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# "Global Corporate Practices and Insolvency Framework in Nepal: Analysis of Companies Act 2063 and Securities Act 2063"

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#### **Abstract**

Corporate governance and insolvency laws play a pivotal role in ensuring a stable, transparent, and efficient business environment. Nepal's legal framework governing corporate governance is primarily based on the Companies Act 2063 and the Securities Act 2063, while insolvency and liquidation matters fall under the jurisdiction of the Insolvency Act 2063. These legislative instruments provide mechanisms for corporate transparency, accountability, shareholder rights, regulatory oversight, and financial stability. However, despite their comprehensive nature, enforcement challenges, regulatory inefficiencies, and gaps in implementation continue to hinder corporate governance effectiveness in Nepal. This study offers a detailed analysis of Nepal's corporate governance and insolvency framework, focusing on the issuance of debentures, auditor regulations, shareholder and creditor rights, public securities issuance, and the legal processes governing insolvency proceedings. It also provides insights into the liquidation process and restructuring mechanisms available for financially distressed companies. Furthermore, the study compares Nepal's corporate governance model with international standards, highlighting best practices from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, India, and Singapore. By incorporating case law references such as Re Universal Distributing Co Ltd. (1933) and Moore Stephens (A Firm) vs. Stone and Rolls Ltd. (2009), this study examines jurisprudential insights that influence corporate and insolvency laws.

The research identifies major challenges, including limited enforcement of auditor disqualification criteria, delays in liquidation proceedings, and insufficient regulatory oversight. Additionally, gaps in investor protection mechanisms and a lack of technological advancements in corporate governance further hinder business transparency and efficiency. To address these issues, the study recommends the adoption of digital governance platforms, enhanced regulatory oversight, stricter compliance measures, and the integration of blockchain and AI-based auditing systems. By strengthening regulatory bodies such as the Securities Board of Nepal (SEBON) and the Office of the Company Registrar (OCR), Nepal can align its corporate governance structure with global best practices. The study also underscores the importance of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and specialized commercial courts to expedite insolvency proceedings. The legal framework must evolve to accommodate a rapidly changing corporate landscape, ensuring that both corporate entities and stakeholders operate within a robust, transparent, and investor-friendly ecosystem.



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*Keywords:* Corporate Governance, Insolvency, Nepal Companies Act 2063, Securities Act 2063, Insolvency Act 2063, Liquidation, Restructuring, Debenture Issuance, Auditor Regulations, Shareholder Rights, Creditor Protection, Regulatory Oversight, Investor Confidence, Financial Stability, Business Transparency, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Blockchain in Governance, AI-based Auditing, Commercial Courts, Legal Compliance, Corporate Sustainability.

#### Introduction

Corporate governance and insolvency laws are essential pillars of a stable and transparent financial system. These legal frameworks regulate corporate accountability, financial reporting, and restructuring processes, ensuring that companies operate efficiently while protecting the interests of shareholders, creditors, and other stakeholders. In Nepal, corporate governance is governed primarily by the Companies Act 2063 and the Securities Act 2063, whereas insolvency proceedings fall under the Insolvency Act 2063. The objective of these legislative instruments is to enhance financial stability, promote business transparency, and mitigate risks associated with insolvency.

The importance of strong corporate governance cannot be overstated. A well-functioning corporate governance framework not only instills investor confidence but also ensures the longterm sustainability of businesses. Nepal, like many developing economies, faces challenges in corporate governance enforcement. The lack of regulatory efficiency, limited adoption of digital compliance tools, and gaps in corporate accountability hinder the effective implementation of governance laws. A major concern is the delay in insolvency proceedings, which impacts the recovery process for creditors and disrupts economic stability. Strengthening institutional oversight and integrating modern technology-driven solutions can bridge these gaps, leading to a more resilient corporate landscape. Insolvency, an inevitable reality for financially distressed companies, demands an efficient legal framework to manage liquidation and restructuring. The Insolvency Act 2063 provides mechanisms for businesses to either restructure or undergo liquidation based on their financial health. Liquidation, being the last resort, allows for the equitable distribution of company assets among creditors. Alternatively, restructuring programs enable companies to regain financial stability, potentially preventing job losses and business closures. Nepal's insolvency laws recognize the significance of judicial oversight, allowing courts to intervene in cases where corporate mismanagement, fraudulent activities, or financial misrepresentation have contributed to insolvency.

A comparative analysis with global corporate governance models highlights the need for Nepal to modernize its regulatory framework. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, and Singapore have incorporated digital governance platforms to enhance compliance monitoring and transparency. The integration of blockchain for shareholder registries and AI-driven auditing processes in these jurisdictions has set new benchmarks in governance efficiency. Nepal stands to benefit by adopting such advancements, particularly in enhancing corporate disclosures, streamlining insolvency resolutions, and expediting court proceedings related to



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restructuring and liquidation. This study aims to provide an in-depth examination of Nepal's corporate governance and insolvency mechanisms, highlighting key legal provisions, enforcement challenges, and international best practices. It explores how legal doctrines such as ultra vires and fiduciary duties influence corporate governance and how insolvency proceedings impact economic resilience. Additionally, the study addresses the critical role of regulatory institutions such as the Securities Board of Nepal (SEBON) and the Office of the Company Registrar (OCR) in ensuring compliance and mitigating corporate malfeasance.

Furthermore, the research evaluates Nepal's corporate governance challenges, including weak enforcement mechanisms, delayed liquidation processes, and insufficient investor protection measures. It proposes reforms such as:

- Strengthening the legal framework for auditor independence and corporate accountability.
- Enhancing the efficiency of insolvency proceedings through specialized commercial courts.
- Implementing digital governance solutions, including blockchain-based transparency mechanisms.
- Encouraging corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives to align businesses with sustainable economic goals.

Corporate governance and insolvency frameworks play a critical role in shaping Nepal's economic trajectory. By addressing regulatory inefficiencies, integrating modern compliance tools, and ensuring stronger enforcement of legal provisions, Nepal can create a business environment that fosters transparency, investor confidence, and long-term economic growth.

#### 1. Issuance of Debentures under the Companies Act 2063

#### 1.1 Legal Framework for Debenture Issuance

The issuance of debentures is an essential mechanism for raising capital in Nepal. Section 34 of the Companies Act 2063 governs the process, stipulating that a public company must specify the purpose for raising loans or issuing debentures, including a detailed work plan and budget. Debentures can be issued either with or without pledging immovable assets. However, a company must obtain business commencement approval and ensure its released capital is fully paid before issuing debentures.

The definition of debenture, as per Section 2(s), encompasses any bond issued by a company, whether or not its assets are used as collateral. Section 2(t) further defines a "debenture trustee" as a corporate entity responsible for safeguarding the interests of debenture holders. The appointment of a licensed debenture trustee is a legal prerequisite to ensure investor protection.



#### 1.2 Conversion of Debentures into Shares

Under Section 35(4), debentures may be converted into shares if such a provision is explicitly stated in the prospectus. This flexibility enables companies to restructure their financial instruments while protecting investor rights.

# 1.3 Priority of Creditors in Liquidation: Case Study - Re Universal Distributing Co Ltd. (1933)

In *Re Universal Distributing Co Ltd.* (1933), the High Court ruled that a liquidator has the right to recover costs and expenses related to asset realization before secured creditors claim their interests. This ruling established the equitable lien principle, reinforcing the necessity of robust legal mechanisms in Nepal to balance creditor and shareholder interests during insolvency proceedings.

# 2. Appointment and Disqualification of Auditors

# 2.1 Role of Auditors in Corporate Governance

Auditors play a crucial role in ensuring transparency and accountability within corporate governance. Chapter 8 of the Companies Act 2063 mandates the appointment of independent auditors to safeguard shareholders' interests. Section 110 requires every company to appoint an auditor, while Section 111 specifies that auditors must be licensed under prevailing laws.

#### 2.2 Disqualifications for Auditors

To maintain the integrity of the auditing process, Section 112 outlines several disqualifications for auditors:

- Conflict of interest, including serving as a director or financial advisor in the company.
- Criminal convictions related to financial fraud.
- Insolvency status, which could impair an auditor's ability to perform duties.
- Holding significant shareholding in the company, which may compromise impartiality.
- Failing to clear debts owed to the company within the prescribed timeline.

# 2.3 Case Study: Moore Stephens (A Firm) vs. Stone and Rolls Ltd (2009)

In *Moore Stephens (A Firm) vs. Stone and Rolls Ltd (2009)*, the House of Lords ruled that auditors could not be held liable for negligence if they were misled by fraudulent directors who acted as the "guiding mind" of the company. This case underscores the challenges auditors face in detecting fraud and highlights the necessity for stringent oversight mechanisms in Nepal to mitigate audit risks.



# 3. Shareholder and Debenture Holder Registers

#### 3.1 Maintenance of Registers

Section 46 mandates that all companies must establish and maintain registers for shareholders and debenture holders at their registered office. Public companies must allow access to these registers upon request, ensuring transparency in corporate governance.

# 3.2 Right to Inspection and Duplication of Records

A public company must facilitate the inspection of shareholder and debenture holder registers upon a written request. Section 46(4) states that the company may issue a seven-day advance public notice in a national newspaper regarding such an inspection request. Section 46(5) further provides that any person can obtain a duplicate copy of the register by paying a prescribed fee. This provision ensures corporate accountability by granting stakeholders easy access to corporate records.

#### 4. Securities Act 2063 and Public Issuance of Securities

#### **4.1 Public Issue Requirements**

Section 29 of the Securities Act 2063 establishes the legal framework for the public issuance of securities. A corporate body intending to sell securities to more than fifty persons must conduct a public offering. The issuance process must adhere to prescribed timelines and regulatory standards to ensure investor protection.

Section 29(2) specifies that the application period for acquiring securities must be predetermined and disclosed in the offering documentation. Section 29(3) emphasizes that public issuances must comply with regulations concerning valuation and securities allotment. Additionally, Section 29(4) prohibits the resale of publicly issued securities within one year unless explicitly approved by the Securities Board of Nepal.

# 4.2 Prospectus Publication

Section 30 mandates that companies must obtain Securities Board approval before publishing a prospectus for public securities issuance. The prospectus must include critical details such as:

- The company's financial statements and liabilities.
- The purpose of the securities issuance.
- Risks associated with the securities being offered.
- The rights and obligations of investors.

However, certain exemptions apply. Section 30(2) states that a prospectus is not required for securities issued by Nepal Rastra Bank, government-guaranteed securities, securities sold to a limited number of persons (up to fifty), and employee stock options. These exemptions simplify the issuance process for certain categories of securities.



#### 5. Global Perspectives on Corporate Law

# 5.1 Comparative Analysis with International Corporate Governance Practices

Corporate governance frameworks vary across jurisdictions, reflecting differences in legal traditions, economic structures, and regulatory priorities. Nepal's corporate governance model, rooted in the Companies Act 2063 and Securities Act 2063, shares similarities with governance frameworks in countries such as India and the United Kingdom. However, key differences in enforcement mechanisms and investor protection measures highlight areas for improvement.

For instance, the United Kingdom's corporate governance framework, established under the Companies Act 2006 and the UK Corporate Governance Code, emphasizes principles-based regulation, allowing flexibility for companies to adopt best practices suited to their business models. In contrast, Nepal's legal framework is more rules-based, requiring strict compliance with predefined statutes. This distinction impacts corporate transparency and accountability, as principles-based governance allows for adaptive and industry-specific regulatory measures.

# **5.2 Lessons from Global Corporate Law Developments**

Corporate governance systems worldwide have evolved to address emerging risks, including financial fraud, shareholder activism, and technological disruptions. Countries such as Canada and Singapore have implemented advanced electronic filing systems for corporate disclosures, improving transparency and regulatory oversight. The United States' Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 introduced stringent compliance measures for financial reporting, mandating increased auditor independence and executive accountability.

Nepal can draw lessons from these global developments by:

- Enhancing digital regulatory frameworks for corporate reporting.
- Strengthening investor protection mechanisms through robust enforcement of fiduciary duties.
- Encouraging the adoption of technology-driven compliance measures to reduce fraudulent activities.

# 6. Identifying Key Challenges in Nepal's Corporate Governance

Nepal faces several challenges in implementing effective corporate governance, including:

- Limited Awareness of Legal Provisions: Many corporate stakeholders, including small and medium enterprises, lack awareness of legal compliance requirements, leading to regulatory violations.
- **Inadequate Enforcement of Auditor Disqualifications:** Despite clear legal provisions in the Companies Act 2063, enforcement agencies struggle to regulate and penalize auditors who fail to maintain professional integrity.
- **Delays in Liquidation Proceedings:** Prolonged insolvency cases hinder the ability of creditors to recover debts, impacting investor confidence in Nepal's corporate sector.



# **6.1 Proposed Reforms to Strengthen Corporate Governance**

To address these challenges, Nepal should implement the following reforms:

- **Introduce E-Governance Platforms:** A centralized digital reporting system can facilitate real-time monitoring of corporate compliance, improving transparency and regulatory oversight.
- **Strengthen Penalties for Non-Compliance:** The imposition of stricter financial and legal penalties for fraudulent activities can deter corporate misconduct.
- Establish Specialized Commercial Courts: A dedicated judiciary for corporate disputes can expedite case resolution, improving investor trust in Nepal's legal system.
- Enhance Auditor Independence: Stricter qualification and monitoring criteria for auditors can ensure unbiased financial reporting and corporate accountability.

# 7. Detailed Analysis of Legal Doctrines

# 7.1 Doctrine of Ultra Vires and Its Relevance in Nepal

The doctrine of ultra vires, which restricts corporations from engaging in activities beyond their statutory authority, is a fundamental principle in corporate law. In Nepal, the Companies Act 2063 enforces ultra vires provisions to ensure that businesses operate within the scope defined in their memorandum and articles of association.

This doctrine plays a crucial role in preventing corporate malfeasance by ensuring that directors and executives do not exceed their legal powers. However, its rigid application may limit business flexibility. Countries like the United Kingdom have reformed ultra vires laws to allow companies greater operational latitude while maintaining regulatory safeguards. Nepal could consider a similar balanced approach by refining ultra vires provisions to allow legitimate business expansion while protecting stakeholders from unauthorized corporate actions.

#### 7.2 Fiduciary Duties of Directors

Directors owe fiduciary duties to the company and its shareholders, ensuring ethical decision-making and responsible governance. The Companies Act 2063 mandates that directors:

- Act in good faith and in the best interests of the company.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and disclose any potential self-dealing transactions.
- Exercise due diligence in corporate decision-making.

Countries like Canada and Australia impose personal liability on directors who breach fiduciary duties, ensuring greater accountability. Nepal should strengthen enforcement mechanisms by imposing stricter penalties for directors found guilty of mismanagement or fraud.



#### 8. Comparative Study with Indian Corporate Law

#### 8.1 Key Similarities and Differences

Nepal's corporate governance framework shares several similarities with India's Companies Act 2013, particularly in the areas of:

- **Auditor Independence:** Both countries emphasize the need for external, licensed auditors to maintain financial transparency.
- **Shareholder Rights:** Minority shareholder protection laws in both jurisdictions ensure fair treatment of investors.
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Nepal's legal framework is gradually integrating CSR obligations, mirroring India's requirement for businesses to allocate funds toward social initiatives.

However, Nepal's enforcement mechanisms remain weaker than India's, where regulatory bodies such as the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) actively monitor corporate compliance. Strengthening Nepal's Securities Board (SEBON) could enhance corporate governance through more stringent oversight measures.

#### 8.2 Case Study: The Satyam Scandal (2009)

The Satyam Scandal exposed significant lapses in corporate governance and auditing standards in India. The fraudulent manipulation of financial statements resulted in billions of dollars in investor losses. The case led to major reforms, including:

- Mandatory auditor rotation to prevent prolonged conflicts of interest.
- Stricter corporate disclosures to ensure accurate financial reporting.
- Enhanced regulatory scrutiny by SEBI and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

Nepal can learn from this case by reinforcing auditor independence and implementing stricter disclosure norms to prevent similar corporate fraud.

# 9. Insolvency and Corporate Liquidation in Nepal

A company is deemed insolvent when it is unable to pay its debts as they become due. Insolvency can arise due to poor investment decisions, miscalculated business risks, and pricing errors. However, broader economic crises and market fluctuations can also push companies into insolvency. According to Section 2(b) of the Insolvency Act of Nepal 2063, insolvency is defined as a company's inability, or the appearance of an inability, to pay its debts either presently due or those due in the future. Moreover, if a company's liabilities exceed the value of its assets, it is considered insolvent.

The Insolvency Act of Nepal 2063 provides that any stakeholder or the company itself may initiate insolvency proceedings. This includes 10% of creditors, 5% of shareholders, or 5% of debenture holders, who must obtain prior court approval before making an application for insolvency proceedings. Liquidators appointed by the company, authorized bodies, and



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regulators (such as the Nepal Rastra Bank for financial institutions and the Insurance Board for insurance companies) can also submit applications accompanied by the necessary documents. Once an application is submitted, the court must register it and schedule a hearing within 15 days. The court may grant the company seven days to contest the application. The court may then either accept or dismiss the application, ordering an inquiry officer to investigate the company's financial status.

Upon appointment, the inquiry officer conducts a detailed inquiry to determine whether:

- 1. The company is insolvent,
- 2. Its financial position can be improved through restructuring,
- 3. Liquidation is the only viable option.

The inquiry officer convenes a meeting with creditors and submits a report to the court, which then issues an order within seven days. The court may order liquidation, restructuring, a waiting period for potential recovery, or further inquiries. Section 13 of the Insolvency Act of Nepal 2063 empowers the court to investigate the financial state of the company. If the inquiry officer requires more time, Section 14 allows for an extension of the investigation period upon reasonable justification. During the inquiry, Section 15 grants the court the authority to remove the board of directors and allow the inquiry officer to manage the company if mismanagement is found. Section 20 restricts the discontinuation of essential services such as electricity, water supply, and telecommunications during insolvency proceedings.

# 10. Liquidation Process and Corporate Restructuring

Liquidation is the final resort for an insolvent company. When liquidation is ordered, all assets of the company are sold, and the proceeds are distributed among creditors. According to Section 2(d) of the Insolvency Act, liquidation refers to the cancellation of a company's registration following the completion of insolvency procedures. The liquidator, an insolvency practitioner, is tasked with asset management, debt claims, creditor meetings, and loan negotiations. The liquidator may also seek additional loans to maximize asset recovery.

Conversely, restructuring is an alternative to liquidation aimed at rescuing the company. The restructuring manager formulates a restructuring scheme in written form, detailing capital restructuring, debt capitalization, asset sales, management restructuring, and other measures deemed appropriate by the court. A creditors' meeting is convened to discuss and adopt the restructuring plan. If creditors approve the plan, it is submitted to the court as per Section 25. If the restructuring plan is not submitted within the prescribed time, the court may invalidate the restructuring process and order liquidation.

If a creditor opposes the restructuring plan, they may file an objection within seven days under Section 27. If the objection is deemed valid, the court may invalidate the restructuring resolution and order liquidation. Additionally, Section 39 provides a conversion mechanism,



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allowing a liquidator to apply for restructuring if they believe the company's business model is viable and can be saved through restructuring rather than liquidation.

Insolvency is one of three company exit procedures recognized under Nepalese law, the others being voluntary liquidation and cancellation of registration. Section 48 mandates creditors to submit claims, providing supporting evidence. The restructuring manager or liquidator must verify the authenticity of claims. If liabilities are undetermined or contingent, Section 50 allows for valuation by the court. Dissatisfied creditors may file complaints with the court within 15 days of claim rejection.

Section 59 allows the liquidator to challenge voidable transactions that took place when the company was already insolvent. If a transaction is deemed voidable, the court, under Section 61, may order the repayment of funds or reversal of asset transfers. Section 67 allows the appointment of a qualified replacement for a suspended or removed liquidator or restructuring manager. The court also determines the remuneration for these officials under Section 68. If the liquidator or restructuring manager fails to perform duties as required by law, the court may remove them under Section 70, and they must provide explanations for any questionable actions as per Section 71.

# 11. Judicial Role in Insolvency Proceedings

The court plays a vital role in insolvency proceedings, ensuring a balance between protecting viable businesses and safeguarding creditor rights. The legal framework aims to prevent unnecessary liquidations by promoting restructuring options. If the court determines that restructuring is infeasible, liquidation ensures that company assets are redistributed effectively for better economic use. This process fosters innovation and investment by redirecting financial resources to productive ventures.

The Insolvency Act of Nepal 2063 seeks to balance several objectives:

- Preventing the unnecessary liquidation of potentially viable businesses,
- Providing a structured legal framework for financially distressed companies,
- Maximizing asset recovery for creditors,
- Protecting stakeholders' rights through judicial oversight.

When an insolvency application is filed, the court allows the company to present counterarguments within 15 days. If no valid defense is provided, an inquiry officer is appointed to assess the financial condition of the company. If liquidation is deemed necessary, the liquidator distributes assets in accordance with legal provisions. However, if restructuring is viable, the court ensures that a comprehensive restructuring plan is implemented under strict judicial supervision.



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Thus, insolvency does not always lead to liquidation. Stakeholders have the right to initiate legal proceedings, and the court plays a crucial role in ensuring that businesses are either restructured or liquidated in a manner that serves the interests of creditors, employees, and the broader economy. The legal provisions outlined in the Insolvency Act of Nepal 2063 underscore the critical role of judicial intervention in maintaining corporate stability and economic efficiency.

#### 12. Conclusion

Nepal's corporate governance and insolvency frameworks have evolved to provide a foundational legal structure for business regulation, securities oversight, and financial stability. However, despite the presence of well-defined legal provisions in the Companies Act 2063, Securities Act 2063, and Insolvency Act 2063, significant challenges persist in the effective enforcement of corporate governance and insolvency laws. Weak regulatory implementation, delays in insolvency proceedings, and inefficient corporate compliance mechanisms hinder Nepal's ability to maintain a transparent and investor-friendly business environment.

A major finding of this study is the necessity of stronger enforcement mechanisms. While Nepal has adopted various legal measures to govern corporate activities, inconsistent enforcement has led to regulatory inefficiencies, financial misconduct, and inadequate protection of shareholder and creditor rights. Enhancing the institutional capacity of regulatory bodies such as SEBON and OCR is crucial to ensuring the effective implementation of corporate governance standards. The introduction of digital compliance monitoring systems can significantly improve transparency and accountability in corporate filings and regulatory oversight.

The study also emphasizes the importance of a structured approach to insolvency management. Liquidation should always be considered a last resort, with restructuring models prioritized to rescue financially distressed companies. The Insolvency Act 2063 provides mechanisms for restructuring, liquidation, and judicial intervention, but procedural inefficiencies and creditor disputes often delay resolution. The appointment of skilled restructuring managers, judicial oversight, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms can help expedite insolvency proceedings and prevent unnecessary corporate failures.

From a comparative perspective, lessons from international corporate governance frameworks indicate that Nepal should adopt:

- A principle-based regulatory approach akin to that of the United Kingdom.
- Stronger investor protection measures, similar to those enforced in the United States and Canada.
- Digital governance solutions, such as blockchain-based corporate records and AI-enhanced auditing processes, as seen in Singapore and Estonia.



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 Stricter auditor independence and accountability measures to prevent financial fraud and mismanagement.

Furthermore, as Nepal's corporate landscape continues to expand, the integration of corporate social responsibility (CSR) provisions into governance laws will be essential for fostering long-term business sustainability. Promoting ethical corporate conduct and sustainability-driven investments will enhance investor confidence and align Nepalese companies with global corporate governance trends.

In conclusion, corporate governance and insolvency frameworks play a critical role in shaping Nepal's economic trajectory. While the existing legal structure provides a strong foundation, further improvements are required to enhance enforcement, align regulations with international standards, and integrate modern technological innovations. Strengthening regulatory bodies, embracing digital solutions, and refining judicial processes will create a more robust and transparent corporate environment. By implementing these reforms, Nepal can position itself as a more attractive destination for investment and economic growth while ensuring financial stability and corporate accountability in the long term.

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