



CHAUTARI QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

No. 1. April-June 2023

Martin Chautari's (MC) core objective has been to enhance the quality of public dialogue and the public sphere in Nepal, particularly in matters pertaining to democracy, development, pluralism/diversity, civil liberties, social justice, and academic research. To achieve this objective, Chautari's activities include research, research mentoring, publications, library (open to the public), discussion seminars/workshops and academic conferences.

REGULAR/SPECIAL EVENTS

To pursue the MC's core objectives, MC organizes scheduled discussions and seminars on Sundays and Tuesdays with speakers and topics drawn from a wide social spectrum. Chautari's discussion and seminar series is the oldest, continuously running such series related to Nepal organized by any institution anywhere in the world.

From April to June 2023, MC organized 11 discussions as part of the Mangalbaarey (Tuesday) series. The discussions covered a wide range of thematic areas, including grassroots people's museum, census 2021, advocacy for the issues faced by poor marginalized victims of loan sharks, education, human resources development, by-election results, issues related to mountain tourism development, livelihood challenges faced by Dalit communities, social movements, and a debate on 15

years of the 'republic Nepal,' among others. In addition, MC actively collaborates with several civil society organizations to facilitate and conduct the Tuesday discussion series. We list out the Sunday research seminar series in Table 1.

Research Seminar Series

Reflections on Teaching Research



Dharendra Nalbo, PhD
Faculty



Muna Gurung, MFA
Faculty



Peter Graif, PhD
Faculty

The Open Institute for Social Sciences

Date, Time and Venue

Sunday, June 4, 2023 (जेठ २३, २०८०) | 03:00 – 05:00 PM [NPT]
Martin Chautari Seminar Hall | Thapathali, Kathmandu



Martin Chautari



fb.com/martinchautari.f
youtube.com/MChautari



Table 1. Research Seminar Series (Sunday)

SN	Speaker(s)	Title	Date
1	Amar BK , PhD, Anthropologist/Senior Research Fellow, Samata Foundation	“God can Only Provide Us Respect”: <i>Sachchai</i> Women’s Struggle against Caste and Gender Humiliations	2 April 2023/ १९ चैत २०७९
2	JB Biswokarma , Dignity Initiative/Martin Chautari Ramyata Limbu , Panas South Asia Srijana Kafle , Purple Foundation	The Politics of Online Social Misconduct*	9 April 2023/ २६ चैत २०७९
3	Damodar Adhikari , Emergency Health Preparedness Expert, SIMEX Hub Krishna Karkee , Technical Advisor/ Disaster Preparedness Expert, SIMEX Hub Naresh Subba , Retired Brigadier General, Nepal Army and Executive Director, SIMEX Hub Prem Awasthi , Humanitarian Coordination Officer, United Nations in Nepal	Status of Disaster Response Readiness and Culture of Preparedness	16 April 2023/ ३ वैशाख २०८०
4	Pratyoush Onta , Martin Chautari	Some Comments on the Recent State of Academic Book Publishing*	23 April 2023/ १० वैशाख २०८०
5	Shradha Pal , Chevening Scholar/MA in Gender Studies, SOAS University of London	‘I am Not the Only One’: An Autoethnography on Sexual Harassment in Public Sphere	30 April 2023/ १७ वैशाख २०८०
6	Sita Mademba , Researcher, Social Science Baha	Reimagining and Reinterpreting Chasok as Sociopolitical Space: Limbu Resistance against the State	7 May 2023/ २४ वैशाख २०८०
7	Dipti Sherchan , PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology, University of Illinois, Chicago	Fieldnotes from Home: Reflecting on Doing Anthropological Fieldwork in Kathmandu	14 May 2023/ ३१ वैशाख २०८०
8	Gopal Thakur , Chairman, Language Commission, Government of Nepal	‘Soit’ and ‘Solkan’ in the Madhesh Province*	21 May 2023/ ७ जेठ २०८०
9	Roshani Rajbanshi , PhD, Assistant Professor, Kathmandu University School of Education	Transformation (Rupantaran) through Participatory Action Research	28 May 2023/ १४ जेठ २०८०
10	Dhirendra Nalbo , PhD, Faculty, The Open Institute for Social Sciences (OISS) Muna Gurung , MFA, Faculty, OISS Peter Graif , PhD, Faculty; OISS	Reflections on Teaching Research	4 June 2023/ २१ जेठ २०८०
11	Amish Raj Mulmi , Writer/Editor	Trade Publishing in India	11 June 2023/ २८ जेठ २०८०
12	Nabin Bibhas , Writer/Journalist	Rolpali Magars and Ganja (Marijuana): Beyond the Mainstream Narrative*	18 June 2023/ ३ असार २०८०

* These seminars primarily took place in the Nepali language.

It is important to note that the Mangalbaarey (Tuesday) discussions are primarily aimed at strengthening the social contract between the state and citizens in Nepal. On the other hand, the research seminar series aims to promote academic research in the fields of social sciences and humanities. In both series, speakers are invited to deliver a lecture lasting 40–45 minutes, followed by a question and answer session with the participants. Between April–June 2023, a total of 467 people actively participated in the discussions, with 220 attendees joining the Mangalbaarey (Tuesday) discussion series and 247 attendees joining the research seminar (Sunday) series. These

events were also broadcasted via [Facebook Live](#) and [YouTube Live](#). We roughly estimate that the discussion series garnered views from over 2,000 individuals.

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

MC is implementing the research project “History of the Public School Education in Nepal, 1900–1990” from April 1, 2023. This research will explore the history of public school education in Nepal between the years 1900 and 1990. Given the

SCHOOL EDUCATION IN NEPAL

History and Politics of Governance and Reforms



editors

LOKRANJAN PARAJULI
DEVENDRA UPRETY | PRATYOUSHT ONTA

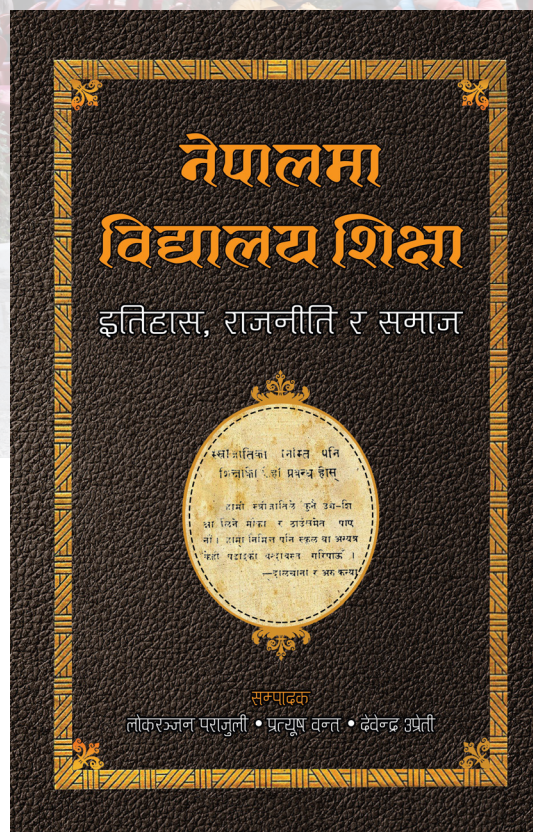
dominance of the state-centric approach in the existing writings on the subject, we propose a different approach to this history. While the particular characteristics of the various political regimes and their policies for school education are important to our inquiry, our focus will be on the agency of common people who marshalled their ideas, energy and collective resources to start and run schools against great odds. We focus on individuals and collectives that made school education possible for members of various groups, communities, and solidarities that had hitherto little access to schools. Their work happened by negotiating the restricting dynamics of the various regimes and by taking risks that pushed the borders of the socially possible at any given moment of time. The outputs of this study will collectively constitute a solid contribution to our knowledge about public schooling in a country in the Global South that was a late starter when it comes to school education for the masses. On June 25, 2023, MC organized a workshop at the MC seminar hall in collaboration with the Centre for Education Policies and Practices (CEPP). The purpose of the workshop was to consult with various stakeholders regarding the history of public education in Nepal. This project is supported by Spencer Foundation (USA).

MC is also currently implementing the project “Promoting the Environment for Further Deepening Democracy in Nepal,” In this project MC seeks to deepen democratic practice through research and informed public discussions” in Nepal. To achieve this objective, MC has done research, held discussions, and brought out publications revolving around three key themes: federal transition, promotion of civil society organizational space, and digital rights.

MC published one research brief and organized a half day event on June 28, 2023 on issues pertaining to civil society organizations in Nepal. The program also explored the legal provisions and financial aspects concerning civil society organizations. The program featured representatives from eight prominent organizations as its main speakers, providing valuable insights and expertise in the field. The research brief shedding light on the state of data protection in Nepal was published on April 26, 2023. This project has received support from the Open Society Foundation (OSF) since October 1, 2020.

Martin Chautari (MC), in collaboration with Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED), and School of Education, Aarhus University, Denmark jointly implemented the research project titled ‘Locating Public Finance Dynamics in Education Sector in Nepal’ since 2015. It was funded by the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was administered by the Danish Fellowship Centre (DFC). The project was completed in December 2022 and its final report was submitted to DFC in June 2023.

The main objective of this project was to enhance understandings of the causes of corruption within the school education sector in Nepal by analyzing the manner in which differently located social actors interpret meanings and measure moral and legal claims, practices and behaviors tied to corruption in the context of local standards and practices. Through robust empirical studies and an interdisciplinary approach, this project has added to the existing literature by bringing to the fore the complexity of relationships—economically, socially and politically—involved in public financing of education in different contexts ranging from



school management committees, scholarship distribution processes, construction/improvement of school infrastructure, etc. Another objective was to strengthen the research capacity at the partner institutes through PhD study programs, training, and engagement in research activity.

Output-wise, the project outperformed—the number of books, research articles, etc. published is more than what was planned initially. The project initially had the target of publishing three books. A total of five books and a special issue of a journal were published. During the project period, four policy briefs were published as was planned initially. Dozens of scholarly articles/book chapters have been published in peer-reviewed national/international journals, and in edited volumes under this project. Project researchers have also contributed dozens of articles on issues that the project covered (e.g., school sector governance, education finance and corruption in the education sector) in mainstream newspapers and magazines published from Nepal. As part of the project activities, five bibliographies related to various aspects of school education have been prepared. Key legal documents related to Nepal's school education (acts and regulations) and key policy and planning documents were also collected, digitized and made available in [MC website](#).

One of the objectives of this research project was to strengthen the research capacity of the partner institutions through PhD study programs, trainings, and by immersing junior researchers in project related research activities. The selected four students were enrolled at the PhD program of Kathmandu University School of Education, and they have worked on various aspects of school sector governance (three of them have already received their PhDs). They also got a

chance to participate in a study visit to Aarhus University in Copenhagen for six months. Apart from the PhD students, MC's junior researchers have been immersed in the research works that principal researchers based at MC undertook. They have also been provided with opportunities to conduct research on their own and they have authored or co-authored/co-edited articles and books published as part of the project.

BOOK LAUNCH

MC organized a book launch event on April 28, 2023 in the seminar hall of the Provincial Assembly of the Madhesh Province in Janakpurdham, Nepal. We invited dignitaries from the Madhesh Province not only to launch the book (*Barefoot Research in the Madhesh Province*, translated title) but also to advocate for policies related to the issues covered in the book. The event was covered by [Online Khabar](#), [SP Khabar](#), [Jaleswor Today](#), [GamGhar](#), and [Janakpur Today](#). The event was also featured on a [local TV news channel](#). Following the event, the book's first editor participated in a [local TV talk show](#) which was conducted in the Maithili language. The interview focused on the book's contents and their contextual relevance. This helped us to extend our reach to individuals at the grassroots level. The book was also featured in a [prominent magazine](#) and [national daily newspaper](#).

LIBRARY-RELATED ACTIVITIES

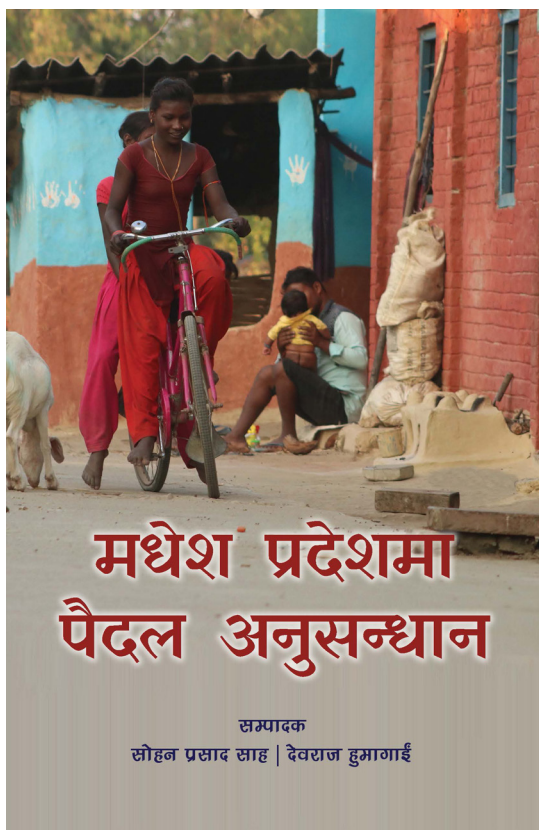
Since 2006, MC has opened its reference library and media archives to the public. This has allowed MC to provide access to all of its holdings of reference items to students, journalists, activists, and researchers. The library's current holdings total more than 23,400 books, theses, and reports. The library also holds an extensive hard-copy collection of journals, magazines, and newspapers published from Nepal. A separate reading room—provided with desktop computers with internet facilities—is available for public users. During the period of April–June 2023, a total of 264 resources were added to the library. Among these, 74 books were purchased by mobilizing MC's resources, while 190 books were donated to the library.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

During the period of April-June 2023, the following items were published:

RESEARCH BRIEF

Martin Chautari. 2023. *State of Data Protection in Nepal*. Research Brief No. 37. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.





A section of the MC Library

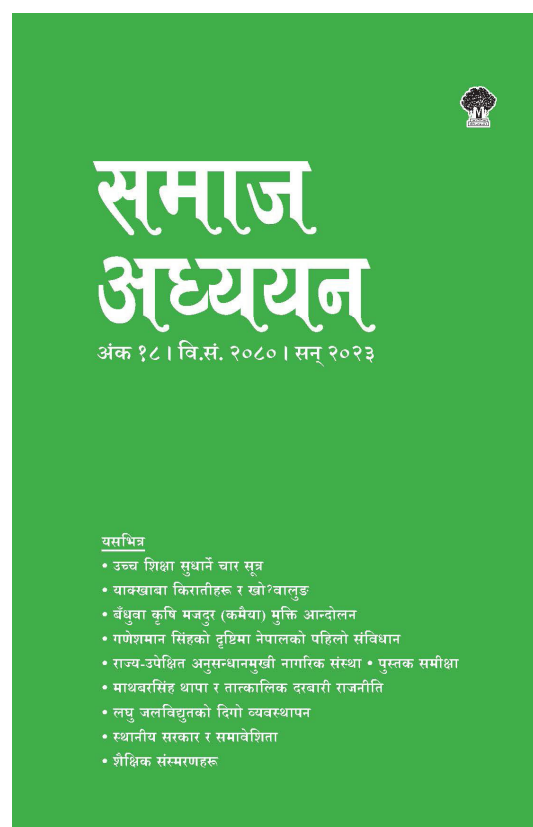
BIBLIOGRAPHIES

- Upriety, Devendra, Shak B. Budhathoki, Pramod Bhatta, Rukh Gurung and Sanjila Moktan. 2023. *Bibliography of PhD Dissertations on Nepal's School Education*. Version 2.0. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.
- Maharjan, Ramita, Upasana Pandit, Harsha Man Maharjan. 2023. *Bibliography of Bibliographies Related to Nepal*. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.

नेपालमा डेटा संरक्षणको अवस्था

Bibliography of PhD Dissertations on Nepal's School Education

Bibliography of Bibliographies Related to Nepal





JOURNALS

MC is the editorial home of the semi-annual journal *Studies in Nepali History and Society* (established in 1996) and the Nepali language annual journal *Samaj Adhyayan* (Studies of Society, established in 2006 as *Media Adhyayan*). During the period of April-June 2023, *Samaj Adhyayan* 18 was published.

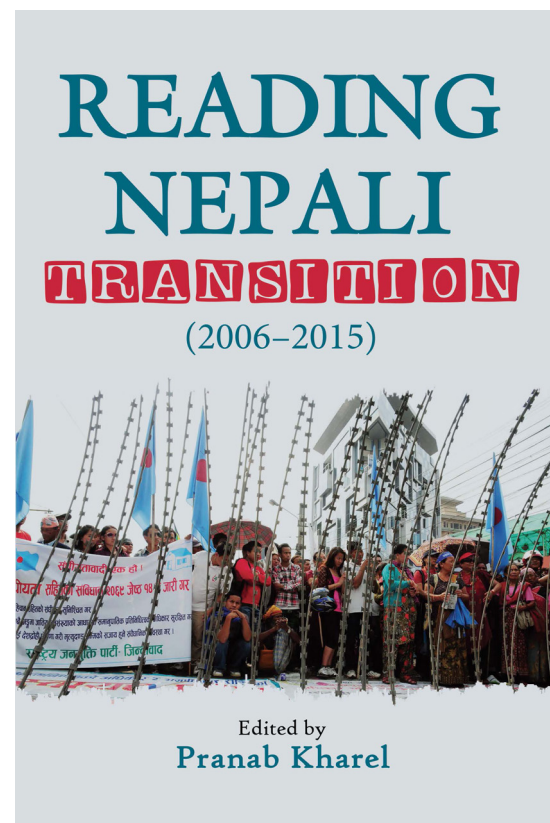
PUBLIC PRESENCE OF CHAUTARI/ANS

In total 22 articles, op-eds, journal articles, book chapters, interviews, and media appearances of Chautarians were recorded during the April-June 2023 period (see link [here](#)). These media appearances were mostly in national media outlets but few are also in regional media outlets in languages other than Nepali.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Applications are requested for a reading seminar on The Environmental Crisis, Education and Communication with Dr. Peter Sutoris to be held in August 2023. This seminar brings the analytical power of anthropology, sociology and related disciplines to ask: What can the social sciences teach us about how to tackle environmental destruction? **Peter**

Sutoris is an Assistant Professor in Education and Social Justice at University of York, United Kingdom. He holds a PhD from Cambridge University, UK. He is the author of books: *Visions of Development* (OUP, 2016) and *Educating for the Anthropocene* (MIT Press, 2022).



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