Notes from the Archive

MANAGEMENT OF THE RELIEF AND RECONSTRUCTION AFTER THE GREAT EARTHQUAKE OF 1934

Yogesh Raj

Introduction

These documents significantly expand our knowledge of the early relief and reconstruction activities following the Great Earthquake of 15 January 1934, also variously known as the Great Indian Earthquake, 1934 Nepal-Bihar Earthquake, Bihar-Nepal Earthquake, or simply Bihar Earthquake.1 Existing knowledge about the momentous event and its aftermath is primarily based on contemporary and near-contemporary information compiled in the book Nepalko Mahābhākampa (Rana 1991 v.s.).2 The book has undergone several reprints and a translation in recent years (e.g., Rana 2041 v.s., 2013; Brahmarshamsher 2015). There was a renewed interest in the book and other published accounts on this and the other earthquakes.3 However, the book has a skewed and selective character, not the least because of the author’s membership in the ruling clan. It also comes through as an account of the charitable guardianship of the Nepali elite, and matches in the viewpoint with that comes through in the state mouthpiece Gorkhapatra, and the related chapter in the biography of Judhha Shamsher, the then Rana Prime Minister.

1 For instance, a psychological study on the rumours associated with the 1934 quake calls it the Great Indian Earthquake of 1934 (Prasad 1935); a popular wiki page in English mentions it as the 1934 Nepal-Bihar Earthquake (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1934_Nepal%E2%80%93Bihar_earthquake). A more recent paper on the comparative fatality during earthquakes calls it the ‘1934, Bihar-Nepal Earthquake’ (Sapkota, Bollinger and Perrier 2016). Eleonor Marcussen (2011) has used the phrase Bihar Earthquake.

2 Other contemporary studies on the 1934 earthquake are, for instances, Nasu 1935 and Prasad 1935.

3 For instance, Mahesraj Pant’s article on historical seismicity published in 2000 is now often cited for viewing earthquakes as recurrent phenomena in Nepal (Pant 2000; Parajuli 2015). Pant himself has written several pieces for popular media on the 1934 earthquake and others in Nepali history after April 2015. See, for instance, Pant 2072 v.s.a, 2072 v.s.b, 2072 v.s.c.
(Prasad 1975). It has been aptly called a “very limited, deeply flawed” work insufficient “to study the quake as a natural disaster” (Mishra and Aryal 2015: 4). Nevertheless, the book has been featuring as the single source for analysing comparative mortality (Sapkota, Bollinger and Perrier 2016), effective approach to reduce earthquake vulnerability (Marahatta 2012), relief operations (Marcussen 2011), originality of the heritage monuments (Karki 2072 v.s.), or geological shifts (Pandey and Molnar 1988). The documents presented here, in comparison, provide us a rare view of the everyday workings of the state agency responsible for managing the post-quake operations and actions of the ordinary citizens amidst the national catastrophe.

The archival collection, from which the documents are drawn, is a repository created by the Bhukampa Piditoddharak Sanstha (BPS), or the Earthquake Victims Relief Organization (EVRO), the state-appointed body to manage the early relief and reconstruction activities after the 1934 earthquake. This collection is now housed in the National Archives, Kathmandu, although it is not yet readily accessible to researchers. A hand list for the 23-odd bundles in the collection does not exist. It will be some time before the description of individual cotton-bound bundles become available. At a cursory glance, the documents inside the bundles appear to be thematically arranged for bureaucratic efficiency. Since the bundles were repacked and renumbered during their transfers from the original site in Kumari Chok and Central Revenue Office in Babarmahal to the National Archives in Sinhadarbar, the arrangement is not strictly adhered to. This is evident from the variations found between the hand list prepared by the National History Guide Committee in 1988, and the list maintained by the Archives. The source manual mentions ‘39 packets’ on the earthquake but does not provide the numbers (Amatya 2045 v.s.: 91), the existing list suggests packet numbers 306–310 with four bundles (ka, kha, ga, gha) within each ‘packet.’ Further, the fact that the papers of a court case of 2018 v.s. have been found inserted in the packet number 308(ka), suggesting a reshuffled packaging on a later date. A preliminary estimate indicates that the collection contains about 10,000 documents. It contains documents in the shape of enumeration (lagat), table (teri), petition (bintipatra), application (darkhasta), letter and/or notice (purji), registers (kitap), and information report (jaheri). The collection is perhaps the largest repository on the 1934 earthquake anywhere in the world.
Under the aegis of the Rupture Research Program, researchers at Martin Chautari are now preparing a catalogue of the collection. The aim is two-fold: one, to make prospective researchers more aware of the various kinds of documents available for their perusal; and the other, to integrate some of the more significant texts from the collection into Chautari’s own rupture research repository. The former will trigger more productive enquiries into the management of the 1934 earthquake. The latter will help situate the earthquake research in a broader perspective of the rupture research framework being developed at Chautari to understand all sorts of natural and man-made catastrophes (Raj 2069 v.s., 2013). Chautari’s repository will contain valuable primary and secondary sources on all kinds of ruptures in a publicly accessible format.

In presenting these select documents, I have attempted to cover all important aspects of the post-disaster response, albeit as samples drawn from different locations: Document 1 is a damage assessment form; Document 2 is an instruction to revise the form as rehabilitation became an issue; Document 3 shows the disaggregate estimates of the inputs for reconstruction; Document 4 is a set of three papers which exhibit the negotiation between the delivering state and the demanding survivors for construction materials; Document 5 presents a way the regime targeted financial aid to the needy population; Document 6 is a view of the timber contractors attempting to benefit from the urgent supplies; Document 7 refers to a problem faced by the issuing authority in recovering the loans from the state employees; Document 8, in contrast, indicates how an individual household in a city core struggles to cope with everyday notions, which had become starkly ambivalent in the post-quake context. The episodes contained in these documents will bring inevitable comparisons to the current post-2015 quake processes.

Each document is presented here with a prefatory note, followed by its facsimile, the Devanagari transliteration of its textual content, and a faithful, if somewhat loose, translation in English. In more than one note, readers will recognize my (and I believe theirs) disappointment over the way the Nepali state is currently handling the post-disaster responses. As expressed elsewhere (Raj and Gautam 2015), I still think that normative assessment of the post-disaster operations is neither fair nor particularly helpful, although being a historian, I have difficulty agreeing with those who are adamant in ignoring the past lessons in framing the operations. The miss by the Nepali state bureaucracy and emergency aid organizations in 2015, specifically in
perusing the information architecture built during 1934, has clearly added more uncertainties and miseries of the quake-affected families.

While transliterating the documents, I have maintained the line breaks, indents and layouts so as to ease verification; ^ ( ) signs indicate crow-feet additions in the original; strikethrough letters have been reproduced as such; for deliberate blank spaces, I have used *; for textual inconsistency and obvious omissions, I have employed the exclamation; for the texts broken due to damage, I have used the sign ]...[. In translating the Nepali text into English, I have tried not to be notarial, but preferred readability. A degree of accuracy is thereby sacrificed, but I hope, not significantly. Lastly, since this is an early dispatch from the archives, I have reserved manuscriptological remarks, or source criticism for the forthcoming publications.

DOCUMENT 1
First Damage Assessment Form

There were at least five sets of the data forms collected by different state agencies to assess the damages in the aftermath of the earthquake of 25 April 2015. These came in the templates prepared by (a) the Ministry of Home Affairs, (b) District Disaster Management Committee, (c) the Municipality, (d) I/NGOs, and (e) volunteer engineers. These forms were developed hastily and did not disaggregate according to gender, losses, resourcefulness and vulnerability of the affected population. They also contained ambiguous categories such as ‘partially damaged’ structures and provided a scope for subjective bias in red/yellow/green labels. Despite knowing in advance that the resulting information would be the basis for relief distribution and reconstruction, none of the forms allowed easy verification and authentication. While these assessments helped the government to apprehend the overall effect of the earthquake, in the shape of the Post-Disaster Need Assessment (PDNA), they were hardly useful for targeting and allocating relief, or for framing a robust arrangement for reconstruction. The shabby information architecture produced inaccurate data on the damage, and created a large number of fake victims. In fact, the assessment was deemed so imprecise that, after a good eight months, it was thought proper to conduct yet another ‘scientific’ damage assessment to build a more secure basis for reconstruction and rehabilitation programs. The first damage assessment form implemented as early as on Day 3 (i.e., 18 January) after the 1934
Great Earthquake was far richer by comparison. The sample reproduced here was used in Lamatar. A closer study, however, reveals that the forms used in Kathmandu city were more elaborate (viz., also contained the seals of the data gathering officials), while those in Trishuli were less so. Nevertheless, their attention to disaggregated data, not only on the dead, survivors, extent and nature of physical damage, possibility of repair, losses and household level vulnerability must be said as remarkable.

**Image 1: Damage Assessment Form, 1934**
### देवनागरी ट्रांसलिटरेशन

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>घरनीको</th>
<th>पीछी मरूका</th>
<th>बाकी जहाँ</th>
<th>ज्ञा घर</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>सहीचाल</td>
<td>नाउँ घर् वतन्</td>
<td>मरुवा.</td>
<td>घाइते.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>तिमण्ये भलके को</th>
<th>स्व घर भलके को यसै साल बनाउँ भन</th>
<th>बनाउँने न भने</th>
<th>घर भलके पान न भने</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>पातलूभ नेमभि</td>
<td>नभलके पनी वी दिखेले जसै भलकै दि नन्द गौरी</td>
<td>साइकल</td>
<td>लला घटा इ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House owner’s</th>
<th>Buried and dead</th>
<th>Survived family members</th>
<th>House</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thumb</td>
<td>First name, surname, address</td>
<td>Dead</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wounded</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disappeared</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damaged among them</td>
<td>Whether the house can be rebuilt in a year</td>
<td>Number who are unable to self repair</td>
<td>Number of hungry family members in the damaged house unable to work and earn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collapsed to the ground</td>
<td>Not fallen but required a complete dismantling</td>
<td>Standing</td>
<td>As it was</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Loss in the debris</th>
<th>Families living in the state-provided shelter</th>
<th>Those in distressed condition</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goods</td>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By volume</td>
<td>By weight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DOCUMENT 2  
Revision in Details to be Collected

It is both necessary and possible to assess the extent of the damage and of the build back capability of the affected population in the first instance itself, if the disaster management institutions and actors therein do not suffer from amnesia. The issue of refurbish, rehabilitation and reconstruction arrives, rather quickly, after the first days of search and rescue (SAR), early relief (ER) and debris management activities. It hardly requires a great creativity to imagine the need for mobilising resources to enhance the capacity of the affected communities for repair. It may, however, take some time to develop mechanisms to implement such assistance. In the 2015 Great Earthquake, it took about eight months to constitute the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA), as the major political parties refreshed the stalled task of promulgating the new constitution, allowed the related Ordinance to lapse and quibbled over the appointment of the executive for the NRA. It is expected that the first reconstruction will happen only after April 2016. It is not yet clear how the state funding will reach the targeted population and whether its full utilization can be ensured. It is clear, however, that the Nepali state is unable to match its financial relief, in the shape of the aid or loan, to the extent of damage or loss any particular household suffered. This is partly because the state does not know the need of a particular household. To compare, the managers of the post-quake activities in the 1934 Great Earthquake realized the need to know the specifics early on. Hence, in the first assessment form (Document 1 above) itself, the information on the extent of needed repair and the capacity to self repair, as expressed by the house owner was included. Yet, the Bhukampa Piditoddharak Sanstha (BPS), a high-level disaster management authority (comparable to the NRA) asked its surveyors to collect household level data so that the government funding could be tailored to the ability and need of a particular family. As the following document shows, BPS allowed several options to the affected families: it asked the requirement of those families which preferred to pay discounted rates for the construction materials (Clause 1); it sought certified amounts of loan from others which wanted to borrow cash from the government (Clause 2); it wanted to identify those families which relied completely on the state for repair (Clause 3); and it also sought information on those families which wanted to relocate themselves with the help of the
government (Clause 4). The ‘autocratic’ Rana government thought it fit to rationalize their assistance in proportion to the household requirements.

Image 2: Additional Queries, c. 1934

Devanagari Transliteration

श्री:

मैंआपका घरदर्मा. नपुलेको हुनाले अवलाई।
ल्याउनपर्दै. फारामको ढाचा पनी दीयेको छ।

७. न. घर भलेका मानीसहरूले. सो भलेका घर. तयार गर्न. सैनीमार्ग गर्न. ईटू
काटपाट. कर्क. पाता. ईट्टादी. यो येती
The sample of the form to collect data, which were not included in the existing household census, has also been included herein

1. If there are owners of the damaged houses, who want specific quantities of bricks, timber, corrugated sheets, etc. on discounted prices to repair or build back the houses, then bring the details on who want it, which materials are needed, how much and their preliminary costs in a clearly written tabular format -----------------------------------------------1

2. If there are people among the owners of the damaged houses, who say they cannot muster enough resources to build back themselves, that they can hardly do without the aid of the government, that they want
loans, then bring the details on the amount, the type, and the manner of their request with your own discriminatory note in the column of the remarks -----------------------------------------------1

3. If there are people, who say that they are in such a wretched condition that they cannot pay back any loan, and they can rebuild or repair only with the grant in aid from the government, include that too ---------------1

4. Among the cases of people, whose houses have been damaged, if there are some, who wish to leave their localities and build houses in open spaces or fields elsewhere granted to them, clarify that as well ----------1

5. While conducting the household census, specify the four side boundaries-----------------------------------------------1

DOCUMENT 3

Disaggregate Estimates of the Inputs to Reconstruction

There are marked differences in the way the Nepali state used the data collected during the damage assessment surveys in 2015 and 1934. In 2015, sectorial estimates on the damage were quickly churned out to a round figure in the PDNA for the Nepal government to call for the foreign assistance, and not for calibrating the financial aid to suit as finely as possible to the individual household’s needs as it was done by the BPS in 1934. The revision introduced in the damage assessment enabled the BPS to make realistic estimates of the required inputs to reconstruction. This has not yet happened. The BPS found it important that the input estimates remained disaggregated. This could have been motivated by two connected reasons. First, since it knew that not everyone wanted free construction materials, its focus should well be in availing construction materials in the market in the required quantities. Second, the inputs were clearly not intersubstitutable or could be purchased equally easily from the market. The BPS’s mobilization strategies would then clearly depend on the type of the input. Hence, the table in the following document shows that of the total 167 households in an area claiming financial assistance of 46,355 rupees, five would relocate, 91 would take partial loans (50% of the claim amount), 44 would take loans in full (43.3%), one was poor and destitute (3.8%), and one would apply for a grant. The surveyor-in-charge considered more than 83 percent of the claim as legitimate. The distribution of claim amount per household reflects the prevailing wealth distribution. Significantly, 30 households wanted the
required inputs to be made readily available. These households wanted 136,000 bricks, 2,406 structural timbers, and 407 corrugated sheets. The need for the skilled construction worker was also clear: the households required 824 carpenters and 748 masons. Although it is not apparent from the table if these were man-days, such disaggregated data must have made the planning for inputs easier for the BPS and its constituent entities. Compared to the scenario, the reconstruction service centers, said to be established in the quake-affected districts for the reconstruction, in December 2015 have no knowledge about such disaggregated estimates and will have no option other than to wait for the quake affected families to come to their doors for advice.
Image 3: Disaggregate Input Estimates, c. 1934

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Item 1</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 2</td>
<td>1250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 3</td>
<td>1252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 4</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 5</td>
<td>923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 6</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 7</td>
<td>972</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 8</td>
<td>526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 9</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 10</td>
<td>8340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 11</td>
<td>20450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 12</td>
<td>9250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 13</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 14</td>
<td>12450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 15</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 16</td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 17</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Devanagari Transliteration

तेलिया इंट.                      9000
पाको इंट                      12000
काढु                      
मुसी गोटा                      880
दली गोटा                      9362
नीडाल गोटा                      31
अगायको थाम गोटा                      133

cकर्लत पाता                      407
कार्रागटः ज्वानः                      9572
सीकरमि                      824
डकरमी                        748

नगरी. घोला मैदान जाने घर ५ स्मेट. घर १६७ के                      46355
आफुसौंग रहेका जठाले नपुगा पाउं भंने घर ६९ के              23505
ग्रे सापती पाउं भन्दे घर ४४ के                        20050
दीन. दु:पीछो घर १ के                      1750
बक्स पाउं भने घर १ के                        200

जाच गर्नः अफीसर.बाट. चेर्य अयोग्य मनासीब ठहरायाको                      38705

मे.क.प. तुलवीकम्रि.रा.पा.                      १
नारा. रत्नवहादुर. जोशी                      १
नारा. रत्नेशबर.लाल जोशी                      १
English Translation

Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Households</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Those who can bear the costs of rebuilding but seek materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of households</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricks</td>
<td>136000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clay tiles</td>
<td>10000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnt bricks</td>
<td>126000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timber</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beams in number</td>
<td>880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafters in number</td>
<td>1362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross beams in number</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar of Agrāṣa in number</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrugated sheets</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsmen persons</td>
<td>1572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenters</td>
<td>824</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masons</td>
<td>748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash for 167 households, including five which agree to relocate in the riverbanks</td>
<td>46355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 households seeking partial loans</td>
<td>23505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 households seeking loans in full</td>
<td>20050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 household of the poor and the destitute</td>
<td>1750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 household seeking a grant</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verified by the survey officer as legitimate</td>
<td>38705</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Me. Ka. Pa. Tulāvikram Rāṇā ........ 1
Nārā. Ratnabahādur Josī ............ 1
Nārā. Ratneśvarlāl Josī ............. 1
An Enquiry into the Reconstruction Material Requirement

The following three documents are related to the supply of timber for reconstructing a minor temple in the outskirts of the Kathmandu city. Although more digging in the archive is necessary to develop a complete picture of the procurement and distribution of the rebuilding materials after the 1934 Great Earthquake, the three documents already exhibit contrasting post-quake reconstruction plan that the one formulated by the NRA in 2015. The state agencies under the Rana regime took the responsibility for the supplies of reconstruction materials. For instance, the Offices of the Management of Woodcutting both in the mountains and in the plains would ensure the supplies of timber. The NRA, in contrast, thinks it fit to disburse two lakh rupees in three instalments to the affected households, and hopes that the ‘market’ (the private suppliers and distribution networks) will ensure the fulfilment of the householders’ need for building materials. The guidelines prepared under the aegis of the Ministry of Forest and Soil Conservation in 2015 also chiefly assume that the market would manage the distribution except for the communities adjacent to the community forestry. Clearly, the role (and I suspect, the responsibility) of the Nepali state in directly assisting the affected families has shrunk in recent decades. This is due perhaps to a combination of factors: it has demonstrably weak capacity to enforce rules for the fair market practices; its key officials collude with influential actors to benefit from the underground market or from bending the existing rules; and the political parties of substance show the double-tongue of paying lip-service to the ‘socialism-oriented’ Nepal and leaving the market mayhem unchecked. This has become evident both in the ways building materials for relief appeared at inflated prices in the kabāḍli shops, and the cooking gas shortage has continued despite the unrestricted supplies. This is not to say that the state agencies responsible for the post-disaster recovery acted in more effective manner then. The applicant in the Document 4C below resorted to circumvent the post-disaster mechanism. He sought a recommendation from the Commander-in-Chief for the conventional Building Survey Office effectively to nullify the BPS sanction, citing its inappropriateness. The circumvention attests to the fact that many got the things done in a way not anticipated by the BPS.
पुजी
उप्रांत. पतलीभरव, था जाने बाटोको मचली भन्ने ढाउसा श्रीअष्टमात्रीकादेवी
को था भूकम्पले भक्तको देवालये वनाउनलाई चाहिने भनि अंदाजले लेपी दी
याको १२ हाते. सल्ला दरी ३० नीकासा वङ्क्रोको हाल. जंचाउदा, सो की०को न
चाहिने अर्की की०को चाहिने हुंदा जांची चाहिने काठ दीनु. भन्ने र अर्थीको नीका
साको काठ दीनु. परेन. भन्ने स्मेत वेनाराको. काठमाडौं फसीकेको. वसने भैरव
वहादुर जोनीले दरपास्त दीयाकोले. लेपको छ. सो अर्थी नीकासा भयाको स
ला दरी गोटा १२ बाँझ (!) नीजले ली सक्यो सकेन. लेपी पढाउने कां गर संम्बत्
१९९९ साल. मार्ग रते रोज शुभम्

Devanagari Transliteration

भूकम्प पिडितोऽधारक संस्थाबाट
श्रीपाहाड काठ कटानी बंदे
वस्त अढ्छाके-----------
English Translation

From the Bhūkaṁpa Piḍitoddhārak Sarṣṭhā to the Offices of the Management of the Woodcutting in the Mountains

Chit

Thereafter, in order to reconstruct the quake-damaged temple of Śrīaṣṭamātrkādevī (Eight Mother Goddesses) at the place called Macali, which is on the way to the Pacalibhairav shrine, 10 units of 12-cubit long beams made of the pine trees were roughly found necessary and sanctioned. But now upon the receipt of the application by Bhairav Bahādur Josī, a resident of Phasikeva in Kathmandu, for granting the required quantity of timber of the variety other than that previously sanctioned, and for not issuing the sanction, this letter has been written to ask you to reply whether he has already received the 12 units (!) of beams of the pine trees. In the year Saṃvat 1991, * Mārga, * day. Be auspicious!

Image 4B: Reconstruction Material Requirement, 1935
From the Bhūkampa Pī. Saṃsthā to the Kathmandu City Assessment Unit of the Same

Chit

In response to the application made by Bhairavbahadur Josī, a resident of Phasikèva, who has said that the 10 units of 12-cubit wooden beams and posts, sent by the office, were not suitable for reconstructing the quake-damaged temple of the Šrīaṣṭamātrkādevī at Macalī on the way to the shrine of Pacalībhairav, and has requested for the required quantity of the timber of another species, this chit has been written to
enquire into the quantity of the timber necessary to rebuild the temple of the Aṣṭamātrkādevī. It will be fitting if you could report after assessing the timber requirement for the purpose at the earliest. In the year Samvat 1991, 20 Caitra, Tuesday. Be auspicious!

Image 4C: Reconstruction Material Requirement, 1935
Thus has been written. Since I, Bhrav(!)bahādur Josī, a resident of Phasīkeva in Kathmandu, have applied for getting the required quantity and quality of timber other than 10 units of the 12 cubit-long beams and posts, which are not now necessary, for rebuilding the quake-ravaged temple of the Aṣṭamātrkādevī at Macālī, on the
way to the Pacalībhairav complex, this Office has received a letter for assessing the quantity of the timber required for the reconstruction of the said temple of the Aṣṭamātrakādevī from the Bhu.Ka.Pt. Sasthā on 91.12.20.3, this Office has sent for me and asked to confirm whether I have applied for the reconstruction of the Macalī temple and to assist its enquiry into the needed quantity of timber. This I confirm. I did apply to the Public Civil Office for the purpose, but due to delay in sanctioning the material, I made presentation at the Commander-in-Chief Saheb’s office, got the temple measured by the Public Works Office at Sīmhadarbār, and since then, have received 40 units of thāsim from the Materials Godown according to the approved estimate. It is not necessary that this office assesses the need or issues the timber as previously sanctioned. Having fully understood that I will be liable, as per the prevailing Orders and Questions, if I have made false details here, I submit this document to the Royal Government through the Kathmandu City Assessment Unit. In the year Samvat 1991, 23 Caitra, Friday. Be auspicious!

DOCUMENT 5
Targeting Distribution of the Financial Aid to the Quake Affected Population

The following document provides a parallel example of the financial aid mechanism in the 1934 Great Earthquake. Several points compare well to the aid mechanism devised after the 2015 quake. The financial aid mechanism was in place in Month 4 then. By Month 7, the state had completed the damage assessment and distributed the financial relief package. It had also supplemented the survey with fresh households who had been left out earlier. The striking point is, however, the attempt of the state to match the relief with the need of the households. The ‘democratic’ Nepali state is so ignorant about the household variation in the need that it thought it fit to distribute resources equally irrespective of the damages. The seemingly equitable gesture is actually an inability of the state apparatus to act with just discrimination. The inability, as noted above, springs partly from its unwillingness to engage with existing social disparity. The ‘autocratic’ Nepali state, in comparison, was so particular that it sought to ensure that the aid recipient was a female destitute and that the substitute claimant, who applied
for the benefit after the sudden death of the recipient, was the rightful heir and a female destitute herself. The lesson is, of course, not that all-powerful (‘high-level’) and autonomous state agency under the ‘autocratic’ regime can quickly deliver relief, but that any state agency should have capacity to identify and discriminate the target of the relief flows rather early and efficiently (Roy 2012). The financial aid for reconstruction began flowing to a limited number of householders in Singati, Dolakha district about ten months after the April Earthquake in 2015. Quake-affected families in the 31 districts spent the scorching heat, torrential monsoon and severe winter in their corrugated roof shelters, waiting for the aid to arrive. The delay was attributed in part to the late formation of the NRA, in part to the donors’ insistence on rectifying the number of affected households that increased every time the government announced a new relief package or conducted a fresh assessment survey. The wait was also said to be caused by putting in the place a public-private partnership modality for financial flows and an unfamiliar arrangement of branchless banking in the quake-affected districts. The new control architecture consisting of the resource centers (for assistance) and service centers (for delivery) for reconstruction still lack reach. The credibility of the government seems to have eroded to such an extent that only a tiny percentage of households have so far claimed the first instalment and some have stated that they would not actually spend it on rebuilding until more favourable prospect appear.
Image 5: Targeting Financial Aid, 1934
भुकंप पीड़ीतोद्वारक (!) जाती रूपांतर दीने भाद्रगाउँ शहर २ नं फाटमा. छतियेका
ले.क.

नरहरिनरसी राणाले चढायको रिपोर्ट -----------------------------

उप्रान्त ९.० साल माघ २ गतेका भुकंपले भयेका नीराधार ढी दुष्पीलाई फडतर्कको
रूपांतर वकस बारी सो बारेको फोट भुकंप पीडीतोद्वार संस्थामा जाहिर गर्नु भने
गरी वकसका ९९९६.७० का पहरानीसाना सनद बमोजी अधीका तरिजफारामा ना
उ नम्बरको हालु छूटको लगत गरी जात्मा ढी दुशी देशीयाको भाद्रगाउँ जाछो टोल ब
स्ने मायादेवी तपोलुनीलाई फडवाट वकस मोहरू ९५। दीने गरी लगत गरी ७
दीने म्या

द टासेमा नीजले रूपांतर दीन नपाउँदै ( ) मरेकोले सोई घर बनाउनालाई म पनी ढी
दुपी नै हु. सो आमाले पाउँने भयेको रूपांतर पाउँ भनी नीजको छोरी मसीनुमायले दर्ज
स्त दीयेको र सो टोलका भलादमीहरुसंग बुझ्दा नीज मसीनुमाया मायादेवीको
छोरी हो योबाहेक नजीकको नाताको अरु छैन ढी दुपी नै छ भने मुष बयां गरे
का र श्रीगदीयर्वाट पनी आमाले पाउँने यो पनी ढी दुपी हुँ यसेलाई दीनु भन
ने प्रभामी श्रीतीपत्रमा लागी आयेको स्मेतवाट नीज मसीनुमाया तपोलुनीको
लगतमा जनाई सो मोहरू ९५।मा पेला पटक मोहरू ७५। दीयेकोले सनद बमो
เฉ जाहिर गरेका ढी जो मरी ---------------

मेक. कुवेरशाम्से थापा छेत्री ---------------१

दी. कुलप्रसाद उपाध्या ---------------१

व.सु. नारायणसी धापामागर ---------------१

ईति सम्बर् ९९९१ साल भाद्र गते रोज शुभ्म् ---------------
English Translation

Srī

A report submitted by Lt. Col. Naraharinarsīṃ Rāṇā, deputed in Bhādgāumī City Second Division for verifying the earthquake victims and distribution of cash relief -----------------------------------

Thereafter, as per the Khadganīśāna Sanad dated 91.1.8.6 for distributing cash relief to the destitute and needy among the people affected by the earthquake of the 2 Māgh in the year 90, we surveyed the destitute and needy not included in the previous assessment survey, but included in the current survey, and found that Māyādevī Tapolnī, a resident of Ñāche Ṭol in Bhādgāumī, was listed as a recipient of an aid of Rs. 125, and was notified to report within seven days. However, she died without benefiting from the aid. So her daughter Masīnumāyā applied to claim that she was herself a destitute and would need the money for rebuilding the house. Upon enquiry with the gentlemen in the Ṭol, they made oral testimony that the applicant Masīnumāyā is the daughter and the only closest relative of Māyādevī. The Brigadier has also certified to allow the daughter to receive the benefits allocated for the mother. Hence, we handed over the first instalment of Rs. 75 of the said Rs. 125 in the name of Masīnumāyā Tapolnī, included the transaction in her record, and have made this representation to you. As you order -----------------------------------------------

Ma. Col. Kuverśamser Thāpā Chettrī--------1
Di. Kulprasād Ūpādhyā ------------------------1
Va. Su. Nārāyaṇsīṃ Thāpāmagar----------1

In the year Samvat 1991, * Bhādra, * day. Be auspicious --------------------------
Assembling required quantities of building materials for reconstruction is nearly an impossible task in at least two specific cases. First, when existing supply and distribution networks do not have the capacity to respond to the sudden surge in the post-disaster demands, new networks will emerge to tap the opportunity and alter conventional structures and organization of the market. The new informal networks will be governed less by the interests of the quake affected population, and more by the motives of the short investors. The state, which is already impaired by its own contradictions, by the breaking down of its rules, and by the strenuous relief responsibilities, will be unable to regulate these emergent networks and actors. This will create an effect of an acute shortage in which the materials are available to the intermediaries, but not to the desperate end users. The shortage will, however, die its slow natural death as the risks of withholding will eventually become greater than the revenues from the sale. Second, when the state has heavily regulated the supplies in the past (as was the case around 1934 Earthquake), it may seek to meet the sudden surge in the demand in the post-quake context by expanding its appropriation base and/or by employing coercive means to strengthen its monopoly over supplies. But the state-regulated markets remain unresponsive and thus, the distribution networks will constrain the material flows along the prescribed paths. Consequently, a new set of speculative entrepreneurs will emerge, who, by colluding with the state authorities, will seek contracts to deliver the materials to the needy. But the absence of fully functional chains in the regulated market will cause many of these actors to fail to erect profitable distribution paths. Hence the impression of short supply will dominate the scene even though there are no constraints in the production. However, the shortage will soon become irrelevant in this case as the quake affected population will procure alternative building materials. The following document shows the process of the second kind in which speculative entrepreneurs in Khopasi sought an advance from the state to harness timber from the state-owned forests and distribute it to the affected population in Bhaktapur, claiming a better economy than the conventional state-regulated channels. We do not know if the said contract was awarded. Bhaktapur city lanes remained narrow and did not have shop lines as envisaged here. In April 2015, the city crumbled to yet another earthquake.
Image 6: Procurement of Timber, 1934
Devanagari Transliteration

श्री:

दर्खास्तपत्र
उप्रांत ६० साल माघ २ गतेज को भुकंप भादवाद सहर ज्याद भतकेको. र सटक फराकिलो गराउना नीमीत वजारको पाली जम्मै भतकाउन लगाई. बकसेको मे छैहे मा दलान पालि प सल बनाई. वसन्त लाई अग्रापहरु को. थाम साता कीतिको. नूडालहरु समेट. चाहिने. नली नहुने. काम भयाकोले. जल्दाजल्दी मै. तयार गर्न परी. सो. थाम नूडालहरु नपाई काम. ह जा भयाको छ तेसो हुनाले सो कामलाई. परल दरमा. सरकारतर्फबाट बीक्री गर्न. दलीहरु मु सिसमेट चाहियेको. काम भयाकोले कुर्क २३००० तेस हजार कटानी. बद्रीवस्त. गरें
काले. द्वारका रुल्लाई. दुर्योगस्थ धारा. नीड़ालहर बाज सज अग्रणि तीन 3 कीसीं
को अग्राष्टिको बोल लामपाटका बीकी परिधिबन्ध सवाई घाट. दीने. बंदोबस्त लिन
कटानी कटानी गरी. दीने. बंदोबस्त गरी पाउंद सो कट्टा कटानी गर्न. पूर्व 1 नवम काश्रे
प्लांटोक. इलाका पहरे बन. चारपोला बनहरमा ^ (मसिमा तरी पुर्वे. कोलाया गाउं
दफीन. धनादेवीला उत्तर भारोलाई कसे दोळातू पढी यति फ कीलामीत्र) कटानी
गर्न. मनसाय लिन दर
कास्ट. दीन. आयेको छु सो बन बनगोश्वारात्फवाट चीताईडार रापी. बंदोबस्त.
गरेका
हुनाले सो बनमा बनगोश्वारात्फवाट पटाई टाचा लगाई. लगायेको भीती भीतीको भ
रपाई. लिने दीने गरी. कटानी दुवारीसमेत. ठेहेदरावाट. गर्न पाउने गरी पेस्की. मोहर
30001 तीन हजार रूपैज्ञ पेस्की पारे. चट्टापट. कटानी. गर्न. बंदोबस्त गरी बाहाली
बकिस
गरी पाउँ। सो फटो तपसिलमा लेपियाला बमोजियो। काठहर बाहाली पायाको भीतीदे
पी सो
झ मैन्हा भन्नाले यह 91 साल र 92 सालमा. हुने. भयाकाले. सोर मैन्हा यङ्ग मागे
को छु. लेपीयाला भीती सममा चुकै गरी तपसिलमा लेपियो।काठु बुकाउनालाई
सरकारसर्व भाद्गाउं बूकेट.मा बुकाउने बन्दोबस्त. गरी पाउँ। सो माथी। लेपीयोको
सोर मैन्हामीत्रमा. कटानी. दुवारी. गरी. भाद्गाउं. बूकेटमा बुकाउँदा काठ धान
900 दा
भील भयामा थेस्को लियेका मोर ५०। कटा गरी दिने बन्दोबस्त गरी पाउँ। काठु द
लिन मुसी। धाम साना ठुला नीड़ालहर तपसिलमा पोलस्ता लेपी। ऋयामा दलितहरकाह
कलई। सुतसत्ताला पाउँदे दलिनका र दुर्योगस्थ अग्राष्टिको धाम नीडालहालाई लाम
पानोका बीकी.भन्दा. सवाई घटाई। दीने. छु बाहालि. गरी पाउँ। घरै पीनीको फुरसद
नये
कोले. घटाघरको. यङ्ग मागेसमेत. गर्न नपरी भटू बाहालि गरीबमेको। भाद्गाउँ सहर.का
रैतान.को. संधीसर्वम पुक्खे गरी. टहल गर्दा हु। सो व्यहोरा नघरे ओ: सबाल बमोजी
बुकाउँला.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>असामी</th>
<th>मोटाई ईं</th>
<th>चौड़ाई ईं</th>
<th>लम्बाई फु</th>
<th>काठ का ता</th>
<th>ताफे</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>दलीन मुँ सल्लाको. 3000 तीन हजार</td>
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<td>4</td>
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</tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>१२</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>मुसी मुँ सल्लाको. 1000 येक हजार</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>१५</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>थाम अग्रापको. 4000 चार हजार</td>
<td>५</td>
<td>६</td>
<td>६</td>
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<td>थाम अग्रापको. 1000 येक हजार</td>
<td>५</td>
<td>६</td>
<td>६१५</td>
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<td>थाम अग्रापको. 2000 दुई हजार</td>
<td>६</td>
<td>७</td>
<td>७१</td>
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<td>नीडाल अग्रापको. 1000 येक हजार</td>
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<td>९</td>
<td>१३७</td>
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<td>नीडाल एँ. को. 3000 तीन हजार</td>
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<td>९</td>
<td>९</td>
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<td>नीडाल एँ. को. 1000 हजार येक</td>
<td>९</td>
<td>११</td>
<td>२४</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

पूर्व १. न. का.प.ई. पोपासी वस्त्रों. हर्षवाहार श्रेष्ठ १ 
| १८६४ | २३० | १०३ | २७ | कारत (१) पत्र लेपी. मुकेश पिड़ीतो. धारक सबा. सींह दर 
| बार. अहामा चढाव्यू. -------------------------- |

सम्बत १९९९ साल. पोष. ३ गते. रोज ३ सुम --------------------------
Thereafter, the city of Bhādgāuṃ was severely destroyed by the earthquake of 2 Māgh of the year 90. And, as (your majesty) has ordered to demolish all thatched fronts in the market so as to widen the streets, there is an urgent need to supply several types of beams, cross-beams and pillars of the hardwood (Agrāśa) necessary for erecting shutter shops on the ground floor. A shortage of beams and cross-beams has caused delays in the rebuilding efforts. For the purpose, the government needs to cut 23,000 forest (Ḍhumśarka) trees and sell the main beams and beams at the price of its procurement. The beams are to be equivalent to the Ḍhumśarka. The pillar and cross-beams are to be of three varieties Māj, Sajaṃ and Agrāśa. I will supply the Agrāśa members at a quarter less than the rate fixed by the state supply office (Lāmpāṭa). Please sanction me the work. The timber will be gathered from the Area Number 1 Kābhrepalāmcok (from the Pahare and Cāsolā forests in the east of the rivulet Masipā, south of the Kotayām village, north of the Dhanade stream, and west of the crossroad Dokase along the Bhāsolā). I have come to apply for the permission to cut the trees within this area. Since the said forests are managed by the Office of the Public Forests, I also request you to sanction me, the contractor, to cut and transport the timber in return of the receipts approved with the stamps of the Office of the Public Forests. If I receive an advance of 3,000 Mohars or three thousand rupees, I will immediately arrange to cut the trees. I submit this for your approval. I will need 16 months from the date of payment of the advance to supply the quantities mentioned in the following table to the Bhādgāuṃ Brigade. Please also order for a deduction of 50 rupees for the submission of every 100 pieces of timber to the Brigade. The table shows the quantities of beams, cross-beams, and pillars. The timber will be of pine trees for the beams and of the Agrāśa for the pillars and cross-beams at a quarter less than the government procurement rate. As there will be an insufficient time, allow me the contract without having to
wait for the notice for the public procurement at Ghanṭāghar. If awarded, I will have provided my service to the people in the city of Bhādgāum. I will also be responsible as per law if any of the details mentioned above prove to be false.

Appendix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Due Quantity</th>
<th>Thickness in Inches</th>
<th>Width in Inches</th>
<th>Length in Foot</th>
<th>Unit Rate</th>
<th>Remarks (?)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rafter of Pine Trunk 3000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafter of Pine Trunk 4000</td>
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<td>10½</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rafter of Pine Trunk 2000</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar of Agrāṣa 4000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6¼</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pillar of Agrāṣa 2000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7½</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Beam of Agrāṣa 1000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13½</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Beam of do 3000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Harṣabāhādur Śreṣṭa and Nārān Bhakta Śreṣṭa both the residents of Ṣopāṣi in Region East Number 1 in Kā. Pa. Ī. have written this application and submitted to the Bhukampa Piḍitodhārak Sathā in Sīṃha Darbār -------------------------------

In the year Samvat 1991, 3 Pausa, Tuesday. Be auspicious -------------------------------
DOCUMENT 7
Recovery of the Loans

This fragment refers to the difficulty in recovering the grant of loans extended to the government employees. It was brought to the notice of the BPS that whether it was appropriate to auction the properties of those state employees, who are dead or have been sacked from the service. It was not possible to make deductions from their remuneration in kind or in cash. The by-laws ask to auction only the collaterals deposited by them. The document, issued by the BPS in 1995 v.s. and approved by its head Hemraj Pandit, reprimands the applicants for the delay they have incurred in the returns from the loans and for following the easy route of seeking further sanctions of loans from the office. It says it will hold the officers personally responsible for the default. All such loans extended to the quake-affected households by the BPS was declared on 17 Bhadra 1995 v.s. as ‘unreservedly remitted’ and would be written off (Prasad 1975: 94).
Image 7: Recovery of the Loans, 1938
श्री. प्रदीप्तमांवरप्रसीधगोपालद्वीपवाहु बीदवशेषरोमणीनायेववहागुरुज्यू
गुरुराज हेमराज. पंडीतज्यू. शी आई. बाट सदर गरेको

यो सापटी लीने जागीरदारहरू मरी पोसी पाली भयाकोले नीजहरुको पांगी बाली
बाट कही गर्न नपाई बाकी रहनेहरुको चैत्र मैन्हासम नतीज धीरो लीलां धी
की गरी उपर गर्नु भने सम लेप्योको लीलाला ]...[ जारी गर्ने धीरी नले
पीयोकोले नीकासा. पाउँ भनी जाहिर गरेको ]...[ यस्तलाई बीचार
गर्दा जागीरदारहरुको रुपैजा असुल गर्नेबारे ]...[ वमोजी
असुल उपर गर्नु भने लेप्योकै हुदा श्री शब्दलु जेगर्नु ]...[ मा आजसम
सुस्ती गरी नीकासाको प्याल नराकी नीकासा पाउँ भनी जाहिर गरेको देपीयोको हुनाले
तुलिं (४०) भयेका श्री सबाल सनद वमोजी गरी उपर गर्नु २० उपर नभेयोको तेस अडाकान
हाकी

तहरीरको ज्ञापदेखि हुनुपन्छ. धी भनी कोसालये. मा पठाई दिनु

हाकी. मीसु. प. राममणी आदी ---------------१
श्री. रत्न नराययण प्रधान ---------------१
नामु. चीनियामा. बेड ---- ---------------१

इति सम्बत् १९७५ वैसास २० गते शुभ्रु ---------------
English Translation

The rest is approved. Hand over the notice to them or their rightholders with returns, and then report the proceedings to us.

Approved on the date.

An order approved by Gururaj Hemraj Panjitiyaj, C.I., Sri Pradiptamanya(ya) vara Prasadagarshadachinabahu Vidvacchirma anvayebadaguruyu

Since the government employees, who had received loans, have died or have been sacked and their positions are now vacant, no deduction could be made from their stipend. If these debtors do not repay the loans within the month of Chaitra, it is written that their collaterals should be sold by auction (but) it is not written that [...] be issued. Thus, considering your application for sanctioning the budget, it is clear that you have dillydallied till today despite written rules on recovering the loans given to the government employees and that you have not made the application on time. Send a communication to the Accounts saying do recover the loans as per existing Questions and Orders. In case they are not recovered, the Officer and Writer will be made responsible for the lapse.

Officer Head Subba Pt. Rammani Adi-----------1
Di. Ratna Narayen Pradhman------------------------1
Na. Su. Ciniyamam. Vaidda------------------------1

In the Samvat 1995, 20 Baisa. Be auspicious
DOCUMENT 8
Earthquake Shook the Definitions

The petition offers a rare view about the consequences of the state reconstruction efforts on an individual household and its surroundings. It refers to a situation whereby a resident in the densely populated core in the municipality of Kathmandu found herself entangled in the property disputes with her influential neighbor. The reconstruction followed after the Great Earthquake in 1934, much like the case after 2015 quake, took neat demarcations in defining simple everyday and seemingly objective notions such as ‘house,’ ‘wall,’ ‘roof’ and ‘drains.’ As the following document shows, these notions did not map onto complex realities: what the officers viewed as a single wall turns out to be a composite artifice on which beams of two houses rest in a complicated fashion; what one claimed as a doorway was a cupboard for the other; and, what was claimed to be the outer wall (kilās) damaged by the earthquake was a gradual show of deliberate dereliction. The Great Earthquake brought out in the surface such dormant relationships and triggered fresh contentions in the affected society. This is the case in 2015 as it was the case in 1934. A recent Chautari publication has also shown that ambiguities over the commonplace terms such as ‘family’ (parīvār) and ‘household’ (ghar), ‘ownership’ (svāmitvako) and ‘use’ (basne), ‘single’ (ekāghar, eklauti) and ‘composite’ (sagol) households became rife in the aftermath of the earthquake (Raj and Gautam 2015). Clearly, the ambivalence accentuated during the post-quake situation needs to be accommodated by developing malleable characteristics in the administration overseeing the reconstruction. Further, if such accommodation is not made at every scale in the governance of the post-quake activities, contentions will become inevitable and petty dynamics will influence the definitions.
Image 8: Shaky Definitions, 1934
देवनागARI Transliteration

बीतीपत्र

उप्रांत. माहाराज. करुणा. नीडान. दयासागर. प्रभू. काठमाडौं. फसीके (१) तोल
वसने सु. येज वा
हाड. संग कीलास घरको बीगारी बनाउने मुद्रामा. येहि गयाका ९१ साल साउण
३ रतेमा येस भु
कप पीरोद्य (1) सं. काठमाडौं 1 नम्बर फाटवाट इंजीनियर. बमरसेहरुल्ले गरी
ल्याईको नक्सा हेदा
सो कीलास हीरादेवीको धेरै दली. घुसीयाको र. सुध्वा. येजबाहादुरका कुनै. ढाँउमा.
नीदालहरुमेत
रहेको देशीयको र. सो कीलासमा पुगी. अन्दाजी 4 ई जती घुसेको र. तेस्रा तलामा
4 ई च जती नीदाल
ल. घुसीयाको 3९ + 2६को छुटापछि. गारो देशीयको छुटापछि बनाउने येजबाहादुर
kो सार्वजनिक घुसे
kो सार्वजनिक व्ययोजन घुसाउन्ये गरी. हीरादेवीले. 7 दिनमा. बनायेको. भन्ये. लागेको
पर्छ. फीताँ ली की
लास छाडी दीन्ये गरी. सुधा येजबाहादुरले बनाउन्ये पानी जाने ढल माइसीपलटिका
पर्छ. माइसीपलटिका
हुन्ये भनी. फैसला भयामा सुधा. येजबाहादुरको धुरी नीदाल भनी. लेखाकालाइ.
सो नीदाल र
हेका तला गारोमा नीज सुधाको योकाप्ती र. आकाप्ती. मेरा दली अटोयाको. सानी?
बीच गारोमाधी
रहेको साजा नीदाल 4 तलामा. अडेको र. तेस्रा तला भनी लेखाकालाइ को होइन. पाँचो तलामा. गारोमा.
नीदाल रही. गारो देशी. बाहिर नीदाल अटोयाने. पावा रहेको. मेरो धुरी. गरीभीत्र पावा
रही. अडेको
सो गारो. तेती. मैले. नचपी. गारो नचापेन. भने. अर. मेरो धरको जभे. दलीमा. सो
गारोको पानी ग
ई नोकसाँ हुने हुदा गारो चप्पी. तेसमाधी छाना. लगाई राखेका छ. 3९को गारो. मेरो.
र. २६को गारो नी
ज. सुधाको हुदा छुटापछि बनाउन्दा 2६को नीज सुधाले वाहेक अरु. जभे मैले बनाउनु.
पने भयाको.
सो वेहोरा. पने नपुलेको. पानी जाने ढलका बारे मेरा उजुर. परी. अप्रैल अडवाट
ढहेरका इन्साफ ब
माइसीपलटिका. अटो पर्चा. भैसकेको र गारो. कीलास बनाउनालाइ
साजा गारो अ
डेको. पाता. साजा गारो. अडेको पाता नभलकाई. बनाउन नहुन्येको. सो भलकाई. नीज
सुधाले बनायामा सा
बीक. बमोजीम नगरी. नमायाका भ्याल ढोका. नीकाली दीयामा. साबीक येस्तो।
भन्न्या. केही नकसा नभएको र तेस्रा तलामा. ढोकाको बीकोसीलाई। दराज भनी। लेख नकसा येख ढोक।
फैसला येख ढोक हुन गयाको हुना। सो साजा गारोमा। तल देखी। माथी। वुंडगल। सम्म। ठाउठाउ। ढोका
साबीकको पुरानु। नीस्सा आजतक सरजमीन महजुद रहेको। सो घर यकैजनाले बनाई। पछी। छोराहुले येख।
जनाले १ जनालाई। १ जनाले १ जनालाई। ढोकह्रै हो। तेस्रो हुना। भयाको बेयोरा। दरणास्त लेख। जाहेर गरेको
छ। सो चारी तलाको कीलास गारो मेरो ठहरेको भुकल्पे भल्केको भने। मेरो। साबीकी छैन। नीज सुधाले हुन पनी।
दीया का कसुरबाट भर केको। भने। अधीदेखी नै। उजुर भयाको। भुकल्पे भल्केको भयाया। हामीहरुको टोलमा।
पुरानु। जीनं भयाको देवचा मानदिनखको १ घरवाहेक। अरु। कसैको पनी भल्केको छैन। अली अली चरके
मरकेकोसम्म छ नीजे येचबाहादुरको पल्ला १ नाले पनी। केही केही मात्र चरकेको छ जाच। बाट जाहेर
होला। तेस्रो हुना मेरो घर। भुकल्पे। चरकेको होइन। नीज। का कसुरले। मेरा नालिसमा लेपीयाको बेयोराले।
सम्म चरकेको हो। अरु कुरा। अधी नै। अदालतमा नालिस परेको छ। येचबाहादुर साजाँ भने। म मेरो
यक्कलाठी भने।
गारो घुसाउने कुरामा नालिस परेको छैन। येस अडाबाट। घुसाई दीने। वा अदालतव्याट घुसाई। दीनेके
हो भने। सम्म मेरो उजुरी हो। तेस्रो हुना। लेपीया बमोजीम। सरजमीन महजुद रहेका।
नकसा दुरुस्त
गरी साजा। गारोमाथिका छाना। को र तेस छानानीरका मेरा कौसी। स्मेत को नकसा
गर्नु परेको।
नकसा स्मेत गरी। दुरुस्त नकसा गरी। नकसा र फैसला। सरजमीन स्मेत। फरक नपर्न गरी। पाउँ। यो बेहोरा
नालिस परेका अपिलमा भनेडा हामीहरुका अडाबाट नकसा गर्न टायेम भयाको छैन।
भनी। ज्वाफ।
दीयाको हुदा. येसै अडावाट नाप नकसा दुरस्त गरी। पाउँ। साबिकमा भयाका। मेरा जगामा बनेका घर (भत?) नीको। करकट पाटा अडीयेका। दलीनका परपाल नीज सुदाले। भक्तायेको नीजेवाट साबीक ब मोजीम बनाउन लगाई तयार गराई पाउँ। भन्नेस्मेत इत्यादी बेधोगाडो। भुकप पी। उ। सं। काठमाडौँ १ नं। फाटमा। मैले दरपास्त। गरेमा। फरक परेको सच्चाई दीछौ। भगदीयाले नकल लगाई। सावेको हुदा अर्को पत्ताए दहा गरी दीनु। भन्दा। जबाक भयाको सो पत्ताए। पडा गरी। तपा(?) परेको। स्याय पडा। पढी। स्याय गयो भने। मेरो उजुर नचुकने हुदा। पीर परेको बेठोगा। (काई। फसीकेब टोल बस्ने वर्ष ४५। को हीरोदिनी र। येका घरसंगका। छोरा भरववादुर्दर्लाई वारौं गरी। सकारामा जाहेकर गर्न। आयाको छौ। सो मुदा येस। भुकप पीरोदयेउधा रक संस्था (५) बाट भीकी। सरजमीन। नकसा। फैसला। स्मेत दुरस्त। गरी। पाउने हुँ। माधी लेपिया बमोजीम फरक नपरेको वहरे। अनं मोजीम सजाये सहला बुखाउला ————

| २००३ | सहर काठमाडौँ वटु। फसीकेब। टोल बसने भरववाहादुर जोसीको
 १९९१ | दीनप्रतीको
 ⁹० | कुणेस कुणेस

इत्य सम्य १९९१ साल आपाठ २८ गते रोज शुम्ब ————

English Translation

Petition

Thereafter, O Great King, the Source of Compassion and the Ocean of Pity, O Lord! In the law suit on destroying the outer wall of house against Yejña Bähādur, a resident of Phasik (va) Tol in Kathmandu. I found that in the maps produced by the engineers and overseers in the First Division Kathmandu of the Bhukampa Pirodaye (!) Sam. on 3 Sāun of the year 91, many beams belonging to Ḥirādevī penetrated in the wall and the rafters belonging to Subba Yejña Bähādur were resting on the wall at several places,
were embedded on the wall for about four inches, including in the third floor, where there are two walls of thickness 3’9” and 2’6” clearly seen as separate. In the note of the decision that Yejñabahādūr would rebuild the portion of his structures and if Hirādevī would not construct her part, Yegyabahādūr would build for her in return of the expenses incurred but would leave his claim, and that the drainage would be built as per the notice of the municipality, the rafters mentioned as belonging to Yejñabahādūr are actually sitting on the wall which supports the beams also belonging to me. The common rafter rest on the walls through the four floors, and the pillar supporting the rafter is actually on the fifth floor and not on the third floor as stated. This pillar is located within the wall supporting my roof. If I have not placed the roof over the wall, the water would have sipped in and destroyed all beams in my house. I have therefore covered the wall by a roof. The 3’9” thick wall is mine, and the 2’6” belongs to him. If we build our houses separately, it was not clear whether I would have to build everything save the said wall of 2’6”. Hence, I also made complaints about the water drainage, and the Municipality has established the note to act as per decision of the on-going appeal. It will not be possible to reconstruct the outer wall without demolishing the common wall. If he builds on simultaneously, he can place windows and doors, and since there is no map representing the existing state, and since he has already claimed a door frame as being a cupboard and the map varies with the decision. The common wall is so far verily standing from the ground up to the kitchen as it has always been. This house was built by a person, and the heirs of the person had sold their shares to different individuals. What I have stated are all verifiable facts. The outer wall belonging to me was not destroyed during the earthquake, but was fallen also because of the improper water drains due to his negligence and I had already complained about it before. If it could be destroyed by the earthquake, houses in our quarters except the old and weak house belonging to Devacā Mānamdhar were not destroyed, only slightly showing hairlines. An examination would also reveal that Yejñabahādūr’s own house of single measure (ek nāle) was also little affected. My house was also damaged not by the earthquake, but by his negligence which I have elaborated above. Other issues are already under the consideration of the court. There is no dispute on whether the wall, which Yejñabahādūr claims as his and I as mine, is to be built in situ, but my application is only about whether the office will build it or through the court orders. Thus, since the existing details on the site are as stated above, I
request the office to amend the maps by depicting the roof above the common wall, and my own terrace near by the roof. As the appellate court has said that it would not soon verify the maps, I am asking this office to amend its documents. The portion of my standing house, which is covered with the corrugated sheets, together with the wall on which beams are rested, and is damaged by him, I request the office to make him rebuild the portion. I have made this application to the Bhūkaṃpa Pī. U. Saṁh. Kathmandu First Division. I am ready to make necessary amendments. Since my disputant has already taken its copy and if delayed, the deadline for response may also pass, hence with this urgency, I, Hīrādevī, age 45 and a resident of Kā. Ī. Phasikeva, and Bhairavbhāhadur, my representative, and son residing in the single family, have come to apply to this government. Let this Bhūkaṃpa Pīrodayevdhāraka Saṁsathā conduct the field assessment, call the maps and decide. If I am proven to falsify or provide inaccurate information, I am ready to face punishments as per the law in the country.

Sd Bhairav  
Phasikeva  
Bhairavbhāhadur Josē, a resident of Phasikeva Vaṭu Tole in the city of Kathmandu, hereby offers his billions of obeisance.

In the year Samvat 1991, 28 Asār, *day. Be auspicious!

**Acknowledgement**

I acknowledge the contribution of several friends in the Rupture Research Group, who are currently engaged in the social audit of the relief and reconstruction activities in several districts. In particular, Ashmita Khanal, Bhaskar Gautam, Bikrambhakta Deubanjar, Nicky Budhathoki, Pushpa Dahal, Rabindra Dhakal, Rukh Bahadur Gurung, and Shradha Ghale have brought me reasons for a more penetrating historical research on the 1934 earthquake. I am grateful to Deepak Aryal for his assistance in the archival work. I thank both Pratyoush Onta and Ramesh Parajuli for their meticulous comments on the draft.

**References**


**Biographical Note**

Yogesh Raj is a historian who specializes in medieval and modern South Asia. His recent publications include *History as Mindscapes: A Memory of the Peasants’ Movement of Nepal* (2010); *Expedition to Nepal Valley: The Journal of Captain Kinloch* (2012); *Sandhya Samrachana: Hindu Newarharuko Mrityuchetana* (2013), *Ruptures and Repairs in South Asia: Historical Perspectives* (2013, editor) and *Courage in Chaos: Early Rescue and Relief after the April Earthquake* (2015, co-author). He is currently the research director (material transformations) at Martin Chautari, Kathmandu. Email: yogeshwithraj@gmail.com