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Finding Home in Nepal: Mannsi Agrawal's Story

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She came from Kolkata to Kathmandu at 21. Nearly two decades later, Nepal has become the place where Mannsi Agrawal built a family, found her professional voice, experimented with photography and performance, trained thousands of people, and turned communication into a career.

When Mannsi Agrawal arrived in Kathmandu in 2006, she was 21 years old and entering a life very different from the one she had known in Kolkata.

She had grown up in the Indian city, studied at La Martiniere for Girls and later studied economics at Symbiosis College of Arts and Commerce. Marriage brought her to Nepal. In a later interview,

Agrawal recalled that she married a Nepali and that Kathmandu gradually became her second home.

That description—“second home”—sounds simple when looking back after nearly two decades.

The process of getting there was not.

A new city means more than a new address. It means learning how people speak, socialise and work; understanding unfamiliar customs; building relationships from scratch; and discovering where, if anywhere, you fit.

For Agrawal, Nepal would eventually become much more than the country she had moved to because of marriage. It became the country in which she built most of her adult professional life.

Her path would take her through marketing, education, Toastmasters, corporate training, public speaking, photography, stand-up comedy, entrepreneurship, tourism storytelling and, eventually, specialised communication coaching.

There was no obvious master plan connecting all of it.

Only later does a common thread become clear: **communication**.

From Kolkata to Kathmandu

Kolkata and Kathmandu are not separated by an ocean, and India and Nepal share deep cultural, economic and family connections. But familiarity between countries does not mean moving from one society to another feels effortless.

Agrawal's earliest relationship with Kathmandu appears to have been built through exploration.

She has recalled visiting places such as Boudha and Thamel and travelling beyond the Valley to destinations including Pokhara and Chitwan. Nepal's biodiversity, architecture, landscapes and everyday culture increasingly fascinated her.

The contrast with Kolkata was part of the experience.

Kolkata had shaped her childhood, education and cultural instincts. Years later, while discussing her photography, Agrawal even connected her preference for warmer tones—browns, oranges and yellows—to growing up in India.

Nepal did not replace that background.

It added another layer to it.

That distinction matters. Her story is less about leaving one country behind than about building an adult identity across two closely connected South Asian societies.

Building a Working Life in Kathmandu

One of Agrawal's early professional roles in Nepal was at Kathmandu's **City Centre**.

A 2009 *Nepali Times* report on Kathmandu's emerging mall culture quoted her representing City Centre and discussing how shopping complexes needed to offer customers entertainment and an experience beyond retail.

It was an early corporate chapter.

But the career for which she later became better known developed elsewhere.

Agrawal moved towards teaching and training, discovering that she enjoyed engaging with people, explaining ideas and working directly with an audience.

Public speaking became particularly important.

Toastmasters gave her a structured environment in which to develop that ability. She eventually received the **Distinguished Toastmaster** designation in 2015, the organisation's advanced recognition under its earlier educational programme.

The significance went beyond collecting a credential.

The woman who had come to Nepal as a young newcomer was gradually making speaking itself part of her profession.

When Communication Became the Career

By around 2010, Agrawal was working as a communication coach, and from 2011 she was working as a corporate trainer.

Her professional record lists organisations in Nepal including Ncell, Sipradi, WorldLink, WWF Nepal, Chaudhary Group, Everest Bank, Nepal SBI Bank, Siddhartha Bank, CloudFactory and educational institutions. She also conducted training for section officers of the Government of Nepal.

The subjects were practical: public speaking, body language, presentations, interviews, customer service and workplace communication.

This is perhaps the central chapter of Agrawal's professional story in Nepal.

Kathmandu was not simply where she happened to reside while pursuing an international career. Nepal itself became the environment in which that career developed.

Companies needed employees who could present better. Young professionals needed confidence. Managers needed to communicate with teams. Students needed interview and presentation skills. Entrepreneurs needed to pitch ideas.

Agrawal increasingly built her work around those gaps.

A 2017 programme at The British College, for example, brought her in to train staff in internal communication using practical exercises, role play and audience-management techniques.

Over the years, her audience expanded from students and employees to executives, entrepreneurs, bankers and organisational leaders.

More Than One Career

Yet describing Agrawal only as a corporate trainer would leave out much of what she has done in Nepal.

For years, she seemed willing to try almost anything that involved creativity, audiences or storytelling.

Photography was one example.

She first photographed children, including her own son, and developed baby photography under the name **Cherry Orchard**.

Then food became another subject.

By 2016, she was working seriously with food photography and styling through **Kathmandu Tales Food Photography**. In 2020, *The Kathmandu Post* described her as among a relatively small group of professional food photographers and food stylists then

working in Nepal.

Her photographs attempted to show more than a plate of food.

She incorporated ingredients, fabrics, utensils and other visual details associated with the culture behind a dish, using photography as another form of storytelling.

There was even stand-up comedy.

Agrawal performed on Kathmandu's stand-up circuit, describing comedy as another, very different, form of public speaking.

Viewed separately, marketing, corporate training, photography and comedy can seem like unrelated experiments.

Viewed together, however, they reveal the same recurring interest: **how people connect with an audience.**

Becoming a Storyteller for Nepal

One of the most interesting turns came when Agrawal began directing that ability towards Nepal itself.

By 2020, she had travelled extensively enough around the country to feel frustrated that many of her friends and relatives in Kolkata had little idea of what Nepal offered.

She created a deliberately provocative video around the idea of why people should *not* visit Nepal—the joke being that the reasons

actually showcased the country's culture, heritage, food, landscape and hospitality.

It spread widely online.

In a 2020 interview, Agrawal described how visits to places such as Pokhara and Chitwan had deepened her interest in Nepal's geography and biodiversity, while photography encouraged her to document what she was seeing.

There is a notable reversal here.

Years earlier, she had been the newcomer discovering Nepal.

Now she was trying to persuade people outside Nepal to discover it too.

Working With Nepal's Tourism Community

That connection with tourism eventually became more formal.

Agrawal has worked with Nepal's tourism sector not only as a storyteller but also as a communication trainer.

In June 2024, the **Nepal Tourism Board** invited her to conduct its *Brand, Communicate, Shine* workshop for NTB officials and tourism entrepreneurs.

The programme covered personal and organisational branding, social-media communication, presentations and public speaking—skills directly relevant to the way Nepal presents itself to travellers and international markets.

She has also appeared within Nepal's wider creative community. At the 2024 Kathmandu International Mountain Film Festival, Agrawal moderated a panel examining how local storytellers can take their work to global audiences without losing an authentic voice.

Again, the worlds of communication and Nepal storytelling had begun to overlap.

From Trainer to Entrepreneur

Agrawal also moved from delivering individual workshops towards building learning ventures.

In 2020, she co-founded the Kathmandu-based education startup **Learning Loft Asia**, working on course curation and educational content. The platform partnered with India's Indian Institute of Digital Education to offer digital-learning opportunities to students in Nepal.

She subsequently founded the **Communication Alchemy Guild**, focusing more directly on the field that had become her specialisation.

Current professional programmes describe her as its founder and as a communication coach working particularly in public speaking, personal branding, presentations and professional communication.

Her current work reflects how the field itself is changing. Ads Academy Nepal, for example, lists a programme led by Agrawal on **communication in the age of AI**, applying traditional human communication skills to a workplace increasingly shaped by artificial intelligence.

Beyond Kathmandu

Another change is geographical.

Agrawal's professional life was initially centred heavily on Kathmandu, but her recent work has increasingly taken her around Nepal.

In a recent account, she described training Himalayan and Everest Insurance teams in leadership and communication in **Biratnagar, Nepalgunj, Bhairahawa, Pokhara and Dhangadhi**.

For someone whose first encounter with Nepal was Kathmandu, this represents a broader relationship with the country.

Nepal is no longer simply one city in her story.

Her professional work now reaches audiences across several provinces and communities.

Communication With a Social Purpose

Perhaps the most meaningful evolution in Agrawal's recent work is the use of communication training beyond purely corporate settings.

In December 2024, the U.S. Embassy in Nepal worked with Agrawal and activist **Muskan Khatun**, a recipient of the U.S. International Women of Courage Award, on a communication programme for survivors of gender-based violence.

The initiative focused on rebuilding confidence, strengthening communication and enabling participants to tell their stories. It was designed to travel beyond Kathmandu to cities including Janakpur, Pokhara and Biratnagar.

That work has continued.

In September 2026, Agrawal and Khatun led another programme in Pokhara involving emerging women leaders, survivors of domestic violence and acid attacks, grassroots leaders and professionals.

The transition is significant.

Communication is often sold as a professional advantage: speak better, present better, pitch better.

Here, it becomes something more fundamental—the ability to regain confidence, articulate an experience and participate more fully in society.

What Mannsi Agrawal Is Doing in Nepal Today

Nearly twenty years after arriving, Agrawal remains professionally active in Nepal.

Her work today sits at the intersection of several areas:

communication coaching, corporate learning, leadership development, public speaking, personal branding and women's empowerment.

In January 2026, Australia Awards-Nepal brought together more than 50 members of its Women in Leadership Network for a Communication Excellence Workshop facilitated by Agrawal. The programme focused on helping emerging women leaders structure presentations, understand audiences, manage fear and communicate with greater influence.

She continues to coach companies and professionals, work with institutions, run communication programmes and take training beyond Kathmandu.

Her career has also become increasingly international, but Nepal remains the base and recurring setting visible across much of that work.

That makes the label “**expat in Nepal**” useful only up to a point.

It explains where the story began.

It does not fully describe what came afterwards.

What Makes a Place Home?

Perhaps the most interesting question in Agrawal’s story is not why she came to Nepal.

That answer is relatively straightforward: marriage brought her here.

The more interesting question is what happened after she arrived.

She found work. She changed careers. She raised a family. She explored Kathmandu. She travelled around Nepal. She built friendships and professional networks. She taught Nepali students and employees. She trained government officials, bankers and business leaders. She photographed Nepal’s food. She performed on Kathmandu stages. She helped promote Nepal’s tourism story.

And today she works with professionals and women across the country on something she once had to develop for herself: **the**

confidence to communicate.

Her Kolkata background remains part of who she is. India is not a discarded first chapter, and Nepal is not a replacement for it.

Instead, Mannsi Agrawal's story illustrates a form of belonging familiar to many people who spend their adult lives outside the place where they were born.

Home can become plural.

It can exist in childhood memories in one country and everyday routines in another.

It can be inherited in one place and built in another.

Agrawal came to Nepal because life brought her here.

What followed was something she constructed over nearly twenty years: a career, a family life, a creative identity, a network, and a relationship with a country strong enough that she eventually went from discovering Nepal herself to helping other people discover it.

That may be the clearest measure of how far the journey has travelled.

Mannsi Agrawal arrived in Kathmandu as a young woman from Kolkata. She stayed long enough for Nepal to stop being simply the country she had moved to—and become

one of the places she could call home.

Reporting note: This Nepal Digest profile is based on Mannsi Agrawal's published interviews and professional material, alongside reporting and records from Republica, The Kathmandu Post, Nepali Times, Nepal Tourism Board, Australia Awards-Nepal and reporting on U.S. Embassy-supported programmes. Where the article describes her feelings about Nepal, it relies on her own previously published remarks rather than assuming her personal views.

Sources and further reading

- Republica: How a Kolkata girl came up with her viral video about Nepal
- Republica: Breaking conventions with Mannsi Agrawal
- The Kathmandu Post: Natural lights, camera, food
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- Nepal Tourism Board: Brand, Communicate, Shine workshop
- Australia Awards-Nepal: Communication Excellence Workshop

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