

# NACA NEWSFLASH

News and Events for the Friends of NACA

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[Info@nepaliacademics.org](mailto:Info@nepaliacademics.org)

[www.nepaliacademics.org](http://www.nepaliacademics.org)

## NACA Event

The Nepali Academics in America (NACA) organized a virtual second annual conference with a theme: Recovery and Resilience in an Uncertain World from April 15-16, 2022. The event was one of the milestones of NACA that successfully brought multidisciplinary scholars and researchers interested in Nepal.

The conference was kicked off with a keynote speech on *Lessons Learned from Past Earthquakes - Resilience, Recovery, and Renewal* by Dr. Binod Tiwari, Professor and Associate Vice President of Research at California State University, Fullerton, California. Dr. Tiwari highlighted his work in Nepal and Japan and described how Nepal could build a more resilient system to overcome future earthquakes. The keynote speech was followed by three concurrent sessions on Youth Entrepreneurship (moderated by Dr. Arun KC), Environment and Development (moderated by Dr. Keshav Bhattarai), and Biotechnology (moderated by Dr. Samagya Banskota). The Youth Entrepreneurship session brought four youths who shared their business cases and opportunities for youths in Nepal. Dr. Banskota brought young and successful Nepali diaspora working in the biotechnology field to showcase their work at the conference.

The second concurrent sessions on the first day were on Natural Disasters and Landing a Tenure Track Job in the U.S. (moderated by Dr. Krishna Poudel). Dr. Milan Shrestha brought four experts to give a holistic, interdisciplinary look at glacial hazards and risks in Nepal. The second day of the conference started with a key session on Health with expert panelists from Nepal and the U.S. The panelists discussed about health and health equity and summarized the importance of health equity in promoting well-being and recovering from disasters.

Dr. Dinesh Paudel moderated a second day's concurrent session on Nepal's forestry in which four experts shared their work related to forest management in Nepal and the broader Himalayan region. Dr. Rabin Bhattarai invited experts from Nepal and the U.S. to discuss about water resources and water quality. Dr. Gaurab Aryal brought experts from Stanford University and Nepal Rastra Bank, among others, to discuss economic issues affecting Nepal's economy. Dr. Kedar Nepal and the Association of Nepali Mathematicians in America organized a session to highlight their activities in Nepal and discuss how they are helping Nepali mathematicians. Further, Dr. Anil Giri organized a session that discussed the impacts of COVID-19 on different sectors in Nepal and the U.S. Dr. Krishna Poudel organized a session on transitioning into administrative positions in higher education institutions. In addition to these organized sessions, the conference also allowed opportunities to present submitted papers covering infrastructures, livelihood, and well-being; agricultural economics; and natural disasters.

Most of these sessions were recorded and have been made available for NACA members through the NACA website. NACA would like to thank all the presenters, session chairs, session organizers, and moderators for their outstanding service to the association. NACA would like to thank the conference chair Dr. Krishna Poudel and the entire conference committee, including Dr. Ananta Acharya, Inari Agriculture; Dr. Gaurab Aryal, University of Virginia; Dr. Jagriti Bhattarai, Johns Hopkins University; Dr. Rabin Bhattarai, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Dr. Samagya Banskota, Harvard University/MIT; Dr. Arun KC, Save the Children and Dr. Bhuwan Thapa, University of Missouri.

## Members Spotlight

### Udaya Wagle, Ph.D.



Dr. Udaya Wagle is a Professor and the Director of School of Public Affairs and Administration at Western Michigan University (WMU). Dr. Wagle has taught a variety of graduate courses focusing on political economy, public policy analysis, public finance, social policy administration, and quantitative methods at WMU. His research focuses on issues of poverty, inequality, social policies, and comparative studies, mostly using quantitative techniques. As a staunch researcher, Dr. Wagle is interested in understanding the design and impact of social and economic development policies in both developing and developed countries and published two books—*Multidimensional Poverty Measurement: Concepts and Applications* (2008, Springer) and *The Heterogeneity Link of the Welfare State and Redistribution* (2013, Springer). He has authored and co-authored over 50 articles, book chapters, and book reviews in interdisciplinary peer-reviewed journals, with numerous other professional reports and opinion pieces. While a significant part of his research focuses on comparative analysis, he has also conducted impact assessments of various policies using survey-based, situational, and contextual data from Nepal, Myanmar, and the United States. Currently, he is editing the *Handbook of Poverty and Inequality* to be published by Edward Elgar in fall with 35 authors from countries across all six continents.

Besides WMU, Dr. Wagle has been involved at various national and international institutions. He has been a local research affiliate at the National Poverty Center of the University of Michigan's Ford School of Public Policy and a visiting scholar at the University of Wisconsin's Institute of Research on Poverty. Dr. Wagle has also been an accreditation site visitor for the Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration (NASPAA), which accredits master's degree programs in public policy, affairs, and administration globally. He has been on the editorial boards of the *Global Social Policy*, *Social Indicators Research*, *Poverty & Public Policy*, and *Encyclopedia of Quality-of-Life Research*. Internationally, he has also been a consultant to the United Nations Development Program in Myanmar, Nepal, and Uzbekistan. In Nepal, he authored the *Country Report* of 2011 by working with liaisons from 22 different United Nations agencies.

Actively engaged in a small group initiating the concept of NACA in 2019, he is grateful for the opportunity given to serve as the founding president of this organization dedicated to promoting the interdisciplinary interests of Nepali academics and researchers in the United States and beyond. Dr. Wagle regards it an honor to receive the trust for a major leadership role during the formative years of NACA. This is the period in which the organization has not just established its purpose and place in a way that benefits its members and the larger community, but also made a major headway in institutionalizing the initiative and delivering its core promise. Now that the core apparatus required to propel NACA is in place and the institutional learning has evolved through an array of professional activities including business meetings and conferences and a host of other topical Zoominars. Dr. Wagle feels it is important to create an inclusive environment where every academic or researcher with interest on Nepal belongs and sees their interests represented without reservations.

As a network of academics and professionals, Dr. Wagle believes the value of NACA can be optimized by working together on issues of shared interest. His involvement with many colleagues from within and outside of NACA has improved his confidence in working collaboratively. It is a continuous process and, while serving as an academic administrator disallows remaining as active as he would like to be, he expects collaborative efforts to expand on research and service outreach in Nepal especially once he returns as a research-active faculty member.

## Recent Publications

### Peer-reviewed Articles

**Kafle, K., Songsermsawas, T., & Winters, P. (2022).** Agricultural value chain development in Nepal: Understanding mechanisms for poverty reduction. *Agricultural Economics*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/agec.12696>. This paper investigates the potential mechanisms and the practical significance of agricultural value chain development in a geographically challenging rural area of a developing country. Using data from a carefully designed primary survey administered in a hill and mountainous region in Western Nepal, the paper shows that linking small-scale producers to regional and local traders can help increase income.

**Kafle, K., Omotilewa, O., Leh, M., & Schmitter, P. (2022).** Who is likely to benefit from public and private sector investments in farmer-led irrigation development? Evidence from Ethiopia. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 58(1), 55-75.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00220388.2021.1939866>. The paper uses the case of Ethiopia and explores the relationship between irrigation suitability and farmers' socio-economic status. The findings suggest that high-value crop producers and wealthier farmers are most likely to make private investments and benefit from public support in farmer-led irrigation expansion if investments are directed to land areas highly suitable for irrigation.

**Ghimire R., Khatri-Chhetri A., & Chhetri N. (2022).** Institutional Innovations for Climate Smart Agriculture: Assessment of Climate-Smart Village Approach in Nepal. *Front. Sustain. Food Syst.*, 02 June 2022 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/fsufs.2022.734319>. This paper evaluates the institutional framework of the climate-smart village (CSV) approach implemented in Nepal by the state government. This case study demonstrates that while the scaling of the CSV approach is a concern, the institutional innovation around CSV has been instrumental in making farmers aware of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) technologies. This has been done largely through collaboration among public, private, civil society organizations, and communities. This collaborative effort illustrates the possibilities for scaling the CSV approaches in the future and highlights their contribution to climate and development goals.

### Books

**Nyaupane, G. P., & Timothy, D. J. (Eds.). (2022).** *Tourism and Development in the Himalaya: Social, Environmental, and Economic Forces*. London: Routledge.

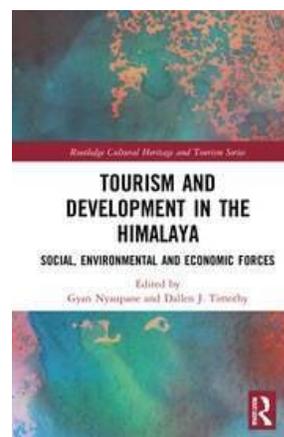
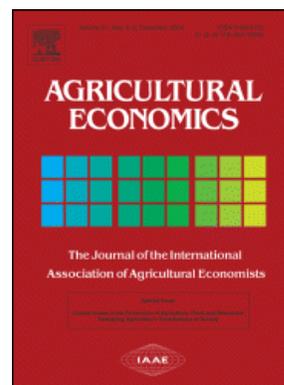
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003030126>. This book examines the unique characteristics of the Himalaya that mark them as a special region among other orographic regions of the world. The Himalayan range is an important global asset for ecological, climatic, cultural, spiritual, and economic reasons. Its diversity of landscapes, climates, and biotic systems makes the Himalaya an extremely attractive region for tourism. The book analyzes tourism and development in the Himalaya region, exploring its sociocultural, environmental, and economic dimensions. With a framework of sustainable development, this book elucidates interdisciplinary perspectives on nature, society, economic development, poverty, justice, health, social and environmental vulnerability, faith and culture, Indigenous rights, women, conflict, heritage and living culture, and many other concepts that broaden our understanding of tourism and development in mountain areas. This volume is a major departure from the existing case study-based approach. Instead, it addresses a more holistic and interdisciplinary perspective. The majority of the contributing authors are from the region, including a few NACA members, which brings a native perspective of the Himalaya.

Chapter 4: Conservation and Restoration of Alpine Ecosystems in the Himalaya: New Challenges for Adventure Tourism in the 21st Century

*Alton C. Byers and Milan Shrestha*

Chapter 14: Corporate Social Responsibility for Sustainable Mountain Tourism in the Himalayan Region

*Rojan Baniya and Brijesh Thapa*



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## Nepal Corner

### Increase in forest cover in Nepal from 2000 to 2019

A latest report released by Forest Research and Training Center in Nepal indicated increase in Nepal's forest cover by 1.7 percent and decrease in agriculture by 2.1 percent between 2000 to 2019. National Landcover Monitoring System, a web-based platform, developed in collaboration with ICIMOD, USAID, and NASA, provided the data for the report.

<https://kathmandupost.com/climate-environment/2022/04/25/forest-cover-may-have-increased-but-agricultural-land-is-shrinking>

## New Life Members of NACA

**Dr Amir Sapkota**



Dr. Amir Sapkota is a Professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Health. He received his BS from Clark University, MA; PhD from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, MD, and Post-Doctoral training from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), Lyon France. In 2017, he completed his Senior Fulbright Fellowship in Nepal.

His research focuses on the intersection of climate change and human health. Currently he is leading an international consortium that is working to develop an early warning system to enhance community resilience against threats of climate change. His most recent work linking climate change and infectious disease burden in Nepal was published in the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences \(PNAS Nexus\)](#).

**Dr Samridhi Shrestha**



Dr Shrestha is currently working as a full-time faculty in the College of Science, Engineering and Technology (CSET) at Grand Canyon University. She is engaged in teaching Environmental Science at the undergraduate level and Introduction to Graduate Studies at the graduate level. She earned her Ph.D. from Arizona State University where she studied people's attitude and behavior towards the environment. Committed to building and supporting young researchers in the field of conservation, she has established a scholarship program in Nepal, [Prem Conservation Research Grant for WCN](#). The research grant focuses on encouraging young scientists who have potential to become leaders in their discipline and provide solutions to environmental problems.

**Editorial Team**

- Dr. Gyan Nyaupane
- Dr. Rajan Parajuli
- Dr. Bhuwan Thapa
- Dr. Arun Khatri-Chhetri
- Dr. Nilesh Timilsina
- Dr. Bishwa S. Koirala

**E-mail:**  
[info@nepaliacademics.org](mailto:info@nepaliacademics.org)

**Website:**  
[www.nepaliacademics.org](http://www.nepaliacademics.org)



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**Save the Date: NACA Third Annual Conference in Phoenix, Arizona**

NACA will hold its third annual conference on April 14-16, 2023 in Phoenix, Arizona. If you are interested in serving as a conference committee member, please contact the conference co-chairs [Gyan Nyaupane](#) or [Milan Shrestha](#).



**Opportunities to Get Involved!**

NACA is seeking volunteers to serve on various committees, including the three Standing Committees (Institutional Affairs, Membership Support, and Strategic Initiatives) and the Newsflash Committee. If you are interested in serving NACA being a member of one of these committees or in other capacities, please let us know at [info@nepaliacademics.org](mailto:info@nepaliacademics.org)