

## NEPAL IN THE XXIst CENTURY

### The Evolution of Health Care in Nepal

**B**ased on 2017 statistics, Nepal has a population of 28.5 million with Gross Domestic Product (GPD) per capita (US\$ 743.3), where 15% of the population lives below the poverty line (< \$1.90/day). Nepal's current health expenditure share of its GPD is 5.8%.

Inarguably, the relation between the health of the population and the country's overall development is interconnected.

The state of health care in Nepal is rather appalling, as millions of people do not have proper access to basic health services.

According to the 2017 World Health Organization (WHO) report, the child mortality rate and maternal mortality ratio in Nepal are 36/1000 live births and 258/100,000 live births, respectively. Eighty percent of the population living in rural areas of Nepal are those who are largely affected by poor health services. WHO recommends one doctor to every 1000 people. However, rural areas of Nepal have one doctor for 150,000 people, compared to one for 850 people in

Kathmandu (capital city). Therefore, there is a large discrepancy in the infant mortality rate in rural (13.2%) versus urban (6%) areas.



**Funding from CQN helps build toilets and water fountains for schools and villages.**

In Nepal, WHO has reported that only 58% of births are attended by skilled health personnels. It is expected that most newborn deaths are caused by three preventable and

treatable issues: complications related to prematurity, birth complications including lack of oxygen (asphyxia) and infection

(sepsis and pneumonia). Due to the lack of well-equipped health centres, inadequate medical supplies and the absence of skilled health professionals, a large number of rural populations are forced to walk or travel for days to suitable health facilities for medical treatment. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have set ambitious targets for all countries, including ending preventable maternal and newborn deaths. UNICEF has set a target of reducing mortality rates from 28 (in 2016) to 21 (2021) per 1000 live births. However, achieving SDG seems unrealistic for Nepal, since it is still struggling to provide basic health services to the population, particularly those residing in rural Nepal.

In 2007, Nepal experienced a substantial political transition from a constitutional monarchy to a secular-democratic republic, followed by a decade of Maoist-led civil war.



**A CQN-funded health worker offers first aid and hygiene classes to mothers and students.**

*Continued on p. 2...*

## A word from the President

### Travel in Nepal in the last century



In the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, very few people could visit the little kingdom of Nepal, practically inaccessible to visitors, where almost all travel was done on foot. High mountains, and valleys with large rivers were incredibly beautiful natural barriers, but not easy to cross. The various ethnic groups that peopled this country kept numerous languages and cultures alive, from north to south and east to west.

Large European expeditions arrived on site to climb summits reaching over 8000 meters. The first of these was that of Maurice Herzog in 1950. Here is an excerpt from his book *Annapurna first 8000*, that describes his arrival in the valley of Katmandu on his return from the expedition.

“Raising my eyes, I caught sight of immense cables criss-crossing a whole valley. Is this possible? A cableway? Yes it was and I learned that it was the longest one in the world. It measured almost 30 kilometers and was the supply route to the city of Katmandu and surrounding areas, with over 150,000 residents.” Today, this area includes almost 1.3 million people.

Apart from the elite politicians and businessmen, the population of Nepal lived in poverty with little technology, services or medical care. From 1850 to 1951, under the reign of the Rana, only the governing class had access to education. Then, slowly, private and public school saw the light of day and, in 1975, primary school education was offered in all the regions.

And so with a giant step forward, development touching all sectors progressed in the subsequent decades.

Happy Holidays to all of CQN's supporters, and thank you for not forgetting us this Holiday season! ✨

*Michèle Legault*

### Health Care in Nepal Continued from p. 1

Despite Maoists insurgence and political instability, Nepal has achieved satisfactory outcomes in some health sectors. For instance, between 2000 and 2015, life expectancy has increased by 11% from 63 to 70 years, child (under-five) mortality rate has reduced remarkably from 81 to 36 per 1000 live births, neonatal mortality rate has decreased by 43.5%.

Some diseases (smallpox, malaria, leprosy, polio and tuberculosis) are in the process of

complete eradication, thanks to national and international organizations and donor communities. However, to achieve SDG-2030 goals set by the UN, an extensive effort is required by various regulatory bodies such as the health ministry, national health research council and medical council. Active participation of international organizations to facilitate development of the health sector in Nepal, and public-and-private partnerships also need to be encouraged to build infrastructures in remote areas. ✨

Sagar Bhatta works as an Industrial Post-doctoral Fellow (Mitacs Fellowship) at the Renewable Materials Research Centre (CRMR), Université Laval. His research is focused on the procurement of bioactive compounds from agroforestry waste and their utilization in the food and health sectors. He received his PhD from the Department of Wood Science and Forestry, Université Laval. Sagar is an active CQN volunteer and served on the Board of Directors in 2015-2016.



*Sagar Bhatta*

## A History of Geopolitics and Governance in Nepal From Monarchy to Democracy - Part I

Nepal, located between two geographically and economically giant countries, China and India, has a long history of widely diversified geopolitical systems. Until the last decade, Nepal was recognized as a Kingdom. Early history of the kingship in Nepal can be traced back from the time of Gautam Buddha, born into a (Shakya) royal family, in the 600 BC. There is little documented history until the 18th century, i.e., before the rise of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who initiated Nepal's reunification process. After twelve successive Kings over 240 years, the partyless monarchy ended in 2006. Along with abolishing the monarchy, the governing system also changed from unitary state to federal states through a massive Constitutional change.

Before the unification of Nepal, there were many fragmented and small but independent States, with little written history. These states were characterized



by dynasties of various ethnic origins. The most information is about Kathmandu and Gorkha. Many cultural landmarks including stupas

and temples, built between the fourth and sixth centuries, show the practice of Hindu and Buddhist religions and cultures.

Nepal was invaded by Tibet and Kashmir in the 7<sup>th</sup> Century and little history was recorded until the 10<sup>th</sup> Century. Another political milestone was in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century when Mallas ruler took power in Kantipur and ruled until the unification of Nepal.

King Prithvi Narayan Shah came to power in Gorkha in 1743. He initiated and played a significant role in unifying the States called "Baisi" and "Chaubise" States. He named the country as the unified Kingdom of Nepal.



His successors continued the unification process for the next several decades, extending east and west.

However, this was the era of the Anglo-Indian war of 1814-16, which ended with the "Sugauli

Sandhi" Treaty between Nepal and Great Britain. After this, the Kingdom of Nepal defined its borders within an area of 147,181 square kilometres, which remains the same today.

There was a change in the ruling system in 1846 when the Rana regime introduced a family-based dynasty by seizing all royal powers and dominating the ruling system by appropriating all power under the King (1846-1950). From its early history until 1950, National governance was a partyless political system. The first political party was formed in 1939 to dethrone the Rana regime and establish a multiparty democratic ruling system. Influenced by the independence and political change in India in 1947, two political parties, the National Congress and the Democratic Party, were formed in 1946 and 1948, respectively. Grassroot movements against the Rana regime formed a trilateral alliance uniting the King and both political parties (mainly the Nepali National Congress). In 1950, the country's ruling system was transformed to a multi-party democracy for the first time but remained within an active monarchy. Since the rise in democracy in 1950, there have been several political changes.

Part II will deal with the rise of democracy in Nepal from 1950 to the present.



*Baburam Rijal*

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### Ongoing projects

This autumn, a new project will begin in the village of Massarangué to repair the holding tank for potable water. This project will be done in three stages to rebuild a reservoir destroyed by a landslide. For just over a year, villagers have had to travel afar to get water. We hope to take advantage of the annual holidays in October and November to complete this project with the help of visitors.

Thank you to Secours Tiers Monde for their financial contribution.

As for education projects, Amrit Lama will now visit schools on a regular basis to ensure follow-up and review the relevance of aid for each one.



*Holding tank for potable water*

For example: the school in Khare now has new directors and has been revived, with 25 regular students. It requested help, and will decide the type of assistance. The number of people in each family varies from one year to another, as does school attendance.

In 2018 and 2019, an effort was made to add small furniture and rugs for new buildings built after the earthquake. In 2019 and 2020, help will be focussed on pen and paper projects, personal hygiene materials and first aid.

Thanks to the St-Barthélemy school for its help, which is greatly appreciated by Nepalese schools. Ten schools profit from approximately \$2000 each year. \* ML

### Projects to finance

Collaboration Québec Népal wishes to offer its heartfelt thanks to our private donors who, once again in 2019, have been very generous. Thanks to them, infrastructure projects are being developed. But other needs continue to be met ever since the earthquake in 2015, notably in relation to accessibility to drinking water and education for young children and adolescents.

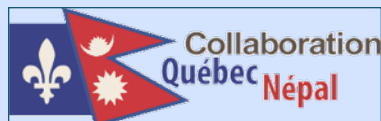
This is why, during this holiday season, we invite you to think about these villages. A personal donation, no matter how much or how little, can make the difference to the projects to finance in 2020. During the holidays, thank you for thinking about them!

A special thank-you goes to the Fondation 3%, to Secours-tiers Monde and to Claude Martel's class at St-Barthélemy School in Montreal.

Happy holidays to all ! \*



*Lyse Ferland*



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