

Name: Aditya Acharya Age: 26 years Profession: Automobile and Mechanical Engineer

(I, Aditya Acharya, a 26-year-old automobile and mechanical engineer, am a representative of a generation that does not run away after seeing problems but solves them with engineering thinking. I have filed candidacy from Sunsari Constituency No. 2 for the House of Representatives Member Election of 2082 to change politics not through speeches but through design, data, and delivery. Please cast your invaluable vote on the election symbol water bottle and give me the opportunity to serve.)

Structural Reform Manifesto for Nepal

Federal Democratic Republic in Crisis

Nepal's Federal Democratic Republic today stands at a decisive turning point. This is not merely a matter of governance; it is a serious test being conducted upon the soul of the Constitution, the structure of the state, and the trust of the people.

As the general election of 2082 approaches, the country's political environment is defined not by the hope and enthusiasm seen at the time of the promulgation of the Constitution in 2072, but rather by the deep structural crisis imposed upon the entire constitutional system.

The events seen in 2082 — the new surge of public movement (*Gen Z Uprising*), inhumane repression by the state side, the killing of innocent children, the subsequently created situation being systematically hijacked with the intent to defame Gen Z nationwide after infiltration by all old power groups, the collapse of political consensus maintained for decades after becoming a victim of public anger, and the establishment of an interim administration under the leadership of former Chief Justice Sushila Karki — have exposed in a naked form the fragility and failure of our state system.

Today's Nepal is operating under the practice of such conditional federalism, where provincial and local governments are given authority on paper, but in practice, those authorities are suppressed by centralised bureaucracy and power-centered political culture. Federalism has become nominal, but decision-making power is still concentrated at the center.

This condition neither matches the Constitution nor the mandate of the people. If this tendency continues, the Federal Democratic Republic will remain limited only to a structural cover. It is becoming increasingly distant from people's lives. Now the choice is clear — either we implement federalism in practice, or the Constitution will be transformed into a failed experiment limited to paper.

Standing on the side of the people, we present this manifesto for building an excellent, accountable, well-governed, and decentralized republic.

This manifesto is a clear and fearless declaration of constitutional realism. It states that Nepal's long-term crisis is not the fault of fate, geography, or culture. This crisis is planned. This crisis has been deliberately created. Legal loopholes kept within the law, financial centralization carried out in the name of federalism, and a political economy centered on extraction rather than production are its root causes.

Today, the state is not in the hands of the people but in the control of *Partocracy* [rule by a political party cartel]. A cartel of political parties is using the state as if it were its private property. Resources collected from the people's taxes are being spent not for public service but for party protection, power bargaining, and cadre maintenance. This cartel has placed itself above the law. Through special legal immunity, weak accountability, and a structured system of planned impunity, it has turned the state into a captured mechanism. For this reason, Nepal has a constitution but no justice. There are elections, but no choice. There is federalism but no local autonomy. This manifesto is a political commitment to end this *Partocracy* and return the state to the hands of the people.

The economic context of this manifesto is serious, and it demands immediate as well as structural intervention. For fiscal year 2082, economic growth is estimated at only 2.1 per cent. This is a serious decline compared to the 4.6 per cent growth rate seen in fiscal year 2081.

Public debt has currently reached 44.6 per cent of GDP. This debt is not the result of productive capital investment but rather the outcome of exchange rate deficit, rising recurrent expenditure, and financial mismanagement. This is pushing the state into a risky debt trap.

Unemployment remains structurally high. As a result, the country today is facing a “muscle drain.” Not only laborers but also excellent athletes, skilled technicians, and capable youth are migrating toward foreign labor markets. This migration is not only an employment search; it is also a deep expression of distrust in the state’s capacity to provide a dignified future to its citizens.

The following points of this manifesto identify the same realities and the clear structural cracks born from them. Those weaknesses rooted inside legal arrangements, administrative practices, and institutional design have made corruption easy and obstructed public service delivery.

This manifesto proposes not vague slogans but concrete legal, legislative, and constitutional remedies. Its objective is clear — to free the state from the capture of *Partocracy* [rule by political party cartel] and transform it into a people-accountable, capable, and functional constitutional republic.

Abolition of Policy Decision Immunity

To immediately stop the continuous looting of state resources and to re-establish the rule of law by closing the dangerous legal loopholes of impunity.

Commitment:

Ending the practice of legalizing large corruption by using decisions made through the Council of Ministers as a shield.

The era of cabinet-level impunity must now be ended. Where, in the name of policy/decision, the state treasury is looted, and responsible persons are exempted from corruption cases.

Problem:

The most effective mechanism of large-scale corruption in Nepal is the so-called principle of “policy decision.”

Section 4 (b) of the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority Act 2048 provides that the Commission cannot investigate policy decisions made by the Council of Ministers. Misusing this provision, major contract and land transfer decisions are routed through the Council of Ministers to grant corruption legal validity.

This provision was originally kept to protect sovereign political decisions such as foreign policy and war declaration, but today that same legal arrangement has been transformed into a weapon for corruption. Fraud in procurement processes, illegal land transactions, and organized looting are knowingly passed through the Council of Ministers to cover corruption schemes, and politicians secure full immunity from prosecution. This has created a two-tier legal system in the country — strict liability for lower-level employees and citizens, but full impunity for political leadership.

Full impunity for political leadership — this structural weakness has, in reality, made high-level politicians crime-free and has hollowed out the rule of law. A living example of this is the Lalita Niwas land scandal. Former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal and former Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai have been arguing on this very basis that charges cannot be brought against them.

Solution:

The CIAA Act will be amended to clearly define the meaning of policy decision. Matters such as procurement processes, land transfers, or licenses related to natural resources will be kept outside the scope of policy decisions.

Even in the Constitution of 2047 and the Interim Constitution 2063, if a person holding public office committed “improper conduct” or corruption-related acts, it was defined as abuse of authority. But in the Constitution of 2072, the phrase “improper conduct” was removed. Because of this removal, the defined acts that constituted improper conduct — where it had been specified what actions done knowingly or negligently by a public office holder would amount to improper conduct (such as refusing to perform a duty within one’s authority, performing an act without authority, not following procedure, evading responsibility, etc.) — were eliminated. After this provision was removed, administrative arbitrariness has increased across offices, and the public has suffered. This provision must be restored in law through amendment. This will reduce high-level corruption and public harassment and increase trust in the rule of law. Major financial scandals occurring through the Council of Ministers will come within the scope of investigation.

End of Procurement Standardization and Variation Order Fraud

Commitment:

By removing the compulsory system of Low Bidding (minimum quotation), a quality-based selection system (QCBS — *Quality Cost Based Selection*) will be implemented.

Structural Disease (Problem):

The Public Procurement Act 2063 is excessively centered on the concept of the lowest price, sufficiently responsive bid. This rigid assumption forces contractors to submit bids 20 to 40 per cent below cost. After receiving the contract, they extract profit through deceptive Variation Orders citing unexpected geological or technical problems. In addition, Clause 66 on special circumstances is misused to bypass competitive bidding processes. Officials deliberately delay procurement and create artificial emergencies at the last moment, then use Clause 66 to award contracts at excessively high prices to their close or preferred parties.

Evidence:

During the COVID-19 pandemic, in the OMNI Group scandal, Clause 66 was misused to bypass standard tender procedures in the name of emergency and medical materials were procured at prices 200 to 300 per cent higher than market rates (PPE and thermometers).

In the Chameliya Hydropower Project, by citing technical excuses such as tunnel squeezing, costs were increased through Variation Orders from about 8 billion to up to 15 billion.

In the 13th amendment of the 2024 Procurement Regulations, delays in more than 1000 sick projects were legalized and practically forgiven to incompetent contractors, which made the problem even deeper.

Solution (Proposed Actions):

Mandatory QCBS (*Quality Cost Based Selection*): Amend the Public Procurement Act (PPA) to make QCBS mandatory for all complex infrastructure projects above NPR 1 billion. This will remove the blind principle of lowest price and help select contractors based on technical capacity and past performance.

Limit on Variation Orders: Legally limit Variation Orders (VO) to 10 per cent of the contract value. (Under the current law, Section 54 allows variation orders without a clear ceiling.) For costs exceeding this limit, a new tender or a mandatory forensic audit by an independent panel separate from the line ministry will be required.

Strict Definition of Special Circumstances: Limit special circumstances only to declared national disasters or war. Remove discretionary executive authority based on administrative delay. (This itself is the main root of corruption.)

Expected Result: Significant reduction in sick projects and cost overruns. Priority to quality over low price, resulting in high-standard infrastructure development.

Cooling Act for Integrity of Civil Service

Commitment:

End the revolving door system that has created corrupt collusion between the civil administration and political parties.

End the culture of receiving attractive posts after retirement in return for serving political interests during service tenure.

Problem:

Nepal's civil administration has become deeply politicized and, in practice is functioning like an extension of the party system. Especially at the secretary level, senior civil servants widely follow a transactional practice — protecting political masters during their service period and receiving constitutional or diplomatic posts after retirement.

This type of corruption has seriously weakened the neutrality, professionalism, and impartiality of the civil service.

Attempts to include a “cooling-off” period in the Federal Civil Service Bill were weakened at the final stage through bad-faith amendments, where constitutional and diplomatic posts were exempted. That rendered the reform objective ineffective.

Evidence:

Section 82(5) of the Federal Civil Service Bill allows immediate political, constitutional, or other appointments after retirement. This clause clearly proves the institutional intent to preserve ties with political masters.

Proposed Action Plan:

A Cooling-Off Act will be implemented.

Through a separate law, all civil servants at Gazetted First Class Officer level or above will be prohibited from holding any constitutional, diplomatic, or political post for at least 3 years after retirement.

Expected Result:

Neutrality and professionalism of the civil administration will be strengthened. Because the situation where officials must give allegiance during service for post-retirement jobs will end.

The protection-and-transaction-based network between retired secretaries and political leadership will be broken.

Public trust in the state mechanism will increase significantly.

Grant Distribution from the Center and Fiscal Federalism

In Nepal, federalism exists on paper, not in practice. Local and provincial governments have political responsibility but do not have money. The federal government controls more than 90 per cent of revenue, such as VAT, customs, and income tax. Municipalities raise only about 5 to 20 per cent of their revenue from their own sources (except in rare cases). For the remaining 80 to 95 per cent, they must extend their hands toward the center.

An even more dangerous matter is that the center has reduced fiscal equalization grants and increased conditional grants. This means municipalities must implement not their own needs but only the projects specified by Kathmandu. This is not federalism; this is a new form of centralization.

This is the problem, and its solution is clear. We will raise a strong voice to amend the Intergovernmental Fiscal Arrangement Act.

First, 50 per cent of total intergovernmental transfers must compulsorily be fiscal equalization grants.

Second, after the budget is passed, the Ministry of Finance must not be legally allowed to cut grants midway. If revenue decreases, let the federal government reduce its own expenditure, not the development budget of municipalities.

From this, even if the center becomes weaker, arrogance becomes weaker. Strong federalism means strong municipalities. Only if the local government is strong do services such as education, health, and employment reach the people.

Kathmandu becoming strong while villages become weak (municipalities weak) is not the country becoming strong.

Therefore, we say — federalism must be seen not in speeches but in the budget. Municipalities must be the owners of development, not contractors of Kathmandu. Where money is, power is there — we want to take that power to the people.

Liberalization in Industrial Entry (Automatic Approval in Industry Registration)

Today in Nepal, opening an industry has become not a right but a favor granted by the government. Because the Industrial Enterprises Act 2020 compels industries listed in Schedule 1 to obtain approval from a board chaired by a minister. What does this mean?

An entrepreneur who wants to work falls into a large trap and is forced to bear administrative hassles.

Old, large players remain protected. New investment is stopped, and the door to corruption opens.

The government said “one-door service center,” but in practice it has become only a post office that cannot make decisions. Investors are still forced to run separately from the forest, land, environment, and industry authorities.

Is there no solution to this? Certainly there is — that is:

Solution:

Abolish Schedule 1 provision: Amend the Industrial Enterprises Act to remove all industries — except defense, security printing, and extraction of precious minerals and petroleum substances — from the approval category and transfer them to automatic registration, and implement strict post-compliance audits.

Strengthening OSSC (*One Stop Service Center*): Enact a related law to give OSSC approval legal supremacy for designated industrial areas over separate approvals of ministries such as forest, land, and environment.

As a result, Investment in the country increases. Employment is created.

Entry-level corruption ends.

We want not a Permission Raj but a Prosperity Regime.

Schedules related to Section 8 (industries requiring approval): arms, explosives, and ammunition industries; security printing; currency and coin production industries; cigarette, bidi, khaini, cigar, and tobacco-based product industries; electronic cigarette production industries.

Microbrewery, beer, liquor, or alcohol-based product industries. Industries extracting stone, gravel, and sand. Industries producing radio communication equipment. Industries refilling liquefied petroleum gas. Industries extracting precious minerals and petroleum substances. Industries providing services through drones. Other industries that must obtain approval according to prevailing law.

Institutional Corruption in the Name of the Industrial Enterprises Act Will Be Ended

Section 54 of the Industrial Enterprises Act clearly states that an industry must spend 1 per cent of its net profit amount on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR — *Corporate Social Responsibility*) and invest 50 per cent of that amount in local Dalit and poor communities (for example, according to its own report, Reliance Spinning Mill's net income in fiscal year 2081/082 is NPR 1 billion 60 crore. If it spends CSR through Itahari Sub-Metropolitan City, it must spend NPR 1 crore 60 lakh on local poor communities. But today I want to ask directly — where did that money go?

The answer is simple. It did not go to the poor; it went into paper NGOs, ministers' foundations, and brokers' accounts. Such amounts reach billions. The CSR provision created for the poor has today become a protected channel of institutional corruption. The law exists, but implementation is zero.

We say — the problem is not industry; the problem is the corruption-fed structure sitting at the centre. Therefore, our clear proposal is: amend the Industrial Enterprises Act and regulations.

The 1 per cent CSR amount must be spent directly through local government accounts for target groups and target purposes. Public audit and digital tracking of every amount must be made mandatory.

Only then will Dalit, poor, and target groups actually receive the rights granted in law for target purposes. Therefore, CSR must now reach the doorstep of the poor, not remain a speech.

Politics Done in the Name of Landless Dalits, Squatters, and Real Farmers Will Be Ended

Subsidies will be delivered to real farmers. Until today, in the name of landless Dalits and squatters, there has been politics, not a solution. Nepal's Constitution has granted every citizen the right to a dignified life with housing and employment. This is not a vote-seeking subject; this is an administrative task that can be completed in 6 months. It will be our duty to raise a strong voice in Parliament for this.

Today in Nepal, thousands of real farmers do not have land ownership. Yet they are sweating in the fields. But when they go to receive subsidies, they are asked — Where is the land ownership certificate? This arrangement is unjust and anti-farmer.

Therefore, now not a farmer's land certificate but Farmer ID will be implemented. Whoever farms is the farmer — on recommendation of the local level, a Digital Farmer ID Card will be provided. All subsidies, insurance, and concessional loans must be provided only through Farmer ID.

Today, the farmer is in the field, but the subsidy is on paper; therefore, we want to deliver that subsidy to the field.

Education–Employment Bridge (TVET Reform)

Today, the country's biggest problem is that youth have degrees but no skills; youth exist, but there is no work.

In Nepal, youth unemployment is officially said to be 12.7 per cent, but among the 15–24 age group, 22.27 per cent of the youth are unemployed. This is not a number — this is a time bomb.

Our education system is designed not for employment but for distributing certificates.

There is no apprenticeship. There is no workplace training. TVET is not aligned with industry demand. There is no industry representative in CTEVT. Therefore, today, diploma holders are unemployed in the country. Industry searches for skilled manpower abroad — this is Skill Mismatch.

The only long-term solution to this is the Dual VET System — based on the Swiss and German model — 70 per cent training at the workplace and 30 per cent in the classroom. Skills are learned not from books but from factory workplace sites.

Solution:

Industry representation must be mandatory on the boards of all Polytechnics and TVET institutes. Curriculum must be designed according to the skills demanded by the industry. A labor market review must be conducted every year. It is not enough to always blame the private sector — they must be encouraged. Companies that keep apprentices for 6 months or more must be given tax exemption and subsidy; apprentices must be given stipends. The law must be amended to make it mandatory for the industry to keep apprentices. An apprentice is not cheap labor — this is tomorrow's skilled worker. Only this can stop youth unemployment and foreign migration. Going abroad will become a choice, not a compulsion. What is the situation in Nepal now? There is no clear national standard. In some places, work is taken for free; in some places, only a nominal allowance is given. Therefore, apprentices fall into exploitation.

Our commitment: mandatory minimum payment to apprentices; tax credit/subsidy to private companies; insurance and safety protection to apprentices. An apprentice is not cheap labor — it is an investment in human capital.

“Startup Nation and Digital Nomad VISA”

Commitment:

1. By stopping *brain drain*, Nepal can become a regional center of innovation and remote work.

Structural Disease:

Although startup policy has provided facilities and exemptions, the requirement to prove “innovative use of technology” under an unclear definition and the lack of capital access have kept the policy limited to paper. Startups are facing serious problems due to Section 57 of the Income Tax Act, where even the new investment stage is treated as taxable income. This effectively harms startup expansion and growth.

On the other hand, despite high internet access, Nepal has no legal framework for Digital Nomads. Because of this, Nepal is being deprived of the global remote work trend and is losing a major opportunity to bring foreign currency into the country.

Evidence:

Section 57 of the Income Tax Act treats capital infusion as profit and imposes tax; therefore, this has clearly become an anti-startup provision. Due to the absence of a Digital Nomad VISA, Nepal has not been able to benefit from the global remote work trend.

Solution:

Permanent exemption from Section 57: Amend the law so that registered startups bear no tax liability under Section 57 of the Income Tax Act during the investment stage.

Digital Nomad VISA: Introduce a one-year (renewable) Digital Nomad VISA for remote workers earning more than USD 24,000 annually from foreign sources.

Necessary policies/laws will be introduced. If income is earned outside Nepal, no local tax will be imposed (for nomads). However, proof of residence and expenditure within Nepal will be mandatory. This is a reform that can be implemented immediately. It can be implemented at a low cost.

A Digital Nomad is not a job taker but a dollar bringer. They receive a salary from foreign companies and spend while residing in Nepal — hotels, cafes, internet, transport, etc. — leaving a positive impact on the local economy.

Restructuring of the Constitutional Council

This issue is raised because the Constitutional Council, which appoints the chief and other officials in constitutional bodies such as the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority, the Election Commission, and the Judiciary, is currently under executive dominance. A Prime Minister-centered structure has made partisan quota-sharing possible in constitutional bodies.

During the dissolution of the House of Representatives in 2020, 52 officials (including Prem Kumar Rai as CIAA chief, Ram Prasad Bhandari in the Election Commission, Tap Bahadur Magar in the Human Rights Commission, among others) were appointed through partisan sharing without parliamentary hearing, and they are still in office.

At present, according to the Constitution, the Council consists of the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Deputy Speaker, Chairperson of the National Assembly, and Chief Justice. Since decisions can be made by majority, change is necessary.

Solution:

Amend Article 284 of the Constitution to include one former Chief Justice selected by civil society or the Bar Association in the Council, and change the Constitution/law so that appointments occur only through full consensus, not by majority.

Reform in Judicial Council (Judicial Council)

Commitment:

Free the judiciary from political interference and end the quota-sharing system that has grown in judicial appointments.

Structural Disease:

The Judicial Council, formed under Article 153 of the Constitution, has five members. But among them, three are effectively political appointees — the Law Minister, the Prime Minister's representative, and the Bar representative, who are usually affiliated with parties. Only two are judges (the Chief Justice and a judge).

This structure has created a condition where judicial appointments are based not on merit but on party loyalty (Congress, UML, Maoist quota).

Result:

The judiciary either becomes obedient to the executive or becomes inactive and ineffective due to fear of impeachment.

Evidence:

Through this same 3/5 majority, political cadres have been appointed even up to the High Court — this is an open truth. This has led to bench capture and politically influenced decisions, and public trust in the justice system is declining.

Remedy:

Remove executive representatives from the Judicial Council. Amend Article 153 of the Constitution to remove the Law Minister and the Prime Minister's representative from the Council and include a senior Supreme Court judge or judicial expert. Public hearings must be applied not only for Supreme Court judges but also for High Court judges to ensure transparency and accountability.

Independent and Courageous Judiciary Based on Public Trust

Abolition of the Whip System — Commitment to Make Parliament Independent

Commitment:

To re-establish the sovereignty of Parliament. To make Members of Parliament real representatives who speak the voice of the people, not rubber stamps of party headquarters.

Structural Distortion:

Article 89 (e) of the Constitution provides for the removal of a Member of Parliament from office based on party whip violation. The interpretation of this clause has been made so broad that today Members of Parliament are in a situation where they must fear criticizing their party's wrong policies, expressing differing views on policy bills, and speaking in favor of their own constituency's interests. This has transformed Parliament not into a forum of debate and accountability but into a machine that follows the orders of the party high command.

Evidence:

The current anti-defection arrangement itself contradicts Article 103 of the Constitution. When a Member of Parliament is not allowed to speak and vote independently, that Member becomes not a representative of the constituency but merely a messenger of the party.

Solution:

Strictly limit the definition of defection. Amend the Political Parties Act 2073 so that it applies only in these situations: during votes of confidence/no confidence in government and during annual budget voting. In all other bills and policy proposals, Members of Parliament must be given full freedom to speak or vote according to their decision and constituency interests.

Result: Fear-free, debate-rich Parliament.

Audit Informant Act Will Be Implemented

Today the Auditor General has become a toothless tiger because it reveals corruption worth billions but cannot take action. The fact today is that up to 2024, the Auditor General has shown irregularities amounting to NPR 733 billion 19 crore. But how much has been recovered? Almost negligible.

The Auditor General detects irregularities but cannot impose surcharges. The authority to file cases lies with the executive and the Public Accounts Committee — bodies that, according to practice so far, are themselves often linked with corruption.

This is what we call a system where detection and prosecution are separated — therefore, today, corruption has become not a punishable crime but merely a ritual of report writing.

What is the solution now?

Implement a new Audit Informant Act. Under this, the Auditor General must be given authority to issue surcharge orders to recover irregular amounts.

Automatic Prosecution: If corruption-related irregularities determined by the Auditor General are not settled within 6 months, the case must automatically go to court. Only then will irregularity become frightening.

The Auditor General must bring not only reports but also results. In a country with NPR 733 billion in irregularities, corruption is not a problem — it has become a system. This must be broken.

Digital Democracy — Electronic Voting

Commitment:

Modernize the electoral process and secure voting rights for all citizens.

Problem:

The current paper-based voting system is slow, expensive, and sensitive to irregularities such as booth capture. An even more serious matter is that millions of workers in foreign employment — who are the backbone of Nepal's economy — are deprived of voting because they cannot vote from abroad.

The Supreme Court, in the public interest litigation filed by *The Law and Policy Forum* in 2017, ordered external voting in 2018. Yet the Election Commission has not implemented it, citing financial and technical difficulties.

The exclusion of foreign workers is a clear violation of the constitutionally guaranteed universal **adult franchise**.

Solution:

Remote voting for foreign workers. Conduct blockchain-based remote voting for Nepali citizens with valid labor approval — this is possible.

Within the country, conduct digital voting with VVPAT (Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail). Its implementation is possible. The necessary technology has long been available. The obstacle is not technology but political will.

Result:

Full voting rights secured for foreign workers. Fast, fair, and reliable results.

Critical Infrastructure Reform Act Will Be Implemented

Such a type of law has also been implemented in countries like Australia and America under the name *Security of Critical Infrastructure Act*. Its fundamental purpose is to prevent corruption. Therefore, in Nepal's context today, it is necessary to ensure sustainable, quality, and long-term infrastructure development by ending the culture of "Asare development" [end-of-fiscal-year rush spending].

Because in Nepal, Asare development has become a subject of national shame. At the end of the fiscal year, roads are blacktopped during the rainy season just to spend the budget, asphalt is laid over mud, and roads are washed away in the monsoon — as a result, taxpayers' money has been like pouring water into sand.

The root causes are delayed budget release, fear of budget freeze if not spent, and absence of a structure that makes contractors accountable.

Proposed Action Plan:

Shift the start of the fiscal year in Nepal from Shrawan to Baishakh, so that work can be performed in the dry season and completed on time.

Mandatory Performance Bond Guarantee: Make at least a 2-year performance bond mandatory in all road and large infrastructure projects. If it breaks or fails within 5 years, the contractor must repair it at their own cost.

Youth Migration — Why and Its Solution

Nepal has fallen into a trap based on migration. It is called a trap because it is very difficult to escape from it. Remittance occupies about 27 per cent of GDP. At a glance, it appears to help reduce poverty, but the social cost is now difficult to bear.

Brain drain, family fragmentation, emptying villages, and political instability are its consequences.

According to 2024–2025 data, daily 1,700 to 2,100 Nepali youth — mostly toward Gulf countries — are migrating for foreign employment. That means the country is losing its most energetic youth every day in numbers equal to one village.

The question arises — why? Is it only for money, or are there other structural reasons behind it? The search is here.

The problem is not limited only to money. The problem lies in the breaking of the triangle of education, work, and dignity. Surprisingly, what we find is that the signal of our education quality has failed.

Signal failure means a degree obtained in Nepal does not work. That is, earlier our degree gave a strong signal of qualification — today that meaning has become void. Because of this, youth are compelled to migrate abroad.

Even when employment is obtained in Nepal, wages are extremely low. 84.6 per cent of total employment in Nepal is in the informal sector. This means most workers have no formal appointment letter, no social security, no pension — their future is completely insecure.

The wage gap is alarming. The Government of Nepal fixed the minimum wage at NPR 17,200 in 2024, while at the same time, even an unskilled worker in Qatar or the UAE received three to four times that — NPR 60,000 to 70,000. This gap gives youth a strong economic reason to go abroad.

The foreign employment process itself has become a trap. The government says Free Visa, Free Ticket, but in reality, this policy is limited to paper. This is the most painful aspect. Systemic exploitation of workers occurs here.

Despite “Free Visa, Free Ticket,” studies confirm that outgoing youth pay illegal fees of NPR 200,000 to 300,000, and it takes 12 to 18 months of foreign stay just to repay that amount. This creates a form of forced labor condition.

Now consider an 18–20-year-old youth whose family has mortgaged a house and land to take a loan. No matter how much abuse the employer commits abroad, can he say “no”? Certainly not. It becomes almost impossible. Because he is crushed under a debt burden. This is a form of modern slavery. This cycle must be broken.

The government has done nothing meaningful in this. From time to time, it speaks of large programs worth billions like the Prime Minister’s Employment Program. This has completely failed. It has been turned into a vote-bank instrument.

It was started with great publicity with the objective of job creation, but its structure itself was made for vote banking.

Example: When a computer engineer joins this program with his qualifications, he is assigned to clean drains. This does not mean drain cleaning is small work — it means there is no match between skill and labor. It became a medium to distribute allowances for elections rather than a long-term plan. This increased distrust and frustration toward the government among capable youth.

The same story applies to the Youth and Small Entrepreneur Self-Employment Fund. There is hardly another example of such institutional failure. Research has found that more than NPR 4 billion was misused. Concessional loans that should have gone to youth entrepreneurs were given to wholesale traders with access. This program became a ground for corruption.

How disappointing this is. No ray of hope is visible here. What is the solution? It must not be superficial but with systemic reform.

First: A wage subsidy program to formalize small and medium enterprises. This can be done such that if a company formally appoints youth aged 18–30 with an appointment letter, the government will provide 100 per cent subsidy of the employer’s required contribution to the Social Security Fund for the first 2 years. This creates no additional burden on the employer.

But the youth receive formal employment, social security, and a future pension. This can be a direct and effective measure to address the 84.6 per cent of informal employment.

Decentralize the Foreign Employment Tribunal. For this, the Foreign Employment Act 2064 must be amended. At present, it exists only in one place — Kathmandu. Currently, if a youth from Siraha who has been cheated abroad seeks justice, he must travel to Kathmandu. Travel and lodging costs themselves become another punishment.

Instead, establish foreign employment benches in the High Courts of all seven provinces. This brings justice close to the victim's doorstep. It makes it fast and accessible. This is the practical solution. I will raise my voice for this.

Reform in the Education System: Make 30 per cent of the institutional grant provided to colleges by the University Grants Commission based on the job placement rate of graduates from those colleges within 12 months.

If graduates of a college do not obtain employment, the grant received by that college must also be reduced. This prevents universities from becoming shops that sell decorative certificates and forces them to provide market-aligned, employment-oriented education.

For this, the University Grants Commission Act must be amended. If given the opportunity, I will raise that voice. Only when the future of the university is directly linked with the future of its students will real reform come in the education system.

Institutional Redesign: Establish a “National Reintegration Bank” based on the Philippines DMW model, to provide returning workers not only training but also capital.

Labor market reform: In the construction and hospitality sectors, a tiered minimum wage must be implemented.

For these and such structural reforms, I have filed candidacy from Sunsari Constituency No. 2 for the House of Representatives. My election symbol is the water bottle.

The above measures change the entire structural system from education to the labor market to the justice system.

My final goal is not to stop going abroad for employment but to make it a choice for opportunity rather than a compulsion.

Will Nepal make its greatest asset — its human capital — merely a means to send abroad and count remittance, or build a broad and dignified system to use the skills, experience, and capital earned abroad in nation-building?

This choice will determine the path of Nepal's coming decade.