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NEPAL – a democracy in progress

Seminar Saturday February 8th, 2014

What an interesting day! More than 60 of the 80 pre-registered people turned up to listen and discuss the current state of the democracy in Nepal and its prospects for the future.



The audience.

After introductory remarks by Marit Bakke, chair person of the Norway-Nepal Association, there were three speakers: **Kunda Dixit**, editor and publisher of Nepali Times, gave a first hand view of the past, present, and future Nepal, focusing in particular on the November 19th election and its implications for democracy. **Marit Haug**, senior researcher at NIBR, presented interesting facts and perspectives on women's conditions and their crucial role for developing a democratic Nepal.

Suraj Thapa, President of the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA) Norway, has lived several years in Norway, first taking a PhD and then working as a psychiatrist. He put Nepal in an international context, comparing in particular Nepal with Norway.

During lunch break people had a chance to talk while eating delicious Nepali snacks that had been prepared by members of NRNA. Nayan Malla was the seminar photographer, and all photos in this article are taken by him.



Participants enjoy Nepali snacks.

Marit Bakke: Introduction



The election in Nepal is the key issue in this seminar. For several years we have seen that a date has been set for an election to the Constituent Assembly, only to experience the date being postponed and postponed. When the Norway-Nepal Association planned this seminar on the democracy in Nepal, we were not sure if the CA election set for November 19th would take place. If it did not, the seminar would discuss why the election was postponed once more. Luckily, it did take place. A turnout close to 80% proved that the Nepali people behaved like mature citizens and sent a clear message to the politicians to get the work done:

To form a government that could run the country, and to write a new constitution.

The November election gave a boost to our planning of the seminar. Many people have been involved. The board of the Norway-Nepal Association has been fortunate to collaborate with our friends in the Non-Resident Nepali Association (NRNA). Last year we very successfully collaborated when organizing an exhibition with photos from the Nepali Chitrakar collection. This year we particularly thank you for having made the Nepali snacks we will have for lunch.

On behalf of the board, I also will thank Fritt Ord for its economic support and for letting us use this nice location free of charge. Finally, I welcome our presenters: Kunda Dixit, Marit Haug, and Suraj Thapa. Kunda Dixit and Marit Haug presented at the Norway-Nepal Association's 25th Anniversary seminar in 2009, and we are very happy to have you back. Suraj Thapa attended in 2009, this year we look forward to your comments on recent events in Nepal.

Welcome to an interesting day!

Kunda Dixit: The November 19th election and its implications for democracy in Nepal

Introductory remarks by Marit Bakke:

We are very happy to have you back at a Norway-Nepal Association event. I first met Kunda Dixit at a Fritt Ord meeting in 2006, in this very same room. And in 2009 you spoke at the Norway-Nepal Association Anniversary seminar. Since then, we have stayed in touch, combining talks about Nepali politics with informal gatherings and tennis matches.

In an interview in 2009 for our newsletter Hamro Patrika, you said that you were a scientist in your previous incarnation, doing your thesis on biogas technology. You then started writing



on environmental issues and moved into general journalism, so much so that you took a Masters degree in journalism at Columbia University in New York. After working for several years for BBC, as a war correspondent in Sri Lanka and in the Philippines, you moved back to Nepal in 1996, only to report on war in your own country. In 2000 you started Nepali Times, a weekly that most of us love to read. You also teach journalism at Kathmandu University, particularly about conflict, climate, and development issues. Recently you were reelected as Chairman of the Centre of Investigative Journalism in Nepal.

At the Anniversary seminar in 2009, you said: "Yes, it is messy! But why are we surprised? In fact the big surprise is that the whole process has not unraveled in the past four years. Bringing such dramatic changes to a society was never going to be easy. We expected things to get better overnight, but these things take time. The reason for the current stalemate and the unrest is because the political evolution of the country since 2006 has happened so rapidly. If we had expected it to take longer we would perhaps be more patient."

Now it is 2014, after a recent election. We look forward to hear your comments about the election; the election campaign, the election itself, and its implications for the Nepali citizens, minority groups in particular.

Four years ago I was here at the invitation of the Norway-Nepal Association for a similar event like this at Voksenåsen. You will not be surprised if I tell you that there is not much to add, not much has changed in Nepal. We are still stuck.

I remember telling you last time that I am a short-term pessimist about Nepal, but a long-term optimist. That is still true. But even your long-term optimism is severely tested at times like now, when politics in Nepal seems to go round and round in the same predictable circle, with the same discredited faces from the past, the same games being played over and over again for power and greed.

Yet, despite all the political paralysis, the infuriating lack of progress in politics and the economy, there are still reasons to be hopeful about Nepal's future. A former Norwegian ambassador in Nepal described me as being "provocatively positive". I still am.

Perhaps we have been too ambitious. Maybe such dramatic changes as we have witnessed in Nepal, could not have been any faster or smoother. Other countries that have gone from monarchy to republic, or from war to peace have seen violent upheavals, reversals in their peace process. Kings have been beheaded, and royal palaces have been ransacked. In Nepal we turned our king into a commoner and the palace into a museum. Nepal's transition has been relatively civilized. Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bangladesh, Maldives - there are many countries where the politics is much more messy than in Nepal.

Yes, our constitution-writing process is stuck. And three months after the last elections for a new Constituent Assembly (CA) it has not started properly deliberating on the draft. But who said it was going to be easy? Redressing centuries of discrimination and injustice, and laying down the path for an equitable future is a hugely challenging exercise even in stable societies. A constitution that is delayed is perhaps better than a faulty constitution.

When the last CA was dissolved in May last year, instead of disappointment, many in Nepal heaved a sigh of relief. That is because the constitutional debate had polarized society to such an extent that there was a danger of the tension spilling out into the streets. So, we had another election on November 19th and we are giving it one more try. This time things are slightly different, the Maoists have dropped from being the largest party to a distant third. And politics has swung to the centre.

As accurately predicted in several public opinion polls, Nepal's silent majority sent some important messages through the November elections. First, the turnout was nearly 80%. These were record numbers and a forceful rejection of the Baidya faction of the Maoists who had tried to violently disrupt the elections. It took courage to go out and vote on November 19th when bombs were going off near polling booths, but people did.

Secondly, voters decided to give the moderate centrist parties a chance even though they did not particularly like them. In the process, they threw out many of the liars and crooks, electing fresh candidates. 80% of the CA members are new.

Third, the overwhelming defeat of the Maoists and other ethnic and territorial parties can be seen as a rejection of the politics of race, and the attempt by some leaders from the elite caste and class to use the disaffection of Nepal's minorities to get to power.

Fourth, the people rejected radicals from the left and the right. They ignored the Baidya faction of the Maoists and they did not give the Hindu monarchist RPPN party a single vote in the direct polls, although the party scored big in the Proportional Representation (PR) ballot.

The writing was on the wall if the politicians had cared to read it. Several public opinion surveys in the past five years, including by our own newspaper, Nepali Times, had shown that most Nepalis are interested more in bread and butter issues like health, education, jobs, and roads. They want accountable leaders with integrity and they have consistently sent the message that they do not support secularism, and think that federalism based on mono-ethnic identity is a bad idea. Even people from the indigenous communities and the Tarai felt that way, but the Maoists and the Madhesi parties went ahead and made those issues their main plank.

So, thankfully, the age of violence in politics is over. This is the age of persuasion and performance. The people do not want anymore to hear empty slogans - they are politically alert and know exactly what is going on thanks to the mass media, especially radio. They know who is lying and who is stealing. And if the winners this time do not perform and deliver, they are sure to be thrown out the next time.

Some among the more spectacularly corrupt and opportunist leaders from that area, unfortunately, have somehow managed to get themselves elected this time too. We have this absurd election rule that allows candidates to stand from more than one constituency, and the top leaders of the three main parties agreed among themselves to allow each other to win.

Because the politicians are the same people as 20 years ago you are seeing the Nepali Congress (NC) and the Communist Party of Nepal CPN(UML) indulging in the same dog-eat-dog behavior in the formation of the new government. The CPN(UML) has put forward the election of a new president as a pre-condition to joining a coalition, and although many see this as a bargaining chip to ensure powerful ministries in the next government, there are also one or two senior CPN(UML) leaders who want to be president themselves. In the NC, although Sushil Koirala won the contest for the leader of the parliamentary party last week, it is still not a foregone conclusion that he will be prime minister. And Sher Bahadu Deuba wants to be prime minister for the fourth time.

The Constituent Assembly's mandate is to write a new constitution within a year and behave as a parliament for the next five years. The election results should not mean that we can return to the exclusivist, centralized politics of the past. Nepal can only move forward and prosper equitably if we decentralize decision-making away from Kathmandu to the regions.

You can call that federalism if you want, but what is much more important is genuine and meaningful devolution to elected leaders of autonomous local councils. How that is to be done without future provinces becoming white elephants and fiefdoms that are a drain on resources is the real challenge. Federalism is not an end in itself, and if it does not help to lift living standards of the people it will be just an expensive waste.

We should not be trying to reinvent the wheel. In the mid-1990s the process of community led development by elected local representatives was working and well established. For the first time in Nepal's history, democracy was beginning to deliver development at the grassroots as elected VDC, DDC, and municipality councils were forced to be accountable to voters. The war, of course, wrecked all that. Nepal needs to get its politics back on track so investment-led growth and infrastructure can create jobs, just like had started happening in the early 1990s.

For that to happen, the most urgent need is to conduct local elections as soon as possible and resurrect the achievements of the 1990s. Only this time we need to build in inclusion of the disenfranchised and marginalized into local election structures. Village, district, and municipality elections need not wait for the new constitution, and the Election Commission has said that it can conduct polls by April if there is the political will.

The first Constituent Assembly was deadlocked over three main issues: electoral procedures, state structure and federalism. No one can argue against electoral reforms being essential because future elections should not allow politicians to misuse the PR process to pad their numbers in the Assembly with token women, Dalits, and Janajatis as they did this time. More than two million eligible voters could not vote in November, and there were a further 2.5 million Nepalis living abroad who were disenfranchised due to no provision for absentee ballots.

The second disagreement was over whether Nepal should have a parliamentary or presidential system of government. Public opinion seems to be veering towards a directly elected executive president, so a compromise is possible.

It is the third contentious issue of federalism that could once more derail negotiations over the new constitution. But even there, there is a consensus on federalism. The disagreement is over how many provinces there should be, and what they should be called. In a country with 123 ethnic groups and 93 languages, this has to be done with care. The challenge is to address the historical exclusion of the underserved and under-represented, while preserving and strengthening national unity. Although voters in the November elections have sent the message that they feel federal provinces named after ethnicities is a bad idea, this is where the CA members have to show statesmanship and come up with a pragmatic, practical and workable formula for future provinces.

The 2008 CA was the most inclusive elected House we ever had in the country. One-third of the members were women, Janajatis were about 20% and Dalits 9%. And 30 women (24 from Maoists) and seven Dalits (all from the Maoists) were elected to the CA in the First-Past-the Post (the winner takes all).

This time, only 10 women and two Dalits were elected in the direct ballot from 240 constituencies. The number of directly elected Janajati members is down to 63 from 74. Even after the PR candidates are added, this CA is far less inclusive than the previous one and some have called it a "giant leap backward" for Nepal.

Regarding the online news from Nepal you probably get the feeling that politics in Nepal is like one of those endless highway journeys in our mountains. It just goes on and on. Sometimes bridges are washed

away and the road being blocked by landslides. The media report on the politics as a never-ending quarrel. It is all politics for the sake of politics.

Yet, we should never lose track of what politics and parliament are for: to ensure that all Nepalis have the same opportunity, that development is more balanced, that there is social justice and better living conditions. Nepal's long neglected citizens need affordable and accessible health care and quality education, they need jobs so they do not have to migrate to work, and they need roads and electricity.

We know what our problems are and we know the solutions. Nepal needs massive investments in energy and connectivity that will create jobs at home. And when these infrastructure projects are complete, they will generate more jobs downstream. But in the shorter term, we can maximize the benefits from the remittance economy by investing in vocational education. Skills-based education is required from the 150,000 young boys and girls who fail their high school exams every year, and the half a million Nepalis who migrate abroad to work every year must be trained in skills so they can earn more in Qatar and Malaysia.

To do all this, we do not need a new constitution. The economy and development do not have to wait to get our politics fixed – we can work on them in parallel. Of course, the traditional politicians in all the top parties do not inspire much confidence. However, there is a new generation of leaders with a hunger to perform and who can bring change if they are given positions of responsibility.

There is plenty to complain about in Nepal. When I left Kathmandu last week there was 11 hours of power cuts every day. It has just been increased to 12 hours. Kathmandu looks like a war zone because of the road widening work that seems never to be finished. The pollution is frightening. But let us face it; it is not original anymore to complain about these things. When everyone faces the same problems, it is boring to shine about it. The question is what we are doing as individuals and as communities to improve things. We are in the habit of complaining and playing victims - it is as if we want Nepal to fail so that our own catastrophic predictions about our own country will be proven right. It is as if we need Nepal to stay poor because that would give us the excuse we need to stay away, or to do nothing.

Nepalis are now living all over the world. Wherever we go, whatever we do, whenever we excel, the country does well. Nepal does well. Let us celebrate what is still good about Nepal: our incredible natural beauty, our immense diversity, our dignified and hardworking people, our generosity and sense of self-worth.

Wherever we are, let us give back to Nepal. We owe it to our motherland.



Kunda Dixit receives a gift after the speech.

Marit Haug: Nepali women's participation in the democratization process

Marit Haug is Senior Researcher at the NIBR, the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research in Oslo. Her research interests include conflicts and post-conflicts, and decentralization and local democracy. Together with a colleague at NIBR, Aadne Aasland, she has done research in Nepal about civil society, political mobilization, and social inclusion.



Marit Haug receives a photograph from the Chitrakar collection.

Nepali women's participation i the democratization process

Oslo February 8th 2014

Marit Haug



The quote

'While men *possess* honour, women *are* patriarchy's embodied honour, namely "shame". Since men lose honour through the behaviour of women from their families and kinships, the control over women's behaviour becomes imperative, as does punishing transgressors. Customarily, women have to choose between honour and power; they lose one because of the other'. Men, however, possess both; in fact, the presence of one strengthens the other' (Gupte 2013).



The inside/outside or private/public dichotomy invoked by anthropologists; how is this divide upheld and/or broken down, how does the divide help explain male dominance? Women's involvement with child bearing and child rearing and domestic work has excluded them from the public sphere, in Nepal the inside/outside divide refers to the household as an economic unit (= not to the physical walls of the house). One of the consequences of women spending time on the inside (involved in subsistence production) is that they are largely dependent on men as mediators with the outside world (the market economy, legal system, government bureaucracy etc.). Men have been socialized and educated to deal with these institutions (Bennett and Acharya 1979).



'While for women of the higher caste Hindu communities there is no respectable alternative role to being a wife and mother, alternative role models do exist for women in the Tibeto-Burman speaking communities and if a woman decides not to marry and be a wife, she will have other channels of gaining social status.' p. 96 (Bennett and Acharya 1979).

The facts: MDGs - gender

Nepal has made '**remarkable**' progress (UN)

- Maternal mortality has been reduced by over two thirds
- Likely to achieve universal access to reproductive health
- Girls' access to primary education almost equal to that of boys – gender parity index 1990: 0.56 -> 2013: 0.99
- Ratio of literate women to literate men: 1990: 0.48 -> 2013: 0.85 (15-24 years)
- Share of women in the non-agricultural sector: 1990 18.9 -> 2013 44.8
- Seats in parliament 1990 3.4 -> 2010: 32.8



The facts ctd: BUT

- Proportion of women in the core civil service: 10%
- Reporting of cases of gender based violence has increased
- UN: few government resources allocated for gender equality



Context of women's political and civic participation in Nepal

- 1960-90: independent and voluntary organizations and political parties were prohibited
- Organisations for women were part of the state and worked in the welfare field (All Nepal's Women's Organization, Mother's Clubs)
- Women's organizations (underground, wings of political parties) part of a broader movement for democracy and human rights
- 1970s: WID began to find foothold in Nepal, from the Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85): women's participation in national development was acknowledged



Context of women's political and civic participation in Nepal

- Transition to democracy from 1990 with a new democratic constitution-> active role of women
- Gender as part of the **political agenda for social inclusion**; opposition against the state by women, ethnic groups, Dalits, Muslims, the Madhesi people – the majority feel excluded (Brahmin men who have dominated politics and administration make up 15 per cent of the population)
- Broad based political and civil society mobilisation
-> high level of awareness among women

Gender responsive/friendly legal and policy context

- Local Self Governance Act 1999: 20 per cent women's representation
- Interim Constitution of 2007: principles of gender equality and non-discrimination
- 2006: 33 per cent representation in state institutions
- Gender Equality and Social Inclusion policy has been adopted by Ministry of Local Development, and other Ministries
 - > CHALLENGE IS IMPLEMENTATION



Earmarking and tracking of resources to women

- Gender responsive budgeting from 2007/8
- Local Self Government Act 1999 allocates 10 per cent of the budget at the VDC and DDC level for women (in total 35 per cent to excluded groups)

Political and civic participation

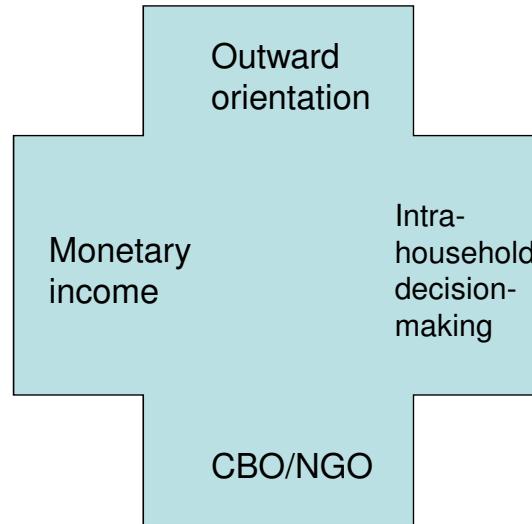
- Voter turn out: 60+
- Participation in protest movements, 9->18%
- 5-10 per cent of women are party members
- Civil society: $\frac{1}{4}$ - same as for men (IDEA 2007, NIBR 2009)
 - > strong increase in all forms of participation among women



Education -> high levels of political participation

- Basic literacy skills
- Leadership skills
- Standing in the community

Profiles of included women



'Outwardly orientated women'

Knowledgeable about politics

- > high levels of education
- > urban living
- > Brahmin/Chhettri and Newar backgrounds

Arenas for participation

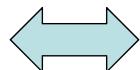


Popular mobilization

- People's Movement that ended the panchayat system
- Jana Andolan II, April 2006
 - > culmination of women's mobilization

Dominance of men in political parties

- 10 per cent of Nepal's 30 000 party members are women
- 2/3 from Brahmin or Chhetri groups
- Hardly any women in leadership positions – neither at district nor national level
- CPN-UML and RRP: changes in statutes



'annakvar'



Role of Maoists

- Women's issues seen as secondary to class issues
- Advocated for measures to increase women's political participation
- End gender based discrimination
- End violence against women
- Women's wing of the party has been relatively strong
- Practice?

Affirmative action: Constitutional Assembly, May 2008->

- 197 women (33%): ethnic groups 36%, Madhesi: 16%, Dalit 11%
- Womens demands were:
 - 50 per cent representation
 - equal citizenship rights in the new Constitution

-> Deadline for new constitution is May 27th 2012



'Women's issues'???

- 63% of women CA members felt that there was a lack of unity among them due to their diverse ethnic, religious, regional and caste backgrounds -> lack of attention to women's issues and parallel women's organisations rather than cross-cutting



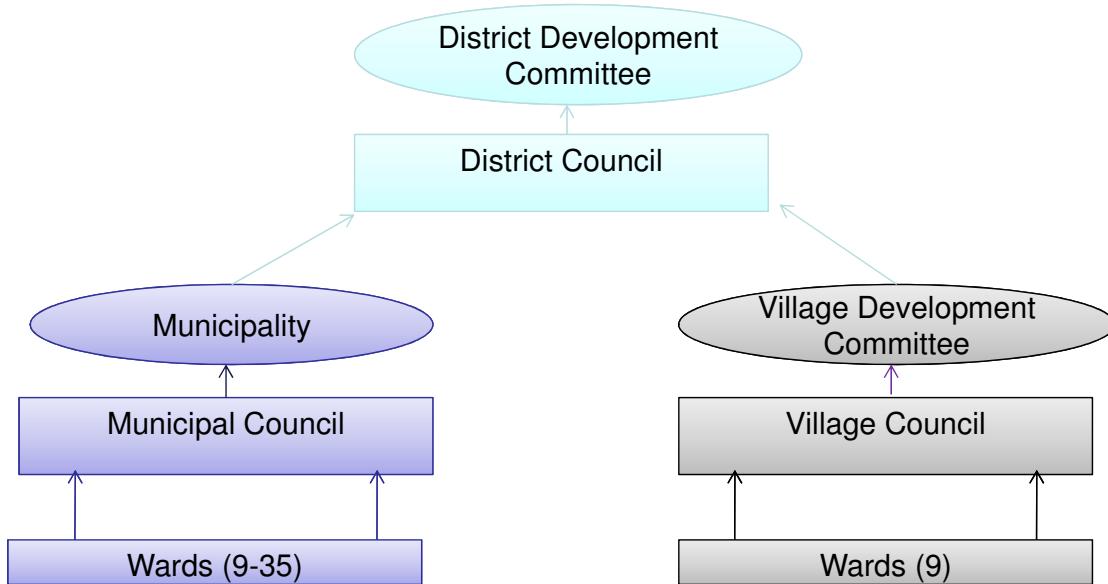
2013 elections



Sub-national participation: 75 districts - 3915 village councils - 58 municipalities

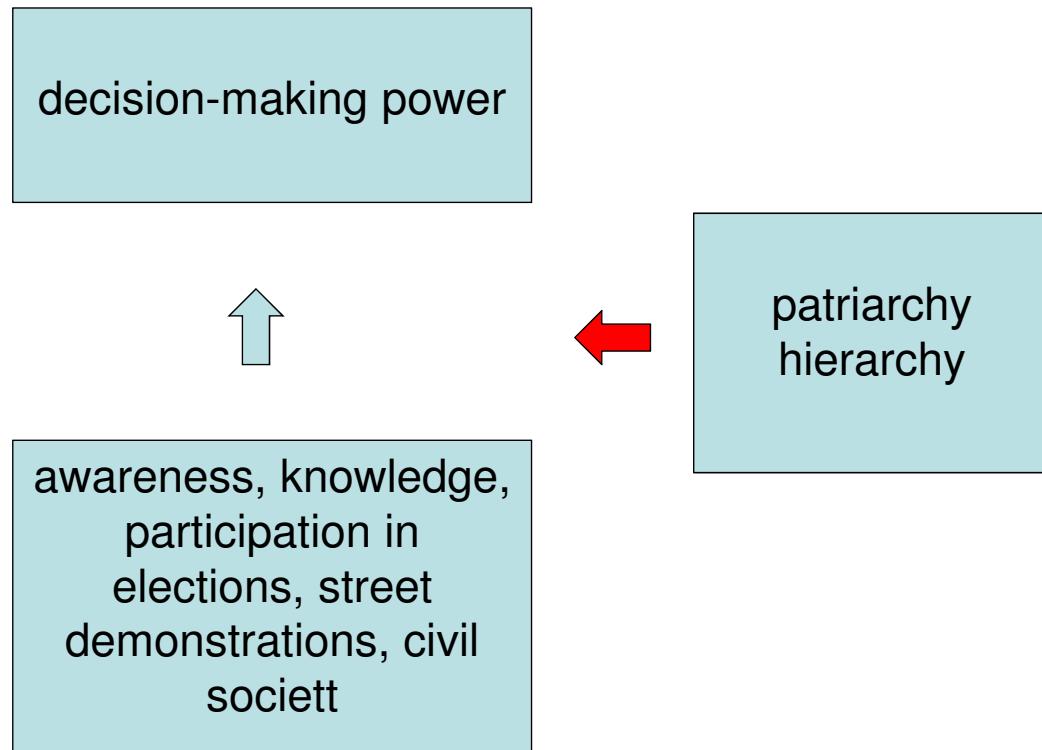


LSGA 1999: participatory and bottom-up planning



Bottom-up planning processes

- **Ward Citizens Forum:** Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Guideline of MoLD says 33 per cent, real participation is not known
- **VDC level:** open (and closed) planning meetings: 14 per cent women (IIDS/NIBR)
- **DDC level:** planning meetings: 10 per cent women (IIDS/NIBR)
- All party mechanism: 3 per cent women at village level, 0 at district (IIDS/NIBR)
 - > BUT UNELECTED, MALE POLITICAL PARTY LEADERS DECIDE



Barriers to women's political participation

- Discrimination of women in family and society
- Patriarchy
- Household chores – 'no time'
- Risks involved: unsafe, shameful
- Money – mobility - mobiles
- Limited numbers – 'the number game'
- Marginalization in political parties

Participation in CBOs and CSOs

- CBOs
 - actively engaging with institutions in their communities
 - inclusive of all groups – cut across group divides
- CSOs – huge increase in numbers of organizations
- NGOs: heavily donor funded, engaged in health, education, literacy, micro-credit, women's rights, voter education etc.
- Networks: for quotas for women in political bodies, against gender based violence, and for women's property rights



Social inclusion agenda – and women

- Women's movement is led by high caste women
- Ethnicity and caste as mobilizing forces
 - > implications for women's issues: women increasingly prioritize their ethnic and caste identity? Janajati women est. Nepal Indigenous Women's federation in 2001, Madhesi Women's Conference in 2007

Civil and political society

- Most civil society organisations are associated with political parties -> fragmentation along party lines
- Many women MPs have their own CSOs
 - > same women active in civil and political society:
 - Very high correlation between membership in civil society and political organisations (NIBR 2009)
 - Weak distinction between different forms of participation in Nepal



Development partner funding

- Gender as part of the social inclusion and inclusive growth agenda
- Gender equality as a cross-cutting issue
- Support for women MPs – capacity building
- Participation by women in projects and programmes, as per the government's GESI policy: 33 per cent + strengthening the capacity of women rights, business skills and leadership capacities
- Economic empowerment as a route to political participation
- Civil society and political networks
- Need to work with men; men's traditional attitudes towards women are the main barrier to women's participation



Local Governance and Community Development Programme (LGCDP)

- Jointly funded by GoN and DPs, covers all 75 districts, started in 2008
- Block grants: allocation should be based on participatory planning processes and accountability to communities
- 10 per cent resource allocation to benefit women
- 33 per cent representation by women in planning
- Gender component in the Social Mobilization guidelines



Intractable issues

- Intra-household discrimination (ref UNDAF) as a barrier on women's agency
- The dominance of men within political parties; how to change the gender balance within the parties?
- Gender versus ethnicity, caste, religion
- No straight forward relationship between participation and gender equality

Bivariate relationships between indicators and demographic/social background variables.

		Tarai	Hill	Mountain	Brahmin / Chettri	Hill Janjai	Muslim	Tharu/Claudry	Yadav	Newar	Rural (vs urban)	New/little education	Middle / higher education	18-27 yrs	28-38 yrs	39-49 yrs	Nuclear household (vs extended)	Household head (vs all others)	HH suffered from conflict
	ECON																		
1.	Land_liv																		
2.	Inc																		
3.	Fem_inc																		
4.	Womown																		
	PART																		
5.	Prof																		
6.	Act-inst																		
7.	NGO_m																		
8.	BenNGO																		
9.	Media_ac																		
10.	Locpol																		
11.	Polawar																		
12.	Act_pol																		
13.	Voted																		
14.	Money																		
15.	Dec_sh																		
16.	Ec_dec																		

Suraj Thapa: Current situation in Nepal, as seen from Norway



Current situation in Nepal, as seen from Norway

Suraj B. Thapa

NRNA NCC Norway

www.nrnenorway.com

Feb 8, 2014

(Seminar : Nepal - a democracy in progress)

Recent pictures 1



Recent pictures 2



Latest developments

- Second constituent assembly election in November 2013
- Interim government waiting for new government formation
- Political parties discussing on new government formation after the President's call for consensus government could not materialize. Election of PM scheduled for coming Monday.
- UML and NC have elected their parliamentarian leaders, but still trying to find formula for power sharing and formation of a majority government.
- Former PM of Norway, Mr. Bondevik visiting Nepal

Democracy

- Government of the people, by the people and for the people (*Abrahm Lincoln*)
- Rule of law and order
- Freedom of expression
- Equal respect and status
- Equal opportunities for all

Democracy index (0-10)

- Free and fair national elections
- Voters' security
- Foreign power's influence on government
- Civil servant's capability to implement policies



Norway vs. Nepal

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ HDI: 0.955 (1st) ■ GDP : 55,398 USD ■ Gini index: 22.3 (low) ■ Literacy rate: 100% ■ Population: 5 million ■ Galdhopiggen: 2469 m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 0.463 (157th) ■ 1200 USD ■ 32.8 (medium) ■ 66% ■ 27 million ■ Mount Everest: 8848m
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Source:
wikipedia



Norwegian democracy

- Democratic practice - 300 years old.
- Gold standard social welfare system
- Democratic quality - top
- Absolute standards of democratic practice
- Long coalition culture

Stein Ringen, Democracy in Norway, Taiwan Journal of Democracy, Volume 6, No. 2: 43-55

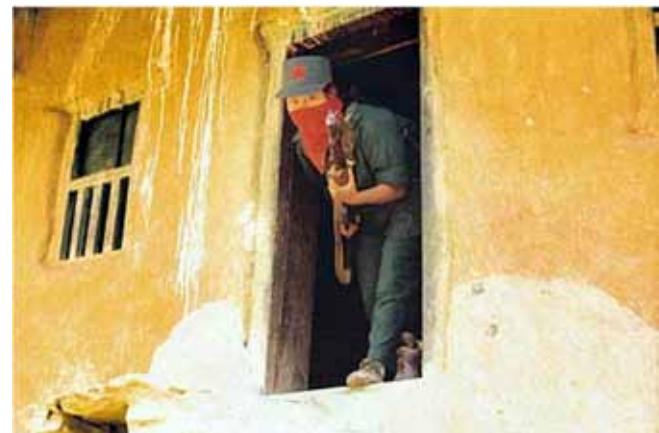
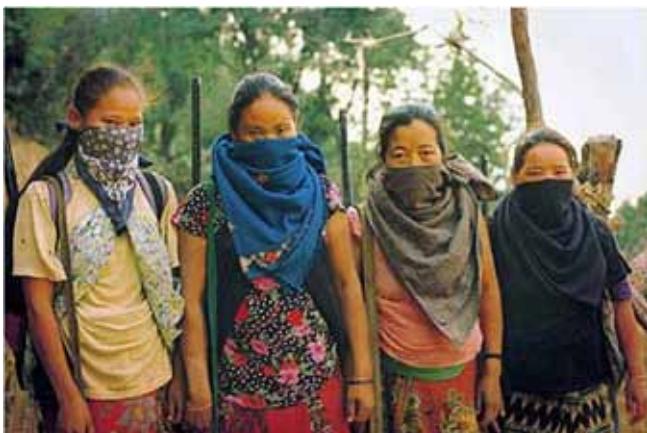
Major political events in Nepal

- Struggle against Rana regimes for democracy started: 1940s
- Democratic revolution: 1950 (2007 BS)
- Democratic movement 1979 and referendum 1980
- 1st Peoples' movement for democracy (*Pahilo Jan Andolan*): 1990 (2046 BS)
- Armed conflicts (Maoist movement): 1996-2006
- 2nd Peoples' movement (*Dosro Jan Andolan*): 2006 (2062-63 BS)
- Elections of constitutional assembly: 2008, 2013

Armed conflict



The six-year-old Maoist insurgency has turned this once tranquil Himalayan Kingdom into one of the world's most violent places



Major achievements (1)

- End of the armed conflicts with successful peace process
- Republic and secular state: 2008
- Wider representations and participations of different groups in the political process
- Learning coalition culture in constitution drafting and governing
- Freedom of expression: free press

Positive aspects of latest political changes

- Increased awareness among people for political rights
- Wider participation of people in political process
- Increasing women's participation
- Recognition of rights of underprivileged people

Challenges to Democracy in Nepal (1)

- Reluctance of the political leaders to follow the democratic norms
- Lack of understanding of true meaning of democracy and myopic political vision
- Increased polarization among political parties
- Unabated corruption
- Lack of accountability of leaders and political parties to the voters
- Opportunistic practices and lack of vision among leaders and political parties
- Lack of respect for different ideologies and practices
- Unhealthy competitions

Challenges to Democracy in Nepal (2)

- Lack of trust among each other
- High expectation of people
- Weak and politicized bureaucracy
- Unabated politics everywhere: schools, colleges, organizations, industries etc.

Political movements have always been successful in Nepal. However, there has been failure in safeguarding the achievements of these movements.

Further challenges

- Constitution writing-will we get a democratic constitution acceptable to all?
- Stable government
- Local election
- Federalism and inclusiveness-type?
- Management of external interests and influences
- Confidence building with parties that boycotted the recently held CA elections

Effects of prolonged political transition

- Political instability/unstable government
- Lack of development
- Unabated corruption
- Frustration and disappointment among public
- Anarchy: frequent strikes and poor law and order situation
- Increasing unemployment and massive emigration of workforce (both skilled and unskilled)
- Increasing gap between poor and rich
- Increase in interference from outside

Reasons to be optimistic (1)



Reasons to be optimistic? (2)

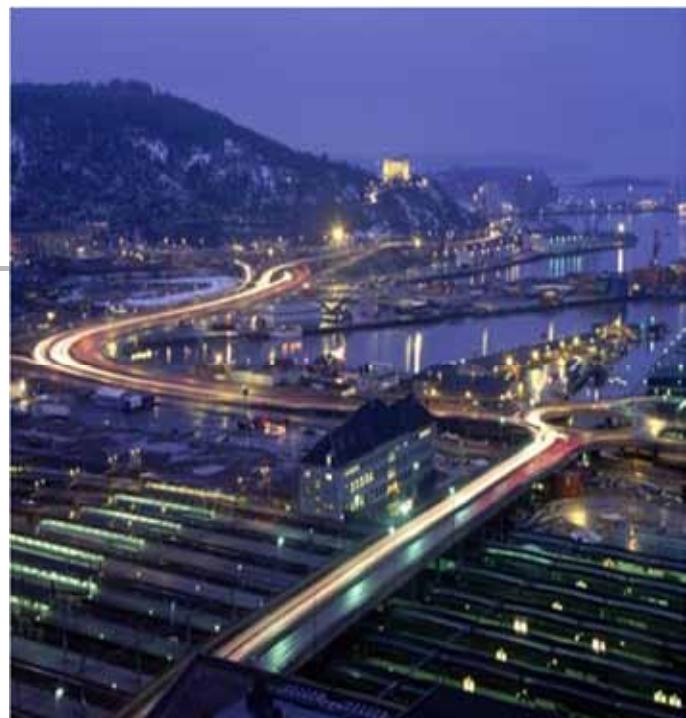
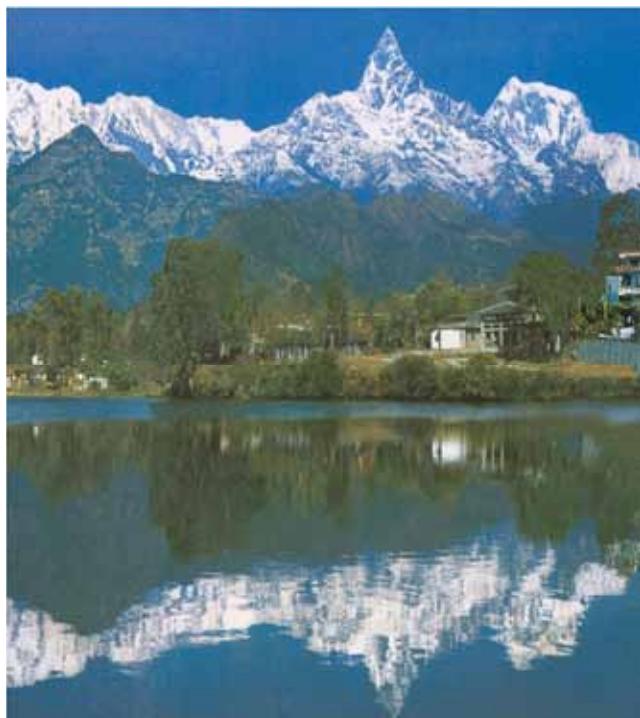


Reasons to be optimistic (3)

- Big political leap in short period of time
- Erratically but definitely forward movement in democratization
- Increased political awareness
- Freedom of expression-free press
- Concern of people living abroad or in Nepal for the country and democratic process
- Migration's positive effects
- Increased engagements of people in local developmental works
- Unification despite diversity
- This CA will hopefully be able to complete the uncompleted job.
- Sandwiched between two big neighbours
- Huge potential for economical development

Final remarks

- Democracy- though it may sound simple, it is in fact quite complicated with many challenges.
- There are several reasons to be optimistic though the way forward is not that simple and easy.
- Difficult to establish democratic culture in the society
- Can democracy function well in developing countries like Nepal? (*Badarko hatma Naribol?*)
- Democracy is only a dream and it should be put in the same category as Santa Clause and Heaven (H.L.Mencken).



Thanks for your attention!

In Marit Haug's presentation you find the word 'annakvar' (see page 18) - it means 'every other.' Both after Kunda Dixit's presentation and at the end of the seminar, the audience asked questions about what to do about corruption, about gender and ethnic issues, and social inclusion and federalism.



The audience asking questions.



Marit Haug, Suraj Thapa, and Kunda Dixit responding to questions from the audience.



The seminar ended with David Durkan and Smita Malla drawing lottery prizes.



Olav Myrholt was the lucky first prize winner of a backpack.

Årsmøte og medlemsmøte i Norge-Nepalforeningen

Det innkalles til årsmøte i Norge-Nepalforeningen tirsdag 18. mars kl. 18.30.

Innkallingen er sendt til medlemmene på e-post.

Sted: Batteriet, Fredensborgveien 24 A, Oslo

Dagsorden:

1. Valg av møteleder
2. Valg av referent
3. Valg av to medlemmer til å signere protokollen
4. Styrets årsberetning
5. Regnskap
6. Innkomne forslag: Styrets forslag til vedtekstendringer (se nedenfor)
7. Valg
8. Eventuelt

Styret gjør oppmerksom på at medlemmer kan fremme forslag som ønskes behandlet på årsmøtet. Send forslag senest to uker før årsmøtet, dvs. senest tirsdag 4. mars, til: marit.bakke@media.uib.no.

Valgkomitéen tar gjerne imot forslag på personer som ønsker å gå inn i styret. Send forslag til Anuradha Gurung: anuradha.gurung.amundsgard@dnvgl.com eller Tor Møgedal: tor_mogedal@yahoo.com.

Til dagsorden punkt 6: Styrets forslag til vedtektsendringer

Forslag 1 Paragraf 4: Styre

Nåværende tekst: Foreningens styre skal bestå av seks personer: en leder, en nestleder, en redaktør, en webansvarlig, en kasserer og en utstyrsansvarlig. Styret er beslutningsdyktig når lederen eller nestlederen og minst to styremedlemmer er til stede. Ved stemmelikhet kan saken avgjøres med lederens dobbeltstemme, eventuelt med nestlederens stemme i lederens fravær.

Erstattes med:

Foreningens styre skal bestå av maks syv personer. Faste poster skal være en leder, en nestleder, en redaktør, en webansvarlig og en kasserer. De to øvrige postene velger styret etter behov. Styret er beslutningsdyktig når lederen eller nestlederen og minst to styremedlemmer er til stede. Ved stemmelikhet kan saken avgjøres med lederens dobbeltstemme, eventuelt med nestlederens stemme i lederens fravær.

Grunn: Styret ønsker å utvide fra seks til syv styremedlemmer, samt endre de faste postene.

Forslag 2 Paragraf 5: Årsmøte

Nåværende tekst: ”Forslag som skal behandles på årsmøtet må være sendt til styret senest 2 uker før årsmøtet. Denne fristen gjelder også for forslag til valgkomiteen av kandidater til styret. Styret skal sørge for at forslag til vedtektsendringer vedlegges innkallingen til årsmøtet.”

Erstattes med:

”Forslag som skal behandles på årsmøtet må være sendt til styret senest 2 uker før årsmøtet. Denne fristen gjelder også for forslag til valgkomiteen av kandidater til styret og forslag til vedtektsendringer. Forslag fra styret til vedtektsendringer skal vedlegges innkallingen til årsmøtet. Medlemmer kan foreslå endringer til styrets forslag til vedtektsendringer senest 2 uker før årsmøtet.”

Grunn: Det kommer ikke klart fram i teksten at medlemmer som ikke sitter i styret kan komme med forslag til vedtektsendringer. Styret foreslår at medlemmer kan sende inn forslag til vedtekter med samme frist som øvrige saker.

Forslag 3 Paragraf 5: Årsmøtet

Nåværende tekst: ”Valgkomiteen velges for to år av gangen. Hvert styremedlem velges for to år av gangen. Annethvert år skal leder, kasserer og tre styremedlemmer velges, og det påfølgende år skal nestleder, sekretær og to styremedlemmer velges. Revisor og redaktør av Hamro Patrika velges for ett år av gangen.”

Erstattes med:

”Valgkomiteen velges for to år av gangen. Hvert styremedlem velges for to år av gangen, der minst to medlemmer er på valg annethvert år. Revisor velges for et år av gangen. Faste poster i styret er leder, nestleder, kasserer, redaktør av Hamro Patrika og webredaktør. Øvrige poster i styret kan velges ut i fra styrets behov. Styret består av maks 7 medlemmer.”

Grunn: Postene i styret er ikke alltid på valg samme år som nevnt. For eksempel at leder ikke alltid velges samme år som kasserer. Nåværende tekst kan også tolkes i den retning at det skal være 9 styremedlemmer.

NORGE-NEPAL FORENINGENS VEDTEKTER

Revidert på årsmøtet 22.03.2007 og 24.04.2009

Paragraf 1: NAVN

Foreningens navn er Norge-Nepal-foreningen.

Paragraf 2: FORMÅL

Foreningens formål er å fremme samarbeid og forståelse mellom det norske og det nepalesiske folk ved:

- å arbeide for kulturutvekslinger mellom Norge og Nepal, og utbre kjennskapet til Nepals kultur og tradisjoner blant nordmenn,
- å fungere som forum for folk med interesse for Nepal.

Paragraf 3: MEDLEMSKAP

Medlemskap er åpent for alle med interesse for Nepal.

Foreningen har tre typer medlemskap:

- enkeltmedlemskap
- familiemedlemskap

- organisasjonsmedlemskap

Medlemskap for organisasjoner gir bare en - 1 - stemme ved voteringer. Medlemskap opphører ved skriftlig utmelding til styret. Medlemskapet opphører også dersom medlemskontingent ikke betales innen oppgitt frist på første kontingent-purring i inneværende år. Hvis dette medlemmet melder seg inn igjen i foreningen senere samme år, kreves medlemskontingent for hele inneværende år. Dersom en ny person melder seg inn i foreningen på eller etter første møte i høstsesongen, kreves ikke medlemskontingent for inneværende år.

Paragraf 4: STYRE

Foreningens styre skal bestå av seks personer: en leder, en nestleder, en redaktør, en webansvarlig, en kasserer og en utstyrsansvarlig. Styret er beslutningsdyktig når lederen eller nestlederen og minst to styremedlemmer er til stede. Ved stemmelikhet kan saken avgjøres med lederens dobbeltstemme, eventuelt med nestlederens stemme i lederens fravær.

Styret er ansvarlig for den praktiske driften av foreningen og for at foreningens formål blir fulgt opp. Når et medlem ønsker å fremme en sak for styret, har vedkommende anledning til å gjøre dette skriftlig eller ved personlig frammøte på styremøte.

Paragraf 5: ÅRSMØTE

Årsmøtet er foreningens høyeste organ og sammenkalles en gang hvert kalenderår.

Årsmøtet innkalles av styret med minst 1 måneds varsel, direkte til medlemmene i brev og/eller på foreningens hjemmeside. Forslag som skal behandles på årsmøtet må være sendt til styret senest 2 uker før årsmøtet. Denne fristen gjelder også for forslag til valgkomiteen av kandidater til styret. Styret skal sørge for at forslag til vedtektsendringer vedlegges innkallingen til årsmøtet.

Årsmøtet skal behandle følgende saker:

- Valg av møteleder, referent og to personer til å underskrive årsmøteprotokollen (årsberetningen/-referatet)
- Styrets årsberetning
- Revidert regnskap
- Saker fremmet skriftlig av styret eller medlemmer, herunder størrelsen på kontingensten for de tre typer medlemskap
- Valg av nytt styre, valgkomite på tre medlemmer, revisor og redaktør av Hamro Patrika

Valgkomiteen velges for to år av gangen. Hvert styremedlem velges for to år av gangen. Annethvert år skal leder, kasserer og tre styremedlemmer velges, og det påfølgende år skal nestleder, sekretær og to styremedlemmer velges. Revisor og redaktør av Hamro Patrika velges for ett år av gangen.

Paragraf 6: VEDTEKTSENDRINGER

Endringer i foreningens vedtekter skal vedtas av årsmøtet med 2/3 flertall.

Medlemsmøte tirsdag 18. mars 2014

Nepal er mer enn å klatre på Everest

Medlemsmøtet holdes rett etter årsmøtet. To av NNFs styremedlemmer forteller og viser bilder: David Durkan og Solvor Småkasin.

I fjor utga **David Durkan** boka *Penguins on Everest* der han blant annet kritiserer den kraftige kommersialiseringen av fjellturismen. Det er blitt “in” å klatre til toppen av høye fjell. Dette gjelder især Mount Everest og stadig flere betaler tusenvis av dollar for å få en sjanse til å nå toppen. Ekspedisjonene står i kø i fjellsiden, mange nærmest båres til topps, mens nepalske bærere og klatrere risikerer helse og livet.

Solvor Småkasin er spesialsykepleier i anestesi. Sammen med blant annet Ola Einang startet hun i 2012 Medical Aid Mountaineering; en organisasjon som ønsker å inspirere turister til å gi enkel medisinsk hjelp underveis på turer i utviklingsland, blant annet i landsbyer i Nepal. Solvor vil fortelle om dette arbeidet og også om mye annet som turister kan gjøre i Nepal.



Langtang fra Dunche.

Foto: Marit Bakke

Fotokonkurransen

I forbindelse med utstillingen i fjor med fotografier fra den nepalske Chitrakar samlingen utlyste Norge-Nepalforeningen en fotokonkurransen. De tre vinnerne ble presentert i Hamro Patrika nr. 2, 2013 og i de to neste numrene tok vi med andre bilder som ble sendt inn til konkurransen. Her er noen flere bilder fra konkurransen.



Foto: Fredrik Pettersen



Foto: Lars Johnson



Hverdagsliv i Thamel.

Foto: Marit Bakke



Foto: Ole Sylte



Foto: Tordis Korvald

Hva har skjedd siden sist?

På de første sidene i dette HP står de tre foredragene som ble holdt på seminaret om demokratiet i Nepal. Samlet gir de en glimrende orientering om den politiske situasjonen i Nepal akkurat nå og hva valget den 19. november betyr for forskjellige samfunnsgrupper, blant annet kvinner, Daliter og Janajatis. Den 12. februar 2014 hadde *Klassekampen* en to siders artikkel om den politiske situasjonen i Nepal, delvis basert på et intervju som journalist Peter M. Johansen hadde med Kunda Dixit under hans opphold i Norge. Den 4. februar publiserte Dagsavisen / Nye meninger.no "Mot demokrati i Nepal", av Helge Holtermann og Scott Gates.

Så kort tid etter seminaret er det lite å tilføye, men det må naturligvis nevnes at allerede den 10. februar, to dager etter at Kunda Dixit holdt sitt foredrag, ble Sushil Koirala (født 1939) fra Nepali Congress valgt som ny statsminister med 405 av de 553 stemmene i den lovgivende forsamling (Legislature-Parliament). Sushil Koirala er etter til tidligere statsminister Girija Prasad Koirala (se HP nr. 2, 2010) og gikk inn i politikken da han var 15 år. Etter at kongen tok full politisk kontroll i 1960, levde Koirala i eksil i India i 16 år og returnerte til Nepal i 1976. I 1977 ble han medlem av sentralkomiteen i Nepali Congress, generalsekretær i 1996 og partiets President i 2010.

Til tross for at CPN(UML) var enig i at Sushil Koirala skulle bli statsminister annonserte de noen dager senere at de likevel ikke ville støtte regjeringen fordi de ikke fikk innenriksministeren. Forhandlingene mellom partiene om posisjoner fortsetter altså som før. I omkring et halvt år ledet Chief Justice Khil Raj Regmi Interim Council, som vel kan sees som et forretningsministerium. Dagen etter at Sushil Koirala ble valgt som statsminister, holdt Regmi en avskjedstale som leder av Interim Council og trakk seg samtidig som Chief Justice.

Annet nytt:

- Ny bok om skogen i Nepal med vekt på community forests: *Changing Landscapes in the Highland of Nepal, Sikkim-India, and Pakistan: A Photo Journey*, av Bharat Pokhrel, Fritz Berger, Anupama Mahat Bidari, Robin Niraula. Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation Nepal.
- Med Sherpa som merkenavn og Made in Nepal merkelapper lanserte Tashi Sherpa for noen år siden Sherpa Adventure Gear i Seattle, USA og i 2009 åpnet han en avdeling i Katmandu. Butikken ligger i en fem etasjes bygning i Narayanhiti Marg og selger klær og utstyr til klatring og friluftsliv. Der drives det også forskning og i øverste etasje er det bed-and-breakfast. 50 Rupees av hvert salg går til Paldorje Education Fund som støtter barna til nepalske fjellklatrere som er blitt såret eller har omkommet under klatring (www.nepalitimes.com, 3-9 January 2014, #688).

- I Winchester i England er det laget et Gurkha Museum som blant annet viser fotografier fra deres innsats i første verdenskrig. I 2003 fikk Gurkha-soldater som var blitt rekruttert etter 1997 oppholdstillatelse i England, men det var også mange som reiste tilbake til Nepal for å bidra til landets utvikling. Dette gjorde blant annet Prem Begha som started Gorkha Savings and Gurkha Development Bank og nå leder Gorkha FM radio.
- Den 14. februar avsluttet Dr. Govinda KC, senior professor ved Tribhuvan University (TU) Teaching Hospital, sultestreiken som han gjenopptok en uke tidligere etter en 14 dagers pause. Dr. Govinda har protestert mot den politiske innblandingen i helsesektoren i Nepal, spesielt i TU sykehusets ansettelse og drift. Han har nå inngått en avtale med regjeringen.
- Den tyskfødte Hartmut Bauder og kona Pramila har siden 1997 hatt en gård i Godavari med produksjon av ull fra alpakka dyrene som stammer fra Sør-Amerika (www.nepalitimes.com, 7-13 February 2014, #693).
- Musée Guimet i Paris har besluttet å returnere to skulpturer til Nepal. En av skulpturene er fra det 11. århundre og ble stjålet fra Bhaktapur i 1984, den andre, fra det 12. århundre, ble stjålet fra Chyasalhiti i Patan på slutten av 1970-årene (www.nepalitimes.com, 20-26 December 2013, #686).



Nepalsk kulturarv i Patan.

Foto: Marit Bakke