

Annex-2

An Accolade to Late Gopal Singh Nepali¹

The Pioneer Nepalese sociologist, Prof. Gopal Singh Nepali who taught in different universities of India and Tribhuvan University of Nepal, was born in 1926 AD in Jyatha, Thamel, Kathmandu. He was educated in India at Banaras and Bombay. Because of apathy by his father and other relatives, mother Yashoda Manandhar Joshi along with 2 years infant Gopal Singh took shelter in the house of landlord in Gadhimai near Bariarpur near Bara district in 1927 AD. Later on, his mother took him to India because she wanted him to study and make something of himself. She passed away when he was only 10 years. Since, then he struggled in life but he never lost sight of his mother's wish of him being very educated. He gave up a well paying job and a career in a bank so that he could pursue higher studies. That motivation and a drive was the reason he became successful in his life. He completed his MA in sociology from Bombay University in 1955 AD and did his PhD from the same University. In variety, the pioneer of Nepali sociology, he started his doctoral research on Newars with specialization in social anthropology from Bombay University in 1959 AD. He did his PhD fieldwork for 24 months in Panga of Kirtipur, Nepal an adjoining region of Kathmandu valley between 1956-1958.

He taught as an assistant lecturer at Sir J.J. College of Architecture in Bombay University and as lecturer in sociology in 1961 at the University of Gorakhpur before joining Banaras Hindu University, Banaras as Assistant Professor in sociology. He served there for 23 years till 1963 to 1986 under different positions. In the same University he worked as the chairman of the Department of Sociology and was subsequently promoted as Associate Professor and in 1983 he was promoted to full Professorship. Prof. Nepali also worked as visiting professor of sociology to L.N. Mishra Mithila University, Dharbhanga University under University Grant Commission in 1979. In 1986, he served in Centre for Himalayan Studies and in 1988 in University of North Bengal, West Bengal, India after his retirement from

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the Department of Sociology, Banaras Hindu University as a professor on Jan 31, 1986. At that time Prof. Nepali was also holding the directorship of Centre for the Study of Nepal, Banaras Hindu University. He was subsequently appointed professor at the Centre for Himalayan Studies, University of North Bengal, where he worked for two years. Professor Nepali was also the life member, Indian Sociological Society and Member, Hindustani Academy, Government of Uttar Pradesh between 1979 to 1981. After retirement from Indian Universities, he joined Dept of Sociology/ Anthropology, Tribhuwan University at Kathmandu as visiting professor and served for 11 years (1988-1999).

During his tenure at Tribhuwan University, he won a lot of acclaim as an expert on the various ethnic groups in Nepal. Professor Nepali had interest on Nepalese and Indian social structures with particular focus on caste, class, religion, family and kinship in their interaction with the process of modernization, urbanisation and social change, rural development, ethnicity with particular reference to Nepal, problems of national unity in Nepal, interaction between Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal etc. While serving in Tribhuwan University, he was invited by various institutions in Nepal for talks and for his expert advice on the subject. He is also recognized all over the world as the author of '*The Newars*' the first book ever written on Newars. His books and research articles have been well received by scholars all over the world. He loved Nepal and always wanted to continue his research. Anyhow, he was a man with high ideals and believed in honesty and integrity. He was always respected and loved by his students, colleagues, family and friends. Prof. Nepali never compromised on his principles throughout his life and lived by what he believed in. He always said that there was nothing impossible and that anything could be achieved with sheer hard work and determination. While sharing his experience it is come to know that he used to say that he was a self made man and had to struggle to be where he was. He was very well read. Besides being competent in his subject, he could discuss any topic under the sun, be it current issues, history, science or mythology.

His health started to deteriorate in the last few years of his service and he moved to Bombay in 1999 to lead a retired life with his children and 4

grandchildren. He spent his time being with his grandchildren whom he loved a lot. He visited with two of them in Singapore and with other two in US periodically. In 2001, for the first time in 10 years or so, the whole family got together for a few weeks in the US. Everyone enjoyed this time together. This reunion of the grandparents, grandchildren, son, daughter, son-in-law, daughter-in law was indeed special and will always be remembered with fondness. This was the last time he was with his grandchildren. In January 2002, he became seriously ill and was struggling for his life. Prof. Gopal Singh Nepali died in January 20, 2002 at Bridgekandy Hospital Mambai, India at the age of 76. At the time of his death he was continuing with his work on ‘ *Interaction between Hinduism and Buddhism in Nepal: A case study of the Manandhar caste of Kathmandu valley*’. But death interrupted and he was unable to complete his work.

Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara has established an award in the honor of the pioneer Nepalese sociologist late Prof. Dr. Gopal Singh Nepali since 2005. The motive behind this undertaking is to inspire young researchers to pursue anthropological and sociological researches. The award is entitled as “Gopal Singh Nepali Memorial Research Award” and is given to the student whose dissertation is the best among all the dissertations submitted throughout that particular year. The evaluation committee formed by the department selects the best dissertation for the award. Every year this award is distributed on Prof. Nepali’s Memorial Day i.e. 20th January commemorating him and his praiseworthy scholarly contribution in the field of sociology and anthropology in Nepal. Three students Ramji Sharma(2005), Rajendra Adhikari(2006) and Meera Devkota(2007) have received the award so far.

