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Current Developmental Challenges in Nepal: How Can The Diaspora Help?

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Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA), Nepal Forum, 2023

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES IN NEPAL: HOW CAN THE DIASPORA HELP?

**ANA Convention
Denver, Colorado**

Date:
July 1st, 2023

NEPAL FORUM

**Current Developmental
Challenges in Nepal:
How Can the
Diaspora Help?**

Sponsored By:
ZEN TRAVELS
202-552-1508 est. 2006

Dr. Ambika P. Adhikari
Phoenix, AZ (Forum organizer)

Dr. Usha Sharma
Boston, MA

Mr. Khagendra Adhikari
Alexandria, VA (Moderator)

Dr. Keshav Bhattarai
Warrensburg, MO

Dr. Shilu Ghimire Neupane
Denton, TX

Convention Venue: Hilton Denver Central Park, Denver, Colorado- 80216

**Summary of the Forum Discussions at the ANA 2023 Annual Convention
DoubleTree by Hilton, Denver
4040 Quebec St, Denver, CO 80216, USA
July 1, 2023. 12:30-1:30 pm**

**Summary Editor
Ambika P. Adhikari, DDes.**

July 2023



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SUMMARY OF FORUM PROCEEDINGS AND PRESENTATIONS

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES IN NEPAL: HOW CAN THE DIASPORA HELP?

A Forum at the Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA) 2023 Annual Convention
DoubleTree by Hilton, Denver Central Park
4040 Quebec St, Denver, CO 80216, USA
July 1, 2023. 12:30-1:30 pm

INTRODUCTION

The Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA) was established in 1983 as a non-profit socio-cultural organization to create a platform for the American and Canadian Nepalis to come together in preserving and promoting Nepali culture and identity, and become a social part of the adopted homelands. According to the ANA's website (ana1983.org), ANA's mission is to "Promote unity and harmony among the Nepali Diaspora living in the Americas, foster Nepali identity & culture, and empower with knowledge to succeed." ANA is one of the oldest, if not the oldest, organizations of Nepali North Americans.

As a part of its activities, ANA organizes an annual convention each year, which provides an opportunity for its members and friends to meet, mingle, have fun, participate in various discussion forums, and enjoy cultural activities. The convention also helps the ANA to connect with the larger local community, where local politicians attend and mingle with the Nepali community members. The ANA discussion forums cover current topics that are of interest to the diaspora Nepalis and the Nepali people.

The ANA 2023 annual convention, organized on ANA's 40th founding anniversary, was held in Denver, Colorado, where hundreds of ANA members and friends had gathered. The convention included a Nepal-related forum "**Current Developmental Challenges in Nepal: How Can the Diaspora Help?**" The Forum took place from 12:30-1:30 pm on Saturday July 1, 2023. Four panelists spoke at the forum, supported by a moderator. About fifty individuals were in the audience.

The ANA forum in Denver explored selected aspects of the challenge Nepal faces, and discussed the potential role of diaspora in these challenges and opportunities. The forum gave continuity to the tradition of deliberations on the Nepali diaspora and development topics at the ANA's annual conventions

This is a summary report of the presentation and discussion at the forum created to record the proceedings of the event, and to provide a reference for similar future ANA forums, and for the benefit of any interested readers.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE FORUM

Nepal now enjoys a unique opportunity to positively transform the country's economy and society. The economic activities fueled by remittance, supported by foreign aid, and aided by domestic economic activities such as tourism, trade, and services, including start-ups, are helping increase individual incomes. However, the earnings from remittances, which measure to about 25% of Nepal's GDP, are spent on consumer goods and not on investments that can generate employment and raise the standards of living. The foreign aid is often donor driven and also not always well managed and wisely spent on national priorities. Further, it is frequently marred by leakage due to corruption. The domestic revenue and tax collection system is also rife with fraud and rent seeking by the political leaders and bureaucrats. As a result, only a fraction of the potential revenues goes to the state coffers. Furthermore, because some development funds are diverted to projects that are not well thought through, such as Pokhara and Lumbini Airports, projects fulfilling the real public needs often do not get addressed. Though these projects are not economically viable, investments are made to satiate fewer individuals' and political interests, the government is unable to fully spend the budget laid out for development activities in a timely manner. This situation has not only seriously impeded the rate of economic growth, but is also seen as posing a grave threat to Nepal's economic health potentially similar to what Sri Lanka experienced in 2022 when the country became bankrupt.

In the past two and half decades, Nepal has seen an exodus of its young population to foreign lands. A large number of students and young professionals are moving to the countries in Oceania, Europe, Far East Asia, and North America while rural and generally less educated youth group is finding contract employment in Malaysia, Korea, and the Gulf region countries. By some estimates, in 2023, the permanent Nepali diaspora living in the more developed parts of the world is around one million, while the temporary foreign migrant workers number around three to three and half million at any time (Adhikari 2022).

Policy makers and scholars see this as a loss of once in a generation opportunity when Nepal could have mobilized its young generation to build the economy. If this trend of youth outmigration continues, development planners fear that the Nepali population will become older before the country becomes rich (Cosic, Dahal, Kitzmuller 2017). Its young and able-bodied citizens will be helping build other societies, while Nepal will have to support its ageing population and resulting decline in productivity while old-age pension amount will need to be drastically increased.

Nepal faces additional development challenges in many fronts that include lack of domestic manufacturing establishments, a weak export trade situation, an inefficient development planning and implementation, and rampant corruption and mismanagement in all sectors.

On the opportunity side, Nepal now has a more educated work force, a new entrepreneur class, and democratic government that can be easily influenced by popular demands. More importantly, even in the midst of the exodus of young people from the countryside, Nepal still enjoys the demographic dividend where the young people could be employed in productive sectors. Further, the participation of women in the workforce is increasing. The education sector has expanded



drastically, and technology has penetrated the society pretty deep. The spectacular developments in Nepal's two neighboring countries – China and India – can easily provide an impetus, inspiration, market, investment, and support for Nepal's economic transformation.

As the Nepali diaspora gains ground in their adopted countries and achieves more experience, proficiency in technology and knowledge, and financial prowess, it can support and help Nepal in its development journey. Both the diaspora community, and political, professional, academic, and business leaders in Nepal recognize this potential. The diaspora group can help in technology transfer, forging business and trade linkages, educational and knowledge exchange, financial investment, and managerial expertise. The Nepali government can create a welcoming environment for diaspora investments and professional involvement.

FORUM FORMAT, AND OUTCOME

The ANA Denver forum organizer Dr. Ambika Adhikari introduced the topic, and highlighted the objective of the forum. Moderator, Khagendra Adhikari briefly introduced each speaker before they spoke. Dr. Ambika Adhikari, Ms. Usha Sharma, Dr. Shilu Neupane, and Prof, Keshav Bhattarai, made their presentations in different topics (see Appendix I for the notes). Each speaker presented their remarks within ten to twelve minutes.

Dr. Adhikari spoke about the state of Nepali diaspora worldwide, and specifically how they are doing in North America. He highlighted their strength and illustrated challenges they are facing. He also spoke about how the diaspora groups and the Nepali government can promote effective policies to further collaboration. Dr. Usha Sharma spoke about the challenges that are often faced by the diaspora members to work and support programs on site in Nepal. Dr. Shilu Neupane highlighted the needs for women members of the diaspora to organize and be financially strong to be more effective in supporting community programs and development activities in Nepal. Prof. Keshav Bhattarai provided a comprehensive view of the diaspora capacities and strengths, and analyzed the issues they may face while connecting with the Nepali policy makers and institutions. At the end, Dr. Ambika Adhikari summarized the contents of the presentations, and offered a short closing statement.

This summary of the presentations and discussions in the forum, will be published on the ANA website and elsewhere as appropriate.



SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR

Name	Organization	Location, Role
Dr. Ambika P. Adhikari	Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS)	Phoenix, AZ – Forum organizer and speaker
Dr. Usha Sharma	Bunker Hill Community College	Boston, MA – Speaker
Prof. Keshav Bhattarai	University of Central Missouri	Warrensburg, MO – Speaker
Dr. Shilu G. Neupane	University of North Texas	Dallas, TX - Speaker
Mr. Khagendra Adhikari	ANA	Alexandria, VA – Moderator

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1. Ambika P. Adhikari (2022) The Nepali diaspora's role in national development, Policy Design and Practice, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/25741292.2022.2139951>. DOI: 10.1080/25741292.2022.2139951
2. Cosic, D., Dahal, S., and M. Kitzmuller. 2017. Climbing Higher: Toward a Middle-Income Nepal. Country Economic Memorandum. Washington, DC: World Bank. License: Creative Commons Attribution CC BY 3.0 IGO <https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/sar/publication/climbing-higher-toward-a-middle-income-country>



APPENDIX I: SUMMARIES OF INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATIONS



State of the Nepali Diaspora, and its Role in Development

Ambika P. Adhikari, DDes.

**Institute of Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), Kathmandu, Nepal, and
City of Tempe, Arizona, USA**

A total of 281 million people, accounting for 3.6 percent of the global population, resided outside their countries of origin in 2020 (UN DESA, 2020), signifying the substantial presence of diaspora groups worldwide. In 2022, the global diasporas remitted over US \$630 billion to low- and middle-income countries, as reported by the World Bank (2023).

Specifically, the Nepali diaspora sent a remarkable sum of US \$8.95 billion to Nepal in 2022, equivalent to 22.8% of the country's annual GDP, according to the World Bank (2023). The data further revealed that remittances to South Asia reached \$157 billion in 2021. These figures strongly indicate a continued upward trend in the future remittances.

Diaspora communities have the potential to contribute to the development of their countries of origin in various ways. The extent of their contributions largely depends on the maturity level of the diaspora, as some groups may be more established while others are relatively new. The following diagram provides a conceptual image of the capacities of diaspora in assisting their countries of origin, based on their stage of diaspora formation.

STAGE OF DIASPORA FORMATION	CAPACITIES
Matured	Institution building
Advanced	Knowledge & Technology Transfer
Established	Investments
Establishing	Philanthropic Activities
Forming	Remittances

Figure 1. A ladder of diaspora's contribution

Source: Adhikari (2022)

While there is no official and precise data available on the number of Nepali diaspora members worldwide, the author has made estimates based on multiple sources, including census data and research studies. The table below presents the author's estimated figures for the global Nepali diaspora population. It is important to note that these estimates are approximate and may be conservative.



Country/Region	Est. Pop. of Permanent Nepali Diaspora Members (2023)	Remarks
North America (US and Canada)	350,000	A rapidly increasing population fueled by student arrivals, diversity visa (DV) lottery recipients, family-related beneficiary immigration, and other groups
Oceania (Mainly Australia, New Zealand, Fiji)	200,000	Another quickly growing group which mostly begins as students while most end up settling permanently
Europe including the UK	300,000	A group consisting mainly of ex-Gurkhas in the UK, and professionals, and other emigrants Europe-wise
East Asia (mainly Japan, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, and Singapore)	150,000	Mainly consisting of individuals who began through work visa, as former British Gurkha members, and students who enter the job market and then settle.
Total (2023 est.)	1,000,000	The total number is approximate, and speculative

Table 1. An estimate of global Nepali diaspora population permanently settled abroad
Author's estimates

The Nepali diaspora group, although relatively new compared to more established diaspora communities such as the Chinese, Indian, Korean, Armenian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Filipino, Mexican, and other older groups, is experiencing rapid growth. As a percentage of the population of the country of origin, the population of Nepali diaspora in North America may be higher than that of many other origin countries.

The Nepali diaspora has been making excellent efforts to organize themselves socially and professionally. However, their capacity is still limited, and their influence can be diluted due to a lack of organization, limited resource mobilization, and occasional disunity among various groups. Nevertheless, the Nepali diaspora is actively working towards enhancing its capacity by establishing professional, business, and social platforms to foster unity and collaboration. It regularly convenes meetings, seminars, conferences, webinars, and forum such as the one in Denver in 2023, to discuss and create strategies for advancing the diaspora capacity.

The government of Nepal also has a crucial role to play in strengthening its engagement with the diaspora to support its development programs. It has introduced several favorable policies, laws, and programs to facilitate investment and employment opportunities for diaspora members in Nepal. The recent enactment of the law granting Non-Resident Nepali (NRN) citizenship to eligible diaspora members serves as an excellent example in attracting diaspora talents in Nepal. Similarly, the NRN/PIO (Non-resident Nepali/Person of Nepali Origin) Identity Card introduced in 2009 is another good example to facilitate diaspora entry and stay in Nepal.



However, there are still numerous barriers that impede the active participation of Nepali diaspora members in Nepal's developmental efforts. One significant challenge lies in the perception and attitudes between resident Nepalis and non-resident Nepalis towards each other. While residents in Nepal often welcome charitable and philanthropic support from diaspora groups, there can sometimes be a lack of trust in the diaspora's commitment to Nepal's welfare. Similarly, diaspora Nepalis, particularly those living in more developed countries, may become frustrated by the inefficiencies and occasional corruption within Nepal's bureaucracy when they attempt to contribute to meaningful collaboration in the country.

Conducting further research on this topic and formulating appropriate policies and programs will be instrumental in facilitating diaspora involvement in Nepal's development efforts.

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Women: Entrepreneurship, Mentorship and Financial Competency

Shilu G. Neupane, PhD.
Texas Woman's University

Women cover half of the sky. Dual income household became the necessity and a new norm globally. Based on literature, women entrepreneurship has emerged as one of the major trends to bring the economic development by impacting the growth in employment and revenues. Women, as traditional homemakers have big roles in family finance, thus making difference in the overall development of home as much at a broader level. There is a growth of entrepreneurship as a career option for women in Nepal. It is fundamental for women to be financially competent. It is even more essential for those women who are interested in entrepreneurship career.

On the contrary, women are financially less educated than men when it comes to financial decision-making. Financial literacy impacts the financial decision-making, thus, there is a strong need of financial literacy for women regardless the career and background. According to the U.S. Department of Education, over 3.8 million American adult women have third graders' skills on financial literacy; only 22.5% of the women were able to answer basic financial literacy questions (Mitchell & Lusardi, 2014). Several studies showed that even talented and well-educated women were less confident when it comes to financial decision-making. The issue of assisting women by providing the necessary skills, knowledge, and support is still a crucial demand of present time.

There is a need to tailoring this financial competency gap in women to balance their professional life with personal life while assisting their business aspirations. Mentorship makes a tremendous difference in women's businesses, especially in the beginning years when the help is much needed at personal as well as professional level. Mentorship is vital for women's entrepreneurial success and sustainability.

Overall, this study purposes to identify the role of a mentorship from diaspora with an expectation to influence women entrepreneurs' financial competency, which was considered important regardless the help they were using from family or other resources.

Also, it enhances women's job satisfaction in the context of family life. Sometime just an effective career conversation helped individuals to come out of her subjective notions of career success and professional development.

We, each individuals living in diaspora could be that conversation starter, an inspirer and a mentor to bring a positive changes in families living in Nepal.

Background Story

A mother of two children, an immigrant trying to find a home in Texas and an international student, working on a doctoral degree were few of my roles as a woman. Like many women across the globe, I, too, was trying to bring a positive change in my family life through the commitment of education. This commitment of education is bonded with the huge financial commitment that obligated me to frugal living and be creative on my household expenses, which inspired me to think about entrepreneurship, such as doing something you enjoy doing, while getting paid for your skills. Nonetheless, I was not very confident in the financial matters that stopped me to start a business that I could have started a long time ago. On the other hand, this gap encouraged me to take a help of mentors or the self-help programs that were designed to



help many women like me in similar situations. When I started looking at the research, women are less confident when it comes to the financial matters and decision-making (Lusardi & Mitchell, 2014). There is a strong need for women to be financially literate and it is even more crucial for those women who are considering entrepreneurship to become financially independent. There is a belief that if a woman is educated, she educates the entire household. With all these reasons, I was compelled to conduct my research in the issues of women, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, and most importantly a need of a mentorship to guide women in this financial journey.

This study is meaningful to many women who want to pursue their career in entrepreneurship as an option to enhance their financial independence, as there is also a strong connection between women empowerment and economic development.

Reference:

Lusardi, A., & Mitchell, O. (2014). The Economic Importance of Financial Literacy: Theory and Evidence. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 52(1), 5-44.



Nepali Diaspora: On the Rise Under a Challenging Environment

Prof. Keshav Bhattarai, PhD.
University of Central Missouri

Overview

The history of Nepali diaspora goes back to 1768 when Nepal became a nation-state. Mass exodus started in Nepal as the countrywide insurgency began in 1996. In 2011, 56% of Nepali households have at least one member of their family working abroad (NLS, 2011). In 2021, 2.1 m and in 2023, over 3.5 million Nepali are working in other countries. Nepal's Department of Foreign Employment (DoFE) has so far approved 110 countries for Nepali to work, but Nepali are working in 172 countries. In 2013/14, Nepal issued working permission to 519,638.

In 2015, “Free Visa Free Ticket” policy introduced forced employers in the destination countries liable to pay recruitment, airfares, visa, and medical examination fees of migrant workers. Employers were reluctant to accept new workers. This policy hit the most to emigrant to Malaysia. This surged in labor supply in the GCC countries, but oversupply labors to GCC by other countries decreased the number of license issued by Nepal.

Restrictions were imposed on women going, for domestic help. Labor license issued decreased because the bureaucracy required foreign employment agencies to submit original labor demand letters, get the demands attested from the respective Nepali Embassies in destination countries, and present numerous other documents. COVID-19 forced the cancellation of many international flights. In 2020/21, due to the COVID-19 only 72,081 labor permits were issued. However, Qatar World Cup 2022 provided a lot of jobs to Nepali workers. The Qatar Vision 2030 and the Asian Games in 2030 will need more labor. The rise in oil price will help create many jobs.

Theory of Diaspora

A group of migrants engage in entrepreneurial activities in their home and host countries. Entrepreneurships engage in the discovery and exploration of multiple opportunities through the introduction of new processes. Diaspora terminology often becomes synonymous to innovation to create opportunities in multiple sectors. Diasporic institutions can facilitate smooth interactions among cultural, economic, political, and social actors and create incentives for different courses of action both at the origin and destination. As cultural, economic, social, economic, political, and social actors respect the rules of the game, this not only creates trust and reduces vested opportunistic behaviors but also: a) reduces transaction cost and facilitates to increase institutional long-term efficiencies; b) contributes to the development of entrepreneurship; c) helps to increase in the creation of wealth at the place of origin; d) helps maintain transparency while building shared social norms and high levels of trusted relationships; and e) plays a catalytic role in economic, social, and political reforms in their countries of origin.

Corruption hinders smooth flow of innovations and services in the global market, disrupts communication, international trade, and increases the movement of people from less developed, more corrupt economies to more developed and less corrupt economies. Corruption affects the level of investment, entrepreneurial incentives, design or implementation of rules or regulations regarding access to resources and assets within a country of origin. Therefore, governments of



developing countries must be committed to fight against corruption and reinforce transparency in order to foster diaspora entrepreneurship. Institutional reforms help in enhancing the efficiency of the judicial and executive institutions.

Imitating successful models

North America and Europe have played a major role in facilitating diasporas to gain access to resources such as money, knowledge, and networks that transform countless opportunities for the development of their home countries. Migrant diasporas have become a focal point in the development debates among stakeholders, such as policymakers, development agencies, members of diaspora groups and NGOs seeking to commercial or not-for-profit sectors to overcome critical development challenges. Some of the models that Nepal can imitate include, but are not limited to:

- What helped China become massive manufacturing power?
- What helped India become a global technology hub?
- What helped Israel become the great startup nation of the world?

However, a lack of proper networking and coordination among educational institutions to offer courses to solve real-world problems may impede the process of imitating useful models. Networking is needed to establish strong connections among innovative institutions.

In the recent years, Nepali people are involved in blue collar jobs in various countries (Table 1) other than in India.

Countries	Number of Nepali	Percent of labor force Nepali people make
Qatar	183,542	31.80
UAE	114,941	26.50
Saudi Arabia	108,414	19.50
Kuwait	27,149	6.80
Malaysia	21,370	4.20
Bahrain	8,454	2.00
Oman	5,713	1.20
Maldives	3,763	0.08
Cyprus	3,370	0.70
Afghanistan	3,763	0.80

Source: www.theeverestlist.org

Country	Number of Nepali migrant workers
Malaysia	500,000
UAE	400,000
Qatar	425,000



Saudi Arabia	380,000
Kuwait	80,000
Bahrain	35,000
Oman	17,500

Source: Nepal Association of Foreign Employment Agencies Mandal (2020).

Data on Nepali Diaspora in the US

State	Y2015	Y2020	Change (%) between 2015 and 2020
Alabama	424	703	65.80%
Alaska	158	289	82.91%
Arizona	1,354	1,760	29.99%
Arkansas	83	357	330.12%
California	9,611	14,040	46.08%
Colorado	4,135	4,679	13.16%
Connecticut	1,118	1,235	10.47%
Delaware	348	44	-87.36%
District of Columbia	213	449	110.80%
Florida	1,178	1,518	28.86%
Georgia	3,020	4,212	39.47%
Hawaii	218	326	49.54%
Idaho	512	1,290	151.95%
Illinois	2,414	3,636	50.62%
Indiana	535	737	37.76%
Iowa	686	2,268	230.61%
Kansas	876	1,884	115.07%
Kentucky	1,403	3,356	139.20%
Louisiana	442	809	83.03%
Maine	15	150	900.00%
Maryland	5,731	8,894	55.19%
Massachusetts	5,601	5,867	4.75%
Michigan	1,831	2,637	44.02%
Minnesota	1,564	2,970	89.90%
Mississippi	211	475	125.12%
Missouri	1,137	2,000	75.90%



Montana	137	84	-38.69%
Nebraska	1,312	2,169	65.32%
Nevada	504	985	95.44%
New Hampshire	1,613	2,420	50.03%
New Jersey	1,504	1,891	25.73%
New Mexico	231	598	158.87%
New York	10,168	16,699	64.23%
North Carolina	3,769	5,863	55.56%
North Dakota	636	1,319	107.39%
Ohio	4,198	12,995	209.55%
Oklahoma	654	791	20.95%
Oregon	1,124	572	-49.11%
Pennsylvania	4,656	9,674	107.77%
Puerto Rico	26	0	-100.00%
Rhode Island	456	70	-84.65%
South Carolina	126	167	32.54%
South Dakota	286	777	171.68%
Tennessee	1,574	1,791	13.79%
Texas	12,190	21,764	78.54%
Utah	1,721	1,740	1.10%
Vermont	690	1,187	72.03%
Virginia	7,499	8,167	8.91%
Washington	2,444	3,217	31.63%
West Virginia	150	358	138.67%
Wisconsin	1,010	1,080	6.93%
Wyoming	56	30	-46.43%

Diasporas' contributions

- Remittances:
- Investment
- Knowledge and skills transfer
- Global networks Remittance:

Remittance:

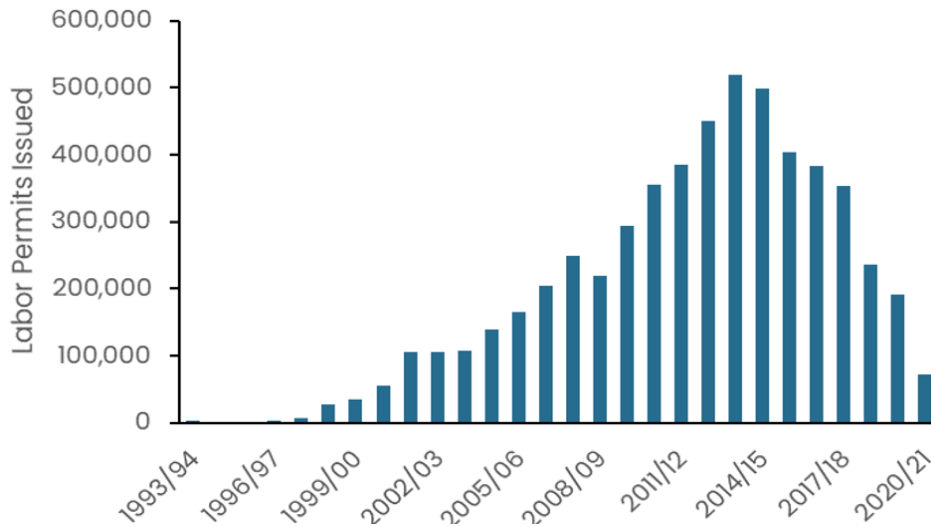
Diasporas send money back to their families and friends in their countries of origin. This remittance is much more important than foreign direct investment (FDI). The GDP contributed by remitters was 29% in 2014, 28% in 2018, but decreased to 20.76% in 2022. Almost 80% of the



remittance received by sending countries is used on daily consumption and just 2.4% in capital formation (Sapkota, 2020).

Unfortunately, diaspora entrepreneurs are facing constraints ranging from unfavorable institutional environments to systemic and endemic corruption. No better conditions than in Haiti, Somalia, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Sudan and Malawi (The Fund for Peace, 2016 & 2018; World Atlas, 2017) on the list of highly corrupt countries (Transparency International, 2019; Joseph and Phillips, 2016; Klitgaard, 2010; Mbaku, 2008; Mbaku, 2010).

Nepal suffers from an inadequate institutional quality, rule of law, regulatory quality (World Bank, 2018) with low level of human development (United Nations Development Programme, 2018).



Innovation and Investment

Diaspora can bring wonderful innovation to the country of origin. For example, a group of diaspora entrepreneurs started the South Asia's First Sky Walk Tower is under construction, at the prime location of Kathmandu City, Kamaladi. Constructed by Wonders Nepal Pvt Ltd on an area of 13.2 Ropani for 23 Years in Lease. The work started on December 2019 at an estimated cost at \$2 billion. It is 78 meters tall with 25 story building. The top will be of 35-meter diameter. The glass is 3-meter-wide glass walkway. This tower will occupy 3500 sq ft area and premises will have a garden, parking, hotel, restaurant, fitness club, swimming pool, office space, seminar hall, air club, recreational activities along with skywalk. This will give an experience of walking in the sky.

Problems faced by Nepali Diaspora

- Nepali institutions are dominated by **innovative corruption**, rent-seeking, bribery, nepotism, patronage and widespread unethical business practices along with the history of political instability and rivalry among the elites for power and control over public institutions to achieve vested interests.
- Face serious deficiency in terms of brain drain and has become dependent on international aids.



- Institutional reforms have yield poor results rarely leading to sustainable institutional change and economic development.
- Suggestions and indicators theorized by the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, International Transparency and World Economic Forum barely touch the endemic issues.
- Findings are generalized, no location-specific and case specific issues have been identified.
- Corruption have been deeply entrenched.

Corruption

- The abuse of a trusted position for personal gain through embezzlement, nepotism, extortion, and other things at different scales using various (**innovative**) methods.
- Migration and corruption are interlinked because it reduces the development benefits. One percent increase in corruption reduces 11% of FDI, and 15% of social services.
- Petty corruption, systematic corruption, and public sector corruption make project costs too expensive.
- Most common areas of corruptions are political, policies, judicial, health care, higher education in universities, labor unions many other things, abuse of discretionary power, favoritism, nepotism, and clientelism.
- Corruption engulfs when migrants' money is tapped into by self-enriching people in trusted positions in the societies of origin
- Both short-and-long term returns of migrants favor less corrupt society in the country of destination
- Bribes by officials at border frustrate migrants and make them not wanting to return
- Post-conflict situation in Nepal has made the society quite corrupt.

Suggestions

- Institutional reforms and policies aiming at improving the investment climate in Nepal. All people, including government officials and businesspeople, who have been implicated in corruption should be judged.
- Diaspora entrepreneurial development and legal institutions should not be under the control of any economic or social actors.
- Often corrupt political elites are working together with greedy businesspeople and unscrupulous investors for private gains.
- Network between economy, organization, NGOs and institutional entrepreneurs can help in institutional changes, curb corruption and market reform.
- G2G labor agreements like with Israel and South Korea with required skills and knowledge before going for foreign employment, to ensure higher paying jobs that match the skills.

Conclusion

- Nepali migrant entrepreneurs are facing challenges to break away from the way the economic elites are doing business. The diaspora must translate new concepts into reality to succeed both within Nepal and in host countries.
- The Nepali migrant entrepreneurs may get involve in forging public opinions to pressure government politicians for institutional and market reforms. This approach may help



break the long-standing dominant coalition between corrupt government politicians and the scrupulous business Nepali pundits.

- If migrant diasporas tend to involve in the politics of their home country, they may identify individuals who can help them fulfill the agenda of open access market through market reforms that meet their expectations.
- Diaspora entrepreneurs must transform themselves into agents of institutional change capable of rallying consensus to change the rules of the game and help break the cognitive, legal and political obstacles.

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APPENDIX II: SPEAKERS, MODERATOR, AND BIOS



Ambika P. Adhikari, DDes., is a Principal Planner at City of Tempe, AZ, USA heading its long-range planning division. He is a Senior Global Futures Scientist (an honorary position), JAW Global Futures Laboratory, and a former Program Manager and former Research Professor, at Arizona State University (ASU).

In Nepal, he was Associate Professor (Reader) at Institute of Engineering (IOE), Tribhuvan University, where he also served as the Project Architect (and interim Project Coordinator) for the Western Region Campus Project (WRCP) in Pokhara. He was Country Representative of Switzerland-based IUCN (International Union of Conservation of Nature) at the Nepal Country Office.

He is a Fellow of American Society of Nepalese Engineers (ASNEng), and a Member of American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). He is a Project Management Professional (PMP) and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Accredited Professional (AP). He is an Adjunct Distinguished Fellow at the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), Kathmandu, Nepal.

Ambika obtained a Doctor of Design (DDes) degree in Urban Planning and Design from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University. Earlier, he was a Fellow at the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS) at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He obtained M. Arch. degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and B. Arch. from the M.S. University of Baroda in Gujarat, India. He has authored one, co-edited six books, and published dozens of journal articles and book chapters related to urban and regional planning, environment, development, and diaspora studies.

He is a current member, and former chair, of the Board of Trustees for the Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA), with which he has been affiliated since 1986. He is the chair of the Advisory Council for the American Society of Nepalese Engineers (ASNEng), and a Board Member for Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), a global diaspora-led policy think tank, and a board member at Asta-Ja USA. Earlier, he held several leadership positions at the NRNA including as a Patron of the International Coordination Council (ICC), Regional Coordinator for the Americas, Advisor to the ICC, Chair of the ICC's Disciplinary Committee, and President of the National Coordination Council (NCC) for the US. He is the coordinator of the ANA Denver Forum – “Current Developmental Challenges in Nepal: How Can the Diaspora Help?.”



Keshav Bhattarai, PhD, is a Professor of Geography in the School of Geoscience, Physics, and Safety at the University of Central Missouri (UCM) (est. 1871) in Warrensburg, Missouri, USA. Dr. Bhattarai teaches geospatial technology, economic geography, and contemporary geopolitical courses at the University of Central Missouri.



Dr. Bhattarai has more than twenty years of teaching experience in the US, and fifteen years of professional experiences in forestry sector of the Government of Nepal. He was also a visiting faculty at the Forestry Institute in Nepal and a Fulbright Scholar at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu. He served as a Department Chair at the Department of Geography at the University of Central Missouri.

He obtained his Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Geography from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, and a Masters in Natural Resource Management degree from The University of Edinburgh, Scotland, UK. Prior to that he received AIFC degree from Indian Forest College, Dehradun, India. Keshav has baccalaureate degrees in Biology, Economics, and Law from Tribhuvan University. He also obtained a diploma in Aeronautical Radio Engineering from International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

Dr. Bhattarai has published four books and numerous book chapters and journal articles. His 764 page book, *Contemporary Environmental Problems in Nepal: Geographic Perspectives* (Springer 2021), co-authored with Dennis Conway, is an authoritative treatise of Nepal's environment, political economy, and development. He has received several scholarly, research excellence, and international scholar awards.



Usha Sharma, PhD, has more than 20 years of teaching and research experience in USA and Nepal. She holds a doctorate in Environmental Engineering (Interdisciplinary) from Tokyo University, Japan. After completion of her Post-Doctoral Research at the University of Massachusetts, Boston, she continued her research and teaching at the same university for a few years. Currently, she works as an adjunct faculty member at several area colleges including Bunker Hill Community College, Boston.

In Nepal, Dr. Sharma was working as an Environmentalist in International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Nepal and Researcher in Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) for more than five years. Dr. Sharma's research papers have been published in peer reviewed journals such as *Atmosphere: Journal of Geophysical Research*.

Dr. Sharma has been actively involved in Nepali community in Boston for last 24 years, working in different capacities. She currently holds the position of treasurer, and earlier, was the Women's Coordinator in ANA. She was the president of INLS (International Nepali Literary Society) Boston Chapter from 2012-2014. She is an advisor in different organizations in Boston such as Greater Boston Nepalese Community, INLS Boston Chapter, Pashupatinath Buddha foundation, Boston.



Shilu Ghimire Neupane, PhD., CFLE is the founder of International Association of Family Issues & Solutions, and an adjunct professor at University of North Texas, where she has been teaching Professional Development and Financial Resource Management. She is the first Nepali to obtain PhD in Family Studies. She also holds two Master degrees - in Literature, and Creative Writing - from University of Nebraska in USA.

She is a Certified Family Life Educator and provides consultancy in various family areas globally. She has been mentoring immigrant families, especially youths in US and Canada through workshops and communication services.

Dr. Neupane's research areas are women entrepreneurs, financial competency & mentorship. She interviewed over 560 women entrepreneurs, and her paper "Let me give you a hand; A phenomenological study on women entrepreneurs, financial competency and mentorship" was selected to present at the United Nation's 62nd Commission on the Status of Women. She is a strong advocate of financial literacy for women.

Writing is her passion. She has authored 5 books in various genre of Nepali literature. Her novel *Para-ko-Deshma*, and her creative nonfiction *PR-ko-Pir* both were based on families living in north America.

She currently is working for the Colorado Department of Human Services and continuing her research on intellectually disabled family dynamics. She also runs a podcast called "TeaTalk with Family Doc" where she has interviewed over 120 professionals covering career and family issues.



Khagendra Adhikari has decades of experience in administration, private entrepreneurship, and grass roots organizing, both in Nepal and the United States. He was born in Bhojpur and grew up in Jhapa, Nepal. Mr. Adhikari attended Tribhuvan University for undergraduate and graduate studies in economics. He served as an officer in the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), before immigrating to the United States with his family in 1998.

Mr. Adhikari is actively associated in many Nepali American community organizations. He is the immediate past president, and a current member of the board of trustees of the Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA).

Earlier, he served as a senior vice president of the ANA for many years. He has also been a past international advisor to the International Jhapali Society. Mr. Adhikari currently serves as advisor to the Jhapali Association of the greater Washington, D.C. area, a benefactor member of the Nepali American Community Center, a trustee member of the Baltimore Association of Nepalese in America (BANA), and Chairperson for the Board of Advisors for the Nepal Education and Cultural Center (NECC).



APPENDIX III: SOME IMAGES FROM THE CONFERENCE



Forum Presenters, volunteer

ANA Convention
Denver, Colorado

Date:
July 1st, 2023

NEPAL FORUM

Current Developmental
Challenges in Nepal:
How Can the
Diaspora Help?

Sponsored By:
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Dr. Ambika P. Adhikari
Phoenix, AZ (Forum organizer)

Dr. Usha Sharma
Boston, MA

Mr. Khagendra Adhikari
Alexandria, VA (Moderator)

Dr. Keshav Bhattarai
Warrensburg, MO

Dr. Shilu Ghimire Neupane
Denton, TX

Convention Venue: Hilton Denver Central Park, Denver, Colorado- 80216

Forum Flyer



Presenter Dr. Shilu Neupane, and Moderator Mr. Khagendra Adhikari



Prof. Keshav Bhattarai presenting at the Forum



One view of the Forum audience



Another view of the Forum audience



A pic taken after the Nepal Forum



Drs. Shilu Neupane and Dr. Usha Sharma presenting



A post-Forum group pic



ANA Denver 2023 Convention Inauguration Parade



ANA Denver 2023 Convention Inauguration Session



ANA Denver 2023 Convention Recognition at Inauguration



Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA), Nepal Forum, 2023

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTAL CHALLENGES IN NEPAL: HOW CAN THE DIASPORA HELP?



**A Forum at the ANA 2023 Annual Convention
DoubleTree by Hilton, Denver
4040 Quebec St, Denver, CO 80216, USA
July 1, 2023. 12:30-1:30 pm**

July 2023