomy of provinces and local municipality should be maintained in term of education quality and curriculum.
- How to develop the interdisciplinary learning; skills oriented learning in humanities, management and social sciences education?
- How to develop viable partnership between public and private institutions? And creating the trust between public and private education providers is essential.
- All education management should be outside the political party influence

This presentation will highlight the main debate on educational reform in Nepal in the changing context based on International Conference in Higher education in Nepal.