



## **A brief Account of Geography Teaching at Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara**

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### **Abstract**

*This article provides a brief yet comprehensive account of the development of geography teaching at Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, since its initiation in 1962. It explores the historical background of the Department of Geography, its foundation, and gradual evolution in the context of higher education expansion in western Nepal. The methods of the study is based on qualitative analysis of institutional records, archival documents, internal publications, and relevant literature. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized, particularly campus and departmental archives. The study aims to document significant milestones in the department's journey, identify and acknowledge the contributions of both national and international faculty members, and highlight the department's academic progress, including its infrastructure, research activities, and curricular expansion. Notable developments include the introduction of Bachelor's and Master's programs, incorporation of population studies, and the establishment of a GIS and Remote Sensing laboratory with international collaboration. The department has also made notable contributions to applied research, academic seminars, and training programs over the decades.*

**Keywords:** *Geography department, Higher education, GIS/RS, Departmental history, Faculty contribution, Academic development*

### **Introduction**

Along with the beginning of the process of modern development of Pokhara valley itself as well as Nepal, Prithvi Narayan Intermediate College was established in Pokhara on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1960 (17<sup>th</sup> Bhadra 2017 B.S.). This happened just after

one year of the establishment of Tribhuvan University, Parent institution of higher learning in Nepal, as a state funding university in 1959. In its inception, it was started as an intermediate level of art college. This step towards the beginning of higher education at Pokhara was the outcome of the ever increasing number of school leaving graduates (in those days this was known as matriculation and later as school leaving certificate- SLC) during the decade of 2010 B.S. In this entire process of development, the role of the then self-motivated social servants at various walks of life and education lovers of Pokhara valley was so crucial and significant. Their active involvement to lay down the foundation stone of higher education in and around Pokhara valley also became highly significant for its further development.

However, somehow the establishment of Prithvi Narayan Intermediate college of Pokhara municipality yields an eye opening opportunity towards further expansion of higher education in Pokhara including the entire region of west Nepal for the first time in history out of Kathmandu valley with the purpose of addressing increasing demand of the people.

Geography teaching in Prithvi Narayan Campus was started by American Peace Corps Volunteer Mr. Peter Farquhar in 1962. Another American Peace Corps Volunteer Miss Dorothy Mierow also joined the then College in 1963 and taught geography. Prof. Dr. Madhav Prasad Tripathi, a geography post-graduate from University of Gorakhpur, India, entered into this Department as a geography teacher in 1967. Since then, he led the Department in different capacities up to 2006. In 1967 the Bachelor's Degree in geography was opened. During the days of 1969/70, Mr. Wasim Ahamad and Mr. Shribastav, both from India, came to this Department as geography teachers. They taught geography in this Department for about a year. In 1970, Prof. Dr. Birendra Singh Gurung, Post-Graduate from University of Ranchi, India, joined this Department and served up to 2007.

Later, the classes of Intermediate and Bachelor's Degree in geography education were also conducted within this Department. The then Primary School Teacher's Training (Normal Training) Centre of Bhimkali Patan was affiliated to Prithvi Narayan Campus as a Faculty of Education under the nationalization programme of Higher Education in 1973. The Department offered the post-graduate level (Master Degree) in 1979. This post graduate level in geography teaching started after seventeen years of its inception in 1962.

Apart from these geography classes, the Department had also conducted classes of population Studies from Intermediate to Post-graduate level (Intermediate, 1993; Bachelor, 1996 and Post-graduate, 2008) as this Programme was affiliated into this Department since 1993. This affiliation program of population studies continued until its own full-fledged establishment of the department of population studies.

At the outset, apart from the compulsory subjects a few optional subjects were included in the teaching of Prithvi Narayan College. Among these optional subjects geography was one but its teaching was started in 1962, two years later after the establishment of Prithvi Narayan college itself. In this preview note an attempt has been made to record the brief profile of this department, since its inception. How the geography teaching started in this department and series of development took place? Who and how many geographers were involved to render the teaching and continued the service? are being included in this preview. For this, necessary data were taken/collected from the existing department and campus record itself and the secondary sources as well.

The objectives of this article are to document the historical development and key milestones of geography teaching at Prithvi Narayan Campus since its inception in 1962; to identify and recognize the contributions of both national and international faculty members in the establishment and growth of the Department of Geography; and to highlight the department's academic capabilities, research activities, and infrastructural advancements, including the establishment of GIS/Remote Sensing, population studies, and postgraduate programs.

### **Methodology**

This study is primarily based on qualitative research methods using both primary and secondary sources. Historical records and archived departmental documents from the Department of Geography, Prithvi Narayan Campus, were thoroughly reviewed to trace the chronological development of geography teaching. Additional information was obtained through departmental records, internal publications, and institutional reports. The study also incorporates relevant literature including faculty contributions and milestone academic events. Secondary sources such as journals, publication of Golden Jubilee of Prithvi Narayan Campus, and seminar proceedings were used to support and validate the institutional narrative. The data were synthesized to present a coherent account of the department's evolution and academic significance.

### **Capability of the Department**

This Department is equipped with surveying and cartographic laboratory, visual display, portraits, departmental library and Seminar hall. The GIS (Geographic Information Systems) laboratory had also been established in this Department with the support provided by Professor Shunji Murai of the University of Tokyo, Japan in 1997. Since then the Department has been offering academic courses on GIS and Remote Sensing for the Bachelor and post-graduate level students in geography. This department also offers training courses in GIS for its faculties, professionals from

various organizations and disciplines and the students. 'The Himalayan Geographers' is the Journal which is published by this Department since 2001. This year the publication of journal completed its 25<sup>th</sup> years. That's why, this issue of the journal is published as the silver jubilee special issue of the department. Besides this, the department of geography has been providing the thesis writing as its academic course. In thesis writing students mostly based on fieldwork and generate the primary data including the collection of data as secondary sources too. Then ultimately they prepare the thesis/dissertation under the continual supervision of an assigned supervisor. The total number of dissertations so far submitted and awarded by this Department is one hundred and fifty Three till the date. In addition, if this department add its own departmental memorial section (like departmental museum) will enrich the departmental capability for further attraction. This will be additional sweet smell in the gold.

### **Completed Research/Project Works**

1. Rural- Urban Linkage, a study of Kaski District with the support of UDLE /GTZ, 1988.
2. Functional Zonation of Mahendrapool Area with the support of UDTC, 1990..
3. Digital Data Preparation from the Cadastral Mapping of Pokhara Sub-Metropolitan City with the support of PEIP, 2000.
4. Prithvi Narayan Multiple Campus Land Use Plan 2007 with the support of Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, 2007.
5. Prepared Trekking Map of Dhorpatan - Hilsa (Nepal's Amazing Western Mountain) with the support of Empowering Women in Nepal (EWN), 2010.
6. Prepared Millennium Trek Map with the support of Millennium Trekking Committee, 2011.
7. The department with Geo/Net Connection (Pvt) Jointly completed the study on "Assessment of Kaphuche Glacial Lake Expansion and its Potential Impact in Kaski and Tanahun districts, Nepal : Using Geo-spatial Tool" Supported by USAID and WWF, Nepal, July 2016.

### **Completed Seminar/Conference and Training**

1. International Conference on Environment, Economy and Habitat, 1994
2. Caravan Training on GIS with the support of AIT, NASDA, 1997
3. In-house Training on GIS Application with the support of UGC, HMG/Nepal, 1998.

4. Professional GIS Training on Environment Resource and Development in collaboration with Nepal GIS Society, UDTC and ICIMOD, 1998.
5. One-day Workshop on GIS Application in collaboration with Nepal GIS Society, UDTC and ICIMOD, 1998.
6. One-day Workshop on GPS (Global Positioning System) with the support of Keio University, Japan, 1999.
7. Preliminary GIS Training with the support of ICIMOD, 2000.
8. One-day Workshop on solid Waste Management, 2001.
9. Introductory Training on GIS, 2001.
10. Organized a daylong Seminar on "Necessity of Geography Teaching in Secondary Level Education", 2007
11. Organized a week long GIS (Geographical Information System) training for geography teachers from various geography teaching campuses of the country, 2008.
12. Organized teachers training programme on geographical information system (GIS) and remote sensing (Rs) in 2010.
13. Department of geography led the preliminary team jointly formed with the representatives of media and Trekking Agent Association, Pokhara for spot observation visit and also to report the actual situation of area affected by the unseasonal flash flood of Seti river on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2012 (23 Baisakh 2060 B.s.) For this logistics was supported by Trekking Agent Association of Pokhara. After three days long field visit, this team prepared on the spot field visit report and presented in a gathering organized at the department of geography, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara. Later along with same preliminary field report department of geography co-worked with NASA Scientist Prof. Dr. Jeffrey Kargel, Geologist Gregory Leonard, and Prof. Dr. Lalu Poudel, Tribhuvan University. This new team revisited the flash flood site and its head water (just below Sabche cirque) area. For this revisit, Jeffery somehow managed logistics support including Helicopter lift. This team again prepared a joint study report mainly based on the causes of flash flood including its further implication. This report was also presented in public gathering in the then sub-metropolitan city of Pokhara.
14. Organized a workshop on Research Methodology from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012 to 4<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

15. A national seminar was Jointly organized by the departments of geography, history and sociology on tourism development from 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012 to 4<sup>th</sup> April 2012.
16. Department of geography including with the support of Prof. Dr. Krishna K.C. prepared a three dimensional (3D) map of western Development Region of Nepal in April/May 2016.
17. Organized a capacity building Trainnig Geo information Technology from 15 June 2022 to 19 June 2022.
18. Organized a orientation programme on proposal and thesis writing in 2024.
19. Kobo tool Box related training programme was conducted in 2023.
20. Department of Geography and Sociology jointly organized one day long seminar on "Climate Change and Adaptation in Nepal" 24 March 2024.

The name and designation of the faculty members who rendered services in this department till the date of their retirement.

<b>S.N.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
1.	Late Dr. Madhav Prasad Tripathi	Professor
2.	Dr. Birendra Singh Gurung	Professor
3.	Dr. Krishna K.C.	Professor
4.	Late Dr. Kedar Basnet	Professor
5.	Dr. Devendra Bahadur Lamichhane	Professor
6.	Dr. Bishow Shrestha	Professor
7.	Mr. Tara Raj Khanal	Professor
8.	Mr. Prem Ballav Pandey	Associate Professor
9.	Mr. Tek Bahadur Gurung	Associate Professor
10.	Mr. Krishna Bahadur Gurung	Associate Professor
11.	Mr. Bishnu Prasad Adhikari	Associate Professor
12.	Mr. Chandra Nath Adhikari	Associate Professor
13.	Mr. Chandra Nath Koirala	Associate Professor
14.	Mr. Shekhar Nath Adhikari	Associate Professor
15.	Mr. Motishwor Thapa	Associate Professor
16.	Mr. Kalidas Sharma	Associate Professor
17.	Mr. Keshab Raj Bastola	Associate Professor
18.	Mr. Kabi Raj Subedi	Associate Professor
19.	Mr. Govinda Prasad Sharma	Associate Professor
20.	Mr. Govinda Mani Bhandari	Associate Professor
21.	Mr. Min Prasad Lamsal	Lecturer
22.	Mr. Vishnu Hari Poudel	Lecturer

### Head of the Department from the Time of its Establishment

S.N.	Name	From	To
1.	Mr. Madhav Prasad Tripathi	From his arrival	1978/8/30
2.	Mr. Birendra Singh Gurung	1978/8/31	1981/8/4
3.	Dr. Madhav Prasad Tripathi	1981/8/5	1987/8/18
4.	Dr. Birendra Singh Gurung	1987/8/19	1992/3/2
5.	Dr. Madhav Prasad Tripathi	1992/3/3	1995/8/20
6.	Dr. Krishna K.C	1995/8/21	1996/8/4
7.	Dr. Kedar Basnet	1996/11/26	2000/1/23
8.	Dr. Bishow Shrestha	2000/1/20	2003/1/19
9.	Prof. Dr. Birendra Singh Gurung	2003/1/20	2007/4/17
10.	Dr. Krishna K.C	2007/4/18	2013/09/24
11.	Mr. Bishnu Prasad Adhikari	2013/09/25	2018/08/24
12.	Prof. Dr. Devendra Bahadur Lamichhane	2018/08/25	2020/11/02
13.	Mr. Chandra Nath Adhikari	2020/11/03	2022/01/20
14.	Mr. Naresh Poudel	2022/01/21	2025/02/01
15.	Dr. Ramjee Pokhrel	2025/02/02	Continue

### Former Faculty Members

Several teachers, more or less, rendered their teaching service at this Department during the period of 63 years since its inception. However, the exact duration of their service has not mentioned here due to the unavailability of proper record although the names of those involved teachers so far as found in scattered sources are as follows:

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| 1. Mr. Peter Farquhar (American Peace Corps Volunteer)                 | 9. Mr. Tula Ram Panta  |
| 2. Late Miss Dorothy Mierow (American Peace Corps Volunteer)           | 10. Mr. Surya Kumar Rai  |
| 3. Mr. Washim Ahamad   | 11. Mr. Madhav Prasad Ghimire  |
| 4. Mr. Sribastav (Full name not known due to unavailability of record) | 12. Mr. Ram Lal Shrestha   |
| 5. Mr. Bhim Ratna Bajracharya  | 13. Prof. Dr. Pushkar Man Pradhan  |
| 6. Mr. Dev Mani Gautam   | 14. Mr. Radhe Shyam Mishra   |
| 7. Dr. Bhagawoti Upadhyaya, (Kharel)                                   | 15. Prof. Dr. Ujagar Singh (On contact basis from Varanasi, India)       |
| 8. Mr. Bal Bhadra Bharati  | 16. Dr. D. C. Barahi (Under Colombo Plan)                                |
|  | 17. Dr. Kishan Singh Rajpurohit (On contact basis from Rajasthan, India) |

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|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 18. Dr. Gopal Bahadur Thapa        | 24. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa      |
| 19. Prof. Dr. Indra Prasad Tiwari  | 25. Mr. Dhan Bahadur Thapa     |
| 20. Prof. Dr. Krishna Poudel       | 26. Mr. Prakash Bahadur Gurung |
| 21. Prof. Dr. Padma Chandra Poudel | 27. Mr. Bhesh Bahadur Thapa,   |
| 22. Late Bishnu Hari Bhandari      | 28. Mr. Laxmi Shrestha         |
| 23. Mr. Ramesh Karmacharya         |                                |

At present there are only nine teaching faculty in the department. The name and their designation.

S.N.	Name	Designation
1.	Dr. Ramjee Pokharel	Associate Professor /Head
2.	Mr. Upendra Poudel	Associate Professor
3.	Mr. Naresh Poudel	Associate Professor
4.	Mr. Khagendra Poudel	Lecturer
5.	Mr. Laxman Adhikari	Lecturer
6.	Mr. Hom Nath Pangen	Lecturer
7.	Mr. Manoj Kumar Dhungana	Lecturer
8.	Mr. Daya Sagar Subedi	Teaching Assistant
10.	Mr. Rajeev Upadhyay	Teaching Assistant

Compared to the previous position, this shrunk scenario of involved teaching faculty in the department shows somehow uneasy situation. They are being over loaded on the one hand and the existing academic program is also being under hardship to the other. This situation of geography teaching including other core subjects is not being encouraging in higher education level. This existing scenario of core subjects in higher education of university level should have prompt correction to bring back into its satisfactory level. The existing situation and scenario of the departments of previous popular core subjects is being a matter of serious consideration in university level education.

In essence, the department of geography, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara, is one of the oldest geography teaching departments of Nepal. The departmental dedication in geography teaching has always remained exemplary and praiseworthy. Within the period of almost six and half decades since its inception in 1962, this department has produced thousands of geography graduate and post graduate students. Their contribution in raising and spreading geographical knowledge among the students has remained immense. But in later period the importance of these core subjects has somehow remained under shadow and that space has been increasingly been occupied by other professional subjects even in the university level education.

This has somehow reduced the limit of academic activities and ultimate role of these core subjects in the system of higher education. However, this on going adverse situation in higher education system should be corrected in time. Otherwise, the fathomless importance of the knowledge of these core subjects will gradually be defaced and will loose their focus in the system of higher education. Ultimately, this defacing trend of the importance of these core subjects in university level teaching is well connected with the root of secondary and lower secondary level education. It should be corrected or improved from the point of these foundations with thematic seriousness followed by appropriate tools and techniques.

Anyway, geography as an academic discipline is the reliable bridge between natural and social sciences. This is already an established norm in education system. The study of geography neither goes as below the geologist go nor goes above as the meteorologist go from the surface of the earth. The study of geography mainly confined to assess, describe, evaluate, explore and analyze all the intricately spreaded/distributed spatial phenomenon within and near the surface of the earth and their interaction with each other as well as its outcome.

With this factual realization, teaching geography should go seriously ahead by spreading its crucial role in the mechanism of all round development of the immediate society in particular and country as a whole in general.

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