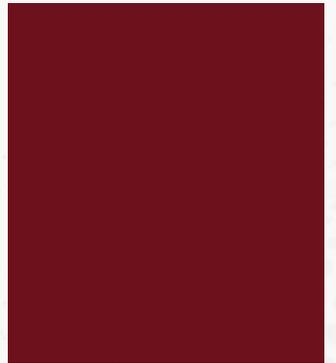


KLEPTOCRACY Dialogues





NEPAL SCORES **5.32/10**
AND RANKS 80

(OUT OF 114 COUNTRIES) ON THE
INDEX OF PUBLIC INTEGRITY (IPI)



NEPAL'S SCORE ON TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL'S 2021 CORRUP-
TION PERCEPTIONS INDEX (CPI) IS

**33/100 AND IS
RANKED 117** (OUT
OF 180 COUNTRIES).

Kleptocracy

- ▶ is simply defined as the transformation in the underlying structure of corruption and impunity
- ▶ from individual opportunistic instances of corruption, e.g. bribes
- ▶ to well-designed systemic arrangements to
 - ✓ extract wealth and power,
 - ✓ sustain and protect the structure,
 - ✓ maintain illicit financial flows, launder money, and make investments.



Fostering a wide-reach collaboration among changemakers within and outside the government to push for systemic reforms to counter kleptocracy.

Given the widespread kleptocratic nexus that often hinders development, policy and planning, democratic practices, and delivery of services, it was imperative to bring dekleptification leaders together to break the network.

Countering Kleptocracy in Nepal: A Leadership Circle MeetUp was a dialogue series of Accountability Lab Nepal (ALN) to bring the changemakers within and outside government together to discuss Nepal's kleptocratic nexus, its impacts, and possible dekleptification measures. It brought anti-corruption leaders from civil society, media, and government together to brainstorm ideas and foster collaborations to generate new discourses for systemic change.



ALN hosted 6 workshops over the period of 3 months with changemakers working across different locations and sectors to dig deeper into how their respective regions and sectors are impacted through the Kleptocratic nexus.



Civil Society



Local
Representatives



Media



Researchers



Independent
Youth



Students



Politicians



Lawmakers



Activists



Bureaucrats



Entrepreneurs

A photograph of a man wearing a traditional Nepali cap (Dhaka topi) and a patterned jacket, speaking and gesturing with his hands at a conference. He is standing in front of a group of people seated at a long table. The background shows blue curtains with a gold pattern.

KEY INSIGHTS ON NEPAL'S KLEPTOCRACY

- Unlike the traditional notion of kleptocracy in repressive regimes, kleptocracy in Nepal is not operated by or for an autocrat or a group of oligarchs to accumulate their personal wealth by abusing state resources.
- Instead, kleptocracy in Nepal can be argued to be a participatory phenomenon where multiple actors—including political leaders and parties, representatives from public institutions, business groups, media houses, individual and international brokers, international actors, and voters—support one another to appropriate state wealth and share it in varying degrees.
- Watchdogs like civil society and media are generally owned or influenced by political leaders and the private sector, who are also highly likely to become a part of the kleptocratic nexus.
- Unfortunately, dekleptification efforts from civil society and media have been rare, and there is a growing trend of leaders ignoring conflicts of interest, resulting in increasing impunity.



Key Learning

- Kleptocracy exacerbates inequality as wealth is accumulated only by the rich and powerful.
- Big media houses and their connections hinder the efforts of journalists who are committed to exposing kleptocracy.
- There are policy loopholes that help flourish corruption/kleptocracy.
- The Kleptocratic nexus is highly organized, but the dekleptification efforts are disorganized.
- Right to Information (RTI) could be a tool that could help journalists and others find adequate information and follow up on any case.
- Investment in investigative media is very little. The more the investment is, the better the efficiency is. Investigative journalists should also be given more training and provided with more resources.



1

Mapping the wrongdoers as well as right-doers is important so that the changemakers who value integrity and transparency are highlighted.

2

The synergies between CSOs and media are essential in supporting each other and fighting against the kleptocratic networks. Such collaborations should also be formed at the local, translocal, and transnational levels.

3

It is also important to promote civic tech to innovate new solutions to fight corruption as innovating tech-based approaches may find avenues that could crack the kleptocratic nexus.

4

More strong and independent agencies should be established to monitor corruption so that corruption cases cannot be influenced.

5

Creating a safety net for whistleblowers: As much as the whistleblowers are protected, the higher chances for kleptocratic networks to weaken. Also when a safety net is there, whistleblowers become more confident to report.

6

Organizations should also welcome good-doers by awarding their accountability and honesty. Given that there are multiple agencies focused on finding the culprit, an institution that awards the good ones could promote good governance.



It is time for Nepal to break the chain of kleptocratic nexus as it undermines and poses a direct threat to the country's democracy. The common people suffer the most from corruption and kleptocracy. By promoting honesty, integrity, and accountability, we can start to make things better. We need to create a society where people's lives improve and democracy becomes stronger. This way, we can build a fair society that fights against corruption.

- Suresh Chand

Director of Programs, Accountability Lab Nepal

The implementation of federalism has resulted in the formation of three levels of government in the country. Public service has increased in proximity to the citizens. However, the service flow is not smooth, transparent, and accountable. Development has been hindered by corruption and influence. The lifestyle of individuals engaged in public representation and public service delivery is also anomalous. It is necessary to undertake additional programs related to governance, transparency, citizen participation, and communication to improve this situation.

- Amrita Anmol

Senior Journalist



There is a need to consider green accountability in the face of climate change impacts. A joint kleptocratic nexus of developmentalists and a few politicians and bureaucrats is on the verge of causing irreversible damage to the environment. The proposed construction of the Nijgadh Airport in Nepal involves chopping down 2.4 million trees in an area designated as an "environmentally sensitive zone" by IUCN in 1994. Although the law requires tree plantation to compensate for the felled trees, the cost amounts to nearly NRs 14 billion. Most importantly, the destruction of such a massive number of trees would decimate the thriving ecosystem, which cannot be fully restored through afforestation alone. All things considered, establishing an international airport in the dense forest of Nijgadh would be an environmental disaster.

- Roshani Giri

Human Rights and Environment Lawyer

