

A UNIVERSITY FOR THE NATION'S SURVIVAL? A HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY THAT DIDN'T BECOME

Lokranjan Parajuli

Introduction

Towards the end of the Rana era (1846–1951)—a period otherwise known for its efforts to control rather than to propagate education among the masses¹—an attempt was made to set up the first ever university in Nepal. The last among the Rana Prime Ministers, Mohan Shamsher, in his *sindūryātrā* held on May 27, 1948 to mark his accession to the prime minister's office, announced that a university would be established in Nepal (Sharada 2005 v.s.). Subsequently, a University Planning Commission (UPC) was formed (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.c). The announcement, and the formation of UPC, is rather perplexing given the restrictions (re)imposed during his three-year reign (1948–1951) in accessing and propagating education for the masses, as well as in exercising civil liberties—however feebly available they may have been during his predecessor Padma Shamsher Rana's reign (1945–1948).²

This article seeks to understand this apparent paradox primarily by seeking to answer the following two questions: What was the imperative for the otherwise allegedly anti-public education ruler to take a lead in establishing a university? And, why was his personal project aborted? In answering these and related questions, this article narrates the story of the first (failed) attempt to establish a university in Nepal, situating the exercise in larger national and international politics.

While there were a number of internal political factors calculated by Mohan Shamsher such as increased oppositional political activities, I argue that rather than the national as key catalyst, readings of international political factors compelled him to take the initiative to establish the university. Of central importance here is the growing nationalization (read Hindi-ization) project/discourse of pre- and post-independent India. This included the

¹ On the politics of education during the late Rana era, see Parajuli (2012a).

² Indeed, there are instances of state authorities shutting down a number of schools and libraries during Mohan Shamsher's reign (Parajuli 2009).

proposals for the vernacularization of Indian universities as well as the phasing out of English as the official language within “five” years.³ This led to cross-border fears that the resulting need to rely on Hindi or regional languages of India would threaten the existence of Nepali language and concomitantly the existence of Nepal itself. I further argue that the university project was aborted because of three major factors—financial, internal political and, once again, external political factors.

This article relies mostly on archival materials, particularly, three Nepali language periodicals published from Nepal during Mohan Shamsheer’s rule: *Gorkhāpatra*, *Śāradā* and *Nepal Śikṣā*.⁴ *Gorkhāpatra* was then the state-owned and only newspaper of the country published three times a week; I looked at the microfilmed copies of *Gorkhāpatra* available at the University of Chicago’s library. *Śāradā*, founded in 1935, was the leading literary journal of the time.⁵ I also studied various issues of *Nepal Śikṣā*, the mouthpiece journal of the Department of Education of the government of Nepal. This monthly journal was first published in Asoj 2005 v.s. (September/October 1948), and it later became bi/tri monthly and was irregularly published. Since the Nepali university discourse was influenced by the language discourse in India of that period, I also looked at the debates and discussions in the Constituent Assembly of India, the report of the first University Commission of India, and secondary literature related to that discourse.

This article is divided into six sections: In the first section I provide some background information on the political situation of the study period. The second section tells the story of the formation of the university commission (i.e., UPC) in brief. The third section which is divided into five subsections highlights the issues that were discussed by the UPC. The fourth section analyzes the imperative behind the effort to establish a university. In the

³ While the final constitutional deadline for the phasing out of English was fifteen years, the Nepali authorities’ initial understanding of the deadline was five years (see, Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 11, 2005 v.s.b: 69).

⁴ It seems that the UPC did prepare a report. However, as far as I know, the report was not made public, and I have been unable to locate it any archive thus far. If this report is found in the future, it may provide some more details on the effort, but the larger argument of this article I believe will not change, as much of the UPC’s deliberations were reported in the three periodicals I looked at.

⁵ However I could not have access to all the issues of *Śāradā* published during the study period.

fifth section I discuss why the university idea was aborted. At the end is a brief conclusion.

The Political Setting

The family oligarchy of the Ranas that lasted more than a century, in general, did not make any genuine effort to promote education.⁶ If anything, the Ranas with a few exceptions actively worked against public welfare. For most of this period, access to education was severely restricted and whatever growth there was in the sector was merely incidental. However, in public, the rulers more often than not posed themselves as promoters of education.

There was a policy turnaround, especially after the assumption of power by Padma Shamsher in 1945. I have argued elsewhere that from the existing policy of “controlling public access to education,” the new policy sought to “control the minds” of the masses by providing them “appropriate” knowledge (Parajuli 2012a). And, women too, they thought, needed to be “educated,” but differently (Parajuli 2013). The Rana government under Padma Shamsher formally introduced the Basic Education System in Nepal in 1947. However, this did not make much headway for a number of reasons I have discussed elsewhere (Parajuli 2012a).

But the “liberal-minded” Padma Shamsher did not last long in power. He was forced to leave the country by his conservative cousins (led by Mohan Shamsher) before the constitution that he commissioned came into force. The first constitution of Nepal was proclaimed on January 26, 1948 and was to come into force from the Nepali new year, i.e., from April 14, 1948. In the meantime Padma Shamsher fled Kathmandu on February 21, and crossed the frontier into India a week later (Shaha 1996: 188). Mohan Shamsher officially took over the reign only on April 30, 1948, as the former did not send his resignation letter as promised. When Mohan Shamsher came to power he followed his father Chandra Shamsher’s footsteps by suspending the limited concessions made by his predecessor. More than paying attention to simmering internal problems and implementing the rather “conservative” constitution, Mohan Shamsher tried to expand diplomatic relationships with the outside world. He also offered his troops to the Indian government when India faced problems in areas such as Hyderabad and Kashmir immediately after its independence so as to win its favor (Shaha 1996; Muni 2016[1973]).

⁶ Much of this section is drawn from Parajuli (2012a).

During the first two years of his administration Mohan Shamsher “put into effect repressive laws drastically curtailing freedom of expression and association” (Shaha 1996: 203) and suspended the civil liberties. In 1950 when Mohan Shamsher came under real pressure from anti-Rana forces, he tried to save his face by concocting elections in some villages and also by forming a so-called “parliament” of his henchmen. Earlier, in 1948, he had banned the Nepali Congress Party (Gautam 2055 v.s.), and also introduced a new Press and Publication Act, 2005 v.s. to further curtail civil liberties (Parajuli 2012b).

A University Planning Commission is Formed

Despite all this “regression,” there was a serious effort during Mohan Shamsher’s tenure to establish a university in Nepal. While he is silent on the education front in his short speech delivered after he formally took over the reign on April 30, 1948 (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.a), he did mention the formation of a university planning commission in the rather long speech delivered on the occasion of his *sindūryātrā* (Sharada 2005 v.s.).⁷ Often referred to as “*vidyāpremī*” or “*śikṣāpremī*” (one who loved education) in all three periodicals,⁸ Mohan Shamsher spoke thus about the university in his latter speech:⁹

⁷ There are three important dates to distinguish here: Mohan Shamsher took over the reign formally on April 30, 1948 (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.a). This date is celebrated in subsequent years as “*udayotsav*.” The other date is *sindūryātrā* procession, which took place a month later, on May 27, 1948, the occasion to celebrate the accession (Sharada 2005 v.s.). The religious coronation (*rājyābhiṣek*) took place a week later, on June 4, 1948 (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.b).

⁸ Titled “Shree 3 Maharaj’s Love for Education,” the first editorial of *Nepal Śikṣā* says, “On his important speech of *sindūryātrā*, his highness spoke about ideas for advancement and reform of the country, one of which was also the [plan to] establish a university. There was lack of a university for the propagation of education in our country. To fulfill that gap by establishing a university is a very clear (*jwālanta*) example of his highness’s love for education” (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.c: 4). All translations from the Nepali original are mine.

⁹ In the same speech, he also mentioned about setting up of a Five-Year Plan and a National Economic Planning Commission which eventually came into fruition more than a year later—the Commission was inaugurated on September 28, 1949 (Gorkhapatra 2006 v.s.a).

...higher education is very much needed and because of which we aim to establish a university in Nepal. A university planning commission (*jāc-sabhā*, lit. inspection meeting) will soon be formed which after thinking through various aspects will prepare a draft plan and submit to us. We hope that this will further the work and our wishes will be fulfilled. (Sharada 2005 v.s.: 8–9)

After nearly four months of his formal accession, *Gorkhāpatra* published a notice on August 25, 1948 saying that the government has constituted a twenty-five-member committee called Vishwavidyalaya Yojana-Sabha (University Planning Commission) under the chairmanship of (Mohan Shamsher's nephew) Mrigendra Shamsher Rana, the Director General of the Department of Public Instructions (*Gorkhāpatra* 2005 v.s.c). Mohan Shamsher's son Bijaya Shamsher, the Director General of Industry, was appointed its vice chairman.¹⁰ It was also reported that the subcommittees (soon to be formed) would have other *vidwāns* (learned people) and concerned stakeholders/officials (*sarokārwālā*) of various government bureaus (*Gorkhāpatra* 2005 v.s.c).

On August 27, 1948, another *sarkārī sūcanā* (notice) was published in the same newspaper. According to this notice, the first meeting of the UPC was to be held on August 29, 1948 at Saraswoti Sadan, Trichandra College (*Gorkhāpatra* 2005 v.s.d). The objective of the UPC and the agenda (also the details of the invitation letter) of the meeting were also published later in *Nepal Śikṣā* (2005 v.s.e). The aim of the UPC was “to prepare a tentative (*moṭāmoṭī*) plan for the establishment of a university for the *unnati*

¹⁰ The other members of the committee included: (3) Suvarna Shamsher Rana (legal committee) (4) Hemraj Pandit (5) Nayanraj Sahityacharya, (6) Balkrishna Shamsher Rana (7) Khadga Narsingh Rana (8) Jitendra Bahadur Shah (9) Yagya Bhadur Basnet (10) Suryajang Thapa (11) Gunjaman Singh (12) Rudraraj Pandey (13) Narendramani AaDi (14) Siddhimani AaDi (15) Bhim Bahadur Pande (16) Rishikesh Shaha (17) Bodh Bikram Adhikari (18) Sudhir Kumar Roy Chaudhari (19) Kshitschandra Chakravarty (20) Ashutosh Sen (21) Ashutosh Ganguly (22) Bhavanath Upadhyay (23) Prayagraj Pandey (24) Bednath and (25) Gajanan Deivarat Vidyavachaspati (*Nepal Shiksha* 2005 v.s.d: 7).

(advancement) of higher education and research in Nepal and present that to the Shri 3 Maharaj” (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.e: 8).¹¹

The major issues that the this meeting was supposed to discuss included: (1) Rules related to the UPC; (2) form (*rūp*) of the university; (3) medium of teaching (instruction) and examinations; (4) the issue of co-education; (5) the issue of research in the university; and (6) formation of subcommittees. In this meeting the UPC agreed to form the following six subcommittees: (i) Subject subcommittee (subjects to be offered; curricula preparation); (ii) Religious and Sanskrit education subcommittee (place of these two in the curricula, and curricula for religious studies); (iii) University site selection and construction (*sthān ra bhavan*) subcommittee (where to establish the university and the type of building to be constructed); (iv) University-institution (*saṁsthā*) subcommittee (what sort of education is required for the country; how many members—[students/teachers]—to be placed in which institution); (v) Subcommittee on additional subjects that will be helpful for the students (subjects that need to be offered initially for the benefit of the country and the subjects to be added later); and (vi) Finance (*ārthik*) subcommittee (rough figure—yearly [recurring] and one time capital investment; income sources) [Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.e]. It is not very clear if all the six subcommittees were formed, but three of the important ones certainly were: Subject subcommittee (which could have subsumed subcommittees i, ii, iv and v); Site selection/construction subcommittee; and Finance subcommittee—as is evident by the news reports (e.g., Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.e).

But since the three-hour-long meeting was not enough for all those important discussions, the UPC held another meeting a few days later (on September 2, 1948), and subsequently other meetings were also held of the main committee and the six subcommittees and sub-subcommittees (especially related to curricula). While some of the issues could be decided upon rather quickly, other issues required much more information, consultation, and deliberation. There also was some discussion on the “authority/boundary” of the UPC, for it was not clear whether they (i.e., members) themselves could take decisions or they were only supposed to discuss and forward the recommendations to the government. The chair of the UPC made it clear that since the UPC was formed to submit a report, it

¹¹ See Gyawali (2017) for more on the idea of *unnati* during the early decades of the twentieth century.

should do so bearing in mind that “it will not immediately come into effect.” The chair added that they should first discuss the issues, prepare the report as per the views expressed in the meetings, and submit it to the government which would later take the necessary decisions (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a).

The Main Issues Discussed

The Form of the University

The first issue that the UPC was to discuss was related to the nature of the proposed university. It was agreed that there was a need for a university in Nepal. But, what sort of a university, and to produce what sort of graduates? Should it follow the models of other universities? Should it be teaching only or should research also be a part of it? Should it be a residential one or should it just provide affiliations? The other important related issue was the subjects to be offered: how many and which subjects (more on this below)?

These and related issues were discussed by the UPC in its initial meetings. While some of the issues could be resolved rather quickly, many of them would have had implications in the state treasury. So the UPC could only report or recommend and leave it to the final authority to decide (see Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 11).

The UPC, going by the reports published, was interested in such a university education that would produce patriot scholars (*deś-sevak vidwāns*) who would also be involved in research. But how could one do that? It was agreed that after discussion on the matter by the UPC, it would publish the conclusions seeking further suggestions/views in this regard from other *vidwāns* not included in the UPC. The commission was also exploring the possibility/question whether curricula of all the subjects should give special emphasis to Nepal (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.a).

Likewise, on the issue of the *form* of the university, some members stood in favor of the affiliating modality whereas a few others recommended a teaching university. But the majority reportedly was of the view that Nepal's university education should be a residential one. If this could be done, they argued, the “competent/qualified” (*suyogya*) teachers could be brought together in one place and this would also make it easier for the students from outside Kathmandu. The university should do both teaching and research and only then the output would be satisfactory, they added (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a). The chair said, “Such a university would cost a lot, but from the

nationalist point of view (*rāṣṭrya dr̥ṣṭikon*) this will ultimately be beneficial.” He, however, added a caveat, “The subcommittee on finance will take a decision on this” (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 11).

On the issue of whether to retain the existing intermediate board or not, it was agreed to retain it for the time being. Most of the members agreed that there should be a research division from the very beginning, and the chair speaking at the end emphasized, “It is better to have a research division from early on, be that in a small scale” (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 14). There, however, were a few skeptics. A member raised concerns on the availability of “brain” (*dimāg*, i.e., researchers), and the expenses that would incur. Another member similarly voiced his concern on the availability of students willing to pursue research in certain subjects, in which case, he suggested, it would be wise to use the money in another unit. Financial implications must be taken into account in taking decisions on this, it was argued (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 13).¹²

The issue of “theory-practical/research” is exemplified by the discussion on the report of the agriculture subject subcommittee. The previous government led by Padma Shamsher had formed an Agriculture Council. The council had also submitted its report to the government. Apparently, the report had suggested the setting up the agriculture research center in the Tarai, which however had not begun by summer 1948.¹³ While it was agreed that agriculture teaching needed research as well, there was a debate on whether the proposed agriculture research center of Tarai could be used for the university teaching/degree purpose. While some (e.g., Hemraj Pandit) suggested of having teaching and research together, others (e.g., Gunjaman Singh) also saw the possibility of sending students (with allowances) to

¹² And, in fact, when the discussions on subjects to be offered and other related questions were held, and their cost implication was calculated by the Finance subcommittee, the UPC’s initial ambition of offering many subjects was shattered, and its member later talked about offering only two-three subjects to begin with (more on this below).

¹³ According to Khadganarsingh Rana of the Agriculture Council, when it had prepared its report the idea of the university did not exist. But apparently the research center could not be established as the government did not allocate required budget: “It has already been three years that the request for budget has been made. But since there has been no budgetary allocation, the work has not yet started” (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b: 370).

do research in the research center to be established in the Tarai. But for this coordination was required between the council/research center and the university department. Another member (Bhavnath Upadhyay) raised the possibility of setting up an agriculture research center in Kathmandu itself instead of the Tarai. Citing examples of the West, the chair Mrigendra Shamsheer, who had just returned from a visit to Australia and New Zealand, said that the students could initially gain theoretical knowledge, go to the field/Tarai for some time to do research, and again come back to the class to write the report. This provision, he thought, could be both cost effective and easy (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b: 369–371).

Subjects to be Offered

As per the decision made by the main committee, an eleven-member Subject subcommittee was formed under the chairmanship of Suvarna Shamsheer Rana.¹⁴ The subcommittee's discussion focused on the subjects to be offered, and the starting date of the university. Altogether six meetings of this Subject subcommittee were held. The first of such meetings was held on September 20, 1948 while the last meeting was held on October 8, 1948. A total of 522 minutes were spent during these meetings discussing three important issues identified by the subcommittee: (1) subjects to be taught at the initial phase of the university; (2) subjects to be added later and their timing; and (3) the draft and format of the curriculum to be prepared on various subjects by forming separate boards with the help of experts. The subcommittee decided to offer the following twenty-six subjects: (1) Nepali (2) English (3) French and German (4) History and Archaeology (5) Economics, (6) Political Science (7) Logic, Philosophy and Psychology (8) Hindi and Urdu (9) Music and Dancing (10) Painting and Sculpture and Architecture (12) Geography (13) Mathematics (14) Education (15) Law (16) Commerce (17) Ancient Hindu Culture (18) Physics (19) Chemistry (20) Biology (this includes Botany and Zoology) (21) Geology (22) Agriculture (23) Forestry (24) Engineering (25) Chemical Technology and (26) Medicine. Separate

¹⁴ The other members of this subcommittee were: (2) Balkrishna Shamsheer Rana (3) Khadganarsingh Rana (4) Rudraraj Pandey (5) Siddhimani AaDi (6) Bodh Bikram Adhikari (7) Sudhirkumar Roy Chaudhary (8) Kshitishchandra Chakravarti (9) Asutosh Ganguly (10) Prayagraj Pandey and (11) Bhavanath Upadhyay (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.e: 1). The subcommittee also had some other members included while discussing individual subjects (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.f: 30).

board for each twenty-six groups, which altogether included thirty-five subjects, were to be formed. The subcommittee decided to set up three faculties for the time being: Faculty of Arts (comprising nos. 1–14 and 16–17 above), Faculty of Science (comprising nos. 18–26), and the Faculty of Law.

The subcommittee also spelled out the time frame of the beginning of each subject and the levels at which these subjects were to be offered. Some of the subjects were to be offered from the year 1949 whereas others were to start from 1950 and 1951. The subcommittee thought that the proposed university could offer eight subjects at the MA level from 1949. These were: (1) Nepali (2) English (3) Sanskrit (4) History and Archaeology (5) Political Science (6) Economics (7) Logic and Philosophy, and (8) Mathematics. The subcommittee also thought that the university could offer a Bachelors in Law program from the same year as well intermediate level degrees in Arts/ Science (IA/ISc) programs in the following subjects: Education, Commerce, Geology, Forestry, Pali, Hindi, and Urdu. It thought Masters degree in Physics and Chemistry could be offered from 1950 and in Biology, Geography and Ancient Hindu Culture from 1951.

As mentioned earlier, the soon to be established university also wanted to offer Engineering and Medicine courses. With regard to Medicine, the subcommittee decided that “since universities elsewhere [i.e., in other countries] also do not offer degrees (e.g., diploma) other than M.B.,” and as it would take some time to make necessary arrangements, the Faculty of Medicine was not to be established at the beginning (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.f: 30). Prior to setting up the Medicine faculty, the committee resolved to first set up an institution called “Kathmandu State Medical Faculty” which would then produce “Compounder, Dresser, Midwife and Nurse.” Subsequently, other courses such as “Licenciate in Medicine, Membership in Medicine and Fellowship” could be offered, and only after that, the subcommittee concluded, should the Faculty of Medicine be established within the university and offer an “M.B.” degree (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.f: 30).

With regard to Agri-Science and Engineering (*Viśwokarmā vidyā*), the subcommittee felt that due to severe lack of resources/basic infrastructure these subjects could not be offered by the university immediately. The subcommittee could not even decide the date from which the university could offer these courses. For this they thought the UPC should first invite people from various “departments” and consult them, and only then

could take a decision on the courses/degrees and the date to offer them (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.f). The Agri-Science subcommittee had formed altogether thirteen committees to prepare curricula for various subjects including “General Agriculture, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Veterinary Science, Pisciculture” (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.g). These curricula preparing committees apparently prepared and submitted their work after few months to the main curriculum subcommittee which discussed them and asked for revisions (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.c).

The Medium of Instruction or the Language Issue

The language issue stands out as one of the important issues in the debates and discussions related to the university. While putting forward the agenda, it was mentioned that this (language) issue has to be well thought through (*vicāraṇīya*) from both national(istic) and usefulness (*upayogitā*) point of views. In fact, it is the language issue that led to the idea of setting up of the university in first place (I’ll come back to this point later). The UPC held a long discussion on this, and it was decided that the medium of instruction and examination should be Nepali at all levels. But, because of the scarcity of textbooks/teaching materials as well as qualified teachers to teach at the university level, English could continue as the medium of instruction for the time being or until texts and teachers became available in Nepali (i.e., until Nepali became sufficiently strong, in the words of *Gorkhāpatra*). They set a target of a decade to make this switch from English to Nepali.¹⁵

Commending the decision, *Gorkhāpatra* (of September 6, 1948) wrote in its editorial:

For the country that takes pride in its independence, it would no doubt have been ridiculous to make a language other than Nepali a medium of instruction. No Nepali could agree to this [i.e., of making any language other than Nepali the medium of instruction]. But there is no adequate literature, etc. in Nepali required for a modern university. So our effort must be towards generating adequate literature required. (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.f: 2)

¹⁵ As opposed to “half a decade” time frame set by India to switch to Hindi (see Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.b).

Later, in another editorial, the same newspaper compared the situation with that of India and boasted that there they couldn't make the *rājbhāṣā* (i.e., Hindi) mandatory whereas in Nepal that was not the problem as Nepali was already the national language. "The only problem is the availability of the literature. If we could increase the [volume of] literature we can make Nepali medium of instruction in two–four years," the editorial claimed (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.g: 2).

However, there were also opinions expressed in the favor of bilingualism (English and Nepali), and also skepticism towards *Bhāṣā* (i.e., Nepali) among the members of the UPC. Some argued that conveying the contents, and grading the papers in *Bhāṣā* would be difficult—for there would be foreign (i.e., Indian) teachers involved as Nepal lacked qualified teachers (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 11–12). The chair Mrigendra Shamsher Rana summarized the discussion and concluded thus:

It was unanimously agreed that the ultimate aim should be to make Nepali the medium of learning. But the question is by when can this be done? At the moment, chiefly we don't have books, and even if we prepare them, there are not adequate number of professors who could teach [in Nepali]. Therefore we are unable to discard English for the time being. (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 11–12)

To skeptics, he gave the examples of Geography and History in which a mixed approach was already in use in school education. He added, "Only 1–2 percent was writing in Nepali at the beginning, now we have only 2–4 percent writing in English. The teachers also gained experience and now teach in Nepali very easily. This experience can be applicable to the case of higher education as well" (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 12). In his opinion, it would be wise (*manāsiv*) to keep English for some time until both content and teachers are ready to teach in Nepali. If done this way, he argued, "The *jātiya joś* (national/ethnic enthusiasm) will not harm *jātiya yogyatā* (national competence)" (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 12).¹⁶

¹⁶ He was referring here to Osmania University in Hyderabad, India which offered courses in Urdu, but in his opinion "failed" to produce any notable *vidwāns* (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a).

The Issue of Co-education

When Mohan Shamsheer's predecessor Padma Shamsheer came to power, he formally opened the door for female education in Nepal. In an important speech—which laid the foundation for “Basic Education” in Nepal—Padma also said, “Girls’ schools too shall be opened, but they must be run in such a way that the *modesty* and *good character* of Nepali women are *not* affected” (quoted in Pande 2039 v.s.: 236; italics added). Thus, in principle, Nepali women/girls could as well get access to formal education. And when a girls’ school (as well as a Montessori school) was subsequently opened the possibility became a reality: girls also started going to school. And gradually other schools also opened their door to girl-children.

In the meantime the discourses on *stri-śikṣā* (female education) ensued in the then existing controlled and limited public sphere within the parameters set in Padma Shamsheer’s speech. Mostly men and some women participated in the discourse via their writings—letters to the editor, opinion pieces, articles and short stories—in the only newspaper of the time *Gorkhāpatra* and the magazine *Nepal Śikṣā*. While nobody directly questioned the rationale of the idea itself—these were after all government-controlled media outlets—there were multiple views and opinions on the virtue as well as the need for educating women and other related questions (e.g., subjects to be taught, merits and demerits of co-education, and so on).¹⁷ Some of the participants in that discourse were members of the UPC, including its chair Mrigendra Shamsheer and the head teacher of Darbar High School Bodh Bikram Adhikari.¹⁸ So it was required for the UPC to decide on this issue once and for all.

There were “no two opinions” within the UPC that women too need to be educated, up to MA, the papers reported (see, e.g., Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 13; Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.g). The chair Mrigendra Shamsheer later reaffirmed his stance on the need for educating women. He argued, “There is

¹⁷ While men on the surface welcomed that idea of female education, I have elsewhere argued that they were terrified and sought the opportunity to further “domesticate” the women by engineering the female minds through “appropriate” education. Women on the other hand viewed education as emancipatory and sought to break the chain of confinement within the household by playing the parity card—they wanted to be equal to men and at par with the “foreign” women (Parajuli 2013).

¹⁸ See Khanal (2008 v.s.) for more on head teacher Adhikari, who also taught at the Trichandra College.

no debate: a country will not be advanced (*unnat*) without female-education.” He further added, “If women are not *śikṣit*, education will not spread” (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.d: 169). But when it came to the issue of co-education and the subjects to be taught to women, there was a huge disagreement.

Gorkhāpatra reported that a heated discussion took place on the issue of co-education (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.g: 1). *Nepal Śikṣā* wrote in a similar vein—*nikai balābal ko bahas bhayo*, i.e., a heated debate took place (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 13). Some members of the UPC were of the opinions that both boys and girls should be taught separately from early on. Citing examples of Banaras and Allahabad universities where girls and boys were reportedly taught separately, they argued that it was done so after seeing the “fault” in co-education. A few even argued/feared that if co-education was adopted it would eventually end the *varṇa* (i.e., caste) system itself (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a).

But the other group argued in favor of co-education. There should be such an environment in the educational institution that both the girls and boys should feel like they are brothers and sisters, they argued. Fault/corrupt practices (*doṣ*) can occur anywhere, not only in the schools, they contended; however, the chances of corruption among the educated ones (male and female) would be less as they won’t misbehave in such a way that their education itself would be blemished. Therefore, they argued, co-education should be there from the lower classes to the university level (see, Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 13).

Many reportedly voiced that co-education should be there up to the age of twelve and again when the students reach BA or MA level, as well as in technical education. Some argued in favor of bringing the lower age limit to eight years and increasing the higher level to MA. At the end, according to *Nepal Śikṣā*, the chair of the UPC gave his verdict that “for the time being the age limit for the lower levels should be twelve.” “But,” he added, “the government had not prohibited co-education beyond that age, but as a responsible government, it would not encourage the practice” (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 13). Separate education for boys and girls meant double expenses, so acknowledging this fact the chair suggested that they report on this issue and let the government take a decision on it. *Gorkhāpatra*’s report however slightly differed on the conclusion. It said that a majority of the UPC members decided to fix the co-education age limit for lower levels

at twelve but also allowed co-education for higher and technical education (see Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.g: 1; cf. Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 13).

The University Site

The UPC had formed a separate subcommittee to search a suitable site for the university.¹⁹ It apparently considered several possibilities and came up with its recommendations (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.e). The subcommittee, in one of the UPC meetings, put forward its suggestions that it would be best to establish the university either somewhere between Bijeshwori to Sangla Futung or from Kapan to Gorkarna in Kathmandu (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.c). Likewise, the subcommittee recommended to allot at least twenty-five *bighās* (around ten acres) of land for the university which also had access to water and electricity facility (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.e). The new member Nripajang Rana²⁰ who replaced another member argued that the university should be established in a bit faraway from the city as it was going to be a “residential one.” He said that the university should be established either in Nagarkot (32 kilometers north-east from Kathmandu) or Nagarjun or Godavari (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b). But none of the others seems to have supported the idea of having a university in Nagarkot.

After the discussion, the chair concluded in favor of having a university near Kathmandu rather than far from it, also because of the associated cost. He was of the opinion that if there were fifteen-twenty thousand students and tram service (which he saw the possibility in the future) were in place, then founding a university in Nagarkot could as well have been okay. But, he qualified, in the present condition, if the students could not commute from home and transporting materials becomes difficult and costly, then “our aim will not be fulfilled.” “Therefore,” he added, “a place near to the city is better otherwise Nagarkot is also okay” (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b: 368). Hemraj Pandit seconded the chair’s views and voiced his arguments in favor of having the university in Kapan where “water was available and people could even walk from home from all three cities.” According to him, Nagarkot was not feasible because of the distance (far from the city), scarcity

¹⁹ The subcommittee was headed by Suvarna Shamsher Rana and its other members were Khadganarsingh Rana, Rudraraj Pandey, Siddhimani AaDi, Bhim Bahadur Pande and Bhavanath Upadhyaya (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.e).

²⁰ Rana became the education minister in the first post-February 1951 Rana-Nepali Congress government.

of water, difficulty in transporting goods, and the place was too windy (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b: 369). The UPC then decided to send engineers to survey and also medical doctors to examine Kapan and other areas proposed by the site selection subcommittee (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b).²¹ However, it is not clear from the reports published in the periodicals whether the subcommittee recommended any particular site for the proposed university.

The Rationale for the University

The above description makes it amply clear that there was a serious attempt to establish a university in Nepal during Mohan Shamsher Rana's tenure. But we still do not get a clear idea on the imperatives for the Rana(s) to set up a university. Soorya Bahadur Shakya (2009[1983]: 4) writes, "With a view to pacifying the growing discontent among the politically conscious educated younger generation the last Rana Prime Minister Mohan Shamsher made an announcement regarding the establishment of a university." It is true that by the late 1940s (especially after the independence of India in 1947) the political movement against the Rana regime was gradually picking momentum, both in and outside Nepal. Political activists were making a case for the change by comparing and contrasting the developments that have occurred in the neighborhood and elsewhere. The discontent among the populace therefore was simmering (Pradhan 2047 v.s.; Updetya 1992; Gautam 2055 v.s., 2064 v.s.).²² This had forced the regime to make certain changes; it was adopting

²¹ According to Hemraj's grandson Prakash A. Raj, Hemraj—who was the most powerful civilian during the reign of Chandra Shamsher Rana (1901–1929)—had even offered his land in Kapan area for the cause of the university (Raj 2035 v.s.). However, neither *Gorkhāpatra* nor *Nepal Śikṣā* reported this. Had there been such an offer made publicly, the two periodicals would have most likely reported as they reported other minute details of the UPC's deliberations.

²² For the political activism in west Nepal see Pageni (2053 v.s.) and for Pokhara see Parajuli (2008). The political activism of the Nepali activists could also be gleaned from the occasional negative reports published in the state-owned newspaper. For example, *Gorkhāpatra* reported (of an incident that occurred more than a month earlier) highlighting the "achievements" of the state: "On Asoj 27 [i.e., October 12, 1948], the day of Vijaya Dashami, some *bahakāyiekā* (brain washed) youths came in groups and gave speech that was objectionable (*bādhā pārne*)." Forty-nine youths were arrested on that occasion according to *Gorkhāpatra*. But on November 14 only two were arrested. This showed the "effectiveness" of the state machinery, *Gorkhāpatra* claimed, "Now there is peace everywhere" (Gorkhāpatra 2005 v.s.h: 1).

a two-pronged strategy: one, the regime was trying to quell the opposition by using brute force, and by introducing stringent legal measures. And two, they were also announcing newer development/reform projects in the name of “advancing” the country, to counter the otherwise allegations made by oppositional activists. The ruler’s liberal public facade needed to be crafted—that of a *vidyāpremi*, *prajāvatsal*, *vikāspremi* personality. And the university project fitted this schema.

This however only partially explains the story. For the rest of the story we once again have to churn the archives, which provide a clue. Speaking at the first meeting of the UPC, the chair Mrigendra Shamsher Rana rationalized the need for a university thus:

[We don’t think] that there is anybody who thinks/questions whether the time has arrived to set up a university. If there is one, the answer is only one: In five years, to acquire higher education we will neither get the chance in the world language English nor in the national language Nepali. We have to seek the support of a provincial language [i.e., we have to do that in one of the provincial languages of India]. Which brave Nepali would not come forward to stop such a process of extinction of one’s own language and eventually the existence of one’s country itself? (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a: 10)

He was referring to the decisions (or rather demands and discourses) of the newly independent India regarding the language issue. Another piece of report published in *Nepal Śikṣā* makes it abundantly clear: “We’ve to rush to establish a university in Nepal because in India there is a talk of providing higher education in regional languages” (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.c: 309). English however was a different thing—an international language; but to

The paper also published an interview (perhaps the first formal interview published in *Gorkhāpatra*) of the officer of the police department on the “hooliganism (*huldaṅgā*) spread in all three towns of the Valley” which now was under control (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.i). *Gorkhāpatra* also published a notice for the government offices across Nepal that *Nepal Pukār*, mouth piece of the banned Nepali Congress, was banned and those who carry this paper should be arrested (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.j: 1). The *Gorkhāpatra* of December 15, 1948 published a release of the Department of *Pracār* (propaganda) stating that B.P. Koirala had been arrested with his two assistants from Kathmandu along with objectionable materials (Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.k: 1).

provide higher education to Nepalis in Hindi or any other regional languages of India was considered suicidal. This they thought would eventually lead to the extinction of national language Nepali, and eventually Nepal's national sovereignty.

In another report on the UPC meetings the following is mentioned: "Now that there is talk in India of continuing with English for a while, maybe we could as well keep silent [adjourn the university-making exercise] for the time being." But to do so, the report said, would be to back down from the government's announcement. Furthermore, "If there is no university in the independent country Nepal, it gives [people/opposition activists] a chance to criticize" (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b: 366).

What these examples tell us is that the Nepal's university project was mostly the outcome of (or better say reaction to) the developments happening in India. The state-owned newspaper was carefully watching the developments across the border in this regard and was publishing related news (see, for example, Gorkhapatra 2005 v.s.h; 2005 v.s.i; 2005 v.s.j; 2006 v.s.b, etc.). Even before the decision to set up a university was made public, *Gorkhāpatra* had published news related to Hindi-ization drive that was taking place in India.

The movement to make Hindi the national language began well before independence was achieved in India in 1947. People like Mahatma Gandhi (of Gujarat) and C. Rajagopalachari (of Madras) of the non-Hindi areas were also part of this movement, which the Indian National Congress (INC) furthered. Thus Hindi became sort of "India's unofficial national language or *Rashtra Bhasha* which was to get official status when freedom came" (Ram 1968: 3).²³ Even though the INC had in principle agreed to replace English, after independence was obtained, there was a growing opposition to Hindi's elevation to official/national language. In fact, one of the most

²³ Ram however argues that what Gandhi meant by Hindi was Hindustani, which connoted both Hindi and Urdu (Ram 1968: 3). It was Gandhi who got the INC to accept Hindi as its official language, according to Ram (1968: 4). So Hindi became the language of Indian nationalism, but when the idea of Pakistan emerged, Urdu then no longer remained a part of Hindustani (or Hindi). "When independence was around the corner, the INC accepted the principle of replacing English as the educational medium. But there was no accord yet on replacing English as the country's official language" (Ram 1968: 4-5). For an insightful analysis of how Khari Boli Hindi rose to the prominence of a "national language," see Orsini 2002.

contentious issues in the Indian Constituent Assembly (CA) was the issue of national/official language, and it even threatened the unity of the INC party. Five weeks before the CA took decision on the language issue, the INC passed a resolution that “there will be a State language in which the business of the Union will be conducted” but didn’t mention which that language would be (Ram 1968: 6). According to Ambedkar, “There was no article which proved more controversial than article 115,” which dealt with the language question. After a prolonged discussion—in which members especially belonging to southern states vehemently opposed Hindi being the sole official language—when the question was put for vote in the CA in September 1949, it was a tie, 78 against 78. Later, “Hindi won its place as a national language by one vote,” i.e., 78–77 (Ambedkar 1955).

The Constitution of India that came into effect from January 26, 1950 says in article 343 the following regarding official language:

1. The official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script...
2. Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all the official purposes of the Union...²⁴

While there was opposition to Hindi in the south, in the north the Hindi-zealots were demanding the scrapping of English and replacing it by Hindi immediately. However, it was the northern pro-Hindi discourse that Nepal was exposed to, also because of its geographical proximity as the news reports published in *Gorkhāpatra* illustrate.

Apart from the constitutional debates, there was yet another Indian exercise—that of a University Education Commission—that had a bearing on Nepal’s higher education planning. On November 4, 1948, the government

²⁴ Available at <http://indiankanoon.org/doc/379861/>; accessed June 28, 2014. Even though there was fifteen-year grace period for the switch, this decision was not welcomed by non-Hindi speakers. There was anti-Hindi movement in different parts of India, including a Tamil language movement in the south (Ramaswamy 1997). When the fifteen-year deadline was approaching, the movement in the south picked up in which people even self-immolated. Keeping this in mind, the Indian Parliament brought into force the Official Languages Act, 1963 which allowed the continuation of the use of English along with Hindi for official purposes even after 1965.

of India formed a ten-member University Education Commission under the chairmanship of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, a philosopher and former vice-chancellor of Banaras Hindu University who went on to become the second President of India. The Commission was set up “to report on Indian University Education and suggest improvements and extensions that may be desirable to suit present and future requirements of the country” (MoE 1962: vi). The Commission submitted its report in August 1949.

The report of the commission was eagerly awaited in Nepal as well, as it was also supposed to take a decision (or recommend) on the language issue—medium of instruction. If it were to succumb to the demands made by the Hindi zealots then the Nepal government would have no choice but to establish a university. At least that seems to be the feeling among the Nepali participants of the university establishing exercise. The two periodicals were keeping a close eye on the developments related to the Commission and its chair Radhakrishnan. *Nepal Śikṣā* reported:

The Commission of the universities of the India is now preparing a report on the education in Shimla under the chairmanship of Dr Radhakrishnan. Since he is the professor of Ethics and ancient religion in Oxford University, and he has to go to England before September, therefore it is believed that the report will be ready before that. After the report is published or even before the report is published [it would be nice] if we could in any way get a chance to look at it, and benefit from it. (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.c: 309)

A news report published in *Gorkhāpatra* of July 15, 1949 informed the readers that Radhakrishnan had been appointed ambassador of India to Russia, and therefore the report of the commission was likely to come out by August (Gorkhapatra 2006 v.s.c: 1). Another news published a month later (August 15, 1949) repeated the same optimism and reported that the chair would be leaving next month for Moscow (Gorkhapatra 2006 v.s.d: 1). Two weeks later (on August 29, 1949) *Gorkhāpatra* reported that the Commission had submitted its report to the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and listed only the chief points that they (i.e., Nepali authorities) were eagerly waiting for: (1) The medium of instruction was gradually to be switched to regional languages (2) For the transitory period, English was to be continued and (3) No time line was fixed for the phasing out of

English (Gorkhapatra 2006 v.s.e: 1). These points, however, are more close to the Indian constitutional provision than the actual recommendations of the Radhakrishnan Commission, which appear slightly different.²⁵ But that did not matter much. The message to the Nepali Rana rulers was clear: there was no need to hurry to establish a university in Nepal, and the university education in English was going to stay in India, at least for the time being.

The Project Aborted

From the discussion above, two things become apparent: that the university idea took a shape mostly because of the developments across the southern border, and that there was a serious effort to convert the idea into reality. But the project was finally aborted for a couple of reasons: First, while the rulers were serious in their effort, the project was not conceived because they genuinely thought of educating their “subjects.” So when the urgency that they initially felt waned and when it became apparent that English would continue to serve as the language of the higher education in independent India, the imperative was in a sense lost. Second, during the planning exercise it also became apparent that the setting up of even a modest university was going to cost a lot of money, which the Rana rulers did not want to expend unless otherwise it was *extremely* necessary.

The UPC started off ambitiously; it wanted a residential university; it wanted separate education for women students; it wanted to offer as many as twenty-six [thirty-five] subjects; it wanted to have research centers; it wanted to have everything. But when the finance subcommittee calculated

²⁵ The main points of the recommendation related to language were: “the medium of instruction for higher education English be replaced as early as practicable by an Indian language which cannot be Sanskrit on account of vital difficulties.” “[P]upils at the higher secondary and University stages be made conversant, with three languages—the regional language, the Federal language and English.” “Higher education be imparted through the instrumentality of the regional language with the option to use, the Federal language as the medium of instruction either for some subjects or for all subjects.” “[I]mmediate steps be taken for developing the Federal and Regional languages: ...Provincial Governments be required to take steps to introduce the teaching of the Federal language in all classes of higher secondary schools, in degree colleges, and in Universities.” “English be studied in high schools and in the Universities in order that we may keep in touch with the living stream of ever-growing knowledge” (MoE 1962: 284–285; see also Ayyar 2017).

the expenditure, it turned out to be more expensive than perhaps initially assumed. According one report, if all the subjects were to be offered then it would, Mrigendra Shamsher Rana claimed, cost Rs. 8–10 lakhs annually, that too only for the salaries of the teachers (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b: 366). Going by the Rs. 4–5 thousand monthly estimated expenses per subject mentioned by the Director, the total cost would amount to twenty-one lakhs for all thirty-five subjects. This amount would even surpass a year's total budget of the government: in the initial twenty months or so after Mohan Shamsher Rana came to power, the government claimed that it spent around forty-nine lakhs rupees from the state treasury (Gorkhapatra 2006 v.s.f: 1). And Mohan Shamsher in his speech already was complaining that the expenses of the state was increasing rapidly whereas the revenue was not keeping pace (Gorkhapatra 2006 v.s.g).

The ambitious university project would therefore be a very heavy burden on the state treasury had it been implemented fully. The UPC discussed this issue in its meeting. The chair Mrigendra Shamsher Rana set the tone—he told the members that it was wise to start small which he claimed was corroborated even by a number of university officials of India during his interaction with them on this issue (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b: 366–367). His views were seconded by the Vice Chair and other “powerful” members of the UPC; the Vice Chair suggested that it was better to begin by offering two-three subjects initially (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b: 367–368). The editorial of *Nepal Śikṣā* quoted an article on university reform by Yadunath Sirkar of Calcutta University to support the idea of having a university offering a limited number of subjects (see Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.c.: 307–308).

We already also see the glimpses in the periodicals that the authority wanted to abort the project when the initial reports came from India. They however at the same time feared that it would hurt the pride of the government and give the opponents (who were increasingly becoming active) further ammunition to criticize the regime (see, Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b). Mrigendra Shamsher Rana said, “To have one's own language is a thing to be proud of, and likewise it is essential to have one's own university. But, at the same time, money shouldn't just be spent [i.e., it is not wise to spend money] for pride's sake.” “Therefore,” he added, “our aim should be to establish one university but with wise spending” (Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.b: 365).

While in the beginning there was much fanfare about the project; the UPC was active holding meetings and making the decisions public, gradually

the meetings became rare. Or at least they were not as enthusiastically and regularly reported. The editors of *Nepal Śikṣā* felt that they had to quell the public feeling that the university project had stalled and therefore they detailed the progress made until then on that front in a long editorial (see Nepal Shiksha 2006 v.s.c: 306–309). However, the reference to university project is missing in the latter day reports of *Gorkhāpatra*. It is not very clear if the UPC submitted its report. Perhaps it did, but it did not find a mention in *Gorkhāpatra* or in *Nepal Śikṣā*. Some months later (on January 23, 1950) Prime Minister Mohan Shamsher Rana claimed that he had already set aside Rs. five lakhs to be spent next year (i.e., 1950–1951) for the purpose of the university, and announced that the university project will come into fruition in/from 2008 v.s. (1951–1952) [*Gorkhapatra* 2006 v.s.g: 4; see also *Gorkhapatra* 2006 v.s.f; cf. *Gorkhapatra* 2006 v.s.h: 2].

But we neither see the report published in the state-owned periodical nor any of that money used for the said purpose (or for that matter on further developments/decisions of the UPC). In the meanwhile, the political crisis deepened; King Tribhuvan fled to India and the banned Nepali Congress party launched an armed struggle in November 1950 against the Rana regime. This armed struggle ended in a compromise, popularly known as the Delhi Compromise, which ultimately saw the end of the Rana regime. With the downfall of the family oligarchy of the Ranas, even though the schools expanded exponentially, the idea of a Nepali university faded quietly into oblivion for a few years. The idea was resurrected later with the formation of the Nepal National Education Planning Commission in 1954, but it took five more years for the idea to materialize; it was only in 1959 that a university—Tribhuvan University—was set up in Nepal (Shakya 2009[1983]; Parajuli 2018).

Conclusion

There was a serious effort to establish a university in Nepal in the late Rana period, particularly during the last Rana Prime Minister Mohan Shamsher's tenure. This is elucidated by the activities of the UPC reported in the periodicals of that period. While at the outset the effort to establish a university may look paradoxical given Mohan Shamsher's anti-public education background, and restrictions that he imposed on civil liberties, I've shown that it is not necessarily so. The university project was initiated in Nepal not with the "egalitarian" aims of providing higher education to the

masses, but rather it was an outcome of the political developments across the border, and inside Nepal.

While increased oppositional political activities against the Ranas in and outside Nepal did play an important role, it was chiefly the international political factors that compelled Mohan Shamsheer to take the initiative to establish the university. The Nepali authorities feared the vernacularization of Indian universities and the phasing out of English. The imperative to rely on Hindi or other regional languages of India for higher education in Nepal (as Nepal's only college then, Trichandra College, was affiliated to an Indian university) would, the authorities thought, lead to the extinction of Nepal's national language, and concomitantly the Nepali nation (Nepal Shiksha 2005 v.s.a). The seed for the university project was thus sown, but once again due mainly to internal and external political developments as well as financial reasons—as is evident by the chair's repeated reference to the financial implications—the project was aborted.

Nepal is often times portrayed as a territory that was “secluded” from the outside world, and was in “slumber” before 1951 when the Rana regime fell. This narrative however has not gone unchallenged—some have called it a strategy of “selective exclusion” (Liechty 1997) on the part of the rulers and others have argued that Nepal was already a part of the “globalized economy” by the early decades of the twentieth century (e.g., Pande 2039 v.s.; Mikesell and Shrestha 1990). This article shows that Nepal's seemingly internal educational exercise of the pre-1951 period is clearly a reaction to the political developments outside Nepal. Such an internal reaction is however different from the post-1951 era where we see more of a direct involvement (overt or covert) of external actors in Nepal's socio-political development landscape.²⁶

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²⁶ See, for example, Robertson (2019) and Rappleye (2019); also Parajuli (2018) where I discuss how American and Indian interests clashed during the founding of Tribhuvan University in the latter half of the 1950s.

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Biographical Note

Lokranjan Parajuli is an editor of this journal and also of *Samaj Adhyayan*. He is a researcher at Martin Chautari and has co/edited several books. Email: rameshparajuli@gmail.com