

The State of
HISTORY EDUCATION
AND RESEARCH IN NEPAL

Yogesh Raj | Pratyoush Onta

This book is an inquiry into the state of historical knowledge production in Nepal from both diachronic and landscape perspectives. Based on documentary research, interviews and a thorough review of the existing literature, it offers a compact analysis of the present state of teaching and research in history and reviews the institutional and methodological innovations and weaknesses of the past dozen years. The authors survey the institutions, processes and outcomes related to history both within the university locations and beyond, and trace how these varied locations and practices have evolved in the recent years. They also recommend specific institutional rearrangements and support mechanisms to promote both the diversity and quality in the disciplinary structures and contents of history in Nepal.

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Martin Chautari

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ABBREVIATIONS

AHA	American Historical Association
ANT	Actor-Network Theory
BA	Bachelor of Arts
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CDH	Central Department of History
CEADS	Centre for Ethnic and Alternative Development Studies
CEDA	Centre for Economic Development and Administration
CNAS	Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies
FOHSS	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
GON	Government of Nepal
HISAN	History Association of Nepal
HOR	House of Representatives
INAS	Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies
IOHSS	Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences
LBU	Lumbini Buddhist University
MA	Master of Arts
MC	Martin Chautari
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
MPP	Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya
MSU	Mahendra Sanskrit University
NEHCA	Central Department of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology
NFDIN	National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities
NGMCP	Nepalese-German Microfilm Cataloguing Project

NGMPP	Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NS	Nepal Samvat
NSU	Nepal Sanskrit University
PAD	Personnel Administration Division
PCL	Proficiency Certificate Level
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PNC	Prithvi Narayan Campus
SASON	Sociological and Anthropological Society of Nepal
SINHAS	Studies in Nepali History and Society
SIRF	Social Inclusion Research Fund
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SSRC	Social Science Research Council
STM	Science, Technology and Medicine
TA	Teaching Assistant
TU	Tribhuvan University
TUCL	Tribhuvan University Central Library
UGC	University Grants Commission
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States of America
v.s.	Vikram Samvat

PREFACE

The draft 'Strategic Plan for the Proposed Social Science Research Council in Nepal' written by Drs Pitamber Sharma, Bal Gopal Baidya, and Dwarika Nath Dhungel was submitted to the Adhoc Council, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare of the Government of Nepal in December 2012. That work was supported by the Social Inclusion Research Fund (SIRF) managed by SNV Nepal. In conversations held between the managers of SIRF and Martin Chautari (MC) in late 2013, it was agreed that MC would undertake two specific tasks. First, MC would write a 'commentary' on the draft Strategic Plan. The 'commentary' would be discussed and incorporated in revising the Plan. That task has been accomplished now. A key MC suggestion for opting institutional funding as the core scheme of the proposed SSRC has been enshrined in the final version of the Strategic Plan. Second, MC would undertake some of the works proposed under the title 'Five Year Operational Strategy' in the Strategic Plan. In particular, it was agreed that MC would carry out a 'stocktaking of the state of social science research' in Nepal. Since this work had to be done within a four month period (mid-November 2013 to mid-March 2014), this review exercise was limited to only four disciplines: sociology/anthropology, geography, history and political science.

The reviewers were asked to focus on the state of both teaching and research in these disciplines in Nepal; assess recent methodological innovations and weaknesses; describe the links between research, publications and their input to teaching in Nepal's universities; and recommend an agenda for the advancement of these disciplines in the

country. As the third of these reviews, we are glad to present to you the analysis of the state of history in Nepal written by Yogesh Raj and Pratyoush Onta, historians at our organization. They were ably assisted by Shak Bahadur Budhathoki, Harsha Man Maharjan, Ramita Maharjan, Ramesh Rai and Devendra Uprety, all members of our research or library staff. We thank them all. We also thank SIRC for providing funds to do these review analyzes. We hope that this review sparks a vigorous debate about how history teaching and research could be restructured in Nepal.

Martin Chautari

INTRODUCTION

For more than forty years now, scholars interested in the teaching and research-related dimensions of the field of history have reviewed the state of the discipline in various ways. Sometimes, these exercises were part of the larger reviews of the state of various social science disciplines in the country (e.g., Stiller 1974; Sharma, Stiller and Uprety 1978; Vaidya and Bhurtel 1984; Manandhar 1997; Onta 2003). At other times, they were executed as part of the institutional commitment to specifically review the state of the discipline (e.g., Manandhar *et al.* 1995) or as part of individual practitioners' quest to comment on the field (e.g., Adhikari 1980; Onta 1994; Kshetry and Karki 2061 v.s.). This analysis of the state of history teaching and research in Nepal falls under the first category. It is part of a Martin Chautari project to review the state of the field in four social science disciplines in Nepal: sociology/anthropology (Subedi and Uprety 2014), geography (B.P. Subedi 2014), history and political science.

In this paper, we deliberately do not rehearse what is already well known from previous review exercises. Instead, we offer a compact analysis that is structured around three main concerns: the present state of teaching and research, institutional and methodological innovations and weaknesses of the past dozen years and an agenda for the advancement of history as a discipline in Nepal. Our approach is also somewhat different from the past attempts in that we have analyzed the state of the discipline from both diachronic and landscape perspectives.¹

¹ Our approach is independent of, but similar to, that utilized by Robert Townsend, a long-term deputy director and the curator of the American Historical Association (AHA), whose recent book narrates the story of AHA as an interplay between what he sees history as a profession and history as a knowledge production activity (Townsend

We have, in the first section, surveyed the institutions, processes and outcomes related to history both within the university locations and beyond. In the second section we have traced how these varied locations and practices have evolved in the recent years in making the state of the discipline in Nepal. We then, in the third section, recommend specific institutional rearrangements and support mechanisms to promote both the diversity and quality in the disciplinary structures and contents. Since two previous substantial attempts to review the state of the field of history in Nepal covered through the year 2001 (Hachhethu 2002) and 2003 (Onta 2003), we have decided to mostly focus on the period since 2002.² However, when necessary, we will discuss examples from the years prior to 2002.

THE PRESENT STATE OF TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN NEPAL *INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE IN CAPSULE FORM*

Any survey of the institutionalized history teaching and research in Nepal must at once dispel a widely-held but wrong belief that institutions of knowledge (re)production should necessarily be formal and durable. This belief is entrenched in most authors of the crisis narratives about the discipline of history. Indeed, it prevents them from looking at the production of academic knowledge beyond the academia and from properly appreciating the vitality and use of the discipline in Nepali society. Credible historical writing in Nepal has been produced by people with no formal degrees in the discipline of history or no formal university-based training of any kind. Such writing has also been produced by people who were trained in self-styled *gurukul*-like institutions or by some whose formal university degrees were in disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy, geography, literature or even economics. Due to the varied nature and sites of enterprise and the diverse background of people involved, delimiting

2013). Similarly, we propose to view disciplinary development of history in Nepal as an outcome of the interaction between university and non-university sites of production of the knowledge about the past.

² Hachhethu (2002) covers history as part of his analysis of the entire social sciences in Nepal.

the terrain occupied by historical research and writings in Nepal is a challenge. In this paper, we have kept the terrain open to all of these practices. As we will demonstrate shortly, we are guided to opt for this open-ended terrain because of the vitality and vibrant nature of the disciplinary landscape in Nepal itself and not because of some altruistic motives. One direct implication of this layout is that to be able to say anything insightful about the state of historical research and writings in Nepal, one will have to consider the developments in the entire landscape and not simply in the conventional sites of teaching and research, namely universities and its siblings such as research councils and academies. In this respect, no or little parallels exist for other social science disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, geography, etc. in Nepal.

Limiting to the 20th century only, historical writings were produced in the early part by several Nepali literary writers interested in seeking a collective Nepali identity especially in British India (Onta 1996b). Since the early 1950s, as the freedom to pursue variously intellectual lives, both individually and in association, became possible inside Nepal, four forms of efforts grew in. First, single-person ventures became prolific: the late Mahesh Chandra Regmi (1929–2003) singlehandedly produced more than a dozen books, a few articles and an uncountable number of original and translated research notes between 1957 and 2003. Others in this category include well known people like the late Baburam Acharya (1888–1972) and Chittaranjan Nepali (b. 1931), and little known people like the late Tirthalal Naghabhani (1987–2058 v.s.; see Maharjan and Raj 2013). Second, relatively large private academic collectives were also formed outside the formal degree-granting university to the purpose. An erstwhile *gurukul*-like institution Samsodhan Mandal founded by the late Naya Raj Pant (1913–2002) has published more than two dozen books, innumerable pamphlets, and more than 10,000 pages of the historical quarterly *Purnima*. One may include relatively less well known Svaddhyayashala, and academic NGOs in this category which have also contributed their bit to (re)produce new historical knowledge. Third, several government departments and state-funded entities have

provided incentives and forums conducive to creation and circulation of historical knowledge. For instance, the Department of Archaeology has published, among other publications, the journal *Ancient Nepal* since 1967. Also in this category would be the Nepal Academy (formerly the Royal Nepal Academy), which has commissioned many historical research and writings in the past and has also published the academic journal *Pragya* since 1970.

The university-based departments, which became active since the early 1960s, are the fourth type. The Central Department of History (CDH) of Tribhuvan University (TU) located in the latter's University Campus in Kirtipur and the three other locations within TU where an MA in history is offered – Prithvi Narayan Campus (PNC), Pokhara; Post-Graduate Campus, Biratnagar; and Thakur Ram Multiple Campus, Birgunj – are important university-based locations for the teaching and research of history in the country. The Central Departments of Nepalese History, Culture and Archaeology (NEHCA), Nepali, Nepal Bhasha and other language departments (where various histories of languages and literatures are taught and researched), and Buddhist Studies, among other departments at TU, also produce history-related works. Various research centers within TU also employ historians. For instance, the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS, estd. 1972) has been the institutional home of very important historians and historical research in the past. Historians are also employed in the departments under the Faculty of Education at TU. Likewise, Nepal Sanskrit University (NSU, formerly Mahendra Sanskrit University, estd. 1986) also has history departments in its constituent and affiliated colleges. For example, Valmiki Vidyapeeth, Kathmandu has a department of history and epics, and offers Acharya (MA equivalent) and PhD degrees in history.

An organization of historians, History Association of Nepal (HISAN, estd. 1999) aims to promote the collective interests of the discipline and its practitioners. Since history departments are missing in other universities of Nepal barring NSU, HISAN functions as an extension of TU's history-related academic infrastructure. Most of its office holders come from the CDH, TU or its affiliated colleges (e.g.,

Trichandra Campus). Independent historians have had very little to do with HISAN (apart from becoming members in the case of some).³ They rely on various private trusts and charities mostly for publication grants. Research of historical nature is also done by practitioners of other disciplines (e.g., sociology, anthropology, etc.) but there is very little intellectual exchange between them and historians in any organized and/or institutional manner. Much the same seems to be true among entities in the private, non-profit and governmental sectors, and between them and the universities. While personal links exist in a number of ways, institution-level collaborations are almost non-existent among these various sites.

The varied locations of knowledge (re)production matter immensely for a proper understanding of the nature of history writing in Nepal and the kinds of interventions required to enhance both the volume and quality of the research.

CURRICULA

The history curricula in Nepal in both universities and beyond have been by and large based on the standards developed elsewhere. While the first university curricula were modeled after the postcolonial university educational reforms in India, as TU developed its academic programs with the help of the Indian university faculty, the non-university curricula was by and large a modern replica of the ancient Sanskrit education (Pant 1979). No reliable analysis of the academic curricula is available, but it may be argued that the structure and content in history, unlike other relatively recent disciplines in Nepal, has remained a product of foundational enquiries into the nationhood and modernizing quests of the new nation.⁴ In the current shape, however, the latter concerns have intermeshed with the anxieties about better serving to the changing

³ For discussions of HISAN including how it was established, what it has done and what it could do, see Vaidya (2013), Paudyal (2013) and Onta (2012c) respectively.

⁴ See Duara (1995). For a mature discussion of Prasenjit Duara's argument connecting the rise of academic history with the emergence of the postcolonial nations, see the review by Vickers (2012) of the book edited by Moloughney and Zarrow (2011).

demands of the market, and the former has created a niche beyond the university system.

Among the non-university locations, only Naya Raj Pant-established Samsodhan Mandal had a training curricula and regime. Pant's school adhered to some fundamentals as integral to the process of training as a historian. These included mastery of Sanskrit, palaeography and epigraphy; rote memorization of some key texts; ability to interpret around 200 classical Sanskrit texts; and evidence-based rectification of factual errors committed by other historians, among other things (Nepal 1997, Pant 2002). Being able to critically edit old documents and texts of inscriptions and write commentaries on them was another part of the training. The projected time-period to master the skills emphasized in this school was a total of eight years (Pant and Pant 2002). Among 30 plus students, only Gyanmani Nepal (b. 1933) completed the full requirements whereas some others fulfilled parts of the training regime. By the mid 1970s, the school's training module was no longer attracting new students. Critics of the Pant's curricula have argued that the regime was inadequate and irrelevant to historical criticism (Malla 1984, 2004). Defenders point out to the quality and impact of the school's output on Nepali historiography (Upreti 1995, Pant 2012).

In contrast, the 2010 TU syllabi have set imprecise objectives for its two-year MA degree program in history. The objectives of the program, besides enabling the students to serve the society, are "to acquaint the students with the recent development" in the discipline, and "to give the students specialized knowledge" (CDC 2010: 1) in certain core and emerging areas such as Nepali and Indian history, history of the Far-East, international history, and tourism. Students are required to take a total of ten paper (six compulsory, four optional, five each year).

The first year students are taught two separate papers on historiography and research methodology to provide "in-depth theoretical and practical knowledge of history and its methodology" (CDC 2010: 1). The paper on research methodology requires the students to "visit any local place of historical and cultural importance and submit a paper of at least 5000 words, based on his/her filed work

under the supervision of” the department where s/he is enrolled (CDC 2010: 11). According to one professor at the CDH, the execution of this requirement was done competently.⁵ International history, focused on modern European history and post-WWII Euro-American diplomacy is a compulsory paper so that the students will have “comprehensive knowledge of world affairs” (CDC 2010: 1). ‘Readings in history of Nepal’ is also a core paper. The first year optional paper can be either on ‘historical and cultural tourism’ or on ‘archival science and museology.’⁶

The second year students take two compulsory papers: one on modern India, and another on modern China and Japan. The third paper can either be the social history of Nepal since 1769 or the administrative history of Nepal for the same period. The fourth paper can be one on the economic history of modern Nepal (1769–1990) or the diplomatic history of Nepal for the same period. Curiously, thesis work which could initiate the student in the research practice is left as an optional fifth paper, the other options being trans-Himalayan studies, recent history of South Asia (apart from India) or an history of the US.

Relevant books have been recommended for the various courses. With respect to Nepal-related papers, the lists of recommended books do reflect a fair inclusion of recent research input. For instance, the first year course on ‘readings in history of Nepal’ comes with a recommended reading list that contains 21 books in English and 25 books in Nepali. Course units and the recommended books have not, however, been explicitly linked. No verifiable data is available to comment on either the pedagogical techniques or the use of the reading materials in the MA classroom. The primary mode of mentoring is lecture delivery and research supervision of those students wanting to do a thesis.

There is no MPhil program in history at TU. Even as some other departments (such as Nepali, English, economics, and sociology/anthropology) have opted to start MPhil programs as an intermediary degree between the MA and a PhD, there has been no discussion about

⁵ Personal communication, Dr Bhaveshwar Pangen, 18 February 2014.

⁶ Museology is the study of museums, both their theoretical aspects and the more practical aspects of curation.

this matter in the CDH. The PhD program continues to be managed by the Office of the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FOHSS) and not by the CDH. Rather than a preparatory course work followed by dissertation writing that is the norm in many universities in other countries, the PhD in history at TU is a degree by dissertation. However in recent years, the Office of the Dean has sought the involvement of the Research Committee of the CDH in approving the PhD research proposals. The PhD student is required to meet the Committee members to discuss her preliminary proposal and revise it thoroughly as per their suggestions. The revised proposal is sent back to the Committee for approval by the Office of the Dean. Only when the approval is granted and other preliminary requirements met, the Office grants a permanent PhD registration to the doctoral candidate. For some years, PhD candidates were required to defend their dissertations in front of a panel of specialists from the CDH (or those it chose to invite) in a 'pre-official viva event' but this requirement has since been discontinued for reasons unknown to CDH faculty members. Discussions about course-work leading to doctoral research have been raised by CDH faculty members in the past but these have not led to any changes in the way doctoral training is delivered and pursued in history at TU.⁷

The FOHSS at TU also offers a course on research methodology which all PhD students are required to take. It also assigns a research supervisor to all PhD students who manage to get a permanent PhD registration in any of the disciplines. It had prepared a research manual for PhD students in 2006 (Dean's Office 2006). That manual contained extracts from different sources on various matters related to academic research including proposal writing, research methodology, and research design. It also contained notes on plagiarism, the suggested format in which the PhD dissertation needs to be presented, and tips for oral presentation of the research output during the *viva voce*, the oral

⁷ This paragraph is based on personal communications with Drs Tri Ratna Manandhar (Professor emeritus, CDH) and Bhaveshwar Pangeni, 30 March 2014. Also see Manandhar (2009).

examination during which the PhD candidate is expected to defend her thesis. In March 2014, we were told that this manual was being revised.⁸

MA in history-epics is also offered by the NSU. The stated objectives of NSU's MA course are, among others, (a) "to make students understand various aspects of the ancient history through episodes in the Mahabharata," (b) "to enable the students to discuss the nature of Pashupata, Shaiva and Pratyabhijnya schools by relating them to the historical context of ancient India," (c) "to inculcate among the students an ability to conduct research," and (d) "to enable them to successfully implement research projects in any discipline" (MSU 2056 v.s.: 242, 256). The two-year curricula consist of 10 papers, five in the first year and the rest in the second. The fifth paper in the first year contains 50 out of 100 marks allocated for an introduction to research methodology. Thesis writing appears as an option to the paper which has religious geography of the Himalayas as a core component. In the first year, the first paper on the lives (*charit*) of Krishna and Ram intends to provide the students with the insights on the human condition. The second and third papers are respectively on the history and culture of the Vaishnav (Bhagavat) and Shaiva (Shivatatva) sects. The fourth paper is on the development of the six schools of Hindu philosophy and the religious geography of the city of Banaras. The fifth paper, consisting of research methodology, has been designed to introduce the students to the nature of research and report writing style. The text and reference books on the section are diverse in both language and content, and range from the preface by Gaurishankar-Hirachandra Ojha's famous text on the ancient Indian epigraphy to Kate L. Turbrian's *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*.

The history component in the sixth paper, which students study in the second year, spans over from the Budhha (c. 6th century BC) to Harshavardhan (c. 6th century AD). The content aims to provide first, a sweeping view of the development from the Neolithic age, through Sindhu civilization, the Aryan movements, the Vedic age, the age of the

⁸ Personal communication, Dr Nilam K. Sharma, Assistant Dean of the FOHSS, 10 March 2014.

epics, and the age of religious fermentation during Buddha's lifetime. It then deals with the rise and the fall of the Mauryan dynasty to the heydays of what it sees as the golden age of the Guptas. The seventh and eighth papers are on political history vis-à-vis the Mahabharat. Sixty percent of the content in the ninth paper is allocated to the analysis of the classical historiography and comparative historical evaluation of various epic and mythological texts. The unit on the religious geography of the Himalayas focuses on introducing the students with various 'texts of significance' (*mahatmyas*) related to key Hindu shrines in Nepal. Optionally, the student may choose to write a thesis to fulfill the course requirement. The MA curriculum in NSU is thus distinct from the MA history course in TU not only in its orientation (historical interpretation) but also in the selection of the texts (epics and mythologies). Although firmly embedded in the classical Sanskrit historiography, the NSU curricula do not curiously aim to equip the students with the necessary analytical ability to critically engage with recent scholarship on the nature and limitations of that historiography.

Contemporary academic NGOs that have done some work in history at the institutional level with a mentoring component for young researchers do not have an official curriculum as such. However at one such organization, Martin Chautari (MC), researchers-in-training are expected to immerse themselves in all aspects of the research design, execution, analysis, presentation, and writing. They are also expected to identify and read relevant works as a way of preparing for their research, and prepare bibliographies and reading lists related to their research themes. In all of these activities they are provided help by individuals with relatively more research experiences. Drafts of written analysis are read carefully by various individuals to provide feedback to the authors who are, in turn, expected to revise their texts for publication.

HUMAN RESOURCES

The total number of professional historians active in Nepal is unavailable. We suspect that there are a few dozen historians operating

outside of the TU system. They are working for the Government of Nepal (GON), other universities and colleges (even when they do not have history departments per se), independent research centers, consultancies, academic NGOs or as independent scholars. According to the data received from the Personnel Administration Division (PAD) and the Faculty of Education, Dean's Office of TU, there are currently 180 permanent faculty members in history and history education (latter within the Faculty of Education) at TU. However the Division does not have comprehensive data on faculty members working for TU on an annual contract basis or on part-time basis.⁹ Table 1 shows the entire institutional and geographical distribution of these 180 faculty members, as well as their professorial ranks. As shown therein, there are 18 Professors, 84 Readers (also known as Associate Professors) and 78 Lecturers teaching/working in 32 different departments/institutions of TU throughout the country, 20 of them located outside the Kathmandu Valley. Among the 18 Professors, 15 are located in institutions/departments in the Kathmandu Valley, two in Pokhara and one in Chitwan. Only three of the professors are women, and all of them teach at Patan Multiple Campus in the Kathmandu Valley. Not surprisingly there is a high concentration of professors (eight) at the University Campus (also known as Kirtipur Campus) where the CDH is located.

In the CDH, there are 18 faculty members: 8 Professors, 5 Readers and 5 Lecturers. As is shown in Table 2, this faculty strength is second only to that in the Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology amongst the four disciplines which are being reviewed by MC. In other words, the history faculty strength in TU's University Campus is bigger than those in geography and political science.

⁹ Individuals who entered into service through the hiring process managed by TU Service Commission are considered permanent. Teaching Assistants (TAs) do not hold permanent jobs but are usually given annual contracts by their respective departments. They get a monthly salary but are not eligible to receive other benefits. However, if they later manage to obtain a permanent position, their years in contract service are counted to determine their seniority and eligibility for future promotions. Part-timers are also hired by the departments but they are paid a nominal amount by the number of classes they teach and are not eligible for any other benefits.

Table 1: Faculty Members in History, TU

SN	College/institution	Professor	Reader	Lecturer	Total
1	Bhairahawa Campus, Bhairahawa	0	0	1	1
2	Bhaktapur Campus, Bhaktapur	1	8	3	12
3	Bhojpur Campus, Bhojpur	0	0	2	2
4	Birendra Campus, Chitwan	1	1	1	3
5	Butwal Campus, Butwal	0	4	3	7
6	Central Department of History, Kirtipur	8	5	5	18
7	Central Department of Education, Kirtipur	1	4	4	9
8	Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Kirtipur	0	4	1	5
9	Dhankuta Campus, Dhankuta	0	2	2	4
10	Dhawalagiri Campus, Baglung	0	2	2	4
11	Doti Campus, Doti	0	0	1	1
12	Gorkha Campus, Gorkha	0	0	1	1
13	Mahendra Bindeshwori Campus, Rajbiraj	0	3	0	3
14	Mahendra Campus, Dharan	0	1	1	2
15	Mahendra Morang Adarsha Campus, Biratnagar	0	0	3	3
16	Mahendra Campus, Nepalgunj	0	2	2	4
17	Mahendra Ratna Campus, Kathmandu	0	6	1	7
18	Mahendra Ratna Campus, Ilam	0	1	2	3
19	Mechi Campus, Jhapa	0	1	4	5
20	National History Museum, Kathmandu*	1	0	0	1
21	Padma Kanya Campus, Kathmandu	1	5	8	14
22	Patan Campus, Lalitpur	3	7	1	11
23	Post-Graduate Campus, Biratnagar	0	1	3	4
24	Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara	2	6	3	11
25	Ramswarup Ramsagar Campus, Janakpur	0	4	2	6
26	Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, Kathmandu	0	4	3	7
27	Sanothimi Campus, Bhaktapur	0	0	2	2
28	Saraswoti Campus, Kathmandu	0	3	4	7
29	Surya Narayan Satya Narayan Morboita Campus, Siraha	0	1	2	3
30	Thakur Ram Campus, Birgunj	0	4	6	10
31	Tribhuvan Campus, Palpa	0	0	1	1
32	Trichandra Campus, Kathmandu	0	5	4	9
Total		18	84	78	180

Source: PAD, TU and Faculty of Education, Dean's Office, TU.

* National History Museum is under TU.

**Table 2: Number of Faculty Members
in Four Central Departments of TU**

Discipline	Professor	Reader	Lecturer	Contract/ part time	Total
Sociology/anthropology	8	6	7	9	30
Geography	6	4	4	1	15
History	8	5	5	0	18
Political science	4	4	2	0	10

Source: Office of the Dean, FOHSS, TU.

With respect to the three other places where MA history is taught, the total current faculty strength is 33 out of which only 25 have permanent jobs, five are teaching assistants and three part-timers. There are 15 faculty members at the Prithvi Narayan Campus in Pokhara and 14 at the Thakur Ram Campus in Birgunj. Only four faculty members run the MA program in history at the Post-Graduate Campus in Biratnagar. As shown in Table 3, in total there are 10 history Professors, 16 Readers and 17 Lecturers in the four TU locations where MA history is taught.

**Table 3: Faculty Strength at the Four TU
Colleges where History MA is Taught**

College	Professor	Reader	Lecturer	Teaching assistant	Part time	Total
University Campus, Kirtipur	8	5	5	0	0	18
Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara	2	6	3	3	1	15
Thakur Ram Campus, Birgunj	0	4	6	2	2	14
Post-Graduate Campus, Biratnagar	0	1	3	0	0	4
Total	10	16	17	5	3	51

Source: PAD, TU; Faculty of Education, Dean's Office, TU and telephone interviews with concerned faculty.

Within TU, history sometimes co-exists with other disciplines in the same department. For instance, in PNC (Pokhara), history and culture MA programs are delivered jointly. This is even truer at the BA

level. Some history faculty members have their positions in the Faculty of Education or at the CNAS. The latter currently has five historians and two other faculty members with expertise in NEHCA (hence 7 out of its current 18 faculty members are essentially historians). There are other faculty members in TU who have expertise in history within their own disciplines. These include several historians of specific languages and literary traditions who have positions in the various language departments of TU and others who have studied religions and cultures historically in departments such as Buddhist Studies. These complications make it very difficult to be precise about the total number of permanent faculty members at TU who are essentially historians. Counting the additional number of TAs and part-timers, we estimate the total number of historians at TU to be about 330.

At NSU's Valmiki Vidyapeeth, there are two Professors, three Readers and one Lecturer in history. In its main campus in Dang in west Nepal, there are two Lecturers and one TA. There are 241 (88 life and 153 general) members in HISAN, most of whom have affiliations with TU as active or retired faculty members. According to the membership lists, historians are affiliated with or teach at 24 different colleges or universities outside of Kathmandu (HISAN 2013a, 2013b). Among these, Tehrathum Campus (Tehrathum), Janata Campus (Rangeli), Adikabi Bhanubhakta Campus (Tanahu), Lumbini Buddhist University (Lumbini), Mid-Western University (Surkhet) and Far-Western University (Mahendranagar) are ones not listed in Table 1.

The provision for the faculty positions for history, and indeed in other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, in TU does not seem to correlate with the student enrollment, number of subjects taught or teaching and research work load. According to one insider, in early March 2014, 18 new professorial positions were advertised for English where 300 students were admitted in the newly started semester system whereas 17 such positions were advertised for Political Science which admitted only 20 new students. Similarly nine such positions were advertised for History which admitted only four new students (Tumbahang 2014). The increase in the faculty strength has been

justified for the additional workload in the newly adopted semester system, yet no verifiable correlations such as maximum student-teacher ratio and minimum lecture hour per teacher seem to exist behind this call. This seemingly arbitrary manipulation of the human resources has serious implications for the quality of teaching and research at the university departments.

Table 4: The Number of Students in Four TU Colleges where History MA is Taught

College	2069 v.s.		2070 v.s.	
	1 st year	2 nd year	1 st year	2 nd year
University Campus, Kirtipur	54	4	10	no enrollment yet
Department of History and Culture, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara	7	3	5	2
Department of History, Thakur Ram Campus, Birjung	0	0	0	0
Department of History and Culture, Post-Graduate Campus, Biratnagar	31	2	2	no enrollment yet

Source: Telephone interviews with concerned faculty.

An exact number of students currently enrolled in BA and MA history programs in TU are curiously unavailable (cf. Thapa and Budhathoki 2060 v.s.). At the MA level there were about 100 students in total during the academic year 2012–13, most of them at the CDH (see Table 4; cf. Kharel and Prasain 2010; Ghimire 2013). Anyone with a BA in humanities or social sciences or a Shastri degree with English is eligible for admissions. According to one senior professor at the CDH, the numbers have gone down in the recent years due to the phasing out from TU of the erstwhile lowest tier of university education, the Proficiency Certificate Level (PCL).¹⁰ The PCL tier was equivalent to classes 11 and 12 and its removal from the university has coincided with the spread of the so-called 10+2 system of higher secondary school education in Nepal. The 10+2 system, as it has developed, is not

¹⁰ Personal communication, Dr Vijay Kumar Manandhar, Head of the CDH, 17 February 2014.

conducive to those who want to study history because it is currently oriented to disciplines other than the humanities and the social sciences. This decline in the number of students is of concern to faculty members. So is the quality of the students who do enroll to study the subject. According to another senior professor at the CDH, many of the students now opting for history are not the top students in their cohort. Furthermore, many who enroll in the MA program hold full-time jobs. As the job market has looked weak for history graduates, the numbers have declined.¹¹

Based on a catalogue made public very recently, a total of 418 MA theses in history have been submitted at TU since the first such thesis was submitted in 1967 (Manandhar, Thapa and Pangenj 2014). Among them, 308 were done at the CDH, 55 at PNC in Pokhara, 39 at Post-Graduate Campus in Biratnagar and 16 at Thakur Ram Campus in Birganj (Table 5). 115 of the 418 theses were submitted by women students, representing almost 28 percent of the total. 363 of the theses were written in the Nepali language (about 87%) and the rest in English. The decadal break-down of the MA theses submitted to the four departments is given in Table 5. At the oldest department, namely, the CDH, 93 MA theses were submitted during the 10 year period between 2036 v.s. and 2045 v.s. (which corresponds to the years 1979–1988). The number dropped to 65 during the next decade partly because some students chose to pursue their MA degree in the other newly opened MA history programs. But it is important to note that the total number of MA theses submitted in all four departments was only 76 during this decade (1989–1998). It is possible that the student enrollment in MA history saw a dip during those years as some other disciplines (such as sociology/anthropology) became more popular than history then.¹² The

¹¹ Personal communication, Dr Shanker Thapa, CDH, 18 February 2014.

¹² This possibility was conveyed to us by Devendra Uprety, personal communication, 16 April 2014. Hachhethu (2002: 58) does show that the student enrollments in history at TU's University Campus during the late 1990s was less than those in sociology and anthropology, less than half those in political science, and less than 20 percent of those in economics. It would require additional research for us to say more definitely why there has been a fluctuation in the number of students submitting MA theses in history at TU as shown in Table 5.

following decade (1999–2008) saw an increase in the number of MA theses submitted in three of the four departments. Also the grand total of all four departments (154) was more than double the corresponding number in the previous decade. The data for the years since 2009 does correspond with a decrease in the number of students opting to do an MA in history at TU.

**Table 5: MA Theses Submitted to Four TU Colleges
where History MA is Taught**

Years (v.s.)	CDH, Kirtipur	PNC, Pokhara	PGC, Biratnagar	TRC, Birgunj	Total
2016–25	3 (0.9%)	0	0	0	3 (0.7%)
2026–35	30 (9.7%)	0	0	0	30 (7.1%)
2036–45	93 (30.1%)	0	0	2	95 (22.8%)
2046–55	65 (21.1%)	1	4	6	76 (18.1%)
2056–65	84 (27.2%)	35	29	6	154 (36.9%)
2066–	26 (8.4%)	19	5	2	52 (12.5)
No date	7 (2.2%)	0	1	0	8 (1.9%)
Total	308 (73.7%)	55 (13.1%)	39 (9.3%)	16(3.9%)	418 (100%)

Source: Manandhar, Thapa and Pangen (2014); CDH (Central Department of History); PNC (Prithvi Narayan Campus); PGC (Post-Graduate Campus); TRC (Thakur Ram Campus).

By March 2014, 63 PhDs in history have been completed at TU since the first doctoral dissertation was submitted by Ludwig F. Stiller in 1970 (see Annex I for the complete list).¹³ As shown in Table 6, this number is higher than the PhDs awarded thus far by TU in political science, sociology/anthropology, and geography. It is also interesting to note that in the 30-year period after the submission of the first doctoral dissertation (namely, 1970–2000), only a total of 28 PhDs in history were completed at TU. In the 13-year period between January 2001 and March 2014, 35 PhDs were completed. This suggests that in recent years the number of students completing their PhDs in history at TU each

¹³ Stiller (1970) is the doctoral dissertation for which he was awarded the first PhD degree in history by TU in 1971. That work was later published as Stiller (1973). Also see Vaidya 2059 v.s. for further details on supervisors who had guided PhD dissertations in history at TU up to that year.

year has been about two or three on average. However even during this 13-year period, the number has varied. For instance during the five-year period between Baisakh 2060 v.s. and Chait 2064 v.s., 20 PhDs were completed. During each of the calendar years 2060 v.s. and 2061 v.s., 5 PhDs each were completed. We are unable to explain this variation.

Table 6: Number of PhDs Completed and Ongoing at TU in Four Social Science Disciplines

Discipline	Completed	Enrolled
Sociology/anthropology	26	83
Geography	12	23
History	63	48
Political science	58	66

Source: Office of the Dean, FOHSS, TU.

As also shown in the Table 6, some 48 students are currently registered at the Office of the Dean, FOHSS as PhD candidates in history.¹⁴ However a faculty member at the CDH has told us that this number is more than two times larger than the number of individuals he is aware of who are pursuing a PhD in history at TU currently.¹⁵ While we are unable to definitely reconcile the difference in these numbers, we estimate that the number provided to us by the Office of the Dean, 48, includes all those who once registered for the PhD degree in history but are no longer pursuing their research actively. There is a seven-year PhD completion rule at TU after which the registration of the PhD candidate is supposed to be cancelled. Given the exceptions made to this rule, it is difficult to be precise about the exact number of active PhD students in history at TU.

Barring a few cases, almost all of the historians now working in Nepal were trained in TU. Some historians of the older generation, who have since retired from active teaching, were trained in India or elsewhere.¹⁶ In the past twenty years, at least four Nepalis have obtained

¹⁴ This information was provided to us by an officer at the Office of the Dean, FOHSS.

¹⁵ Personal communication, Bhaveshwar Pageni, 18 February 2014.

¹⁶ Just to cite three examples, Dr Tulasi Ram Vaidya (b. 1940), Professor emeritus at TU, got his MA and PhD from Allahabad University, India; Dr Prem R. Uprety

PhDs for historical research from universities in the US and UK.¹⁷ As has often been noted, history in Nepal is a very insular discipline for two reasons: first, most historians were trained in TU and work for it. An intellectual culture of in-breeding (Stiller 1974) is worsened by sharply maintained professorial hierarchies and the absence of democratic collegiality between faculty members. Second, very few non-Nepali historians have shown active research interest in the history of Nepal in the most recent past. The number of foreign historians doing research on Nepal was never big but it has gone down for various reasons (this can be best shown for the case of India).¹⁸ Quite a few non-Nepali anthropologists have shown a historical streak in their research work related to Nepal but that can hardly be a substitute for an active research scene in which Nepali and non-Nepali historians cross examine and fertilize each others' research interests and outputs.

PUBLICATIONS

At least a dozen current journals published from within Nepal publish contents of historical research. Table 7 lists 15 such journals some of which are almost 50 years old and one that was founded as recently as 2013. Some journals are published by GON departments (e.g., *Abhilekh*, *Ancient Nepal*) or a state-supported academy (e.g., *Pragya*); others are published by TU entities: CDH (*Voice of History*), departments in TU colleges (e.g., *Anveshan*, *Historia*, *Historical Journal*) and CNAS

(b. 1944), Professor emeritus at TU, got his MA in Ancient History and Archaeology from Allahabad University and MA and PhD (1975) degrees in Modern History from the University of Missouri, US; Purushottam Banskota (b. 1946), Professor emeritus at TU, got his PhD from the University of Delhi.

¹⁷ Pratyoush Onta (1996a) got his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania, US; Ramesh Dhungel from Columbia University, US (1999 – for historical research done at what was then known as the Department of Middle East and Asian Languages and Cultures); Yogesh Raj (alias Yogesh Ram Mishra) from Imperial College, UK (2012); and Sanjog Rupakheti from Rutgers University, US (2012). Here we have not listed the likes of Lokranjan Parajuli who did doctoral research in historical sociology for a PhD (2009) from the Faculty of Sociology at Bielefeld University, Germany.

¹⁸ Non-Nepalis who have done doctoral work of historical nature related to Nepal in the past 15 years would include the likes of Bernardo Michael (at the University of Hawaii), Rhoderick Chalmers (School of Oriental and African Studies), Arik Moran (University of Oxford), and Catherine Warner (University of Washington).

Table 7: Main Academic Journals where Historical Writings have been Published

SN	Journal	Beginning year	Publisher	Remarks
1	Purnima	1964	Samshodhan Mandal, Kathmandu	
2	Ancient Nepal (Prachin Nepal): Journal of the Department of Archaeology	1967	Department of Archaeology, GON	
3	Pragya	1970	Nepal Academy, Kathmandu	
4	Contributions to Nepalese Studies	1973	Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Kirtipur	
5	Voice of History	1975	Central Department of History, Kirtipur	
6	Journal of Nepal Research Centre	1977	Nepal Research Centre, Kathmandu	
7	Rolamba: Journal of Joshi Research Institute	1981	Joshi Research Institute, Lalitpur	
8	Abhilekh	1983	National Archives, GON	
9	Adarsa	1993	Pundit Publications, Kathmandu	Last published in 2002
10	Historia: Journal of History and Culture	1995	Department of History and Culture, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara	
11	Studies in Nepali History and Society	1996	Mandala Book Point, Kathmandu	Editorial home is MC
12	Anveshan: A Research Journal of History and Culture	2001	Department of History and Culture, Post-Graduate Campus, Biratnagar	
13	Itihas Pravah: Annual Journal of Nepalese Studies	2005	Department of History, Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus, Kathmandu	
14	Historical Journal	2010	Department of History and Buddhist Studies, Patan Campus, Lalitpur	
15	HISAN: Journal of History Association of Nepal	2013	History Association of Nepal, Kathmandu	

Source: Martin Chautari Library, Thapathali, Kathmandu.

(*Contributions to Nepalese Studies*). Still other journals are published by private research centers (e.g., *Pasuka*, *Rolamba*, *Purnina*). Still others are published by foreign-university projects (e.g. *Journal of Nepal Research Centre*). One journal (*Studies in Nepali History and Society*, SINHAS) is editorially prepared by an academic NGO (MC) and published by a commercial publisher Mandala Book Point. The newest journal in this list, *HISAN: Journal of History Association of Nepal*, was founded in 2013 by HISAN, the professional organization of historians.

Some of the journals listed in Table 7 have not been very regular in recent years. The primary example of irregularity is the journal *Voice of History* published from the CDH. Only two multiple-volume-combined issues of this journal have been published since 2002: volume 17–20 (120 pages) published in December 2005 and volume 21–27 (108 pages) published in August 2012. In other words, that is a sum total of 228 journal pages in 11 years at an average of 21 pages per year. This is a dismal record for a department which, as mentioned above, has the highest concentration of professorial faculty members in history within the TU system. Since many of these faculty members have been very productive in their personal capacity – some producing as many as three books during a calendar year – we can only interpret this dismal journal production record as an evidence of the lack of regular commitment to collegiality when it comes to producing a collective good such as an academic journal. Curiously the journals published by the GON departments have been relatively very regular. The same could be said of some of the journals published by TU's other history departments and the ones put out by private research centers.

More than 1800 articles of historical research have been published in these journals (see Table 8). On face value then, there is no dearth of journals in Nepal for academic historical writings. However, strict peer review protocols are more the exception than the norm for the main articles published in these journals. The journal *SINHAS* follows a single-blind (namely, the reviewer's identity is not disclosed to the author unless the editors are authorized to do so by the reviewer) peer review system but the other journals listed in Table 7 are not known

to follow a strict reviewing process. Some have no reviewing process whereas others have adopted ad-hoc mechanisms of reviewing some of the contents they publish. It is also worth noting that some historical research is published in journals other than those listed in Table 7. Hence a journal such as *Nepali* (published by the Madan Puraskar Guthi) has published variously important historical articles in its more than 50 years of existence. Historical research on languages and literatures also get published in magazines dedicated to literary themes (such as *Garima* published by Sajha Prakashan) or even general newsmagazines. The impact of this voluminous output both for the advancement of the discipline and for critical historical engagements in related disciplines has not been measured.

Not considering the books in the genre of historical fiction, whose popularity excels at par with other popular literary genre, at least 223 academic books have been published in the field of historical research since 2002. Out of this total, 98 were written by university-based historians and 125 by non-university based historians.¹⁹ This total of 223 books is larger than the total number of books published in sociology/anthropology, political science and geography put together. Historians in Nepal, like their counterparts elsewhere, have a penchant for the book form to present the output of their research. Most books are single-authored monographs or full-length books written in Nepali or English. There are only a few edited volumes, indicating once again the lack of collegial work amongst Nepali historians. Absence of good readers and reviews, short and student-friendly introductions to the various aspects of the discipline, bibliographies and publication counters also reflect the lack of zeal among the historians for inter-generational transfer of their achievements.

¹⁹ This data comes from separate lists of such books prepared by MC researchers. While we know that these lists are incomplete, the data gathered in them is sufficient to make our case that the non-university-based researchers are quite active in the field of historical research in Nepal.

Table 8: Cumulative Data of Published Items in Various History Journals

Journal	Editorial	Article	Obituary	Book review	Lit. review	Commentary	Bibliography	Index	Document	Report	Speech	Seminar paper
Abhilekh	30	243						11	57	34	7	
Adarsa (no. 1 to 2)		11										
Ancient Nepal (no.149 to 182-183)		151										
Anveshan, Itihas Pravah, Historia, Rolamba, and Voice of History	86	1083	4	27				3	11			18
Historical Journal (no. 1[1] to 2[2])	4	44										
JNRC (no. 1 to 14)	4	112	1	4								
SINHAS (no. 1[1] to 17[2])	13	166		75	7	51	4	1				
HISAN: Journal of History Association of Nepal 1(1)		19										

Source: Respective author indexes prepared as part of this research, available at MC library, Kathmandu.

In terms of publishers, we find that some books have been published by the authors or their family members/friends. Many have been published by commercial publishers in Nepal (e.g., Ratna Pustak Bhandar, Vidyarthi Pustak Bhandar, Bhudipuran Prakashan, Bhrikuti Academic Prakashan) and India (e.g., Adroit, Rupa). Some have been published by entities within TU such as CNAS, CDH, TUCL, etc. Other books have been published by entities of the Nepal Government (e.g., Nepal Army Headquarters), academic NGOs (MC), and private foundations (e.g., Bhimsen Mandir Samrakshan Karya Samiti, Naradmuni Thulung Smriti Parisad, Baniya Bandhu Sahayog Samiti, Bishwo Yakthum Mundhum Samaj, etc.). The scale of publication suggests that history as a discipline is certainly not dead in Nepal nor is it necessarily in the decline. Although just as in the case of journals, the book publication scene is also characterized by mostly a non-peer review regime. Publishers hardly add any value to the manuscripts submitted for publication by authors. There may well be interesting questions about the extent of the dissemination and circulation, as well as the size and nature of the users of the historical publications in Nepal.

RESEARCH PROJECTS/PROGRAMS

A comprehensive list of research projects/programs in history in the country is unavailable. Many projects/programs have been implemented in the past at the institutional, collective, and individual levels. Well known early achievements of the historians associated with the Samsodhan Mandal during the 1950s and the 1960s were results of an institutional commitment for collective work. Several such projects were executed at CNAS (formerly INAS) during the 1970s, the results of which were some of the early books published by it during the same decade. The 'National History' Project executed at CNAS during the 1980s was the result of an institutional decision that much later resulted in the publication of several thematic volumes on the history of Nepal from early to recent times. Although there were many disappointments in the way this project was managed and completed, it was heartening to see that quite a few of the books were co-written by university based faculty not all of whom were affiliated to CNAS or the CDH. In the

recent past, large-scale institutional research projects or collective projects have become rare in TU entities or the Samsodhan Mandal. Nepal Academy has not executed any institutional historical research in the past decade plus. Same seems to be true for the National Foundation for the Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) which was established in 2002 by a separate Act. In the government departments too, large projects that led to the publication of a series of 'national history source books' (Amatya 1988–1991) some 25 years ago under the auspices of the National History Guide Committee of the Department of Archaeology have virtually dried up.²⁰

MC's collective research on the history of radio (2003–05) and the history of magazines in Nepal (2010–13) are examples of institutional research done recently at academic NGOs. These endeavors resulted in several published articles and books, not all of which were recognized as works in the history of Nepal.²¹ Institutions have also created research presentation platforms on specific themes for individual researchers to present their related work. CDH's 1995 publication, *State of Nepali Historiography* (Manandhar *et al.* 1995), is an output from such a venture. More recently, MC and Kyoto University's project on 'Ruptures and Repairs in South Asian History' (2012–13) in which CDH also became the project workshop co-organizer is an example of this type of work that has resulted in a book publication (Raj 2013a). Two historians are investigating social and textual characteristics of non-university-based historians and history writing in MC's ongoing research project 'Knowledge Production beyond Academia.'

Individual projects/programs have been the dominant mode of historical research in Nepal, as these allow researchers to pursue topics of their interests in a flexible time frame. Mahesh Chandra Regmi's working style and the volume and quality of his output provide us the

²⁰ Also see Dangol (1991) published around the same time by the same department of the GON. This work is a catalogue of papers related to Guthis, part of the collection microfilmed by the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP).

²¹ For examples of outputs from these projects, see Onta *et al.* (2004) and Panthi, Onta and Maharjan (2013). In reviewing the former book, Manandhar (2008) claims that it is more a work in sociology than history without explaining why he thinks so.

best example of such research done during the last four decades of the 20th century.²² But many of his contemporaries, based at TU and outside, also produced much of their corpus by working on their own individual research projects. Individual research has been executed on a number of different topics by senior, mid-career and junior researchers with varying degrees of success. Many are furthering their PhD topics (e.g., Vijay Manandhar, Rajesh Gautam, Surendra K.C., Dil Bahadur Kshetry), period (e.g., Rajaram Subedi, Bhaveshwar Pangen, Govindaman Singh Karki, Mala Malla) or specializing in a new area (e.g., Thapa 2008).

Historians outside TU also seem to engage in a wide variety of pursuits. Some continue their area-specific investigation (e.g., Bhattarai 2005 on Dhankuta). Others focus on particular people (e.g., Chaudhari 2063 v.s. on the Tharus). Still others explore specific family history (e.g., Rana 2062 v.s. on the Ranas). A tendency to specialize can also be observed among some historians. For instance Kanchha Baniya has moved from family history (2005) to regional history (2006), so has Indira Joshi (2063 v.s.a, 2063 v.s.b). Arjun Babu Mabuhang and Bharat Thunghang (2070 v.s.) have explored the Hodgson papers to narrate a specific war between Limbuwan and the Gorkha army.

An advantage of the predominance of the individual research works is that history research in Nepal has always been thematically diverse, and therefore interesting, terrain. To the contrary, the same feature also means almost the complete lack of the critical reassessment of the past achievements in a theme one is pursuing. This has made any search for novel theoretical and methodological arguments unnecessary, for much of the research focus at, and is greatly valued more for, 'bringing hitherto unknown materials to light', than for demolishing dominant but incorrect views.

FINANCING

The university-based historians such as the CDH faculty and CNAS researchers get their salary from their mother institution TU, which

²² See Onta (2013b) for a bibliography of Mahesh Chandra Regmi's works.

is publicly funded. TU's budget has not provided additional research funds to the CDH ever. In the past, CDH has received small grants from foundations to hold seminars. For instance it organized a two-day seminar on the 'State of Nepali Historiography' in October 1993 with financial support from the B.P. Koirala India-Nepal Foundation (Manandhar *et al.* 1995). CDH has also benefited from grants from the University Grants Commission (UGC) to hold seminars and conferences, some of which it has organized in collaboration with HISAN.

With respect to CNAS, the research funds have dwindled significantly as a percentage of its total budget, a trend that has been reported earlier (Onta 2003). In the approved TU budget for the current fiscal year 2013–14, NRs. 13,234,000 has been allocated for CNAS with the following breakdown: academic salary (NRs. 6,284,000), administrative salary (NRs. 5,653,000), allowance (NRs. 241,000) and provident fund (NRs. 1,056,000). For internal expenditures (including utilities), NRs 4,343,000 have been allocated. Out of this amount, NRs. 1,579,000 has been earmarked for publications, NRs. 1,029,000 for research and development, and NRs. 65,000 for seminars (TU 2013). CNAS has also granted a research fellowship with the title *Dhanavajra vidvatvriddhi* on a competitive basis. It was initiated in 1997 and was supported by a small contribution from the American art historian Dr Mary Shepherd Slusser. According to information received from Nirmal Man Tuladhar, a founding member of the committee overseeing this fellowship, 10 awards have been made and almost all of the supported research has been published (see Annex II). This fellowship has not been given since 2008. CNAS also gives mini-research grants to its faculty members from its own annual budget. During the fiscal 2010–11, for instance, 17 such grants were made out of which at least six were for historical research. The research division of TU also awards mini-grants to faculty members. During the fiscal 2011–12, 40 such awards were made, only one of which was awarded to a teacher of history.

The UGC also provides PhD and MPhil fellowships to research students. Between the fiscal years 2057–58 v.s. and 2064–65 v.s., at least

eight PhD scholars in history seem to have received partial support to complete their doctoral research (Table 9). One such grant was given more recently in 2069–70 v.s. For faculty without a PhD, UGC also gives one-time mini-research grant. Under the latter category, some historical research projects have been supported. However since such data is not available in one cumulative table but has to be derived from sparsely documented annual reports and copies of such reports for some of the fiscal years since 2002–03 could not be located in the UGC website, its main office or TUCL, it is not clear just how many grants have been made to historians in the past dozen years or in total. The UGC funding is also available for research visits and conference travel by individual scholars. Several members of the CDH and affiliated colleges of TU are said to have received such grants in the past but no such grants seem to have been given to historians in recent years. There is also a grant provision for special research on what the UGC calls ‘topics of national importance’. According to faculty members at TU we have spoken to, no historian has received this grant.

Table 9: Grants from the UGC for PhD Research in History

Name	Full/partial	Year (v.s.)
Govindaman Singh Karki	Partial	2057/058
Nil Prasad Pant	Partial	2059/060
Surya Bahadur Gharti Chhetri	Partial	2060/061
Gunanath Gautam	Partial	2063/064
Gyanendra Prasad Paudel	Partial	2064/065
Bhagawan Khadka	Partial	2064/065
Shova Pokharel	Partial	2064/065
Krishna Raj Adhikari	Partial	2064/065
Tokraj Pandey	Partial	2069/070

Source: Annual Reports of UGC.

Beyond the university system, the Nepal Academy has in the past supported historical research by specific individuals. However, it does not seem to have supported any specific research on history through its fellowship program in the past 10 years, although it has supported a few ones related to culture. NFDIN has supported almost 20 historical

research projects by various individuals and institutions in the past 12 years (see Annex III). It has also given publication grants to at least five books related to historical research (see Annex IV).

Research institutions derive financial support, primarily the costs of publishing, from a variety of sources. State entities such as the government departments of archaeology and culture, the National Archives and museums provide nominal funding for field and archival works (namely, surveys of inscriptions, waterspouts, and literary sources and catalogues of the government collections) and fully cover the printing costs of some of their sponsored reports. Numerous research reports, however, never enter into the phase of publication.

None of the non-government institutions have permanent endowment for research or publication awards. These entities rely either on one-time funding from private benefactors (e.g., Nagarjun Publications) or occasionally, on Nepali and international grant-making bodies (e.g., The Toyota Foundation for the Classical Newari Dictionary Project). For academic NGOs like MC, money to support its research has come from donors active in Nepal (e.g., DanidaHUGOU) and foundations with offices elsewhere (e.g., Japan Foundation). MC occasionally receives personal grant to meet the partial costs of specific research projects. Nepalbhasha Academy raises funds from individual benefactors both in Nepal and elsewhere for its publication grants and awards program.

Samsodhan Mandal's founder Naya Raj Pant remained a full time, salaried faculty in the Ranipokhari Sanskrit Pathshala, and late in his life, also got a salary from TU. His son Dines Raj Pant, another longtime Mandal scholar, recently retired from a full time professorial position at NSU's Valmiki Vidyapeeth. Mahes Raj Pant, who is the editor of the Mandal journal *Purnima*, partially sustained himself by working as a research consultant in a Nepal-Germany funded manuscripts microfilm project, and later, as a research fellow in research institutions in Europe. The Mandal scholars spent their savings, and income from family assets into research and publications. Currently, they partially cover the costs of the Mandal with the help of an annual grant from the Ministry of

Education (NRs. 100,000), income from the sale of their publications including the issues of the journal *Purnima*, interest from a fixed account of about NRs. 8,00,000, and occasional cash awards from private Nepali foundations such as the Madan Puraskar Guthi which awarded its Jagadambashree Puraskar to the Mandal for the year 2068 v.s.

The late Mahesh Chandra Regmi supported his work with a portfolio approach. Although we have not been able to break down his revenue portfolio, he did translation consultancies in the initial years of his work and had research fellowships from the University of California at Berkeley for much of the 1960s. The Magsaysay Award in 1977 relieved him of financial pressure for some time during the last 1970s and the early 1980.²³ There was some revenue generated also from the sale of various publications.

Individuals have funded their personal research through their own personal savings, and as mentioned above, from research fellowships provided by Nepali institutions such as CNAS and the Nepal Academy. A handful of individual historians have obtained fellowships or research grants provided by non-Nepali institutions.²⁴ The training of some Nepali historians in universities located outside of South Asia has also been facilitated by scholarship schemes or grants from those universities and external foundations.²⁵ However, a large numbers of individual researchers are left on their own to fund their interests. Some of them occasionally receive some relief from government institutions, while others continue to impoverish themselves by historical enquiry.

²³ Regmi mentioned this to Pratyoush Onta in the early 1990s.

²⁴ We cite our own examples here. The research that went into the making of Onta (1999) was supported by a grant from Sephis, the South-South Exchange Program for Research on the History of Development. Raj (2010) is based on research supported by a 2005–06 fellowship from the South Asia Regional Fellowship Program of the Social Science Research Council, New York.

²⁵ Apart from the two writers of this article, other historians who have benefited from such schemes include Tri Ratna Manandhar (who got a British Council fellowship during 1976–77 to do a diploma in history at Cambridge University), Prem R. Uprety (who got a Fulbright Fellowship to do doctoral work at the University of Missouri, US in the 1970s), Shyam Bhurtel (who did a PhD in 1981 at Auburn University, US with the support of a Fulbright Fellowship), Vijay Kumar Manandhar (who did an MA at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a Fulbright grantee in the early 1990s), and Sanjog Rupakheti (who did doctoral work in history at Rutgers University, US between 2006 and 2012).

The late 'history laureate' Baburam Acharya was provided with nominal support from the state treasury to further his works. Chittaranjan Nepali worked as a bureaucrat followed by stints at the Election Commission and the Nepal Academy while doing historical research on the sidelines. Tirthalal Naghabhani did a day job at an office under the Ministry of Finance and met research and publication costs from his private purse. Hariram Joshi spent his family earnings on research and publications. Recently, some publications of historians have been financed through private foundations and *guthis*.

To summarize, the funding scene in historical research in Nepal is generally bleak. Research funding within the university system is a tiny fraction of overall spending, almost all of which goes to meet the fixed expenditures on overheads like salaries and office supplies. Outside the university system, the access to state resource is severely limited to people not employed in the government departments or agencies. The scene is characterized by an inclination to recognize life-time contributions and not to cover the costs and overheads while the researcher is actually impoverishing herself. Occasional private and partial support for publication on specific themes is available but this is few and far between.

PUBLIC VISIBILITY OF THE INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

Some academic institutions like the CDH of TU have been in the news for the declining number of students in recent years (Kharel and Prasai 2010; Ghimire 2013). CNAS has been in the news as a not-happening place (Shrestha 2012). Some CDH faculty members are highly visible (e.g., Surendra K.C.) in the public media not so much in their capacity as historians but as commentators on current political affairs. Sometimes historians do get quoted by journalists about subjects in which they have some expertise. Occasionally, mainstream magazines have even agreed to publish a series of articles by historians. For example, during 2012–13, the magazine *Himal Khabarpatrika* published a series of articles by the CNAS-based historian Ramesh Dhungel on matters related to the communities whose names had been implicated in discussions

regarding the naming of provinces in the proposed federal restructuring of Nepal (Dhungel 2012a, 2012b, 2013). He now writes a weekly column in the daily newspaper *Annapurna Post* (e.g., Dhungel 2014a, 2014b).

Samsodhan Mandal gets in the news when some award is given to it. For example, when Madan Puraskar Guthi awarded it the Jagadambashree Puraskar for 2068 v.s., there was widespread coverage of it (e.g., Bhattarai 2012). Mandal occasionally appears in the news for the curiosity it and its members – who have never gone to a ‘proper’ school that gives certificates – generate amongst journalists (e.g., Dahal 2012; Sapkota 2014). The Mandal scholars regularly contribute to the mainstream print media through their columns. Since 2012, Mahes Raj Pant’s fortnightly comments on academic history and related matters have appeared in the broadsheet newspaper *Rajdhani* daily (e.g., Pant 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b). Dines Raj Pant’s weekly revisions of Nepali history dates and events have appeared in the tabloid weekly, *Shukrabar* since Baisakh 2068 v.s. (e.g., Pant 2013, 2014). Gyanmani Nepal occasionally writes historical reflections on current affairs in the Nepali national dailies (e.g., 2014). The memory of Naya Raj Pant, who was awarded a D.Litt. by TU in 2000, was celebrated by a leading Nepali national daily, *Nagarik*, on 17 August 2013 with a leading news report (Rimal 2013) and five other articles. He has also been the subject of several volumes of appreciative essays edited by Shesh Raj Shiwakoti (e.g., 2059 v.s., 2061 v.s.) and a similar volume has been dedicated to his son Dines (Shiwakoti 2063 v.s.). The Mandal scholars also serve as PhD dissertation committee members/examiners in the Nepal Sanskrit, Tribhuvan and Lumbini universities, and advisory committee members of university research institutions (e.g., Dines Raj Pant’s advisory role in CNAS). In early 2014, all three key positions, namely, the Vice-Chancellor, Dean and Registrar of the relatively new Lumbini Buddhist University were held by historians.

It is not uncommon to have public controversy between university historians and others on both historical methodologies and details. For instance, there is a long history of public exchanges between Mahes Raj Pant of the Samsodhan Mandal and TU based academic (Professor

of English-turned-historian, now retired) Kamal P. Malla (e.g., Pant 1984; Malla 1984, 2004). In the 1980s, independent historian Tirthalal Naghabhani (NS 1107) and TU scholar of Newar history and culture Dr Chunda Vajracharya (NS 1107) were engaged in a public debate about the nature of the deity Changunarayan. It is also common for members of the public with interest in history to have a debate on matters related to history books.²⁶ Some non-university-based historians are more visible in the media than others. MC historian Pratyoush Onta writes regularly on the nature of academic research in an English daily that often generates interesting serious public discussion.²⁷ Occasionally, such historians also get asked to write cover stories for magazines on topics in which they have done research (e.g., Raj 2013d).

In brief, historians in Nepal have their share of public fame. But it can hardly be said that such public engagement has resulted in affecting significant change in the relationship between the state and citizens in Nepal. This is partly because historians in the public space are celebrated but not taken seriously for their knowledge and skill. This is evident in the fact that barring once, no historian has been ever invited to present her expert views in any of the parliamentary committee hearings, ministerial level consultations, or the National Planning Commission discussions on any matter of national significance in which she may have considerable research experience.²⁸ While historians and their expert knowledge about the past continue to matter for embellishing the communal view of the glorious bygone days, they are not significant

²⁶ For a recent examples of such an exchange see Saurav (2013, 2014) and the response from Nembang (2014) with respect to the book by Chemjong 2003[1966].

²⁷ For instance, for arguments about the 'decline thesis' of Nepali academia – which states that there has been an overall decline in the state of Nepali academia – see B. Dhungel (2012), Onta (2013a) and Upreti (2013). On the relationships among academic NGOs, donor funding and notions of accountability, see Onta (2012a, 2012b) followed by Ojha (2012), Tiwari (2012) and Upreti (2012).

²⁸ The only exception we are aware of (courtesy Tri Ratna Manandhar, personal communication, 13 April 2014) is when the then House of Representatives (HOR) invited TU historians Tulasi Ram Vaidya and Purushottam Banskota to hear their views on the recruitment of Nepalīs as Gurkhas in the British Army as per the Tripartite Agreement of 1947. This was done sometime during the mid-1990s when the HOR was discussing the subject of Gurkha recruitment. We are not aware of any work done by Vaidya on the subject but Banskota is the author of *The Gurkha Connection* (1994).

shapers of the day-to-day statecraft in which economists, sociologists and political scientists dominate.

RECENT INSTITUTIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS AND WEAKNESSES

RECENT PAST OF THE INSTITUTIONS

A complete mapping of the Nepali institutions of historical research is overdue. Nevertheless, it can be said that for much of the two decades before the early 1970s, the non-university based entities were significant sites of historical research in Nepal. Various historical journals published by Yogi Naraharinath (*Sanskrit Sandesh* founded in 1953, *Itihas Prakash* founded in 1955, *Himavat Sanskriti* founded 1959)²⁹ and other publications such as *Nepal Sanskritik Parisad Patrika* (founded in 1952 and edited by Isvar Baral) and *Pragati* (founded in 1953 and edited by Narayan Banskota) provided forums for historically minded scholars both in and out of the university system to publish their work during the 1950s. Samsodhan Mandal published all of its pamphlets (*vidya rakhsya* and *savadhan patra*) and several of its book-length works (e.g., Vajracharya 1962; Vajracharya and Poudel 2018 v.s.) during this period. It also published the journal *Abhilekh* for three years during the early 1960s before starting the journal *Purnima* in 1964. Mahesh Chandra Regmi brought out his early monographs on land tenure and taxation in Nepal between 1963 and 1968 and founded the monthly *Regmi Research Series* in 1969 (Onta 2013b). Well-known (by Baburam Acharya, Dilli Raman Regmi, Balchandra Sharma, Dhundiraj Bhandari, Chittaranjan Nepali, etc.) and not-so well known (by Dharmaratna Yami, Bhuvanlal Pradhan, Svayambhulal Shrestha) works on Nepali history were also written in the wake of the political change in 1951, mostly within the spirit of searching for the country's essence, and outside the university academic system.

Tribhuvan University was founded in 1959 and its CDH came into existence the same year. TU granted its first MA in history in 1961

²⁹ These dates are based on information provided in Mahes Raj Pant's (2014b) article on Yogi Naraharinath.

(Vaidya and Bhurtel 1984) and, as mentioned earlier, the first PhD in 1971. TU's *Journal of the Tribhuvan University* (later renamed *Tribhuvan University Journal*) was started in 1964 and shortly thereafter it proved to be a publication forum for historians (e.g., Stiller 1969). TU's Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS) was founded in 1972 as the Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies (INAS) and some of its founding staff members were historians of high caliber. For this and a variety of other reasons, research began to be done at CNAS and the CDH from the early 1970s. These two TU entities also founded their own journals – *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* (estd. 1973) and *Voice of History* (estd. 1975) – during the same decade and both journals expanded the publication possibilities for articles and associated short writings related to historical research in Nepal.³⁰ In time, they and related institutions within TU slowly began to consolidate their location within the field. In tandem with this development, various government departments and state-funded academies also started providing support and publication avenues in history. By the end of the 20th century, TU entities had clearly emerged as the leading collectivities for research and teaching of the subject in the country even as non-university based entities continued to be important players in research and publication.

The non-university institutions struggled to regenerate their former vitality by the turn of this century as their founders died or became inactive in the period. For example, after the death of its founder Naya Raj Pant in 2002, Samsodhan Mandal activities are now run chiefly by two of its remaining, and co-incidentally Naya Raj's sons, Mahes Raj (b. 1944) and Dines Raj (b. 1949). The former collective now faces the oft-repeated criticism that it has turned into a Pant family affair and its premier journal *Purnima* has become a family journal (Malla 1984: 1). Dilli Raman Regmi (1913–2001) handed over his library and infrastructure to the Nepal Government but till recently, the Ministry

³⁰ Two historians served in the founding editorial board of *Contributions*: Prayag Raj Sharma as the chief editor and Dhanavajra Vajracharya as a member. The latter had previously edited *Purnima*, the journal published by the Samsodhan Mandal before joining INAS in July 1971. The very first issue of *Contributions* carried articles by Vajracharya (1973) and another historian Madhav Raj Pandey (1973).

of Education and Sports, which is the line ministry responsible for managing the Dilli Raman-Kalyani Regmi Memorial Library, continued to focus on the preservation and functioning of the library only. With the death of Mahesh Chandra Regmi in 2003, his private Regmi Research Centre was dismantled. Joshi Research Institute, the publisher and editorial home of the research journal *Rolamba* (founded in 1980), has always been one-man institution. But since 2000, its output also became irregular as Hariram Joshi, the cultural historian behind the enterprise, began suffering from ill health. While the journal itself has always attracted contributions from both university-based scholars and others, the Institute does not seem to have new breed of managers and administrators to further its aims (Manandhar 2006; Shrestha 2004).

Since the 1990s, the existing institutional locations of research sought to reinvent themselves in what they perceived as the favorable political economic conditions for academic scholarship in Nepal. At the same time, new institutions for implementing and supporting research also proliferated and research-related activities multiplied albeit many of them were short lived. Examples include Martin Chautari (estd. informally in 1991 and formally in 2002), Suthan (estd. 2051 v.s.), and various *janajati* associations such as Tamang Pragyasabha, Centre for Ethnic and Alternative Development Studies (CEADS), and Kirat Yakthung Chumlung. Apart from the research done by individuals associated with it, Martin Chautari has implemented several collective projects on the history of media in Nepal. The group work done by its researchers is an example of how academic NGOs dependent upon donor funding can still manage to do important historical research work. MC's hardcopy print media archive and library is a valuable asset to researchers in Nepal and its seminar series functions as an important platform for researchers to present their work.³¹

Suthan was constituted in 2051 v.s. to demand more transparency in the conservation works then carried out by the Bhaktapur Municipality.

³¹ Further details available at www.martinchautari.org.np. Also see Onta (2011) for an argument regarding how academic NGOs can and have contributed to the strengthening of academic traditions in Nepal

Its broader objective was to make more information available to the public on the state of the heritage of the Newars. By 2053 v.s., Suthan had begun conducting classes on medieval Newari scripts for interested individuals in Bhaktapur as well as other Newar cities. It had started Saturday expeditions to local historical sites to read, collect, copy and archive historical materials including stone inscriptions, palm leaf deeds and documents, and paper manuscripts. Suthan began publishing a monthly research journal, *Pasuka*, the same year. This journal ran till 63 issues. In its heyday, Suthan hosted periodic discussions on history among Nepali historians.³² In 2058 v.s., Suthan instituted Khvapa Research Centre to oversee and manage its growing collections of primary historical materials. Suthan's activities were run by part time volunteers, and it eventually met the fate of many Nepali social organizations when, in 2060 v.s., many of its founders either left Nepal for further studies or took occupations that did not allow them to spare any more time. Since 2070 v.s., there have been some attempts to restart Suthan's key activities in history research, including the publication of *Pasuka* in a new quarterly format and making the Suthan's manuscripts collection accessible to the public.

Tamang Pragyasabha was founded in 2006. It published the premier issue of its academic journal *Tamang Journal* in 2009. According to its editor Amrit Yonjan Tamang, the second issue of the journal has not been published but work is progressing toward that end.³³ The organization has also supported some Tamang students doing MA thesis. CEADS has run a seminar series in Kathmandu for many years and has translated and published in the Nepali language some classic studies such as *Land and Social Change in East Nepal* written by Lionel Caplan (2000[1970]). Kirat Yakthung Chumlung has reprinted much of the work of the Limbu scholar Iman Singh Chemjong (1904–1976) including the classic *History and*

³² During 2054–55 v.s., it ran the Golden Gate Lecture series, which saw both university- and non-university based historians such as Pt Divyavajra Vajracharya, Prof Vidyannath Bhatta, Pt Ramapati Raj Sharma, Prof Kamal P. Malla, Prof Prayag Raj Sharma and Dines Raj Pant, deliver their research findings. The texts of these lectures were also published in *Pasuka*.

³³ Personal communication, 14 April 2014.

Culture of the Kirat People (2003[1966]). It has done a study of the impact of the abolishment of *kipat* tenure in east Nepal that is yet to be published. It has organized occasional seminars for presentations by scholars who have done research on topics related to Chumlung's areas of work and has recently established a Limbuwan Study Centre to consolidate its research work on all aspects of Limbu society and culture.³⁴

Private and non-profit sector initiatives in archive building and hence in the facilitation of the academic infrastructure for historical research have become more important than ever before. For example, Asa Saphu Kuthi (also known as Asa Archives), the largest private archive of manuscript-holdings had its collections digitized in 2001.³⁵ Another non-profit NGO specializing on the Buddhist heritage of the Kathmandu Valley, Lotus Research Centre, was established in 1993, and has initiated a digitization program for its collections.³⁶ It has now transformed itself from being a documentation center and research training institute to a full-fledged archive and library and an affiliated college within the new Lumbini Buddhist University (LBU). Similarly, digitization and web archiving are key components of the conservation and preservation program of the Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya (MPP, formally registered in 1985), a Nepali language archive and library. Coupled with its intensified public outreach programs, MPP has provided unprecedented access to a plethora of primary historical materials useful for historical research.³⁷ The Dilli Raman-Kalyani Regmi Memorial Library is seeking to innovate itself as an Academy that promotes historical research aided by consolidation of its existing library and museum. The announcement to that effect has not been, however, followed by any concrete actions. Being a government managed entity, the delay in any initiative will likely to be compensated by the ease with which such initiatives will be institutionalized.³⁸

³⁴ Personal communication, Arjun Limbu, ex-chair of Kirat Yakthung Chumlung, 17 April 2014.

³⁵ Further details available at www.asaarchives.org/

³⁶ Further details available at www.lrcnepal.org/

³⁷ Further details available at madanpuraskar.org/preservation_conservation.php

³⁸ Further details available at www.drkrmlibrary.org/

Meanwhile, the condition of government supported National Archives has also improved in terms of consolidation of holdings, research support and access. The Nepalese-German Microfilm Cataloguing Project (NGMCP), started in 2002, aims to publish a descriptive catalogue of all the more than 180,000 manuscripts microfilmed during the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP, 1970–2002) and put it online.³⁹ The National Archives, which worked as a partner in the NGMPP, became a custodian of the microfilms in Nepal. It has transformed the way scholars now access manuscripts and other historical materials such as palm leaf deeds and Guthi records. It has also brought under its ambit two major government collections since 2002, namely Kumari Chok Adda and Jaisi Kotha documents of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The former is now available for scholarly use.

The CDH has broadened its recruiting base of the students by making eligibility criteria more flexible since the late 1990s. As mentioned earlier, anyone who has a BA degree in the humanities or the social sciences or a Shastri degree with English is now eligible to apply to the MA program in history. Along with the decision to include some new courses (see below), the move has been justified to reverse the trend of decreasing enrollment in the discipline. Almost 25 years ago, the CDH brought under its care the primary historical materials formerly owned by Koshi Tosha Khana of the Nepal Government. As expected, the ready access to the valuable government archive at its own premises has triggered a series of scholarly work since the transfer (e.g., Pangen 2068 v.s.c, 2068 v.s.d). The archive, however, deserves a better infrastructure and management for its care by scholars and students of history.

Since its founding in 1999, HISAN has organized conferences and seminars in different parts of the country. The conferences have succeeded in bringing together Nepali historians based in various parts of the country for a get-together known both for its academic value and touristic importance (Onta 2003). However HISAN's big conferences

³⁹ Further details about NGMPP and NGMCP can be found in Hanisch (2008) and www.uni-hamburg.de/ngmcp/index_e.html

are still not held in an annual manner. Between August 2012 and September 2013, it co-organized ten research seminars in collaboration with the CDH and MC at the latter's premises in Kathmandu. The zeal with which the seminar series was started seems to have waned by early 2014 again due to the lack of commitment to long-term collegiality in the production of historical knowledge. In 2013 HISAN published the inaugural issue of its own journal *HISAN: Journal of History Association of Nepal*. While some of the articles in it are well researched and do advance historical scholarship, the same cannot be said of others also printed in this issue.

Despite the show of willingness to innovate, existing locations of history education and research have a long way to go to realize their vitality in both the quantity and quality of their activities across the discipline. The patchy solutions of constituting new organizations, of starting a journal or a course, of broadening recruitment or prospective employment, or of access to hitherto unknown archive are important. They are not sufficient to transform the discipline from an irrelevant and third rate academic career choice to a significant area of enquiry for an informed public policy and discussion.

RECENT REVISIONS OF THE CURRICULA

Since curricula-based training regime in history has gone through significant changes at Tribhuvan University, this discussion will be limited to that institution only. The MA degree in history was one of the early degrees awarded by TU (namely in 1961). The pre-1990 history syllabi of TU were unavailable, but looking at the syllabi since 1991 in its severally revised forms, it can be asserted that the popular suggestion in the media about the static character of the history curricula at TU has been partially responsible for the discipline's dwindling attraction among students.⁴⁰ This negative but false picture of the state of the discipline

⁴⁰ For some comments on two sets of MA syllabi of history at TU during the 1960s and the early 1970s, see Stiller (1974: 89–91). For additional comments on various syllabi in use during the pre-1991 era, see Sharma, Stiller and Uprety (1978), and Vaidya and Bhurtel (1984). Adhikari (1984) is very critical of the 'subject committee' led process of syllabi making at TU.

has perhaps contributed more to the unpopularity than the alleged unchanging curricula. The fact is that within the constraints present in a large centralized university, the history curricula have been changed almost as often as those in related disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities. For instance, MA level syllabi were changed in 1991 (2048 v.s.), 1999, and 2010. These syllabi were for the annual system of papers and exams adopted by TU as its academic mode of operation.

In the 1991 syllabi (FOHSS 2048 v.s.), first year MA students studied three compulsory papers devoted to historiography and methodology, internal history of modern Nepal (1768–1951) and modern Europe up to 1870. They had one optional paper from five offerings: modern India up to 1857, modern China, recent Middle East (responding to the Gulf War), Nepali diplomatic history and medieval Nepal. During their second year, the students had three compulsory papers: socio-economic and administrative history of modern Nepal, European history (1871–1945), and the writing of a thesis or essay. For an optional paper, they had five options: modern India (1858–1947), modern Japan, medieval India, trans-Himalayan countries, and post-Rana Nepali history. For both compulsory and optional papers related to Nepal, pertinent works published by Nepali and non-Nepali historians (and in some cases political scientists/administrators, specialists in international relations/diplomats, and anthropologists) since the 1950s were assigned as recommended books. The recommended lists were long although the syllabi did not relate the readings with the specific units of the relevant courses. The recommendations also included ‘relevant articles’ published in several named journals. In that sense, one could make the partial case that available outputs of research on the history of Nepal did find their way into the MA syllabi and hence the feedback from research to teaching, at least at the formal syllabi-setting level, was present for papers related to Nepal. Based on the recommended readings on the two papers on modern India, we would suspect, however, this was less true for the papers related to regional and European history.

Research training modules in the degree earning courses were rather limited. The first paper of the 1991 syllabi was divided into two

sections: historiography (with eight units) and methodology (with six units). The objective of the course was stated as firstly, to “familiarize the students with the principal trends in the philosophy of history writing... and secondly, to train the students in the art of writing...” (FOHSS 2048 v.s.: 1). But like other papers, this was a lecture-based paper which required the students to sit for an annual exam only. Students were not asked to carry out research and write anything else. How the students would get any training ‘in the art of writing’ was not clear. In the second year, students wrote a thesis or an essay. They were now expected to put into practice some of the aspects of what s/he had learned during the first year. The primary mode of mentoring was lectures and research supervision of those students wanting to do a thesis. In other words, the 1991 syllabi was fundamentally not very different in its orientation and goals from that in use during the 1960s. The latter syllabi had been aptly criticized by Stiller in the following manner some forty years ago (and we could say much the same about the 1991 syllabi):

There was nothing in the syllabus which we were obliged to teach that would favour greater student participation in the class through seminars or discussions, there was no premium put on student self-expression, there was no way to train the student’s historical judgment, there was no way to train a student to defend his knowledge rather than to merely reproduce it on his final examination. The examination exercised over-all control of what went on in the classrooms, and the student’s only concern was for the syllabus and his ability to answer five questions well when the examination came around. (1974: 89–90)

The 1999 syllabi brought both structural and content changes. To begin with, there were five papers each in both the first and second year of studies. Four compulsory and one optional papers were offered in the first year. Among the four, one was a paper on historiography and methodology and another on 20th century European history. Two papers on modern Nepal, namely, socio-economic history and recent history (1950–90) were included. For the fifth optional paper, there were four offers: ancient and early medieval history of Nepal (up to 1395), modern India, modern China and the post-1947 South Asia (focused on Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka). In the second year, there were

three compulsory papers: administrative history of modern Nepal, diplomatic history of modern Nepal and European diplomacy during 19th and 20th centuries. The fourth paper could be a thesis or one study based on archival science and museology or on the history of trans-Himalayan countries. The fifth optional paper could be selected from one on later medieval Nepal (1395–1769) and three other papers related to India, Japan and the US. The 1999 syllabi therefore saw the doubling of the number of compulsory courses on Nepali history. Compulsory courses on European diplomacy and the diplomatic history of Nepal were introduced, as the introduction to the syllabi put it, “for the purpose of qualifying the students to join the Foreign Service” (CDC 1999: 1). The optional paper on archival science and museology was also clearly added to prepare the history students for jobs in archives and museums. Among the optional papers, the 1999 syllabi also doubled the number of papers (to two) devoted to ancient and medieval Nepal.

The increase in the number of detailed papers on Nepali history from the earliest times to 1990 was accompanied by very long lists of recommended readings and additional lists of reference books authored by both Nepali and non-Nepali scholars. These lists are telling for a number of reasons. First, they show that historical scholarship on Nepal had grown enormously in the last decades of the 20th century, so much so that the architects of the 1999 syllabi had an embarrassment of riches to choose from. Second, the same architects did not exhibit the same zeal in linking the various units of the papers and the recommended books. The list seems thus prepared with the aim of accruing sale benefits from the hasty inclusion and not generally of providing plural perspectives on the topics dealt in the syllabi.

Slight changes were also made in the research related paper in the 1999 syllabi. An additional unit to the section on historiography now made it a course of nine units. In the section on methodology, a unit of 10 marks was devoted to field study whereby the students were expected to “prepare a research-oriented field study report on a historical topic fixed by the department” (CDC 1999: 6). This provided an opportunity, however limited, for the students to actually write a separate report on

a research experience. Nevertheless, actual research training remained rather a desire in the 1999 syllabi as well.

The 2010 syllabi have been discussed earlier. However, some of its aspects can be highlighted here. The total number of papers remained the same (namely, ten) as in the previous syllabi. But in the first year, historiography and research methodology were separated into two full papers. A slight improvement was also made in the separate paper on research methodology. It again required the students to do field research and write a study report, but the full marks for this component was increased to 20 from 10. Curiously, papers related to Nepali history underwent dramatic changes, particularly, the ancient and medieval period lost out in the new arrangement. The erstwhile two papers on modern Nepal in the first year were reduced to one with the title 'readings in history of Nepal'. The two full optional courses on early and medieval Nepal in the 1999 syllabi were now reduced to a single unit in the compulsory course related to (largely) political history of Nepal. Although no one we spoke to gave us a very clear answer regarding why these two optional courses were dropped from the 2010 syllabi, we gather that (i) the retirement of some faculty members who had championed these courses in the previous syllabi, (ii) the non-availability of faculty members whose research was focused on these eras, and (iii) the desire to make the new syllabi a bit more general were some of the influential reasons behind these changes. The optional paper had two offers: 'historical and cultural tourism' or 'archival science and museology.'

The 2010 syllabi continued lectures and research supervision of those students wanting to do a thesis as the primary mode of mentoring. This re-designing was clearly done to make the MA history program more attractive to students who were looking for jobs in sectors such as archives, museums and tourism. These changes created an overemphasis in the study of modern Nepal and disadvantaged those students who might have a research interest in ancient and medieval eras of Nepali history. While this kind of asymmetry has been reported in the case of research opportunities in India (Pati 2013), to have it in-built into the syllabi is unfortunate. We can only think that it will further contribute

to the lessening of the interest and capacity in Nepali scholars to study histories of the pre-18th centuries, a trend that has been noted in India as well (Pollock 2011).

The MA syllabi have again been changed in late 2013/early 2014 after TU administration decided to implement the semester system in its University Campus from the academic year 2014–15. The details of the last changes in the history curricula are not yet available in print. According to faculty members involved in re-designing the courses for the first two semesters, some entirely new optional courses (e.g., on military history, ethnic history, diaspora history, cultural and religious history) have been introduced in the new syllabi. As in the past, there will be a combination of compulsory and optional courses.⁴¹ These changes have been implemented under tremendous time pressure (within the course of few weeks) and were done with minimal intra-departmental consultations. This hasty change could potentially brew trouble in the near future when and if the semester system is implemented throughout TU. It is suspected that teachers might not be available or suitably oriented to teach some of the newly designed courses, especially in other campuses of TU where the MA program is run. But for now, TU has adopted a two-track system: the first continues to use the 2010 syllabi in the three colleges outside of Kathmandu where MA history is taught and the second that uses the new semester-based syllabi only at the CDH.

RECENT HISTORY OF RESEARCH

The following is a summary of recent trends in historical research in Nepal. The summary is mainly based on the post-2002 book-length publications both by university-based and non-university-based historians, on the completed PhD research at TU, and on the known research projects undertaken.

Judging by the post-2002 publications in history, it may be said that the dominant framework in Nepali historiography has remained 'statist'

⁴¹ Personal communication with Drs Vijay Kumar Manandhar, Shanker Thapa, and Bhaveshwar Pangei of CDH, 17–19 February 2014.

in the sense that various historical phenomena are seen as unfolding against the nation-state (Pandey 2008; Upadhyaya 2069 v.s.; Gautam 2060 v.s., 2061 v.s., 2062 v.s., 2063 v.s.b, 2064 v.s.; Aryal 2003, 2005; Thapa 2062 v.s.; Khanal 2068 v.s.; Dhungel 2010). This is not to say that historians have not been sensitive to the territorial, organizational or characteristic changes in the nation-state. They always have been so, but they seem to assume the eternal idea of the nation-state instead of analyzing it as a specific historical phenomenon. The preoccupation with the state and its organs can also be seen in a recent proliferation in the national and local administrative (Vaidya and Bajracharya 1998; Pangeni 2064 v.s., 2065 v.s., 2068 v.s.d; Bhattarai 2064 v.s.) and military histories (Manandhar *et al.* 2069 v.s.; Pangeni 2067 v.s., 2068 v.s.a, 2069 v.s.). Within military histories, Gurkha recruitment (K.C. 2062 v.s.) has attracted a wider public political discussion in various media recently. History of diplomacy and international relations also has the same clear nationalist bias (K.C. 2061 v.s.; Manandhar 2004; Thapa 2052 v.s.; Yadav 2057 v.s.).

In the post-2002 period, however, there was also a significant growth in the sub-national histories (Pangeni 2049 v.s.; Baniya 2006; Adhikari 2060 v.s., 2061 v.s.; Das 2010, 2068 v.s.; Ghimire 2069 v.s.; Khanal 2061 v.s.; Bhattarai 2011; Devkota 2064 v.s.; Subedi 2060 v.s.). There has been a similar growth in ethno-nationalist (Prasain 2060 v.s.; Chaudhari 2063 v.s., 2069 v.s.; Baral 2008; Chhetri *et al.* 2070 v.s.; Dhungel 2002; Mabuhang 2006; Paswan and Suwal 2069 v.s.; Mabuhang and Thunghang 2070 v.s.; Rai and Rai 2070 v.s.; Tamang 2068 v.s.; Raut 2013) and lingua-nationalist histories (Khanal 2068 v.s.; Acharya 2070 v.s.; Tuladhar 2070 v.s.). There has been some attempt to innovate on the conventional regional histories by combining detailed ethnographic and archaeological materials (Shrestha 2064 v.s.; Chhetri 2008; Giri 2010), uses of images (K.C. Pokharel 2070 v.s.). Critiques of these ethno-centric discourses are few and far between (Sharma 2004).

It is obvious that within these territories of power, both university-based and non-university based historians' primary research interest has heavily tilted towards politics. Popular struggles against the regimes

feature prominently (Karki 2008; Bhattarai 2005; Dangi 2007; Chalise 2003). Within this corpus, specific heroes (Gautam 2058 v.s., 2060 v.s., 2061 v.s., 2063 v.s.a; Pangeni 2005) and key political parties (Basnet 2066 v.s.; Gautam 2055 v.s., 2062 v.s., 2064 v.s., 2066 v.s.; Gautam and Pradhan 2006; K.C. 2056 v.s., 2060 v.s., 2064 v.s., 2065 v.s.) have received a fair amount of attention. Some scholars have paid attention to the political force manifested in the student movements, peasant movements and leftist cultural organizations (Ojha 2012; Thapa 2000, 2001; Prabhat 2006). Others have analyzed key specific moments (Karki 2007, 2070 v.s.). Negative portrayals of the elite are common albeit superficial and lacking analytical rigor (Shrestha 2005), and arguments for peoples' history are aplenty although the people-centricity in these narratives itself could be a debatable issue (e.g., Subedi 2067 v.s.).

Works on economic history are rarer (Dhungel 2043 v.s.; Dhungel and Pradhananga 2056 v.s.; Kandel 2009) but many carry political economic overtones. These works frame their economic problematic within the familiar national and sub-national territorial logic. Bhattarai (2055 v.s.) is a doctoral dissertation on the land tenure system in Nepal. Similarly, Sangraula (2061 v.s.) has worked on the *kipat* system of land ownership and management in the eastern Nepal. Baniya (2063 v.s.) narrates the political economy of a mid-western administrative center Palpa Gaunda. Kandel (2009) is an attempt to summarize the administration of trade and industry prior to 1951, while Pangeni (2068 v.s.d) is a contribution along the same themes focused on the relationship between Jang Bahadur Rana and a businessman named Dharma Narayan Manandhar (see also Manandhar 1999). Khadka (2066 v.s.) narrates the story of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industries in the post-1951 period in tandem with the evolution of the state economic policies. Similar statist concerns inform Tiwari (2002) which provides a sketch on the history of forest management in Nepal.

Academic cultural histories have specific contours in Nepal. They are generally histories of religious and cultural traditions (Thapa 2005a, 2005b, 2008; Pandey 2003; Kayastha 2070 v.s.; Gharti Chhetri 2067 v.s.), of iconographies (Poudel 2062 v.s.; Shakya 2008a, 2008b, 2011)

and shrines (Dhoju 2068 v.s.; Thapa and Bajracharya 2005; Bleie and Bhattarai 2001; Joshi 2007; Maharjan 2005; Shakya 2012). Some attempt to focus on castes (Pant 2050 v.s.a, 2050 v.s.b, 2052 v.s.; Mishra *et al.* 2004; Adhikari 2060 v.s.) have been made. The ethnocentric focus on the castes is inverted in attempts that have been produced to criticize the caste-system (Karki 2011; Maharjan 2012).

New kinds of cultural histories are being attempted outside the university. Examples of these would include Onta's (1999) work on the nationalization of Bhanubhakta Acharya's memory and the work of a larger group of researchers on Radio Nepal (Onta *et al.* 2004) and Nepali magazines (Panthi, Onta and Maharjan 2013). Some researchers have analyzed the regional history of print media (e.g., Pradhan 2060 v.s.), watchdog journalism of the 1980s (Maharjan 2013) and the links between Nepali films and specific nationalist and sub-nationalist identity politics (e.g., Ajeet 2007, 2010).⁴² Other examples would include the work of Parajuli on library and schools (2009, 2012). These are added to a minority of research works carried out within the university on the history of the *Gorkhapatra* (Prasain 2061 v.s.), education (Rijal 2045 v.s.), TU library (Pangeni 2068 v.s.b) and museums (Raut 2069 v.s.). There has always been a small interest on law and legal history both within and beyond academia (Adhikari 2002; Banskota Baral 2063v.s.; Khanal 2002; Pathak and Pyakurel 2061 v.s.; Wasti 2006, 2063 v.s., Pant 2065 v.s.). Similarly, gender histories also infrequently punctuate overall gender-insensitive trend in Nepali historiography. Examples of such works would include Thapa (1985); Karmacharya (Hada) [2005]; Pandey (2058 v.s.); Shakya (2067 v.s.); Kandel (2064 v.s.); and Karki (2069 v.s.).⁴³

⁴² Much of the recent research on histories of the Nepali media has been published in the annual journal *Media Adhyayan* which was founded in 2006. The complete author index to everything published in its first eight volumes (through 2013) can be found at <http://martinchautari.org.np/2012-08-27-08-45-41/journals/12-publications/journals/51-author-index-to-media-adhyayan.html>. Cf. Scannell (2002) for an account of how histories of the media have been written elsewhere, especially in the UK and US.

⁴³ Feminist political theorist Seira Tamang (2000, 2009) has made important contributions to our understanding of the gendered history of Nepal and the history of the women's movement. Others have written about various aspects of the history of the women's movement in Nepal (e.g., Acharya 2068 v.s.; Tumbahanphe 2066 v.s.).

RESEARCH AT THE MASTERS LEVEL

If research done at the MA thesis level can be seen a crucial training exercise for a rigorous research career later, it is then important to look at what has been happening at that level in the field of historical research. As mentioned earlier, 418 MA theses in history have been submitted to the history departments in four different campuses of TU. Since the catalogue listing these theses was made public only on 12 April 2014, we did not have the time to analyze their thematic focus or to present them even in succinct tabular forms. However, one of the compilers of that catalogue has commented thus on this subject:

If we take examples of theses submitted in Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, and Post Graduate Campus, Biratnagar, two distinct features evolve. Students at P.N. Campus mainly focused on temples scattered throughout the region whereas students in Biratnagar mainly explored on tribes and races in the Eastern Tarai. Similarly, students writing theses at Thakur Ram Campus, Birganj paid attention on studying various aspects of people living in the region. In the cases of theses submitted to the Central Department of History, they deal with diverse areas of Nepalese history such as—political, economic, religious, social, cultural, diplomatic, regional, legal, administrative, constitutional, educational, military, ethnic, etc. These works should be regarded as a significant achievement of Department of History providing basis for further explorations. (Manandhar 2014: page not mentioned)

The variation Manandhar has noted is interesting but he does not explain what might be causing it. We suspect that apart from reasons related to the proximity of the research field sites to the locations of the four campuses, the research interests of the supervisors guiding these MA students are also influencing the latter's research topics.

The catalogue does not say anything about whether or not these MA theses were later converted into publications, namely monographs and/or journal articles. We do know that some have been converted into monographs.⁴⁴ If we are to go by what has been published in the various departmental journals in the past dozen years (namely, *Voice of*

⁴⁴ Two of the first three MA theses in history submitted to TU were published (Stiller 1968; Rana 1970). For more recent examples, see Gautam (2004) and Rai (2065 v.s.).

History, Historia, and Anveshan), we would have to say that not many articles written by students which were based on their MA theses have been published with acknowledgement of this fact. However we suspect that at least a few such articles have been derived from some MA theses even though we do not have concrete proof of them at the moment.⁴⁵ If the thesis to journal article conversion rate is low in history, it is by no means an exception since similar trend has been observed in other disciplines (Onta 2010).

QUALITY OF THE PUBLICATIONS

While we have commented upon the thematic focus of recent research in history in a previous section as a way to demonstrate what has interested Nepali historians in their quest for knowledge – and by default what has not interested them – in this section we look at the related but somewhat different issue of the quality of the publications in the field. Our comments are mostly based on the contents of history journals (listed in Tables 7 and 8) and on books published by historians as they collectively provide us a robust window into issues related to the quality of the work being generated in the discipline.

Quality is a somewhat elusive idea when it comes to the publication of academic journals and books. However, for our purposes here, we would link quality of history publications with several related features. The first issue is the regularity of publications. Regularity is not a hallmark of most Nepali journals (Onta 2010) and history journals are no exception. The irregularity of the journal *Voice of History* published by CDH has already been noted above. While *Historia* published from PNC is more regular, it too has suffered from occasional lapses. As a result several combined volumes of this *annual* journal have been published: combined volumes 4 and 5 in 2057 v.s., 6 and 7 in 2060 v.s., and 9 and 10 in 2063 v.s.. Volumes 11 and 12 did not get published until 2067 v.s. and 2069 v.s. respectively. More often than not, journal editors have complained that their journals are irregular because of the

⁴⁵ This is also the view of Bhaveshwar Pangeni, one of the compilers of the catalogue. Personal communication, 17 April 2014.

lack of 'good quality' articles. If this is the root of the problem, it begs the question why we have more than a dozen history-related journals in Nepal and why a new journal was founded as recently as 2013. We suspect that the lack of democratic collegiality is also at work here. Until 1995 when *Historia* was established, *Voice of History* was the only department-produced history journal within TU. During that era, it published very few articles by historians who were located in other colleges of TU, hence indirectly forcing those other departments to start their own journals. Ideas about legacy have also influenced the founding of new journals. At a time when CDH's *Voice of History* has been very irregular, more or less the same set of editors has started a new journal *HISAN: Journal of History Association of Nepal* in 2013. We suspect that the leadership of HISAN is more interested in making legacy claims down the years than in seeing *Voice of History* as a regularly published journal.

The issue of regularity for the publication of books is more complex. The publications of most history books are occasional events, by and large determined by the availability of manuscripts and funds. Nevertheless, foundations and publishers, whose stated objectives include funding for research, manuscript preparation, or publications, do not always own up the responsibility of regularity in their outputs, as that will necessitate them to invest more in organizing and managing the resources in their possession and be in turn restricted from acting arbitrarily.

The second issue is related to the exercising of peer review protocols of the submitted materials. Embedded in a culture of appreciative writings, both in the literary and journalistic registers, critical peer review is a near-absent phenomenon in Nepal's academia and the field of history is no exception. The idea that articles submitted to journals should undergo a vetting process by peers so that their quality can be assured is well-known in Nepal's history circles but it is an idea that is rarely practiced. This is again related to the absence of democratic collegiality amongst Nepal's historians. Within TU, professorial hierarchies are reproduced in great many ways, journal production being one of them. Junior faculty members are often burdened to

become the executive editors of departmental journals and the head of the concerned department often appears as journal's 'patron.' Most journal issues begin with articles by the senior faculty members in the department. For example, in eight issues of *Voice of History* published between 1997 and 2001 (the period in the life of this journal when it was most regular), five began with an article by Professor Tulasi Ram Vaidya. His articles were the second and third articles, respectively, in two other issues and only one issue of the journal published during this period carried no article by him. It goes without saying that Vaidya was and is the acknowledged patriarch among historians trained and employed at TU. Editors who have tried to adopt even basic versions of peer-reviewing in the journals under their care have faced hostile reactions from their colleagues. Some have even been physically threatened by authors whose articles had been reviewed.⁴⁶ In the 34 separate issues of 17 volumes of the journal, *SINHAS*, which does follow peer review protocols, only four or five Nepali historians have published their articles.

The situation for the evaluation of books is not much different. Because there is a dearth of publishers committed to high standards in the pre-press evaluation of book-length manuscripts (of both single/multiple-authored and edited volume types), most books get published with the contents as submitted by their authors/editors without any further editorial value addition on the part of the publisher. When queried, most publishers defend the current regime by saying that the economics of academic publishing in Nepal is such that they cannot afford to hire full time academic editors to curate their publications.⁴⁷ When it comes to private foundations or trusts which have published works of historical research, it is quite understandable why they would be incapable of adding any value to the submitted manuscripts.

The third issue is related to the production quality of texts published. There have been significant improvements in this front over the past

⁴⁶ This is based on several conversations we have had with colleagues in TU over the years. Upon their request, we are unable to disclose specific details about such exchanges here.

⁴⁷ This is based on conversations we have had with various Nepali publishers over the past twenty years.

dozen years chiefly because of the general improvements we have seen in the printing industry in Nepal. The physical quality of the printed text including matters such as the consistency of the ink used, the design of the covers, the layout and related aspects of the published texts are now generally very good. However, since there continues to be a rush at the very end of the publication process when printers are demanded to meet unrealistic deadlines by authors or their publishers (who often schedule book or journal 'launch' dates without consulting the printers), some journal issues and books do arrive in the market with marks of shoddy processing in the press (namely, dirt marks on printed pages, bad cutting of the covers, etc.). In short then, increase in the volume of publications both in the form of journal contents and in the form of books have not been matched by tight quality monitoring standards in content-production and sometimes in technical production.

With respect to the theoretical and methodological significance and quality of the contents in history journals and books, we begin with a remark made by Professor Kamal P. Malla some twenty years ago. Discussing a paper presented at a seminar organized by the CDH in 1993, Malla commented that "most critical issues of the theory and the methods of historiography have not even been raised seriously in Nepal" (1995: 19). Barring one or two exceptions, not much has changed in the past two decades that would require us to revise that comment. Works on historiography are mainly confined to publishing new materials or providing better readings of published sources (Vajracharya 2007, 2068 v.s.; M. Pant 2069 v.s.a, 2069 v.s.b; Pradhan 2070 v.s.; Shrestha 2067 v.s.).⁴⁸ A few narratives exist on historiography proper, but they have an inbuilt teleology with a present-bias. They propound the academic rationalist historiography as the natural culmination of the past struggles in innovative historical practices (K.C. 2003; Joshi 2063 v.s.b). Other works on historiography take the shape of biographies or autobiographies/memoirs of historians who arguably contributed to this evolution (K.C. 2059 v.s.; N. Pant 2061 v.s., 2069 v.s.; Vaidya 2007; Paudyal 2009; Subedi Forthcoming). Possible alternatives to rationalist historiography

⁴⁸ Also see the various issues of the above-mentioned journal *Pasuka*.

have been suggested by one of us (Raj 2012a, 2012b, 2013b, 2013c) but university-based historians are yet to take notice of them.

On more general matters of theory, we would have to conclude that this is not something that has engaged Nepali historians. Given the insular nature of the profession, engagement with theoretical concerns that have animated historians elsewhere has not been a priority for historians in Nepal for the most part. Works that engage with historiographical method, both theoretically and as practice are exceptional (M. Pant 2069 v.s.a, 2069 v.s.b; Raj 2010). As far as methods as research tools are concerned, in general, various tried and tested methods (namely, critical reading of published and unpublished documents and inscriptions, interviews, oral history, etc.) have been executed in different combinations. There is a general lack of originality but there are varying degrees of competence as well.

One may, of course, argue for measuring the quality of the published works in terms of their impact on the discipline. Increasing volume of work done by historians in Nepal has had a significant impact on the shape and texture of the discipline in the country. This impact, as noted earlier, is also reflected in the university curricula. The MA syllabi used in recent years in TU reflect the availability of recent research output in terms of recommended books. But the insular nature of the history profession and the limited language access, the Nepali research output has had virtually no international impact. The only international impact the work of some Nepali historians has had has come in two forms: As minor engagements between their work available in English and the research questions posed by some historical anthropologists or diplomatic historians of non-Nepali origins (viz. Mahesh Chandra Regmi's publications), and as providers of primary source materials to non-Nepali art, religion and culture historians in the circumstances when Nepali historians work for the former as specialist-informants (viz. Gautam Vajracharya's work for Pratapaditya Pal) or as collaborators (viz. the use of Samsodhan Mandal's output in Mary S. Slusser's *Nepal Mandala*).⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Kamal P. Malla's (1983) review of the book by Slusser (1982), especially his comments on the nature of her collaboration with members of the Samsodhan Mandal

AGENDA FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE DISCIPLINE

As has been suggested above, the institutional landscape in history is somewhat different than that for other social science disciplines (say, sociology or economics). Graduation through a long training regime in the university has been almost mandatory for someone to function as an academic in the latter disciplines. Furthermore, the university is the undisputed and often the only institutional location of significance in the landscape of teaching and research in those disciplines. This has not been the case in history in the past (cf. Sharma 1974) and might not be the case in the near future. The university (in Nepal or abroad) has emerged in the last decades of the twentieth century as the principal site in which historians gain their credentials. But it is not the only institutional setting where historians have done their work or will do so in the future, given the strength and continuity of historical knowledge production beyond academia. This suggests two points. First, the policies for advancing the state of the history discipline need to address barriers and constraints both within the university system and beyond. Second, the strategies for linking teaching and research in history in Nepal need to be more innovative than for the case in the other disciplines, as the sites of production, distribution and consumption of historical knowledge have variegated organizational and institutional nature. The recommendations outlined below have been developed by taking these two points as guiding principles.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AND NETWORKING

1. A considerable effort is required in re-imagining the constitution and boundaries of the history discipline within the university system. The Central Department of History in TU, for instance, may be centered on teaching and conducting research in conventional subfields of history. But its bulk activities should tend to foster inter-, cross- and multi-disciplinary collaboration with other disciplines. There are at least three ways to achieve this: First, promote the student and faculty

and their work, led to the now famous exchange between Mahes Raj Pant (1984) and Malla (1984).

recruitments from as diverse first or advanced degrees as possible. Their demonstrable interest, and not certificates, in history should be prioritised. Institutionally, it may also mean mergers of departments⁵⁰ or creating chairs for specialized fields within history and making other knowledge and skill serve historical enquiry. Second, encourage faculty and student to develop collaborative research projects with other departments.⁵¹ This will require selecting attractive research topics where historical knowledge is one input among many other kinds of knowledge. Third, foster historical enquiries in other disciplines. This will involve opening up history sub-specialities in other disciplines. While social and economic histories will remain core concerns of the department of history, chairs in historical sociology within the department of sociology and in historical economics in the department of economics should be created. In the courses aimed for the new universities, such historicising of the disciplines should be explored.

2. Institutional resources may be better utilized through improved networking and collaboration between existing institutions both within and beyond academia. For instance, the departments of history and languages at TU, History Association of Nepal, independent academic research and policy institutes like Samsodhan Mandal and Martin Chautari, and government and private archives (such as the National Archives, Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya, Lotus Research Center and Asa Saphu Kuthi) as well as new research collectives that have arisen from various social movements (e.g., Limbuwan Study Centre) could establish a historical research consortium, whose member institutions then jointly seek collaborative research funding from the various departments of GON and international agencies, to undertake the following (often

⁵⁰ This possibility was also mentioned by Shanker Thapa, personal communication, 18 February 2014.

⁵¹ The importance of teamwork in historical research had been highlighted by Vaidya (1974) while commenting on Stiller (1974). But ten years later he wrote, "Despite the proliferation of education and educational institutions, there is a lack of coordination and faith among the members of academic family in Nepal" (Vaidya and Bhurtel 1984: 7). Manandhar (1997: 45) had also highlighted the need for an "interdisciplinary approach... for the proper understanding of history as a branch of social science."

involving nominal costs) activities: Promote collection, preservation, dissemination and research activities such as organizing exploratory tours, creating project oriented joint-PhDs and research groups, holding regular and special lectures, seminars, reading groups and an annual conference, discussing course and pedagogical innovations, organizing trainings on methodology and developing a Nepali history database by sharing/exchanging information and publications.⁵² Such a consortium is also better placed to generate and propagate historical information amenable to policy formulation and analysis. In fact, the consortium could easily develop influential history and policy research groups to advise the parliamentary committees, various ministries of the government, and international institutions like the World Bank, the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund on any number of relevant topics.

3. More institutional public funding for historical research and teaching should be made available in proportion to its quality products and public impact. The funds could take shape of three forms: seed/innovation funds (10%), development funds (60%) and impact funds (30%). Since the major share of public funds for history teaching and research is currently spent on the inadequate salaries of the university-based teachers, the funding mechanism is inhibitory both to quality research and teaching. Furthermore, institutions beyond university departments and centers have managed to survive solely through their own perseverance and deficit funding. Public funding scheme should not only reflect the university/non-university divisions in the history institutional landscape in Nepal, but also be sensitive toward

⁵² Emphasizing the need for an annual seminar/conference for historians, Stiller wrote some 40 years ago:

Innumerable difficulties have been urged as reasons for not having an annual seminar for historians.... If we are not willing to help ourselves, we cannot really expect someone else to take the time and trouble to help us. And we would be *helped* by such a meeting. Each of us has a great deal to learn from his fellow historians, and there is no substitute for an annual meeting as a forum for ideas and as a source of mutual encouragement. We owe it to one another. (1974: 99; emphasis in the original)

its diversity in terms of the nature, location, history and specialization of the institutions. All history-related funding could go, for instance, into a history basket fund. The basket fund could be governed by a committee of reputable scholars and researchers. The funds could then be awarded to *all sorts of institutions* based on the good prospects for their start-ups, excellent reviews of their past work, demand for their present proposals, and the strategic requirements for achieving greater public good. In addition to the public money, various organized private sectors of the economy, such as banking and finances, transportation, energy, infrastructure and development may be incentivised to spend more on historical research related to their sectors, not only because public tax collection and distribution system is inefficient in Nepal, but also because these research could result in the better understanding of the structural constraints and potentials of their own sectors.

4. Nepal has been witnessing complete reversals of the place and role of history in the curricula both at the school and campus level teaching programs. While pre-1991 period education curricula can be characterised as attempts to recover historical essence of the nation and its people to serve the nationalist program of development, the post-1991 period can be seen as attempts to fossilize the past and coming to terms with the rapidly changing forms of social and economic behavior. Accordingly, statist history education was at the core of building the nation program which dispersed after 1991 and history curricula (along with subjects such as geography, hygiene, and civic science) became a small unit within one single subject of social science in schools. In college education, science and technology along with commerce, management and finance became prestigious and attracted the best and brightest while history turned pale even among its social sciences siblings. Frequent revisions in history curricula in MA should be seen as attempts to make history present in a seemingly futuristic stage of Nepali society. While more innovative solutions should be sought to fulfil the student recruitment gap (see below), it is time perhaps to abandon the

bland utilitarian objective of the curricula revision.⁵³ Instead, curricula should be geared towards acquiring skills and techniques of analysis and persuasive argumentation than towards imparting information about history of certain nations or subjects that are available in any case within a distance of a click these days. Since analytical and presentation skills are built up over the years than over a semester, it makes sense to offer history major/elective at the undergraduate levels in all streams including natural sciences and engineering.

INNOVATION IN RECRUITMENT OF STUDENTS, FACULTY AND RESEARCHERS

1. The reintroduction of the semester system in TU (first attempts were made in the 1970s) is likely to keep out a number of students from completing the courses if the compulsory attendance threshold is implemented strictly. Nevertheless, the semester system in TU may be taken as an opportunity, on the one hand, for changing the focus and objective of the MA curricula as mentioned before, and on the other, for recruiting more competent students if all disciplines manage to put a cap on the number of places in the respective MA programs. However it is too early to know if the semester-system will endure and what impact it will have on the number of students.⁵⁴

2. All PhD studentships may be fully funded to attract the best and the brightest.⁵⁵ Part-funding for the most MA students are desirable. These studentships in some cases may be awarded through faculty clusters which have secured public funding by demonstrating consistently good output through innovative research programs. Other studentships

⁵³ A similar argument had been made by Stiller when he noted, “The best history is always non-utilitarian in nature” (1974: 94).

⁵⁴ If the department managers are not able to control the number and timing of students admitted in the semester-based MA program, TU’s new experiment could result in a mess similar to the one described by Pati (2013) in the case of the University of Delhi.

⁵⁵ This was an idea also mentioned in Sharma, Stiller and Uprety (1978: 274). They suggested that university fellowships for doctoral students in history should “include a stipend, a book stipend, and adequate travel allowances for them to carry out their research.”

may be allocated directly to the history department. Some with inter- or multi-disciplinary approaches may also be held at the Office of the Dean, FOHSS of TU. TU research centers such as CNAS and Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) could have two PhD studentships under the relevant research faculty. Joint-PhD programs in private institution-university collaboration may be encouraged through the UGC and support for such programs could come from the proposed SSRC in Nepal (Sharma, Baidya and Dhungel 2014). Indeed, these students in joint-PhD programs could well be located in the private research institutions for mentoring and could be awarded a university degree. Strong and well-recognised history research institutions like Samsodhan Mandal, which are trying to foster sound alternatives to the conventional teaching and research models, should be incentivised to start and sustain their own degree awarding system with the public funding support. As with the university system, the assessment criteria for such an innovative step will be the quality of the process and product these institutions deliver.

3. Good students should also be encouraged to pursue higher studies in history outside of Nepal. This would avoid the problem of inbreeding noted earlier (cf. Stiller 1974) and expose Nepali students to historical research themes and traditions that are not currently available in the country. While the costs of such pursuits do need to be taken into consideration, there might be more than one way to cover them. For countries where it is relatively very expensive to pursue MA or doctoral studies (e.g., UK, US, Japan), seeking the help of their governments or specific universities to arrange for generous scholarships for Nepali students of history would be necessary. For countries where the costs are relatively modest, the same avenues might be pursued but other arrangements could also be sought. For instance, since the total costs of pursuing a two-year MA in history in any of the leading public Indian universities is less than what the total two-year costs of a private school in Kathmandu for a primary grade student would amount to, it might be possible for some students to either pay for these programs on their

own or be supported through Nepali mechanisms otherwise meant for Nepal-standard costs.⁵⁶

4. As mentioned above, there is a need to mainstream history curricula at both school and college levels. It should not be, however, seen as reversal to the Panchayat-era style of using history for the goal of fulfilling the nation-state's program of building 'new Nepal.' History, both as a subject and as an explanatory scheme for understanding the past and the present, should be placed more strategically in the school and college curricula. For instance, students may be offered history course as a major (elective) in the secondary level, and in the higher secondary levels of all streams. Bachelors level programs in all streams may also have a history major subject. Students with a major in history at any level should then be encouraged to pursue MA in history. Another way to broaden the recruiting base for the MA programs could be to include an eligibility test that takes into account the interest and aptitude of the prospective students. Just as architecture programs in Nepal conduct an additional test of aptitude and interview to assess the candidate's interests, ability and motivation, institutions offering MA and PhD degrees may also set these criteria on top of the minimum academic qualification required for enrollment. In exceptional cases, demonstrable evidence such as consistently innovative and high-impacting outputs of research by a candidate may be deemed sufficient to make him/her eligible to enrol in the MA or PhD course.⁵⁷

5. The proposed SSRC and UGC may also extend their support to both the students and faculty in the university departments to go to other non-university research institutions and universities both within and outside Nepal. These institutions may fund such visits and exchange schemes

⁵⁶ For instance, the total cost of a Nepali student pursuing a two-year MA in history degree at the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi would be currently about NRs. 250,000. That includes tuition (under the 'foreign student' category), fees and hostel expenses.

⁵⁷ Currently, a prospective student is required to submit three published articles to demonstrate she can write research. How does this contribute to her enrollment is, however, not known.

for short teaching and research assignments in the host institutions. The arrangements could well be formalized by 'memorandum of understandings' or by informal agreements between the institutions on cost-sharing or reimbursing basis. In order to prevent this investment to turn into an unaccounted for favor, however, clear guidelines may be set for using it to promote visits with demonstrable potential for long-term academic and research partnerships among the participating institutions. The existing UGC-support mechanism for organizing academic events, or for subsidising academic visits, can very well cover the teaching and research 'leaves' of the faculty and students in the host institutions.

6. One more way to attract students and faculty in history is to mainstream historical analysis and criticism in public discussions. Historical insights can be an effective tool for challenging commonplace assumptions about the present problems and possible futures of society. What is often prescribed as a cure for the present ills may have already been proven wrong. While it is fashionable to preambulate research and policy prescriptions often with an historical outline, it is not common to see the use of sound empirical data from the past in critiquing simple prescriptions for the future. To cite, economic policy prescriptions such as privatization and various versions of public-private partnerships are not informed by the history of their failures and are based primarily on few dubious successes. These arrangements of investment and management have always been in the favor of private capital interests over the public good. Hence, production ventures with guaranteed sale have attracted a good deal of investment, offers related to distribution and maintenance systems have not. Yet Nepali historians have not been successful in putting this message to the public arena. Similar absences serve to reinforce the popular perception about the mere embellishing value of history in Nepal. This adds to the generally unattractive 'date and chronology' image of the discipline amongst the bright students. History faculty and researchers must persistently substantiate the public relevance of their discipline by demonstrating critical engagement with

the public issues all the time, not as political analysts or commentators but as historians.⁵⁸

FUTURE RESEARCH THEMES

Although there is no limitation to how the existing research themes may be strengthened or extended, the following list could be useful in presenting the challenges Nepali historians face both with respect to the promise of Nepal's own traditions of historiography, and in relation to the state of the historical research in the region and elsewhere. The list is a modified version of what one of us has put forth before (Raj 2012b, 2013b).

1. There is an ample scope of enriching the various conventional subfields in Nepali history in tune with the recent socio-economic and political changes in Nepal. Historians of politics, for example, could investigate the ecology in which various flows and nodes of power produce inequality, marginalization and exclusion in Nepali society. Regional historians, particularly working on the far western areas and Tarai, may refocus their attention to the production of boundaries, borders and distance vis-à-vis the ongoing state structuring and social inclusion agenda (cf. Kshetry 2060 v.s.). Economic historians can fruitfully redirect their research to interpret the restructuring of class and caste since the liberalization in the 1990s, examining its pattern against the long term evolution in the access and ownership of resources. Cultural historians can take head on the problem of religion in Nepali society as a ground in which conservative norms have been interacting with globalizing forces to produce local sites of hybrid structures and creole interpretations, be they on iconography or on *rites*

⁵⁸ In this regard we note with approval what Stiller had said 40 years ago:

Historians can fulfill...development tasks best – and perhaps only – by doing what historians do, study the past. I cannot say strongly enough that the application of history to the tasks of development is not the historian's task. To fulfill his role in society the historian must constantly strive for objectivity and integrity, an effort that cannot succeed if he subordinates his work to any other goal no matter how noble. (1974: 97)

de passage. Both ancient and medieval historians can bring in the much needed *longue durée* perspectives to correct the presentist bias of many works that are inspired by sociological and anthropological concerns. Environmental historians can effectively demonstrate the limits to the current overwhelming single-minded preoccupation with political structures, processes and actors, by looking at the Nepali society from the perspectives of large-scale natural changes.

New lines of historical enquiry into material history, that takes a more mature view on production than the prevailing political economic perspective, and more sensitive approach to use instead of the consumption can bring in fresh perspectives on the extent of changes in the material creation, possession and redistribution in Nepali society in this and previous centuries. The 'new materialism' (cf. Latour 2007) in history will engage with things as inscriptions of emerging social relations, as nodes of changing political and cultural behavior and as bundles of economic and supra-economic values. Similarly, as in all poor societies, public policy and discourse in Nepal have attributed science, technology and medicine (STM) with a great transformation efficacy. Nepali state has been investing huge amount of public investment into building and supporting scientific, technical and medical education and research establishments. There is a gap in our historical understanding of how STM has played out in Nepal, a lacuna which helps perpetuate the same uncritical stance towards priority spending on that sector.

2. Similarly, use of new research methodologies has the potential either to alter the existing interpretations or to change their significance. One such possibility lies in exploiting recently available sources of history. For example, the audio-visual media such as the photographs, cartoons, audio clips and movies can be used in chronicling the late 19th and 20th century history of Nepal. The challenge in this regard is not much the ready access to the photograph collections, which is growing phenomenally in recent years through various digital archiving initiatives at institutions such as the MPP and photo.circle,⁵⁹ but to develop an innovative and distinct

⁵⁹ For further details, see www.photocircle.com.np

historiographical idiom which allows the audio-visual evidence to play both contending and substantiating roles in relation to documentary and archaeological sources (cf. Onta 1998). Similarly, electronic documents and new social media provide an unprecedented opportunity for the social and cultural historians to trace the networks and flows of relations, both of the powerful and the governed.

In addition to the use of these new sources, lesser known representation techniques can help tackle research problems that have not been satisfactorily dealt with so far. Collective biography or prosopography is best suited for making sense of various census data on people and things related by a common goal, activity or function. The technique is also useful for understanding how a collection of people, with some shared values and visions affect society and in turn are affected by it (Stone 1971). For example, biographical outlines of the Nepali elite that highlight relations and networks within groups of common interests can represent a better map of the pathways of power in Nepali society than otherwise. Quantitative history has more or less not been written in Nepal. It will be productive to use data, tables and graphs to challenge conventional understanding of the history of interaction between the Nepali state and her citizens, and to raise new questions for research.

3. Works that broaden Marxist and other varieties of political economy, neo-liberal economism, postcolonialism and 'new historicism' will highlight the flaws inherent in these existing analytical frameworks. The questions that are potentially fruitful to this end are, for instance, related to the efficacy of the prevalent definitions of class, caste, gender and ethnicity vis-à-vis the relationship between popular ideology and internal/external colonialism. Research that applies lesser used frameworks such as actor-network theory (ANT) and political ecology can be useful in rectifying the assumptions about eternal fragmentation of social/natural reality and the nature of 'actants' including both living beings and things. Similarly, works that specifically aim to establish new frameworks of historical analysis such as ruptures and repairs (Raj

2012b, 2013a, 2013b), zomia (van Schendel 2002; Scott 2009; Michaud 2010; also see Brass 2012), and material histories (Edgerton 2010) will help to overcome simplistic faiths on rationalism, yet will enable historians to argue that a close attention to the distribution of space and things can illuminate the nature of the material and cultural fabric of Nepali society vis-à-vis economic and political transformation of recent decades (Shneiderman 2010).

4. Along the same line and to enlarge the social constituency of academic history in the country, Nepali historians will need to pay attention to what the Indian political theorist Partha Chatterjee (2003) has called “the domain of the popular.” For one thing, they will have to pay attention to, as a subject of research itself, “the diverse forms of recounting the past that continue to shape beliefs, stereotypes and attitudes in the public sphere” (Chatterjee 2003: 33) in Nepal. In addition they will also have to learn to engage analytically with the popular histories being produced in Nepal today by writers and analysts who are fully embedded in various politics of identity and not turn away from such histories by evoking the line that these works are not ‘scientific history’ but ideologically-charged propaganda. For this engagement to be real, historians based in university departments and recognized research centers would have to emerge out of their intellectual and archival ghettos and be ready to re-imagine the constituting elements of what has erstwhile counted as research in domains policed by departmental heads and commissars of bodies such as the TU Service Commission. The idea is not to abandon history’s recognized methods of rigor and analysis but, as Chatterjee has said in the case of India, to fashion “a new conceptual language and idiom that might gain general currency” (2003: 34) in the more democratic and inclusive Nepali public sphere.

RECOMMENDED WAYS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND IMPACT OF THE PUBLICATIONS

1. Historians have to think of new processes of content generation and critical reviews. As the thesis to journal article conversation rate

seems low for the case of Master's level research done at TU, a post-thesis mentoring program (with the possible participation of non-university-based senior academics) leading to the publication of articles by the concerned students could be implemented. Alternatively, joint authorship between the student and her thesis supervisor might be pursued. Critical reviews of recent scholarship – individual book reviews, multiple book reviews, and reviews of theme-specific, region-specific and period-specific works – should be commissioned and published after peer reviews and revisions.

2. New mechanisms for expert-led and general peer reviewing should be established for all journals and books. This will first entail the willingness on the part of disciplinary practitioners to submit their work for such scrutiny and evaluation even when structural incentives that will promote this 'willingness' are hard to institutionalize at the moment. To start off, journal editors could invite willing authors to submit their work for peer review and when such works do get published, identify them as such publicly. This will require setting up of simple protocols for journal editors managing the process and for those who are doing the peer reviews. This will also require creating a college of willing peer reviewers. Given the academic book market, setting up a formal mechanism for peer review of book-length manuscripts might be more difficult but that work too could begin with simple experiments.

3. A range of distinct publication venues should be created through a mix of printed and online media. Given the low levels of internet penetration in Nepal, journals and books might still be better off being printed. However for archival materials, reading lists and bibliographies related to specific themes, regions and eras, indexes to journal articles,⁶⁰ interviews and roundtable discussions, creating specific online platforms might be an efficient idea whose time has arrived. Similarly, online platforms could be created for all kinds of 'amateur' history write-

⁶⁰ Such indexes made during the course of research for this review will be uploaded in the MC website (www.martinchautari.org.np) shortly.

ups, for working drafts by professional and for conference proceedings. Thematic readers and similar compilations that make the achievements and weaknesses of the discipline visible to its new and old practitioners should also be produced. Given the limited capacity of the academic publishers in Nepal, those writing in English should try to get their works also published by academic publishers based outside of Nepal.

4. Benchmarks for periodic and standardized audit of content generation, editing and publishing processes should be created by an entity such as HISAN in collaboration with journal editors and book publishers. These processes could be broken down into effective steps for preparing the manuscripts, for editing tools and strategies, and for publishing. The benchmarks will help generate quality product with predictable regularity. This in turn will help the publishers, editors and content developers to better allocate their limited resources or to enter into the dynamics of market with a higher degree of confidence. Initially, the benchmarks could be simple in terms of their being amenable for use given current conditions of the profession as described in this paper.

5. Measures for assessing the impact of the publications should also be devised. One way to do that would be to follow the bibliometric impact factor highway by establishing an online Nepali history citation counter. A continuously updated bibliography of published works, together with a real time mechanism for tracking down each and every citation may be started by HISAN or MC with support from the proposed SSRC or UGC. The frequency of citation, after given due weight for the quality and diversity of the publication, can be used to develop both short term (for one year) and long term (for five years) impact factor for the publication and the author. Another way to do that would be, when appropriate, to evaluate qualitatively how the published research has shaped the terms of the related academic and public debate. The latter can be done in the form of a narrative.

6. Innovative ways to feed the publications into the academic teaching and training should also be devised. For this to happen, ways to

strengthen the link between continuous revision of classroom teaching materials and new research should be implemented. These would include the routine execution of research seminar series, thesis or dissertation workshops (in which history teachers are asked to be designated commentators) and annual or more frequently held conferences of historians. University-based entities will also have to create a habit of delivering guest lecture-modules to benefit both their students and faculty members.

7. New ways to facilitate and disseminate historical research will have to be thought of. These would include things like increasing public access to dataset archives, and creating an online portal of full-text history journals. Additional funds for strengthening departmental libraries in history related departments across Nepal and for enhancing their access to electronic resources will have to be found. Dissemination techniques using old and new digital audio-visual media and the Internet might be crucial in attracting a new generation of students to history in the future.

8. The pecuniary rewards for those who teach and research history and other disciplines in Nepal should improve substantially so that those individuals can pursue a life dedicated to teaching and research without having to worry about financing their family needs all the time. This can only happen if the social constituency for history and academic work is broadened in the country.

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ANNEX I

**List of Completed PhD Dissertations in History at TU
(1970–March 2014)**

SN	Name	Title	Year
1	Ludwig F. Stiller	The Unification of Nepal: A Study of the Early Shah Period from Prithvinarayan Shah to Girbana Yuddha	1970
2	Tri Ratna Manandhar	Nepal: The Years of Trouble (1877–85)	1980
3	Krishna Bahdur Thapa	Women and Social Change in Nepal (1951–1960)	2039 v.s.
4	Suryamani Adhikari	The Khasa Kingdom of Western Nepal (1207–1404)	2041 v.s.
5	Sushila Pradhan	Buddhism in Ancient Nepal	2042 v.s.
6	Shankarlal Joshi	Ansuverma and His Times	2043 v.s.
7	Bishnu Prasad Ghimire	Palpako Sen Rajya	2044 v.s.
8	Rajaram Subedi	Bajhangko Itihas	2044 v.s.
9	Rajesh Kumar Gautam	Nepalko Prajatantrik Aandolanma Nepal Praja Parishadko Bhumika	2045 v.s.
10	Ghanshyam Rijal	History of Education in Nepal (1851–1951)	2045 v.s.
11	Govinda Maskey	Social Life in Nepal	2046 v.s.
12	Bhadraratna Bajracharya	Bahadur Shah	2047 v.s.
13	Chandra Bahadur Thapa	The Role of Brian Houghton Hodgson in the Politics of Nepal	2048 v.s.
14	Gehendraman Udas	Nepalma Prajatantra ra Shree Panch Tribhuvan	2049 v.s.
15	Dil Bahadur Kshetry	Slavery in Nepal	2050 v.s.
16	Tek Bahadur Shrestha	Parbat Rajya ra Yeska Chhimeki Rajyahasitako Rajnaitik Sambandha	2050 v.s.
17	Devi Prasad Sharma Kandel	Trade and Industry of Nepal During the Rana Period	2050 v.s.
18	Purushottam Lochan Shrestha	Bhaktapurma Tantrik Shaktiko Yug	2052 v.s.
19	Bhairav Bahadur Thapa	Nepal-Bharat Bichko Sambandha ra Gatirodh (1950 dekhi 1989)	2052 v.s.
20	Surendra K.C.	Nepalma Samyavadi Aandolanko Itihas	2053 v.s.
21	Laxmilal Chaudhary	Conspiratorial Politics of Nepal (1794–1806)	2053 v.s.
22	Ganga Karmacharya (Hada)	Role of the Queens in the Politics of Nepal (1775–1846)	2053 v.s.
23	Vijay Kumar Manandhar	Nepal-China Relations up to 1955	2054 v.s.
24	Gopal Bahadur Bhattarai	Nepalma Mohiyani Vyavastha (2021 dekhi 2048 v.s. samma)	2055 v.s.

SN	Name	Title	Year
25	Kashikanta Mainali	Politics in Nepal (1885–1901)	2056 v.s.
26	Pitamber Lal Yadav	A Case Study of Treaties between Nepal and British India, 1792–1923	2057 v.s.
27	Yagyanath Acharya	Pradhanmantri Bhim Shamsher ra Tatkalin Nepal (1986 dekhi 1989 v.s. samma)	2057 v.s.
28	Ishworchandra Lakhe	Nepalma Bauddha Dharma ra Hindu Dharmako Parasparik Sambandha	2057 v.s.
29	Pushparaj Chalise	Jana-Aandolan 2046 v.s. ra Sattasin Pakshako Rananiti	2058 v.s.
30	Rama Pandey	Jivit Kumari Pujako Sanskriti Evam Aitihasik Parampara	2058 v.s.
31	Prem Singh Basnyat	A Military Study of Nepalese Forts and Fort Battles Against Foreign Power by the Royal Nepal Army	2001
32	Meena Ojha	The Role of Students in the Evolution of Democratic Polity in Nepal	2060 v.s.
33	Chudamani Sharma	Nepalko Prajatantrik Aandolan 2017 dekhi 2036 Ek Adhyayan	2060 v.s.
34	Gyan Bahadur Karki	Nepalko Jana-Aandolan 2046 ma Bauddhik Vargako Bhumika	2060 v.s.
35	Ishwori Prasad Laudari	Nepalko Prajatantrik Aandolanma Ganeshtman Singhko Bhumika	2060 v.s.
36	Bhaveshtwar Pangeni	Dr K.I. Singh ra Nepalko Rajniti (2000 dekhi 2017 v.s.)	2060 v.s.
37	Narayan Prasad Sangroula	Pallo Kiratko Kipath Vyavastha (1831 dekhi 2021 v.s. samma)	2061 v.s.
38	Indira Joshi	Nepal Angrej Yuddhama Badakaji Amarsingh Thapakko Yogdan	2061 v.s.
39	Ghanashyam Bhattarai	Nepalko Sthaniya Prashasanma Sthaniya Padadhikariharuko Bhumika (1768 dekhi 1951 AD samma)	2061 v.s.
40	Raj Kumar Pokharel	The Communist Movement in Nepal: A Historical Study of the Communist Party of Nepal (ML-UML) 1975–1994	2061 v.s.
41	Govindaman Singh Karki	V.S. 2007 Salko Jana-krantima Bhojpur	2061 v.s.
42	Nrisingh Kumar Khatri	Conservation of Biological Diversity (Plants and Animals) in Legal Aspects of Nepal (Historical Study)	2062 v.s.
43	Krishna Raj Adhikari	Nepalko Rajniti ra Bhimsen Thapa	2062 v.s.
44	Bishnu Sapkota	Lord Curzon ra Himali Rajyahu	2062 v.s.

SN	Name	Title	Year
45	Karna Bahadur Baniya	Palpa Gaundako Prashasanik, Samajik tatha Aarthik Avasthako Aitihasik Adhyayan	2063 v.s.
46	Gopalbhakta Dhaubanjari	Madhyakalin Nepal Upatyakako Samajik Jivan	2063 v.s.
47	Khadgaman Shrestha	History of Buddhism in Nepal up to 1956 with Special Reference to Vajrayan Buddhism	2063 v.s.
48	Shankar Kumar Upadhyaya	Simraungadko Itihas (san 1097 dekhi 1326 samma)	2063 v.s.
49	Shova Pokharel	Nepalko Prajatantrik Aandolanma Tanka Prasad Acharyako Bhumika	2064 v.s.
50	Gyanendra Prasad Poudel	Nepali Itihas Lekhanma Dr Dilliraman Regmiko Yogdan	2064 v.s.
51	Badri Narayan Gautam	Nepali Congress: Melmilapdekhi Satyagrahasamma (2033 dekhi 2042 v.s. samma)	2064 v.s.
52	Bhagawan Khadka	Nepalma Udyog Banijya Sanghko Sthapana ra Bikas (2007 dekhi 2060 v.s. samma)	2066 v.s.
53	Basanta Rijal	Historical and Cultural Study of the Exodus of Tibetan Buddhism to the Kathmandu Valley	2066 v.s.
54	Anil Kumar Pokharel	Nepalma Bhutani Sharanarthiharu: Karan, Vartaman Avastha ra Phirtiko Saval	2066 v.s.
55	Bimala Shakya	Nepalma Mahilahrako Kanuni Sthiti: Ek Aitihasik Adhyayan v.s. 2007–2047	2067 v.s.
56	Surya Bahadur Gharti Chhetri	Palpako Magar Sanskriti	2067 v.s.
57	Rajendra Prasad Regmi	Nepalko Rajnitima Chitawan (2017 dekhi 2046 v.s. samma)	2068 v.s.
58	Binod Thapa	Nepal America Sambandha (1947–2007 AD)	2068 v.s.
59	Nil Prasad Panta	Rashtriya Janamat Sangraha 2037 v.s. ra Nepalko Prajatantrik Aandolan	2069 v.s.
60	Bharatraj Raut	History of Museum: Its Principles, Tradition and Present Situation in Nepal	2069 v.s.
61	Balaram Kayastha	Bhaktapurko Vishwayatra (Bisket) ko Samajik ra Sanskritik Adhyayan	2070 v.s.
62	Tokraj Pandey	Shah Rajaka Aath Tika	2070 v.s.
63	Radha Kumari G.C. Bhandari	Gandaki Anchalka Guthi Vyavastha	2070 v.s.

Source: Pandey *et al.* (2013); TUCL (1999) and CDH, TU.

ANNEX II

Recipients of Dhanavajra Fellowship from CNAS

SN	Name	Title
1	Rukmani Onta	Kathmandu Upatyakaka Saraswati Murtiharu ra Tinko Sanskritik Adhyayan
2	Shukra Sagar Shrestha	Kirtipurko Sanskritik ra Puratatvik Adhyayan
3	Surendra K.C.	Nepalko Itihas Lekhanma Dhanavajra Vajracharyako Yogdan
4	Rajesh Gautam	Nepalko Prajatantrik Aandolanma Prachanda Gorkha: Ek Adhyayan
5	Shanker Thapa	Nepalese Buddhist Scholarship and Proliferation of Buddhist Sanskrit Literature
6	Beena Poudel	Kathmandau Upatyakaka Vishnu Vibhav Murti ra Chitraharu
7	Ranjana Vajracharya	Newar Bauddha Sanskar: Ek Adhyayan
8	Narayan Prasad Timilsina	Devghatko Sanskriti Adhyayan
9	Milan Ratna Shakya	Ancient Stone Images of Buddha and Bodhisattva in Nepal
10	Ganga Prasad 'Akela'	Nepalka Mithilanchalanko Lokgatha tatha Loknatya

Source: Nirmal Man Tuladhar, Ex-executive Director, CNAS.

ANNEX III

Historical Research Supported by NFDIN

SN	Name	Topic	Year (v.s.)
1	Pabitra Bajracharya	Rashtriya Bibhuti Shankhadhar Shakhwako Shodh Adhyayan	2060/061
2	Chandra Bahadur Gurung	V.C.haruko Adhyayan Anusandhan tatha Prakashan	2060/061
3	Nepalbhasa Misa Khala:	Bauddha Newarharuma Hindukaranle Lyayeko Vikriti tatha Samadhan Sambandhi Adhyayan	2060/061
4	Sunuwar Sewa Samaj	Sunuwar Jatiko Utpatti, Itihas, Evam Parichayabare Adhyayan Anusandhan	2063/064
5	Bantawa Anusandhan Pratisthan	Loponmukh Syamuna Sakenwa Sanskritiko Ek Adhyayan	064/065
6	Harkaraj Chongbang	Kirat Jatiko Vamshavali Sambandhi Adhyayan Anusandhan	2065/066
7	Balkrishna Kauchha Magar	Magar Jatiko Itihas Namak Adhyayan Anusandhan	2065/066
8	Bhupal Rai	Who are Kirats? A Retrospective Review	2065/066
9	Harichan Chhantyal	Chhantyal Jatiko Purkhyauli	2065/066
10	Yubaraj Maski	Svatantrata Senani Ekdev Ale Magar	2065/066
11	Aarthik ra Samajik Utthanma Mahila Samuha	Loktantrik Aandolan Aa. Ja.ko Bhumika: Ek Aitihasic Adhyayan	2065/066
12	Kumar Yonjan Tamang	Nepalma Adivasi Janajatiharuko Paramparagat Shasanpranali Sambandhama Ek Adhyayan	2067/068
13	Bijaya Subba	Adivasi Janajati Movements in Nepal	2067/068
14	Ram Chandra Rai	Prachin Kiratkalin Vividh Kanuni ra Nyayik Vyavastha	2067/068
15	Jyoti Bhattachan	Thakali Jatiko Pitribhumi Thak Sat Sayako Nakshankan tatha Vartaman Sima Vivadko Aitihasic Adhyayan	2068/069
16	Purushottam Chaudhari	Scociological Study of Origin, History and Influence of Buddhism among Tharu Community	2068/069
17	Lhakpa Sherpa	Nepalko Janajati Aandolanko Aitihasic Adhyayan	2069/070
18	Bhoj Bikram Budha Magar	Magar Jatiko Rajnitik Itihasko Khoji	2069/070
19	Ramesh Rai, Gobinda Chhantyal	Janajati Vidyarthi Aandolan: Vijaropan ra Bikasko Belibistar Ek Adhyayan	2070/071

Source: Annual Reports of NFDIN.

ANNEX IV

History Related Publications Supported by NFDIN

SN	Name	Topic	Year
1	Naradmuni Thulung Smitri Parishad	2007 Salko Krantima Bhojpur (Book)	2063/064
2	Bibek Baiba	Aadivasi Janajatiko Vidrohako Aarambha ra Aandolanko Vartaman Sthiti (Book)	2063/064
3	Dal Bahadur Pun	Dosro Vishwoyuddhako Pida (Book)	2065/066
4	Ambarjang Limbu	Limbu Sahityako Itihas (Book)	2069/070
5	Yalambar Foundation	Nepal Upatyakama Kirat Shasan ra Shasan Samayako Saval (Book)	2069/070

Source: Annual Reports of NFDIN.

CHAUTARI BOOK SERIES

51. रेडियो नेटवर्क : अभ्यास, अन्तर्वस्तु र स्थानीय प्रभाव (सन् २००९)
देवराज हुमागाई, कोमल भट्ट र हर्षमान महर्जन
52. जैविक विविधता र जनजीविका (सन् २००९)
हरिप्रसाद दुङ्गाना, जगन्नाथ अधिकारी र शरद घिमिरे, सं.
53. मिडिया अध्ययन ४ (सन् २००९)
शेखर पराजुली, प्रत्यूष वन्त र देवराज हुमागाई, सं.
54. तराई-मधेस : सन्दर्भ ग्रन्थ (सन् २००९)
तीर्थ विष्ट र चिरन मानन्धर, सङ्कलक
55. *Education in Nepal: Problems, Reforms and Social Change* (2009)
Pramod Bhatta, ed.
56. *Developing Alternative Media Traditions in Nepal* (2009)
Michael Wilmore
57. राज्य पुनःसंरचना र संविधानसभा : सन्दर्भ ग्रन्थ (सन् २००९)
कैलाश राई र चिरन मानन्धर, सङ्कलक
58. मिडिया अध्ययन ५ (सन् २०१०)
देवराज हुमागाई, शेखर पराजुली र प्रत्यूष वन्त, सं.
59. *Out Here in Kathmandu: Modernity on the Global Periphery* (2010)
Mark Liechty
60. मिडिया तालिम : नेपाली अभ्यासको लेखाजोखा (सन् २०१०)
देवराज हुमागाई, शेखर पराजुली, हर्षमान महर्जन र अर्जुन पन्थी
61. नेपाली सेना : नागरिक नियन्त्रणका चुनौती (सन् २०१०)
सुधीर शर्मा, सं.
62. *History as Mindscapes: A Memory of the Peasants' Movement of Nepal* (2010)
Yogesh Raj
63. नेपालीय हुनलाई... (सन् २०११)
सीके लाल
64. *Looking at Development and Donors: Essays from Nepal* (2011)
Devendra Raj Panday
65. मिडिया अध्ययन ६ (सन् २०११)
देवराज हुमागाई, शेखर पराजुली, प्रत्यूष वन्त र हर्षमान महर्जन, सं.
66. उच्चशिक्षामा सहभागिता : असमानताका सामाजिक आयाम (सन् २०११)
प्रमोद भट्ट, सं.
67. नेपाली राष्ट्रियता : चिन्तन र अभिव्यक्ति (सन् २०१२)
रमेश पराजुली, सं.

68. *To be a Nepalese...* (2012)
CK Lal
69. *मिडिया अध्ययन ७* (सन् २०१२)
देवराज हुमागाई, प्रत्यूष वन्त, अर्जुन पन्थी, हर्षमान महर्जन र
शेखर पराजुली, सं.
70. *Autocratic Monarchy: Politics in Panchayat Nepal* (2012)
L.S. Baral
71. *क्रमभङ्ग र सम्भार : नेपाली इतिहासलेखनमा हस्तक्षेपका नयाँ
सन्दर्भ-विन्दु* (सन् २०१२)
योगेश राज
72. *Eloquent Hills: Essays on Nepali Literature* (2012)
Michael Hutt
73. *नेपाली मिडियामा दलित : सहभागिता र विषयवस्तु* (सन् २०१३)
जेवी विश्वकर्मा
74. *Discourses of Awareness: Development, Social Movements and
the Practices of Freedom in Nepal* (2013)
Tatsuro Fujikura
75. *मिडिया अध्ययन ८* (सन् २०१३)
देवराज हुमागाई, प्रत्यूष वन्त, शेखर पराजुली, हर्षमान महर्जन र
अर्जुन पन्थी, सं.
76. *सन्ध्या-संरचना : हिन्दूनेवारहरूको मृत्युचेतना* (सन् २०१३)
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