# CANADIAN NEWA GUTHI PROFILE

# 2023 – R1



The overarching mission of CNG is to promote Newah and Nepalese Culture; sustaining and developing the socio-economic and professional capabilities of Newah Community, as well as the Nepalese Community living in Canada and abroad by establishing a vibrant Nepalese Canadian Community with a unique Newah identity.

**Canadian Newa Guthi (CNG)** was established on **September 18, 2005**, the day of Yanyapunhi (Indra Jatra Festival).

*Registered as a **Non-Profit Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)** with the Canadian Federal Government in City of Brampton in Canada.*








*Designed by: Dr Prajwal Lal Pradhan*

# INTRODUCTION

Canadian Newa Guthi is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving, promoting, and showcasing Newa culture and tradition to create awareness about health issues, conduct workshops and trainings, and sponsor youth-oriented activities like karate, youth leadership program, career counseling sessions, public speaking training, serving newcomers on their settlement issues, and offering free tax filing clinics to newcomers and low-income families and many more.



# WHO WE ARE

Throughout the beginning of time, Newah people have cherished their culture. The majority of the Newah population, which was in the Kathmandu valley, has relocated to the different parts of the world for sociocultural or other reasons. Over time, they still continue to relocate temporarily or permanently in other locations around the world as a result of global phenomena like education, improved living conditions, and employment. Even though we migrated to other regions, our culture which encompasses our way of life, values, beliefs, traditions, cuisine, and so forth cannot be forgotten. At present Newah or Newar or Nepami are transforming into the minority group of indigenous people in the world. A small group of Newah people in Canada have formed a new ethnic society called Guthi in 2005 September 18 and gave a formal name Canadian Newa Guthi. 14 Newah families from GTA gathered to celebrate the 'Samaybaji' festival. That's when they realized they had to do something to preserve Newah culture and traditions and pass them on to younger generations. It was established on the day of 'Yanya Punghi' with the aim of preserving, promoting, and practicing Newah heritage such as

# DEMOGRAPHICS

- Total population in Nepal – 13,21,933 (5% of Nepal's population)
- Language – Nepal Bhasa
- Religion – Hinduism, Buddhism
- Known for – Culture, arts and literature, trade, agriculture, and cuisine
- Significant population – Nepal Mandal

# OUR MISSION

The primary goal of Canadian Newa Guthi is to promote, maintain and preserve Newa culture, art, language, and rituals in Canada among Newah Society. CNG strives to sustainably improve the quality of life of Newah living in Canada through the process of integrating Newah across Canada and adds meaning and value to their lives by

- Promoting their rights and interests
- Enabling individuals, families, and their communities to participate and increase their own well-being.

Increasing understanding and unity among Newah including all Nepalese of different culture.



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## COMMITMENTS

CNG is committed to excellence in meeting the needs of the Newah Canadians it serves through the continual improvement of its programs, processes, and services. CNG is committed to making every effort to ensure transparency in communicating information on business practices, organizational structure, and financial policies. CNG is also committed to maintaining healthy relationships between Newah and other community organizations not only in Canada but around the world.

## VISION

The vision of CNG is of a place in which all Newah Canadians realize their full potential in Canadian Society while respecting people's rights and dignity. CNG is committed to facilitating the full participation of all persons of Newah origin in the social, cultural and civic life of Canada, and to the preservation and promotion of their rich and diverse cultural heritage.



## OBJECTIVES

### PRIMARY OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate the integration of Newah Canadian Society and to foster the retention and development of their culture heritage within the framework of multiculturalism.
- Support Newah culture, art, and ritual in Canada to ensure its survival.
- Provide a platform for community integration, as well as appreciation and promotion of cultural heritage and best practices among diverse demographic and ethno-cultural groups.

## GOAL

The primary goal behind all CNG activities is to give diverse demographic and ethno-cultural groups a platform for community integration as well as for appreciation and promotion of cultural heritage and best practices through food, exercise, creative expression, and meditation.



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# SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

- To facilitate and assist in resettlement of newly arriving Nepalese immigrants and adaptation of those residing Canada by
    - Assisting them in their initial settlement by providing orientation services and information on housing, education, health care, job and business opportunities, legal aid and more services whenever required.
    - Maintaining liaison with relevant public and private agencies, local, provincial, and federal organizations to promote the flow of information and services.
    - Encouraging and promoting individual and community development initiatives by providing support in terms of facilitation with private and public institutions and giving technical advice
    - To act as a center of communication between all residents of Newah origin living in Canada by maintaining database records of contact details.
- Render help to Nepalese living Canada in times of emergency
- Promotion of aims to promote, encourage and undertake projects and activities which will strengthen/ further the aims and activities of CNG

**MAJOR GOALS:**

- To network, develop and sustain the institutional and professional capabilities
- To preserve and promote Newari Culture
- several activities pertaining to socio-economy, health, culture, and environmental education are being undertaken in partnership with local communities, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, and all levels of government. Apart from this, CNG is also engaged in strengthening the coordination among Nepalese organisations by reaching out to a wider Nepalese diaspora in Canada and elsewhere.

## LANGUAGE

Newar people have their own language Nepal Bhasha which belong to the Tibeto-Burman language family. It is stated that 5.5% of total population of the country are Newars, only 3.39% speak Newari language. Since, the writing script Ranjana Lipi is quite different from Nepali Devnagari and is not included in the curriculum of school education, very negligible count of people can write and understand the Newari Script Ranjana Lipi.

# GUTHI SYSTEM in NEWAH SOCIETY

In all the activities of Newar Society they are strongly bonded with a special social organization called “GUTHI” and it has various types according to its functionality. As stated earlier, GUTHI is a socio-religious organization of the Newar people and moreover it is an integral part of Newar culture, which has added a character for their identification as a distinct group.

**GUTHI** in Newari language etymologically originated from Sanskrit word Goṣṭhī is a social organization that is used to maintain the socio-economic order of the society. From the history it reveals that the GUTHI system has been in operation since the Lichhavi era with the first practice being recorded in scriptures on pillars erected at Changu Narayan temple. This ancient practice can be traced back to the fifth century, and it continues to have an organic link with the society and cultural heritage today. Guthi responsibilities range from simple everyday rituals to take care of temples; organize big events like chariot processions and traditional mask dances; and teach music. They also support social functions by integrating young people into a caste-based society.

Nowadays, many things have changed in terms of locality and caste-based professions, but the structure of the guthi has largely remained the same, with people belonging to their respective castes and performing their functions accordingly. Several guthi were required to be in their respective occupations if they were to be part of society. These guthis included sana guthi, which carried death rituals, and twa guthi, who taught music to young boys and helped integrate the youth into the community. Many people nowadays are leaving these guthi due to the strict nature of these guthis, and preferred modern and independent lifestyles by the younger generations. Even though many people are still a part of these guthi, many guthi are also loosening their strict nature as a way of retaining members.





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## IMPORTANCE OF GUTHI

In newa culture guthi has significant values from birth to death among the guthiyar family. Most of the newa families are reside in the united way within some areas. The elder men among the family will be head of the guthi untill his death. In newa united places we will find all the necessary people who is required for our life time such as farmer ( Jyapu), Barber ( Nau), Carpenter ( Sikarmi), plumber ( Nakrmi), Butcher ( Nya), Dakarmi (Mason), Sweet maker (Haluwai), Flower saler (Gathhu),Cleaner ( Podei ), Purohit( Priest), Rajopadhya & Guvaju ( Newa priest), Joshi ( Palmist), Vaidya ( Traditional Doctor) and Aaicha (Traditional Healer Women) in surrounding areas. This is one of the beauties of newa traditional locality.



In Newar society private Guthi organizations (called Niji Guthi or Duniya Guthi) have prime role as to carry out the social and religious functions, these Guthi system helps in maintaining the social structure and uniting the people in the community, keeping “we are feeling” alive along with the religious faiths and beliefs. Thus, due to its importance in the lives of the Newar people, it is regarded as one of the most important and significant elements of the Newari culture.

# ABOUT OUR YOUTH COMMUNITY

Youth involvement in the community fosters the development of compassionate citizens who may carry on the same job as adults. Youth who volunteer in their communities also grow leadership abilities, understand the value of assisting others, and get work experience.

Research has consistently proven that being active in communities and being a part of teams that tackle problems benefit young people in many ways. Increased academic performance and enhanced social and emotional wellbeing can result from youth engagement.

Children and young people can discover what a community is, how communities are created, where community development and planning fall short, and what functions they might play at various stages of the processes. Stories – Through community development, stories may inspire and drive young people to bring about change.

Canadian Newa Guthi in this context, believes that youth participation empowers young people by giving them opportunities to meet community needs through very efficient decision-making and delivering excellent services to the community as they can easily visualise and see that their actions have positive outcomes and learn skills to support their own and the wider community's development. Also, youth engagement helps build on important protective factors related to mental health, since it provides opportunities for youth to connect with their peers, build networks, and increase the sense that they're not alone.




## VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

The past activities and events of Canadian Newa Guthi have demonstrated how important youth volunteers were to the effective implementation of its programmes. They donated their time and resources to this programme at every stage.



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# CULTURAL ASPECTS OF CANADIAN NEWA GUTHI



As stated in the main objective, the overarching mission of Canadian Newa Guthi (CNG) is to promote cultural diversity of Canada by establishing a vibrant Nepalese Canadian community with a Newari identity.

Under this framework, CNG plans to accomplish the following objectives.

• to network, develop, and sustain the institutional and professional capacities of larger Nepalese populations living in Canada and Nepal;

• to conserve and promote Newari culture;

• to propagate the message of world peace and harmony; and acomplish this by utilising nature-based solutions.

In collaboration with local communities, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, and all levels of government, a number of initiatives in the fields of socio-economics, health, culture, and environmental education are being carried out. In addition to this, CNG is working to improve coordination across Nepalese NGOs by connecting with a larger Nepalese diaspora in Canada and worldwide..





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# MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

1. Regular celebration of Samaybaji event, the Signature Cultural Event of Canadian Newa Guthi has been organizing since its inception in 2005. At the beginning it was observed within limited families whereas, over the time, it became one of the most popular cultural and Newah culinary events in Greater Toronto Area. Since 2017, Canadian Newa Guthi has been receiving matching fund from the City of Brampton. In the event, CNG showcases the Newah cultural dances, instrumental music, Newah sports, Newah quiz contest, Lakhe dance, Pulukisi, Dhime dance, Charya dance and lot of other activities along with serving unique Newah cuisine "Samaybaji" to all the guests. The impact of the funding helped grow pretty in terms of enriching cultural diversity of Brampton and public participation. The conspicuous example of increased participation in 2019 exceeded to 500 plus just before COVID-19.

2. Another significant festival since 2005 is the Mha Puja and Nhu Daa (New Nepal Sambat - Newah New Year) celebration. It has proven one of the most distinctive cultural events of the Newah people. Because of its popularity, every year, the number of people taking part in the event has grown yearly. CNG administers the Mandala for each person and conducts the Pooja in accordance with Newah tradition and culture...

3. Next popular cuisine related event is Youmari Puni the very unique festival which is celebrated after the post harvesting. This festival has relation with nutrition and climate like other festivals and it is celebrated on the full moon day around December. For the first time, CNG celebrate Youmari Punhi festival among the executive members family in a potluck gatherings since 2013 and has been continuously celebrating each year.

4. Conducted Free Tax clinic for the Nepalese and Bhutanese community living within GTA.





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5. For the Nepalese and Bhutanese community residing in the GTA, various health information sessions on heart disease and stroke, diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis, and arthritis were organised. For instance, one of them is the "Diabetes Awareness and Newcomers Welcome Programme" in Toronto's downtown.

6. Canadian Newa Guthi and Cross-Cultural Learning Centre, London, Ontario (CCLC) struck an agreement to work together to help Mahendra Lila Higher Secondary School, Gorkha, Nepal, which was ravaged by the tragic earthquake in 2015, be rebuilt. In November 2017, CCLC hosted a recognition celebration for the donor organisations, including CNG, following the building's completion.

7. “Koochhi bhwaya” and ”Jhow Bhwoye” like very unique and one of the most significant feasts of Newah community celebration have remarkably brought Canadian Newa Guthi into a new height. “Bhwoye” stands for the joint feast including all the guest and family members is the signature feast of the Newah festivals:

8. Hosted First North America Regional Conference of World Newa Organization in 2017 in Mississauga, ON Canada. In this three-day long conference various scholars presented their working papers on promoting Newa culture around the globe. It was noteworthy that Newa people are indigenous inhabitants of Kathmandu valley, Nepal, who are very rich in pageantry and rituals throughout the year.

9. Conducted Joint activities with University of Toronto, Brock University and Ryerson University to promote Newa traditional culture and strengthening its activities within multicultural of Canada.

10. Bridging Canadian Nepalese Youths with Newcomer Nepalese Immigrants” is a five-month long project funded by Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration. This project is designed to achieve twin objectives of leadership skill



# COMMUNITY BENEFITS FROM CANADIAN NEWA GUTHI

Each member of the Canadian Newa Guthi is able to create their own identity in their area, and when necessary, they also participate in community activities such as planning and implementing Guthi programs. In fact, within community development, CNG members tend to serve primarily as volunteers for resources and actions. Since CNG is a no-profit ethnic group of a small number of Newa people residing in GTA Canada, members in the communities frequently interact with those who are already at work on issues within the community and set the programs through the board of directors meeting.

In general, the community is found to be benefited from the Canadian Newa Guthi in the following aspects:

- Engage in a variety of programs occasionally so that community people can demonstrate their leadership abilities, job, skills and enjoyment of engaging programs
- Every young person needs, among other things, proper frameworks, reassuring connections, chances to fit in, positive social norms, chances to develop skills, and the coordination of efforts from the family, the school, and the community. In this situation, they can accomplish their objectives through contacts amongst the young people in the household families in the guthi
- A high level of public participation generally aids in the formation of leadership with an authentic following of community-sourced, pragmatic solutions, the achievement of cohesion in decisions on Important Issues, and the establishment of greater accountability for public authorities
- The fresh perspective, ideas, and passion that young people can provide the organization, as well as their unique abilities



Youth participants gain from the program in a variety of ways as well. expanded access to the resources and opportunities kids require to develop into healthy, compassionate, and responsible adults, an improved sense of self-efficacy when young people discover their capacity to influence actual social challenges, issues, and needs; Their integration into the sociocultural environment aids in their increased academic performance and interest in pursuing higher education, as well as in the development of their problem-solving, teamwork, and planning skills, as well as their attitudes towards and abilities in civic engagement.



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# REGULAR ACTIVITIES:

**SAMAYBAJI EVENT**: Each year in August, an outdoor event is organized in the name of Samaybaji Newah Food Festival with Nepali Traditional Dance to promote Newah food and its traditional dance like Jyapu Jyapuni, Charya dance, etc. This is one of the most uniquely popular programs and is well participated by the Nepalese community along with Canadians living in GTA. Samaybaji includes Chiura (Baji), Chweyla (barbequed meat marinated in hot spice), Fried Egg (Khe), Wo: (black lentil pie), Musya (roasted soybean), Lava (garlic), Palu (ginger), Tukanchha (baby mustard), Alu Achar (potato pickle), Bodi (black eyes bean), Panchakwa (mixed curry of five vegetables and beans), fried fish & fruits, Yogurt and Rakshi (alcohol).

**YO MARI PUNHI:** Yo Mari is one of the traditional special food items of the Newa community, which has significant value within the Newa community as they observe a special day in the full moon of December called THIELA Punhi (the longest night of the year) each and every year. Every year this festival is celebrated after the post-harvesting of the farmers.

**WORLD NEWA DAY:** In response to the World Newah Organization's call for "World Newah Day" to be observed globally on the last Saturday of March every year to promote Newah solidarity, CNG also hosted a celebration in Toronto. Speakers at the event discussed Newah legacy, its sustainability initiatives, the environmental connections between food and festivals, distinctive monument construction techniques, and more.

**TAX CLINIC:** Every year in April, CNG holds a free tax clinic for the community of Nepalese and Bhutanese residents in the Greater Toronto Area.

**MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES:**

- Nepali New Year Meet & Greet Program
- Occasional Online Musical Nights in virtual mode
- Traditional Buddha Prarthana during COVID-19 in virtual mode
- Musical Events Tributed to late singers Narayan Gopal Guruvacharya, Prem Dhoj Pradhan and so on
- Ehee (Bel Bibah)
- Jhow Bhwoye Program – Misha Pucha
- Food Festival – University of Toronto
- Health Awareness and Parenting Program
- Tara Mandala Puja
- WNO( World Newah Organization) North American Regional Conference:
- Bridging Canadian Nepalese Youths with Newcomer Nepalese Immigrants
- Training Program for internationally trained professionals

## MHA PUJA:

**A Special Event Hosted Every Year**

Mha Puja (Newah New Year - Nhu Da) is the first CNG event initiated after its establishment and regularly organized every year at the end of December. Because this day also commemorates the New Nepal Sambat or Nhu Dan, which was started by the late businessman ShankharDhar Sasha in the Kathmandu valley in 879 AD by forgiving all of the debts owed by Nepalese citizens during the reign of King Raghav Dev, this is one of the main traditional programmes of Newah of Nepalese descent. It falls on the fourth day of the Yamapanchka, which is also known as Gobardhan Puja, and is one of the special Pujas performed by Newah people to worship themselves. More than 100 people, both Newah and non-Newah, take part in this event each year.



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# FUTURE PLANS & ACTIVITIES

- A temple with gods and goddesses can be built in the future to support Newa festivals in order to preserve and promote Newa culture and religious practices
- By holding classes relating to the Newa language, dance, yoga and many more residing in the temple premises, a school can be constructed, specifically for the protection and promotion of the Newa language, which has almost approaching extinction among younger generations.
- For all Nepalese immigrants coming to Canada after leaving their birth country in pursuit of work or to advance their future status are in fact finding it too difficult to find proper employment that meets their credentials or are forced to flee from unemployment. In such horrific situations, a kind of agency unit might be established to offer them assistance, and bits of advice, and work methodically to provide them with respite from initial challenges and unemployment issues.
- It has already been mentioned above in the short introduction and described how a Guthi System actually works in reality within the New Community. However, Canadian Newa Guthi is aiming to adhere to customs like Sana Guthi (related to death rituals), Twa Guthi (related to musical groups), and Nas Guthi (related to culture, dance, and entertainment) that have been followed in the Newa community to claim to help people when they really needed during their difficult time like when someone dies, when they are grieving, when they are separated from their family in old age, etc..



**Sanah Guthi**: a socio-religious group of people belonging to same locality. All heads of households (thakali) are obliged to belong to a funeral group. All the materials and human resources and the mobilization required for the cremation have to be arranged by the Guthi. During the funeral procession, Guthiyaars are required to carry the corpse from the house to the cremation site. Most importantly, the preparation of the cremation site has to be done by the Guthiyaars. Moreover, the financial and social support needed by the family of the deceased is also fulfilled by the Guthi. In some cases, the provision of a special kind of Guthi; namely Bichaa Guthi; is found for the financial support to the family of the deceased.



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# 2023-2025 EXECUTIVE BOARD

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21 Mr. Sushil Anu – Executive Member

**Invited Guests for All Board Meetings:**

1. Mr. Prakash Lal Pradhan – Immediate Past President
2. One Representative from CNG Next Generation Group


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## HOW TO JOIN?

- **Visit CNG site: https://www.canadianewaguthi.org**
- **From the Account Menu, select the Membership Levels or select Guest Member/General Member/ Life Member whichever is your proper choice**
- **Follow the instructions on the Signup page**
- **After completion checkout**
- **You will be registered**


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