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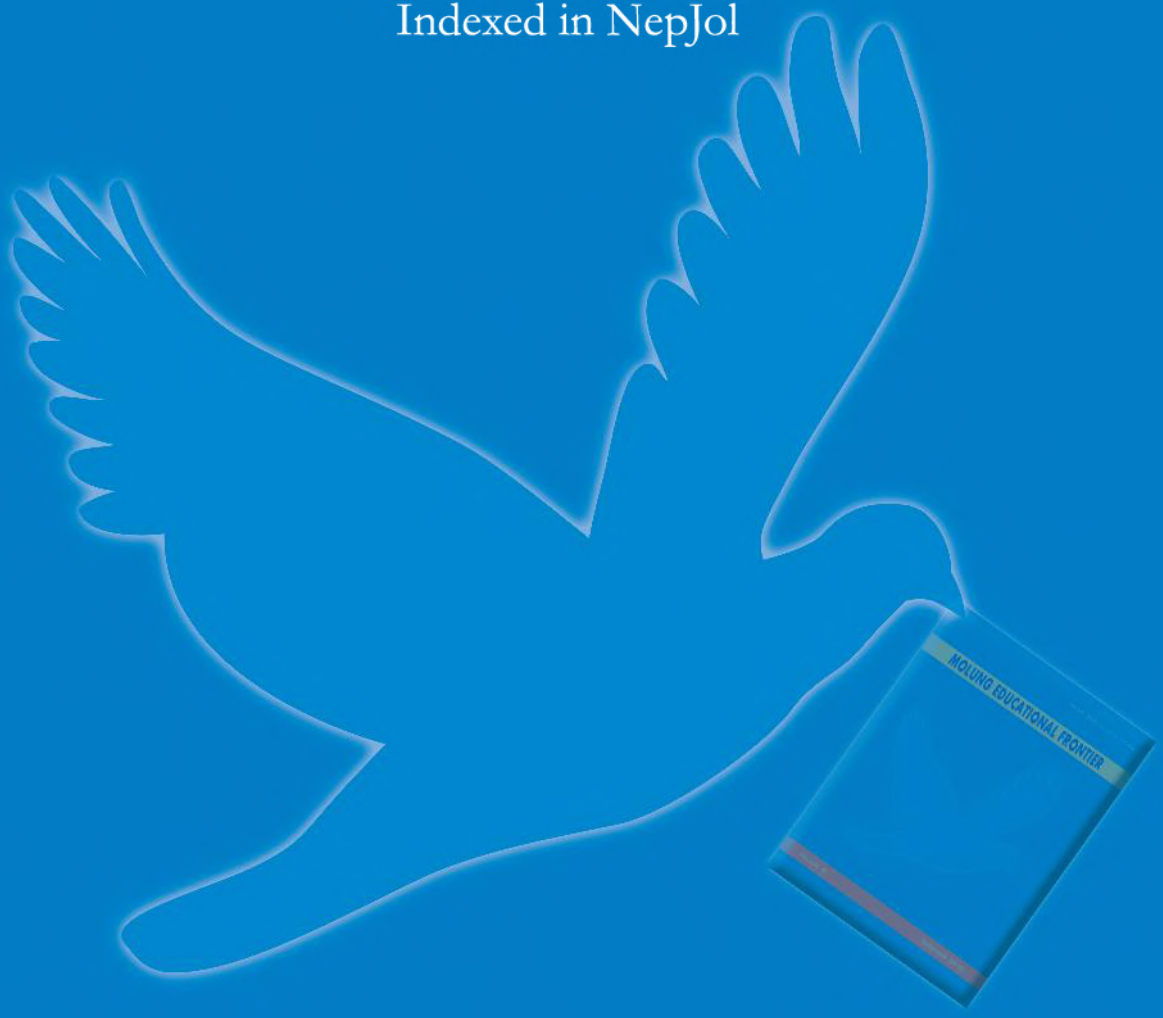

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Editorial Team

Editor's Note

With the establishment of republicanism, Nepal as a developing nation wants to rapidly develop, achieve sustainable development goals, and improve people's quality of life. Molung Foundation, as a research institution, has also set its vision, mission, and goal to contribute to the development of a self-sustained and equitable society. Along this line, we regularly publish a scholarly journal titled *Molung Educational Frontier* focusing on good governance, development, and prosperity. This is a multidisciplinary journal that incorporates research articles, review papers, and book reviews based on original research carried out by researchers and scholars worldwide. It accepts only the manuscripts that use the style sheet of the latest version of the APA Manual.

We have incorporated ten articles in the present volume including one review paper and a book review. They represent different academic disciplines and geographical zones from home and abroad. They have addressed the pressing social issues – governance, economy, development, reconstruction, resilience, social conflict, community empowerment, ethnicity, culture, pandemic, medicine and the like. Researchers aim to explore, examine, and find answers to the social problems and contribute to formulating appropriate policies for the overall development of the country.

Researchers are cordially requested to send their manuscripts that can contribute to our institutional goal. We publish the selected articles after the double-blind review, author's revision, and acceptance of the Editorial Board in June every year. We may also publish Special Issue(s) on relevant theme(s) if a group of researchers shows their keen interest.

Bhupa P. Dhamala

15 June 2021

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Linked Lives: Exploring the Narratives of Second-Generation Migrants in Nepal

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Abstract

This article describes the narratives of second-generation migrants in Nepal. The paper explores the reasons for migration as shared with their offspring by first-generation migrants. The article also shares the narratives by second-generation migrants on experiences of family, school, community, and the State. Second-generation migrants or adult offspring of first-generation migrants from Tibet and India comprised the sampling frame for the qualitative study. Data were collected through a non-probability sampling technique, and in-depth semi-structured interview schedules were used. Nine in-depth interviews were conducted for the study. Thematic analysis was employed to examine the data. Key reasons to migrate to Nepal featured in the narratives of the migrants were opportunities for business, availability of good education, and a suitable climate in Nepal. Furthermore, lack of opportunities for employment and education and instances of violence at their place of origin pushed the migrants towards Nepal. Most of the interviewees shared having solid bonds with their families. They shared mixed experiences (both encouraging and humiliating) at school and varied experiences in their interaction with the broader society (both supportive and conflicting). Furthermore, all interviewees shared challenges in dealing with or receiving help from the Nepali State.

Keywords: migration, Nepal, children of immigrants, migrant experiences in Nepal, second-generation migrants

Linked Lives: Exploring the Narratives of Second-Generation Migrants in Nepal

Migration is a dynamic concept and involves various forms of population mobility (Sharma & Sharma, 2011). Kok (1997) defines migration as crossing the boundary of a predefined spatial unit by one or more persons, resulting in the change of residence. Institute of Migration [IOM] (2019a) reiterates that migration is "The movement of persons away from their place of usual residence, either across an international border or within a State" (p. 137). Migration also involves decision-making about moving, the act of moving, and a process whereby people adapt to a new environment (Virupaksha et al., 2014).

The share of international migrants in the world population has increased from 2.3 percent in 1980 to 2.8 percent in 2000 and to 3.6 percent in 2020 (Global Migration Data Portal, 2019). The International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2019a) describes that a migrant is

> any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of: (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is. (para.1)

The number of migrants in the world who lived outside their country of origin in 2019 was 272 million, increasing from 258 million in 2017 (Global Migration Data Portal, 2019). Migration as a phenomenon has drawn considerable interest worldwide because of its omnipresence and its impact on the world that we know today. In this regard, the United Nations has dedicated enough attention to migration in its Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs], where 11 out of the 17 SDGs contain targets and indicators relevant to migration or mobility. The core principle of SDGs is to 'leave no one behind,' not even migrants (Global Migration Data Portal, 2019).

Migration is generally perceived to be a complex phenomenon because of the multiple complexities it may involve, e.g., differences in languages, food habits, clothing patterns, religious beliefs and practices, cultures, to name a few, between origin and destination. Migration is a complex phenomenon also because of the varied experiences of migrants as they migrate with their culture and cultural capital. Bhugra et al. (2020) draw attention to the vital role of cultural capital in acculturation and in reduction of distress after migration.

Ample discussion has been made around the phenomenon of migration, including the reasons for migration. Shrestha (1990) and Virupaksha et al. (2014) discuss migration as a path to financial freedom and bring attention to capitalism as a reason for domestic and international migration. Wolpert (1965), in the 'situational approach,' says that people migrate when the value of 'place utility' of a location is more significant than other locations. For Wolpert, the value of place utility involves social, economic, and other costs and benefits that the person gets in a particular location. Joseph (1988) contends that migration frequently occurs due to socio-economic-political changes. Lee (1966) forwards the much-acclaimed 'push-pull theory' of migration. The 'push-pull theory' lists several factors that push people from their place of origin and the factors that lure people to the place of destination. Some examples of push factors are war, natural disasters like famine, flood, landslide, and examples of pull factors are better education, better social protection systems, and better employment opportunities.

Emigration is a prominent phenomenon in Nepal, and extant poverty and lower human development indicators provide fertile grounds for emigration. The Department of Foreign Employment in Nepal flags that nearly 1400 Nepalese left Nepal every day between 2018 and 2019 to work elsewhere (Mandal, 2019). Poverty is a major reason for the emigration of Nepalese. Based on the Multidimensional Poverty Index 2016 data, "34.0 percent of the population were multidimensionally poor while an additional 22.4 percent were classified as

vulnerable to multidimensional poverty" (United Nations Development Program, 2020, p. 6). However, immigration to Nepal is considerably smaller and has received little attention from scholars. According to the 2001 census, there were 116,571 foreign-born citizens in Nepal; 90% of them were of Indian origin, followed by those with origins in Bhutan, Pakistan, and China (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Similarly, the 2011 Census shows approximately 1.8 percent of the total population in Nepal to be foreign-born, with 93.6 percent born in India (IOM, 2019b). IOM (2019b) states that foreign-born citizens primarily stayed in Nepal because of marriage (45.8%), dependents (17%), and business.

Against the backdrop of little scholarly attention on the phenomena of immigration in Nepal and migration-related experiences, this paper discusses the narratives of the adult offspring of first-generation migrants, defined as second-generation migrants, in Nepal. The paper primarily brings out the reasons for migrating to Nepal as shared by these second-generation migrants. The paper also looks into the experiences of living in Nepal as shared by these migrants. The general objective of the paper is to bring out the narratives of second-generation migrants in Nepal. The specific objectives of the paper are a) to explore the causes of migration to Nepal, and b) to investigate the experiences of second-generation migrants to Nepal.

Research Methodology

The study intended to explore the reasons for migration for the first-generation migrants to Nepal and to understand the experiences of the adult offspring of these first-generation migrants or the second-generation migrants. Qualitative methodology was chosen to explore the overall experiences of the respondents. In the absence of studies surrounding emigration and the experiences of emigrants, the study used an exploratory design where semi-structured interviews were conducted with all the respondents. The study used non-probability sampling, including snowball sampling and purposive sampling, to

collect data. Snowball sampling helped locate the lesser known population or hard to locate population of emigrants and purposive sampling allowed for inclusion of emigrants from both Tibet and India. Nine interviews were conducted in Kathmandu between 2017 and 2018. All the interviewees were adults whose parents had migrated to Nepal from other countries. The demographic information on the interviewees is provided in Table 1 below. The narratives shared by the interviewees were based on memory or recall. Some questions asked during the interviews are: Tell me the story of your parents leaving the country of origin and coming to this country; what have they told you about their reasons for migrating? When did they migrate?; Can you tell me about your parents and your relationships with friends/family in the country of origin?; Tell me about your schooling, relationships with teachers, friends, family as a child growing up in this country.

In-person interviews were conducted at respondent's convenient location and were audio-recorded. Interviewees could choose to respond in English, or Nepali language, whichever was comfortable to them. Most respondents used both languages, sometimes mixing Nepali and English in a single sentence. The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and then translated into English. Thematic analysis was then employed to look into the interview transcripts. The six-phase approach to Thematic Analysis recommended by Braun and Clarke (2012) was used; it involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Ethical consideration by the study included anonymity of the interviewees (use of pseudonyms), informed consent (obtaining oral as well as written informed consent), professional competence (conduction of interviews by trained personnel), respect for people's right, dignity and diversity. Voluntary participation and the principle of non-violence—do no harm—were also implemented in the study.

Table 1

Demographic Composition of the Respondents

Name	Age	Sex	Education	Family's Occupation	Origin	Religion
Akash	25	M	Bachelor in Engineering	Business	India	Hindu
Agya	18	F	+ 2	Business	India	Hindu
Priti	43	F	Bachelor	Healer/ Instructor	India	Hindu
Roshani	18	F	Bachelor in Journalism	Business	India	Hindu
Shanti	21	F	Bachelor of Arts running	Teacher	India	Hindu
Anamika	40	F	Bachelor of Arts	Business	India	Hindu
Kartok	25	F	Bachelor of Arts	Monk	Tibet	Buddhist
Pema	22	F	Bachelor of Arts	Retired Army	Tibet	Buddhist
Lek	22	M	Bachelor in Business Studies		Tibet	Buddhist

Theoretical Framework

This paper primarily uses two theoretical frameworks, namely Lee's (1966) push and pull factors of migration and Life-course Perspective, particularly its central proposition of Linked Lives. Lee's (1966) push and pull factors of migration provided a clear direction to describe the data brought out by the narratives of the second-generation migrants to Nepal, particularly what factors were instrumental in pushing migrants from India and Tibet to Nepal and what factors appealed to them to migrate to Nepal. Linked lives is a notion that "people in salient relationships with each other, such as parents and children, occupy mutually influential interlocking developmental trajectories that extend throughout their lives" (Elder et al., 2003 in Greenfield & Marks, 2006, p. 2). The notion of linked lives was amply featured in the narratives of the second-generation migrants to Nepal who were influenced by the stories of migration of their parents and in their sharing of experiences at school, including relationships with their peers and teachers.

Findings and Discussions

This paper brings out the reasons for migration for first-generation immigrants from India and Tibet to Nepal, as shared through the narratives of the second-generation migrants. Additionally, it features the everyday experiences of second-generation migrants, namely experiences within family life (including the relationship with family members), experiences at school (including the relationship with their peers and teachers), and experiences in the community (including cultural and religious similarities and differences and struggles with the Nepali language).

Reasons for Migration

The interviewees shared several reasons for coming to Nepal. These included opportunities for business, opportunities for a good education, a suitable climate and culture, opportunities to earn a livelihood and build a career. Also,

lack of opportunities and instances of violence at their place of origin was reported to move into Nepal. The reasons for migration shared by the interviewees can be categorized as push and pull factor according to Lee's suggestion (1966).

Pull Factors

Opportunities for business were mentioned by five of the interviewees as reasons to migrate to Nepal. The excerpts below share some of these:

> My mom and dad decided to go to Nepal, and my dad actually got a business offer here. So he decided to come. (Roshani)
>
> The primary reason for their coming was making a good living here…They were originally from Rajasthan in India. My father used to work in Bombay when one of his friends suggested going to Kathmandu for work. In the beginning, he did a job here in Kathmandu. Later, after 7 or 8 years, he started his own textile business. (Priti)
>
> The primary motivation to migrate was economic. My parents were originally from Rajasthan. They ran a small textile business there, but the earning was not so good. So, they decided to come to Nepal for business. (Anamika)
>
> After giving up farming, he [my father] came to Kathmandu to visit our relatives. After coming here, he felt that there was a business opportunity here. (Akash)

The data reflects that quality education is another important factor influencing migration to Nepal. Three interviewees shared ‘good education opportunity’ as pull factors to migrate to Nepal, as mentioned in excerpts below:

> We used to stay in a small city near Delhi. Everything was good there, but there was not much exposure to better education system. (Roshani)
>
> They [my parents] wanted to make a good living for them as well as their children. Another reason was the education of their children. Rajasthan

> didn't have good schools back then. So, they were also looking for educational opportunities for their children when they decided to come here. (Anamika)
>
> Our family was the lord of lands which was why I was allowed into a boys' school. But I was the only girl in the entire school…So my father thought that if they came to Nepal children would have the opportunity for better education and exposure. (Priti)

Besides opportunities for business and education, other pull factors to Kathmandu shared by the interviewees were its cool climate, cultural openness, natural beauty, and religious harmony as shared below:

> Kathmandu is popular among Indians, both from cultural perspective and climatic perspective. (Akash)
>
> [My father says] Nepal was beautiful. Food was good. Environment was nice. Culture was nice. Even when people were working they cared for the others too. (Lek)
>
> They [Kartok's parents] came to Nepal for pilgrimage once before settling here. The reason they chose Nepal was that it was a peaceful country with lots of religious places for Buddhism. (Kartok)

Push Factors

According to Lek, the religious issues of Tibet forced their parents to migrate to Nepal.

> I think my father left because of difficulty. It is the story of 1959 A.D. My grandfather was in the special force that protected His Holiness Dalai Lama. So, he had to flee Tibet. (Lek)

Shanti shared that her family migrated to Kathmandu due to the unsuitable climate of Calcutta, India. Shanti stated, "My dad never liked the weather of Calcutta. My mom and dad grew up in Manipur, and in Nagaland respectively;

their families migrated to Calcutta and both of them did not enjoy the weather there".

The data reveals that Indian immigrants mainly migrated for business purposes whereas Tibetan migrants primarily escaped from unstable politics. These findings support Lee's push and pull factors of migration. Few Indians and Tibetans stayed in Nepal and started liking the weather and its natural beauty and the openness of the Nepalese. This motivated them to extend their stay in Nepal which turned into permanent residence for some of those visitors.

Wolpert (1965) emphasized 'place utility' in his theory 'the situational approach' where people have a higher value of the chosen location rather than other places. The term 'place utility' involves social, economic, and other costs and benefits that the person gets in a particular location. The findings of this study highlights 'place utility' for both Indian and Tibetan immigrants; for Indians, fertile land for business was a major utility, while safety and refuge from the War in Tibet provided utility from Tibetan immigrants to Nepal. In the historical approach, Joseph (1988) says that migration occurs from time to time due to the pressures and counter-pressures both from the internal and external sources and due to the structural transformation of socio-economic and political setup. The findings of the study are along these lines where the political instability of Tibet was a significant reason to leave Tibet for Nepal (pressures from the political set up). Opportunities for socio-economic transformation for Indian migrants were reported as significant reasons for migration.

Experiences of Second-generation Migrants in Nepal

In addition to the reasons for migration shared in the narratives of the second-generation migrants in Nepal, the paper also features the everyday experiences of second-generation migrants, namely experiences within family life, experiences at school, and experiences in the community and the State, which are detailed below.

Experiences Related to Family

Six interviewees shared having strong bond with relatives and one interviewee hinted towards conflict in their relationship while discussing family relations. Various aspects of family relationships, including sharing time with relatives, visiting the place of origin, frequent chats, and telephonic conversations with grandparents, were discussed in these narratives. Additionally, attending social and religious ceremonies, enjoying vacation, building a strong bonding with, and having fun with cousins were featured in the narratives too.

Technological development and access to social media were chiefly mentioned as factors facilitating a strong positive relationship between immigrants and their relatives.

> Because calls were expensive: especially international calls, communicating with each other was only done to inform about events like marriage or other events. Now technology has made communicating easier. We talk more often and are connected to everyone through social media. (Akash)
>
> Even though we are far in terms of geography, technology has brought everyone together. (Agya)

Another aspect of their lives that the second-generation migrants to Nepal enjoyed talking about was their strength and family prominently featured in their narratives. Second-generation migrants believed that these strengths led them to success in the host country, Nepal. For Shanti, "Self-motivation, self-trust, and individualization are biggest strength," and Agya emphasized on self-confidence as strength. She stated, "We have the confidence to travel. As long as we have money, the passport, and the phone, you can travel anywhere". Two interviewees shared that family or their parents were their biggest strengths, as seen below:

> My friends and family are my biggest strengths and support system. (Agya)

> My father always told us that every problem has solution, and we should keep striving for it. I believe in what he said. (Priti)

The nature of parents was also identified as the strength of the family and source of inspiration, as seen below:

> We Tibetans bow down to people often; my father has a good way of talking to people. He is very respectful. Because of my parents' good behaviour, people treat me well too. We [Tibetans] are helpful people. (Lek)
>
> Even though they [her parents] didn't have anyone behind them, they believed something was behind them. They are very adjusting even in adverse family situations. The struggle that I faced taught me to look at things differently. (Kartok)

Experiences Related to School

Experiences related to school occupied significant space in the narratives of the respondents. The key themes that emerged in these narratives were difficulty in language and relationship with peers and teachers, both of which are discussed at length below.

Difficulty in Language. Language difficulty was the most frequently described experience by the interviewees while in Nepal as the Nepali language is the primary language in schools –which was different from their mother tongue and communicating language. Although speaking in English was encouraged in classrooms, Nepalese students ubiquitously talked in Nepali, which created difficulties for second-generation migrants. Presented below are some excerpts from interviews regarding the difficulties in language:

> My mother tongue is Hindi, so an accent came when I spoke Nepali" (Akash)
>
> Studying in a government school, where the primary medium of instruction in the Nepali language was another huge challenge for me. I

> could not communicate in Nepali well. It was a very difficult phase for me. In Rajasthan we only spoke Marwadi language, not even Hindi. I was depressed in school. But one of my friends helped me a lot. Her name was Sonika Maharjan [name changed]. She used to watch Hindi movies and read Hindi comics. So, she knew the Hindi language. And she was the one who taught me Nepali. (Priti)
>
> In initial days, we used to talk in sign language. Language was a barrier. As for now, they [her parent] are equipped with basic Nepali language to use in markets. (Kartok)
>
> We had to study Tibetan, but we also studied all subjects in the curriculum of Nepal Government… We speak a little Nepali but there are others who do not speak much. Most of the Tibetan students fail in Nepali but they pass in other subjects. In the place I live, all are Tibetans, so we all speak Tibetan. We only have to speak Nepali at shops or at college or in the public transportation. (Lek)

Kartok shared having to speak in Nepali in college and using the Tibetan language in her house and camp. So she experienced difficulties in adjusting between the two languages. The analysis reveals that the everyday life experiences of Tibetan migrants are more complex than those of the Indian migrants. One of the reasons might be that majority of the Nepalese can understand Hindi but not the Tibetan language. Access to Indian schools to children of Indian immigrants opens an environment to talk and share in their mother tongue if needed. Although there were Tibetan teachers in Tibetan schools, one of the respondents shared that they hesitated to speak with the Tibetan teachers. Communication assists immigrants in satisfying their basic personal and social needs in the new host culture and facilitates acculturation (Lakey, 2003). Yun Kim (1979) suggests that humans can adapt, and immigrants acculturate themselves to receive and interpret messages in a way that they will be

recognized, accepted and responded to by the individual or group with which they interact. Along these lines, the interviewees shared that it grew easier for them to adapt to the new Nepalese culture after they started speaking Nepali.

Relationship with Peers and Teachers. Besides the struggles with language, interviewees shared fond memories of school life. Eight of the nine interviewees shared having a close relationship with at least one of the teachers. Some shared:

> We had nice and friendly teachers. I had a teacher. Her name was Rima [name changed] and she was very friendly. I miss her. I still talk to her sometimes. (Agya)
>
> The experience at school was good…Most students were Tibetans…… I liked the Nepali teachers too, they were learning about Tibetan culture. They understood us. (Lek)

Some of the interviewees mentioned having a 'favorite teacher' in their school life. Favorite teacher, for them, was supportive, helpful, kind, and generous, as seen in the sayings below:

> I was a teacher's pet. I still remember Pabita ma'am [name changed] from Triyog School, my class one class teacher. Up to date, she is my favourite teacher. I also liked Soniya ma'am [name changed] –class teacher at class 3. I have not forgotten their names. (Shanti)
>
> I knew every teacher, and they were very good and supportive. My math teacher was my class teacher when I was in class 6, and he used to support me every time. When I was humiliated [at school by a friend], I used to cry, and he used to call me and tell me things will get better. He said he would talk to her [my friend who humiliated me], so he was very encouraging, very good. (Roshani)

One respondent also mentioned ethnicity-based affinity while at school. She shared:

> What I noticed was like I am Indian and if the teachers had Indian origin, automatically you feel *apnapan, aafnai jasto lagney*, and [feeling of intimacy] because they face the same thing in the country and they know what I face. (Shanti)

All the respondents who went to residential Tibetan schools shared being isolated from the outer environment and having limited interaction with the community, as shared in the excerpt below:

> I think that there is a difference between people who went to Namgyal [residential Tibetan school] and those who went to other schools. I feel the others who went to other schools have more knowledge on subjects and faculties…We stay in hostels and do not know much about what's happening outside of the camps as we went out once a month. But we do learn a lot of skills while at school. (Lek)

Like Lek, other interviewees of Tibetan origin also shared receiving life skills at school, which they felt helped them in their everyday life at school and beyond. They mainly talked about taking leadership positions at school, which allowed them to become independent. For example, Pema was active in the school in different roles: class captain, house captain, and vice-president of the student council. She shares how she lifted herself to lead a march that was led only by boys before her:

> The march pass was very competitive during the sports day. …. Everyone wanted to win. The leading person of the March pass were boys every time. In my final year, I told my house teacher that I wanted to lead the march. He agreed, but my statement shocked everyone. Very few people believed me. I proved them wrong. We won the march pass. Even judges were impressed to see girls leading the march. I left the high school setting examples of gender equality. (Pema)

Sometimes second-generation migrants faced difficult experiences in school. Roshani and Shanti shared feeling humiliated at school:

> there was a Nepali girl in the same class, who used to humiliate me, and keep me away from socializing and befriending other people in the class…whenever I tried to befriend anyone in the class, she would tell me I cannot be friends with that person, because that person is her friend since a long time, and I was only a newcomer. This was in my first year in Nepal, that phase was challenging. I used to make every possible excuse like headache and stomach upset to skip school. I literally used to vomit to show my parents that I am not feeling well. (Roshani)
>
> I faced that *'Dhoti'* [a derogatory term to denote Indians] term a lot in school life. (Shanti).

Experiences Related to the Community and State

The experiences of the interviewees within the community and the State were diverse and sometimes contradictory. While some interviewees shared being treated well and getting supportive hands in Nepal, some others shared experiences of humiliation. These diverse experiences with the broader community are shared below.

Community-related Experiences. The interviewees shared mixed responses regarding their experiences with the broader community in Nepal. Two interviewees of Tibetan origin shared that they saw similarities between communities in Nepal and Tibet; this helped them build good relations with the Nepalese. Pema somewhat identified with the Newar community in Kathmandu and expressed, "I never felt myself different than others…I had a bit of Newari background and [I am] pretty sound in the Nepali language. It was normal for me to settle." Lek compared 'Kham' with 'Gorkhali' as both are popular for their commitment and trustful behaviour. He emphasized, "People in Kham are simple-straightforward. Many are in the Army. They don't like when people cheat. But

when they are friends, and they like you, they will give their lives for you," and he felt similarly about the Gorkhalis in Nepal. In the contrary, some of the respondents with origins in India shared being name-called, as expressed below:

> I think nobody should be treated on the basis of what caste or community they come from. Your treatment of another person should be solely guided by how that person treats you. I am still pinched by such name '*Madey*' [a term used to refer to Marwaris derogatorily]. (Priti)

Two other respondents, also with origins in India, shared relying on Nepali friends for many things, including emotional support and support to earn a livelihood. Priti expressed:

> I wanted to open a boutique in Kathmandu. But I couldn't do so with an Indian citizenship. And my friend Ranju [name changed] helped me. I opened the boutique in her name and ran it for two years.

And Shanti shared that she relied on friends, teachers, and family rather than diplomatic missions for emotional support. She expressed, "Embassy doesn't help at the emotional level. It helps if there are any issues related to the government; they help at the level of law or advocacy."

State-related Experiences. All interviewees with Tibetan origin shared difficulties in government-related works in Nepal and not getting supportive treatment from the Chinese Embassy. The interviewees of Tibetan origin reiterated being under close surveillance from the Government of China and being restricted by the Nepal government to do any activities against China. According to Tibetan interviewees, running public activities became increasingly difficult after 2008 A.D., and they limited their activities within the camp. And that too was being scrutinized by the Nepal Police, who demanded that any celebrations inside or outside the camps be done with their consent. The interviewees shared:

> We cannot celebrate our important days, like Democracy Day and other ceremonies in public. Earlier we used to have such celebrations. Now it is very strict…Even within the camps, the police had come last time. (Lek)
>
> Since 2008, we haven't had the opportunity to celebrate the birthday of H. H. Dalai Lama peacefully. Even on March 10 [Tibetan Uprising day], Nepalese police guard the Boudha, every Tibetan settlement area, to not perform any activities against the Chinese. They don't even let us go out of the settlement or area. You are put into jail if you wear traditional Tibetan attire during these days. (Pema)

The political atmosphere and changes can also impact the immigrants in the host nation, as can be seen in immigrants of both Indian and Tibetan origin in Nepal. Such impacts gain prominence at times. An example of this includes anti-Indian protests during the 2015 undeclared blockade of Nepal by India. Bhugra (2004) asserts that one's identity comprises the racial, cultural, and ethnic identities. The ethnic identity of being an Indian in Nepal at times like the 2015 blockade impacted the lives of immigrants from India in Nepal. Akash shared:

> I remember that I was unemployed during the time of blockade and was looking for a job. I went to some interviews. Most of them were fine by me being an Indian citizen, but some of them—the moment they found out that I am an Indian—they got reluctant to offer me the job. (Akash)

Citizenship is an important document that proves an individual's identity, and the process of obtaining Citizenship also speaks volumes about the way the state treats individuals. The data analysis reveals that two interviewees had Indian Citizenship; two had Nepali Citizenships; one of the interviewees had a Nepali passport, and another had two Citizenships (one from Nepal and the other from India). Furthermore, one of the interviewees neither had a Citizenship nor a Tibetan refugee card, and two respondents did not disclose their Citizenship status. Each respondent had an interesting story to share regarding Citizenship.

Interviewees with Tibetan origin shared paying large amounts of money to get Citizenship, and interviewees with Indian origin shared difficulties obtaining documents from the Nepali State.

Some interviewees of Tibetan origin stated they were refugees in Nepal and having left their nation forcefully; they did not have any legal documents except 'Refugee Card,' which some of them got in Nepal. They expressed that not having any identification document forced them to use any means, including illegal ones, to obtain Nepalese Citizenship, as shared in the excerpts below:

> We paid around 40,000 Nepali Rupees to get signature from C.D.O. We didn't want to complicate things. Compared to my other Tibetan friends, I think I paid very less. (Pema)
>
> They try to get a lot of money from Tibetans. I have heard the Tibetan pay hefty sums of money to Government officials. Many Tibetans easily give money to get the job done faster rather. So, the [Nepalese] Government Officials try and get money from them purposefully. (Lek)

Pema shared that she knew people who got Citizenship by changing their name, surname, father or mother's name, family details, etc. Two of the interviewees, including Pema herself, admitted to changing their identities in their Citizenship certificate:

> I changed my name and added surname for the citizenship. It was Lama. (Pema)
>
> An old Nepali man we knew helped my brother and me to get Nepalese Citizenship claiming [we were] his children. His name is in my Citizenship as the father. Most of my family members own Citizenship. I don't know where the old man lives exactly, but he is from Kathmandu. (Kartok)

Moreover, interviewees of Tibetan origin experienced various problems while getting Citizenship, such as the official's delay and discomfort.

> Despite having legal documents in my hand, they can recognize that I was not originally a Nepalese. Officials procrastinating work is the biggest problem that I faced. (Pema)
>
> My mother also has a naturalized Citizenship. So, I will get Citizenship by descent. But I don't yet have a Citizenship…I was told [in Lumbini] that the new constitution has provisions for me to get Citizenship, but it is not yet in practice, so they asked me to come later. (Lek)

In contrast to the above, Anamika held two citizenships –from Nepal and India. However, Nepal doesn't allow dual citizenship. Anamika got Nepali Citizenship through her father and Indian Citizenship through her husband when she married an Indian national. Anamika shared:

> Initially, I had a Nepali Citizenship. After marriage, I hold an Indian Citizenship because I was married to an Indian guy…But I feel it was easier back then to get Nepali Citizenship. Now it would have been a more difficult job.

Under the Nepal Citizenship Act, 2006, a person born in Nepal before mid-April 1990, has a permanent domicile and has been continuously resident in Nepal throughout his life, can apply to acquire Citizenship of Nepal based on birth (Nepal Law commission, n.d.). However, many immigrants from India are yet to benefit from this law. For example, Priti's parents could not succeed in receiving a Nepalese Citizenship despite living in Nepal for more than 35 years and meeting other criteria. The interviewees shared that many Indians married Nepali women and bore and brought up children in Nepal, but these children are yet to receive Nepali Citizenship. For example, Priti expressed:

> I have Indian Citizenship. My parents still have Indian Citizenship. Even after living in Nepal for 35 years, they could not get Nepali citizenship. I studied here in Nepal, and there is recorded evidence of that. But the

> Nepali government has not yet issued a Citizenship to my parents, let alone me or my sibling. (Priti)

Akash also shared difficulties in obtaining Nepali Citizenship. He shared about arguing multiple times with government officials that he should get Citizenship in Nepal as per the laws, but the officials denied it. Akash shared:

> When I was 19, I went to the local government officials to discuss Citizenship…I told him that I fulfilled all the criteria to obtain Citizenship. But the officer replied that though I fulfilled all the requirements according to the constitution, I would not be given Citizenship unless I was a celebrity or unless I could help Nepal significantly financially. He said—we have 30 lakhs Indian in Nepal, and we cannot give Citizenship to all of them.

The response of the Nepali Government official, as shared by Akash, reflects the general perspective of the State towards immigrants with an Indian origin living in Nepal.

Conclusion

From the narratives of second-generation migrants, the study illustrates that people of Indian origin were attracted to Nepal for business purposes, good education, and preferable weather. In contrast, immigrants of Tibetan origin had primarily fled to Nepal due to the unstable political scenario of Tibet. Pull factors like favourable climate, religious openness, and business possibilities lured some immigrants to convert the short-term stays into permanent residence. Indian immigrants expressed strong bonds with relatives, e.g., grandparents, cousins, siblings. They shared visiting families in their country of origin frequently as compared to Tibetan migrants. Interviewees shared mixed experiences (both encouraging and humiliating) at school and their interaction with the broader society (both supportive and conflicting). Furthermore, all interviewees shared challenges in dealing with or receiving help from the Nepali State.

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Breaking the Wall of Poverty: Microfinance as Social and Economic Safety Net for Financially Excluded People in Nepal

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Abstract

Microfinance is a financial service aimed at economically underprivileged people who have no or limited access to formal financial institutions such as banks due to the lack of financial resources, collateral, or low income. Microfinance institutions provide a collateral-free loan to low-income individuals with the principle of financial inclusion, which allows them to invest in various self-employment activities. In this article, we critically review the development of microfinance and its issues and challenges in Nepal. More specifically, using the concept of the Grameen Bank model and its relevance in the context of Nepali microfinance institutions, we explore how microfinance can be an effective tool of financial intervention to alleviate rural poverty in Nepal. Methodologically, we utilize secondary data sources such as government and non-government reports and existing empirical studies. We offer recommendations for policymakers to establish appropriate modalities, programs, and microfinance services targeting the socio-economic transformation of rural communities in Nepal. We conclude that the government and financial institutions can stimulate microfinance institutions through multidimensional interventions and facilitation to advance the socio-economic status of financially underprivileged people in rural communities in Nepal.

Keywords: Nepal, microfinance, microcredit, rural poverty alleviation, Grameen Bank model

Breaking the Wall of Poverty: Microfinance as Social and Economic Safety Net for Financially Excluded People in Nepal

The diverse topography and charismatic features of mountains with flora and fauna make Nepal a naturally beautiful country nestled in the lap of the gigantic Himalayan Range. Unlike its natural beauty, ethnic, linguistic, and social diversity, a large portion of the population is deprived of economic prosperity. Although Nepal has made significant progress in poverty reduction, the country is yet to meet per capita income criteria set by the United Nations to graduate from a least developed country to developing country status. The United Nations Human Development Report (2020) shows that Nepal's Human Development Index (HDI) value has significantly improved since 1990. For example, the HDI value was 0.387 in 2019, whereas it was 0.602 in 2020. This improvement is, in absolute terms, an increase of 55.6 percent. Based on the HDI value, however, Nepal ranked 142nd out of 198 countries and territories. Similarly, the 2020 - World Bank report shows a significant gross national income (GNI) per capita. For example, the GNI in 2018 was US$960, and it increased to US$ 1,090 in 2019 (Prasain, 2020).

Nepal is making efforts to socio-economic and political transition; however, it needs significant poverty reduction as well. The World Bank (2016) indicates that more than 35% of the total population in Nepal live in absolute poverty (i.e., the daily earning is less than US$1 per person). According to a report published in a national daily, *The Rising Nepal*, the debt liability of the government of Nepal in mid-2020 reached Rs. 1,196 billion, out of which Rs. 482 billion was internal debt and Rs. 714 billion was external debt (Kandel, 2020). While comparing the total debt with the population, the government debt of each Nepali reached Rs. 40,000 (i.e., approximately US$ 332) per person. In the context of such an economic move, the role of microfinance is pivotal in

transforming the country's socio-economic status through various microfinance schemes in Nepal.

Microfinance is an integral part of the new economic paradigm, which has significantly contributed to the poorest of the poor through their socio-economic empowerment in society (Bashyal, 2008; Jain, 2020; Khandakar & Danopoulos, 2004). It provides easy access to financial services to poor people excluded by so-called formal/conventional financial institutions (e.g., banks) due to the lack of collateral or low income (Kasali, et al., 2015; Simkhada, 2018). These financial institutions do not provide loans to people who do not have sufficient assets or income; however, microfinance in this scenario is a practical economic intervention that allows them to access the loan.

Microfinance services exclusively focus on economically deprived people and small entrepreneurs to help them engage in self-employment or other self-earning activities. Further, microfinance services augment social and human capital for financially disadvantaged people and help them move out of the vicious cycle of poverty (Bashyal, 2008; Jain, 2020). Microfinance institutions (MFIs) provide credits to the poor to help the poor set up their income-generating business (Parotid & Saravan, 2018). Thus, microfinance offers financial liberation for economically vulnerable people and strengthens their sense of dignity through social and economic empowerment.

In this paper, we scrutinized the effectiveness of microfinance services to dismantle the wall of poverty with a view to augmenting the social and economic safety net for financially excluded people in Nepal. More precisely, using the Grameen Bank model as a theoretical tool, we explored how microfinance could be an effective financial intervention to help rural households meet their basic needs and improve their economic welfare. We offered policy recommendations to microfinance institutions (MFIs) to better serve financially impoverished families in rural Nepal.

Understanding the Microfinance

Prof. Muhammad Yunus developed the modern concept of microfinance in 1976. He founded the Grameen Bank, an innovative financial microcredit program and microloan to low-income people in Bangladesh. In 1983, the Grameen Bank was authorized by national legislation to operate independently. Microfinance services are designed to provide microloans to financially disadvantaged, socially marginalized, and geographically isolated populations to become self-sufficient by stimulating self-employment generating activities. This innovative concept of the Grameen Bank has been known as 'solidary group lending' to promote savings and investment and alleviate poverty.

Today, this project has received global recognition as a powerful instrument for poverty reduction. For example, the 2019-Microfinance Barometer report indicates that about 140 million microfinance loans had been borrowed globally at the end of 2018 compared to 98 million in 2009. The report also states that 80% of the borrowers were women in 2018 compared to 65% in 2009 (Microfinance Barometer, 2019). According to *Global Newswire* (2020), over 500 million people worldwide directly or indirectly benefited from microfinance services leveraging economic opportunities. It is estimated that global microfinance services may reach US$ 313.7 billion by 2025.

Microfinance is a financial provision that boosts low-income and self-employed people through accessible and sustainable financial services (Bashyal, 2008; Jain, 2020; Simkhada, 2018). Such services help increase and diversify incomes; build human and social capital, and improve the living standard of poor people (Sharma, 2007). Microfinance services have attained a milestone goal of tackling marginalization and inequality to the financially vulnerable people in most of the least developed countries. Matsangou (2016) states:

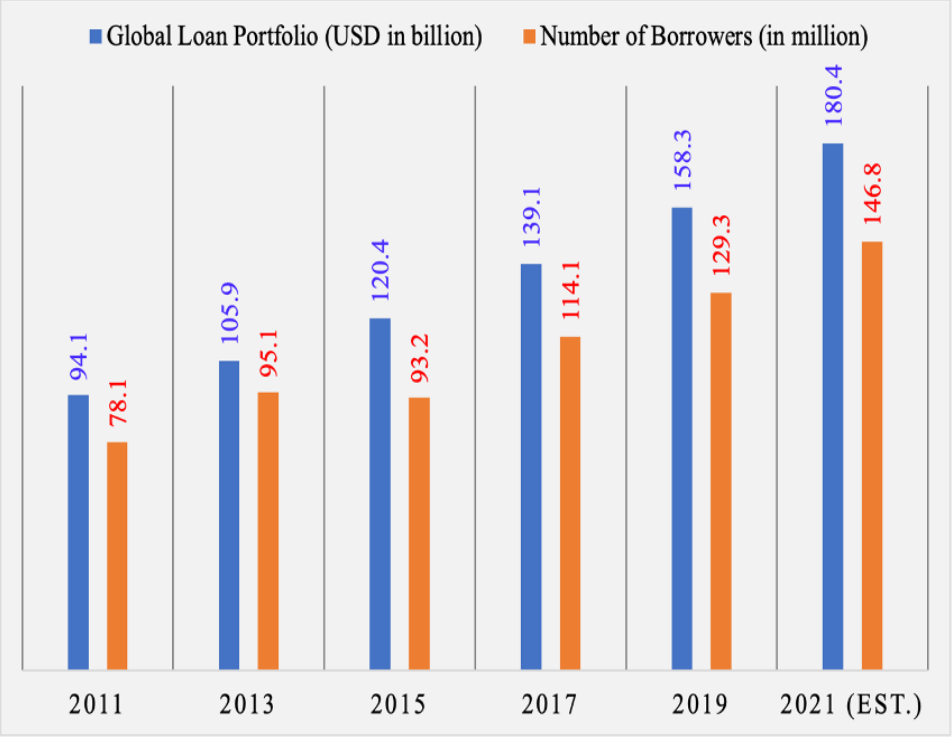
> Many people living in developing nations are trapped in an endless cycle of poverty, living on very little each day and deprived of regular work and

> access to vital services. Banks are generally unwilling to provide would-be customers with capital in the absence of financial history, collateral, steady employment, or any form of repayment assurance. Yet without access to financial services, there is little hope of escaping. Microfinance aims to bridge this gap (para.7).

Microfinance services are meant to reduce socio-economic challenges to the maximum number of people in need through accessible and sustainable financial services. Such services have supported the poor by reducing their financial crisis, which is a part of their everyday living. Figure 1 shows a global picture of the micro-lending trend (USD in billion) and the number of borrowers (in millions).

Figure 1

Microlending Landscape 2011-2021



Source: Microfinance Barometer, 2019

Microfinance in Nepal

Microfinance is a relatively new phenomenon in Nepal. The Agricultural Development Bank instituted a formal microfinance service by establishing the Small Farmer Development program in 1973. Other Commercial Banks introduced services such as priority area loans, poverty-stricken loans, and loans without collateral; however, these services were less effective. The government of Nepal officially recognized microfinance as a poverty alleviation tool in its Sixth Development Plan from 1980/81 to 1984/85. With the restoration of democracy in 1991, the microfinance sector picked up tremendous momentum. Rural Development Bank contributed to economic mobilization by providing financial access to rural people (Jain 2020). During the early 2000s, many MFIs and NGOs (e.g., Nirdhan Utthan Laghubitta Sanstha, Center for Self-Help) operated under the Grameen Bank model. They instigated microfinance programs and later converted them into Microfinance Development Bank. Similarly, other microfinance development banks (e.g., Chhimek Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Ltd.) were established. Further, the Central Bank also licensed Community Based Micro financing NGOs.

Microfinance operates in various models in Nepal. For example, Small Farmer Cooperatives (SFC) operate under the Agricultural Development Bank. Similarly, the Priority and Deprived Sector Credit are mandatory for Commercial banks, Development banks, or Finance companies classified as A, B, or C category of financial institutions. These financial institutions mandatorily invest five percent of their total lending on the priority and deprived sector. Other models, such as Rural Development Banks, Financial Intermediary Non-Government Organizations (INGOs), are sponsored by donor microfinance programs (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2020).

According to the 2077 BS Unified Directive of Nepal Rastra Bank, MFIs maintain four percent primary capital and eight percent additional capital. The

Unified Directive also presents the performance and operational figure of 90 MFIs as of Mid- April 2020. The MFIs had the total capital and other reserved funds of Rs. 32,688.64 million, paid-up capital Rs. 20,760.97 million, and total borrowings Rs.145,075.00 million (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2020). Microfinance services have expanded to all 77 districts, with 4,018 branches; 319,201 working centers; 19,058 working staff; 10, 78,820 groups formed by microfinance; and 28, 88,603 borrowers. The total loan comprised Rs.1, 46, 21, 60,550.00 and deposited Rs.11, 29, 33,518.00 as of Mid-April 2020 (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2021).

Although the microfinance program was first introduced in the 1950s in Nepal through cooperatives such as Small Farmers Cooperatives Programs (FSCPs), the operation of microfinance services formally started in 1992 with the establishment of Rural Development Bank, which was based on the Grameen Bank model of Bangladesh (Jain, 2020; Microfinance Industry Report, 2009). With the successful intervention of financial programs, Small Farmers Development Programs were transformed into Small Farmers Cooperative Limited (SFCL) and were self-operated by local farmers. The effectiveness of microcredit services was expanded through various programs such as Priority Sector Lending Program, Production Credit for Rural Women, and Rural Self-Reliant Fund (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2021). When the government of Nepal implemented liberal financial policies in 1991, the private sector and NGOs also initiated microfinance programs replicating the Bangladesh Grameen Bank model of microfinance delivery. The most common features of these financial organizations are to increase the outreach of financial services and economic opportunities to poor people to help them become self-sufficient. Microfinance is a segue to promote social and economic development through micro-entrepreneurs and small businesses. Matsangou (2016) writes:

> Many people use the money to start up their first businesses, often mentored by experienced entrepreneurs in their local communities. Or

> they use the money to expand their current businesses, add new products, open new stores, or launch new enterprises in other sectors. This grassroots economic development generates income for the business owners and creates additional jobs for other community members (para. 12).

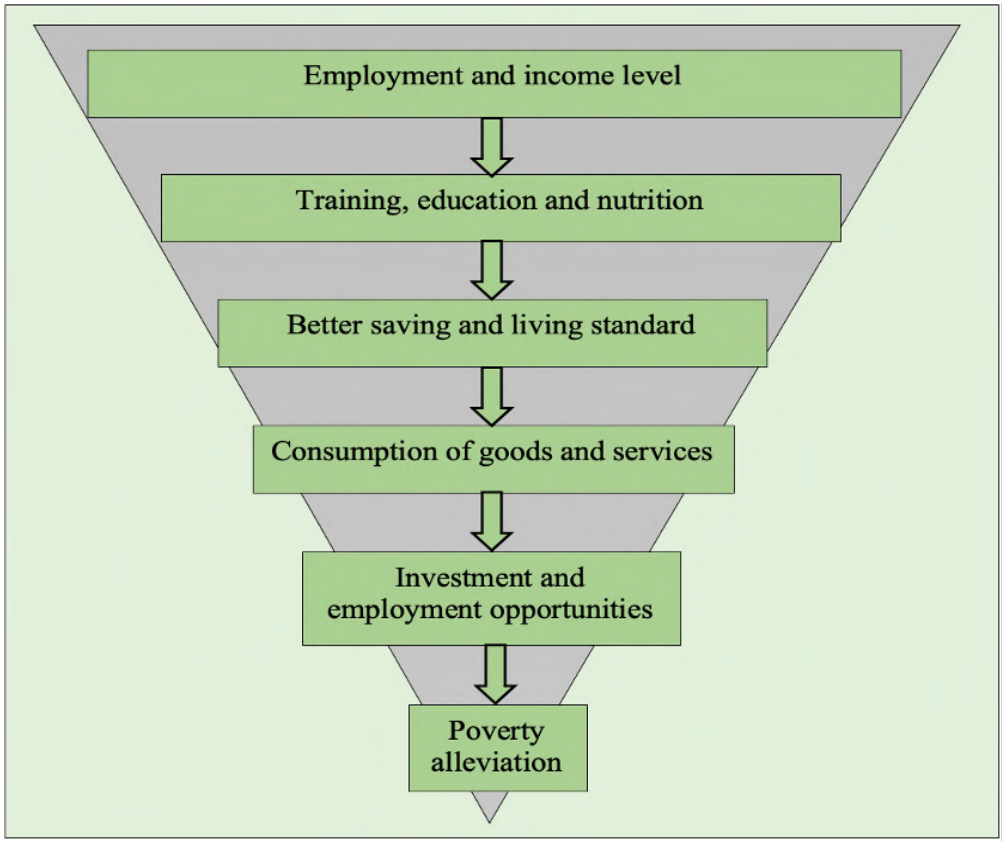
The role of microfinance is pivotal in alleviating poverty by instigating various microfinance services with a perception of transforming the country's socio-economic condition. The government of Nepal issued a national microcredit policy in 2007 to create conducive financial services and legal measures for MFIs to alleviate poverty.

Microfinance services allow poor people to diversify their financial sources to increase their income. Rural Microfinance Development Centre (2014) conducted a pilot survey in the microfinance service area to measure poverty. The findings show that the poverty rate in the microfinance branch area was lower than the national poverty rate of Nepal (Rural Microfinance Development Centre, 2014). Clients of the microfinance institutions have managed small income-generating activities and enterprises (e.g., agro-based, cottage industries, and trade/services) using financial assistance to bridge a cash-flow gap. As the income level among borrowers increases, it also increases their spending power on nutrient food, healthcare services, education, business, and ultimately improving the quality of life (Dhungana et al., 2016; Rural Microfinance Development Centre, 2014). Studies have concluded that the microfinance services have enhanced socio-economic and civic empowerment among women (Dhungana, et al, 2016; Noreen, 2011). Figure 2 below conceptualizes a transmission mechanism of microfinance/ microcredit to poverty alleviation. It demonstrates how microfinance services can help improve the productive capacity, income-earning opportunities, and livelihood of weaker sections of society by providing

financial access to enhance their potential ability in income-generating activities and enterprises.

Figure 2

The Transmission Mechanism of Microfinance/Microcredit to Poverty Alleviation



Rajbanshi et al. (2015) investigated the impact of MFIs in Nepal. They concluded that the MFIs exhibited far fewer and more partial effects than are frequently claimed in the industry. In a similar vein, Simkhada (2018) revealed that about 60% of people were excluded from conventional banks in Nepal due to the lack of proper financial services. He concluded that unless the barrier to financial access is dismantled through policy change (i.e., supply and demand of the service of financial institutions), financial inclusion is difficult to achieve. Simkhada (2013) asserts that cooperatives models effectively serve the financially

underprivileged people through a wide range of savings and credits, insurance, and non-financial services to rural communities in Nepal.

Microfinance services have positive effects on women's household decision-making (Jain, 2020), women's social and civic empowerment (Noreen, 2011), enabling them for the nutrient food, modern health care service, and quality education of their child (Adhikari & Shrestha, 2013). Jain (2020) suggested that the microfinance services enabled women empowerment such as household decision-making, major economic decisions, fulfilling family needs, purchasing fixed assets, etc., through savings. The author concludes that, although microfinance services uplifted women's living standards, only a small number of women were utilizing microfinance services. It suggests that the MFIs need to expand their services to better serve the poor communities, particularly women clients in rural Nepal. As outlined above, the following section discusses a theoretical model of the Grameen Bank as a financial intervention to people devoid of banking or credit service.

Grameen Bank Model and Microfinance

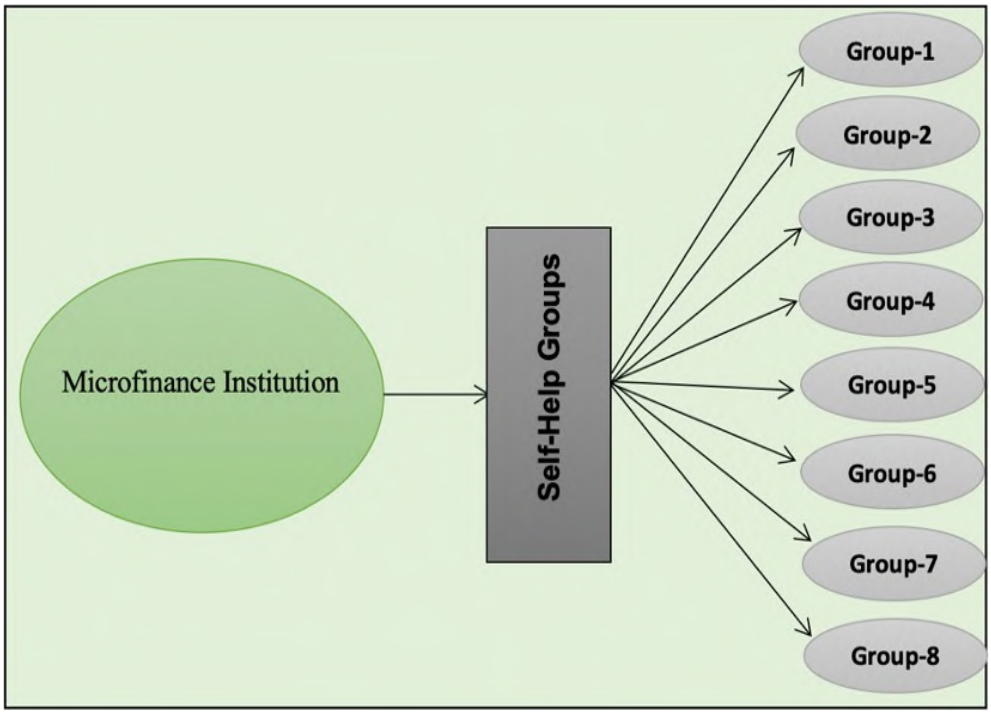
Prof. Muhammad Yunus first introduced the ground-breaking concept of the Grameen Bank model in 1976, with a new vision to offer microcredit or microloan to the poor (Chowdhury & Somani, 2020; McDonnell, 1999). The philosophy of the Grameen Bank is that all human beings are born entrepreneurs. This innovative project was initiated to test the hypothesis that poor people can generate self-employment at the community level if they get financial services at reasonable interest rates. This hypothesis was experimented with among the poor people in rural Chittagong, and within the groups, the majority were women (Amin & Uddin, 2018; McDonnell, 1999). The primary purpose of this idea was to free these groups from the clutches of informal moneylenders (Jain & Mansuri, 2003). Embracing this philosophy, Prof. Yunus provided "collateral-free loans from his pocket to the poor villagers for income-generating activities" such as

making pots and bamboo couches and chairs (Morduch, 1999, p. 1575). This ground-breaking notion ultimately grew into the Grameen Bank model.

According to the Grameen Bank model, the loan is given to the local villagers in a group voluntarily formed by local people. The members select five persons from their community to make a group. The idea of self-selecting the group members replaces the need for collateral and minimizes the transaction cost (Chowdhury & Somani, 2020; Hashemi & Morshed, 1997). Concerning the lending mechanism, the initial two members first receive the loan, followed by the third and fourth members, and finally, the fifth member. If one group member defaults, the entire group members may disqualify subsequent loans. Thus, this mechanism ties all the members together and makes them responsible for properly utilizing the loan in income-generating activities and timely repayments. Figure 3 shows the lending mechanism of the Grameen Bank model.

Figure 3

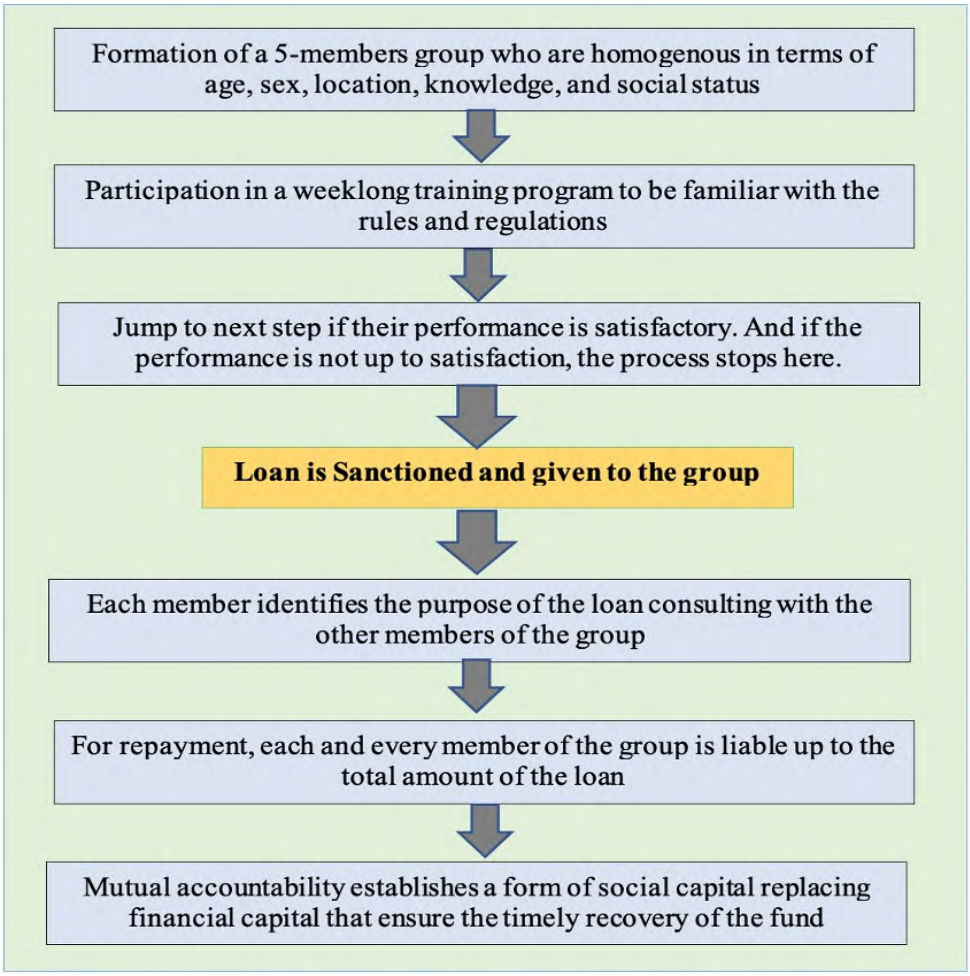
Lending Mechanism of Grameen Bank Model



Before the group members receive the loan, they participate in a training program for a week to learn the bank's rules and regulations. The group members discuss their plans, and everyone comes up with the purpose of her/his loan. Finally, the loan is sanctioned when the bank is satisfied with the proposal and plan of everyone for their investment (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Grameen Bank Model of Microfinance/Microcredit



The Grameen Bank model, however, has been criticized widely. For example, the opponents of the model argue that the loans carry unusually high interest rates. In 2015, the National Bureau of Revenue filed a court case against

Prof. Yunus for evading $1.5 million in tax (Matsangou, 2016). In *Aljazeera,* DeCrow (2019) reports that Sheikh Hasina, the Bangladeshi prime minister condemned MFIs for "sucking blood from the poor in the name of poverty alleviation" (para. 9). Furthermore, it is also criticized that some MFIs are focused on profit maximization rather than serving the poorest of the poor. For example, Matsangou (2016) writes:

> A new trend [has] emerged in the world of microfinance…not just to help others but also to profit. The likes of Barclays, CitiGroup and General Electric initiated microfinance projects that gained from lending small amounts of capital to so-called unbankable (para. 17).

The opponents have raised the issue of monitoring mechanisms. They have questioned if the financially excluded people could be pulled out of the cracks of the debts through the financial intervention of microfinance.

The Grameen Bank policy found that the repayment rates are higher if the groups are relatively homogenous, i.e., comprising of members from similar socio-economic backgrounds, same-sex, and from the same village, than the groups that are formed based on a bank's administrative decision (Grameen Bank, 2011; Huppi & Feder, 1990). Self-selected group members have several advantages because of collective responsibility and joint liability, such as higher success rates of loan repayment, successful peer monitoring, and low credit risks (Grameen Bank, 2011).

Chowdhury and Somani (2020) found recovery rates of 94.5% in 2018. The trend of Grameen Bank policy often targets microfinance services to women, in some cases exclusively. For example, Daley-Harris (2007) reports that 85% of the most indigent microfinance clients were women. Thus, focusing on female clients makes sense from the public policy perspective not because women are particularly vulnerable and careful investors and have registered higher repayment rates. In the context of Nepal, it is often the situation that rural women rarely

leave the village compared to their male counterparts. The Grameen Bank model substantially contributes to financially impoverished people, including women, through its microfinance services.

The Grameen Bank Model and Nepali MFIs

The Grameen Bank model is a foundation for a lending mechanism of the MFIs in Nepal; however, they do not necessarily embrace the theoretical underpinnings of the model. For example, the group mechanism or provision in the Grameen Bank model (see Figure 3), which consists of five members in a group and eight such groups, does not necessarily apply in the context of Nepali MFIs. The group formation is flexible, i.e., three to twenty-five members in a group (a personal conversation with Mr. Basanta Lamsal, Chief Executive Officer, Vijaya Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Ltd, May 2, 2021). The rationale for group flexibility is customers' interest, low density of population in rural areas, and competition among MFIs.

Similarly, according to the Grameen Bank model, the group members are voluntarily formed; however, in Nepali MFIs, the staff members and clients play a proactive role in selecting quality members. The loan disbursement mechanism is also different in Nepal than introduced in the Grameen Bank Model. In Nepali MFIs, the loan is generally disbursed to group members in three distinct phases with a ratio of 40%, 40%, and 20%, respectively. In the case of a small group, this mechanism may not apply. As introduced in the Grameen Bank model, the entire group members will be disqualified for the loan if one of their members defaults on the loan repayment. However, in the context of Nepal, it does not necessarily apply, and so does the case for the requirement of eight groups (a personal conversation with Mr. Debendra Bahadur Shah, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Kisan Laghubitta Bittiya Sanstha Ltd., May 2, 2021).

According to Nepal Rastra Bank's Unified Directive (2077BS), MFIs can approve a maximum of Rs.5, 00,000.00 loan to an individual without collateral

and Rs.7, 00,000.00 to individuals who are not involved in groups taking collateral. Similarly, a maximum of Rs. 15, 00,000.00 loan can be sanctioned to individuals after two years whose performance falls under the underpass category in the past two years. However, if the client is involved in a group, he /she can't get both collateral-based and group guarantee-based loans from MFIs in Nepal (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2020). This suggests that the credit policy and guidelines of MFIs in Nepal are more flexible than the fundamental provision of the Grameen Bank model.

Issues and Challenges of Microfinance Institutions (MFIs) in Nepal

Microfinance is now globally acknowledged as a powerful financial tool to fight against poverty. Its innovative management and business strategies helped people move out of poverty in many third-world countries. While an effective intervention of microfinance services has touched low-income families, the success rate isn't the same everywhere (Basnet, 2007). In Nepal, microfinance hasn't been as successful as it has been in Bangladesh, India, South America, and Africa. For instance, in Bangladesh, the microcredit organizations have reached almost 90% of villages, where more than 75% of low-income families are directly benefited, and among them, 95% of borrowers are women (Grameen Bank, 2011). On the other hand, in Nepal, a decade-long Maoist insurgency (1996-2006) created an unfavourable climate for small businesses, which could otherwise penetrate the more impoverished strata in the rural communities in Nepal. The political crisis resulted in financial deprivation among many people in rural communities.

The large number of MFIs has increased since the early 2000s; however, most of them are concentrated in urban cities or densely populated areas, where there is easy proximity to the market. The MFIs have grossly neglected the neediest rural communities in the hills and mountain areas. The Microcredit programs target low-income families; however, they serve less poor or

disadvantaged groups (Sharma, 2007). This shows that the poorest of the poor, who are the highest priority of the government of Nepal, are less benefited from the microfinance services.

Many MFIs have formed groups for savings and credit purposes. Despite their focus on landless or disadvantaged groups, in some cases, it is found that groups are formed mostly with non-poor people, and the group leaders are selected from well-to-do families. While many poor people have started micro-enterprises using their loans taken from MFIs, many face marketing problems for various reasons, including selecting inappropriate products, limited knowledge on managing the business, and lack of experience. Similarly, the lack of advanced technology in the agricultural sector, particularly in rural areas, hinders the effectiveness of microfinance services. Additionally, the market for agricultural production is constrained due to high transportation costs in the hills or mountain regions. Political instability has been another concern, which has created economic insecurity and paralyzed the business prospects of MFIs in Nepal.

It is often criticized that many MFIs lack professionalism within financial institutions. Many MFIs have been mushrooming every day; however, lack of knowledge and business plans are significant concerns for running financial programs and sustainability. Credit customer duplication is another challenge to MFIs in Nepal. As per Nepal Rastra Bank Directive, no 3/077-2 “Ja,” for D class institutions, multiple banking customers should be confirmed by taking credit information from Credit Information Center (CIC). Although MFIs take customer declarations about various banking facilities to avoid duplication, some customers hide their information about loans from multiple banks to borrow more loans. This is due to the lack of coordination among MFIs to collect clients’ credit information. As a result, the same loan can likely be financed from multiple MFIs. This results in bad debt loans to clients due to their limited income source for loan repayments.

There is a diminishing attraction of customers to MFIs due to high interest rates, high service charges, lack of synchronization between cash flow from the business and repayment schedule of the loan, group members' responsibilities, and rumour of exploitation by MFIs. These all result in customer turnover in MFIs in Nepal. Microfinance institutions need to deconstruct these challenges for sustainability in the business. Further, MFIs have inadequate resources for investment. For example, Nepal Rastra Bank Directives has stated that MFIs can mobilize their financial resources 30 times of their core capital; however, microfinance is restricted to mobilized public deposits unless approved by Nepal Rastra Bank. There are currently only a handful of MFIs, which can mobilize public deposits. Hence MFIs are unable to expand their business in rural and mountain regions.

Alleviating poverty is quite challenging. Microfinance institutions need to put their every effort into economically marginalized and vulnerable groups in rural communities. Central Bank Directives has made a mandatory legal provision to A, B, and C category Banks and Financial institutions to invest 5% of total investment in economically marginalized and disadvantaged groups (Nepal Rastra Bank, 2021). Yet, the definition of economically marginalized people is not in an economic term or income threshold. When there is no clear threshold, the microfinance services may not reach the targeted groups.

Discussion and Policy Implications

Although the microfinance program can have a powerful impact on rural poverty alleviation, it is not a panacea. Several other factors hinder development policy and implementation, which need to be addressed appropriately and adequately. Extensive evidence discussed above demonstrated that microfinance is a practical financial intervention to reduce the poverty and vulnerability of low-income families in developing countries. MFIs play a significant role in empowering women by increasing their contribution to managing household

emergencies and controlling decision-making. Microfinance services improve nutrition, maternal and child health, and housing, especially among children and women.

In the Nepali context, however, decades of experience have demonstrated that progress in these areas is precarious due to political volatility, economic insecurity, and lack of basic infrastructure in rural communities in Nepal (Dhakal, 2010). This is imperative that a strong management and efficient operation of microfinance programs is required to reach financially deprived people in the rural communities in Nepal. In a developing country like Nepal, where the private sector is weak, the government has a significant role in promoting MFIs through multidimensional interventions and facilitation. This section discusses policy implications and recommendations directed towards policymakers to establish appropriate microfinance programs and services targeting the socio-economic transformation of rural communities in Nepal.

Need of a National-level Microfinance Policy

The government should develop a national-level microfinance policy identifying appropriate modalities to direct the microfinance programs and accomplish the specified objectives. Such programs should emphasize vocational and skill enhancement training to enhance borrower entrepreneurship and business management skills. Further, the policy requires collaboration between provincial and municipal governments and non-governmental institutions. The existing outreach of microfinance services is minimal. It has been witnessed that MFIs cannot be extended comprehensively without the political stability in the country. To better serve financially underprivileged people, the government should develop a long-term policy through the existing network of MFIs. The government should invest in infrastructure such as motorable roads in rural areas and ensure transportation facilities even in the rainy season in the hilly and mountainous regions.

MFIs to Focus on Rural Communities

Many MFIs are in urban cities and district headquarters. They are mainly concentrated in the Terai and hilly urban areas. The mountain and rural hills are grossly neglected. The government should design and implement special programs to motivate the MFIs for rural communities in mountain and hill regions. MFIs should promote the local NGOs and Cooperatives to launch local-oriented and lucrative programs. The government of Nepal should give tax exemption, additional subsidy package, interest-free fund to MFIs operating in rural hills and mountain regions. Thus, MFIs should be encouraged to extend their services into rural areas to serve more impoverished clients.

Promoting Agriculture and Agro-processing

In Nepal, poverty is concentrated more in rural areas. Thus, the intervention becomes pragmatic if it is started from agricultural, agro-based, and natural resource-based enterprises. The poor are attached more directly to livelihood, be it a farmer, an unskilled wage earner, or an entrepreneur. Promoting agriculture and agro-processing in an agricultural country like Nepal is crucial in enabling the microfinance sector. Almost two-thirds of the industries are agro-industries, and processing is in the initial stage in Nepal (Kayastha, 2013). This sector lags the production growth and suffers from a lack of entrepreneurial skills and a semi-skilled workforce, as indicated earlier. Capacity building in this sector is also needed through a broader perspective. Similarly, the microfinance sector also lags agro-processing and cold storage in the local areas to provide a smooth market mechanism to sell the products produced by the borrowers for a reasonable price.

Sustainable Availability of Funding

Sustainable availability of funding for MFIs is a prime factor of attention for promoting them. Self-generated funds within are inadequate as the saving capacity of the poor is small. Government policy directives to persuade banking

and finance institutions to lend some proportion in deprived sector credit is the right direction. Such policy increases the supply of MFI funds significantly as the banking sector's lending resources are extensive. However, the banking approach of just setting aside funds is inadequate to drive MFIs without persuasion to right portfolio prioritization and addressing of the issues. Thus, to promote MFIs, the provision of insurance and other alternatives have to be there as a backup policy. In doing so, Nepal Rastra Bank can play a crucial role by increasing paid-up capital or merging MFIs to mobilize public deposits.

Capacity-building Support

Capacity building is a crucial aspect of microfinance for its services and users. Information generation, entrepreneurship development, project and viability analysis, marketing arrangement, group formation and mobilization, adoption of disciplines, account keeping, computer operations, social activities to enhance human capacity, understanding of borrowers, etc., are the most critical areas to consider. Likewise, promoting microfinance is closely linked to micro-enterprises and entrepreneurship beyond primary sectors such as processing of various small-scale agro-products and agro-processing, as discussed earlier. The government should arrange resources and support MFIs for capacity building through skill-based training, advancement of digital technology, and credit facilitation.

Nepal Rastra Bank to Develop Regulatory Mechanisms

Nepal Rastra Bank should monitor the problem of loan client duplication and take initiatives to implement an effective way of collecting credit information systems of microfinance so that it decreases the duplication problem of multiple financing and reduces bad debt loans due to duplication of credit customers in MFIs. The regulatory body of banks and financial institutions should be aware about the poorest of the poor to whom the deprived and priority sector loan has been designed to pull out of poverty. The government also should maintain the

income and economic status by establishing a clear income threshold and criteria so that MFIs can easily select a targeted group of people to serve them better.

Additionally, Nepal Rastra Bank should issue the circular to all the Banks and Financial Institutions (BFIs) to reduce complex and lengthy documentation procedures and adopt a cost-effective loan process for deprived and priority sector loans. The competent authority has been recommended to waive the charge on the issuance of documents for the Deprived Sector Loans. There is a broader consensus about microfinance programs not penetrating the neediest clients due to resource constraints. Higher interest rates and service charges result in a higher customer turnover rate. Nepal Rastra Bank should strengthen MFIs and allow them to mobilize public deposits, which eventually helps overcome resource constraints, reduces the cost of funds, and enables them to offer competitive interest rates. This can create a healthy environment for MFIs to alleviate rural poverty in Nepal.

Conclusion

Microfinance can be an effective financial intervention to alleviate rural poverty by creating employment and self-employment opportunities in Nepal. It provides collateral-free loans to low-income people neglected by so-called formal financial institutions such as Commercial Banks, Development Banks, and Finance Companies. Although MFIs are working to uplift the financially underprivileged people, more work is needed to penetrate the poorest of the poor strata of the rural communities in Nepal. Moreover, the Nepali economy is primarily agriculture-based, but the progress in the agricultural sector is low. Until the microfinance services are targeted to this sector, it is challenging to improve rural people's substantial economic and social apparatus in Nepal. This indicates the need for a particular strategy in microfinance to minimize headcount poverty through financial intervention in a rural community in Nepal.

The Grameen Bank model is the basis of Nepali MFIs. It used to be a very effective and popular model in the past. Recently, the relevance of the model (group solidarity model) is diminishing due to changes in the social dynamics and social harmony. Further, microfinance clients want to be independent and do not want to take responsibility for others. There are strong voices of clients for individual products rather than group products based on group guarantee and responsibility for a loan. Therefore, the demand for collateral-based individual loans and individual-based non-collateral loans is increasing rapidly in the microfinance industry in Nepal. This mechanism also reflects that the credit policy and guidelines of MFIs in Nepal are more flexible than the fundamental provision of the Grameen Bank model. Thus, well-designed microfinance programs with appropriate product designs are warranted to serve the financially marginalized rural communities. Such programs should target a wide range of social and economic indicators, including income, nutritious food, housing, education for children, health care, and women empowerment. These indicators form the thrust of this vital mission that microfinance is one steppingstone of rural poverty alleviation in Nepal.

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Devaluation of Cultural Life: A Study of Reconstruction-Resilience Practices of an Earthquake Displaced Community

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Abstract

This article investigates how earthquake reconstruction was practiced without considering socio-cultural values in the dislocated community after the 2015 earthquake. The process of disaster resilience tended to focus only on technical structures like the number of houses and school buildings as the main indicators of recovery from earthquake. The resilience programs conducted by the government and NGOs did not pay due attention to caste/ethnic tensions, religious division, political clash, and cultural loss among the villagers. In this study I thus wanted to know what were the meanings/ interpretations of reconstruction and community resilience; how reconstruction programs considered socio-cultural resilience; what socio-cultural aspects in practices of reconstruction were missing, and what were the challenges of cultural resilience among the displaced communities. The study was done at Kunchok-Nabalpur of Sidhupalchok. Local people's perspectives of reconstruction, values, cultural life (ethnographic study) and narratives were collected by using observation, interview, case study and field visit methods. The study found that caste/ethnic, religious and cultural cohesion had not been reinstalled. Socio-cultural diversity and diverse social needs of displaced people were ignored by the resilience programs of the government. This shows how technocratic reconstruction programs were not as effective as expected due to the devaluation of socio-cultural life of the disaster displaced people who otherwise could contribute to the policy and programs of sustainable and inclusive development of the society.

Keywords: disaster, displacement, reconstruction, devaluation, socio-cultural life

Devaluation of Cultural Life: A Study of Reconstruction-Resilience Practices of an Earthquake Displaced Community

There is a wealth of statistics of the huge damage caused by a devastating earthquake of M 7.9 Richter scale in April-May 2015 in Nepal. According to the Nepal Reconstruction Authority (NRA, 2018), 8,970 people died, 22,300 people were seriously injured and approximately 800,000 houses were destroyed. Based on the research of a village this article focuses on the damage in the village of Kunchok, in Sindhupalchok distrct under Bagmati Province killing over sixty-three people and destroying all (800) houses.

When I went to Kunchok Ward no 2 of Indrawati village municipality of Sindhupalchok in June 2018, people were unsettled. Most of them were living under temporary tin-roof huts. Balbhadra Bharati, a 65 years old man who lost his wife in earthquake, said that all of the villagers were displaced in different ways. He added that there were both temporarily and permanently displaced villagers at Kunchok. He said:

> All houses and school buildings collapsed. Thirty-six people died, and about 100 were injured in the village. Survivors were engaged in either medication of the injured or management of dead bodies. The entire village was found unsafe because crack-lines on the earth's surface were visible everywhere. After a couple of days, survivors lived under the tent provided by the government and non-governmental agencies. After a couple of months government-supported a tin-roofed hut for the survivors. I am still living under the hut and waiting to return to new house. I am tired of making official papers and living in the temporary hut. Some survivors were compelled to leave the settlement area and trying to relocate to a new place. The Rural Municipality bought public land and relocated permanently displaced people of the village.

Simple though it looks, this narrative indicates the uncertainty and frustration amidst the little hope of earthquake displaced people. A geological survey identified 136 settlements needing relocation. National Reconstruction Authority formulated and implemented different policies and guidelines for the consistency of reconstruction, community resilience, and equal distribution of resources. Processes of community resilience were technically measured in terms of the reconstruction of a number of houses and other physical structures. Media also described the earthquake resilience through technical science, geological location of safety, and danger zones.

The paper is divided into four sections. After the following introductory remark in this section, the second part sets theoretical approach and conceptual framework for the research. Then the third part of the article provides detailed ethnographic contexts of the field where reconstruction/resilience programs were continued in the aftermath of the earthquake. The last section synthesizes major findings of the research.

Resilience and Reconstruction

The term 'resilience' or ‘recovery’ is often confused with 'reconstruction.' The etymological meaning of reconstruction refers to construction of physical infrastructures like houses, schools, roads, and cultural sites. Resilience not only encompasses the reconstruction of physical structures but also reinstatement of livelihood activities and restoring community life (Central Department of Anthropology, 2020).While scientific explanations were dominant narratives in public space, another perspective, grounded in the social analysis of disasters, argued that disasters were not just natural; instead, they were tied to the development trajectory of a country and to the way development created multifaceted sources of vulnerability. In other words, a disaster was the consequence of poor or inadequate development. It captured the idea that disasters were historical products born out of the human agency and that they expressed the

conditions of risk and vulnerability that the societies created and lived in. Many households were displaced, and they were planning to relocate new settings at Nawalpur with the help of the local government. Socio-cultural and political dimensions of resilience were overlooked in the narratives of both by government and media.

This study has been done through ethnography which provides a link to the past for the present diversity and contexts. Ethnography is current history that is not only informed by the past but something that will also indicate the outline of the emerging moments (Shah, 2004). The advent of ethnographic methods, including narrative, has greatly elucidated the articulations of disaster resilience and microcosmic social organizational shifts and adjustments that occur.

The primary purpose of this study is to identify the situation of the displaced people and to analyze the devaluation of the socio-cultural life of disaster displaced people and deficiencies of policies and practices in the multicultural communities. This study is based on both primary and secondary data. Local people's perspectives of reconstruction, values, cultural life (ethnographic study), and narratives were collected by using observation, interviews and case methods.

Disaster and Social Vulnerability

Vulnerability is political-economic phenomenon of the society. After natural or human induced disaster events, another disaster starts because of socio-economic, political conditions of particular groups of people. A large number of people may be killed, displaced or affected by the socio-political causes at post disaster context (Gamburd, 2014). The deteriorating social context is regarded as disaster after disaster by many anthropologists (Gamburd, 2014; Oliver-Smith & Hoffman, 2002). Displacement of large populations and their resettlement are embedded concerns of social vulnerability. The relationship between the physical and social aspects of vulnerability has been acknowledged by numerous scholars.

Physical vulnerability results from location concerning to potential hazards, poor or inadequate construction of buildings, age of structures, and so forth. The social vulnerability involves the relative ability of an individual, household, or community capacity to respond appropriately to threatening conditions (Levine et al., 2007). Lack of income, lack of transport, age, gender, minority status, lack of information, and numerous other factors may cause to social vulnerability. Several authors (Bogard, 1989; Cutter, 1993; Cutter & Emrich, 2006; Dow, 1992; Downing, 1991; Smith, 1992) have noted that vulnerability is a function not only of immediate physical conditions, but also of society's capacity to withstand disasters. Bohle et al. (1994) and Dow and Downing (1995) define vulnerability as a multi-dimensional construct captured in physical, and socioeconomic factors. Other research has integrated social response with physical risks in a wide array of spatial contexts (Degg, 1993; Lewis, 1987; Liverman, 1990; Longhurst, 1995; Mitchell et al., 1989; Palm & Hodgson, 1992).

Ideally, post disaster vulnerability assessment should incorporate a wide range of factors: age, disability, family structure, and social networks, immobility, housing and the built environment, land ownership, population densities, income and material resources, the availability and affordability of property insurance, critical lifelines, occupation, and race and ethnicity (Burby et al., 2003; Chang, 2001; Clark et al., 1998; Cutter et al., 2003; Fothergill & Peek, 2004; Kunreuther, 1998; Lewis, 1987). The NRA and non-governmental agencies developed indicators for the vulnerability assessment but they were practically not implemented in the field. They instead count family or household, injured population, dead number of people, and damaged number of houses. A similar approach has been used to claim recovery/reconstruction of the society. There was no assessment of social and cultural indicators of recovery.

Socio-cultural and political dimensions of resilience were overlooked in the narratives of both government and media. This paper concerns the tenacity of

a binary way of framing post-disaster reconstruction between so-called "physicalist" and "social" approaches (Sliwinski, 2017, p. 263). In the case of Gujarat Earthquake reconstruction, social and cultural aspects of the community were not only ignored but also humiliated and hegemonized through political and economic symbols of modernity (Simpson, 2013). Similarly, Marchezini (2015) argued that disaster survivors had experienced various forms of social death caused by the policies and practices of some governmental agencies. All the analysis stressed that state organizations have biopolitical discourses and practices that consider local cultures irrelevant or irrational. This theoretical framework is applicable for analysis of the research.

Initial Resilience Activities

To get the most effective resilience, different approaches in different phases are required. The long-term resilience is connected with what happens at the beginning of the disaster. While assistance in the emergency is needed to save lives, uncoordinated, rushed and top-down approaches are employed at the village. Uma Giri, a 50 years old displaced woman, said that many strangers came with food and a tent after a couple of days of the earthquake disaster. They distributed things 'first come first receive' basis. They provided whatever they brought without making systematic rules. Roadside dwellers received five times more than off-road villagers. Narayan Bharati, 71-year-old man, said that they were discriminated against by the donor because their tents and huts were far away from the road side. Most of the relief distributors did not walk away from the road. He said that off-road villagers were compelled to live near their land because they had livestock and helpful neighbours. Sherpi Tamang, one of the remote dwellers, said that people did not allow others to make tent at their private land at the roadside. Most of the relief donors did not walk into the inner part of the village. He said that most of the vulnerable people were from remote parts and marginal locations where the road had not been constructed. Listening to their

stories, I came to know that roads proximity was an indicator of socio-economic resources. In remote village there was very good socio-cultural harmony. Kishor Ranamagar, a roadside dweller, said that people understood the values of road in the aftermath of the earthquake. The road is a boon for the roadside people because they received more relief material and built network with different newcomers. Roadside people knew much information because of the flow of people and the gathering of people around tea-shop around the road. Similarly, the road was profitable for the proximate dweller in terms of the labour fee of house construction materials.

Sliwinski (2017) referred to a materialistic perspective privileging a hazard approach to disasters (i.e., the disaster is equated to an exogenous event caused by a hazard) and technological procedures to fix damaged infrastructure such as houses, roads, schools and the like. Government through NRA allocated the same amount and material for roadside dwellers and remote dwellers, middle class, and lower class, all castes and differently-abled people. Socio-economic, gender, caste/ethnic and lifeline assessments have not been done before launching recovery and reconstruction programs. In this context, the Government of Nepal formulated and employed monolithic and physicalist policies for the reconstruction of the earthquake disaster. Uma Giri again said that the early free handouts heightened expectations on what comes next, subsequently, negatively influenced people's self-reliance and creates dependency. Everyone talked about mechanism of receiving instalments, construction expenditure, number of labour and amount they received from government. Villagers tried to meet criteria set by the government and local technicians. They visited at ward office and filled form for the next phase.

Both government and technicians oriented physicalist model (Sliwinski, 2017) of resilience to the displaced people. Uma added that system of *Parma* (labour sharing), food sharing at neighbours, oxen sharing systems completely

disappeared in the aftermath of the earthquake. These systems strengthened social and cultural harmony among the villagers. A number of dead persons, beneficiaries, completed houses, school rooms, and roads were counted by the technicians and political leaders. Politically active and powerful villagers received and stored unnecessary materials. They did not talk about the restoration of Tamang's worshiping place at new settlement. Before distribution of relief materials, none of the recovery teams was concerned about caste/ethnicity, gender, disability, poverty and occupational status of the villagers. The support materials also distributed uniformity without considering their number of family members and economic status of the family. Therefore, it can be argued that the resilience program is techno-centric.

Permanent Displacement

Two settlements were severely cracked and blocked on both sides by dry landslides. Four people died in the earthquake landslide. The geological study team suggested not making the house in a cracked location. There were eight families at a settlement. Most of the survivors (6 households) of the settlement had their own land at another site. They were relocated to their land. Their land was not close to the road. Because of distance from road and systems of drinking water, electricity, the location was not preferred for the settlement. Now, the earthquake compelled them to relocate the marginal location. The relocated survivors also relatively excluded from road access benefits. An old woman said that her family received the remaining relief materials. The relocated people did not get information and connection from the donors. After the Rural Municipality election, the displaced households received more material. The ward chairperson formed a committee for the inclusive distribution of relief and recovery support. Those (2 households) who had no land in another location were permanently displaced to public land. The permanently displaced were the highly marginalized households of the Tamang. Compared to the permanently displaced, temporarily

replaced and relocated people at their own land were the survivors who found themselves culturally strong and socially united.

There were two categories of permanent displacement in the village. The first category of them was the group of people relocated in their land. The second category of displaced people has not their own land at other location. Compared to the second category, the first category received relatively more support from non-government agencies and local community. They continued previous livelihood occupation and strategies. They were connected to own ethnic group in terms of territory and cultural stuff. They lost materials and family members, but their stories sound optimistic. Biru Lama, 56 years old among the replaced persons, said that there was a satisfactory level of social security in the community. He shared that his neighbours cooperated for extension of the road, drinking water pipe and electricity at a new settlement without local government decisions. Some of them gave land and wood free of cost for road and temporary house construction.

Another permanently displaced settlement was alarmingly picaresque. Displaced persons were relocated at the community forestry land. There were no facilities of electricity, drinking water, and land for vegetable cultivation. When the policy of land acquisition was formed, the Rural Municipality designed a resettlement project for the permanently displaced villagers. At first, the survivor was reluctant to accept the resettlement project because they were not included in the process of decision making. The problem was top-down and non-participatory approaches were employed for the resettlement program. Ratna Tamang, a displaced old man shared that his family was about to resettle in the Tamang settlement, but the Rural Municipality decided to make a house in the new settlement. Displaced people were not given any option for the selection of settlement. Uttam BK, a permanently displaced man, expressed a similar tone in living near his kin people.

UNDP Program and Wage Increment

After a couple of weeks, United Nations Development Program [UNDP] selected Kunchok for completely safe demolition/debris managed – both public and private buildings – in 3 VDCs (Kunchok, Irkhu, and Karthali) of Sindhupalchok. The concept of this Emergency Employment (Cash for Work) in the Early Recovery phase was to involve local communities to remove debris and safely demolish the houses, which was the immediate need of aftermath of such a great magnitude of earthquake for safety and pave the way for reconstructing both public and private buildings. They named it as UNDP's emergency employment. This program created 'hope' and recreated 'society' among most of the temporarily displaced survivors.

The concept of the program was derived from the physicalist model of resilience. The program did not support unity of community and inclusive participation of the survivors. Permanently displaced households and survivors who left the village for the medication of family members and took shelter at relatives in a different village and Kathmandu valley were excluded from the program. The inclusive development rhetoric of such a reputed international development agency overlooked issues of displacement and gender discrimination.

It was no free offering, however. 'Cash for Work' was regarded as 'dignity,' the community received the cash in exchange for their valuable contribution to community/own (private) house demolition/debris management at a crisis. If social workers were mobilized in the program, this could be an opportunity for the social and community recovery initiative. Engineers and technical experts were mobilized to mark and study the physical status of the location and houses.

The debris management and cleaning programs started from Shree Mahendra Higher Secondary School. This program was not limited to public

structures, but also covered demolition and debris management of private homes. Dal Bahadur Bharati said that this type of program was experienced for the first time in his life. All working-age family members and some UNDP officials worked for debris management and cleaning up the damaged homes; all working-age family members were paid cash by UNDP officials. Villagers were surprised because they earned money/wage for cleaning of own broken homes. Many of them expressed that this was new phenomenon in the village. In comparison to pre-earthquake daily wage, the workers were paid two times more the wage. Before earthquake, the wage rates of the villagers were Rs. 350/400 for males and 300/350 for females. Uma Giri said that the UNDP paid Rs. 1000 for males and Rs. 800 for females.

This program was primarily dominated by a physicalist approach as Sliwinski (2017) claimed. Gender-based difference was noted because UN agencies advocated equal wages for equal work but did not practice it. The program was neither sustainable nor inclusive in terms of displacement, caste/ethnicity, and gender. Permanently displaced survivors did not need to demolish/debris management of their houses, therefore, they were excluded. Unruled and unhealthy competition of cash earning among the survivors raised tension among themselves. Working at own home and getting cash wage was an alien practice; therefore, everybody was interested to stand at working site. Bal Bahadur Bharati joked that both worker and disaster site viewer received the same wage. Long term consequence of the program was an increment in the wage rate in the village. The wage rate of the UNDP program became a common wage rate for males and females in the village. When the rate was established as standard wage rate, the expensive wage ratio was a headache for the middle-class farmer in the village. After this project, nobody was ready to work on low wage. Man Bahadur Giri had relatively more land. He needed farm labour occasionally. The agro-wage rate was expensive. He shared that he thought he had better leave

agricultural land barren. In the beginning people were happy to receive a high wage rate. When they started to pay everyday wage for their farm work, they were not satisfied with the dramatic increase in the wage rate. As a consequence, there was a dearth of labour in the village right after the earthquake. Everybody was engaged in reconstructing their own home and agricultural activities. Those families who had not working-age members suffered a lot, and they were compelled to pay expensive wage rate.

Another consequence of high wage practice was the penetration of house construction contractors. Many of them were from outsiders. They brought large number of construction labours. Many labours were from Kalikot and Jajarkot districts. In the course of reconstruction, the local elite also started as contractors. Ram Bahadur Thapa, the headmaster of Mahendra Higher Secondary school, for example, became a contractor for house construction. He bought a tripper to carry hardware materials and contracted more than ten houses of the villagers. Mohan Bahadur Giri, the chairperson of the school management committee, said that Mr. Giri was more businessman than teacher after the earthquake. Because of his engagement in the construction business, education quality and school system were ruined. When I was at the school office of Mr. Giri, he was busy on phone calls with his tripper driver. I also agreed that he and many teachers were completely turned entirely from teacher to businessman and contractor. The students also complained that he rarely presented in the class.

Many people started a new profession besides earlier professions and village politics. Their engagement in business created social and educational problems in the village. Teachers who were expected as role models of the village were involved in profit making business. Socio-cultural behaviours of the students were also found problematic. This economic and physical/material orientation of recovery hampered the social and educational resilience of the village. School buildings were reconstructed, but the quality of education was declined. Most of

the villagers transferred their children to either Kathmandu or Chautara for better education including those of headmaster who now could afford to pay in expensive private schools in the cities.

Reconstruction: Monolithic Model

Reconstruction brought two important changes to the village. They are roadside houses and monolithic structures of the house. Most of the houses under construction made either one or two-rooms with similar structure and design. Though NRA authorized eight different models of house construction, local technicians promoted a single model. Their indirect promotion was single room cemented house. The smaller and one-room house was easily and quickly passed without an observational check of technicians, who behaved like the authoritative and highly welcomed persons in the village. One of the villagers said that there were varieties of arts, architecture, and structures of houses before the earthquake. They were made by older people most of whom already passed away and the rest could not work. He argued that those arts and architectures were lost forever. Their newborn children would observe only new style house in the village.

According to Man Bahadur Bharati (96 years old), new members of his family did not get an opportunity to observe the art and architecture of his old house, which was full of wooden art and structure like outer balconies. He stressed that stone roofed house would be a big surprise and strange for the coming generation. He added that stone slate-roofed houses were symbolic markers of prosperity, caste, and social status in the village. He remembered his heydays when lower caste people were not allowed to make slate-roofed houses. He further explained:

> *Bhotes* (Tamangs) were poor and many of the Sanyasis had not stone roofed houses in the village. Recently (before 10 to 20 years) stone roofed house became a fashion among all caste ethnic peoples. *Bhotes*, Sanyasi, Magars and Dalits constructed stone roofed houses in the village. Then the

> earthquake destroyed the fashion, competition and differentiation. Now all of villagers were building uniform house. There was no caste ethnic, class and status differences. All are equal.

I observed slight differences. Economically well up households made big concrete house including own investment. The second layered people also made relatively different houses by borrowing money from their relatives and commercial institutions. Marginalized peoples made whatever government package covered. Highly marginalized were either excluded from the list of relief or processed for second instalment.

I also observed cases of corruption by the technicians who made commitments to the people after the arrival of instalments without meeting basic requirements for the next installment. One morning, Man Bahadur Giri, one of the local politicians, called me to observe the *Dasnamai* settlement at Puware. I met Sherpi Giri, the elected ward member from the previous Maoist party. Other people also gathered around when we were talking about resilience and the reconstruction process of the village. I was unfamiliar to many villagers. One of the villagers, who was drunk, was confused with my appearance. He thought that I was a technician. He proposed to pay Rs. 10000 to forward his file for the second instalment as bribe. When I did not pay attention, he again said, "I paid you whenever I got first *Kista*, believe me I will pay you again. Please, forward my file for the process of the second *Kista*". Then I realized that there were cases of corruption from technicians.

At the local level, technicians were the supreme authority of reconstruction so they governed the ecology of construction. Some of them made alliances with local elites who were social workers of NGOs and treated locally like NGO personnel. Khem Bahadur Nepali said that his name was excluded from the list of *Raha*t. He added that his family had been temporarily living out of the district. His land and other property were in the village. The coordinator and

villagers did not list his name as the earthquake victim. After a couple of weeks, he came to check his name in the list of *Rahat.* The villagers and technicians denied his name because he was not in the village, and his family would not live in the village. Later, he filled complaint (*Gunaso*) form, but his complaint was not heard. He, as a member of *Biswasi Mandali* (a local Christian, member of a Church that was constructed at his uncle's land), went to the Chuch to get the support of the community. Lastly, his name was included in the list of *Rahat*.

First, the reconstruction project of government instalments supported and brought new settlement. Because of limited resources, people tried to manage within a given amount. If they used human labour to carry construction material from the road to the inner settlement, there would be more labour expenditure. I observed that there was road access at each newly made and under-construction house. The Ward chairperson also agreed that the primary source of budget distribution was the expansion of road access for all households. Newly-made roads changed the land and settlement pattern of the rural village. If the house was made off-road, it would cost high because of extra labour to carry construction material. Those people who had land close to the road transformed their previous house location. They left the old house and made a new home close to the road. Chairperson said that every household demanded road on his/her yard. The road at the yard was one of the markers of power and socio-economic status of the household. The landowners of roadsides turned economically powerful because they put many conditions and bargaining to the landlocked households. One Dasnami owner denied access to the road by cutting his land to the Dalit community. There were five Dalit households in the village. The Dalits filed the case. The case was not decided yet. The landowner said to me that if Dalits would buy his land, he was ready to sell. Bir Bahadur Tamang, the chairperson of the ward, said that there were various structures, wood art, and architecture house before the earthquake. Tamang's house and Sanyasi's house were different in

structure, art, and architecture. These diversities of architecture disappeared after the earthquake. There is no difference between Tamang's Sanyasi' and Magar's newly made the house. Man Bahadur Bharati (90 years old man) said that house is not store made of soil, stone or cement-sand and iron. There must be an agreement of gods, local spirits, and human beings. Before making a house, a human must get consent from nature and god. He said that there was no consent of gods and spirits to make new house wherever people are making. He claimed that these newly made houses would be ghost houses after a few years. He added that there was a tradition of observation and study of the proposed house making place both physically and spiritually. Tin roof hut, warm clothes support, and land relocation policy were the second phase of recovery. This phase was a much more systematic distribution of materials.

Reconstruction: Rhetoric and Reality

Narayan Bharati showed me the village where massive houses were constructed. He told me that if I visited them before the earthquake, the picture of the village would be completely different. Traditional settlements and caste ethnic clusters were different. He again added that if I was in the village after six months of earthquake, the village would be set up as homogeneous tin-roofed huts. There was no caste, ethnic, and class differences. After two years of the earthquake, there was a dramatic reconstruction of houses and roads of different type. When the road and house were constructed, the household was listed as resilient. Road and house were the only indicators of reconstruction/recovery in the village. NRA's reports also stressed a number of houses and schools as main indicators of the recovery from the earthquake.

Man Bahadur Bharati said that villagers tried to receive government funds without any cost. They knew that the allocated budget was insufficient to reconstruct the house and other assets of the family. Some of them made houses and converted to shade/ goats' houses by the budget. An interesting aspect was

that they named the new house as ‘Government house’. It was exciting process of ‘Othering’ the construction. Many of them showed newly constructed and government-funded house because they thought that these visitors came to observe ‘government houses’. When I started about the earthquake and reconstruction, they requested me to observe government houses made out of government funds.

Sanu Nepali said that he made a house, but his family members did not like to live in the narrow room. There was no space for the relatives who came home during the festivals. There was no space for the god and goddess. Ram Bahadur said that their culture was ‘god first’. Many of the newly made houses were started without observing the fortune of god and evil spirits. The traditional culture of house construction was the astrological observation of the site for the good fortune of the family members. At the beginning of the foundation, a priest should worship and offer good and evil spirits. But this time, technicians and engineers identified the house construction site. They replaced astrologers, priests, and gods. Therefore, most of the villagers thought that government-made houses were not lucky for the family. Then, they started to keep goats and cows. The technical model of resilience thus created problems with the government-supported houses. The negligence of the local culture turned the human houses into a cow shed.

House construction was the only subject of observation on the project of reconstruction. Nobody paid attention to social and cultural reconstruction. Their public spaces were more commercial and profit-oriented. The social and cultural aspects of food and labor sharing were collapsed with the earthquake. Traditional norms and values of respect were lost. None of the authorities talked about the reconstruction of the old architectural aspect of the house, old social ties and cultural functions.

Narayan Bharati said that this model of reconstruction was gender and kinship unfriendly. He added that there was no space for night stay for the guests and other family members who visited on festivals. He shared that his daughters and sisters complained that there was no space for an overnight stay for them. Two daughters and their four children visited on the occasion of *Teej.* He said, "In traditional house, there was sufficient space for guests and family members. Because of lack of sleeping space, daughters shortened their living with parents. Similar situations occurred in Dashain and Tihar. In Dashain, many relatives visited but they returned quickly for the same reason. If they stayed overnight, it would be uneasy to the host. There were only two small rooms. Women and girls felt uneasy to adjust with male members". He explained that preveiously there were extensive kinship relations in the village. Relatives were interested in staying with old peoples. Most single elderly people made one-room house. He questioned, "How close relatives like in-laws and could live overnight within a room?" Similarly, women and girls were mostly engaged in cooking in the kitchen and cleaning pots and clothes. There was no space for the kitchen and water management.

Therefore, the reconstruction project neglected villagers' kinship networks as well as gender relations in local contexts. Many villagers complained that this reconstruction planning devalued the social and cultural life of the community people. It was merely planned by technicians who counted only the number of humans in a household. But in the village, babies, dogs, goats, calves, and chicken have also to be adjusted within the same space allocated for humans. Dal Bahadur Bharati said that it was their great mistake to count human family members exclusively in the village resilience project. His argument was that village life was intricate with kinship relations and agrarian livelihood. Without understanding the complexity of village life, the project of resilience/ reconstruction would be unfinished or even if finished it would not as effective as it ought to be.

Conclusion

The main conceptual framework of the NRA was that all people affected by earthquake, irrespective of their caste, ethnicity, gender, class, ability, religion, and region, were equal. The villages were heterogeneous, whereas formed policies treated them as having no caste, ethnic, power, and class differentiation. The major flaw of most of the policies was that they ignored inclusive clauses of fundamental rights section of the constitution, 2015 as well as inclusive provision of development guideline.

NRA of Government of Nepal, local authority, and most NGOs also considered resilience as construction of houses, roads, drinking water supply, electricity, and another technical requirement. But the displaced people have not only lost their place but also been shocked by the social networks and cultural practices of the new place. There was economical and technological domination of resilience programs. The resilience projects were heavily influenced by a certain type of value and the market-based development. Reconstruction programs weakened local diversity of knowledge and practices and strengthened market economy. None of the resilience programs were implemented to reconstruct the culture, knowledge, and social capitals of the displaced community. Reconstruction of cultural capitals, learning, social networks was ignored in the programs of community resilience among the displaced people.

Similarly, reconstruction regulation stated that technical engineers should pass the structure of the house before application for the next instalment. I have not seen any engineers in both the ward and village municipality offices during my fieldwork. Villagers and CTEVT technical students said that engineers did not visit wards and village municipality office. In ward, CTEVT students were authoritative personal to accept and reject proposal of the next instalment. They rarely visited villages and settlements to observe reconstruction processes and technical aspects. They mostly stayed at the ward office. When applicants came

for the request of the next instalment, technicians demanded photos of the present status of the house. If some of the applicant did not meet the requirement of the NRA, technicians suggested going photoshop and asked to print two photos of the technically accepted structure. This is possible because the architectural and structural models of all houses are the same.

Moreover, the provisions of the next instalment application were also identical. Then, technicians passed the previous structure and proceeded the instalment. There is space for the signature of the engineer in the form. When I asked the technicians, they said that all forms were collected in the different villages and collected at the district headquarter. There is a coordination office where one or two engineers sign in all dead and application forms sent by the technicians. Without observation and visit of reconstruction field, they passed and proved that newly constructed house under *Rahat* package was safe and technically earthquake resilient. Displaced people are hierarchical in terms of power, prestige, and property whereas policies treated them equally. Therefore, most of the reconstruction and resilience programs perpetuated social hierarchy, domination of one group over the other, and inequality. Most of the reconstruction programs thus devalued the socio-cultural life of the displaced households and surrounding communities whereby causing failure to attain resilience.

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Bhada Tharu Homestay: Building National Integrity through Cultural Performance

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Abstract

This article studies the challenges of modernity in Tharu people's way of life and how successfully they have sustained to maintain aesthetics of ethnicity coping together with modernity. The scholarly discussion of the impact of ritual performances of Tharu people to identify themselves in the national and international domain through the socio-cultural aspect of homestays provides us insight into how Tharus have become successful in preserving the memory of identity through cultural heritage. This study confines its approach within the Bhada village of Kailali district. It examines the progressive changes institutionalized after the homestay programmes in socio-cultural development of Tharu people's cultural performances facing urbanization. Homestay programmes in the Tharu village of Kailali district have accelerated their financial advancement chiefly by their exceptionally distinct social-cultural legacies of rituals and performances. With the assistance of various exploration reports, it essentially analyzes the part of social execution like dance melodies among Tharu people to bear the progressions for economic exercises and vocation. With the assistance of Devkota and Bhattarai's notion of homestays and rural development, the paper legitimizes the imminent practical development in the indigenous community by analyzing the issues from culture to modernity.

Keywords: homestay, Tharu-ritual performances, modernity, economy, development

Bhada Tharu Homestay: Building National Integrity through Cultural Performance

Bhada Tharu homestay has helped the financial and social execution of local people in the Kailali district of Nepal. With the appearance of homestay programs, local people have a chance to keep themselves occupied in the financial and social exhibitions. The absence of financial opportunities had previously caused them to choose more pay-producing monetary exercises within a short duration. The establishment of homestays has elevated the financial freedom of women, particularly those housewives who in the past were constrained to live with no income at all. Previously, they were reliant on their spouses and working individuals of their family. Almost 12.8 kilometers far from the Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City, Bhada homestay lies with a Tharu majority, barring all other communities. On the occasion of tourism year 2011, Bhada homestay sarted on December 17 offering its local food and housing accommodation to visitors who had been unfamiliar with Tharu culture. Bhandari (2011) propels the promotion of rural tourism as the primary contributing factor for rural livelihood in Nepal. He write that 'The Tourism Policy 2065 BC Nepal' and 'Tourism Vision 2020 Nepal' have additionally tended to manage the tourism industry advancement by an emphasis on community based tourism and homestays. Bhandari asserts the launch of tourism programmes as the assisting factor in the economic change of rural parts of Nepal which were previously struggling to run the rural lifestyle.

Homestay is a provision in the convenient area that has seemed to address the issue of everyday tourism industry advancement. Rural tourism through homestays functions as a part of the eco- tourism industry that intends to construct the community folks' ability by truly investing local resources shrewdly and assists with securing climate change. Local tourism enables the folks to protect the natural surrounding where they reside. The forest area is protected by setting up community forest clubs. The riverside is developed as a tourist destination.

The village roads are decorated by planting roadside gardens and trees. The waste products are managed in a proper and fixed place. Homestay makes them more conscious about preserving the serenity of their surroundings. The local ecosystem is transformed into a primitive landscape as best possible. Consequently it is recognized by professionals as an apparatus of sustainable development in the tourism industry. In the line to distinguish modern development as temporary and the need of eco-friendly modernization, Stabler and Goodall (1996) write that the idea of a sustainable tourism industry improves the fundamentals of modern development. They emphasize the propensity of rural tourism of homestay programmes with the more rational and emotional approach of modernity.

Sustainable tourism development expects to accomplish the equilibrium of effects to guarantee the quality of life of the host local area. Tosun (2011) believes in the preservation of indigenous culture and habitat with the establishment of homestay to socio-culturally distinct society. He suggests that homestay industry improvement ought to be arranged and administered for the insurance of the indigenous habitat for a group of people coordinating with economic sectors. It should regard the way of life and climate of the specific zone, its economy, and conventions. Homestay tourism needs to practice pre-work on the local traditions, socio-political approaches of the state, community demography, and financing.

The homestay makes its sightseers rejoice through different functions. *Sakhiya, Jhumra, Maghauta, Lathauhwa, Baithakku, Mungrahuwa, Barki Maar,* and *Ghoruwa* are mainstream society dance tunes of the Tharu. Common and man-caused scenes incorporate lakes, wild creatures, fowls, wildernesses, *Behada baba* sanctuary visits, *Jagannath Bhuihar* (Tharu Deuthan). Likewise, there are appealing wooden toys and materials reflecting conventional Tharu workmanship and day by day necessities dependent on agriculture. Bhalmansa Laxminarayan

Tharu (L. Chaudhary, personal communication, December 12, 2020) explains about the accessibility of a wide range of Tharu food items alongside the chance of noticing and exploring Tharu culture, lifestyle, and customs in such homestays. Devkota (2008, as cited in Lama, 2013) states that in the nexus between tourism and economy homestay tourism is the microeconomic module in the inside part of the rustic zone along with uncovering the provincial culture and nature to the rest of the world. Homestay tourism enables the locals to generate income since they can sell their local products in the form of cuisine and crafts.

Tourists pay for facilities and comforts. Moreover, tourists also buy different handicrafts and embroidered dresses like the memento. This inspires the unemployed human resource to generate income from the microeconomic perspective. Absence of indigenous culture and heritage makes the government difficult for implementing policies. Button (1988) in his review of John Bodley's *Tribal People and Development Issues* reflects on the lack of clear understanding of the original features of the indigenous community in today's development policies. Button exposes the lack of state recognition and assimilation of indigenous culture and identity in the national integration. Government should invest adequate time and human resources to draft the scientific report on the cultural performances of the various tribes residing in the country. Tharu's cultural and ritual performances assist them to gain state recognition in the absence of proper state welfare programmes.

The government policies should not force these indigenous groups to change their way of life. If the groups feel they no longer can sustain living in the ritually accomplished lives, they avoid following the rituals strictly. Such policies may include the capitalist stream of the government. When the government prioritizes more to the individual growth over the business model, the indigenous group habitual to living in the larger community starts to segregate. Thus, the

community cannot remain intact. Therefore, the economy can grow but the rituals fail. Such a situation can lead to inhuman treatment of each other.

The Tharu community has been subject to socio-political marginalization from the twentieth century when they were *kamaiyas* (bondage labour) exploited by the landlords. Their inclusion in the national development by recognizing their cultural heritage appears primary for national integration. In such conditions of extreme economic deprivation, they could hardly contribute to national development despite being a notable populace. Singh (2018) writes that in order to narrow the gap between the level of development of tribal areas and to improve the quality of the tribal communities, "elimination of all forms of exploitation particularly in land, money lending, and malpractices in the exchange of agricultural and forest products should be given high priority" (p. 822). He focuses on eliminating the social and economic gap between the hierarchies of classes by promoting such ethnic people more towards economic activities. Unless they become socially and politically active and realize their agency, the overall development of any state seems challenging.

Objective and Methodology

The primary objective of this paper is to explore the challenges of the poor economy in Tharu community and the secondary purpose is to recommend cultural performance as the innovative medium to enhance the economy.

This study approaches the qualitative, descriptive method for the analysis of reports, data, and statistics comprising both primary and secondary sources. The secondary sources are based on journals, research articles on Tribal people, and challenges of the modern economy. Primary sources include statements archived from the field reporting. The arguments are validated from the research reviews conducted on the effects and benefits of homestay on promoting local tourism and microeconomics. Based on the phone interview and the online databases, the

research provides the cultural performances as the promising perspective to empower women and unemployed youths.

Tharu Community and Perspective of Development

The Tharu community is bound by its own cultural norms and values. Different rituals performed throughout the year bring them under their own social discipline. Customs like *Barghar, Bhalmansa, Hareri Puja, Hardahuwa* and *Kachhari* create a system of local governance independent of modern bureaucracy in their community. Girase (2016) while explaining about the social system of the indigenous people states that the ethics, morals, norms and values are the components of controlling the social system in tribal life. Bhada homestay preserves the ethics and values of traditional Tharu folklore and performances.

Hechler (2003) presents a useful review of Guneratne's (2002) book *Many Tongues, One People: The Making of Tharu Identity in Nepal* that discusses the effects of modernity in shaping of Tharu identity. Guneratne seeks to demonstrate that the Tharu; a tribal group of the Nepal-India border area, derive their ethnic identity not from the past, but "from the conditions of modernity, the outcome of the organizing efforts of people whose life experiences are being transformed through modernization and state building" (Hechler, 2003, p. 983). He accuses the modern economic system behind the Tharu community's oblivion of their true cultural identity. In his study he shows how Tharus are struggling to cope with the liminality of modernity and tradition has obliterated many of their distinct cultures vital for signifying their identity. Following *Imagined Communities* by Benedict Anderson, Guneratne attempts to dispense with primordial explanations of ethnicity which hold in essence that contemporary ethnic identities are received more or less unchanged from premier past (Hechler, 2003). Guneratne establishes the issue of changing the lifestyle of Tharu. The identity of Tharu self and their involvement in development has accelerated much more quickly than in any other ethnicity.

To develop and motivate Tharu community in national integration, special privileges over the natural resources around where they reside for domestic purposes should be allocated. They should be granted rights over the jungles, rivers and soil for sustenance farming. Vidyarthi (1972) advocates providing similar concessions and special privileges to tribes over the natural habitat around which they live. He writes, "The dependency of the tribal, whether forest dwellers or those whose economy is supplemented by forest produce is well-known" (p. 87). Tharus ought to be given a concession on assortment of deadwood for domestic use, minor forest produce for domestic utilization, the expulsion of lumbers, bamboos, reeds, jars, and so forth for development. The concession will help them to construct the houses and enhance farming.

Homestays provide proximity to the guests and the hosts. Since they are run by the owners of the respective houses, visitors feel adjacent to the behavior of hosts. They come to experience the dialogues and social communication skills of hosts. Visitors in Tharu homestays can connect themselves with the linguistic and communicative aspect of Tharu community. Sweeney (2008, as cited in Lynch, 2003) calls attention to such convenience where guests or visitors pay straightforwardly or in a roundabout way to remain in private homes, where connection happens to a more prominent or lesser degree with a host or potential family who typically live upon the premises. Visitors have an affluent time to get friendly with different aspects of Tharu life from food to folk songs. They can observe the rituals and recognize the particular customs. *Sakhiya, Jhumra, Maghauta, Hurdangwa* and *Kathghori* dances are performed on the arrival of national and international visitors. Different projects and programmes have been regularized for the promotion of such tourism throughout the district like organizing concerts and *mahotsav* (fairs), *Maghi Milan* programme and *Barghar* gathering. Bhada homestay with nearly 200 houses holds an immense prestige of cultural heritage and tourism. *Jaand, rakshi, dhikri* and *bariya* are among the

popular food cuisines of Tharu culture. The Bhalmansa defines the celebration of Maghi as one of the most anticipated occasions for the locals and divine opportunity for the guests to get observed in the Tharu culture.

With 20 Tharu homestay houses in Bhada, internal and external visitors receive warm welcome in traditional Tharu reposes. The village, which is spread over an area of about 350 hectares and is surrounded by rivers, hills and forests, has a population of more than 1,700 at present. The community takes tourists in the Hellenic world of dance and songs in the evening after they are taken to watch the village culture on a day-long walk. The provision of basic hygiene, comfort and security has been well- looked after. Safe and comfortable sleeping room with bathroom and toilet are distinctly managed. The organized local tourist shuttle *gorugada* (oxen cart) takes the tourist to visit the famous religious and cultural tourist sites including Joginya Lake, Behada baba temple, Rameshwar temple, Sahadeva Mahdeva Lake, Koilihi Lake. Devkota (2008, as cited in Lama, 2013) describes the vivacity of such homestay programmes. He confers that homestay programmes can include a large range of performing activities for the visitors. Homestay combines provisions like adventure, trekking, social tourism, agro-tourism, pro-poor tourism, recreational tourism, and ecotourism. It builds every aspect of tourism contributing to the overall economy of the country.

Along with the glittering cultural performances and aromatic natural landscapes, Bhadagaun has an unusually strange myth related to its formation. The prevalent belief of the village as sacred to Tharu people only excludes non-Tharus to permanently settle in the village. No other castes except Dangaura Tharus can live in the village. When talking about the myth, Bhalmansa clarifies that in ancient times, a Tharu Guru named Bhagauti Das 'Prakand' came through Dang's Hekunli and Bhaluwang and chose this independent place and settled in a forested area. Taking vow to the deity, he successfully established the small worshipping *maruwa* (temple) in the village. The recurrent examples of tales of

non-Tharu dying or getting sick on attempting to live in this village permanently horrify the outsiders even up to now.

The establishment of the village as the Tharu homestay has brought positive changes to cope with the challenges of modernity after the former Urma VDC-8 of Kailali district got its political identity as Bhada. The Bhalmansa further said that drinking water, roads, electricity and other facilities were not available in the village earlier but nowadays those facilities have come to the fore. Since the connectivity from all directions is still a major problem basically from the west and north side, the need of making bridges over the river is urgent. He further puts the request to add a park, internet facility and daily transport facility to attract more tourists according to the modern demands of time. The minimum cost for the food and services are being charged for the promotion of culture along with the economic growth. As informed by the Bhalmansa, tourists interested in ethnic diversity and their research visit the homestay with immense expectation. He believes that the village has made a true gesture of hospitality under everyone's effort. Nearly 15000 to 20000 thousand incomes are being recorded as per the information provided by the Bhalmansa and the homestay operators.

Culture and Economy: Micro-development through Homestay

The government of Nepal attempts to help the provincial jobs by utilizing the country's normally rich resources and diverse culture to advance the tourism industry. There is no disbelief that homestay administrators earn by offering their own amenities to their visitors. Amran (2003, in Ibrahim & Razzaq, 2011) writes that these exercises bring issues to apprehension on social trade and regard the host's way of life whereby vacationers can get appropriate accommodation with brilliant facilities. Homestay tourism can be run and promoted on a great scale especially in agricultural states. Lanier and Berman (1993, in Bhuiyan et al., 2011) also refer homestay venues as the programme which provides entertainment along with the economic income to supplement the locals with economic

independence together with sense of cultural uniqueness. The homestay environment creates a space for private families to become public by sharing their way of life to the visitor. Lynch (2003) discusses homestays programmes as the performance of the basic way of living of the host's customs and traditions. Bhada homestay functions as the ethnographical tool to analyze the everyday performance of Tharu community.

The tourists show interest in the local's cuisine and their unique cultural performances. The village houses are divided into different house numbers and if any tourist wants to stay for one and more nights, local house accommodation is available there. Since the place belongs to a humid region, rooms have been designed in a very comfortable way to let the air pass in the room. The cultural performance of women and men has been one of the major reasons for international tourists and social researchers to land on this ethnic land. Such performances have re-evolved the declining cultural activities and gaze in the rural atmosphere of Nepal. Since rural folks are more oriented towards the instant benefitting economic activities and are less occupied with the ideas of performing the traditional rites and rituals, Nepal as a single unique community is losing the grip of its originality. However, the inception of homestays has proved the aura of identity and resistance to inhuman modernity. The younger generations who hardly had any interest and motivation for cultural performances have been stirred through socialization with tourists. It has stimulated them to preserve cultural ingenuity.

The homestay programme developed in the distant and rustic regions enables locals to preserve their ecological zones. It helps them to protect ecologically vital woodlands, parks, cultural heritages, landmarks, and viewpoints. Bhuiyan et al. (2011) asserts the inclusive approach of homestays by transforming local areas into tourist destinations for recreation and receiving knowledge on local geographical features. Hawkins and Lamoureux (2001)

implore about the combination of rich natural resources with the diversity of indigenous communities. Homestay programmes have provided immense growth of Nepal's originality and economic sustainability. Rivers (1998) characterizes homestay as a term that alludes to "guests leasing convenience from a nearby family to learn community culture, way of life, or language" (pp. 492-500). The authenticity of village life has been revoked through homestays. Bhada which was merely a village in the past and hardly known for its uniqueness has now been able to offer an epitome of Tharu cultural diversity and traditional museum sharing its vibrant lifestyles with all those living and visiting there.

Women Empowerment through Homestay

The homestay has immensely helped the domestically restricted women. Such women had no resource of income in the past. They were socially and economically victimized. With no source of income and communal involvement, women had a hard time to practice their skills for economic purposes and empower their social status. They suffered domestic torture and rarely had any decisive role in family. Men had no hope of being dependent on the women of their families prior to such programs. The turn of rural villages into tourist destinations empowered women by making them a prime part of cultural performances exhibited before visitors. They outdid their traditional roles from cooking, dressing, singing and dancing to subvert the patriarchy. Their cultural performances enable them to showcase the socializing strength of beauty. It attracts the visitors with the charm of their ornaments, dress, and bodies. Women can commiserate with the body as a power exercise.

By expelling all the futile and traditional concepts of being born into chains of social restrictions, the homestay has empowered Tharu women to calculate their potentials and concretize their decisions in families. Their cooking skills help them to create the entrepreneurship for marketing their local cuisines. Their limited space bound to the kitchen unexpectedly transgressed them from the

boundary of the liminal space of the kitchen. Now, these women's participation in the folk dance songs has dismantled their submissive state and liminal space. Hence, it has gifted them the liberty of self-drive, self-decision, and self-sustainability. Ibrahim and Razzaq (2011) assert that the homestay programme makes sensations of solidarity locally while doing collaboration by keeping up the customary social qualities inside the local area. They further put the idea that the homestay programme improves the social union among individuals, reinforces authority and builds local area acknowledgment from the external world.

The involvement of these women has presented them as one of the prime members of the community's social and political performances. Tharu women are also viewed as the emblem of beauty due to their rich cultural dresses. Decorated in traditional clothes and ornaments, the audience views those as the object of the gaze. Along with this, even the sense of beauty gets interpreted in different forms. The cultural dress of these women comprises lehenga, embroidered blouse, earrings, necklace, rings, nose-rings, bracelets, payals, and other typical ornaments worn on different occasions. The vivid and vibrant dresses catch up not only with those archetypes of traditions but they too have defined them glamorously. Thapaliya et al. (2012) write that the ladies' gatherings and the adolescent gathering engage the visitor by playing out the social shows and serving delicious local food with the warm cordiality. The involvement of women in homestay programmes has worked as one of the major contributing factors to allure the visitors. Thus, the homestay functions as the platform to generate income by transforming the Tharu culture and women as the art to be observed and praised. Had there been no such cultural performance, hardly any visitor would have reflected any interest to visit them.

The display of dresses during folk dance performances has inevitably established the link between the beauties with tradition. The traditional performances of these dances are the medium to cohere the emotions and

statement of empowerment through their bodies in the modernity that hardly accepts the uniqueness of women's body performances. It has even deconstructed the age-old sentiments of Tharu women merely as the object of beauty.

Moreover, it has strengthened and transformed that beauty into the subjective weapon to slay the oppression of patriarchy. The traditional concept of women in the Tharu community from the object of gaze contradicts the concept of submission and subjugation. On demanding the modern interpretation of the diversifying myth and projection of lehenga, the same women at present are being accepted as the standards of beauty. The orientation from the object of marginalization into the object of popular culture helps to reinterpret the flawed definition of women's dress. The derogatory thought of considering women just as an object of gaze justifies hypocrisy of the idealistic notion of society. The predestination of culture into beauty has re-established beauty as the empowering body. The homestay has empowered women's subjectivity. Moreover, it has enabled them to be financially independent and realize the importance of their integration into national development.

Homestay hosts advertise the destination describing its surroundings and location where the other important socio-cultural marks are situated. Local temples, lakes and forest reserves and popular tourist spots are a few of them. Bhuiyan et al. (2011) similarly assess that the local folks and homestay administrators attract the travelers by planting trees, securing the normal assets and customary culture by practicing eco-friendly waste management. Tharu folks know the significance of the forest that offers them the water, lumber, wood, and grass. The rural folks of Bhada worship natural resources as deities to bless them with continuous bliss and flow of nature's flow.

The ecosphere of a village has enriched the beauty of the homestays. The natural location of Bhada Tharu homestay surrounded by the jungles and rivers from its all side has aggrandized its beauty. Thapaliya et al. (2012) emphasize the

beauty of the host destination which looks perfect with its greenery so that it attracts the sightseers to visit the place. The lush green vegetation surrounding the almost two hundred houses in typical traditional archetype has established the authenticity of Tharu community and culture in Bhada. The local pets; hens, pigs, goats, and fish items are also available for tourists to relish the delicious ethnic cuisine. Besides the beautiful natural surroundings, the concept of nature and people living in a single amalgamation has valued ecological balance which in turn protects the clean and green environment in order to to achieve sustainable development goals.

The villagers use firewood to cook the food and other daily cuisine obtained from the nearby jungle. However, there is an established pattern of extracting the resources from the community forest. The basic and waste going forest produces strictly excluding green trees and green vegetation are allowed to be collected once in three months. In the past farmers used to go hunting. There were no such strict laws and other state regulations but nowadays locals themselves have become environment conscious and have realized the importance of ecology as put forward by the village Bhalmansa.

Remaining intact with the agrarian lifestyle, the rituals and customs celebrated and performed remain in close relationship with farmers' way of life on and off the field. The dance songs like *Sakhiya, Jhumra, Murdunghuwa, Laththahuwa* reflect the embeddedness of non-humans and humans. The season of farming does not commence without performing Sakhiya dance preceded by *Lwangi* (first prayer for good harvest) puja to their ancestral deity. Similarly, after the completion of every planting and harvesting season, *Jhumra* is performed to mark the happiness of successful planting and harvesting. The ritual and cultural performances get intact in symmetrical alliance with each other. The singing of the elders and the involvement of young ones during the cultural performances manages to bridge the understanding and sharing of tradition through the

exhibition of shared experiences. The young girls and young boys participating in the dances and songs create the agrarian romance and rural proximity amidst the gender differentiations. The romantic and cultural integration of the binary genders through the joyous performances works as one of the important procedures for building the adulthood of Tharu youths.

Devkota (2008, as cited in Lama, 2013) explains that the homestay programme contributes significantly for the support of working-class people in Nepal. The ritual of worshipping pagan deities by assimilating ancestral spirits into one's body by the Tharu youths has been the primary performance contributing to the gaze for the spectators. Piercing the body parts like tongue and hands after summoning the ancestral deity creates awe and sublimity to all the visitors coming to enjoy the economically and socially marginalized class. The shamanic performances function as the vital cultural lifestyles of the Tharu community. The regulation of day to day life and the incorporation of spiritual power has classified society as the epitome of deeply philosophical community. Tharu rituals are the major attraction for tourists. Tourists arrive at homestays to study the distinct Tharu rituals. This promotes cultural tourism that attracts investments from national and international levels to preserve and conduct research on their rituals. The rituals signify the voice of the community. The performances bring them to the observer and establish the Tharu community as one of the prominent communities of Nepal. The recognition helps them to seek the justice of being marginalized in the mainstream.

Such rituals become extremely important for researchers and scholars for the interpretation of diverse ethnicities. Thus, this homestay has simultaneously been performed as the anthropological library while being a sort of commercial enterprise. Visitors can study and approach the cultural significance. They can ultimately contribute more to the vivacity of ethnic promotion and sustainable development of the country.

Ethnicity, Identity, and Ecology

Ethnicity has put together a lot of challenges to the developmental aspect of Tharu community. The inadequate representation in the national mainstream has undermined their capacity and social performances. The low income and scarce involvement in the alluring economic activities and bureaucratic posts have created major problems for the socio-economic growth of the ethnicity. Overcoming the challenges, home stay tourism has provided an outlet to this community in national and international forums. Basumatary (2020) declares that government strategies and plans should orient towards inclusion of indigenous groups to national integration. Regardless, these courses of action and plans have not yet reached the needed goal. The standard culture and practices of ethnic people are impacted by non-tribal. She further strengthens her argument by showing the association between rich social traditions and nature. The interconnectedness of human culture and nature helps to understand the primary way of life.

Tharu identity has a deep-ecological relation with nature. Their tenderness to nature isolates them from other social groups. The need to develop the ethnic cultural lifestyle has become a present necessity. They equally contribute to the socio-economic development of the nation. However, if they remain neglected by the state policies as they used to be in the past, they will never be integrated in the national development. Their knowledge of organic farming and herbal medicines could be exploited largely with efficient policy and capital investment. They have to participate in socio-economic and political fields for local and national development. Homestay has brought them in the position to realize their ignorance. Homestay involvement has taught them to assimilate their backwardness to connect themselves for the overall national development. Few initiatives could be taken for enhancing the rural folks' status. Basumatary (2020) further explains such measures as establishing facilities of education,

financial institutions, entrepreneurship skill training, and training on various skills like horticulture, animal husbandry, forestry, cottage and small scale industries. The problems aroused during the process of national integration should be tackled sensitively since initially indigenous people may not comprehend the change. Ethnicity includes a set of cultures, especially entwined with nature. It benefits to save nature for productive use in the future. However, it simultaneously needs tremendous government support for development. Regardless, if people are not dynamic, discerning, and secure in their other improvement, all implantation of government plans will be paltry. Therefore, the Tharu community should realize the necessity of their co-operation for sustainable national progress and harmonious integration.

Homestay scholar Sharma (2012) indicates the absence of managerial skills among the technically illiterate folks. He stresses the need for such homestay skill development training through the experts of hospitality management. Bhattarai (2012, as cited in Lama, 2013) clarifies about the tourism board's effort to diversify and commercialize the homestay programmes by coordinating the project with different travel and tour operators. Social gathering during the cultural performance provides the folks of the respective community to assimilate and learn the skills more authentically. Sedai (2006) exploring the scope of such gatherings writes that assortments of the caste and ethnic gathering acquire various shades of social customs. Their feasts and festivities are remarkable structures forming the bond of unity and identity. Ibrahim and Razzaq (2011) expose the added benefit about homestays even to the hosts as they have the opportunity to be familiar with foreign cultures shared by their visitors. It even revives their monotonous life by making them become acquainted with each other. At the point when the vacationers arrive at the homestays, they will locate a warm customary greeting from all the homestay hosts in their social dress and it

assists with causing the traveler to feel revived. They took the visitor to the local area office for the reward and different campaigns.

Bhada Tharu homestay yields the opportunity to see, offer and feel the distinctly interesting Tharu life, culture, and custom. Bhada Tharu homestay shares the novel idea of tourism alongside local area advancement. It propels the commonplace economy through the progression of provincial tourism. Bhada homestay bounces the chance to local youths and women to generate income through the nearby resources. From the local way of life, food, dress, dance tunes to the naturally rich climate, Bhada arises as the credible Tharu character of western Nepal. Tharu, being a politically underestimated class, recovered their fortitude with Nepal's national integration through homestay programmes. The popular social exhibitions pictured among the public and international scholars set forth their cultural richness into the global society. The move of social exhibitions into income-creating exercises connects their identity with innovative cultural fertility. The sustenance of their culture and tradition with the advent of homestay provides them a silent resilience of ill-development and cultural appropriation comprehending the secular integration.

Bhada homestay has thus provided the Tharu community an important outlet to escape the economic dead zone. When they had unfruitful economic activities and a lack of innovations to regulate their economy, the concept of homestay emerged as the medium to generate employment for them together making them aware of global culture. The homestay has terminated their vacant times by engaging them in economic activities through the approaches like running guest houses, bars, cafes, continental stores, different cloth shops, tea stalls. It has also made them aware of the importance of education since they encounter local and international intellectuals. The folks have realized that their community’s better future and the justice for rights can only be comprehended by

making themselves economically as strong as they can and their children literate as much as it is possible.

Therefore the paper concludes by examining the difficulties of innovation in Tharu individuals' lifestyle and how effectively they have supported to keep up the style of nationality adapting together to modernity. The academic conversation of the effect of ceremonial exhibitions of Tharu individuals to recognize themselves in the public and global area through the socio-cultural part of homestays gives us insight into how Tharus have been trying to save the memory of identity through cultural legacy. Homestay programmes in Bhada of Kailali have sped up their economic progression mostly by their extraordinarily distinct social-cultural traditions of ceremonies and exhibitions. Basically, with the help of different research scholars, the paper has justified folk rituals of the Tharu community as the medium of their socio-economic progress. Beside this, the paper attempts to validate the community as the eco-lover who dwells and protects the natural resources of their locality helping to promote ecological conservation. The paper has incessantly focused on Tharu ethnicity and their folk rituals as the emblem of identity struggle. The identity exhibitions have been worked out through much democratic and systematic tourism of homestays. Therefore, homestays have not only incorporated the community into national development but it has also promoted their ethnicity, and culture as well.

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Building Community Resilience: A Study of Gorkha Reconstruction Initiatives

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Abstract

This article is based on the major findings of a field study recently conducted in Gandaki Rural Municipality of Gorkha district after the 2015 earthquake with its epicentre at Barpak of the same district, which quaked the region of northern midhills of Nepal. The study examined how far neighbouring households, community organizations, and state agencies contributed to building community resilience in this earthquake affected area. More specifically, it investigated into the efficacy of reaconstruction initiatives to provide relief to the earthquake victims for their recovery. To explore the issue, mixed-method approach of both quantitative and qualitative research was applied. Primary data were collected from the stakeholders through questionnaires and focus group discussions. The convenience sampling method was used to select 116 households from Ward No. 1 of the Municipality. The findings of the research indicate that contribution towards building community resilience was the highest from the neighbouring households followed by community organizations whereas the least contribution was from the state agencies. We found that community resilience practice in the area has not been as effective as expected. So collective and coordinated effort is necessary for building community resilience.

Keywords: community resilience, households, reconstruction, community organizations, state agencies

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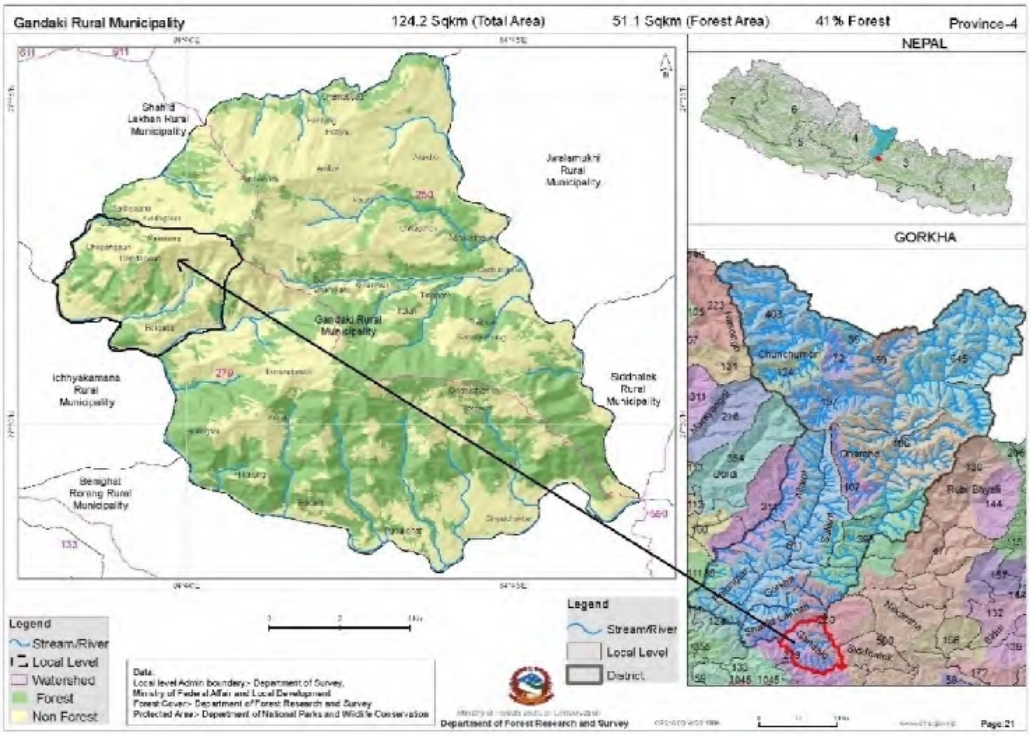
Of the 75 districts in Nepal, 31 had been hard hit and 14 were even declared as 'crisis-hit' in 2015 earthquake in Nepal (National Planning Commission, 2015). The lives of eight million people, almost one third of the population, had been impacted in various ways by the devastating earthquake. In the context of the nationwide loss of life and property, we studied the impact of the earthquake in a small village of Makaising of Gorkha district under the Gandaki Province, which is now Ward No. 1 of Gandaki Rural Municipality as shown below.

Figure 1

Makaising in Gandaki Rural Municipality



Source:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1XZ8ZxHg9vs2PIbwCOeUlc94LHNXV85_1

As a result of the big earthquake, more than 5000 households were fully damaged and nearly 600 were partially destroyed in that Rural Municipality alone. When we first met Ms. Kamala Khanal, 61 years old single woman, at Mathilo Tar, Butar of Makaising at Gandaki Rural Municipality in May 2020, she was living in her old hut alone. She was an earthquake reconstruction beneficiary but had no capacity to construct a new house due to the lack of land and proper financial condition. As we asked her about the earthquake, she said:

> Due to the big earthquake almost all private and public buildings collapsed, and some highly vulnerable houses were demolished. Nearly three died and more than 20 were injured in the village. Most of the houses looked unsafe due to crack-lines that appeared in their house. Aftershocks occurred repeatedly at Makaising village. Neighbours and community people provided some kilos of rice, potatoes, and oil for kitchen purposes. After one week the government and non-governmental agencies started to distribute relief in our village with temporary shelters. I made a temporary shelter with the support of neighbours and community volunteers. I was listed as a reconstruction beneficiary in the beneficiary list of the ward office. The housing project staff and ward engineer visited my hut and explained how I could be eligible for my land and house. Project personnel and ward chairperson told me about the landless application process, required documents for the process, and took me to the ward office, prepared documents, and took me to district headquarter as well. Now I have *jaggadhani purja* (evidence paper) of my land ownership. I hope I can stay safe. (Khanal)

This suggests that she was terribly suffering in her hut with only small supports from neighbours, community, and ward office. The support from the government and development agencies had not yet been adequately provided.

In the aftermath of the earthquake, the Municipality tried to recover with the cooperation of development partners and donor agencies. They were jointly engaged in housing, community building, school, health, and cultural heritage reconstruction. The Government of Nepal [GoN] also initiated Gorkha quake reconstruction through National Reconstruction Authority [NRA], which is now the overall lead and coordinating body for reconstruction and recovery throughout the nation in this regard.

In order to reconstruct and build resilience after the disaster, every recovery and reconstruction initiative should be safe. The concept of building a safe and resilient community was initiated by the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction [SFDRR] in 2015 and accepted by the GoN. This is a globally accepted framework which assumes that the government builds a resilient community with the joint investment of public and private partnership investment regarding the disaster management. Resilience building can be done through both structural and non-structural measures. According to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society (IFRC, n.d.), "This is essential to enhance the economic, social, physical, and cultural resilience of persons, communities, countries, and their assets as well as the environment" (p. 6).

Reconstruction initiatives can contribute to building safe community resilience and building back in a better way. It can become a way of generating hope for a safe community, reducing future vulnerability, and economic losses. Trained construction workers, conscious house owners, and accountable state agencies can contribute to safe and resilient reconstruction. The building back better approach follows the building code of rural municipality and constructs houses based on the pre-designed outlook of NRA. Households, communities, ward authority, rural municipality level reconstruction committee, and other state agencies are major factors that can regularly contribute to the reconstruction from disaster damage. It is in this context that we have conducted a field based research

in Ward No. 1 of Gandaki Rural Municipality (previously Makaising Village Development Committee). We wanted to know the effectiveness of reconstruction intitiaves that were launched in the area and to what extent they could provide relief to the earthquake victims.

Conceptual Background

The term 'resilience' was initially used to define the capacity of a material to spring back to the original shape or to return to the previous balance after a displacement. Bodin and Wiman (2004) "With respect to stability in terms of *elasticity* -in technology commonly also referred to as *resilience* - we note that the faster the system returns to its equilibrium after a displacement, irrespective of whether no, few, or many oscillations are involved, the more elastic (resilient) it is. The importance of resilience in several cases outweighs that of other stability aspects; for instance, the temporal response of a shock absorber is more important a property to consider than the actual position of its stability (equilibrium) point" (pp. 3-4).

Schipper (2016) defines resilience framework emphasizing on what resilience is or how to achieve it but the reason that resilience needs to be built in the first place is the shocks and changes that jolt existing systems. She explains what effects these shocks and changes have and what can be done to ensure that those effects are minimized or eliminated through collective engagement. She further argues that an approach should ideally be complemented by an analysis of root causes of vulnerability since taking a hazardous perspective also requires an understanding of all the components of vulnerability analysis.

The idea of community resilience develops from the concept of resilience but is further complex by the difference in the meaning of community. Just as resilience can be used to mean recovery capacity of an individual from difficulty, so it can also be applied to the community as a whole. Communities are the common frame of social and financial situations that affect one another

collectively in composite ways. The contemporary understanding of community resilience is the collective sense of stress, adaptation, wellness, and resource dynamics. It is a method of connecting a supportive system of adoptive capacities to the adaptation after a disaster strike. The available literatures state that financial progress, social resource, communication and community capability together contribute to build community resilience. The post-disaster community resilience is an evaluation of the past and existing work that builds the collective capacity such as social support system. Here we use the term "community resilience" to mean planning and preparedness for disaster response.

Disasters are both natural calamities and man-made hazards. They are becoming more aggressive and very expensive to rehabilitate. They have reflected increasing global economic losses over the years. Natural hazard becomes devastating due to our poor preparedness and low capacity. McFarlane and Norris (2006) define ''disaster as a potentially traumatic event that is collectively experienced, has an acute onset, and is time-delimited; disasters may be attributed to natural, technological, or human causes" (p. 4). This description includes unexpected natural disasters such as earthquake. It also includes the disaster induced adverse conditions.

Reconstruction refers to the construction of physical infrastructures that have been damaged by the natural calamities. Destruction caused by the disasters is the result of our low preparedness or lack of it and the inadequate setting of the development. The disaster is the outcome of both human activities and natural phenomena that involve the conditions of risk and vulnerability.

Michaels et al. (2019) try to explain the stakeholders' engagement in reconstruction process for resilience building. They raise major issues regarding stakeholder's engagement in reconstruction based on evidence, a gap identified through evidence-based mapping on resilience practices in reconstruction. Safe and resilient house building is possible when all stakeholders are engaged

thoroughly right from the site selection of construction, when house owners understand their house layout and map, and when the state agencies provide regular technical and social support in reconstruction. Safe, low loss guaranteed, durable and multiple hazards risk-sensitive reconstruction can be considered as resilient reconstruction.

Community-based reconstruction practices are those practices which are based on their need, choice, and capacity. They can contribute to the households and their community-based structures for safe resilience building. Based on their antcipated capacity the households can foresee their possible risk and prepare for future risk reduction, which may make a significant difference in their lives and livelihoods. Coady et al. (2004, as cited in Akinola, 2017) in this connection argue, “However, targeting in many low and low-middle income countries are sometimes done using community-based targeting methods and mechanisms (CBTMs), which allow community members to participate in the implementation of social protection programs. Yet, while community-based targeting as a method simply refers to the involvement of community organizations, authorities, or agents, such as local leaders, civil society, or non-governmental organizations, in the selection of beneficiaries of social protection programs” (p. 2).

Regmi et al. (2019) explain that the practice of disaster risk management and adaptation to climate change focuses on reducing vulnerability and increasing towards stresses and adverse impacts of climate change exposure as well as vulnerability and increases resilience to the potential adverse impacts of climate extremes and stresses. In the context of Nepal, the theme of building resilience has been practiced in many areas of development. Intervention including disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and livelihood interventions are the major ones.

Reconstruction and resiliencience are different concepts but they are interconnected also. When we intervene, reconstruction initiates. When we

reconstruct, resilience is built. But the resisilience should be safe and sustainable. For sustaninable resilience social support is necessary. Sustainability is the broader category, where resilience is a crucial component. If reconstruction only emphasizes on building back better in terms of physical terms, then social supporting culture can be left out. Hence, it is essential to bring together social support culture with reconstruction efforts for building community resilience.

The available literature stated above shows that researchers so far have mainly studied structure-based resilience approaches and explored the chain perspective of resilience. They have described service delivery initiatives to build resilience but have not adequately studied the collective contribution of individual households, community organizations, and state agencies for building resilience. We have seen that the previous researchers and writers have not satisfactorily raised their concern about social aspects that are also equally import for building community resilience. Therefore, we have examined how the local households can contribute to building resilience with the support of community organizations as well as state agencies as a collective enterprise. This study provides useful insights to our better understanding of community resilience. It is on this ground that we tried to seek answers to such questions as how local households, community organizations, and state agencies' initiatives can contribute to building resilience through reconstruction initiatives, how they can support themselves, and how they make themselves resilient.

Methodology

As mentioned earlier, the mixed-method approach of both quantitative and qualitative research is applied to collect and interpret the data making more use of the quantitative method. Creswell (2014) explains that mixed methods are useful to seek convergence across qualitative and quantitative methods. We have applied his concept in this research.

All households who were engaged in reconstruction from Ward No. 1 of the Gandaki Rural Municipality were identified as beneficiaries in coordination of Ward Office, Government of India- Nepal Houseing Reconstruction Project (GoI-NHRP) project site office and NRA engineer. Out of these, 116 households were sampled purposively from Makaising, Lamagau, Chepanggau, and Butar. These households are reconstruction beneficiaries who are receiving tranche, amount of cash support from GoN-NRA, to build their houses in the aftermath of the Gorkha earthquake 2015.

The sources of primary data are field observation, personal interviews, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) in different groups, and Key Informant Survey (KIS) of the community representatives. A structured questionnaire was used on household based data collection which was close-ended, and semi-structured questionnaire surveys were conducted in community-based group discussions in their meetings. These data were analyzed through triangulation for quality control. Checklists were applied during the ward office visit. Tally was done with citizen charter board and service delivery checklist on reconstruction. The questionnaires were applied for data collection among the households, community organization members, and selective key informers. Diferent official records and documents, available in e-resources such as national and international research and publication were used in literature review.

This study is chiefly based on primary data. We have taken interviews from households, community-based organization members, and ward authority. KIS and FGD were used to generate the data for triangulation. The practice of descriptive and analytical methods were applied for analysing the data.

Views of reconstruction beneficiaries have been analyzed in terms of Likert (1-5) scale. This is based on the opinions of households, community organizations, and ward authority supports. The expected intensity of an individual understanding has been rated in a line of spectrum starting from the

agreement or disagreement. This 5-point scale has been useful to measure their experiences, understandings, and opinions. This scale was used to express an individual's perception in degree, where 1 is for 'strongly disagreed', 2 for 'disagreed', 3 for 'undecided', 4 for 'agreed', and 5 for 'strongly agreed'. In addition, we have applied Cronbach alpha method for significant tests. This is mostly used for assessing internal consistency of the questionnaires. In this study we have used this metod to asset it.

Results and Discussions

According to Ministry of Home Affairs (2019), "Nepal is one of the most disaster-prone countries affected by recurrent multiple hazards. Every year, the country suffers from the great loss of human lives and damage of properties due to natural and human caused disasters such as earthquake, flood, landslide, thunderbolt, fire, road accident, and epidemic" (p. 11).

Disasters can affect a socio-economic status of individuals and communities. In the study area the low employment status, rare financial services access, and weak institutional preparedness had negative effects on the households during disaster and recovery period. Household capacity can contribute to better response and recovery. The term capacity means the ability of individuals, households, and communities to absorb, adapt and recover from shocks and their stresses. We focused our study on the effects of earthquake, reconstruction processes, and resilience practices among the households, community organizations, and state agencies and organized our major findings in the following paragraphs.

During the study, we found economic, social, and cultural diversity settlements at Makaising. The different communities such as Gurung, Adhikari Brahmans, Chepang and Magar comprise a significant share of the population in this area. They have practiced social support on reconstruction, especially on labor and material support. Different community-based institutions like the

community forest user committee, mother groups and farmers' groups had supported the earthquake-affected households.

Contribution of Local Households

Households and communities have potential of playing effective roles to help recovery of the disaster victims and enable them to adjust in the aftermath of the disaster. The the disaster victims are the reconstruction beneficiaries who can be well supported from local households who are not affected by the the disaster. The household experiences and their practices are one of the major sources of our study in the village of Makaising. We studied the condition of community resilience practices based on their individual experiences and socio-cultural setting. Supporting culture and maintaining a good relationship is in practice in the study area, which has contributed to building community resilience.

The socio-economic status of the household is based on their production, earnings, and saving capacity. The employment rate of the study area is only 9.49%. Among those who are employed, 36.35% are migrant workers, 18.18% are in NGOs, 18.18% are in others, and 9.09% are in government jobs. Only 9.48% population (11 respondents) shared that they can survive on their own earning. Only 15.51% (18 respondents) survive more than nine months, 32.75% (38 responders) can survive more than six months, 24.41% (26 respondents) can survive more than three months and 19.82% (23 respondents) shared that they can survive around three months on their own income. The statistics shows that due to the low employment rate and low self-employment practices, households are struggling for living and saving for the future. The households can improve their economic status being engaged in self-sustained agricultural enterprises such as easily marketable cash crops, vegetable farming, livestock pultry farming etc. They can do it more comfortably with the help of community financial organizations such as cooperatives, forests groups, women's support groups etc. The financial status and the household capacity is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Financial Status and Capacity of Households

S.N.	Source of income	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total Percent
1	Formal employment opportunity	10	8.62	1	0.86	9.49
2	Self-earning (sufficiency to living through earning)	17	14.65	3	2.58	17.24
3	Saving income	10	8.62	1	0.86	9.48
4	Is there any engagement into local saving group	5	4.31	14	12.06	16.37
5	Did you get local authority helps during crises	19	16 .37	8	6.89	23.27
6	Did you get any other formal/informal supporting mechanism while crises strike?	17	14.66	11	9.48	24.19
	Total	78	67.25	38	32.75	100

Source: Field survey, 2020

This data shows the source of information about household's self-defined resilience capacity which seems an important indicator of the household's response capacity. It indicates that only 17.24% of the total households sufficiently live on their earnings. Respondents shared that the traditional

agricultural systems do not address daily household needs. Only 9.49% have formal employment opportunities at the local level and 9.48% of respondents saved a samall part of their income. The data also shows that more than 90% of the respondents cannot save their earnings. Lack of sufficient employment and self-entrepreneurship opportunities at the local level unfold the poor saving capacity of the households. The remarkably low amount of saving has affected the socio-economic status of the households, which has further impacted on supporting capacity to the victims during the earthquake disaster. A household earning and the sufficiency of living on their earning rate are lower (17.24%). At the local level, earning environment is poor; households cannot produce sufficiently due to unfavorable weather for farming, inadequate irrigation system, and limited fertile land. Due to the low production of local products households have a low chance of earning. Due to low earning, they cannot manage savings without which they cannot offer to support another household either in normal times or during the crises. The result thus indicates that households and community members have their own formal/ informal support mechanism as the prime source for building resilience.

Local formal and informal support practices have also supported the households during the disasters, which covered the largest percentage of the household responses (24.19%). The study also shows the first respondent to disaster is the nearest household and community-based organizations and their members. Thus, we need to invest in the scale-up capacities of households for further building resilient communities. Household capacity can be enhanced through production support, earning, and saving. Higher saving capacities of households can contribute to future supporting mechanisms in disaster management. They need to emphasize local production, self-entrepreneurship, high earning, and high saving. Having high earnings and savings, households can invest in further support to needy households during the disaster crisis and can

contribute more in response to the disasters for recovery. Despite low earnings and savings the local households have the highest degree for contribution to the the earthquake victims. Had they had handsome savings, they could have done more to help the victims. Further, their social-cultural traditions have also contributed to some extent.

Contribution of Community Organizations

Households have received support in disaster response, recovery. and reconstruction from community organizations. Some community organizations have supported house reconstruction. The local/community-based organizations like local mothers' groups, forest user groups, and saving and credit groups have supported their members. The local forest user committees supported individuals with wood and firewood while they made temporary shelters. Table 2 is the response of household on how community organizations contributed to their relief and recovery.

Table 2

Households' Perceptions on Contribution of Community Organizations

S. N.	Social support during the crisis	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total percentage
1	Strongly disagreed	6	5.17	5	4.31	9.48
2	Disagreed	5	4.31	7	6.03	10.34
3	Undecided	7	6.03	8	6.90	12.93
4	Agreed	22	18.97	16	13.79	32.76
5	Strongly Agreed	22	18.97	18	15.52	34.48
	Total	62	53.45	54	46.55	100

Source: Field survey, 2020

34.48% of respondents said that the local groups have a crucial role in resilience building. They further added that local mothers' and farmers' groups supported their member's households. The local saving and credit groups

considered low-interest loans to member households to help them start up their own business. After getting a soft loan, members of such committees already started vegetable farming, livestock rearing, and poultry farming. Among the total respondents 38.48% of respondents agreed that community organizations have contributed to building resilience. The second-largest group respondents 32.76% accepted the same, followed by the third-group of respondents 12.93% who were undecided. The fourth group of 10.34% disagreed, and 9.48% strongly disagreed.

During the FGD events, respondents shared that the local community organizations have their own rules and policies for the meeting, institution operation, saving, and credit mobilization. Most of the local groups have their resources in both cash and kind based on their monthly saving, forest-based resources at forest users' groups, and own seed banks in traditional in farmers' groups. They were supported by their members during the crisis. Farmers' group provided seeds, mothers' group supplied small loan, and a forest user group provided firewood or furniture. This support from community organizational support system was based on collective actions. They were engaged in earning, saving, and re-distribution while their member households were in crisis.

The respondents of the FGD evenets also mentioned that the local groups such as neighbours, mothers' groups, farmers' groups, *tole* associations, and saving and credit groups supported the households and communities through ready response to reconstruction in their communities. Respondents shared that they had exemplary support systems for construction in practice. An example is *Parma* system where human resources were exchanged in construction works. With the support of community members community volunteers and a trained mason seven houses were constructed in this area. During the *Parma*, the person whose house was being constructed managed day meal/ snacks; otherwise community members managed the meals themselves and helped. This suggests

that the community organizations also contributed to building community resilience despite in smaller degree than that of local households.

Contribution of State Agencies

According to NRA guidelines the household received 300,000 Nepalese currency based on three installments. The ward authority was closely facilitating overall reconstruction. Facilitation started from beneficiary registration and recommendation to NRA through District-Level Project Implement Unit (DLPIU). After the formal agreement eligible beneficiaries received their first tranche (50,000 NRs) from the nearest bank and they had to do a Damp Proof Course (DPC) of house. After the completion of DPC, they could proceed for a second installment (150,000 NRs) and when they completed their roof level, they were eligible for a third tranche (remaining 50,000 NRs). In this whole service facility system, a technical person desginated by the ward authority regularly visited the beneficiary's house and provided technical support to a trained mason and the houseowner free of cost for the construction work.

Table 3

Households' Responses to the Support of State Agencies

S.N.	State agency support	Male	Percent	Female	Percent	Total Percentage
1	Strongly agreed	31.00	26.72	11.00	9.48	36.21
2	Agreed	10.00	8.62	9.00	7.76	16.38
3	Undecided	16.00	13.79	11.00	9.48	23.28
4	Disagreed	11.00	9.48	11.00	9.48	18.97
5	Strongly disagreed	2.00	1.72	4.00	3.45	5.17
	Total	70.00	60.34	46.00	39.66	100

Source: Field survey, 2020.

Table 3 shows the response towards the contribution of state agencies to building community resilience. The Likert scale result indicates that 36.21 % were strongly agreed, followed by 16.38% who agreed, 23.23% were undecided, 18.97% disagreed. and 5.17% strongly disagreed on the contribution of state agencies to resilience building.

Households expected prompt delivery services from the ward authority during the disaster crisis. They were satisfied with ward service and support on reconstruction. The ward authority provided reconstruction services including the identified probable reconstruction beneficiary, the beneficiary registration process, coordination, and recommendation to NRA. The landless and vulnerable houses were verified based on NRA guidelines, recommended to the Rural Municipality and NRA if found eligible, and supported by the state agencies in reconstruction.

During the FGD events at Makaising, Mr. Chij Bahadur Damai, 56 year old man, shared his happiness with this research team member on how halted house is constructed with the support of neighbors, community people, and state agencies. He explained further:

> I was staying single in Gandaki Rural Municipality Ward No. one, at Makaising. After the collapse of my house in the earthquake in 2015, I was listed as a reconstruction beneficiary and got the first tranche. I spent some amount of the first tranche on purchase for Dasain festival celebration and hardly did DPC for house construction. After completion of the first DPC, I was eligible for a second tranche, but unfortunately, my son took away all the amount of the second tranche budget so I could not start my story. My neighbours, relatives, community people, and ward authority were collectively engaged in my house construction and finally and now I am to live in my own house.

Considering the mixed responses of the household respondenets we can understand that the state agencies also contributed signifaicantly though further smaller degree than the community organizations.

Analysis and Interpretation

In order to make the findings of our study reliable and trustworthy, we used Cronbach's alpha in all three sectors as stated above. This scale can be used for analyzing validity and reliability. The impact of the support practices of the local households, community organizations, and state agencies could contribute to building resilience in the study area. It is based on the accuracy and exactness of measurement that represents sampling procedures. The Cronbach alpha provides a coefficient of inter-item correlations that measures the internal consistency among the items. The statistics below shows our assessment of the contribution based on the measurement by using the following formula in Table 4:

Table 4

The Use of Cronbach's Alpha for Assessment

Let us imagine that the number of items in the survey is five, then the computed average correlation is 0.592
Therefore, alpha= nrii /1+ (n−1) rii
= 5(0.592)/1+(5-1) 0.592
= 2.96/3.368
= 0.87
The computed alpha ranges from 0.60 to 0.90 and characterized to:
1. More than 0.90 very highly reliable
2. From 0.80 to 0.90 highly reliable
3. From 0.70 to 0.79 reliable
4. From 0.60 to 0.69 marginally/minimally reliable
5. Below than 0.60 unacceptably low reliability

Table 4 shows the computed result of Cronbach alpha fomula used for reliability assessment. The standardized value of 0.87 is less than the table value (0.90). This provides us with an overall reliability coefficient for a set of variables (e.g., questions). Therefore, the validity analysis of the practices contributing to building resilience shows high reliability. In the case of this study this formula helped us to understand the degree of different supporting agencies for building community resilience.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the things stated above, we can conclude that this study is primarily focused on the relationship between the reconstruction supporting agencies and the community resilience. It shows how the local households, community organizations, and state agencies separately and together have contributed to building community resilience.

Despite in different degrees, all three components have contributed to community resilience building through reconstruction in Gorkha. The local households tried to build their capacity through their own earnings and savings. The community-based organizations supported their members based on their common assets. The state authorities also supported the earthquake affected households based on their reconstruction package and by formulating further reconstruction plans and budget allocation.

This study investigated the high earning-saving capacity of the local households. House to house supporting practices in reconstruction are highly remarkable. Local households supported to one another through their savings, available assets, and by exchanging human resources. The households could add their earning and saving capacity through their investment and self-entrepreneurship.

The community-based organizations supported their members through delivery of soft loans from financial groups, supply of forest products such as

wood for house construction and furnishing. Some local group members were also engaged in building houses as volunteer masons. Social bonding practices of community organizations helped the disaster victims. Community organizations could enhance their capacity to support by collective entrepreneurship.

The state agencies also supported recovery process from the annual plan and budget allocation, technical support on the house construction, and tranche facilitation to an eligible household. They also provided certificates to the landless households, facilitated land purchasing, collected social support for house construction of the landless and single woman households. This indicates that only a well-planned and high equipped allocation of resources from local authority can contribute to building resilience.

The paper thus indicates the degree of contribution of local households, community organizations, and ward authority to building community resilience. We have tried to investigate underlying factors of household capacity (building of household), community-based organizations, and state agencies which contribute to building resilience. Although efforts to build community resilience in the area achieved only limited success due to the uncoordinated reconstruction initiatives of the benefactors, the local households, community organizations, and the state agencies can achieve grater success through systematic, coordinated, and collective actions for building community resilience in the future.

This research did not consider other factors which would contribute to building community resilience, for instance, forecasting, absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities of households and communities. The study area was limited to one ward of Gandaki Rural Municipality at Gorkha, which might not represent the experiences of resilience-building at different places in earthquake affected communities of Nepal. This study can nevertheless be considered as a baseline for further studies of community resilience building. Future researchers can explore the things that we have not considered in this study.

We recommend that formulation of appropriate risk recovery policy can scale up the capacity of community-based organizations to address the future risks. It is essential to formulate both short term quick recovery management policy as well long-term policies and programs to build an integrated disaster risk management system that would be in line with social protection policies and development integration policies among the local authorities which can contribute to building community resilience. It is hoped that this study helps to formulate appropriate policies regarding the community resilience buidling practices.

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Multifold Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Communities in Nepal

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Abstract

This paper brings out the pressing issue of Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its multifold impact on the vulnerable communities such as women, children, elderly people, persons with disabilities, and marginalized groups in Nepal. The study identifies the groups corresponding with the kinds of problems and effects in relation to caste/ethnicity, gender, and age. It also categorizes groups in terms of socio-economic conditions such as employment, income, livelihood, access to basic food, shelter, health and education. The analyses based on these issues contribute to highlighting the protection measures for reducing the level of vulnerability. Both the primary and secondary data were collected through desk review and telephonic interviews among the selected women and underprivileged people of the study area. Findings of this study suggest that the pandemic has serious effects that have been seen on vulnerable communities in the area. Curtailment, reduction and/or stop of regular salary or income of the employees from enterprising sectors can have lasting impact on the overall livelihoods of the vulnerable groups unless they are offered special packages to promote their conditions. The research indicates the pandemic as a humanitarian crisis. In such a crisis, only legal treatment and actions may have adverse effects on the poor and helpless people who have lost their resources due to unavoidable situations like lockdown, prohibition order, and insecurity of their jobs.

Keywords: COVID-19, pandemic, vulnerable communities, livelihood, effect

Multifold Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Communities in Nepal

The Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic has left lasting socioeconomic effects both globally and locally. Although the direct severity was less in Nepal in early days in comparison to other American, European and South Asian countries, the impact on the vulnerable communities is very high in terms of their day to day earnings and maintaining household economy. It is in this context that this study is done in some detail.

One of the major issues of the present debate is the identification of vulnerable communities in relation to COVID-19. Available literatures can be classified as clinical, social, and economic interpretations of the communities affected by the COVID-19. Clinically, certain groups of individuals are at higher risk for COVID-19 infection, including older adults, people with underlying conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and lung disease, and pregnant women (WHO, n.d.). Socially, women, youths, children and people like persons with disabilities, sexual minorities, and people in special need were found deprived of legal documents like citizenship card, old age certificate, relationship paper and so on (Institute for Strategic and Socio-economic Research [ISSR], 2020). Economically, the COVID-19 pandemic manifests 'a tragic outlook ‘especially for the vulnerable communities around the globe.

Two priority areas for global and regional stakeholders are suggested by the Global Economic Forum: building trust and awareness as well as supportive government response through innovative partnerships. High income countries with strong healthcare systems are in a better off position while struggling to detect and contain COVID-19. However, the low-income countries like Nepal have to suffer from the existing imperfect and often fragile healthcare systems, to which large swathes of the population do not currently have access (Akram & Galizia, 2020).

Theoretical Framework

The term COVID-19 is an abbreviated form of Corona Virus Disease defined first by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on February 11, 2020. The virus is a new flu which has a link to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and some types of common cold (WHO, n.d.). Facts about COVID-19 are still unknown to the experts in the field despite a huge programmatic and financial efforts made so far to identify the causes and treatment measures. Although vaccines have been developed to reduce the impacts, their effectiveness is yet to be verified and rectified. Till then, as WHO (n.d.) guesses, the pandemic continues to spread and the communities have to prevent further transmission and reduce the impacts of the outbreak.

The COVID-19 pandemic has abruptly changed the lives of the people and most vulnerable among them are the women, youths, children, persons with disabilities, sexual minorities and those in special need. The children and youths were deprived of school and university education. Socializing with friends and wider family were highly discouraged for them. Women were confined at home due to the three months long complete lockdown facing a lot of burden. All of these impacts are further amplified in contexts of fragility, conflict, and emergencies where social cohesion is already undermined and institutional capacity and services are limited (UN, 2020). Most vulnerable among them are from the poverty stricken communities.

Although the details of COVID -19 impacts is yet to come out awaiting both time and issues, recent ones reveal that a larger number of men are dying as a result of COVID-19 but the health of women generally is more affected through the reallocation of resources and priorities. These reports further reveal that maternal and neonatal mortality rate has increased to a larger extent reaching over 60,000 women being deprived of needful check-up and other services (Karuna

Foundation Nepal, 2020). Adhikari (2020) suggests that institutional delivery rates have largely been cut down to a half due to the cut of health care services.

The COVID pandemic has compelled the vulnerable communities to make a living with limited resources. Those from the migration exposure are totally dependent on remittances (Akram & Galizia, 2020). Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2020) suggests more than half (56%) of Nepalese households are remittance-dependent. The condition of such families with the shrinkage of informal sectors is severe as revealed by International Labor Organization [ILO] which suggests the share of workers earning below 50 percent of the median could increase by more than 50 percentage points (ILO, 2020). Another study suggests that one-third workers have been laid off, and over two-fifths of women have lost their jobs due to COVID pandemic (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2020).

People's style of making their living has drastically changed due to the COVID pandemic. Since they are far from the public contact due to lockdown, a culture of techno-work from home has emerged as a newer phenomenon. Unpaid care work where women have to get their exposure to the extent male members can hardly imagine and realise has increased tremendously. Not only their children are at home due to school closure, but also the husbands and the working age adults. The elderly and the lactating children were already under their liabilities. This all shows the added burdens of the women at households brought out due to existing inequalities in the gender division of labour (UN, 2020). Women have been thus affected due to domestic violence, stigma and discrimination (Relief web, 2020). The girl children deprived of basic education are treated as the burden of the family and thus get exposure to child marriage (Sharma, 2020).

Poor people’s capacity to buy nutritious food has been reduced resulting in the potentiality of being less immune towards the virus and more likely to be

infected. The food supply chain has been severely disturbed and thus the market has witnessed a huge price hike depriving many households with poor resources to cope with limited foods at home. As male exposure to employment in a patriarchal country like ours is higher, that is, only 59 employed females against every 100 males (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2018), women are more deprived of access to basic food.

Research Questions

Based on the above cursory review of the COVID-19 context on the issues of vulnerable communities, such research questions have been set-forth: what kinds of problems and impacts COVID-19 pandemic have particularly on vulnerable groups in relation to employment, income, livelihood, access to basic food, shelter, health and education of the vulnerable communities, and what can be the remedial measures for reducing the level of vulnerability.

Methodological Approach

This study was conducted in 2020 as a part of the survey/research at the request of ISSR. Based on both primary and secondary data, the compact learnings on the impact of COVID- 19 on vulnerable communities were first generated through desk review and these learnings were validated with the primary data collection. This study is based on cross-sectional design which employed mixed methods, that is quantitative and qualitative. In order to fulfil the quantitative needs, the telephone interview with the selected women and poor people of Kathmandu, Udayapur, and Kapilvastu were conducted during the lockdown period of July and August 2020. Priority in selecting the sample was given to the vulnerable groups.

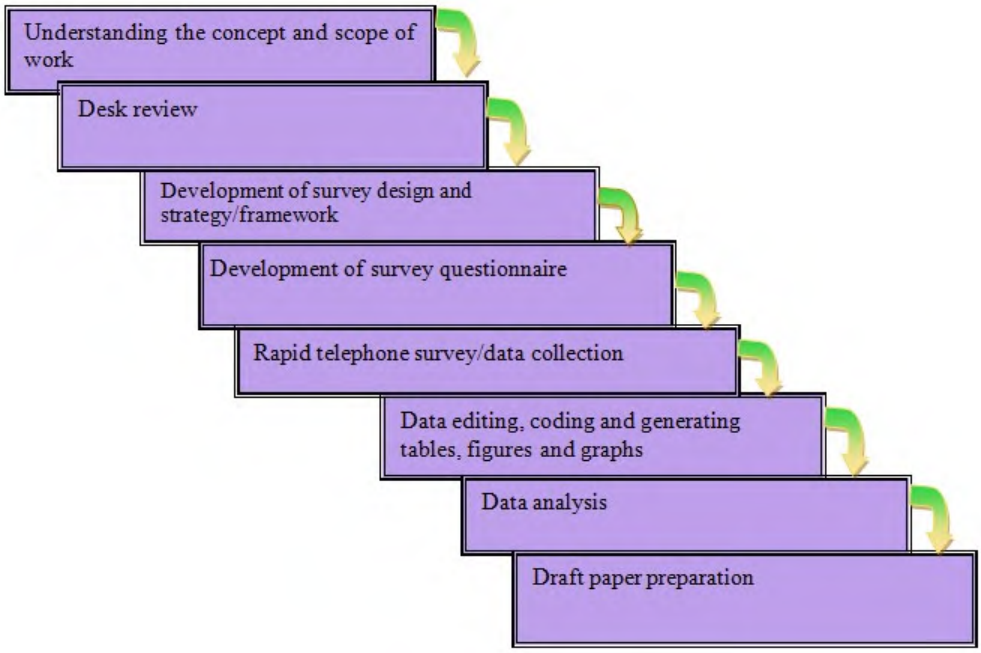
Sample Size

The total sample size of the rapid phone survey was fixed slightly over 300 people following a purposive sampling procedure. List of potential respondents was first prepared on the basis of records of those who have stayed in

quarantines, holding centres and isolation centres, provincial offices, district administrative offices, concerned local government and from different networks and organizations and federations such as Human Rights Alliance.

Figure 1

Methods and Study Approaches



Research Tools

Research tools designed online were basically the structured questionnaire constructed to fulfil the objectives which were developed in excel format so that data would be collected at the same time while performing the phone conversation with the respondents. The data collection strategy was focused on the in-depth analysis of the right respondents' situation and status on education, economic empowerment, health and access to local governance and decision making

Data Editing, Coding and Analysis

The data collected from the telephone survey were edited and coded using SPSS software. Two levels of data editing were used to ensure the reliability and

quality of the data. After editing and coding the data, the required tables, graphs and figures were generated in line with the objectives. The primary data collected from the survey were further verified from the secondary sources.

Results and Discussions

More than half (51.5%) of the selected sample were female which ranged by district from 42 percent in Kapilvastu to 54 percent in Udayapur. Almost half of them belonged to the age group 30-44 years which was observed the highest (52%) in Kathmandu against 46 percent in Udayapur as given in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Background Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	**Kapilvastu**		**Kathmandu**		**Udayapur**		**Total**	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender								
Male	44	41.9	50	50.0	54	54.0	148	48.5
Female	61	58.1	50	50.0	46	46.0	157	51.5
Age Group								
<19 Years	3	2.9	3	3.0	0	0.0	6	2.0
20-24	7	6.7	15	15.0	1	1.0	23	7.5
25-29	9	8.6	16	16.0	3	3.0	28	9.2
30-34	12	11.4	21	21.0	13	13.0	46	15.1
35-39	21	20.0	19	19.0	16	16.0	56	18.4
40-44	19	18.1	12	12.0	17	17.0	48	15.7
45-49	14	13.3	5	5.0	9	9.0	28	9.2
50-54	12	11.4	3	3.0	11	11.0	26	8.5
>55 yrs	8	7.6	6	6.0	30	30.0	44	14.4
Caste/Ethnicity								
Brahman/Chhetri	24	22.9	31	31.0	39	39.0	94	30.8
Dalit	6	5.7	12	12.0	9	9.0	27	8.9
Janajati	39	37.1	53	53.0	4	4.0	96	31.5
Tharu	33	31.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	33	10.8
Madhesi/Muslim	3	2.9	4	4.0	48	48.0	55	18.0
Marital Status								
Married	92	87.6	81	81.0	88	88.0	261	85.6
Unmarried	11	10.5	10	10.0	2	2.0	23	7.5

Divorced	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3
Separated	1	1.0	5	5.0	0	0.0	6	2.0
Widow/Widower	0	0.0	4	4.0	10	10.0	14	4.6
Level of Education								
Illiterate	13	12.4	16	16.0	52	52.0	81	26.6
Lower than Primary	11	10.5	15	15.0	13	13.0	39	12.8
Primary	17	16.2	18	18.0	10	10.0	45	14.8
Lower Secondary	21	20.0	23	23.0	13	13.0	57	18.7
Secondary	31	29.5	21	21.0	9	9.0	61	20.0
Intermediate/10+	11	10.5	7	7.0	3	3.0	21	6.9
Bachelor	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.3
Total Sample	105	100.0	100	100.0	100	100.0	305	100.0

Source: ISSR, 2020

Of the total sample, nearly one third (31%) belonged to the Brahman/ Chhetri and Janajati communities each whereas nearly one in every 10 were Dalit. One-fifth (18%) belonged to Madhesi/Muslim communities and 11 percent were Tharu. An overwhelming majority (86%) of the respondents were married, representing 88 percent from Kapilvastu and Udayapur each, and 81 percent from Kathmandu. An overwhelming majority (93%) had obtained secondary level or less against seven percent who had obtained intermediate (equivalent to 11 & 12 grades) whereas very few respondents (0.3%) were bachelors. The proportion of illiterate respondents is nearly one-third (27%). This was observed highest (52%) in Udayapur against those with lower than primary level of education in Kathmandu (15%).

Agriculture is the main occupation for many of the respondents. Nearly 43 percent respondents were involved in agriculture. Manufacturing stands out as the second most cited occupation comprising 26 percent. Majority of the respondents (74%) from Kapilvastu were involved in manufacturing whereas the proportion of respondents engaged in agriculture is observed highest in Udayapur (90%) followed by Kathmandu (38%).

Safety Measures for COVID-19

Almost all of the respondents were found exposed with COVID-19 as they shared that they had heard and known about COVID-19. Three primary measures, i. e., physical distancing, adopting sanitizers and others were adopted by respondents to be safe in the study districts. The proportion of respondents who adopted physical distancing is highest in Udayapur (100%) followed by Kathmandu (96%) and Kapilvastu (57%). The respondents who adopted sanitizer and other measures i.e. masks are observed highest in Udayapur.

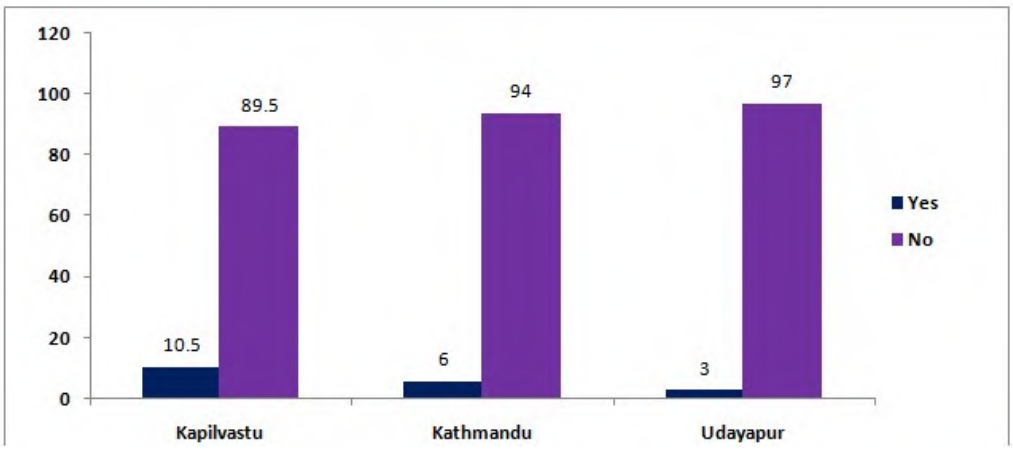
Safety measures adopted by the respondents at the workplace were also observed. This is justified by their versions that 84 percent respondents reported of having the condition of safety measures at work and living place was acceptable whereas 7 percent reported that it was adequate and 9 percent expressed that it was inadequate. By caste/ethnic groups, significant number of respondents reported that the condition of safety measures was acceptable as reported by 80 percent Brahman/Chhetri, 85 percent Dalit, 88 percent Janajati, 79 percent Tharu and 85 percent Madhesi/Muslim. Some of the respondents also reported the safety measures being inadequate as reported by Tharu (15%), Brahman/Chhetri (11%) and Janajati (8%). This suggests that safety measures were still inadequate.

Effects of COVID-19 on Livelihoods

Almost all the respondents, i. e., 94 percent expressed that they did not have a regular salary or income from employment/source. This response was almost the same for Udayapur (97%), Kathmandu (94%) and Kapilvastu 89%) (Figure 2). They said they did not get a regular salary or income. This finding reveals the cut off in regular salary/income corresponding with a negative effect on livelihoods of people who need special packages to promote their livelihoods. Figure 2 below displays the regularity of salary or a regular income from an employment by source.

Figure 2

Regularity of Salary/Income from Employment by Source



Source: ISSR, 2020

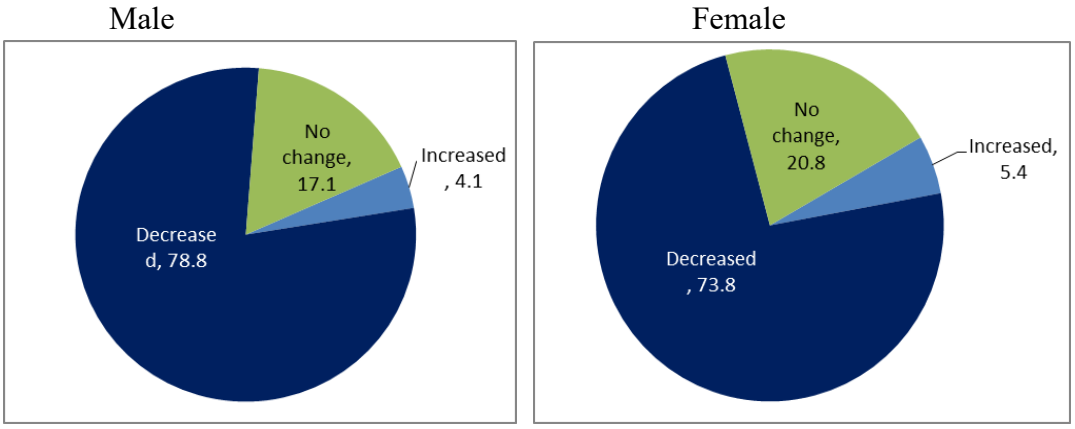
Overall findings suggest that the COVID pandemic has affected all the caste/ethnic groups. Most severe among them are the Dalit and Madhesi/Muslim communities as all of the Dalit and Madhesi/Muslim respondents reported that they did not have regular salary or income after COVID-19. Only a small proportion of respondents from other caste/ethnic groups like Brahman/Chhetri (11%), Janajati (8%) and Tharu (6%) reported that they had regular income.

With regards to reduction in salary/income, an overwhelming majority (93%) of the selected respondents expressed that their salary/income had reduced. Among them, more female (95%) respondents were found experiencing reduction in salary/income after COVID against slightly lower number of male counterpart (92%). Data further reveals the fact that almost all the respondents from Dalit and Madhesi/Muslim had to make their living with reduced income against the observed lower proportion of the Brahman/Chhetri groups (89%). All of the respondents who were engaged in production, security guard and domestic work reported that their salary/income had decreased.

The irregularity of salary/income is directly proportional to reduction in salary. About 31 percent respondents whose salary had decreased for more than 90% whereas 35 percent expressed that their salary/income decreased by 50-59%. Only a small proportion (5%) of respondents reported that their salary/income decreased by less than 19 percent. Due to the effect of COVID-19, most of the respondents experienced a decrease in workload in all three districts (i.e. 98% in Kathmandu, 77% in Udayapur and 53% in Kapilvastu). Only a small proportion of respondents (15%) from Kapilvastu experienced an increase in workload. The comparison of workload among male and female reflects that there is a slightly higher decrease in workload among male than their female counterparts (79% vs. 74%) whereas there is a higher proportion of female respondents who expressed there was not any change in workload (21%) (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Workload Situation after COVID by Gender



Social security scheme has the greater role to uplift the worse situation of the targeted population in terms of poverty, vulnerability, stigma and discrimination. COVID -19 has given more chances to fall people in this condition. In this study, over three quarters of the respondents opined of not having any such options to relive from the immediate effect of the COVID pandemic. This version of expression was given by over 98 percent of the

respondents in Kathmandu and 75 percent from Kapilvastu. Very few of them, that is, less than 10 percent in the selected districts expressed of receiving economic assistance during lockdown.

Problems Caused by COVID-19

COVID-19 has caused a lot of social, economic and cultural problems globally and locally. In this study, the targeted population were found mostly affected by financial (34%) problems. Nearly one-fifth (20%) of them expressed that they witnessed the loss of their regular income. One in every 10 shared their experiences of losing the employment and many had lost the opportunity to physical presence for education.

With the onset of COVID-19, the government announced lockdown and by which people were compelled to maintain physical as well as social distancing. This situation has created far-reaching effects in the lives of the people. Although the Corona Virus Crisis Management Centre (CCMC) managed quarantine facilities for safety at all local levels, the non-migrants were confined to their own homes and those in quarantine had to sit inside with scarce resources for their day to day living.

Identification of Health Problem after COVID-19

Health problems during the pandemic was a significant concern for many people. I present a case study, taken from ISSR (2020) where mental health problems with an individual led to loss of all family property.

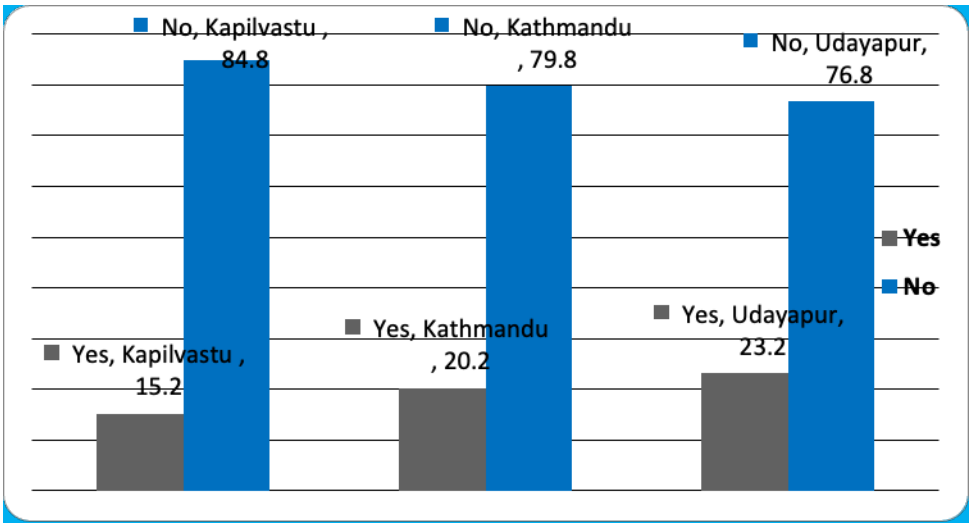
Mahammad Lal Mahammad, a 48 year old man is living in Udayapur with his 6 children and wife. Literate upto the primary level, Mahammad, used to work in the farm. There were no any problems in their family before COVID-19. When the pandemic occurred they were unable to manage hand-to-mouth as they turned jobless. Mahammad's one of the sons has been suffering from mental problem since last 7-8 months. Since the family was not too able to manage the son's treatment, they took loan from neighbour for his treatment. He visited various

hospitals and used different medicines but those all attempts went in vain. Then, Mahammad took his son to India but the son could not get alright there too. The family used up all their borrowings, the savings as well as the fixed assets on son's treatment. He even sold his house but the son's treatment is not possible. The loaners took their home away. They got some financial help from government but it wasn't sufficient for 8 people to fulfil their basic needs. They are now deprived of eating healthy foods. They are going through their hard moments and he is requesting for some financial help from the government to get back to their normal life.

One fifth (20%) of the selected respondents from the three districts expressed that they faced health related problems. Among them, Brahman/Chhetri communities were in a higher position (25%) followed by very few (6.1%) Tharu communities. Figure 4 identifies health problems after COVID-19 in the three districts.

Figure 4

Identification of Health Problem after COVID-19



Source: ISSR, 2020

Reduced Access to Treatment

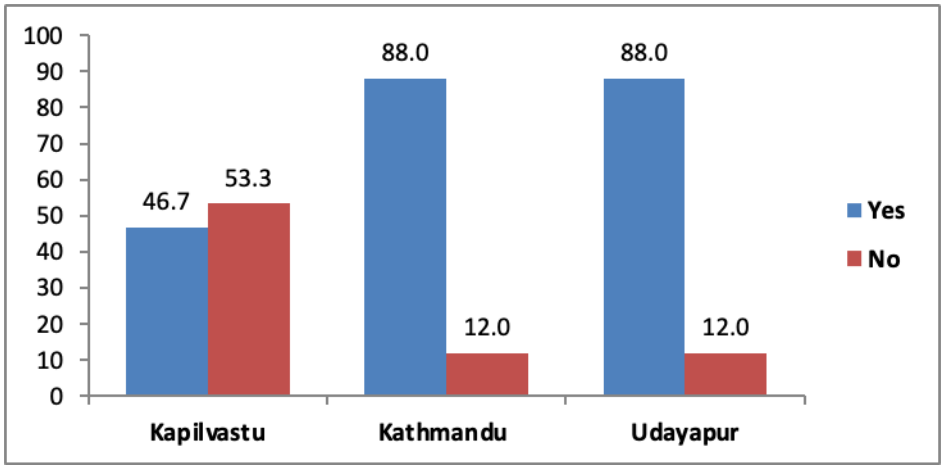
COVID-19 pandemic has invited problems to the people in special need. Among them those in the pregnancy situation had to face many problems. Not having smooth operation of the health facilities and medical services was one of the major barriers faced by the vulnerable communities. This was expressed by nearly one quarter (24%) of the respondents from Kathmandu.

Decrease in Income

Direct effect of COVID pandemic on income was manifest in the study area as expressed by a large majority (88%) of the respondents in Kathmandu and Udayapur and comparatively by lower proportion (47%) of the respondents in Kapilvastu (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Daily Income Related Problems Due to COVID-19



Source: ISSR, 2020

Income related problems due to the effect of COVID-19 has direct linkages with the day to day occupations like job, employment, business. In this regard, an overwhelming majority (over 95% from Kathmandu and Udayapur) of the respondents expressed that the faced problems related to income had a close

association with the day to day jobs. Curtail of job had invited a huge problem of employment as expressed by the respondents from Kapilvastu.

The COVID-19 is not only limited to welcome the economic problem but also the humanitarian crisis as a whole. The day to day functioning of the legal, social and economic sectors do not function during this crisis. The issues of legal actions or treatments did not help to provide justice of the people who faced unprecedented crisis welcomed by the COVID.

Unemployment

Significant proportion of respondents (77%) reported that they had problems related with employment of family. The highest proportion of respondents (93%) from Udayapur shared that they had problem related to employment of family which is followed by Kathmandu (92%) and Kapilvastu (45%). The main problem related with employment of family in Udayapur was no work (100%) whereas unemployment was the main problem of Kathmandu (100%). In the case of Kapilvastu, shut down of business and other relevant work was reported as the main problem.

Discontinued Education

The COVID-19 has a direct effect on education sector. Almost all the educational institutions from the basic to the higher levels remained close during the lockdown period. Continuity of the children's education was the major problem faced by the respondents in the selected districts. A large majority (87%) of the respondents from Udayapur expressed having a severe effect of COVID on education. This was expressed by less number of respondents from Kapilvastu (58%) and Kathmandu (47%).The main problems expressed by them was such as closure of school for a longer period as expressed by over half (57%) of the respondents from Kapilvastu and nearly half (49%) from Kathmandu and comparatively by higher proportion (87%) from Udayapur.

Loss of Livelihoods

Making the day to day availability of food was expressed as the major problem related to livelihood in the study area. This was expressed by a large majority (88%) of the respondents from Udayapur followed by 73 percent from Kathmandu and comparatively by less (24%) number of the respondents from Kathmandu.

There was a negative effect observed in the reduction in workload and curb in salary/income due to COVID crisis which was more clear on Dalit resulting in shelter problem (18.5%) followed by Madhesi/Muslim (18%) and Janajati (18%). On the average over three quarters (77%) shelter related problems were the rent dues which was highest among the Janajati group (94%)followed by Brahman/Chhetri (91%), Dalit (80%) and Madhesi/Muslim (44%). One-fifth (20%) respondents from Dalit community reported that they had no house.

Problem Solving Measures

Nearly one-third (32.5%) respondents explained that sufficient employment opportunities should be given to solve the problems. Similarly, one-fifth of them reported that financial assistance is needed to get rid of these tensions. Almost equal of them expressed that the role of the local government is crucial to solve the existing problems.

Very few of them (7%) said that the role of the private sector can be important for minimizing the problems. The respondents from Kapilvastu said that the role of the local government is crucial whereas respondents from Kathmandu and Udayapur reported that the creation of employment opportunities would be of greater value for solving the problems.

Table 2 below presents the problem solving measures used by the concerned respondents in each of the three districts, which the study found while interacted with them on the issue.

Table 2

Problem Solving Measures

Measures	Kapilvastu	Kathmandu	Udayapur	Total
Employment	0.0(0)	59.0(59)	40.0(40)	32.5(99)
Local Government	54.3(57)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	18.7(57)
Provincial Government	10.5(11)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	3.6(11)
Financial Help	0.0(0)	21.0(21)	37.0(37)	19.0(58)
No Lockdown	0.0(0)	8.0(8)	5.0(5)	4.3(13)
Private Sector	20.0(21)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	6.9(21)
Control Corruption	0.0(0)	1.0(1)	4.0(4)	1.6(5)
Proper Development	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	7.0(7)	2.3(7)
Not Stated	14.3(15)	0.0(0)	0.0(0)	4.9(15)
Other	1.0(1)	11.0(11)	7.0(7)	6.2(19)
Total	100.0(105)	100.0(100)	100.0(100)	100.0(305)

Source: ISSR, 2020

Discussions on Findings

Some specific areas of effect shown by this study are acute health problems, particularly, mental health and depression. Some remedial portions of the problems were also identified such as the timely treatment of the sick and infected people. Severely marred were the pregnant women and women in their delivery period who complained that the medical services and facilities were not in smooth operation. Similarly, people suffered from chronic diseases and their families involved in small business, informal wage earning works and household activities with low-income source were also found lacking financial aid for their treatment of diseases like kidney dialysis, regular blood transfusion for cancerous patients, and many other problems.

The respondents depending the informal enterprises like grocery were found fallen in the serious crisis of bankrupting when multiple crises added up like continuity of children's education, treating the patient with chronic disease and so on. Those depending on the daily income related problems were also found facing with curtailment of job, employment, business etc. Although they were distributed with some relief packages by the local government channels, accesses to these resources by the vulnerable communities like women, children, persons with disabilities, sexual minorities and those in special need were found problematic due to having no legal documents like citizenship card, old age certificate, and relationship paper and so on.

Similarly, unemployment of the persons involved in the informal sector has further added up the vulnerability as a direct effect. The school going children, particularly, the girls were compelled to drop the school study. Since parents turned unemployed, the girls were compelled to assist them in joining hands and mouths and thus bear vulnerabilities of many kinds.

Lives of people have drastically changed with the emergence of a new lifestyle during the COVID pandemic. The government facilitated isolation centres in the hospitals lack cleanliness and hygiene. There was no proper care, lack of regular check-up, and poor quality food. Infected people were compelled to use the same washroom without proper mechanism of disinfection. Problems after coming back from the isolation centre are equally acute: negative response from neighbours, friends and family members. The reduction in workload and curb in salary/income due to COVID-19 crisis had negative effect on shelter of the family.

The problems identified and raised are crucial for livelihood security and enhancing human development. Creation of sufficient employment opportunities could be the way to solve the problem which is followed by financial help by harnessing cooperation and coordination among government, non-government

and and private sectors. Whereas the role of the local government is important at the programmatic level, coordinating role can be played by the provincial governments and the policy level coordination by the federal government.

The data and cases presented in this study show the pathetic life of the city area in Kathmandu where the wage earning family lost the jobs and went in crises of varied nature. The case presented here highlights the condition of the isolation centres in hospital which are not neat and clean. The virus has not only put the health of people at risk, but problem solving measures also made living and shelter insecure. With constant rise in poverty during this period, exacerbating food insecurity has been observed.

Conclusion

COVID-19 has a direct effect seen on the women, marginalised, and vulnerable communities in the study area. Although they had sufficient exposure on the effect of COVID -19 pandemic and measures to follow for the protection, the level differed with respect to geographical locations, community's socio-economic and cultural conditions. The field level observation showed the lack of safety measures at work and living place being inadequate. The direct effects like curtailment, reduction and stop of regular salary or income from enterprising sectors have lasting effects on the overall livelihoods of people indicating special packages to promote their condition. Due to COVID crisis, Dalit, Madhesi and Muslim communities were found severely marred.

This study presents data based on the univariate analysis of the selected socioeconomic variables as an impact of COVID. It does not compare the pre-pandemic status of these variables in the study. However, the case referred to as above symbolises how the helpless families are bearing a crisis due to having no legal documents like citizenship card. The COVID -19 is a humanitarian crisis. It comes under neither a basic need nor a right based approach but a special situation. In such a crisis, legal treatment and action cannot help the poor and

helpless people who have lost their resources due to unavoidable situation like lockdown and shut down of enterprises.

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Exploring Intersectionality: Theoretical Concept and Potential Methodological Efficacy in the Context of Nepal

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Abstract

This article engages in theoretical discussions of intersectionality on such issues as: how does Kimberle Crenshaw's intersectionality theory function in various forms of social divisions, and how do various scholars respond to it? Why is intersectionality theoretically and methodologically critical to examining Nepali political and social contexts, especially on women and Dalit's issues? This article examines the overview of intersectional theoretical standpoints explicitly based on Crenshaw's ideas and how it problematizes political practices of domination and discrimination against minority groups in societies today. Rather than providing an empirical and positivist approach to findings, this write-up offers a theoretical framework that helps conceptualize and utilize it in examining power exercise and politics in the Nepali context. It emphasizes discourse analysis to explore the systemic discrimination and the genealogy of structural violence to moot debates about central and marginal subjects concerning women and Dalit issues in Nepal.

Keywords: intersectionality, women, Dalit, systemic discrimination, power and politics, Nepal

Exploring Intersectionality: Theoretical Concept and Potential Methodological Efficacy in the Context of Nepal

Intersectionality has gained magnitude, with various responses to its efficacy and functioning in analyzing nation-states' politics and policies, especially in the context of Western societies today. Recently, scholarship has been enriched with ground-breaking debates on intersectionality theory and its praxis, particularly concerning power and politics that have been practiced. In this context, intersectionality theory focuses on a broader variety of questions—gender, race, and ethnic minorities—fostering debate with ideas in pursuit of knowledge within and beyond academia (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Intersectionality as theory and methodology is not bound to any geographical location or political practices within a specific nation-state concerning only on the gender issues. As a critical theory, intersectionality has attracted an abundance of engagement in dealing with social and political problems produced and practiced in the liberal democratic political structure within a Western political context and non-Western politics and social categories of difference based on the hegemonic dominance of power: gender, language, caste, religion, and ethnicity (Carbado et al., 2013).This paper engages in the methodological discussion of intersectionality and its importance to study Nepali political practice concerning the systemic discrimination against minority groups (Ahuti, 2010; Carbado et al., 2013; Gurung, 2009).

The first section of this paper discusses Crenshaw's theoretical concepts entailing three categories of intersectionality. As part of literature review for this paper, it brings various perspectives of the scholars discussing the theoretical and methodological efficacy and limitation of intersectionality, which is relevant for underpinning the argument concerning the significance of intersectionality as a methodological tool to examine the social inequalities, uneven power distributions

and political practices from history to the present context of Nepal. This paper then analyzes how political practices and power exercise established a systemic regulation of social hierarchies and discrimination against people who are demarcated in different categories such as women and Dalit. Within these broader categories, intersectionality is imperative to examine the micro and macro experiences of the people that intersect their everyday understandings of how power has been practiced elusively to silence them (Crenshaw, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2006). This paper utilized historical data and existing literature such as the sources from scholarly published materials that discuss Nepal's socio-political practices and analyze using discourse analysis as a tool to examine the genealogy of hierarchies, social inequalities, systemic discrimination (Hodes, 2018; Van Dijk, 2001; Wodak & Krzyzanowsk, 2008). Since this conceptual paper uses secondary data, discourse analysis allows us to revisit the center and margin of political discourses and power exercises regarding discrimination against women and Dalit in Nepal. Finally, it offers ideas regarding why intersectionality as a methodology is essential to explore people's experiences in Nepal's diverse socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural structures.

Crenshaw and Intersectionality

Intersectionality, a term created by Crenshaw (1991), has been an effective and popular critical theory that relates to differences in women's experience, especially in the context of Western liberal democratic policies an

d practices. This theoretical idea in current political contexts contributes to shaping the lives and experiences of those who have long been subordinated and discriminated against (Crenshaw, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2006). In Crenshaw's argument, intersectionality alludes to the intersection between social variables such as race, gender, ethnicity, language, and culture. Crenshaw explicitly interrogates the concept of identity politics in the United States for its failure to address the experiences of those who have been politically marginalized.

Crenshaw's particular focus lies on the issues of women of colour in the context of political and social structures and the exercise of power in the United States. She argues that intersectionality significantly explores the issues of the injustice continuously encountered and experienced by women of colour in their everyday lives. In the given context, intersectionality allows women of colour to explore their lost identities, even in the cracks between feminism and antiracism (Crenshaw, 1991). This argument informs how intersectionality considers the overlapping identities in liberal democracy. However, some scholars criticize intersectionality theory as being theoretically over-reliant on Black Women, impacting the other dimensions of politics and power relations (Kurtis & Adams, 2016; Nash, 2008).

Crenshaw has categorized intersectionality into three folds: structural, political, and representational (Crenshaw, 1991). In Crenshaw's perception, structural intersectionality is a tool that explores various forms of injustices and violence against people of colour and suggests how these unjust policies can potentially be reformed. Crenshaw provides an operational definition of structural intersectionality through field-based research and examines the experiences and resilience of battered women taking shelter in Los Angeles. One of the dominant findings of her research entailed how Black women faced the issues of racism, poverty, unemployment, gender, and violence. In such situations, the women of colour were found vulnerable since they failed to meet the requirements to be eligible for permanent resident status in the United States (Crenshaw, 1991). The reason behind such eligibility requirements directly aligns with systemic barriers in the policies of immigration law and language (Collins, 2000, 2015; Crenshaw, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2006;). We argue that these barriers, based on power, politics, and practices, escalate the domination patterns that explicitly intersect women's domestic violence experience. The situation of women of colour in terms of social, political, and economic distributions depicts how they reluctantly accept

the domination and biases created by those in power (Foucault, 1980). With the discourses of power and politics, the dominant group marginalizes the women of colour both socially and culturally and silences them politically (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Women of colour are situated in at least two subordination dimensions in political intersectionality: women and racialized groups (Crenshaw, 1991). Crenshaw's study reveals how domestic violence has been deliberately politicized, reflecting the working strategies of social institutions. Crenshaw exemplifies the reluctance demonstrated by the Los Angeles Police Department to provide domestic violence statistics and emphasizes the intensity of violence. She strongly remarks that the atrocities that the women of colour faced went beyond institutional and racial discrimination. Explicating this bitter truth, Crenshaw problematized the liberal feminist discourses that surpassed the minority struggle and experiences.

As argued by Crenshaw (1991), representational intersectionality is concerned with the political representation of women of colour in liberal democratic practices. Regarding the mis/representation of women of colour, Crenshaw highlights "recent controversies" regarding race, gender, and ethnicity. These controversies occur because of the categories of policy discourse that prevent women of colour from occupying their space in the political apparatus. This argument leads to the point that the tendency to place a marginalized group to a distinct category of visible minority identifies how social structures dehumanize people by categorizing them as 'others' (Collins, 2015). This practice of dehumanization of those in the margin is politically constructed and historically conceptualized through the discourses of power and politics (Crenshaw, 1991). There is an ongoing interplay of power and politics in contemporary society regarding how society and culture define racism and sexism (Crenshaw, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2006). This directs to the fact that those in power

invalidate the discourse of those in the margin. This invalidation is apparent in political practices when politically disadvantaged groups are considered, especially when we perceive them in conjunction with their roles, rights, and responsibilities in the United States and beyond.

Intersectionality: Spectrum of Various Perspectives

Intersectionality has been the center of attention within academic and non-academic debates among scholars and beyond. Intersectionality theory is popular among scholars because of its tremendous utilization to map the socio-political and socio-economic disparities, social hierarchies, and inequalities that are implicitly and explicitly present in societies. As a critical theory, intersectionality is not only popular among scholars; it has also equally been of interest to feminists, politicians, and social activists today. Recently, Jason Kenney, the premier of Alberta, Canada, became controversial when he castigated intersectionality theory in a racist expression (Woods, 2020). Along with politicians and public figures' engagement, it is imperative to discuss how scholars respond to intersectionality since this paper aims to delve into the theoretical debates and methodological significance in the context of Nepal.

Intersectionality is considered a tool for exploring a matrix of domination in terms of a society's organizational structures and power relations (Collins, 1998, 2015). Drawing from Crenshaw's ideas of overlapping identity politics, Collins builds on the notion of intersectionality, linking it more to how knowledge is produced and consumed in different social settings where there is a disparity in the names of gender, inequality, race, and identity. Intersectionality serves as a theoretical framework that contributes to revealing social realities. Critiquing Crenshaw, Bilge (2013) concerns more with "whitening intersectionality," referring not to the colour of skin but the "genealogical thematic re-framing" regarding the theoretical and methodological significance. It is argued that the tendency to whitening feminism creates a potential danger to bypass the origin of

black feminism and battle racism within white feminism (Bilge, 2013; Tomlinson, 2013).

Carbado et al. (2013) also draw from Crenshaw and further elaborate the concept of intersectionality as a method to map social disparities and geographical movements. It is stated that "our failure to attend to intersectionality movement has limited our ability to see the theory in places in which it is already doing work and to imagine other places to which the theory might be taken" (Carbado et al., p. 303). Intersectionality has been acknowledged as a methodological tool across disciplines and has also been widely understood as a controversial theory across the globe. Despite this controversy, intersectionality can be considered a crucial tool for mapping dimensions that prioritize hierarchies in our social and political structures. We argue that these structures demand intersectionality to operationalize the long-standing concept and continual practices of power through social and political bodies. So, it is imperative to note "what intersectionality is" and "to assess what intersectionality does" (Carbado et al., 2013).

As Vardeman-Winter et al. (2013) discussed, intersectionality exists and operates in all disciplines, which is demonstrated in the scholarly works of feminists and critical race theorists. Their works indicate the implication and impact of intersectionality across disciplines such as "philosophy, education, political science, sociology, psychology, public health and geography" (Vardeman-Winter et al., 2013, p.285). Going beyond the Black women, MacDowell (2013) focuses on the implication of intersectionality to examine an intersectional analysis concerning other women of colour's identities. Strongly supporting the critical race theorists, May (2014) claims that "intersectionality challenges the pull of prevailing mindsets, in part by drawing from political expectations, lived experiences, and analytical positions not crafted solely within the bounds of dominant imaginaries" (p. 96). These arguments lead to the point of reference which covertly supports the claim that intersectionality can be a crucial

tool to excavate diversities and unfold social realities of marginalization and silence.

McCall (2005) considers intersectionality a theoretical intervention to penetrate and unfold issues around women of colour. While doing this, the author projects some methodological complexities of unfolding social and political issues of those in the margin. In respect to the methodological implication and complexity of intersectionality in conducting social research, Clarke and McCall (2013) note that "there is a wide range of empirical research by scholars who do not necessarily claim the mantle of intersectionality but who nevertheless enable our work and serve as an important resource for an intersectional analysis" (p. 350). Unlike these arguments, it is discussed that intersectionality is a particularized theory that concerns only women of colour (Bilge, 2013; Tomlinson, 2013). However, Nash and Warin (2017) insist that "intersectionality was positioned as a counter to the problems associated with identity politics precisely because it acknowledged differences among women" (p. 72). Let us discuss how intersectionality as a methodology to map the social inequalities and differences established uneven power distribution and systemic domination in Nepal is applicable for researchers and critics.

Normative Structure and Power Exercise: Discrimination against Minorities

Heteropatriarchal normativity has been a long mainstream political structure that has founded and promoted the bias discourses to define and operate marginalized groups in Nepali society (Pradhan-Malla, 2001). In her argument, these discourses have separated who exercise and execute power and who are deprived of social and political representations. Women, in particular, have been the recipients of these bitter experiences in the patriarchal society of Nepal (Levine, 1987; Pradhan-Malla, 2001; von Furer-Haimendorf, 1957). Apart from the dominance of heteropatriarchal normativity, religion also plays a central role in promoting intersectional realities often experienced by those in the periphery

(Hofer, 1979). Hinduism, for example, still remains at the center of politics, legitimizing the various forms of discourses to authorize its executors (Gurung, 2009; Hofer, 1979). The monarchical system introduced this practice of dominance that intersects between gender and religion (Hachhethu, 2007; Pradhan-Malla, 2001).

Snatching the sovereign power from the monarchy, the Rana Regime in Nepali political history exercised the state power and promoted the caste system, placing some at the center and others at the margin (Hachhethu, 2007). Both political practices and socially constructed caste systems victimized women, leading to a culture of punishment (Pragya, 2015). There are certain improvements in providing justice to women in today's Nepali society; however, the forms of violence against women are still structural and political (Joshi & Kharel, 2008). These forms of violence are evidenced in the contemporary scholarships:

> As in many other countries, the laws relating to violence against women in Nepal is also neither adequate nor human right sensitive to redress the problems. In the Ninth Five Year Plan, the issue of legal provisions to ensure women's rights and institutional legal provision to prevent Violence against women, especially domestic violence was raised. (Joshi & Kharel, 2008, p. 5)
>
> Although the Constitution does not allow discrimination based on sex, caste, creed or colour there are more than 150 discriminatory provisions against women in the forms of denial access to and control over resources, restricted mobility, low representation in decision-making positions in civil services, politics and public sectors. (Pragya, 2015, p.7)

These expressions imply that the politics of exclusion and discrimination against women are a persistent threat to women in Nepal. One key contributor to such violence against women is the discriminatory law that creates a division between

males and females in exercising their rights (Pragya, 2015). The political change in 2008 and the promulgation of the new constitution in 2015 promised to secure women's rights; however, these rights are not yet fully effective (Pragya, 2015). The ineffectiveness of women's rights and century-long anti-female discourses are still deterring women from their political rights guaranteed by the constitution. It shows the influence of both religion and patriarchal normativity in the politics of discrimination. These historically descended cultural practices and current political provisions intersect and yet minimize women's rights with an unjust imposition of suppression.

The Nepali socio-political practices within the monarchical system upheld the patriarchal values based on power exercise (Pandey, 2016). The political violence and discriminatory policy to access the resources underlines a systemic problem that has created depression and mental health issues among minority groups, including women and Dalit at large (Gurung, 2009; Kohrt et al., 2012). As a methodology, Intersectionality in the Nepali socio-political context is significant to investigate, understand, and flatten out standardized systems of social hierarchies and discrimination that have established male-centric and caste-centric regulation of power and politics (Crenshaw, 1991; Gurung, 2009; Pandey, 2016). The way patriarchy dominates women in the guise of cultural values is worth linking to what Foucault (1975, 2003) calls the dominance of power and discourse on 'right to kill' or 'let live' is structural and political. The political practices and the system of punishment seem to have been improved in a way, but the practices of discrimination have been intensified due to the stealth patriarchal legacy and caste system in Nepal. The violence against marginalized groups has now turned out to be a “necropolitical” in its practices of destroying and instrumentalizing human bodies to the precarity of living (Mbembe, 2003). Sexual violence and death after rape have been proliferating, and the victims are deemed to be of the working family (Kamdar, 2020; Panday, 2020). The question of what it means to

be a woman and what it means to be a man and woman of low caste and class is imperative to investigate through the lens of intersectional methodological ideas.

Genealogy of Structural Violence and Politics of Discrimination

The social and political systems of Nepal have structurally discriminated against women and the Dalit community. However, the experiences of the political representatives of the minority groups intersect with their everyday experiences of victimization. These intersecting complexities are the identity markers and signifiers of social problems that might have been influenced by the political ideologies that hinder investigating an in-depth exploration of the genealogy of differences, hierarchies and social inequalities practiced through the past centuries.

> Caste position was a critical issue. For one example, the lower-ranking and non- Hindu groups could be enslaved for certain crimes, while the higher ranks could only be downgraded in caste. There is a gradation of fines and punishments in legal code too, according to the castes of the victim and the person who committed the crime. (Levine, 1978, p. 73)

The caste system characterizes its politics for categorizing people and establishing discourses to create crime and punishment subjects. The violence against Dalit in Nepal explicit and implicit, but it has an underlying root of structural violence established and legitimized for centuries. Intersectionality as methodology allows examining social divisions and politics of discrimination (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

> Nepalese political history shows that despite frequent political transition to a democratic inclusive system, marginalized groups like the Dalit are still politically excluded and oppressed in society. The structural injustice induced by caste hierarchy persists and causes multidimensional effects on Dalit, and it is a principle reason for Dalit exclusion and powerlessness. Ineffective implementation of policy and a lack of institutional mechanisms to enforce those policies are the prime impediments, as well

as the political parties and rulers not being sensitive to Dalit concerns. (Bishwakarma, 2017, p. 263)

The politics of discrimination against the Dalit community has been superficially improved, but the underlying systemic exclusionary practices still exist in Nepal. The representation of marginalized communities is the broadly absent presence (Espiritu, 2014) in the policies of inclusive exclusion resulting in these people's lives grimmer than before because of the racializing nature of the systemic and political operation. The politics of categorizing people and practices of power exercise constructed inferior subjects of operation in Nepali political and historical practices signifies structural violence that legitimized political, social, and cultural hegemonic control of one group over another.

The state's power was under the control of certain elite groups in history that established class and caste hierarchy, neglecting people's capabilities and craftsmanship (Ahuti, 2010). The cast-based discrimination is a social construct that needs to be debunked with subversive strategies through shared values (Ahuti, 2010). Dalit's issues did not get any space in earlier monolithic and armchair ethnographic studies (Chaulagain & Karki, 2020; Folmar, 2007). The genealogy of the structural violence against women, Dalit, and other marginalized communities is now crucial for a move to debunk the patriarchal mindset and caste-based political discourses and practices. The move on social research deploying the intersectional approach creates an avenue in the socio-political and socio-economic arena by offering micro and macro subversion to the existing political practices for a social change concerning equity, equality, and social justice. The politics of inequality produces and reproduces various problems explicitly affecting the daily lives of people who have no power, have been categorized as low social status, deprived of political representation and decision making. Viruell-Fuentes et al. (2012) argue that "racism reliably produces and reproduces social and economic inequities along racial and ethnic lines, and, as

such, it is a fundamental cause of disease" (p. 2100). The underlying structure of political, cultural, and economic inequalities and exercise of power has created an inferior subject in Nepali societies by silencing the voices and rights of the so-called minority communities.

> There are more than 125 ethnic communities in Nepal, and the majority of ethnic people are also peasants. These ethnic peasants, especially the minority groups, have been culturally, politically, and economically suppressed and exploited by the Hindu upper-caste rulers, merchants, and priests for centuries, especially after the forceful incorporation of small principalities into the united Nepal in the eighteenth century. (Paudel, 2016, p. 548)

The politics of categorizing and practices of othering are deemed essential in neocolonial domination, intensified racial and gender discrimination against minority people in Nepal (Guneratne, 1998; Laczo, 2003). Intersectionality as a methodology for social research examines multifaceted political problems, which have been historically in the system of political operation and the variables to create differences through a single-dimensional system of power exercise. As a methodology, intersectionality should not only be taken as an instrument of criticizing power exercises, political practices, and discursive formation; it should also be perceived as an idea of generating new insights into the knowledge economy by thoroughly investigating the disadvantaged groups' experiences. This methodological underpinning examines lived experiences of people in the present hierarchical societies through a different lens, examining the genealogy of systemic racism practiced in both intra- and inter- nationalities and ethnicities in the society.

As a social research method concerning Nepal's power and politics, intersectionality travels to the marginal corner of political history and mechanism of operation to investigate the realities of inequalities and subjugation, generating

knowledge for social change. Intersectionality intervenes in the existing paradigms of social inequalities and hierarchies that trace a long history of operation in Nepal to reproduce knowledge by questioning the discourses about social hierarchies, dispassionate distribution of power, the controlling mechanism of the state, and categories of class and caste. Carbado et al. (2013) highlight that "the goal" of intersectional theory "was not simply to understand social relations of power, nor to limit intersectionality's gaze to the relations that were interrogated therein, but to bring the often-hidden dynamics forward in order to transform them" (p. 312). As Foucault (1980) illustrates and is further explained in 1994 and 2003 about the genealogical approach, intersectionality's effectiveness as a method has travelled to various geographies and social and political histories and practices as a genealogical investigation of discourses, subjugation, and power.

The politics of creating differences and structural domination and patriarchal hegemonic belief systems, for instance, are some of the central issues in Nepal in which intersectionality functions not only for producing new knowledge but also for identifying how politics and policies work in the categories of difference such as caste systems that have been perpetuated for a century. This political operation is systemic and discriminatory that depicts state racism (Foucault, 2003) against certain groups of people. Intersectionality suggests exploring the genealogy of the marginal, neglected, and dominated realities in Nepali society based on people's experiences and silences. Silence is political; silence normalizes its silencing notion. Intersectionality offers methodological intervention for examining many such ethnic, religious, and cultural issues that have been explicitly and implicitly influenced by power dynamics and political practices in Nepali socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural context need to revisit and re-examine that will be a new method of understanding social disparities.

Conclusion

This conceptual paper offers a methodological framework to explore and examine social hierarchies, discrimination, and injustice, structurally functioning in Nepali politics. The paper provides a valuable point of departure for conducting field-based future studies, employing intersectionality as a tool to examine the current socio-cultural scenario and explore the history of dominance and discrimination against socially neglected groups and communities in Nepal. Regardless of this limitation, the paper's method allows future researchers to map political practices and the legacy of discrimination produced through the social structure by questioning the existing power relations. In other words, the paper contributes to the scholarships to redefine what counts as humanity and dignity, looking into the dominance of century-long discourses and practices and investigating the tendency to sexualize and racialize otherness in the Nepali socio-political apparatus. This paper's methodological ideas can potentially contribute to unfolding issues of ethnicity, which is severe and critical to examine in the Nepali political context.

This paper has considered intersectionality as a methodological tool kit that travels every corner of the globe. As a methodology, it is applicable to map racial discrimination in the West in a narrower sense; however, it is also an approach to examine power dynamics and political practices of non-western societies, including those in Nepal. This informs that intersectionality can be understood as an activity to examine a micro-study of individuals' and groups' experiences in societies and identities constructed by national and international regimes of power and political discourses. The intersectional approach allows exploring the genealogy of social inequalities and the various discourses of categorizing people into groups to understand the history of political operation and liberate people from such operation, taking an epistemological travel to the ontological process of rethinking humanity.

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Modernization in Medical Practices in Rural Nepal: An Ethnographic Study of Hyolmos

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Abstract

This article attempts to investigate the modern medical practices and the major factors triggering the changes in views, attitudes, and practices among the Hyolmos, an indigenous people residing in high hill region, Helambu, the northeast of Sindhupalchok, central Nepal. This ethnographic study with the key informants' interview, participant observation and household census was employed during a year-long fieldwork. The collected data were thematically analyzed and interpreted. The finding shows that the major triggering factors bringing such changes are education, communication, and transportation that increased awareness among the people for choosing alternative opportunities. Tourism and foreign employment raised the economic level that created better financial options for treatment. Conservation of forest was limited to the performance of herbalists and Amchis. To some extent, inter-caste marriage practice and the urbanization process also increased awareness about the use of western medicine.

Keywords: allopathic practice, change, education, modernity, tourism, transportation

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Modernity has brought great changes in many aspects of life including medical practices. Considering health as one of the most important concerns in life, peoples' practices are transforming in modern medicine along with the modernity. Among the medical practices, allopathic practice is more popular along with the development, education and modernity (Pigg, 1995, 1996) and it is preferred more for the treatment of any illnesses even in rural areas where there is easy access to health posts.

Despite the barriers, changes occur in society. Sometimes we observe revolutionary changes and sometimes changes occur slowly. In the process of social change, medical and healing practices also cannot remain unchanged. Many changes are observed among Hyolmo people regarding their medical choices and different healing and medical practices. The drastic changes have clearly been examined since 1980s. But those changes in medical practices have not yet been assessed through in-depth study. The purpose of the paper is thus to investigate the present conditions, different changes in healing and medical traditions, healing procedures, and the factors of changes on medical practices among the Hyolmos.

Many factors have played significant role for the changes in their entire lifestyle in recent decades. Medical practice also could not remain far from those changes. In this paper, the changes related practices that tend to go with modernization and factors contributing to those changes are presented and analyzed.

Ethnographic fieldwork was carried out in the Hyolmo community for one year in 2015/16 by using a number of data-gathering techniques such as key informants' interview, participant observation and household census. Local teachers, nurse of local health post, political and social leaders, and elderly people

were taken as key informants in this study. Interviews were carried out with local health service consumers. Necessary data were gathered through observation of health seeking behaviour and their destination. Socio-demographic data had been collected using household census. Data gathered were thematically analyzed and interpreted, which are presented in the following subsections.

Feierman (1981), Frackenberg and Leeson (1976), and Young (1981) describe the systems model to analyze the impact of social forces on the search for health care. This model, according to Janzen (1978), requires two levels of analysis: one at the micro level (incorporating perceptions about an illness, its prevalence, and efforts to diagnose, prevent, and cure) and the other at the macro level (incorporating information about large-scale social entities such as health institutions, economic and political systems that dictate access to health care). In this study, I have used both levels of analysis.

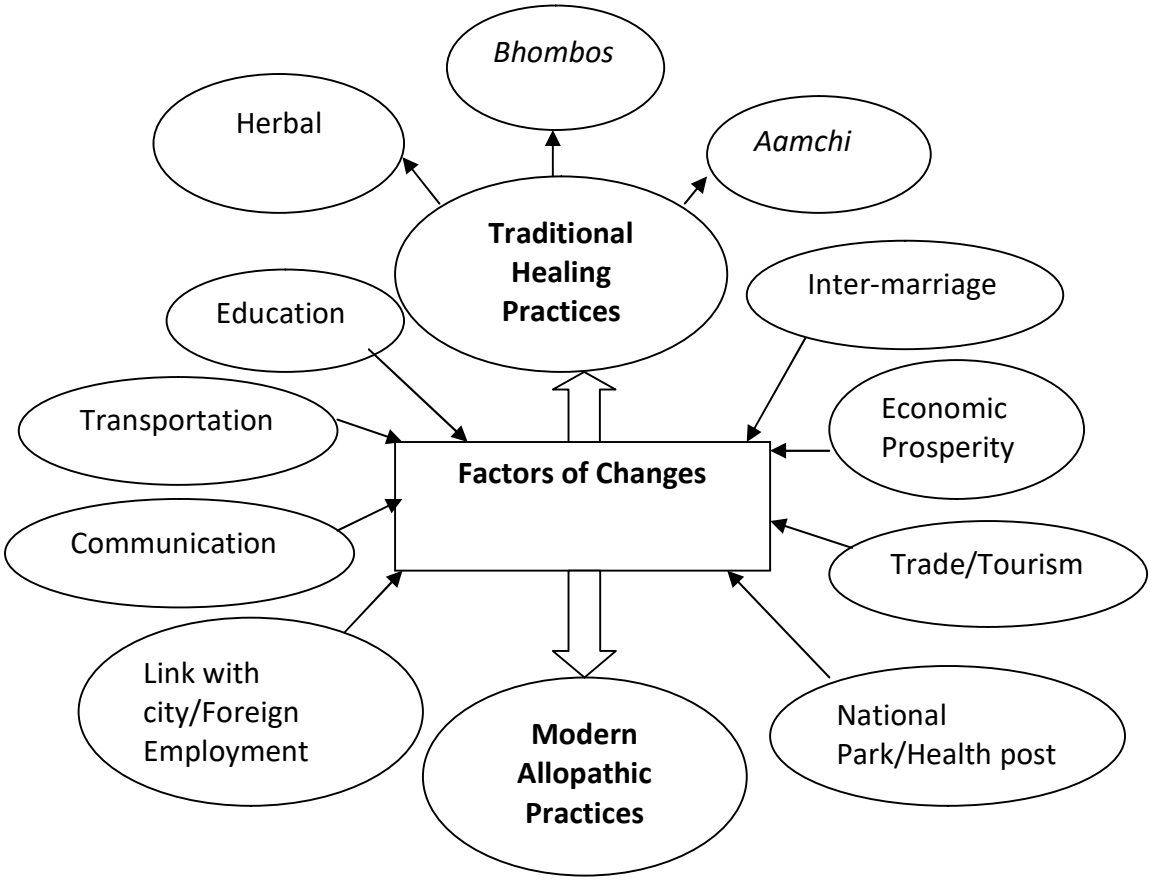
Conceptual Framework

Medical system is an integral part of all cultures. It encompasses the totality of health beliefs, knowledge, skills, and practices of a cultural group. It incorporates all clinical and non-clinical activities, formal and informal institutions, and other activities that are even indirectly connected with illness in a community. The conceptual framework depicted through Figure 1 was developed to explore the changes in health seeking priorities and their causes among Hyolmos.

The framework shows that the traditional healing practices such as faith healers (*Bhombo)*, herbal, *Aamchi* (Himalayan doctor) and home remedies are changing nowadays toward allopathic western medicine due to the factors like education, transportation, communication, foreign employment, tourism, trade, economic prosperity, inter-caste marriage practice, link with city, establishment of National Park and Health post etc.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework for Changes in Medical Practices and their Factors



Analysis and Discussion of Empirical Findings

Melamchi Ghyang: A Timeline

Melamchi Ghyang is a rural village of Helambu Rural Municipality, Sindhupalchok. It has its own history based on local events, and it is influenced by some national events too. These events are associated with medical/healing choice and their transformation as shown below in Table 1.

Table 1

Melamchi Ghyang in Timeline

Dates (A.D.)	Major Events	Major Changes
1950s	People went to work in Burma, Assam and Sikkim	After the contact with outside cultures through out-migration; western medical practice began gradually
1960s	Circular migration to different cities of India accelerated	Increase in awareness, allopathic medicine introduced, increase in economic well being
1976	Langtang National Park established	Rumor of capturing pastureland by the expansion of national park and people started to shift in other works
1980s	Chauri production started in local shed	End of buying *chauris* in expensive rate from upper Rasuwa, increase economic strength
1982	Death of the third Chiniya Lama	Unofficial end of the era of feudalism
1986	Jungle of Melamchi Ghyang area incorporated in National park	Loss of autonomy on the control of jungle resources by the villagers, control in herbs collection
1987	Langtang Trekking route of Sundarijal, Gosainkunda, Melamchi Ghyang opened	Tourism accelerated, increase in allopathic medicine, economic strength
1989	School established in local area	Helped to raise awareness in every sector including health and hygiene, socialization of children, raised

		allopathic practices
1990	Democracy restored in the country	Raised awareness in politics, increased link with other non-Hyolmos
1990	Electricity supplied to houses produced from local Phadung Khola	Increase in the facilities of the means of communication
1990s	Bombay returnee women brought AIDS	Awareness on HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases
2000s	Guthi Land began to change into Raikar	Freedom on land using, economic strength
2005	Community Action Nepal supported in health and education sector	Health facilities started, local school got support
2007/8	Telephone and cell phone service expanded	Easy communication with relatives living in city and Bazaar area, information about the availability of doctors in the Health Centers
2010/11	Disc home TV channel system began	Access to different channels and television programs
2011	Melamchi FM was established in the local area	Health program started to broadcast in radio, awareness increased
2011	Establishment of health post	Facilities of modern health service, allopathic medicine users accelerated
2012	Link with road transport	Offered different facilities such as food and medicine supply
2013	Local high school started 10+2 class	Access of higher education locally

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

This has happened the past as well. Talking about the medical practice in the past, Bishop (1998) states:

> In 1970-71, residents of Melamchi only occasionally sought medical advice in Kathmandu. Seeking medical treatment from hospital in the city means they needed time to be away from the village and work, the necessity of cash payment and lack of familiarity with the Nepali language. This meant most people having illnesses were dealt with in the village. The distance and terrain were other impediments. Without road and helicopters, people had to be carried on the back of others which was extremely uncomfortable for everyone involved… General people used home remedies. (p. 128)

Transformation in medical practices

Despite difficulties and uncertainties of the past there are now many changes which have brought about remarkable transformation in medical practices. They are discussed below.

Education

Education is the key factor to change the society. Education gives awareness, and conscious people have different attitudes toward medical choice**.** Since the establishment of Melamchi Ghyang School in 1989, the literacy rate in the area changed from nearly 0 to 62 percent. Among the above six years aged population, 8.18 percent are grade 10 passed and 6.34 percent have passed up to secondary (grade 12) level. Five males (2 percent) have successfully completed bachelor's level too. Analyzing on the basis of sex, 74.5 percent males and 48.74 percent females are literate now (Fieldwork, 2015). Adult literacy classes are going on continuously for four years. These classes have also contributed to increase literacy rate in the area.

Along with the increasing number of people with formal education, medical choices and priority are also changing. Mani Prasad Adhikari, the head teacher of Pema Chhyoling Lower Secondary School, Nakote, shared:

> We refer first to local health post and then to Melamchi Hospital or to the hospitals of Kathmandu, depending on the seriousness of patients, but we never refer to *Dhami/Jhankris* (faith healers). In the past, local people were ignorant and consumed alcohol even in the case of typhoid fever; as a result, many of them lost their lives. But now the situation has changed due to school education.

Some youths who study higher education in Kathmandu also have changed their family members' healing destination. The families, who depended on local shamans in the past, have started to go to health post or hospital for the purpose seeking health now. Education has contributed to decrease the status of *Dhami/Jhankris* and their followers. It has also helped to decrease several superstitious beliefs such as the tradition of sacrificing animals to appease what they called disease causing deities.

Transportation

Timbu, the lower Helambu, was connected with road transport a decade ago. There is public bus facility regularly in all seasons. It is connected by graveled road because it is near the tunnel of Melamchi Drinking Water Supply Project for Kathmandu Valley. Melamchi Ghyang is about 75 km north-east from Kathmandu, connected by agricultural road. The place was connected by the road in 2011 but cannot run transport regularly due to the worse road condition and lack of bridge over the Melamchi River. Thus, bus facilities are limited only to winter season. Recently, the queue of public bus started in 2015, but this road transport is less reliable.

Facility of road transport has started to bring change in their lifestyle. About 21 percent households use LP gas instead of firewood as fuel for cooking.

It has decreased the smoke of their fireplace and supported healthy life. Transportation supported to the supply of allopathic medicine in the local health post and food supply to villagers from the market. It has made it easy to go to city hospitals or use ambulance, which brought change in the locales' medical practices.

Communication

All the households use electricity in Melamchi Ghyang. It had been supplied since 1990 from the small-scale hydroelectricity project of Phadung Khola, established in 1986. It supported the communication system. Now this hydroelectricity project has stopped but the main grid of electricity is connected. Most of the households have televisions along with Dish Home, and it has contributed to choose medical options on locales due to the information about treatment systems. Thus, they have become familiar with the modern practices.

There are three FM radio stations around: Melamchi FM, Sindhu FM and Sunkoshi FM. Their broadcasts are easily heard in Hyolmo region. They also broadcast health awareness programs and advertisement of hospitals. Namobuddha FM, Kabhrepalanchok and some other FM broadcasts with Kathmandu station are also heard. Some informants claimed that they are influenced by radio programs.

Communications explicitly increase people's determination to modify habits detrimental to their health (Bandura 1990). Means of communication changes health habits and instruct them the way of health behaviour. These means of communication have direct and indirect impacts in health sector.

Hyolmos were found having communication services like internet, Telephone and cell phone and they have almost regular talk with their family members who live in Kathmandu or abroad. The referral cause, knowledge about health service, and information about the availability of healers have changed the medical choice toward faster service along with the choice of better alternatives.

Foreign Employment

Human mobilization for employment across border is increasing. Foreign employment has played significant role in the health seeking behaviour among Hyolmos in both health consciousness and economic efficiency.

The main occupation of Hyolmos three decades ago was transhumant herding. Due to their hard life, they gradually shifted to occupation other than transhumant herding. As a result, their economic status elevated. Now their major source of income is foreign employment. Hyolmos have gone to mainly India for work, and some of them are working in US, UK, Israel, Korea, Hong Kong, Canada, Finland, Dubai, Kuwait, etc. Among the foreign employed locales, the member of about 46 percent households are in India, and more than 8 percent are in US and 2 to 5 percent are scattered in other states (Fieldwork 2015). Bishop (1998) applies the term 'circular migration' to this process of migration of Hyolmos, mainly the migration for short period to work in India and to return.

Foreign employment has enhanced their economic level, which has influenced the better choice of healers in advanced hospitals. Generally, persons who go abroad have adopted allopathic practices due to economic strength. A 53-year-old local male informant, Kami Sherpa shared that he has a son in Korea, the next son is in UK and daughter-in-law is in Hong Kong. He used to go to *Bhombos* to heal in the past when all his family members were with him in village. Now his medical choice has been shifted to allopathic practice.

Before the establishment of health post in Helambu, the people who worked in India seasonally, used to bring normal allopathic medicine in the village. Generally they go to India after the celebration of Lhosar (in February) and come back in September, October. They became familiar with allopathic medicine in India and also brought some medicines when they returned to their home. Many villagers claim that the beginning of western medicine is by Indian returnee villagers. The villagers have been working in different places of India

such as Laddakh, Himanchal, Arunanchal, and Assam even today. When I was in Melamchi Ghyang in January and February, almost all the households were full of family members who came to celebrate Sonam Lhosar, and when I went again in June or July, there were very few people in most of the households, and some of the houses were empty.

Tourism

Helambu lies in the Langtang trekking route. It is one of the oldest trekking routes in Nepal, developed in 1970s. Tourism has made the villagers prosperous economically on one hand, and it has introduced western medicine on the other. Tourists have contributed to change the villagers' medical behavior towards allopathic practice. Some tourists used to bring normal medicine and give to the villagers if needed till the last decade of twentieth century.

Melamchi Ghyang is no more isolated due to the expansion of transport and communication. Many Nepalis also go there for trekking, pilgrims, tour and business. They also have contributed to change the local people’s medical practices.

Trade Route

Helambu is located in the middle of a triangle of the trade route that links Kathmandu, Nyenam and Kyirong. In Kathmandu valley the two main settlements, namely Swoyambhu and Bouddha, can respectively be seen as the end points of the Kyirong and Nyenam trade route to Kathmandu. Until two generations ago, people travelled from Helambu to the east via Thangpal, Gunsa and Golchhe, a journey of two to three days for the salt/grain trade. In the past, Hyolmos travelled through this route with rice, cloth, peppers and thread, and returned not only with salt but with wool, blanket and sheep for sale to Hindu people for the festival of Dashain (Clarke 1980). A local teacher of the high school, claimed, "The native *Rongwa* (low land people) used to come in Melamchi Ghyang since long ago as it is a route of Kyirong to take salt. Timure,

the border of Rasuwa and Tibet, can be reached through Melamchi Ghyang via Semchhelang pass which has influenced every aspect of life including medical practices". Nowadays these routes are not in use.

Economic Prosperity

In Melamchi, herders faced economic constraints from the factors of geography and history. Melamchi herders were isolated from services and information. They had no access to veterinary medicine and clinic (Bishop 1998). Due to their hard herding life, they gradually shifted to the occupations other than transhumant herding. As a result, their economic status elevated. Now very limited transhumant herders are there. This was once the lifestyle of every Hyolmos.

Economic status seems to be the major factor for medical choice among the Hyolmo people. The major income source was transhumant herding till 1970s. Now tourism-related business such as hotels and lodges, going abroad to work, changing land ownership from *Guthi* to *Raikar* (private), employment in local area etc. have increased their economic level and has increased the choice of medical alternatives along with their material culture.

Due to the affordability of villagers to treat in city hospitals, economic growth has contributed to increase the tendency towards allopathic medical practice and also has accelerated the healing procedure.

Establishment of Health Post and Hospital

After the establishment of health post in 2011 in Melamchi Ghyang by the support of Community Action Nepal (CAN), the locals' first choice has become health post in health problem. About 47 percent household heads share that they go to health post first for the basic health facilities for themselves and for their family members. Common health problems like common cold, diarrhea, cough, high blood pressure, vaccination, pregnancy test, delivery, fever, etc., are treated in health post. There is a staff nurse to facilitate the locals. Further treatment of

patient has been made possible from the occasional visit of doctors. The locals who fully depended on traditional healers *(Bhombos)* in the past have started to go to health post now. The reason to choose health post is education and awareness on the one hand and its reliable facilities and cheap cost of health post service on the other hand. People get all the facilities of health post throughout the year when they become member of health post by paying Rs. 100 per person annually. Medicines are also available free of cost.

Rinki Sherpa, the staff nurse of the local health post (Ninja Rinjen Community Health Service centre), claims, "All people come to take service in Health Post except for *Bhombo* and Lama themselves. Even the family members of *Bhombo* and Lama are facilitated by HP. The local people are also satisfied with the facilities of HP. They expect a modern hospital in local area".

The villagers also prefer health post due to its location, as it is situated in the centre of village. People go there first in every minor and major case. Even the people who have indigenous healing knowledge began to go to health post.

Link with Kathmandu

Though Melamchi Ghyang is a rural area, many villagers have started to follow modern medical practices due to the link with Kathmandu. The villagers have the trend of using allopathic medicine now: 50 percent of the locals have home and 27.08 percent of them have land in Kathmandu. Rests of the villagers also visit Kathmandu frequently as they have relatives, or for business or their children as the students have gone to Kathmandu for higher studies.

The people of Melamchi Ghyang have a strong historical link with Kathmandu. The Bouddha Ghyang Guthi, Kathmandu and Melamchi Ghyang Guthi, Melamchi Ghyang both were once under the control of Chiniya Lama's generation who lived in Bouddha and frequently visited to Melamchi Ghyang to see things. The link with Kathmandu has made them familiar with modern medical practices. They have more medical options and are aware of more

possibilities of choice of various medical practices. The modern medical practice is the most important one.

Inter-caste Marriage Practice

Inter-caste/ethnic marriage was strictly prohibited among Hyolmos in Melamchi Ghyang till three decades back. They used to get married with only Hyolmos but of a different clan. There are five clans under Hyolmos in Melamchi Ghyang: *Ghale, Syangba, Jhhyaba, Yoba* and *Lama*. But now inter-caste marriage is common among them: 65.7 percent HH heads prioritize marriage based on prior love because they claim that the partner can understand each other in this kind of marriage; 82.29 HH heads accepted that inter-marriage is common in their community (Fieldwork, 2015).

Inter-caste marriage practice began since 1980s when Hyolmo youths started to work abroad and went to Kathmandu for business and higher studies. This practice accelerated with the development of transportation and communication. But Hyolmos still do not accept the marriage with *Dalit* (untouchables) castes.

Marriage is one of the major means of diffusion of culture. Medical practice is also a cultural part; we can observe some changes in medical choice due to inter-caste marriage. Sometimes the bride brings new healing knowledge of her culture and tends to apply them in new home so that some changes in traditional herbal and home remedies are found. The economic support and the referral cause which is made by the relatives established after inter-marriage; they get alternative opportunities in medical practice.

Langtang National Park and Community Forest Users Group

Langtang National Park was established in 1976. It covers three districts: Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Sindhupalchok. Melamchi Ghyang was incorporated in the park only in 1986. Helambu is a VDC adjoining Lantang National Park, and Melamchi Ghyang village is very near the park, less than 1 km. The villagers are

not allowed to enter the jungle area to collect forest products as it is the protected area. For the systematic use of forest products, a community forest users group (*Dhupu Samudayik Ban Samittee*) is formed. The national park and community forest users group have controlled the use of forest products. A limited amount of firewood and fodders can be collected and used systematically, but herbal products are strictly prohibited to collect.

There are 15 forest types and more than 1,000 species of flowering plants and ferns and medicinal herbs within the national park (Shrestha 1985). Due to the strict policy of national park and forest users group, mass production and business of the herbal products is not possible. The local herbalists are feeling difficult to get medicinal herbs. There are no skillful herbalists by profession, but the traditional herbalists who use the herbs to treat the family and community are also feeling problem.

Aamchi also uses herbal plants for treatment, but the area where he lives is not incorporated under the National Park when the people refused to be included in 1986 (Bishop 1998). Now, use of herbal medicine is limited because of their less effective medicine. When the villagers want more effective medicine for prompt recovery, they use allopathic medicine.

Summary and Conclusion

Hyolmos' medical choices are changing for around three to four decades. Their choices, priority, procedure and even belief system are found changed. Several factors have been playing significant role for such change. School and adult literacy classes have made the locals aware in their health condition and healing process as education and awareness is the prime factor to bring about such changes. Informants with formal education have given high preference to allopathic practice. Similarly, Hyolmos' economic prosperity made it possible to choose the best medical alternatives. They are economically better and have access to hospitals and treatment procedures. In recent decades, Hyolmos have

gone abroad to work and this has influenced local peoples' medical choices. Now Melamchi Ghyang is facilitated with transport and communication, which brought remarkable changes in medication practice. The locals who depended fully on traditional healers in the past have started to go to Melamchi Hospital or Kathmandu now for better treatment. After the establishment of health post, locals' health behavior changed drastically as they prefer to use allopathic medicine as the first choice. The health post is giving health care at a low cost. The number of *Dhami/Jhankris* is decreasing and herbal practices are also declining along with the establishment of health post. Inter-caste marriage and the link with Kathmandu helped to bring Hyolmos in touch with the outer world. These practices have contributed to cultural exchange.

Establishment of national park and community forest users' group resulted in the decline of herbalist's profession. Tourism and political factors are the minor causes which brought change in Hyolmos' health-seeking behaviour. All these factors mainly changed the traditional medical choices into allopathic practice. Now allopathic medical practice is an established practice that many Hyolmos follow.

Medical practices change due to several factors. People's choices, priority, procedure and even belief system are changing due to global impact. Education and awareness brought by school and adult literacy classes is the prime factor for changes where educated people give high preference to allopathic practice. Economic prosperity has made possible to choose the best medical alternatives. Foreign workers have influenced local peoples' medical choices. The locals who depended fully on traditional healers in the past have started to go to city hospital for better treatment because of transport and communication facilities. Locales prefer to use allopathic medicine as the first choice from health post. The number of faith healers and herbal practitioners are declining along with establishment of health post. Inter-caste/ethnicity marriage and the link with city has helped touch

with the outer world. Establishment of national park and community forest users' group has resulted in the decline of herbalist's profession. Change in the locales' life style from transhumant herding to modernity has brought a big change in medical practices. Consequently, decreasing ratio of transhumant herding has decreased herbal and self-medication practices. Tourism and political factors are the minor causes of changes they also have contributed to decrease the followers of traditional healers and superstitious beliefs. All these factors mainly changed the traditional medical choices into allopathic practice.

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Unpacking Human Trafficking from Neoliberalism and Neoconservatism Paradigms in Nepal: A Critical Review

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Abstract

This theoretical review paper examines the trafficking of women and children in Nepal caused by oppression and socio-economic marginalization and unpacks human trafficking from neoliberal and neoconservative paradigms. It does not discuss human smuggling but instead provides a critical examination of the forces contributing to human trafficking in Nepal according to the neoliberal and neoconservative paradigms. It begins with a brief overview of human trafficking in Nepal and then explores the international frameworks related to human trafficking. It then briefly examines the "4 P" strategy – prevention, protection, prosecution and partnerships – related to anti-human trafficking efforts and identifies gaps in practice/policies. It concludes with a critical discussion of the implications for social work. The paper also stresses that anti-trafficking intervention programs and approaches must be accountable and responsive to the aspirations, strengths, wisdom and experiences of the specific community and be sensitive to the external and internal forces contributing to the trafficking they seek counter. It claims that there is a need for participatory action research that invites trafficking survivors to engage in critical dialogue and conversation and help develop integrative strategies to address human trafficking in Nepal. To write this paper, the author critically reviewed secondary data, including qualitative and quantitative studies and NGO publications, but does not claim to provide a comprehensive or systematic analysis of evidence.

Keywords: anti-human trafficking discourses, gender inequalities, injustice, solidarity

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It is hard to gain accurate or replicable data on trafficked children and girls because trafficking is illegal and done covertly (Buet, Bashford, & Basnyat, 2012; Frederick, Basnyat, &Aguettant, 2010). In 2001, it was estimated that 5,000 to 7,000 thousand Nepalese women and girls had been trafficked to Indian brothels that year (Crawford & Kaufman, 2010, citing an International Labor Organization report). Ten years later, the Human Trafficking Assessment Tool Report of the American Bar Association, 2011, reported that approximately 5,000 to 15,000 Nepalese girls and women were trafficked annually to India for sexual exploitation. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2018), "Nepal reports more child victims than adults" (p. 64). The most recent report of Nepal's National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) indicates that 78 percent of identified victims of trafficking in 2017/18 were female, and 25 percent were children (Abilio et al., 2019, p. 5). Another study reported that the number of trafficking in person (TIP) cases was declining in district courts, but that the numbers in the high (appeals) and supreme courts were increasing (Banjade et al., 2018). In the district courts, the average annual cases registered for five years was 281, with conviction rates 42 percent and pending conviction rates 51 percent (Banjade et al., 2018).

These statistics suggest that Nepal's involvement in the anti-human trafficking movement is increasing. This means it is not clear what they mean in the anti-trafficking discourses. Do they genuinely suggest that the movement is addressing the issue of human trafficking? Most cases of trafficking in Nepal are never reported to the police to avoid stigmatization. Besides, the judicial process is prolonged and expensive. The nature and scope of human trafficking have drastically changed in the last few years. The trend has shifted from human trafficking to India for sexual exploitation to labour trafficking, mainly in East

Asia and the Middle East. Therefore, it is essential to conduct community-based studies and participatory action research to validate the national figures and explore why there is so little incentive to report cases of human trafficking. Participatory action research is an empowering and emancipatory approach that provides marginalized socio-economically groups with opportunities to come together, share their silenced voices, identify their issues, develop strategies, and act upon them in addressing the problems identified (Dhungel, 2017).

International Frameworks and Agreements

The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons (2000) defines human trafficking as follows:

> the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or of giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation or the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs. (p. 2)

The UN established Trafficking in Persons 2000 (TIP) as a collaborative tool for national and international communities to address the issue of trafficking in collaboration with (Kaye & Winterdyk, 2012; Kempadoo et al., 2005). Countries that sign and ratify it are required to commit to preventing trafficking and protecting its many victims (US Department of State, 2020). The United States has developed anti-trafficking measurements focusing on the 4Ps, prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership will be discussed below. Nepal has complied with the TIP by engaging in the 4Ps since becoming a signatory country.

Neoliberalism/Neoconservatism

Neoliberalism and neoconservatism are tied to capitalism and individualism; thus, their primary focus is to support a robust economy that benefits a few individuals. Western society and much of the global community are deeply entrenched in an economy based almost entirely on monetary incentives and policies, free trade, globalization, the retrenchment of social policies, and the privatization and deregulation of the economic sector (McKenzie & Wharf, 2016). Society is committed to individual freedoms and, believing that each individual is responsible for his or her wellbeing (McKenzie & Wharf, 2016), focuses on the private rather than the public sector (Strier, 2019). Furthermore, governmental funding formulas are based on corporate models of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, and there is a push for the social sector to embrace this model (Macías, 2015).

Although the word 'neoliberalism' was first coined in the 1930s as a term of leverage to argue against fascist and other oppressive authoritarian systemic culture, the term became more prevalent in dominant discourses from the 1970s to 1990s (Harvey, 2007; Raschke, 2019). The spread of neoliberal policy, discourse, and ideology has influenced political thoughts and created a global hegemonic culture (Prendergast et al., 2017). This change has led to the weakening of democracy, the growth of inequality, insecurity and austerity, the extension of free markets globally, and an overall emphasis on individualism (Eagleton-Pierce, 2016; Prendergast et al., 2017).

Under neoliberal ideology, the wealthy have grown wealthier and the poor poorer. The middle class has tended to suffer from economic impoverishment. These results have included deteriorating wages, the privilege and security of labour unions, erosion of the delivery of government and government-funded services, and the removal and restriction of social and welfare benefits (Prendergast et al., 2017). Neoliberalism promotes competition. It rewards those

who are already wealthy and punishing those who are not. As neoliberalism continues to push individualism, privatization, inequality, and the withdrawal of social services, many of the most vulnerable are left without safety nets. Those who work to uphold fundamental human rights are left fighting against a tyrannical system that eliminates any attempt at dismantling it (Prendergast et al., 2017).

Neoliberalism is usually accompanied by neoconservatism, which aids neoliberalism by enforcing policies that force people into the labour market and, once there, in low-paid and insecure jobs (Prendergast et al., 2017). The term "neoliberalism" was used to spread American values to other developing nations and suppress anti-American views by the systematic use of state power. It also promoted national interests and democracy globally by building solid coalitions with international allies and opposing foreign enemies (Prendergast et al., 2017). Universally, neoliberalism involves and seeks to enforce acceptance of elitism, a pro-capitalist hegemonic ideology, hierarchy, and acceptance of one's place in that hierarchy. Neo-conservatism is a complex political ideology and, while it is sometimes conflated with neoliberalism, it is an entity of its own with distinct views on foreign policy, free trade markets, social welfare, and so forth (Prendergast et al., 2017).

Unpacking Human Trafficking from Neoliberal and Neoconservative Ideas

With the increase in free-market policies across the globe that accompanied the spread of neoliberalism in the late 20th century, there has been much economic growth; at the same time, however, global competition has also increased (Peksen et al., 2017), making it hard for some countries to succeed. In addition, with the focus primarily on economic growth, there has been little regard for human rights or addressing the needs of those most negatively impacted by these policies (Peksen et al., 2017). Furthermore, while the effects of globalism do boost economic development, they also exacerbate the violation of labour rights

and trafficking of various forms, including forced child labour (Aduhene-Kwarteng, 2018; Peksen et al., 2017). As neoliberal globalization aims to produce cheap goods, provide poor services, and reduce labour costs, it violates human beings' social and political rights (Aduhene-Kwarteng, 2018; Peksen et al., 2017).

Some see human trafficking as modern-day slavery. Smith and Kangaspunta (2012) recognized that "slavery has a long history throughout the world. Its occurrence is recorded as early as 539 BC and was not completely illegalized until the late 1900s" (p. 20). Slavery is seen as an ancient form of human rights violation, and the antislavery movement emerged to promote human rights (Choi-Fitzpatrick, 2017). In fact, "the early United Nations was formed due to human rights against slavery" (Smith & Kangaspunta, 2012, p. 21). The trafficking of women and children is a complex interconnected issue resulting from an oppressive culture and society (Locke, 2010).

The following section will discuss how neoliberal and neoconservative ideas contribute to the trafficking of women and children. The particular factors involved are (1) unequal distribution of power; (2) patriarchal norms and men's privilege; (3) socio-economic divisions; (4) armed conflict; and (5) the centralization of industries in Kathmandu.

Unequal Distribution of Power

The trafficking of girls and children dates traces its roots to the reign of the tyrannical Rana dynasty from 1846 to 1951 (Lama & Bory, 2002; McNeill, 2008) when indigenous girls from the Himalayas and Middle Hill regions were brought to Kathmandu hoping to serve as housemaids to the Nepali queen. Instead, they were presented to the kings of India as gifts. Their role was to entertain the Ranas and their guests with dance and song (Asman, 2009; Richardson, Poudel & Laurie, 2009). This practice became a tradition that continued even after the Rana regime collapsed in 1950 (Lama & Bory, 2002). Some Ranas fled to Indian cities such as Kolkata and Mumbai, taking along their

housemaids in some cases, selling them to brothels in India. Once sold, they had no choice but to continue working there to survive (Asman, 2009). They then started to recruit other women and children from their places of origin in Nepal (National Human Rights Commission of Nepal, 2008), promising them that employment opportunities in India would improve the quality of their lives (Asman, 2009; Subedi, 2009).

The 1950 Treaty signed by Nepal and India established an open border and contributed to a rise in girl trafficking (Human Rights Watch as cited in Richardson, Poudel & Laurie, 2009). The number of trafficked women and children to India continued to increase during the Panchayat regime from 1960 to 1989. Indeed, "a criminal network was developed from villages to brothels, from elite to the local police and to the national political elite" (Human Rights Watch/Asia as cited in Subedi, 2009, p. 12). The fact that no trafficking law was adopted until 1984 and the regime's misuse of power increased the number of girls trafficked (Chaulagai, 2009; Subedi, 2009).

The 1980s and 1990s saw widespread rural-urban migration as carpet factories opened in cities and workers were in demand. Once away from home, many girls and children were transported further across the border and were urged to work in the Indian sex industry. After the Government of Nepal prohibited bonded labour in domestic work, agriculture and brick kilns in 2002, former bonded labourer servants got involved in commercial sexual activities since they had no home or other resources to support their families (Frederick, Basnyat, & Aguettant, 2010). Bonded labourers were of two categories: poor farmers and migrants forced into servitude when they could not pay back loans from landlords or moneylenders. The children of such borrowers were born into bondage. Chaulagai (2009) argued that this traditional practice has continued to make children vulnerable to sex trafficking despite the new democratic system of governance.

Patriarchal Norms and Men's Privilege

Kaye and Winterdyk (2012) claimed that gender inequalities are perpetuated by patriarchal values, while Hackman (2000) pointed out that the power imbalances of a patriarchal society undermine women's power and personal freedom. Patriarchal values negate gender equality, leaving women powerless and making them vulnerable to the scheming of human traffickers (Kaye & Winterdyk, 2012). Nepali culture and society are inherently rooted in patriarchal values and male-dominated paradigms that intensify gender inequality and gender-based violence, leaving girls and women more vulnerable to sex trafficking (Buet et al., 2012; Dhungel, 2017; McNeill, 2008; Sharma, 2014). Given these facts, it is essential to critically analyze patriarchal values and norms in Nepal and their impacts on the lives of girls and women.

Gender inequality is manifested in multiple forms in Nepal: women work more at home, have lower literacy rates, and numerous laws are discriminatory (Banskota & Manchanda, 2001). A number of studies report that multiple gender-based discriminatory practices are embedded in the Nepalese culture and society and that these increase the vulnerability of women to trafficking. These include but are not limited to gender roles, family decisions, socio-cultural values, and economic activities, as well as the nature of the labour force, education system, and public participation (Chaulagai, 2009; Hennink & Simkhada, 2008; Locke, 2010; Parker, 2011; Sharma, 2014; Subedi, 2009). For example, women are largely confined to domestic duties, and their role defines their status as daughters, wives, and mothers, not individuals. Men are still considered to be family "breadwinners" (Sharma, 2014). In addition, women are discouraged from challenging their position in society and are taught to be submissive (McNeill, 2008).

Moreover, women's access to knowledge, skills, resources, opportunities, and power remains low (Hennink & Simkhada, 2008; McNeill, 2008). According

to the 2011census, only 23 percent of adult women are literate compared to 64 percent of men (National Census Report, 2012), and while the latest figures in the Nepal Human Development Report (2020) are improved, the "female literacy rate …[of] 60.5 percent compared to the male literacy rate of 76.2 percent" (p.37), they still reflect "disparities in education." In fact, the "male literacy rate is higher than the female rate in all seven provinces" (p. 37).

Pratisksha (2018) found that human traffickers mainly target "low-caste," uneducated, and socio-economically marginalized groups and women. Locke (2010) reported that 70.7 percent of trafficked survivors were either illiterate or barely literate. Chaulagai (2009) suggested that the amount of household work expected of daughters, including helping their mothers with daily household chores and looking after their younger siblings, prevents them from capitalizing on educational opportunities in schools. The traditional belief that sending girls to school means "wasted limited income of the family "still dominates (Sharma, 2014, p. 13), as does the belief that "women and girls are . . . second-class citizens" (Sharma, 2014, p. 41).

Steeped in patriarchal ideology, son preference is widespread in Nepal. Pratiksha (2018) argued that "women and girls are regarded inferior in every stage of life. … [and] [t]he practice of rejoicing at the birth of a son and lamenting at the birth of a daughter is quite common in most … communities" (p. 18). Many believe that sons alone provide economical insurance for parents and that since daughters will care for their husbands' families after they marry, there is no reason to invest much in their futures. In addition, Nepali laws have historically discriminated against women in property and inheritance rights. For example, the parental property automatically goes to the male offspring after a parent's death. Aengst (2001) explained the result of such constrictions: "the lack of economic alternatives for girls and ingrained cultural beliefs regarding gender roles makes young girls particularly vulnerable to trafficking" (p. 5). Chaulagai (2009)

claimed gender inequality is "institutionalized" in the patriarchal society and exacerbates women's vulnerability to trafficking. There is a strong consensus in the literature that the trafficking of women is inextricably linked to their low socio-economic status in Nepal (Cameron & Newman, 2008; Chaulagai, 2009; Hennink & Shimkhada, 2004; Parker, 2011; Sharma, 2014).

Socio-Economic Divisions

The unequal distribution of resources and the imbalance of power in Nepal resulted in the emergence of caste and class systems, reinforcing long-term social injustice and violating human rights. Only a few groups, those close to the royal family or working for the Government of Nepal, were entitled to own specific categories of land, a discriminatory policy creating a significant gap between the haves and haves not. The situation of the marginalized Badi community in Southwest Nepal demonstrates the relationship between low socio-economic status and high rates of trafficking for sexual exploitation (McNeill, 2008, Subedi, 2009). To elaborate, Badi parents commonly pimp their daughters, who have no choice but to acquiesce (McNeill, 2008). The Badi community is seen as a prostitute caste who was supposed to entertain elite groups and religious leaders (Richardson et al., 2009). Similarly, as a last resort, until 2001, when bonded labour was banned, members of the Tharu community worked in conditions of bondage for landowners or sold their children as slaves (*kamaiya*) to repay their debts. Badi girls and women continue to be involved in the sex trade despite its more subtle forms and manifestations and are therefore highly vulnerable to trafficking, and in fact, "the localized traditional prostitution practice can be transformed into criminalized cross-border trafficking" (Richardson et al., 2009, p. 261).

Armed Conflict

Migration from Nepal to different cities in India is an age-old phenomenon, but it got a new stimulus due to the ten-year armed conflict between

Maoist forces and the government. The period from 1996 to 2006 saw the large-scale displacement of hundreds of thousands of Nepalese women and children (Cameron & Newman, 2008; Singh, Sharma, Poudel & Jimba, 2007; Sharma, 2014). Some women migrants who had left their homes searching for security and a better quality of life were sold either to Indian brothels or to other countries, including Dubai and Qatar, to work in hotels and factories (McNeill, 2008; Subedi, 2009).

The armed conflict impacted people's lives in a variety of ways. On the one hand, people living in rural areas, particularly youths, ethnic minorities, and lower-caste groups, experienced death threats if they refused to join the rebels or provide them with food and shelter. On the other hand, state security suspected that they were insurgents or allies of the Maoists and consequently interrogated, tortured, and sometimes even killed people. Feeling trapped, rural people began to migrate to Kathmandu and cities in India in search of a better quality of life. However, they discovered that renting a home or a room in a new city was almost impossible due to their being from Maoist areas (Cameron & Newman, 2008; Singh, Sharma, Poudel & Jimba, 2007). The "[i]nternal displacement due to conflict and persecution, which currently affects almost forty million people, (UNHCR, 2014) creates significant risk factors for trafficking" (Gallagher, 2015, p.16). Multi-layered discrimination created a situation that increased women IDPs' vulnerability to trafficking.

Centralized Industries in Kathmandu

Because of neoliberalism and capitalism, opportunities and economic development were centralized and advanced in Kathmandu in a way that enabled dominant groups with power and privilege to take advantage of, endanger, and exploit marginalized socio-economic communities. The rapid growth of the carpet and other industries in Kathmandu during the early 1990s attracted marginalized socio-economic people to migrate to Kathmandu to better their lives (Subedi,

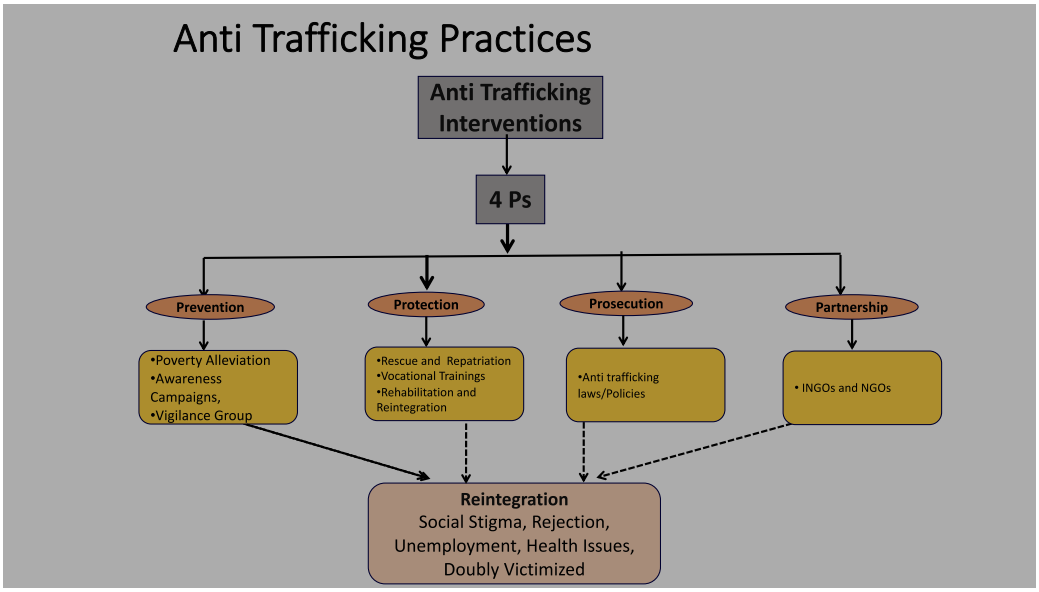
2009). Arguably, on the one hand, trafficking in persons was primarily influenced by the flourishing of the carpet business in Kathmandu, and on the other hand, when the carpet business declined due to the Maoist insurgency, those women and children who were primarily dependent on the industry for their survival became hopeless and suffered extreme poverty. As a last resort, the women and children left the country in search of new jobs. The decline of the carpet industry in the 1990s seems to have pushed more vulnerable women and children into sex and/or labour trafficking.

Anti-Human Trafficking Measures (4Ps)

Having adopted the United Nations' 4Ps anti-trafficking interventions, the Government of Nepal has developed a wide range of strategies to address the issue of human trafficking in Nepal. These are shown in Figure 1 below and discussed in the subsequent section.

Figure 1

Nepal's 4Ps Anti-trafficking Interventions



Although all 4 Ps overlap and are equally important, Nepal's government focuses on preventive activities. In partnership with local organizations working

on the anti-trafficking movement, the government has initiated various preventive programs in Nepal, mainly in at-risk communities and at the Nepal-India border. The "Village Surveillance Committees" and the "Border Monitoring Groups" as preventive measures that watch out for the security of women or leave their communities and who cross borders were formed (Banjade et al., 2018; Bohl, 2010; Chen & Marcovici, 2003; Sharma, 2014; Subedi, 2009).

The government has introduced and developed resources and materials related to trafficking to raise awareness about trafficking in the school system. It plans to incorporate the material into the social studies textbooks of grades eight and nine. It developed and piloted a course module on human trafficking for grade seven in 100 schools in 10 districts (Government of Nepal, 2013). However, most of the work being done appears to be driven by the numerous NGOs operating in the country. These include Biswas Nepal, Shakti Samuha, Maiti Nepal, Shanti Foundation, Change Nepal and Women Rehabilitation Center; all of them have developed anti-trafficking strategies. For example, Biswas Nepal has implemented prevention strategies such as providing non-formal and formal education to women, introducing income-generating activities, and raising awareness through lobbying and advocacy campaigns to prevent trafficking in the entertainment sector. Biswas Nepal staff also visit and monitor restaurants and interact with owners, the police, trade union members, and officials (Banjade et al., 2018).

As shown in Figure 1, the protection approach comprises rescue, repatriation, rehabilitation, reintegration, and referral to services (Banjade et al., 2018). Many NGOs have played a significant role in rescue and repatriation. In FY 2016/17, a total of "1065 trafficking victims were rescued by five NGOs: KI Nepal (466), Maiti Nepal (310), Biswas Nepal (276), Shakti Samuha (9), Chhori (3) and Kumudini (1)" (Banjade et al., 2018, p. 124). The rehabilitation agencies provide a wide range of services, including food, shelter, skills development

training, mental and physical health services and legal aid services (Banjade et al., 2018). There are two forms of reintegration; the first focuses simply on reunifying victims with their families, while the second centers on providing skill development training and seed funding for earning a livelihood according to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) (Banjade et al., 2018).

The Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act 2007 was promulgated. It provides funding for the services such as rehabilitation and reintegration and compensation of survivors (not less than half of the fine levied as punishment on offenders). The government has tried to be more progressive in its prosecution of traffickers (McNeill, 2008). However, the Act 2007 sets the maximum punishment for those involved in trafficking as between 5 and 20 years of imprisonment on the nature of the crime (Acharya, 2008). According to the US Department of State, there are "slightly stricter penalties rang[ing] from 10 to 20 years imprisonment and a fine" for involvement with sex trafficking (2019, p. 341). While punishments are severe, the procedures of the Nepali justice system are so lengthy that they have enabled some traffickers to leave the country or change their identities and therefore escape prosecution (Dhungel, 2017). Also, many trafficked women opt not to file a case against traffickers to avoid stigmatization (Adhikari, 2014; McNeill, 2008). Overall, In January 2018, the Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens led a "review of the 2012-2022 anti-trafficking national action plans [which] revealed the government had implemented less than one-third of the plan's prosecution and capacity-building objectives" (United States Department of State, 2019, p. 343).

Discussion and Moving Forward

Some anti-trafficking interventions, primarily preventive and protective measures, focus on meeting the immediate need of both women and children to prevent trafficking and support the reintegration of trafficking survivors. Dhungana (2010) suggested that anti-trafficking programs that focus on

encouraging women not to leave their villages may hinder them from achieving their needs and aspirations. Meenakshi Ganguly argued on social media in 2021 that a new proposal by the Department of Immigration will further infringe upon women's rights (https://www.hrw.org/about/people/meenakshi-ganguly). According to this proposal, "any Nepali woman under the age of 40 will soon need the permission of her family and her local government ward office—among other requirements—before she can travel abroad alone" (2021, para. 2).

Counselling and vocational training, which fall under protective measures, seem to be pre-designed and generalized under a one-size-fits-all model and do not adequately address survivors' needs (Adhikari, 2011; Bohl, 2010; Chaulagai, 2009; Sharma, 2014). Interventions do not provide opportunities for professional training, including in health care and hotel management, and vocational training, such as sewing and knitting, leaving many survivors dissatisfied. Adhikari (2011) argued that "it is important for NGOs to strengthen their strategies to facilitate in economically empowering and independent living of the trafficked women returnees" (p. 83).

The government has failed to incorporate these measures into its work due to the poor enforcement of existing laws, the lack of comprehensive anti-trafficking strategies, and various manifestations of corruption (Chaulagai, 2009; McNeill, 2008; Sharma, 2014). The intimidation and harassment survivors experience during court proceedings, for example, discourage survivors from filing a case against perpetrators (Adhikari, 2011; Chaulagai, 2009; McNeill, 2008). The procedures for and approaches to the legal response to trafficking are also problematic. The victim is then cross-examined to determine whether or not she was trafficked (Dhungel, 2017), treating her as if she were a criminal and making them vulnerable to double victimization (Chaulagai, 2009; Dhungel, 2017). To avoid such humiliation, many victims refuse to file a case. According to the 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report, the "government [of Nepal] did not have

SOPs for victim identification and referral to services" (US Department of State, p. 342). "Official complicity in trafficking offences remained a serious problem, both direct complicity as well as negligence, and the government did not report significant efforts to address it, even after a 2017 parliamentary call to take action" (US Department of State, 2019, p. 341). When the US Department of State (2019) ranked 187 countries based on the extent of government action to combat trafficking, with Tier 3 as the lowest ranking (US Department of State, 2020), it ranked Nepal as a Tier 2 country because of its noncompliance with the minimum standards of TIP protocol.

There is little doubt that neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies benefit the wealthy and privileged to the detriment of everyone else. These ideologies are quietly accepted, however, because gender inequality in Nepal is perceived to be non-existent. Social practices like gender discrimination are seen as the result of individual shortcomings, and victims are blamed. For this reason, the continuation and rise of neoliberalism and neoconservatism threaten social justice advocacy (Boucher, 2017) and endanger the field of social work, which is a newly emerging field in Nepal. In turning their attention to anti-trafficking discourses, social workers need to advocate for legal and policy changes regarding human trafficking measures and develop interventions to bring about community change and social justice for oppressed and marginalized women and children. If they do not critically understand that the root issues of human trafficking lie in neoliberal and neoconservative ideas or are not aware of current anti-trafficking measures, including the 4 Ps, and their implications for curbing human trafficking from a human right lens, however, social workers may do more harm than good. Therefore, social workers must engage with women and girls, listen to their stories, and build anti-trafficking interventions in collaboration with communities to avoid harm. Service providers need to create community-led organizational responses to human trafficking using a pragmatic approach, including poverty

alleviation and focusing on community economic development, a protection approach focusing on trauma-informed care, and a prosecution approach focusing on advocacy for legal and policy change.

Women and child trafficking pose several challenges to the mental and psychological well-being of its survivors. To move forward, a wide range of professionals and communities, including researchers from interdisciplinary teams, activists, policymakers, practitioners, health professionals, civil society and communities, need to unite to carry out a community-based participatory study focusing on the mental health and psychological wellbeing of women and children in general and on the COVID-19-impacted society in particular. During times of hardship, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, this team of stakeholders must continue combating the inequities experienced because of the pandemic and the injustice and inequality that lie beneath the surface. Overall, social work practice and education should include action-based initiatives. For this reason, community-based participatory studies and action studies are needed. Since neoliberalism will continue to push against social welfare, social safety nets and the social work profession itself, it is critically important that social workers continue to be involved in community organizing and anti-trafficking discourses and their voices and experience to support the vulnerable and marginalized, the victims of the neoliberal regime.

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Development and Public Health in the Himalaya: Reflections on Healing in Contemporary Nepal: A Book Review

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Development and Public Health in the Himalaya: Reflections on Healing in Contemporary Nepal: A Book Review

Book title: Development and Public Health in the Himalaya: Reflections on healing in contemporary Nepal
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Engaging with a range of public health issues, based on his rigorous ethnographic study, Ian Harper in this book deals with important social and political transitions in Nepal via the lens of medicine and health development. The book sheds light on how local realities align with or resist against and are complicated by globalized meta-narratives and practices of health and development. The author presents this scenario through four interrelated facets of case studies of traditional healers, micronutrient initiatives in the form of Vitamin A programme and pharmaceuticalization of mental health and tuberculosis control program/infectious disease and a hospital run by Christian missionary as health programme intervention in Palpa district in Western Nepal. The author examines these facets in the ideological, historical, political, and economic context of mission-based development work. The book has been of interest for both the academics and the practitioners who want to expand their horizon on developmental interface in the health sector in Nepal.

The book contains eight different chapters plus a concluding section. It begins with the introduction of the issues dealt in the monograph followed by description of Palpa, where bulk of the field study was conducted, and the healing

traditions were practiced in the area. The third chapter, 'The view from the clinic' primarily portrays the perspectives of the health workers and how health is linked with state, development and progress. The fourth chapter, 'Caught in the middle', focuses on the author's ethnographic portrayal of shamans and mediums, and their patients and families and examines the way various healers associated with medicine and the interactions among themselves. The fifth chapter elaborately describes the history of mission hospital in Palpa vis-à-vis its role in introducing biomedicine, a completely different healing paradigm, in the area. One critical aspect of the mission hospital, the psychiatric services, has been dealt in the chapter six. On the other hand, chapter seven has come up with a critical viewpoint on the logic and implementation of capsular promise of vitamin A programme. He critically observes the implementation of protocols and the control of tuberculosis in the eighth chapter. In the conclusion the author reiterates "the main themes of the monograph, and ask(s) questions about putting health-related knowledge to work for political and programmatic ends".

The book clearly reflects the author's critical intellectual capability having two decades of experience in Nepal, not only as a physician and public health expert but also as a medical anthropologist. Reflexive encounter of medical and public health journey which paved his way in the domain of medical anthropology has been portrayed through his lucid ethnographic presentations in the book. The way the ranges of healers - shamans, mediums, herbalists, ayurvedic practitioners, and medically trained workforce - are introduced in it provides crucial ethnographic materials for the rest of the interpretive journey of the book. Amidst the declining interest of medical anthropologists towards plural healing practices, this book has markedly pointed out the need of reorienting attention towards this almost forgotten and overshadowed arena.

The author has beautifully portrayed the scenario in which some development actors such as Action Aid, MS (MellemfolkeligtSamvirke) Nepal,

Oxfam Nepal, and SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation) Nepal have rendered the traditional healers and their healing efficacies. Indigenous healing practices, which have been labeled as the alternative healing practices as elsewhere in the biomedical rationale dominated contemporary world, have been shown as incompetent ones and thus creating the apparatus for developmental intervention in the sphere of public health. This kind of reductionist biological approach introduced in the locality through biomedicine has colonized people's understanding of themselves, their body and their health. Nevertheless, creation of vacuum in healing ideas and practices is not a swift task rather it takes a long time. In this construed vacuum, he shows how clinical Christianity steps in to manipulate the consciousness of local people for religious conversion through the altruistically projected healing space and procedures. Analyzing the clinical Christianity practiced in and around Palpa district, he remarkably portrays how mission enterprise was enacted in the area through hegemonic biomedical project.

The book critically presents the prevailing complexities of plural healing and the introduction of biomedicine in the study area. In doing so, the author also shows how the mission hospital has become the authoritative medium of familiarizing biomedical knowledge, especially antibiotics and diagnostic capabilities. Along with the far and wide spread of success stories of healing, mission hospital's fame also accelerated the repute of foreign doctors, often depicting them as having magical healing power. It also points to the scenario in which how missionaries exploited the human susceptibility to illness as a space to bring in the Lord to heal the patients and preach them Christianity. It evidently shows how the missionaries tactically mystified new healing ideas as the divine power during the moment of failure of native way of understanding and manipulated their consciousness towards the alteration of the God and faith rather than that of the healing pathways.

What I found as one of the interesting topics dealt in the book is how the hospital became the public sphere where people from distinct cultural background, illness/disease condition, and healing alignment were able to interact with each other. Moreover, Harper argues that it also opened up the possibility of multiple interpretations of alternative therapies even in a biomedical space. In doing so, he has clearly shown the link between the broader social and cultural changes towards the modernity vis-à-vis the transitions taking place in understanding, adopting, and practicing healing.

The book also minutely deals with the psychiatric services provided through the mission hospital in the study area. As the author has pointed out, it specifically focuses on diagnostic category of depression. The role of health education has been explored here in promoting medically sanctioned treatments amidst the prevailing stigma especially in reckoning it as a problematic health situation. The societal transition is also reflected through this kind of reluctance to regard this as health condition rather than conventional wisdom of linking it with the disordered relation with broader socio-cultural realm. The greater availability of psychotropic drugs and expansion of psychiatric services in the area has contributed not only to sideline conventional ontologies of interpreting socio-cultural phenomena, rather, the practice of regarding it as health problem and taking medicine as remedy to get rid of it also reinforced the biomedicalization of social and cultural problems in the study area.

I found that the author is very much critical about the National Vitamin A Programme of the Government of Nepal which began in 1993 with financial and technical support from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and a little support from UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. Based on his observation of Vitamin A capsule distribution programme, he brings the reader closer to the field site when the health personnel used multiple means to make people go for Vitamin-A. He had critically examined the nexus dominated

by the small constellation of scientists and some international development organizations. Based on almost entirely upon the biomedical logic, their publications and knowledge constructions had provided foundation in construing the apparatus showing the urgent need of what these people and organizations regard as cost-effective and humanitarian intervention of 'micronutrient initiative', a form of capsular rationality, to get rid of nutritional deficiency. For the author, the most important implication of this is that these representations directed the formation of health-related policy which crucially influences on developmental efforts and processes in Nepal.

The author is completely dissatisfied with the way the government of Nepal and international developmental agencies looked for the capsular solution of the nutritional deficiency. In the emerging context of increasing medicine consumption and expanding private pharmacies, he worries that this programme nourishes further into the process of the commodification and magical attraction towards syrups and tonics. He points out some instances in which in case of lack of compliance to take Viatamin A, coercive forms of state surveillance measures are also taken. Eventually, he affirms that this programme has contributed in promoting biomedical hegemony and pharmaceuticalisation in relation to health.

He regards TB control programme in Nepal as a very hierarchical, vertical, and disciplinary form of medical intervention implemented through Directly Observed Therapy, Short Course' (DOTS) as a magic bullet approach of WHO which rolled out in the country from the mid-1990s. Harper had critically analyzed how the standardized recording and reporting for national and international organizations to monitor the control of the disease at the population level has impacted on the understanding and practices locally. Through the assessment of DOTS programme, he explicitly deals with two broad issues: how global governance works in practice for this essentially vertical public health programme and what could be the implications for those people suffering from

tuberculosis but may not fit with the order of the standardized programmatic apparatus. On top of suffering of these people undergoing through the entanglement in their treatment because of so called standard protocol he also points to the possibility of rise in multi-drug resistance variants of tuberculosis.

The author affirms that these kinds of health developmental programmes have also added in creating the emergence of 'biological citizenship' as families and individuals internalize modern, medical understandings of the body, health and illness. Production of 'sanitary citizens' through the mobilization of coercive measures of state surveillance and 'therapeutic citizens' through the distribution of pharmaceutical products have become common phenomena through the implementation of this kind of health governmentality. Above all, the author's sharp critique is there for the highly vertical, technocratic intervention as euphemized capsular solution for what he regards as resulting from structural problem and inequality.

A remarkable strength of this book lies in lucid way of presentation of ethnographic details that make the reader feel as if he/she is not turning the pages rather moving around the places and people described in the book. It is mainly based on primary information with rich ethnographic details. Claims, arguments and counter arguments presented in the book are adequately supported by these microscopic ethnographic details that are elevated to the level of interpretation linking them with Foucauldian discourse analysis to interrogate the implications of public health development programmes. The adopted ethnographic methods are quite compatible in collating information which provides flesh and blood for the skeleton of this ethnography. I nevertheless assume that 'overdoing with Foucault' may complicate the non-anthropologists to get into it.

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