

# SOCIAL SCIENCES IN NEPAL

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## Introduction

The "decline of history" in Nepal was the focus of an article in one daily paper (*Nepal Samachar Patra*) on August 29, 2001. Six months earlier, another daily carried a piece on an "empty in history class and history teacher turn[ing] into student of sociology" (*Kantipur* 2001, February 15). Both reports highlighted four specific problems: the unavailability of jobs for history post-graduates, the decline in the number of history students in Tribhuvan University (TU), an outdated curriculum, and the attraction of sociology/anthropology for students in higher education. The state of some other social science disciplines is not much different. The opinions expressed in a seminar on *Social Science in Nepal* illustrate the problems. It was claimed that "Political Science...has progressively lost its erstwhile charm and appeal" (Jaisawal and Amatya, 1997: 57) and that "research (economics) in Nepal is confined to feasibility studies and evaluation of projects and a few empirical analysis.... Academic research [is] confined to Ph.D. (and some times Master's) dissertation (Sharma 1997: 69), though the economics department still enrolls large numbers of students. While sociology/anthropology is an emerging discipline, most experts prefer acting as consultants of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) than as serious academics. "For some, research is done for career or professional interests and for many others for making a living (Bhattachan 1997: 13). The above statements clearly show the erosion in the quality of social sciences in TU.

The monopoly of TU in higher education and research has recently been broken with the establishment of three new universities, but it has hardly improved the situation because none of these newly established institutions have introduced social sciences faculty. The mushrooming of private research centres and NGOs due to availability of foreign funds has certainly opened up new avenues and broadened the scope of social sciences research.

However, research work has largely been downgraded into report writing, creating an adverse impact on the academic environment of TU since most NGOs and private research centers rely heavily on its teachers and researchers.

The above brief sketch of the academic environment within and outside the university indicates that the state of social sciences research in Nepal is far from satisfactory. Why is it so? This paper will try to make a comprehensive assessment of research in the history, political science, economics, and sociology/anthropology of Nepal, considering these disciplines as the core of social science.

The paper consists of five sections. It begins with a brief review of the history of social sciences in Nepal. The second section identifies some major institutions in government, university, private research institutions and NGOs, which have produced social science knowledge, and analyses their research activities. Section three deals with a case study of two leading research centres in Nepal. The fourth section focuses on resources i.e. books, journals, libraries and funds of research. Finally, there are some recommendations for the improvement of social sciences research in the country.

Before I enter into the main subject, it will be relevant here to recall three major political events of Nepal, which have had a profound impact on the overall educational environment, particularly as regards social science subjects. The first is the advent of democracy in February 1951, which opened up an opportunity of education for the people. In the past during the oligarchic Rana regime (1846-1950), education was virtually prohibited except for the members of ruling family and other privileged groups. The open educational environment in the post-Rana period was stalled by a royal coup against democracy in December 1960. Though the newly established regimented partyless panchayat system expedited development in education, the regime, by its New Education Plan (NEP) of 1972, deliberately discouraged social science subjects. The situation changed after the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990. The opening and expansion of new universities and research organizations outside the purview of government and TU are the most recent developments.

### History of Social Sciences in Nepal

As mentioned above, the advent of democracy in 1951 provided a space for producing social science knowledge through teaching and research. For higher education in the pre-democracy period, Nepal had only one institution (Tri Chandra College, established in 1918), which had only a few students in each of the two separate faculties – art and basic science. Research was a completely uncovered area, though some Europeans<sup>1</sup>, Indians<sup>2</sup> and Nepalis<sup>3</sup> had published books on Nepali history before 1950. The situation changed after 1951. As a consequence of Nepal adopting an open-door policy after a century of isolation, a number of native and foreign scholars have become involved in producing social sciences knowledge, with Nepali academics mostly confined to teaching while foreigners on both teaching and research.

In the initial stage, except for the domination of Nepalis in the field of history, it was mainly foreign scholars who conducted research in the social sciences in Nepal. These foreign writers fall into two categories – Westerners and Indians. While explaining the interest of foreign researchers in Nepal a British scholar specializing in Nepali history and politics said, "Anthropologists and other social scientists have paid Nepal particular attention because of its rich ethnic and cultural diversity; because, since its opening-up in 1951, Nepal has allowed foreign researchers freer access than in other parts of the Himalayan region; and probably also because many researchers simply find it a congenial place to work (Whelpton 1990: XXIV). Another important reason behind the flow of Indian and American writers in the '60s-'70s, that reduced in succeeding decades, is the location of Nepal between China and India and its strategic importance in cold war politics at regional and international levels.

The contribution of foreign scholars was not only limited to research but also affected teaching. The spread of higher education, especially in the social sciences, was marked by the opening of several private colleges in the post-1951 period. Till 1972, three different types of colleges existed: university college, government college, and private college. Both the private and government colleges were affiliated with Patna University of India and followed its syllabus, creating a unique situation that Nepali history, politics, economy etc. were not included in teaching inside the country. The situation changed in 1959 when Nepal established a university of its own and the newly established TU introduced specifically Nepali content into higher education in the social sciences. The availability of some books on Nepal by

that time provided a rationale for this decision. Hugh Wood's bibliography published in 1959 included 1,300 books and articles on Nepal written in English ((Whelpton 1990: XXIV). The Indian influence, however, remained in one way or others. Despite Nepal's having her own university, the post graduate classes of all subjects under the arts faculty, including history, political science and economics, were run by Nepali and Colombo Plan Indian teachers. Indian universities trained the first generation of educated Nepalis, including university teachers.

Despite dependency on India and exclusion of research from TU's academic activities, the social sciences were dominant in the education of the country's future manpower, particularly for the bureaucracy, educational institutions and corporations. But the pre-eminence of social sciences could not long survive because of the state's active intervention against it. The social sciences in Nepal have been increasingly neglected since the government introduced the NEP in 1972 with its two major objectives:

- a) to produce citizens who, with full faith in the country and the Crown, would conduct themselves in accordance with the Panchayat System; and
- b) to meet the manpower requirements of development through the spread of scientific and technical education (Shah 1978: 38).

In pursuing the second objective of the NEP, TU created separate institutes in 1972-73 for each of the following subjects: forestry, agriculture and animal science, medicine, and engineering. In line with the state's policy of balanced development in all the five regions (Eastern, Central, Western, Mid-Western, and Far-Western) of the country, TU expanded the technical campuses in different localities. In addition to the state policy to promote vocational and technical education, the parents and students showed awareness in choice of subject. This subject consciousness led students to opt for courses that would better guarantee job availability. Till the '60s, Nepal did not have a significant problem of educated unemployment but over time it has become difficult for those educated in the social sciences to find jobs. This explains why a large number of students have been attracted to technical education. The state protection along with societal preference for technical education has naturally had an adverse effect on the social sciences. The figure of student enrollment in higher education could be taken as one indicator. In the '50s and the '60s the ratio between general education and technical education was roughly 80: 20, but had shifted to 63: 37 by 1977

(Malla 1979). At present the students in the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences constitute only 42 percent in the total 115,608 students of TU (Tribhuvan University 2001: 9).

Though the NEP was biased against the social sciences it did initiate research at the university. In the '70s TU established its own four specialized research centers: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS), Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA) Research Centre for Applied Science and Technology (RECAST) and Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID), the first two being devoted to research in different fields of social science. This marked a switch from purely teaching-based to research-based social science knowledge production. The return of some TU-Colombo Plan teachers in the mid-'70s after obtaining their Ph.D. from different universities of India further contributed to the university's research and teaching capabilities. Thus, native university teachers gradually replaced the Colombo Plan Indian teachers.

Despite TU's conscious efforts to nurture social sciences research since the '70s, the priority was given to other fields. The collapse of the NEP in 1980 paved the way back to the British-Indian model of education but this did not bring any change in the state's patronage to technical education. However, despite constantly increasing its capacity to absorb more students in technical subjects, TU could not keep up with the societal demands for more student enrollment in technical education. Nor did it provide any incentive for the social sciences to divert the students' pressure for technical education. Instead, it escaped from the problem by granting permission to establish private campuses. During the '80s, several private campuses, most of them catering for Humanities and Social Sciences and some including Commerce as well, were established in different parts of the country.

A retrospective look at the evolution of the social sciences in Nepal will help to understand the changing trends and the focus of different disciplines. History is the oldest and perhaps the strongest of these and also one which has mainly been nurtured by native scholars. Overseas writers on Nepal history could be counted on the fingers<sup>4</sup> and only a few Indian historians<sup>5</sup> produced books, most of them concentrating on the diplomatic history of Nepal. Nepali historians were ahead when research opportunities opened after the political change in 1951.<sup>6</sup> In the '50s, history writing became a fad in Nepal, more so than any other social science subject (Sharma 1974: 116). Writing political history remained the dominant trend but Mahesh Chandra Regmi ventured into a new area: the economic history of Nepal. The Italian

scholar G. Tucci was the catalyst in introducing research on regional history of Nepal. At the institutional level, *Itihas Sansodhan Mandal*, founded in the early '50s by experts in Jyotisa (traditional astrology/astronomy), Sanskrit, Newari and epigraphy, has been constantly engaged in history research since its inception. The Department of Archeology of the government and to some extent the Royal Nepal Academy have contributed to the genesis and evolution of research on Nepali history. Comparatively, the role of TU, both at individual and institutional levels, is least significant if the contribution made by CNAS is excluded. Serious research on history has continuously declined since the '70s.

The record of study/research in economics resembles that in history in two respects. One, there are only a few foreigners including some Indians who have done serious research on Nepali economy.<sup>7</sup> Two, among native scholars/institutions concerned with economics, non-university sectors have produced more books and reports. There are just a few university teachers who have made noteworthy contributions in both teaching and research.<sup>8</sup> Some economists from the TU and the government have also made a remarkable contribution to diversify the discipline in area-specific studies i.e. finance, trade, planning, rural development, regional planning etc.<sup>9</sup> In general, however, faculty members of economics department have done hardly any serious academic research. One of the major reasons is that those who are highly qualified have always been picked up by the government and or by private consultancy offices and others are busy with project work rather than academic research.

Political science and sociology/anthropology are relatively more influenced by foreign scholars in terms of research production. Except for Bhuwan Lal Joshi who, as a co-author with Leo E. Rose, produced a comprehensive and highly scholarly book on post-Rana politics, the pioneer researchers on Nepali politics are Americans<sup>10</sup> and Indians.<sup>11</sup> A few native writers<sup>12</sup> contributed by publishing books on the chronology of political development, political administration and the judicial system. A new trend has been evident since the late '70s when an independent scholar Rishikesh Shaha and a university teacher Lok Raj Baral began producing their own academic books on Nepali politics. This discipline, however, remained in constant difficulty, partly because of the decrease in interest by foreign scholars, including Indians, by the '80s (Onta 2001: 60-89). Another reason was the fear psyche of native political scientists under the regimented panchayat system. Among those who did Ph. D during the panchayat regime

(1960-1990), most of them selected foreign policy issues to avoid the risk in their research. The *Nepali Journal of Political Science*, published from 1979 to 1983, showed this reality. Out of 29 articles published in the total six issues of this journal, papers on Nepali politics account for only three, the remainder being on Nepal's foreign policy, regional affairs, international relations and political theory. Similarly out of 10 papers in the 'Current Issue Series' brought out by *CNAS Forum*, nine articles are related to Nepal's foreign policy and South Asian Affairs and one on development. In contrast to the availability of arenas beyond the university for history and economic researchers, the scope of political science research was limited to the university structure till 1990. The situation changed after the restoration of democracy in 1990 but the Nepali political scientists, with few exceptions, show little sign of being able to adjust to new opportunities and responsibilities.

Sociology/anthropology is a relatively young discipline in Nepal, although rural sociology was introduced into courses in 1954 by a government-run training centre. The INAS (later renamed as CNAS) ran a programme of anthropology degrees (Master and Ph. D) by dissertation for a short time in the mid-'70s. Teaching of these two subjects, which come under one department in TU, started only in 1981. This discipline is, however, rich in research in terms of quality and numbers of books and authors. Sociology/anthropology of Nepal has two distinct features. First, unlike other social science subjects, this discipline is almost completely untouched by Indian researchers. Another feature is that research on Nepali sociology/anthropology has constantly been initiated and promoted by Western authors. Overseas scholars<sup>13</sup> have made a remarkable contribution in exploring and expanding work in the discipline, primarily in the areas of ethnography, development and social change (Dahal 1984: 37-49). By the mid-60s, the native sociologists/anthropologists were also producing their own research works.<sup>14</sup> Despite the general fruitfulness of the discipline, many faculty members of the sociology/anthropology department of TU have not done serious academic work mainly because of their indulgence in consultancy business outside the university.

Research by Nepali social scientists, particularly by university teachers, before 1990 was less than satisfactory. Part of the reason was the lack of institutional support from the government. Since the political environment in the university had always been hostile to the panchyat establishment, the government, on the one hand, tried to control research in the university and,

on the other hand, it attempted to strengthen research activities within the government structure. The late '60s and the '70s were the key period for setting up the government research and training centres. Notable among these were the Panchayat Training Centre, Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC), Agricultural Projects Service Centre (APROCS), Industrial Service Sector (ISC), Trade Promotion Centre (TPC) and Water and Energy Commission Sector Study (WECS). The National Planning Commission (NPC), Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB), and Royal Nepal Academy (RNA) were encouraged to carry out more research projects. Besides, each of the major departments and ministries of the government set up their own research unit under the title of 'Policy Planning Wing.' The Centre for Panchayat Policy and Investigation (CPPI), set up inside the palace with the Crown Prince as its head, was the key controlling institution. This also conducted research secretly through hired university teachers and civil servants with the purpose of providing philosophical underpinning to the panchayat system. The major activities and research done by the government agencies were primarily directed towards providing policy inputs for development planning, not consciously motivated for the promotion of social science in Nepal.

### **Social Sciences Research Institutions**

The post-1990 scenario for the social sciences was marked by some changes. The educational institutions are now largely free from regimentation and the government has reduced its role in research activities. The scope and opportunities for social sciences research have increased. Since the university has made no move to revive its research capabilities many university academics are seeking other avenues. Research by the private research centres and NGOs has become a new fashion owing to the availability of financial support from foreign donors. They have a lion's share in the research business including the production of books – irrespective of the quality – though many of them do not have their own research manpower and so rely on the university's human resources. The university teachers/researchers are providing services to outside organizations for their personal benefit not for the institutional enhancement of the university from which they draw their regular salary. Despite TU academics remaining the dominating actors in social sciences research, the failure of university system to utilize its manpower has benefited the NGOs.



**University:** The university is the centre of knowledge production. Of the total five universities in Nepal, TU offers courses in every subjects and it alone has taken responsibility for social sciences. The four other universities are Mahendra Sanskrit University in Dang, Purbanchal University in Biratnagar, Pachimachal University in Pokhara (all these are state-funded) and Kathmandu University (private) in Dhulikhel. TU is the biggest university and has five institutes (one each for science and technology, engineering, medicine, forestry, and agriculture and animal science), four faculties (humanities and social sciences, management, law, and education), and four research centres (CNAS, CEDA, RECAST and CERID). Apart from the 177 campuses affiliated with it, TU has 61 constituent campuses spread all over the country in which 115,608 students enrolled in 2001 (Tribhuvan University 2001: 9). This figure is around 80 percent of the total students in higher education. Among TU teaching organizations, the humanities and social sciences faculty is the largest one running 26 departments covering different subjects that can be broadly divided into three categories: language and literature, liberal arts, and social sciences.

Before coming to the main theme of the paper, one point that needs to be dealt with is the teaching environment in TU, particularly as it affects social science subjects. For this purpose I have taken the figures for student enrolment in Bhaktapur Campus and Kirtipur Campus, of which the former teaches intermediate and bachelor levels and the latter concentrates on post-graduate level only.

**Table 1: Number of Student Enrolments at Different Levels of Social Science**

	Bhaktapur Campus										Kirtipur Campus				
	IA (intermediate)					BA (Bachelor)					MA				
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
History	75	129	186	172	214	19	9	12	15	12	78	75	93	109	102
Political Science	121	206	320	307	308	47	17	29	22	23	188	185	166	287	383
Economics	333	267	335	240	219	76	87	185	108	127	990	568	819	993	653
Sociology/ Anthropology	X	X	X	X	X	116	117	210	162	210	201	146	125	175	185

Source: Official records of Bhaktapur Campus and Kirtipur Campus.

The total figure of student enrollment in Bhaktapur campus at IA level in the last five years shows a preference for economics and then for political science. History is the least popular subject and sociology/anthropology is not yet available at IA level in the university. The popularity of this last subject is clearly shown by the constant increase in numbers at BA level in the last five years. Economics has been reduced to second in popularity, and the number of students taking course in political science and history at this level were negligible. The gap among different subjects further intensifies if number of students in the last year of the BA in the five calendar years were counted: 3, 1, 2, 1, and 2 in history; 4, 2, 3, 2, and 5 in political science; 11, 11, 40, 18, and 29 in economics; and 19, 12, 50, 30, and 53 in sociology/anthropology respectively.

The figures for MA students in the last five years in Kirtipur Campus show the popularity of economics, followed by political science, sociology/anthropology and history. This picture, however, does not reflect the whole story, especially about the emergence of sociology/anthropology as dominant subject in terms of student enrollment. The sociology/anthropology department of Kirtipur Campus admitted a record number of 800 students in 1994 but numbers then declined because the quota for new students was fixed at 100 despite the fact that around 900 students sat the entrance examination in 2000. As the department limited admissions, students dispersed to other campuses, which provide more places for MA students in this subject. Tri Chandra Campus admitted around 200 students of MA in sociology/anthropology in 1995 when it started the post-graduate class. Numbers taking an MA in this subject in Tri Chandra Campus increased to 4,700 in 2001.

Judging from a comparative perspective, the social sciences as a whole are the least attractive in terms of students' choice for their higher education. In contrast to the '80s, when the dominant was the opening of several private campuses teaching humanities and social sciences, most of the private campuses mushrooming after 1990 have been providing courses in management, with a few offering basic science, engineering and medicine. Over time, the number and percentage of students taking courses in science, engineering and medicine have rapidly increased in both TU and other universities. Above all, the dominant subject is management to which all the three newly established universities and several private campuses have given priority. TU alone has 29,432 management students at different levels for 2001 (Tribhuvan University 2001: 9). This trend will continue for the near

future as shown by the figure that out of 74,421 students of 'ten plus two' (equivalent to certificate level), 50 percent have taken a management course (Khatri 2001).

The above statistics raise three major questions. One, why is the new generation of students more interested in joining private campuses rather than public campuses? Two, why are students more interested in other subjects than in the social sciences? Three, among the different social science subjects why are some more attractive than others?

The answer to question two stems from the bottom line: education in Nepal has increasingly become job oriented. Engineering and medicine have long been popular because of easy availability of 'prestigious' jobs for their graduates. On the benefit of taking management course, Kundan Dutta Koirala, Dean of Faculty of Management of TU, states, "...management graduates from TU are easily absorbed by the growing market economy. The management programs are market-tailored to a large extent.... The demand for management graduates in the areas of marketing and finance is far more than its supply (Koirala 1999: 69). The same logic applies to question three, the popularity of sociology/anthropology compared to other social science subjects. To quote K. B. Bhattachan, "Due to ever-growing activities of international non-governmental organizations in Nepal and their increasing demand for sociology and anthropology graduates to work with them the discipline has become very glamorous." (Bhattachan 1997: 17). Another reason for student pressures on sociology/anthropology is that all students who passed diploma level irrespective of their disciplinary backgrounds are eligible to join the post-graduate class in this subject. Similarly, graduates from management can join the MA in economics. The recent introduction of a post-graduate course in law has adversely impacted on the student enrollment for MA in political science, which once attracted law graduates. The history department has recently released restriction to the graduate of other subjects to join in its MA course since last three years but it has not impacted to the decline of student enrolment in this subject.

To respond to the first question, I will briefly highlight one problem facing mainly by central departments of Kirtipur Campus. Both teachers and students of post-graduate classes have long appeared part-timers. Students regularly attending class in all the four subjects (history, political science, economics, and sociology/ anthropology) hardly exceed 20 percent of total students enrolled. Most teachers are overburdened by their involvement in other activities outside the TU - in politics or in NGOs or in private

campuses. An erosion of standards in social science is linked to the general decline in the quality and standard of higher education throughout TU (Sharma and Khatri 1997: 3). Acknowledging the problem, the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences says, "...our educational environment is dirty" (Manandhar 1997: 40).

Coming to the main thrust of this section – social sciences research in TU – I will now briefly touch upon the three different types of institution within TU which, apart from their other responsibilities, are more or less involved in social sciences research: academic-administrative offices, teaching departments of Kirtipur Campus, and research centres.

The role of TU Research Division, which once undertook multiple responsibilities i.e. publication, research grant, affiliation etc., has recently been reduced to the single assignment – publication of the university's annual *TU Journal*, which first appeared in 1964 and includes articles of all subjects from history to bio-diversity. The newly established Centre for International Relations does not involve itself in research work except for granting affiliation to foreign researchers and networking with foreign universities. The Office of the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences is one of the institutions within TU with greater responsibility to promote teaching and research activities. In addition to its constant involvement in improving the syllabus of the different subjects under its jurisdiction through conducting training, workshops and seminars, its roles of granting Ph.D. degrees and allocating research funds are noteworthy. The Dean's Office runs the Ph.D. program in collaboration with individual teachers of central departments of Kirtipur Campus.

The potential significance of Ph.D. research in strengthening the academic environment inside the university and the nation as a whole goes without saying. Some facts and figures of the last 30 years (1970 to 2000), brought out by a previous study, reveal the real situation. According to this, 1155 TU staff (most of them Ph.D. candidates) took study leave, 75-80% of these being teaching staff. They included 248 Ph.D. candidates who registered in the Office of the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences of TU. But TU has awarded Ph.D. degree to total 153 persons of different subjects. (Subedi 2000: 2). This reveals two things. One, foreign universities, including Indian universities, have produced more Nepali Ph.Ds. than has TU. Two, the big gap between the number of persons registered for Ph.D. and the number of persons who completed Ph.D. shows a tendency to misuse study leave. This problem will remain in the near future, since TU authorities

have never taken actions against the abusers of study leave nor do they consider this a serious issue.

The production of Nepali Ph.Ds. from foreign universities in greater number reveals the fact that TU is relatively unattractive to aspiring Ph.Ds. One of the main reasons is the lack of funds. Of course TU has been offering grants under the "faculty development program" for Ph.D. researchers since 1979 but the total number of persons who have taken advantage of this over the last 21 years has been only 240 (Subedi 2000:3). The bias against social sciences is too obvious for two reasons. Firstly, the faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences receives a quota of only two seats for TU's Ph.D. scholarships. Secondly, the present Dean has given the lowest priority to history, political sciences, economics, and sociology/anthropology while nominating persons for a Ph.D. scholarship. He argues that there are many other departments under his faculty, which have few or no Ph.Ds. Another institution promoting Ph.D. research through providing scholarship is University Grant Commission (UGC) which – in the last five years from the time of its foundation in 1995 – has granted fellowship to total 67 Ph.D. researchers, including 7 from history, 3 from political science, 7 from economics, and 1 from sociology/anthropology.<sup>15</sup> Besides, 265 foreign Ph. D. fellowships on different subjects were awarded to Nepalis through TU channels in the last ten-year from 1990 to 2000 (Acharya and Parajuli 2001:138).

The Dean Office of Humanities and Social Sciences faculty is involved in research in other ways. Over the last four years, it has run a program of mini-research to be conducted by TU teachers belonging to this faculty, providing a grant of around NRs 25,000 per person. The Dean's office usually selects 20 proposals every year under this scheme. But the Dean has had the bitter experience that nearly 50 percent of teachers receiving the funds have not yet completed their work. Moreover, little of the work actually completed has met the standard set by the Dean's Office

Before discussing in detail the research and teaching activities of TU social scientists, I present their social and academic profiles on the assumption that these things may have some impact on the research agenda and environment.

Table 2: Social Profile of University Social Sciences Teachers/Researchers

	Gender		Religion					Caste/Ethnic Groups					DC
	Total	Male	Femal	Hindu	Buddhist	Muslim	Hill			Tarai			
							Brahmin	Chhetri	Newar	HE/TG	TCG	TE/TG	
Central Departments	103	96	7	93	9	1	58	12	18	5	10	-	-
History	21	19	2	19	2	-	11	5	5	-	-	-	-
Political Science	20	19	1	18	1	1	9	3	4	1	3	-	-
Economics	41	39	2	38	3	-	25	2	8	1	5	-	-
Sociology/ Anthropology	21	19	2	18	3	-	13	2	1	3	2	-	-
CNAS*	20	18	2	16	4	-	8	2	8	2	-	-	-
CEDA*	34	26	8	29	4	1	11	4	15	1	3	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

HE/TG: Hill Ethnic/Tribal Group, TCG: Tarai Caste Group (Included two Muslims), TE/TG: Tarai Ethnic/Tribal Group;  
DC: Dalit Caste.

\* Excluding Executive Directors as they are already included under their parent department.

Source: Interview with some academic and administrative staff of above mentioned departments and research centers.

The table reveals the male domination in social sciences in TU as females constitute only 10 percent. Most TU social scientists are Hindus and 11 percent are Buddhist. Hill Brahmins and Newars – which constitute only 12 percent and 5 percent respectively in total population of Nepal – predominate with 49 percent and 26 percent respectively. This data more or less corresponds to national figure of educational attainment at graduate and above level that Brahmin constitutes 34.1 percent and Newar 23.7 Percent (Gurung 1998: 127). Other caste groups, including Chhetris, are less numerous; and the complete absence of Dalits (so called 'untouchables') is also notable. These figures more or less match the ratio of power distribution in the politics and administration of Nepal. The question is: does under-representation of marginalized sections of society in the university have an impact on setting the research agenda and on other academic activities? This is a debatable issue but not much debated by TU social scientists. For example, apart from CEDA's intensive study on the status of Nepali women in the '70s, gender issues have never had priority in either teaching or research in the university. For the native social scientists at TU, questions related to Dalit castes, hill ethnic groups, tarai community remain as almost untouched areas though a number of foreign researchers have produced volumes of books and articles on these issues. These agendas have been taken up for a twin purpose – research and advocacy – mostly by NGOs and other organizations, which are campaigning for the cause of disadvantaged sections of society. The lobby and advocacy work rather than research concerns have been instrumental in their focus on a number of social, economic and political problems of the country.



Table 3: Academic Profile of University Social Science Teachers/Researchers

Institutions	Total academic staff	Numbers and sources of Ph.Ds.				Research books				Position		
		Total	Nepal	India	Other	Single	Joint	Edited	Prof.	Reader	Lecturer	
		103	11	27	16	32	24	14	35	34	34	34
Central Departments	21	5	6	1	13	7	2	7	10	4		
History	20	3	7	1	8	6	5	11	7	2		
Political Science	41	3	11	8	7	6	3	13	15	13		
Economics	21	-	3	6	4	5	4	4	2	15		
Sociology/Anthropology	20	2	3	4	12	8	2	3	9	8		
CNAS*	34	-	7	4	5	4	6	2	12	20		
CEDA*	157	13	37	24	49	36	22	40	55	62		
Total												

\* Excluded executives as their profile accounted to the department they belong to.

Source: Interview with some academic and administrative staff of above mentioned departments and research centers.

Out of total 157 social scientists working on four different subjects (history, political science, economics, sociology/anthropology) in Kirtipur Campus and two research centres, 40 are Professors, 55 Readers and 62 Lecturers. Around 50 percent of the academics from each discipline and centre have a Ph.D. degree except for only 32 percent in CEDA. In total, the number of Ph. D. holders from Indian universities is highest (37), the lowest from Nepal (13). Those who received a degree from abroad are 24, most of them from American and British universities. Among 157 social scientists 49 have a sole-authored book to their credit; 36 (including some who also authored books on their own) have produced joint books, and 22 have published an edited volume. This figure does not reflect the actual volume and quality of books contributed by the individual members of above four teaching departments and two research centres. Treating the individual contribution separately is beyond the scope of this study, but how far personal academic assets are translated into institutional strength needs to be examined.

For the faculty members of the central departments of Kirtipur Campus, teaching is their obligatory job and research is not binding. In addition to teaching, however, they are institutionally involved in two types of research, serving as guide to dissertation writing by MA students and assisting with the publication of their departmental journal. The History and Political Science departments have suffered from a common problem, viz. the lack of institutional support from outside the university. Both departments sometimes conduct talk programs, workshops and seminars whenever they receive grants from outside. But they get such kind of support very rarely. In its four-decade long life, History Department received a small external grant only three times from the UGC, Nepal-India B.P. Foundation, and Fridrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES). So this department has to its credit the production of three sponsored books: *Controversial Themes on Nepali History* (in Nepali) *State of Nepali Historiography*, and *Political Instability in Nepal*. Besides, the History Department has published a bi-annual journal (*Voice of History*) since 1975 but this has only appeared regularly since 1999. The Political Science Department is the most backward faculty in terms of research output. It has not produced a single book nor has it revived the departmental journal since it stopped in 1983.

Economics and Sociology/Anthropology are most prosperous but relatively less productive departments. Thesis writing by MA students is optional in Economics but compulsory in Sociology/Anthropology.

International agencies like Winrock International and GTZ have provided a small grant for the MA dissertation writing program in Sociology/Anthropology and Economics. Besides, the former is receiving similar support from Bergen and Cornell universities. For Economics Department, Nepal Rastra Bank has long provided research fellowships for both students and teachers. It has also borne the financial cost of the departmental journal, *Economics Journal of Nepal*, which is regular since its inception in 1978. The Sociology/ Anthropology Department has its own volumes of occasional paper, which, in fact, employs journal format and standard, but it has produced only 7 volumes in the 14 years from 1987 to 2001. One additional departmental/institutional contribution has been the publication of an edited volume, *Development Practices in Nepal*.

Research at the institutional level by central departments of Kirtipur Campus is negligible. But individual efforts by TU social scientists to get themselves involved in research works through the cultivation of other platforms are an open secret. Some historians of Kirtipur Campus have already published the fruit of their research from CNAS, Royal Nepal Academy, *Itihas Samsodhan Mandal* and other research centres. Relatively speaking, political science has limited scope for research either inside or outside the university, except for the alternative platforms provided by the Political Science Association of Nepal (POLSAN) and Nepal Centre for Contemporary Studies (NCCS). For sociologists/anthropologists, the space for academic research outside the university is virtually nil though they have been highly patronized by NGOs and INGOs. Thus, the TU sociologists/anthropologists are behind other social scientists in terms of production of books. Only 4 out of 21 faculty members of Sociology/ Anthropology Department of Kirtipur Campus have sole-authored books to their credit, despite this department having 9 Ph. Ds., 6 from the USA and 3 from India. The picture in the Economics Department is not much different from that for sociology/anthropology. Out of 41 faculty members of Economics Department 22 have Ph. D. degrees but the number of single-authored books is just 7 suggesting that the TU economists have least interest in academic research. Most TU economists are busy in projects sponsored by government, NGOs and INGOs.

Research by TU academics from outside Kathmandu is virtually non-existent though the expansion of post-graduate (MA) class in other campuses appear as a push factor in some cases. In addition to Kirtipur campus, the number of other campuses providing MA courses in economic is 8, with the

figures for political science, history and sociology/anthropology 7, 3 and 2 respectively. Prithwi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, first introduced an MA class in economics and geography in 1978 and it later expanded to other subjects, history, political science and English in 1994. The expansion of MA classes in different subjects followed with the establishment of a research committee, which sponsors mini-research projects, with a financial grant of Rs 10,000, to 10-15 campus teachers in each year. The results of these research projects are published in *Prithwi*, a journal of Prithwi Narayan Campus. Besides, the Department of History and Culture, and Political Science and Sociology each have their own journal, *Historiya* and *Journal of Political Science* respectively. Though research in Prithwi Narayan Campus at present is confined to thesis writing by MA students, mini-research by campus teachers and publication of journals, one should appreciate it since such activities have not yet been taken up by other campuses running post-graduate classes.

The role of TU's own research centres needs to be observed to understand the state of social science research in the university. Out of TU's four non-teaching research centres, CNAS and CEDA are assigned to social sciences areas. CNAS focuses on academic research and CEDA on applied research. Their difference is well reflected in their own publication. CNAS's publications are mostly in book form (140) rather than mimeographed (33), whilst CEDA has published relatively few books (12) but the entries for CEDA's own research reports in its library reach to 1689 volumes. CEDA's priority is further reflected by the fact that out of its 34 researchers only 7 have published books of any sort (single-, joint-authored or edited). To contribute to academic research, CEDA has published a journal, *The Journal of Development and Administrative Studies*, since 1975 though it has not come out regularly. Both CNAS and CEDA are multidisciplinary if one looks at the disciplinary background of academics at these two centres.<sup>16</sup> But in terms of research areas, CNAS is genuinely multidisciplinary whereas CEDA is an interdisciplinary centre focusing on only one area, development. Irrespective of the diverse disciplinary backgrounds of CEDA researchers, they are classified into 7 groups in accordance with its priority areas: Planning and Economic Policy, Rural Development, Population and Human Resources, Management System and Administration, Action Research Program, Environment and Resource Management, and Women in Development.

CEDA, since its foundation in 1969 as an autonomous research institution, which was integrated into the university in 1972, has focused on two areas: applied research and training. The purpose of its creation is to provide facilities and conduct applied research activities and to meet the in-service training and career development needs of both government and private organizations (Rana 1978: 6). Till the '70s CEDA was known as the most active think-tank research center but now it has declined due to many reasons. Three of them are noteworthy. First, most of its founder researchers were co-opted to the National Planning Commission and INGOs and did not come back to their parent organization after completing these temporary assignments. Second the foundation of NASC for training to government employees led to the cutting down of CEDA's training activities. Third, CEDA has long suffered from mismanagement, as is witnessed by the irregularity in publication of its journal, lack of record of periodicals in its library, and above all the tendency of individual researchers to seize opportunities for consultancy work ignoring the institutional interest of their own organization.

Social sciences research in the university is becoming neglected and marginalized. To search the reasons behind decline of research in this area, let us recall the tribute paid by Stiller, scholar of Nepali history, to the pioneer scholars of Nepali social sciences, "It has been a selfless task, unrewarding, and possible only because of the high degree of dedication these men have shown" (Stiller 1974: 75-108.) At present, this spirit could hardly be found among the TU social scientists. Particularly after the restoration of democracy in 1990, a new type of social sciences culture has emerged: that is talking culture not working culture, and no research without extra money. The quest for money has led the TU social scientists to work more in other places, mainly on private campuses, NGOs and INGOs, even at the cost of their individual responsibility/assignment in the university. Many university teachers have their own private campuses or NGOs. The high marketability of active TU teachers/researchers in the upcoming fields of commercialized education and consultancy research business has seriously hampered the academic environment of the university. One more problem, which has been constantly raised since TU initiated research, is the separation of research and teaching jobs and the existence of a degree of hostility between those working in research centres and others in teaching departments. So teaching and research have never been seen as complementary to each other.

**Government:** Research in Nepal at the government level is a new phenomenon starting from the mid-'60s. The space and scope for government research was intensified and diversified in the '70s and the '80s through the setting up of a number of area-specific state-owned research offices. During the panchayat regime, government research meant two things: construction of the ideological and philosophical base for the then partyless panchayat system, and the provision of policy input for development. The relevance of first objective ended with the restoration of democracy in Nepal in 1990 but the importance of the second remained undeniable. The Administrative Reform Commission formed in 1992 recommended setting up a separate policy-planning division in each major ministry and department. The government followed this recommendation in form but not in substance, because the policy-planning division in government offices has become a home for those officials who have failed to obtain patronage from the concerned Secretary or Minister. For government officials, to get an assignment to research work means to receive punishment. The government's insensitivity to and ignorance of the value of research is further observed in the collapse of APROSC, an active and productive research centre. Several other government research offices are heading towards the fate of APROSC. There are still, however, some government agencies outside the ministries and departments which are involved in the production of social sciences knowledge.

The government research institutions can be broadly categorized into four groups: data producers, area-specialized centres, training centres and general. The NPC, a state run think-tank, is the biggest, producing thousands of reports that are classified into five areas: social service and manpower, economic sector and foreign aid, physical infrastructure and water resource development, agriculture and forestry, and rural development and poverty alleviation. The NPC conducts hardly any research work itself. It appears to function merely as a broker, receiving large amounts of money for research from donors and using individuals, private consultancy offices or NGOs enjoying patronage by members of the NPC to carry out foreign-funded research. It is generally perceived that most of the NPC members have their own declared or undeclared consultancy offices.

Most government research institutions, such as NRB, CBS etc., are essentially data collecting units. For instance, CBS publishes vast amounts of data e.g. the population census, agricultural census, industrial census, national accounts, price index etc. The primary activities of area-specific

research offices i.e. TPC, WECS etc. are to generate and produce data on their own specific areas. The government data have largely been used for government's policy planning and by researchers especially by demographers, economists, sociologists. Institute of foreign Affairs (IFA) is also supposedly an area specific centre and was envisaged as a think tank on foreign affairs matter at the time of its foundation but it hardly fulfills the function for which it was established. The running of this office by just two professionals, including the executive director, and its publication of just three books (including two volumes in its policy study series) is enough to indicate the true reality.

The Local Development Training Centre (LDTC) and the NASC are two major training institutions of the government. Both are involved in research but as a supplement to their main task – the provision of training by the LDTC to those involved in local development and by the NASC to government employees. The LDTC's 83 publications over the period 1991-2000 indicate its research priority areas – local development, local self-governance, local elected bodies, and decentralization. The NASC has its own Research Policy and Information Service Department through which the office undertakes in-house research project: 2 full-scale research programmes, 2 mini-research projects and 3 case studies per year (NASC 2000). Over time both the LDTC and the NASC have diversified their clientele through providing training services to NGOs and the private sector as well. They have also intensified their activities mostly in the consultancy sector e.g. the NASC undertook 26 consultancy projects in 1999/2000. Besides, the NASC library has over 10,000 books, reports, and working papers.

Among the government research institutions, RNA and DOA are somehow different from others in terms of areas of their activities. The main objective of RNA is to promote art, language and literature. Nevertheless, research on social sciences also falls under its scope as shown by its publication of 34 books on this area out of its total 565 publications up to 2000. Though the members of RNA are assumed to be outstanding personalities, it has not yet created its own academic staff. It promotes research through providing a grant of Nrs 50,000-75,000 (per person) for 9 scholars per year. The DOA has concentrated on collecting inscriptions and historically important hand-written documents from all over the country.

Some other points need to be highlighted to understand the position of government research. The government allocates funds to its research

institutions merely to meet the salary and administrative costs. So the government research offices are financially dependent on foreign donors. Most government research is limited to data generation and report writing, which are supposed to be used for policy planning and as primary data by social scientists. The government research centres' work is not related to social sciences studies except for some significant articles related to this area published in their own journals.

**Private Research Centres, Professional Organizations and NGOs:**

Research in Nepal by non-government and non-university sector has developed recently with the mushrooming of NGOs and availability of foreign research funds. The trend is illustrated by the figures for NGOs registered with the Social Welfare Council: there were just 219 of these before the changes of 1990, but by the end of March 2000 they numbered 10,475. If NGOs registered in District Offices in all 75 districts are added to the list the total number exceeds 30,000 (Dahal 2000). Most of them are development NGOs but only a few are active and they generally include research as one of the components of projects they handle. Most among those known as active NGOs have no interest in research nor do they conduct serious studies even though the total project budgets include allocations for research. So their contribution is mainly limited to increasing the quantity of research volumes and diversification of study areas.

In fact research from private sector started only in the '70s except for the *Itihas Sansodhan Mandal* (established in 1952), which in the period following its inception conducted a considerable amount of original research on Nepali history but which later became less active. The post-1990 period witnessed the establishment of several private research centres in the form of NGOs.

The private research institutions, excluding development-focused NGOs and other that do not publish regularly, can roughly be divided into five broad categories: consultancy and action-research-based institutions, advocacy-based NGOs, academic research centres, professional organizations, and INGOs.

New Era (NE), Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS) and South Asia Partnership/ Nepal (SAP-N) are important members of the first category. NE and IIDS are pioneer private institutions – both established in the '70s and run throughout by former members of NPC and retired senior bureaucrats – which initiated consultancy and client-based research. They



have later expanded to applied and action research. SAP-N has a different history of turning itself from donor agency (established in 1985) to officially non-governmental development organization in 1994. All these institutions have in common the fact that they have been nurtured by active support from a number of foreign donor agencies. For instance, at present SAP-N has 6 Canadian-aided projects and several other projects funded by INGOs. The three are the richest private centres, NE and SAP-N having their own office complex and IIDS an endowment fund totalling US\$ 990,000. Keeping intact the consultancy business, SAP-N and IIDS have recently entered into the sphere of academic research as well, partly because of the availability of funds in this area and partly because of the competitive market in the research business. Most of their publications in book forms have appeared since the mid-'90s. But the authors of most of these books produced by SAP-N, and IIDS are outsiders, especially university teachers, suggesting the limitation of consultancy-based research institutions in the area of academic research.

The advocacy based NGOs are prospering in a similar way to consultancy-based institutions. Informal Service Sector (INSEC), a human rights organization, could be one of several examples. It has its own paid representatives in all 75 districts of the country. Its involvement in research is well reflected by its own publication of 95 items, including its periodicals, till 2000. The value of research it has conducted is, however, primarily confined to a supplementary role in support of its advocacy of human rights and campaigns against *kamaiya* (bonded labor system), child labor, exploitation of women, and the practice of untouchability.

Among the private academic research centers, Centre for Social Research and Development (CSR/D) is unique as it was set up by independent persons of different disciplines who dislike building their career through university and other formal institutions. The conduct of regular weekly discussion on a variety of subjects through its sister organization, Martin Chautari, has encouraged a new culture among the small number of educated youngsters who take part in debate and discourse on contemporary issues.

Aside from CSR/D, the private academic centres are mostly run by TU's incumbent teachers, for example, Nepal Foundation for Advance Studies (NEFAS) and NCCS. Most of these organizations produce mostly compilations of seminar papers. For instance, NEFAS has published more books (27 up to September 2001) than any other private research centre, but 16 are seminar proceedings, 5 monographs, 4 jointly authored works, and only 2 books by single authors. Of South Asia Study Centre (SASC)'s total

five books three are seminar proceedings. Only two, CSRD and NCCS, are producing their own bi-annual journal in addition to the latter's quarterly occasional papers. Their record of book production is limited to one volume each. However, since the late '90s, NCCS has developed ambitious programs including workshops/seminars, data generation, fieldwork-based research, publication of journal and occasional papers, and the training of youngsters in political science and other social sciences. Recently NCCS has further increased both its research and training activities with financial help from the Ford Foundation. SASC was founded by a former bureaucrat-cum-politician but for research activities it is also entirely dependent on university teachers. Out of its five hired researchers undertaking a study project on elections, four are incumbent TU academics.

The domination of university teachers can also be found in professional organizations i.e. POLSAN, History Association of Nepal (HAN), Nepal Economic Association (NEA) and Sociological and Anthropological Society of Nepal (SASON). These organizations draw membership from the post-graduates of the relevant discipline irrespective of their type of employment, but university teachers control both their administration and their academic activities. POLSAN once appeared as the most active organization with its record of producing nine books and one journal. But its split into three groups led to a reduction in its vibrancy and the presidents of all three splinter POLSANS have used them as their own pocket organizations to promoting their own vested interests. At present all the three POLSANS confine their activities to organizing occasional talk programs and seminars. Other professional organizations like HAN, NEA and SASON are united but unable to expedite their activities beyond holding workshops and talk programs, except for SASON's publication of two sets of seminar proceedings in book form. The professional organizations of Nepal, like the private academic research centers, are financially in poor condition. If they receive endowment funds, the above mentioned professional organizations could be a viable alternative platform for promoting social sciences research in Nepal.

Since a congenial environment for social sciences research appeared after the restoration of democracy in 1990, some research as well as advocacy-based INGOs – i.e. National Democratic Institution for International Affairs (NDI), ORG-MARG, Coalition for Actions for South Asian Cooperation (CASAC), South Asia Forum for Human Rights (SAFHR) – have also set up their offices in Kathmandu. Some of them are directly involving themselves in research, and others are providing training and other facilities to the new

social scientists of Nepal. NDI has conducted some research and hold workshops on contemporary issues, especially on gender, corruption, parliament, political parties and governance. SAFHR and CASAC have also run several research and training projects on peace, conflict resolution and regional cooperation. The Sri Lanka-based Regional Centre for Strategic Studies (RCSS) have provided opportunities to both the established and emerging social scientists to get academic exposure at South Asian level. ORG-MARG, a profit making India-based organization, set up its branch office in Kathmandu in 1993 and in the seven years up to 2000, it conducted 11 opinion surveys on different issues.

The involvement of private institutions in research has had the following positive results: 1) opening new space for research outside the government and university structure; 2) expanding the nature of research from purely academic to action and applied research; 3) developing field based quantitative and empirical studies; and diversifying the areas of research to include gender, environment, dalits, tribal communities, human rights and a number of other issues ignored by the government and university. However the private research centres and NGOs are doing research on the periphery not the core of social science subjects since donors are not much interested to academic research nor can the resulting publications, in most cases, be considered truly scholarly works. Two other things need to be noticed. One, private research institution cannot survive without continuous support from one or more foreign donors. Two, they often do client-based research and the research output is limited to report writing for clients. So most of the data they generate are confined to themselves and to the donors. For instance out of 110 plus 39 studies/reports/projects conducted by IIDS up to 2001, only 32 have been published in book form. Similarly very few out of 340 reports prepared by New Era up to 2000 have been published.

### **Case Studies**

This section concentrates on a comparative study of two social sciences research centres: CNAS, a university body, and IIDS, a private-sector institution. Originating as the Institute of Nepal Studies (INS) in 1969 and changing its name to Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies (INAS) in 1972 and finally to its present title in 1977, the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS) was established to conduct social sciences research in the university. In its initial phase under the leadership of founder Dean Prayag Raj Sharma,

who had trained in ancient history and archeology, it focused on study and research related to history, sociology, anthropology and language. This office had institutional status, headed by a Dean, and it could award MA and Ph.D. degree through dissertation. The degree granting authority was taken away permanently when it was downgraded from research institution to research centre in 1977 and Dor Bahadur Bista, a leading anthropologist, succeeded Prayag Raj Sharma as Executive Director of the centre. This change, however, had no major effect on its research areas or on CNAS's emergence as the major institution of social sciences research in Nepal. Rather, the centre acquired new infrastructure and resources, including a large office complex, and the recruitment of new researchers.

CNAS took a new turn in the '80s with the appointment of Kumar Khadga Bikram Shah, the brother in law of King Birendra, to the post of Executive Director in 1984. He strengthened the political science wing to materialize his vision of making CNAS as a think tank on foreign affairs. Previously CNAS had only one political scientist but later the number increased to 11, specializing respectively on Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Japan, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, regional affairs and international relations. CNAS's political science wing grew in importance with the publication of the journal, *Strategic Study Series*, *CNAS Year Review* in addition to their contribution to *CNAS Forum*. To facilitate research, CNAS subscribed to a number of international journals and leading newspapers from all South Asian countries. But this wing suffered suddenly in early 1989 because of the regimented educational and research system under the partyless panchayat regime. The difference between Khadga Bikram Shah and a senior political scientist, Lok Raj Baral, on India-Nepal relations and particularly on India's blockade of Nepal in March 1989, led to the cruel decision to transfer many political scientists from CNAS to other campuses. The publication of *Strategic Study Series*, *CNAS Year Review* and *CNAS Forum* stopped permanently. This event led eventually to a swing in the focus of the CNAS political science wing from foreign policy to domestic politics, though the switch occurred partly because of the change in focus of research after the restoration of democracy in 1990.

Departures from CNAS continued after 1990 but those leaving were now mainly sociologists/anthropologists. It should be noted here that next to political science, sociology/anthropology was the most powerful wing of CNAS during Khadga Bikram Shaha's tenure (1984-1990). CNAS' sociologists/anthropologists along with some academics from other

disciplines, viz. history, economics, geography and management, conducted two big research projects, one on Mustang and another on Remote Area Development. Three senior researchers of sociology/anthropology returned to teaching department in 1990-1991, and were afterwards replaced by recruiting 3 new sociologists/anthropologists. At present, CNAS has 5 political scientists, 5 sociologists/anthropologists, 3 linguists and 7 from history, culture and archeology.

CNAS has had many ups and downs but two things remain unaffected: the regular publication of its journal, *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, over the last 28 years and the quality of its research output. The availability of a separate publication fund from the government since 1995 has helped to increase the volume of book publications. CNAS also sometimes receives research funds from the government and international agencies. The total amount of such grants since 1990 is 34,97,434 rupees for four different projects. The centre is also benefiting, particularly with regard to further training of its academic staff, from its institutional affiliation with research centres outside the country, currently with the International Institute for Asian Studies (Netherlands), Centre National De la Recherche Scientifique (France), Nityanda Institute (USA), and International Development and Economic Cooperation (Japan). Looking at the other side of the picture, however one can find problems faced by CNAS. These include lack of institutional approach in setting research agendas, insufficient funds for research, ever increasing bureaucratization, inadequate use of library resources, involvement of some of its academics in consultancy research outside the university etc.

IIDS, since its foundation as Integrated Development System (IDS) in 1979, has made constant efforts both to strengthen itself as an institution and to expand its research activities. The founders are Kul Shekhar Sharma, Bhekh Bahadur Thapa (former senior bureaucrats) and Prakash Chandra Lohani (an academic turned politician). The organization gained the new name IIDS in 1990. The experience and connections built up with foreign donors by the founder director and his successors during their jobs in the Finance Ministry or in Planning Commission counted a lot in building IIDS's capacity to mobilize external sources of funds. At present, there is a long list of foreign donors providing financial grants to this office.<sup>17</sup>

In the beginning IIDS, or IDS as it then was, concentrated on consultancy research provided by international agencies i.e. IDRC, ESCAPE etc. Applied and action research particularly on development issues are its specialty. The

holding of the chief executive post by two women- Meena Acharya and Indira Shrestha- for around six years in the '80s contributed to adding one new area of research - gender. Over time, IIDS has also entered the field of academic research but economics and development remain its thrust, as suggested by the volume and number of its research. It has to its credit over 100 reports on different aspects of development.<sup>18</sup>

IIDS has declared its ambition to develop itself as a think-tank (IIDS 1996-97). To meet this goal, money is no problem for IIDS but its strength in terms of manpower is questionable. In contrast to its claim of having 35 professional staff divided into general research and action research groups (IIDS 1999-2000: 30), the office has actually just 10 academic staff with post-graduate qualifications but lists most of its administrative staff as professionals doing action research. Among the general researchers, two have Ph. D. degrees and a record of academic publication, but for the rest academic research is an unknown area. Most academic work as well as applied research carried out by IIDS have been done by outsiders with in-house academics acting as assistants to the hired main researchers. This exposes the limitation of client-based research institutions: there is a big gap between dream and reality.

CNAS and IIDS, each has own distinct place. CNAS is primarily a multidisciplinary centre. For IIDS, the dominant subject is economic development. CNAS is primarily an academic centre whereas IIDS's expertise is in applied and action research. So, the research output of IIDS is more directly relevant to policy formulation while CNAS is more orientated to pure social sciences research. There are also important differences between the two institutions in the background and qualifications of their staff. CNAS, is far ahead of IIDS, in terms of caste/ethnic composition, disciplinary background, and academic credentials of individual researchers employed. Most notably, 9 CNAS academics have a Ph.D. degree against IIDS's 2, whilst 13 researchers of the former institution have produced their own book but IIDS's professionals authored only unpublished research reports. Individuals' assets are naturally reflected in institutional strength. CNAS has 140 books to its credit against IIDS's 32. The number of unpublished reports produced by IIDS is 58 against CNAS's 95. CNAS library has acquired 9391 books and subscribes to 59 journals. IIDS's library has a collection of 1457 books, 2430 research reports and 30 periodicals (including newspapers, magazine and newsletters). Looked at in perspective, differences between CNAS and IIDS are natural since CNAS is 10 years older than IIDS and its

total manpower is double that of IIDS. Most CNAS academics have a long professional record but most of the IIDS's present professionals took up their positions only after 1990. In contrast to TU's system of offering permanent positions to both administrative and academic staff, IIDS recruits its staff on two-year renewable contracts. On money matter CNAS cannot match IIDS. The research budget allocated to CNAS for this year (2000-2001) is only Nrs. 900,000 compared to Nrs. 36,00,000 for IIDS.

### **Research Accessories: Materials and Funds**

Scholarly work on social science is a sophisticated job which demands – in addition to personal devotion and a conducive institutional environment – minimal research materials and optimum financial support.

**Books and Journals:** About books on Nepal published in the country between 1990 and 1996, TU Central Library's catalogue has 52 entries related to history, 201 on political science, 267 on economics and 99 on sociology/anthropology. Most of them, however, are works of propaganda or advocacy, party documents, or NGO productions, and only a few could be considered as academic books. A survey at Mandala Book Point, a bookshop which stocks most academic books on Nepal written in English, shows a total of 868 titles: 79 on history, 94 on politics, 95 on economy, and 78 on sociology and anthropology related topics. Leaving aside the contributions of foreign scholars and publishers, book publication in Nepal particularly in the social science areas is thriving since the institutions and publishers are taking an interest in this business.

Two government-funded institutions, Sajha Prakashan and Royal Nepal Academy, are the biggest book producers in Nepal but their contribution in the field of social science is relatively small. Private research centres are of increasing importance in this field but their failure to publish on history and their concentration on the Nepali economy shows their focus. The most welcome trend is the interest taken by private professional publishers in producing academic books.<sup>19</sup> Previously they were concentrating only on textbooks and travel books. Over the last few years they have paid growing attention to the publication of scholarly books on social science areas.

Journals are another avenue for academic publishing. Most remarkably, NGOs and private centres for applied/action research have made no contribution in this field. Except for the production of house-journals by

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some government-run offices, this area is the exclusive domain of the university and private academic research centres. The table below gives a list of journals on social science areas of Nepal, including two published outside Nepal.



**Table 4: Social Science Journals**

Social Science general	History	Political Science	Economics	Sociology/ Anthropology
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Contributions to Nepalese Studies</i> (B)</li> <li>2. <i>Kailash</i></li> <li>3. <i>Studies in Nepali History and Society</i> (B)</li> <li>4. <i>Nepali Journal of Contemporary Studies</i></li> <li>5. <i>Journal of Nepal Research Centre</i></li> <li>6. <i>Pragya</i> (N)</li> <li>7. <i>Journal of Nepalese Studies</i></li> <li>8. <i>Journal of Nepalese Studies</i>*</li> <li>9. <i>European Bulletin of Himalayan Research</i>*</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Rolamba</i> (B)</li> <li>2. <i>Ancient Nepal</i></li> <li>3. <i>Abhilekh</i> (N)</li> <li>4. <i>Voice of History</i></li> <li>5. <i>Purnima</i> (N)</li> <li>6. <i>Historiya</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Journal of political Science</i></li> <li>2. <i>Nepali Political Science and Politics</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Economic Journal of Nepal</i></li> <li>2. <i>Vikas</i></li> <li>3. <i>Economic Review</i></li> <li>4. <i>Nepal Population and Development Journal</i></li> <li>5. <i>The Journal of Development and Administrative Studies</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology</i></li> <li>2. <i>Janajati</i> (N)</li> </ol>

(B) = bi-lingual, N= Nepali, \* From outside Nepal.

**Libraries:** The history of libraries in Nepal goes back to the end of 19th century with the opening of the Bir Library, the first public library, later renamed the National Archives. The personal collection of Kaiser Shamsheer Rana was also turned into the government-owned Kaiser Library in 1964, which now has a collection of 50,000 books and other materials. Similarly the Nepal National Library came into existence in 1956 when Hem Raj Pandey donated his personal collection to the government. This library was enlarged through its merger with the Central Secretariat Library. It has 70,000 books, documents and periodicals. However, the largest library at present is TU Central Library, which has over 220,000 books and 500 periodicals including newspapers. In the specific field of social sciences, CNAS and CEDA have fairly good collections of books and journals.

There are four different types of library in Nepal. Each library has own specific feature in terms of use. Among the government libraries, National Library, Kaiser Library and National Archive are not discipline specific but most of the users, aside from the newspaper readers, are those searching for old books. Historians, however, are of the opinion that some foreign libraries e.g. Indian National Archive (Delhi), National Library (Calcutta) and Commonwealth Office Library (London) have better collections about Nepali history than are found in Nepal itself. While visiting the government owned libraries the author found very few readers in library. Many readers expressed disappointment with the standard of management. The staffs of these libraries have complained about another problem: lack of funds. The Kaiser Library receives only Nrs. 50,000 per year and around half of that budget is spent on newspapers alone. The National Archives was able to acquire only 134 books in the last year.

The library of the RNA has good collections but mostly on the subject of fine art, culture and literature similar to the Madan Puraskar Library. The later one is unique because of its collection of old newspapers and periodicals published from Nepal. The libraries of the NPC, NRB and NASC provide service to their own staff. The libraries of IIDS and NE are also confined to internal use only. Most library users visit Indian, British and American libraries for journals than books. For TU students and teachers, TU Central Library has provided service since its establishment in 1959. In addition to its rich collection of over 220,000 books, it receives 251 journals published from outside the country, in addition to 281 journals and magazines and 87 newspapers published from Nepal. This library is mostly used by post-graduate students for text/reference books and for thesis writing. But TU

social sciences teachers/ researchers have an extremely poor record of using this library. According to the official record of academic staff entering the library in the month of September 2001, the number of visits by members of different departments were: 4 from CNAS, 1 from CEDA, 3 from political science, 7 from sociology/anthropology and 13 from economics.

The state of almost zero use of the central university library by Nepali social scientists reveals a number of problems. Firstly, serious social sciences study/research in the university is declining. Secondly, as university teachers often complain, there is a lack of new books and standard journals and also a problem of mismanagement in the library. Thirdly, there is a growing tendency for active social scientists to rely on building a personal library. Fourthly, most research in Nepal has been done outside the university and many private research centres and NGOs have their own small library. For instance, IIDS has its own library with a collection of 1457 books, 2430 reports and 30 periodicals including newspapers. Since most of their work involves applied and action research, which demands more data-based study than rigorous deskwork, the culture of library use is eroding. Fifth, the use of the Internet is also partly responsible as it opens up a new source of knowledge. Especially those who have recently been trained in the Western universities have a habit of using the Internet everyday. Others too are starting to follow this trend.

**Research Funds:** One of the major reasons behind the decline of social sciences research in TU is lack of funds. TU has increasingly reduced its research responsibility as shown by the decrease of its research budget over time- 22.6 percent of total expenditure in 1983/84, 12.5 percent in 1988/89 and 9.3 percent in 1992/93 (Dahal 1999: 25). Money allocated to four research centres of TU is very nominal, only 1.3 percent of TU's total budget (Dahal 2000: 22). Worst of all, these research centres have long allocated more (approximately 85 percent) for salaries and much less to research work (less than 15 percent). The Dean's office of the Humanities and Social Sciences has an annual budget of only Nrs. 500,000 to support its mini-research program. The teaching faculties do not have any research budget except for small grants provided by national and international institutions to MA students of economics and sociology/anthropology departments for their dissertation writing. Very few TU social scientists and Ph. D. students have received the small grants provided by the UGC.

Both private and government research are completely dependent on foreign grants. The Ford Foundation, USAID, DANIDA, Asian Foundation, IDRC (Canada), and SNV (Netherlands) are the major donors for both academic and applied research. Others who contribute more to advocacy and development research are UNDP, World Bank, ADB, HELVETAS, GTZ etc. So the research budget of some established private institution would naturally be much higher than that of the university. The table below shows the difference between one TU research centre and one private research institute in allocation of research budget.

Table 5: Research Budget of CNAS and IIDS

	CNAS		IIDS	
	Research	Publication	Research	Publication
1990/91	700,000	-	360,000,0	400,000
1991/92	700,000	-	360,000,0	400,000
1992/93	700,000	-	396,000,0	440,000
1993/94	700,000	-	486,000,0	540,000
1994/95	700,000	-	612,000,0	680,000
1995/96	700,000	700,000	558,000,0	620,000
1996/97	700,000	700,000	864,000,0	960,000
1997/98	900,000	700,000	675,000,0	750,000
1998/99	700,000	700,000	432,000,0	480,000
1999/2000	900,000	700,000	729,000,0	810,000
2000/2001	900,000	700,000	360,000,0	400,000

Source: CNAS' planning section and IIDS's administrative section.

The UGC represents a recent attempt to foster the academic environment in the country. This institution was established in 1994 to channelize the government's financial grants for university and higher education. The UGC has a research budget that increased from Nrs. 6.5 million in 1996/97 to 9.9 million in 1999/2000, to support the university teachers in their different kinds of academic activities i.e training, seminars, field work, library work etc.

Year	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
Research Budget (Nrs.)	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.9
Number of Grants	100	120	150	180
Number of Beneficiaries	200	240	300	360
Number of Seminars	50	60	75	90
Number of Field Work	30	35	45	55
Number of Library Work	20	25	30	35
Number of Training	10	15	20	25

Table 6: UGC's Research Budget Allocation

	Subjects	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
1	Training	150,000,0	204,750	800,000	110,000,0
2	Research Promotion	700,000	100,000,0	100,000,0	100,000,0
3	Visiting Program	300,000	--	800,000	600,000
4	Fellowship	400,000	100,000,0	130,000,0	170,000,0
5	Support to M.Phil/Ph. D	-	800,000	100,000,0	500,000
6	Physical Facility	600,000	120,000,0	200,000,0	210,000,0
7	Library Strengthening	100,000,0	559,000	130,000,0	120,000,0
8	Seminar/workshop	300,000	265,500	500,000	500,000
9	Teaching Material Development	300,000	60,000	300,000	300,000
10	UGC' own activities	700,000	530,000	500,000	537,000
11	Miscellaneous	700,000	--	400,000	400,000
	Total	650,000,0	561,875,0	990,000,0	993,700,0

Source: UGC, Annual Report 1995/96; 96/97; 97/98; 1998/1999; 1999/2000.

UGC is not discipline specific nor is its scope limited to a particular university. Teachers at all Nepali universities, public campuses and private colleges, are entitled to seek financial support for their academic work from this office. Social scientists are among them and the record shows that they have secured 25 percent of UGC's total spending for its program of mini-research projects, research visits, travel grants for oversea seminars, Ph.D fellowships, and seminars.

**Table 7: UGC Grants for Research and Related Activities**

	Subjects	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/2000
	<b>Total</b>				
	Mini Research Projects	37	39	41	40
	Research visits	4	-	2	6
	Travel grants for seminars	5	23	29	47
	Fellowships (Ph.D)	-	20	23	24
	Seminar Organization	12	15	17	24
1	<b>Political Science</b>				
	Mini Research Projects	1	2	1	4
	Research visits	-	--	-	-
	Travel grants for seminars	-	-	1	-
	Fellowships (Ph.D)	-	-	1	2
	Seminar Organization	-	-	-	-
2	<b>Economics</b>				
	Mini Research Projects	3	4	3	3
	Research visits	-	-	-	-
	Travel grant for seminars	1	3	1	-
	Fellowships (Ph.D)	-	3	1	3
	Seminar Organization	-	1	-	2
3	<b>History</b>				
	Mini Research Projects	3	4	4	1
	Research visits	1	-	-	2
	Travel grants for seminars	-	-	-	2
	Fellowship (Ph.D)	-	1	4	2
	Seminar Organization	1	1	1	1
4	<b>Sociology/Anthropology</b>				
	Minis Research Projects	2	-	1	1
	Research visits	-	-	-	-
	Travel grants for seminars	1	-	-	1
	Fellowships (Ph.D)	-	1	-	1
	Seminar Organization	-	-	1	-

Source: UGC, Annual Report 1996/97; 97/98; 1998/1999; 1999/2000.



UGC provides a grant of up to Nrs 20,000 per person under its mini-research project scheme and the numbers of university teachers who benefited from this program in each year were 37-40. The record shows the UGC's support of Rs 9000-20,000 per person for field studies in South Asian countries. The number of university teachers who received travel grant for their participation in oversea conferences increased from 23 in 1996/97 to 47 in 1999/2000. The amount granted under this title varied from Nrs. 5,000 to 25,000. In each year UGC provides Ph. D. fellowships, from a minimum of Nrs. 2000 to a maximum of 5,600 per month, to 20-24 university teachers for their advance study. It also provides amount of Nrs 7,000 to 25,000 to different teaching departments for conducting seminars. The budget allocation under different headings and the number of persons benefiting over the last four years shows that the UGC has many schemes but the individual grants it provides are very nominal.

### **Conclusion**

When social sciences research in Nepal began in the '50s it was dominated by foreign scholars but at present the interest of overseas researchers has declined considerably. Except for the CNRS (Paris) working at institutional level, foreign research on social sciences areas of Nepal is largely confined to individual interest and effort. By the mid-'60s, native researchers were engaged in producing social sciences knowledge but within a limited area. They have not yet embarked on theory and concept building. Their horizons are largely national in scope, i.e. Nepali history, Nepali politics, Nepali economy and Nepali society, and not beyond to diplomatic history, foreign relations, and trade with neighboring countries. The few political scientists who have been acknowledged as experts of South Asian affairs have recently concentrated on domestic politics.

The future of social sciences research in Nepal is bleak for two main reasons. First, the Nepali state/government is not likely to be interested in study/ research on social science areas. Second, the societal demand is for job-oriented education, as suggested by the exclusion of social science subjects by newly established universities and their affiliated campuses/colleges. There are many other grounds for pessimism. TU, the only university taking responsibility for social sciences study/research is not also losing its interest in research but also in a state of general decline. Taking this into account, it is not unnatural that the active TU

teachers/researchers seek an alternative platform, one that is largely provided by private research institutions and mushrooming NGOs. The research output of non-university sectors is generally poor in quality. Nor can much be expected from the government research institutions except for their contributions in generating raw data.

Despite the downward trend of social sciences research in Nepal, it can be improved if concerted efforts are made to address some major problems i.e. bias education system against social sciences; exclusion of research component in teaching faculties; lack of coordination and cooperation between researchers and faculty members of teaching departments; lack of research fund in TU and in most private academic research centres; over dependence of government, private research centers and NGOs upon foreign donors for meeting financial cost of their own research projects; decrease the motivation even among the serious scholars to carry out academic work; increased tendency of involving in consultancy business by active TU teachers/researchers; and non-publication of most applied, action, and client based research reports.

The revival of TU as an effective academic institution is must for improving social science research in Nepal. Since it still enrolls 80 percent of the total students of higher education and it alone has providing higher education for social science subjects, TU is a gateway to go ahead towards the goal of promoting social science knowledge in Nepal. TU does not have problem of able manpower; its problems are erosion in personal honesty and integrity of its academics, mismanagement in university administration, and lack of adequate fund. Of several ways to mitigate these problems, one is inclusion of research component in teaching departments. The administration should take necessary policy measures so that the teaching faculty can directly deal with financiers of research projects. Donors should also have a sort of commitment to strengthen academic environment in TU. If a conducive environment is built up in this way, TU teachers will be involved more in their own institution. This, in turn, will help for the institution building of private research centers, at least in developing their own research manpower.

Above all, Nepal needs an umbrella organization to sustain and develop social sciences study and research. The establishment of a social sciences research promotion council, like that of Indian Social Science Research Council, should be a priority objective. An endowment fund for such council can be generated from the government and donor agencies, which are

interested in pure academic research in social science areas. Such proposed scheme will not impede to any university or private research centre in their individual link and dealing with donor agencies.

### Notes

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- 1 William Kirkpatrick, Francis Hamilton, Hector Oldfield and Perceval Landon have been considered as the pioneer authors of books on Nepali history and or Nepali anthropology. None of them was trained social scientists. They were travelers and British envoys and their purpose of visit to Nepal was either to spread Christianity or to introduce British influence in Nepal.
- 2 Bhagwan Lal Indraji, Hari Prashad Shastri and K. P. Jaisawal are the first Indian historians known to have written on Nepali history.
- 3 Surya Bikram Gyanwali, Naya Raj Panta and Ambika Prasad Upadhaya are pioneer native historians.
- 4 Some notable Western scholars on Nepali history are Giuseppe Tucci, Raniero Gnoli, Luciano Petech, Ludwig Stiller, John Whelpton and Mary Slusser.

- 5 Indian historians who have worked on Nepali history include K.C. Chaudhary, Ramakant, Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, Asad Husain and Satish Kumar.
- 6 The pioneer Nepali historians are Yogi Narahari Nath, Babu Ram Acharya, Naya Raj Panta, Dhana Bajra Bajracharya, Shanakar Man Rajbanshi, Hemraj Sakya, Surya Bikra Gyawali and Dilli Raman Regmi.
- 7 Notable foreign writers on the Nepali economy are Eugene Mihaly, W.O. Thewat, Lovache, Bin Hakker, David Seddon, Sakiyama, J.C. Ojha and S.C. Jain.
- 8 A few members of university's economics department like Y. P. Pant, I. L. Pradhan, B. P. Shrestha, P. P. Timilsina, Sri Ram Poudel, Guna Nidhi Sharma and Madan Dahal have made some noteworthy contributions in both teaching and research on the Nepali economy.
- 9 Scholars who focus on specific areas on the Nepali economy are: Y. B. Panta, Hari Shankar Tripathy and Gunanidhi Sharma on finance, S. R. Poudel, U. B. Pradhanang and Bhuchandra Vaidya on trade, Badri Prasad Shrestha, Mohan Man Sainju, Ram Prakash Yadav and Mahesh Baskota on planning, S. P. Adhikari, S. B. Rai, Devendra Raj Pande on rural development, and Harka Gurung and Surya Lal Amatya (both geographers) on regional planning.
- 10 American scholars on Nepali politics include Leo Rose, Fred Gaige, Margaret Fisher and John Scholz.
- 11 Indian scholars who have done research on Nepali political studies are Anirudha Gupta, H.N. Agrawal, S.D. Muni, Ramakant, R.S. Chauhan, Tribhuvan Nath, S.K.Jha, Parmananda, B. C. Upreti and M. D. Dharamadasani.
- 12 Keshar Bahadur K.C, Grisma Bahadur Devkota and Prachanda Pradhan, members of the first generation of native authors, have focussed on political aspects of the judicial system, general history and administrative history of Nepal respectively.
- 13 Some among several oversea writers on sociology/anthropology of Nepal are Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, Alan Macfarlane, Lionel Caplan, Michael Allen, Gérard Toffin, David Gellner, James Fisher, E. E. Okeda, Charles McDougal, John Hitchcock, Bernard Pignède, Gabriel, Colin Rosser, Julian C.J. Wake, Alexander Macdonald, and Donald Messerschmidt.
- 14 Dor Bahadur Bista is considered as the pioneer of Nepali anthropology. Some of his contemporaries who contributed to research and training in

- this discipline are G.S. Nepali, Swayambhu Lal Shrestha, Bihari Krishna Shrestha and T.S. Thapa.
15. University Grants Commission's Annual Reports 1995/96; 1996/97; 1997/98; 1998/99; and 1999/2000.
  16. CNAS researchers consist of 7 from history, culture and archeology, 5 from political science, 5 from sociology/anthropology and 3 from English language and literature. CEDA has 13 economists, 9 from management, 5 statisticians, 3 political scientists and one each from language, population, sociology and culture.
  17. Ford Foundation, Helyitas (a Swiss INGO), and UNICEF are regular financers to IIDS and others who contributed research grants, at different times, are AFFHC (Australia), CECI and CCO (Canada), GTZ (German), UN University (Japan) CEDPA, UNESCO, SNV (Netherland), UNDP, USAID, World Bank, ADB.
  18. IIDS reports are classified into 11 sections: 11 reports on economic studies and development policies, 5 on finance, 7 on international trade and payments, 8 on sector studies, 2 on development policy, 22 on population, health and family planning, 17 on agricultural and rural development, 7 on environment and resources, 19 on women development, 7 on organization, training and management, 3 others.
  19. Some Nepali publishers contributing for the publications of academic books are: Mandala Book Point, Himal Association, Pilgrims, Ratna Pushtak Bhandar and Yakata Pushtak.

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