

Export of Cannabis seeds to Nepal

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Nepal is a small country in the Himalayas tucked in between the Tibet region of China and India. It has a population of around twenty eight million people and is about a hundred and forty seven thousand kilometres squared in area. It's capitol city, Kathmandu,



in nearly twelve thousand kilometers from Guelph. The basic geography in Nepal consists of three geographical areas: the mountainous region to the north of Nepal, the hills region in the centre, and the terai region in the south. The mountainous region in Nepal is not a good place to grow crops, mainly because the temperature is too cold and the growing season is short. The farming system there is mainly based on livestock such as yaks, goats or chauries that are brought to the mountainous region to graze during the summer but in the winter the livestock are brought down to the hills regions where grass still grows. Farming in the hills region of Nepal consists mainly of terraced farming for grains such as maize or millet. There is also some cultivation of fruits and coffee as well as livestock. The terai region is the most agriculturally productive of the three regions and has a sub-tropical climate that is suitable for growing tropical fruits and for mechanized rice farms. (Chapagain 2016)

Cannabis has grown in Nepal for a very long time, both wild and cultivated varieties. It was traditionally used by Hindu yogis to aid meditation, often from India where the use of cannabis was illegal. It is also used for medicinal purposes and by older people who are can no longer work on farms.(FISHER 1975) In 1973 growing and selling cannabis became illegal in Nepal.

The main reason for this was because of pressure from the United States to crack down on drug use and trade around the world. Now the farming and selling of cannabis is illegal, however the use of marijuana in Nepal is legal. (FISHER 1975) Despite this, there is now a push in Nepal to legalize the drug once again to boost the tourism industry and to profit from this valuable crop that is now being grown illegally. (Mani 2015) In the Parsa district in Nepal, one of the southern districts that make up the terai region, sixty percent of the arable land was used to grow illegal drugs. Most of this was sold across the border to the Indian mafia. (Mani 2015) If growing cannabis was legal, all of this money would be going to Nepalese farmers and the government in Nepal as opposed to organized crime.

If growing cannabis becomes legal in Nepal, I would propose that Canadian cannabis seeds be shipped to Nepal to be grown there. They are a product that some farmers in Nepal already would know how to grow, seeing as it was grown very commonly forty years ago, and those farmers would be able to teach how to grow the plant to other farmers. The plant can serve several purposes. It can be used as a drug for medicinal or recreational purposes, as most people know, but the seeds are also a healthy food source that contain 3 essential amino acids and has a high fibre content and on top of that the stalk of the plant can be used for fibre to make clothes or carpets. (Paul von Hartmann 2015) Cannabis as a drug can be used in palliative care for many illnesses and can be used to stimulate appetite and to treat symptoms such as pain, vomiting and convulsions. (Burger, Editor Suzanne Johannigman, and Eschiti 2013) Cannabis is a very valuable cash crop that can be sold at a much higher price than most crops grown by Nepalese farmers. However, the seeds are relatively expensive to purchase, so it would probably be best for most farmers in Nepal to grow some cannabis plants alongside the crop they already grow or the livestock that are farmed there, seeing as most of them would not be able to purchase large quantities of cannabis seeds at a time. (Clarke 2007) Cannabis plants grow well in the same field as many grain crops, such as wheat and maize, as well as some root crops and fruit trees Some high quality cannabis strains can cost five to ten Canadian dollars per seed, which is the equivalent of four hundred and eight to eight hundred and fifteen Nepali rupees. (About True North Seedbank | True North Seed Bank 2016) The cost of starting up and operating a cannabis farm can vary depending on the technology used and the scale of the farm. If the cannabis was grown outside, the cost of starting the farm and operating it would be relatively low; only basic supplies such as fertilizer and pesticides would be required. However, this means that the

cannabis plants can only be grown in the summer, as the plants would die during the winter. The plants could be harvested only once per year as they have a season time of three to four months.(Hakkarainen Vibeke Asmussen Frank Jussi Perälä Helle Vibeke Dahl 2011) Growing the cannabis in greenhouses is a more efficient way of growing, but it is also much more expensive. Greenhouses usually cost between two and four USD per square foot. (Robbins n.d.) On top of that is the cost of electricity to heat the greenhouse. This poses a problem for many farmers in Nepal who are off the electrical grid. They would need to use a generator which adds even more to the cost of operating a greenhouse. Little research has been done to determine how well cannabis grows in Nepal and which types grow best, so I want to ship several varieties of Canadian seeds in order to test which ones grow best in the Nepalese climate. Unfortunately there are very few statistics at the moment regarding varieties of cannabis that grow best in Nepal, and there probably isn't an easy way to find out as the people growing it there will most likely not want to give away that information. However we do know that the plant has usually grown best in Nepal at altitudes of fifteen hundred to thirty five hundred metres, meaning that the hills region of Nepal would be an ideal place to grow cannabis. (Clarke 2007) This would also help the hills region become a more profitable region for agriculture, as most agriculture is sustenance farming there. For this reason I think it would be best to test out a variety of new Canadian strains of cannabis in Nepal to determine which ones grow best in the Nepalese climate.

For the purpose of shipping cannabis seeds to Nepal from Canada, the True North seed Bank is an ideal company. This company, based in British Columbia, ships a very large variety of cannabis seeds around the world to various buyers. They source the majority of their seeds from Canadian growers such as the Canuck Seed Bank, another British Columbia based company, and also get some of their seeds from the Netherlands and the United States. Their seeds are shipped either from British Columbia or from the United Kingdom. In the case of Nepal, they will be shipped from the office in BC. The company will ship the seeds to Nepal at a flat rate of seventy CAD or five thousand seven hundred and thirty Nepali rupees, regardless of the size of the order and will ship the product for free if the order is over five hundred and twenty five Canadian dollars, equivalent to approximately forty three thousand and three hundred Nepali rupees. The product is expected to arrive in around twenty five business days. The company has an extremely large variety of seeds for different methods of growth and for different purposes. They sell both

auto-flowering and photoperiod seeds. Auto-flowering seeds grow into plants that will flower after a certain time period while photoperiod plants will flower when exposed to a certain light to darkness ratio. They also have seeds that grow into plants with varying THC and CBD levels. They also sell several award winning strands of cannabis plants. (About True North Seedbank | True North Seed Bank 2016)

The main competition for the seeds that are shipped from the True North Seed Bank will be the seeds from cannabis plants that are already grown in Nepal. The Canadian plants should have superior genetics and should be more potent than the Nepalese cannabis, giving it a place on the market in Nepal. The cannabis in Nepal before it was made illegal was sixty percent less potent than the cannabis in North America today, so if that has stayed the same than the Canadian product should be of higher quality. (Mani 2015)

Shipping and storing the cannabis seeds is generally very easy and cheap. The seeds are dry so they can be stored for long periods of time and do not need refrigeration as long as they are kept in a dry environment. The seeds are also very light and small so they do not cost very much to ship such a long distance as from Canada to Nepal. This also means that after harvesting the seeds, farmers can store them for some time before planting them again or selling them.

Phytosanitary certificates may be required to ensure that the seeds being exported to Nepal are free of any pests and to show that they have gone through inspection procedures.

Unfortunately growing cannabis is still illegal in Nepal so this highly profitable business cannot exist for the time being in that country.

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