



# Nepali Diaspora Organizations in North America: Achievements, Opportunities, and Challenges

## SUMMARY REPORT OF DISCUSSIONS AT THE FORUM

*Held at*  
**Nepali National Convention**  
**Coppell, Texas, USA, July 2, 2022**  
*Organized by*  
**Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA), and**  
**Nepalese Society of Texas (NST)**

**ANA - 2022 DALLAS, TEXAS**  
A Panel Discussion at Nepali National Convention  
**Nepali Diaspora Organizations in North America:  
Achievements, Opportunities and Challenges**  
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July 2nd Saturday at 2:00 PM  
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 <b>Dr. Ambika P. Adhikari</b> Forum Coordinator/Panelist	 <b>Dr. Minendra Rijal</b> Guest Speaker	 <b>Dr. Swarnim Wagle</b> Guest Speaker	 <b>Dr. Drona Rasali, Canada</b> Panelist	 <b>Dr. Uttam Gaulee, MD</b> Panelist
 <b>Dr. Arjun Banjade, TX</b> Panelist	 <b>Dr. Pragati Ghimire, FL</b> Panelist	 <b>CPA Laxman Pradhan, VA</b> Panelist	 <b>Dr. Shilu Ghimire, TX</b> Panelist	 <b>Mr. Khagendra Adhikari</b> Moderator

**JULY 2022**

*Edited By*  
**Ambika P. Adhikari**



## **Summary report of discussions at the forum “Nepali Diaspora Organizations in North America: Achievements, Opportunities, and Challenges”**

Coppell, Texas, USA  
July 2022

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Note: The opinions expressed by the authors in this report are personal, and do not necessarily represent that of ANA or NST.



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## Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the several people who helped organize and run the forum “Nepali Diaspora Organizations in North America: Achievements, Opportunities and Challenges”. The forum was held on July 2, 2022 at the Nepali National Convention organized by the Association of NepalIs in the Americas (ANA), and was hosted by the Nepalese Society of Texas (NST).

Cordial thanks go to the convention organizing team of ANA and NST for including the diaspora forum at the convention. I offer my gratitude to several individuals who helped in the preparation of the forum, and its logistics on site. I am especially grateful to Bijay Bhattarai, Rajendra Wagle, Satish Tripathi, Arjun Banjade, Anjan Shrestha, Thala Raj Panta, Maya Sharma, and the convention team, and ANA and NST executives who helped us from the early days of preparation, and for providing logistics on the day of the forum. Thank you, Niranjana Adhikari, Esq. for taking notes of the presentations and remarks, Maya Sharma for the on-site logistics, and to Prof. Bishnu Ghimire and Bijaya Shrestha and others for the pictures used in the photo essay section of this report.

Kudos and thanks are due to all the panelists: Dr. Minendra Rijal, Dr. Arjun Banjade, Dr. Shilu Ghimire Neupane, Dr. Pragati Ghimire Aryal, CPA Laxman Pradhan, and moderator Mr. Khagendra Adhikari for making time to travel to Coppell, Texas and to present their expert ideas. Thank you, Dr. Swarnim Wagle, Prof. Drona Rasali, and Prof. Uttam Gaulee for taking time to present remotely.

Thank you, Dr. Arjun Banjade, and DC Nepal, for live streaming the forum to allow thousands of viewers to watch it in real time, and the recorded version later. The video can be watched at: <https://fb.watch/e9RsTcWcoE/>

We are grateful to all the attendees who took time to join and listen to the presentations and discussion. Many of the participants helped us with comments, questions, and feedback both before and after the forum.

The opinions expressed by the panelists, moderator and the editor of this summary report are their personal opinions, and do not necessarily represent the views of ANA or NST. We hope this summary report will be of value to those who are interested in the topic of the Nepali diaspora, and the management of the diaspora organizations.

**Ambika P. Adhikari, DDes.**  
Report Editor



## **Forum: Nepali Diaspora Organizations in North America: Achievements, Opportunities and Challenges**

**Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA)  
2022 Annual Convention  
2:00-3:30 pm, Saturday, July 2, 2022  
Four Points by Sheraton, Dallas Fort Worth Airport N.  
1580 Point West Boulevard, Coppell, TX, USA**

### **Introduction to the Forum**

The forum “Nepali Diaspora Organizations in North America: Achievements, Opportunities and Challenges” was held at the annual convention of the Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA) in Coppell, TX, USA on July 2, 2022. Nepalese Society of Texas (NST) hosted the convention and forum. As studies related to diaspora have become important topics in the fields of development, community culture, sociology and anthropology, ANA decided to include this topic among the forums organized at the national convention.

### **Background**

The global Nepali diaspora population in 2022 is estimated at 800,000 (See Reference #1). Although no authoritative statistics is available, the Nepali diaspora in North America in 2022 is estimated to be at least 250,000 strong (see References #1). To support the community in its social, cultural, professional, and philanthropic pursuits and aspirations, several hundred socio-cultural and professional associations and organizations in the continent have been established by the Nepali diaspora members. As the diaspora number grows, and old associations begin to mature, and new organizations keep forming, they all face several growth and management related opportunities and challenges.

Organizations are defined as formal entities with human members that are established to achieve common goals of its members, and the related larger community. Organizations have well-defined objectives, structure, by-laws, protocols, and procedures on how the bodies will be run and governed.

The Nepali diaspora organizations in the North American continent - mostly established as non-profits, charities, or informal groups - have generally served the community well, and have achieved much success to reach their goals. In the forum, we mainly covered the non-profit and voluntary organizations built by the Nepali communities in the US and Canada.



Organizations evolve from the visions and teamwork of its leaders and members. The classic Tuckman's model of project management (see References #3) identifies five phases of teamwork development as:

1. Forming,
2. Storming,
3. Norming,
4. Performing, and
5. Adjourning.

The Nepali diaspora organizations in North America are in the different phases of these performance stages in terms of their organizational teamwork. Some have just begun, and some have already matured.

Organizational sociology is the study of the formation, growth, structure, bureaucracy, management, and impact of the organization on the community and larger society. It also studies the performance, efficiency, and effectiveness of the organization and how decisions are made, and work performed to reach the stated goals.

### **Purpose of the Forum**

The purpose of the forum was as follows.

- Review the sociology of diaspora organizations to advance the community's social, cultural professional, and philanthropic needs and aspirations. Assess the role of diaspora in national development.
- Asses the level of successes of organizations to achieve goals.
- Review the challenges being faced by the organizations including personal goals of the leaders, management and bureaucratic needs and hurdles, and groups that may evolve and hinder the organizational objectives.
- Discuss case studies, examples and best practices as seen in other non-profits in North America.
- Propose, recommend, and outline way forward in improving the functioning of the organizations.

The forum summary is expected to be of interest to the diaspora members, students, academics and professionals interested in the work of the Nepali diaspora including their activities in the adopted countries and development in Nepal.

### **Logistics Related to the Forum**

The forum had a panel of nine members in the session that lasted for 1.5 hours. Each speaker was allotted about 5-10 minutes to speak. The invited speaker and distinguished panelist, Dr. Minendra Rijal, who was given a bit longer speaking time. Six of the panelists: Ambika P.



Adhikari, Arjun Banjade, Laxman Pradhan, Pragati Ghimire Aryal, Shilu Ghimire Neupane, and Minendra Rijal were physically present at the session, while three panelists: Swarnim Wagle, Drona Rasali, and Uttam Gaulee sent recorded video presentations. The forum was moderated and recorded.

The summary of the presentations and discussions include the notes provided by some of the presenters are attached as appendices to this report.

The forum was a voluntary effort, where all panelists and organizers covered their own cost of travel, lodging, boarding, and any other items related to their attendance.

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## References

1. Adhikari, A. P. (2022, April 2). A Review of Nepali Diaspora, their Role in Nepal's Development, and Lessons for Developing Countries. <https://doi.org/10.31235/osf.io/kj64z>
2. Sociology of Organizations. <http://sociology.iresearchnet.com/sociology-of-organizations/>. Accessed on April 4, 2022.
3. How to Recognize the 5 Stages of Group Development. (2021, November 2). <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/how-to-recognize-the-5-stages-of-group-development#what-is-tuckmans-model-of-group-development>

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## Panelists

Dr. Ambika P. Adhikari, Phoenix, AZ. - (Forum Coordinator)  
Dr. Pragati Ghimire Aryal, Tampa, FL.  
Dr. Arjun Banjade, Dallas, TX.  
Dr. Uttam Gaulee, Baltimore, MD. - *remote*  
Dr. Shilu Ghimire Neupane, Dallas, TX.  
Mr. Laxman Pradhan, CPA, Ashton, MD.  
Dr. Drona Rasali, Vancouver, BC. - *remote*  
Dr. Minendra Rijal, Kathmandu. (Distinguished panelist)  
Dr. Swarnim Wagle, Kathmandu. (Distinguished panelist) - *remote*

## Moderator

Khagendra Adhikari, Alexandria, VA.





## Welcome and Introductions

At the outset, forum coordinator and panelist, **Ambika P. Adhikari** welcomed all the panelists and attendees. He outlined the objectives and the expected outcome of the forum. He stated that the forum was designed to discuss how the Nepali diaspora organizations in the US and Canada are performing and how their management can influence their effectiveness in serving the community, and helping in Nepal's development.

Moderator **Khagendra Adhikari** briefly introduced all the panelists and invited them one by one to present their thoughts on the topic of the diaspora organizations in North America. He advised the audience both in the room and attending virtually to go to the ANA's website ([www.ANA1983.org](http://www.ANA1983.org)) for detailed bio of the speakers and the moderator and for any further info on the forum. He then invited each panelist one by one to put forward their thoughts on the topic.

## Summary of Presentations by the Panelists

Distinguished panelist **Swarnim Wagle** made his initial remarks highlighting the origin of diaspora formation globally. The Nepali diaspora has now reached an important numerical threshold and it can now be a viable force for good. He cited his own experience in working for the government of Nepal to underscore the importance of diaspora in Nepal's development. With the diaspora's growing numbers and financial prowess, he suggested there might be adequate surplus financial capacity to invest in Nepal. For this to happen, Nepal must provide opportunities and conducive environments for good returns on diaspora investments.

Nepal too has policies to obtain benefits from diasporas. Diaspora can support the native lands via 1) Philanthropic contribution, 2) Remittance, 3) Talent, 4) knowledge (professors and researchers).

How the diaspora groups govern themselves will help establish the legitimacy of the organizations, and how they are enabled to create impact become important issues. The diaspora groups also need to consider representation in Nepal. He gave the example of France where its diaspora groups have guaranteed representation in the French parliament.

**Drona Rasali** opined that social consciousness can help the Nepali organizations in improving their ethical and fair practices. He explored perspectives in the areas of the prosperity, physical and emotional well-being, social justice, cultural safety, and planetary obligations for the Nepali diaspora organizations.

Rasali cited the example of how Nepali community members joined hands in acquiring land lots in British Columbia, Canada in 2021 to help create a "Nepali village" and support the





community's prosperity. Community groups can follow a similar collaborative and team approach in academic, research and business ventures to help strengthen organizations.

He stated that Nepali migrants have been arriving in North America in large numbers only recently, especially since the 1990s. Earlier, it was primarily for higher education, and some of them decided to settle in North America.

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health as Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Each member of the community and organization should feel safe, and should be free from any discrimination or hate. Diaspora organizations have a role to play here.

Rasali spoke about the people of traditionally dominant castes often disregarding to the dignity of the people of historically marginalized and oppressed castes or gender. Many of these traditions can cause unacceptable violation of cultural safety for the historically marginalized people including Dalits, women and those from non-binary genders. Stratification of Nepali community has also caused social injustice in the diaspora. The diaspora organizations must abandon outdated traditions that often linger as cultural baggage even in the Americas, and adopt secular and equitable approaches.

He concluded that prosperity, physical and emotional well-being, social justice, cultural safety, and a sense of planetary obligations are important for diaspora organizations.

**Laxman Pradhan** spoke on how the nascent Nepali diaspora organizations can attain financial sustainability. Financial challenges of the organizations can be overcome by promoting community engagement and leadership coupled with transparency and accountability in management. Clear objectives, budgets, strategies and action plans, and good leadership will greatly help move the organizations forward and make them more effective. Many of the non-profits in the US face imminent bankruptcy, cashflow shortages and financial problems. Fiscal management and a robust financial health of an organization can help avert organizational failures.

Pradhan spoke about the achievements, challenges and opportunities for the diaspora organizations in the USA. He provided an example of how ANA also needs to watch its financial portfolio closely to ensure that its fiscal health remains intact, and the association can function effectively.

**Uttam Gaulee** highlighted several mechanisms to engage the diaspora in the socio-economic transformation of Nepal. His observations were based on the recent history of some nations that have successfully driven their economic prosperity. He illustrated how diasporic figures Gandhi and Manmohan Singh helped in India's transformation towards a modern state and economy.



Gaulee identified some areas where Nepal can benefit from the following contributions from the diaspora as follows.

- Intellectual contribution in policy level
- Establishment of academic leadership in Nepali universities
- Establishment of polytechnic institutes and community colleges in every province
- The movement to create a Native Artisans' University

He argued that Nepal can benefit by engaging the diaspora as resources in its nation building efforts. For example, individual diaspora scholars are perhaps the most important agents in transnational educational collaboration and exchange. Emerging technologies make communication across the world easier to use—including videoconferencing, collaborative research in real time, internet-based telephones, wi-fi based connections, and mobile devices.

He cited the Brain Gain Center (BGC), which was a strategy focusing on investment in soft infrastructure sparking discovery and innovation by connecting the Nepali people globally. He thanked the diaspora experts including Ambika Adhikari, who demonstrated their willingness to support their homeland by registering in the Center. He thanked former minister Pradeep Gyawali for establishing and providing leadership to the BCG when he was the foreign minister.

Gaulee expressed pleasure in seeing that increasing political engagement of the Nepali diaspora in North America. He opined that such engagement would help toward addressing the challenges identified by Ambika Adhikari and diasporic obligations as enumerated by Drona Rasali. The diaspora will also help in achieving the financial sustainability as depicted by Laxman Pradhan, and entrepreneurial gain as described by Shilu Ghimire.

**Pragati Ghimire Aryal** spoke about the importance of engaging the younger generation in the community organizations. She observed that except in a very few diaspora organizations, such intergenerational involvement was limited. She also spoke about how the organizations can help in philanthropic activities in Nepal and the local communities in the United States, and provided examples of her own involvement in such programs.

The millennials in the diaspora and in Nepal should connect and form network to help both groups. The resulting network will help the younger generations in the diaspora experience gratitude and those in Nepal to benefit from the global connectivity.

**Shilu Ghimire Neupane** emphasized how entrepreneurial activities in the diaspora are important in establishing the diaspora communities as important forces in the community and in enhancing their abilities to help Nepal. She provided examples of women entrepreneurs establishing businesses and collaborating to advance the financial autonomy of the diaspora members, especially women. Establishing businesses gives the diaspora women financial autonomy,



confidence to deal with the situation, and chart their own destinies while financially supporting their families. The diaspora organizations can help train the entrepreneurs do better.

**Arjun Banjade** provided a critical review of how the Nepali diaspora organizations function in North America. He stated that although most organizations begin with good intention and dedicated leaders, many often degenerate into a platform to carryout agendas of Nepali political parties. He thought both the diaspora leaders and Nepali political leaders should take at least some of the responsibilities towards resolving these issues. The diaspora organizers should leave their political baggage behind, and should focus on achieving the objectives of the organizations.

Banjade added that the diaspora members should engage in the political process of the adopted land so that they can be more effective in helping the local community and eventually Nepal too. The organizations can facilitate such programs.

Distinguished panelist **Minendra Rijal** reminisced his own days in the diaspora while a student and later professor in the USA. The diaspora can play a critical role in supporting Nepal's development. This has made non-resident Nepali citizenship, property rights for the diaspora members with foreign citizenship, and related legal issues important. As Nepali political leaders have some of their own or their close acquaintance' family members settle in North America, Europe and Oceania, they are now well aware of the important role that members of the diaspora can play in furthering Nepal's interests.

Rijal described some of the programs, initiatives and regulations that the Nepali government has been advancing to promote and encourage diasporic engagement. He also stated that several challenges still remain in facilitating diaspora engagement in Nepal including some confusions related to the ancestral property rights of those who have taken citizenship of foreign countries. He said most Nepalis going for foreign labor are less educated, but they send the bulk of remittances that Nepal enjoys. The Nepali government must work to expand employment opportunities in the country itself.

Moderator **Khagendra Adhikari** thanked all the panelists and handed over the microphone to Ambika P. Adhikari.

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*Note:* The speaking notes and extended abstracts of the presentations from the panelists are provided at the end of this summary report as appendices.



## Forum Coordinator's Closing Remarks

Forum coordinator and panelist, **Ambika P. Adhikari** provided an overview of the situation related to the global diaspora and how the growing Nepali diaspora permanently settled in developed countries is perhaps more than 800,000 strong. He felt that the global Nepali population is a “diaspora in the making”. It can be a significant force for helping the local community and the native land. Adhikari estimated that the Nepali diaspora population in North America is upward of 250,000 in 2022 including 200,000 in the US (198,000 in 2019, Pew Research Ctr.), and 50,000 (est.) in Canada based on the census data and other anecdotal information.

He also projected that there are perhaps more than 500 Nepali community organizations in the US and Canada that broadly cover socio-cultural, global, binational, national, regional, local, and professional and trades, ethnic groups, gender-based, and political ideology-based groups and associations.

Adhikari asserted that the community associations have helped build leadership traits, in advancing philanthropy, nurturing of younger generation, building community, promoting culture, and supporting in Nepal when needed. The diaspora groups have new opportunities made possible by the global digital connectivity and improving financial status of the diaspora members. The older generation can mentor the new generation to facilitate cultural continuity. It is important for the community members to enter the mainstream politics in the adopted land and make use of the strength in numbers that translates into votes.

Challenges in the diaspora organizations include occasional groupism, and the baggage brought from Nepal's political culture and affiliation and mixing them in the non-partisan community organizations. The community associations should run as voluntary but professional associations. It is useful to study examples of non-profit professional associations in North America to see if we can use some of the elements that help them succeed. Further, organizations should invest in capacity building including trainings and resource mobilizations and decouple political ideologies from the community organizations. They should utilize the benefits and resources available through federal, state and local governments

As an example, Adhikari provided a brief review of ANA's activities, successes and failures. Initially ANA was the only game in town for the North American Nepali community, and helped to build a community, comradery, friendship, and personal bonds. ANA provided mutual support and initial orientation to many newcomer Nepalis, and provided an opportunity for cultural continuity. It provided a platform for organizing philanthropy, and volunteerism. ANA's Nepali Education and Cultural Center (NECC) was a groundbreaking project. ANA was instrumental in promoting Nepali culture, music, arts, and literature in North America.



## Appendix I

### Speaking notes from the presenters

Extended abstracts, remarks, speaking notes, or recorded presentation videos were received from the following panelists.

1. **Ambika P. Adhikari**
2. **Pragati Ghimire Aryal**
3. **Arjun Banjade**
4. **Uttam Gaulee**
5. **Shilu Ghimire Neupane**
6. **Laxman Pradhan**
7. **Drona Rasali**
8. **Swarnim Wagle**

The documents are provided in the following pages.

*Note: The panelist's notes included in the report do not necessarily reflect the opinion of the convention organizing committee, the sponsors or the organizations where the panelists work. Each panel member is responsible for the content of their presentation.*



## Notes from Dr. Ambika P. Adhikari

### Some major issues related to Nepali organizations in North America

#### Introduction

Nepali diaspora in North America is growing rapidly. It is estimated to be around 300,000 in 2022. This includes 250,000 in the US (198,000 in 2019, Pew Research Ctr.), and 50,000 (est.) in Canada that is based on 2016 Canada census and anecdotal sources. There are perhaps more than 500 community organizations that include association related to socio-culture, geography and region (global, binational, national, regional, local), professional and trades, ethnicity, gender, and political ideology.

#### Achievements

Nepali diaspora organizations have accomplished many feats including the support to the community in leadership development, advancing philanthropy, nurturing of younger generation, building community and advancing culture and traditions. They have also helped and assisted people in Nepal in times of needs and adversaries.

#### Opportunities

The current technological and globalized environment offers many opportunities for the diaspora organizations to function more effectively across the globe. Diaspora organizations can easily and at low cost utilize digital connectivity and communication platforms. The increase in number of diaspora members gives them local political clout in the US and Canada, where their votes can provide good leverage to enter politics and advance their community. With the increased number, better educational attainment and financial status, they can offer mentoring services to new generation to give them a leg up.

#### Challenges and Recommendations

Nepali diaspora organizations are often seen to be fraught with groupism, and internal tensions which often emanate from the political baggage they have brought from Nepal. Sometimes, the organizations seem to engage in small talks, and time-wasting activities. It appears that when Nepal's political culture and party affiliation are mixed with the non-partisan community organizations in a foreign land, differences can emerge as have been seen in some diaspora associations.



It is recommended to run the associations as voluntary but professional associations and leave any individual affiliations with Nepali political parties outside the boundaries of the organizations. It will help to study examples of how other non-profit professional associations in North America are managed to see if we can use some of the elements that help them succeed. Capacity building including trainings and resource mobilizations are important. The organization should also utilize the benefits and resources available through the federal, state, provincial, and local governments to support their programs of community development. Increased membership in the associations makes securing governmental funds more feasible.

The Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA) is a good example to show successes and failures of a community non-profit organization. Established in 1983, ANA has remained a premier Nepali association for the North American Nepali community. It has helped to build a community, comradery, friendship and bonds among its members and the diaspora community generally.

ANA also provided support and initial orientation to many newcomer Nepalis who were trying to settle in the new world. It provided an opportunity for cultural continuity among the generations of settlers. ANA promoted Nepali culture, music, arts, literature, historic awareness among its members and the larger American community. It helped build friendship among many individuals, and offered opportunities to build acquaintances and friendship among the community members. It was successful in providing a platform for organizing philanthropy, and volunteerism both to the community in North America, and people in Nepal.

Among the many examples of successful outcomes brought about by ANA is the Nepal Cultural and Education Center in the Washington DC metro area (Maryland), the first of its kind center built by the Nepali community in North America. Many other diaspora organizations in the US and Canada have followed suit to establish local cultural and religious centers to serve the community.





## Notes from Dr. Pragati Ghimire Aryal

### **The role of diaspora organizations in fostering entrepreneurship and talent sharing among millennials**

#### **Introduction**

Millennials are the largest growing population in the world, and especially so in the migrant communities in the countries of adoption and the country of origin. Looking at the impact of second and third generation Asian diaspora in the development of their “root country”, it is high time for Nepali diaspora organizations to shift the focus of their programs towards the youth of their communities.

#### **Utilizing the Talent of New Generation**

Second and later generation of diaspora children possess a huge pool of talent, drive to make an impact, and are looking for opportunities in every direction. It is important that we understand their aspirations, goals, beliefs, and feelings towards their roots. More often than we realize, most diaspora children, especially of college age, are becoming interested in offering community service and travel to their country of origin. For the Nepali diaspora, access to Nepal and communities back home provide them a sense of belonging. In addition, in this global age of technology and innovation, it will provide them access to a whole new market for opportunities. Millennials who have regular contact with communities in their countries of origin often demonstrate gratitude for the life they have been able to live, form contact with local community and become interested in sharing of talent and service.

#### **Connecting Diaspora with the Native Communities**

Millennials in Nepal are technology-savvy due to access to latest gadgets. Although we still see a growing rate of migration out of Nepal, a large proportion of millennials now are also preferring to try their luck at entrepreneurship, scientific agriculture, small business, tourism and other sectors. Organizations in the diaspora can play an important role in promoting collaboration and partnership of our second and later generation with their peers in Nepal by creating pools of networks, mentorships within the country of settlement and the country of origin. This can also benefit newly arriving immigrants, especially students who are landing in a new country as they could potentially have a readymade access to the network in the diaspora while maintaining connection back home. The work done by various diaspora organizations during the pandemic to help communities back in Nepal, with volunteering work done by parents and their children alike in different fields have shown us there is a lot of passion and thirst for collaboration between the diaspora members and communities in Nepal.



## **Millennials are the Future**

Worldwide, millennials are leading the progress in every field. With the availability of support and networks, the second and third generation diaspora millennials are specifically at an advantage for achieving their dreams due to access to different platforms in different parts of the world. Those of us who are involved in diaspora organizations have an obligation to provide innovative platforms that can be hugely beneficial to our children in the diaspora as well as help in the development of our country of origin.



## Notes from Dr. Arjun Banjade

### The State of Management in Diaspora Organizations

Thank you, ANA and Dr. Ambika Adhikari, for this opportunity of sharing the podium with such distinguished group of panelists. I want to share my thoughts on Nepali diaspora organizations function in North America with four stages of psychological development - Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing (FSNP).

#### Forming

Nepali diaspora members in America have formed non-profit organizations and performed social activities since the early 1980s. With a growing number of community members, a single or just a few organization (s) can't serve them was perhaps the case early on. For example, the ANA was the platform for Nepali people for many years. But now, there are hundreds of other organizations - political parties - such as Nepali Jana Samparka Samiti (NJSS), Overseas Nepalis Forum (ONF) and others, and NRNA. Hundreds of social organizations have been registered as non-profit organizations by enthusiastic Nepalis in North America. These organizations provide a platform for people interested in arts and culture, music and movie, to party politics (such as NJSS, ONF) to those interested in creating a bridge between motherland Nepal and the adopted land America (e.g., NRNA).

(1) Dedicated community leaders with good intentions FORM various organizations with excitement to serve the respective geographic or community interest rather than their vested interest in mind

(2) There is a sense of camaraderie and respect for each other in the leadership ranks; everyone in the team is new to each other, and they exhibit their best behavior

(3) Organizations focus on bylaws and regulations and try to be creative with exciting and ambitious programs

#### Storming

(4) Over time, when team members know each other; know their strengths and weaknesses, they start back-biting, creating conflict.

(5) With the visibility of the organizations in society, people not familiar with organizations' objectives also join and seek the leadership position. They are not motivated for servings but rather join to fulfill their vested interest. Some are attracted to fame and seek a position to show



off, with a perception of gaining higher social status and respect (खादामाला को रहर) and to label themselves as different or superior. Others join to use the platform to expand their network for their business ventures. Their intention in getting in leadership roles using money and muscle is to be in close contact with political leaders and the government power holders in Nepal that give them access to resources. In short, almost all organizations are formed with excitement, but such excitement does not last long as often, we forget why the organization was formed. It seems a few people establish an organization, and once it becomes reputable, all the opportunistic people get in and destroy it.

(6) Most of the leaders in Nepali organizations are 1st generation Nepalese-Americans who carry their political affiliation with the Nepali political parties and continue it in America (साउनमा आखा फूटेको गोरूले सधै हरियो देख्छ). Even general masses in Nepal are moving away from traditional politics and electing young and independent leaders. However, the diasporic leaders cannot do so; they have dated themselves 20 years back.

(7) There are organizations affiliated with political parties in Nepal (although they call themselves non-profit and non-political organizations). These organizations suffer from extreme groupism, and leaders associated with such organizations are engaged in circling around the political leadership for their personal interests.

(8) Nepali organizations in North America lack youth and women involvement, although leaders from all organizations give very high priorities to these groups in their speeches (lip service). Youth and women generally do not want to participate in dirty politics in Nepali organizations.

(9) Syndicate system – in bus service, the syndicate system decides which bus the passengers ride rather than the passenger choosing their rides. Likewise, the social organizations are behaving like syndicate bus services – putting their hand-picked inept leaders in the queue, and their members don't have good choices. It is challenging, if not impossible, for an independent-minded person to get elected to the top leadership position. This is particularly true at the national level of big diasporic organizations in America.

(10) Current organizations are not producing leaders for the mainstream politics in the adopted lands.

## **Norming**

(11) Nepali organizations inevitably suffer from internal conflicts. Many organizations started at different times, and their journeys have been varied. Some are new and enjoy a honeymoon period, while others suffer internal strife. There is at least one example that the organization's leadership settled down after bitter conflict. ANA's inner conflict and inability to adapt to the changing situation also impacted its share of influence. However, the current administration is



trying very hard to improve its standing. However, other organizations, such as NRNA, are going through bitter conflicts or are still in the storming stage. It will enter norming stage once its leaders realize the harm and are ready to settle down their differences after listening to the members' voices.

## **Performing**

(12) Most Nepali organizations are still far from being at the performing stage, where everything is settled, and they start fulfilling the organization's goal.

In summary, there are hundreds of organizations in America formed by Nepali diaspora members to serve the interest of the growing community. However, the enthusiasm and service motives among such organizations' founders quickly change or get replaced by people with vested interest. The growing conflict in such organizations discourages many Nepali people. Now is the time for leaders to revisit the original objectives of the organizations they intend to serve. Often, we know what others should be doing but don't know what we should be doing. We should encourage people to think critically and do the right thing to minimize the bandwagon effect – "everyone else is doing it" and desire to fit in or be in a winning team (although it is not doing right). Often people believe what everyone they see is doing as the truth. Some people will fall prey to the bandwagon effect no matter what we do. But we should continue encouraging people to reason and make the right decisions, including when they choose their leaders for Nepali organizations.



## Notes from Prof. Uttam Gaulee

### Organizing the Nepali Diaspora in North America in a Collaborative Manner

Thank you, Khagendra Adhikari, for the kind introduction. It is a pleasure to share the stage with such distinguished colleagues. I see diaspora as an untapped resource with a potential to be partners for national transformation. Hence, I will attempt to highlight a mechanism which can engage all of us in the socio-economic transformation of our homeland. My perspectives are certainly shaped by transnational educational engagements that tap into the energy and resources of diaspora scholars, and my observations of the recent history of some nations that have successfully driven their economic prosperity.

If we look at China, Deng Xiao Peng jump started the Chinese economy and lifted 800 million people out of poverty. He studied economics in France. The Chinese nationalists gave him a really hard time. He was vilified at home as a “foreigner” and was attacked many times politically and even physically.

If we look at India's transformation, we see that both the leader for independence Mahatma Gandhi, and the architect of modern economic transformation Manmohan Singh were diaspora scholars. They had left their countries at one point. They returned and used their insights into transforming their nations.

There are similar stories of Li Kwan Yu of Singapore, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and as controversial as he is, Paul Kagame of Rwanda.

Tanzania graduated from low-income country to lower-middle-income country status in July 2020. Tanzania's achievement reflects sustained macroeconomic stability that has supported growth, in addition to the country's rich natural endowments and strategic geographic position.

The economy of Rwanda has undergone rapid industrialization due to a successful governmental policy. Since the early-2000s, Rwanda has witnessed an economic boom. The President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, has noted his ambition to make Rwanda the "Singapore of Africa.”

When it comes to Nepal, I have seen so many individuals do amazing things across the borders. I think it is best for me to talk about what I have been directly involved with so that we can build those connections for further inquiry if needed.

- Intellectual contribution in policy level



- Establishment of academic leadership in Nepali universities
- Establishment of polytechnic institutes and community colleges in every province
- The movement to create a Native Artisans University
- To save country from disinformation campaigns

From my research and experience, I argue that we can transform Nepal by engaging the Nepali diaspora in nation building. Individual diaspora scholars are perhaps the most important agents in transnational educational collaboration and exchange. Emerging technologies make communication across the world easier to use—including videoconferencing, collaborative documents worked on simultaneously around the world, internet-based telephones, wi-fi based connections, and mobile devices.

Collaboration is widely available and is cost effective, intimate, and rewarding. In this age of social media, individual scholars can spread the word, inspire others, rally support, and put pressure on institutions and society to do more to provide educational development and innovation.

I'm sure you have heard about the Brain Gain Center (BGC). It was a strategy focusing on investment in fundamental capabilities of the nation by building a soft infrastructure sparking discovery and innovation by connecting people across the borders. When I first created a prototype of connecting diaspora by humanizing technology, many friends stepped up to the plate and supported the idea. Thanks to the collective enthusiasm and dare I say, the power of such platforms as this convention, the Nepal Government adopted the prototype as Brain Gain Center in 2019. Dr. Ambika Adhikari was one of the earliest registrants. I wish to thank each of those diaspora experts who demonstrated their willingness to support their homeland by registering in the Center. I will be remiss if I did not say special thanks to Mr. Pradeep Gyawali for providing leadership on behalf of the Nepal government when he was the foreign minister.

When an intellectual crosses political or national borders, his or her role and responsibilities suddenly become undefined. In nation-based socio-political and intellectual/professional paradigms, the identity, ethos, and respect for the “foreign scholar” are often romanticized in such a way that someone will quip “*lau u ta kasto bhagyamani - swargai pugi halyo ni!*” (Lucky you in living a paradise!) At the same time, there is always an underbelly of rejection often transpired in such terms as “*bhasiyo!*” (Gotten into a rabbit hole). Unbeknownst to the homeland groups, the mobile scholar is navigating the uncharted territories with uncertainties, and confusion surrounding his or her own place and value to the new society.

Diaspora members have to create their new identities in the foreign land. One of the most important steps toward that direction is political engagement. It gives me a great pleasure to see that our political engagement is gradually gaining momentum toward reaching some critical milestones toward diaspora development, and perhaps, toward addressing the challenges rightly





identified by Dr. Adhikari and start thinking about larger diasporic obligations as enumerated by Dr. Rasali. I think these fundamentals will pave the way for the financial sustainability as depicted by Laxman Pradhan ji, and entrepreneurial gain as described by Dr. Shilu Ghimire.

List of some Nepali American political leaders in the US are as follows.

- Delegate Harry Bhandari - Maryland General Assembly.
- Sarahana Shrestha - New York District 103
- Vice Mayor Kiran Sitoula, Town of Indian Head, Maryland
- Council Member Madhu Panthi - Town of Haymarket, Virginia
- Council Member Pradeep Dhakal - Herndon, Virginia
- Council Member Bhuwan Pyakurel - Reynoldsburg, Ohio
- Tika Paudel - Eules, Texas
- RTM Ram C Shrestha - Branford, Connecticut
- Dinesh Sharma - Texas District 12 (unsuccessful run)

Dr. Uttam Gaulee sent a pre-recorded video presentation. The link to Dr. Uttam Gaulee's video presentation is given below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3RRjysFdK0>



## Notes from Prof. Shilu Ghimire Neupane

# Entrepreneurship as a Dialogue in Diaspora Organizations

### Introduction

- Existing hundreds of community organizations
- Micro/Macro level diaspora dialogue
- Trend, transition/economic development
- Technology/Digitalization/Connectivity
- Work ethics in business
- Choices in entrepreneurship
- Post-COVID situation

### Achievements

- Millennial/involvement
- Exposure to culture/knowledgeable
- Economic growth/support to home-country
- Creativity/Virtual platforms
- Clarity-communication/strength
- Opportunities and strengths
- Online presence/Creativity approach
- E-commerce
- Mentoring to new generation
- Information Technology/Efficiency

### Challenges

- Conflict/communication
- Too many organizations; too little time
- Work-life balance/weariness
- Shortage of skills and resources
- Competitive/Trust building
- Limited financial, human, social capital
- Diversion/lack of professionalism

### Recommendations

- Inclusiveness/involving young generation
- Train the trainers/ new generation/millennial
- Women involvement leading to family advancement



## Notes from Laxman Pradhan, CPA

### Financial Sustainability of Nepali Diaspora Nonprofit Organizations in North America

#### Background

The challenges of establishing financial capacity and financial sustainability are central to organizational functions and activities, regardless of whether an organization is operating as profit or nonprofit. Thus, financial sustainability is particularly important concern as well as question for all Nepali diaspora non-profit organizations operating with different objectives in the USA and Canada including Association of Nepalis in America (ANA), and Nepal Education and Cultural Center (NECC). The fiscal crisis has a huge negative impact on organization's credibility and reputation that we witnessed with ANA in the aftermath of the 2010 Boston Convention.

According to the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS), more than 1.5 million nonprofit organizations are registered in the U.S. The data showed that 7 to 8 percent of nonprofits in the U.S. are technically insolvent, with liabilities exceeding assets. More than 50 percent of nonprofits are operating with less than one month's cash reserves, and another 30 percent have reportedly lost money over a three-year period. Due to COVID-19, the revenue of many non-profit organizations has significantly declined – often by more than 60 percent. For many non-profit Nepali organizations, there is a genuine challenge to remain sustainable due to lack of financial resources and community support. Though there is no statistics, it is fair to say that there are more than 500 Nepali non-profit organizations operating in North America at local, regional, and national levels. These are mostly at local the level.

There are several definitions of the term “financial sustainability.” According to CPA Henry Martin, the phrase “financial sustainability” in the context of nonprofits generally refers to an organization's ability to sustain itself over an extended period of time in support of its central mission. To be a sustainable organization, its leaders must know how to deliver affordable programs and services in alignment with the enterprise's fundraising revenue. Financial sustainability refers to the ability to maintain financial capacity over time (Bowman, 2011).

As an example, the current financial position of ANA is a wake-up call to all nonprofit leaders, who need to make more concentrated efforts to improve transparency and financial sustainability by partnering and coordinating with other Nepali organizations. The nonprofit leaders should focus on avoiding redundancy and cutting operating costs while delivering quality services and programs to Nepali community.



When nonprofit organizations are financially sustainable, they can maintain operations, and accomplish their mission in the long run. To achieve this financial goal, the nonprofit's leaders need to know how much it costs to deliver its programs and services, so that it can raise enough money to cover those costs and avoid deficits. Indeed, one of the biggest goals of any nonprofit is financial sustainability. A sustainable source of funds is necessary to keep the operations running to achieve their long-term goals.

### **Achievements**

Despite the financial challenges, with the practices of fiscal discipline and good governance, Nepali diaspora nonprofit organizations can achieve the following:

- Balance financial sustainability with organizational mission (ANA and NECC)
- Control the outflows of money
- Enhance financial position and reputation
- Comply with federal and state tax filing obligations - avoid penalty
- Boost credibility and visibility
- Attract and retain donors, members and youth talents
- Avoid fiscal fall outs
- Positive impact and value for community
- Provide quality programs and services to community cost effectively

### **Challenges**

Every non-profit organization faces various financial and managerial problems. Major challenges of financial sustainability for nonprofit organization include:

- Over-reliance on external funding sources – government & private donations
- Inadequate fiscal and operating reporting
- Lack of transparency and accountability
- Economic changes
- Unsuccessful branding and marketing
- Clarity and consistency of message
- Federal and state compliance issues
- No reliable private donations, business sponsorships and government grants
- Lack of community engagement and leadership
- Lack of professionals for auditing, preparing and evaluating budgets

### **Opportunities**

Promising management and financial practices can overcome the existing challenges and convert them into opportunities as follows:



- Establish strong finance capacity and sustainability
- Deliver significant cost savings and efficiencies
- Retain current and potential donors
- Community awareness and socio-economic development
- Capitalize on community strength and mobilize young talents
- Innovative fundraising
- Corporate partnerships and sponsorships
- Develop collaborative and cost-effective community programs with partnerships
- Obtain government grants and support
- Online/web presence for collecting donations
- Use of technology to transform business operations
- Improve transparency
- Create new sources of revenue (private donors, membership fees, commercial activity)
- Foster a culture of giving and “willingness to give”
- Enhance organization resilience, credibility and visibility

### **Strategic Approaches**

Nonprofit leaders and finance team can focus and develop following strategies to achieve financial sustainability for Nepali non-profit organizations in North America.

- Clear vision
- Long-term commitment
- Adopt an enterprise approach to operate and generate revenue
- Strong leadership and finance team
- Budget and transparency
- Organization business plan and program
- Focus on the right donors
- Division of responsibilities
- Effective management team
- Recruit the right people
- Teamwork

### **Conclusion**

Financial sustainability is the symbol of a healthy nonprofit organization. Nepali diaspora organizations can face a variety of challenges in establishing and maintaining financial sustainability in North America. However, these challenges can overcome by promoting community engagement and leadership coupled with transparency and accountability. Financial sustainability requires clear objectives, budgets, strategies and action plans.



## Notes from Prof. Drona Rasali

# Envisioning Social Outlook of Nepali Diaspora Organizations in the 21st Century's Americas.

### Introduction

Learning from the notion of prospective community spirit or social consciousness propounded by Stapleford (1918), the social outlook of community-based organizations (CBO) can be a dynamic and forward-looking characterization of a community for its continuous improvement in societal progress with the experiences gained through human endeavors from the time immemorial evolving to suit the present-day worldview.

In the sociological context of Nepali Diaspora organizations in the Americas, it seems important for us to enter a discourse on envisioning a broadly ideal but pragmatic social outlook for them. Because of our unique background, we bring from the past to respond to the question of our contemporary social consciousness. I will specifically explore our organizational social outlook in the areas of the prosperity, physical and emotional wellbeing, social justice, cultural safety and planetary obligation of our diaspora members at large.

### Prosperity

Prosperity is rather a broad term to cover overall human flourishing. However, I am focusing here on the prosperity issue in terms of our own livelihoods. Nepali Diaspora had been arriving in Americas, in a significant number, rather in more recent decades, especially since the latter half of the last century. Our relatively late arrivals, as compared to many other nationality groups from around the world, happened due to two most striking reasons: 1) Nepal, the country of our origin was never formally colonized, and consequently, the citizens did not have ways and means to migrate to overseas countries like the people of many colonized countries- except for Gurkhas joining British Army, who too were eventually repatriated to Nepal after their military service in the British Empire; 2) Up until, early 1990s, the autocratic monarchical government had heavily restricted movement of the citizens going out of the country except for India. Majority of the arrivals in Americas prior to 1990s were those who came here for their pursuit of higher education advancement. Whoever stayed back in the Americas after their successfully attaining higher education have done well in their settlement through professional and academic endeavors leading to prosperity in stable livelihoods. After the democratic movement of Nepal in early 1990s, Nepali students and immigrants began arriving in larger number for all kinds of varied reasons. As a result, their prosperity levels and stages are also diverse. The achievements in prosperity have been largely at the individual level, while the collective prosperity of Nepalis as



a community and its organizations has been still at its infancy. More recently, a few isolated community initiatives of investments have been started, e.g., over a hundred families of Nepali community joining hands in acquiring land lots for envisioned community ventures for future prosperity was initiated in British Columbia province of Canada in 2021, on the realization that the greater permanency of settlement in the lands of new homes in Americas can be built up through land acquisition. This approach can be followed by collective initiatives gaining ownership also in academic, research and business ventures that would eventually strengthen diasporic organizational outlook.

### **Physical and Emotional Wellbeing**

At the behest of the University of Pittsburgh's global initiative, I had the privilege of translating into Nepali and Hindi (Rasali, 2011) the definition of Health put forward by the World Health Organization in its Constitution (WHO, 1946) stating, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Clearly, when we think about health, we consider our physical state as well as emotional wellbeing influenced by our genetic inheritance, the environment factors we live with and our behavioral lifestyle factors we live with. COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how our health is affected not just by the disease-causing pathogen, such as the corona virus, but also all the spheres of our life in geo-spatial and temporal realms impacting on our health status. We should be wary of these spheres. In non-pandemic situation, when we would go to our new normal post-pandemic time, especially in Americas, majority of our health problems will rest not only communicable diseases like COVID-19 or HIV/AIDS but mostly on numerous non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that do not even have any specific causative agent. The latter are contracted by us largely in association with our lifestyle and behavioral risk factors such as food and drinks, tobacco, alcohol and other substance use, physical inactivity and physical built environments. Adopting the right lifestyles is the key to health resulting in physical and emotional wellbeing which contribute directly to the positive aspirations for our social outlook. A Canadian research evidence shows that immigrant population do not normally access mental health services, such as counselling. This is mainly due to our cultural taboos, as we are generally stigmatized against such services. Fortunately, we also bring with us our traditional knowledge and practice of attaining emotional wellbeing through Yoga and meditation, which should be promoted and propagated as part of our social outlook at the organizational level such that they are adopted by all as our cultural heritage.

### **Social Justice**

Social outlook is about projecting the overall well-being of every individual in society who can reach their full potential for their own flourishing eventually contributing to the wellbeing of the community, society and nation such that the success of the society is linked to the well-being of each and every citizen. However, an essential requirement for this to happen is to remove the barriers along the way so that everyone can enjoy the journey toward their dreams with





confidence and dignity in equitable term. Quoting Martin Luther King “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.” Unless we have ensured social justice with human rights, social equality based on fairness in the society, leaving behind the baggage of the unrealistic traditions that are handed down to us with mythological superstitions, we cannot achieve our envisioned social outlook both at individual and organizational levels. While social justice is guaranteed through statutory provisions of both Canada and the US in compliance with their international obligations through universal human rights, in the context of Nepali Diaspora in both the countries, it is usually taken for granted without a proper realization of existential realities. Traditional hierarchical stratification of the Nepali society continues to cause social problems, especially in the American cities with large Nepali diaspora members. These problems include caste and/or gender-based discrimination manifested by tendencies of segregation and groupism based on the social stratification. We cannot change the history where we came from, but we do not live in the history either. We live in the 21st Century, and we need to live to the expectations of this century, rationalizing many of our mythological traditions to fit into the present-day society, just like the most of American children up to the age of 4-5 believe Santa Claus unconditionally from the heart and soul as real, but do move on to existential realities from the age 5-7 onwards (Williams, 2003), quickly learning to demythologize the story of so-called Nicholas from the North Pole. Especially, this sort of rationalization is so important to us, as our cultural heritage is entangled in confusion between mythological stories and existential history of mankind in terms of time, space and causality (Williams, 2003).

## **Cultural Safety**

The 21st Century calls for the cultural safety and humility to reclaim human dignity of all people that are part of a community organization, society and the world in equitable terms. Especially in healthcare settings, it has now been the norm in several countries including Canada that care providers ensure cultural safety for their Indigenous clients who are in contact with them. Likewise, more generally, each community and its organizations should ensure that every person should feel culturally safe with dignity when interacting with each other in everyday life, being free from any fear of discrimination or hate based on descent (race, caste or clan or gender identity). In the foothills of Himalayas, Hindu traditions are regarded as a dominant culture in which the people of traditionally dominant castes think they are superior, often disregarding the dignity of historically marginalized and oppressed castes or gender. They assume cultural righteousness of mythological traditions as the bases as opposed to existential facts of history. Many of these traditions, today, cause unacceptable violation of cultural safety for the historically marginalized people including Dalits, women and non-binary genders. Our organizational social outlook must reject these traditions.



## Planetary Obligations

There is no doubt now that climate change is real. Snow mountains of our Himalayas are melting at unprecedented rate. The people of British Columbia (Canada), Washington and Oregon States experienced unprecedented heat dome resulting in more than 500 excess deaths last year summer, when unusual flash floods, atmospheric rivers and epidemics also occurred in unexpectedly. These are some of the manifestations of climate change which is the result of solely excessive anthropogenic activities. We must strive through our social outlook, at individual level as well as collectively as a community and society, for limiting our excessive human endeavors that harm the health of the planet we live in. Realizing now that our basic needs are set for the next several decades requiring us to meet our planetary obligation moving towards adopting 'zero emission' level for climate change adaptation. In this context, I am reminded by a Subhaashit Niti verse, “यावत् भ्रियेत जठरं तावत् सत्वं हि देहीनाम् । अधिकं योभिमन्येत स स्तेनो दण्डमर्हति ॥” that translates, as “Man’s right to global resource should be up to that mark which satisfies his basic needs. But, if he desires more than that, such a person is nothing more than a thief, and deserves a punishment” (Kharel, 1998).

## Conclusions

Prosperity, physical and emotional wellbeing, social justice, cultural safety and planetary obligation are some of the considerations for our organizational social outlook that need to be integrated in our individual life’s existential realities as well as collectively for a diasporic community and general society in Americas.

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Dr. Drona Rasali also sent a pre-recorded video presentation. A video link to Dr. Drona Rasali’s presentation is at the following address.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OXDGVY0qCUc>



## Notes from Dr. Swarnim Wagle

Dr. Swarnim Wagle sent a prerecorded video. The link to Dr. Swarnim Wagle's video presentation is given below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1qtNP8DoGk&t=2s>



## Appendix II

### Short Biographies: Panelists, and Moderator

#### Distinguished Panelists



**Minendra Rijal**, PhD, is a former minister in the Government of Nepal, holding several cabinet level portfolios (including Culture, Defense, and Communication), and is a current Member of Parliament (MP). He is a leader in Nepali Congress, the current ruling party. He represents Morang district constituency number two in House of Representatives, Government of Nepal. Dr. Rijal was also a member of the National Planning Commission (NPC) of Nepal in the nineties.

Having begun his political career in the Nepali Congress-affiliated Nepal Students Union (NBU), Dr. Rijal has remained active in the Nepali national politics for more than four decades. He has served in various capacities within the Nepali Congress including being its Central Committee member and holding several other important positions in the party.

Dr. Rijal also has decades of academic and professional experience in research, teaching and consulting in the fields of operations and business management, economic analysis, public policy formulation, and development economics. Dr. Rijal has worked with government, universities, non-profit organizations, private sector organizations, and international institutions.

He received Ph. D. and M. Phil. in business administration from New York University, and MBA (top of the class) from State University of New York (SUNY) at Buffalo. Earlier, he earned an MBA, bachelor's in law (BL), and BSc from Tribhuvan University Nepal. He has taught at New York University, Kathmandu University, and Tribhuvan University, and lectured at Lancaster University (UK).



**Swarnim Waglé**, PhD, is the Chief Economic Advisor at the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) in New York covering 36 countries. Between 2014 and 2018, Dr. Waglé served the National Planning Commission (NPC) in the Government of Nepal for three intermittent years, first as Member and then as Vice-Chair. As the head of the Government's apex policy advisory body, he guided the formulation of national development strategies, coordinated policy across the public sector, monitored large projects, led ministerial delegations on the international stage, and steered organizational change. In the aftermath of



the Nepal earthquake of 2015 and the flood of 2017, Dr. Waglé co-led the Post Disaster Needs Assessments (PDNA) and helped garner pledges for billions of US dollars in assistance.

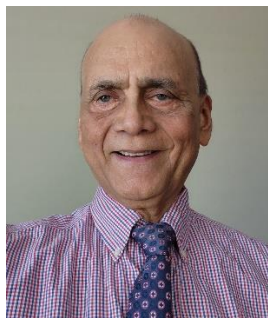
Swarnim Waglé has worked as an international development professional for more than 20 years, including as Senior Economist at The World Bank in Washington, DC and UNDP in Hanoi, Colombo, and New York. He co-edited *The Great Upheaval* (Cambridge University Press, 2022) and co-authored the Global Human Development Report (2013) titled *The Rise of the South*. From 2002 to 2007, he co-led the UNDP Asia Trade Initiative.

Dr. Waglé is Chair of the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), a South Asian policy think-tank established in 1979. He sits on the Senate of Kathmandu University and advises several non-profit organizations. He is an eminent member of the World Bank's South Asia Championing and Visioning Process. Having undertaken short-term assignments at the Asian Development Bank (Manila) and the International Trade Center (Geneva), he also served as South Asia editor of *Harvard Asia Quarterly* in 1999-2000.

Swarnim Waglé holds a doctorate in economics from the Australian National University, Master's in International Development (MPA/ID) from Harvard University, and BSc (Econ) from the London School of Economics.

## **Panelists**

(In Alphabetical Order by Last Name)



**Ambika P. Adhikari**, DDes., is a Principal Planner at City of Tempe, AZ, USA heading its long-range planning division. He is a Senior Global Futures Scientist (an honorary position), JAW Global Futures Laboratory, and a former Program Manager and former Research Professor, at Arizona State University (ASU).

In Nepal, he was Associate Professor (Reader) at Institute of Engineering (IOE), Tribhuvan University, where he also served as the Project Architect (and interim Project Coordinator) for the Western Region Campus Project (WRCP) in Pokhara. He was Country Representative of Switzerland-based IUCN (International Union of Conservation of Nature) at the Nepal Country Office.

He is a Fellow of American Society of Nepalese Engineers (ASNEngr), and a Member of American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP). He is a Project Management Professional (PMP) and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Accredited Professional (AP). He is an Adjunct Distinguished Fellow at the Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), Kathmandu, Nepal.



Ambika obtained Doctor of Design (DDes) degree in Urban Planning and Design from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University. Earlier, he was a Fellow at the Special Program for Urban and Regional Studies (SPURS) at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He obtained M. Arch. degree from the University of Hawaii at Manoa, and B. Arch. from the M.S. University of Baroda in Gujarat, India.

He has authored one, and co-edited six books, and published numerous journal articles and book chapters related to urban and regional planning, environment, development, and diaspora studies.

He is a current member, and former chair, of the Board of Trustees for the Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA), with which he has been affiliated since 1986. He is chair of the Advisory Council for the American Society of Nepalese Engineers (ASNEng), and a Board Member for Nepal Policy Institute (NPI), a global diaspora-led policy think tank, and a board member at Asta-Ja USA. Earlier, he held several leadership positions at the NRNA including as a Patron of the International Coordination Council (ICC), Regional Coordinator for the Americas, Advisor to the ICC, Chair of the ICC's Disciplinary Committee, and President of the National Coordination Council (NCC) for the US.

He was the coordinator of the ANA Forum - Nepali Diaspora Organizations in North America: Achievements, Opportunities, and Challenges.

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**Arjun Banjade**, PhD, received a Ph.D. in mass communication and MA in International Studies from Ohio University. He also earned MA in Demography from Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

He currently serves as the Director of Student Reporting and Student Success at Tarrant County College in Fort Worth, Texas. Before coming to the US in 1998, he was an Assistant Professor of Population Studies at Tribhuvan University in Nepal and an Assistant Program Officer at the Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Program's Nepal Office (1995-1998).

He served as a Senior Vice-President (2019-2021), Board of Director (2017-2019), and Education Taskforce Chair (2015-2017) at the Non-Resident Nepali Association National Coordination Council of USA. He was Treasurer at the Parent-Teacher Organization, International Leadership of Texas, Keller K-8 (2017-2019) and the Founding Member Secretary/Executive Officer at US-Nepal Policy Research Center (2016-2019). He also held several positions at the Nepali Public Relations Committee, America, including Founding Treasurer, Member Secretary, and Advisor (2007-2015), and delegate to the Nepali Congress Party's 12th General Assembly (2010).

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**Uttam Gaulee**, Ph.D., is a leader in American higher education. A policy analyst, author, and keynote speaker, Dr. Gaulee is a professor in the department of advanced studies, leadership, and policy at Morgan State University. He served as the Chair of the University Council at his institution from 2019 to 2021 and played a pivotal role in cultivating an effective relationship between the faculty and the administration. He established a research and creative activities committee within the University Council to generate a common effort toward elevating the institution to a higher level of research activity.

His research agenda intersect international higher education systems, diaspora studies, interdisciplinary perspectives on education policy, global citizenship, and cross-cultural issues in international development and geopolitics., Dr. Gaulee is an advocate of community college as a vehicle for social progress and economic development in and beyond the United States. He recently edited a volume on Global Adaptations of Community College Infrastructure.

Dr. Gaulee has devoted over two decades of his academic and professional life to promoting solutions related to student success, workforce development, and institutional effectiveness. While serving in increasingly higher capacities of the Community College Futures Assembly and Bellwether College Consortium between 2012 and 2016, he collaborated with multiple national commissions and affiliated councils of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) to evaluate and promote best practices among community colleges and hosted national policy summits on workforce development, reverse transfer, and talent pipeline management.

A recipient of the Fulbright (2010) and Cross Award (2016) from the Association of American Colleges and Universities, Dr. Gaulee is actively promoting and developing the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector in various developing countries. As a native of Nepal, Dr. Gaulee has been directly contributing to the advancement of the higher education sector of his homeland. A global survey of Nepali diaspora scholars led by him has generated ideas of Brain Gain for the context of Nepal. His article Leveraging Diasporic Power for Nation Building has been well received in Nepal's policy circle. Dr. Gaulee is the founder and editor-in-chief of the Journal of Underrepresented and Minority Progress.

Dr. Gaulee serves as president of the Society of Transnational Academic Researchers (STAR), a member-supported grassroots organization building communities that support the advancement of international scholars working across borders.

He received his PhD in education from the University of Florida and MA in higher education from the University of Pittsburg.





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**Pragati Ghimire Aryal**, PhD, MD, MPH earned her PhD in epidemiology from the University of South Florida, MPH from the university of Nebraska at Omaha, and MD from Shanghai Medical College of Fudan University in China.

She is Executive Director/Consultant Epidemiologist/International Advisor at HSP Inc in Florida. She has led Covid Response/Relief Surveillance, Monitoring, Study Design and Analysis, Instrument Development and Evaluation, Clinical/Infectious Disease/NCD/NTD Epidemiology, Scientific Writing, Public Health Policy via HSP. HSP impacted 600,000 lives in Nepal with 4000+ volunteers and partnerships with 250 partners/organizations during the covid-19 pandemic.

She is the Women’s Coordinator for the Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA). Earlier, she was Vice President of the Nepalese Association of Florida. She remains active in many community organizations in North America and supports several philanthropic and service-oriented programs in Nepal, and she mentors young people in Nepal to help them serve the communities where they live.

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**Shilu Ghimire Neupane**, PhD., CFLE, is the founder of International Association of Family Issues & Solution, and an adjunct professor at Texas Woman's University. Her research areas are entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and mentorship.

Dr. Neupane was selected to present her papers at United Nations Headquarters in New York in 2018 and in 2020 on sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women. Both papers were well received by women leaders all across the globe. Dr. Neupane was invited to speak at the first women entrepreneurs’ summit held at Dallas on March 2019.

Dr. Neupane is the first Nepali to earn Ph.D. in Family Studies program. She had her Masters in American Literature and Creative writing from the University of Nebraska at Omaha and she has authored five books. Besides teaching, she is currently working on her new book “Mentors next to you.” Dr. Neupane, who also is a certified family life educator, is actively involved in colleges and community regarding mental awareness issues. Since Pandemic, she has been providing free counseling and support services to families in Texas, Canada, and Nepal.

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**Laxman Pradhan**, CPA is the Youth Coordinator for the Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA). He received an MBA and MST degrees from American University, Washington, DC in 1997 and 2011, respectively. Mr. Pradhan is a member of American Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

Mr. Pradhan has more than 20 years of experience in accounting, finance, business registration, and individual and corporate taxation. His principal areas of interest are developing and designing effective tax, accounting and financial policies and processes to enhance internal and external financial reporting accuracy and efficiency of the organizations. He strongly believes in creating wealth through prudent investment in equity markets.

Mr. Pradhan is currently employed as Tax Manager in the Global Tax Department of Capital One Bank in McLean, Virginia. He is actively involved in state tax provision work. He is responsible to updating and analyzing tax impacts on new state legislative developments and regulations. Prior to joining Capital One, he worked as Assistant Vice President at Chevy Chase Bank, Senior Tax Accountant at Lockheed Martin Corporation in Bethesda, and Tax Analyst at Riggs Bank and MCI WorldCom, Inc. in Washington, DC.

Mr. Pradhan believes in community services. He strongly considers that “giving back to community” is one of his responsibilities and goals. To materialize this noble goal, Mr. Pradhan has been very active in Nepali community in Washington D.C. area for last 20 years. Since October 2014, Mr. Pradhan has been actively working in a non-profit organization named Nepal Education and Cultural Center (NECC). He is currently serving as a Vice President (Finance and Development) of NECC. He is responsible to establish transparency and strengthen financial position of NECC through a strong internal control system. He is also responsible to prepare budgets for financing renovation, expansion, and construction projects.

He served 12 years in Nepa Pasa Pucha Amerikaye (NPPA – a non-profit tax-exempt organization) Executive Committee, 4 years as a President, 4 years as a Vice President and 4 years as a Treasurer. While he was President of NPPA, he commanded and involved in promoting visibility of NPPA and collaborating with other organizations to help support and develop Nepali community in DC area. Mr. Pradhan also served as a General Secretary of a non-profit organization named Bandipures in North America (BNA). He also serves as Treasurer of a non-profit organization named Washington Nepal Health Foundation (WNHF) located in Washington DC.

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**Drona Rasali, PhD.**, is a Fellow of American College of Epidemiology (FACE) and an adjunct professor at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan. He earned a Certificate in Higher Education Teaching (CHET), as an addendum to his doctoral study from the University of Manitoba. Currently living in Vancouver, Canada, he serves as the Director of Population Health Surveillance and Epidemiology at the Provincial Health Services Authority of the British Columbia Government. Formerly, he served as a government veterinary officer in Nepal until 1993 when he became a senior scientist of the Nepal Agricultural Research Council until 2003.

Dr. Rasali's current research and professional interests focus on the multidisciplinary areas including epidemiology, health promotion strategies, prevention of chronic disease/injury and their risk factors, health equity indicators, socio-economic deprivation index, community health profiles, food security.

Earlier, he served as Provincial Chronic Disease Epidemiologist at the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health for 7 years until 2012. He has authored/co-authored several peer reviewed research papers, government technical reports and book chapters on wide range of public health, biomedical and veterinary fields. Among the journals where he has published include The Lancet, and several other high impact journals.

Dr. Rasali's interests include multidisciplinary health and life science including population and public health, one health, food security, social justice, equity and emotional well-being of the people and balanced environment. He has professional background of a veterinarian and animal geneticist, closely related areas of epidemiology, disease prevention and health promotion following population and public health. He volunteers in the areas of higher education, social justice and community capacity building for flourishing of humanity and well-being among people, communities, societies.

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**Moderator**



**Khagendra Adhikari** has decades of experience in administration, private entrepreneurship, and grass roots organizing, both in Nepal and the United States. He was born in Bhojpur and grew up in Jhapa, Nepal. Mr. Adhikari attended Tribhuvan University for undergraduate and graduate studies in economics. He served as an officer in the Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA), before immigrating to the United States with his family in 1998.



Mr. Adhikari is actively associated in many Nepali American community organizations. He is the immediate past president, and a current member of the board of trustees of the Association of Nepalis in the Americas (ANA).

Earlier, he served as a senior vice president of the ANA for many years. He has also been a past international advisor to the International Jhapali Society. Mr. Adhikari currently serves as advisor to the Jhapali Association of the greater Washington, D.C. area, a benefactor member of the Nepali American Community Center, a trustee member of the Baltimore Association of Nepalese in America (BANA), and Chairperson for the Board of Advisors for the Nepal Education and Cultural Center (NECC).

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## Appendix III

### Some Images from the Forum and Convention

The following is a photo essay composed of photographs by Ambika Adhikari, Bishnu Ghimire, Maya Sharma, Bijaya Shrestha, Kishan Regmi, Shambhu Dhungana, and others.





A view of the panelists of the forum.



An informal session at the convention



Forum attendees



Forum panelists and attendees



Distinguished panelist Dr. Minendra Rijal



Some convention and forum attendees in an informal moment





Distinguished panelist Dr. Minendra Rijal



Guests at the ANA inaugural session



Panelist Laxman Pradhan ANA Officials and some attendees



Attendees at the inaugural session of the convention



Moderator Khagendra Adhikari with former minister Mahendra Pandey and ANA officials



Attendees at the convention inauguration





Panelists and attendees



Panelists and attendees



Convention attendees in an informal session



Convention inauguration scene



Some convention participants



Convention organizers with Mrs. ANA title winners at the convention





Convention participants



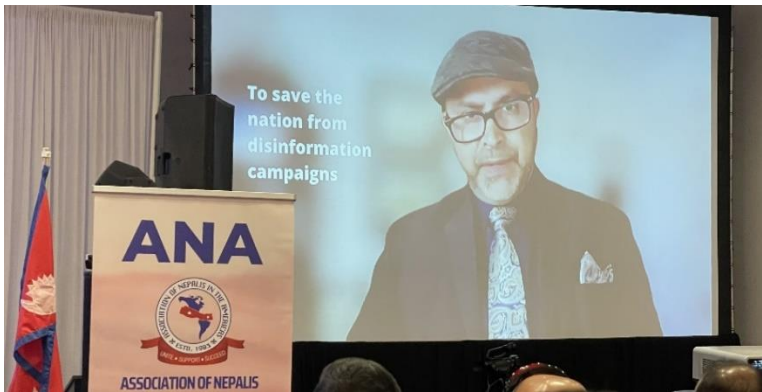
Convention organizers: ANA and NST Executives



Convention participants



Dr. Swarnim Wagle presenting remotely



Prof. Uttam Gaulee presenting remotely



Prof. Drona Rasali presenting remotely





Moderator Khagendra Adhikari and panelist Laxman Pradhan



Some participants in a bright mood



A scene from the convention inaugural session





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## Back Cover Page

# Nepali Diaspora Organizations in North America: Achievements, Opportunities and Challenges

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS AT THE FORUM

### Nepali National Convention

Coppell, Texas, USA

July 2, 2022



Organized by  
**Association of Nepalese in the Americas (ANA), and  
Nepalese Society of Texas (NST)**