On 2 June 2021, Plan International released a research paper called ‘Representation of Women and Girls in Nepal’s Cinema’ written by Plan International Nepal and DocsKool.

The paper reveals that Nepali films perpetuate harmful stereotypes preventing girls and young women from fulfilling their potential. The research also shows that women and girls are rarely presented as leaders, and even when they are in leadership positions they are far more likely than men to be sexually objectified. Learn more about the study here.
A recent report by Policy Research Institute (PRI) highlights the history and current trends of Vaccine Diplomacy linking with the current COVID-19 scenario. Report recommendations:

- High level of alert and preparedness starting from the stock-keeping of essential medicines and oxygen supplies, quarantine facilities for suspected people, testing facilities, home isolation and institutional isolation centres, telemedicine and mobile health units, increased hospital beds, HDU, ICU and ventilator capacity, and proper training of health professionals.

- Ensuring the service for non-COVID-19 patients, particularly mental health patients.

- COVID-19 management needs to be devolved to ward leadership with the support of local civil society organizations. Every ward should have a COVID-19 dashboard of its own with a connection to the central data information system.

- The capacity of the Nepal Health Research Council needs to be enhanced to deal with overall research challenges posed by COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

- Nepal should raise its voice against vaccine nationalism, especially among the western countries which have stockpiled vaccines many times more than the need of their population, so that vaccine equity could be addressed regionally and globally.

- Nepal needs to have a long-term vision of self-sufficiency in COVID-19 vaccines, by supporting pharmacological institutions that can manufacture vaccines with the technical support of collaborating countries/manufacturers.

More details available here.

**GLOBAL GENDER GAP REPORT 2021**

According to the Global Gender Report 2021 published by World Economic Form (WEF), this year globally, the average distance completed to parity is at 68%, a step back compared to 2020 (-0.6 percentage points). Iceland is the most gender-equal country in the world with gender gap reduced by 89.2% followed by Finland (86.1%), Norway (84.9%), New Zealand (84%) and Sweden (82.3%). Nepal has slipped from rank 101 to 106 with the overall score of 0.683. On the four dimensions, Nepal’s rank and score are as follows:

1. Economic Participation and Opportunity - Rank 107 with 0.630 score
2. Educational Attainment - Rank 134 with 0.895 score
3. Health and Survival - Rank 113 with 0.965 score
4. Political Empowerment - Rank 61 with 0.241 score

More details available here.
As of 30 June, the COVID-19 caseload has reached 640,662 people of which 58,911 are children, an increase of more than 110 percent over only two months. Following lockdowns in 75 out of 77 districts, the reported number of daily cases has started showing a decline since mid-May. However, the test positivity rate remains high at 25 per cent.

As global vaccine scarcity continues, vaccination efforts have been constrained and only 2.55 per cent of Nepal’s population have been fully vaccinated.

Children, their families, migrant returnees and child- and female-headed households bear the brunt of the COVID-19 impact highlighting the critical need for humanitarian response and crisis recovery efforts at all levels.

Flooding and landslide that started in the second week of June have further exacerbated the hardship caused by COVID-19 affecting people’s lives and properties in 86 municipalities of 38 districts across all seven provinces.

UNICEF Nepal has come up with its latest Humanitarian Report covering the period from January to June, 2021. Highlights from the report include:

- As of 30 June, the COVID-19 caseload has reached 640,662 people of which 58,911 are children, an increase of more than 110 percent over only two months. Following lockdowns in 75 out of 77 districts, the reported number of daily cases has started showing a decline since mid-May. However, the test positivity rate remains high at 25 per cent.

- As global vaccine scarcity continues, vaccination efforts have been constrained and only 2.55 per cent of Nepal’s population have been fully vaccinated.

- Children, their families, migrant returnees and child- and female-headed households bear the brunt of the COVID-19 impact highlighting the critical need for humanitarian response and crisis recovery efforts at all levels.

- Flooding and landslide that started in the second week of June have further exacerbated the hardship caused by COVID-19 affecting people’s lives and properties in 86 municipalities of 38 districts across all seven provinces.

More details about the report available [here](#).

**Trafficking in Persons 2021 Report: Nepal Statistics**

The US Department of State has released the Trafficking in Persons 2021 report. The report has acknowledged Nepal this year becoming State Party to the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. Excerpt from Nepal's country narrative reads as such: "During the Nepali fiscal year, police conducted 97 investigations involving 240 suspects, the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) initiated prosecution in 170 cases against 415 suspects, and district courts convicted 202 traffickers in 88 cases, all under the HTTCA. This is a decrease compared to initiating 258 investigations involving 524 suspects, initiating 407 prosecutions from previous years, and convicting 231 traffickers the previous reporting period. The government did not report the number of ongoing cases or the sentences prescribed to convicted traffickers. District courts acquitted 108 suspects in 48 cases, compared to 243 acquittals in the previous reporting period. Officials did not disaggregate data to distinguish between sex and labor trafficking cases, and some cases might not include evidence of exploitation in forced labor or commercial sex." More details about the report available [here](#).
Meet Evidence Champion - Dr Khem Pokhrel

Dr Khem Pokhrel is a global health professional with key expertise in designing, implementing, and evaluating public health programs for more than 16 years in Nepal and abroad. He received MSc and PhD degrees in Global Health from The University of Tokyo, Japan. His primary areas of work comprise of Health System Strengthening, Global Burden of Disease Study, HIV, Nutrition, Mental Health, Digital Health, and Reproductive Health. Currently, Khem works as a Country Representative for THET (a UK based research consortium in Nepal. Prior joining to THET, Khem worked as Research Adviser for USAID’s Fertility Awareness for Community Transformation (FACT) project under Georgetown University, Washington DC, USA. Khem also worked as National Nutrition Coordinator for Multi-sector Nutrition Plan of Government of Nepal. He has extensive research capacity and published multiple research articles in international indexed journals.

What has motivated you to conducting research in the public health sector?
Evidence is essential in order to inform and develop policies and subsequently implement them. Research provides that evidence or authenticity to help decision makers meet the solutions to prevailing public health issues. As a researcher, I trust that our research work not only provides the evidence about current public health system in the country but also opens the opportunity and scope as a foundation for further research.

What are the specific areas you are interested in writing/publishing?
My primary areas of interest within the public health arena are health system strengthening, reproductive health, mental health, HIV, and nutrition.

You have been conducting and publishing research in public health consistently. What have been your major lessons and achievements?
I believe publishing is obviously the best achievement for any researcher. You will be more content when your research findings come alive and they are utilized by the government and non-government stakeholders to develop plans and policies. Research findings become relevant and significant when they are able to contribute and guide the public health system towards a proper direction.

Any recommendations or tips you would like to share to those who are interested to conduct and publish research in public health.
I would suggest the early career researchers to design their research studies very carefully understanding the context. It is imperative that studies are designed that are contextually appropriate and relevant. Likewise, quality of a research very much depends on the methodology and tools adopted. Furthermore, as research uptake, your research should also reach out to intended audiences, by communicating complex information into plain language.

Follow Dr Khem through his Google Scholar profile.