



**Britain-Nepal  
Academic Council**



**SOUTH ASIA  
INSTITUTE**

SOAS University of London

# **13<sup>th</sup> Annual Nepal Study Days**

**16-17 April 2015**  
**SOAS, DLT (Djam Lecture Theatre)**

## **ABSTRACTS**

### **Climate Change: Numbers and Relationships**

***Ben Campbell***

Next December the latest round of UN climate talks will take place in Paris to refocus on the causes and consequences of global climate change. Data from Nepal and other Himalayan region countries will doubtless again provide evidence for accelerating glacier melt, extreme temperature ranges, intense and abnormal timings of precipitation, and cumulative risks (health, livelihoods) to millions of vulnerable people, and unique ecological habitats. As an issue, climate change is big, frightening and yet somehow distant. This paper will explore reasons why it appears so. Its framing as predominantly a natural science issue will be examined from the perspective of environmental crisis narratives. This will contrast the analysis and remedial policies of mainstream political-economic approaches to climate risks, with the varieties of human-environmental interactions contributing to possible ways of seeing the Himalayan anthropocene.

### **Soil Fertility Status of Bari and Khet Land in the Kavreplanchowk and Baglung District of Nepal**

***Rajendra Prasad Uprety and Kamal Shah***

Nepal is a landlocked country elongated from east to west and flattened from North to South. Geographically it is divided into three regions as low land (Terai), middle hill and high hill. Agriculture is the main stay of National economy. A vast majority of the agricultural population has been residing in the middle hills where the average land holding is less than 0.5 hectares, compared to 1.7 hectares in the Terai. Soil fertility status of farmland depends directly on farming practices. The increasing population pressure in the hills of Nepal stresses the environment and threatens the agricultural productivity and consequently the food security. The sustainability of hill agriculture depends how farmers manage, protect and utilize their farm and forest resources. Shifting cultivation, overgrazing, overuse of marginal land are contributing to the loss of soil-fertility. Soil fertility is a critical issue to farmers, particularly where population density is high and agriculture is the major source of income. A study to identify soil fertility status of land use systems i e Khet (lowland) and Bari (upland) which are two distinct and dominant agricultural land use system was carried out in

Kavreplanchowk (Cambisols) and Baglung (Luvisols) district of Nepal. The soil fertility status of Nitrogen (N), Phosphorous (P), Potassium (K) and Organic matter (OM) is better in Bari land than Khet land. The soil pH was found to be more acidic in Khet land than in Bari land. Bulk density and root depth of Khet land were greater than that of Bari land. Due to higher application rate of farmyard manure (FYM) in Bari land and less crop intensity in Bari land resulted Bari land more fertile than Khet land. High doses of chemical fertilizer used in Khet land reduced the soil pH, increased droughtiness of the land and is an issue facing the environmental sustainable soil management practices.

## **Plants and You: Linking scientific biodiversity knowledge with local people in Nepal**

***Colin Pendry and Bhaskar Adhikari***

Flora of Nepal: *Plants and You* project at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh is working on an innovative way of producing high-quality biodiversity knowledge on plants accessible to the rural people of Nepal so that they can make best use of community based forest resources, improving their livelihoods and the resilience of the ecosystems in which they live. *Plants and You* is directly aimed at helping the poor and disadvantaged people in Nepal by empowering them to make better, more informed decisions. Knowledge of plants is fundamental to effective decision-making, utilisation and communication. Having a better understanding of important plants in community based forests, their economic potential and other uses, will add value to the contribution that the forestry sector can make to inclusive economic growth and poverty reduction. *Plants and You* brings together difficult to access, hard to interpret, fragmented primary data and derived information, systematising it into an accessible format based on printed plant profiles. An Internet-linked database stores the information and generates the printed plant profiles. This digital knowledge base lays the foundation for follow-on projects, promoting sustainability and future upscaling, and enabling diversification in delivery methods using increasingly high tech solutions (e.g. websites and mobile apps).

## **Health and welfare of Nepali female returnees from Gulf countries: A mixed-methods study**

***Padam Simkhada, Edwin van Teijlingen, Manju Gurung and Uday Yadav***

Nepal is one of the largest suppliers of labour to Gulf countries where there is a demand for cheap and low skilled workers. This migration has increased significantly in the past years. However, there has not been a study on the experiences of Nepali women migrants. This paper explores health problems and exploitation experienced by Nepalese women migrants in Gulf countries. We conducted qualitative interviews with rescued women migrants (n=16) and policy-makers and 15 people working in migration-related organisations in Nepal. Quantitative data was collected for 1052 returned/rescued migrant women from the records of an organisation working for migrants. Female migrant workers were generally young (below 30 years) and married with low education status (primary education only). Having a large family (many children) was a push factor for women seeking foreign jobs. Most had stereotypical female jobs such as babysitting, washing dishes and clothes, and other household jobs. Most had received less money than originally promised. Often women were not permitted to interact with people outside the household or even

beyond the boundaries of the house in which they worked. Bonded working conditions was one reason why many tried to escape from the Gulf. Two-thirds were rescued by Nepal's embassies in the Gulf, and some interviewees were sexually exploited and 1 in 10 had serious mental health problems. Most organizations focused on rehabilitation rather than pre-departure preventative interventions. Better information prior to departure may make women aware of their health risks and rights. Our work shows that the situation is very exploitative, there is an urgent need to empower women before they migrate, and during their stay in Gulf countries. The latter is unlikely since some of the receiving countries in the Middle East treat indigenous women as second-class citizens.

### **Working with Loadshedding: Labor Migration in a Kathmandu Valley Textile Industry**

***Mikkel Vindegg***

A lack of electricity has to varying degrees been part and parcel of life in the Kathmandu Valley for more than a decade. Based on six months of fieldwork in a Kathmandu Valley VDC, I show how a local textile industry is affected by the vagarious electricity access, leading to both domestic and international labor migration. Many factory owners have given up trying to entice local people in to working in the factories due to the strong attraction of employment abroad. As a consequence, domestic labor migrants from Tarai have come to constitute the major part of the labor force in the industry. Seemingly content to work under conditions resulting from the vagarious electricity distribution, colloquially known as "Loadshedding", they nonetheless constitute an insecure source of labor as migrants' stay in the area is commonly temporary. However, weavers of local origin are not necessarily inclined to stay for the long-term either. One factory owner even stated that the industry as a whole has become a mere stepping stone for going abroad. Once a weaver has made enough money to make a passport and pay a manpower agency to find a job abroad, he may leave without notice. Thus, for the owners less able to keep their employees for the long-term, their production has become decidedly unstable. For some, running a factory has become seasonal work, many looms being idle during the dry months when Loadshedding is at its highest. While the possibility of remittances doubtlessly creates new opportunities for some, it leads to constraints for others. Therefore, I put it that the lack of electricity can place industry in Nepal at competitive disadvantage in the global labor market, for which there are few remedies and, as of yet, no end in sight.

### **Issues associated with the process and context of migration of migrants and their families from Nalang VDC**

***Chris Willman***

International labour migration in Nepal is considered a main and sustainable livelihood strategy. About 29% of the households in Nepal have at least one member living abroad, demonstrating considerable need to investigate the effects of the process. Migration to the Gulf States from Nepal, a popular destination, is in its infancy. There has been a host of problems that migrant's from Nepal face at various stages of the migration process. The strong sponsorship system in the Gulf keeps migrants under strict control. Recruitment agencies also play a key role in migration from Nepal. Back home, parents, wives and children face the struggle of coping without sons, husbands and fathers, both psychologically and as a loss of labour.

Additionally, the use of remittance varies and although it has been argued to reduce poverty in Nepal, how this achieved is relatively unknown. This research investigates the process and context of migration, focussing on related issues before migration, during the migration and after the migrant returns. It concentrates on pre-departure issues, experiences of the migrant at the workstation, how it affects those left back home, and remittance management. In-depth interviews were conducted with male migrants and their families from Nalang VDC in Dhading District during April 2014. The VDC has a population of around 7000 and like many other areas of Nepal has a high proportion of its male population working abroad. The conclusions of this paper are multi-faceted, with a host of problems experienced by both migrants and their families back home. A common message from the participants was that a person should in Nepal, to be with their family and apply their skills in their own country. Whilst this would be difficult to combat because of the financial benefits and migration culture, attention needs to be directed at migrants and their families to educate them around the process and experience.

### ***Caa-Cin: Traditional Artworks around the Door of Newah houses*** ***Sanyukta Shrestha***

Making art on various parts of domestic dwellings is a popular tradition in the Newah culture, which originated from Kathmandu, Nepal, around 300 BC. This paper discusses door art practised among the Newahs till date. While *toranas*, also known as *torana dvaara*, are quite popular in South Asia as an auspicious decoration for the entrances to sacred or holy sites, the Newahs paint a unique set of auspicious symbols called Caa-Cin around the main door of their houses and temples. This paper will explore the Caa-Cin symbology, its meanings and how it differs among the Buddhist and Hindu traditions within the Newah community. It shall focus especially on those Caa-Cin symbols of which the relevance has been obscured over time due to lack of documentation within the local artists' community and the Newah practice of keeping secrets, termed *kaney majyu*. Caa-Cin were traditionally made by the Puns (or Citrakaars), a sub-caste of painters within the Newah community. Although the traditional custom is for the Puns to paint with pigments on the wall, this paper will also analyse the contemporary practice, where increasingly, ready-made posters with the required symbols are used. While it has proven to be much easier and cheaper for the consumers, it has detrimentally affected – and today threatens – the livelihood of the entire Pun community. This paper examines how this painting tradition has changed over time, thus assessing the consequences of such changes to the Pun community. Finally, this paper briefly touches upon other contemporary extensions of Caa-Cin, such as its appearance at various modern-day Nepalese community events around the world, where Caa-Cin symbols are used as hanging banners to decorate the formal stage, for presenting cultural dances and dramas.

### **What is there to gain from public knife-hoarding?**

#### ***Stefanie Lotter***

This presentation will discuss ongoing research into Nepali objects in collections. It will focus on the absurdly large object group of 'khukuris' found in UK museums, amassed and growing despite collection policies that discourage the collection of duplicates. Khukuri collections are not frequently displayed but archived and conserved at highest standards in museum depots. The display of these knife collections within the realm of weaponry or technology is not likely and would in fact

be rather questionable. This presentation will show however that the interpretation of unused and seemingly absurd collections can shed a fascinating light onto British-Nepal relations.

## **From ethnography to clinical assessment: Capturing children's subjective worlds**

### ***Emilie Medeiros***

In this presentation, I will discuss ways in which ethnographic findings can be used to design a clinical tool for analysing the subjective functioning of young people involved in armed groups in an integrated manner. In addition to the key social and psychological processes identified during my fieldwork, I will borrow from the Cultural Formulation Interview for the DSM-5 field trials and the MINI for Mustang (Nepal) to propose a structure for fieldworkers to conduct a clinical assessment. The findings are derived from an 18-months ethnography conducted between 2008 to 2010 in the areas of Kathmandu and Rolpa region. I used participant-observation methods with a cohort of 17 key informants who were *whole timers* under the age of 16 years old to understand the impact of their armed group involvement onto their subjective functioning. I will use life trajectory of Pabitra and Ganesh who have dialectically opposed *man-dimāg* functioning to exemplify the proposed structured assessment. The method proposed would follow this structure: 1. Initial assessment: Socio-cultural profile, Presentation over time and space, Position towards the armed group experience, Subject/Clinician relationship. 2. Subject's suffering: This section will be concerned with the problems of acutely distressed subjects as follows: Story of suffering, Examples of related experiences, Causes and conditions of the issues, and Influence of the issues on everyday life. 3. Concluding analysis. The proposed approach for the analysis of the young people's subjective functioning combines an anthropological to the psychological approach in order to devise culturally-appropriate reintegration strategies for fieldworkers. Despite limitations, this tool would contribute to the existing literature on the intervention with children involved in armed groups in Nepal and elsewhere.

## **Post-conflict Constituent Assembly Elections and International Assistance in Nepal**

### ***Min Bhatta***

Do international actors help promote elections in a post-conflict country like Nepal? If so, what impacts have they made in the last two Constituent Assembly (CA) elections of 2008 and 2013 in Nepal? Studies show that the international election monitoring has been in practice for decades and is an institutionalized concept of the Western democracies and many international organizations. Additionally, the invitation of such actors from the newly transitioned countries for financial aid and technical assistance in holding elections has also become a common practice to earn international legitimacy, recognition, and transparency. Have these efforts been helpful in institutionalizing elections in Nepal? The scholarly debates on the role of international actors in advancing democracy through elections in new democracies show that their support strategies have mainly been motivated by democratic peace theory, emphasizing that nations in transitions not to go back to conflict. Although international actors have been spending a huge amount of money and technical assistance in holding elections and in the constitution drafting process, Nepal has still been struggling to draft a constitution through the elected assembly. Keeping this in

mind, this paper aims to explore how have the Western efforts been internalized and to what extent Nepal has been successful in holding free and fair elections. This study uses archived materials, interview data, elections press releases from international organizations and election manifestos of main political parties. The preliminary findings suggest that the loosely coordinated international assistance programmes for elections in the post conflict country most likely renews the hostile situation among political parties even they come through the elections. Consequently, the main agenda of the constitution drafting process including administrative reforms and state restructuring agenda fall behind. All parties including international actors should pay attention in their respective roles to avoid the dangers of the democratization process.

### **Nepal's 2010 general strike: A moment of truth**

#### ***Feyzi Ismail***

In the last two decades Nepal has witnessed a series of political upheavals that have raised possibilities for fundamental social change. The first people's movement for democracy in 1990 marked the beginning of Nepal's democratic revolution, while the second people's movement in 2006, following ten years of civil war, paved the way for the abolition of the 240-year-old monarchy in 2008. Republicanism helped weaken cultural and linguistic domination, which has for centuries been exercised by upper-caste hill people. The Maoists played a central role in these upheavals, mobilising millions on the basis of class demands, including persistent poverty, rising unemployment and soaring inequality. While there have been improvements in a number of development indicators over this time, the poor that constitute the vast majority in Nepal have not experienced substantive socio-economic change. This lack of progress has relied on the interplay of two phenomena: an anti-Maoist alliance consisting of the international community, the domestic ruling elite and NGOs, and a fundamental ambiguity at the heart of the Maoists' political theory. At a number of crucial moments, the Maoists' conviction that Nepal was not economically prepared for social change, led to hesitation and disorientation. This paper focuses on Nepal's 2010 general strike—which some had called the third people's movement—as one such crucial moment. The paper argues that the general strike was the Maoists' final mass mobilisation and a turning point: having entered mainstream politics in 2006, signing a peace deal facilitated by India, they became fully incorporated into the parliamentary system. For now, the Maoists themselves have limited the possibilities for transformative social change in Nepal.

### **Failing to Produce a Constitution for Nepal: 2012 and 2015 Compared**

#### ***David Gellner***

This presentation will examine the reasons for the failure of Nepal's first Constituent Assembly in 2012 to produce a constitution, despite four years and four extensions of time. The familiar failings of politicians, the conservatism of the Nepali elite, the Kathmandu-centrism of key decision makers are all frequently invoked; but the degree to which it was possible to mobilize a genuinely popular movement of Bahun and Chhetri ethnic assertion has not been fully appreciated. Popular movements of this sort, from whichever quarter, were conspicuous by their absence in January 2015. Thus the explanation for the failure to produce a constitution in CA2 has to shift to other, more contingent factors.

## **Economic Consequences of Stigma and Discrimination associated with HIV/AIDS in Nepal**

***A.N. Poudel, David Newlands and Padam Simkhada***

HIV/AIDS is one of the most stigmatized diseases in the world. The stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS not only emotionally affect the HIV positive individuals but also affects them economically. There was no any study in the world which explored the consequences in detail. Therefore, the study aimed to explore the economic consequences of stigma and discrimination on HIV-affected individuals and households. A cross-sectional study was conducted in 2011 in six treatment and care centres in six districts of Nepal using mixed-methods approach (survey and in-depth interviews). Survey with 415 HIV positive respondents who were  $\geq 18$  years of age and at least a month of HIV-infection history and in-depth interviews with 30 HIV positive participants who were  $\geq 18$  years of age and at least a year of HIV-infection history were employed in the study. Descriptive statistics and thematic approach were used to analyse survey and in-depth interviews data respectively. The survey study found that over 30 % of total respondents experienced stigma and discrimination after HIV diagnosis and economic capacity of 7.6 % of respondents had been reduced due to stigma and discrimination. The findings include removing PLHA or spouse from a job by employers and given less wages. The in-depth interviews explored additional findings such as- compelled to leave the job, villagers do not call for work, need to go far away for wage labour, go far for treatment (self-stigma), villagers do not buy animal products, villagers do not exchange labour, villagers do not 'give and take' and removal from village. The study concluded that stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS have economic consequences. These reduce economic capacity of HIV-affected households and increase poverty among them. The study has helped fill the knowledge gap about the economic consequences of stigma and discrimination related to HIV/AIDS in detail. The major limitations were a concentration on respondents attending treatment centres, the lack of a control group and the possibility of recall bias. The study has a number of policy implications for different stakeholders.

## **Pharmacies in Kathmandu: local health educators**

***Stine Helmersen***

For locals with ailments or health concerns, the neighborhood pharmacy is often the initial point of contact with the health care system in Kathmandu. If a health-related problem arises, a visit to the physician's office can easily result in a major out-of-pocket expense and it can be time-consuming since queuing can be an all-day affair. What is more, the physician may not have time or be able to adequately communicate in layman's terms essential information about diagnosis, prognosis and treatment options. Thus the patient generally leaves unenlightened, carrying one or more prescription. On a daily basis pharmacists are therefore required to translate test results, explain diagnoses and prescriptions, and even perform basic diagnostics for customers seeking their help regarding a health issue. Pharmacies, and the trusted pharmacists working in them, do more than just dispense drugs to anyone who comes by with a sore throat. This study therefore attempts to document what other roles and functions the pharmacy has in the community and how the local population utilize this resource in questions regarding health and illness. Based on a 6-month qualitative study among allopathic and ayurvedic pharmacies in the heart of Kathmandu, the presentation will address the unique and essential role pharmacies

and their staff have as purveyors of medicine and sources of rudimentary health education in the community with a special focus on how they bridge the gap between the patient and the physician. Pharmacies were found to offer a wide range of services including, but not limited to, dispensing medication, administering injections, dressing small wounds, counseling and recommendations regarding further treatment, and are an essential part of the local health care system of Kathmandu.

### **New norms and forms of development: Brokerage in maternal and child health projects in Nepal**

***Jeevan Raj Sharma, Radha Adhikari, Pam Smith and Ian Harper, Obindra Chand and Deepak Thapa***

Foreign aid to the health sector as a share of total aid to Nepal has risen rapidly in the past two decades, from under 2% in 1990 to 14% more recently. With the start of DFID funded Safer Motherhood Programme (NSMP) and USAID funded Nepal Family Health Programme (NFHP), both technical and financial assistance from external development agencies in the field of maternal and child health has increased significantly since 1997. Driven by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), a number of donor funded initiatives have been framed within the logic of MDG targets as well as a focus on outsourcing, value for money, results, and the increasing use of evidence. A number of intermediaries that include non-profits, private contractors, management consultancies, advocacy groups, research organisations, think tanks and educational institutions among others are involved in a variety of institutional arrangements through sub-contracts and partnerships. Based on an ongoing study on the role and functions of aid funded institutions that broker maternal and child health projects and programmes, this paper will present emerging findings on institutional forms, programme logic, the nature of outsourcing, and use of evidence in these projects and programmes in Nepal. Data for this paper is drawn from a stakeholder mapping exercise, key informant interviews as well as ongoing fieldwork of USAID funded *Suaahara* project, which is a multisectoral nutrition programme and *Aama Surakchya Karyakram* managed by the Government of Nepal with technical assistance from DFID that aims to mitigate high costs of childbirth through free institutional delivery and incentives.

### **Role of community health workers in maternal health improvement in Nepal**

***Sarita Panday***

Community Health Workers (CHW) known as Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) are providing maternal and child health services in Nepal. This study highlights how CHWs are delivering innovative maternal health services in remote villages of Nepal. Between May and September 2014, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 CHWs, 26 local women and 11 local health workers including four focus group discussions with 19 CHWs. The majority of CHWs (n=39) had been working for more than 10 years. The main role of the FCHVs is providing local access to healthcare services. Being mothers themselves and having been recruited from their own community, FCHVs are in a unique position to understand pregnant women and mothers in their community. While most of these FCHVs had no opportunity to access health information during their own pregnancies and childbirth, they are attempting to make a difference in society by creating greater health awareness of the importance of nutrition, health check-ups and hospital

deliveries including family planning. They disseminate this information through local activities such as folk songs composed of relevant maternal health messages and meeting with new mothers with gifts full of nutrient food. They share information with mothers and pregnant women during monthly meetings and refer them on if necessary. In some places, FCHVs were even conducting deliveries as there were no immediate facilities. Generally it is poorer women who utilised FCHVs' services. FCHVs have a substantial role in creating greater health access for rural women in Nepal. They provide health services to some of the most disadvantaged groups of women in the country. Efforts should be focused on providing FCHVs with context specific support to enable them to fulfil their role more effectively.

### **“*Buḍha-buḍhīlāṭ māyā cāhinchā*”: ‘Doing family’ and long-distance care arrangements among the Kathmandu Valley’s Senior Citizens**

***Roberta Mandoki***

Based on a ten-month ethnographic research between 2013 and 2015, this paper focuses on changing imaginaries of ageing in the middle-class in the Kathmandu Valley. It explores the complex entanglements between rapid urban changes, globalization processes and shifting family structures from the older generations' view, since intergenerational relations are more and more influenced by the increasing mobility of workers and students both within Nepal and abroad. Since the introduction of a national social security scheme for senior citizens in the mid-1990s, age-related issues have emerged on the political agenda and have also become more visible in public discourse. At the same time, the local development sector has discovered ageing as a new field of engagement, and connects to global discourses of gerontology and demography. Thus, transcultural ideas about ageing and what old age could mean travel into Nepal's capital through global media, the Nepali diaspora, and the NGO sector. How do middle-class senior citizens perceive these dynamics in a post-civil war scenario where the political situation disappoints many citizens? And how do they engage with the increasingly multi-ethnic social environment in Kathmandu's sprawling urban settlements? The paper looks into how long-standing notions of family and ageing as well as religious concepts on the life course meet with social change and migration trends. The extended family system has served as a point of reference in discourses on intergenerational relations in Nepal that are most often shaped by filial piety and patrilinearity. However, transnational family structures are rising among middle-class families, since many young Nepali seek for better work or study prospects abroad and may permanently settle there. Based on ethnographic case studies, this paper highlights the current emergence of long-distance care arrangements such as old-age homes or day-care centres in the Kathmandu Valley, both from an individual and institutional perspective.

### **Should ageing Nepal plan ahead the future needs and provision of assisted living housing facilities?**

***Sirjana Devkota***

Developing countries are facing rapid demographic transformation. Improved living standards, advancement of medical facilities and better health awareness are the key factors for population ageing, which can be classed as accomplishment of development. However, younger adults have not been able to look after their older generations in tradition ways due to speedy social revolution from equal opportunity on employment, migration and urbanization. As a result, the older persons who are

physically and emotionally reliant on their families' support have already begun to feel unsecured, uncared and vulnerable. This study explores the health and social care needs for the elderly from remote area of Nepal. 253 Gurkha Welfare pensioners were interviewed personally about their health and social care needs with set questionnaire. 3 focus group discussion conducted to probe the potential of assisted living arrangements, their views and expectations. 37.4 % of female and 28.0% of male rated their health as "poor". Gastrointestinal problem (gastritis), musculoskeletal pain (gout, pain), cardiovascular issues (Stroke, heart attack) and breathing issues (COPD, Asthma) are majority of self-reported health problems. Hearing impairment and vision impairment is common cause of disability amongst this age group. Gender difference remains significant on articulation of mental health issues. Female reports about anxiety ( $p=0.020$ ) and insomnia ( $p=0.017$ ) more than male member. Family value, culture and tradition hinder the concept of assisted living arrangement even though elderly population feels less valued and less appreciated by family member and society at times. More attention has to be given for mental and physical wellbeing as well as social security elderly population while the younger generation are focusing more to develop on career development.

### **Understanding parents' and professionals' knowledge and awareness of autism in Nepal**

***Amy Alexander, Liz Pellicano, Emilie Medeiros, Kirti Man Tumbahangphe, Felicity Gibbons, Mary Wickenden, Merina Shrestha, Anthony Costello, Dharma Manandhar and Michelle Heys***

Autism is a global phenomenon. While in Western countries such as the US and UK, prevalence estimates of autism spectrum disorders are around 1% of the population, much less is known about the prevalence, or indeed the manifestation, of autism in countries outside of the US and Europe, especially in developing and underserved populations like Nepal. The aim of this study was to examine parents and (health and education) professionals' perceptions and understanding of typical and atypical development in both rural (Makwanpur District) and urban (Kathmandu Valley) Nepal, focusing specifically on autism. We conducted 9 focus groups with health workers, paediatricians, primary school teachers and parents of autistic and non-autistic children in Makwanpur and Kathmandu and 9 semi-structured interviews with early childhood development (ECD) teachers, faith healers, paediatricians and disability sector workers in Makwanpur (total number of participants, 93). The focus groups and interviews included questions about typical development and vignettes of typically and atypically developing children. Overall, those parents and professionals who were not directly involved with atypically developing children had very little awareness of autism. Participants commonly used terms such as "doggedly", "egoistic" or "dumb" to describe vignettes of children with autism. The majority of participants felt that environmental factors (e.g., parenting style, home or school environment) were key causes of atypical development. Furthermore, paediatricians described how they received very limited training in childhood developmental disorders, especially in the recognition and management of behaviours. Many participants called for wider awareness of autism in the community through training and awareness campaigns. These findings clearly show for the first time the lack of awareness of developmental disorders, such as autism, from both Nepalese parents and professionals alike. These results have important implications for future work aiming to increase awareness and enhance support available for autistic children and families in Nepal.

## **Cultural Aspect of Educating Daughters in Nepal**

### ***Gayatree Timsina***

There is no society without hierarchy and each has its own characteristics. Caste and Gender hierarchies are the fundamental characteristics of Nepali society. Some particular group of people, such as Dalits and women, were historically excluded from their basic right to education and are still deprived from their access to education even after the decades' long global movement of 'Education for all' and a series of educational transformations, especially after 1990. Against this background, I conducted a detail study on educational participation of girls' at the turbulent period in Nepal (2005-2011) when a civil insurgency was at its peak and culminated in a republican state in place of constitutional monarchy. I began my study, in a particular time when there was an uncertainty of gaining access to the field as there was a fear of insecurity among the people. Focusing on educational deprivation, particularly of Dalit girls, I used ethnographic search approach [4] by means of conducting ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation, [2, 5] in a rural village, Chundevi (pseudonym), close to Kathmandu valley. I investigated extent of deprivation from formal education faced by Nepali girls, analysed the major factors affecting their education and developed some strategies that may bring changes in their educational participation. I used the concept of social exclusion, Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction [1] and Frierean pedagogical approach [3], which offered me a strong theoretical basis for my study. In this presentation, I will illustrate my research findings on girls struggling to go to school in Chundevi village and their parental decisions concealing their educational access. My presentation will highlight the Nepali Hindu culture and patriarchal value system deeply rooted in Nepali society that give a little value to women and are responsible for their educational deprivation. The discussion will end with some strategies that I recommended in my study that may help bringing social changes.

## **Tensions of transition in women's position in the Nepalese rural communities**

### ***Enni Mikkonen***

This research addresses women's position in Nepalese rural communities going through a transition on different levels. The primary empirical analysis of the research is drawn from six months of an ethnographic fieldwork with two women's communities in the rural Nepal in 2012-13. As the researcher is one of the founders of a nongovernmental organization (NGO) for children and women and has lived in Nepal for three years over a ten-year period, it grounded her settling in the rural women's communities. The communities' purpose was to promote gender equality and community development, which offered a ground for exploring and analyzing women's actions and perspectives as well as scrutinize the constrains and internal and external relations of communities. The analysis stands at the intersection of traditional and transitional elements of women's position in the rural communities. The research brings forth the perspectives and actions of the women and prioritizes the local, often silenced and hidden knowledge. There is a wide range of international development co-operation and international organizations promoting women's position in Nepal, but at the same time there are changes arising from very local communities. The local and international perspectives and conceptions do not always meet when women's position is discussed and promoted (e.g. Channa 2013). The research addresses these different directions of transition and the tension between

them. Examining the driving forces behind the changes opens windows for understanding the change process as well as its directions and barriers in promoting women's position towards gender justice.

### **Gender, agency and peacebuilding practices in post-conflict Nepal**

***Hanna Ketola***

After the peace agreement Nepal has witnessed an upsurge in international involvement, governments and INGOs sending in a wide variety of missions, consultants and advisers. 'Gender and peacebuilding' is one of the fields of intervention in the post-conflict context bringing together national level women's NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies. This paper explores how women who are targeted by practices of peacebuilding engage with and negotiate these practices. In doing this it highlights engagements between the various international actors, national and local level NGOs, and most importantly between these actors and the women who are targeted by the practices of peacebuilding. How are we to conceive of 'women's agency' in this situation marked by an increased presence of discourses and practices of the international? This paper draws on a particular case study of Maoist women ex-combatants. Based on initial analysis of fieldwork findings this paper discusses engagements between Maoist women ex-combatants and the various national and international actors involved in the field of gender and peacebuilding in Nepal. How do former women combatants articulate agency in relation to the various 'civil society actors' including women's NGOs and UN agencies? How are discourses such as 'women, peace and security' implicated in the way women ex-combatants negotiate the post-conflict situation? The paper argues that a focus on these engagements is crucial to provide a more nuanced understanding of how gendered forms of agency emerge in post-conflict contexts.

### **Ethnic Minority and Social Mobility: A Case Study of the Nepali Community in England**

***Chandra Laksamba, Sangita Shrestha, Krishna Adhikari, and Lokendra Dhakal***

This paper is based on CNSUK's research project that has recently started. The study aims to explore social mobility patterns of the Nepali ethnic minority community in England, as standard sociological studies of class dynamics and social mobility tend to exclude many small yet growing ethnic minority communities. The Nepali community is a new, yet one of the fastest growing ethnic minority groups in England. There has been an exponential rise in their numbers in the UK between the census 2001 and 2011, currently estimated at 100,000. This is mainly due to the UK Government's decision to allow ex-Gurkha soldiers to settle in the country. Considering this rise, CNSUK conducted a census-style survey in 2008, which has established a demographic benchmark, and came up with several useful findings. This research builds on previous available data, and explores direction and dynamics of the community, focusing on youth and their families. The study will mainly investigate: how the second generation Nepalis are doing in their new home in terms of their education, occupation and integration in relation to British class hierarchy; how their life chances are influenced by their parents' social positions; what opportunities, challenges and prospects they have; and what their likely status would be in the future. In this context, the research aims to find out the issues and implications for the community and for the policy process as a whole. Using our

previous database, 100 randomly selected families will be studied using a mixed methodology of data collection. A household survey coupled with interviews with both parents and children (aged 16 and above) will be carried out. Stratified sample data will be collected from two sites - Reading and Farnborough - where a considerable number of Nepalis reside. The findings will be published in an international journal.

### **A Heart Divided: A Refugees' Tale**

***Nicole Hoellerer***

In the late 1980s and early 1990s about 100,000 Nepali-speaking Bhutanese were forced to flee from their native country Bhutan, living in camps in East Nepal for almost 20 years. They were expelled from Bhutan following the introduction of strict nationalist laws, preventing Nepali-speaking Bhutanese in the South of country to worship their religion, learn their language in school and express their Nepali culture. Since 2010 about 400 Bhutanese refugees arrived in the United Kingdom (UK) via the Gateway Protection Programme - an organised resettlement programme for refugees in protracted refugee situations. A group of them in Manchester, together with British volunteers and Nicole Hoellerer (a PhD student from Brunel University), initiated the *Bhutanese Refugee UK Film Project* and produced the one hour long film 'A Heart Divided', telling the story from their forced exile from Bhutan and their lives in Nepalese refugee camps, to their experiences with refugee resettlement and their new life in the UK. As a Nepali-speaking group they engage with the Nepali community in the UK, with whom they share their language, culture and religion. The film – made in Nepali – is an example of a Nepali-speaking minority and their story of exile and resettlement. It shows the various views and different experiences by a Nepali community, who may share a common history of exile, whilst being divided between seven different resettlement nations. The aim of the film is not only to create awareness of Bhutanese refugees in the UK and on a global scale, but also to engage young refugees in initiating, realizing and enjoying community projects.

### **The NRN movement and the question of citizenship**

***Krishna Adhikari and David Gellner***

As is well known, Nepalis have migrated around the world in ever-increasing numbers since 1990, and, in most of these places they have set up associations and organizations for various purposes. Alongside this, there is an international movement of NRNs (non-resident Nepalis) that seeks to unite Nepalis living abroad into a single transnational movement that will promote the interests both of the migrants and of Nepal (through investment and charitable support). It has grown quickly into a large transnational organization, with powerful national chapters in many countries. A key issue from the point of view of the NRN movement itself is the question of dual citizenship. Despite many promises of support from individual politicians, the proposals of the NRN movement have so far encountered resistance within Nepal itself, based on nationalistic grounds. The NRN movement is therefore a good case study to consider the clash between different understandings of national identity in an increasingly interconnected world.

## **K-pop, Kathmandu and Camden: Transnational Trends and Fashion Creativity Amongst Young Nepalis in Britain**

***Premila van Ommen***

How do generations negotiate creative aspirations and desires? Since 2004, Gurkha families migrated multi-generational households from Nepal to Britain under new settlement rights. The youths moving with their parents were already well versed in global popular culture. Many grew up moving across places like Brunei and Hong Kong. Settling into the UK, they quickly organized music, dance and fashion events amongst themselves. They were easily permitted to pursue arts courses without the pressures of professional achievement experienced by other South Asian communities. This research explores the reasons for and outcomes of such trends in the shaping of new transnational identities through the world of fashion and arts-related education and activities. It seeks to chart creative production by observing community and youth events in order to advance definitions of culture, class, and modernity through migration. Its lessons can be applied to outreach and understanding of other ethnic minorities. Studying young artists, bloggers and fashion students, this project takes into account cross-generational negotiations, bringing the often-missing voices of parents and elders into studies of youth subcultures. It will search ambiguities and paradoxes in preserving tradition. Parents pass on new constructions of ethnic identities to children who teach them about the trendiest accessories to wear at functions. This study will also be informed by contemporary research on identities constructed through digital technologies and will contribute new explorations of globalized fashion consumption trends. For example, Korean media that includes music (KPop) is significantly favoured over British urban pop culture by young Nepalis even though Nepal and Korea have extremely different cultures and languages and England is now their new home. By studying these new subcultural forms in the context of developing social capital, this project will examine how a young migrant generation navigates between learning what it means to be Nepali and becoming British.

## **Playing at football: Time, pleasure and identity politics in transnational Nepal**

***Michele Serafini***

This research will focus on changing conceptions of time, pleasure and identity politics, with an ethnographic approach to the emerging transnational Gurung-Himalayan-UK football culture. In the Lamjung District of central Nepal, football appears at the intersection of expanding global capitalism and the aspirations of various Nepali diasporas in the United Kingdom. Research will be conducted in both countries in order to (a) ethnographically explore the ways football is symptomatic of new kinds of social change in which bodies, rivalry and social compulsions are being restructured and (b) map the institutions and discourses which are encouraging the spread of the game to recast the recent political history of Nepal in ethnographic terms. In the 1980s, football tournaments in the district town of Besisahar began to attract teams from all over Lamjung, with players coming from as far as Kathmandu. As football became increasingly popular in the 1990s, the sport was embraced as part of a national 'mediascape'. Scholars have traced the trajectories of large-scale political projects in the country. Building on this work, I will also trace the relationship between the rise of football and the national ideas of centralisation, development and reform. After the construction of a national highway in the 1960s, Besisahar grew exponentially, as the town became more accessible to the state. The local Gurung

community came to be influenced by the linguistic, religious and administrative centralisation of Nepali panchayat nationalism. After the multiculturalist turn of the 1990s, a Gurung identity had to be crafted as part of a Janajati political movement demanding equal participation of hill ethnic groups in the new democratic state. Is there a correlation between the changing national scene of identity politics and the ethical demands of playing and watching football? Did football coordinate playing subjectivities so as to foster a politics of Gurung ethnic identity or rather it played a part in the formation of a national public sphere? Through football, I will explore how the pleasures and practices of everyday life, cultural politics, and transnational discourse are intertwined on Himalayan football pitches. Fostering ideas of masculinity, perseverance and obedience, football has become a tool for shaping distinctive ethics. Alongside changing political and economic regimes in the country, football will be used to signal the emergence of new forms of culture, bodies, rivalry, politics and notions of pleasure and connectivity.

### **Mahila Tamang's Books**

#### ***Michael Hutt***

This presentation of a piece of research in progress, based largely on literary research and interviews conducted in Kathmandu in 2011 and 2012, will focus on the production and consumption of works of Marxist realist fiction in Nepal. It takes as its starting point the contents of a bookcase belonging to an ex-Maoist combatant now living in retirement in Kathmandu and the 'syllabus' promulgated by the then Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) for the ideological training of its cadres. It goes on to chronicle the process by which selected works of fiction came to be translated into Nepali from Russian and Chinese, and the extent to which Maoist cadres were inspired and influenced by these works during the course of the 'People's War' in Nepal between 1996 and 2006. Finally, the discussion moves to a consideration of the concept and definition of 'world literature' in this context