

[NEPAL: NC NOT TO BOW DOWN FOR STATE POWER.](#)



Submit C

[Home](#) | [About us](#) | [Archive](#) | [Post your Article](#) | [Advertise](#) | [ePaper](#) | [Contact](#)

Saturday, December 8, 2012 5:01 AM

[Subscribe](#)

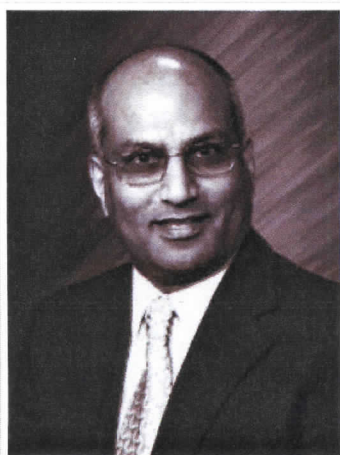
[RSS Feed](#)

[Bookmark this site!](#)

[HEADLINE](#) [NATIONAL](#) [VIEWS](#) [EDITORIALS](#) [SECOND IMPRESSION](#) [FIVE QUESTIONS](#) [COMMENTARY](#) [INTERNATIONAL](#) [ANALYSIS](#)

Nepal: Asta-Ja and Agricultural Revolution

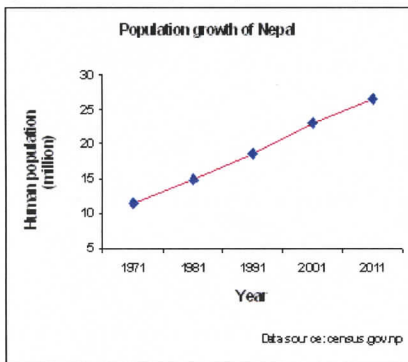
Like **2** Tweet **5** **4**



Professor Durga D. Poudel
University of Louisiana at Lafayette, USA

Nepal is endowed with the best possible natural resources and conditions that lead to, when managed properly, a highly productive and sustainable agriculture. Its diverse agro-ecozones, fertile lands in Terai and Valleys, alpine pasturelands, water resources, forest resources, available manpower, and very favorable climatic conditions give Nepalese agriculture a competitive advantage. Twenty percent of Nepal's total land (14.7 million hectare) is in crop production and 12% of its total land consists of rangeland and pasture. The agriculture sector employs more than 80% of the Nepalese population and contributes over 38% to national GDP.

Despite its high potential for agricultural production and food self-sufficiency, Nepal is experiencing serious food shortages, a negative balance in agricultural trade, and degradation of its natural resources. Major reasons for this food shortage and increasing amounts of agricultural imports include population increase, rapid land use changes, low agricultural productivity, uneconomical farming units, and lack of decentralized, grass-roots-based agricultural development policies and programs. From 1974/75 to 2007/08, when there was over 120%



increase in human population, maize production increased by 127%, wheat production increased from 331,000 MT to 1,572,000 MT, and oilseed production increased from 66,000 MT to 134,000 MT, but the production of rice (the principal staple food crop for the Nepalese people) increased only by 75% (i.e. from 2,452,000 MT to 4,299,000 MT) (MoF, 2010). The trade deficit of three Standard International Trade Classification (SITC) groups (i.e. Food & Live Animals, Tobacco & Beverages, and Animals & Vegetable Oil & Fat) in 2008/09 (i.e. Rs -11,025.8 million) was 10 times higher compared to that of 1974/75 (i.e. Rs - 1,062.5 million) (MoF, 2010). As compared to 1975/76, the 2008/09 import value of two SITC groups combined (i.e. Food & live Animals and Animal & Vegetable Oil & Fat), was 98.7 times higher. Trade

deficits have accelerated, especially after 1990.

Commodity specific analyses of Nepal's imports in 2010 indicated rice, maize, wheat, vegetable oils, apples, live animals (especially goats), beans, dry onions, and potatoes as major agricultural imports. In 2010, the total amount of grain (rice, maize and wheat) imports was 235,507 metric tonnes with a monetary value of US\$54,385,000. Similarly, Nepal imported 37,400 MT of apples with a monetary value of US\$9,562,000 and 391,184 live goats with a monetary value of US \$ 5,358,000 in 2010. Total value of Nepal's 2010 import of vegetable oil (sunflower oil, soybean oil, palm oil, and rapeseed) was US\$178,935,000. Ninety seven percent of grain (rice, maize and wheat) and 100% of live goats, dry onions, and banana were imported from India, 96% of apple imports were from China, and 77% of sunflower oil was imported from Ukraine.

Related News

[Nepal: Development Issues and Labor Economics](#)

[Nepal: Development Issues, an appraisal](#)

[Nepal: Chemistry of anthropology, sociology, and civil service trilogy](#)

[Nepal: Dynamics of farmer managed Irrigation and prospects-2](#)

[Nepal: Devastation of Churia](#)

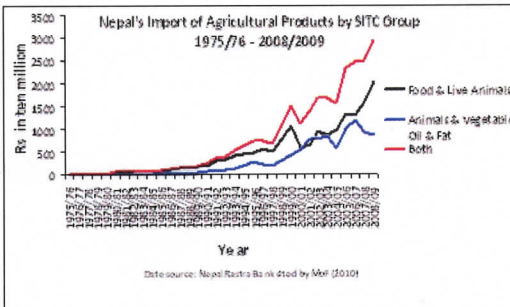


The Fulbari
RESORT & SPA
POKHARA • NEPAL

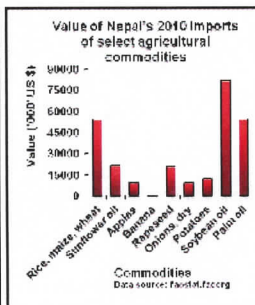
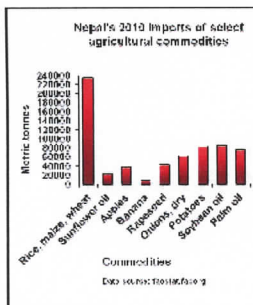


The Fulbari
RESORT & SPA
POKHARA • NEPAL

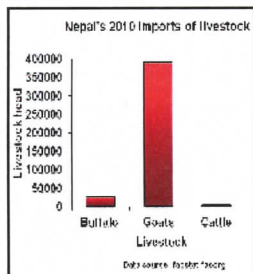
Recognizing the nation's natural resource base and its potential for economic revolution and socio-economic transformation of the nation, the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal was founded in 2008. The Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal is based on the sound and theoretically grounded principles of Asta-Ja meaning eight "Ja" Nepali letter "Ja", *Jal* (water), *Jamin* (land), *Jungle* (forest), *Jadibuti* (medicinal and aromatic plants), *Janashakti* (manpower), *Janawar* (animals), *Jarajuri* (crop plants), and *Jalabayu* (climate) (Poudel, 2008) for their sustainable development and management and socio-economic transformation of Nepal. The Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal envisions an economically prosperous, environmentally sound, and socially just Nepal through sustainable development and management of Asta-Ja. Since its inception, the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal has been heavily engaged on various activities that include:



- 1) Organizing high level Interaction Meetings,
- 2) Enhancing solidarity to the campaign from dignitaries, political leaders and other stakeholders,
- 3) Developing network of commercial agriculture producers,
- 4) Capacity-building of commercial agriculture producers, 5) hosting field days and public meetings,
- 6) Organizational expansion, and
- 7) Policy advocacy



With an objective of presenting its mission, vision, goals and objectives to the intellectual communities and dignitaries, the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal organized several Interaction Meetings in the past four years. The Chief Guests and the venues of these Interaction Meetings include Right Hon. The President, Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, Sital Niwas; Hon. then Prime Minister Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal, Crown Plaza; Hon. then Vice Chairman, NPC, Dr. Jagadish Chandra Pokhrel, Crown Plaza; then Chief Secretary, GoN, Dr. Madhab Prasad Ghimire, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu; Hon. Vice Chairman, NPC, Mr. Deependra Bahadur Chhetri, Crown Plaza; and Secretary, Finance Ministry, Singha Durbar, Kathmandu. These events were well attended and participated.



In order to promote solidarity between the campaign and the nation's dignitaries, the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal launched "Gamala Program" in which the Asta-Ja Abhiyan team visits national leaders, bureaucrats and other stakeholders separately at their residences or offices with

"*Akbare Khursani*" (i.e. very hot chilly plant) potted plant, requests that they water the plant, then hand over the "*Akbare Khursani*" pot to the dignitaries with a hand clapping ceremony. In this regard, the Asta-Ja Abhiyan team has handed the "*Akbare Khursani Gamala*" to Rt. Hon. The President Dr. Ram Baran Yadav, Ex-King Gyanendra Bir Bikram Shahdev, Ex-PM Madhav Kumar Nepal, Ex-PM and the Chairman of UCPN-M Pushpa Kamal Dahal, Ex-PM and Chairman NCP-UML Jhala Nath Khanal, Chairman of NCP-M Mohan Baidhya, President of Nepali Congress Sushil Koirala, Vice-President of Nepali Congress Ram Chandra Poudel, Ex-PM and Vice-President of Nepali Congress Sher Bahadur Deuba, General Secretary CPN-Masal Mohan Bikram Singh, senior leaders Sarbendra Nath Shukla, TMLP, CP Gajurel, NCP-M, and K.P. Oli, NCP-UML. All of the dignitaries and personalities that the Asta-Ja Abhiyan team met were very supportive of the campaign and have expressed their solidarities. A common sentiment found among the dignitaries was that agricultural development and resource utilization is critical for nation's economic development and socio-economic transformation. The President expressed that considering the economic development achieved by our two neighbors we can also make similar progress if we design our developmental strategies based on our soils and climatic conditions. He also expressed that a campaign such as this sustains more meaning and significance to the society especially when there is political instability in a nation. Similarly, the Ex-King expressed solidarity and extended his best wishes to the success of Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal. While Mr. Ram

Chandra Poudel stated that we should overcome our trade deficits through commercialized agriculture, Mr. Jhalanath Khanal expressed that nation's main agenda now is economic revolution, and agricultural development is pre-requisite to our industrial development. Mr. Madhav Kumar Nepal announced that he will be establishing a modern model agricultural farm soon. Mr. Pushpa Kamal Dahal emphasized agricultural development for the nation's overall development and prosperity. Mr. Mohan Baidhya suggested economic and political development should go hand in hand. Mr. Sher Bahadur Deuba expects that the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal will also contribute to environmental protection of the nation and its resources. Mr. Sushil Koirala appreciated that the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal is spreading the message of agricultural (production) revolution which is in line with the principles and guidance of late leader B.P. Koirala.

Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal has developed a network of about 200 commercial agricultural producers representing 12 districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Rupendehi, Palpa, Parbat, Tanahu, Jumla, Makwanpur, Chitwan, Nuwakot, and Rasuwa), and the network continues to expand. The Asta-Ja Abhiyan facilitates interaction among these producers through meetings, field days, and advocacy programs so that the problems and issues in relation to their commercial agricultural production can be identified and solved in a timely manner. Such issues may include marketing facilities, timely supply of fertilizers and other inputs for commercial production, capacity-building of entrepreneurs, and soil and water management. With the help of the Youth Self-Employment Fund (YSEF), the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal conducted five trainings that included fruit and vegetable production, vegetable production, and poultry farming in five locations: Duwakot, Ramkot, Kirtipur, Harishidhi, and Bukhel in Kathmandu Valley. Each training consisted of 25 participants and lasted for 15 days. Training in Bukhel was attended by the Vice Chairman of YSEF, Dr. Punya Prasad Regmi and His Excellency Mr. Hanan Goder, Ambassador of Israel to Nepal. In his address to the participants, Dr. Regmi stated that "The YSEF belongs to all youth and I am happy to invest in youth for agricultural revolution." His Excellency Hanan Goder said that, "You farmers are great, you produce food for us, and agricultural professions need more investment." Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal has also actively participated in collaborative capacity-building research projects with public Universities (Tribhuvan University, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Louisiana, USA), NARC, CARE-Nepal, ADB, Nyaik Sansar, Department of Livestock Services, and other agencies. The Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal has been updating its website (<http://astajanepal.com>) regularly with the latest information and activities and also disseminating information through television, radio, media, press releases, and newspapers. Farmers associated with Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal have established commercial farms in various part of the country including Palpa, Nuwakot, Parbat and Tanahu districts.

Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal has been involved heavily in organizing field days and public meetings. Some of the field days and public meetings organized by Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal have been attended by high profile dignitaries including His Excellency Hanan Goder. His Excellency's inspiring words to the farmers in relation to food self-sufficiency, agricultural technologies, Nepal's excellent resource base, crop productivity, and optimism on nation building on a field day event in Ramkot were very noteworthy and well received.

In its organizational expansion, the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal has already formed 24 committees in 11 districts (Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Nuwakot, Rasuwa, Kaski, Parbat, Palpa, Rupendehi, Jumla, and Ramechhap) with more than 450 members on board. Organizational expansion of the Abhiyan is continuing. There are some Cooperatives either being registered or in the process of registration which will be closely associated with the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal. The Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal has also done its Organizational expansion outside Nepal (i.e. India).

Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal has actively involved in policy lobbying. Various policy agendas for lobbying included:

- 1) Interest rate reduction from 12% to 6% on livestock loans through ADB,
- 2) Availability and transport subsidies for fertilizer and seeds,
- 3) Establishment of an Asta-Ja Coordinating Ministry, or alternatively, an Asta-Ja Department,
- 4) Incorporation of Asta-Ja in the Constitution as the guiding principle for the nation's development,
- 5) No-interest loans for youths who are attracted to agricultural production and businesses related to the other Eight-Ja, and
- 6) Crop/livestock insurance and marketing.

For policy lobbying, the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal team visited the Planning Commission several times, as well as Ministries, Secretaries, political leaders, governmental agencies, the PM, the President, the Speaker, legislatures, and several governmental staff. As a result, Mr. Madhav Kumar's cabinet decided for a governmental subsidy of 6% on livestock loans from ADB. Other agendas are also gaining interest on policy debate. The Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal recently organized a one-day Leader Farmer's Advocacy Program in Harihar Bhawan Nepal which was attended by the Chief Secretary, Mr. Lila Mani Poudel. There were over 170 participants including the Acting Secretary of Agriculture Division, and representatives from the

Directorate of Animal Service Division, Directorate of Training, NARC, various cooperatives, NGOs, and news media. All speakers at the program univocally expressed their solidarities to the campaign. This writer gave a PowerPoint presentation entitled "Asta-Ja and Agricultural Revolution: Entrepreneurships, policies, and resource management".

In order to expedite the process of agricultural revolution and socio-economic transformation of the nation, the Secretariat of Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal has recently approved several agendas for future policy advocacy and undertakings. Some of them are briefly discussed below:

Agenda 1. Coordination and capacity-building of commercialized agricultural producers across the nation.

The Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal plans to unite 5,000 leading commercial producers across the nation in next three years. These producers will serve as "Campaigners" for commercialized agricultural production in the nation. They will also actively participate in policy discussions. Capacity-building of these lead producers in relation to agricultural production, processing, marketing, storage, and transportation will be given high priority. These producers will also contribute to farmer-to-farmer technology transfer in the nation. Meanwhile, the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal will continue lobbying for various issues including crop insurance, minimum prices, marketing, processing, and export.

Agenda 2. Establishing a Department of Agriculture (or a department of similar nature) within all universities in the nation.

The unique and complex agro-ecozones and the related farming systems in Nepal warrant locality/site specific agricultural education, research and development. This requires appropriate institutional mechanism for manpower development, service delivery, and agricultural research and development. The Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal has decided to start lobbying and raising awareness among the stakeholders and farmers in the region for establishing Departments of Agriculture (or of similar nature) within all universities in Nepal. This will set a strong and widespread institutional mechanism for agroecoregion-based agricultural research and development. These departments will offer a comprehensive agricultural curriculum which will include: food and nutrition, resource management, environment, and agricultural production and marketing. In addition, these entities will also provide agricultural services to their respective regions. A high level of synergy will develop between the governmental institutions, agricultural research programs, and agricultural education in the region.

Agenda 3. Compulsory agriculture course in High School and 10+2 curriculums.

There is a need for basic education in food, agriculture, and environment for every citizen of a nation in order to develop healthy diets and lifestyles, sustainable food and agricultural systems, and environmental quality. Such an educational system becomes even more critical for an agricultural based economy like that of Nepal. Therefore, Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal will lobby vigorously to various policy making bodies and raise awareness among the people for the incorporation of an agricultural course in High School and 10+2 curriculums nationwide. This comprehensive course will cover important aspect of food and agricultural production such as crop production, human health and nutrition, food contamination, food security, resource management, and environment.

Agenda 4. Posting of at least one agricultural technician in each VDC.

To ensure timely availability of agricultural services to local communities, it is important that government services be available locally. Therefore, the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal will lobby governmental agencies and ministries vigorously in posting at least one agricultural technician at the VDC level. These technicians will work closely with the commercial producers while understanding and working together with the local communities in managing natural resources of their working VDCs.

Agenda 5. Inclusion of Asta-Ja in the Constitution.

In order to ensure equitable distribution and sustainable management and development of Asta-Ja resources, it is necessary that the nation recognize, value, and give priority to their conservation, management and development. Because Asta-Ja resources constitute the backbone of the Nepalese economy and their equitable distribution and development is necessary in order to develop a just society, the Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal will vigorously lobby to the Constitution making bodies for inclusion of Asta-Ja resources in the upcoming Nepalese Constitution. This will ensure that the nation sustains support for conservation, development, and sustainable utilization of Asta-Ja resources for its economic development and socio-economic transformation.

The Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal is a non-profit, self-reliant, voluntary, inclusive, and grass-roots based non-governmental organization committed to economic revolution and socio-economic transformation of the nation. The Asta-Ja Abhiyan Nepal appeals to the wider communities and stakeholders for their continued

support in its campaign for developing economically strong, environmentally sound, socially just, and nationally highly integrated Nepalese society and Nepal.

References

CBS (Central Bureau of Statistics), 2012. National Population Census. Available at <http://census.gov.np>

FAO. 2012. FAOSTAT. Available at <http://faostat.fao.org/site/342/default.aspx>

MoF (Ministry of Finance). 2010. Economic Survey, Fiscal Year 2009/2010, Vol. II. Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Poudel, D.D. 2008. Management of eight "Ja" for economic development of Nepal, *Journal of Comparative International Management*, 11(1): 15-27.

Masters in Sustainability

NEC Sustainability Graduate Program Earn Your Master's Degree Online

MastersinSustainability.NEC.Edu

AdChoices 



Post your Comment here

TERMS OF USE:The views, opinions and comments posted are your, and are not endorsed by this website. You shall be solely responsible for the comment posted here. The website reserves the right to delete, reject, or otherwise remove any views, opinions and comments posted or part thereof. You shall ensure that the comment is not inflammatory, abusive, derogatory, defamatory &/or obscene, or contain pornographic matter and/or does not constitute hate mail, or violate privacy of any persons) or breach confidentiality or otherwise is illegal, immoral or contrary to public policy. Nor should it contain anything infringing copyright &/or intellectual property rights of any person(s).

Name :

Email :

Comment:

Security Code



Enter the text above

I agree

Submit