

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

2015

THE ANNUAL KATHMANDU CONFERENCE ON

NEPAL & THE HIMALAYA



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Britain-Nepal
Academic Council



The papers contained in this volume were presented at the **Annual Kathmandu Conference on Nepal and the Himalaya**, 22 to 24 July, 2015, organised by **Social Science Baha**, the **Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies**, **Britain-Nepal Academic Council**, and **Centre for Himalayan Studies - CNRS**.

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Interactions between Customary Institutions and Local Elections in Dolpo

TASHI TSERING GHALE

Introduction

This paper analyses the interactions between local elections and customary Dolpo institutions, such as *chikyab* (regional leader) and *gā-pu* (senior headman), which inevitably involves contestations. To understand the contestation of local elections, the politics of social exclusion and gender in terms of women's experiences will be analysed while historicising both the conflicts and the development of local elections in the Dolpo community in the context of Maoist insurgency, the Janajati movement, and contemporary local and national partisan politics. As the plans for the local elections have yet to be drawn, members of the Dolpo community, mainly in the Chharka and Mukot VDCs, are imagining things very differently. This paper will describe the ways that different people of Dolpo imagine and position themselves in terms of both past and future elections and their experiences based on data collected through interviews. In this context, it will be easier to analyse how the transformation of Dolpo's political relations with the central state has changed since the 1950s due to the interaction, and the challenges to legitimacy that the traditional local governance system of Dolpo has faced over time.

For this, the researcher carried out his fieldwork in two VDCs: Chharka and Mukot during the months of May-June in 2014. From each VDC, two wards were selected. Compared to other wards, in these wards from both the Chharka and Mukot VDCs, the variance regarding age, gender, and the people's experiences was also found to be pertinent for the research. These four wards also have some of their customary governance institutions still functioning while others are extinct. This paper will also show the changing influence of customary institutions and the state's penetration into the lives of the Dolpo people.

Theoretical Background

Contested Election

Elections have always remained spaces of contestation, both literally and figuratively, though it is pivotal for the proper functioning of democracy. There are several scholars who demonstrate the inevitable tensions it entails (Baral 1993; Dahl 1971, 1998; Baral 2005; Hua 2007; Lawoti 2007; Gellner and Hachhethu 2008; Collier 2009). According to Dahl (1971), there is still something missing in practice to implement an ideal democracy. Some of them are: gross inequalities, challenge of a monarch, proper representatives of the whole people, and the lack of favourable conditions to foster the process of democratisation with few people having an idea about democratic ideas and beliefs. There are 'ups and downs, resistance movements, rebellions, civil wars, revolutions' whenever one has tried to implement democratic practices' (Dahl 2007, 25). Moreover, in a representative democracy, bargaining between political and bureaucratic elites takes place. In addition, no constitution can preserve democracy if the conditions are highly unfavourable.

One of the unfavourable conditions for Dahl (1971) is also the vertically stratified society of a country. This could even invite cultural conflicts and may even lead to the rise of authoritarian regimes to suppress these conflicts and differences. Moreover, consociational democracy, the grand coalition of political leaders after the proportional representational (PR) elections, might also fail in culturally diverse societies. Therefore, he also believes that democracy is not deficit-free. Similarly, Hua (2007) critiques elections as rational affairs. He argues that in reality elections should be more realistically seen as cultural events in which candidates' campaigns are shaped, consciously or unconsciously, to appeal to the cultural understanding and practices of the electorate, whether in First World democracies or in the various governmental systems present in Asia. This also shows how culture interacts with the electoral processes and how elections can be a cultural event, intermingled with the everyday lives of the locals.

Customary Governance Institutions

According to the functionalist approach, 'informal' institutions could be understood as 'socially shared rules, usually unwritten, that are created, communicated, and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels' (Helmke and Levitsky 2003, 9) [emphasis added]. They also specifically examining the emergence of customary institutions, and argue that

these institutions emerge independently and predate formal institutional structures. With the formation of formal institutional structures, these indigenous or 'traditional' institutions, such as customary laws and kinship-based norms coexist and interact with formal rules created by new electoral and market institutions [emphasis added]. These customary institutions are also changing with the tradition hereditary leadership no longer in practice, and instead its members become representatives of the local population and interact with the local government (IDEA 2006).

While examining the traditional institutions of Jharkhand, India, Shah (2008) states that they promote the idea of sacral polity and the values of egalitarianism through its democratic values. She also maintains that these institutions could be seen as democratic institutions although the state's agencies have tried to force its legitimacy and affects these local institutions. Bhattachan (2008) argues that customary governance institutions comprise an ideal way of assisting in the fulfilment of the everyday community needs. Nonetheless, while customary institutions are involved in traditional activities, mainly dispute resolution and organising the religious life of the village, they also play other roles, such as social welfare by helping destitute or widowed women and by informal resource mobilisation (IDEA 2006).

From a functionalist approach, according to Blocher (2012), the customary governance system is the institution which operates as a social order but outside the state; customary and social norms are a rule enforced by informal social sanctions without a constitution or judges. Blocher focuses on how custom arises and how it is enforced, which could be analogous to the legislative and executive functions of a formal government. The legislative elements of customary governance could be associated with how customary laws or norms govern individual action and the executive elements could be associated with punishing violators using those customary institutions. Therefore, the creation of rules and the enforcement of those rules are the functions of customary systems. This recognition of the branches of customary governance helps identify and evaluate the mechanisms and the functions by which custom is formulated, vis-a-vis 'tribal' chiefs, and the writer shows that the institutional dimension of customary governance is significant.

Interactions between Customary and Bureaucratic Institutions

There has also been an interaction between customary governance and formal institutions, one institutionalised by the introduction of democracy vis-a-vis elections. Though the entire process of democracy-building and

governance reform has assumed that those institutions not rooted in liberal democratic principles are bad for governance, recent studies have incorporated an analysis of the significance and importance of customary governance institutions (Helmke and Levitsky 2003, 2006; IDEA 2006, 2012). This has made a significant contribution to broaden the understanding of democratic institutions.

Since the 1990s a decade of institutionalism in comparative politics, according to Helmke and Levitsky (2006), research on democratic institutions has also shifted towards the study of informal institutions. This pattern of study also broadened the scope of institutional analysis and provided a better understanding of the incentives driving political behaviour. Therefore, in the case of conceptualising or theorising these 'informal' institutions, Helmke and Levitsky, while failing to reflect upon the universal tendencies of democratic principles, whether these are suitable to the other part of a globe, have proposed four patterns of formal-informal institutional interaction: complementary, accommodating, competing, and substitutive. In addition, they also explore why and how 'informal' institutions emerge and their sources as well as the reasons for stability and change. The relationship between the two has been complementary as well as synergistic. The customary governance tends to exercise control over the local governmental process by controlling the village candidate in the village or district-level political structures, and often leadership is also shared, which also makes the interaction between the two livelier. However, this level of interaction is also affecting the customary governance institutions as they decline with the villagers increasing willingness to participate in the local governmental process and sometimes blocking the customary governance influences in the electoral outcomes.

According to Helmke and Levitsky, formal democratic institutions coexist with informal rules throughout Latin America, and these rules also shape the work and outcome of democratic institutions by reinforcing, subverting, constraining, and even superseding the formal rules, procedures, and organisations. Meanwhile, highlighting the importance of informal rules propagated by informal institutions, such as customary institutions, these institutions could also provide some positive benefits in terms of representation; these institutions may also increase democratic accountability by allowing formal democratic institutions, including their officials, to be responsive and responsible towards other agencies. These informal institutions' norms of accommodation, power-sharing and coalition-building could prevent problems associated with multiparty presidentialism and parliamentarism.

Furthermore, according to Blocher (2012), segregating the two branches of customary governance gives a detailed view regarding how customs do or should interact with the formal legal system and offers a range of possibilities for the interaction between the two systems. He also shows the possibility of courts using customs to enforce the law and vice versa. Besides this, there are also relationships and interactions between electoral politics and informal institutions (Helmke and Levitske 2006). Informal campaign finances via informal institutions, including personal and family networks in the area, where initiation from government areas are prohibited helps strengthen informal campaign finance contracts.

Also, entrenched norms, such as clientelism of informal institutions, assist in attending to local needs when those are not fulfilled by electoral institutions. The shared norms of supporting a previous politicians' past performance have also enhanced both accountability and the overall performance of democratic institutions. However, there is an inherent and inevitable antagonism between the traditional and modern forms of governance. Examining the situation in Sierra Leone, Fanthorpe (2005) highlights how customary governance and socially associated chiefdom administration are affected by decentralisation programmes initiated by the government and supported by international donors. The government accuses these 'traditional' structures as being oppressive and the root cause of the recent civil war and tried to destroy the culture to establish new forms of social organisation.

The Politics of Social Exclusion

Social exclusion, according to Biklen (1973), can be defined as the 'practice of casting out the disabled and the different into the woods' (Biklen 1973, 226), which leads to dehumanisation and willingly segregates a significant number of its members for inadequate services. While analysing the cases of mentally disabled children in Pennsylvania, Biklen shows how the state has orchestrated this exclusion of all so-called 'retarded' children by denying educational opportunities and segregating them from their peers. Similarly, Bossert et al (2007) show the relationship between deprivation and social exclusion. The authors show that all individuals and groups are either 'wholly or partly prevented from participating in their society and in various aspects of cultural and community life' while terming them social misfits (Bossert et al 2007, 777). They clearly think that while there would not be absolute social exclusion, the dynamic concept should be understood in terms of its relativity and deprivation, i.e. a person's feeling of deprivation in society arising out of comparing one's situation with

those who are better off where 'the magnitude of a relative deprivation is the extent of the difference between the desired situation and that of the person desiring it' (Bossert et al 2007, 778).

In addition, social exclusion, according to them, comprises social, economic, and political aspects, and therefore, includes the lack of capacity to attain valuable assets in society. According to some scholars, the concept of social exclusion helps understand 'the causes and consequences of exclusion and deprivation' (Nevile 2007, 249), which in turn can assist in policy interventions. Sen (2000) believes that social exclusion is also a relational concept. Sen shows that under the capability approach, social exclusion is also related with exclusion from other social relations, i.e. an inability to participate in the life of the community, or capability poverty and other deprivation which further limits one's living opportunities. 'Social exclusion can thus, be constitutively a part of capability deprivation as well as instrumentally a cause of diverse capability features' (Sen 2000, 5).

Therefore, the deprivation of capability and the experience of poverty are important in properly understanding social exclusion, which, one could argue, can also lead to both active, such as through policies of the government and passive exclusion (and unfavourable inclusion). In these terms, Sen argues that globalisation and unfavourable inclusion should not be omitted from an analysis of social exclusion. In addition, Sen shows how persistent unemployment and worklessness propagate and continue social exclusion. Some of the effects of unemployment are the loss of current output, skill loss and long-run damages, loss of freedom and social exclusion, psychological harm and misery, ill-health and mortality, loss of human relations, motivational loss and future work, gender and racial inequality, and weakening of social values. While showing the relevancy of Sen's understanding and emphasising the role of relational issues between social exclusion and deprivation, Nevile stresses that this could further propagate another deprivation and will lead to poverty and social exclusion. This can also add value to the analyses of poverty.

Similarly, according to Power (2000), social exclusion is about 'the inability of our society to keep all groups and individuals within reach of what we expect as a society. It is about the tendency to push vulnerable and difficult individuals into the least popular places, furthest away from our common aspirations' (Power 2000, 47). Furthermore, Jung (2008) discusses how the cultures of Mexico were clearly neglected by the centralised state of Mexico, and argues that modern states have enlarged the boundaries of

exclusion 'while transforming markers as class, gender, race, and culture into political identities'¹ (Jung 2008, 21).

Gender: Women's Experiences

There are several scholars who validate women's experiences while framing them theoretically. West and Zimmerman (1987) discuss the routinisation and dramatisation of gender roles and gender displays. These aspects of gender are imbibed and act upon individual behaviour, and their interactions, both in the private and public spheres. The authors also remain critical of how these reciprocal domestic and institutional arenas propagate the domination and difference among the gender identities. According to Jain (1990), the idea and findings derived from women's experiences bring women into the planning process and integrate women into development, while at the same time making them visible. While exploring development theory and practices, these strategies fail to meet women's interests and the basic needs of food, health, and education. Only from women's experiences, according to Jain, are women able to construct specific plans, underlined by 'theory and policy with institutions and method which would not only bring the kind of economy and hopefully the polity that would safeguard women's interests' (Jain 1990, 1454).

Additionally, Mills (1998) critiques the American white male-centric, masculine academia and modern white feminists, primarily dominated by high-class white men and white women, which not only puts men's stories at the forefront but also treats every woman as the same. Moreover, it explores gender dynamics and power hierarchies in imperialism and colonialism, for instance, men and women's roles and their position during the colonial era and also 'Third World' women. Subsequently, post-colonial feminists emphasise the necessity of woman and their position, including herself and subjectivity, which puts women at the centre and focuses on their different and respective histories, cultures, power, resistance, strategies, and agency, and they are valued and studied. It deals with the study of subaltern, non-elite colonial 'voiceless' subjects and prioritises their characteristics of heterogeneity, negating any tendency of homogenisation.

The study of women according to their history, political and cultural context, including the study of the subaltern, is emphasised by post-colonial feminists. Broke and True (2010) explore how this power in the

1 '[M]any people cannot make claims in a liberal society, and their inability to do so does not rest in fact that they are not free, technically speaking, but rather in a fact that they are denied, or for other reasons cannot locate identity. What liberals imagine as pre-political, and automatic, is in fact deeply political' (Jung 2008, 70).

public sphere can be minimised through research, both at the theoretical and pragmatic levels. They believe that the feminist methodology, with its reflexivity, could diminish the power of traditional epistemology. To some extent, feminist methodology can be linked with ethics of care as both validate women's experiences and their cooperation, and how reflexivity operates at the conceptual and the practical level is further explored.

The National Context

In the context of Nepal, democratic practice in terms of governance does not seem to have fared well. According to Baral (1993), problems of governance in Nepal originate from a centralised power structure, lack of ideology, crisis of confidences, nebulous concept of national identity, and external pulls and pressures. In this centralised power structure, Baral highlights the retained and continued 'Hindu orthodoxy' with the ethos of centralisation, enforced by the rulers while hampering autonomous decision-making structures at the lower level. Baral also asserts that the traditional militarisation used by the rulers and a rigid caste structure employed by the Nepali power elite has hindered the process of institutionalisation.

In addition, Baral argues that no political party is serious about linking the gap between the precepts and practice of democracy, including electrocracy. None of them are pursuing the declared democratic agenda of increasing the accommodation of marginalised and underprivileged groups into the system. This paradoxical situation has arisen due to the perpetuation of power and status via the mechanism of elections. The entire process is used merely for petty party and individual interests, to capture power and unaccounted resources. The result has been that the democracy, including electrocracy, has not benefited the locals of the country as people lose faith in parties, leaders, and systems. At the same time, intellectual circles on Kathmandu paid less attention to the harsh response of the security forces, as evident in the cases of the operation of Kilo Sierra II and numerous reports of extra-judicial murder, such as Dorambha killings or the killing of innocent people by the police during the Maoist conflict (Sharma 2013).

IN addition, since the enactment of Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA) in 1999, local elections (with direct budgets from the central level) were promoted as an alternative to local democratic practices, which has also been problematic. According to Bhattarai (2012), though the grant volume to local bodies has been increasing with a single VDC receiving a maximum grant of Rs 4.6 million and the lowest of Rs. 1.5 million, distributed on the basis of population, per capita cost, and geography with 60 per cent, 30

per cent and 10 per cent weightage respectively, and due to 'competitive populism' among the political parties in power, the local bodies' institutional capacity to properly plan, implement, and monitor the funds is lacking. Political parties have overlooked the legal instrument, such as the LSGA, and institutions such as the local bodies to establish a representative governance mechanism while negating people's participation and further marginalising the disadvantaged groups from their right to participate and decide local development affairs.

This action of the political parties has also led to violence in Nepal. Some scholars portray the violence as a historical phenomenon, which also shows the contestation evident in Nepali social and the political spheres. Bhattachan (2002) argues that since the fifties, in the name of decentralisation the process of centralisation has been intensified. Under the *Panchayat* system, Nepal's governance was dominated by Caste-Hindu Hill Elite (CHHE), instituting a Hindu nation with one national language (Nepali) and one national identity. Educational, cultural, and legal tactics were heavily used to create *Asali* Hindustan in various districts orchestrating active exclusion of various communities of Nepal (Gellner, Pfaff-Czarnecka, and Whelpton 2008; Lawoti 2007). These policies in turn have served as a foundation for the contentious politics. According to Lawoti (2007), with the institutionalisation of multiparty democracy and a more open society compared to the *Panchayat* era, the contentious activities, from identity and gender movements, protests, and strikes to the Maoist insurgency, increased due to the discrimination faced by the various ethnic and caste groups. Lawoti highlights several problems in the democracy of Nepal. First, exclusion of more than two-thirds of the population, including indigenous nationalities (Adivasi Janajati), Dalits (traditional 'untouchables'), and Madhesis (plains people) from the sphere of governance in Nepal; the CHHE, that comprises only 31 per cent of the population dominate the state, politics, economy and society. The economic stagnation of the rural regions during the 1970s and the higher level of poverty in the rural regions than in urban areas, including land ownership patterns, also raised inequality.

According to Dahal (2005), there are several challenges and problems associated with the previous parliamentary and two local elections that might become acute in the future. Some of those problems are: the failure to conduct free and fair elections by the 'partial' and inefficient Election Commission of Nepal (ECN) amidst the political parties' predisposition to want to contest elections only when they are in power; the regular violation of codes of conduct and election irregularities; activity of political parties and the ill-regulated election observers; poor basis for the identification

of voters and technical and intentional mistakes in the voters' list; the placement of voting booths on private land, faraway places, and gardens that violating electoral norms, laws and rules, and the non-scientific and impractical basis for selection of voting booths; improper management of existing booths; reducing polling stations in the western hill districts, which creates problems for the old, the sick, and the handicapped; poor management of manpower with the basis of selection of chief registration officers (CROs), registration officers (ROs), and polling officers (POs) from among the civil servants that are non-scientific and polarised affecting the electoral results as they are found involved in various election crimes and malpractices; misuse of the power, resources, and authority in getting more votes by the government and the observation of the polls by national and international agencies, only where the roads or highways reach. Furthermore, Khanal (2005) believes that governance in Nepal is also in crisis mainly due to politicians' narrow and personal interests to cling to power leading to neglect of elections and governance, and the district officials controlled by central political parties. This has also made the people remain sceptical about any elections in the country.

Kumar (2005) also explores the proximate causes of conflict in Nepal and finds electoral politics as one of the many reasons. Kumar stresses that electoral politics only reconfirmed elitism but failed to fulfil popular aspirations engendered by the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990. He argues that a shrinking resource base and denial of social opportunities are some of the reasons for conflict and violence. Subsequently, this has also led to the distortion of democratic performance in Nepal. Moreover, also to make elections peaceful and historic, violence in terms of the brutal public fights, booth-capturing, and bribery and intimidation of the voters was promoted by the state.

This normalisation, however, neglects how local elections and the local representatives affect indigenous governance systems. Therefore, authoritarianism is integrated into the state-society linkage through constrained participation of several communities by forcing them to support the electoral agenda of populists. Nonetheless, this discourse should also be shifted towards how local populations collaborated and resisted these changes. Yet, according to Kumar (2008), obstacles to local leadership arise from the parties themselves. Major political parties never treat local leaders as capable and always treat them as pawns in their local bodies. These local leaders are not fairly represented while disadvantaged groups are kept at bay. Women's representation, both in local bodies and political positions is extremely low. Therefore, a centralised and traditional

authoritarian state continues to disregard the local bodies and their ability to lead and develop the country.

There are few who have explored how democracy, mainly elections, has functioned and how it has affected the customary laws of indigenous peoples. According to Hachethhu (2008), the state went through *Panchali* to *Panchayat* and *Panchayat* to Village Development Committee (VDC). Until 1990, the state had its own agents, village chiefs, such as, *mukhiya*, *jimmawal*, *talukdar* and so on. Most of them were elites from high-caste families, holding large amounts of land and being knowledgeable of the state practices. In this process, as the state went through the modernisation process, local institutions, in this case, the customary laws of indigenous peoples, were undermined by the state while permeating the government's rule into society and expanded the role and reach of modernisation in several areas, such as administration, law, roads, electricity, communication, education, health. Subsequently, after 1990, according to Hachethhu, locally based non-state organisations came forward and demanded space and legitimacy as local actors, alongside elected representatives, in local governance. This also led to identity politics, with an upsurge in ethnic movements by the marginalised groups as well as by women and Dalits among others.

Overall, 'gendered' Nepali society is still patriarchal, influenced mostly by male chauvinism, high-caste-bureaucratized-men, resisting change and ideal democracy. 'Nepali lingual' women have been facilitated by the present structure of Nepaliness, and the nationalist imagination was and is problematic, which disapproves of diversity. However, one of the main problems has been that women are now divided between the various political parties, NGOs, and mothers' groups, and they are failing to come together as a cohesive group for the common issue of women's emancipation against patriarchy and the unequal representation of women in the public sphere. Past injustices and inequalities existed in Nepal simply on the basis of categories, like race, ethnicity, and caste, purity and pollution, and were further forcibly materialised and politicised in the 1854 *Muluki Ain*, (country code). Women were never treated the same as men, and identity of the 'plural' peoples were further overshadowed by xenophobic nationalism, Hinduisation and Sanskritisation. Since the 1990s, justice in terms of identity politics, along with bringing women's subjectivity to the centre became a necessity to cancel and compensate for the historical injustices and inequalities. Furthermore, the recent Rautahat incident (against Dalits), resistance as demonstrated by Kamlari and Kamaiyas and Badi women in the capital, substantiates the fact that these categories are here to stay. Simultaneously, these categories are indeed assisting and validating

women's cultures, histories, and subjectivities and the experiences of these women are directing the country towards progress and a better future.

Dolpo

Administrative development at the local level also facilitated violence and exclusion. Talking about the administrative development in Dolpa, Bauer (2004) asserts that new institutional and political centres in the 1960s and 1970s were filled by centrally-appointed elected representatives, district chiefs, and agents of the state to collect taxes directly. This development divided Dolpo into four village *panchayats*: Do Tarap, Saldang, Tinje, and Chharka. Dunai became the headquarters of Dolpa and also for the Dolpo peoples. Local elections were introduced, and violence and exclusion increased.

The customary institutions are directed by a headman within their hereditary governed communities in Dolpo. They were controlled historically by the *chikyab* system, *gowa* system, and now by the *gapu* system. *Chikyab* mainly came into force during the annual village assembly meeting in Do-Tarap. Before that annual meeting, *gapu* came into force in every *yul* (village) where *gapu* (headmen) deal with community affairs, such as setting the dates of agricultural activities (e.g. ploughing and harvesting), travel to and from seasonal pastures, and annual trading expeditions. The positions of tax collectors (*tralpön*) were filled on a rotational basis by members of the assembly. The secretary-treasurer (*trungyik*) came from the spare ranks of the literate; one man usually held this job for a long period. This secretary was responsible for village correspondence, revenue records, and keeping property rights. Their roles and influence also changed according to different contexts and in one of the research sites, *chikyab* and *gowa* have already become extinct.

New leadership and a parallel government within the community have also emerged. Traditional leadership and customary laws are not recognised by village and district officials. These officials simply used to laugh when they heard something about the local traditional laws. Bauer (2002) illustrates how local democratic practices, especially elections held in Nangkhong Valley, where one of the wards in the Saldang village development committee (VDC) of Upper Dolpa threatened violence, a ubiquitous feature in contemporary local elections in Nepal. According to Bauer, the struggle starts with the proliferation of funds by government representatives, allocated for the VDCs but where the leaders within the communities need to provide all the allocated budgets to the community. Therefore, the interaction between customary institutions led by *gapu*

and the local election must be explored and analysed to understand the democratic process in Dolpo.

Within the Chharka and Mukot VDCs, two wards each were selected for the research. These two wards from the former were Yarle and Punkag, and from the latter, Shyang and Pingding wards were chosen. In-depth and semi-structured interviews were conducted, mainly with the respective *gapu* and former elected ward and village chairpersons and members from the 1997 local elections. Most of the candidates of 1992 local elections could not be traced due to several factors, such as some of the village's ward chairpersons have already passed away, some members were not easily accessible, and some had migrated to other places (such as the Mustang and Manang districts). Therefore, the available interviewees were selected via snowball sampling. This research analysed the interaction, social exclusion, and women's experiences, according to the proposed theoretical framework mentioned above.

The Local Context

Chharka VDC

Interaction: Coexistence, Voting, and Participation

In the case of Yarle (ward no. 8) in the Chharka VDC, the local election of 1997 was facilitated with the help of customary institutions led by the *gapu*. Most of the locals participated in the local election on voting day and some did not due to their inability to understand the political process of voting. The *gapu* in Yarle seems to have emerged due to the socio-cultural and political process. The *gapu* became essential in each and every activity of the community. According to Gyaltzen Gurung, son of a previous *gapu*, 'Without a *gapu*, it would be hard to imagine life in Yarle or any other place in Dolpo'. For them, the *gapu* is a pivotal figure in conducting religious pujas, assigning responsibilities to every household, and also during the harvesting season. It has been nearly a decade since a *gapu* has also been facilitating the *yarsagunbu* (Yar = summer, Tsa = grass, gyun = winter, bu = worm) season. During the *yarsagunbu* season, Mingmar, another local, recalls going to a gathering invited by a person assigned by the *gapu*, where a proper date to pick *yarsagunbu* is fixed and also the fee to be charged to both local inhabitants and outsiders. However, lately proceedings relating to *yarsagunbu* is done with the help of a newly emerged leader, Gyamtso, who is the present leader of three villages: Punkag (ward no. 6), Yarle (ward no. 7), and Thimner (ward no. 8). It has nearly been a decade since Gyamtso was elected as a new leader, and before Gyamtso, the leader was

Gyaltsen. Looking at the trend of this leadership pattern, it appears that the individual who possesses a rich livelihood becomes the leader. For example, Gyaltsen used to possess more than 100 yaks and was also a grandson of former chief of Chharka, Tsultrim Dorje. Now, besides a rich livelihood, the present leader Gyamtso also has a good rapport with adjacent villages of Chharka due to his wife, who he married from that area. Nonetheless, in the present context, due to various reasons, the institution of *gapu* is slowly becoming ineffective.

While lamenting about this gradual loss of power and status in Yarle, Dorje, the present *gapu* of the Yarle ward of Chharka, is slowly being sidelined to only cultural and religious management, where he is seated on a chair at a higher-ranking order than others. He thinks that the *gapu* has only become a symbolic figure to represent the community. He clearly feels that these degradations of power and status are due to the emergence of a parallel leadership funded by the district development center (DDC), currently held by Gyamtso. In this dwindling loss of social capital, one can clearly see the impact of the district government officials in Dunai, mainly the CDO. The interviews with the CDO, the local Development officer, and VDC secretaries confirm that they are unaware about the functioning of the *gapu*. After the commercialisation of *yarsagunbu* in the region, the district government and the national park extracted a certain amount from the locals who picked the *yarsa* from certain areas of a park. Recalling *yarsagunbu* becoming commercialised and the locals' pursuit of transparency and accountability, Gyamtso said that the receipts book was made and printed in Kathmandu and then later used in three villages during the *yarsagunbu* season. This receipt was also made in order to show the district officials when they come and visit the place. Most of the time, a security official visits and monitors the area. This also shows that there has been an interaction between the local and district institutions.

Moreover, according to Dorje Gurung, the present *gapu*, when both the 1992 and 1997 local elections were held, the former *gapu* had called everyone to the usual gathering place and discussed the pros and cons of the local election. During the last 1997 local election, there was no parallel leadership. Although he also participated in the voting process, Dorje clearly stated that he favours his customary institution over the institutions established by the government. However, the locals took part in the local election once they were assured about its limited benefits. They were not informed about its demerits to the community and also the promotion of individualism within the community. Therefore, the customary governance of the *gapu* during that election, according to Dorje, neither violated nor produced different

outcomes in regard to the formal rules, and coexisted and increased the efficiency of the formal institutions, those established at the central and local levels including ward level. However, the customary institutions were affected due to *gapu*'s tokenistic representation in the ward-level election. This may also show the significance of the complementary role of informal institutions in strengthening the local government system, mainly initiated by the state, like that of the local election and the ward-level government system implemented by the state affecting the *gapu* system.

In Punkag, the *gapu* has been appointed only from three families. The *gapu* can only use and direct the locals to follow his orders for some activities. He does not have the luxury to go to adjacent villages and ask them to follow his orders as they have their own *gapu*. These three families are, according to the locals, the original settlers of Punkag, and improved their social status and prestige by using the vast range of land under their control. The wives of these households mainly wear a *thikpu* (literally iron helmet), a head gear made of precious stones and silver. There is not much difference in the activities led and coordinated by the *gapu* in either of the wards: Yarle and Punkag. The emergence of parallel leadership has also affected the *gapu* of Punkag. According to the present *gapu*, Kunsang, he has to give his orders only after consulting with Gyamtso. When a conflict or fight occurred in the village earlier, it used to be settled by the *gapu*, but now, these are settled after consulting with Gyamtso. Meanwhile, if there are people who are not satisfied with what Gyamtso has decided, they still go to the *gapu* to attain their objectives. This also shows how the decisive position of a *gapu* is changing within the community. Besides talking about how the local election was assisted by the customary institutions in Punkag, Kunsang clearly remembers organising a gathering of locals in Punkag and asking about the local population's opinion on who they think should be elected in the ward-level election. This consultation, according to him, helped him win the ward-level election with two of his brothers, Tsepten Ghale and Norbhu Ghale, both being elected as members.

Currently, the perspective of the local election is now strongly influenced by the last Constituent Assembly election. There are two views, one supporting local elections and another that does not want local election to take place. Those who support local elections believe that the new form of government and people would benefit the remote community more. Some are also supporting it for the sake of attaining some monetary gains from the district. There are a few people, however, who disagree with the effectiveness of local election in light of incidents during the CA-II election. During the CA-II election, held in November 2013, according to some locals,

more than 200 people came to the place with sticks in their hands. Some of them also carried pistols, according to the people here, which terrified them. These outsiders threatened the villagers to vote for their leader and later forced them to take an oath of on a religious text by putting their hands upon their religious text. One who resisted this move was severely beaten. All of these people even stayed in the locals' houses without giving them a penny in return for what they ate. Terrified by this incident, some locals are not optimistic about the next local election and clearly feel that insecurity and corruption would continue and the wrong person would again win the election and there would still be no development activities in the ward.

Social Exclusion

People of the Yarle and Punkag wards in the Chharka VDC, although they have always participated in the local elections, clearly feel that their concerns have not been addressed and they have continuously been deprived of basic opportunities such as education, technology, and communications. In the both local elections a local, Tashi Chewang Gurung was elected and re-elected as the VDC chairperson but the locals feel that he failed to bring any incentives and developmental programmes to the Yarle and Punkag wards. The locals of Yarle and Punkag also complain about the previous decisions of district leaders to keep the wards, 1-5 in Chharka and the remaining 4 wards in the Bharong villages, such as: Thimner, Yarle, Punkag and Dhukot. The locals of Yarle and Punkag, therefore, stated that the unequal number of wards also help the people of Chharka (five wards) to re-elect their own people for the whole VDC, whose decisions also affect the remaining wards. Until today, both the VSAT landline and Hello Mobile Network telecommunication tower was installed and the VDC building are all in Chharka village. Also, because of this lack of telecommunications, the remaining four wards still have no telecommunication service. If the people from these remaining wards have to call their friends or family, who are in Kathmandu or other parts of Nepal, they have to walk to Chharka village. It takes at-least a day to reach Chharka village from the other wards. Furthermore, the locals of Yarle and Punkag treat the locals of Dhukot as 'impure'² while keeping their socio-cultural relationships with Dhukot

2 The locals of Dhukot are known as Dhuwa, and in Chharka VDC, Dhuwa are restricted from marrying others except among themselves. If they are found marrying other people from the Chharka VDC, the recently emerged parallel leadership punishes the partner. In a recent incident, a woman from Yarle married a man from Dhukot, the two newly-weds were fined and for many months were also restricted from entering other villages except Dhukot.

minimal. It has also affected their unity or their desire to elect someone from their own community in any local elections.

For the next local elections (when it happens in the near future), there are also some candidates who are eager to win, but even those who are proposing themselves as candidates are from Chharka (the five wards). Most of the people from Yarle and Punkag have not yet decided upon whether they want their own people to run as a candidate or they would support the candidate from Chharka. Although they have been continuously facing discrimination from the people of Chharka, the people of Yarle and Punkag are still unaware about any alternatives that could benefit their community. This will have serious ramifications on their lack of representation.

When asked about their lack of representation, locals clearly mentioned that the place lacks a proper education facility and as is evident from the (lack of) schools in the area. Even if there is one school established by the government, district officials and some people of the community have failed to call and ask the designated government teachers to stay in the region, for at least four months when the weather is favourable. Although according to locals, these government assigned teachers have been taking their monthly salaries without teaching students from the region a single thing, these teachers, in turn, have time and again blamed the locals for not sending their children to schools. According to many locals, the teachers rarely visit a school and even if someone comes, he/she only stays for a week. These factors have also led to social exclusion and deprived the villagers from a proper education, and in turn, this has led to a lack of representation of these people in government jobs. In addition, there are several stories where a government headmaster has forged the signature of the local school's chairperson to withdraw money from the bank. Although the district officials were quick to point out the illiteracy of the locals as the single reason which keeps these locals away from securing any government jobs, the district officials also continue to remain silent about the unavailability of teachers and about the continuous corruption and mismanagement headed by the school headmaster.

The government's complicity in this form of active exclusion also extends to the local socio-cultural aspects. The government has not yet recognised the customary institutions, their decisions, and their position within the community. Upon interviewing the district officials, CDO, LDO and a security official, two aspects regarding their knowledge and attitude about the local customary institutions are reflected. First, these officials did not know about the *gapu* system and how it works in the community and what

it means to the locals. Second, these officials favour their own functioning and management principles over the local's customary institutions. They clearly reject the customary institutions, while arguing that it would be hard to recognise every 'difference' and diversity by the district officials looking after a whole district or the largest district of the country, Dolpa. Although there might be government indifference to customary institutions, such as the *gapu*, it would be clearly better for the region if the officials and their policies could adhere to the customary governance.

Women's Experiences

There are not many differences in how women have experienced local elections in the study sites in the Bharong villages: Yarle and Punkag. Most of the women still operate under the control of men and men hold the key to running a household. There is a clear distinction of men as breadwinners and women as housewives. This division also keeps women in the villages away from any significant practices, such as going to Mustang and Tibet for trade, carrying heavy loads, going to higher altitudes to the sources of rivers for irrigation, and going to higher altitude passes to pick and collect *yarsagunbu*. Women are still not represented in the *gapu* system in both villages, and a son is still favoured over a daughter. This also makes the society patriarchal and leads to the control of women under the invisible hand of men. Therefore, during the last local elections, most of the women interviewed stated that they just followed their husbands' orders and went to vote for their husbands' choices.

In addition, when asked about the provision of a woman as a ward member, they clearly said that women can hardly make any differences in front of men as men would be more insistent and are always looking to control women. They also showed their dissatisfaction over the number of seats allocated in the VDC to female members. Likewise, there has not been a single woman elected either as a village chairperson or a ward chairperson. There is only the provision of a single seat available for women, which amounts to a mere tokenistic practice. When asked whether women are allowed to be a *gapu* or not, they said until now there has not been a single woman *gapu* from those three families (mentioned above), and there are slim chance of a woman becoming a *gapu* in the future. Only in the case of unmarried women in the prominent three families, would a woman be allowed to be a *gapu*. In the case of a younger or infant son, a woman can act but only on her son's behalf, and she has to consult with the men from the other two families if any decision is to be made. Therefore, these experiences of women who were not allowed to express their agency

in the election, who are unhappy over the provision of a single seat as a ward member, and who have to remain under the authority of men if she needs to exercise any decision as a *gapu*, contributes to understanding the gender inequality in the region.

Mukot VDC

Interaction: Coexistence, Voting and Participation

During the 1997 election, there were political parties active in the Mukot VDC, such as the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and other independent candidates. The main positions, such as village chairperson of the VDC and also some of the ward's chairpersons were affiliated to the UML. Nonetheless, none of the district leaders of the political parties came to the region before or after the election. Most of the locals, therefore, remained unaware of their party's district leaders. Likewise, none of the locals knew about the political party's stance, but rather worked and voted for a *gapu* and also for certain development incentives. For example, the *gapu* of Pingding, ward no. 4, Tsering Namgyal Gurung, was elected as a ward chairperson in the 1997 local election, and according to Pemba Gurung, they voted for him as he was a *gapu* and most of the people believed in his abilities to be decisive. During his reign as a ward member of the VDC, according to him, with cooperation from a ward chairperson, they succeeded in making a plan to construct a small trail from Kakkot to their village, Pingding. Besides this, they also succeeded in establishing a school in their village, but it is now without any teachers.

According to Karma Gurung, although the initial promises of local election and by the elected leaders were seductive to the community, they failed to continuously work for the community. This might be attributed to the fact that these ward chairpersons would not have as much authority compared to the VDC chairperson. Yet, according to Gurung, they would not have any option other than to vote for an individual who would run for the post of VDC chairperson in the next local election. They were also forced to vote for a candidate proposed by the same village, Kakkot, in the last CA election. Some were even threatened with death if they would not comply with the orders of certain people of Kakkot, individuals from Kakkot, who also possess a rich economy facilitated by their control over better timber compared to other places in Mukot, were elected village chairpersons of the Mukot VDC in the last two local elections.

During these local elections, the customary institutions, including the

gapu of Pingding, were consulted but the *gapu* of the Pingding ward was forced to be only a ward member. He was never encouraged to stand and nominate himself for the post of ward chairperson. Similar phenomenon was also seen in the Shyang ward. The locals were also forced to vote for a candidate from Kakkot, rejecting any nomination from the Shyang ward, and competition was diluted in this region during local elections. Therefore, most of the locals who participated and were voted during the local election with the approval of the local institutions and; therefore, the customary institutions also coexisted with the formal rules while benefiting the elites within the community.

The anticipations of future local elections are influenced by the previous CA-II election. Two days before the last CA-II Election Day in Shyaang, a district politician's agent from Kakkot went to Pingding and Shyaang and threatened them with death if they did not follow and vote for the chosen candidate. During the Election, according to some locals, violent incidents also occurred as those agents kicked and beat some locals from Sheri (ward no. 5). They clearly did not want to vote for the person whom the agents wanted them to, yet these locals had no option. They feel betrayed even after nearly two years since the last election by the person who won from Dolpa. They also complained that his agents promised development in terms of installing telecommunications in Shyaang. Therefore, locals both in Shyaang and Pingding are also not optimistic about the next local election as they feel that they have to again live and vote in fear.

Social Exclusion

The continuous indifference of district and security officials to the customary institutions of Pingding and Shyaang is also evident. Although the influence of customary institutions in Pingding is also dwindling, the relationship of older people who had links with the previous *gapu* is still intact. Locals of Pingding continue to flock to his house for his guidance, and suggestions are still followed to resolve any conflict within the community. Pemba of Pingding clearly feels that culture and tradition of his community will always remain significant and what his father, a previous *gapu*, did for the community will always be remembered. Pemba, meanwhile, also maintains that local elections should happen, but should be inclusive and serve the interests of the people and must punish the corrupt people. Also, because of this, according to Pemba, locals continuously failed to accrue any benefits from the state's resources. In addition, Pemba believes that the continuous exclusion of locals from government services is also due to the lack of proper education and the failure to understand and converse in

the 'Nepali' language. This will continue until and unless the government is serious about providing quality education in the remote regions. This also shows that the case of social exclusion is interrelated with many factors, such as education and language besides the policies directly related to social inclusion. He further mentions that certain people from Kakkot (wards 1, 2, 3 and 4) have never benefited due to the people of Pingding. In his own words, 'They kept the government services and annual village money [budget] to themselves [Pingding], while distributing cash handouts to their own people. Why did that happen? Because there are some clever people in Kakkot and we are unable to raise our voices against those injustices even if we know who the culprits are.'

This also shows the feeling of helplessness of the locals of Pingding, who continuously feel powerless and lack any means to change their community. Adding to that, Karma confirms that the individual who was elected earlier in the Mukot VDC as the village chairperson brought all the benefits to their own places and wards, such as Kakkot, which is the reason why, according to him, the locals of other wards, such as Mu, Tehrang, Sheri, and Pingding have no telecommunication services and schools. Additionally, both the communication services, such as landline telephones and Hello the Nepal Mobile Network Tower being installed in Kakkot, even a partially foreign-funded school have been established at Kakkot. Although the village ward's main gathering place is Shyaang, most of the services proposed for Shyaang have been taken to Kakkot, and this, according to the locals, is due to some influential people of Kakkot, who continuously want to keep the other wards underdeveloped. While the customary institutions are barely functional or influential, the youth of Pingding are involved in conflict resolution and irrigation management, and the youth follow and respect the traditions passed on by the elders.

The youth feel that the elders are the pillars of the traditions of their community and without the elders and their experience they feel that the community will never thrive. Likewise, in the case of Shyaang, though no *gapu* was elected in the local election, those were elected, according to Jamyang, only benefited themselves rather than the community. Jamyang asserts that the village chairperson became corrupt and rarely looked after the interests of people. When asked why Choekyab Gurung did not develop the community, Jamyang asserted that Gurung was never one of their own as his father and family shifted to Kakkot from Tibet only during the 1960s. Despite this, some locals feel that local election is the only way to develop Shyaang and the next election should happen soon. In addition, one interviewee confirmed that he wants to stand as a candidate for the

VDC chairperson in the next local election because he wants to have all the money possible from the district so that he can develop the community as much as he can. He also wants to overlook Kakkot if he gets elected this time around. When asked about how he would take both his community's traditions and the government's principle of the rule of law together, he thinks that by benefiting his community, he can achieve both. This also highlights that social exclusion or active exclusion can be orchestrated vis-à-vis local elections.

Women's Experiences

In both the wards in the Mukot VDC, women's experiences are shaped by their socio-cultural conditions. As women are continuously seen as a bad omens from birth, and most of their time is spent with domestic chores. According to them, they were never really seen as one who could contribute in the welfare of a community and what they did and do inside the house is never really appreciated by their husbands. What they say in a village gathering is also ignored by other people and they are continuously neglected from any public participation. According to respondents, they are not satisfied with just a single seat as a ward member in the local election. They feel that it is only a tokenistic representation and feel that this will further divide them. Although they do not really feel that they can consider a decision without their partner's assistance, they feel that some of the men are also afraid to speak out against any injustices. In the last CA-II election, according to Lhamu of Shyaang, she clearly felt she fought and raised her voice against the goons who came as agents and beat the locals. Lhamu intervened and stopped those agents from further beating locals as she shouted at those agents. When asked what prompted her to take that step, Lhamu said that not every woman is weak in her society and she could not watch injustices even as none of the men protested against the goons. She further added that those who have sticks and money will always win the elections, but the government should work towards the preservation of local traditions and culture. Likewise, their own traditions continue to neglect women's presence in society. Both patriarchal society and governmental district institutions continue to halt the progress and empowerment of women.

Conclusion

The research paper examined the interaction, social exclusion, and women's experiences evident between customary institutions and local electoral processes, both in the historical and contemporary contexts of Dolpo. Not only is the local democratisation processes, including the institutions

established by the state, flawed but those institutions and processes could be enhanced with the incorporation of customary governance institutions and its agents. In addition, this paper also showed the significance of the Dolpo people's understanding and experiences of local elections and their future perspectives regarding local elections. There is also the assumption that the next local election will be influenced by the last CA-II election and not every local wants local elections. It also helped raise the oppressed voices of local people including women.

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Water Catchments and Water Users

Negotiations and Other Mechanisms for Water Security in the Urbanising Himalaya

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Introduction

Himalayan ecosystems provide a wide range of goods and services to people living in the rural and urban region (MA 2005; Rasul et al 2011; Grêt-Regamey et al 2012). A study shows that more than half of the global population depends on fresh water that is captured, stored, and purified in the Himalayan regions (Grêt-Regamey et al 2012). However, the ability of these ecosystems to continue providing the same quality and quantity of ecosystem services (ESs) has been degraded considerably at the local and global levels (MA 2005; Wunder et al 2008). Many places experience water scarcity, creating water stress among the different users, which ultimately results in disputes. Sometimes, even when there is enough water, there is not enough capacity to make it available to different users (Wetlands International 2010). In some places, competition over scarce resources, differences in the perceptions and attitudes towards water use, and increasing interdependence among users creates conflict between users (Upreti 1999). Many Himalayan towns are under severe strain from environmental degradation, the lack of basic services, including water supply systems because of the continuous population growth and urbanisation and according to the projections, water stress will grow in the future (IWMI 2000).

The sustainable management of water resources has become a challenge for donors, the government and civil society organisations in the towns of Nepal (Upreti 1999). At the same time, sustainable water resource management is an indicator of advancement for societies (Dore et al 2010). A Community-led incentive based mechanism has been found effective for the sustainable management of water resources (Joshi et al 2014). The

specificities of community and their socio-political contexts influence the extent and types of demands around water and, in a large part, the engagement and intervention possibilities around management strategies. The types of sources (such as springs, streams, and rivers), the relative altitude of the source to the town, combined with communities' relative standing and bargaining power and their distance from the source all have an impact on water supply and demand, and the eventual arrangements that are negotiated within these landscapes. The presence of local institutions, as well as forest and water tenures, and the existing legal/political framework of water management also exert their own influence over the nature and effectiveness of such arrangements.

Studies show that making a meaningful community-led incentive mechanism and negotiation play a crucial role for fair, effective, and sustainable water supply and management (Dore et al 2010). In the Himalayan towns of Nepal and India, there are several exemplary cases of negotiation for incentive-based water security with upstream communities for the provision of water supply systems to the downstream community (Bhatta et al 2014). The central question of this paper is how negotiation can play a crucial role in creating a conducive environment for reciprocal watershed agreements in two specific towns (downstream community) in Dhulikhel (Nepal) and Palampur (Himachal Pradesh, India) for water security. The paper compares the dynamics of these negotiated settlements, and their current status, and the ways in which they are perceived and understood by both upstream and downstream stakeholders. Both towns have entered into formal long-term agreements for the supply of water with identified upstream communities, which have been supported and facilitated by external agents and donor projects. Despite their different histories and trajectories, these case studies provide complementary insights into the political economy of water in the Himalayan region.

Methodology

This paper is a product of a current 'Political Economy of Water Security, Ecosystem Services and Livelihoods in the Western Himalaya'¹ research project. Within this research project, the water management approach in small urbanising town is investigated through six case studies in Nepal

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and India. For this paper, we consider empirical evidence from two case study sites in Dhulikhel (Nepal) and Palampur (Himachal Pradesh, India). Key informant interviews (KII), focus group discussions, participant observation through a number of field visits, and a review of archival documents, including a media content review, are the four key methods of data collection that the authors employed for this study. For the study, four focus group discussions and 43 semi-structured interviews were conducted. The semi-structured interviews included key informant interviews with water negotiator(s), water users' committee (WUC) representatives, government officials, and different political party leaders, including the former mayor and deputy mayor of the town(s), civil society organisations, and non-governmental organisations. Furthermore, interviews also were conducted with local community members, including the beneficiaries of the water negotiation in both the upstream and downstream communities.

Context of the Study Towns with Drinking Water Systems

Dhulikhel is a small municipality and the district headquarters of the Kavrepalanchok district in the Central Development Region, about 32 km east of Kathmandu, Nepal. With panoramic views of the Himalayan peaks, it is a tourist destination, as well as an emerging centre for education and health with Kathmandu University and a community-managed Dhulikhel hospital. The town has a population of about 16,263 living in 3291 households (CBS 2012). Situated at 1550 metres, the urban area is only about 4 per cent, and it is dominated by rural and agricultural land (73.6 per cent), followed by forest land (22.4 per cent) (Dhulikhel Municipality 2011). In Dhulikhel, the water supply system is managed by the community via the Dhulikhel Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Users Committee (DDWSSUC), which is regarded as an exemplary urban community-managed water supply system in Nepal. About 97 per cent of the population of Dhulikhel is supplied with quality drinking water (MoUD Nepal 2015), primarily from a stream named Kharkhola, in Kalanti Bhumidanda village, 13.5 km away via a gravity-fed pipeline. The Kharkhola source is one of the tributaries of the Roshi which is a tributary of the Koshi; a trans-boundary river.

The other study site, Palampur, is a small town in the foothills of the Himalayan Dhauladhar mountain range in the Kangra district of the state of Himachal Pradesh, India, and is around above 1300 metres. Over a hundred years old, the town has a population of about 5000, with another 20,000 in the surrounding urbanised villages, which also hosts institutions, such as an agricultural university and a military cantonment. The town gets about 20 per cent of its water supply from the Bohal spring that supplies quality

mineral water to the central town area. The spring is also a backup during the occasional disruptions in the water supply from the nearby Neugal River, especially during the monsoon. While the town is around 1300 metres, the spring is at altitude of around 1500 metres in the upstream village of Bohal and the supply is gravity-fed. The Bohal spring and pipeline, being the historical source for Palampur since 1952, is under the Palampur Municipal Council (MC) management. The distribution of water and its infrastructure, pipelines, their maintenance, and water billing and payments is also handled by the MC. The Neugal river water is sourced and filtered by the water supply department of the state government, the Irrigation and Public Health (IPH) Department of the state of Himanchal Pradesh, and then supplied in bulk to the Palampur MC for distribution. However, in the urbanised villages surrounding Palampur town, the distribution and billing is also handled by the IPH Department. Palampur is one of few towns in the state that handles its own water distribution; in all other towns, the IPH Department is directly in charge of distribution.

Negotiation for Water Security in Dhulikhel and Palampur

Case 1: Dhulikhel

The local people's active participation at all the phases of the negotiation, including planning and implementation as well as during the operation stage of the water supply project is the key factor for the success of the agreement between upstream (Kalanti Bhumidanda) and downstream (Dhulikhel). The Dhulikhel community people, those who were suffering, started looking for support agencies in 1987 to construct their water facility. As a part of their exploration, they approached the then GTZ, which was working in the water sector, close to the town named Bhaktapur. GTZ started working with Dhulikhel Development Board and started looking different options to bring water for Dhulikhel people. As an exploration, the Dhulikhel Development Board (DDB) approached the community of Kalanti Bhumidanda where the water source is located and started a dialogue with the community people about the possibility of a piped supply of water to Dhulikhel. Responding to the appeal of DDB, the then Bhumidanda village *panchayat* discussed the issues with the wider citizen forum and agreed to allow a piped supply of water to the DDB, realising the water needs of the Dhulikhel people. There was a single condition of the agreement, support in the construction of a school building in the upstream community, which was completely damaged by a large flood. The condition was agreed by the downstream community in Dhulikhel. The DDB then made an agreement

with the upstream community people to secure the water source on the 27th of July, 1985. To come to this agreement, the role of the local government and their leadership was found to be crucial. Finally, the DDB handed over responsibility to the Dhulikhel Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Users Committee (DDWSSUC) in 1992.

The negotiation did not end just with supplying the water to the downstream community and fulfilling the single demand of the upstream community. The upstream community began demanding more and more from the downstream, despite the fact that a single condition was mentioned in the agreement. The frequency of demands from the upstream increased because of the absence of elected bodies at the local level since 2002. As a result, on behalf of the downstream community, the DDWSSUC made an agreement with the Bhumidanda Village Development Committee (VDC) 25 years after the first agreement, adding more provisions to provide to the upstream communities. The additional facilities agreed were a NPR 800,000 annual payment to the upstream VDC, as well as additional support (NPR 200, 000) for the school, university scholarships, and hospital discounts. In addition to these, the downstream community agreed to pay NPR 36,000 annually for the guarding of the forest in lieu of protecting the watershed with an area of about 200 hectares. While the second agreement promised more for the upstream community, the downstream community also demanded an increase in the volume of water to that of agreed in 1985. Here, continuous political engagement and mutual understanding between the upstream and downstream community played a vital role in securing a proper agreement for the drinking water supply to the downstream community.

Case 2: Palampur

Negotiations to establish water security in Palampur was established through the Palampur Water Governance Initiative (PWGI), a collaborative project between the German Development Agency GIZ, Winrock International India, and the state government of Himachal Pradesh, under the 'Capacity building of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Himachal Pradesh'. The joint GIZ-Winrock team, with a local organisation based in Palampur, the Himachal Pradesh Eco-Development Society, founded the PWGI to increase interaction and trust between the different stakeholders and to identify and implement measures to improve water quality and enhance water quantity. The PWGI facilitation team undertook a feasibility study in 2009 to explore the needs of the upstream and the downstream communities and to identify the potential for a PES-like scheme to improve

water management. The downstream perspective was captured through a roundtable meeting attended by the Municipal Council, the Irrigation and Public Health Department, and the Forest Department.

In October 2010, the Palampur Municipal Council signed a 20-year Payment for Ecosystem Services agreement with an upstream community-based forest management group, the Bohal-Odi Village Forest Development Society (VFDS). In return for a small annual payment, the VFDS agreed to control local subsistence use (lopping and grazing) and protect a small patch of forest, which had been identified as a recharge zone for the spring in Bohal village that supplies drinking water to the Palampur Municipal Council area. This agreement was preceded by an informal agreement since the 1950s, which related to access to water. The personal expertise and interests of the facilitator remained crucial in establishing a functional incentive-based mechanism, the willingness of stakeholders, and the creation of positive upstream-downstream relations at Palampur.

The management plan placed a complete ban on grazing and undergrowth removal from the Bohal spring recharge zone, allowed the collection of leaf fodder for fifteen days a year in January (dividing the forest into two parts with only one person per house permitted to collect foliage), and grass fodder for seven days per year, at a time decided by the VFDS. Members of the VFDS comprised all the households of the villages that required wood for fuel or access to the forest. Each member of the VFDS was required to pay an annual fee of INR² 100 (US\$1.60 in 2015) to pay a forest guard to protect the forest. The VFDS executive committee was given powers to impose a fine for any violation of the rules. The agreement was drafted largely from scratch, with inputs from the facilitation team, villagers, and the Forest Department.

The following table provides insights for a comparative analysis of the agreements and water supply context of both the Palampur and Dhulikhel towns.

2 Value of 100 INR (Indian Rupees) = 160 NPR (Nepalese)

Table 1: Upstream-Downstream Agreements and Their Impact on Palampur and Dhulikhel

Context	Palampur	Dhulikhel
Drinking water context	<p>Bohal spring in the upstream Bohal village is the original water source for Palampur Municipal Council since the 1950s. It now supplies less than 20 per cent, of the demand, but provides a high quality reliable supply which goes to the core town area.</p> <p>The rest of the supply comes from the nearby Neugal River via gravity-fed pipelines and from an existing irrigation channel. Discharge in the spring is said to have declined; locals say that snowfall in the spring zone has reduced, and the snowfall only stays for a few days, as opposed to weeks previously.</p>	<p>Saptakanya fall of Kharkhola stream located in the Kharkhola Mahabharat Community Forest is the primary source of piped drinking and domestic water for Dhulikhel since the 1980s. It now supplies around 90 per cent of the population, covering all part of wards 2,3,4,5,7,8,9, and some parts of 1 and 6 of the Municipality.</p> <p>In addition, 27 public taps from nearby sources, which predate the pipeline, provide water for drinking and other uses both to the few without-piped supplies, as well as supplementary support for those with a piped supply. Discharge at the source is perceived to have reduced.</p>
Water governance	<p>MC handles the Bohal spring, tanks and pipeline, maintenance as well as water distribution and water bills.</p> <p>Irrigation and Public Health Departments of HP provides the bulk water supply from Neugal River via a canal and pipeline after filtration.</p>	DDWSSUC is responsible for the sourcing, treatment, distribution of water, billing, revenue collection, and maintenance.
Water finance	Retail water billing of customers by MC. IPH Department raises bills for the bulk water supply, which the MC disputes and has not paid for years. Arrears run into tens of millions.	Water charges NPR 160 for first 10 kl/month, and then NPR 22/kl for 11-25kl; NPR 33/kl for 26-50kl and NPR 76/kl above 51kl. This helps meet operational costs, also has a surplus. Annual revenue is NPR 15,541,104.12, and operational costs are NPR 7,915,336.73 (FY 2012/13).

Context	Palampur	Dhulikhel
	Local water charges are not sufficient to meet operation costs of the MC, let alone pay the IPH for the bulk water. Part of the problem is that the nearby village areas are treated as rural, with low rural water rates charged by the IPH (around INR 18-19/kl), or even flat rates, and the town area tries to maintain parity with the rural rates charged across the road from them.	
Informal/Earlier agreement	Dates to 1952, still operational. MC bought area of spring mouth with a one-time payment apparently, and built a tank there to collect water. But no paperwork available. Agreed to provide two common taps for local use from the tank. One person was to be employed from village in the MC. This is being honoured.	Since 1980s. Water tapped from Kharkhola with written agreement on July the 27 th , 1985. One-time payment for the construction of a local school building. Later on, on <i>ad hoc</i> basis, there was payment after a demand from the upstream community. A new agreement was signed on May the 8 th , 2011, which made the payment system annual.
Baseline scenario (if no agreement)	Informal protection by Bohal village under risk of breakdown. Forest could be degraded with further possible reductions in the Bohal spring discharge.	Saptakanya fall of Kharkhola showing some reduced discharge – the downstream community would be stuck with that. Without a new agreement, no accesses to tap more volume of water from the same water source of Saptakanya fall of Kharkhola.
Formal agreement	Signed in October 2010, for 20 years. The purpose was to support the protection of identified high infiltration zone of the Bohal spring.	Signed in 2011 - open-ended. Primary purpose was to secure cooperation of the upstream villagers to access more water from the source of the Saptakanya fall.

Context	Palampur	Dhulikhel
Parties to the agreement	The Palampur MC in the downstream and the community forest management institution - the Bohal-Odi VFDS in the upstream. Copy given to <i>panchayat</i> and Forest Department.	Dhulikhel Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Users Committee (DDWSSUC) in the downstream and Village Development Committee in the upstream in the presence of Kavre District Water Resource Committee, Dhulikhel Municipality, Kathmandu University, Dhulikhel Hospital. Support to guard for Kharkhola Mahabharat Community Forest mentioned in the agreement, but they are not a formal signatory.
Responsibilities of upstream party with respect to the forest	VFDS manages forest and the identified high infiltration zone for Bohal spring as per their management plan. Restrictions on grazing, clearing of undergrowth. Provision for rotational lopping to collect green fodder and fuel wood in winter. Can access additional forest area behind their protected forest.	Forest protection implicit as accepting money for forest guards. Forest management by Kharkhola Mahabharat Community Forest Users Group - which manages 199.68 hectares. There are restrictions on grazing, illegal timber felling. However, enforcement is limited. People obtain grass, fodder for livestock, fire-wood for energy and thatch for roofs.
Responsibilities of U/S party with respect to the water supply	No explicit responsibility in the agreement. However, by agreeing to protect the recharge zone for the spring, they implicitly agree to let MC continue to tap the Bohal spring.	To co-operate in the expansion of the water system and setting-up of a pipeline to tap water from the Saptakanya fall of Kharkhola.
Responsibilities of downstream party – financial	1. Make a recurring annual payment of INR 10,000/- on receipt of request from VFDS. Increase by 10 per cent every five years. Flat payment, not linked to salary for any guard, etc.	1. Make Recurring payment of NPR 800,000 per year. To increase by NPR 100,000 every five years. 2. Recurring payment of NPR 100,000/year – for each of the two schools.

Context	Palampur	Dhulikhel
		<p>3. One-time payment of NPR 300,000/- for school infrastructure.</p> <p>4. Give compensation in the case of damage by water pipeline.</p> <p>5. Payment of NPR 36000/ a year for a forest guard.</p>
Responsibilities of downstream party - non- financial	Support Bohal village's sanitation work in the future.	<p>1. Provide plastic pipe for local upstream drinking water supply system.</p> <p>2. Give priority to upstream residents for employment.</p> <p>3. Kathmandu University – support improvement of schooling system and scholarships at the university</p> <p>4. Hospital – give discount charges.</p>
Conditionality	Formal conditionality, but in practice, MC seems happy to make payment without visiting forest – on basis of visual view of forest from the town.	No formal conditionality in the agreement with respect to forest protection. Co-operation expected in accessing water supply, but no conditionality clause per se even for that, perhaps as purpose is more to secure access to water, rather than allow U/S an option to hinder its supply.
Monitoring	<p>Provision for joint walk to review forest condition and to fill joint visual inspection form. Only done in the first year.</p> <p>Both parties to support water supply monitoring.</p>	No mechanism mentioned for monitoring of forest condition.

Context	Palampur	Dhulikhel
Status of the agreement	<p>Being implemented. Five payments made between 2010 and 2015. Fourth payment was increased to INR 12,000/- by MC, but their executive officer objected, and the next payment was reduced to INR 8000.</p> <p>MC has given material and labour costs for making a clothes washing platform and a tap for local use in the upstream village.</p>	Annual payment is continued as per new agreement.
Status of forest protection	<p>Informal protection by women's group predates agreement by a decade.</p> <p>Forest protection continuing. Some damage due to fire. Periodic problems with local forest guard in upstream VFDS.</p> <p>Forest seen to be thick from the town by MC, no visits in the last three years.</p> <p>Three water percolation tanks made in the spring recharge zone by FD – said to have had a positive impact on spring discharge.</p>	<p>Moderate level of forest protection continuing, but still lack sustainable means of management.</p> <p>Payment (beyond guard salaries) is mostly used for development in Kalanti Bhumidanda VDC rather than forest conservation.</p>
Status of water discharge at the source and water supply	The perceived decline in discharge over time is said to have been arrested and reversed. Water supply continuing with some increases.	Water supply continuing as before. While discharge of Kharkhola is perceived as having reduced over time.

Source: Field study 2014-2015

Discussion

The study reveals that both towns have given primacy to securing access to water from upstream villages. The Palampur MC is said to have purchased the land where the spring mouth was located as far back as 1952, for a one-time payment and also made a verbal promise to provide two public taps in the upstream village, and give a job to one person in their water

supply department. The focus on forest protection in the spring catchment only came about in 2010, and that too with some external facilitation. The agreement in Dhulikhel is clearly aimed at ensuring the co-operation of the upstream village to access their water. The payment also seems to be in two parts; the bulk of the amount is an open-ended (for the school and VDC) payment for the access to the water, while a subset of the payment is for covering the cost of the forest guard.

A review of the agreements for the water security of both towns shows payment levels are very different in both towns. At INR 10, 000/year, the payment in Palampur barely covers the cost of hiring a part-time forest guard in the upstream village. There is no ongoing payment for access to water beyond the one-time purchase of the spring land in the 1950s. One reason for the low payment from the MC was that the payment for access was split from the payment for conservation and the MC had no certainty that protection of the spring catchment would actually arrest and reverse the decline in discharge. Therefore they may have set a modest amount that they were willing to pay. The upstream community people accepted the rather low level as they wanted to protect the forest on their own accord, and, therefore, the payment was perceived as additional support. In Dhulikhel, the annual payment is 50–60 times higher than Palampur, primarily as it is seen to be for access to the water. Without the payment, there is unlikely to be water access in Dhulikhel. The high water demand increases the willingness to pay the upstream service providers in order to ensure a sustainable supply of such services, and the case reflects that a PES (-type) scheme may function well if and when there is a clear demand for an ecosystem service (Wunder 2005). However, proper mediation and mutual trust and benefit-sharing mechanisms are important considerations when developing PES (-type) schemes (Bhatta et al 2014).

Both towns have signed upstream-downstream agreements and were handling the complete water supply system from source to tap for the sources in question. Palampur MC entered into an agreement primarily for its own historical spring source, which it handled. Dhulikhel Water User Committee had full operational control over its water supply scheme. If a separate department at the state or national level was in-charge of the water supply at the town level, it is unlikely that the communities would have banded together to manage such an agreement. Both payments are funded from the undivided resources of the MC Palampur and the Dhulikhel Water Users Committee. There is no separate fund for resources in the water bill, for instance, for water access or catchment protection. Water supplies yield significant financial and economic benefits for downstream

users; however, those benefits need to be identified and valued properly to convince the decision-makers about the importance of managing upper catchments as a part of the water supply infrastructure.

Both towns had autonomous community forest institutions that they were managing the forest as common-pool resources, primarily for their upstream stakeholders. In the Indian state of HP, the institutional form chosen in the upper villages was the VFDS, which was formed under the Participatory Forest Management Rules of 2001. This allowed the MC to directly sign an agreement with the Bohal VFDS. However, a kind of no objection certificate (NOC) was taken from the *panchayat*, but it was not a signatory to the agreement. In Dhulikhel, the forest in the upstream community is protected by the Kharkhola Mahabharat Community Forest Users Group (CFUG) under the 1993 Forest Act of Nepal, and related regulations, which empowers the CFUGs to manage their forest resources and considers CFUGs as independent entities. However, the agreement is with the Kalanti Bhumidanda VDC, rather than the Kharkhola Mahabharat CFUG. Perhaps, if the CFUG had been a signatory, then it may have received some more resources for forest protection and conservation, which may have led to a further supply of quality water due to more scientific forest management by the local communities. The compensation amount provided to Kalanti Bhumidanda has been used in development activities rather than watershed conservation.

As described by Wunder (2005), conditionality is said to be a key element in a Payment for Ecosystem (PES) regime, along with a willingness of the buyer and the seller of services. In the case of Dhulikhel, there is no overt conditionality either for access to water or for forest protection. The agreement simply states that certain levels of payment will be made and other support given and co-operation is sought in return. This could be interpreted to mean that the agreement is more binding on both parties, and neither can renege easily on the agreement. From the perspective of the DDWSSUC, as increased access to water was a critical issue in 2011, they may have wanted to come up with a stable long-term agreement with their upstream partners. In Palampur, there is a scope for monitoring and conditionality, but the MC is little interested in either. Economic incentives constitute the core of PES; however, conditionality seems to be equally important in the PES mechanism (Wunder 2005). Our preliminary analysis reveals that incentive-based mechanisms with the mutual understanding and long-term interaction play a crucial role in negotiations, which ultimately sustains water security for the downstream communities.

One reason may be simply locational, as unlike carbon which is fungible globally, towns need water in specific locations; and for both Palampur and Dhulikhel the chosen water sources were presumably well-located for them and are perhaps their most preferred options. Therefore, they needed to undertake stable long-term agreements; for example, in the case of India the downstream (Palampur) is around 1300 metres above sea level, while the spring source is around 1500 metres in the upstream village. Because of these locational factors, there is more likelihood of face-to-face negotiations and long-term interactions. Therefore, interaction has an element of social interaction and negotiation rather than cut-and-dry market transactions.

Conclusion

Both towns have autonomous community forest institutions that were managing forest common-pool resources, primarily for their upstream stakeholders. In the case of Nepal, the water users committee (downstream), which is non-government organisation, made an agreement with the Village Development Committee (upstream) to secure water; however, no formal relationship has been established between the upstream VDC and the CFUG, and the downstream Dhulikhel drinking water users committee. Although the amount of payment provided to the upstream community should benefit everyone in the upstream, it overlooks the role played by the community forest users group in managing the forest resources. The CFUG that actually manages the upstream forest resources, including other ecosystem services, has been left behind. The compensation amount provided to Kalanti Bhumidanda VDC was used in development activities rather than watershed conservation and forest management.

In both cases, payments are funded from the undivided resources of the MC Palampur and the Dhulikhel drinking water users committee. There is no separate fund for the management of forest resources in the water bill that can significantly contribute to water access or catchment protection. Water supplies yield significant financial and economic benefits for downstream users; however, those benefits need to be identified and valued properly to convince decision-makers about the importance of managing upper catchments as a part of the water supply infrastructure.

Conditionality is said to be a key element in a Payment for Ecosystem (PES) regime, along with a willingness of the buyer and the seller of the services; however, in both cases, it has been overlooked. In the case of Dhulikhel, there is no overt conditionality either for access to water or for forest protection. Likewise, in Palampur, there is a scope for monitoring and conditionality, but

the MC is not very interested in either. After analysis of both cases, it can be concluded that incentive-based mechanisms with a mutual understanding and long-term interaction play a crucial role in negotiations, which ultimately sustains water security in the downstream communities.

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Climate Change, Crops, Livestock, and Human Relations to Food Sovereignty among the Loba of Nepal

MAN BAHADUR KHATTRI

Introduction

In this paper, I have discussed how agricultural systems and food sovereignty are associated with the interaction between human beings, livestock, and crops in the socio-cultural and ecological system of the Loba people of Lo-manthang, Nepal. I have focused on whether their access and ability to choose their food is threatened; whether they continue to sustain agro-biodiversity relations based on their indigenous knowledge for food sovereignty; and if climate change has threatened food sovereignty among Loba of Nepal? For this purpose, I have described what the Loba people have experienced in relation to the changing local climate and local adaptation measures in their indigenous agricultural practices. I have used local people's knowledge as the base of human ecology (Kassam 2001), to analyse these context-specific relations and the cumulative dynamic derived from the web of interactions with the ecological system of the area. This paper describes the changes in temperature and rainfall, the value of food and varieties of crops and livestock produced in the changing ecological system of the Loba. The indigenous people in Lo-manthang have been continuously coping with different adaptive measures for a long time, adding new elements to their traditions to cope with the dynamic climatic situation in their habitat. They have a close relationship with the environment, and adaptive measures include landholding, labour management, collective maintenance of irrigation systems, and a spiritual connectivity in agricultural systems. I collected data from August to September 2013 as part of my field research for my PhD dissertation. I have mainly used qualitative data collection methods, such as interviews, observation, and key informant interviews.

Climate Change

Lo-manthang is located in the trans-Himalayan zone of Dhawalagiri and Annapurna mountain ranges. It is a rain-shadow zone with very little rainfall even during the monsoon season (June-August). On the basis of the data collected by the Department of Hydrology and Meteorology, the Government of Nepal, the average annual rainfall during 1974-2012 is 143 mm. According to Shrestha and Aryal (2011), in the trans-Himalayan zone, the temperature is rising annually at the rate of 0.09 degree Celsius. There is scant rainfall and a high amount of solar radiation. This area is considered as semi-arid alpine (3000-4500 m), with a temperature of 3-10 degree Celsius. According to meteorological station at Lo-manthang, for the period 1985-1994, the maximum temperature in June and July reached a little over 19 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature in January was as low as minus 10 degrees Celsius (Sharma et al 2001). Interestingly the meteorological station in the Chhoser VDC near Lo-manthang, on the 23rd of January 2013, the minimum temperature went down to -17.5 degrees Celsius and the maximum temperature was -1 degree Celsius, but this can be considered as an extreme event. On the same day, 300 yaks died due to the severe cold in Lo-manthang, and the temperature in the winter of 2013 went down to -20 degrees Celsius.

People have also experienced erratic rainfall, as on the 17th of July 2013, there was 10 mm rainfall within 10 minutes. Similarly, the Loba have experienced some dry seasons during 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012. The people have experienced natural phenomena such as hailstones, which are bigger and occurring more frequently. The changes in nature, amount, and periods of rainfall demand certain adaptive measures from the Loba community for crop cultivation and harvesting. Longer winters affect the sowing of seeds and shorter summers are problematic for the productivity and harvesting of crops.

Without irrigation there is no possibility of crop cultivation in Lo-manthang due to the dryness, high radiation, windy conditions, and thin soil. Rainfall and snowfall are not regular and becoming unpredictable. The most important favourable condition for the people is to have a lot of snow during the winter so the land can absorb water. The snow melts slowly and keeps the land wet for a longer period. Farmers report that they have been experiencing water scarcity due to less snowfall during the winter and the fast melting of the snow during the spring due to increased heat from the sun and growing global temperatures. The climate scientists consider this kind of marginal area with geo-climatic features, such as dry and in a rain shadow as vulnerable to climate change. There are some observations on

the effect of climate change that local people have experienced, especially in their agricultural practices.

Due to the temperature rise, people have started to cultivate apples in Upper Mustang, in Surkhang and Dhin village in the Surkhang and Ghami VDCs. They have become successful in this regard. People from Dhye village in the Surkhang VDC have also started planting apples in the area nearby the village of Tcharang. People have started a community apple farm in Tangay in the Chuksang VDC. This is an important opportunity for the local people due to the temperature rise. In Lo-manthang a process of crop diversification is taking place from the traditional crop production to modern cash crops, such as fruits, vegetables, and prioritised crop cultivation on the basis of the market value of crops. They have also adopted food consumption patterns with green vegetables, which they experienced in the hill areas of Nepal during their winter migration. Those who have been able to go abroad for work have also learned to consume vegetables and fruit. Similarly, seasonally visiting tourists also like to taste the local organic vegetables, which encourage them to grow green vegetables. NGOs and GOs are also facilitating this change by providing technical support to encourage local people to consume these items to improve their food sovereignty and food security as well as economic status and health. Food systems can be affected in several ways ranging from the direct effects on crop production, changes in markets of food prices, and the supply chain infrastructure due to changes in climate, which is also associated with food sovereignty (Gregory, Ingram and Brklacich 2005, 2139).

Food Sovereignty

Food is the basic substance for human survival. Sources of food vary due to tradition as well as socio-economic political situations. For example, the Chepangs of Nepal, who recently became sedentary and in central Nepal, depend on their own cultivated crops but also depend significantly on food from wild roots, vegetables, and wild animals (Rai 2014). Many people in Nepal have a tradition of consuming wild yams during the Maghe Sankranti festival, and wild yam is a special food item for that occasion. The indigenous tradition of food production was based on seed preservation of local crop varieties to grow every year. People used to say, '*hulmulma jiu jogaunu, anikalma biu jogaunu*' – save yourself in a mob and save seeds during a famine. Food is also strongly associated with people's identity. During the time when commensality was deeply associated with the caste system, one of the central questions during social interaction among the people of Nepal was the animal eaten being culturally associated with identity, such

as cow-eater, pig-eater, buffalo-eater, chicken-eater, sheep and goat-eater. In this context, a rigid hierarchy was created, and according to Rai (2014), identity was associated with what people eat and drink.

Food sovereignty is associated with several aspects of everyday life, such as whether people are able to consume food for a healthy life; whether people are able to continue their traditions of production, consumption, exchange; whether the production of food is associated with sustainable environmental relations; whether people are able to use their indigenous knowledge to produce food; and whether people have culture-specific food choices. Population growth, changes in production systems and socio-political and economic systems have resulted in barriers in accessing food for many people in the world. The World Food Programme (WFP) was established by the United Nation in 1961 as a UN humanitarian organisation. WFP focuses on food security, defined as people having access at all times to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. Food security has three main elements: 1) sufficient and consistent availability of food; 2) food access through purchase, own production, barter, gifts, borrowing, or food aid; 3) food utilisation by consuming nutritious food for good health¹. Food sovereignty has a political aspect as it is a movement to change and advocate the rights of producers, environmental protection, protection of indigenous knowledge; it is also involves different people and organisations that believe in food sovereignty. According to Windfuhr and Jonsen; ‘food sovereignty is essentially a political concept’ (Windfuhr and Jonsen 2005, 15). Food insecurity is widespread in the case of Nepal due to social and geographical exclusion, unequal landholding, and poverty. It was during the Via Campansia (the Peasants’ Way in Spanish) movement

Table 1: The Main Elements of Food Security and Food Sovereignty

	Food Security	Food Sovereignty
Model of agricultural production	Productivist/Industrial	Agro-Ecological
Model of agriculture trade	Liberalized	Protectionist
Lead organisation	WTO	Via Campesina
Instruments	AoA, TRIPS, SPS	IPC
Approach to plant genetic resources	Private Property Right	Anti-patent, Communal
Environmental discourse	Economic Rationalism	Green Rationalism

Source: Lee, 2007

1 WFP. <http://www.wfp.org/food-security>.

that food sovereignty was used for the first time in 1992. According to Via Campansia, food sovereignty is a precondition to genuine food security. It generally constitutes four priority areas: the right to food, access to productive resources, mainstreaming of agro-ecological production, and trade and local markets (Windfuhr and Jonsen, 2005).

Therefore, food sovereignty is different from food security at different levels of its trade, lead organisation, instruments, and approaches to genetic resources, and environmental discourse. The issue of food sovereignty was raised by smallholder farmers, pastoralists, fishermen/women, indigenous communities, and landless people for access to the resources like land, water, seeds, livestock breeds, and credit. Their demand is that food producers should have the right to be involved in the agricultural policy decision-making processes, the rights of women farmers should be recognised for their major role in agricultural production, recognition that agro-ecology as a way not only to produce food but also to achieve sustainable livelihoods, living landscapes, and environmental integrity. Food sovereignty is clearly defined by the declaration of Nyeleni in 2007 as:

Food sovereignty is the right of people to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation.²

Value of Food

The Loba of Lo-manthang are culturally and ethnically of Tibetan origin and they have a close connection to Tibet by marriage and pasture land. The total population of the Loba in the Lo-manthang VDC is 569, and among them 276 are male and 293 are female (CBS 2014). The relation to Tibet was cut slowly after China's annexation of Tibet in 1950 (Dhungel 2002). The Loba follow various sects of Tibetan Buddhism. The majority of them follow the Sakyapa sect. The Loba are divided into different social groups: the Bistas (king, Mukhiyas), the Phalwas (the Gurung), and the occupational groups, including Ghara (smith), Shemba (butchers), Chemba (leather worker), Nepa (leather processing), Samjuwa or Sumbra (tailor), and Emeta (musicians). There is no caste system in the strict sense or anything equal

2 Declaration of Nyeleni, the 27th of February 2007.

to a caste system practiced in other parts of Nepal, but the occupational groups are excluded from various socio-political and religious activities. If they are allowed to participate, they usually have subordinate roles.

Food has multiple values in the Loba community and is primarily produced to fulfill their nutritional requirements. Food constitutes grain and includes the farming of livestock for meat, milk, and butter that constitutes a large proportion of their dietary requirements. During almost every meal they consume some meat as part of their diet. Since the Loba live in high altitude area (3700 metres), they experience long winters, and they need to maintain heat as their survival strategy. According to the Loba, meat generates heat, which is good for coping with the cold of the local ecological system. Not only do they eat meat to produce heat, they use animal dung as fuel which also generates heat and is used for different domestic purposes. Many people keep their cattle on the ground floor, which also has implications for heat and security of their livestock. Food is used as medicine in the Pamir mountains, and food made of the flour of barely, called *tsampa*, is widely used as a medicine among the Loba (Kassam, Karamkhudoeva, Ruelle and Baumflek 2010). The *tsampa* is also consumed every day with buttered tea and *chhurpi* (dried cheese), and especially by the sick, old, and children to get additional nutrition. *Tsampa* is also a common food for older people since they lack teeth to chew hard food.

Food and drink are social and cultural items in the Loba community. Food production, processing, preparation, and consumption is social. During cultivation, harvesting, processing, and consumption the participation of men and women, the elderly members of the family, children, relatives, and neighbourhood is required. Usually, women are heavily involved in cultivation but men always support them. The agriculture season begins with the ritual called *sakaluka*, where women first plough the fields. This act is performed in order to make the God of land happy and seek blessings for good weather and a good harvest. The preparation of the food is usually done by women, and They follow the norms of priority with the elder men eating first. The seating arrangement next to the hearth is also socially assigned, as the eldest person sits closest to the hearth. Age and gender relations during consumption have a social meaning of respect and care. Furthermore, the relations between men and women are more equal at the societal level and women also enjoy a higher level of freedom in the domestic and sometimes public spheres.

Grains and livestock are used as commodities and exchanged for cash, goods, and services. The amount of grain production, landholding, and livestock ownership indicates a person's social and economic position in

the Loba community, as it implies food sovereignty and security of any household. The food produced in Lo-manthang was historically exchanged with Tibetan salt and they followed the salt and grain circuit during the spring and summer. Tibetan salt was also exchanged with varieties of grain in lower Mustang as well as western Nepal and brought to Tibet using their pack animals, such as mules, horses, and donkeys. High food grain production was possible due to the availability of water, more predictable weather patterns, and the large number of livestock was used for the production of manure for fuel and fertiliser, traction in the field during plantation and harvest time. At that time, the Loba were organised by polyandrous marriage practices, which supported cultivation with human labour, and land and other property belonging to the family were kept undivided. I argue that during this period the Loba had food sovereignty. However, these days the reverse circle has happened to the food supply, and the Loba buy various kinds of food and drink (rice, wheat flour, sugar, salt, noodles) from Tibet/China, and the Government of China donates food to the Loba. This situation was unthinkable about 40 years ago in Tibet and among the Loba community, as people did not think about salt coming from the south and grain coming from the north.

Locally produced food is consumed during the ritual ceremonies, to make ritual offering like *torma* to the ancestors and other deities whom they pay respect. The food grains they produce are offered to the divine before being consumed. At the same time, food from animals is also a very important part of social, economic, cultural, and religious aspect of Loba community life. Butter, milk, meat, *churpi*, dried local food, and drinks are associated with power dynamics. Yak meat is considered a delicacy for marriages and other public feasts. This item is highly prized by the higher status Loba. Butter is offered as a blessing and to the respected guests and relatives, and is also used to ward off evil spirits. They put butter in a cup when they serve *tsampa* and Tibetan salt and butter tea for guests. They place butter on the door of the house to ward off evil spirits, and butter is also put on forehead for those who travel long distances or for long periods for a safe, happy, and successful journey. Butter is produced from yak, cow, and goat's milk. The objects they produce from livestock are clearly associated with respect, blessings and rituals, or offerings to God. Livestock products, such as butter, milk, and meat are also used for medicinal purpose. They use these products specially for cuts and to feed the weak. We can observe the clear link between crop and livestock production being closely associated with food security. The combination of both crop and livestock products, along with local species of animals adapted to the local environment, are

linked to food sovereignty, the the Loba's identity, socio-economic power, and close interaction with the local environment.

Food is associated with power relationships among the Loba. Feasts are organised in order to win the favour of people. Community level feasts are organised each year on the occasion of the Loshar and Yartung festivals. Members of each household participates in the feast. Liquor from naked barley is shared and consumed among the household members when important decisions are made. The village head has to offer locally made liquor to the local king to inform him about the beginning of crop cultivation as well as harvesting. As I mentioned above, meat becomes a part of the feast together with the other food items. In this context, livestock plays a crucial role in the power dynamics in the community. Recently, the Loba have introduced rice as a new food item. Rice is not grown in this area, but it has become a food item here. They buy rice, which is grown in the hills and plains of Nepal and transported to Lo-manthang. Those who eat rice are considered socially and economically superior. Despite the quality of the rice, people prefer consuming rice as an exotic food item of high class, which ultimately threatens the indigenous production and consumption system of wheat and naked barley.

Features of Agriculture

The agriculture system in Lo-manthang can be understood from a human ecological point of view of the relations between humans, and other animals, plants and their habitats (Kassam 2001). The agriculture system practiced by the Loba is a combination of crop production and livestock management, and is one of the main bases of the economy and livelihood of Lo-manthang. At the same time, agriculture is strongly associated with several other factors, such as the availability of water for irrigation, seeds, manure or soil nutrients, human labour, livestock management, land holdings, the land tenure system, availability of pasture land, sources of fuel, food consumption patterns, exchange systems, distribution patterns developed and practiced by the local community. According to Nyeleni (2007), from the perspective of food sovereignty, a food system should provide healthy and culturally appropriate food for all. Such food is produced in the local environment through ecologically sound and sustainable methods. The producers, distributors, and consumers of local food are placed at the heart of food system and local production and protection of the land, people, and natural environment is stressed (Nyeleni 2007).

Context-specific knowledge of the Loba is valuable in understanding the local ecological relations. The Loba use livestock to produce grain, and

the Livestock gets a share of the grain and straw as their food. The effects of global warming being experienced by the people is starting to turn agriculture into critical situation. The agricultural system in Lo-manthang is characterised as traditional, slowly incorporating modern tools and technologies in order to cope with the changing natural and socio-economic conditions. In addition, the agriculture system in Lo-manthang is characterised as the unity of an agro-pastoral system that suffers from a short growing and single season, few varieties of crops, weather-dependent or glacier-fed irrigation, the dominant role of community decisions for crop cultivation and harvesting, short and peak harvest periods, scarcity of water for irrigation, low germination of seeds, low availability of labour on the one hand. On the other hand, there are many traditional practices that facilitate local people to cope with any new marginal situations in the development of the climate and economic system.

One example of these traditions is the practice of collective community decisions on crop cultivation and harvesting by fixing a specific date. This is a kind of community institution, which is run among a specific social group on an annual basis. They are trying to adapt to the temperature rise by reducing the days scheduled for harvest. People have begun to abandon previously cultivated land where grass for winter fodder now grows. This is another method to cope with the problem of water shortages. Seasonal migration is another mechanism, which has helped them mobilise resources other than land. They trade local craft items, herbal medicines, and visit relatives. Due to the absence of family members and seasonal migrations, they save food while earning cash by trading. Traditional social structures based on the polyandrous family has changed, which has the severe consequence of creating a labour shortage; this problem is partly solved by hiring wage workers from the Baglung, Myagdi, Parbat, and Kaski districts. Several opportunities and threats due to the temperature rise can be observed in Lo-manthang. People are cultivating new varieties of vegetables and fruits, such as apples, which are adaptive to the changing local climate. Early crop ripening, dryness, lack of water for irrigation are major phenomena which the Loba people are facing in relation to their agricultural practices.

Varieties of Crops Cultivated

Agriculture is not only what is produced, but it is equally interrelated with consumption, patterns of distribution, and exchange. Grain is used for several purposes, such as a medium of social relations and item of business or trade. The pattern of crop cultivation is associated with the productivity of the soil and crops. The Loba have systematically chosen certain crops

as their main crops. The Loba have categorised their crops as *kar* (wheat and naked barley) and *nak* (mustard, peas, buckwheat). *Nak* crops have characteristics of short-duration growing crops and require less soil nutrition. Therefore, the major crops produced in Lo-manthang are wheat, buckwheat, naked barley, peas, mustard and potatoes.

The variety of crops have developed along with their social, cultural, commercial, nutritional, and medicinal properties as well as the adaptability of changing ecological system among the Loba. In the past, the priority to produce cereal crops was higher. The Loba have become more selective of their crops these days. The value of crops varies due to market prices, changes in consumption patterns, and in relation to raising livestock. These days, buckwheat and potatoes are becoming high-value crops. They are collected and brought to Kathmandu and exported as gift items even to European countries like Germany and Italy. Buckwheat is economically beneficial as prices are rising. One *pathi* (approximately 4kg) of buckwheat costs around NPR 250 (USD 2.5), and its flour costs NPR 700 (USD 7) in the local market. The productivity depends upon the weather conditions and attack by pests. Productivity is also sensitive to frost and hailstorms. These natural phenomena have changed a lot and the indigenous knowledge of the Loba on the weather is challenged due to climate change, which puts their food sovereignty under threat due to their marginal geo-climatic situation. As Manandhar, Vogt, Perret, and Kazama (2011) have argued, climate change affects the livelihood of farmers who are economically more vulnerable.

Barley is valuable locally due to its high-value consumption as prepared *tsampa*. *Tsampa* is a local staple food item. The Loba like to consume *tsampa* as traditional nutritional food item. Potatoes and turnips are grown in significant amounts. Potatoes are becoming a popular item to trade in Pokhara and Kathmandu due to their special taste as organic produce of the high-altitude region. They store potatoes underground by digging a deep hole so they do not rot. During the 1980s, wheat and peas were the major crops. Wheat was the food for humans and the peas were to feed the horses, donkeys, and cows. With easier market accessibility, rice is now available at the same price as wheat in Lo-manthang. Since rice is not grown locally, eating rice is considered an auspicious food item. At present, the most neglected crop in Lo-manthang is wheat. The negligence of wheat as a crop has several reasons. First, those people who were buying wheat for their daily consumption have shifted to rice consumption. Adopting auspicious food items like rice and junk food, while neglecting locally produced food is a process that leads to the loss of food sovereignty. Wheat needs more irrigation than other crops

grown in Lo-manthang, as it is irrigated at least six to seven times before it is harvested. Threshing is labour-intensive, even if people have started to use Chinese-made threshing machines. The production of mustard continues for its oil for consumption and to light lamps for deities.

Barley is the most important crop, as *tsampa* is a very special type of food. Barley costs NPR 300 (USD 3) per *pathi* in Lo-manthang. Preparation of *tsampa* is time-consuming. First, naked barley is dried in the sun and washed with water and toasted while it is wet. Then it is kept in a sack and cleaned by pressing with the hands and feet and winnowed, after which it is brought to the mill to be ground very fine. *Tsampa* is especially eaten in the morning before the Loba go to work. They eat *tsampa* with tea adding *chhurpi*, and butter. The sick people consume a mush and *thukpa* made of *tsampa*. In the past, *tsampa* was ground in a *ghatta* (traditional water mills), but these days modern water mills are used. People get a better tasting *tsampa* if it is ground in the traditional water mill and some people go to Dhi village, where a traditional water mills are still in use.

Peas were a popular crop produced in the past when the Loba kept a large number of horses, mules, and donkeys. However, these days these pea-consuming animals are getting fewer and as a result there is little demand for peas to sell. Earlier Drokpa, the nomadic yak herders, bought grains from the grain-surplus families of Lo-manthang, but these days, they buy grains in the market, i.e., rice brought from the lowlands. In this context, priority over local food, which is associated with food sovereignty and the inspiration to produce food locally, is decreasing. The local distribution system of food has changed due to the presence of new food items, people's changing food habits, changes in the economic value of different varieties of grains and the livestock production system. The Loba have some local food items with simple cooking methods, such as steaming, boiling, frying, and roasting. Loba food is easy to make, simple, yet full of natural goodness (NTNC 2011, 13). The buttered salt tea (*chhyaby jha*), *tora khuwa* (juice), mustang coffee, *tsampa*, buckwheat pancakes, wheat *roti* (bread), fried potatoes, garlic soup, vegetables and varieties of meat, and *momo* are traditional well-known food items of the Loba people. Today, most people eat rice, noodles, even junk food items, and there is now a modern bakery in Lo-manthang.

Productivity of crops is low due to a variety of factors, including poor soil quality, inadequate manure and irrigation, cold temperatures and extreme weather events. More seeds are needed and the harvest is poor. The seed has to be very concentrated due to low germination and also because some seeds are eaten by birds, rats and insects. Since thick broadcast sowing is

required, around 21 per cent of grain grown or harvested is saved as seed (Ojha 1986, 62). Low productivity of food crops is reported as the yields range from 1:3-6, meaning one kilogram of seeds could yield between 3 to 6 kilograms of grain (Chettri 2006, 113). Seasonal crop rotation is followed in order to enhance soil fertility. The Loba practice crop rotation between *kar* and *nak* crops. If the produce of the first year is wheat/ naked barley, the next year it will be peas, mustard, or buckwheat. Farmers who have large landholdings but not enough water to irrigate all the land keep some land fallow, after cultivating two consecutive crops (Ojha 1982, 68).

In the past, the Loba collected grass, peas, mustard simultaneously, but new customary practices have been introduced where people harvest grass first and then they harvest crops according to their preference. After harvesting the crops, they allow the animals to graze in the fields. The practice of harvesting grass or crops first has ecological and economic value. In the past, there was no practice of land abandonment. Similarly, they were not very careful about grass collection since they had enough winter grazing access in Tibet. At the same time, livestock was much more valued because they were used for trade in Tibet. The value of local crops in the Lo-manthang region has changed compared to the past because of transportation facilities and road link to Jomsom, and the Myagdi District and beyond. Similarly, food supplies to Tibet have stopped, but they try to continue agriculture as their traditional occupational identity, to hold land as their ancestral property and their partial livelihood.

Weeding herbs helps increase productivity which is carried out several times by women, depending upon the availability of labour and the type of herbs grown. The Loba have started to use some modern tools, such as threshing machines, in order to solve the problem of the shortage of human resources to work in the field. They have started using gloves in order to protect their hands while working in the field. In the past, the Loba used horses to thresh crops and those who do not have access of threshing machines still use horses.

Livestock and Livelihood

The agro-pastoral system is an integral part of the agriculture system in Lo-manthang. The importance of livestock is immense in Loba society. They not only provide nutritious food in the form of meat, milk, yogurt, fat, butter, and cheese but also provide other necessities in the form of clothing, bedding, rugs, tents, bags, straps, and fuel. Wool and hides from livestock make sustenance in the harsh climate of this region possible. Horses are one of the most useful and expensive domestic animals. Yak meat is

considered a delicacy for various occasions of celebration. The manure of domesticated animals as well as human faeces is accumulated and regularly supplemented with ash and used as fertiliser, but many families now have indoor toilets and chemical fertilisers are not used. The more cultivated land a household owns, the more manure and domesticated animals to produce the manure is needed. *Zhopas* (a hybrid of a cow and a yak) are used to plough land while horses are used to carry manure to the field and for threshing. Animal husbandry has also been changing after the road connection from Lo-manthang to the north and Jomsom to the south. Some people have stopped riding horses and instead ride motorcycles. According to key informants, there were many donkeys in Lo-manthang about 15 years ago, but we cannot see any these days.

Yaks, goats, sheep, cattle, *zhopas*, and horses are the main livestock raised in Lo-manthang. The range lands of Upper Mustang provide a habitat for many species of plants and wildlife. There are some big and old trees in the main settlements; and may indicate that there was a forest in the area in the past. The local people said that according to their ancestors Thulung, which lies next to Lo-manthang, had a forest. The big pillars and beams in different *gumbas* (Buddhist monastery), especially Jampa Gumba in Lo-manthang, probably came from local tress. These days, trucks and jeeps are used to transport goods. However, mules and horses are also used. Tourists use mules and horses to transports their equipment for trekking. Some trekkers use horses to visit nearby villages, such as Chhosser. The *zhopa* is used to plough field but are not bred in Lo-manthang. They are brought from different parts of Tibet, Gorkha, and Solukhumbu districts of Nepal.

In order to address the labour shortage and reduce the cost of keeping livestock, they keep a common herder in Lo-manthang. Some households even hire a cow herder and pay a monthly wage and food proportionately. One herder is paid about Rs. 50,000 annually in cash and food. In the past, this was not possible because every household owned a large number of livestock. The number of horses in the villages today is small, and they usually graze next to the villages. A common herder is not hired for horse grazing. Horses are used as a means of transportation during winter to Tibet and around the region. The Drokpas graze yaks, at higher altitudes (40,00 metres) during the summer and during the winter they mostly move them behind the mountains into a gorge or the flat lands between the Mustang and Dolpa districts of Nepal. Their traditional pasture during the winter in Tibet has been completely closed since the 30th of April 1988 (Ojha 1986, 195). The Drokpa produce meat, wool, woollen materials, and dung from

the yaks and exchange them for food or money with other people who live in Lo-manthang and the surrounding areas. Other livestock such as cattle are also important for milk and manure, but *Zhopas* are the only source of draft power. These days there is plenty of fodder for the domestic animals in Lo-manthang because grass grows in the fields where crops once grew. The livestock, which are kept at home, are stalled and taken to the pasture land at around 7:30 in the morning and brought back in the evening. During the winter, they are kept mostly at home.

Horses and yaks are high-value animals because of their economic contribution followed by sheep and goats. Goats are the most numerous domesticated animals followed by sheep, cattle, yaks, horses, and *zhopas*. Similarly, cattle are the most commonly owned livestock, whereas owning of yaks, sheep and *zhopas* is limited to relatively few households that have the manpower to take care of them. The Chinese occupation of Tibet resulted in two major disruptive effects for the Loba as they lost their valuable winter pasture in Tibet, and consequently had to reduce the number of livestock. Moreover, the Khampas (Tibetans from the Kham region) came to settle in Upper Mustang and cut down trees for fuel wood leading to deforestation. A complex relationship between Hindu settlers from the hills in the south and the Loba can be observed that benefits both through the exchange of livestock. During the autumn the Hindus celebrate Dashain as their main festival and they consume the meat of mountain sheep and goats that graze in high mountain areas that eat medicinal plants and herbs, which is good for their health. The Dashain celebration is a chance for Loba to sell their sheep and goats and reduce the herd size, which helps them manage the winter fodder shortage. At the same time, selling sheep and goats brings them cash. They also slaughter livestock, especially sheep and goats, during autumn to store for the winter.

Tourism was introduced in the Lo region in 1992. The Loba are also engaged in the tourism business in different capacities. Tourists usually visit during the spring and autumn seasons, which are also the seasons of cultivation and harvesting of crops. In this sense, agriculture and tourism have a conflicting relationship. While both agriculture and tourism need human labour, which is becoming a scarce resource, local crop production is commodified to supply food for the tourists. Nowadays, many people prefer to work in tourism because it is much more profitable and cash returns are immediate, whereas working in the fields is laborious and the return is unstable due to uncertain weather conditions, crop failure, crop disease, and pest attacks, which are becoming more frequent. The number of tourists is increasing every year. The tourists who stay in the lodges

and eat locally support the local economy more than those who come in large numbers in organised tours and camp in tents. The camping tourists do not contribute much to the local economy as they bring everything they need with them including porters, food, fuel, cooks, and guides. Some of them hire horses to trek around Lo-manthang and they pay for camp sites. However, the Government of Nepal earns trekking fees from every tourist.

Landholding as an Adaptive Measure

The Loba identity is based on their relation to property, i.e. house, land, livestock, and ornaments. The community has a system of inheritance of parental property by mainly the eldest son. The community also follows Lamaism where the second son or the second daughter, whichever the case may be, enter monkhood or nunhood. As mentioned earlier, the Loba follow customary laws and parental property is kept undivided with usually the eldest son inheriting it. The inherited land, and other property, is the basis for social and cultural participation in the community in Lo-manthang. The indivisibility of the household and non-fragmentation of land is an adaptive mechanism to cope with highly limited resources. The amount of land owned by individual households is measured in units relating to the seed needed to cultivate the land. This is also closely related with social life. When someone asks a Loba, how much land they own, the reply is, for example, 60 *khal* meaning two days' ploughing by a pair of *zhopas* is required. If a family owns 30 *khal* of land, the local community considers them as one *dhongba*, i.e., one household. At the same time, they become members of the community. The household is responsible for all kinds of community obligations, such as irrigation canal maintenance, free labour services for the community when required, and they can take part in Yartung, the horse racing festival. The eldest son is also responsible for taking care of his siblings until they are grown and of their parents and ritual ceremonies. Any items owned by *dhongba* cannot be sold and it has to be kept for the next generation. However, property earned by the household, separate from that received as *dhongba* is distributed to children (sons and daughters) other than the eldest son. Such property might include the *daijo/ghiu*, property brought from the wife's natal family. Daughters are given ornaments brought from the natal family. Due to changes in the economic system, previously rich people who owned more land and livestock are becoming poorer than those who were poor and the polyandrous brothers who moved away from the family without any property but found employment in foreign countries.

Lakti Chikula: Labour Management

Agriculture demands a lot of work, such as maintaining the irrigation system, repairing canals, preparing and carrying manure to the fields, ploughing, digging, sowing, weeding, harvesting, carrying the harvest home, threshing, storing, sun-drying, and husking and grinding. The wages of a labourer are rising fast and sometimes it becomes more expensive for local farmers to grow their own food than buy from the market. Due to the shortage of labour, the Loba have to hire labour from Baglung and Rolpa districts in western Nepal during peak agricultural seasons, particularly the harvesting season.

Lakti Chikula is a group rotation of farm workers among land cultivators. In Lo-manthang, people are not able to follow this system of labour exchange all seasons and especially during harvest time. They practice *lakti chikula* while carrying manure to the fields. They go from one household to the next based on the arrangement of time made with the owners of *zhos*. Since there are only two pairs of *zhos* in Lo-manthang, they have to hire from different neighbouring villages, such as Fuwa, Kimiling, Thinger, Namgyel, Dhakmer, Ghami, and Surkhang. However, during the harvest season, young men and women wage labourers come from Bhalkot in the Nishi VDC of the Baglung District. They work from 8am to 6pm and get paid NPR 300-500 with three to four meals a day, depending on the quality of their work. I observed that some boys aged 14 to 15 years of age were also working as were some couples with their children. In the fields, besides ploughing other people work to dig canals to irrigate the fields. Seed casting is done by the experienced farmers. The workers are organised in groups and they work for every individual household who have participated in the group.

Collective Maintenance of Irrigation System

Irrigation canals supply water from nearby streams, which originate from glaciers. The canals are maintained by traditional rules and mostly by local people. They have a local system on how to distribute water at the head-end and tail-end of the field. Nowadays, they also get support of repair materials, like cement and pipes from different NGOs, the VDC, and government offices. Not only crops but trees are also planted in the region and need irrigation. People also plant trees on the edge of canals, which makes the area green during the spring and summer. According to a key informant, every year people have been abandoning previously cultivated land. The land is turning into grass fields for fodder, and it is collected in September and used during winter. In this way, the total grain production in Lo-manthang and other VDCs of Upper Mustang is decreasing.

Crop cultivation requires regular irrigation and more so in the arid Lo region. The permeable soil structure and high evaporation due to intense sunshine make the application of water at regular intervals crucial (Ojha 1982, 65). Since water is not abundantly available, the canal system breaks down frequently and requires maintenance on a regular basis, even during the night. In order to solve this problem, the Loba have developed as village head system that has to mobilise obligatory labour and support from among the households that own land and use water for irrigation and household purposes. Labour contribution for irrigation canal maintenance is fixed in proportion to the size of the landholding, which is determined by the amount of seeds required to cultivate the land. The local unit of land measurement is a *khal*.

A *Khal* was determined by the seed sown by a single person in the past, which is recorded. For example, if the canal repair work needs 15 days, the household that owns 30 *khal* land is required to contribute labour for 15 days. Households that do not own land but have settled in Lo-manthang also have to contribute labour since they use the water to drink when there is no water supply in the pipes. Nowadays, people receive support from NGOs and GOs to repair the canals, and use cement and pipes so breakdowns are less frequent. There are 12 irrigation canals in Lo-manthang, six are repaired and used by the whole village, while the other six are used by only a small number of five to 20 households. The small irrigation canals are maintained by the water appropriators only. Throughout the Lo region, one can observe large tracts of permanently abandoned land. Much of it may have been abandoned as far back as 30 to 35 years ago. There are some indications that the river beds became deeper through erosion due to frequent glacial lake outburst flows, but the people could not build or repair the canals with the available technology at that time to drain their fields of the collected water.

The National Adaptation Programme of Action, Nepal (NAPA, Nepal) has recognised six thematic areas relating to climate change, and agriculture and food security is one of them. NAPA has prioritised the integrated management of agriculture, water, and the forest and biodiversity sectors through the building and enhancing of the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities and improved systems and access to services related to agricultural development (GoN 2011). Agriculture in Lo-manthang has been affected not only by global warming and extreme weather events, but also by tourism, Chinese government policy towards Nepal and the policies of Nepali government, NGO activity, road construction for transportation facilities that links the markets of Pokhara, Beni, and other parts of Nepal

and Chinese-ruled Tibet. Some households have started to plant trees as there is not enough water for crop cultivation. Trees are valuable in the region and growing them is not labour-intensive compared to growing crops. Timber from *populus* trees is very good for building houses.

Sakaluka Ritual: Spiritual Connectivity with the Agricultural System

Agriculture is seasonal and starts in February-March and ends in September. The crop germination period is long. Barley (*uwa*), buckwheat, wheat, peas, and mustard are the main crops. The *sakaluka* ritual is the heart of a collective action, which is performed at the community and household levels for good weather and a good harvest. This ritual has social, spiritual, and material dimensions. In the Loba language *sa* means soil, *ka* means mouth and *lu* means manure. Therefore, *sakaluka*, etymologically, means, opening mouth of soil and manure. It is performed for five to 15 days during the first month of Tibetan calendar. The dates are fixed by the *amchi* (traditional shaman), based on the weather conditions. Planting begins with *Sakaluka*, and symbolises that the earth is warming and the land needs to open-up following the ploughing, which is first done by women. During *sakaluka*, the village head and his assistants are appointed in turn to perform the ritual. They are supported by a Lama, *amchi*, king, and other locally respected people. On the day of *sakaluka* they elect a new village head and other authority figures on a rotation basis and the previous authorities are thanked.

The ecological relationship of the Loba people extends from different seasons and rituals to the spirit of land, settlements and households, and rituals are performed to maintain these relationships. The Loba believe that the snake god becomes active during the *sakaluka* ritual and offer it incense, food, and drinks. On the occasion of *sakaluka*, first, a girl and a boy are selected as *lopsanpa* on the basis of their astrologically matching the birth year and their match with the five elements (air, water, fire, soil, space) in the current year for a good harvest and the well-being of the livestock and people. The other criteria for *lopsanpa* selection are living parents, and they should preferably be unmarried. Then on the day of *sakaluka* they worship *jholah*, the village deity that lives just above the main entrance gate of Lo-manthang. Then they go to the *chhipra*, the stable of the king, to get manure. The *lopsanpa* boy digs the manure and the girl fills a basket with the manure, which is then carried by the girl to the *ujha chhaybu*, the field of king, with a procession following. In the past, there was a tradition of playing drums and singing songs.

For *sakaluka* the Lopa prepare special items of food: *tsampa* of naked barley mixed with pieces of cane molasses, sugar, butter, dried cheese (*churpi*). This is offered to the snake god to make the snakes happy. They also bring two mana (one kilo) *uwa* (naked barley). They dig a small area and mix it with soil and they cast the seed highly concentrated in a small area. The women start ploughing the field and then the men plough afterwards. They worship their ancestors and they change their *lungta* (prayer flags) at home. Similar practices are also followed by the Manange people of Manang U valley to express their collective identity (Aase and Vetaas 2007, 58-59). However, in Lo-manthang they explain that they want to prevent crop and fodder destruction by livestock. It is believed that if women with attractive clothes plough the land, the *Naga* deity becomes happy and blesses with good weather and harvest. *Chang* (rice beer) is prepared under the leadership of an old *ghempa*, the village head. A male goat is freed as an offering to the deity. It will not be killed for food in the future. First, *Sakaluka* is performed at the community level, which is organised by the village head. Each and every household also performs the ritual worship at the beginning of planting season for the year. Every household works independently by sowing seeds of different varieties.

Conclusion

The food sovereignty of the Loba is in a critical situation. First, they lost their sovereignty over the salt and grain trade with Tibet. Second, climate change has had a devastating effect on high altitude areas like Lo-manthang. The closure of trade with Tibet has a great significance as the Loba have not only lost economically, but also socially as they had established relationships through marriage and access to pasture. Therefore, they were forced to reduce the number of their livestock. Their priority over local production of food crops has changed. Due to climate change, scarcity of water is rising and land is being abandoned. In order to cope with the socio-environmental crisis, they are adopting other alternatives, such as seasonal migration, value-focused agricultural production, tree plantation, employment in foreign countries, and involvement in tourism. Migration to areas like Pokhara and Kathmandu is taking place. The new generation are mostly educated and have grown up outside Lo-manthang, which has resulted in further migration for economic and other social opportunities. Low productivity of crops and ultimately desertification of the land has also threatened the indigenous knowledge in relation to the local habitat and food sovereignty of the Loba of Lo-manthang.

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The Issues and Impacts of Social Security Benefits Programme and Citizenship on Elderly People

PRAPANNA MASKEY

Introduction

Social Security Benefits Programme (SSBP) evolved amidst the situation of insecurity and instability. Industrialisation process explicitly and implicitly contributed in the emergence of SSBP in the worldwide context. Situation of insecurity is deeply ingrained in the very fibre of modern system of industrial organization. Livelihood is uncertain and out of control in industrial environment (Epstein 1936). With the advent of industrialisation process, SSBP was introduced as a necessity in the industrialised nations as the care of the elderly and mentally ill being worse than in non-industrial societies (Reynolds 1995). SSBP is the right of every citizen for their contribution to society. Everyone has a right to be entitled with security in the adverse circumstances, for instance, in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood circumstances beyond the control of the individual (Morsink 1999). The state redistributes social security benefits to the citizens in recognition of their lifetime contribution. Social security programme operates through state financial resource reallocation and redistribution. Social security programme redistributes resources across generations from parent to children and rich to the poor (Tabellini 2000). The income is always reallocated from earners to non-earners or low earners under the SSBP. Similarly, government interventions in the programme are the consequence of government-invented industrial and urban society (Rimlinger 1968).

Although SSBP aims to mitigate prevailing poverty; however, programmes have been unable to wipe out the substantial poverty under the capitalistic mode of production. Capitalism promotes the imperativeness of money in

each and every aspect of life. Then, capitalism eventually transforms the individual into an individualist being. Capitalism increases the number of poor as the capitalist seeks to multiply profit through any means. Chambers (1983) argues poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon, encompassing not only lack of income but vulnerability and powerlessness. In such a situation, SSBP can be regarded as a slight relief programme for the poor thought is unable to eradicate existing poverty. Poverty and their physical state are correlated with vulnerability and powerlessness. SSBP entitles the elderly to economic capital. Gradually, the economic capital enables them to achieve social capital and cultural capital. Elderly people celebrate religious and cultural programmes, inviting friends and relatives to strengthen social bonds and relationships. Bourdieu (1986) states that social life may be conceived as a multi-dimensional status game in which individuals draw upon their economic, social and cultural capital. Elderly people utilise their capital to strengthen their position in the game (Bourdieu 1986).

Income insecurity and the explicit consequences of old age are an acute problem in Nepal. Severity of deprivation, a low degree of development of the formal social security systems, limited or inappropriate coverage of public support, resource constraints, low levels of institutional development for security provision, and the relative powerlessness of the poor and vulnerable are key features of developing countries. Such features make it difficult for the implementation of SSBP to disburse benefits in a smooth manner (Burgess 1984). Specific programme is required for specific countries in such situations. As Nepal undergoes rapid socio-economic and political transformation, such as urbanisation, economic liberalisation, and increasing rural-urban divide, there will be markedly increased need for effective social protection programmes.

SSBP was introduced in Nepal with the reinstatement of multi-party democracy in 1991. The people, therefore, perceive the social security programme as a reward for their contribution in the democratisation process. Former Prime Minister of Nepal, the late Manmohan Adhikari announced the universal flat pension distribution programme to all the elderly above 75 years in 1994. Initially, five districts from the five development regions of Nepal were selected to pilot the scheme, and the programme was implemented by the Ministry of Education and Sports. Prior to the introduction of the social security benefit programme, the elderly of Nepal were completely reliant upon their family even for just a little money. Eventually, the Government of Nepal also declared that it would provide allowances to widows above the age of 60 and disabled people. The social security welfare programme has gained widespread popularity

in Nepal since its inception. Frequent inquiries into the implementation of social security benefit shows it is very popular. Any individual without regard to gender, class, or ethnicity is entitled to social security benefit on the basis of a set criteria.

Welfare states throughout the world provide social security benefits to the people. However, these welfare states rarely provide a substantial amount of social security benefits, granting only a minimum level of social security benefits to its citizens. Different states operate social security programmes through diverse tools and in different ways. The Government of Nepal provides social allowance to the marginalised and the needy. With the advancement of society, citizenship evolved in a gradual manner. Marshall (1950) states that first civil rights were ensured in the eighteenth century, political rights in the nineteenth, and social rights in the twentieth. Social rights ensure the social minimum needed for living and security. Rights are extended from class to class and from gender to gender. The right to welfare is ensured by the social rights (Marshall 1950). The Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 categorises social security as a fundamental right. The social welfare programme in Nepal is able to ensure rights to its citizens to a certain extent. A specific feature of welfare state is the provision of social security benefits. The apparatus to implement welfare in Nepal is the social security benefits mechanism. However, the programme needs to extend to reflect the social changes in the country.

Social Security and Citizenship

Social security benefits bring a wide range of explicit and implicit impacts on the life chances of elderly people. In the case of Nepal, out of the total population, elderly people above 60 years of age constitute 8.13 per cent (CBS 2012). The social security benefit programme explicitly impacts the elderly people and there is also a spill-over impact on family members. The social security benefit is able to ensure organic bonds among the members of the modern society. Elderly people cultivate good social relationships with peer groups, neighbours, concerned individuals, and bank staff before and after receiving social security benefits. Elderly people maintain cooperation with various stakeholders, and organic solidarity is possible in through the social security benefit programme. The elderly utilise social security benefits in the consumption of basic need items. Social security benefits enable the elderly to adjust to the changing times and circumstances.

Social Fabric

The social security benefit programme significantly strengthens the social fabric. SSB enables the elderly to align with family members, peer groups, and the other elderly people living in the same vicinity. Strong family relationships are the glue that binds people together and maintains integration. The social security programme bridges the existing gap between the elderly and family members of different generations. Social security benefits in the form of cash enable the elderly to be involved in social activities without being dependent on their family member despite the fact that the elderly depend upon family members for survival. Social security systems strengthen the position of the elderly to fit within the family-based social structure. Social security benefits contribute to the togetherness of the extended family. Elderly members living in joint families invite all family members to celebrate after receiving social security benefits. Elderly people may organise a family picnic or they get involved in such gatherings. The elderly even join events organised by family members such as marriage ceremonies, birthday parties, and other events. Social security benefits are able to bridge the gap between senior and junior members of the family. roose(1976) rightly mentions that people will only engage in collective life once they have secured the personal realm. The social security allowance limits exploitation and discrimination in the family structure. The spill-over impact emanates from the social welfare programme in the image of elderly people.

Social security benefits are able to maintain consensus within the family. Social security programmes convert family detachment into attachment as capitalism is the source of family detachment. However, in terms of children, the elderly prefer involving daughters instead of sons and daughters-in-law. An overwhelming number of elderly people mentioned that daughters are more responsive to the needs of their parents than sons.

Economy

Maintaining a subsistence level of life is a major challenge in Nepal. However, few elderly people solely depend upon social security benefits to do so. As the future of children depends on parental status, lifestyle of the elderly depends on the status of the children. Joblessness and illness of children deteriorate the life chances of the elderly. Furthermore, the recent earthquake added injuries as another issue that is indirectly influencing insecurity. The earthquake deprived the elderly of the basic needs of shelter and security. In such a situation, social security is able to heal the existing injury only to a certain extent.

Physical Quality of Life

Social security benefits affect the everyday physical quality of life of elderly people. Social security benefits ensure the economic well-being of elderly people. The economic well-being contributes to physical well-being. The elderly use some of the money from social security benefits to purchase medicines to control blood pressure and sugar in many cases. The well-being of the elderly is often dependent on medication and participation in religious activities for mental health. Social security benefits ensure liberty and autonomy of the elderly. This autonomy allows the elderly to fulfil their cherished wishes. Furthermore, social security benefits enable the elderly to be involved in the public sphere. In this regard, Sen (1983) points out that poverty is a circumstance without some basic opportunities of well-being and a failure to achieve certain minimum capabilities. The social security benefit programme enables the elderly to exercise a minimum level of capabilities. Money from social security benefits allows the elderly to travel to see friends and has emerged as a means to curtail the malady of industrial society.

Religion

Religion is a means of psychosocial healing for people. It is rare for people to remember and pray to God when they are happy and successful, as they pretend to be atheists. However, people remember religion in situations of trouble and hardship (Maskey 2014). This research found the majority of the elderly people belonging to diverse religious backgrounds as religiously oriented and monolithic. Hinduism recommends *sanyashram* for the elderly. Dubois (1972) writes that Hinduism has the preferred state of *sannyasi* for the elderly, and to achieve this, they must detach themselves from their work and family responsibilities and become wandering ascetics. The elderly following different religions use money from social security benefits in different ways. However, the majority of the elderly believe in the concept of rebirth and freely participate in charitable and religious activities. Elderly Buddhists observe rituals more frequently than the younger ones in villages where monastic ceremonies take place (Spiro 1971). Maybe such practices allow the elderly people to add virtue to be added for their next birth. The elderly give money to the children of their homes on special religious days such as *aushi*, *purnima*, *asthami*, and *masanta*, and they regularly donate cooked food to temples and *gumbas*. According to them, donating in kind does not allow the poor to misuse money for the wrong purposes. The everyday life of the elderly begins with religious activities. The elderly use their allowance to buy items to perform religious

rituals like *pooja* and *shraddha*. The affluent elderly donate their social security benefit for charitable purposes.

Social Security and Capitalism

Historically, the elderly of Nepal occupy a prominent position within the joint family system and public sphere. Junior members of the family receive blessings and advice from the elders, which they tend to follow. However, with the advent of capitalism, the elderly are treated differently. The capitalist mode of production recognises capital as the best achievement of the world. People living under capitalism seek to multiply capital and material possessions. However, the elderly remain devoid of capital as they do not get jobs. Roosevelt described the destitution of the elderly as the by-product of modern industrial life Epstein (1936). In the capitalist world, old people were among the last to be hired and first to be fired and the majority of them are poor (Paterson and Perry 1995). The capitalist economy provides no pay for involuntary idleness. In such circumstances, the social benefit programme seeks to ensure social justice in the capitalist world, including Nepal. Through the social security benefit programme, elderly people are less likely to be affected by the negative influence of capitalism. Social security provisions attempt to reduce the tension within capitalist mode of production where the value of individual is determined through economic capital. In capitalism, capital determines the social status of each and every individual. Therefore, the social security benefit programme is able to pacify social disorder in the capitalist environment.

Insecurity is deeply embedded in the fibre of the capitalist system. Frequent inflation decreases the purchasing power of the elderly. Social security benefits help in this context. However, the social security benefits scheme should be amended to reflect the changing times and circumstances. The social security programme aims to mitigate the inequalities generated by market economies without abolishing the market under capitalism. The social security benefit scheme aims to share at least a basic level of socio-economic and cultural well-being.

The Welfare State

The welfare state operates different programmes in different countries. Social welfare includes all programmes directed specifically at the well-being of individuals and families. The basic aim of the social insurance programme is to overcome the insecurity which arises from the loss of wages during enforced idleness in the industrialised state Epstein (1936). The range of such programmes is much the same in the industrialised

countries although with significant variations on the emphasis and priorities. The Government of Nepal introduced a reservation scheme for marginalised people and grants social security to stipulated people under the social security scheme. Social security provisions ensure a certain level of social stability and security to the beneficiaries, despite the amount being inadequate at present.

The basic motive behind the introduction of the welfare programme was to promote individual welfare. However, invisible motive of the welfare state is to implement a peaceful formula in advanced capitalist democracies after the Second World War. The peace formula, firstly, provides assistance and support to those citizens who suffer from specific needs. Secondly, the welfare state is based on the recognition of the formal role of labour unions both in collective bargaining and the formation of public policy. The peace formula limits and mitigates class conflict and balances asymmetrical power (Offe 1984). In the welfare state, social security is ensured to compensate for accidents or misfortune that prevents some citizens from making purchases due to illness and old age. Defenders of welfare rights regard them as justified special rights and want to see generous compensation (Boucher and Kelly 1998). For example, in modern-day England, the welfare state attempts to provide liberty and security to the poor and the landless as a civilised society, such that even the poor have the right to secure lives (Rimlinger 1968). The Government of Nepal aims to protect the rights of the people. However, the welfare state does not eliminate the real causes of individual contingencies and needs such as work-related diseases, the disorganisation of cities by the capitalist real-estate market, the obsolescence of skills, unemployment but compensates the consequences of such events by the provision of social insurance and social assistance.

Social Justice

Social justice promotes a just society by challenging injustices and valuing diversity. It exists when all people share a common humanity and have a right to equitable treatment, support for their human rights, and a fair allocation of community resources. In conditions of social justice, people are not to be discriminated against, nor their welfare and well-being constrained or prejudiced on the basis of gender, sexuality, religion, political affiliations, age, race, belief, disability, location, social class, socioeconomic circumstances, or other characteristics of their background or group membership (Toowoomba Catholic Education 2006).

Social justice is a feature of the state. Patterns of social justice mark

the level of civilisation of any state. Social justice is promoted through social policy of the state. Social justice maintains equality and balance among the diverse citizenry through the means of social assistance and social insurance programmes. Providing basic security for all is the fundamental characteristic of social justice. Basic Social Security suggested by the ILO (2000) requires policies and institutions where everyone has access to health services, a decent level of education, and basic needs for their existence, which would enable them to function to the best of their capabilities. According to Miller (1979), a just state of affairs is that in which each individual, within a society, has exactly those benefits and burdens which are due to them by virtue of their personhood and actions.

Social justice is the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. Social justice is promoting a just society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity. It is the state that is capable of using force to make sure people are complying with social justice requirements (Miller 1979). The Universal Declaration of Human Right (1948) mentions social security as a basic human right and every citizen has the right to survival, protection, and development. The state of Nepal also ensures social justice for its people by targeting various programmes to individuals without ability to achieve self-betterment due to the existing patriarchal social structure, caste system, regional disparities, and ethnicity. Individual citizens would experience hardships without such support. Adam Smith describes social justice as the improvement of the circumstances of the lower ranks of the people. Such improvement matters for social justice as no society can flourish and be happy, when the greater parts of its members are poor and miserable. The poor feed, clothe, and live by their own labour. In such a situation, attempts should be made to improve their condition. For instance, workers are unable to work better when they are ill-fed and when they are disheartened (Rothschild 1995). The social security programme is the best means so far devised to grant social justice. The Government of Nepal distributes social security benefits by utilising its accumulated revenue. The social security benefit programme in Nepal is based on a direct cash transfer. The elderly are entitled to social security benefits on a quarterly basis with a social security identity card. However, the quarterly social security allowance earned by the majority of elderly is hardly sufficient for their basic immediate needs.

Conclusion

The SSBP aims to ensure social security in society. The Government of Nepal ensures welfare and rights of Nepali people through social rights on

the basis of citizenship. Worldwide, social security programme emerged as a relief programme in the social environment of industrialisation. In the case of Nepal, the social security programme emerged with the advent of democratic dispensation. The social security benefit programme positively transforms the situation of the elderly people interweaving them into the social fabric. However, it is not able to bring substantial changes to the social life of the elderly owing to the inadequacy of the benefit amount. The elderly belong to the dependent-age category, and elderly people are dependent on the state, family, and neighbourhood to eke out a living. The elderly were associated with various occupations during their lifetime. However, their physical condition and age criteria in job tenure prevent them from being involved in their previous occupations. In this context, social security benefits remain the only source of income to use without the consent of others. The social security allowance is crucial for elderly people with jobless children. Elderly people enjoy mobility in the public sphere through the money they receive as social security benefits. Social security entitlements allow elderly people to achieve economic capital, which in turn, enables them to achieve social and cultural capital. The social security programme is also successful in helping maintain social cohesion, promote social stability and solidarity, and generate a feeling of belongingness through citizenship status. It helps create classlessness and a sense of equality among people as well as promote welfare in society through social assistance.

Social security benefit programmes uplift the position of the elderly people of Nepal. However, numerous elderly people are deprived of social security benefits due to lack of a citizenship certificate. The Government of Nepal would be more inclusive and flexible if some alternative evidence enables the elderly to receive social security benefits. On the other hand, those receiving the benefits complain that it is inadequate due to growing inflation. The programme has been unable to break the cycle of poverty, but is able to reduce poverty to a certain extent. Social security benefits seem to be the only viable alternative for the vulnerable elderly. The capability of the elderly is determined by continuous altruistic support, love, and care of family members. The ability to support their family financially enables them to achieve respectable positions within their family and society. A wide range of social and economic problems compels the elderly to depend on social security benefits. Finally, the social security benefit programme plays a vital role in enhancing social equity and social justice. However, the social security benefit amount should be revised by taking inflation into account and the current circumstances. The Government of Nepal

should generate resources through the social and economic development of Nepal to adequately distribute social security benefits in a sustainable manner.

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Bullet vs ‘Bullet’

An Ethnographic Study of the Perceptions of Youths in Transition in Nepal

RAVINDRA CHANDRASIRI PALLIYAGURUGE

Introduction

Nepal introduced privatisation in the education sector in 1981, and the number of private schools, which are generally called ‘*Boarding Schools*’ increased dramatically. The medium of instruction of those schools is English and most of them were established in Kathmandu valley. According to many of the youth in the Kathmandu valley, there are government schools in their villages but they are not good. Therefore, to gain a ‘proper education’, the youth are migrating from different parts of the country to the Kathmandu valley. Amatya (2005) notes that annually around 100,000 rural students, both male and female, move to urban centres for higher education. Moreover, the researcher also observed many migrated youths from different development regions of the country in the Kathmandu valley as they came not only for higher education but also for school education, which indicates that the youth in the Kathmandu valley represent ideas, views, and aspirations of whole of Nepal. After the youth migrate to the Kathmandu valley, they often live in private hostels, which for them, is quite expensive. Therefore, if they have enough money they try to find rooms or flats to rent. Some of them stay with their family members in a flat, but the majority reside with their mothers, elder sisters, or brothers, as fathers or other male members of the family are frequently working abroad or in their village and send money to their sons and daughters in Kathmandu.

After the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2006 and during the drafting the new constitution, Nepal is effectively in a transition phase under the interim constitution. In this context, the future expectations of the youth in Bachelor’s and non-Bachelor’s levels of education and their contribution to socio-cultural and political-economic development

are very important. During the war, youths (from both sides) expected to win through the 'Gun Bullet', but, they only achieved vast devastation, destruction, and loss of life.¹ The second 'Bullet', which is mentioned as part of the theme of this study denotes 'Bullet Motorcycles'. One of the most popular and expensive motorcycles in Nepal, according to most of the youth in Kathmandu is the 'Bullet motorcycle'. They want to buy it as a fashion or symbol of wealth; therefore, the name of the 'Bullet Motorcycle' is used as a symbol that represents the youths' expectations of migrating abroad or achieving a western lifestyle instead of developing the country.

Objectives

What are the perceptions of non-Bachelor's-level youth and Bachelor's-level youth in Nepal? What is the impact of future perceptions of the youth on Nepal, especially the betterment of the country? Are there correlations between the perceptions of non-Bachelor's-level and Bachelor's-level youths in Kathmandu?

Research Problem

The main research question of the study is why do the youth desire a 'Bullet motorcycle' as their future aspirations instead of the development of the country?

Literature Review

Greene (2001) studied the youth in the Kathmandu valley in 'Mixed messages: unsettled cosmopolitanisms in Nepali Pop'. Methodologically, this study was based on ethnographic research methods, but Greene's primary concerns were on 'Mix Music' (remix Music) and youth identity in the Kathmandu valley. For him, 'Remixes became very popular in late 1990s Nepali pop' (Greene 2001). He concluded that the Kathmandu youth are dancing and singing to find pleasure and explore identity issues, but he did not clearly explain what kinds of identity issues the youth of Kathmandu might have. It may be issues of gender, youth identity among the elders and youth groups, religious identity, caste or ethnic identity to name a few. Rather than explaining the types of identity issues, Greene expressed that the youth of Kathmandu are seeking identity through music and dancing. No doubt, this is a logical and innovative idea regarding the behaviour of the urban youth in Nepal, but, this idea has to be linked with the specific identities of the youth.

1 Gordon 2005

However, there are similarities between Greene's study and this research, as the research site is the Kathmandu valley and ethnographic research methods were used by Greene's study and this research. While Greene's study focused on music, this research is interested in the youths' perceptions.

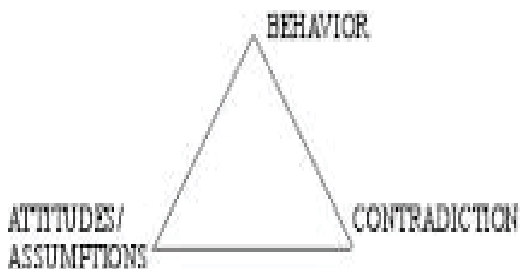
Conceptual Framework

Wallensteen's (2007) Conflict Dynamic Approach and Davis's (1959; 1962) Theory of Relative Deprivation have been applied to construct the conceptual framework of this study.

The Conflict Dynamic Approach suggests that a conflict moves among the three corners of a triangle, named by A, B, and C. Therefore, this triangle is identified as the 'Conflict Triangle'. A prominent scholar on conflict, Galtung, first formulated and coined the term 'Conflict Triangle', and corner 'A' refers to attitudes or assumptions, which are embedded within the conflict, corner 'B' implies behaviour. According to Galtung (1996), 'B' can be observed at the manifest, overt level, and more particularly as violent physical or verbal acts or as hostile body language. Corner 'C' is identified with contradictions and Galtung says: 'The contradiction has to involve something wanted. Let us call it a goal and its attainment a goal-state' (Galtung 1996). Furthermore, he said that when people achieve goals, then they will realise a goal as happiness (*sukha*). If they do not achieve the expected goal, then the people will experience deprivation (*dukha*). Therefore, we can say:

Conflict = Attitudes/Assumptions + Behaviour + Contradiction

Figure 1: Conflict Triangle



(Galtung 1996)

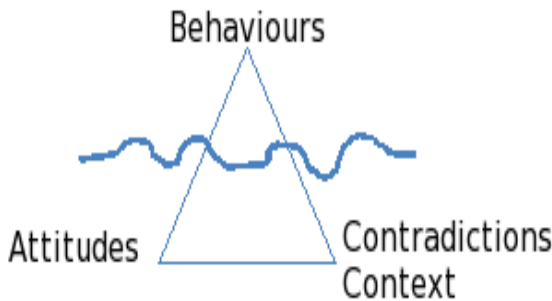
The conflict triangle is applied to analyse the dynamics of certain conflicts, and a conflict can begin from any of these corners, but these corners are

interrelated with each other. Therefore, each corner is interdependent with the other corners (Bergström 1970). If a conflict arises from one corner, it will spread to other corners.

The conflicts can be seen as two ways:

1. Actor Conflict: A and C both are conscious
2. Structural Conflict: A and C both subconscious

Figure 2: Conflict as an Iceberg in the sea



(Galtung 1996)

Therefore, conflicts can be seen as 'Iceberg' in the sea. The visible part of the conflict is very small. Like an iceberg, an unimaginably large part of the conflict is invisible. They cannot be clearly seen or identified. This invisible part might be embedded within attitudes and/or the contradiction of the conflict. To identify conflicts as Icebergs, it requires a deeper understanding of the dynamics of society. These A, B and C oriented approaches to conflict can be categorised into eight subdivisions according to their possibilities.

Table 1: Conflict Subdivisions

A = 0,	B = 0,	C = 0	Total no-conflict, the state of death
A,	B = 0,	C = 0	Attitudes/assumptions prepared
A = 0,	B,	C = 0	Behavioural patterns prepared
A,	B,	C = 0	Attitudes/assumptions and behaviour prepared
A = 0,	B = 0,	C	Contradiction is there and nothing else
A,	B = 0,	C	The subconscious level fully prepared
A = 0,	B,	C,	Ritualistic conflict behaviour
A,	B,	C	A fully articulated conflict

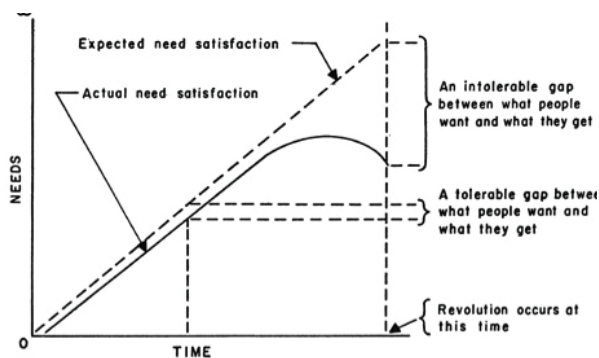
(Galtung 1996)

To understand conflict as a whole and the dynamic processes, the

anthropological viewpoint of society provides an in-depth understanding of deep-rooted societal conflicts. This approach is needed to understand conflicts which are not visible, but to gain an academic understanding of those conflicts, the application of theory is very important.

Davies (1962), a prominent American sociologist identified 'Relative Deprivation' as the main cause that provoked revolution. His point of view was the result of a socio-economic and socio-psychological study of revolutions. Davies said, 'Revolutions are most likely to occur when a prolonged period of objective economic and social development is followed by a short period of sharp reversal' (Davies, 1962). This theoretical understanding enhances our knowledge about revolutions by saying that they are the result of short-term and quick break down of economic growth after long-term economic development. Because of this regression, it creates a gap between peoples' expectations and the availability of resources. This context was theorised as the 'J curve theory of relative deprivation', which is explained in figure three. This idea of 'relative deprivation' can be applied to analyse other social conflicts, such as non-revolutionary conflicts.

Figure 3: Needs Satisfaction and Revolution



(Davies 1962)

Wallensteen (2007) modified the idea of the 'J curve theory of relative deprivation' to some extent by saying that the gap between people's expectations and actual their situation will create frustration among people and it will lead to social destruction, such as conflicts. This theoretical framework is applied to understand the impact of the perceptions of the youth on the betterment of the country. Furthermore, it will help to identify youth mobilisation in the current context of transition Nepal.

Methodology

In an epistemological sense, and ethnomethodology was applied in this study. Therefore, this research is based upon ethnographic research methods. Participant observation and case studies were used to collect data. The case studies consisted of 10 bachelor's level and 10 non-bachelors level students who are currently residing in Kathmandu.

The researcher is a Sri Lankan student of Tribhuvan University, Nepal. He has been pursuing a Master Degree in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies at the Department of Conflict, Peace and Development, Tribhuvan University, from September 2014 to August 2015. He has been residing at a private Boys' Hostel in ward 34, Basuki Marg, Mid Baneshwor, Kathmandu, during that period. In this hostel, there are 35 male students. Among them, two students are studying hotel management one is studying medical sciences two students are preparing for the IELTS Exam, one has a job, three are studying engineering, five are science students, and the remaining are studying management. Their age ranges from 16 years to 36 years, including the researcher. The level of study ranges from grade 11 to Master's Level. Except for the researcher, all the students are from different parts of Nepal, and represent the diversity of caste and ethnicity of Nepal. Out of them, there is a sub-warden, who is a management graduate.

While sitting, eating, sleeping, reading, and chatting, the researcher observed their behaviour, living patterns, attitudes, and perceptions. Often, asking direct and indirect questions to gathered data for the research. Sometimes, they volunteered to give information about themselves and about other topics like politics, development, religion, culture, geography, and the people of the country. Living with them, the researcher observed and tried to understand the perceptions of non-graduate level youths in Nepal. The researcher can understand and speak a little Nepali, as there are many similar words between the Nepali languages and the researcher's mother tongue, the Sinhala language of Sri Lanka. Therefore, he could understand conversations by context. The hostel students spoke in English in front of him, otherwise in difficult situations; other friends translated the conversation into English.

Out of the 35 hostel students, the four non-graduates were purposively selected for case studies. They are very close to the researcher, and due to that reason, they freely expressed their ideas and views ignoring the researcher's identity as a foreigner. Two of them are roommates. The other two are very close friends. One non-graduate student was met when the researcher visited the world famous Pashupatinath Temple at Gaushala. He was a grade twelve student who came from the Tarai region. Then,

the researcher had an in-depth interview and discussion with this non-graduate student after informing them of the need to collect data for the research.

Before living in the hostel, the researcher lived with other Sri Lankan friends (three female and one male student) in a rented house at Tinkune, Kathmandu, for one month. At that time, two Nepali girls who were residing nearby become their friends. They were coming and going for different purposes and they helped each other during that time. They are sisters from the Kavre district. The elder sister is studying chartered accountancy and has a Bachelor's degree in management. The younger one is in grade 12 studying science. They gave interviews after they had been informed about the research.

There was some difficulty in finding three other non-graduate female students. It is assumed that these difficulties might have occurred due to patriarchy, and the researcher's foreign origin. However, when the researcher was going to college, a few non-graduate girl students became friends and the three closest and articulate students were selected for the study. Apart from this, Facebook, the social network site, was used to chat and get information from them. The researcher's class consisted of fifty students. They represent diverse backgrounds, including the media, military, education, business, social work, and chartered accountancy. After informing to them about the research five male and five female students were selected for research purpose. The discussions were conducted in English.

In addition, attending day-to-day classes at the Department of Conflict, Peace and Development Studies and adapting to the normal life of Kathmandu, and observing the Facebook profiles of the youth in Nepal, the researcher observed the whole system of life of the youth in transition in Nepal. Therefore, one-year-long participant observation was used to explore the research questions. The research primarily focused on both male and female students in the Kathmandu valley. The youth who are not going to school or college or youths outside of the Kathmandu valley are not respondents in this study, and this can be considered as a limitation of the research.

Reasons to Desire Permanent Settlement Abroad

The 'Bullet motorcycle' is the most popular and expensive motorcycle in Nepal, according to the youth in the Kathmandu valley. It is comparatively heavier than other motorcycles in Nepal. When they are riding it, it produces a loud noise. Then, the audience can easily see the rider. Sometimes, the riders of Bullet motorcycle want to show off their riding style to others. For

them, most of the youth want to buy a 'Bullet Motorcycle' as a fashion or symbol of wealth. The people who hope to buy this motorcycle do not care about the sound but the sound serves as a symbol. The people, who may not think about air and sound pollution, may not think about the betterment of the country. Therefore, it can be assumed that, if they have a chance to go abroad and an opportunity to settle there permanently arises, they will definitely take it. However, in contrast, there are a number of ideas and views against the above assumption from the answers of the youth in the Kathmandu valley. They reveal a number of reasons for migration to Europe or other countries.

Corrupt Systems in Society

According to an engineering undergraduate student:

Corruption is everywhere. My parents are working in Gulf countries. I have a younger brother. He is also living in this hostel and studying in Kathmandu. My parents want to make me an engineer. That is their expectation. Everyone is talking about corruption among the politicians. But no one talks about other type of corruption in our society. Look. Can we easily find a flat without bribing to the brokers in Kathmandu? Everywhere, the government and private institutions, their top and mid-level heads are old people. They are not giving opportunities to us, even though we have learnt and achieved higher degrees. That is why I want to go abroad. Then, if I find an opportunity, I will settle there.

Corruption and bad governance are recorded in scholarly articles and research reports, but corruption as a practice of human beings or as a system of society is not taken into account. This boy was born in Nepal, but after moving to Kathmandu he has been alienated from his own society by the system of corruption. Karl Marx used the term 'alienation' to identify workers who had become alienated from the process of labour and production in their own society (Heywood 1997). Similarly, this young man was alienated from his own society, due to money or other materialistic concerns. Another student, a management graduate, pointing to the road nearby, said:

Look at that road. It was nicely constructed two years ago. But, now, can anyone use that road? There is no problem, if they take money as a bribe or corruption. At least they should work. Now, they take the whole amount of money but do not do anything.

He is talking about corruption in development projects and the incentives for project planners and contractors.

Free Education in Foreign Counties

Some youths/students want to go Germany or other countries for education. Some of the European countries, like Germany and Norway, provide free education for students. That is why they want to go and study there. A female management undergraduate, who is also taking a chartered accountancy course said:

If I have a chance to go abroad and settle there permanently, I will not go. Because I want to think about my family members, my father, mother, sisters and brother. The relationship between my family and me is very important. If I have a chance to continue my study while working and sending money home, then, I will go. I know Germany is one of the European countries which provides free education. So, if I have the opportunity I will try to go Germany. Then, I can study without paying and send money home while doing a job. Two of my sisters and younger brother are studying here.

Her immediate sister is living with her and studying at the higher secondary level and agrees, she says: ‘Yes, if I have received a chance to go foreign countries to settle permanently. If I have an opportunity to go abroad to study while doing a job, definitely, I will go even though, it is in Europe or wherever in the world’.

Lack of Opportunities

Another female management undergraduate said that if she has a chance to go abroad and settle there permanently, she will do it without thinking twice. She said that her father is a senior government officer and she was born in Kathmandu and her elder brother is a chartered accountant. Therefore, she does not have severe financial problems, but as a youth, they cannot get good opportunities in Nepal. If she has a chance to go abroad, she said that she would go there without thinking twice. Because, according to her, she can utilise her skills and potential properly in a foreign country, especially in Europe or America. She said that her preference is a ‘Hyundai Car’. She does not like motorcycles or ‘Maruti cars’. It seems that youth who belong to middle-income families and Kathmandu-born families are also suffering from a lack of opportunities. They want to use their skills for the development of the country, but there is lack of opportunities in Nepal

as a developing country. Therefore, they hope to go aboard and get the opportunity to settle there permanently. This will badly affect the system of their country, due to brain drain.

Lack of Youth Participation in Decision-making Processes

An engineering graduate commented that:

The elders do not like to give opportunities to younger ones like us, even though we have knowledge and talent. All political and government institutions are governed by old people. They want to rule the country according to the interest of India. One day, they will sell us to either India or China. I do not like them. All politicians in Nepal are corrupt. Even in private institutions like NGOs or other organisations, it is very difficult to find a job without connections. I want to go Australia.

He expressed his disappointment about the current political, social, and economic systems and geo-political scenario of Nepal.

Western-oriented Psyche

A Western-oriented mentality, which is growing among the youth in Nepal, is another factor behind youth migration to foreign countries. An engineering undergraduate stated:

I want to go to the USA. That is the primary goal of my life. I am studying engineering. There is nothing else, without going to the USA. I do not even have a girlfriend. You know, my friends have girlfriends or so many girlfriends. But I do not like Nepali girls. I 'Don't care about them' (He totally rejects them). I like girls in the USA. In the USA, there is personal freedom. If I have a US green card, then I can travel to other countries also. [...] I have an older sister and a younger sister. The older sister got married and they are in Australia now. They are working there. They are trying to get PR [Permanent Residency] in Australia. They helped me to study. If I go to Australia, my sister and brother-in-law are there to help me. But I do not want to go to Australia.

The researcher observed that a female graduate changed her Facebook profile after being exposed to American students who were participating with her in a three-day workshop.

Poverty

A management undergraduate from the Tarai region told me:

I am very poor and I have to work to earn money to pay school and boarding fees. If I have a chance, I will go to Germany. I will go. I will try to go there. There is free education. Here we have to pay for education, room rent, food, and everything. If I go there, I can study without paying money.

Motivations from their Family

There are family influences behind youth migration. If one or few members of the family work abroad, there is a tendency to go abroad. An undergraduate student who is studying and preparing for the army enlistment test told me:

I want to achieve an officer position in the Nepal Army and then, I want to visit many countries with my wife, after marriage. Since my childhood, my mother wanted to send me abroad. My uncle (Mother's elder brother) is in Belgium. Therefore, she encouraged me to go abroad. That was why I prepared for the IELTS exam. But my grandfather served in the British army in India. Since my childhood, I heard stories of fighting and glory of the army, which was done by my grandfather. Apart from that, he wants to see his own grandson as an army officer like his grandfather. So he always encouraged me to join Nepal army.

He abandoned his ideas to go abroad and instead joined the Nepal Army as a junior officer, after a long and very hard examination process.

Reasons for Non-permanent Settlement Abroad

According to the views and perceptions of the respondents, there are a number of reasons for non-permanent settlement abroad.

Working Opportunities in Nepal

Considering the narratives and discussions of the youth, it can be found that if they have opportunities to do some work in Nepal; they do not want to go abroad. They want to do something on behalf of their county. According to a female management undergraduate regarding moving abroad, 'No, I want to do something for my country'. Moreover, a female American Fulbright scholar and social science graduate said that she does not want to settle permanently there. She wants to work here, in Nepal.

Ancestral Property and Innovative Ideas

If the youth have ancestral property, then they do not think about going abroad. A 16-year-old student in grade 11 said,

I want to open 'copy factory' (paper industry), and want to be a computer engineer. I have forty million (Nepal rupees) worth of land in my village. I want to sell my ancestral property. Every bachelor-level youth wants to go to America or other countries like Dubai, Australia, or Norway for work. Some of them want to emigrate. Emigration means permanently leaving your country. EDV (Electronic Diversity Visa-Lottery can be gained by educated youths) is provided by the American government. That is why many youths want to go there. I do not want go to America. Why go? All my things are here. I want to earn American money by selling copies to them from my future copy factory. If I try, I will be able to earn 40-50 million rupees per year. Then, why should I go to America. But my mother has told me to go to America.

It is clear that if they have enough property or work, they may not have the intention of going abroad.

Family Business

A student who is studying for a degree in hotel management said, 'If I have a chance to go abroad and have an opportunity to settle their permanently, I will not do that. I want to come back with big money and start my own hotel, a big hotel'. Currently, he said his parents have two hotels in his hometown, Sunauli.

Conclusion

Some youths, due to the corrupt systems of society, free education in some foreign counties, lack of opportunities, lack of youth participation in decision-making processes, western-oriented psyches, poverty, and encouragement from their family hope to go abroad and settle there permanently. In contrast, working opportunities in Nepal, ancestral properties and innovative ideas, family ties, and the reputation of the family and societal recognition can be identified as reasons for choosing to not go abroad for permanent settlement. However, there are youths thinking of going abroad and settling there permanently if they have an opportunity, but how many of them can achieve their aspirations. Amatya (2005) pointed out:

‘The parents are unable to support their children’s education in the big cities. Their income which is generated from agriculture is just enough for them. As a consequence, students are occupied in other part-time jobs mainly in restaurants, hotels and tourist centres for extra money. Further they might have tendency to do sex work’ (Amatya 2005).

If they get opportunities to settle permanently abroad, what will be the professions? Most of them will be in a difficult position to find a good job or profession abroad, even if they settle there permanently. It means that there might be a gap between their expectations and realisation of their dreams. According to the theory of relative deprivation (the youth of transitional Nepal will feel deprived mentally whether they are in Nepal or settled permanently abroad. This situation will may lead to more conflict, according to the theory of conflict dynamic approach (Wallenstein 2007). Tensions will lead to more conflict-oriented attitudes or perceptions, which may lead to a contradiction and the resultant behaviour (Galtung 1996). The behaviour might not necessarily be an insurgency like the ten-year armed conflict, also called ‘The People’s War’. It might be youth turmoil and social unrest due to alienation from their society and culture.

For Davies: ‘Well-fed, well-educated, high-status individuals who rebel in the face of apathy among the objectively deprived can accomplish at most a coup d’état’ (Davies 1962). Some symptoms of this can be seen in the youth, both male and female. They are not concerned about other things when they are using social media like Facebook, Twitter, or when they are playing computer games or riding bicycles. Manchanda states that: ‘Over the last decade or so, the template of Nepali politics and society has got radically restructured’ (Manchanda 2008).

Whatever the pattern, deprivation among the youth will create social disorder. Then it may lead to social destruction, because, according to Davies: ‘Political stability and instability are ultimately dependent on a state of mind, a mood, in a society’ (Davies 1962). Therefore, policy-makers, academia, think tanks, civil society activists, and the media should pay attention towards this issue before it further escalates.

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Participatory Democracy and Federalisation in Nepal

What Does It mean for the Feminist Political Agenda?

BINDA PANDEY

Introduction

Background

Nepal is in a protracted transition. A series of political changes have taken place through the people's movements from 1990 to 2006. In 1990, people disposed of the 30-year partyless Panchayat system and established multiparty democracy. The new system provided opportunities to ordinary people, including women, to become organised and to mobilise. It also created an enabling environment for the people to voice their concerns and protest against the violation of basic human rights and discrimination. It also provided space and opportunities to learn organisational skills and act collectively on issues of common concern. Women came together and started to become involved in different groups, such as community groups, cooperatives, political organisations as well as civil society organisations. In the process, they realised the importance of the political participation and intervention in the process of policy formulation to ensure their equal right as human beings. They were motivated to be a part of the political process and started to raise their voices and demand the right to equal representation in the public decision-making processes and special quotas to ensure this.

The Constitution of Nepal 1990 recognised women's rights and the need for their participation in politics. Addressing this issue, the constitution initiated a policy of affirmative action and included the provision of at least five per cent female candidacy for the general election of the House of Representative, the lower house of parliament, and five per cent in the

Upper House. As a result, some women were elected to parliament, but the Constitution of Nepal 1990 did not address the issue of identity and equal property rights for women. The Constitution and the subsequent laws on local governance did not address the issue of women's participation in the local elections. The local political bodies did not have any quotas for women. The first local elections, held in 1993, elected only 136 women out of about 200,000 elected representatives. After realising the importance of women's participation at the local level, women, primarily within the political parties, demanded seat reservation in local elected bodies.

Finally, the law relating to local elections was amended in 1997 (NLC 1997) with a provision of 20 per cent seat reservation for women at the lowest level, the wards. As a result, more than 40,000 women were elected to the village assemblies in the subsequent local elections, and the impact on society was very positive. The political system became more inclusive and participatory. Despite the positive change, only one woman was elected as a vice-chairperson at the district level, and not a single woman was elected as chairperson at the district level. Following the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and demands from gender activists, in 1995 the Ministry of Women and Social Welfare (later transformed into the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, MoWCSW) declared their objective of mainstreaming gender in development policies and programmes, implementing women's development programmes, and following up on Nepal's international commitments to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Another demand raised by the women's movement was the establishment of A National Women's Commission (NWC) with constitutional power. It was established in 2002 through the decision of the Council of Ministers, and was entrusted to draft its own bills. While it was analysing the 1990 Constitution of Nepal, the NWC, as a government institution, for the first time in the country raised the issues gender equality in inheritance rights relating to the monarchy. Its statement demanded that the throne of the constitutional monarch should be inherited by the first child regardless of gender.

A new Civil Code of Nepal was promulgated in 1963. The Civil Code was overwhelmingly dominated by patriarchal philosophy and social value systems. None of the provisions addressed women as full citizens with equal rights. Various women's movements raised their voices for changes to the legal code. From the very beginning, they launched awareness campaigns for women to come together to revolt against the Panchayat system. This campaign for equality continued even after the establishment of multi-party democracy. Finally, the Civil Code was amended in 2002, (the eleventh amendment) to incorporate more rights for women. Major

areas of the amendments were legalisation of abortion under 12 weeks of pregnancy, establishing of rights of unmarried daughters to parental property inheritance, ensuring a share for women in the affinal household before divorce, liberalisation of conditions for the use of inherited property by widows, and increased punishment for the culprits of rape cases. These amendments were a historical step in terms of securing additional rights for women, but there was still a long way to go to attain gender equality.

The incidents of February the 1st, the 2005 coup by the King and the subsequent political scenario, and the people's movement (*Janaandolan II*) are by now old history. The people's movement in 2006 abolished the long-ruling monarchy and established the Republic of Nepal. It was seen as a peaceful political revolution which ended the centuries of institutions that represented feudalism. *Janaandolan-II* had the unprecedented participation of the people, when men and women of all ethnicities, linguistic groups, regions, and faiths came out onto the streets with their own agenda for change. That movement established many other agendas for total political, economic, and social transformation in the country to operationalise a real people's sovereignty. Mainstreaming the marginalised groups based on gender, caste, region, ethnicity, class among others, was one of the missions of the movement. Federalism, participatory democracy, inclusion, gender equality, secularism, good governance were major components of this agenda, which are priority areas for institutionalising democracy and the people's sovereignty of the country. People have been waiting a long time for the promulgation of the new constitution that incorporates all these aspirations. In the process of constitution-making, equal rights of descent for both men and women, proportional representation in all state mechanisms, forms of governance, status of the judiciary and federalism are major issues at stake, which have not been fully settled yet.

Gender Issues in the New Federal Constitution

Gender equality has been one of the focal issues of discussion in the process of constitution drafting. Most of the agenda in this process has been limited to the changes in legal framework/affirmative policies from the liberal feminist point of view rather than radical changes in structure. Recognition of women as full citizens of the country by descent with rights to transfer citizenship to their children and non-discriminatory treatment for naturalised citizenship on marital grounds was at the heart of the discussions, which seems to have been lost once again. The draft constitution mentions that only those children with both parents as Nepali citizens can acquire citizenship by descent. Visibly, this is non-discriminatory, but women

suffer more from this provision, but Nepali men and women will not have equal rights to transfer their citizenship to their foreign spouses. Foreign women married to Nepali men will be entitled to Nepali citizenship as soon as they start the process of change in their citizenship, but foreign spouses of Nepali women will have no such rights and will have to live in Nepal for 15 years before starting such a process. Also, there will be discrimination in the kind of citizenship for children of both-parents-Nepali couple and one-parent-Nepali couple. The Constituent Assembly's indirect and circular way of discriminating against children of Nepali women based on their marital choice is deeply linked with patriarchal values and the geopolitics of Nepal's situation.

Equal inheritance rights for all siblings to parental property are another agenda, which was mentioned in the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2006 and the provision is also in the new draft. However, the majority of the Nepali people are not aware about it, and the state and the political forces are reluctant to enforce the provision. Ensuring women have at least 33 per cent political representation in the decision-making process was one of the central agendas of most women. Immediately after the 2006 *Janaandolan-II*, the revived parliament unanimously passed a resolution that at least one-third female participation will be ensured in all state institutions. Women are demanding implementation of the resolution and proportionate representation (50 per cent) at the local level in the forthcoming elections of the local governance institutions. The draft constitution has a provision of one-third female participation in federal and state parliaments and 40 per cent at the local level. It is silent on other institutions of the state, such as judiciary, executive, political parties, and constitutional bodies. It does, however, have a clause in the women's rights section stating that women will have the right to be represented in all state organs.

Regarding the portfolios, the draft constitution says that either the speaker or deputy-speaker should be a woman in both the federal and state parliaments. A similar provision is made for the chair and vice-chair of the Federal Upper House, but it remains silent on presidency/vice-presidency and the distribution of portfolios in local bodies. This kind of inconsistency within the document shows that the Constituent Assembly is drafting the provisions without any consistent philosophy to ensure women's participation. In addition, statistics and daily reports show that physical, emotional, and socio-cultural violence against women and girls, including economic discrimination, are a wide-spread menace in all sections of Nepali society and may be increasing. It should be properly addressed by the new constitution with a unanimous voice. Not only women, but

also male human rights advocates are also demanding strong measures to fight this life-threatening menace in society. It is satisfactory to note that the rights of women against violence have been strengthened with a compulsory compensation clause for the victims. Gender advocates have been demanding this addition for a long time.

The concept of one's own-body, own-self, and reproductive rights was another hotly debated issue in the first Constituent Assembly. Activists with a feminist perspective are strongly raising this issue by linking it with women's reproductive health, women's command over their bodies, personality, career development, and lifestyle. In short, it is the issue affecting a woman's present and future life in each and every phase. That is why reproductive rights should be an indispensable right and women should be allowed to decide freely on it, but men along with some women relate this issue with conjugal rights. The approach taken is not very clear in the new draft.

Another important point for women's empowerment incorporated in the draft prepared by the first Constituent Assembly was the recognition and counting of women's contribution to the household well-being by their unpaid care and household work in the national statistics, along with encouraging men to share such work. This issue is linked with the recognition of women's economic role in society, which views them as non-contributing members, taking measures to ease women's work burden with implications for their health, as they also take care of children, the elderly, disabled and sick people in the family. Although the mention of this issue in the directive principles section by the first CA is recognition of domestic work is perceived as positive from a feminist perspective, the mention has now been deleted. The provision 'no woman should be discriminated against based on gender' in the Interim Constitution 2006 has also been deleted in the new draft, which signals the persistence of patriarchy in the constitutional process.

Raising the status of the National Women Commission to a constitutional body was another objective of the struggle, which has been finally achieved. The draft has also provisioned special attention to women in the section on the right to education, employment, health, and social security, which is positive. Under federalisation, the states will be entrusted with the implementation of the responsibilities for all these commitments. State-level political leaders will have to take a broad vision on gender equality and women's empowerment to convert these rights into reality. Whether they will they measure up to the task is an issue only to conjecture at this stage.

Identity Issues linked with Federalism

From the feminist standpoint, all the issues mentioned above demand a different interpretation. In the context of women's right to descent, changes may occur in the social image and status of women. When a mother is entitled to transfer her national identity to her children, the morale of both the mother and children will rise. This issue has been resolved only partially. In the context of federalism, the issue of identity will have different aspects. Will children be free to identify themselves as a member of their mother's ethnic group by their surname and geography of birth? This question is unanswered. Even those groups which are deeply attached with and are widely campaigning for ethnic and geographical identity are not properly addressing this issue. One of the possible reasons behind this may be that they are not in favour of renouncing patriarchal practices, which are deep-rooted in both their minds and cultures. This issue has a deep meaning under federalism from the feminist perspective.

Secondly, while women have equal inheritance rights to parental property, it may affect the marital systems and patriarchal-residence patterns. A woman may refuse to move to the husband's house for the rest of her life, because they will have property and a feeling of belonging to their native place and a sense of identity, they may want to stay there. This would be another big challenge for the patriarchal society. The issues regarding children's identity need clarity. Can they choose to identify themselves with their mother's identity as descent and father's as geography or vice-versa? Or living in one place and choosing another place as their geographical identity, after becoming mature? These issues have not been dealt with yet. People dealing with federalism are not responding to these concerns properly. Even in terms of participation, almost all ethnic and regional groups are demanding a proportionate share in the different mechanisms, but they are not recognising the need for a women's share within their own institutions. For instance, none of the political parties or community organisations based on region and ethnicity is providing proportional space for women. This shows that although the issue of the identity and participation is gaining importance, the gender perspective has not received sufficient attention.

Federalism and Participatory Democracy

Federalism is the concept of having a multi-layered government, with the good intentions of bringing the governance closer to the people and widens the scope of people's participation in the governance process. The concern about ensuring people's right should be at the heart of the process for

the federal architects. Bodenhamer (2001) defines federalism as a system of shared power between two or more governments with authority over the same people and geographical area. In a federal nation, the central government has well-defined powers, with full sovereignty over external affairs, while sharing the authority in domestic affairs with lower-level governments in a complex manner. The central and state governments may have parallel or overlapping interests or needs in domestic matters.

The major advantage of a federal system is the fact that this system of governance expands the scope of participation in politics and governance of the country. There are greater opportunities to vote and hold office for the people under the federal system than under a unitary one. In the federal system, the number of representatives people can vote for increases significantly. The state and local governments provide a platform to train and develop national leadership and test their leaders. James Madison (Kramnick 1987) says that the federal and state governments are different agents and trustees of the people, constituted with different powers and designed for different purposes.

Filippov and Shvetso (2011) opine that successful federalism requires well-functioning democratic institutions, judicial system, integrated national political parties, and appropriate electoral incentives created through democratic political competition. From a survey of the literature on the subject, they conclude that only in well-functioning democracies can federalism be a stable and effective form of government. Empowering people at the local level is essential for people's well-being, but this fact is often ignored at the upper levels. Political decisions with the greatest and the most immediate impact on people's lives should refer to the local level. The goal of federalism must be to bring the process of public decision-making on matters relating to the everyday lives of people, to the lower levels so that they can reflect the preferences of the citizens and thus strengthen participatory democracy.

Under the federal system, people should have more opportunity to exercise their democratic right through being part of the decision-making and planning processes. That might be the reason why Abraham Lincoln (1863) said, 'Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not vanish from this earth'. It can be possible only if people feel themselves as part of the governance structure and own the government as and the elected actively serve them. Democracy is an unavoidable ingredient of federalism. An autocratic system never needs layers of state mechanisms. A small circle of people can decide and rule over everything, which might be quick as well. Democracy is a lengthy process of

decision-making compared to a dictatorship. On this issue, Urofsky (1992) states: 'Democracy is hard, perhaps the most complex and difficult of all forms of government. It is filled with tensions and contradictions, and requires that its members labour diligently to make it work'. He further says, 'Democracy is not designed for efficiency, but for accountability; a democratic government may not be able to act as quickly as a dictatorship, but once committed to a course of action, it can draw upon deep wellsprings of popular support' (Urofsky 1992). This is a better way of letting people be part of the governance process.

Based on the American experiences, Urofsky further draws 11 principles of democracy, such as constitutionalism, democratic elections, different layers of government, a legal framework, an independent judiciary, (limited) power of the presidency (executive), a free media, freedom for interest groups to voice their concerns, public's right to know, protection of minority rights, and civilian control of the military. Most of these principles are followed in many democratic nations by establishing a multi-layer governance system. While talking about the people's rights in federalism, these elements should be respected at every level of the governing mechanism.

A new terminology of participatory democracy has been introduced in discussions of democracy over the last few decades. This principle gives emphasis to the involvement of citizens in policy-making, which can improve information flow, accountability, and due processes. It gives a voice to those who are most directly affected by public policy and is also called collaborative civic engagement. A wide range of participatory approaches is included in this process, including information gathering, consultations with the people, and their involvement in decision-making and public dispute settlement. This process could also be possible and may be effective at the local level in the federal system, but it demands a high level of understanding and passion, since it may require many resources and significant time.

Citizen participation has many roles in developing a strong system of self-governance, as it is a central way to build the awareness of the importance of the local structures and a means of understanding the concerns and desires of communities. Federalism is a process of collective decision-making, where citizens have the power to decide on policy and politicians assume the role of policy implementation through the provision of services. According to Andre (2014), federalism may contribute to the promotion of democratic values in different ways, such as checks and balances, popular participation; citizenship revisited, changes in the party system, and

provide pluralism and a voice to the minorities. However, whether all the above ingredients of a successful federal democracy can be realised will depend on the broadness of understanding, attitude, and willpower of the political actors, as they will play a decisive role. The big question in the current Nepali context is 'are they ready to follow the principles outlined above?'.

Unless the major political leaders are ready to change their opinions, which are patriarchal and self-centred, and behave feudally, participatory democracy cannot be realised, federalism or not. The leaders should develop their listening power, respect diverse opinions and make decisions collectively to ensure that the democratic principles work in practice. At the same time, the people also need to change their ways of expressing and acting to make them more positive, creative, and fact-based. After all, women, as half of the population, should be involved in the process, respected, and included in all decision-making processes. Affirmative action should be supplemented with the appropriate functional mechanisms to build the capacity of marginalised groups and women, and mainstream their voices in the regular decision-making processes.

Federalism and the Feminist Perspective

State power should be de-centralised to bring governance close to people for equality. In that process, women should be equally involved in every mechanism and action for a forward-looking change with a feminist perspective. While talking about the feminist perspective, men and women are equal citizens with a different biology, and have different capacities and needs, which should be addressed differently to achieve substantive equality. Similarly, it should also be taken into account that all women are similar in biology but not equal in terms of condition, position, and status defined by social, economic, and cultural situations. Differentiated approaches are required to address the problems of each of the groups as per their situation in society. Policy-makers should be aware of the fact that policies may have different impacts on women and men and address diversity among women based on class, race, disability, and sexual orientation (Rankin and Vickers 2001). Based on class, ethnicity, geography, and access to basic human rights including economic, social, and cultural rights and resources, women are different. Contextualising the matter, these differences should be recognised and addressed properly with an aim to achieve equality within the general category of 'women'.

Achieving the democratic goals of federalism requires good governance as well as participatory democracy. Leading political forces should know

that half of the population is female and are comparatively disadvantaged and marginalised in society. Furthermore, their proper participation is necessary to make the federal system inclusive, participatory, effective, and responsive. The structure and process should be accessible and it should be possible for women to be part of decision-making and planning, with the use of local languages and practices, which should be free from unfamiliar political jargon. Inclusive and effective participation is necessary to reverse the subordination and marginalisation of women and to contribute to democratic local governance. Ballington (n.d.), from her case study of Southern African Development Community (SADC), emphasises that the election of women councillors has been the most visible and direct way in which women are able to participate in local governance and to influence decision-making, ensure gender sensitivity, and empower women in the process. States should follow affirmative action programmes in areas where women's participation and contributions are unbalanced. In this regard, affirmative action policies should take into account the diversity within women's groups in terms of class, caste/ethnicity and geographical location.

Lang and Sauery (2014), from an in-depth feminist study of the federal systems of Austria and Germany, conclude that mechanisms, resources, and their physical engagement are decisive to achieve gender equality under a federal system. They further mention that the three-tiered network of women's institutions in both Germany and Austria profited women in several ways. The institutionalisation of multi-layer gender networks provided the political opportunity to create women's projects at all levels, and take action to mainstream gender in the government mechanisms and empower women. Lang and Sauery have identified political ideology as another important factor in recognising a feminist agenda within the governance system. Their study showed that when center/left parties were in power, women's voices and the need for gendered infrastructure was better recognised than when conservatives were ruling. The Economic condition is another intervening variable in the relationship between federalism and feminism. In economically stable times, interlocking federalism is advantageous for women's policies, but in economically challenging times, it tends to produce downward adaptations and the marginalisation of the women's equality agenda. The study also provides evidence that participation, ideology, and economic conditions remain critical to the empowerment of women.

Contextualising Federalism and Feminism

Nepali society has been deeply influenced by patriarchal norms and values for centuries. Women have been commodified. For instance, women are not free even to keep their consistent identity and to be addressed by one name. Somebody else decides her destiny. Their freedom of mobility and the choice of profession and occupation are limited. Violence against women is a serious problem. Women are not safe even within their families and communities. Their confidence level is low. Their safety is the biggest challenge, and the state needs to take serious action. Bringing state mechanisms closer to women with adequate participation is needed to address women's issues effectively. .

Society is neither very friendly to women nor victim-friendly in the cases of their violation. Democracy was re-established by the joint struggle of women and men, but women have not been taken into confidence in the institutionalisation of peace and democracy. Men and women have different perspectives on the overall social reconstruction, but only their reproductive role is recognised. In this context, making federalism free from patriarchy and respectful to inclusion, participation, and gender equality is still a far-off destination. In addition, the feminist movement needs to travel a long distance to change the attitudes and actions of the political actors, state mechanisms, and society to achieve substantive gender equality. Battling the entrenched patriarchy and sensitising the institutions, community, and individuals must go side by side.

Ways Forward

Women are an equal part of the population and should be accorded concomitant importance in society. If federalism aims to bring governance closer to the people and involve them in all decision-making processes, together with planning and implementation of development programmes, women should have an equal voice and agency in all these processes. Federalism should address the issue of the gender identity properly to achieve its goal and make it successful, effective and efficient. For this purpose, we should already start to think about appropriate mechanisms and ways of mainstreaming and empowering women with appropriate action plans and resources. The action plans should also have programmes and mechanisms to change the perspectives of both men and women regarding gender roles. Without a change in attitudes and perspectives, it is not possible to change behaviour in practice.

In conclusion, Nepal's women's movement is largely guided by liberal democracy and emphasises affirmative changes. However, the time has

come to move forward by linking social movements and social changes for gender justice. Federalism means dignifying the citizen with a moral boost and making them more involved in the process of self-governance. This is not possible without quality citizens and humanised minds to think and hands to act. For that transformation a feminist perspective is a must.

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Being in the Shadow of Death

Existential Reflections on Mortality as a Modality of Being-in-the-World in the Sinja Valley of Western Nepal

SAMUELE POLETTI

Introduction

After several months of fieldwork in the Sinja Valley of Jumla District, this is my first attempt to come to terms with the data gathered so far, and to define the general line of inquiry I intend to explore further. At its root, the bulk of my research interests may be summarised as an attempt to answer, in ethnographic terms, the question: ‘What is death supposed to have in common with the ‘concrete situation’ of acting?’ as posed by Heidegger (1996, 279). In other words, how the consciousness of death may help us to shed light upon the ways in which people in Sinja make sense of existence, and how this manifests in everyday life? Their own ways of tackling potentially common dilemmas about existence might help us to challenge the assertive and universalist answers given by philosophy, allowing us to appreciate the complexity of human being-in-the-world (see also Blainey 2010b, 116).

Death is not quite the End

For Heidegger ‘[t]he ‘end’ of being-in-the-world is death’ (Heidegger 1996, 216), a position shared also by Jackson (2005). Yet, this does not quite apply to the reality I found in Sinja. I believe that the best way to begin illustrating this matter, from a phenomenological perspective, will be that of narrating an episode in which I found myself caught.

Once, a couple of days after having walked from Jumla Bazar through the Jaljala pass that leads to Sinja, I started to feel very weak. My hosts, alarmed by my condition, asked a local shaman (*dhami*) to visit me, just to exclude the possibility of having been attacked by a spirit (*muiyan*) along the way. Yet the *dhami*, after having felt my pulse – the empirical way to determine

the nature of a malaise, according to the beat, established that my suffering was actually caused by one of these wandering spirits. The identity of my attacker was promptly determined: it was a young boy from the village of Ludku called Yek Raj, who died several years ago at the top of Jaljala pass by getting caught in a snowstorm. Nobody knew that he was going that way, and since he was inadequately dressed he got weaker and weaker, until he eventually died. His corpse was found a few days later and buried nearby, and ever since he has attacked his fellow villagers from time to time.

Moreover, when he was a kid, a German scholar¹ lived for some time in his house, while he was conducting research in the area. Since I am living in the same village for the same reason, the *dhami* concluded that I was mistaken with that scholar, from whom Yek Raj expected something, probably the clothes he did not have the good fortune to wear when he died. This explanation was consistent with the weakness and the changes of temperature that I was feeling, in my understanding it was related to a fever, but for him a clear clue of Yek Raj's cause of death, who had indeed died of cold and fatigue. The diagnosis was largely approved by the others present. Therefore, the *dhami* prepared a handful of raw rice mixed with turmeric powder (*besar*) used to please all sorts of worldly desires, and after having rotated it a couple of times over my head he threw it away in the direction of the Jaljala pass. This was assumed to be what explained my subsequent, gradual healing. What interests me here is not to make any point about the ontological existence or non-existence of spirits, but rather to elucidate a concrete situation concerning how people cope with their putative presence. In fact, this episode is relevant as it encapsulates many aspects of how existence is conceived in Sinja.

Causes, Consequences, and Intentionality

Although people, such as 70-year-old Brahmin Tika Raj Upadhyay, may explain death by saying 'when the soul goes away, the body is just like soil' (*java purush udera jancha, hamro sarir mato jastai huncha*), this does not imply the end of being-in-the-world. Actually, Tika Raj continues, after death the soul, freed from its body, becomes 'like bees in search of a new hive', wandering in the world until a new incarnation is found according to the work (*kām*) done in the previous form of existence.

In the case of good work (*dharma-karma*), this can result in a life as a high-caste man, whereas sin (*pāp*) will lead to a lower form of being, e.g. an insect or buffalo, since 'when we plant barley in the field, at the time

1 Dr. Günter Umbesheid (see Umbesheid 1987).

of harvesting, we cannot get wheat, we get barley', concludes the old Brahmin. This stretches the arch of existence way beyond birth and death, the causes of which trace to the previous existence and its consequences extend much further than the demise of the physical organism. For this reason, for instance, when I asked one of the priests (*pujari*) serving at the Kanaka Sundari temple that overlooks the valley how it could not be *pāp* to slaughter the he-goats regularly taking place there, he replied that the violent death of the animals is the outcome of the sin they accumulated in a previous existence. While this causal fate is shared by both those who died *kal* and *akal* (literally 'timely' and 'untimely'), for the former the process is much more straightforward.

After death, a 13-day mortuary rite (*kiriya*) takes place, during which a close relative of the deceased, ideally the eldest son, takes care of all ritual practices on behalf of his whole kin group (*sak*). During the *kiriya*, every day some rice is cooked in milk (*pinda*) and buried in a designated place. This is believed to feed the soul before its next incarnation, as this is also the substance that will constitute the body for the next existence.² Therefore, his or her son plays a fundamental role in allowing the deceased to achieve the next incarnation, impossible to attain otherwise.

During the 13 days of the *kiriya*, the ritual activities pivot around the *Pritamandali* and the *Garud Puran*, sacred books that the *pujari* reads aloud at the deceased's house in front of the relatives of the dead and other fellow villagers. As I was told by several of these priests, this has a twofold purpose. On the one hand, it indicates the path for the soul of the deceased, facilitating the passage to a new form of existence. On the other, the living will 'know in advance what to do when it will come their turn to die'. In terms of consciousness of death, this is paramount. In fact, by hearing these texts, people acquire knowledge of what things are sinful and what is virtuous, learning how to live accordingly. Otherwise, 'how will people know', a priest said, 'what is good and what is bad?' Thus, recalling what *pāp* implies in terms of a new life people are led to avoid it, which makes consciousness of death as a sort of regulator of behaviour³.

The help of the son and the close relatives has another function, perhaps

2 There is not enough room in these pages to discuss this at length. It suffices to note that this long and complex rite bears interesting insights regarding the regeneration of life (Bloch and Parry 1982) and the reintegration in the society of ancestors (Hertz 1960).

3 This offers a good example of what Seremetakis calls 'optic of death', suggesting an understanding that moves from death to the social or cultural order, rather than the reverse (1991). In this case, it implies exploring how through death the social world of values is constructed, making it the originator of principles of moral conduct.

even more important still. Indeed, a good death is conceived to be one in which the dying person has managed to extinguish all his desire (*lalaso*) of mundane things,⁴ so that at last only the wish to remember the name of god (*Ram*) remains. Otherwise, it is alleged that a person who dies thinking about what still remains to be done will not die at peace. For this reason, silence at the time of death is not desirable, since one has to speak out his last desires, and so dying peacefully.⁵ In fact, notwithstanding how hard a person has tried to extinguish his *lalaso*, something will always remain, for 'desire' in a way is the very nature of existence (see below). Therefore, hearing the deceased's final wishes, the relatives will commit to try to satisfy them on his behalf, completing his *lalaso*.

Such a worldview informs an interesting perception of time. Indeed, when asked about their memories, elderly people often reply that they have none. This reflects the relatively common view that the past has gone and is worthless to be recollected, showing a concrete way in which possible sources of desire are let go, leaving them behind. All that matters is what lies still in front to live, a projection towards the future in which a *lalaso* of some sort is implicit.

Herein lies another fundamental aspect that seems to be intrinsic of human existence: the fact that '[t]ogether with the certainty of death goes the *indefiniteness* of its when' (Heidegger 1996, 238). Yet, if for Heidegger this generates angst (*ibid.* 245, 316), in Jumla, consciousness of this ambivalent character of death seems to be what actually sets in motion the existential venture. As elucidated above, people should think of death for it favours the pursuit of virtues and the eradication of sin, a desirable condition in view of both this life and the next. This gives a sense to existence. Without which it will just be passively attended rather than actively engaged in. Nevertheless, at the same time, if people knew the exact time of their death they will become hyper-reflexive about it, paralysing every activity and generating sadness. People will be discouraged to do things for the future, feeling defeated from the very beginning. 'It's not good to know the time of death, because if we knew, we would feel sad and wouldn't have the energy to do any work (*kām*),' as explained Kalidas Upadhyay, a 75-year-old Brahmin peasant living in the village of Ludku. It will be far a too heavy a burden to carry in one's life.

Therefore, from my preliminary observations, consciousness of death seems to be what allows life to be a projection over time. In a sense it is

4 Desire can be of many sorts: that of eating a specific kind of food, of seeing a son marrying, or to give back something that was borrowed.

5 These last desires constitute also a sort of oral testament that the relatives should be bound to respect, which may prevent possible disputes about inheritance.

time itself intended in existential terms, without which there will be only the *hic et nunc*; an eternal meaningless present. Instead, it is precisely for people to intentionally proceed towards the unknown that they proceed at all, furthering some kind of project about their lives. In Heideggerian terms, this is what constitutes human Being as *Da-sein* (*there-being*): not an homeostatic and ahistorical Being, but one that is always situational, i.e. located in history, and therefore subjected to becoming, since the primary feature of temporality is precisely the conception of *the future* (*ibid.*, 303; see also Levinas 1985, 37).

Consciousness of Death

As Levinas pointed out, ‘concrete life is thrown in a very interesting light when we recognize it as being intentional and when we say that it is consciousness of something’ (Levinas 1985, 46). Accordingly, consciousness of death lies at the very centre of my argument, for it appears to be what allows the people I am living amongst ‘to exist’ rather than simply vegetate, realising the limits of their experience-in-the-world. The term *janma* offers a good example of this. It means ‘birth’ in Nepali, and existentially is a very meaningful word, for it encloses the totality of life. Indeed, it embodies the beginning of it represented by the first letter *ja*, which stands actually for *janma*, and at the same time the last letter *ma* denotes death, in Nepali *mṛityu*. This means that when a person comes into the world, he already carries death with him. If this can be said to be true for every living being, in the Sinjali context, it takes a much more articulated form.

On the sixth day after birth, during a ceremony known as *cina lagaune*, a Hindu priest (*pujari*) writes down the horoscope of the infant, according to which, an appropriate name is given, along with a rough account of his personality and of all the major events that will characterise his life story, comprising a tentative period of death. That night, after a ritual named *khasti puja* in which a plain notebook and a pen are put under the pillow of the baby, it is believed that the goddess *Bhabini* will come and concretise what was revealed in the horoscope by writing, on the baby’s forehead rather than in the notebook, his destiny, including the exact time and cause of their death. Therefore, in Sinja, the certainty of death as an intrinsic aspect of existence is not just an abstract conception, but a very concrete matter that accompanies people during the whole span of their lives. In cases like that of Lal Prasad Upadhyay, a Brahmin in his sixties, this informs a religious determinism leading to a very fatalistic acceptance of life as it comes, because as he states, ‘We can’t decide anything: all was already decided, and happens according to *Bhabini*’.

In light of the above, also in Sinja, it can be said that '[o]ur view is too short-sighted if we make 'life' a problem, and then occasionally also take death into account' (Heidegger 1996, 291). Yet, let me clarify what I intend by 'consciousness'. Consciousness is to be understood as the 'processor' of human experience-of-the-world, and what allows these experiences to be perceived and elaborated. It constitutes 'the substrate within which all human experiences occur' (Blainey 2010b, 118). It is always projected towards the outside, in a constant dialogue with others and things – subjects and objects – for precisely these outer encounters are what allow its articulation and expansion. As Jackson puts it, '[t]he critical issue is intersubjectivity and interexperience – the ways in which selfhood emerges and is negotiated in a field of interpersonal relations, as a mode of being in the world (Jackson 1998, 28).

In fact, 'reality' is eternally partial, for human consciousness is always intentional, i.e. it is always pointed towards a specific aspect of experience. According to Levinas, indeed '[i]ntentionality appears as the very essence of consciousness' (Levinas 1985, 46). For instance, three people may look at the same scene: ducks playing in a lake. For one of them, the scene recalls some good memories of his infancy, producing certain sensations. The biologist amongst them sees instead the mechanisms of socialisation of the animals, whereas the third has chosen this place for its quiet, but, being so absorbed in his thoughts concerning a situation that took place elsewhere, he hardly notices what is around him.

In light of this we can say that 'the world is empty', being in these different states of consciousness is what actually informs the complexity of it, without this the world would probably appear much emptier than it seems. In other words, it accounts for the agency of the subject over a pre-determined world. Indeed, despite the phenomenal reality, as it appears to, being the same; our experience of it differs a great deal according to the direction in which our consciousness is focused, not least for cultural reasons. The aim of this is not to remove my informants from the world they inhabit, but to use existential techniques to frame the ethnographic account. The result will not be that of creating a kaleidoscopic subjectivism, but to reject a socio-cultural determinism that wants people as the simple result of 'their culture', providing justice to 'those immediate experiences which form the very stuff of the concrete fullness of life' (Tulloch 1952, 31).

Nevertheless, as Levinas notes, '[t]he object which we do not have actually in sight does not disappear from consciousness. It is given potentially as the object of a possible actual consciousness' (Levinas 1985, 20). This is exactly what I am trying to explore concerning death. This shift between more and

less aware state of consciousness finds expression in a Jumli proverb, which states ‘when we go to a marriage we are happy because we don’t remember death, but we are sad while going to the cremation ground for it reminds us that we will die too’ (*jantama marula sochdainan, malamima gayapachi banchula sochdainan*).

Sometimes they Return

However, coming back to my opening story, often people die in unexpected ways, regardless of their plans or wishes. In case of untimely death (*akal*), people are considered unable to extinguish their *lalaso*, which keeps them anchored to their current existence, preventing them from obtaining another life (*juni*).⁶ Once, attending a Dalit (*Kami*) cremation ceremony, I asked what the connection is between *lalaso* and life. The son of the deceased woman replied, ‘Once the *lalaso* is finished, everything is finished, but if the *lalaso* remains, also life continues’, an opinion that seemed to find agreement among his fellows.

In fact, the remaining *lalaso* is what allows the coming into being of wandering spirits (*muiyan*). Indeed, rather than to harm people, their attacks have to be seen as a way to attract attention, obliging people to donate something, for as the Jumli proverb says, ‘the kid that doesn’t cry doesn’t get milk’ (*narune balak dudai na pa*). A year after its death, in a propitious day chosen by the *pujari* according to the horoscope, the relatives should go to the exact place where the *muiyan* died, and after a nightlong ritual returning home carrying a ball of string, which is believed to show the *muiyan* the way home. At that point, it is expected that the spirit will possess one of its relatives and, through him or her, explain the circumstances of its death, along with indicating what its *lalaso* consists of. A little shrine (*khopo*) will be built inside the house and dedicated to the *muiyan*, to whom food is regularly offered as a symbolic form to satisfy any kind of worldly desire. From this moment onwards, the *muiyan* will be treated as a sort of invisible householder, given food from time to time. Nevertheless, clear views regarding its chances of a new reincarnation seem quite disregarded. Therefore, to Heidegger’s rhetorical question regarding dying as intrinsically implying going-out-of-the-world (Heidegger 1996, 221), the answer must be negative.

6 Abortion appears the only exception. Indeed, people are said to desire things for the future based on past experience-of-the-world, thus, albeit being a type of *akal* death, having experienced nothing the baby cannot have generated *lalaso* yet, and consequently immediately obtains another life. However, it just takes a day to mature *lalaso*, so all babies dying *akal* after birth have to be treated as *muiyan*.

According to some, a person who has died accidentally may achieve another life after some time, whereas in the case of suicide this possibility is precluded forever, since death occurred according to their wishes and not those of the gods, who punish them in this way. Others state that for people who committed suicide the journey before getting another life takes much longer, for the gods; made angry by their choice, oblige them to repair the path, which gives them extra *lalaso* of food and clothes. Others still claim that for all *akal* deaths reincarnation is never possible. This, however, is not object of too much reflexive speculation, but empirically assessed. In fact, probably bored by my pressing questions about these matters, people often simply replied that if a deceased attacks the livings, this means that he did not get another life, if not then they probably did.⁷ This illustrates well how everyday life is actually experienced beyond academic logical systems, a point that will emerge even more prominently when it comes to cosmological views (see below).

Nevertheless, opinions converge in stating that if a *muiyan* is particularly energetic in attacking people even outside of its close kin, it may be eligible to become one of the many manifested gods that constitute most of the Jumli pantheon. After it has been recognised as such, a powerful *muiyan* will be regularly embodied by a shaman (*dhami*) and, surprisingly enough; help people to cope with the attacks from 'simple' *muiyan* or other invisible entities.⁸ Therefore, quite often, when people feel ill they first go to the *dhami* to find out whether the problem is caused by one of these beings, and in case this does not solve the problem, they subsequently might see a doctor. However, since a current *muiyan* may be forgotten by later generations and new ones will appear, this makes the Jumli pantheon a constant work in progress.⁹

The circumstances of an attack are not always immediately clear as in the episode presented at the beginning of this paper, especially when the identity of the attacker does not explain the connection with the victim.

7 It is important to say that these are not the superstitions of illiterate people, but practices prevalent in Jumli society. Thus, also educated people are not immune to these influences. As a local lecturer told me, 'We are like you, we don't believe because we have read science books. However, this still happens sometimes, and then we are compelled to believe'.

8 *Muiyan*, in the rest of Nepal known as *pret-atma*, and are only one of the many entities that attack people on a regular basis, most of which are much more dangerous, alleged to even be able to kill people if not properly counteracted by a *dhami*.

9 In the Karnali basin, the mainstream Hindu gods are called 'hidden gods' (*gupta devta*) and are flanked by a myriad of lower deities that interact directly with people through the intercession of a medium, generally a *dhami* (see also Campbell 1978; Sharma 2006).

Although not very common, I came across a few of such controversial cases, in which several *dhami* are consulted and the matter undergoes a great deal of interpretations. In case of recurrent attacks by an unknown *muiyan*, the spirit can be stopped for good by nailing it to the ground using a wooden nail carved from a *mehel* tree. Yet, if the *muiyan* is claimed to be a family member, that would be considered a great lack of compassion. In these cases, it is patiently given offerings each time, hoping that its *lalaso* will extinguish at some point.

A Controversial Cosmology

Therefore, in Sinja, death seems to have a paramount place in the experience-of-the-world, and traces of this may be found as deep as in the cosmological conceptions. The local cosmos, as it is often described by those I have been speaking with, comprehends three worlds: a land of the gods (*devta*) called *Swarga*, also known as *Indra lok*, the world of the god Indra; the *Patal*, a sort of underworld populated by ghosts (*bhut*) and demons (*danawa*); and the *Mrityu lok*, the world of death, that we inhabit. The latter owes its name to the fact that it is the place where people live and die, death that, by being the only sure event about existence becomes its most significant feature.

The interesting aspect is that there is not ontological discontinuity between these worlds, but they are rather alleged to be coexistent. Death seems to be the 'door' that allows communication between these worlds. Therefore, after death, the soul (*purush*) is believed to undertake a one-year journey at the end of which it will reach the palace of Yama, the lord of death, who will decide its fate, as a local *pujari* explained. Yet, this is quite a controversial aspect. Indeed, the majority of the people with whom I have spoken offered a twofold view about what will happen at that point, whose intrinsic incoherence appeared to be unnoticed. On the one hand, it is said that those who did good will be taken 'up', and they will live forever with the gods, whereas those who committed sin (*pāp*) will precipitate in the *Patal*. This seems to suggest the importance of the intentionality of the subject, though in contrast with the kind of determinism implied by *Bhabini*. On the other hand, however, these same people when asked about the nature of the world tend to state that nothing exists outside of the *Samsara* ('the world' intended in its wider sense). Consequently, the journey of the soul after death is simply a wandering around until appropriate conditions for a new life are found, as Tika Raj pointed out (see page 2). Lal Prasad explained on another occasion, '*Swarga* and *Patal*, like gods and demons, are not to be searched elsewhere: they are already here. There is nothing beyond this

world'. Therefore, in the opinion of people like him, 'up' and 'down' indicate spatial directions, for 'going up, living with the gods' means becoming *nirjib* (non-living being), like the sun and the stars.

Others, and to my stupefaction, especially the priests serving in the area where I am staying—say that *Swarga* and *Patal* are very material and immanent concepts, and can be determined by the facilities and the life standards of a place. Where people live happily and at peace, enjoying lots of food and good facilities, this is a sort of Heaven (often associated with Kathmandu, India, or the West). Where instead the conditions of life are miserable and life is hard (i.e. Sinja), 'with insects in the toilet', is Hell. Quite interestingly, and recalling Pigg's (1992) work regarding the ideological impact of development (*bikas*) in Nepal, the omnipresent discourse about *bikas* seems to have had quite a different outcome here from the Western-like secularism and, impacting with a highly religious context, generated a sort of 'religious materialism', a 'metaphysics of *bikas*' that might be another example of the inclusive attitude of the Hindu tradition.¹⁰

Initially I tried to essentialise these views, partly out of habit, partly for it is a tempting reassurance while confronted with an entirely new world, in the probably absurd pursuit of 'truth' (see also Gadamer 2004). Yet, with scarce results, until I realised that the problem might have been my excessive reliance on cognitive aspects over lived ones, namely on my informants' speculations over life rather than engagement in it. This 'incoherence' indeed could simply point towards a less linear and strictly rational mode of thinking, which allows two parallel possibilities to coexist, without being forced to be mutually exclusive as a logical consequence. This does not imply complete irrationality, but just a less rational modality of being (see also Blainey 2010a, 5), unveiling what Jackson calls 'the illusion that the world can be subject to our knowledge and control' (Jackson 2011, 173). Indeed, this is an argument:

not against reason per se, but against the fetishisation of a logocentric notion of reason, born in the Enlightenment, that has eclipsed our sense of the *variety* of ways in which human beings create viable lives—emotional, bodily, magical, metaphorical, anthropomorphic, practical and narrative [...] to remind ourselves that other forms of reason,

10 In a long, common interview I had with five priests, there was a long discussion amongst them to define the nature of these places. After some time, they all agreed that, regardless of the descriptions that sacred texts such as the *Garud Puran* offer, they now have to be understood according to the quality of life. This is an eloquent example of this '*bikas* exegesis'.

less preoccupied with intellectual certainty and truth, are equally significant in the struggle for life. (Jackson 2005, xxviii-xxix)

This led me towards a closer consideration of direct experience, in Gadamer's words 'the immediacy, which precedes all interpretation, reworking, and communication, and merely offers a starting point for interpretation' (Gadamer 2004, 53).

Life in a *Totenwelt*

Indeed, more than preconceived 'ideas' regarding death, what triggers consciousness of it seems to be the involvement in other people's demise, perceived as a fate we all share through a process of empathic analogy (*Einführung*). Actually,

[t]his kind of empathetic (and hence non-rational, non-cognitive) understanding of Others comes out of our exposure to their bodies moving and acting in ways that we recognize as similar to the ways in which we would act under similar circumstances. (Duranti 2010, 22)

And it goes without saying that the same thing applies also when bodies are dead.

In Sinja, 'direct experience' is not to be understood only as witnessing the biological death of somebody, for beyond this, death 'appears' in other moments too. The more formalised ones are the funerary ceremony and the subsequent 13 days of mourning (*kiriya*), the yearly remembrance of the deceased on the exact date of his death (*sraddha*), and the 16-day period preceding *Dashain*, which is a sort of collective commemoration of those who have died (*sohra sraddha*). Besides, there might be some occasional situations in which consciousness of death comes to the fore, like for instance when a travelling party comes across a dead body, perceived as an auspicious event for it is believed to take all possibilities of dying, away from the livings.

Accordingly, 'death' could be conceptualised as: a) an *event*, the biological death that passively just happens; b) a *concept*, a more or less active intentional object that leaves trace in actions; c) yet most importantly a *modality of being-in-the-world*. The latter merges passive acceptance of the event, ideas, and active acts of consciousness, blending all into the domain of lived experience, or *Lebenswelt* (lifeworld). In fact, limiting the range of the inquiry only to socio-culturally informed 'beliefs' regarding life and death would be too much of an essentialist abstraction, since:

[t]erms such as society, habitus, and culture can all too easily obscure the lifeworlds they are supposed to cover, and we must continually remind ourselves that social life is lived at the interface of self and other. (Jackson 1998, 35)

Therefore, *Lebenswelt* and *Weltanschauung* (worldview) are tightly interwoven in a mutual exchange, or, in other words, worldviews are embedded into the domain of experience, and cannot be extrapolated from it as abstract entities.

In light of the above, however, more than in a *Lebenswelt* people seem to inhabit a *Totenwelt*, a 'deathworld' in which death appears to be the most prominent characteristic informing the worldview of human beings and their subsequent experience-of-the-world, as the very name *Mrityu lok* actually suggests. This makes death a sort of 'total social phenomenon', Mauss (2007) stated, the implications of which inform many aspects of human life, as I am trying to elucidate in this paper. Accordingly,

our analysis of death remains purely 'this-worldly' in that it interprets the phenomenon solely with respect to the question of how it *enters into* actual Da-sein as its possibility-of-being. (Heidegger 1996, 230)

This allows avoiding any ontological assumption about the 'nature' of death or the afterlife, leading instead to approach the worldview of my informants as what Blainey (2010b) calls an 'ethnometaphysics', in which the prefix 'ethno-' stands for a certain degree of cultural relativism. This means investigating how these (ethno)metaphysical and (ethno) ontological assumptions are formulated and held to be true within a specific socio-cultural world, and how people embody them into their quotidian practices. Thus, rather than stating whether these views are true or not in absolute terms, what interests me is to explore how this emic universalism is generated from a certain experience-of-the-world, and in turn shapes everyday actions. This kind of hermeneutic circle (see Gadamer 2004) might be a way to transcend the dichotomy between 'thought' and 'action' underlying many academic interpretations of socio-cultural realities. Consequently, '[t]his anthropologically inclined ethnometaphysical inquiry posits culture as the 'first-mover' of existential thought and belief about the world' (Blainey 2010b, 118), albeit privileging people's direct engagement in the world over their reflexive speculation upon it.

Concluding Thoughts

In this paper, I tried to reflect upon death and how it manifests in people's consciousness in Sinja, to 'disclose existential meaning' (Jackson 1996, 5). This has implied trying to consider what does it mean *for them* to live in a world organised in such a way, regardless of whether these views are 'true' or not.

Showing how worldviews are intrinsically linked to the lifeworlds in which they are generated and upon which they produce concrete effects, my claim has been that there is nothing to search beyond the reality that appears to us, for everything is already there. Therefore, moving away from academic models that present reality as the sub-product of something else in a too logical and coherent fashion, properties that seem not to apply to the world as it is actually experienced by the people directly involved in it, we are forced to rethink the ways in which we produce knowledge (see also Blobel 1998, 321; Tulloch 1952, 32). Indeed, '[t]o understand is to participate immediately in life, without any mediation through concepts' (Gadamer 2004, 208). Or, as Heidegger puts it, '[w]e come to terms with the question of existence always only through existence itself' (Heidegger 1996, 10).

Concretely, this means moving away from the perhaps overemphasised the reflexive domain of 'thought' *vis-à-vis* other modalities of being-in-the-world, perpetrated by academics while approaching 'reality'. This implies acknowledging that 'existence' always precedes 'thought' (or 'essence'), a consideration in which might lie the key to dissolve the Cartesian dichotomy between 'action' and 'thought', 'mind' and 'body', 'subject' and 'object' within the flow of lived experience. Indeed, people are not all the time reflexive about what they do, an awareness that is not actually required to act and live as part of a determined world. They firstly experience their surroundings, others and themselves, and only subsequently, perhaps, they reflect upon such experiences. An instance of this is the way in which children in Sinja are supposed to make sense of death. 'There is no need to say much [to them] to explain death, they see and they figure it out by themselves', I was told several times—where despite the words, 'seeing' has to be intended in the much broader sense of 'experiencing their surroundings', in which other people are obviously included. This draws the attention towards other forms of understanding experience-of-the-world away from reflexive thought. Thus,

[r]ather than the life of the mind, we also consider the life of the body, the senses, the emotions, the imaginations, and the material objects we fashion, deploy, and value in our everyday lives. (Jackson 2011, 173; see also 1983; Csordas 1990; Desjarlais 2003; Tsintjilonis 2007)

It is not a matter of 'knowledge' of the world but of 'engagement' in it that lies at the core of the pre-reflexive 'natural stance' before the world, as Husserl defined the domain of the 'taken-for-granted' (see Duranti 2010, 18).

Nevertheless, the taken-for-granted becomes intelligible through the interaction with others, from whom we learn and who learn from us. In fact, '[t]hings, like other people, reveal themselves in relation to us, just as we disclose ourselves in the way we relate to them' (Jackson 2011, 171). 'You learn from us, but we also learn from you', Sandeep Upadhyay, my research assistant, told me once. He was not referring to some sort of knowledge imported from the West, but to things related to his own world. At the end of one of our interviews with elderly people, Lokendra made a deviation on our way home to give an apple to an old man he knew was living nearby. 'I have found that the elders have a lot of wishes, so I am giving him an apple', he explained to me. I believe this offers a simple but telling case to exemplify the inter-subjective nature of experience. Moreover, it shows how an anthropologist, interacting with an 'other' world, acts as a catalyst of consciousness, bringing to the fore situations and sensations normally located in a deeper and pre-reflexive domain of consciousness.

Therefore, more than being the objective description of an 'other' world, ethnography becomes the inter-subjective description of the encounter between two distinct socio-cultural worlds. This makes an existentially driven form of anthropology an inter-subjective account that merges *their experience-of-the-world* with *our experience-in-their-world*, in which the one unveils the other (see also Tedlock 1991). An anthropology thus conceived becomes a sort of inter-personal and inter-cultural form of philosophy, which entails reflecting together over 'the human struggle for being' (Jackson 2011, 173). After all, I realised that the same sort of questions I ask 'them' regarding death and the general sense of existence are the same I have always asked myself. It is not that I secretly hope to find in them the answers, which would be too much of a burden to put on their shoulders, rather to reflect together upon the same questions concerning our being-in-the-world, trying to include death in life in an attempt to make sense of it.

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Music for Peace

A Study of a Music Education Programme in Udayapur District of Nepal

PRABIN NANICHA SHRESTHA

Introduction

In the aftermath of the decade-long Maoist insurgency, Nepal witnessed many peace-building activities from both the government sector and the non-government sector. The government, through its own structures and programmes, initiated peace-building activities focused on disarmament and the reintegration of ex-combatants, economic recovery and reconstruction, the establishment of local peace and truth and reconciliation committees, and assistance to conflict victims. Besides these state-initiated programmes, a significant growth in peace-building programmes initiated by NGOs, INGOs and grassroots organisations were observed. Many of these activities by the development agencies are targeted at the local level and are based on dominant peace-building discourses,¹ such as music for peace, arts for peace, education for peace. and media for peace.

A significant rise in local and cultural initiatives for peace, as one of the main agendas of peace-building, is reflected in the post-1990s development discourse, which considers peace as an important part of development (Phillips 2004). In Nepal, the post-conflict period witnessed the integration of peace as an inseparable dimension of development in the existing development discourse. Denskus (2007) recounts how international donors ushered in the discourse of development by linking it with peace-building discourse. Furthermore, major international donors collaborated with the National Planning Commission to formulate 'Nepal Peace and Development

1 I borrow from Hilhorst (2003) and Apthorpe and Gasper (1996) the concept of discourse as an ensemble of ideas, concepts and thoughts that shape the way we understand and interpret any action or phenomena. By 'peace-building discourse', I mean to refer to discourses that have influenced many development organisations working in the sector of peace.

Strategy 2010-2015',² which focuses on peace as an important dimension of development and suggests ways to incorporate it in the overall development agenda. The major focus is to address the 'root causes' of the conflict in order to ensure both short-term and the long-term peace-building. Therefore, the post-conflict period witnessed a significant rise in development projects initiated by the state as well as the non-state actors, such as NGOs and INGOs that targeted achieving 'peace'.

Considering the fact that most of these programmes are initiated and implemented at the local level and are supported by development agencies, it is important to assess the influence these discourses have on local people's understanding of peace and development. Scholars have been persistently showing concerns about the impact of the dominant discourses of development introduced by NGOs and INGOs at the local level. Bergh (2010) reports that peace-building activities that are driven by the dominant development discourses have not been adequately studied to examine how local people understand, and are affected by, them. Such concerns echo the longstanding debate among scholars regarding the interaction between local discourses and the dominant development discourses introduced by NGOs and INGOs. For instance, Escobar (1995) argues that local discourses are often overshadowed by the dominant discourses of development introduced by development agencies. Similarly, Hilhorst (2000), after investigating the impact of the dominant development discourses on local understanding and perspectives, argues that the dominant discourses introduced by NGOs and INGOs at local level are interpreted and negotiated by local actors in their own ways.

There are multiple discourses....Even though one discourse may appear dominant, there are always parallel, residual, emerging or counter-discourses....While the idea of hegemonic discourse implies that such development discourse is incommensurable with local knowledge, and therefore, no interpenetrating takes place, it is now recognized that there is interplay of discourses. (Hilhorst 2003, 9)

Pigg (1993) also argues that the meanings of development notions are negotiated in the local context, where the local people interpret these discourses in their own understanding in such a way that existing local practices may either affirm or contest the dominant development discourse. Furthermore, it is important that development projects driven

2 This document is available at <http://un.org.np/report/pds-2010-2015>

by these discourses are studied to explore their manifestations at the local level. In this context, this paper argues that any development initiative driven by dominant discourses of development and implemented at the local level should look into the interaction between the discourse and its local interpretations. In the same line, I suggest that we need to look into local interpretations of the growing influence of peace-building discourse adopted by various development agencies through their peace-building activities that target the local level in post-conflict Nepal.

Therefore, what does local³ interpretations of such peace-building discourse entail? I argue that such local interpretations reflect people's experiences, and the meanings people associate with such discourses. Furthermore, such interpretations help us explore both the intended and 'unintended consequences' of a development intervention (Pigg 1993). While the intended consequences of development agencies are reflected in their reports, publications, and discussions, the unintended consequences are often overlooked. The lack of consideration of the 'social analysis of development' is problematic because it does not fully reflect how a society is affected by any development project (Pigg 1993). Moreover, Fujikura (2013) argues that it is important to broaden our vision beyond the typical framework set by the development project while assessing the impacts of such projects. He argues for a broad framework to analyse the impact of a development project, which should include space for 'limits and the possibilities of individual and collective actions for personal and societal transformations within a terrain already reconfigured by the activities of development' (Fujikura 2013, 14). He insists that there is a need for '... historical and ethnographical explorations into the multiple effects of development activities...' (Fujikura 2013, 2).

In this paper, I have made an attempt to explore the impacts of a peace-building initiative as a development project implemented in a rural village in the Udayapur District based on the local people's interpretations and experiences of the project. Popularly known as the 'Music for Peace' project, the programme is run by a local community school with financial

3 There is an ongoing debate on what does 'local' exactly represent? Forbes (1999) argues that 'local' as a category cannot be considered a fixed category as 'Looking only for the most strictly local privileges place over politics and implies that physical boundaries are impermeable' (Forbes 199, 319). Furthermore, I agree with Forbes that 'localness' of a project gives an authenticity for asserting legitimacy of an NGO or a social movement or for claiming 'representativeness' in larger organisations. However, I go one step further and emphasise the need to explore in what ways people claim 'localness' and how they benefit from such claims. In an upcoming paper, I discuss in detail this debate. In this paper, I have engaged briefly with this debate in the later sections.

support from an international non-profit organisation, and it involves music education for children and the youth of the village.

A Music Education Programme for Peace

The music education programme, which is popularly known as Udayapur Music Programme (UMP), was started in 2009 in Tintale⁴ village in the Udayapur District. It is supported by Playing for Change Foundation (PFCF), an international non-profit organisation founded in 2007 in California, USA. With a mission to inspire, connect and bring peace in the world through music, PFCF has established a number of music schools in conflict-affected regions. So far, PFCF has nine music schools in South Africa, Ghana, Mali, Rwanda, Nepal, and Thailand. It is guided by principles which emphasise the power of music to help children and adults transform their thoughts and behaviour by developing tolerance and sharing an understanding. Another focus area of PFCF is to empower local communities by handing over ownership and management of the music programmes to the local communities. In order to achieve these targets, PFCF works with local communities as well as other development agencies at the local level. In Nepal, PFCF has music programmes in Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and the Udayapur districts. In Kathmandu and Lalitpur, PFCF run music programmes in collaboration with private music institutes and NGOs. In the Udayapur District, PFCF supports a local community school in Tintale village to run the music programme.

Under this project, music classes are conducted on a regular daily basis after school. The music education programme is managed by the school management committee, which consists of school teachers, the principal, parents, and local representatives. The direct beneficiaries of the music education programme are the students of the school. The students joined the music class as per their wish after consulting with their parents, and the school management committee that runs the music programme is in constant communication with the parents. For instance, parents' meetings are held every month to inform them of the progress of their children in the music class. Although the students are the direct beneficiaries of the programme, the whole village is directly or indirectly involved in the music education programme. For example, musical activities like stage programmes are held regularly where local people also perform. Similarly, local people also contribute by helping organise the music programmes and by participating in them.

4 The village lies in the western plains of the district and is home to people of various ethnicities and castes such as Brahmins, Chhetris, Magars and Tamangs.

The music programme aims to develop solidarity among children by allowing them to work in groups, fostering respect towards diversity and developing confidence. The children are mostly taught traditional musical instruments such as *madal*⁵, harmonium, and bamboo flute. However, children are also taught guitar, drums, and keyboards. According to the organisers, priority is given to folk music in order to promote Nepali culture and music. The music programme's association with the local community school has great significance. If the school was not there, the music programme would require certain infrastructure, which would have required a huge investment. In addition, the music programme also has an association with the mothers' society in the community. For instance, in social awareness plays organised by the mothers' society, the music students from the music programme were also involved. The music students performed awareness songs between the plays. Also, the PFCF arranged for the members of the mothers' society to visit Kathmandu and record their own songs. This shows that the music programme was open to being associated with other groups in the village besides the music students and the school. As a result, the music programme has not only benefitted the direct beneficiaries, the music students, it has also helped other groups like the mother's society to function effectively.

Methodology

I learned about the music programme and the PFCF through a documentary titled 'Music Can Stop War',⁶ which shows a number of children sharing their experiences from their participation in the music programme. The documentary led me to a critical question regarding how the beneficiaries of a certain project share their experiences. Although this documentary is not the area of my study, it was an important entry point, and later I visited the website of the PFCF and looked for other media and publications about the music education programme. From the information collected, I was able to get in touch with the local representatives and the Kathmandu-based representatives of the music programme. They helped me understand the general context and also helped me plan my travel to the area. After some preparatory works, I travelled to the village where I spent about five weeks in October and November of 2014. During these field visits, I conducted in-depth interviews with music students, their parents, music teachers, and

5 *Madal* is a percussion instrument which is a hollow wooden vessel covered at both ends by sheep hide.

6 This documentary is accessible at <http://youtube.com/watch?v=dOpNwoy7XZ4>. It was released on YouTube in February, 2014.

the organisers of the programme. I was also able to meet representatives of organisation who were making a field visit to the village. After consulting with the local community school that runs the music programme, I volunteered as a music teacher and was engaged in teaching flute lessons to the students for an hour every day for about four weeks. During this period, my participant observation of the music class and interaction among students and teachers was quite significant as it helped me understand the context where the music programme was held. I prepared detailed field notes about the observation on a daily basis.

Some of the challenges in the field were in interviewing the young music students, some of whom were as young as 10 years old. Although I had casual conversations with the children below 16 years, I selected only the students above 16 years for my study. The only reason for such a decision was because I felt that the younger students had difficulty in comprehending the issues that I was discussing with them. However, I interviewed the parents of many of the students to explore their understanding of the programme and assessment of their children's participation in the music programme. Similarly, I talked to a music teacher and the organisers of the programme to understand the complexities and challenges involved in running the programme. I also talked with other children and youths of the village, who were not enrolled in the music programme, to understand their views about the programme. In addition, I also participated in a regular monthly meeting with the school and parents, where issues related to the music programme were also discussed. I interviewed about 18 music students, a music teacher, five parents, some volunteers and members of a committee that ran the music programme. The music students I interviewed included 10 girls and eight boys belonging to diverse ethnic and caste groups, including Brahmins, Chhetris, Dalits, Tamangs, Newars, and Magars.

'Music for Peace' Discourse and Practice

'Music for Peace' discourse builds on the notion that music has a transformative power that brings changes in values, beliefs, and the behaviour of people through non-violent and peaceful ways (Phillips 2004). Literature shows that music, both as a form of art and an important cultural element, has been used since ancient times to bring people together through shared meanings and common experiences to create and maintain social harmony (Randall 2005; Bergh 2010). Furthermore, it is evident that development agencies across the world have initiated a number of peace-building activities based on such a discourse. For instance, Robertson (2010) describes how the musical activities of an inter-religious choir in

Bosnia-Herzegovina, through collective action, helped them collaborate for a peaceful future, reflecting respect for cultural diversity based on the memory of a peaceful existence in the past. Meanwhile, UY (2012) talks about the effectiveness of a government-funded national music education programme in Venezuela, which started in the 1970s as after-school music programme that helped in keeping school children away from negative images of war and conflict. Similarly, Pruitt (2008), in her study on youth peace-building groups in a major Australian metropolitan area, concludes that being engaged in musical activities for peace-building provides the youth an alternative mode of engaging in dialogue through expressions of their feelings. Meanwhile, Garcia (2014), by studying the conflict-related songs composed by conflict victims at the grassroots level in war-torn Colombia, concludes that those songs entailed both opportunities and challenges for the reconciliation process.

In the context of Nepal, there are some initiatives that have used music and the arts to promote peace. For instance, Nepathya, a famous Nepali rock band, has been conducting 'Education for Peace' peace-concerts and tours since 2002 in various parts of the country.⁷ Similarly, a number of NGOs and INGOs have also been running arts and music programmes for peace by targeting school children.⁸ However, studies conducted on the subject of music, peace, and conflict in Nepal did not focused on such initiatives.⁹ Most of the studies in Nepal focused on the use of music and various musical components during the Maoist insurgency and during the *Panchayat* era. For instance, there are a number of studies done on the relations between music and conflict in Nepal, mostly focused on how songs were used by rebels to mobilise people to join the rebellion. De Sales (2003), by studying the revolutionary songs released by Raktim Pariwar¹⁰ after the People's Movement of 1990 in Nepal, emphasises the need to study the songs and the context where these songs were released, along with analysing the impact of the songs had on contemporary socio-economic and political aspects of the Nepali society. She argued that cultural factors like music and images, besides the political dimensions, do have a significant impact on the emergence and the growth of a rebellion. Similarly, Stirr

7 For details, see <http://nepathyaband.com/>

8 I have discussed earlier the activities initiated by MasterPeace Nepal, Playing For Change Foundation, Search For Common Ground Nepal and UNRCPD.

9 This is based on my own experiences. Until the preparation of this paper, I have not found any academic studies focusing on such initiatives. However, there are few media reports regarding these initiatives.

10 Raktim Pariwar is a cultural association associated with the then Communist Party of Nepal (Masal).

(2013), by focusing on a musical drama or opera conducted by the Maoists in Rukum in 2005 during their central meeting, analysed the use of music by the Maoists to create an 'emotional unity' among themselves. Likewise, Mottin (2010) argues that songs and dramas performed during these Maoist cultural programmes sometimes provided an outlet for the cadres to express dissatisfaction with their leadership. Similarly, Grandin (1996) studied how during the autocratic *Panchayat* rule political parties were able to generate mass support through musical cultural programmes, where progressive songs were considered the main component. Considering the myriad ways in which music has been used during and after conflict, studies aiming at looking into the uses of music must explore various approaches to analysing the musical contexts, content, and practices. In the following section, I discuss some of these approaches.

Various Approaches in Studying 'Music for Peace' Discourse

Music, as a form of art and a cultural element, has great significance in human society. Music can be a form of expression, a medium of communication, or a medium of social ordering. However, scholars argue that due to lack of proper studies on music and its effects in society, music's powers remain 'invisible' in modern societies (DeNora 2005). This emphasis on the need to study music and its impacts in social life underscores the significance of the non-human elements in our society such as arts, and their relations to humans (DeNora 2005). A number of approaches have been developed to explore the relationships between music and society.

Dowd and Roy (2010) studied music as basically a socio-cultural construct which is shaped by, and which also shapes, socio-cultural beliefs and practices in a society. They further point out that a sociological study of music should approach music as both an object and an activity. According to them, music as an object is '...a thing that has a moment of creation, a stability of characteristics across time and place, and potential for use and effects' (Dowd and Roy 2010, 185). Hence, music as an object is understood as something which takes birth and grows in society, and which is practiced, transferred from one generation to another. By studying music as an object, scholars follow a textual approach mostly by focusing on song lyrics and their potential uses and implications. However, the authors do not limit themselves to the textual approach. The authors state that as an activity, music involves people, their activities and how they give meanings to themselves and their activities. Hence, by studying music as an activity, scholars give emphasis people's understanding of music. Therefore, musical meanings cannot be studied in isolation, and

instead, should be studied in the context they are perceived, interpreted, and reflected by the people.

Despite music and society having such close relations with each other, scholars point out that studies on music have often limited their focus on musicological aspects and lacked ethnological perspectives of music (Merriam 1964). A musicological focus treats any form of music as a system in itself, and, hence, studying the origin, structures and patterns in the music, whereas an ethnological focus explores music as a fundamental part of human culture, which is integral to any socio-cultural or political organisation in a society (Merriam 1964). Therefore, any study of music cannot ignore the ways music is connected to the people, their lives, experiences, and the meanings the people associate with their musical activities. As suggested by Merriam (1964), despite the limitations of ethnomusicology, it has to be recognised that this field is growing rapidly with researchers now focusing on wider scopes of music, and bringing in both musicological and ethnological aspects to better understand how music is related to people and society. A need for more innovative studies is also suggested by Pettan (2010), who recommends a growing field of applied ethnomusicology as an effective approach to study musical projects that involve active engagement of scholars or practitioners of music with local people in bringing changes in thoughts and actions of the people involved in such projects. Hence, scholarship on music requires innovation and creativity in studying how music is related to people and their experiences.

It is not only important to look into how the peace-building projects involving musical activities are conducted, it is equally important to see how they are evaluated. Bergh and Sloboda (2010) argue that evaluation of such projects is often geared towards measuring and claiming success rather than studying how projects affect the participants. The authors, based on a study of the work to highlight the effectiveness of peace-building activities involving music and arts, reveal that evaluations of such projects are usually done by organisers themselves, and almost all interpretations of the success of the projects follow the top-down approach, which often suppresses participants' voices and experiences as they are merely based on anecdotal evidences as proof of their success. Also, there is a tendency to extrapolate the personal experiences of some individuals to the entire society, and overlook the diversity present within the society. Another problem in the evaluation of such projects, as highlighted by Bergh and Sloboda (2010), is that there is often a lack of critical analysis of the participation or engagement of participants. In such projects, it is very unlikely that all participants would engage at the same level, and scholars

differentiate passive engagement from active engagements that would potentially problematise the concept of 'participation or engagement of participants'. They define active engagement as participants being involved in musical exercises, demonstrations, and performances that extend for a long duration, usually months. Passive engagement involves listening to music while doing other activities. The effects of such engagement are short-lived and ephemeral. Therefore, the authors suggest that participants' engagement can be carefully studied by taking into consideration their level of engagement and the implications to their lives.

Local Imaginations of the Interconnections between Music and Peace

By exploring local interpretations of music programme, I aim to uncover the various ways in which the local people 'imagine' themselves in relation to the music programme. I argue that looking into such interpretations portrays the manifestations of the music programme at both the individual and collective levels. In studies conducted by the development agencies, there is a tendency to gather a few individual stories and extrapolate them to represent the whole community. However, here I aim to show that people's interpretation and understanding of any programme, or an associated discourse, is based on their subjective experiences and particular social location within his or her community. Yet, there are some interpretations which represent a collective voice as a result of their collective experiences with some existing socio-cultural issues. For instance, despite multiple interpretations of the music programme at an individual level, there is a common concern that the music programme needs to address the existing caste and gender issues in the village. In the following sections, I discuss interpretations that included individual and collective experiences, artistic and cultural manifestations of music, and expressions of socio-cultural notions related to music, peace, and power relations existing in the village.

While discussing the meanings of the 'local interpretations', it is important for me to highlight the ongoing debate on what we consider a 'local understanding' and whom we consider 'local'. Considering 'local' as a fixed category may overshadow the dynamic interactions between various groups, and ignores the multiple voices existing within a particular locale (Forbes 1999). I believe that the best way to represent the multiple voices is to bring in the perspectives of local people situated at various social locations. In doing so, it is also important to explore in what ways people develop their interpretations and how they express them. For the purpose of discussions here, I interpret 'local' as the people located at

various social locations within the particular geographical area. Hence, local interpretations here include experiences of the music students, music teachers, parents, and all direct and indirect beneficiaries of the music programme.

The Individual Level

One of the major findings of the study was that the relation between music and peace is conceptualised through subjective experiences in terms of what meanings people provide to their experiences. The literature shows that in post-conflict societies music programmes for peace-building aim at keeping people away from negative images of war, and instead, develop peaceful experiences (Urbain 2010). Experiences of peace are realised at both the individual and collective levels. According to Garcia (2014), music programmes in war-torn societies in Colombia provided opportunities to the children to come together and experience happiness despite the existing problems, such as food scarcity and poverty. Therefore, music programmes in post-conflict societies provide people with a space where they can come together and share their belongingness. The participants in this study shared that the music programme in the village provided that space for the people to come and forget all their troubles and suffering. Additionally, for many of the participants, the relationship between music and peace was realised in their individual experiences while listening to music or engaging in musical activities during the music class. They expressed a feeling of solitude or being relaxed and away from suffering. However, they accept that such experiences are short-lived and they need to come back to reality sooner or later. Yet, they feel that the temporary experiences of solitude have a positive impact on their thoughts.

When I play the harmonium, I feel peace inside my heart. I feel I am very relaxed and away from all kinds of pain. I know I need to go back home, and again see many problems in my home and village. But while I play music, I think that if I practice hard, I will do well in it. Similarly, I think if we work hard in life, we will ultimately feel happy. (Shraddha Giri,¹¹ 17-year-old music student)

While peace is understood in the form of individual experiences, changes in one's behaviour and thoughts are often reported by the participants in the music programme. In such cases, participants focus more on their

11 All the names of respondents used in this study are pseudonyms.

experiences of the perceived changes than on their impact. In many studies conducted on the use of music therapy and its impact on the psychology of the children in post-conflict societies, much focus is given to the impact, and they often neglect assessing in what ways the children actually experience those changes (Urbain 2010).

I used to be a very high-tempered person. I get angry easily. But when I listen to music, it calms me. I learnt that we need to calm ourselves to be creative. Our mind can be in peace when we calm ourselves. It has helped me make friends. In music class, it is very peaceful. It is like learning in a temple. (Bishan Pariyar, 18-year-old music student)

According to the participants' experiences, music is understood mostly at the individual level. For them, music for peace mostly means an escape from suffering. However, despite such experiences being temporary in nature, the participants agreed that music provided them with positive thoughts and energy to cope with the problems they face. Therefore, understanding the relationship between peace and music at the individual level should consider how individuals feel that music brings changes to their lives. Such nuances of perceived changes, their ephemeral presence, and the latent functions are often overshadowed by an overemphasis on the intended consequences of the music programme aimed at a larger context.

At the Collective Level

Music as a form of art has served as a medium of expression of people's understanding and imagination of peace. For instance, Pruitt (2008) studied a music programme in a major Australian metropolitan city where she found that musical activities provided the youth with alternative modes of expressions that included social criticism and political comments. It is also found that music has been used as a tool by people in many countries across the world to advocate for peace (Urbain 2010). One of the music teachers of the music programme in the village kept emphasising his happiness upon seeing the music students being able to develop with their own songs. He remembers that the songs were mostly about gender equality and child rights. However, he also recalls that they had also composed a peace song for one of the programmes organised in the village. As a teacher, he feels that a medium of outlet, such as music, is important for children who have grown up in pain and adversity.

You see some of these children have memories of conflict. Though many of them were too young when the Maoist war took place, some do remember. They remember seeing soldiers walking in the village and searching their homes. They have heard about people dying, people crying in pain and other kinds of pain. When they hear songs related to wars, they get emotional. Once we decided to compose our own song related to peace. The students were very interested. So, I asked them to come up with their own song. They did, in fact, come up with their 'peace' song. We also practice other peace songs sung by different artists. (Kamal Ghimire, 49-year-old music teacher)

In many societies across the world, people have used music as a tool to advocate for peace. For instance, many singers and musicians have composed peace songs that proved to be very powerful in uniting people for peace. Even in Nepal, during and after the Maoist conflict, a number of artists wrote peace songs that called on both the state and the Maoists to come to an agreement to stop the war. Such activism through music as a form of art has also been observed in other countries. Garcia (2014) states that peace songs composed by conflict victims at the grassroots level in post-conflict Colombian societies helped unite conflict victims. These collective expression from conflict victims through music proved that music, as a form of art, can be a powerful tool to advocate for peace.

On the other hand, music, as an important part of culture, provides a common ground for people from different backgrounds to come together (Miall et al 2011). An important consideration in understanding music as a cultural element is that music is closely associated with people and their activities, and they give meanings to such activities. In coming together and sharing common experiences through music, people empathise with each other's suffering. One of the members of the school management committee believes that bringing children and youth from different classes, castes, and ethnic backgrounds is important to develop respect for diversity in society. He believes that enrolling them in the music education programme is one way of teaching them to be peaceful. He shares his experiences of the music education programme:

You know, these young people have hot blood, they are very active. They can be very violent and aggressive at times. But, if we can train them to be peaceful from an early age, such violent behaviours can be controlled. That is what we are trying to do. We are bringing these students from different backgrounds, boys and girls, poor and rich, high

caste and low caste, so that they can work together and learn together. This is one way of ensuring that these children learn to respect each other. Learning to respect each other means you are not being violent to others. In this way, youth culture can be made peace-friendly. (Raman Dahal, 37-year-old member of the School Management Committee)

These experiences of music is not only observed by the local people, as the volunteers who have come for short duration to the village notice that music, as a part of culture, can provide a common ground for people to interact. One volunteer, for example, believes that such experiences are not limited within the music class and manifests in everyday life beyond the music class. Manifestations of the music programme beyond the music class are quite debatable. In the final section of this paper, I have briefly touched upon this debate. Here, a volunteer from USA, who teaches music to the children, shares her observations of the music programme:

Like we said, it's not about singing a song, or what instruments you play, it's about them (children) coming together and learning that they can come together outside of the music class. They can come together for meetings and have a role in politics. They can come together on having something that is best for the village. They can have a voice together. That's the strongest part of it. It's easy for them to take that outside of the programme and just work together outside. (Milly Randall, 25-year-old volunteer)

The volunteer believes that the experiences of the children in the music class would have manifestations beyond the music class. According to her, the children not only learn to work together in class by respecting the diversity of their friends from different backgrounds in the class, but this is also manifested in their behaviour and actions outside of the class. Yet, there are some arguments that counter these claims.

Liminal Space of Music for Peace Discourse

One of the most significant findings of the study was that participants believed that music can bring peace only if music can bring equality. The participants believed that only if music could bring people from all castes, genders, or backgrounds to the same level, it can ultimately bring peace. Such views were expressed by both local people and the organisers. Hence, the organisers were also very concerned about making sure that the music programme included children from all backgrounds. Much focus

was given to ensuring that the music programme was inclusive in terms of participation of children, both boys and girls from diverse ethnic and class groups. In the light of the 'inclusive participation', there were also claims that the music programme promoted equality in terms of gender relations and caste relations. However, there are some complexities and challenges faced by the music programme in terms of bringing changes in the larger socio-cultural contexts that lie beyond the liminal space of the music programme.

Gender Issues

It was worth noting that there is significant participation of girls in the music programme. Some of the parents said that initially they were hesitant in sending their daughters to the music programme. However, with the mothers' society and the school strongly advocating for the inclusion of girls in the music class, participation of girls in the music class rose significantly. Besides ensuring girls' participation in the music class, the musical content in the programme was only directed towards promoting social awareness against gender-based discrimination. Many of the songs the students learnt in the music class were about promoting gender equality. One of the music students shares her appreciation of the songs:

Our music teachers taught us a song which was about gender discrimination. The song was about a little girl who was deprived of education only because she was a girl. The song has a good message and asks people not to discriminate between sons and daughters. I think if we play these songs, then people will realise that they are doing injustice to their daughters. I think even radios and TVs should play songs like these which have positive messages of social awareness. (Sujana Ghimire, 17-year-old music student)

The students' activities were not limited within the music class. They were actively involved in plays and other programmes organised by the mothers' society. The plays were about social awareness, with a focus on gender equality, girl trafficking, and domestic violence. In these plays, the music students not only acted as characters, they also performed awareness songs. According to one of the parents of a music student, participation of the music students in the plays made them even more effective because of their performance of the awareness songs.

When the children played the songs about gender equality, everyone

felt very emotional. Some of the people in the audience even cried. Even I couldn't stop my tears. I realised that we have been treated so unequally. I faced so many troubles in life only because I was girl. I hope that my daughters won't face such problems. I believe after watching those dramas and listening to those songs, people won't discriminate against their daughters. (Ishori Basnet, 34-year-old parent and member of the mothers' society)

In this sense, the music programme has contributed in two major ways to promoting gender equality. Firstly, the music programme has ensured that the music programme is gender inclusive, and both boys and girls are given equal opportunities in teaching-learning as well as performance. Secondly, the music students were found equally active in social awareness for gender equality and ending gender discrimination. This participation of music students in awareness campaigns included their collaboration with the mothers' society in the village. In addition to this, the international organisation has also been supporting the mothers' society in the village, and contributing to women's empowerment. Therefore, the music programme in the village has had a positive impact in ensuring gender equality, not only in its programme but also in contributing to raising awareness of gender quality and ending gender discrimination.

Caste Issues

In the light of the existing social realities, the music programme focused on including students from diverse caste and ethnic groups in the village. The coordinator of the PFCF shares his observations on inclusive participation of children in the music programme:

The first time we had this music programme, I saw children from all castes; I saw Tamangs, Madhesis, Dalits, and they were all playing music. Music really sets a tone for group oneness that goes beyond caste. And when they take that into the classroom, it's great. It stays with them because your mind gets set up as you grow. That it's ok. There is unity in diversity. (Will Aura, 60-year-old PFCF Asia coordinator)

Besides the programme coordinator, the members of the school management committee also explain that one of the major objectives of the music programme was to teach the students to respect diversity. Hence, the organisers claim that they have included students from different castes and ethnic backgrounds. The organisers believe that by including the

students from diverse backgrounds, they can be taught to respect diversity and have respect for each other. Their arguments are often based on their claims that caste-based discrimination remains a serious issue in the village and that the initiative taken by the music programme is a part of a larger initiative to eradicate such discriminatory practices.

Before the music programme was introduced in the village, children from lower castes were very much excluded. They played in separate groups in the village. There was very little interaction between children from high castes and low castes. The parents of children of high castes did not allow their children to play with children from lower castes. We knew this was a problem. We had to solve this problem. When we introduced the music programme, we kept children from all castes together and taught them. But some parents of the children from high castes stopped sending their children. However, later they started to send them. (Bir Bahadur KC, 45-year-old member of the School Management Committee)

The above statement from a member of the school management committee, which runs the music programme, clearly indicates the sensitivity of issues related to caste-based discrimination. Caste-based discrimination is deep-rooted in Nepal's socio-cultural practices. The music programme addressed the issues in two ways. Firstly, the music programme introduced the music class where children from different castes were taught together. It challenged the existing stereotype that did not allow children from higher castes and lower castes to study or play together. Within the music class, by teaching children to play and perform together, the music class instilled in them a feeling of equality and respect for each other. Secondly, the music students were taught social awareness songs about ending caste-discrimination, which they practiced in class and performed during various programmes in the villages. According to the music teacher, the music students were directly involved in writing and composing the songs. Therefore, the music programme employed children as the agents of social change. In this way, the music programme attempted to address the issues related to caste-based discrimination in an effort to promote equality, which is one of the pillars to assure peace in any society.

Going beyond the Liminal Space

Though it cannot be denied that the music programme took significant steps in addressing issues related to discriminatory practices in the society,

caste-based and gender discrimination still exist in one form or other. For instance, one of the music students said that although she can talk and play with her friends from 'lower' castes in the music class, her family still prohibits her to go to their houses.

I enjoy playing with friends in music class. Some friends are very talented at playing the madal or the harmonium. Sajan is very good in playing both. So, he teaches us how to play them in class. So, we all like him. He is very friendly. He has a harmonium at his home as well. Therefore, when we are not in music class, we wish we could go to his home and learn the harmonium. But my mother doesn't allow me to go to his home. My mother doesn't like me going there. She says they are not good people. They may harm you (Samita KC, 17-year-old music student)

It is evident that though students from different castes interact with each other in the music class or during music programmes, but when they return home they face certain rules imposed by their family and society to follow the caste restrictions. Therefore, a big challenge remains for the organisers and the school committee members on how to replicate the changes that students feel in the class in the community. By introducing the concept of liminal space, created by this particular music education programme and the associated discourse, I aimed to illustrate how socio-cultural issues embedded in our daily practices affect the transformative possibilities offered by a development intervention. In this context, by referring to the statement put forth by a music student regarding the challenges she faced in influencing the change she experienced in the music class to her social context, I attempted to highlight how the underlying socio-cultural issues such as stereotypical gender relations, caste-based discriminatory practices challenge the intervention of the music education programme in realising the impact of its activities.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore local people's understanding of music for peace discourse and their engagement with a music education programme ran by a local community school in their village with financial support from an international organisation driven by this discourse. The findings showed that while the local discourse does not necessarily contest the dominant discourse of peace-building, it exposes certain conditions which influence the possible outcomes. As shown in the paper, local people have different interpretations of music, peace, and the relationship

between music and peace based on the local contexts and situations. For instance, peace was defined more in terms of social harmony, solidarity, and equality. Hence, the participants were of the opinion that music can bring peace only if music could bring social harmony, solidarity, and equality. In this context, since the music programme was able to bring people from different backgrounds together, the participants felt that the music programme was actually effective in establishing social harmony in the village. The participants felt that if the music programme could contribute to ending gender and caste discrimination in the village, which would be a significant achievement. Accordingly, the music programme focused on these two aspects to ensure the inclusive participation of children in the music programme. These conclusions imply that any organisation which initiates a peace-building initiative driven by an international discourse, such as music for peace, at local level should consider the local realities and setting in order to achieve its goals. Therefore, for the music programme, the major challenge lies in extending its impact beyond the classroom and the music school which lie as a liminal space while the real work lies in bringing changes to everyday lives. More importantly, any study on peace-building initiatives at the local level should examine local manifestations and interpretations, which are often overshadowed by the dominant discourse of development.

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Breaking the Silence Shrouding Violence against Women & Girls

Political Accountability towards Women's Human Rights

MADHURI R. SINGH

Introduction

‘...‘Ama’ tie ‘bhai’ to your back and me to your chest and let us all jump into the river...’

The plea of a nine-year-old as narrated by his mother still rings in my ears. I often wonder what kind of adults the two little boys, who looked for corners to hide in the evenings, have grown into. The helpless mother, who wanted to end her life because of her drunkard husband's atrocities, but wanted to live for the sons, torn between violation, suffering, compassion, and responsibility remained silent for over a decade. Society was sympathetic, but the environment was unsafe for her and her children to stay at home, as the intoxicated father came looking for them with an axe in his hand and threatened to kill all of them.

In the mid-nineties, Violence against Women & Girls (VAW&G) was an issue shrouded in silence and Nepal was debating about denying or accepting VAW&G as a human rights issue. VAW&G ranks among the most pervasive human rights abuses taking place across the world today.¹ It transcends boundaries of nationality, culture, religion, and socio-economic status. A manifestation of gender discrimination, VAW&G is compounded by structural prejudices built into patriarchal societies and seriously inhibits women's and girls' abilities to enjoy their rights and freedom equally with men and boys.

1 UN Women 2013.

Several researchers conclude that in various parts of the world between 10-50 per cent of women have been physically hit by intimate partners at some point of life, and 40-70 per cent of the homicides of women worldwide are caused due to intimate partner violence. Physical violence is often accompanied by psychological and sexual abuse, and intimate partner violence is the cause of 16 per cent of maternal deaths during pregnancy. Emerging studies show a strong relationship between domestic violence and the spread of HIV/AIDS in the developing world. However, direct comparisons cannot be made between cultures or countries or make judgments about which society intimate partner violence is the worst (Singh 2008).

Situation of VAW&G

The ten-year armed conflict (1996-2006) in Nepal was a major contributor to many forms of VAW&G, especially sexual violence, where even children were not spared. Both the security forces and the Maoist combatants committed physical, verbal, and sexual violence. Members of the security forces allegedly raped and sexually abused female combatants after arresting them and targeted female relatives of the Maoist suspects, or those they believed to be Maoist supporters because they had provided Maoists food and shelter. Maoist combatants allegedly raped women who stood up to them and refused to support their party's activities. In some cases, women were targeted if they were found alone; in other instances, male relatives were nearby and could not or did not intervene due to fear. The fear of stigma and further abuse has led to an undisclosed magnitude of sexual and reproductive rights violations that occurred during the conflict (Human Rights Watch 2014). The socio-cultural structure of Nepali society has made the reintegration of returning female combatants difficult. Caste discrimination in marriages has resulted in domestic violence and lost opportunities in education and employment skills, leading to the possibility of women being pushed back into poverty.

A recent study by local NGO, Sancharika Samuha, analysed 15 national newspapers from January to March 2015 and found the following statistics on violence perpetrated against women during that period: 61 murdered, 10 raped and killed, 48 died due to domestic violence, and six dowry-related deaths. Additionally, also reported in that period were 159 rapes, 124 cases of domestic violence, 102 cases of human trafficking, 102 cases of harmful traditional and cultural practices, 34 cases of accusation of practicing witchcraft, 11 cases of polygamy, 32 cases of sexual harassment, and 14 dowry cases (*The Kathmandu Post* 2015). Available data from the Nepali

Police for the period 2007-2014 indicates a rise in VAW&G including rape, attempted rape, trafficking, forced abortion, polygamy, child marriage, and domestic violence.

The 2011 National Demographic and Health Survey of Nepal reported that 21 per cent of women aged 15-49 had experienced physical violence at least once since the age of 15. Of these women, 12 per cent had experienced sexual violence. For married women, their current husbands accounted for the largest proportion of perpetrators (84 per cent and 87 per cent for physical and sexual violence, respectively). Among never-married women, siblings were for the largest proportion of perpetrators at 38 per cent.

The Survey presented valuable comparative data on VAW&G prevalent across demographics, showing that women are most at risk of physical and sexual violence within the home, with perpetrators being family members. To begin with, the data shows that incidences of violence increase with age, and married women are more likely to face violence. Proportionately, more rural women (22 per cent) experienced physical violence than urban women (19 per cent). Twice as many women in the Tarai² (12 per cent) experience physical violence than women in the mountain zone (6 per cent). The data is similar for sexual violence. Younger women are less likely than older women to report sexual violence. Rural women are more likely (13 per cent) to experience sexual violence than urban women (11 per cent). Education, on the other hand, played a positive role in reducing VAW&G. However, the data clearly shows that a woman's economic background does not protect her from violence; victimisation is evident across all wealth quintiles, with only slight differences (Ministry of Health and Population, New ERA, and ICF International Inc. 2012).

On a positive note, the available data and research indicate that VAW&G is no more shrouded in silence. Voices are being raised and concerns expressed to bring perpetrators to court and provide justice to victims.

Responses to VAW&G

Universally, the last four to five decades have been crucial in establishing evidence and exploring the extent and magnitude of violence perpetrated against women and girls, even though it is under-reported because of the sensitivity of the subject. Even to this day, society attributes blame to the (female) victims for provoking or inviting violence upon themselves by their disobedience and failure or infidelity as a wife (Ministry of Health and Population, New ERA, and ICF International Inc. 2012). Although fundamental

2 The southern plains of Nepal.

Table 1: Crimes against Women and Girls – 2007-2014

Fiscal Year	Rape	Attempted Rape	Trafficking	Abortion	Polygamy	Child Marriage	Domestic Violence
2007/08	309	73	123	13	122	4	881
2008/09	391	75	139	12	170	2	968
2009/10	376	101	161	8	146	7	983
2010/11	481	151	183	12	197	3	1355
2011/12	555	156	118	13	259	12	2250
2012/13	677	245	144	28	350	19	1800
2013/14	912	414	185	12	421	17	6835

Source: Women and Children Service Directorate, Nepal Police 2013

to the provisions of the 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), VAW&G was not specifically addressed in the original CEDAW articles and was subsequently included in the General Recommendation No. 19 of CEDAW in the eleventh session of 1992 (UN General Assembly 1979).

A group of women in California started the first refuge 'Heaven House', a shelter for women victims of domestic violence forty-five years ago, followed by a hotline many years later. A groundbreaking book *Scream Quietly or the Neighbours Will Hear* by Erin Pizzey, for the first time, gave women a chance to speak about the issue in the United Kingdom. In Nepal, SAATHI opened the first shelter for women victims (and their children) of domestic violence in 1995 (Singh 2008).

Nepali society is no exception in perpetuating VAW&G of all kinds. Until few years ago, VAW&G at the family and community level, and by the state, was considered as a 'women's only' issue. Physical, emotional, traditional practices harmful to women, social and cultural norms, and economic deprivation were considered as corrective measures further sanctioned by religious interpretations to put women in their rightful place. The political transformation of the country from a single-party *Panchayat* system to multi-party democracy in 1990 opened avenues for civil society organisations to be recognised and registered, which played a major role in raising awareness, conducting research, advocating for policy and legal reforms adhering to the international norms, and lobbying with the government for preventive and protective measures for victims of violence and the prosecution of the perpetrators.

From Silence to a Voice

...Uthera bole hawa le lagthyo- basera bole musa le sunthyo...

(...if I stood and spoke the wind took away my voice and if I sat down only the mouse heard ...)³

This expression from a 84-year-old lady reflects the situation of a Nepali woman during her youth, probably about 65 years ago. Social, political, and economic empowerment has transformed her from a meek housewife to a co-operative member with strength and a voice due to unity. This reflects the social transformation in rural Nepal.

3 Author's interview with Dambar Kumari Basnet, member of a community group working for economic, social, and political empowerment of women in the Eastern Development Region of Nepal (7-12th of June 2014).

The world conferences on women brought hope and optimism to women's lives for peace, equality, and development and recognised 'domestic violence' as an obstacle to gender equality. During the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, governments fully acknowledged VAW as a fundamental violation of women's human rights. Through aggressive advocacy, specifically after the Fourth World Conference and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), Nepali women are beginning to realise and establish their rights as individuals, although equality continues to evade the vast majority. Subsequent to BPfA, there has been a sharp rise in the number of NGOs working on gender equality, women's empowerment, diverse forms of VAW&G, and human rights. Specifically, such work has been done on domestic violence, the trafficking of girls and women, child rights, and single women's (widows) rights. There has also been a great deal of work on capacity-building of the government and NGOs through gender advocacy, empowerment, as well as research and media mobilisation at the national, district, and community levels (National Network for Beijing Review Nepal and SAATHI 2009).

Political accountability, to some extent, is evident through the constitutional, legal, and administrative measures, but impact at the societal level is limited and varied. While many Nepali women suffer sexual and physical violence, it is important to note they do not do so equally. The impact of gender discrimination and VAW&G is reinforced and made more severe by poverty as well as caste/ethnicity. Nepal's women, belonging to multiple identities including Dalit, Adivasi/Janajati, Muslim, Madhesi, and other marginalised communities as well as women with disabilities, experience violence in different ways. Rural-urban, literate-illiterate, class-caste, financial status, awareness level, and topography also play a major role in women's awareness and access to the available justice and security services. The fundamental institution of the family is core to providing protection, but conversely, often inflicts VAW&G and is only minimally challenged in Nepal.

...from thinking of it as our 'fate' to tolerate violence, we now know it is our 'right' to live a life free of violence...⁴

This statement from a 45-year-old community worker reflects the changing attitude towards VAW&G in semi-urban Nepal. Evidence of change can be perceived through increased media reporting of VAW&G, reporting

4 Author's interview with community groups working on economic, social and political empowerment of women in the Eastern Development Region of Nepal (7-12th of June 2014).

to the police and other relevant governmental and non-governmental institutions indicating an increased level of awareness about legal rights and services. There is also debate and scrutiny on whether crime is also on the rise due to the rapidly transitioning society and negative influence of the visual media and soap operas. In a transitioning Nepal, VAW&G normally starts with domestic and cultural violence and continues to other sites, such as violence on the streets, workplaces, internal and external trafficking, and exploitation in the entertainment sector, specifically dance bars, commercial sex work, and bonded labour within the country and beyond.

...After tolerating four months of eccentric and physical abusive behaviour from my ex-husband, my parents realised all was not good. Family members tried to mediate the situation, but I finally opted for divorce; otherwise, I would either be dead or in a mental asylum by now...⁵

This comment from a 26-year-old educated and legally aware woman from a middle class family reflects the changing perception and mindset of educated urban women towards VAW&G. It conveys the message that divorce is no more a taboo as it used to be in the past, and that living a life free of violence is more important than maintaining family honour and prestige by suffering in silence. The shortcoming, however, is the scarcity of statistical evidence accurately recording the percentage of women able to break away from an abusive and exploitative relationship and situation. Family support and economic independence of victims of violence is seen as a major factor to garner community support as well.

Two Sides of the Same Coin

While talking about VAW&G, and the plight of the victims, it is also important to look at factors contributing to making a child into an abusive adult. In several countries of the West, perpetrator-focused programmes help an individual realise his/her shortcomings and change abusive behaviour. Another case that reiterates the need to look into perpetrators' growing stages as an essential contributor to abusive behaviour is cited below.

...under the situation that my husband does not take alcohol and abuse me, I would want to live with him. I complain about our situation, the

5 As expressed to the author by a Kathmandu-based educated woman in December 2014.

NGO takes us to the police station where they make him sign papers and lock him up for few days and let him out on bail in a few days...

This testimony from a young woman inspired me to probe deeper into the case and learnt that the perpetrator, whose father committed suicide when he was nine-years-old, was raised by his single mother who blamed him for everything that went wrong. He was assigned the responsibilities of looking after his younger siblings, and forced to be the 'young adult' by suppressing his own childhood desires. He grew up with guilt forced upon him and hating the way he was treated. The brunt of a 'dysfunctional family' is often intense on the eldest child. As an adult, his behaviour towards his mother and all females immediately associated with his daily life became suspicious, discriminatory, and violent as he now had the power to control them. Therefore, the cycle of violence based on the theory of 'power and control' manifested as abuse against his wife.

While this discussion advocates the need to look at perpetrators' childhood histories, it is important to understand that treatment of perpetrators besides punishment is essential if VAW&G is to be totally curbed. Men, socialised in a patriarchal society, and women reinstating patriarchy to safeguard their position, often fail to recognise that VAW&G is not just a personal or gender issue but a concern of grave human rights violations and a development issue.

John Bradshaw, America's leading personal growth expert, who pioneered the concepts of the 'inner child', 'dysfunctional families', 'emotional illness as a social crisis', emphasises the importance of knowing family history to understand how childhood (mis)treatments manifest in an adult. He sees 'shame as a pivotal, insidious and destructive force, planted within individuals by misguided parents and kept alive until it is exposed to the healing light of day' (Bradshaw 1996). Citing an example of the 'inner child', Bradshaw explains that emotionally narcissistic parents (adult children) make sure that they get from their kids the love they did not get from their parents, thus making the child the object of narcissistic gratification. He presents the theory of 'shame versus guilt' and how it is carried over in life to shape adult human behaviour. Bradshaw's central ideas focus on the family as an 'emotional system' where children learn and absorb. He debates the dominance of patriarchy in raising families and stresses 'emotional healing for the recovery of mental health' (Bradshaw 1996).

Relating the two cases presented above to Bradshaw's concepts, it is important to look into the family circumstances of the perpetrator's growing stage to understand the growth patterns of abusive individuals.

A follow-up on the growing pattern of the two youngsters who witnessed what they did would open an insightful arena to learn how perpetrators become who they are, as violence is a learned behaviour and there is proven evidence that ‘victims of today become perpetrators of tomorrow’. Ironically, poor documentation and lack of follow-ups often misses the opportunity to explore an area of great importance.

Political and Social Accountability

Nepal's political accountability to Nepali women and international commitments to address VAW&G is visible in the enactment of national laws and regulations, including the 2007 Interim Constitution of Nepal; laws and provisions in the *Muluki Ain* (The Country Code); clauses in various acts and special acts and regulations which lay down procedures and rules for the implementation of acts and laws. Particularly important are the Domestic Violence (Offence and Punishment) Act 2009 and Regulation 2010; Trafficking in Persons and Transportation (Control) Act 2007 and Regulation 2008; Gender Equality Act 2006 (more than 60 gender discriminatory laws amended and several affirmative provisions added); Sexual Harassment in Workplace Eradication Act 2014; and the directive on marital rape among many others. These Acts and Regulations enacted or amended in response to the demands of changing socio-cultural-economic dynamics and norms, resulting in human behaviour, if enforced sensitively and without biases and influences, are expected to prevent VAW&G from occurring and provide justice to sufferers. However, a significant problem is the fact that law enforcers, victims, and perpetrators alike, have a limited understanding of the law, even when the provisions themselves are highly progressive.

The National Action Plans on Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking in Persons, the Standard Operating Procedure of Rehabilitation Centers 2012; National Minimum Standard 2012; Guidelines for Regulating Women Workers in Dance, Bars, Cabin Restaurants, Massage Parlours, 2008; and the Rehabilitation Fund for the Rescue, Protection, and Rehabilitation of Survivors are indicative of the government's commitment to curb VAW&G and provide justice to victims. The three-year Human Rights National Plan of Action (2010/11-2012/13) also has significant provisions to protect the rights of women and children. The Country Programme Action Plan (2013-2017) emphasises legal reforms and women's access to justice, peace-sensitive approach to social empowerment, livelihood enhancement, and inclusive governance at the community level. In terms of social accountability, advocacy and lobbying, women's organisations have

broken the silence shrouding VAW&G and influenced policy and legislative outcomes. This, however, does not adequately address the deeply embedded practices and socio-cultural norms, which condition women to persevere and men to control, violence being used as the tool.

The world is technologically and scientifically advanced, but human relationships within social contexts are still influenced by unequal power relationships that create an environment of tension and insecurity for women. This especially applies where attitude towards women remains that of a second-class citizen, solely dependent on men for economic, legal, and social well-being. Nepali women have made significant progress in the social, education, and health sectors in the last two-and a half decades, but their status within society and community still remains vulnerable. Male members within the family and society are reluctant to accept the changing roles of women. Researchers around the world have also found that during periods of transition in gender relations, women may be at an increased risk of violence (Singh 2008).

Enforcement of provisions within the legal frameworks and their impact is yet to be measured as the patriarchal mindset is often quoted for the biased enforcement of the laws. Nepal has acceded to/ratified 23 international human rights instruments (FWLD 2010), including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women and its Optional Protocol. In the aftermath of the decade-long armed conflict, Nepal is the first country in South Asia and second in Asia to formulate the National Action Plan to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and 1820 on Sexual Violence during and in the post-conflict situation. Eight years after the Maoists and the government signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and a Commission to Investigate Enforced Disappearances was formed in 2015, but its effectiveness is yet to be seen.

The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997) of Nepal recognised violence against women as a development issue, and the Tenth Plan (2003) aimed towards legal reform to address traditional violence against women and to provide legal aid for the rehabilitation and reintegration of girls/women affected by trafficking, focus on community-based rehabilitation and income generation for women and children affected by armed conflict/Maoist insurgency, and reaching out to women and other socially marginalised groups including Dalits and people with disabilities. A subsequent Three-Year Interim Plan (FY 2007/08-2009/10) changed gender equality from a strategy to a major objective. This and subsequent plans have introduced new programmes for women's empowerment, focused on establishing and

strengthening institutions and mechanisms for gender equality as well as intensifying efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women and ensure women's access to justice. Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is a major strategy to ensure resources for gender equality and women's empowerment, as it considers that women face violence due to economic dependency.

Breaking the Silence: What has happened?

Besides the discussions above, political and social accountability to break the silence shrouding VAW&G and consider it as human rights issue is seen in several initiatives of the Government of Nepal. The Government of Nepal, in coordination with other stakeholders, promotes 'zero tolerance to violence' with the long term goal of creating 'a Nepal free from gender-based violence where women, men, girls and boys can realise their full potential and live a life of dignity'.

Further commitment is obvious through initiatives such as (Singh 2014):

- Ratification of major human rights treaties, conventions and the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR), especially related to women, such as the CEDAW, BPfA, UNSCRs 1325 and 1820.
- Declaring 2010 as the Year to End Gender-based Violence and the creation of an inter-ministerial committee under the Chief Secretary to prepare and implement the National Action Plan (NAP) in line with the declaration.
- Establishment of a Gender Empowerment and Coordination Unit (GECU) at the Office of the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers (OPMCM) to manage and monitor reported cases of VAW&G and implement the NAP.
- Establishment of a free hotline number (1111) connecting directly to the Prime Minister's office.
- Creation of 75 District Resource Groups (DRG) under the coordination of the Chief District Officer (CDO), 110 women and children service centres under Nepal Police and 23 shelters for victims of domestic violence and trafficking under the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MWCSW).
- Establishment of Gender-Based Violence Elimination Fund in 2010 to provide seed money for rescue, medical support, legal aid, counselling, and rehabilitation of the survivors of Gender-based Violence (GBV), and introduced hospital-based One Stop Crisis Management Centres (OCMC) in 15 selected districts and

established units to register cases of violence at the District Development Committee Offices. Enactment of Discrimination and Untouchability (Offense and Punishment) Act 2011, and Act against Sexual Harassment at Work Place 2014.

- Formulation and implementation of the National Action Plans on UNSCRs 1325 and 1820, NAP on GBV, National Safe Motherhood Plan (2002-2017) and the Supreme Court directive to formulate law to abolish 'Chhaupadi'⁶ as a malpractice having adverse consequences on women's health.
- Endorsement of The Standard Operating Procedures for the prevention of and response to VAW&G and creation of the Gender-Based Violence Information Management System (GBVIMS) under the office of the National Women Commission.
- Care and support programme for survivors of violence at Paropakar Maternity Hospital in Kathmandu and GBV as an integral component of healthcare provision in the Nepal Health Sector Implementation Plan 2010-2015.
- Best practice seen in improved collaboration among civil society organisations and government and civil society representations in government-formed committees at the central and district levels.
- Non-governmental organisations (NGO) and Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRD) continue to raise awareness, provide support services to victims, advocate for formulation and enforcement of laws and engage men in the fight against VAW.
- NGOs continue to pressurise the government to provide justice to victims through campaign such as 'Occupy Baluwatar'⁷, 'One Billion Rising'⁸, and 'Campaign against Rape'.
- Engagement of men as allies to combat VAW&G seen through MenEngage campaign, SAATHI's collaboration with All Nepal Football Association (with the theme of 'Our Goal: End Violence against Women'), The White Ribbon Campaign, etc.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Despite the initiatives taken and the commitments expressed, the situation of women's rights in Nepal is still bleak, with limited progress made in completely curbing VAW&G. The Millennium Development Goals Progress Report 2013, jointly produced by the Government of Nepal and the UN

6 Chhaupadi-menstrual seclusion, a traditional practice in the far-western Nepal.

7 December 2013 to February 2014.

8 Part of International campaign conducted every year since 2012.

Country Team, indicated positive progress in achieving all goals except Goal 3, which seeks to 'promote gender equality and empower women'. The report states that though reporting on VAW&G increased, remedies from state mechanisms were either very slow or ineffective. A challenge faced by Nepal, despite efforts by the government and the civil society to recognise and address existing forms of VAW, are new forms of violence that have emerged.

The new emergence include an increase in suicide among women, and the social cost associated with foreign labour migration, such as an increase in extra-marital affairs and divorce; abandonment of children; sexual exploitation and abuse of migrant women leading to unwanted pregnancies, child birth and family break-up; exploitation of displaced women and children due to conflict or natural disasters; neglect and sexual abuse of elderly women, young women and girls in the absence of family members; growing misuse of modern information technology such as mobile phones to view pornographic films leading to increased incidences of sexual violence among teenagers and youngsters; easy access to pornographic films changing men's/boys' sexual demand and behavior, exacerbating the occurrence of rape and sexual abuse; cyber crimes; increase in trafficking of women and children; and dowry deaths to name a few. The changing trend of trafficking also became evident from Central Investigation Bureau (CIB) of the Nepal Police action against ten agents who smuggled and trafficked young girls to African and the Gulf countries through travel agencies, specialised for the purpose.⁹ Murder cases, especially of Shiba Hashmi¹⁰ and Bindu Thakur¹¹ indicate the emergence of 'honour killing'. Although prohibited by law, evidence of increased child marriage is being recorded, especially in Nepal's Tarai region, to retain prestige and honour of the family.

In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of April the 25th and May the 12th 2015, VAW&G increased in the form of rape and attempted rape,¹² where a five-year-old was raped by a 42-year-old man and five other attempts were made to rape young girls and women in the camps set up for the earthquake-affected people in Kathmandu. The increase in the trafficking of women and children¹³ from the affected districts, as published

9 Operation Eagle arrests 10 traffickers, June the 1st 2015, CIB press conference, Kathmandu, Nepal.

10 Image Channel broadcast on February the 20th 2013 based on incident of 10.12.2012.

11 *Kantipur Daily*, 01.01.2013.

12 One rape and five attempted rapes, May the 27th 2015.

13 eKantipur. May the 17th 2015, 'Alert Meeting' regarding the possibility of women

in the daily vernacular 'Nagarik Dainik', shed light on how trafficking agents reached the remote affected districts and lured young girls with better employment opportunities, but sold them to Indian brothels. Twelve girls were rescued from Mumbai brothels and three others from brothels in north Indian states.¹⁴ Moreover, the draft of the new Constitution still exhibits discriminatory clauses regarding citizenship from the mother's name.

The outcome of the Fourth World Conference in the form of Beijing Platform for Action gave momentum to address this issue, and two decades of advocacy, lobbying, and persistent struggle by women's rights groups have culminated in the formulation and amendment of constitutional provisions, laws, and policies to address the issue in Nepal. However, facts such as politicisation of crime, patriarchal mindset resulting in unwillingness to treat the issue as a human rights and development issue, corruption and bad governance have restricted women from enjoying their basic human rights as conferred by the UDHR 1947. As a movement has become organised and is demanding rights and justice for victims of violence, we can be hopeful that Nepali women will be able to enjoy their basic human rights through gender equality. The media has played a crucial role in highlighting the issue and to raising awareness regarding 'fate versus right'. The increase in reporting of VAW&G cases to the police, and other relevant institutions, proves that silence shrouding the issue is dissolving and socio-political accountability is increasing.

There is Still a Need to:

- Express and practice the commitment and non-interference from political entities to politicise crime, especially those related to VAW&G
- Provide better education on the existing laws and policies to law-enforcement agencies and the general public to strengthen enforcement and implementation of the law.
- Improve coordination between NGOs and the government to establish referral linkages between facilities. Including the government (police, hospitals, Gender Unit at the OPMCM, National Women Commission, DRC, shelters/service centres), NGO shelters, legal aid, and awareness campaigns for a stronger response.
- Incorporate VAW&G as a human rights topic from primary school level curriculum to create law-abiding citizens who understand the

trafficking.

14 Medianp.com. June the 11th 2015. Earthquake affected woman in Indian brothels.

core principles of basic human rights.

- Respond to conflict-related VAW&G for lasting peace.
- Increase the capacity of service providers at all levels by providing training to ensure that staff responds to VAW&G incidences according to internationally recognised standards, including providing information on basic human rights, and recognising and addressing the signs of VAW&G with sensitivity.
- Provide life-skills and financial skill training to empower women to manage their finances in an effective manner, thus preventing them from staying in abusive situations.
- Establish gender-sensitive infrastructure and a fast-track justice system to deal with the sensitive issues of VAW&G.
- Establish support systems of safe houses, second-stage homes, and other infrastructure depending on the need of the victims(s).
- Support the establishment of community-level women's groups' networks for prevention and protection.
- Design interventions that focus on under-researched forms of violence among certain target groups and during emergencies and natural calamities.
- Engage men and boys as allies to combat VAW&G.
- Introduce programmes for the perpetrators in addition to punishment by engaging them in programmes intended to change their behaviour through psychosocial processes.
- Establish a strong monitoring framework relevant for public accountability of policies and programmes. Design monitoring and evaluation tools to measure the impact of the implemented programmes that demonstrate promising strategies for prevention, and as guiding tools for policymakers, donors and other stakeholders.
- Mobilise the media for all types of campaigns to promote the rights of women and to maintain equality. Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter are effective tools to reach out to the younger generations and to reach a larger number of people.

I would like to end my paper with a quote from His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama:

It is the nature of human beings to yearn for freedom, equality and dignity. If we accept that others have a right to peace and happiness equal to our own, do we not have a responsibility to help those in need? All human beings, whatever their cultural or historical background,

suffer when they are intimidated, imprisoned, tortured or discriminated against. The question of human rights is so fundamentally important that there should be no difference of views on this.

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Mediating the Migrant Experience

Dukha, Viraha, and Nostalgia in Nepali Lok Dohorī Songs

ANNA STIRR

Introduction

Aghi Pachhi jānchha ni din rūdai
Hāsa bola kahile kahi bheṭ hūdai
Paschim purvako
Purvako, aba pheri bheṭ kahile holā ra duiṭā dhurvako?

*Ahead and behind, days pass in weeping,
Let's laugh and talk, when we meet once in a while.
Of west and east
Of the east, now when will we meet again, we of the two poles?*

In the couplet above, the singer has returned home to her village in Gorkha District after a long absence, and is beginning to sing about the experience of leaving and returning. Both tears and laughter characterise this experience, tears characterising days spent apart, laughter when together again. The singer here, Maya Gurung, is both a rural-urban migrant and a woman returning to her natal home (*māita*), so in forming her lyrical couplets she has at her disposal two venerable narrative song traditions, of migration in general and of women's separation from their natal families. As she continues to improvise lyrics, she will make references to the places around her, aspects of the natural world, and the quirks of the relatives who have come down to meet her and listen to her sing.

A professional *lok dohorī* singer herself, with a broad knowledge of tunes from various parts of the country, Maya is also drawing on current commercial *lok dohorī* songs. Here she is singing a song with a melody sourced far from her home village, musically as well as lyrically

emphasising her distance from a place that feels like home. Gathered around her are uncles and aunts, brothers, sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews, and other villagers. They had all been dancing but took a break to listen when she began to sing. A friend, back from her marital home, takes up a *mādal* drum and begins to play. The dance now takes form to this new beat, as Maya expresses her longing for home; her sadness that the home she remembers is now alive only in memories, and she greets and honours her relatives in song.

This paper is about the musical field of *lok dohorī*, and its role in mediating Nepali migrants' felt experience of being away from an imagined home. The kind of song-and-dance gathering described above is a central form of performance throughout Nepal's hills, and a major inspiration to *lok dohorī* as a commercial genre. Similar 'songfests' take place in numerous versions all over the Himalayan region, in various languages and musical styles, and villagers' talk of their importance in sharing sorrows and joys (*dukha-sukha bāḍne*). This atmosphere of emotional sharing, characterised by simultaneous highs and lows, becomes an ideal expressive context in the *lok dohorī* music industry. In this industry, singers like Maya produce songs and music videos oriented toward an audience that, if not rural-urban migrants themselves, has some attachment to Nepal's rural hills that leads them to recognise and value the 'songfest' and its ways of sharing joys and sorrows through music, dance, and the sung poetry of often-improvised lyrics that draw on rich poetic traditions. It is a context in which multiple social mediations occur, from the intimate musical and conversational interactions among performers within the duration of a song, to the various publics in which the music may place them, to the social divisions the performance may make visible, to the global political economic conditions that encompass them. With attention to these different and intersecting forms of social mediation (Born 2013), this paper examines how migration songs have contributed to shaping the experience of migrant life by highlighting particular emotional states.

The modern Nepali popular songs about migration that I examine in this article include many in the commercial *lok dohorī* genre, and also film songs that can be put into genres of *lok pop* or *lok ādhunik*. Together, these songs draw on poetic tropes of *dukha* (suffering) and *viraha* (longing) that are hundreds of years old. These poetic tropes and the musical and visual tropes used along with them emphasise a particular structure of feeling around the dialectic of home and away. Yet to argue that all migration songs are only about *dukha* would not be accurate; the equally popular narrative of the migrant's triumphant return home is one counter-example, and the

popularity of humorous improvised couplets juxtaposed with sad refrains in live *dohori* performances, underscored by the fast danceable beats that characterise many of these songs, shows that a greater range of emotion is present.

Song in Migration History

Migration has long been an important part of livelihoods for many poor residents of the Himalayan foothills, and indeed, throughout South Asia. Dirk Kolff (2002), in his study *Naukar, Rajput, and Sepoy*, describes a military labour market throughout the subcontinent from the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries. In the prevailing traditions of the time, men would leave their villages to seek employment and attach themselves to the army of a regional *rāja*. This was called *naukari* or service, a term that survives to this day in Nepali, most often referring to military or other service to the state.

Such migration traditions, and their place within social structures and structures of feeling, are described and alluded to in songs and poetry, in particular, in the *viraha* genre. The term *viraha*, most simply translated as emotional pain, and in this context as longing, describes a thematic genre of song and poetry found throughout South Asia with songs about love and the pain of separation (Orsini 2006). It is this theme of migration, separation, love, and longing that marks a song as *viraha*. The lyrical themes of *viraha* songs paint a consistent picture of migration traditions in which men venture out into the world to seek their fortunes, while women stay home and wait for their wandering sons, brothers, and lovers. Songs from both women's and men's perspectives associate village homes as feminine, and cities and the wider world as masculine. For example, Kolff cites the ballad, *Vīśaladevarāsa*, composed in Old Marwari around 1450, in which a husband is going into *naukari* (here translated as 'service as a courtier,' implying that he is going to serve a foreign king), and Kolff comments, 'as so often in Indian literature, the woman of the house tries to make her travel-loving husband change his mind' (Kolff 2002, 76).

O Lord, who tells you to go away and go into service as a courtier?
(when the master is away)
There is no money in the house or salt in the pitcher,
The low-born women quarrel in the house
Homes oppressed with debt are unpleasant,
Whether the master leaves as a jogi
Or whether he goes in shame into service as a courtier (J. D. Smith 2007,

The themes of women missing their husbands and trying to convince them to stay home, of poverty, and of debt, run through *viraha* songs, as the husbands always leave whether for military service, trade, or to become wandering ascetics, or some combination of these (Alter 2011; Kolff 2002). The tradition of *viraha* songs that express love and longing in the context of migration along these gendered lines provides a set of lyrical tropes on which *dohori* improvisers and writers of new songs draw, and thus influence the continuing character of migration songs today.

While *viraha* is discussed as a genre of poetry in many different South Asian languages, the broader word for songs expressing all types of sorrows, and the one more commonly used in Nepali, is *dukha*, suffering. In Nepal today, it is safe to say that ‘*dukha* songs’ also comprise a broad thematic genre, within which *viraha* songs could be considered a subtype. Therefore, all *viraha* songs are *dukha* songs, but not all *dukha* songs are *viraha* songs. Finally, there is also the closely related trope of remembering the village home (*gāũ gharko samjhanā*), which does not necessarily hold the same connotations of love and longing for individual people as does *viraha*, and can be translated as nostalgia. These three concepts of *dukha*, *viraha*, and nostalgia characterise Nepali migration songs. As products of, and participants in, networks of social mediation, these songs, over centuries, have come to provide templates for how one should feel and express those feelings in the context of migration or separation from their home or loved ones. We might see them as part of a pedagogy or regime of emotion that mediates the relation between feeling and gendered social position among their performers and audiences (P. Smith 2001; S. L. Smith 2001). I will argue here that this is part of what they do, but that socio-musical mediation is also more complex and open-ended.

As I briefly mentioned above, there are particular strands of migration songs that can be categorised according to the type of migration they address. The two most common strands diverge along gendered lines: songs about men’s migration for military service and trade (Kolff 2002; Hutt 1996), and songs about women’s migration for marriage (March 2003; Narayan 1997; Narayan 1987). It is of course true that men migrate for other reasons than labour, including marriage, and women also migrate for labour, but the songs released today still depict a gendered difference in the experience of migration along the lines of much older *viraha* songs. Nevertheless, both types of songs express emotions about longing for the home places in which they were born, a nostalgia that has more similarities than differences. I have written elsewhere about women’s songs about remembering their natal homes, songs about rural-urban migration in

general, and about songs in and about labour migration to the Gulf (Stirr 2007; 2009; 2018). In this paper, I focus on military labour migration or the military *lāhure* experience. Along with women's songs about remembering their *māita*, this constitutes one of the most broadly recognised set of migration-related poetic tropes and narratives in Nepali-language folk songs for the past two hundred years. The term *lāhure* has been used for such migration since the advent of Nepali recruitment into the British Army after the Anglo-Nepalese War, yet the songs draw on an even older tradition that dates back several centuries.

Lyrics, Music, and Emotion in a Hundred-Year-Old Migration Lament

The oldest example of which I am aware of a migration song recording in the Nepali language comes from a collection now in the 'collection of more than 2,500 audio-recordings of Allied prisoners of war done by the Royal Prussian Phonographic Commission between 29 December 1915 and 19 December 1918, including a large number of non-white colonial prisoners. The soldiers were asked to stand in front of the phonograph, and made to read out a text, or sing a song or tell a story' (Das 2014, 406). Carl Stumpf, one of the founders of the discipline of ethnomusicology, was an initiator of this project, which was framed as a linguistic study with parallels to Boasian salvage ethnography. Among the prisoners was a man named Jas Bahadur Rai, born in 1893 or 1894 in the Indian district of Darjeeling. In the Zossen POW camp of Wünsdorf, on the 6th of June 1916, at 4 pm, he sang a song in Nepali into the phonograph of Carl Stumpf's research assistant. The song now survives in a Wünsdorf archive, where it is labelled 'Gurkha Song, Own Words,' (PK 308). Jas Bahadur Rai died shortly after he sang this song and was buried in Wünsdorf's graveyard of the Common Wealth.

The song he sang, transcribed below, heartbreakingly expresses his suffering and his wish to return home, and also illustrates some of the themes that continue in *viraha* songs to this day.¹ He addresses the song to the women he loves back home, apparently both his wife and sisters, addressing them with terms of endearment and kinship terms '*charī*,' '*didi*,' and '*kanchhī*,' but preceding these all with '*sun-lāune*,' 'gold-wearing.' This could be read as an implied criticism, reminding them that it is his sacrifice that has brought them their gold, and leading to the question that runs through many migration songs to this day: was it worth it? The majority of

1 I am grateful to Santanu Das for bringing this song to my attention, and to Ram Kumar Singh for helping with the transcription.

the song expresses his personal experiences, narrating how he has seen the world and suffered greatly, and at the end, his implication that he has lost his faith in God seems to suggest that joining the British army and fighting in the First World War was most definitely not worth it.

There are two recordings, recorded on two separate cylinders. While a difference in pitch at the beginning of the second recording suggests that some time elapsed between the two, the description of how prisoners' songs and testimonies were recorded also leads me to believe that there was not a break of more than a few minutes. I present them here as one

Table 1: Example of Jas Bahadur Rai's POW Song

Line	Nepali Transcription ⁱ	English Translation
1	<i>Sisaiⁱⁱ kholā baḍhi jyānⁱⁱⁱ āyo bagāyo bulbule</i>	With the rising of the Sisai river, I came, carried in its bubbling flow
2	<i>Germany deśmā āpugyaū hamī Angrezko hukumle</i>	We arrived in the country, Germany, at the orders of the British
3	<i>Hai suna suna, sun lāune charī,^{iv} Angrezko hukumle</i>	Listen, oh listen, gold-wearing birdie, at the orders of the British
4	<i>Nepālī jyānko tīn dhāre pānī mul pānī turūrū</i>	Nepalis have three water taps, water flowing from the source
5	<i>Nepālī jyānko marne na bāchne man pani durūrū</i>	Nepali people, neither dying nor surviving, the heart also crying
6	<i>Na uḍī jānu na basī āunu, man rūnchha durūrū</i>	Neither can we fly away, nor can we arrive while staying put, the heart cries, sobbing
7	<i>Hai suna suna, sun lāune didī, man rūnchha durūrū</i>	Listen, oh listen, gold-wearing sister, the heart cries, sobbing
8	<i>Pāniko bulbul, yo manko chulbul, bujhāūchhau katin dīn</i>	The bubbling of water, the restlessness of this heart, how many days will it take to console yourself?
9	<i>Hai suna suna, sun lāune kānchhī, bujhāūchhau katin dīn</i>	Listen, oh listen, gold-wearing little one, how many days will it take to console yourself?
10	<i>Dui paisa bache Kaopalmar sigret salkāula mārchisle</i>	If I save two cents, I'll light a Kaopalmar cigarette with matches
11	<i>Hindustān pāri, ke rāmro pahāḍ, ghāsaiko khaliyo</i>	Across Hindustan, what beautiful hills, storage places for fodder
12	<i>Baseko pirtī, chutāunam bhayo, man bādha baliyo</i>	The love we've had, we now have to break apart, bind your heart and be strong
13	<i>Hai suna suna, sun lāune charī, man bādha baliyo</i>	Listen, oh listen, gold-wearing birdie, bind your heart and be strong

2nd recording:

14	<i>Europai jyānko ke rāmro tarī gāseko tillī pāt</i>	The Europeans have such beautiful fields, shining leaves sewn together
15	<i>Gwāpeko hunchha tihara kisim dunaiko Dillī pāt</i>	They're joined together as if for Tihar, ^v a bowl made of leaves from Delhi
16	<i>he suna suna, sun laune didī, dunaiko Dillī pāt</i>	Listen, oh listen, gold-wearing sister, a bowl made of leaves from Delhi
17	<i>Europai jyānko baganai rāmro, toriko phul phulchha —phul phulchha phulchha man^{vi}</i>	The Europeans have such beautiful gardens, mustard flowers bloom —when flowers bloom, so does the heart
18	<i>Chaudhai sālko laḍāiko suru dunyaiko bhukta man</i>	When the war of the year 14 began, the world's hearts suffered greatly
19	<i>Garmiko mausam— garmiko mausam, garmī jyān bhayo, pankhaile humkaideu</i>	Hot summer weather— Hot summer weather, my body is hot, cool it off with a fan
20	<i>Europeko desh mā basnu man chhaina, India paṭhāideu</i>	I don't want to stay in a European country, please send me to India
21	<i>Gorkhālī khānchha khasiko shikhār khādaina rājaihās</i>	A Gorkhali eats goat meat, he doesn't eat swans
22	<i>Na bāchdā gati, namardā mati, Belgiumko mahārāj</i>	Surviving brings no progress, dying brings no knowledge, king of Belgium
23	<i>Jānu jyān jānu, jādā nai mero, dhou bhane kati dhou,</i>	Bodies must go, and when mine goes, if you wash it, how much can it be washed?
24	<i>Parālko āgo, jiu bhayo dāgo, rou bhane kati rou^{vii}</i>	Fire of straw, my body has become like a string, if I cry, how much can I cry?
25	<i>Pharānse jyānko kyā ramro tarī, ṭhulo chha suntalā</i>	The French have such beautiful fields, and there are large orange trees
26	<i>Pharānsni miche ma herdā kheri, jiu baōhchha tīn tolā</i>	I pushed through France too, and when I look back at it, my body gains 36 grams [out of fright] ^{viii}
27	<i>Usaira mero sāno jyān sāno ma kholdai kholdina</i>	That and my body is small, so small, I don't open up at all
28	<i>Germanko desh mā bātai jyān bujhdaina ma lājaile boldina</i>	In the country of the Germans, I don't understand their talk, and out of embarrassment, I don't speak
29	<i>Ki bhannu ṭhulo bhagavān bhannu dāju kelāi?</i>	Tell me, brother, what can we call powerful – God?
30	<i>Madeśe jyānko hariyo pipal ghās kāṭū yellāi.</i>	Our green pipal tree of the plains might as well be cut down for fodder.

i Note on transcription and translation: I give priority to the sound of what was sung and to visually representing poetic meter in the Nepali, so some spellings are nonstandard. And, I follow colloquial Nepali romanisation conventions and use *ch* and *chh*, instead of *c* and *ch* as in Sanskrit conventions. Das also discusses this song using my translation (2014: 411). That particular article contains some mistakes in the Nepali romanisation, and incorrectly cites me as categorizing *jhyāure* as a genre of women's laments; it is not, although it is quite a polysemic word, as I discuss elsewhere (Stirr 2015). I make one change to my earlier translation here,

following Rubaica Jaliwala's translation from Nepali to German, which uses 'Kaopalmar cigarette' (Lange 2015, 22).

- ii Perhaps the name of a river, as I have rendered it, or perhaps he means 'susār', 'whistling', a term commonly used to describe the sound of flowing streams.
- iii *Jyān* literally means 'life' but also 'body' – something like 'incarnation' in the material sense, the material manifestation of life, different from *juni*, which is the time-span of 'this life' as opposed to past and future lives. He uses this word to refer to himself and to other people, as well as sometimes to his body. This is common in songs and some rural, colloquial speech today as well. I've translated it differently in different verses according to the context. Since it appears so much throughout the song, it could also be treated as a *thego* – a word used not for its meaning but to fill out the syllables of the meter. I have translated as a meaningful word and not a *thego*, but either way it doesn't change the meaning that much. *Jiu* is another word for body that he also uses, which connotes only the material body.
- iv *Charī* ('birdie') is often used to refer to a girl in folk songs.
- v While the song is pretty clear here, I don't understand what a leaf-bowl from Delhi is supposed to signify in this context.
- vi Here he's changing the last phrase in order to rhyme with the next half of the couplet. So *tori ko phul phul chha* (mustard flowers bloom) is the phrase he's throwing out.
- vii The two lines of this couplet refer to funerary rituals – washing the body, making a cremation fire with straw as tinder.
- viii *Tolā* is a measure of weight. One *tolā* equals 12 grams. As to why he uses this particular number, *tīn tolā* is a common phrase in songs, often referring to gold. I think the phrase is *tīn tolā* and not, for example, *chār tolā*, because people find the alliteration pleasing.

song, but acknowledge a slight difference in thematic content between the two cylinders. The first one focuses on telling how he got there and addressing the women he loves; in the last couplets, he says what he must have known to be his last goodbye to them, asking his '*sun lāune charī*' to bind her heart and be strong. The *viraha* aspects of love and longing are particularly highlighted in this first half, as are nostalgic memories of the hills of Hindustan and the mundane objects of everyday life, like the storage places for animals' fodder, or the bowls made of leaves. The second recording turns to his experiences in war and as a prisoner, admiring the fields and gardens of Europe all the while remembering the horror of fighting, expressing the frustrations and humiliations of the POW camp, and wishing explicitly to be sent home. Line 28 is the only line in which he breaks the poetic meter, in an iconic illustration of discomfort and embarrassment at being unable to communicate while imprisoned in Germany. Line 29 and 30, the final couplet of the song, suggest that he has lost his faith. The first line of the couplet asks somewhat sarcastically what we can now call powerful after the suffering of the worlds' hearts in the war (mentioned in line 18), questioning if God can actually be believed to have any power. The second line of the couplet turns to a metaphor, the *pipal* tree that is worshipped as God. Saying that it might as well be cut down for fodder implies that he has lost all faith.

In musical terms, the song Jas Bahadur Rai sang is a *jhyāure* song, defined as such by its poetic meter (*chhanda*, this particular one technically called *Asāre Jhyāure*), and by its 6-beat rhythmic *tāl*. *Asāre Jhyāure* poetic meter is associated with love songs of all varieties, tragic or happy (Chalmers 2002; Stirr 2015; Shah 2006). Although Jas Bahadur is singing alone without rhythmic accompaniment, the slow *jhyāure tāl* that would go along with this song, shown below with one possible pattern of *bols* for the *mādal*, is one often used with sad songs. This combination of poetic meter and *tāl* is common in slow, sad love songs. The melody Jas Bahadur uses is a typical melody for this poetic metre.

Figure 1: An Example of One Rhythmic Pattern in Slow *jhyāure tāl*

Beat	1	2	3	4	5	6		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Bols	Dhin	Tang	-	Phat	Tang	Dhin		Dhin	Tang	-	Phat	Tang	Dhin	

Figure 2: The Melody of the first Two Couplets of Jas Bahadur Rai's Song

"Gurkha Song, Own Words"
Sung by Jasbahadur Rai at Zossen POW Camp, Wümsdorf, Germany, 1916

Literary sources from the nineteenth century demonstrate the close association of *Asāre Jhyāure* poetic metre with love (Chalmers 2002; Stirr 2015), so we can make the informed assumption that this melody (based as it is on the poetic metre) would likely have held similar associations for Jas Bahadur Rai at the time when he recorded it.² Although he was from

² However, this melody is not in the *Asāre* rag of the hills of central and western Nepal, which has further associations with rice planting and thus even greater associations with love. As shown in Figure 2, the melody of Jas Bahadur's song is in a major scale, yet without the characteristic patterns of any particular rag, classical or otherwise, as far as I am aware. This is the norm for *jhyāure* songs.

Darjeeling, this type of melody could have been heard in any number of places across the Nepali hills, west through the Mid-Western region. Thus, the musical associations combined with the lyrics make this a song of love and ultimate sorrows, a nostalgic lament for a homeland the singer will never see again, mixed with anger at his predicament and the forces that have led him to an end far from home and those he loves. This poignant song blends an established pan-South-Asian thematic tradition of *viraha* poetry with a poetic metre, melodic style, and *tāl* characteristic of Nepali-speaking areas, and serves as an excellent example of how poetics, narrative, and music intertwine to mediate the emotions surrounding a military labour migrant or *lāhure*'s experience. These traditions continue to this day.

Understanding a bit about this tradition can help us see how it continues to influence contemporary migration songs, alongside changes, and how these songs remain important in people's lives. One way of examining the social work that songs accomplish, and the work people accomplish with songs, is to look at music as a form of social mediation. Georgina Born's (2013) recent work on music and mediation aims to theorise its processes in an open-ended way, without striving to create any sense of holistic closure. She suggests that we pay attention to four planes or orders of social mediation: first, the micro social relations entailed in making music; second, music's use in creating imagined communities; third, music's relations with existing collectivities like nation, race, class, and gender; and fourth, the broadest level of the social and institutional orders that shape the relations of production, reproduction, and transformation. She sees these orders or planes as part of a musical assemblage, connected in multiple yet nonlinear ways:

These four are irreducible to one another, and are articulated in contingent and non-linear ways through relations of affordance, conditioning, or causality...all of these orders of social mediation may enter into aesthetic experience for participants, listeners, or audiences... [and] if this relay of social relations – from wider social dynamics, to music-ensemble relations, to performance microsocialities – may sometimes be homologous, this is not inevitable. (Born 2013, 139)

The social relations that pervade the multiple social acts of making and engaging with music are not always homologous. This idea is central to studies of music and politics at macro and micro levels. For example, Born's study of the French experimental computer music institute IRCAM demonstrated that the prevailing egalitarian ethos of performance practice was in direct contradiction with highly rigid and hierarchical institutional

norms. In instances like this, socio-musical experience can offer ‘a compensatory or alternative social space that fashions the social world differently’ (Born 2013, 141).

The social space of the songfest in Nepal’s rural hills has also been discussed as an alternative space in which the rules of conduct differ from those of everyday social relations (Ahearn 1998; Holland and Skinner 1995; Skinner, Holland, and Adhikari 1994; Stirr 2017). In particular, this social space allows for the expression of emotions that may not be acceptable in other times and places. Amid the highly unequal social relations at the moment of recording Jas Bahadur Rai’s song, and the entire set of conditions that led him to be there in the first place, he drew on a song tradition and its associated context for singing that allowed him to express what he felt in the dehumanising conditions of a prison camp: the mix of emotions including love, fear, wonder, appreciation of beauty, desolation, disappointment, anger, frustration, sadness, longing, and more. Still today, this realm of greater emotional expression intersects with other aspects of social relations in a less egalitarian or alternative way. In particular, gendered expectations about migration have continued to frame masculine and feminine activities and emotional positions in strikingly similar ways throughout the history of folk song on the subcontinent. I, therefore, concentrate on gendered themes and their relations to emotion in the following discussion of contemporary migration songs from Nepal’s music industry. I pay particular attention to the intersection and interaction of micro-social aspects of song with the larger collectivities of gender and nation.

Contemporary Songs of Migration

Nepal’s music industry, with myriad production and distribution companies that have proliferated since the early 1980s, continues to produce many songs related to migration of all sorts. Foreign employment and remittance drives Nepal’s economy, and Nepalis abroad engage with the music industry as performers, fans, and investors. Rural-urban migration has contributed significantly to the popularity of urban *dohori* restaurants, which aim to recreate songfest environments.

Songs specifically focused on military labour migration, ‘*lāhure* songs’, form a significant component of the migration songs produced each year, and influence the others with their thematic content. So far, nearly all of them are about a male migrant and a woman who stays home while he is away. Some primary themes include love (from sadly longing to expectantly anticipating) and money (including issues of greed, poverty, and debt), of

military glory and exciting travel, of longing for home and for the one who has left, and of great suffering on the part of the *lāhure* and those he leaves at home. Some songs express primarily joy or sorrow, but most songs contain and afford a range of emotions in their lyrics and music, which expand in a wide array of settings for listening, viewing, and performance.

Cheerful Songs

Happy *lāhure* songs almost always involve the migrant's return, and what he brings with him in both material and symbolic terms. Songs abound of *lāhures* home on leave flirting with young village girls who idealise both their wealth and their militarised hyper-masculinity.³ The oldest recorded example I can find of this type of song is Mitrasen Thapa Magar's 1936 song '*Lāhureko Relimai Fashionai Rāmro*,' in which the singer discusses the glamour of being a *lāhure*. In terms of musical *tāl* and melodic features, it is difficult to generalise about these songs. However, all of the ones I mention here are in fast *jhyāure tāl*, whether they are considered to be in the genres of *lok gīt*, *lok pop*, or *lok ādhunik*. These latter songs are primarily from films, and it is this *jhyāure tāl* that adds the '*lok*' element to the other genres. Its fast tempo (*laya*) is associated with energetic dancing and often, though not always, with happy songs.

Lāhures and other male migrants in these cheerful songs bring fashion, the glamour of the foreign, and promises of fulfilment of generalised female fantasies. They pepper their Nepali with Hindi and English and return to Nepal with fashionable gifts and promises of love, and perhaps new, exciting lives abroad for girls back home. 'Friends and brothers, generals and colonels, in the Gorkhali battalions, take me and show me around London,' sings a girl in one song from the film *Daiva Sanjog* (Banskota 1998). '*Achha, lekin London's damp will make you catch cold*,' sings the *lāhure* in return, using the Hindi words for 'yes, but...' in the beginning of his response. A girl in another song, from the film *Takdir* (Khadka 2008), sings of the *pardeśī*, the one gone abroad, who will return with everything ready to marry the singer; the vermilion powder, bangles, and beads for her to wear as a wife. In 'I'm a Lahure in a Gorkha Platoon' ('*Ma ta lāhure Gorkha paltanko*'), the

3 Heather Streets argues that British imperial martial race discourse contributed significantly to idealisation of military masculinity: '...the language of martial races overshadowed diverse cultural expressions and obscured massive regional changes brought about by incorporation into the Empire's global reach. Instead, martial race discourse produced a masculinised, stylized vision of these regions and their people that has been extraordinarily difficult to resist both by outsiders and, as we have seen, sometimes even by insiders' (Streets 2007: 219).

soldiers themselves celebrate their *lāhure* status (Adhikari 2010), and in one song known as ‘*Lāhure dāī*’ (Khatrī 2012), the women at home simply welcome the *lāhure* back:

Lāhure dāī, chhuṭimā āko
Hāsa bola, maukā mā bheṭ bhāko
 Brother soldier, home on leave,
 Laugh and talk, now that we have the opportunity to meet.

Cheerfulness in these songs is bound up with gendered notions of future-oriented possibilities, whether in the simple happiness that a male relative has returned to his patiently waiting female loved ones, or in the promises of wealth, status, and associations with desirable worldly experience that these men bring as marriage prospects. It is also worth noting that the songs, in the context of the films, follow the *rasa* tradition of aesthetics in drama by expressing one dominant emotion at a time (Ranade 2006), while the films themselves contain a wide range of emotion and do not usually have happy endings. This perspective allows us to see these songs as representing stolen moments of happiness in a *dukha*-dominated genre, where the predominant emotion, though not one of the ones that corresponds to *rasa* theory, may be hope. Yet, film songs have lives of their own outside of the films, and their recontextualisations in performance are worth examining.

These cheerful songs are performed mainly in contexts that aim to celebrate the life they describe. All of these recent songs are standards in *dohorī* restaurants, from Nepal’s major cities to the communities of Gurkha soldiers and ex-Gurkhas in England. *Dohorī* restaurants often aim to cater to ‘British and Indian *lāhures*’ as customers, because they generally have more money than others returning from abroad, and especially the ones from the central and western hill areas are often partial to *lok dohorī* songs that recall their home areas. The former manager of Kathmandu’s Nirmaya Rodhi Club, Ramesh Babu Shrestha, told me in an interview that he saw men returned from the British and Indian armies and Singapore police as his primary target audience. This was first because many of them lived around the Kamaladi area where the *dohorī* restaurant was located, second, because he was trying to impress his then father-in-law who was ex-British-army, and third because they had cultural links to the songs and their performance traditions, and (he thought) they felt a kinship with the songs and the performance practice of *lok dohorī* that other customers may not have. In short, he thought they could make the restaurant thrive

because they would have a personal connection to the performances that would keep them coming back and bringing their friends. To an extent, he was right, but the customer base of *dohorī* restaurants is more diverse as well. Still, Ramesh Babu discouraged performing *dukha* and *viraha* songs about *lāhures*' experiences, as he worried that the questioning and doubts about the *lāhure* life in their lyrics might seem insulting to his preferred patrons.

Beyond *dohorī* restaurants, these cheerful and energetic songs are popular in concerts that *lok dohorī* artists perform abroad. These are often sponsored by groups like the Magar Sangh New York, or the Tamu Dhi UK, ethnic organisations whose members contain a large number of Nepalis retired from the British army, along with their families. Part of the ubiquity of these 'cheerful *lāhure* songs' also has to do with the performers, who aim to create an atmosphere of excitement and fun in *dohorī* restaurants and at concerts, with few sad songs, favouring songs that portray *lāhures* and the life of a soldier in a positive light. All of the 'cheerful songs' mentioned here circulate among performers as mp3s in karaoke track form, as singers help each other to give the performances they think their audiences expect. A quick look at the karaoke tracks on professional *lok dohorī* singer Suman Budha Magar's laptop in the US in 2012, and also at those available at a *dohorī* restaurant in Manama, Bahrain, in 2010, revealed many 'cheerful *lāhure* songs,' but zero slow, sorrowful songs specifically about migration. There were songs about lost love and separation (*ādhunik* or *lok ādhunik*, from singers like Arun Thapa and Shambhu Rai), but none that dealt with migration in the lyrics. There is some room for sad songs in *dohorī* restaurants and stage programmes, especially at the beginning of the evening's programme, and if they are requested. However, I have been present when singers (including myself, in Bahrain in 2010) have been asked to cut the sad, slow tunes and please give the audience something energetic. Outside of commercial live performance venues, songs expressing sorrow and nostalgia remain popular especially in their recorded forms, for watching and listening, and in more intimate performances among groups of friends (Stirr 2018).

Songs of *Dukha* and *Viraha* Today

Like Jas Bahadur Rai's song in the prison camp, contemporary songs of separation and longing regarding military labour migration acknowledge its darker sides. They do not hide from the real possibility of death and the fact that the travelling soldier may never come home. One recent famous song is the 1990s song and its 2008 remake *Ramdi Bridge* (*Rāmdī Pul*)

(Rayamajhi 2008),⁴ which takes place at the time of parting, and expresses a strong sense of apprehension that the *lāhure* may not survive.

Rāmdi pula tārane bhittikai, bāche bheṭa, mare ni yettikai

Right after crossing Ramdi Bridge, if I survive, we'll meet again, if I die, well then.

Bāche bhane yehi bāṭo phirani, mare bhane, rifleko sirani

If I survive, I'll be back this way, if I die, a rifle for a pillow.

This song, in its 2008 remake in the Nepali film *Gorkha Paltan* (a vehicle for the Indian Idol winner and erstwhile Indian armed policeman, Prasant Tamang), displays a classic visual trope of the *lāhure* leaving home, paying respect to his parents in a ritual of leave-taking. He takes *tikā* from his mother, bows to the feet of both his parents, and leaves the courtyard of his home. He walks down to join other *lāhures* on a bus through the Nepali hills, which carries them to a train through the Indian plains. This could be almost any *lāhure* music video. For example, the same sequence also appears in a 2003 video by *lok dohorī* star Bhagwan Bhandari, 'Mother, I'm Going Abroad' (*Lāge Āmā Pardeś Tira*). In this video, Bhagwan plays himself as he leaves his parents (played by his real parents at their family home in Syangja) for a manual labour job in Qatar (which was his actual job). The earliest of what are now many Gulf migration videos, 'Mother, I'm Going Abroad' fits right into the existing *lāhure* song tropes, both visual and lyrical. Both of these songs are in slow *jhyāure tāl*, with different poetic metres. While 'Ramdi Bridge' is a *dohorī* song and 'Mother, I'm Going Abroad' has a structure that can be sung as *dohorī*, both of these songs are rarely used as the basis for new *dohorī* improvisations in their verses, but rather performed as recorded. My speculation as to why, is that their slow *jhyāure tāl* marks them as songs for listening rather than for dancing. Additionally, especially in the case of the now-classic song 'Ramdi Bridge,' the original lyrics are what listeners expect to hear, as the song does not have a chorus. These songs, thought of as for listening and viewing, not for dancing, and not usually for making up one's own couplets, offer a more bounded sense of the relation between emotions and gendered social positions. Songs that are meant for dancing and lyrical improvising bring performers and listeners in commercial contexts closer to the idealised, nostalgically remembered rural songfest,

4 This is the song I was asked not to repeat in a Manama *dohorī* restaurant, because it was too sad and slow. The owner of this restaurant was a bit draconian about song preference and had banned other songs as well, including the widely popular 'Nepali Ho', for reasons the artists did not understand.

with its emphasis on the interplay of *dukha* and *sukha*, and a more open-ended emotional experience.

For example, ‘*Sararara Water on the Mill*’ (*Sararara pānī ghaṭṭāmā*), sung in its original commercial version by Purushottam Neupane and Bima Kumari Dura (2006), is a *dukha* song with some important musical differences from the above songs. This song focuses on the husband-wife relationship and represents the conventionally gendered, centuries-old migration narrative of the man who heads out into the dangerous world and the woman who stays behind, dependent on her man.

This *dohorī* song has a verse-chorus structure, within which the verses can be improvised, but they are pre-written on the recording. When people perform it live, the verses they sing are almost always different, but the choruses remain the same. The chorus the men sing is:

*Sararara pānī ghaṭṭāmā, Aba pyāra pharkanchhu pharkanna nām sārē hai
pension paṭṭāmā*

Sararara water on the mill, now, my dear, I don’t know if I’ll return; I’ve written your name down on the pension paper.

And the women’s chorus is:

*Sararara pānī ghaṭṭāmā, Mero pyārā hajurai nahūdā man bujhlā ra pension
paṭṭāmā*

Sararara water on the mill, my dear, without you, how can a pension paper comfort my heart?

This was a song that, when it came out, was paradoxically popular in Kathmandu and Pokhara’s *dohorī* restaurants, where the prevailing tone of performances tends toward the cheerful, flirtatious, and celebratory rather than toward themes of *dukha*. Performances of this song would usually stick closely to the themes of *dukha*, *viraha*, and nostalgia that characterise *lāhure* songs in general, but there was always room for expansion of the themes in improvised lyrics. Even four years after it came out, customers in Aldershot, England’s *dohorī* restaurants, would also request this song. Since Aldershot is probably the largest community of ex-Gurkhas and their families outside of Nepal, it makes sense that an audience there would request songs that addressed (at least the conventional narratives relevant to) their own experience.

Another reason for the song’s continued popularity in live performance was probably its danceability. Even if improvisers do not stray far from

the themes in the choruses, this musical difference changes the emotional landscape of the song's live performances. Unlike the other songs discussed so far, which are in a slow *jhyāure tāl* that in most commercial live performance venues would empty the dance floor, 'Srarara Water on The Mill' is in a moderately fast 4-beat *khyāli tāl*. Audience members routinely dance to this song, though without some of the most energetic *jhyāure* dance moves that characterise dances to fast *jhyāure* songs. This combination of *dukha* and danceability recalls the mood characterising village songfests, where the co-presence of joy and sorrow is expected and celebrated as part of the beauty of life. While I have no recordings of 'Srarara Water on the Mill' sung in village songfests, I do have one from a *dohorī* competition. This recording illustrates the conjunction of recurring, conventional tropes of *dukha* and *viraha* as expressed in the lyrics, and the *sukha* in collective singing and dancing that the song's danceable beat helps facilitate.

Dohorī competitions aim to create an atmosphere characteristic of rural festivals, just as *dohorī* restaurants aim to replicate small-scale songfests, and this particular competition took place at Kathmandu's Bhrikuti Mandap in front of an audience of thousands, in the winter of 2007. It was run by the Lok *Dohorī* Professionals' Organisation, the organisation of *dohorī* restaurant owners. Teams from each *dohorī* restaurant competed against each other, each side (men or women) gaining points for the quality of poetry in their lyrics and their musicality. In this particular competition round, the men from Jharana *Dohorī* Sanjh competed against the women from Ganga Jamuna *Dohorī* Sanjh. Each team has a lead singer and one or two side singers. The side singers, as in rural songfests, both sing along with the lead singer on repetitions of couplets and refrains and suggest couplets for the lead singer to sing in response to the opposing team. The particular gimmick of this competition was to give the singers a topic on which to improvise their couplets, testing their abilities in a range of emotions and situations. The competition emcee gave this pair of teams their topic:

[Unrecorded: You two have been married for three days. And he's in the army.] Now, you do this. You have to leave tomorrow. It's evening today, and a letter arrived. You opened it and looked at it. And you have to leave right away. Tomorrow early in the morning you have to get going, you see. So it's the conversation between the two of you. Rajiv. You, husband and wife. Understand? Because it fits the context, we've given them the tune, 'Srarara water on the mill, now my dear, I don't know if I'll return, I've written your name on the pension paper.'

Because it's timely and fits the theme exactly, do you agree with this tune? Okay, who's going to start?

The *sārangī* began to play, the emcee announced which teams were up next, and on this cold February day, many audience members got up to dance. The song unfolded like this: (the transcription below contains only the improvised couplets, which were each repeated three times with the appropriate male or female choruses sung in between each repetition):

Table 2: 'Sararara Pani Ghattama as sung at a 2007 Lok Dohori Competition'

Couplet	Nepali transcription	English translation
1	Men: <i>Āyo chīṭṭhī najāna bhā chhaina</i> <i>Merī sanī chhoḍnai man lāchhaina</i>	A letter's arrived, and I can't not go My little one, I don't want to leave you
2	Women: <i>Budhā sangai chhu ma ta tolāko</i> <i>Yati chīṭṭhai kina ho bolāko</i>	I'm sitting here with my husband, lost in thought Why did they have to summon you so soon?
3	Men: <i>Khāe jāgir parnale rinmā</i> <i>Basnai paryo arkāko adhinmā</i>	I went into the service to repay a loan I have to follow the orders of others
4	Women: <i>Pokhnai paina yo man ko bilāuna</i> <i>Sakinna ra dui chār din milāuna</i>	I didn't get to express the laments in my heart Can't you get a few days extension?
5	Men: <i>Āyo hukum jānu nai parchha</i> <i>Sangai basna malāi ni rahar chha</i>	The order arrived, and I have to go I also wish I could stay here together
6	Women: <i>Dherai chhani manakā kurā</i> <i>Sake samma najānus hajura</i>	There are so many things in my heart If you can, please don't go, sir
7	Men: <i>Lāgne hoina sadhailāi para</i> <i>Bhaigo bhaigo ti āsu najhāra</i>	I'm not going away forever Enough, enough, don't let those tears fall
8	Women: <i>Jānchhu bhandā ma bāṭa chhuṭera</i> <i>Jharchhan āsu bhakano phuṭera</i>	When you say you're going away and leaving me Tears fall, breaking the dam
9	Men: <i>Bhane pani āsuko ādhi</i> <i>Merī pyāri basideu man bādhi</i>	Even if there's a storm of tears, My dear, keep your heart bound
10	Women: <i>Kasto hunchha āphaile bhana</i> <i>Samālda ni bujhdaina yo mana</i>	See for yourself how it is, Even if I try to convince myself, this heart won't understand
11	Men: <i>Ke garau ta pugena dekheko</i> <i>Yastai raichha bhagyamā lekheko</i>	What can you do, what we see never comes, We find this is what's written in our fate

12	Women: <i>Najau bhanchhu namāna pira</i> <i>Je je hunchha tehi garchha ākhira</i>	I'm saying, don't go, and don't be worried, I know you'll do whatever you're going to do in the end
13	Men: <i>Chhoḍnai byasta dui char din hāta</i> <i>Rukha muni roī basna bhandā ta</i>	Keep your hands busy for a few days, Rather than sitting and crying under a tree
14	Women: <i>Ekā sāto chadaicham khāko</i> <i>Ke po rukho garchha ni majjako</i>	We've eaten our cornmeal mush from the same plate, Now you're making a mockery of our pleasure
15	Men: <i>Yo manaimā rinaiko churī chha</i> <i>Yasto thāl chha chuhine dhurī chha</i>	The dagger of the loan is in my heart And these drops – the roof is leaking
16	Women: <i>Āepani hāwā ra hurilāi</i> <i>Khar kāṭera chhāulā ni dhurilāi</i>	Even if wind and hurricanes come, We'll cut thatch and mend the roof
17	Men: <i>Jharchha āsu chatimā pugchha</i> <i>Sanī dherai nasamjhāu dil dukhchha</i>	Tears fall onto my chest, Little one, don't try to convince me so much, my heart hurts
18	Women: <i>Jen tena hāmlāi pugyachha khānu</i> <i>Je je hunchha yehi basam hai sānu</i>	We have enough to eat simply, Whatever happens, let's stay here, alright little one?
19	Men: <i>Mai hu timlāi sadhai sāth dine</i> <i>Naroi basa āunechhu pheri ni</i>	I'm the one who will always keep you company Don't cry, I am coming back again
20	Women: <i>Timi mero ma timro bhara</i> <i>Chhoḍi hiḍne bho kurā nagara</i>	You depend on me, and I on you Don't talk of going and leaving me.

The themes in this narrative hark back to the song that Kolff quotes as exemplary of *viraha* tradition: the man is determined to go, and the woman tries to convince him to stay home. These singers are professionals being tested on their ability to create a narrative on a given topic. They are acting, rather than expressing what is in their hearts, their *manko kura* as the phrase in the song goes. Yet their skilful use of narrative tropes reproduces the masculine and feminine emotional positions found in hundreds of years of *viraha* songs. As March (2003) notes regarding women's songs about missing their natal homes, the *feeling* of pain in the songs is one that both genders experience similarly, regardless of the gendered positions in the narrative. Listening at the time, and later transcribing and translating, I found the song moving, as did the emcee, who summed up the song this way:

If eyes didn't try to cry, and lips didn't try to laugh, what a beautiful life it would be. But look, love can fill up the heart in an instant, just an instant, like this couple about to be separated after three days

of marriage. Brother, you sang an extremely sweet song, heartfelt congratulations and thanks to you both.

With a nod to a perspective that emotional equanimity might be best, the emcee recognised the singers for playing their roles well and creating what he felt to be a believable enactment of the emotional states of lovers who would be separated too soon. The female singer's last three couplets suggest a relation of mutual dependence between husband and wife, in contrast to the original recording's expression of total feminine dependence. Thus, while the singers were enacting traditional roles, the woman's improvised lyrics also suggest different possibilities.

Judges, other artists, and some others, including ethnomusicologists, may listen intently to all the lyrics of a song in a *dohorī* competition. Not everyone in the audience was so attentive, as some of them were there primarily to dance, and others for the social atmosphere. The tempo of the song in the competition increased considerably in comparison to the original, making it easy to dance to. Some of the members of Sampurna Tamu Samaj showed up in their ethnic dress to dance, and other audience members flocked to the dance floor set up between the judges' table and the stage. Food stalls surrounded the perimeter and audience members flocked to them and sat in small groups a bit away from the main stage area, eating their snacks and chatting. The performance event itself involved all of these things, the push and pull between conventions of *dukha* and *viraha* songs, and lyrical and musical reinterpretations, mediating multiple ways of emotional engagement with the reality of migrant lives.

Conclusion

I end with another songfest performance, this time an urban one. The participants have all migrated multiple times, within Nepal and around the world with the British and Indian armies. The song they sing follows the conventional gendered narrative to a point, but here the woman hesitates, resisting the pull of the man's masculine qualities in which he seems so confident.

*Purnimāko Junelī rātaimā, mai hu kānchhī Malāyako lāhure, sangai jāne jau
hīḍa sāthaimā*

In the night of the shining full moon, here I am, Kanchhi, a *lāhure* in
Malaya, if you want to, come on, come along together.

*Purnimāko Junelī rātaimā, lāhure jīvan arkaiko hātaimā, sangai basna
paindaina sāthaimā*

In the night of the shining full moon, a *lāhure*'s life is in others' hands,
and we don't get to be together.

This song was released in 2012, sung by Mohan Gurung and Sharmila Gurung, with slightly different words than those above. The above refrains were sung in 2014 by a group of friends at the Gurung/Tamu Lhosar party at Kathmandu's Tundikhel. I joined this group after participating in the Lhosar parade, marching along singing *chuḍkā dohorī* songs with Sat Muhane Deurali Tamu Samaj [Society]. Maya Gurung, the professional *lok dohorī* singer whose song opened this article, was present in the background, singing along. The lead *dohorī* singers at this songfest, Rum Gurung and his wife, have lived the life to which the song alludes. Rum was in the Indian Army, and his wife put up with it all. Now grandparents, they participate a great deal in social services and are very much involved in the Tamu Society functions. In the video I recorded of a few minutes of the song, members of the Tamu Society were sitting in their stall at Tundikhel, eating momos and drinking the copious bottles of homemade alcohol that everyone had carried throughout the whole parade, stashed in the decorative bags that the Society's women had knitted for this very occasion. At the beginning of the recording the women finish their couplet. The first line of the couplet is cut off, but they sing the second line, *dhartī muni mā*, 'under the earth,' before returning to their chorus. Rum sings another verse couplet (a stock one) right after: *ghām āyo ghamāilo, bachunjela garaū na ramāilo, purnimā ko junelī rātaimā...* 'the sun came out, it's sunny, as long as we live, let's enjoy ourselves, in the night of the shining full moon...' Everyone joins in during the chorus, certainly enjoying themselves. On multiple other occasions, these men and women have expressed that they feel like they have earned the right to enjoy life when they can, and the song holds special poignancy for them.

As everyone sings, life goes on. Someone passes someone else money, trying to figure out how much is owed and who is paying for the momos. Side conversations continue and finish, and the participants rejoin the song. The hubris of the male chorus, and even perhaps the hesitation of the female chorus, provides something for everyone to laugh at, remembering their younger selves and all they have been through in lives characterised by separation, some reunions, and some goodbyes. Part of the laughter and enjoyment, even when the song is sad, comes from comparing song narratives with their own lives, recognising how some of the lyrics and their themes may correspond with realities of experiences and expectations, but also how their lives exceed the narratives in the songs. Music and

dance embody some of that excess, as do improvised couplets with little or no connection to refrains, and sometimes little or no connection even to each other. The result is a multiply refracted performance experience irreducible to a single text, a single set of emotions, or a single narrative about gendered experiences of migration.

The idea of music mediating migrant experience also cannot be reduced to a pedagogy of emotions in which song themes present for hundreds of years thoroughly shape feelings regarding migration. The themes are there as resources to play with, reframe, and challenge. Narrative themes do have a significant force; I have yet to hear a song or see a video that reverses gender roles, but at the level of performance, these narrative themes are also not all that matters. Songfests and related performances like *dohorī* competitions, and even music videos, can function as alternative social spaces in which dominant gender hierarchies may be present but not dominant, and available for refashioning along with their associated emotional narratives regarding how migration feels, for those who move and those who remain in one place.

This brief discussion of the gendered emotional themes and musical associations in songs of *dukha*, *viraha*, and nostalgia, and their intersection with the micro-socialities formed in performance only begins to hint at how emotion and social categories come into play in performances of songs with such long histories. Further study of how these performances also relate to other orders of socio-musical mediation, such as imagined communities, and the broader set of political-economic relations that run through them, may help bring about a greater understanding of how music mediates migration experiences of Nepalis throughout the world.

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Culture as Patrimony and Heritage

A Preliminary Study of Ethnographic Museums in Nepal

GÉRARD TOFFIN

Introduction

The transformation of living cultures into national or local patrimony proved to be a major global process both in the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first century. In the course of this *patrimonialisation*, or so it is often called, a cultural element is turned into a community's heritage. This metamorphosis entails a large number of changes in the perception and construction of culture. It supposes a basic disjunction between individuals, identities, and ways of life. Culture is in some way externalised from living traditions. At the same time, the object or the performance ceases to be a living item and becomes a witness of the past, a matter of conservation and identity. Its former inclusion in religious, ritual, and mythical contexts is not erased but is dissociated from the living flux and from social praxis. The modern concept of culture, both as patrimony and heritage, is the result of this double disjunction that leaves a person an orphan of their former encompassing values.

The process, which occurs both in the West and in other parts of the world, involves political and economic stakes in a more or less prominent way. It can particularly be observed in two major fields: the *patrimonialisation* of the performing arts, such as dance, rituals, festivals, mostly under the influence of UNESCO's transnational policy of intangible heritage, and the *museification* of culture in the form of ethnographic museums. In both cases, the social and religious life of the item, its very status in sociological terms, changes drastically. It is transformed into a heritage product and, as such, it develops a new meaning for the spectators as well as for the curators (or the exhibitors). Aesthetic considerations, for instance, tend to play a new crucial role in the way the element is selected and exhibited.

In the following pages, I present the preliminary findings of a study I

carried out in 2014-15 on ethnographic museums in Nepal. The paper describes the new life of human artefacts which begin their lives as a trivial (or ceremonial) object for daily (or ritual) use and end up in museum showcases to be preserved and displayed as items of a more or less past civilisation. Interestingly, the whole process is captured and manipulated by ethnic associations and government bodies (which in Nepal include culture and tourism authorities). Both try to promote their own interests and implement their policies. These local and government bodies often have contradictory and contentious concerns: from a social science viewpoint, culture always has to be regarded as a field of conflicting forces. Though my research is based on field studies, it deals thus with a wider perspective.

I

Let me start with some personal recollections. During my first years at CNRS, I was posted not to a university but to the former *Musée de l'Homme*, Paris's erstwhile ethnographic museum. This famous institution housed important collections of artefacts that had been brought back from Nepal (and from many other countries) between 1960 and 1970 by various French experts, most of whom were anthropologists. I myself donated to this museum various items illustrating the material culture of Jyāpu Newars and of Western Tamangs of Ankhu Khola (Dhading District), among whom I carried out my first fieldworks in Nepal. At that time, the study of material culture and objects used in daily life was an important part of any university course in anthropology, and a significant field of research in this discipline, especially in its non-structuralist current. I remember that up until 1968 one of the final examinations in the degree course in ethnology at the Sorbonne University included the study of one or two material items selected from this museum. This was gradually phased out from French university courses in anthropology, and in 2006 the ethnographic collections of the *Musée de l'Homme* were transferred to what is now the *Musée du Quai Branly* in Paris. This museum focuses mainly on the artistic qualities of non-Western ethnographic items and overlooks the cultural contextual study of artefacts.

Ethnographic museums have prevailed in the Western world since the nineteenth century, but their existence in Asia and other non-Western cultures is more recent. It dates back mostly to the contemporary post-colonial period. In fact, the proliferation of these museums in non-Western countries only became a global trend in the 1990s and at the beginning of the twentieth-first century. This phenomenon is linked to the rise of

ethnic identities and the recognition of the rights of indigenous cultures by the United Nations. It is a particularly fascinating process since it lies at the crossroads between ethnicity and identity politics. As a rule, these ethnographic museums echo the ongoing ethnicisation of culture.¹

In Nepal, the movement was heightened by the post-Panchayat political paradigm in favour of multiculturalism. Today, these institutions play an active role in ethnogenesis, and in the negotiation of collective identities. They provide ethnic groups with visibility and illustrate their quest for lost cultures. Since the 1990s, ethnic museums are a way of asserting one's identity throughout the country and of revitalising one's cultural heritage in a multicultural political context. It is also a mark of modernity. For an ethnic group, not having a museum today is to admit that a minimum level of civilisation does not apply to it!

The main national project, the Nepal National Ethnographic Museum [NMEN] (*Nepāl Rāshtriya Jātīya Sañgrālaya*), is a government-run programme. Its aim is to illustrate the cultural patchwork of Nepal in terms of both ethnic groups and castes. The concept of NMEN was launched in 1995 by Professor Ganeshman Gurung from Tribhuvan University with the help of a Norwegian anthropologist, Harald Skar, who has now retired. The building, situated in Kirtipur municipality on the way to Champadevi Mountain, has still not been completed for financial reasons. However, the committee incharge of it has opened an exhibition on the first floor of the Nepal Tourism Board, in Bhrikutimandap, Kathmandu. It displays a series of artefacts that have been categorised on an ethnic and caste basis. Only thirteen outstanding ethnic groups have been chosen. A second room contains other showcases devoted to lesser-known communities. Here museology makes use of male and female dummies fitted out in ethnic attire, showing the diversity of each group's specific clothing and jewellery. The collections are rich but the museum is ill-equipped in terms of its library, documentation, and electronic devices. The final Champadevi project aims at displaying the different cultures of about one hundred Nepalese groups.

The small Regional Museum in Pokhara (Naya Bazar), which was built in 1985, is another state-funded museum. It has an archaeological section, a good collection of musical instruments, and a number of items belonging to Gurung, Tharu, Darai, and Thakali ethnic groups, and to Kāmī, Damāī, and Gandharva castes. At least two other national ethnographic museums, or at least museums possessing an ethnographic section, have already opened

1 I would like to thank Professor Ganeshman Gurung for his help when I was collecting data in the field.

across the country, in Dhankuta and Surkhet. Another government museum devoted to Tharu culture is going to be built in Nawalparasi District which is far off the beaten track. These museums come under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation.

II

Ethnic museums (*jāṭīya saṅgrālaya*) that are established at the community level and managed by specific communities on an associative basis are an alternative to these official government undertakings. The best example is Jyāpu Samāj Ethnographic Museum in Lalitpur (which opened in 2012). It showcases not only Jyāpu culture but, for the most part, the whole of the Newars' rich ethnic fabric. It is a well-known fact that Jyāpu peasants claim to be the indigenous stratum among Newars and the depository of their ancient culture. The museum is located both on the ground floor and in the basement of the imposing red-brick Malla-styled Jyāpu Academy building (Bhola Ganesh). The large room is divided into three main sections, featuring various tools and cooking utensils, musical instruments and traditional clothes, as well as religious items used during festivals and ceremonies. An interesting exhibit shows miniature clay figurines pulling Rāto Macchendranāth's cart. A large number of items are crammed together on tables draped in red velvet cloth. They have been sourced from discarded objects and from donations made by the community.²

Another example is the Tharu Cultural Museum, *Tharu Sānskritik Saṅgralāya*, in Bachhauli in Chitwan District, which opened in 2006. It illustrates various Tharu festivals, in particular Phaguwā (Holī), and displays a wide range of fishing artefacts, one of the Tharus' main economic activities. Like other museums of its kind, dummies are used to represent Tharu men and women going about their traditional activities. Similar projects, but much more modest in terms of their size and ambition, have sprung up all over the country: in Pokhara and in Lamjung District, for Gurungs, and in Kathmandu for the Rais, among others.

The International Mountain Museum, designed by the UK architect John Sanday, also deserves a mention. The Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA), a non-government and non-political organisation, opened this museum in February 2004 thanks to substantial Japanese funding. The museological content has greatly benefited from ICIMOD's (International

2 Among the Newars, mention can also be made of the ethnographic museum specifically devoted to the Udāy Buddhist community which is to be found in Asan Tol, Kathmandu. It is run by Udāy Samāj, a caste organisation.

Centre for Integrated Mountain Development) expertise on mountains in Nepal and around the world. The museum (floor area of 3,110 square metres) brings together items from cultural groups living in the Annapurna region (Gurung, Thakali), but also belonging to more distant regions such as those inhabited by the Limbus, Rais and so on. It makes use of dummies to valorise the exhibits. Another feature is a Tibetan prayer room that has been faithfully reconstituted. The coherent intellectual framework based on the relationship between people and their environment is the hallmark of the exhibition.

And lastly, there are more or less private initiatives, backed by foreign or international institutions. The Changu Narayan Living Traditions Museum (LTM), which has been set up in one *sattal* (wood-covered shelter) surrounding the religious complex dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is curated by Judith Chase, an American citizen, is perhaps the most noteworthy of them. It opened in March 2012 and consists of four sections illustrating the four major geographical regions of Nepal: the Tarai, the middle hills, the Kathmandu Valley, and the high mountains of the Himalaya. Chase's own collection of artefacts includes tools, cooking utensils, clothing and religious objects. The intricate ceremonial wall murals from Mithila are particularly impressive. Excellent photographs accompany the exhibits. Unfortunately, the museum was partly destroyed by the Gorkha earthquake in 2015.³

III

As mentioned at the beginning of this paper, the marked boom in ethnographic museums in the country over the last two decades epitomises a process of the *museification of culture*. This does not mean that the items showcased are no longer used in daily and ritual life. It simply means that there is a growing need to display them. Ethnic objects are no longer restricted to their traditional practical usage. They have acquired a representational role; they have become a tool for ethnic assertion. From a sociological standpoint, the shift from being functional cultural items to being exhibited in glass cases is a major issue. These objects have become a public expression of a culture and are dissociated from their normal use in everyday life.

The growing number of these museums also comes at a pivotal moment

3 The Folk Music Museum, in Tripureshwar (Kathmandu), belongs to this category of museum. It was registered with the Government of Nepal in 1997, and it opened to visitors in 2002. It was badly damaged by the earthquake in April 2015 (see *The Himalayan Times*, 26 July 2015). It houses 600 different types of traditional Nepali musical instruments.

when ethnic material culture is on the decline or has totally disappeared. As a matter of fact, traditional artefacts are gradually being replaced in daily life by modern items. The local knowledge required to make them is dying out. Patan's Jyāpu Samāj Ethnographic Museum shows some musical instruments which no one no longer knows how to play. Similarly, knowledge of the environment and of its natural resources upon which these objects are based is rapidly dying out, especially among the younger generation. From a more general perspective, the need for an ethnographic museum arises when the link with the living tradition is about to be severed.

The artefacts presented in these Nepalese museums safeguard material and symbolic cultures that are under threat. However, the rather inadequate means used to stage the collections tend to mummify the items. As a matter of fact, the way museographic holdings are presented has undergone major transformations in the West over the last decades. More modern and attractive devices, using audiovisual media have been introduced. These devices are totally absent from Nepalese ethnographic museums. For instance, in most of these institutions, the generalised use of dummies, like those found in clothes shops in bazaars, accentuates the outmoded presentation. Moreover, films or videos rarely accompany exhibits. There are no multimedia facilities, no interactive programmes, and no audio recordings. Furthermore, the everyday objects on display are rarely contextualised in terms of the present day, and the aesthetic dimension of the artefacts is simply absent. The exhibits keep alive the memory of the ethnic group, but tend to portray a necrology of the past and a frozen-in-time image of its culture. In other words, the objects are presented in a somewhat fossilised manner, without underlining the dynamic and transformational aspects of local cultures. Understandably, most of these museums suffer from a lack of visitors.

IV

One final observation needs to be made. When confronted with these ethnic items which belong to past cultures or to cultures that are dying out, the observer/visitor, whether endogenous or exogenous to the showcased society, is faced with time. They suddenly experience the destructive effect of passing ages, the impact of globalisation and modernisation over the decades. Therefore, ethnographic museums are one among a number of modern devices that emphasise differences in temporalities, past, present and future. They divide the present into a past and a contemporary moment. They stress anachronisms and time warps. They also embody the memory

of a past, of a cultural heritage in the modern sense of the term, popularised by UNESCO over recent years. For local cultures, it is a way of recording their history and of establishing a link with the globalised sphere.

This individual and collective experience is not totally new in the history of humankind. Yet, it has become increasingly significant in our modern world. Owing to these museums, the perception of the past has changed considerably. Mythical time, the time of origins, which used to be reactivated periodically during festivals, ceremonies and rituals, is at present boxed up in museum glass cases. What in the past was perceived as cyclic non-directional time is now experienced as an orientated, sometimes apocalyptic and fatal time, swallowing up everybody and everything in its path. Ritual items, paintings, and masks that were exhibited once a year on ceremonial occasions now hang on walls on a permanent basis, as if they were desacralised, emptied of religious power.

The Role of Mental Health and Psycho-Social Support from NGOs

Reflections from Post-Conflict Nepal¹

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Introduction

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) globally support government initiatives and social development by assuming the role of advocates, service providers, activists, and researchers on a variety of issues affecting the lives of people (Thara and Patel 2010). In addition, NGOs play an important role in delivering and developing models for more innovative services than those delivered by governments (Harwin and Barron 2007). Alongside the more familiar roles of service delivery and campaigning, NGOs are active in a complex range of broader development activities that include the promotion of democracy, peace-building, conflict resolution, human rights protection, and policy analysis (Lewis and Opoku-Mensah 2006). NGOs play a crucial role in all settings, but during conflict and disasters, they commonly take on a greater role as such humanitarian crises overwhelm often-already overstretched government health systems (De Jong 2007; Ejaz et al 2011). The increased mortality and morbidity associated with mental health and psychosocial problems during and after natural or human-made disaster receives greater media attention and public interest, which may convince policy-makers to more seriously consider the suffering associated with mental health and psychosocial problems (De Jong 2007).

As described by the World Health Organisation, these crises thereby provide opportunities in terms of increased funding and political will

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to support mental health and psychosocial well-being beyond the humanitarian crisis (WHO 2013). Opportunities include creating new leadership, new ways of thinking, and redefining existing service delivery models (Perez-Sales et al 2011). For example, Sri Lanka and Indonesia, after the 2004 tsunami, made rapid progress in the development of basic mental health services, extending beyond tsunami-affected zones to most parts of the country. Similarly, Burundi, Kosovo, Iraq, and Afghanistan have used the opportunity of greater support for mental health during conflict situations (WHO 2013). Given that NGOs may contribute to creating healthcare systems with increased efficiency, more equity, and good governance (Ejaz et al 2011), it is worthwhile reflecting on the role of NGOs in specific humanitarian settings, discussing the pros and cons of their involvement, and setting future strategies. This paper, based on the authors' work-experience and grey literature, documents the contributions made by mental health and psychosocial support of NGOs in the conflict/post-conflict contexts, analyses their strengths and limitations, and discusses their future role in strengthening the mental health system in Nepal.

Background

Nepal, a home for 26.5 million people (CBS 2012), and is a small, mountainous, multi-ethnic country located in South Asia. It has poor development indicators, including the Human Development Index [157 out of 186] (UNDP 2013), low literacy rate [65.9 per cent] (CBS 2012) and relatively low GDP per capita at purchasing power parity [USD 1102] (UNDP 2013) among others. Nepal suffered a violent conflict that claimed the lives of more than 13,000 people, while many more were subjected to torture, intimidation, extortion, and abduction (Russell 2012). The fragile health system of Nepal became even weaker during the period of the Maoist insurgency as health staff were often intimidated and tortured by both the government soldiers and the insurgents, and the delivery of essential commodities was disrupted (Singh 2004).

Although formal registration of NGOs in Nepal began in 1977, the emergence of mental health NGOs started only after the 1990 people's movement, with the numbers increasing during the 10 years of Maoist conflict (1996-2006). Currently, an estimated 20 out of over 37,000 nationally registered NGOs work specifically in the field of mental health and psychosocial support. Previously, Nepali NGOs commonly supported government initiatives in delivering quality health services. However, during and after the Maoist conflict, they played increasingly important roles in providing health services to conflict-affected areas and marginalised

populations. In our observation, increased funding during the conflict period helped NGOs to develop and strengthen their work in the mental health field in Nepal. Learning from the programmes implemented during conflict period, NGOs have become successful advocates for, and partners in, policy revision and integration of mental health into primary healthcare (PHC).

Key Strengths

We compiled data from a 4Ws (who is where, when doing what) mapping tool developed in MS Excel format (O'Connell et al 2012), which documents mental health training, services, and research activities of several stakeholders in the aftermath of emergencies. The tool was completed by interviewing NGO staff. We also collected information available on the websites of Nepali mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) NGOs. Data is summarised in Table 1, which highlights the contribution of NGOs in developing human resources, raising awareness, conducting rigorous research, and delivering services in the field of MHPSS care. These key strengths of NGOs are described in Table 1 on the following page.

Capacity Building

Training Para-professional Counsellors: Very few mental health human resources are trained by government institutions. Those who are, commonly prefer a more bio-medical orientation and are frequently based in major city centres (WHO 2006). Therefore, mobilisation and retention of mental health workers in rural areas has been a challenge (Acland 2002). Recognising this gap, NGOs started developing para-professionals by training community members in psychosocial and mental health issues (Jordans et al 2007; Jordans et al 2003; Kohrt et al 2007; Sapkota et al 2007). This training ranges from a few days 'orientation' to six-month psychosocial counselling training programmes. They, in addition to classroom-based teaching, focus heavily on field practicum, introducing trainees to the challenges of real-life settings, reflecting upon how psychosocial support and counselling services can address the needs of the population (Jordans et al 2003). Based on the training materials available, para-professionals have been trained to play roles in the promotion, prevention, detection, referral, and follow-up in psychosocial and mental healthcare.

Other Training Programmes: At the community level, 2 to 4 weeks of training is provided to develop community psychosocial workers (CPSW), whose main function is raising awareness about mental health and

Table 1: NGO activity in Mental Health and Psycho-social Support in Nepal

Training	Service Delivery	Awareness Raising and Advocacy	Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two weeks basic psychosocial care training for community psychosocial workers • Six months para-professional counselling training • Training on psychological first aid (PFA) • mhGAP training to PHC workers • Non violent communication training • Training on Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines for mental health and psychosocial support in emergencies • Care for care givers' training • Training on stigma reduction • Peace building training • Vocational training • Life skills training • Effective parenting training • Classroom based intervention training • Healthy Activity Programme • Training for depression based on behavioural activation • Counselling for alcohol problems training based on motivational interviewing • Family intervention training for psychosis, bipolar disorder and epilepsy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psycho-education • Psychological first aid • Counselling (individual, group and family) • Psychotherapies (cognitive behavior therapy, child parent relationship therapy, creative movement therapy, art therapy, Gestalt therapy, play therapy, sand play therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization Reprocessing (EMDR), Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) and hypnotherapy) • Psychiatric consultation and medication • Legal support/legal counselling • Case management, documentation, referral, networking and follow-up • Emotional support, problem management, relaxation and meditation • Rehabilitation services • Residential and day care services • Sports and recreational activities • Livelihood assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radio programme • Street drama • Information dissemination through pamphlets, cultural programmes, dance and sports • Community orientation programmes • Press meetings • Newspaper articles • Workshop and seminars • Street rallies and silent march pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need assessments • Process evaluation • Effectiveness evaluation of interventions • Cross-sectional studies and longitudinal studies • Qualitative studies • Cohort studies • Delphi studies • Validation studies of western psychological instruments • Development of ethical guidelines • . • .

identifying and referring people with mental health problems (Kohrt et al 2008). Additionally, female community health volunteers (FCHVs) have been trained in a community informant detection tool, which assists in identifying people with mental health problems and promotes referral to health service providers at PHC. In addition, 1 to 2 weeks of training is conducted for PHC workers to help them dealing with psychosocial and mental health aspects of PHC attendees (Upadhyaya 2013; WHO 2006). More recently, training through district-level government mechanisms on the mental health gap action programme (mhGAP), which promotes the integration of mental health in primary healthcare (WHO 2008), has been introduced. Counsellors are developed to provide individual, group, and family counselling (Jordans et al 2003) and support community psychosocial workers, female community health volunteers, and primary healthcare workers (TPO Nepal 2013) at the community level.

Several tailor-made training packages have also been developed and delivered by different organisations. Some NGOs have integrated psychosocial concepts in training packages for teachers, health workers, and children affected by conflict (Kohrt et al 2008) and HIV/AIDS (NCASC 2012; Sapkota et al 2007), frontline workers during emergencies (Jordans et al 2012) for members of the Nepal Police force, staff working in the nutrition sector, protection workers at Bhutanese refugee camps (Reiffers et al 2013), staff working in gender-based violence and trafficking (TPO Nepal 2012), and outreach workers in the entertainment sector. Training on psychosocial aspects of conflict mediation, peace-building, legal protection, and human rights are also being provided.

Post-training Follow-up and Clinical Supervision: One of the strengths of NGO training is that they have mechanisms for on-site clinical supervision, group case conferences, and follow-ups during refresher training. These mechanisms encourage trainees to practice the skills learnt and provide opportunities to express difficulties and get suggestions for improvement.

Service Delivery

Our observations suggest NGOs have commonly taken on mental health and psychosocial care that does not focus on strict diagnostic categories, but rather on more broadly defined distress.

Community-based Service Delivery Model: In line with the global focus towards community mental health services, Nepali NGOs appear to have adopted a community-based model of mental healthcare. Psychiatric consultation during mobile health camps, integration of mental health into primary healthcare (TPO Nepal 2013), and rehabilitation and family

support through home visits (Raja et al 2012) are some examples of community-based service delivery models. Other examples include school-based mental health services (Jordans et al 2010) and conflict resolution and community mediation programmes. In our observation, residential rehabilitation centers contribute to this model by working as a bridge between the medical and social model by conducting recreational activities, providing day-care services with strong family engagement alongside medication.

Culturally Relevant Intervention Designs: NGOs are making efforts to design culturally relevant interventions. Examples of culturally relevant interventions implemented by research based mental health NGOs include classroom-based psychosocial interventions (Jordans et al 2010), child-led indicator programmes (Karki et al 2009), alternative to violence, effective parenting, community mental health promotion programmes (Sapkota et al 2011), women's empowerment group interventions (Reiffers et al 2013), and the tree of life intervention (Ncube 2006). Formation of self-help groups for peer support between people experiencing mental health problems is another commonly used intervention, with group members connected to community resources and provided livelihood support through vocational training and grants for setting up small businesses (Raja et al 2012). Although there remain strong debates in the literature on the relevance and sustainability of activities by 'external' actors in humanitarian crises, many NGOs have taken a participatory approach, combining service delivery with efforts to better understand local priorities and resources (Kohrt and Hruschka 2010), and adapting 'western' interventions to make them culturally sensitive to local contexts (Jordans et al 2003; Tol et al 2005).

Multi-disciplinary Team of Service Providers: Mental health service provision is a multi-sectoral affair (Upadhyaya 2013). NGOs have tried to combine the medical and social models of mental healthcare (Raja et al 2012), and often promote a multi-disciplinary team approach of service delivery (Kakuma et al 2011; Thara and Patel 2010). In our observation, NGOs working in mental health are gradually involving service providers from different backgrounds (medical, social, and legal), and are more aware of the need for clients' privacy and confidentiality. The direct interaction between PHC workers and psychiatrists (TPO Nepal 2013; Upadhyaya 2013), the inclusion of psychosocial counsellors in mobile mental health camps, and the involvement of nurses, counsellors and social workers in community rehabilitation programmes are some examples of a multi-disciplinary team approach.

Awareness and Advocacy

Another key strength of NGOs is that they are good at mental health promotion (e.g. through popular interventions aimed at strengthening psychosocial well-being, such as child-friendly spaces and recreational activities), mental health advocacy, and awareness-raising programmes (Jordans et al 2003; WHO 2006). Because of their knowledge of local contexts and quick access to, and acceptance by, local communities, NGOs have been able to sensitise the population either through direct community-orientation sessions or through street plays, radio programmes, cultural programmes, newsletters, and short films (Thara and Patel 2010). In our experience, continued NGO lobbying and advocacy has made stakeholders more sensitive and responsive, resulting in an increased coverage of mental health in government policies and programmes, and in the national media.

Strong Focus on Stigma Reduction: In Nepali society, mental illness is highly stigmatised as it is a 'mark of shame, disgrace and disapproval' (Regmi et al 2004). An important aspect of NGO's awareness-raising programmes is the focus on stigma reduction in society (Jordans et al 2003; Sapkota et al 2007) and the education of people with mental health problems and their family members (TPO Nepal 2013). In our opinion these efforts have produced some positive results, including greater acceptance of service-user involvement in programme planning and policy development.

Policy Advocacy: NGOs can play a vital role in mental health advocacy (Funk et al 2005). Since 2009, NGOs have joined hands for policy advocacy by establishing a loose network named National Mental Health Network. Advocacy efforts of NGOs have yielded positive outcomes such as the endorsement of a national minimum standards for shelter homes (MWCSW 2011), promulgation of psychosocial guidelines for HIV/AIDS affected-children (NCASC 2012), and integration of psychosocial issues into other sectors, such as education, sexual and gender-based violence, trafficking (MWCSW 2011), child protection, reproductive health, nutrition, disaster preparedness and response (IASC Nepali version 2009), and conflict and peace-building. Other examples of the positive results of NGO advocacy are the provision of social benefits under a disability allowance provided by the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare and the establishment of a One-Step Crisis Center under the Ministry of Health and Population (NHSSP 2014). In the authors' opinion, NGOs are increasingly involved in national-level policy discussion forums. For example, they have contributed to the multi-stakeholder action plan for mental health (2013-2020) and a chapter on mental health to be included in the proposed integrated Nepal Health Act.

Research

Due to the lack of national-level prevalence studies and large-scale research (Regmi et al 2004; Tol et al 2009), little is known about the mental health burden in the general population. Although NGOs have not been able to address this gap at the national level, they have provided rich information about mental health and psychosocial situations in specific geographic locations and for sub-populations (Upadhyaya and Pol 2003), including torture survivors (Tol et al 2007), internally displaced persons (Thapa and Hauff 2005), refugees (Reiffers et al 2013), people affected by natural disasters (Jordans et al 2010), girls/women working in the entertainment sector, and children associated with armed forces and armed groups (Kohrt et al 2008). To ensure that research is conducted in an ethical manner, guidelines such as the C4P model: Four Principles for Ethical Research with Child Soldiers (Kohrt and Hruschka 2010) have been developed. Similarly, Western instruments, such as the Beck Depression Inventory (Kohrt et al 2002), PTSD Checklist [Civilian Version] (Thapa and Hauff 2005), and child mental health and psychosocial research instruments (Kohrt et al 2011) have been validated in Nepal.

Research Collaboration and Publications: A few NGOs have focused their efforts on conducting psychosocial and mental health research, results of which have been published in academic journals. Publication of research findings on community mental healthcare (Upadhyaya et al 2013), impact of torture on refugees (Van Ommeren et al 2001), psychosocial care for conflict affected children (Kohrt et al 2010), and prevalence of mental disorders (Luitel et al 2013; Upadhyaya and Pol 2003) are some of the examples of NGO's contributions to research and publication. NGOs have also collaborated with foreign academic institutions such as McGill University, Canada; King's College London; University of Cape Town, South Africa; and Makerere University, Uganda, to conduct psychosocial and mental health research in Nepal. In our opinion, these collaborations have contributed to developing the local research capacity and the dissemination of research findings to larger international audiences. This includes research publication and dissemination via collaborative article writing, where the practice of incorporating the strengths of experts from high-income countries with both senior and junior Nepali researchers has been developed (Kohrt et al 2014).

Translation of Research Knowledge: Findings from mental health research conducted by NGOs have been used by the government and UN agencies to design rehabilitation packages for former child soldiers and other programmes for specific sub-populations. Research results have also

been used to develop new interventions or modify the existing ones. The revision of classroom-based intervention (CBI) by TPO Nepal, after the results of randomised control trials, is one such example (Jordans et al 2010). Information collected by NGOs has also been used by others in various forms. For example, the process of documentation of the natural disaster during the Koshi river flood was used for the adaptation and contextualisation of the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) guidelines in Nepal (IASC Nepali version, 2009). Research findings have provided strong advocacy tools to lobby the government for policy changes such as the inclusion of mental health in the Nepal Health Sector Support Programme (NHSP-II) and non-communicable disease multi-stakeholder action plan (2014-2020).

Key Challenges

Despite the identified strengths, NGOs have all displayed several challenges in terms of coordination, sustainability, accreditation, and licensing as described below:

Coordination and Collaboration

Between Mental Health and Psychosocial Support NGOs: In our opinion, coordination and collaboration among mental health NGOs in Nepal has been a challenge. Since 2000, several networking efforts among mental health and psychosocial organisations have been made. Groups were formed, often with strong participation in the beginning, but after cooperating successfully for some time, these groups often collapse, possibly due to the lack of a shared vision. Secondly, there are differences of opinions between stakeholder groups regarding mental health treatment and mechanisms for service provision. Due to this, several policy-level consultation workshops have not been able to produce consensus policy documents. Third, due to a lack of clarity and shared vision for mental health and programmatic directions, duplication of NGOs activities has been observed – as in other countries (Lewis and Kanji 2009). Overall, there appears to be a reticence towards sharing and learning from each other's best practices and challenges.

Among the Government and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support NGOs: In our observation a similar lack of collaboration has plagued relations between the government and NGOs. NGOs are free to run their projects in isolation if they so wish, with little government oversight and internal coordination, while NGOs that are working closely with government institutions face red-tape and unnecessary delays. Second, during the armed conflict the government was party to the conflict, so NGOs distanced

themselves from the government institutions to retain a neutral position. Though this approach facilitated service delivery during the peak time of conflict, it appears to have prevented strong alliances with the government and opportunities for public private partnerships.

Between Government Institutions: In our observation, coordination among government institutions for mental health has also been minimal. Currently, the mental hospital, Primary HealthCare Revitalisation Department, Management Division, and National Health Training Centre are involved in mental health, but due to lack of clear policies guiding their relationships, activities of these government institutions do not appear to be well-coordinated. Although similar, there does not seem to be any clarity about which institution is the official focal point for mental health, with the Ministry of Health and Population to date unable to clearly instruct NGOs to coordinate with a particular division within the ministry.

Low Priority of Mental Health in Nepal

Neither the government nor civil society organisations have prioritised mental health as one of their core areas of focus.

Lack of Government Attention to Mental Health: The mental health policy formulated in 1996 is not yet implemented (Regmi et al 2004) and three rounds of efforts to endorse mental health legislation went in vain (Upadhayaya 2013). The policy proposes establishing a separate mental health division in the Ministry of Health and Population, but there is still no one to oversee mental health within the ministry. There is one central mental hospital and a few regional hospitals with limited psychiatric services. Therefore, in our opinion, mental healthcare is largely institutionalised with limited community mental health activities in the government health system. The lack of law, regulation, government systems and procedures for mental health and the non-implementation of mental health policy clearly demonstrate the government's lack of attention to mental health.

This lack of government priority to mental health (Upadhayaya 2013) is a challenge for NGOs because low priority means inadequate funding, weak government mechanisms, and a lack of systems, procedures, and infrastructure. In the absence of these factors, the grassroots successes of NGOs may not be sustainable and opportunities to translate experiences gained by NGOs into lasting policy changes are missed. Secondly, the continuation of pharmacological treatments through institutional-based psychiatric care is a challenge for NGOs that often advocate a socio-medical model of mental health service provision. Thirdly, the lack of government initiatives towards the integration of mental health into primary healthcare,

despite commitments in the 1996 policy, is another obstacle for mental health. Due to lack of government priority to mental health (Regmi et al 2004), many bilateral and multilateral donors supporting health sector development in Nepal are not providing sufficient funding to mental health NGOs. The government allocates only less than one per cent of total health budget to mental health and among that a large portion is allocated for the operation of psychiatric facilities (Regmi et al 2004). There is almost no budget for community mental health activities in which NGOs have mastery.

Lack of Civil Society Organisations' Attention to Mental Health: Although psychosocial and mental health is a cross-cutting issue and should be addressed by NGOs active in other sectors, such as education, protection, livelihood and shelter and site planning, many NGOs have not prioritised the integration of mental health and psychosocial issues into their existing programmes.

Sustainability

In our observation, almost all the mental health NGOs in Nepal depend upon external funding, normally a short duration. Due to these short-term projects, NGOs cannot commit to long-term treatment services. Likewise, NGOs don't have an influence over the structures and mechanisms to continue services. Apart from these external limitations NGOs also have a weakness that they are in competition with each other for the scarce resources and move quickly from one location or theme to another for funding without properly addressing the ethical issues of phasing out. The discontinuation of services after the phase-out of a project makes people even more vulnerable and frustrated with NGO's work. Whilst there are exceptions, most NGOs are running activities in isolation without formal collaboration with government entities, as a result, the services end when the project is phased out. Consequently, there are issues of both the sustainability of the NGOs themselves and the sustainability of services initiated by them.

Discussion

This paper touched upon the strengths and limitations of the role of NGOs in mental health and psychosocial support in Nepal. Below, we discuss these key issues in relation to a) the important role NGOs play in strengthening mental health systems; b) the need for partnerships with the government; c) the standardisation of training programmes and services; and d) the need for a central coordinating body for mental health within the Nepal government.

NGOs can play an important role in strengthening the mental health

system. The efforts of mental health NGOs in Nepal appear to have mainly focused on three of WHO health system building blocks: namely, human workforce development, information, and service delivery (WHO 2007). Service delivery by NGOs, especially following conflict and natural disasters (Harwin and Barron 2007), is a contribution to health system strengthening as NGO's work helps in achieving increased health coverage. NGOs' potential contribution to mental health system strengthening has been well demonstrated in other settings. For example, in Afghanistan due to NGO's contributions, the capacity of service providers improved, service utilisation increased, and donors finally agreed to fund mental healthcare (Ventevogel et al 2012). Pakistan has benefitted substantially through 'health education, health promotion, social marketing and advocacy by the not-for-profit private sector' (Ejaz et al 2011). Similarly, mental health sectors in Uganda and Burundi were largely supported by NGO initiatives (Baingana and Mangen 2011; Ventevogel et al 2011). Likewise, the NGO Basic Needs, introduced a mental health and development model in Nepal, which focuses on concepts like user empowerment, community development, and health system strengthening, offering a feasible method of integrating mental health into existing community-based interventions (Raja et al 2012).

Second, although NGOs have several strengths, such as easy access to the local communities, and arguably a better understanding of the local contexts, quick and flexible response mechanisms (Lillehammer 2003), and access to marginalised and underserved areas, they also have a number of challenges including limited sustainability of donor-driven programmes, weak collaboration and high staff turnover. NGO's direct action in humanitarian settings may result into laudable gains in the short terms, but without sustained networking and advocacy strategies, NGOs are unlikely to have any significant long-term national impact (Edwards et al 1999).

Experiences of conflict and emergency affected countries show that mental health reform efforts may commence in the midst of emergencies and if capitalised upon can have positive impacts on the long-term development of mental health systems (WHO 2013). However, NGOs alone cannot achieve system-strengthening goals, highlighting the need for strong partnerships with government. The government, except when party to the conflict, bears the primary responsibility for providing key mental health services to its population, as access to health services is a basic human right. NGOs can support the government through a clearly defined public-private partnership approach demonstrated to be effective in many low and middle-income countries. For example, over eight years in Burundi,

NGO's activities shifted from the delivery of services to strengthening the capacity of government staff and embedding mental health and psychosocial support within existing health services and social systems (Ventevogel et al 2011). Similarly, Raja et al (2012) argue that strategic engagement and involvement of government is critically important in influencing mental health practice and policy. Lessons learnt from Uganda also stress the importance of coordination and joint planning between the government and NGOs (Baingana and Mangen 2011).

Third, the quality of training courses and clinical services of NGOs cannot be independently verified due to lack of accreditation for NGO training courses and a regulatory body that monitors the quality of the clinical practices. This is a serious threat to the quality of services and therefore the long-term sustainability of psychosocial human resources developed by NGOs and counselling services provided by them. In line with the humanitarian principle of 'First Do No Harm', NGOs should work towards the development of minimum standards for training and clinical practices, with facilitation from the government in accreditation and licensing processes. Even fully trained staff require regular refresher training and on-site clinical supervision mechanisms to ensure service quality is maintained (Baingana and Mangen 2011; Jordans et al 2003).

Fourth, in the absence of a central coordinating body for mental health within the government, coordination and collaboration have been challenging. The competing interests of several governmental and non-governmental stakeholders appear to have given rise to confusion, tension, and frustration. The sharp division can only be minimised by a legitimate government body responsible for coordination of mental health activities. NGOs can advocate and help in establishing a coordinating body, as has been demonstrated elsewhere. In Afghanistan, for example, NGOs assisted the government in establishing mental health department within the Ministry of Public Health, which greatly facilitated policy development and service coordination (Ventevogel et al 2012).

Way Forward

We propose concrete roles that NGOs could potentially play in post-conflict Nepal, where the impact of the conflict is still prevalent in many communities. First, NGOs could contribute to government efforts to integrate mental health in primary healthcare as suggested by WHO's mhGAP. To do this, NGOs could utilise their knowledge and skills in training, research and service delivery and support the government in developing a training curriculum, treatment protocols, and supervision guidelines. This

would address, to some extent, the challenges related to the availability and sustainability of primary mental health services.

Second, micro-level programmes conducted by NGOs in certain geographic areas, no matter how well and effective, have not been scaled up to the national level. Therefore, in order to address the challenges related to policy formulation and revision, NGOs should use their grassroots knowledge and experiences by linking field priorities to national policies and programmes. The government also needs to be proactive in collaborating with NGOs and the private sector (Thornicroft et al 2010). This can be best done by a jointly developed a public-private partnership strategy (Baingana and Mangen 2011; Nakimuli-Mpungu et al 2013), which acknowledges the central stewardship role of the government and importance of NGOs for assisting the government, providing critical but positive comments, and advocating the importance of quality and equitable government-delivered services based on a health system strengthening approaches (Ventevogel et al 2011).

Third, there is no national quality control mechanism for mental health and psychosocial support services. Therefore, the government, together with NGOs, needs to establish a mechanism like a national mental health council to assess the quality of services provided. There has to be a reciprocal accountability that NGOs hold the government accountable, but the government also has a role in ensuring NGOs are accountable to the population. Lastly, there is also an urgent need to standardise the training curriculum, manage the accreditation of training courses, and develop the licensing mechanisms for psychosocial counsellors.

Conclusion

Nepali NGOs working in mental health and psychosocial support, despite facing several challenges, have contributed to the awareness, prevention, and treatment of mental health and psychosocial problems. Human workforce development, service delivery, and awareness-raising have been the core areas of focus for most NGOs, while some have also been involved in mental health research and scientific publications. As these NGOs already work on several health system building blocks, they can play an important role in post-conflict mental health system strengthening. Although there is little doubt about the important role that NGOs can play in a post-conflict Nepal, there must now be more attention to stewardship from the government to facilitate the sustainability of services, acceptance by other stakeholders, and ensuring continued funding. The credibility of NGOs and their services is negatively impacted by the lack of accreditation for training courses and lack of provisions for monitoring and licensing of

counselling services. It is now time for the government to take leadership and assume a central coordinating role. NGOs can complement the work of the government through a public-private partnership approach.

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From Mystification to the Marketplace

The Changing Contours of the *Māita* in Nepali *Tij* Songs¹

BALRAM UPRETY

Introduction

One of the fundamental concerns of academics regarding folklore research, especially in South Asia, has been that it has seldom moved beyond the preliminary stages of collection and classification. According to Alan Dundes, the noted American folklorist:

...there is relatively little interpretation of folklore. Much more energy has been devoted to question of classification than analysis... But collection and classification are not a substitute for analysis... But for whatever reason, folklorists typically stop their intellectual work with the presentation and identification of data... The problem is that the fundamental question of meaning is never raised or discussed at all. (Dundes 1980, vii-viii)

This paper therefore seeks not only to document, but also to critically read what has been collected, published, documented, and archived on women's *Tij* songs. Even where there has been some attempt in existing scholarship at the interpretation of available folk cultural artefacts, the epistemology that underpins a large part of such interpretations raise some uncomfortable fundamental questions. In a 'Third World' dependent upon Western theoretical and epistemological systems for its critical vocabulary, the academic dealing with the subaltern subject must speak in

1 I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms Smriti Singh, Assistant Professor, Darjeeling Government College, Darjeeling, for her intellectual support and incisive feedback when this research was taking shape. Her help, especially in the translation of the songs, remains invaluable.

the Euro-American idiom and voice if she wishes to be heard 'at the centre'. If she does not do so, she has not spoken at all.

The infatuation of Western feminism with the 'silenced native subaltern woman' is not politically and ideologically neutral, but situated in the complex location of Western feminists vis-à-vis the cultures of the other. The task of the postcolonial feminist academic in this context is to 'bring to voice'—to facilitate the recording and dissemination of the cultural production of women—so that there are texts that can then be worked with, as it were. The evolving tradition of women's songs that I deal with in my work is a phenomenon which predates the emergence of feminism in the twentieth century West. While such cultural production may not use a vocabulary that feminists would instantly recognise as one of resistance, the academic, with his/her bilingual and bicultural training in the cultures of both the Nepali women's communities and Western academia can then shed light on the subaltern archive in the critical language dominant in the academy. It is with this aim in mind that I read the dominant patriarchal representation of Nepali women problematically and subversively in order to chart out a longer alternative 'her-story' of resistance in the genre of songs.

Understanding *Tij*: Contexts and Concepts

Tij in Nepal celebrates female agency as well as the more quotidian aspects of women's lives.² Most importantly, *Tij* is associated with songs, dancing, and singing. In the eastern part of Nepal, the song that accompanies the celebration of *Tij* is known as *Sangini*; in other parts of Nepal, it is simply called *Tijé gīt*.

2 *Tij* has been variously spelt various ways by different authors: Bennett spells it *Tij*, Skinner and Holland spell it *Teej*. I, however, spell it *Tij*, which corresponds to the phonetic pronunciation of the word in Nepali. Celebrated annually from *bhādra*, *śukla dwitiyā* to *pañcāmi* (mid-August to mid-September), *Tij* is primarily the festival of upper-caste Nepali women, i. e., *Bahun* and *Chhetri* women (which in popular construction and the age of global consumerism is gradually becoming the festival of all Nepali women). On *Tij*, Nepali women who are married are taken by their father or elder brother to their natal home for feasting on the first day of the festival. The feasting is followed by rigorous fasting for the longevity of their husband's life. As they fast for the long life of their husband, women go to the nearest *Shiva* temple or public place where they sing and dance. Their singing enacts a complex cultural phenomenon: women undermine the patriarchal ritual of fasting by singing songs that critique patriarchy. The songs enact counter-hegemonic femininity; they underline women's alternative conceptualisation of their subjectivity. The songs that deal with many other aspects of their life also come to problematise the opposition between *māita* and *ghar*, an aspect rarely dealt by indigenous or other researchers, is the locus of the present study.

Khanal (2011) states that in the social history of Nepal, especially in the hill region, *Tīj* songs have played a central role in the emancipation of women.³ In the politically charged writing of leading Nepali editorial columns, *Tīj* becomes Nepali women and vice versa. It becomes an event that spans the lives of all Nepali women, not only the Hindu ones, thus linking the festival with the nation-building project. The editorial of Gorkhapatra daily writes:

The ambience of the entire country has been carnivalised by the festivity ushered in by the Haritālikā *Tīj*. Unforgettable is the ever-swelling confluence of literature, music and art collectively created by women participating in *Tīj*. It must be the uniqueness of *Tīj* that it is not confined amongst Hindu women alone. Today, *Tīj* has become intimate and indispensable for non-Hindu as well as for the Hindu women who would not celebrate it traditionally. Therefore, to describe this festival of pan-Nepali women as a festival of Hindu women would be a distortion.⁴ (Gorkhapatra Daily 2010)

During the festival of *Tīj*, women expect to be taken to their *māita* for a celebration no matter how far away their *māita* is.⁵ Amongst Hindu women, *Tīj* is almost an affirmation of certain aspects of what patriarchy has conditioned them into thinking of as ‘essential’ aspects of their selfhood, such as their role as daughter, wife, and mother. Celebrated annually from *bhādra*, *śukla dwitīyā* (mid-August to mid-September) to *pañcāmi*, the celebration of *Tīj* is associated with many mythological stories. On *dwitīyā*, women feast on milk, curd, butter, sweets, fruits, and numerous delicacies; it is an indulgent preparation for the rigorous fasting to be undertaken the next day. The gastronomical indulgence is known as *dar khāne* that is, ‘to feast on dar’. Thus, the festival oscillates between the sacred and the secular. On *tritīyā*, married women and unmarried girls who have started menstruating, go through rigorous fasting, most without water. Married women fast for the longevity of the life of their husbands; unmarried

3 See Ajayabhadra Khanal, ‘Miss Nepal, *Tīj* Ani Saśaktikaran: Pūjibādle Mahilā Unmukti Andolanlāi Bandhak Banāuncha?’ (Miss Nepal *Tīj* and empowerment: Has the movement for women’s emancipation become a pawn of capitalism?), *Annapurna Post*, 1 September 2011. My translation.

4 My translation.

5 The *Māita* is the house in which a woman is born. The house is always seen as a transit point for a woman in Nepali society. In a patrilocal Nepali society, she has to leave her home and go to the house of her husband after marriage. The violence of this movement – physical and psychological – and the questioning of such system is the preoccupation of many *Tīj* songs discussed in the paper.

girls who have started menstruating fast for a 'good' husband. From early morning, the fasting women go to a river or any water body, to bathe and worship Shiva-Parvati and sing songs. On *pañcāmi*, women worship *saptarṣi*, the seven mythological *ṛṣi*s. The seven *ṛṣi*s are considered in Brāhminical culture to be the sources of male spiritual pedigree. The *ṛṣi* *pujā* is, according to traditional accounts, supposed to 'rescue' women from the sin of touching men when they become 'untouchable' during menstruation.

Though the ritual performativity of *Tīj* cannot be undermined, the centrality of songs that accompany the festival has not received serious academic attention from indigenous or international academia. The tendency of Nepali, as well as international academia, to date the 'arrival' of feminism in Nepal with the onset of the pro-democracy movement in Nepal in the 1990s overlooks the vocabulary of protest embedded in the *Tīj* songs. While the ritual performativity of the archetypal *Tīj* endorses patriarchy, the songs underline women's counter-hegemonic and contrapuntal reading of patriarchy.

Taking one salient theme of *Tīj*, i.e., Nepali women's complex conceptualisation of their *māita* and the *ghar*,⁶ this paper attempts to underline a long genealogy of protest before the infiltration of feminist discourse from the West in the 1990s. The patriarchal monolithic construction of the *māita* as an idealised space – bereft of contradictions, fissures and ruptures, and above all, the erasure of women as the producers of critical and contrapuntal epistemology. If *Tīj* can be seen, possibly without much critical contention, as a dominant cultural signifier in Nepal, *māita* similarly can be seen perhaps as the most dominant chronotope of *Tīj*. I locate the origin of *Tīj* in the patriarchal politics of space: patrilocality as a corollary of patriarchy naturalises women's displacement from their biological family to the conjugal one, thereby opening the dichotomy between *māita* and *ghar*. The archetypal *Tīj* can be seen as a spatial and temporal release given to the labouring female body in the post-paddy cultivation period for emotional as well physical recuperation and renewal within the sanitised patriarchal metaphysics of feasting, fasting, and purificatory *pañcāmi* bathing. Understanding the articulation of the *māita* in *Tīj* may also help us understand the patriarchal construction of binary spatiality and its transformations.

Māita occupies a central place in Nepali women's socio-emotional

6 Marriage is traditionally a passive experience for most Nepali women. The notion of choice in marriage is very recent in Nepal. The songs under discussion underscore women's conformity as well as contestation of such praxis.

imaginary.⁷ As stated earlier, the classical songs romanticise and idealise the parental home, while more recent compositions take a more pragmatic view of the *māita*. I seek to examine why and how women create a perceptual dichotomy between *ghar* and *māita* in their songs. Foucauldian archaeology helps one to map an alternate oral history of *māita* also as a place of gaps, ruptures, fractures, disillusionment, and conflict, an aspect rarely problematised in the folk and popular imagination. Tracing the trajectory from the classical to the contemporary *Tij* songs, I shall establish how the process of idealisation and sacralisation is a reciprocal one: the *māiti*⁸ tends to idealise and sacralise the *céli*⁹ as much as the *céli* does the *māiti*. This collective cultural tendency operates as a weapon of patriarchy, rendering women economically powerless even as they are made objects of love and devotion ritually. There is a collective cultural tendency to idealise the *māita*.

‘As a stream runs to the ocean, a *céli* runs to her *māita*’ (Singh 2005, 39), ‘Cherished is even a dog from one’s *māita*’ (96), ‘Women jump over a year-old shrub to reach their *māita*’ (96)¹⁰; these Nepali proverbs still in circulation testify to the place of *māita* in Nepali women’s lives. From the folk to the popular, from cinema to literature, the celebration of the *māita* goes beyond the cultural boundary of the Nepali context and has a strong resonance in many North-Indian communities. What explains such an obsessive romanticisation of the *māita*? For Mary M. Cameron:

The maita represents an idealized place of childhood and adolescence and an idyllic time when the physical landscape and the movement

7 At this juncture, it is necessary to comment on the mediation of meaning in these songs, since the interpretation of the songs will largely depend on the received version of the oral/written text. While I have personally collected and translated many of the songs, I have also translated into English many of the songs that have been recorded by other scholars in Nepali. I have tried to keep as close to the literal meanings as possible, and while much is lost in any translation process in terms of innuendo, puns or double meanings, my own bilingualism has enabled me to bring these subtler levels of meaning embedded in the source language to the surface and hence the reader’s attention when I am glossing the songs or interpreting them in the target language. Translation itself is a political act, and an interpretive one. Many readers will not have engaged with such songs, especially the rural ones, before this, and hence, in order to enable a fuller understanding I have provided substantial quotes from the songs.

8 Members, especially male, of a woman’s natal home.

9 Daughters and sisters are reverentially and indulgently referred to as *céli* by people of her *māita*. The word carries nuances of deference, respect bordering on reverence as well as condescension, indulgence and infantilisation.

10 My translations.

of agricultural season and ritual cycles are first experienced by a girl. Women say they remember their maiti in dreams, in songs, in yawns, and in sneezes... Maiti is a metonym for the people living there, conventionally associated with parents, siblings, sisters-in-law, and grandparents ... the maiti is a key symbol in women's psychological and emotional states... A married woman's soul often returns to her natal home to see the people there, as they appear in her dreams. (Cameron 2005, 188)

Tij is the festival when such romantic invocation of the *ćeli-māiti* bond is reiterated. Parajuli puts the interplay of psychosocial and cultural dynamics into perspective:

Chori-ćeli long to be at their *māita* on *Tij* no matter how far away they are. 'Cherished is even a dog from the *māita*'— goes a saying in Nepali. Just anybody cannot be sent to bring the daughter home on *Tij*; it must be the father, the elder brother, or the younger one. If none of them are able to go to fetch the daughter home or if the chori-ćeli fail to visit their *māita* for some domestic reason, they get extremely miserable... What greater tragedy can befall a woman who is married into a family with an unsuccessfully married younger sister-in-law, a widowed elder sister-in-law, and persistently nagging *sāsu* and *sasurāl* ...amidst the laughter and merriment in the birthplace and the familiar surroundings of the *māita*, the meetings with friends and neighbours, chori-ćeli forget their nagging misery. The *māita* acts as an ointment on their stinging wounds.¹¹

(Parajuli 2007, 176-77)

Parajuli seems to suggest here that the *māita* cannot be critically appreciated without studying its binary opposition, the *ghar*. The valorisation of *māita* can be perhaps understood only once the binarism as an operational strategy of patriarchy is underscored. Why do women create such a perceptual dichotomy between *ghar* and *māita*? The following song, to some extent, tries to grapple with this issue:

My father-in-law told me do not go, hamkyāilo¹²
My father has come to fetch me home, hamkyāilo!

11 My translation.

12 Hamkyāilo is a nonsense word that creates the poetic nuances of defiance and gaiety, subdued wildness and a sense of gay abandon.

My mother has come to fetch me home, hamkyāilo!
 My elder brother has come to fetch me home, hamkyāilo!
 My elder sister has come to fetch me home, hamkyāilo!
 My younger brother has come to fetch me home, hamkyāilo!
 My *māita* shall I go now, hamkyāilo!
 Deliciously shall I indulge, hamkyāilo!
 After dancing in the *cautāri*,¹³ I shall go to *pādhera*!
 I shall take sons and daughter along with me, hamkyāilo!
 For three months shall I stay at *māita*, hamkyāilo!
 I have not been to *māita* for a long time, hamkyāilo!
 Worthlessly have I wasted my life, hamkyāilo!¹⁴

(Thapa 1959, 244)

The fantasy of dancing and going to the *pādherā* merits close attention, as *Tīj* is primarily a festival of two elite upper-castes, Nepali Bahun and Chhetri women. The Parbatiya upper-caste woman lives a disembodied existence — all spirit but no body. The act of dancing gives them bodies which they are not allowed to possess. The sensual body of a dancer is an anomaly, and therefore, threatening. The Brahminical patriarchy acknowledges and sanctifies only the procreating and nurturing roles of women, and there is, therefore, an assertion of freedom from these roles in the fantasy of the speaker. The celebration of freedom also permeates the speaker's perception of the *pādherā*.

Pādherā is the place where women go to fetch water, as in the Nepali rural context where the division of labour is fairly gendered, collecting water is exclusively women's work, thereby making *pādherā* a completely 'feminine' space. In a culture where women's mobility beyond the domestic sphere is monitored and regimented, *pādherā* as a space beyond the boundary of domesticity occupies a richly ambivalent status; it is inside, an extension of home in terms of women gathering water for home, yet outside, for it is spatially located beyond the boundary of home. For the Parbatiya upper-caste woman, who lives in hill terrains, the collecting of water is a difficult act. Many folk songs refer to the drudgery of this activity, yet to read *pādherā* only as a space of drudgery would be to undermine the different ways in which women subvert and appropriate this space.

Women transform a place primarily associated with hard labour into a space of female bonding and socialising, sometimes romance, and into a

13 A shed made by the roadside for travellers to rest.

14 My translation.

space of gossip. For women, such transformations operate ambivalently. It is disempowering for it reduces a 'female' space and female bonding and socialising into what is commonly perceived by men to be a space for gossip and trivia, thereby creating a binary between the purposeful, serious, productive male discourse and female gossip. As Homi Bhabha puts it, most stereotypes are fraught with anxiety and are embedded in power politics: they articulate the anxiety of the dominant group to classify, categorise, and hence 'tame' and subdue and therefore trivialise the 'other' that it cannot control (Bhabha 1994, 18-36). The common Nepali saying, 'gossiping women even fail to notice the slipping off of their petticoats,' not only trivialises women and their culture of orality and hearsay, but also betrays the anxiety of the patriarchy that is excluded from the exclusive female space of *pādherā*. Besides, *pādherā* is not a homogeneous space: the *pādherā* of the *māita ghar* — the subject of the speaker's fantasy — is different from the *pādherā* of the *ghar*, a point to which I shall return later.

The sub-text of the song here can be retrieved by paying close attention to the rhythmic repetition of *hamkyāilo*. The fantasy of gastronomical indulgence – 'salla salla *khāmlā*' – a phrase that defies any attempt at translation without violence to the original – bears the idea of the food that flows endlessly, easily and merrily. In the Nepali rural agrarian context, food becomes fluid or flowing only when the diet main staple, rice is taken with curries, *dāl*, milk, butter, curd, and meat. Such a combination gives rice the fluidity fantasised by the speaker. Needless to say, such excess and indulgence is a pointer to prosperity. For the speaker in the song, *māita* and *ghar* are the two poles of her emotional geography. The mere possibility of visiting the *māita* on *Tij* seems to liberate or rescue the speaker from the 'wasteland' of the *ghar*, where she has entirely 'wasted' her life.

Such a binary is repeatedly reinforced in many *Tij* songs. Another song dramatises the binary through a conversation between the woman and her in-laws:

- Wife: Elder brother has come to fetch me home
 For the yearly festival of *Tij*
 Allow me to visit my *māita*, my *swāmi rājai*.¹⁵
- Husband: I know nothing about that matter
 Plead with your mother-in-law rather
- Wife: My father must be unknotting a bundle of clothes now
 How ill-fated am I! I feel dead here.

15 *Swāmi rājai* means my lord, my beloved.

- Sāsu*: Sasurā has been clothing you, I have been feeding you
Do not cry daughter-in-law, thinking of your *māita*
Wife: The soothing sleep on a bed and the luxury of a brass pan
How can the *ghar* ever become the *māita*!¹⁶
 (Sharma and Luitel 2006, 120)

Here the mother-in-law, or *sāsu*, asserts that since the father-in-law and herself have been clothing and feeding the daughter-in-law, the latter should have no reason to cry and long for the *māita*. For the mother-in-law, who herself has been a daughter-in-law at one point in her life, to be a *buhāri*¹⁷ means to exist, survive. For the *buhāri*, the *ghar* would always remain a *ghar* for it cannot ensure her the affection and the special privileges like ‘sleeping on a *khaṭiyā*¹⁸ and washing in a brass pan.’ More than physical objects or spaces, these are the markers of power and hierarchy, and the journey from the floor in the in-laws’s home to the *khaṭiyā* is not only a journey in space but also in time. In order to enjoy such privileges, the bride herself would have to become a mother-in-law which implies a long temporal journey.

In an article in *Sunchari Samachar* on September 15, 2005, the noted Nepali folklorist D. B. Sing archives a song that clearly shows the opposition between the *māita* and the *ghar*.

- On reaching *ghar*, I met *sasurā*¹⁹
So unlike my *bābā*,²⁰ O siri Bhagawān!²¹
On reaching *ghar*, I met *sāsu*
So unlike my *āmā*, O siri Bhagawān!
On reaching *ghar*, I met the elder brother-in-law
So unlike my brother, O siri Bhagawān!
On reaching *ghar*, I met the elder sister-in-law
So unlike my *bhāujū*,²² O siri Bhagawān!²³

In the signifying system of kinship, a woman’s biological *bābā* and *āmā* are

16 My translation.

17 Daughter-in-law.

18 Bed.

19 Father-in-law.

20 Father.

21 O siri Bhagawan literally means ‘O my God’. Here it is an exclamation of anguish and surprise, shock and rude awakening.

22 Wife of elder brother.

23 My translation.

replaced and substituted by *sasurā* and *sāsu* as the ‘new’ parents. Since this semantic relocation is not necessarily accompanied by emotional re-alignment, such grafting must necessarily appear as resulting in a mockery of the original. The following striking lyric visualises a scenario where the poet persona is injured in an accident. When both father and father-in-law find the body of the injured woman, their reactions are in stark contrast to each other:

I did not embroider in the *sirphūl*²⁴ of my head,
 After falling from the bridge, I was not instantly dead,
 Bāba²⁵ and *sasurā*²⁶ went out in my search,
 And found me lying on a bed of stones,
 Bābā cried, this is my daughter,
 Sasurā said, those are my ornaments,
 As *bābā* started to lament frantically
 Sasurā started to take off the jewellery.²⁷
 (Parajuli 2007, 181)

The father’s selfless love for the daughter is pitted against the inhuman greed of the *sasurā*. The vilification of the *ghar* informs a sizable corpus of the *Tīj* songs, wherein the *ghar* becomes the abode of sinners – the *pāpighar*. Thus, the daughter is described as returning to her parental home, vowing never to return. The comforting food of the parental home is preferred in contrast to the bitter gourd – symbolising bitter experiences – dished out at the in-laws’ home:

Āmā, prepare the curry of *ghiraūlā*,²⁸
 That bitter gourd, I shall not have.
 Force me not so much, *āmā*
 Never shall I go back to that *pāpighar*²⁹
 Didi, prepare the curry of *chichinni*³⁰
 That bitter gourd I shall not have
 Force me not so much, *didī*

24 A golden ornament designed in the shape of a flower that is worn on the head.

25 Father.

26 Father-in-law.

27 My translation.

28 Gourd.

29 Her husband’s house is referred to as *pāpi* or sinful/sinister.

30 A kind of vegetable.

Never shall I go back to that *pāpighar*.
Bhāuju,³¹ prepare the curry of barwar³²
 That bitter gourd I shall not have.
 Force me not so much *bhāuju*
 Never shall I go back to that *pāpighar*.³³
 (Acharya 2005, 233)

The speaker probably uses the metaphysically loaded word *pāpi* more in a secular sense than a sacred one. Through this word, the woman is trying to signify the cruelty and exploitation that she had to undergo in the *ghar*. Why does, then, the speaker use the word *pāpi* with a strong otherworldly resonance? Though the dichotomy between sacred and secular is a fairly recent one in Nepal, it is equally true that Parbatiya women, until very recently, were not considered full legal subjects. Hence, any offense against them has no corresponding classificatory word and must be couched in the linguistic framework of metaphysics. In the absence of any secular or legal protection, women had to rely upon the ‘moral uprightness’ of the people around her. The parting words of the bride’s father at the end of a traditional marriage ceremony — ‘Look after her and the merit (*puṇya*) is yours; kill her and the *pāp* is yours’ — underlines the fact that women were denied legal subjecthood.

The following song is probably one of the most poignant descriptions of the displacement that comes about in a woman’s life when she is forced to shift from her parents’ home to a hostile environment after marriage. This relatively more contemporary *Tij* with overt political overtones and self-reflexivity unravels some of the crucial constituent features of a *pāpighar*. The song describes the transition in the singer’s life as ‘Nepali *ćeli*’s lot’:

Lend me your ears *didī-bahini*³⁴
 Nepali *ćeli*’s³⁵ lot, here I bemoan.
 For ten long months, you carried me
 In your womb, o *āmā*.
 O *bābā*, you fulfilled our wish for education.

31 Elder brother’s wife.

32 A kind of vegetable.

33 My translation.

34 *Didi-bahini* means sisters in the Nepali kinship system. However, instead of referring to the kinship system there is invocation of collective sisterhood for ‘feminist’ protest in the present context.

35 Daughter or sister addressed indulgently and reverentially.

You got us educated and made us your friends,
But today, you are marrying me away.

After describing a journey by palanquin to the *ghar*, the song goes on to describe the horror of ill-treatment at the hands of her in-laws. Metaphors of captivity and claustrophobia inside the wedding palanquin create a sub-text of premonition and foreboding. The mere thought of *ghar* fills the speaker with anxiety:

After threshing paddy in the morn,
I went to rāniban³⁶ to cut grass.
Under the load of grass and hailstorm and rain,
I sat in the cauterize and wept.
Morning had slipped into noon,
As I returned from the chore.
The gagretā³⁷ reveals a gāgri³⁸ toppled over.

Rage-darkened sasurā black in hue.
A big gāgri took I to fetch water again.
As I returned with a gāgri full of water,
How must I have felt to see a livid sāsū!
Furious, sāsū left for the field.
In place of rice, alas, there was maize on my plate.

The father-in-law's silence is a classic example of how patriarchy can perpetrate violence by not using physical violence. The sasurā is silent; he does not even gaze at the speaker. He is active in his passivity. The rage scripted over his body is the language and code of patriarchy. The harried bride picks up the toppled gāgri and runs to the pādherā to fetch water and meets an equally livid sāsū on her return.

I had dwelt earlier upon the pādherā as a heterogeneous space: this song refers to the pādherā of the *ghar* as opposed to the pādherā of *māita*. Anger punctuates her departure as well as her return. Here, the sāsū's anger merits some scrutiny. She participates in the dominant codes of patriarchy and derives power from it. It is only through such collusion that she can exercise power and authority. Patriarchy, evidenced by the song, rules by turning women against women. More than the 'rage-darkened' sasurā, it

36 Dense forest.

37 Space made for keeping utensils in which water is stored.

38 A round bottomed, narrow necked metal vessel for fetching and storing water.

is the 'livid' *sāsu* that troubles the speaker. Her need for female sympathy causes her to exclaim:

How would *sāsu* have felt if I were her daughter!
 How long shall I endure such pain and fear?
 Never may I laugh in this *pāpighar*.³⁹

(Acharya 2005, 277)

The bland maize meal given to her is the culmination of the series of '*pāps*' or sins that characterise her in-laws' behaviour at the *ghar*. With regard to *Parbatiya* food and its politics, what needs to be emphasised here is the hierarchy of foods. Rice, considered to be the staple diet by Nepalis, occupies the highest status. Eating rice twice a day and having sufficient rice grain is taken to be the mark of prosperity. One has not eaten unless one has eaten rice (Cameron 2005, 64-65). In such a gastronomical hierarchy, *dhīḍo*, a boiled meal prepared out of maize, millet, wheat and barley corn occupies the lowest place and is taken to be the marker of poverty and destitution. However, a meal of *dhīḍo* sometimes signifies more than destitution when dealt out in non-subaltern homes; it is not free from power politics. Mothers-in-law may force their daughters-in law to eat *dhīḍo* in order to put the latter in their place. It could thus be used, as in the present song, as an instrument of punishment.

The address to the listener of the song, *didi-bahini*, 'sisters both older and younger', raises some interesting issues. The songs were originally transmitted orally, and hence it was difficult to pinpoint the authorship of the songs. Unlike Anglo-Saxon oral poetry, or other oral traditions, the singer did not leave a personal signature within the songs. However, this lack of an author meant that in the process of transmission other singers who took up the song could add their own special touches or personalise the songs to the context of the particular female audience hearing them. The absence of a sympathetic woman in the in-laws' home is mentioned in the song, but a larger community of women is also invoked to whom the complaint is addressed. This address to the larger community of women is also subtly didactic in purpose, reminding women of the need for solidarity; a solidarity that patriarchy breaks by pitting the female in-laws of the *ghar* against the new bride.

The oral nature of the origin and transmission of the lyrics also opens up the performative potential of the songs. Many of the songs are in the

39 My translation.

form of conversations or dialogues, some merely addressing the audience plaintively, but others that depict dialogues between women and their many in-laws, or, as in the case of the following song, between the aggrieved woman and her confidante Kamalā. This is a remarkable song composed in more contemporary idiom, exemplified by the reference to the ‘terry-cotton blouse’:

How beautiful is your terry-cotton blouse, Kamalā!
 Your singing will cheer all, Kamalā!
 ‘Why are you glum?
 New is the straw-mat and blanket and new is the pillow!’
 The heirs are my father’s sons, Kamalā, I am an outsider.
 Adjust the rope, Kamalā, when you climb a hill with a heavy load
 Away flies my heart from this *pāpighar*! O return my *sindūr*!
 What bird swoops down, Kamalā, quivering its tail?
 With my *māiti* beyond nine hills, dazed, I cry all day.
 A little kid is gamboling on the field
 Gloomy are my days, Kamalā, as my *māita* is far this *Tīj*...
 My ring of pure gold, Kamalā, is topped with a coin
 What sin drove me away, Kamalā, from my birthplace!
 Tied am I like a cow, Kamalā, to this mirthless *pāpighar*.⁴⁰

(Acharya 2005, 233)

The speaker seeks succour from an easy companionship with Kamalā, to whom she unburdens her heart. While the lamentation at not being able to return to the parental home on the festive occasion forms the recognisable theme of the poem, there are other features of the lyric that deserve comment. When the confidante seeks to console the speaker, she mentions that she is an ‘outsider’ in her parental home, simply because as a daughter her right of inheritance is disregarded. Note the animal imagery in the song: while the image of the cow reminds her of her own status in the *ghar*, the sight of a kid leaping about or even a bird swooping down reminds her of her own girlhood when she was relatively unrestrained and free. Indeed, she goes so far as to wish to undo her marriage, by asking for the vermilion to be returned.

A striking feature of this song is the interlacing of these complaints with references to more quotidian things; conversations about blouses, adjusting basket ropes, jewellery and even new bed-linen. Is this interlacing to be

40 My translation.

read as a realistic touch that approximates the free-wheeling conversation of women in everyday life, or even a signifier of the deliberate masking of bitter complaint by 'safe' table-talk when in-laws are around or eavesdropping? It is possible to read even the references to purely material things such as jewellery as symbolic representations of what the speaker is trying to convey, confidentially, to her friend. Material objects do take on deep affective value in many of these songs, for instance in the following lyric where the *māita* is represented by an umbrella and a hairpiece:

The best gold makes a beautiful hairpiece,
 As a night is made lovely by the stars and moon...
 The hairpiece gifted by my father,
 And the umbrella by my mother.
 I could not go to my *māita* even on *Tij*,
 And have spent the night weeping.
 In that beautiful dusk,
 My mother cries thinking of me.
 I could not go to my *māita* on *Tij*,
 My father's heart is shrouded in darkness.⁴¹

Problematizing the *Māita*: A New Kind of Realism

The tendency to idealise the *māita* as the place of pure and unalloyed bliss not only informs the folk songs we have examined, but also interpretations by folklorists starting from Thapa to Parajuli (Thapa 1959, 235-36; Parajuli 2007, 176-77). The invocation of the *māita* as a space of bliss permeates the folk as well as the popular imagination. Drawing upon Foucault, I wish to map an alternative archaeology of the *māita* as a space of contradictions, ruptures, and breaks: the 'other' side of the *māita* seldom 'canonised' by the dominant patriarchal discourse. Foucault states:

The history of ideas usually credits the discourse that it analyzes with coherence. If it happens to notice an irregularity in the use of words, several incompatible propositions, a set of meanings that do not adjust to one another, concepts that cannot be systematized together, then it regards it as its duty to find, at a deeper level, a principle of cohesion that organizes the discourse and restores to it its hidden unity. This law of coherence is heuristic rule, a procedural obligation, almost a moral

41 Performed by Harikala Wagle, when she was in private conversation with the author, Kathmandu, August 2010. My translation.

constraint of research: not to multiply contradictions uselessly; not to be taken in by small differences, not to give too much weight to changes, disavowals, returns to the past and polemics; not to suppose that men's discourse is perpetually undermined from within by the contradictions of their desire, the influences that they have been subjected to, or the conditions in which they live; but to admit that if they speak, and if they speak among themselves, it is rather to overcome these contradictions and to find the point from which they will be able to be mastered. (Foucault 1989, 168)

The univocal and monolithic perpetuation of an idealised *māita* fails to capture women's complex and highly nuanced conceptualisation of the parental home. The mythology of the *māita* emphasises how it imparts rootedness, stability, security, and identity to women. Such a view essentialises the *céli-māiti* bond as unchanging and inviolable and therefore fails to map alternative experiences of the *māita*. The *māita* as an emotional space can also be tenuous and unstable.

In the bonds that a *céli* shares with her relatives in the *māiti*, her bond with the parents occupies the central position and is expected to be the most enduring. *Bābā* and *āmā* become synonymous with the *māita* as exemplified by Nepali proverbs: 'Bābā-āmā make a complete *māita*, *dāju-bhāi* a half; but the nephew none' (Singh 2005, 15). The following *Tij* song also underlines the tendency to use the *māita* and *āmā-bābā* interchangeably:

Sirphul is to be worn on the head
On the feet the *bīj*⁴²
O why for an orphan girl
Has come the festival of *Tij*!

All go to *māita* when comes the *Tij*
There in *Muglān*⁴³ is my *māita*
I go to work even on such a festive day
Alas! On the threshold fall my tears!⁴⁴

(Parajuli 2007, 180)

Any attempt at understanding the institution of the *māita*, without

42 An accessory for the feet.

43 *Muglān* in the classical folk corpus refers to India.

44 My translation.

discussing the cultural tendency to sacralise the *céli*, daughters and sisters. is bound to be incomplete. The simultaneous existence of what Bennett calls the 'filiafocal model' in which daughters and sisters are sacralised along with the patrifocal one in which the in-marrying women occupy the lowest status renders Nepali sexual politics interesting. Bennett locates in filiafocality a counter-discursive and counter-hegemonic tendency, the tendency to reverse and therefore balance the dominant patrifocal model (Bennett 1983, 124-213). However, Bennett does not ask one significant question: how does the politics of sacralisation affect daughters and sisters? Is the sacred deference and the periodic dakshinā or donations and worship that women receive at *māita* as *céli* really empowering? Is the symbolic capital that daughters and sisters receive as effective as the 'real' capital inherited by the brothers and sons? In the final analysis, sacralisation empowers women symbolically and ritually while it disempowers them 'actually' and 'really.' However, such ritual and symbolic capital functions ambivalently for women. The politics of sacralisation can also act as a weapon for regulating female sexuality; being invested with sacred and ritual capital, women cannot help but 'interiorise' the patriarchal gaze that mythologises their sexual purity and austerity and continues to revere them so long as they enact the patriarchal ideals of purity and pativratādharmā.⁴⁵

The idealisation of the parental home is challenged in more unusual songs where one can clearly discern powerful undercurrents of anxiety and tensions that mark women's relationship with their *bābā* and *āmā*. The female persona singing the song actually places curses upon her parents and relatives for their perceived neglect of her. Only the brother escapes being cursed because he acknowledges her presence:

I had met *bābā* on that mount, he refused to look at me
 May *bābā* never go without a leaky vessel and a hatuwā⁴⁶ buffalo.
 When I met *āmā* on that mount, she refused to look at me,
 May *āmā* never go without a leaky pot and drenched firewood.
 I had met my *dāju* on that mount, he refused to look at me,
 May he always aimlessly wander and cry in strange lands.
 I had met my *bhāi* on that mount, he turned and looked at me,
 May he be always blessed with shining shoes and an umbrella in his
 hand!⁴⁷

(Thapa 1959, 236-37)

45 The patriarchal ideology that requires its women to treat their husband as god.

46 A cow or buffalo that refuses to be milked except by special individuals.

47 My translation.

Regimented epistemology, in the name of coherence and cohesion, tries to tame and subdue alternative truths as contradictions, aberrations, or exceptions. The song dramatises how antipathy and hatred generate an alternative paradigm of the bond with the parental home. In a culture where women are deified by the *māiti* as sacred beings, worthy of worship and spiritual deference, the *céli*'s curse can be a spiritual nightmare for the *māiti*, for the word 'curse' does not merely denote, in the Hindu context, the 'secular' act of hurling abuse. It is a metaphysically loaded act which takes place only when actors experience suffering and wish to inflict a great injury.

Women's experience of the fragility and instability of the *māita* informs many *Tīj* songs. The repeated references to the cold, indifferent *māiti*, and especially uncaring and competitive *māiti* women, highlights the fractures that beset the emotional geography of the *māita*:

I have been living on leaves and dressing in bark,
 O bird! Hide my shame and tell them that I am happy.
 If my *bābā* were to know, he would send gifts instantly,
 If my *āmā* were to know, she too would send many gifts,
 If my *bhāuju* were to know, she would celebrate my misery.
 ...If my *buhāri* were to know, she would celebrate my misery.
 ...If my *bhāi* were to know, he would send me some money,
 If my *dāju* were to know, he would send me some clothes,
 If my *bhadā*⁴⁸ were to know, he would get me delicacies,
 If my *kāki*⁴⁹ were to know, she would send me some grains,
 If my *māiju*⁵⁰ were to know, she would shed tears,
 If my *bahini*⁵¹ were to know, she would start clapping,
 If my *didi* were to know, serves you right, would she say.⁵²

(R. D. and L. L. 1965, 86-87)

This song shows the *māita* as a complex space of compassion and conflict, co-operation and contest. However, the stereotype of jealous women, *buhāri*, *bahini* and *didi*, needs further investigation. All the male members of the family in the song are presented as caring and affectionate. Some of the women, some very close such as *bahini* and *didi*, are presented as

48 Son of a woman's brother.

49 Wife of father's younger brother.

50 Maternal aunt.

51 Younger sister.

52 My translation.

competitive or unfeeling. The song seems to suggest that division amongst women is often a cause for women's suffering. These *Tīj* songs, instead of celebrating women's rootedness in the *māita*, enact an acute sense of rootlessness, disorientation, and crisis. They bemoan a sense of the gradual loosening of the tie constantly threatened and needing anxious enactments in songs, rituals, events, and festivals. The strong control that the parental homes seeks to exert over the 'purity' of the daughter means that the *māita* can heartlessly reject its own if it feels that the 'purity' or chastity of the daughter has been sullied. This is seen in the song where the loss of chastity is symbolised by an embroidered handkerchief that has been stained and which even a washerman will not clean. Needless to say, in this 'conversation song,' the daughter is disowned by the father of the house:

On this smothering pitch dark rainy night,
O my ever-kind *bābā*, open your door to me.
'Have you run away or have you disgraced us?
This door shall not open for you!'⁵³

(Acharya 2005, 229)

This little kusume rumāl,⁵⁴ the washerman will not wash,
O *nāni*,⁵⁵ the *māitighar* is not for us, celi.⁵⁶

(Sharma and Luitel 2006, 91)

Given the centrality of the economy in the construction of identity, it is perhaps important to recover women's critique of the essentially feudal *māita* as the originary place of socio-economic discrimination. We have to retrieve the nuances of the classical *Tīj* songs and read them against the grain using Derridean methodology in order to recover women's economic critiques. A close reading of classical *Tīj* songs shows how economic discrimination is scripted in the unconscious of the language itself. Women frequently speak of jewellery and losing valuables, but it is quite clear that these are not their own property but in the control of either their parents or in-laws. A close reading of the following 'classical' or old *Tīj* songs shows how economic discrimination is scripted in the unconscious of the language itself:

53 My translation.

54 Small pretty handkerchief.

55 *Nāni* is the term used for addressing small children or people who are young. However, in this song, women use it to address each other, affectionately and informally.

56 My translation.

After purifying *bāba*'s āgan⁵⁷
 We'll lock ourselves in and play
 The *céli* who has locked herself in
 Her head is without a *sirphūl*
 I will wear a *sirphūl* if luck favours me
 Would I be allowed to go on playing?

(Thapa 1959, 237-38)

In my *bābā*'s garden, there is a big-leaved *rāyo*⁵⁸
 I lost my *sirphūl* when I went to pluck it.⁵⁹

(Thapa 1959, 241)

For the annual festivities of the *Tīj*
Bābā has come to take me home
 The nasty *sāsu* has hidden my *sirphūl*
 Get up you *sirphūl*! And open the door,
 Get up you *sirphūl*! And light up the fire,
 Get up you *sirphūl*! And clean the home,
 Get up you *sirphūl*! And sweep the floor
 Get up you *sirphūl*! And bring pure water.
 In my *bābā*'s garden, there is a big-leaved *rāyo*
 I lost my *mundri*⁶⁰ when I went to pluck it
 The nasty *sāsu* has hidden my *mundri*.
 Get up you *mundri*! And open the door,
 Get up you *mundri*! And light up the fire,
 Get up you *mundri*! And bring water,
 For the annual festivities of the *Tīj*
 My *bābā* has come to take me *māita*,
 The nasty *sāsu* sent me *ghar* crying!⁶¹

(Thapa 1959, 241)

What is significant in these songs is the 'economic' gendering of the unconscious of the language. In the discourse of the economy, neither the *māita* nor the *ghar* belongs to women. Both of these spaces are no-woman's land. In the first song, the garden belongs to her father. What merits

57 Father's courtyard.

58 A leafy vegetable with large leaves.

59 My translation.

60 An ornament worn by women on the nose.

61 My translation.

scrutiny here is that the speakers are not even talking about property and ownership per se. The first speaker is planning to ritually purify *bābā*'s *āgan* and enjoy for a while; the second is referring to the loss of her *sirphul* when she had gone to pluck *rāyo* 'in my *bābā*'s garden'. This is a classic example of the unintended yet insidious eruption of the unconscious of the language to signify a cultural order where women naturally belong nowhere and own nothing.

The narrative of women begging for dowry or *dāijo* from the *māita* is found in many classical *Tij* songs. Dowry would guarantee a better 'reception' for the new bride at the in-laws' home:

Nine pairs of pigeons on my *bābā*'s rooftop,
Give me a pair as dowry my *bābā*...
'Pigeons do not make dowry my *celi*,
Take a cow as dowry instead but not pigeons,'
Who will tend the cows and who will till the fields?
'Take a cowherd for the cow.
But not the pigeons for you.'⁶²

(Parajuli 2007, 326-27)

Another song that documents the practice of begging or bargaining for dowry pits female siblings against each other as they compete to get a portion of the family's property or wealth:

Beautiful silken *coli*⁶³ and *phariyā*⁶⁴ and a train of *bhariyā*⁶⁵ for the
eldest sister,
But where are they for me?
O do not cry! We shall send *bhariyā* for you,
Sirphul on the head and rings for your ears shall we give you.⁶⁶

(Parajuli 2007, 319)

Whether the *dāijo* constitutes women's inheritance or *stridhan*⁶⁷ and the economic merit of this sort of 'endowment' can be endlessly debated. What cannot be ignored here is that these songs represent women as culturally

⁶² My translation.

⁶³ Blouse.

⁶⁴ A sari draped in typical Nepali fashion.

⁶⁵ Porters.

⁶⁶ My translation.

⁶⁷ Property over which women have exclusive right.

sanctioned beggars. The politics of casting women as culturally sanctioned 'natural' beggars denies the *céli* any 'claim' on the *māiti* property. A woman's moral and cultural 'right' to beg contrast sharply with the son's legal and natural right to claim and possess the inheritance. The *māiti* exercises the power over *céli* by reserving the power of frustrating or fulfilling the *céli*'s wish. The act of giving also establishes a moral hierarchy. In Parbatiya Nepali culture that sacralises *dān*⁶⁸ as spiritually meritorious (Cameron 2005, 135-40; Chakravarti 2005, 50-51), the donor earns the capital of prestige in society by giving the *celi* what she should have got anyway as a biological heir. The much idealised fabric of the *māita* has many holes and gaps.

More contemporary songs articulate the *céli*'s recognition that economic discrimination is the fundamental cause of her marginalisation. In this dramatisation of a conversation between a girl and her parents, the girl is clearly shown to provide unpaid labour to the parental home until the time she is married off, without getting a share of the property:

- Daughter: I rose in the morning to pick flowers,
 But did not pick them because they were covered with dew,
 Parents just keep the daughters to do work at home,
 But not even a small piece of courtyard is given to them.
- Parents: The small piece of courtyard is needed to dry the paddy,
 Go daughter to your husband's house to get your property.
- Daughter: We have to go empty-handed to our husband's home,
 The brothers fence in their property.
 My brothers' many clothes rot away in a box,
 But when they have to give us a single cloth, tears come to
 their eyes.

(Skinner, Holland, and Adhikari 1994, 268)

Undercurrents of rebellion mark this song. Bennett points out the fact that

68 *Dān* is a Nepali word difficult to translate. It is a gift which has ritual and spiritual connotation. *Dan* is more than donation. It earns the giver religious merit. The glorification of *dān* in the Parbatiya Nepali community has its ideological and material roots in the ideology and praxis of the caste system. As people were divided into four castes, Bahun, Chhetri, Vaiśya, and Śūdra, each was enjoined to follow a caste specific-occupation. As the creators of the system, Bahun reserved for themselves the occupation of teaching and worshipping. Bahun as a category needed to survive economically and *dān* became an essential way of ensuring the means of survival. Hence the Purānas, Smṛtis and Dharmaśāstras deal exhaustively with the merit of giving *dān* to the Bahun. The classical Hindu caste system does not have exact replication in the Nepali system. The allusion here is not for generalisation but for underlining broad patterns of continuities.

before marriage the 'sacred' daughters and sisters are made to do more work at *māita* than their brothers. Sisters and daughters are not given anything when the family property is partitioned amongst the sons. *Tīj* songs, also called *Sangini* in the eastern part of Nepal, characteristically defined by Nepali folklorists as a women's genre marked by lamentations and complaints, has in this song, acquired a confrontationalist vocabulary, thereby reorienting the commonly perceived notion that the 'classical' *Tīj* songs are not merely the documentation of lamentation and helpless resignation but also of polemics and protest. This song indicates an awareness of the economic exploitation of the woman-as-domestic labour figure. Women's liminality resulting from such an imbalance in the domestic economy is hinted at in a song that I have also referred to earlier as: 'How beautiful is your terry-cotton blouse, *Kamalā!*' An emotional and analytical distancing of the speaker from her 'father's sons' is needed, perhaps, to critique the gendering of economy and her erasure from the spatial and emotional geography of the (non)home. The *māita* acts as a transit point for these women. It is not surprising then when Bennett reports the popular adage amongst the upper-caste *Parbatiya* Nepali that 'women belong to the species that goes to repair the wall of others'⁶⁹ (Bennett 1983, 166). Sandwiched between multiple (non)homes and yet perpetually homeless, the (non)home *māita* is better than the 'mirthless *pāpighar*' simply because it is the better of two unpleasant options; it is more preferable to be a 'sacred outsider' in her parental home than a dangerous one at the in-laws'.⁷⁰ The unfairness of this choice is made clear in the song about a girl wanting to become a boy on the day of her marriage:

A ten-paise *sindūr*⁷¹ now takes over my life.

After repaying money for your ten-paise *sindūr*,

69 According to Lynn Bennett, '*Āimāiko jāṭ arkāko gharko bhittā ṭālne jāṭ ho,*' which means that women belong to the species that goes to repair the wall of others, is widely in circulation in Nepali society. Though it is not exactly a proverb, it has a proverbial status. Senior female members of the family use this saying as much as the male members showing how women have internalised the patrilocality as an inevitable existential destiny.

70 I use the phrase 'a sacred outsider' to problematise Bennett's endorsement of what she calls the filiafocal model of kinship organisation, as an alternative to the dominant patrifocal one. See Bennett, *Dangerous Wives and Sacred Sister*, 124-318. While it cannot be denied that daughters and sisters are revered as sacred beings in the 'filiafocal' model, the politics of sacralisation does not come without other pitfalls and patriarchal regimentation. Ritually sacralised and deified, she continues to remain a sacred outsider at *māita* as she remains a dangerous one at *ghar*.

71 Vermillion that costs a meagre amount.

... I'd rather stay with *bābā*.
 ...The life-giving *bābā-āmā* I shall look after.
 Tell me which deity to placate to become a son.
 What offerings are needed to please that deity?
 Leaving her *janmaghar*⁷² a daughter must go,
 I would rather be a son by dying tomorrow.
 Transplant the flower that has blossomed near the door,
 Strangle your love for this ill-fated daughter.⁷³

(Acharya 2005, 232)

For Lacan, desire is the desire for the other and it is fundamentally mimetic. The speaker's desire to 'be a son by dying tomorrow' treats the 'phallus' as 'the transcendental signified'. The peculiarity of the song, however, is its ambivalence. The speaker wants to 'be a son by dying tomorrow' so that she can look after her 'life-giving *bābā-āmā*.' It is only by becoming a son that she can perform the duty towards her parents that she wishes to perform as a devoted daughter. She fails to realise that her participation as a son in the patriarchal system would further reproduce the patriarchal order that she wants to escape. The strength of the song lies in laying open the limitation of her vision. The speaker maps out an alternative within the medium of the dominant; her moments of subversiveness turn out to be the moments of conformity.

In my analysis, the *māita* emerges as a complex place. It functions as an emotional refuge as well as a financial one during women's moments of distress. However, the speakers, or these singers, are also critically aware of the *māita*'s other functions. It functions as the most fundamental agent of patriarchy, a space that produces and reproduces patriarchal values, norms and puts women as daughters through the route of patriarchal socialisation and bestows them with patriarchal subjectivities. In the old and the contemporary folk songs, women do articulate their ambivalent bond with the *māita*, perhaps less explicitly so in the older songs; this is a bond marked by tenuousness, ruptures, and anxiety. These songs vocalise women's critique of the *māita* as the most significant hub of patriarchal values and ideology.

Why, then, does the dominant epistemology controlled by the upper-caste male Nepali folklorists privilege only the glorified image of the *māita*? Why is women's critique of the *māita* as a phallogocentric space not allowed any

72 House where one was born.

73 My translation.

discursive space and respectability? The discursive erasure of women's critique of the *māita* has two major implications. Firstly, by erasing women's critique of an institution that functions ambivalently for them, dominant folklore research denies women the role of the producers of a critical episteme. The production of 'critical' epistemology is seen to be the domain of patriarchal rationality by most scholars, as evidenced by the phrasing and wording of their analyses. Secondly, the erasure of women's critique helps mythologise the *māita* as the idyllic 'pastoral' for women, invalidating women's depiction of the *māita* as the originary locus of patriarchal oppression. In rural *Tīj* songs, we have seen the idealised invocation of the *māita* as well as the contestation of such idealisation in Nepali women's alternative conceptualisation of *māita* as an originary space of patriarchal spatial violence. The epistemology of *māita* experiences a marked shift as we move from women's pugnacious polemics in the rural *Tīj* to the urban carnivalesque de-crowning of the originary phallogentric underpinnings of *māita*.

Feminist to Female: The Carnival Counter-Discourse

Democracy did to the rural *Tīj* what globalisation would do to the urban *Tīj*: it affected a paradigm shift in the production of *Tīj*. With the introduction of liberal Western democracy, the epistemic trajectory of *Tīj* experienced a radical rupture. The articulation of the domestic power politics was largely replaced by the articulation and documentation of the state power politics and the understanding of their mutual embeddedness. The globalisation of the polity and culture as the gradual culmination of democracy can be seen as the second turning point in the production and consumption of *Tīj*. Although the Nepali democracy was established in 1990, the impact of globalisation on *Tīj* took almost a decade to be seen. The metropolitan versions of *Tīj* can be roughly traced back to the first decade of the twenty-first century.⁷⁴

The narrative of the 'urbanisation' of *Tīj* falls within the realm of contemporary cultural historiography. Theorising the historicity of the present does not come without pitfalls and (mis)adventures. In relation to the urban *Tīj*, Nepali as well as international academics seem to have preferred silence, and the reasons for this are quite clear. Firstly, in the absence of the indigenous or other academic theorising of the urban *Tīj*, the researcher must use the popular paraliterary and oral sources for

74 Fixing a definitive date to describe a social phenomenon is always problematic; it especially becomes more dangerous and questionable if we are dealing with contemporary history. However, in the institutionalised production of knowledge, periodisation as a necessary evil continues to remain indispensable.

the construction of a discourse about urban *Tīj*. This section of the paper endeavours to scrutinise the urbanisation of *Tīj* using such diverse sources; the journalistic archive on *Tīj*, interviews with the participants, research journals, and actual *Tīj* songs produced for several years, collected from the location of this researcher's inside/outside position within the *Tīj*-celebrating Nepali community.

In the urban context, the centrality of the *Tīj* lyrics, which we observed in the rural context shifts to a kind of 'total *Tīj*' (to adapt a term from theatre), a totality of performative gestures and events. The songs and the praxis of rural *Tīj* were almost metonymic, thematically interchangeable; they would mirror each other in the agrarian-patriarchal context. However, in the city, where there is a deeper penetration of neo-colonial and globalising forces, the superstructure of *Tīj* becomes part of the market economy, a change that transforms the cultural politics of *Tīj* forever. The commodifying of *Tīj* by the market economy makes it a part of the global consumer culture. In the explosion of consumerism, urban *Tīj* in praxis moves further away from the archetypal rural songs we have examined thus far. In the urban context, the logic of the market makes the *Tīj* songs just another commodity in an endless chain of cultural commodities. This shift towards the performative does not mean a corresponding diminution in the importance of the lyrics themselves. In the epistemic shift from *Tīj* songs to *Tīj* as performance, the songs continue to occupy a dominant position, if not the central one, as they did in a different epistemological climate.

Democracy and globalisation enacted a complex transformation of *Tīj*. *Tīj* became a pregnant site for ideological warfare; the right-wing Hindu ideology has appropriated *Tīj* for consolidating a religious and sectarian imagination of the nation, and the left has attempted to appropriate *Tīj* for feminist emancipatory politics and agenda. The corporate sector has deployed *Tīj* as a metaphor for global consumerist modernity; a corrupt and self-seeking political class has used the month-long extravaganza of the festival as an 'opiate' for deflecting attention from the constitutional and political crises that has become synonymous with democratic Nepal. The women of the upper and middle classes have used *Tīj* to dramatise their consumerist might and class capital; even sexual minorities have used, albeit sparingly, the site to highlight their marginalisation in the heterosexual hegemony of the nation. The multivocal appropriation has not diminished the importance of *Tīj*; it does not mean a corresponding loss of its feminist political potential, as often argued in the popular discourse by men and women alike: it only underscores the centrality of *Tīj* and the need to readjust our ideological lens to read the transgressive political valency of this powerful cultural

metaphor. Given the malleability of *Tīj* as a site of polysemic pluralities, it would be necessary to go beyond reading *Tīj* through the texts of its songs as we have done in the context of rural Nepal: textuality and praxis together construct the semiotic universe of the urban *Tīj*.

The 'urbanisation' of *Tīj* has affected the shift from the *māita* or *mandir* to the marketplace; the shift has been marked by the stretching of the festival in terms of both space and time. The temporal excess is echoed in the spatial expansion of the festival. In the rural *Tīj*, women's movement pertains to their journey from the *ghar* to the *māita*, mostly accompanied by a male relative. The route is spatially predetermined, from the *māita* to the Shiva *mandir* on *tritiyā*, from *māita* to the river on *pančami*, and finally from *māita* to the *ghar*. In the urban context, a month-long celebration inevitably implies a spatial reconfiguration, a month-long celebration that spreads out over larger areas, including non-traditional sites such as hotels, markets, and city squares. Women's limited *māita*-centric spatiality in rural *Tīj* is replaced by a staggering range of sites. As Baduwal and Anmol noted in a *Kantipur* article on August the 30th, 2011:

...numerous *Tīj* parties in the five star hotels and party palaces, often accompanied by parties in friends' and relatives' homes, the celebrations organised by the numerous 'Mothers' Groups', neighbourhood 'Residents' Associations', clubs, schools, colleges, hospitals, worker's unions and the media.⁷⁵

Many shopping excursions to specially organised *Tījé* Bazars, shopping malls and markets punctuate the visits to the Shiva temple on *Tīj*. *Māita*, therefore, is no longer the central local of the festival in its urban avatar.

Cannibalisation/Carnivalisation: Urban Adaptations of *Tīj*

The spatial as well as the religious underpinnings undergo a seismic shift as we journey from the originary to the urban; from the 'purity' of the folk to the hybridity of the metropolitan. Firstly, with mass mobility due to the introduction of modern means of transport and communication, space sheds much of its oppressive quality for women. When the context that underpinned the spatial axes of *Tīj*, that is, the vast distance between parental home and the in-law's home, has changed, the urban *Tīj* often expresses these standard tropes almost as epistemic anachronisms and contradictions. With the growing power of democracy, modernity, western rationality, and

75 My translation.

globalisation, the religious aspect of *Tīj* experiences a significant change. Although Hinduism continued to remain the religion of the state in the initial years of democracy, the secularising, modernising, and the de-sacralising impulses built into liberal democracy increasingly undermined the centrality of religion as the governing ideology of modern Nepal.

Tīj has increasingly moved away from patriarchal constructions of both religion and domestic space. However, we need to understand what *Tīj* has moved towards; the market economy and global consumerism. The de-spatialising and de-sacralising tendency of modernity combined with the consumeristic and commodifying logic of globalisation helps us trace the epistemic shift of *Tīj* from the rural to the metropolitan model. A classic example of the global capitalist modernity of the new songs is seen in the idea of the 'disco' *Tīj*. The 'disco' song attempts to use the interplay of opposites; the traditional, feudal-patriarchal voice of *paramparā*, *sanskriti*,⁷⁶ and purity seeks to recover and freeze *Tīj* in its archetypal purity while the 'modern' female voice wishes to 'disco with *Tīj*':

- Woman: A modern *celi* I am,
Tīj will I celebrate my way
 ...Listen sisters, what do you say?
Tīj, with time, has changed
 In the disco shall we dance *Tīj*.
- Man: In a red *sari*, *coli*, and *tilhari*⁷⁷
 Dressed as per custom, others dance
 Of your gaudy dress and bawdiness
 What, my love, will others say?
- Woman: ...I shall not remain in captivity to make others happy
 Let's have a celebration, for it is our tradition.
- Man: Jangling *chamchami*⁷⁸ with anklets and *čura*⁷⁹
 Should you dance, my love
 Forsake the disco, this alien custom leave
 The charm of *Tīj* is ours, my love.
- Woman: Old structures and customs

76 Tradition and culture. Translators often say that the word *sanskriti* cannot be translated. In the present context, more than denoting the entire gamut of culture, the word connotes the realm of culture that, in some way, is related to tradition.

77 A necklace made of very small glass beads strung in numerous loops. The loops are held together by a small ornate gold band. It is worn only by married women.

78 Chiming sound made by anklets.

79 Heavy gold bangles.

- Do certainly change
 Things this age has given,
 I will eat and I will wear.
 ...busy is my life, I earn a wage
 Time I have none
 My mini-skirt is convenient
 In it do I delight.
- Man: Neither do you fast, nor go to *māita*
 To parties do you always run
Dar at home is not prepared
 What you eat I know not
 Drunk do you come back home.
- Woman: As I imagined, so turned out *Tīj*
 Happy am I as I can be
 Meeting friends and cooling flames
 Has coloured my world entirely.⁸⁰

(Komal Oli, 2011)

The disco *Tīj* is a trope of cultural hybridity that emerges in urban Nepali modernity that problematises the nostalgia for the rural/archetypal or 'pastoral' version of the festival. The space of the disco, and the dance form of disco, are used to facilitate a global capitalist as well as modernist feminist metamorphosis of *Tīj* into a subversive *ādhunik* event; a space of hybridity where the venue, clothing, and food rituals are all departures from the traditional and dictated by 'convenience' and new social networks of the salaried woman.

To unpack the urban *Tīj*, we shall first investigate how *Tīj* has transgressed its androcentric roots. Bakhtin's concept of carnival would, to a large extent, help us make sense of the urban unfolding of *Tīj*. The Bakhtinian carnival principally involves the inversion of canonical truth, the celebration of the materiality of the body; the subversive potential of the carnival speech genres, language, and laughter. The carnival is an ambivalent site of 'officially sanctioned' transgression. While using the carnival as an analytical frame for reading the urban *Tīj*, attempts are made to gauge the incompleteness of any such conceptual tool to completely capture a cultural phenomenon of this sort.

The medieval carnival for Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* was a unique time that:

80 My translation.

... offered a completely different, non-official, extra-ecclesiastical and extra-political aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations ... (Bakhtin 1984, 6)

...As opposed to the official feast, one might say that carnival celebrated temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from established order; it marked the temporary suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions... (10)

...Carnival is a minimally ritualised anti-ritual, a festival celebration of the other, the gaps and holes in all the mappings of the world laid out in systematic theologies, legal codes, normative poetics and class hierarchies. (Clark and Holquist 1984, 300)

The urban *Tij* enacts the spatial ‘de-throning’ of the *māita* as the territory of lyrical longing, unmitigated female nostalgia, and utopia. In the rural *Tij*, *māita* is seen as a space of emotional healing, renewal, and rebirth; on the other hand, while there are critiques of the patriarchal set up of the parental home, it is not women’s condemnation but the consecration of the *māita* that is privileged. In the patriarchal meta-discourse, *māita* emerges as a transcendental signified that guarantees women the finality of existential meaning and fulfilment. In such idealised emotional cartography, *Tij* and *māita* become synonymous. The idealisation of the *māita* emerges as an attempt at erasing the violence encoded in patriarchal spatial gender politics. Even when women critique the *māita* as an originary metaphor of patriarchal oppression, it continues to remain the most central space in their emotional geography. Criticism is a signifier of their engagement, not withdrawal and indifference. The centrality of *māita* is reinforced not by the absence of its criticism but by its presence. Refusing to go to the *māita* on *Tij*, therefore, would be inconceivable and blasphemous.

The urban *Tij* enacts a carnivalesque de-bunking of the *māita*’s ‘halo’ in two different ways. Firstly, in the urban *Tij*, there is a growing collective cultural tendency to snap the umbilical cord of *Tij* with the *māita*. Women’s construction of alternative celebratory spaces in party venues, in auditoria, in each other’s houses undermines the site of the *māita* as an indispensable existential signifier. It is difficult to imagine the *māita* without the Law of the Father: going home on *Tij* is going to the home of the Father. In conducting celebrations in auditoria and friends’ homes, women move away from the phallocentricity of the *māita* rendering it less important. The birth of the

māita as a space is predicated upon the symbolic and ritual death of the daughter in marriage. The urban woman's moving away from this place is, thus, the inauguration of new spaces outside the *māita* that are life-affirming and existentially celebratory. The woman's relocation of *Tij* is symbolic of their empowerment. If the *ghar* is conceived as a space of drudgery and tyranny, the *māita* is conceived of as a space of recuperation, renewal, plenitude, fulfilment. The *céli* needed periodic rescue and recuperation at the *māita*. In women's realignment of space in urban locations, women have created new spaces of renewal and recuperation, a rejection of their vulnerability and victimhood. As Sharma notes in an article in *Kantipur* on August the 26th, 2011:

Women's compulsion of going to the *māita* on this festival was also related to the issue of inheritance. In the past, women had no right over the parental inheritance. No matter how affluent a family a woman belonged to, it was commonly perceived that in order to wear a sari or have a sumptuous meal, she had to go to the *māita*. Women were kept in others' control. At present, the law that would give equal right to the son as well as to the daughter over the parental inheritance has already been legislated. Therefore, a daughter need not fall on the feet of her *māiti* to enjoy a feast of dar.⁸¹

The decentring of the *māita* is evidenced in the urban songs that present a counter-narrative of the *māita*. In one song, the woman refuses to go to her parental home when her brother comes to 'fetch' her because there is no mobile phone network in her *māita*, which would prevent her from having telephonic conversations with her husband:

A mobile phone have I bought
After my husband went abroad
A missed call I shall give him
At midnight today...
Yesterday had my brother come
Only to fetch me
At my *māita* the network disappears
I did not go for *Tij*.
Mother might cry thinking of me
Last year I had gone but for a night

81 My translation.

Māiti, I see, cannot be
More intimate than my *swāmi*.

The tension between the rural pastoral where the girl once ran among the hills and could lift heavy loads and urban modernity where festivals 'have lost their charm' is palpable in the 'conversation song':

'Can you recognise me, *didi*?
From your *māiti gaon*⁸², your *bhai* speaks.'
Oh, what news, *kānchā*,
...Why have you called?
'I do not know how fares the city
But in the country comes the *Tīj*
My heart aches thinking of *Tīj*
And remembering my *didi*.'
...Trouble not yourself this year
I have no time: do not come to fetch me.
...*Swāmijiu*⁸³ without me
Cannot move a step
...A three-hour-long journey
How shall I cover on foot?
...One day away from home
Yields losses of lakhs
Festivals to us, *bābu*,
Have lost their charm.

In a startling reversal, the woman now tells her brother over the telephone to bring her parents and come and enjoy the festival with her at her *ghar*. The song underlines the reversal of the classical trope of *Tīj*; in the genre of *Tīj*, there is a sub-genre of songs that deals with women's anguished yearning for a *māita* that they cannot visit because of an intimidating patriarchal spatiality. They cry, wail, and lament when they cannot visit *māita* on *Tīj*. In the urban counter-epistemology of the *māita*, the legacy of anguished lamentation is no longer her inheritance; it is her *māita* that 'aches' for the woman.⁸⁴ The woman turns the androcentric spatial origin

82 Village.

83 Husband.

84 What surprised me during my research on archetypal *Tīj* was not the predominance of songs expressing women's melancholic longing and covert criticism of the *māita*, but the almost total absence of songs expressing the emotions of their *māiti*. In the repertoire

of *Tīj* on its head by inviting her *māiti* for *Tīj* at her home:

So now, *bhānjā*,⁸⁵ disconnect the phone
 Poor are we, therefore faulty...
 ... O why has my daughter
 Become like an outsider?⁸⁶

(Neupane et al n.d.)

In the urban songs, the *māiti* is seen as an uncomfortable space that lacks technology, connectivity, transportation, and cleanliness. More than connecting her with her *maitis*, going to the *māiti* would disconnect her from her husband. The prospect of meeting the *māitis* does not thrill the singer; the idea of leaving her husband behind disturbs her. There is a clear shift in the emotional geography. In the urban counter-spatialisation of *Tīj* the indispensable becomes dispensable, hierarchies become de-familiarised; displaced from the pedestal, they look questionable and unnecessary.

The entry of *Tīj* in the globalisation and the global consumer culture, as has already been stated, radically alters the textuality of *Tīj*. The 'globalisation' or urbanisation of *Tīj* effects the locational shift of *Tīj* from the *māiti* or *mandir* in the premise of the *māiti* to the marketplace and public-square. The paper will make a passing mention, in the following section, of how the locational shift alters this essentially patriarchal metaphor inhering in the festival and gives us a liberatory glimpse of an alternative which would always problematise the archetypal patriarchal

of *Tīj* songs, we seldom come across a song that documents the emotion of the *māiti*. What is the politics of this erasure: does it mean that the *māiti* does not suffer when the *celi* does not come home for *Tīj*? Does it mean that the ability to navigate space easily — the space that separates *celi* and *māiti* — explain the lack of emotional longing of the *māiti*? Or, is the performativity of masculinity and machismo (the *māiti* is a masculine territory that comes to life when it banishes its own women from their birthplace) that erases the emotionalism of the *māiti*? Even if the genre of *Tīj* is taken to be feminine, why is it that women rarely refer to the emotion of their *māiti* in their songs? In most cases, indifference, cruelty, exploitation, othering, and erasure are the defining contour and texture of *māiti*'s emotion. This aspect requires separate and sustained engagement.

85 In this long conversation song, the brother wants also to talk to his sister's son, his *bhanja*. After the failure of his effort to persuade his sister to come to the *māiti* for *Tīj*, he talks to his *bhanja* before disconnecting the phone. While the *bhanja* longs to visit his *mawali*, the house of his maternal uncle, his mother is indifferent even to the desire of her son. The *bhanja*'s intense desire for his uncle's home comes for easy comparison for the indifference of his mother thereby further accentuating the dispensability of the *māiti* in the new economy of desire.

86 My translation.

nature of the festival. In the shift from *māita* to the marketplace, there is inversion of the predominantly patriarchal hierarchical invitational system; invitation becomes woman-centric, multidirectional, de-hierarchised, and democratic. There is an eruption of female body in the textuality of *Tīj* in the visual as well as the auditory trope; the insurrection of female body, in spite of the dangers of commodification and objectification, problematises the ontological and ritual othering of female body in the mythology and the praxis of *Tīj*. The subversion of patriarchal space and time unsettles patriarchy's temporal and spatial colonisation of the female world order seen in the articulation of originary *Tīj*. The urban de-feminisation of *Tīj* as an exclusive female space may be perhaps seen as a carnivalesque re-mapping of *Tīj* in the idiom of hybridity and loss of patriarchal purity; the transgressive re-writing of *dar* from fasting to feasting, from religious patriarchal to profane, metaphysical to mundane also problematises the predominantly 'functional' sanctioning of feasting for fasting. The shift, in short, unsettles the patriarchal imagination of *Tīj* as a cultural trope of Nepali women's vulnerability and victimhood in its construction of space as well as rituals that navigate the space time-continuum.

Conclusion

In the rural *Tīj* songs, Nepali women question the patriarchal construction of space; the binary of the *māita* and the *ghar*. In the old or 'classical' songs, women's criticism can be seen in their feeling, understanding, and articulation of an unjust spatial order. Here, Nepali women's understanding and articulation of their problem problematises the myth of silenced native subaltern, waiting for its moment of articulation in the idiom of western feminism, a myth carefully constructed and perpetuated by the indigenous and 'liberal' western feminism. The construction and perpetuation of such a myth seems to be 'unconscious', and therefore, all the more dangerous. Though it cannot be denied that the vocabulary of democracy and international feminist movement gave Nepali women new idioms and polemics, it would be equally wrong, as we have seen, to deny the indigenous genealogy of articulation and protest inscribed in the old *Tīj* songs, much before the arrival of western feminist ideas in the politically loaded decade of the 1990s. Also, the urban counter-spatialisation of *Tīj* unsettles and ruptures the patriarchal constructions of binary spatiality that marks the politics of space of archetypal *Tīj*. The urban relocation of *Tīj* from *māita* to the public-square problematises patriarchy, in spite of its apparent classist and metropolitan bias. The question of class and metropolitanism of *Tīj*, however, requires more serious engagement than

a passing mention. While it would be an exaggeration to say that the urban avatar of *Tīj*, in its interrogation of the binary spatiality of the *māita* and the *ghar*, has transcended patriarchy, it would be equally problematic to deny Nepali women's re-scripting of *Tīj* in the idiom of liberatory degeneration, dystopia, and panic.

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A Hitherto Undiscovered and Unstudied Newari Manuscript of a Maithili *Bārahamāsā* Song by King Jagatprakāśamalla of Bhaktapur A Preliminary Analysis

RAMAWATAR YADAV

Introduction

“‘बारहमासा’ मैथिली लोक-साहित्य की अनुभूत्यात्मक अभिव्यञ्जना है।
... ‘बारहमासा’ की भाव-धारा पुरानी शराव-सी चोखी, और देवदारु-सी
स्वच्छ है। ... जैसे नीलम पर धूप पड़ने से उसकी लावण्य-मुद्रा खिल
जाती है, वैसे ही ग्रामीण कवियों की पारदर्शी आँखों का विम्ब पड़ने से
सौन्दर्य में कला की कमनीयता आ गई है।”

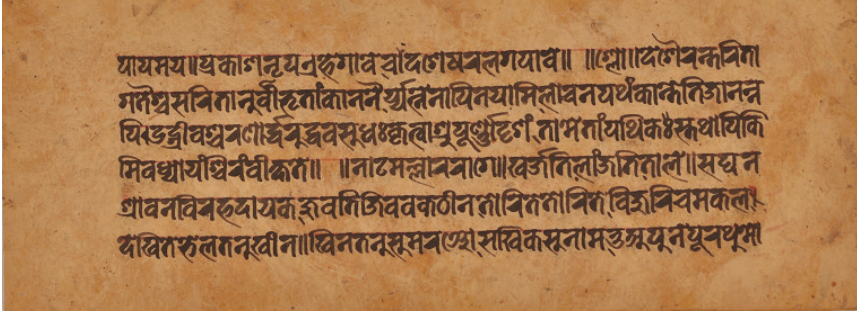
Ramaiqbālasimha ‘Rākeśa’
(V.S. 1999/=1942 CE, p. 404)

‘...the Bārahmāsā literature appears as the golden thread around which
the souls of India’s villagers, from remote ages to this day, have woven
the web of their joys and sorrows, especially the sorrows of women’s
hearts – since the Viraha-Bārahmāsā remains originally and essentially
the most perfect lyrical expression of the village women of northern
India’.

Charlotte Vaudeville (1986, ‘Preface’: xi)

Bārahamāsā (composed of two constituent elements *bāraha*, ‘twelve’, and
māsā, ‘month’), ‘(song of) the twelve months’ is an extremely well-known
and extraordinarily popular and prototypical genre of poetry – folk or
literary, secular or devotional, but essentially highly romantic and intensely
emotional – in a number of New Indo-Aryan languages, including Maithili.

Indeed, the childhood memories of the amorous sound and sweet cadence of bucolic young male folk of my village rocking themselves in the swing tied tightly with a rope onto two stark bamboo poles in the mango groves, while singing the Maithili *bārahamāsā* beginning with *caīta he sakhi...*, linger vividly in my mind until today.



Extant old *bārahamāsā* texts, in languages such as Old Rajasthani (Varma 1982/1925; Gupta 1953), Old Gujarati (Dalal 1956), Old Marathi, Old Braj Bhāsā, Old Avadhi (Mullā Dāūd's *Candāyan*, composed in 1375), Classical Bangla (Zbavitel 1961), and Bhojpuri (Grierson 1886) are well-attested to and sufficiently and reliably studied and analysed (Zbavitel 1961; Vaudeville 1986). As a matter of fact, the *bārahamāsā* song, with its three hallmark traits, i.e., 'the woman's voice, the pain of separation from the beloved (*viraha*) and the catalogue of images pertaining to the seasons' (Orsini 2010, 144), has tended to serve as a 'template' for poets of all New Indo-Aryan languages of India for centuries.

The earliest analysis of a *bārahamāsā* song of an Indo-Aryan language that I happened to have come across thus far is by Grierson (1884). In a seminal article titled 'Some Bhoj'pūrī Folk-Songs', Grierson analyses, a total of seven Bhojpuri songs (six *bārahamāsā* and one *caīmāsā*) in detail and provides some piercing and highly illuminating observations on the form of these songs:

The first seven of these songs belong to a class well known throughout India from the earliest times... My own knowledge of modern vernacular folk-songs is confined to Eastern Hindūstān and the Bengal Presidency, and with regard to this tract I can assert that several songs of the class are popular in every district between Banāras and the Brahmāputra. These songs are at the present day called '*Bārah Māsas*' or '(songs of) the twelve months.' Their form is always the same. Some woman laments

the absence of her beloved or of her son. Each verse is devoted in order to a month of the Hindū year; in it she describes the peculiar woe which she experiences at that season. Thus she goes through the round of the twelve months, and at the last month her patience is generally rewarded by the return of her husband, or of her son, as the case may be. (Grieson 1984, 200)

It is generally claimed, and in my opinion correctly, that the earliest Maithili *bārahamāsā*¹ songs were composed during the first quarter of the 15th century by the greatest Maithili poet Vidyāpati (1352-1448 CE). As a precursor to a practice carried out later by such poet-kings of Medieval Nepal, such as Jagajjyotirmalla and Jagatprakāśamalla, and these songs are found to have been embedded into a collection of mellifluous lyrical songs of Vidyāpati famously known as the *Padāvalī*. Thus, in footnote #51, Zbavitel² alludes to a Maithili *bārahamāsā* song occurring in a publication of Vidyāpati's *Padāvalī* edited by Basumati³ and published in Calcutta. Similarly, a Maithili *bārahamāsā* song depicting all the twelve months of the year is found to be inserted in a masterly collection of a total of 710 mellifluous songs of Vidyāpati by G. Jha⁴. Upon inquiry, Govind Jha⁵ has very kindly informed me that he had lifted the above-mentioned *bārahamāsā* song from Nagendranath Gupta's⁶ edition of Vidyāpati's songs titled *Vidyāpati Thākurer Padāvalī* (Song #729), and that Nagendranath Gupta had indeed acknowledged acquiring the song in question from a source in Mithilā; implying that in the course of his research Govind Jha had never come across this song in any earlier source, manuscript or otherwise prior to that of Nagendranath Gupta's. Nagendranath Gupta's classic edition includes two types of songs of Vidyāpati: songs contained in the *Taraūnī Palmleaf* manuscript and the songs collected at large in Mithilā; the second category of songs were arranged by Nagendranath Gupta under the rubric *Mithilār Pada* and the *bārahamāsā* song in question was placed under this rubric.⁷)

All this leads us to the inescapable conclusion that the *bārahamāsā* song contained in Govind Jha's (1981) edition does not form part of a

1 Pronounced by Maithili speakers as [bəɾə'masa].

2 Zbavitel 1961, pg. 60.

3 Basumati 1935, pg. 194-195.

4 Jha 1981, 229-230, Song #569.

5 Personal communication; emails, dated 19, 20 and 21st of November 2014.

6 Gupta, N. (ed) 1909.

7 It is common knowledge that Nagendranath Gupta received the collections of both varieties of the songs courtesy of the Mahārājādhirāja of Darbhanga.

handwritten manuscript. Similarly, to the best of my knowledge, no hand-copied manuscript of *bārahamāsā* songs composed by Vidyāpati, or copied out by scribes at a later date, have been discovered yet. Strangely enough, such masterly compilers and editors of Vidyāpati's songs, such as Grierson (1882), Thakur (1941) *Rāmabhadrapura Palmleaf* manuscript, and Jha's (1954) *Nepāla Palmleaf* manuscript – to name only the famous few – tend not to contain even a single *bārahamāsā* song in their collections and/or anthologies.

It is quite likely that there may be more *bārahamāsā* songs in existence that are published in anthologies that are beyond my reach, but so far, I have been able to locate the published versions of only four *bārahamāsā* songs, categorically bearing the name of the poet Vidyāpati in their *bhaṇitā*, 'author tag' as composer.⁸ Interestingly, Jha's voluminous collection containing a total of 1521 songs of Vidyāpati also includes a *bārahamāsā* song without explicitly bearing the name of Vidyāpati as composer in its *bhaṇitā*, (Jha 2008, Song #735, 232-234). One only wishes that these published *bārahamāsā* songs may not turn out to be spurious interpolations by a later hand.

Maithili *bārahamāsā* songs constitute an opulently rich heritage of an impressive oral literary tradition *par excellence*. Nonetheless, contemporary and colloquial versions of a number of *bārahamāsā* songs, occasionally bearing the names of composers, are printed in a number of anthologies of Maithili 'loka' and 'saṃskāra' songs, but tend to be without any reliable references to the source, mode, and/or time of composition. Mention may be made of two extremely famous and highly remarkable anthologies: 'Rākeśa' (1999/1942) and Devī (1999), as well as of Rakesh (1999). Under the rubric *bārahamāsā*, Rākeśa⁹ lists a total of 20 songs; he subcategorises them as *bārahamāsā* proper (14), *bārahamāsā chandaparaka*² (1), *caümāsā*, 'song of the four months (of the rainy season)', (1), and *caümāsā chandaparaka* (3). Interestingly, one song (i.e., Song #11) compiled herein as a *bārahamāsā* song makes no mention of any month whatsoever.

Names of poets such as Kūvara, Sūra (dāsa), Babana, Sukavidāsa, Gopāladāsa, Nebālāla, Kulapati, Jayadevasvāmī, and Mādhava are mentioned in the *bhaṇitā* of songs. A total of 14 songs bear the names of composers in their *bhaṇitā*, while six songs are by composers who have apparently

8 These are: (Basumati 1935, 194–195 as cited in Zbavitel 1961: Footnote #51, 607; Jha 1981: Song #569, 229-230; Devī 1999: Song #405, 175; Jha 2008: Song #1021, 329 and its variant version reprinted in Mishra 2014: Song #191, 94-95).

9 Rākeśa 1999/1942, pg. 404-467.

wished to remain anonymous. Devī¹⁰ (1999) lists a total of 16 songs, and subcategorises them as *caūmāsā* (five), *chandaparaka caūmāsā* (two), *chaūmāsā*, ‘song of six months’, i.e., from Jyestha to Kārtika corresponding to May–June through October–November (one), *bārahamāsā* proper (seven), and *chandaparaka bārahamāsā* (one). Names of poets such as Rāmakṛṣṇa, Batenātha, Kṛṣṇa, Śambhudāsa, Jayadevasvāmī, Vidyāpati, Mādhava, Ramānanda, Nebālāla, and Kulapati are mentioned in the *bhaṇitā* of songs. A total of 11 songs bear the names of poets in their *bhaṇitā*, while five are anonymous.

Similarly, Rakesh (1999) cites a total of 17 *bārahamāsā* songs, only one of which categorically mentions Sūradāsa as the author in its *bhaṇitā*; the rest are anonymous. Truncated versions labeled as *tinamāsā* (one), *caūmāsā* (three), *pañcamāsā* (one), *chaūmāsā* (one) and *satamāsā* (one) songs are also cited in the work. Refrains and verse-fillers and what Grierson (1884) calls ‘unmeaning burdens’ such as *re*, *he*, *ho*, *e*, *nā re*, *yo*, and *yaii* are commonly used in these *bārahamāsā* songs.

In the course of my investigation, thus far I have come across a total of two *bārahamāsā* songs penned by poet-king Jagatprakāśamalla: one song occurs in his collection of an assortment of devotional verse compositions titled *Nānārtha Deva Devī Gīta Saṃgraha*,¹¹ while the other song is embedded in the verse work currently under study titled *Gītapāñcaka*. Both of these works are undated. Based on the arguments presented elsewhere that suggest that *Gītapāñcaka* more than likely was composed in the same year in which Jagatprakāśamalla’s life-long friend Candraseṣarasimha died (1662), I have arrived at the conclusion that the hand-copied Newari manuscript of the present cluster of *bārahamāsā* songs, found to be inserted in the manuscript of the collection of lyrical songs, *Gītapāñcaka*, composed by the Bhaktapur king Jagatprakāśamalla in 1662, may perhaps claim to be the oldest extant hand-copied text of the Maithili *bārahamāsā* songs to date.

The Author: His Life and Works

Jagatprakāśamalla (1643–1673), son of Nareśamalla and grandson of Jagajjyotirmalla, was born on the 26th of Mārga, Saturday, kārtika kṛṣṇa amāvasyā in N.S. 759/V.S. 1695,¹² corresponding to October 1639. Due to the early demise of his father Nareśamalla on āśvina vadīpañcamī of N.S. 763/V.S. 1700,¹³ corresponding to the 8th of September 1643, Jagatprakāśamalla is

10 Devī 1999, pg. 171–181.

11 Shastri 2029/1972 Song #63.

12 Paudel 2065/2008, pg. 21.

13 Paudel 2065/2008, pg. 20.

believed to have ascended the throne of the Kingdom of Bhaktapur as a child-king at the age of four in 1643. Jagatprakāśamalla died prematurely from the effects of a severe smallpox on the 29th of *Mārga*, Thursday, *mārgaśīra kṛṣṇa caturthī* of N.S. 793/V.S. 1729,¹⁴ (corresponding to the 28th of November 1673, at the prime age of 34.

King Jagatprakāśamalla is sadly known to have led his short-lived life in terrible torment and strife due to personal aggrandisement and incessant internecine dissension and conflict between him and king Pratāpamalla of Kantipur on the one hand, and king Śrīnivāsamalla of Lalitpur on the other. In spite of this, he was able to produce an amazingly vast wealth of literary output of high merit in his short life. Jagatprakāśamalla is known to have two wives: Candrāvati and Padmāvati. It is also known by now that he received a third and youngest wife named Annapūrnālakṣmī with the aid of Candraśeṣarasimha. Unfortunately, the chronicles of Nepal do not offer us much clue to the ancestral lineage of either Annapūrnālakṣmī or of Candraśeṣarasimha.

Jagatprakāśamalla's dramatic work is to a large extent written in the Maithili language. Of the more than 10 dramas ascribed to him, two very well-known and published Maithili dramas are *Prabhāvatīharaṇa*, 1656 (Mishra 1972) and *Pradyumnavijaya*, n.d. (Brinkhaus 1987a). During 1987, a German edition of a well-known and complete Newari play, *Mūladevaśaśidevayākhyāna*, n.d. was also published in Stuttgart, Germany (Brinkhaus 1987b). Other unpublished Maithili plays, the manuscripts of which are currently stored and preserved in the National Archives of the Government of Nepal, are *Malayagandhinī*, circa 1663–65; *Pārijātaharaṇa*, n.d.; *Nalacarita*¹⁵ 1670; *Uśāharaṇa*, n.d.; *Madanacaritra*, circa 1670; and *Mālatī-Mādhava*, n.d. A few other plays, which are either fragmented and/or incomplete, or merely referred to by scholars but hitherto untraced are *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, *Vṛandācarita*,¹⁶ and *Kṛṣṇacarita*.¹⁷

In addition to being a masterly playwright, king Jagatprakāśamalla is also known to be a connoisseur of music and poetry of a high order: *kavīndra*, 'king of poets', *gandharvavidyāguru*, 'preceptor of musical sciences', and *sāhityavidyāvid*, 'expert on the science of literature' were some of the sobriquets used for him. A large number of his Maithili songs are fittingly preserved in carvings on metal, wood, and stone tablets in and around the cities of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur (Jha 1971; Mishra 1977). Sadly,

14 Paudel 2065/2008, pg. 28.

15 Also called *Naliyanāṭaka*.

16 Also called *Jālandharopākhyāna*.

17 Also called *Kaṁśavadha*.

many of these precious inscriptions may have run the risk of being reduced to rubble during the massive earthquake on the 25th of April 2015, and the subsequent major aftershock of the 12th of May 2015.

A great majority of his Maithili songs, along with the songs composed by other contemporary royal poets, are compiled in an assortment of verse anthologies produced later, while a considerably large number of his Maithili songs also form an integral part in the manuscripts of his plays preserved and stored in the National Archives of the Government of Nepal in Kathmandu. It is worth noting that even his best known and complete Newari play, *Mūladevaśaśidevavyākhyāna*, happens to end in a Maithili devotional song beginning with *athira kaleval[r]a jānu he kamala pātaka jala tula* ‘Be it known that (human) body/life is as unstable (and infirm) as a drop of water on lotus leaf’ (Folio 50a-b) – a song that also happens to occur in *Gītapañcaka* (Folio 30 V: 6). He is credited to having authored a number of collections of Maithili verse compositions namely *Nānāraṃgagītā* N.S. 780/1660 CE, *Gītāvalī* N.S. 781/1661 CE, *Padyasamuccaya*, n.d., *Gītapañcaka* c. 1662 CE¹⁸, *Nānārtha Deva Devī Gīta Saṃgraha* n.d.¹⁹, and *Nānārāgagītā* N.S. 790/1670 CE²⁰.) According to Malla (1981) a manuscript of a collection of 518 Newari verse compositions of Jagatprakāśamalla entitled *Nepālabhāṣāgīta* is also reported to have been preserved and stored in the National Archives of the Government of Nepal in Kathmandu.

Jagatprakāśamalla’s dramas and songs are an eloquent testimony to the fact that he was indeed a prolific and versatile author and a great musician. A polyglot that he was, Jagatprakāśamalla is known to have been highly proficient in the mastery of at least six languages (*ṣaḍbhāṣāvijñā*) such as Newari (his mother tongue), Sanskrit, Parbate/Khasa (precursor to modern-day Nepali), Bangla, Hindi/Braj Bhāṣā/Avadhī, and of course Maithili.

The Manuscript

Chasing a hearsay trail, I stumbled unexpectedly on a Newari manuscript of king Jagatprakāśamalla’s collection of Maithili songs *Gītapañcaka*, in a private institution named the Āśā Archives at Raktakālī in Kathmandu, during mid-November 2012. A cursory perusal of the manuscript almost instantaneously revealed that the manuscript was rather fragmented and that a number of folios were sadly missing. Further inquiry and search with the assistance of a few local scholars, most notably Prof. Kashinath Tamot, led me to a discovery of the manuscript of yet another

18 Yadav 2018.

19 Shastri 2029/1972.

20 Also called *Puruṣokti G+ṭapañcakaṃ*, (Jha 2037/1980, 82).

complete and full text of *Gītapañcaka* in the National Archives of the Government of Nepal on the 19th of January 2013. The present study of Maithili *bārahamāsā* songs is based on a digital copy of the manuscript of *Gītapañcaka* (numbered B 285/22 in the Catalogue) made available to me courtesy of the National Archives of the Government of Nepal on the 17th of February 2013.

Quintessentially, *Gītapañcaka* contains a total of 40 elegiac and panegyric lyrical songs (and a corresponding number of Sanskrit *ślokas*); it is indeed an elegy explicitly stated to have been written in sad and loving memory of a life-long and dear friend of king Jagatprakāśamalla named Candraseśarasimha. It can be gleaned from the inscriptional and published sources that Candraseśarasimha was a close friend, a minister (probably a chief minister) in the royal court of king Jagatprakamalla, and that he had been successful in exerting an amazingly indelible impact on the character and personality of king Jagatprakāśamalla. Indeterminate though cautious as he was, Paudel (2065/2008) speculated that Candraseśarasimha was either Jagatprakāśamalla's *sasurā*, 'father-in-law', or *jeṭhāna*, 'wife's elder brother'. Claims to the effect that Candraseśarasimha was indeed the elder brother of queen Annapūrnālakṣmī were continued to be made in the literature; thereby rendering him as *Jeṭha sārā*, 'elder brother-in-law', of king Jagatprakāśamalla (Shastri 1972, Mishra 1977). A contrary claim to the effect that Candraseśarasimha, supposedly a son to Jagajjyotirmalla's second son, Śaśiseśarasimha, was in all probability an elder cousin's brother to king Jagatprakāśamalla is also made in the literature (Jha 1990). The fact that Candraseśarasimha is invariably addressed by Jagatprakāśamalla as *bhāi*, *bhāyi*, and *bhāiṃyā*, 'brother', and as a person of *ekahi kūla*, 'of the same lineage', in *Gītapañcaka* may attain salience and lend credence to Jha's (1990) claim. The controversy, however, rages on and remains unresolved due to the lack of firm historical evidence.

The date of composition of the manuscript of *Gītapañcaka* is unknown. A reference made to the date of the death of the poet-king's dear friend Candraseśarasimha in the manuscript may nonetheless offer a clue. At the very outset, the first song of the first *yāma* 'canto' makes a cryptic reference to N.S. 782/1662 CE as the year of death of Candraseśarasimha in a chronogram in which numerals are expressed symbolically through brief code-ciphers such as the following:

*Jeṭha jivana sakhi, visalekhe bhela mori, mithuna piriti suka bāre,
nepālaka saṃmate nara diṭhi vasu haya, se dina dura gela hāre ॥*

(Folio 2R: 6 - 2V: 1)

Thus, Candraśeṣarasimha apparently died on Friday in the month of *jeṭha* ‘May–June’ of *nara diṭhi*, ‘eyes’ (i.e., 2), *vasu*, ‘sage’ as in *aṣṭa vasu*, ‘the eight sages/the excellent ones’ (i.e., 8), and *haya*, ‘horse’ as in ‘seven horses of God the Sun’ (i.e., 7); the numerals 287 yielded by the above chronogram are formulaically deciphered in a reverse order from left to right in order to construct the actual date; thus rendering 287 into 782 N.S. corresponding to 1662. In other words, Candraśeṣarasimha died about eleven years before the tragic death of king Jagatprakāśamalla in 1673. Based on the above evidence, one would surmise that the collection of Maithili elegiac and panegyric lyrical songs, *Gītapañcaka*, was most probably composed in ca. 1662.

The name of the scribe of the manuscript of *Gītapañcaka* is not mentioned either. A closer scrutiny of the script reveals though that the entire manuscript was copied out in uniform handwriting by a single scribe. In all fairness, it must be stated that the handwriting is distinctly neat, well-shaped, and highly legible. Judging by the orthographic peculiarities and/or anomalies evident in the manuscript²¹, one may be emboldened to conclude that in all likelihood the scribe might have been a person of the Newar caste.

Transliteration of the Newari Manuscript into Devanāgarī Script

(१७ अ: ४)

॥ नाट मल्लार रागे ॥ खर्जति लांजति ताले ॥

सघन (५) श्रावन विरह दायक, जुवति जिबब कठीन,
तोरिते तोरिते, बिजुरि चमकल, (६) देखिते भेल तनु खीन ॥
खिन तनु सुमरजो सखिक सुनाम,
तुअ पुने पूरथु मो(१७ प: १)रि मति काम ॥

(१७ प: ३)

॥ प्रथम भादव प्रेम बढावल, एकहि भेल दुहु देह,
जे वि(४)धि जत नदि तिरहु भौंपल, तैं विधि बाध[ढल] सिनेह ॥
नेह मोरि सब लेल साजनि (५) बारि,
तोह बिनु हमे नहि पारब सँभारि ॥

(१८ अ: १)

॥ मास आसिन करुण कारण (२) फुलरि[लि] मधुरी जाति,
ख अति निरमल होएत एहि बेरि, के कर मोहि परिपाति (३) ॥

21 Discussed at great length in Yadav 2018.

परिपाति प्रिय सखि कए गेल आबे,
जे बिनु मोरि अति एहि तनु ताबे ॥

(१८ अ: ५)

॥ कातिक (६) काँदब, सखिक गुण बुझि, सहि न पारब दूख,
कुररि तुर[ल]ना भेलहु हम धनि, तेजल (१८ प: १) जति मोरि सूख ॥
सुख सुखि[सखि] जननी परि हरि लेल,
सगरि जनम मोरि वेद(२)न भेल ॥

(१८ प: ४)

॥ मास अगहन खेलय उपवन, हमहि साजनि समाज,
परसि प(५)वने मुदित दुहु जन, कएल अनुभव काज ॥
काज करब जजो प्रिय रह थीर[,]
(६) कथि लायि तहिनि बिनु मानिक हीर ॥

(१९ अ: २)

॥ पूस पुनिमक शशिक सम मुख (३) रुचिर लोचन चकोर,
हमे न बिसरब, तोहर अवयव, भौँखि रहबहु तोर ॥
तो(४)हर गुणे पुरल हमर संसार,
तोहे मोरि ऊरक मनि मय हार ॥
॥ मा(१९ प: १)घ महिना सखिहि संग दुहु, अनल निकट विलास,
एहन प्रियतर हमे न ते(२)जब, जननि देह संग बास ॥
बास पावब हमे साजनि समीप,
तोहे त्यजि ह(३)म भेल तेल बिनु दीप ॥

(१९ प: ५)

॥ फागुण दश गुण वेदन बाढल, अबसे शरिर वि(६)नास,
सखिक गुण बुझि धैरज नहि होअ, पाओब तहिनि अवकास ॥
अवकाश करब(२० अ: १)हु हम सखि तोर,
कथि लाइ अबे बेस कुण्डल दोर [डोल] ॥

(२० अ: ३)

॥ चैत चन्दन परम शीतल, [कोमल] केशरि सुवा(४)स,
एहन सुख दुहु, कएल अनुभव, हरखे वसंत विलास ॥
विलास करब सखि लग (५) रह आबे,
जननि कृपा ते प्रिय हमे पुनु पाबे ॥

(२० प: १)

॥ मास माधव सहि न पारब, सुनिय हम पिक सो(२)र,
लोचन नीरहि मेदनि परलिहु, सुनिय दुर प्रिय बोर[ल] ॥

बोल बोलब हमे कजो(३)नक पासे,
जत जन नहि राख निय विसवासे ॥

(२० प: ५)

॥ जेठ जीव मोरि तेजल एहे तनु, भेलहु गगनक (६) फूल,
ए विधि जानुह जे होअ बुध जन, भेलहु तन्हि काँ भूल ॥
तारि दल हमरा तुल मु(२१ अ: १)ख भेल,
परम कलेश मोरि देविहि देल ॥

(२१ अ: ३)

॥ मास आषाढ हमर दुर गेल, भुगुति अ(४)भिराख संग,
सुसखि मीलब सुकृत भय हमे, करिय मिलि कहु रंग ॥
रंग विरंग (५) सब एहन कि काज,
अबसे करब प्रिय, पाबय के साज ॥

(२१ प: १)

॥ मास बारह भ[न]य परका(२)स, अपने मति अति दूख,
चाँदशेषर पाए हमरा, भेलहु परमहि सूख ॥
सूख पा(३)ओब हमे जेहि लग पाय,
अभिमत पाओबथु प्रिय सखि काय ॥

Transliteration of the Newari Manuscript into Roman Script

(17 R: 4)

॥ nāṭa mallāra rāge ॥ kharjati lām̐jati tāle ॥
saghana(5)śrāvana viraha dāyaka, jubati jibaba kaṭhīna,
torite torite, bijuri camakala,(6)dekhite bhela tanu khīna ॥
khina tanu sumaraṇo, sakhika sunāma,
tua pune pūrathu mo (17 V: 1) ri mati kāma ॥

(17 V: 3)

॥ prathama bhādava prema baḍhāvala, ekahi bhela duhu deha,
je vi(4)dhi jata nadi tiruhu jhāpala, tē vidhi bādh[ḍh]ala sineha ॥
neha mori saba lela sājani(5) bāri,
tohe binu hame nahi pāraba saṃbhāri ॥

(18 R: 1)

॥ māsa āsina karuṇa kāraṇa(2)phular[l]i madhuri jāti,
kha ati niramala, hoeta ehi beri, ke kara mohi paripāti (3) ॥
paripāti priya sakhi kae gela ābe,
je binu mori ati ehi tanu tābe ॥

(18 R: 5)

|| kātika(6)kādaba, sakhika guṇa bujhi, sahi na pāraba dūkha,
kurari tur[l]anā bhelahu hama dhani, teja (18V:1)la jati mori sūkha ||
sukha su[sa]khi janani pari hari lela,
sagari janama mori veda(2)na bhela ||

(18 V: 4)

|| māsa agahana khelaya upavana, hamahi sājani samāja,
parasi pa(5)vane mudita duhu jana, kaela anubhava kāja ||
kāja karaba jaño priya raha thīra[,]
(6) kathi lāyi tahni binu mānika hīra ||

(19 R: 2)

|| pūsa punimaka śaśika sama mukha[,] (3) rucira locana cakora,
hame na bisaraba, tohara avayava, jhākhī rahabahu tora ||
to(4)hara guṇe pūrala hamara sāsāra,
tohe mori ūraka mani maya hāra ||
|| mā(19 V:1)gha mahinā sakhihi saṃga duhu, anala nikaṭa vilāsa,
ehana priyatara hame na te(2)jaba, janani deha saṃga bāsa ||
bāsa pāvaba hame sājani samīpa,
toha tyaji ha(3)ma bhela tela binu dīpa ||

(19 V: 5)

|| phāguna daśa guṇa vedana bādhalā, abase śarira vi(6)nāsa,
sakhika guṇa bujhi, dhaīraja nahi hoa, pāoba tahni avakāsa ||
avakāsa karaba(20 R:1)hu hama sakhi tora,
kathi lāi abe besa kuṇḍala dora[ḍola] ||

(20 R: 3)

|| caīta candana parama śītala[,] [komala] keśari suvā(4)sa,
ehana sukha duhu, kaela anubhava, harakhe vasamta vilāsa ||
vilāsa karaba sakhi laga (5) raha ābe,
janani kṛpā te priya hame punu pābe ||

(20 V: 1)

|| māsa mādharma sahi na pāraba, suniya hama pika so(2)ra,
locana nīrahi medani paralihu, suniya dura priya bor[l]a ||
bola bolaba hame kaño(3)naka pāse,
jata jana nahi rākha niya visavāse ||

(20 V: 5)

|| jeṭha jīva mori tejala ehe tanu, bhelahu gaganaka (6) phūla,
e vidhi jānuha je hoa budha jana, bhelahu tahnika bhūla ||
tāri dala hamarā tula mu(21 R: 1)kha bhela,
parama kaleśa mori devihi dela ||

(21 R: 3)

|| māsa āsāḍha hamara dura gela, bhuguti a(4)bhirākha saṅga,
susakhi milaba sukr̥ta bhaya hame, kariya mili kahu raṅga ||
raṅga viram̐ga (5) saba ehana ki kāja,
abase karaba priya, pābaya ke sāja ||

(21 V: 1)

|| māsa bāraha bha[na]ya parakā(2)sa, apane mati ati dūkha,
cādaśeṣara pāya hamarā, bhelahu paramahi sūkha ||
sūkha pā(3)oba hame, jehi laga pāya,
abhimata pāobathu priya sakhi kāya ||

Translation into English

Folio 17 Recto

The densely cloudy (month of) *Śrāvana* (Sanskrit *Śrāvaṇa*: July–August) offers acute pangs of separation; it is all the more difficult for a young damsel to survive the separation (in this rainy month).

The lightning kept shining in quick succession; the sight of it made my body weak and frail.

It is with a sad heart that I repeatedly remember the name of my friend. By your grace, may my wishes be fulfilled!

Folio 17 Verso

To begin with, (the month of) *Bhāḍava* (Sanskrit *Bhādra*: August–September) heightened love; the two bodies became but one.

Just as (in the rainy season) the full-flowing river engulfs even its banks as well; in a similar manner, our love has overpowered (us).

All of my love was selectively snatched away by my friend.

Without you, I cannot gain control of myself.

Folio 18 Recto

The month of *Āsina* (Sanskrit *Āśvina*: September–October) causes compassion as many kinds of fragrant flowers are in bloom.

The sky is very clear at this time (of the year); who will take care of me (now)?

True, my dear friend had taken good care of me earlier but now without him my body burns grievously.

In (the month of) *Kātika* (Sanskrit *Kārtika*: October–November), I cry reminiscing about the good virtues of my friend; I will no longer be able to bear the sorrow.

O friend! I have become like a *kurarī*⁴; I forsook all my happiness.

Folio 18 Verso

The Goddess took away my best friend; my entire life became sorrowful. In the month of *Agahana* (Sanskrit *Mārgaśīrṣa*: November–December), I played out into the garden in the company of my friend.

The two of us were very happy to feel the gentle brush of a breeze of wind; we had a nice experience thereof.

One can experience love only when the dear friend is steady.

Of what use are the gems and diamonds without him (any way)?

Folio 19 Recto

In the month of *Pūsa* (Sanskrit *Paiṣa*: December–January), your face beamed like the full moon and your eyes were as lovely as those of a *cakora*⁵-bird.

I will never forget your face; I will keep on gazing at your (face).

My world is filled with the virtue of your merits.

You are indeed the gem-studded necklace of my heart.

Folio 19 Verso

In the month of *Māgha* (Sanskrit *Māgha*: January–February), my friend and I used to sit by fire and enjoy each other's company.

I will never ever forsake such a dearer friend; May the Goddess offer me his company (for ever)!

I will for sure get the company of my friend.

After you left, I have become (like) a lamp without oil.

In the month of *Phāguṇa* (Sanskrit *Phālguṇa*: February–March), my sorrow increased ten-fold; this will for sure ruin my body.

Realising the merits of my friend, I could not hold patience to imagine that I would ever take leave of his company.

If I ever take leave of you, O friend!

Folio 20 Recto

Then why would it be at all nice to let my ear-rings (continue to) dangle?
(The month of) *Caīta*'s (Sanskrit *Caitra*: March–April) extreme coolness
of the sandal wood paste and the (sweet) fragrance of the (tender)
*kesari*⁶–flowers.

(Both my friend and I experienced) such happiness (as one would
expect to have) in a spring season.

I would (definitely) rejoice in the company of my friend;

If by the grace of Mother Goddess I get to be re-united with my friend
again.

Folio 20 Verso

In the (hot) month of *Mādhava* (Sanskrit *Vaiśākha*, *Rādhā*: April–May), I
can no longer bear to hear the plaintive love wails of a *koela*/*koili*⁷–bird.
Tears shed from my eyes and fell on the ground; my friend will (likely)
hear the wail of my anguish from afar.

Who to would I speak about my feelings in a situation in which no one
seems to trust each other?

In the month of *Jeṭha* (Sanskrit *Jyestha*: May–June), my friend left his
body (for heavenly abode) and became invisible (in the sky).

All who are wise know it to be so, but that's where they are at fault.

The starry universe looked as sad as my face.

Folio 21 Recto

The Goddess gave me much sorrow, indeed.

The month of *Āsāḍha* (Sanskrit *Āsāḍha*: June–July) went by as I kept
wishing for the company of my friend.

Being well-fated, I will re-meet my best friend and together we will
have fun and amusement.

What use is the fun after all?

I will for sure strive hard to find a way to re-gain my friend.

Folio 21 Verso

(At the end of the song of) the twelfth month says Prakāśa: I was very
unhappy inside my heart;

After having received the company of Cādaśeṣara, I was extremely
happy.

I will receive happiness in his company;

May the body of the dear friend rest in peace!

Conclusion

As indicated above, the Maithili *bārahamāsā* song under study does not form a separate and independent identity of its own; instead it is found to have been inserted (as a mark of virtuosity, versatility, and craftsmanship of the poet as it were) in the manuscript of the Maithili epic poem, *Gītapañcaka*, composed by Jagatprakāśamalla in a Newari script called *Nepālākṣhala* – Sanskrit *Nepālākṣara* and Modern Newari *Nepā:akha*: – (Lienhard 1974/1992, 2, 14). This is after all not the first occasion when Jagatprakāśamalla has done it: even in an earlier collection consisting of an assortment of verse compositions titled *Nānārtha Deva Devī Gīta Saṃgraha*, the poet-king tended to insert a *bārahamāsā* song (Shastri 2029/1972). This custom to suddenly embed a totally new and independent poetic genre in a long epic poem may not be as unusual as it seems; after all, the Newar poet-kings habitually composed Newari *bārahamāsā* songs in skilful imitation of the pattern of North Indo-Aryan languages (Lienhard 1974/1992, Song #67, 159). Mention must also be made of a similar custom practiced much earlier even by Jagatprakāśamalla's illustrious grandfather Jagajjyotirmalla who is known to have ingeniously inserted a few indigenous Maithili 'folk' tunes, such as *laṇānī*, 'song of grinding grains under two stone slabs' (Song #46), *kobara*, 'wedding song' (Song #47), and *jhūmari*, 'song sung on swings' (Song #49) in his collection of verse-songs laced with classical *rāga*, 'mode' and *tāla*, 'beat', *Gītapañcāsikā*, Śakābda 1550/1628 CE, (Śāke 1896/1974; Mishra and Jha 2010). We have also come to learn from Zbavitel (1961) that this practice of embedding songs in longer poems was 'of considerable antiquity' (p. 587) in classical Bangla literature, that it was after all 'no chance addition or insertion' in course of development of the Bangla narrative *Baromasi*, and that the *Baromasi* of separation was found to be 'best suited to be interpolated into longer epics' (Zbavitel 1961, 588 - 590).

Most *bārahamāsā* are what is called *viraha-bārahamāsā*; in other words, they tend to express an ardent longing for the reunion of separated lovers. These folk songs are both secular and religious. The secular *bārahamāsā* songs dwell on the popular theme of 'the pain of separation (*viraha*) endured by a young wife pining for the return of her beloved all the twelve months of the year' (Vaudeville 1986: x). The acute pain of separation described therein is pitched against the background of a highly moving description of nature's (i.e., season's) face aggravating the pain of separation during each month of the year; the rainy season of four months being most un-bearing. In addition, the so-called religious *bārahamāsā* songs depict the separation of Rādhā (or a Gopī) from Kṛṣṇa and describe her acute pining for reunion with Kṛṣṇa. Occasionally a few songs also tend to describe Māinā's acute

anguish over choosing a highly cumbersome and unusual bridegroom in the form of Śivaśaṃkara for her daughter Gaiṛī.

A *bārahamāsā* is also said to depict a conflict of 'within' with 'beyond': an article of the month September 2009, posted in an online *Exotic India Newsletter* states:

Nature affords to Barahmasa poetry its canvas, all pictures and colours, love, its spirit and essence, and endless continuity of its pangs month-after-month, its narrative technique and epical stretch and binds into one thread the two cofronting worlds, the worlds of man and nature.

Nonetheless, the present cluster of *bārahamāsā* songs representing all the twelve months of the year and inserted in the manuscript of *Gītapañcaka* makes a clear departure from the convention in that it is written demonstrably to commemorate the sudden and untimely demise of king Jagatprakāśamalla's life-long and dear friend Candrasēṣarasimha, and to express deep sorrow and pain of separation as well as to extol his fine attributes and glorious deeds.

Composers of Maithili *bārahamāsā* are at variance with regard to the issue of the structure of their songs; in other words, there is no apparent unity of structure with regard to precisely which month of the Vikramāditya calendar currently in vogue in Nepal and Mithilā a typical *bārahamāsā* song ought to begin with. Thus, five out of seven *bārahamāsā*-proper songs compiled in Devī's (1999) anthology begin with a description of the month of *Caīta* and end with the description of the month of *Phāguṇa*. Of the remaining two songs, one song begins with a description of the month of *Baisākha* and ends with a description of the month of *Caīta*, while the other song begins with a description of the month of *Asāḍha* and ends with a description of the month of *Jeṭha*. The only *chandaparaka* *bārahamāsā* song contained in this anthology begins with a description of the month of *Sāona* and ends with a description of the month of *Asāḍha*. Similarly, as indicated above, Rākeśa's (1999/1942) anthology contains a total of 14 *bārahamāsā*-proper songs, which describe all months of the year. Nonetheless, these songs observe no uniform unity of structure. Therefore, of the 14 *bārahamāsā*-proper songs, seven begin with a description of the month of *Asāḍha* and end with the description of the month of *Jeṭha*; six songs describe the months of *Caīta* to *Phāguṇa*; and one song describes the months of *Jeṭha* to *Baisākha*. One additional song, labelled as *bārahamāsā chandaparaka*, begins with the description of *Sāona* and ends with a description of the month of *Asāḍha*. The remaining *caūmāsā* and *caūmāsā chandaparaka* songs too display

a similar discrepancy with regard to the unity of structure. Rakesh (1999) cites a total of 17 *bārahamāsā* songs depicting all the twelve months of the year; however, these songs also tend not to observe a structural unity with regard to the onset month. Neither do the songs labelled as *tinamāsā*, *caūmāsā*, *pañcamāsā*, *chaūmāsā*, and *satamāsā* in that work.

It is worth noting though that the present *bārahamāsā* song of Jagatprakāśamalla specified with *Nāṭa Mallāra rāga* and *Kharjati Lāmjati tāla* and the two *bārahamāsā chandaparaka* songs contained in the anthologies referred to above observe a striking analogy of the unity of structure. In other words, all the three *bārahamāsā* songs laced with information on musical *rāga* and *tāla* begin with a description of the month of *Sāona* (Sanskrit *Śrāvaṇa*) and end with a description of the month of *Asāḍha* (Sanskrit *Āsāḍha*). Another structural peculiarity that tends to characterise the present *bārahamāsā* as unique is that each stanza of the song of the twelve months contains a total of four *caraṇa* (roughly speaking, lines) and that the third *caraṇa* begins with a reduplication of the last *pada* (roughly speaking, word) or parts of the last *pada* of the second *caraṇa*; thereby, adding flexibility and cadence to the sonorous voice of the singer. Needless to say, this feature is lacking in other *bārahamāsā* songs collected in Grierson (1884) as well as in the anthologies referred to above.

In a study of the first *bārahamāsā* of Urdu titled *Bikaṭ Kahānī* and composed by Afzal Jhinjhanvi in the early 17th century, Jalil (2012) comes, as it were, 'to the rescue of the rich and important but largely ignored literary form' of the *bārahamāsā* and asserts that it is in essence almost entirely rural and that it basically survives in the form of a *loka gīta*. Jalil (Jalil 2012, 3) also lists a total of three hallmark features of a *bārahamāsā*: in her own words, these are: *gharelu lehja*, 'domestic style', *dramai tarz*, 'dramatic tone', and *khud-kalami*, 'use of the first person'. Decrying the rather slanted and lopsided thrust of the contemporary literary criticism and research, Jalil remarks:

Had the literary historian not created this artificial distinction between high and low literature, a great deal of folk-related literature whose roots go back to an orally-transmitted cultural legacy would not have been marginalized. However, it is still not too late. Even now, if we abandon the parameters of 'high' culture and 'high' literature and begin to study the small and the simple and the natural we can avert some of the dangers of separatism. (Jalil 201, 4)

Needless to say, Jalil's succinct remarks will provide a proper perspective on the scientific study of the Maithili *bārahamāsā* song in particular and the

Maithili folk literature in general, especially in view of the fact that the age-old tendency to mistakenly dichotomise oral/folk literature as ‘folksy’ and written literature as *śiṣṭa sāhitya*, cultured literature continues to persist until today (Malangiya 2004; Jha 2010; and Raman 2014).

Finally, the main question that raises itself is: Is the genre of *bārahamāsā* poetry an autochthonous form, or is it derived from some other source? It may not be easy to come up with a definitive statement on the genesis of *bārahamāsā*. It is commonly held that the earliest form of a *bārahamāsā* song may owe its origin to *ṛtuvarṇana*, ‘the portrayal of a season’, in particular to *ṣaḍṛtuvarṇana*, ‘the portrayal of six seasons’, depicted in the *ṚigVeda* and the Vedic *Samhitās*, and later in the great epics of Classical Sanskrit – the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, and still later in Kālidāsa’s *Ṛitusamhāra* that describe the six seasons of the Indian lunar calendar in sufficient detail²². Nevertheless, basing himself on a strict scrutiny of around two hundred Bangla *Baromasis* in different parts of Bengal and of a host of texts of the folk poetry and literature from Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, and a number of tribal areas including those of Chhattisgarh in India, Zbavitel arrived at a credible conclusion:

At present, it seems most probable that the Baromasi existed in the folk-poetry of India in a very remote past, that it was preserved by oral tradition and that it spread all over India, developing in each of its numerous national and tribal literatures in a different way. (Zbavitel 1961, 615)

In the light of the above firm assertion of Zbavitel, it would be both apt and proper to view the *bārahamāsā* song (and for that matter the Maithili *bārahamāsā* song) as an autochthonous genre of oral folk-literature.

Notes

1. For more information on Maithili phonetics and on [a] → [ə] sound change in Maithili, the reader is referred to Yadav (1984a, b, 1996, and 2013).
2. Mishra (1949: 77) translates the expression *chandaparaka* as ‘metrical verses fit to be recited rather than to be sung.’
3. According to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, the aṣṭa vasu, the eight saints/the excellent ones are: 1. *Āpa* ‘Water’, 2. *Dhruva* ‘the Pole star’, 3. *Soma* ‘Moon’, 4. *Dhava/Dhara*, 5. *Anila* ‘Wind’, 6. *Anala/Pāvaka* ‘Fire’, 7. *Pratyūṣa* ‘Dawn’ and 8. *Prabhāsa* ‘Light’. (Monier-Williams 1899/1999: 930)

4. Sir M. Monier-Williams' (1889/1999) dictionary defines *kurara* as 'an osprey' and *kurari* as 'a flight of ospreys. Govind Jha also describes *kurarī* as a bird of the category of a *papīhā* (*kurarī eka pakṣī thika papīhā jātika*).
5. Grierson (1882: 165) defines *cakora* as 'the mountain partridge, *Perdix rufa*. Said to be enamoured of the moon: also to have a graceful gait and beautiful eyes, to each of which, either of these of a woman is often compared: hence used to signify a beloved woman'.
6. Grierson (1882: 152) defines *kesara* as 'a fragrant kind of flower'.
7. Grierson (1882: 152) defines *koela/koili* as 'the Indian cuckoo. The song of the bird is supposed to be an incitement to love'.

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Wietse A. Tol is the Programme Director of the Peter C. Alderman Program for Global Mental Health at HealthRight International and is Associate Professor in Global Mental Health at the Department of Mental Health of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. He holds an MA in Clinical and Health Psychology and a PhD in Public Mental Health. His research and practice focus on mental health and psychosocial support interventions for adversity-affected populations in low- and middle-income countries. In particular, his work centres on (integrated) interventions that address mental health and the social determinants of mental health. He regularly consults with UN agencies and (international) non-governmental organisations in the areas of mental health and psychosocial support needs assessment, monitoring, and evaluation.

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Appendix
Conference Schedule

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THE ANNUAL KATHMANDU CONFERENCE ON NEPAL & THE HIMALAYA

22-24 July, 2015, Hotel Shanker, Lazimpat

Social Science Baha, The Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies,
Britain-Nepal Academic Council & the Centre for Himalayan Studies, CNRS

SCHEDULE

Day 1: 22 July (Wednesday)

SESSION 1: 9–10:30 am			
HALL A		HALL B	
Opening Remarks: Basanta Thapa , Vice-Chair, SSB Gerard Toffin , CNRS		Opening Remarks: David Gellner , Chair, BNAC Heather Hindman , Incoming President, ANHS	
<u>Panel A1</u> Dukha at Home and Abroad: Nepali Transnational Labour Migration		<u>Panel B1</u> Politics and Indigeneity	
Chair: Gerard Toffin Distinguished Emeritus Director of Research, CNRS, Paris		Chair: David Gellner Professor of Social Anthropology, School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford	
Jeevan Raj Sharma Lecturer in South Asia and International Development, University of Edinburgh	Bodies in Search of Freedom: Suffering, Structural Violence and Symbolic Violence Amongst Marginal Nepali Migrants	Prem Chalaune Lecturer, Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University	The Politics behind Indigenous Rhetoric in Nepal
Anna Stirr Assistant Professor of Asian Studies, University of Hawaii-Manoa	Mediating the Migrant Experience: <i>Dukha</i> , <i>Viraha</i> , and Nostalgia in Nepali Lok Dohori Songs	Jailab Rai Lecturer (Anthropology), Central Department of Sociology Anthropology, Tribhuvan University	Community Forestry Policies and Construction of the Social Space of Indigenous Peoples in Nepal
BREAK: 10:30 – 11:00 am (<i>refreshments will be served in the dining hall</i>)			

Day 1		SESSION 2: 11:00 am – 12:30 pm		22 July	
HALL A		HALL B			
Panel A2		Panel B2			
Youth in New Nepal		Religion, Secularism and the Nepali State			
Chair: Mallika Shakya Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, South Asian University, New Delhi		Chair: Lauren Leve Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, University of North Carolina			
Aidan Seale-Feldman PhD Candidate, University of California, Los Angeles, USA	Adolescent ‘Mass Hysteria’ in Post-Conflict Nepal: Ethnographic Impressions	Dannah Dennis PhD Candidate in Anthropology University of Virginia	Buddha was Born in (Secular) Nepal: Claims and Counter-Claims of Nepali National Identity		
Ravindra Palliyaguruge Lecturer, Political Science, Department of Social Sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka	Bullet Vs ‘Bullet’: An Ethnographic Study of the Perceptions of Youths in Transition Nepal	Ram Tiwari Master of Law, Tribhuvan University, Nepal	Religion and Modernizing Imperatives of the Nepali State		
Heather Hindman Associate Professor, University of Texas at Austin	Gari Khana Deu - Let us Live! How Transnational Youth Navigate a Provisional Nepal	Luke Wagner Department of Sociology, Yale University, USA	Agents of Other States: Debating Secularism and Negating Agency in Nepal		
LUNCH: 12:30 – 1:30 pm (served in the dining hall)					
SESSION 3: 1:30– 3:00 pm					
HALL A		HALL B			
Panel A3		Panel B3			
Climate Change and Food Security		Situated Bodies in Masculinized Power: Analyzing Women’s Struggles for Citizenship, Education and Bodily Integrity in Nepal			
Chair: Heather Hindman Associate Professor, University of Texas at Austin		Chair: Pratyoush Onta Director of Research, Martin Chautari			
Tara Nath Pande Advisor, Women and Environmental Development Organization (PWEDO)	Application of Appropriate Technology and Practices for Food Security and Livelihood Improvement	Surabhi Pudasaini Founder, Galli Galli	Writing Gendered Citizenship: Rights and Tactical Alliances in Nepal’s Constitution Drafting		
Floriane Clement Researcher, Institutional and Policy Analysis, International Water Management Institute (IWMI-Nepal), Kathmandu	Deliberative Governance on Vulnerability to Climate Change: Voices from Madhesi Farmers	Lokranjan Parajuli Program Coordinator, Democracy and Governance Research Unit, and Editor, Publication Program, Martin Chautari, Kathmandu	Educating Women for Men’s Sake: Discourses of Female Education in Late Rana Nepal		
Man Khattri PhD Scholar at Tribhuvan University	Climate Change, Food Sovereignty, Crops, Livestock Production Among the Lobas of Nepal	Seira Tamang Director of Research, Martin Chautari, Kathmandu	The Hindu State, Women’s Activism and The Cultural Coding of Sexual Violence and Impunity in Nepal		
BREAK: 3 - 3:30 pm (refreshments will be served in the dining hall)					

Day 1	SESSION 4: 3.30 – 5.00 PM		22 July
HALL A		HALL B	
Panel A4		Panel B4	
Water Security, Ecosystem Services and Livelihoods in the Himalayas		Emerging Political Dynamics in Nepal	
Chair: Dinesh Paudel South Asia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS) Nepal and Appalachian State University		Chair: Laurie Vasily Executive Director, United States Education Foundation (USEF) Nepal	
Devendra Chauhan, Vishal Singh, Anvita Pandey, Rajesh Thadani & Centre for Ecology, Development and Research (CEDAR), India Ngamindra Dahal Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS), Nepal	Sustainability of Water Supply in Hill Towns in The Himalayas	Richard Bownas Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of Northern Colorado Ratna Bishokarma Sociology student, Tribhuvan University	Between Synergy and Co-optation: Dalits and Maoists Before, During and After the ‘People’s War’
Kamal Devkota, Hemant Ojha, Kaustuv Raj Neupane, Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS), Nepal Bhaskar Vira & Eszter Kovacs University of Cambridge	Negotiating Water Security: Dynamics of Up and Down Stream Water Management in Two Small Towns in Nepal’s Himalaya	Mahendra Lawoti Professor, Department of Political Science, Western Michigan University	Elections and Under-representation in Democratizing Nepal
Chetan Agarwal, Centre for Ecology, Development and Research (CEDAR), India Tikeshwari Joshi & Kaustuv R. Neupane Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS), Nepal	Water Catchments and Water Users: Zoning, Negotiations and Other Mechanisms for Water Security in The Urbanizing Himalayas		
BREAK: 5 - 5:30 pm (refreshments will be served in the dining hall)			
KEYNOTE ADDRESS: 5:30 pm			
HALL B			
Tanka Subba Vice-Chancellor, Sikkim University		Nepalis without Nepal: Migration, Livelihood and Identity	
Moderator: Kanak Mani Dixit Ex-Com member, Social Science Baha, and Founding Editor, <i>Himal Southasian</i>			

Day 2: 23 July (Thursday)

SESSION 5: 9 – 10:30 am			
HALL A		HALL B	
<u>Panel A5</u>		<u>Panel B5</u>	
Nepal in Transformation: Changing Women's Roles and Responsibilities		Societal Conflict and Post-Conflict Trends	
Chair: Meena Poudel Policy and Programme Advisor, International Organisation for Migration (IOM)		Chair: Jeevan Raj Sharma Lecturer in South Asia and International Development, University of Edinburgh	
Meena Acharya Team Leader, UN Women research on progress of women in Nepal	The National Market Under a Federal System, Ensuring Equal Playing Field for Women	Prakash Bhattarai PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand	Effectiveness of Third-Party Coordination in Conflict Resolution: Evidence from Nepal
Madhuri Rana Singh Visiting Faculty, Department of Conflict Peace and Development Studies, Tribhuvan University	Breaking the Silence Shrouding Violence against Women & Girls: Socio-Political Accountability towards Women's Human Rights	Prabin Nanicha Shrestha MA in Conflict, Peace and Development Studies, Tribhuvan University	'Music for Peace' Discourse and Local Understanding in Post-Conflict Nepal
Binda Pandey Deputy Member of ILO Governing Body from Workers' Group	Participatory Democracy and Federalization of The Country – What does it mean for Feminist Political Agenda	Sandeep Basnyat PhD student, Department of Tourism, University of Otago, New Zealand	Labour Movements and The Tourism Industry: Do They Have Historical Nexus in Post-Conflict Nepal?
BREAK: 10:30 – 11:00 am (refreshments will be served in the dining hall)			
SESSION 6: 11:00 am – 12.30 pm			
HALL A		HALL B	
<u>Panel A6</u>		<u>Panel B6</u>	
Cultural Investigations and Politics		Land and Politics in Nepal: Anthropological Investigations	
Chair: Hari Sharma Social Science Baha		Chair: Katharine Rankin Professor of Geography, University of Toronto	
Ramawatar Yadav Former Vice-Chancellor, Purbanchal University, Nepal	A Hitherto Undiscovered and Unstudied Hand-Copied Newari Manuscript of a Maithili Bārahmāsā Song Composed by King Jagatprakāśamalla (1643-1673 CE) of Nepal: Preliminary Analysis	Jacob Rinck Doctoral Student, Socio-cultural Anthropology, Yale University	Land Reform, Social Change and Political Cultures in Nepal's Tarai
Gerard Toffin Distinguished Emeritus Director of Research, CNRS, Paris	Politics of Culture and Ethnic Museums in Nepal	Sujit Shrestha Emory University, USA	Making and Un-making 'Sukumbasi': Contestations over Naming in Kathmandu's Urban Politics
Anne Mocko Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies	Who Sees the Sacred Vest? Ritual, Politics, and The Recasting Bhoto Jatra during Nepal's Interim Period	Amy Leigh Johnson Doctoral Student, Anthropology, Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University	"Tharu-Pahadi Bhaai Bhaai": Imagining Federalism in Sundar Sudurpaschim
LUNCH BREAK: 12:30 – 1:30 pm (served in the dining hall)			

Day 2		SESSION 7: 1:30 – 3:00 pm		23 July	
HALL A			HALL B		
<u>Panel A7</u>			<u>Panel B7</u>		
Investigating Technology-Society Links in Nepal: An Eclectic Proposition			Identity Politics: Old and New		
Chair: Yogesh Raj Martin Chautari			Chair: Sambriddhi Kharel Social Science Baha		
Birat Ghimire Universal Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd Sambeg Panthi Pokhara University		Policy of Repair: MHP Development in Nepal	Shyam Krishna Shrestha Consultant Country Coordinator, Terre des hommes Germany Southasia Program Anita Shrestha PhD Scholar, Department of Sociology, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur		Identity Issue of Dhaugoda Newar after Unification of The Bhaktapur Kingdom in Nepal
Nischal Regmi Martin Chautari Shailesh B. Pandey Senior Researcher, Martin Chautari		An Insight into ICT's Energy Consumption and its Implications	Krishna P. Adhikari Research Fellow, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford David Gellner Chair, Britain-Nepal Academic Council		New Identity Politics and the 2012 Collapse of Nepal's Constituent Assembly: When The Dominant becomes 'Other'
Harsha Man Maharjan Researcher, Media Research Unit, Martin Chautari		Rise and fall of High Level Information Technology Commission in Nepal			
BREAK: 3 –3:30 pm (refreshments will be served in the dining hall)					

Day 2		SESSION 8: 3:30 – 5:00 pm		23 July	
HALL A			HALL B		
Panel A8 Citizen and the State			Panel B8 Engaging with Higher Education Reforms in Nepal		
Chair: Mahendra Lawoti Professor of Political Science, Western Michigan University			Chair: Tanka Subba Vice-Chancellor, Sikkim University		
Prapanna Maskey Master's Degree in Philosophy, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur		Issues and Impact of Social Security and Citizenship on Nepali Society	Pramod Bhatta Director of Research, Education Research Unit, Martin Chautari, Kathmandu		Affiliation as Privatization: Trajectories of University Expansion in Nepal
Khem Shreesh, Sanjay Sharma & Rooja Bajracharya Independent Researchers		'Numbering of the people': 100 Years of Census in Nepal and National Discourse	Devendra Uprety, Pratyoush Onta, Lokranjan Parajuli Martin Chautari, Kathmandu		How Not to Make New Universities
Pawan Kumar Sen Interdisciplinary Analysts, Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur		Nepal's Transformation from Monarchism to Republicanism: In Views of General Public	Pratyoush Onta, Krishna Adhikari, Lokranjan Parajuli, Devendra Uprety Martin Chautari, Kathmandu Ramesh Rai Tribhuvan University		The Saga of a Transition: The Efforts to 'Rightsize' Tribhuvan University in Post-Panchayat Nepal
BREAK: 5-5:30 pm (refreshments will be served in the dining hall)					
PUBLIC PANEL SESSION: 5:30 pm					
HALL B					
Panelists: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Bhaskar Gautam Martin ChautariMallika Shakya South Asian UniversityAustin Lord Cornell UniversityJeevan Baniya Social Science Baha			Earthquake 2015 and Social Scientists: Reflections from the Field and Afar		
Moderator: David Gellner, University of Oxford					
This panel discussion has been partially supported by The Asia Foundation					

Day 3: 24 July (Friday)

SESSION 9: 9 – 10:30am

HALL A		HALL B	
<u>Panel A9</u>		<u>Panel B9</u>	
Politics and the Local		Literature, Politics and Boundaries	
Chair: Dambar Chemjong Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, Tribhuvan University		Chair: Ramawatar Yadav Former Vice-Chancellor, Purbanchal University	
Raktim Patar Assistant Professor of History, Gargaon College, Sivasagar, Assam	Village Administration among the Tiwa: A Discourse on The Loroship	Ajapa Sharma M.A Modern History, Jawaharlal Nehru University	Modernity Multiplied: B.P Koirala's Women Between Literature and Politics
Tashi Tshering Ghale 'Dolpo' Social Science Baha	The Contested Local Elections	Mallika Shakya Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, South Asian University, New Delhi	Belonging and Border in the Twentieth Century Nepali Novels
Sanjaya Mahato PhD Fellow at Graduate School for Social Research (GSSR), Polish Academic of Sciences, Warsaw	Social Costs and Benefits of Party Switching in Nepal	Catherine Warner PhD, South Asian History, University of Washington, Seattle	Exile, Sovereignty, and the Place of Palpa in the Making of The India- Nepal Borderland (c. 1790 to 1816)

BREAK: 10:30am– 11:00 pm (refreshments will be served in the dining hall)

SESSION 10: 11:00 am – 12:30 pm

HALL A		HALL B	
<u>Panel A10</u>		<u>Panel B10</u>	
Home and Away		Modernity and Change in Nepali Society	
Chair: Bandita Sijapati Research Director, Centre for the Study of Labour and Mobility, Social Science Baha		Chair: Seira Tamang Director of Research, Martin Chautari	
Balram Uprety Assistant Professor in English, St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling	Presenting The Absence: A Contrapuntal Reading of the Maita in Nepali Teej Songs	Gita Neupane PhD candidate in Sociology, University of Hawaii at Manoa, Hawaii	Men's Perspectives on Sexual Harassment against Women in Public Space in Kathmandu
Laxmi Dhungel PhD candidate, Kathmandu University School of Arts	Women Educational Migrants Return to Nepal and Their Role in Transforming Society 'Gharki Le Ghar Garnu, Marda Le Chari Khanu'	Shreemanjari Tamrakar , MPhil Student in Sociology, Tribhuvan University Tracy Ghale Research Associate, Social Science Baha Sanjay Sharma Independent Researcher	'Maybe it's just a phase': Parental Reaction to Non- heterosexuality
Andrew Nelson Lecturer, Department of Anthropology, University of North Texas	Between Social Evil and Social Necessity: The Dual Meaning of Kathmandu Dalāls	Sabin Ninglekhu Member, Editorial Board, <i>New Angle: Nepal Journal of Social Science and Public Policy</i>	The City as a Bourgeois Desire

LUNCH BREAK: 12:30pm– 1:30 pm (served in the dining hall)

Day 3	SESSION 11: 1:30 – 2:30 pm		24 July
HALL A		HALL B	
Panel A11		Panel B11	
Health and the Mind		Reflections from the Eastern Tarai	
Chair: Anne Mocko Assistant Professor, Concordia College		Chair: Pramod Bhatta Director of Research, Martin Chautari	
Nawaraj Upadhaya Health Net TPO, The Netherlands and Ministry of Public Health, Afghanistan	The Role of Mental Health and Psychosocial Support NGOs: Reflections from Post Conflict Nepal	Miranda Weinberg PhD Candidate, Educational Linguistics and Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania	Schooling Languages: Investigating Language-in-Education Policies and Educational Aspirations in Jhapa District, Nepal
Ashley Hagaman PhD Candidate, Anthropology and Global Health, School of Human Evolution and Social Change, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, MPH	Suicide Surveillance and Health Systems: How Nepali Institutions Frame a Growing Public Health Burden	Madhu Giri PhD in Anthropology, Tribhuvan University	Becoming a Musahar and Making Space: Storytelling as an Art of Telling History in Eastern Tarai
Uden Maharjan Thammasat University, Thailand			
BREAK: 2:30-3:00pm (refreshments will be served in the dining hall)			
SESSION 12: 3:00 – 5:00 pm			
HALL B			
Panel B12			
Society in the High Himalaya			
Chair: Rajendra Pradhan Member, Social Science Baha, and Dean, Nepa School of Social Sciences and Humanities			
Katsuo Nawa Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, The University of Tokyo		On ‘Thumcharu’: The Concept of ‘Tradition’ in Byans, Far Western Nepal	
Samuele Poletti PhD candidate, Department of Social Anthropology, University of Edinburgh		Being in the Shadow of Death: Existential reflections on Mortality as a Modality of Being-in-the-world in the Sinja Valley of Western Nepal	
BREAK: 5-5:30pm (refreshments will be served in the dining hall)			
PUBLIC SESSION: 5.30 PM			
HALL B			
Speakers: Shamik Mishra and Deepak Aryal Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya		1934 Earthquake Revisited: A View from the Archives	
Moderator: Pratyoush Onta			
This presentation has been partially supported by The Asia Foundation			

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