

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

2017

THE ANNUAL KATHMANDU CONFERENCE ON
NEPAL & THE HIMALAYA



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Note: Not all the papers presented at the conference were submitted for publication; some were published in other platforms while others remain unpublished. The conference schedule is provided in the appendix of this volume. The full list of presentations made at the conference along with the abstracts submitted can be viewed at www.annualconference.soscbaha.org/conference/conference-2017.

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Appendix

Analysing the Construction of Gendered Work

A Case of Hotels, Resorts, and Casinos in the Kathmandu Valley

MONA SHRESTHA ADHIKARI

Introduction

With a particular focus on the expansion of the service industry, it is important to understand the dynamics of women's entry and employment in the context of the gendered labour market. Like markets, organisations are not gender-neutral and gender stereotypes exist at the workplace, which at times are reinforced by organisational policies and management practices (Acker 1990). The construction of jobs and hierarchies in an organisation has a gendered dimension. Cockburn (1988) views ending sex-segregation at work as a pre-requisite for ending the social division of labour by which masculinity is associated with economic production and femininity with reproduction and domestic life.

Studies of work in the hotel industry illustrate that women and men experience different kinds of gendered occupational segregation (Crompton and Sanderson 1990; Levy and Lerch 1991; Adkins 1995; Sinclair 1997). Women's work is confined to traditional women's areas like housekeeping and reception duties and often viewed as an extension of their domestic and household activities. Men predominantly occupy skilled and managerial jobs. A few studies of the casinos concentrated in Las Vegas and Nevada demonstrate that the industry employs a high number of young women workers, who work under strict human and electronic surveillance and are regulated on their appearance (Enarson 1993; Jones and Chandler 2001, 2007; Chandler and Jones 2003; Sallez 2005).

In Nepal, very little research exists on gendered employment in hotels, resorts, and casinos. A few studies (CBS 2004; Khanal 2005; Upadhayay et al 2011) have documented the masculinisation of the sector and shown that the proportion of women in the total workforce is limited to 18 per cent. Khanal (2005) limits her study to three five-star hotels and simply

reports the findings that managers preferred to employ women in some departments, such as the reservation, sales and marketing, guest relations, front desk, and housekeeping departments because women were considered to have more convincing and negotiating capacity than men. Moreover, as noted by Upadhayay et al (2011), 18 per cent of the workforce in 10 five-star hotels and 35 per cent of the workforce in 10 casinos in Nepal were women as of 2008. This paper¹ aims to contribute to the studies on hotel industry by exploring the construction of gendered work in the hotels, resorts, and casinos drawing on a feminist research conducted in six establishments² in Nepal. I argue that gendered work is constructed by three distinct but related dimensions, namely: a) the gender division of labour, b) the gendered ideologies of managers and workers, and c) the gendering of skills provided through training.

Gender and Work

Gender has long been understood as a social construction. Gender underpins sets of assumptions regarding masculine and feminine behaviour that is associated with being a male or a female, and those are guided by socio-cultural norms of different societies (Charles 1993; Forseth 2005; McDowell 2009). These gendered expectations or assumptions also prevail at work as 'workplaces are dynamic and changing and are themselves embedded within wider social structures and attitudes and assumptions about gender and sexuality' (McDowell 2009, 54).

Acker (1990, 146) argues 'to say that an organisation ... is gendered is to say that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine'. In addition, Acker (1990, 149-50) asserts that the concepts of both 'a job' and 'hierarchies' are gendered. While 'a job' contains the gender-based division of labour and the separation of the public-private sphere, 'hierarchies' are also constructed on the assumption that those who are committed to work are more suited to authority and responsibility and, therefore, are in higher ranks (invariably men), and those whose commitments are divided are in lower ranks (largely women). Moreover, Elson (1995, 1) writes, 'an emphasis on gender highlights the fact that work is gendered; that some tasks are seen as 'women's work',

1 The paper is part of a larger study on women's paid work and empowerment in the hotel industry in which I do not focus on class, caste, and ethnicity as categories of analysis but have analysed the way workers 'do' and 'undo/redo' gender and how they perform different types of labour (such as emotional labour, aesthetic labour, and sexualised labour) at work.

2 I selected two samples from each category of five star hotels, deluxe resorts, and casinos.

to do which is demeaning for men; while other tasks are ‘men’s work’, to do which unsexes women’.

The concept of ‘occupational segregation’ (Hakim 1981) unpacks the gender division of labour at work, positing that occupational segregation consists of two dimensions: vertical and horizontal. While vertical segregation looks at who is employed and where in the organisational hierarchy, horizontal segregation looks into who is employed in which kind of work in the different departments within an organisation and more widely across the labour market. While analysing occupational segregation provides an insight into who does what, it is also crucial to further investigate how workers ‘do’ and ‘undo/redo’ gender at work. West and Zimmerman (1987, 126) present their understanding of gender as ‘a routine, methodical, and recurring accomplishment’ and propose that it is both men and women who ‘do’ gender, which is ‘an ongoing situated process, a ‘doing’ rather than a ‘being’ (West and Zimmerman 2009, 114). Their understanding points to gender as an ongoing process that depends on context, by comparing interactions that display so called ‘natural’ or ‘essential’ masculine or feminine traits associated with the gender of a person.

Deutsch (2007, 122) proposes using ‘... the phrase “doing gender” to refer to social interactions that reproduce gender difference and ... the phrase “undoing gender” to refer to social interactions that reduce gender difference’. However, West and Zimmerman (2009, 117) view this expansion of ‘doing’ to ‘undoing’ gender as ‘a change in the normative conceptions to which members of particular sex categories are held accountable’ further pointing to ‘a shift in accountability: Gender is not *undone* so much as *redone*’ (West and Zimmerman 2009, 118, emphasis in original).

Amidst the scant literature in Nepal on women’s employment in the hotel industry, Khanal (2005) and Upadhayay et al (2011) focus on gendered workforce data. In this paper, I move beyond the gendered workforce data and explore gendered work in hotels, resorts, and casinos within the hotel industry. I use the concept of occupational segregation to unpack the gender division of labour by analysing vertical and horizontal segregation. Discussion with workers and managers provide insights into other dimensions that contribute to the construction of gendered work.

The Context

Nepal has an ethnically diverse population of 26.62 million comprising 48.56 per cent male and 51.44 per cent female (CBS 2011). Women in Nepal face discrimination from the patriarchal structures embedded in the laws of the country, society, and at workplaces (Bhadra 2009; Acharya 2010).

Nepal is witnessing a shift from a dependence on agriculture to a service-based economy. Women are concentrated in agriculture and forestry, followed by manufacturing sector (CBS 2009). Within the services sector, 1.65 per cent of all women in the labour force are concentrated in the hotel and restaurant sector. In addition, women are concentrated on training related to housekeeping and hospitality (MoF 2011). Tourism Statistics 2010 (MoTCA 2010) reports that training on housekeeping has been dominated by women while men dominate the training programmes on food preparation (including food and beverage service), front office, bar tender, and in-service training.

Research Design

As per the Hotel Association of Nepal (HAN 2001), there were eight five-star hotels, five deluxe resorts, and eight casinos in Kathmandu. I administered questionnaires to personnel managers in all the 21 establishments about their workforce. I used questionnaires to collect data on gendered workforce in these establishments during my preliminary field visit to Kathmandu in July and August 2008.

During the second visit between April and December 2009, I conducted 65 interviews with different groups of people (workers, managers, male family members, and policy experts), organised two focus group discussions with women working on the gaming floor of casinos, and made observations. I chose two establishments from each of the three categories, namely, five-star hotels, deluxe resorts, and casinos based on the relatively high proportion of women in their workforce. To maintain confidentiality, I chose to use pseudonyms: Platinum Hotel (PH), Gold Hotel (GH), Sun Resort (SR), Moon Resort (MR), Dazzle Casino (DC), and Glitter Casino (GC).

Research Findings

Data gathered on the distribution of workforce in the 21 establishments showed that the majority of the workers were men, with women comprising 14 per cent and 21 per cent in hotels and resorts respectively. The casinos, a relatively new area of employment, have relatively fewer numbers of men and 32 per cent of the workforce is female.

Gendered Division of Labour

I use Acker (1990)'s framework of gendered organisation, gendered jobs, and hierarchies. I further analyse the gender division of labour using the concept of occupational segregation (Hakim 1981).

Table 1: Distribution of Total Workforce in Sample Establishments

Establishments	Male	Female	Workforce Total
Five-star Hotels	2591	434	3025
Deluxe Resorts	563	152	715
Casinos	3948	1882	5830
Total Workforce	7102	2468	9570

Source: Preliminary, July 2008.

Vertical Segregation

As Hakim (1981) notes, vertical segregation refers to who is employed where in the organisational hierarchy. The table shows that there are gendered hierarchies (Acker 1990) within the establishments, with the managers being mostly men. A few women are managers and their number varies across the five establishments. However, I do not have precise data from DC; therefore, only the total workforce data in casinos has been calculated in the table below.

Table 2: Proportion of Total Workforce in Managerial and Non-managerial Positions in Sample Establishments by Gender

Sample Establishment	Managerial Workers			Non-managerial Workers			Total Workforce		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Platinum Hotel	32	1	33	224	68	292	256	69	325
Gold Hotel	38	8	46	248	48	296	286	56	342
Hotels	70	9	79	472	116	588	542	125	667
Sun Resort	8	1	9	115	43	158	123	44	167
Moon Resort	31	8	39	126	41	167	157	49	206
Resorts	39	9	48	241	84	325	280	93	373
Dazzle Casino	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	388	169	557
Glitter Casino	37	4	41	339	325	664	376	329	705
Casinos	-	-	-	-	-	-	764	498	1262

Source: Field Visit, April 2009; n/a: not available.

Horizontal Segregation

According to Hakim (1981), horizontal segregation refers to the distribution of women and men between different departments. Presented in Table 3 below, I examine the offices which I have categorised as front office, those where customer interaction is high, and back office, those that support the front office and have limited customer interaction.³

³ In service work, particularly the hotel and casino sectors, it is common to hear the terms front office or front-line workers referring to those who are regularly interacting with customers to

Table 3: Proportion of Total Workforce in Front Office and Back Office in Sample Establishments by Gender

Category of Analysis	No. of Workers			No. of Workers		
	Platinum Hotel			Gold Hotel		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Front office	78 (74)	27 (26)	105	101 (79)	27 (21)	128
Back office	178 (81)	42 (19)	220	185 (86)	29 (14)	214
Total	256 (80)	69 (20)	325	286 (84)	56 (16)	342
	Sun Resort			Moon Resort		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Front office	51 (74)	18 (26)	69	81 (77)	24 (23)	104
Back office	72 (73)	26 (27)	98	107 (76)	33 (24)	140
Total	123 (74)	44 (26)	167	188 (77)	57 (23)	245
	Dazzle Casino			Glitter Casino		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Front office	180 (57)	137 (43)	317	110 (29)	270 (71)	380
Back office	208 (87)	32 (13)	240	266 (82)	59 (18)	325
Total	388 (70)	169 (30)	557	376 (53)	329 (47)	705

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

Source: Field Visit, April 2009.

The above table shows that most workers are concentrated in the back office which is well known to be the ‘backbone’ of the hotels and resorts. Conversely, the ‘backbone’ of casinos is the front of house where workers, especially women, are concentrated in the gaming department.

Furthermore, detailed workforce distribution across various departments (See Annex 1, Annex 2, and Annex 3) shows that in hotels and resorts women

provide services, distinguishable from those working in the back office and back of the house workers who support front office workers in providing face-to-face services to customers. In my research, workers and managers used similar terms of front office or front of house and back office or back of house to make this distinction.

are also concentrated in departments that involve work such as housekeeping, serving food and beverage, body/beauty care, and in casinos, on the gaming floor in assisting and entertaining customers, largely men, who gamble. Women are also the majority of the workforce in some departments such as sales and marketing in GH and DC, housekeeping in SR and DC, health club/spa in SR, and gaming and guest relations in GC. The majority of workers in the other departments are male. The workforce in some departments such as engineering and laundry in hotels and resorts and transport in casinos is exclusively male, but there are no departments where the workforce is exclusively female.

Gendered Ideologies of Managers and Workers

Some accounts of both managers and workers were guided by gendered ideologies that were underpinned by essentialist views, wherein work was considered as either 'men's work' or 'women's work'. They assigned masculine and feminine attributes to men and women respectively and considered them suitable accordingly in the various departments within the establishments.

'Men's Work': Masculine Attributes

While most managers focused on explaining why women were working in certain departments, few managers highlighted that women did not apply or were rare in departments such as food and beverage production and engineering. For example, the manager of MR said, 'Men are more into craftsmanship and engineering professions; women are rarely found in these professions'.

Likewise, male workers in engineering, food and beverage service, laundry, and security associated their work with physical strength. Pradeep (male, laundry, PH) asserted, 'Doing laundry with big machines... is no doubt a man's job'. When I asked how he would feel if there were some women in his department, he replied, 'This would bring distraction among us. I mean, among men folks, there could be fights over women's matter ... you know what I mean?' Pradeep perceived women to be more of a distraction and that women's entry into the laundry work could create chaos and cause fragmentation in the unity of male workers. His response also indicates resistance to women's entry, thus maintaining the 'male monopoly' in the department as he tries to draw gendered boundaries at work. It can be said that these men 'do' gender, resisting women's entry into male-dominated departments such that their male privilege remains intact.

Calling on male colleagues to help to do housekeeping work was also

mentioned by some women. For example, Runa (MR) said, 'I ask for help from men in my department to shift furniture and adjust the curtain hooks because they are stronger than me'. This indicates that some women in the housekeeping department also assume/expect men as being fit to do jobs that require attributes seen as masculine, such as physical strength.

Additionally, Dipen (security, GC) is sceptical of women's ability to handle the chaotic environment of the gaming floor and seems to suggest the job of a bouncer⁴ is fit for a man rather than a woman, as his quote below suggests:

...it is difficult for women colleagues to handle the situation when there are cases of drunken men shouting or abusing customers, workers, yelling foul language, and creating an environment for a row.

Dipen's quote shows that working as a bouncer involves working with risk, and potentially violent customers, while facing threats from some of the drunk and abusive customers. He suggests that being a man he could take it but for his women colleagues it would be too much to handle the risky work as a bouncer.

Hence, according to the gendered ideologies of managers and workers, masculine attributes associated with (some aspects of) work such as doing work that demands physical strength and working with risk reinforces and legitimises the gender division of labour.

'Women's Work': Feminine Attributes

Managers and most workers point towards certain ideologies concerning the suitability of women in certain departments. Managers and female workers explain a preference for women workers for two 'natural' reasons: first, women have acquired the skill to do certain tasks like cleaning and caring at home, and skills acquired at home are assumed to be easily transferrable to work; and second, that women are presentable, with a charming personality, good interpersonal skills, are soft-spoken, and have a liking for work related to beauty and body care.

Having good interpersonal skills, being soft spoken and presentable with a charming personality, and not being aggressive were attributes managers expected from women workers. In hotels and resorts, managers saw women as suited to reception and sales and marketing departments because they were 'good at inter-personal skills' (manager, PH) and are 'more presentable... [have] charming personality...are soft spoken and do not get into arguments

⁴ Bouncers are workers who provide security mainly at the gaming floor in a casino and are included in the security department.

like men' (Manager, GH). Moreover, women were also seen as having 'the motherly feeling with them', being calm in nature and being able to 'handle customer's anger' (manager, MR).

Managers of casinos suggested that the casino business was perceived as a 'glamorous' one, signaling the requirement for young women to be perceived as the 'attraction'. Manager of GC highlighted that they 'give more preference to girls in the customer relations department'.

Some women workers also associated women's caring role in the family with what they do at work. For example, Rohinee (GC), working as a guest relations assistant, is required to 'ensure that the guest is well taken care of...lighting his cigarette, changing his money', and making sure he is comfortably seated and has enough to eat and drink.

Most women working in the customer service-related departments believed they were good at listening, communicating, were soft-spoken, and could control their anger, and that these skills were what they used when interacting with customers. For example, Neeta (GC) mentions, 'Communicating with customers is what women can do better than men...because women are good at listening, do not lose their temper fast, and are soft spoken too'.

Housekeeping work was considered by managers and women workers to be more suitable for women. For example, the manager of MR mentioned, 'Women are better at decorating and are multi-skilled', and the manager of SR said, 'Women can handle the housekeeping work better, they are used to doing it at home'. Some women workers working in housekeeping echoed these views. For example, Tarini (MR) mentioned:

I feel women can do the housekeeping work as it is quite similar to the work they do at home. At home, women do several things at a time like cooking, feeding the baby, cleaning the house, etc.

The gendered ideologies of managers and workers on housekeeping see it as 'women's work' which involves multi-tasking including cleaning, caring, and decorating; multi-tasking since it is similar to housework that women learn at home and are seen as 'natural' qualities of women. Within the housekeeping department, while most women were found to be doing the former kind of work such as cleaning bedrooms, men were assigned to clean the public areas.

Thus, gendered ideologies are underpinned by essentialist views that attach attributes of masculinity and femininity to certain jobs which are considered as 'men's' and 'women's', and further expect and lead workers to 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman 1987) differently at work. For

example, working as an engineer or doing laundry work that involves using big machines and lifting heavy equipment are considered as 'men's' jobs. Work reminiscent of that which women often do at home, such as cleaning or entertaining guests, are considered as 'women's' jobs.

That said, a few women workers are challenging the gendered ideologies by resisting the gendered aspects of work. As illustrated by their quotes, they were doing work demanding physical strength. It contradicts with managers' and workers' ideologies that women are not strong compared to men.

I had to prove myself to work in the kitchen with men. Though some men would suggest that they lift the heavy utensils, I felt they were trying to tease me... (Karuna, food and beverage production, MR).

I did everything from lifting big pots and standing long hours in front of the oven just to prove myself that I could handle the tough work (Dolma, kitchen, PH).

These women are challenging the notion that women cannot do work that requires physical strength. Women assumed masculine attributes and further highlighted having to prove themselves as they faced resistance from male workers; these women are 'undoing' gender (Deutsch 2007). Furthermore, there is a disjuncture; the ideologies held by managers and workers around who is suitable to do the work sometimes contrast and contradict.

Gendering of Skills: Training Provided by Establishments

Establishments provide training to workers with the primary motive of ensuring that the service provided leads to customer satisfaction as well as maximises workers' productivity. Many workers bring with them some kind of gendered skills when they enter the work as explained in the quote from the manager of PH:

Men and women join the hotel because they come with certain training and skills that make them suitable in certain departments, as men get trained as cooks, stewards, engineering, and women get trained as receptionists and secretaries...

However, besides the skills workers bring with them, they are also imparted various training to further provide standardised and 'quality' service. I categorise the training provided into four sets of skills that are inter-related. These skills relate to: doing, managing, looking, and pleasing.

Skills Related to 'Doing'

Most of the training was focused around 'doing' work, keeping in mind the quality of service that establishments provide to their customers. With increased competition and a need to maintain the standard of the hotels and resorts, workers' accounts explained that training related to 'doing' the specific work in the 'right way' according to the establishment's own style. For example, Uttara (female, GH) considers that 'training makes you do the work in the right way'.

In the casinos, providing satisfaction to the customers was vital, and training related to games seemed very important as the gaming floor was the heart of the casino as seen from the focus group discussion with women from GC below:

Madina: We had to keep working with the cards at home, at work until we acquired that talent.

Sonali: I know, I was continuously playing...and it was not easy. I also had to revise my mathematics...we had to be quick...

Madina: Yes, one mistake in calculation can cause a big loss to the casino. We cannot afford to make any mistakes...we need to be always on the alert with calculations.

Workers also had to undergo persistent practice to ensure that they got it right. Madina's quote further illustrates the costs of a mistake in calculation which demonstrates the salience of training workers to sharpen their skills related to 'doing'.⁵ Men were also trained with skills related to working with calculation and cards. Pritam (gaming, DC) expressed, 'I also regularly practised shuffling cards based on the training'.

Similarly, in the case of hotels and resorts, male workers are provided with skills related to 'doing' certain kinds of work such as engineering, laundry, production of food and beverage, and wood carving to name a few, depending on the gender division of labour and the gendered ideologies of managers related to 'men's work'.

Managers also emphasised the provision of various kinds of training to enhance workers' skills and provide better services to customers, as well as different training depending on which department they worked. For example, the manager of PH said, '[Men] in laundry are trained in using new technologies with laundry machines...women in housekeeping are trained on updated decoration styles'.

5 It is largely women workers in GC who are provided such training as they dominate the gaming floor. In the case of DC, there are nearly equal number of men and women workers working as croupiers, so both men and women who are provided with such training.

Skills Related to 'Managing'

Training provided to both male and female workers by hotels and resorts included imparting skills related to 'managing' people and departmental work.

I have to manage a lot of staff in the department. I was recently sent for training on how to manage people and the departmental work as well. (Dinesh, male, reception, GH)

With my new role as a supervisor, the training related to supervising workers and the department work has been helpful. (Kalpana, female, housekeeping, MR)

While both quotes explain being trained with skills to manage departmental work, it was Dinesh, a male worker, who explicitly said he received training on how to manage people and Kalpana, a female worker, who received training on supervising workers and the department work. This distinction was also expressed by other men and women who acquired skills related to 'managing' and 'supervising'. This could be possibly because of different positions within the establishment hierarchy, which meant that men were working at managerial level while women were working at the supervisory level. It also reflects that although both men and women were trained on skills related to 'managing', the understanding of the term 'managing' had gendered meanings as men referred to it as 'managing' while women referred to it as 'supervising'. This indicates that when men were referring to the same training in terms of 'managing', they could possibly be seeing it as high status, thus inflating what they said, and by implication also inflating their position.

Skills Related to 'Looking'

One common feature of training provided by all hotels, resorts, and casinos was training on looking good, presentable, and/or attractive as a result of the element of 'glamour' in the sector. This reinforces the significance of aesthetics at the workplace. For example, the manager of MR said: '[W]omen like to look good. We provide them with training on how to look good'. This quote indicates that the training builds on a preference women already assumed to have.

I specifically asked workers to explain what they were taught in terms of grooming, and, for example, Ramakant (male, fitness, PH) and Dipen (male, security, GC) both pointed out that they were trained to 'look smart' with

short hair and clean nails and to maintain body hygiene, which seemed to be general requirements for all workers across establishments; most workers mentioned similar grooming requirements.⁶ Thus, while both men and women are trained on grooming, the emphasis is on women workers whether or not they are in front office. Women workers emphasised being trained to look good, including how to put on makeup and do their hair. Kalpana (housekeeping, MR) mentioned: 'The emphasis is on the women although both men and women who work with guests are provided such training. I think we all need to look good'.

Some managers' accounts also indicate that women are expected to look good and that looking good is more important for women. For example, the manager of MR said:

Women...need to pay attention to their hair, makeup, and how they present themselves. Also, the men...but for women it is more important... they do well in this glamorous job.

This shows that 'looking' is gendered differently for men and women who are all expected to 'look good' in all establishments. The emphasis is more on women in all establishments as 'looking' is defined differently for men and women by managers. Moreover, it was women who were expected to look 'glamorous'. Furthermore, in both casinos, training on skills related to 'looking' and grooming standards outlined in staff handbooks had more detailed and extensive requirements for women compared to those for men.⁷

Skills Related to 'Pleasing'

While all workers are trained to smile when interacting with customers, workers' understanding of smiling was different as can be seen from the quote below:

6 Examples of other general codes of grooming related to workers' outfits and accessories, e.g., ironed clothes, clean polished shoes, wearing a maximum of two rings, hair not hanging in the face, women tying their hair neatly and men having short hair.

7 For example, posture, voice, hygiene, manners, and attitude of workers are considered important for all workers and are more extensive for women. Men are expected to have short, neat hair with no coloured streaks, no beard or moustache, clean shaved, and only one watch and one ring can be worn. For women, there are many more requirements than those outlined for men. Some of these grooming standards include: shoes with a height of minimum three inches to maximum five inches, studded earrings no bigger than 1.5 centimetres in diameter, hair gathered away from face and properly controlled, no bangles or visible chains, and makeup must be applied as per the grooming lessons. I refrain from quoting the source for confidentiality reasons.

We are trained to smile...be soft spoken and friendly with our customers. Training on communication helps us...not to argue because the customer is always right...this is important as my work involves interacting with customers. (Suresh, male, reception, MR)

I was given overall hotel training...also that when we greet customers, we are always told to smile...we must be soft spoken and smile so that customer feels welcome...pleased ... (Sabina, female, housekeeping, PH)

Although both quotes highlight the imperative of being soft spoken, Suresh talked about being friendly while Sabina talked about having to smile. These indicate the importance of gendered skills related to pleasing at work. Some women workers from casinos discussed being trained to 'please' the customers by caring for them; women were expected to 'please' (male) customers through their looks. For example, Rohinee (GC) said:

...to please them [customers] ... I used to be told to wear sexy clothes. I learnt how to speak in a caring tone through some communication related training.

Hence, through the training provided by establishments, there is a gendering of skills as workers are trained to work in certain ways as part of doing gendered work. These skills of 'doing', 'managing', 'looking', and 'pleasing' are not mutually exclusive.

Conclusion

This research finds that the nature of gendered work varies depending on the type of sector/industry in which the work takes place. It shows that the country-context is important; the workforce in hotel and casino sector in Nepal is not feminised overall, but certain occupations within it are becoming feminised. This is different to the findings of the studies conducted in the Western context.

Based on my research findings, I make three conclusions. First, I find that at the structural level in which gendered work is constructed demonstrates the 'gendered hierarchies' and 'gendered jobs' across and within the six establishments (Acker 1990). All establishments are masculinised with casinos having a relatively higher proportion of women in their workforce than hotels and resorts. There is a 'gendering of hierarchies' (Acker 1990); managers are mostly male in all establishments. While men are in the majority as managers, there are relatively more women as managers in GH

and MR than others. In GC where 47 per cent of the workforce is women, they are least represented at managerial level.

In addition, there is a 'gendering of jobs' (Acker 1990); there is a gender division of labour within establishments. Women are concentrated in some departments like housekeeping, serving food and beverage, body/beauty care in hotels and resorts and on the gaming floor in casinos. Men comprise the majority of the workforce in other departments.

Second, I find that the gendered ideologies held by managers and workers, which further legitimise and/or contest the gender division of labour. These gendered ideologies are underpinned by essentialist views that attach attributes of masculinity and femininity to certain jobs which are considered as 'men's' and 'women's' domains as if they are 'hermitically sealed' which leads to workers 'doing gender' (West and Zimmerman 1987) at work. In addition, a few women who challenged such gendered ideologies could perhaps be seen as 'undoing gender' (Deutsch 2007) as they work in non-traditional jobs. They faced male resistance and had to prove that they could do the same work as men and consciously challenged the notion that women are not fit to work in certain departments.

Third, one of the ways in which gendered work is constructed is through the gendering of skills that are imparted through the training provided by the establishments. The sets of skills related to 'doing', 'managing', 'looking', and 'pleasing' are not mutually exclusive. Establishments seem to be guided by a focused objective of providing 'quality and standardised service' to their customers, and training (and retraining) workers is part of the employment practices. This means there is a gendering of skills as men and women workers acquire different sets of skills, which also depends on where they work within and across the different establishments; this can be understood as workers doing gender at work.

In conclusion, analysing the construction of gendered work in the hotel industry of Nepal shows that there is gendering of skills that shapes and is shaped by the gender division of labour and the gendered ideologies held by managers and workers around 'men's work' and 'women's work'. In the process, this leads to gendered work being made and remade and workers engaged in 'doing' and 'undoing' gender, which further has implications on the understanding of gender.

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**Annex 1: Proportion of Total Departmental Workforce of
Sample Hotels by Gender**

Department		Platinum Hotel			Gold Hotel		
		Total Workforce			Total Workforce		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Front office	Front Reception	26 (79)	7 (21)	33 (100)	32 (84)	6 (16)	38 (100)
	Food and Beverage Service	36 (84)	7 (16)	43 (100)	51 (85)	9 (15)	60 (100)
	Sales & Marketing	6 (55)	5 (44)	11 (100)	3 (33)	6 (67)	9 (100)
	Fitness/Spa Centre	10 (56)	8 (44)	18 (100)	8 (57)	6 (43)	14 (100)
	Security	0	0	0	7 (100)	0	7 (100)
	Subtotal	78 (74)	27 (26)	105 (100)	101 (79)	27 (21)	128 (100)
Back office	Administration and Human Resources	7 (64)	4 (36)	11 (100)	2 (50)	2 (50)	4 (100)
	Finance	12 (86)	2 (14)	14 (100)	21 (88)	3 (13)	24 (100)
	Engineering	33 (100)	0	33 (100)	27 (96)	1 (4)	28 (100)
	Housekeeping	37 (54)	31 (46)	68 (100)	49 (68)	23 (32)	72 (100)
	Laundry	17 (100)	0	17 (100)	0	0	0
	Food and Beverage Production	50 (91)	5 (9)	55 (100)	86 (100)	0	86 (100)
	Stewarding	22 (100)	0	22 (100)	0	0	0
	Subtotal	178 (81)	42 (19)	220 (100)	185 (86)	29 (14)	214 (100)
	Grand Total	256 (80)	69 (20)	325 (100)	286 (84)	56 (16)	342 (100)

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

Source: Field Visit, April 2009.

**Annex 2: Proportion of Total Departmental Workforce of
Sample Resorts by Gender**

Department		Sun Resort			Moon Resort		
		Total Workforce			Total Workforce		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Front office	Reception	8 (73)	3 (27)	11 (100)	13 (68)	6 (32)	19 (100)
	F&B Service	26 (96)	1 (4)	27 (100)	29 (74)	10 (26)	39 (100)
	Security	2 (100)	0	2 (100)	8 (100)	0	8 (100)
	Outdoor Leisure	9 (82)	2 (18)	11 (100)	0	0	0
	Sales & Marketing	3 (75)	1 (25)	4 (100)	0	0	0
	Health Club/ Spa	3 (21)	11 (79)	14 (100)	0	0	0
	Subtotal	51 (74)	18 (26)	69 (100)	50 (76)	16 (24)	66 (100)
Back office	Admin/HR	18 (86)	3 (14)	21 (100)	6 (100)	0	6 (100)
	Engineering	18 (100)	0	18 (100)	24 (100)	0	24 (100)
	Laundry	6 (86)	1 (14)	7 (100)	7 (100)	0	7 (100)
	Housekeeping	6 (32)	13 (68)	19 (100)	25 (54)	21 (46)	46 (100)
	Accounts	8 (73)	3 (27)	11 (100)	10 (56)	8 (44)	18 (100)
	F&B Production	8 (73)	3 (27)	11 (100)	35 (90)	4 (10)	39 (100)
	Kitchen Stewarding	8 (73)	3 (27)	11 (100)	0	0	0
	Subtotal	72 (73)	26 (27)	98 (100)	107 (76)	33 (24)	140 (100)
	Grand Total	123 (74)	44 (26)	167 (100)	157 (76)	49 (24)	206 (100)

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

Source: Field Visit, April 2009.

**Annex 3: Proportion of Total Departmental Workforce of
Sample Casinos by Gender**

Department		Dazzle Casino			Glitter Casino		
		Total Workforce			Total Workforce		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Front office	Gaming	81 (51)	79 (49)	160 (100)	30 (13)	200 (87)	230 (100)
	Guest Relation	0	0		10 (17)	50 (83)	60 (100)
	Sales & Marketing	7 (19)	29 (81)		10 (100)	0	10 (100)
	Security	46 (81)	11 (19)		0	0	0
	Food & Beverage (service)	46 (72)	18 (28)		60 (75)	20 (25)	80 (100)
	Subtotal	180 (57)	137 (43)		110 (29)	270 (71)	380 (100)
Back office	Human Resource, Administration and Finance	6 (60)	4 (40)		16 (80)	4 (20)	20 (100)
	Housekeeping	14 (47)	16 (53)		50 (63)	30 (38)	80 (100)
	Material	18 (100)	0		0	0	0
	Production	0	0		100 (100)	0	100 (100)
	Kitchen	51 (100)	0		0	0	0
	Kitchen Steward	28 (80)	7 (20)		0	0	0
	Cash	17 (94)	1 (6)		0	0	0
	Maintenance	10 (100)	0		0	0	0
	Video Surveillance	11 (100)	0		0	0	0
	Slot Machine	15 (79)	4 (21)		0	0	0
	Telephone Operator	1 (100)	0		0	0	0
	Transport	37 (100)	0		100 (100)	0	100 (100)
	Others	0	0		0	25 (100)	25 (100)
	Subtotal	208 (87)	32 (13)		266 (82)	59 (18)	325 (100)
	Grand Total	388 (70)	169 (30)		376 (53)	329 (47)	705 (100)

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

Source: Field Visit, April 2009

Self-Help Group's Effects on Women's Empowerment

BAL KRISHNA KHADKA, PRANAYA RATNA STHAPIT, AND
SUDHINDRA SHARMA

Introduction

Self-Help Group (SHG) programmes among women have made significant impact in the Global South as a cost-effective mechanism to provide financial services to the unreached poor, as well as to strengthen women's personal and social capacities. Saving and credit mechanisms of a SHG is merely an entry point, as it has been an instrumental process to harness the group's social intermediation among group members. Rani and Tandon (2016) report that SHG has played a pivotal role in positively changing life-pattern of poor women and have empowered them at not just individual level but also positively affected family members and society as a whole. Furthermore, at various levels, 'members of SHG in agricultural activities have benefited considerably in terms of social, economic, and psychological development' (Samah, Hamsan, and Ndaeji 2013).

The process of empowerment among women can be achieved through SHG, where women become aware and active in various communities. Wale and Deshmukh (2011) suggest that SHG is instrumental to women's empowerment and rural entrepreneurship, which brings individual and collective empowerment through improvement in both the condition and the position of women. SHGs provide trainings on various income-generating skills as well as facilitate the formation of social capital. Moreover, SHGs intend to increase self-confidence as well as self-awareness.

As SHGs gained popularity among women in Nepal, governmental and non-governmental agencies have over the years implemented various participatory community approaches commonly known as mothers' groups¹ or women groups. Finscope consumer survey, a global measure of financial inclusion, reveals that 29 per cent of Nepali belong to saving groups, which is one of the most prevalent forms of SHGs in Nepal (FinMark Trust 2014).

1 Informal mothers' groups have existed in different societies, including in Nepal, for a long time prior to intervention by state or non-state entities.

These SHGs claim to make a positive impact in both the condition and the position of women in society. Moreover, disempowered women in Nepal need to be viewed against the backdrop of rural agrarian-based women because majority of people (83 per cent) live in the rural area where around 77 per cent are involved in farming.

It is essential to measure the effect of SHG participation on empowerment of women because this will help to design more effective and sustainable women's empowerment intervention programmes in Nepal. However, from the existing data, it is not possible to conclusively say anything about the impact of SHGs on empowerment. This paper attempts to use the dataset of a scientifically designed randomised control trial (RCT) to examine the relationship between SHGs and women's empowerment in rural Nepal. Using Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI), the paper attempts to measure empowerment in four domains comprising of decisions about agriculture production, access and ownership of productive resources, control over income, and time use.

Based on the index, this paper will attempt to measure the impact of SHG on women empowerment. The statistical null hypothesis and research hypothesis are formulated as:

Null Hypothesis (H_0): Belonging to an SHG does not contribute positively to women's empowerment.

Research Hypothesis (H_1): Belonging to an SHG does contribute positively to women's empowerment.

As the part of the findings of the study, the paper first examines the profile of the respondents across districts, caste/ethnicity, language, age, and education distribution. Then, the calculation index of WEAI is undertaken that shows percentage of disempowered women and empowered women. The findings further differentiate the level of empowerment between those who belong to SHGs and those who do not belong to these groups. Subsequently, the paper assesses the index by breaking down the disempowerment index across four key domains of production, resources, income, and time use. The figure further breaks down among people who belong to SHGs and people who do not belong to SHG. Lastly, using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression model, the paper explores the relationship between SHG and empowerment and the significance of the relationship.

Literature Review

In order to truly comprehend the impact of SHG on women's empowerment, it is essential to unpack the complexity associated with various definitions and measurements concerning women's empowerment. Moreover, it is pertinent to understand the concept of women's empowerment with regard to SHGs.

Empowerment

The concept of empowerment has been studied by scholars in various ways. Consequently, the term empowerment has different meanings depending on different context. Amartya Sen (1985) emphasised the significance of freedom to choose and achieve different outcomes. The term, freedom to choose and achieve different outcomes, is closely related to capability of a person. Thus, Sen (1993) further explain that freedom to choose is reflected on a person's set of capabilities. However, capability of various people depends upon various paradigms that entail personal characteristics and social settings. Based on Sen's idea of empowerment as the set of capabilities to achieve desired outcome, various scholars and institutions have proceeded to further examine the concept of empowerment.

The World Bank (n.d.) defines empowerment as a process that increases the capability of individuals or a group to make choices to further lead that choice to desired outcomes. Swain (2007) describes that the process to increase the capability is achieved through building individual and collective action and increased efficiency and fairness of the organisation. Furthermore, the World Bank (n.d.) mentions four key elements of empowerment that includes access to information, inclusion and participation, accountability, and local organisational capacity. One of the significant points made by the World Bank is that individual and collective action increase the capability of an individual because it ultimately impacts community development.

Community development necessitates empowered individuals and groups of the society. Swain (2007) is of the opinion that community development is the reflection of social capital and empowerment. Thus, the concept of empowerment is also closely related to social capital and community development. Grootaert (2003) points out that gaining social capital facilitates empowerment. Social capital entails a range of networks including individuals and organisations that engender interpersonal trust, coordination, and cooperation for mutual benefits.

Women's Empowerment

The systemic gender disparity prevalent in society damages capabilities to achieve desired outcome of women. Compared to men, women are poorer and under-privileged due to various social, economic, and cultural constraints (Lakshmi and Vadivalagan 2011). Consequently, women's empowerment has become a global discourse that has gained popularity in recent years as empowered women make positive impact on their family livelihood as well as education, health, and nutrition of their children. Thus, it is understandable that various definitions of women's empowerment have emerged over the years.

Yadav and Rodriques (2014) define women empowerment as an increase in the spiritual, political, social, and economic strength of women. Kabeer (1999) adds on to Sen's idea of capability and holds that women empowerment is about the process of providing ability to those who are denied the ability to make life-choices. She further emphasises that the ability to make choice depends upon three interrelated elements of resources, agency, and achievements. Elaborating Kabeer's concept of women empowerment, Swain (2007) explains that resources entail not only access but also future rights to all material, human, and social resources. Furthermore, agency is an action where individuals act upon a defined goal to achieve a desired goal. To sum up Kabeer, these interrelated dimensions of resources and agency to achieve a desired outcome for women truly constitutes empowerment.

Women empowerment is also about one's feeling of being capable of enacting the agency through participation in decision-making. 'Empowerment is an active, multidimensional process which enables women to realize their own identity and power in all spheres of life' (Pillai 1995). Realising one's identity and power is about the process of making awareness and capacity-building for their greater and active participation in decision-making on resources, child education, saving and credits, health, nutrition, domestic violence, and the right to freedom.

Measuring Women's Empowerment

In order to realise the desired outcome, one needs to transform resources into choice and that not only requires access but also control over resources. Scholars like Goetz and Sen Gupta (1996) build the indicators of empowerment based on control over loan that ranges from no control to full control of the use of loans. Swain (2007) reveals that there are other scholars who have used repayment rate as the indicator of empowerment. However, women might just be mediating between family members and loan providers, without any control.

Malhotra, Schuler, and Boender (2002) draw a framework based on multiple dimensions of economic, socio-cultural, interpersonal, legal, political, and psychological components, where women can be empowered within one or all of these dimensions. Similarly, Hashemi, Schuler, and Riley (1996) provided eight criteria to measure empowerment that include mobility, economic security, ability to make small purchases, large purchases, involvement in major household decisions, and relative freedom from domination by the family, political and legal awareness, participation in public protests and political campaigns. Since from the theoretical point of view, measuring women's empowerment is multidimensional and context-specific, various measures have been developed for use across various contexts and countries.

Among the various measurement indices developed, such as Gender-related Development Index (GDI²) and Gender Empowerment Index (GEM³), this paper intends to use Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). 'The WEAI is a composite measurement tool that indicates women's control over critical parts of their lives in the household, community, and economy. It allows us to identify women who are disempowered and understand how to increase autonomy and decision-making in key domains' (IFPRI⁴ 2012). The five key domains (5DE) constitute women's engagement in agriculture sector across: 1) decisions about agricultural production, 2) access to and decision-making power over productive resources, 3) control over the use of income, 4) leadership in the community, and 5) time use. However, this paper only looks at the four key domains, and excludes leadership in the community.

Decisions about agricultural production include sole or joint decision-making over food and cash-crop farming, livestock, and fisheries as well as autonomy in agricultural production (IFPRI 2012). Access to and decision-making power over productive resources constitute ownership over productive resources such as land, livestock, agricultural equipment, consumer durables, and credit. The use of income is defined as sole or joint control over income and expenditure. Leadership in the community is understood from the perspective of membership in economic or social groups and comfort in speaking in public. Time use is allocation of time to productive and domestic tasks and satisfaction with the available time for leisure activities.

2 GDI calculates gender inequalities between men and women based on access to basic need.

3 GEM measures women's access to political and economic positions. GEM is based on indicators that are share of seats held in a parliament, supervisory posts, high administrative posts, and technical post held by women, and the share of income of women compared to men.

4 The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)

SHG and Empowerment

An SHG is a small and informal group of people living in the same local area and generally comprised of homogenous socio-economic characteristics of people between 10 to 20 in rural areas with the objective of solving their common issues and problems that they are facing or experiencing in family or communities. Jagtap and Goyal (2012) explain SHGs as voluntary-based homogeneous groups, either registered or unregistered, in which members come together for saving money regularly for a common fund that meets their needs and is premised on mutual help. They use the accumulated fund for their mutual benefit on their own group's interest and need basis with some interest on credit that they disburse to the group members.

The concept of self-help groups was initiated in Bangladesh through Grameen Bank of Bangladesh, founded by Mohammed Yunus in 1975, with an idea to provide a separate bank of the poor. It aims to provide access to credit for poor rural people without asking any collateral or without engaging them in complicated paper work. In Nepal, these groups are known by informal saving and credit groups.

Various empirical evidences show that SHGs have been instrumental in empowering women enabling them to work mutually across various rural areas of world. Samah, Hamsan, and Ndaaji (2013), provide example where SHGs intermediated by agricultural activities in Nigeria have shown a positive impact on women, considerably benefitting them in terms of economic, social, and psychological development in Nigeria. Garai, Mazumder, and Maiti (2012) analyse the differences between beneficiaries (women members of SHG) and non-beneficiaries (women non-beneficiaries) in Nadia district of West Bengal. They show that beneficiaries have significantly higher score in terms of personal autonomy, family decision-making, economy, and political autonomy, compared to non-beneficiaries. Thus, SHGs appear to provide necessary space and support to increase capability and control in the lives of women.

Various scholars have argued that SHGs go beyond economic empowerment to change lives of women. Samah, Hamsan, and Ndaaji (2013) write that the collective approach of SHGs facilitates the formation of social capital, promotes bonding among the members, trains them with various life-skills, increases their confidence, builds mutual trust, and provides a critical outlet for sustainable socio-economic status of women. In addition, Desai (2000) infers that SHG is a process where women build awareness, increase participation, and improve their decision-making power and control over resources. However, it should be noted that the

SHGs movements across the globe for women empowerment have come about due to the intervention of NGOs or other intermediaries.

Sandhu (2015) asserts that it is the communal self-regulatory group idea and the efforts shown by NGOs that make success of SHGs promising and effective. The trend is being followed in Nepal where various institutions (I/NGOs, government agencies, MFIs, cooperatives) have been working in rural areas of the country for women and marginalised and deprived communities by forming SHGs with the objective of bringing about a holistic change by empowering them in every sphere of life.

About the Programme

The current paper analyses data of a research titled 'Evaluation of the Welfare Impacts of a Livestock Transfer Program in Nepal', which sought to evaluate Heifer International (HI)'s BASIS project in Nepal. HI Nepal provides livestock and training, with the aim of holistic transformation unique to each community.

HI Nepal mostly implements its programmes via partner NGOs and targets services to poor women in efforts to promote sustainable livelihood, poverty reduction, and empowerment. HI Nepal provides its services through SHGs that typically consists of 15 to 25 members, formed one year prior to receiving the first animal gift, an improved-breeding buck, as the part of asset transfer programme. In addition, members also receive improved technologies and often agricultural inputs to help increase income and nutrition. SHGs also have a saving mechanism that is mainly used for animal insurance and credits to SHG's members.

Participants receive agro-focused training on areas such as improved animal management, pest management, kitchen gardening, organic farming, herb cultivation, vermi-composting, manure management, improved forage production, and so on that seek to economically elevate the condition of women.

In addition to the benefits received from HI Nepal, beneficiaries are equipped with trainings on Heifer's 12 Cornerstones⁵ and SHG management. In order to reinforce the Cornerstones and encourage a holistic progress toward achieving these objectives, each group engages in participatory self-review and planning (PSRP) every four months. HI Nepal believes in

5 12 cornerstone trainings are related to 1) Passing on the Gift, 2) Accountability, 3) Sharing and Caring, 4) Sustainability and Self-Reliance, 5) Improved Animal and Resource Management, 6) Nutrition, Health and Income, 7) Gender and Family Focus, 8) Genuine Need and Justice, 9) Improving the Environment, 10) Full Participation, 11) Training, Education & Communication, 12) Spirituality.

achieving women's empowerment through the Cornerstones trainings. In SHGs, women actively participate and take leadership roles, which encourages them to participate in the decision-making of their household. In the long run, it aims to transform discriminatory social practices and cultural norms as it relates to women's rights and agency.

The research and the intervention programme are inextricably connected. In fact, the research has been designed in a way to allow for assessing the impact of the programme. In keeping with the RCT design, some intervention areas have been designated as 'treatment' while others have been designated as 'control'.

Methodology

Sampling

This paper used the data of the study conducted to measure the short-term impact of livestock transfer and training programme in rural Nepal. Adopting the RCT design, the study areas were classified into treatment and control groups to measure the impact of the programme. The sample size of 2888 respondents was arrived at using multistage probability sampling method spread over 60 VDCs of seven districts, Tanahu, Palpa, Rautahat, Sarlahi, Mahottari, Dhading, and Nuwakot. The sample survey of size 2888 produces ± 1.5 per cent margin of error at the 95 per cent confidence level at the aggregate level.

Questionnaire

A well-structured questionnaire was used to collect the data. First, the questionnaire was formulated into English and later it was translated into Nepali language. Nepali language was used for administering the survey in the field. Pre-test was done before finalising the questionnaire, and the questionnaire was amended as per the feedback of the pre-test. Since the survey needed to be taken in Android Tablets, the questionnaire was transformed into Android-based form through CSPro. Seven days of intensive training were provided to the enumerators before deploying them to the field. The data was collected by enumerators through face-to-face interviews with the respondents using Android Tablets.

Statistical Techniques

This paper measures the impact of SHG on WEAI; the dependent variable is WEAI and independent variable is SHG. Dependent variable is quantitative and the independent variable is qualitative dummy variable with two

categories. The OLS regression model is used to test the statistical significance of the SHG on WEAI. The individual level WEAI is calculated following the Sabina Alkire et al (2013) with some modification in its dimensions, indicators, and weighting value.

$$WEAI = W_1 * X_1 + W_2 * X_2 + W_3 * X_3 + W_4 * X_4 + W_5 * X_5 + W_6 * X_6 \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

In the above equation (1), the variable X_1 is used for input in productive decision and W_1 is the weight assigned for X_1 ; variable X_2 is used for ownership of asset and W_2 is the weight assigned for X_2 ; variable X_3 is used for purchase, sale, or transfer of assets and W_3 is the weight assigned for X_3 ; variable X_4 is used for access to and decision on credit and W_4 is the weight assigned for X_4 ; variable X_5 is used for control over use of income and W_5 is the weight assigned for X_5 ; variable X_6 is used for workload and W_6 is the weight assigned for X_6 .

The range of WEAI is between 0 to 1; higher the value of WEAI, higher the empowerment of women.

The independent variable SHG is qualitative, and it is converted into dummy variable by assigning 1 for those who belong to SHG and 0 for those who do not belong to SHG. The OLS regression model is given by:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + e \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

In the above equation (2), Y is the dependent variable and represents the WEAI, and X is the dummy independent variable and it represents the SHG. The regression coefficient (β_1) measures the statistical significant impact of SHG on WEAI; 'e' is the error attached with the regression model.

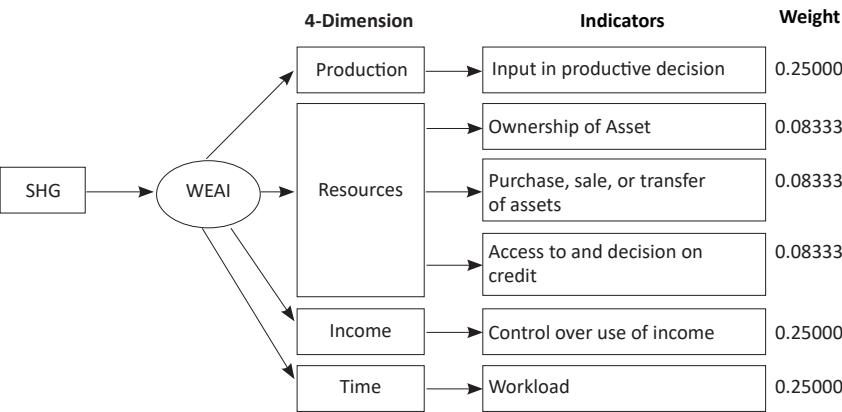
Analytical Framework

This paper focuses on measuring the impact of SHG on women empowerment in agriculture index (WEAI). The WEAI is calculated by analysing the raw data of a study called 'Evaluation of the welfare impacts of a livestock transfer program in rural Nepal'. For this study, the WEAI is calculated by covering five dimensions, production, resources, income, leadership, and time and ten indicators with equal weights.

However, the robust WEAI is modified to local context for this paper. This paper defines the WEAI by four dimensions, production, resources, income, and time. Furthermore, the four domains comprise six indicators, and each domain is weighted equally, as are each of the indicators within a domain. Six indicators are calculated by giving equal weight 1/4 to each dimension.

Each dimension weight is further equally distributed to corresponding indicators of each dimension.

Figure 1: Analytical Framework for the Study



A woman is considered as empowered in four key domains if she has adequate achievements in all four domains or is empowered in some combination of the weighted indicators that reflect 80 per cent total adequacy. A major aspect of the index is that it is able to reveal in how many domains women are empowered and at the same time reveals the connections among areas of disempowerment.

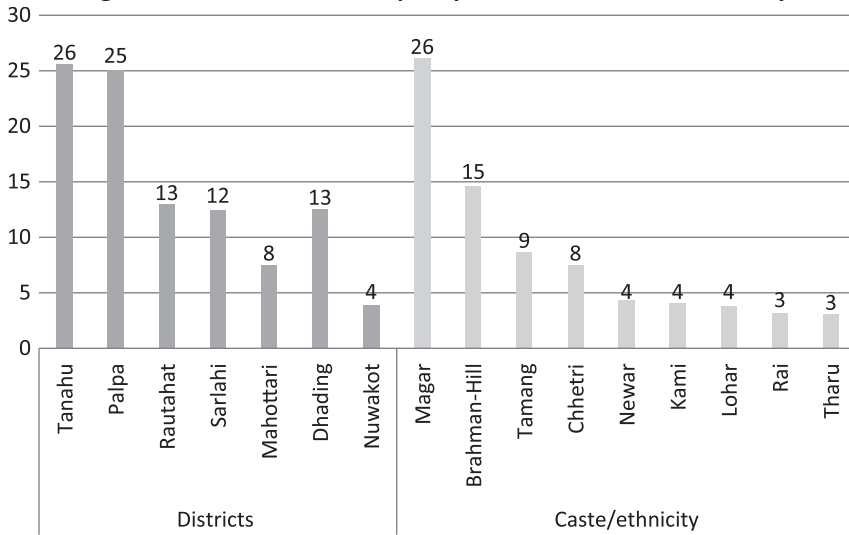
Research Findings

Profile of the Respondents

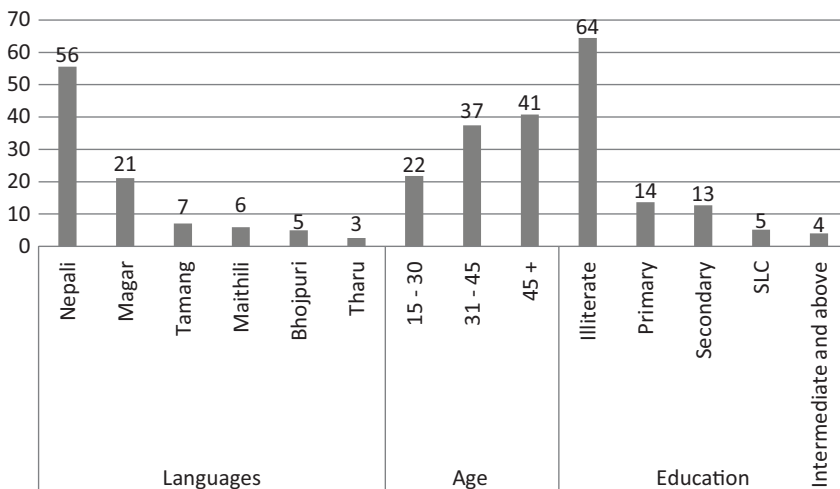
The study captures diverse profiles of the respondents. Out of total 2888 respondents sampled in the study, most of the respondents (37.45%) are in the age group of 31 to 45, around 21.8 per cent belong to 15 to 30, and the rest (40.8%) are aged 45 and above. The sample spread in the seven districts is as follows: Tanahu (25.6%), Palpa (25.1%), Rautahat (13 %), Sarlahi (12.5%), Mahottari (7.5%), Dhading (12.5%), and Nuwakot (3.9%).

Majority of the women are from Magar community (26.15%), followed by Hill Brahman (14.6%), Tamang (8.7%), Chhetri (7.5%), Newar (4.3%), and the rest, 40 per cent, are from other caste/ethnic groups. In terms of religion, around 86.3 per cent are Hindu, some 10 per cent are Buddhist, and the rest are from other religions.

Over half of the respondents (55.6%) speak Nepali language for communication, 21.1 per cent use Magar language for communication, 7.1

Figure 2: Distribution of Sample by Districts, and Caste/Ethnicity

per cent use Tamang language, 5.9 per cent use Maithili, and 5 per cent use Bhojpuri.

Figure 3: Distribution of sample by language, age, and education level

Around two thirds of the respondents reported that they are illiterate (64.4%), some 13.6 per cent have primary education, 12.7 per cent have secondary education, 5.2 per cent have passed SLC, and the rest said they have intermediate-level education or above.

WEAI and SHG

This study considers women in SHGs who are members of mothers' groups, or saving and credit groups, or forest user groups, or any social groups which are formed for the wellbeing of women on the various social, political, and financial issues. The data suggests that around 69.4 per cent of the women are the member of SHG, while 30.6 per cent are not members of SHG.

Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)

The empowerment index of WEAI is calculated using Alkire-Foster Method with some modification in local context. The mathematical model is expressed as:

$$\text{Empowerment on 4DE} = 1 - M_0 = 1 - [H * A] \dots\dots\dots (3) \text{ OR}$$

$$\text{Empowerment on 4DE} = [1-H] + H * [1-A] \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

where H is the percentage of disempowered women, where a woman is considered disempowered if the overall score is less than 80 per cent considering all six indicators. A is the percentage of dimensions⁶ in which disempowered women have no adequacy. In other words, no adequacy signifies percentage of women who score zero across all six indicators. Thus, disempowered women might have some adequacy or might be empowered in some of the indicators. The value of 4DE ranges from zero to one, where higher values indicate greater empowerment.

Table 1 presents the findings on women empowerment based on 4DE. The research shows that according to 4DE, 37.7 per cent women scored 80 per cent value or more and 62.3 per cent women scored less than 80 per cent value in the six indicators. Thus, 62.3 per cent of women are considered disempowered (H) and 37.7 per cent of the women are considered empowered (1-H).

While 62.3 per cent of women are disempowered, they might be empowered in some indicators out of six indicators. The 62.3 per cent of women, who are not yet empowered, still have, on average, adequate achievement at 57.8 per cent of the six indicators. Thus, the overall women empowerment index is $37.7\% + (62.3\% * 57.8\%) = 73.7\%$. Thus, disempowerment index is calculated as $100\% - 73.7\% = 26.3\%$.

The study revealed that percentage of women who belong to SHGs have higher level of empowerment than those who do not belong to SHG. For instance, as shown in the table below, the percentage of empowered $(1-H * A)$

⁶ Dimensions comprise six indicators: input in production decision, ownership of assets, purchase sale or transfer of asset, access to and decision on credit, control over use of income, and workload.

women who belong to SHGs is 76.7 per cent compared to 66.8 per cent who do not belong to any SHGs. Likewise, 41.5 per cent women who belong to SHG scored 80 per cent value or more, whereas only 28.9 per cent women who do not belong to SHG scored 80 per cent value or more in the six indicators.

Table 1: Empowerment on 4DE by SHG versus no SHG

Indices	Overall	Belong to SHG	Do not belong to SHG
Disempowered Headcount (H)	0.62	0.58	0.71
Empowered Headcount (1-H)	0.38	0.41	0.29
Average Inadequacy Score (A)	0.42	0.40	0.47
Average Adequacy Score (1-A)	0.56	0.6	0.53
Disempowerment Index (M_0) = $H \cdot A$	0.26	0.23	0.33
WEAI ($1-M_0$)	0.74	0.78	0.67
Number of observation used	2888	2005	883

Source: Primary data.

Various literatures show that women empowerment is a multidimensional concept and also suggest that empowerment in one domain may not create empowerment in other domains. Our research findings show that out of four key domains, higher level of disempowerment is found in workload and control over income, compared to access to resource and decisions in production. Among the indicators that most contribute to disempowerment index is workload (41.1%), lack of control over use of income (27.8%), and that the dimension contributing least to disempowerment is ownership of asset (2.6%) and purchase, sale, or transfer of assets (4.7%). In other words, 41.1 per cent of women do not have a manageable workload, while 27.8 per cent do not have control over their income which might lead to detrimental effect on empowerment.

Table 2 presents the breakdown of disempowerment index on dimension and indicators by 'belong to SHG' vs 'do not belong to SHG'. Both groups appear to follow the same pattern for overall level of disempowerment, where women face higher level of disempowerment in workload and control over use of income compared to access to resources and production decision.

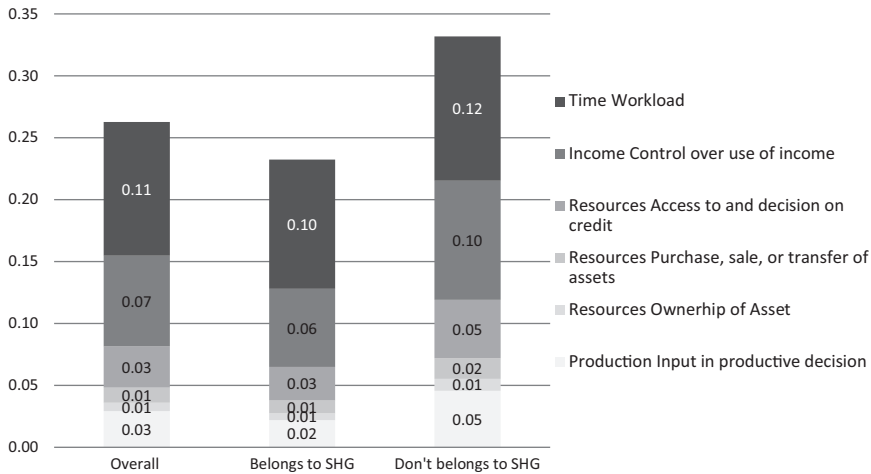
Figure 4 presents the indicators, which most contribute to disempowerment. Workload, control over use of income, and purchase, sale, or transfer of assets and input in productive decision contribute most to disempowerment for those who are not member of SHG. For instance, in general, for both groups, workload and control over the use of income contribute the most to disempowerment. However, compared to those who belong to SHGs, workload and control over the use of income

Table 2: Breakdown of Disempowerment Index (M_o) by Dimension, Indicators, and SHG

	Breakdown of Disempowerment Index					
	Production	Resources			Income	Time
	Input in productive decision	Ownership of Asset	Purchase, sale, or transfer of assets	Access to and decision on credit	Control over use of income	Work-load
Overall Statistics						
Disempowered Index (M_o) = H * A	0.03	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.07	0.11
% Contribution to Disempowerment Index (M_o) = H * A	11.10	2.60	4.70	12.60	27.80	41.10
% Contribution to Disempowerment Index (M_o) = H * A	11.10	19.90			27.80	41.10
Belong to SHG						
Disempowered Index (M_o) = H * A	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.03	0.06	0.10
% Contribution to Disempowerment Index (M_o) = H * A	9.50	2.30	4.50	11.70	27.20	45.00
% Contribution to Disempowerment Index (M_o) = H * A	9.50	18.50			27.20	45.00
Do not belong to SHG						
Disempowered Index (M_o) = 1 - 4DE	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.10	0.12
% Contribution to Disempowerment Index (M_o) = 1 - 4DE	13.70	2.90	5.00	14.20	29.00	35.10
% Contribution to Disempowerment Index (M_o) = H * A	13.70	22.10			29.00	35.10

Source: Primary data.

contribute the most to disempowerment for those who are not members of SHG. For instance, control over the use of income contributes 12 per cent to the disempowerment for those who do not belong to SHG as compared to 10 per cent for those who belong to SHG. Similarly, control over use of income contributes 10 percent to the total disempowerment in the group that do not belong to SHGs, compared to 6 per cent that belong to SHGs. Thus, the result shows that the level of disempowerment is lower among women who belong to the SHGs compared to the women who do not belong to SHGs.

Figure 4: Breakdown of Disempowerment by Indicators

Statistical Significance between SHG and Women Empowerment

The WEAI index reveals that women who belong to SHGs have higher level of empowerment compared to women who do not belong to SHGs. However, it is necessary to test the statistical significance of the relationship between SHG and empowerment of women for any meaningful comparison. Thus, the paper intends to analyse the cause and effect relationship of SHG on WEAI using following OLS regression model:

$$WEAI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SHG + e$$

The statistical hypothesis is formulated as follows:

$$H_0: \beta_1 = 0 \text{ vs } H_1: \beta_1 \neq 0$$

The result of OLS regression model used to measure the impact of SHG on WEAI shows that there is a significant positive impact of SHG on women empowerment, as the P-value of β_1 $0.000 < \beta = 0.05$ and Std. error of 0.009. The value of regression coefficient of SHG (β_1) shows that, on an average, women who belong to SHGs have higher empowerment level than those who do not belong to SHGs by 0.098.

The positive effects of SHGs on women empowerment potentially run through access to credit, group support, various income-generation trainings, increase in financial stability, that in turn have resulted in women's decision-making power, autonomy, economic independence, self-confidence, and self-awareness. SHGs are mainly run via INGOs and NGOs

like HI Nepal that provide saving and credit mechanism as well as training to participants. Thus, capacity of the women generated through mechanisms embedded in SHGs appears to transform women as autonomous agents who make strategic life choices.

Table 3: Model Summary

Findings of OLS	Value	P-value
R-squared	0.04	
Std. error of the estimate	0.22	
Y-intercept (constant)	0.65	
Coefficients of SHG (β_1)	0.09	0.000<0.05
Std. error of the coefficients	0.01	
Sample size	2888	

Even though the impact of SHG on women empowerment is statistically significant, the value of R-squared⁷ indicates that the effect is small. As shown in the Table 3 above, of the total variation in women empowerment, only 3.9 per cent variation is explained by SHG. The small effect might be due to the fact that membership in SHGs is silent on some criticisms such as increase in workload for women, decrease in male contribution on expenditure. In addition, culture of less freedom in decision-making among women could also impact the empowerment on women.

Mayoux (1997) observed that only small increase in income has cost heavier workload for women. SHGs for women's empowerment looks very promising as it has increased the economic independence of women; however, literatures also suggest that small increase in women's income is leading to decrease in male's contribution to household expenditure. In addition, men are generally consulted before taking decisions regarding household or personal issues. Kabeer (1999) illustrates that every culture has its own distribution of power with men making decisions in some areas and women making decisions in others. The evidence of South Asia suggests that decisions on matters such as food and other items of household consumption and those concerning children's health fall under women, whereas decisions on education, marriage, market-related transactions in major assets fall under the male domain.

⁷ R-square < 0.05 is considered as small effect; R-square < 0.10 is considered as medium effect; and R-square > 0.10 is considered as high effect.

Conclusion

To conclude, the detailed analysis reveals the significant positive impact of SHGs on women empowerment measured across six indicators provided by WEAL. Furthermore, 76.7 per cent of women who belong to SHGs are empowered compared to 66.8 per cent of women who do not belong to SHGs.

Among the six indicators, women appear to be disempowered in workload and control over the use of income, as compared to other indicators. This indicates the fact that rural women are burdened by higher amount of daily work and their control over the income is also low. Even though the pattern looks to be same for both groups, the ratio is relatively less among women who belong to SHGs.

Though the detailed investigations demonstrate the positive impact of SHGs on women's empowerment, its effect appears to be statistically smaller with the R-squared value of 3.9 per cent. Thus, besides SHGs, other types of interventions that influence women empowerment need to be further explored and examined in order to design more effective women's empowerment programs.

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Responding to Disaster

Women's Roles in Nepal's Political Transition and Earthquake Recovery

BRIANA MAWBY & ANNA APPLEBAUM

Introduction

Communities experiencing or emerging from conflict are often affected by natural disasters as well, creating intersecting challenges in the rebuilding process. For the communities involved, these issues are fundamentally intertwined and connected; it is not possible to respond to one set of challenges without being influenced by the other. It is important to understand how fragile communities respond to and address both conflict and disasters, rather than examining these as separate and distinct processes. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand the key roles that women play in this intersection; research shows women's roles in these overlapping contexts are critical to effective recovery and reconstruction.

Background

Nepal's decade-long conflict between the government and the Maoists was arduous for women: they were particularly vulnerable to gender-based attacks, suffering from widespread sexual violence carried out by forces loyal to the government and Maoist rebels (Human Rights Watch 2014).¹ Yet women were not only victims of violence; they were also active participants in the conflict. Women made up about 20 per cent of verified Maoist combatants, serving as policy-makers, couriers, organisers, health workers, foot soldiers, and mid-level commanders (Khadka 2012, 34-37). Some were ideologically motivated; others joined to gain food and wages to support their families (Khadka 2012). Whether serving as combatants or not, Nepali women faced common economic challenges. As men left home

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1 Government security forces raped and abused female combatants after arrest and targeted the female family members of suspected Maoists. Similarly, the Maoists sexually assaulted women who stood up to them or refused to support their cause.

to fight or were killed in the conflict, women became heads of households (Menon and Rodgers 2015, 68-69). Women often struggled with these added responsibilities, given restrictive social norms that limited their ability to effectively market and sell goods (Menon and Rodgers 2015, 53). Yet this aspect of the conflict also offered an opportunity for women to join public spaces and become more politically active. Even without joining the Maoists, women experienced the breakdown of traditional customs (Khadka 2012).²

The immediate post-conflict period saw significant progress on women's rights. The new constitution referenced women's unique needs and stated women's right to political affirmative action measures (World Bank 2015). Women founded and led civil society organisations (CSOs) that helped drive the burgeoning political sphere around the newly formed government (Asian Development Bank 2013). The legislature passed several progressive bills on gender-based violence (GBV) and political participation. Nevertheless, significant challenges remain for Nepali women. Women lack the ability to alone confer citizenship to their children or spouses; equal pay for equal work is not guaranteed; and women lack equal inheritance rights (World Bank 2015, 9, 180). Only 19 per cent of women own land and only 54 per cent of women participate in the labour force (Luintel 2016, 11). With female-headed households making up more than a quarter of Nepali households, as an increasing number of men emigrate for work, the high levels of discrimination create additional barriers to Nepal's economic development (Acharya 2003, 247; Luintel 2016, 11).

In April 2015, Nepal experienced a disastrous setback when a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck the country. Nearly 22,000 people were injured and over 8,000 were killed (Asian Development Bank 2016). At least 750,000 homes were destroyed, and there were major losses in livestock and other economic resources, resulting in an estimated \$5.17 billion of damage (Asian Development Bank 2016). The resulting devastation affected some of Nepal's most famous historic and cultural sites, including UNESCO World Heritage locations. The earthquake also strained post-conflict reconstruction and peace efforts, given the necessary shift in resources and attention to post-disaster reconstruction. However, the earthquake catalysed the adoption of a new constitution in September 2015, although it remains controversial (International Crisis Group 2016; Haviland 2015). Women's groups particularly fought discriminatory provisions regarding hereditary citizenship, which in practice ensure that Nepali women cannot

2 For some women, the breakdown of traditional norms during the conflict was short-lived and they had to readjust to the return of traditional gender relations and social expectations after peace was reached. See Khadka, *Female Combatants* 59.

pass on their citizenship to their children (International Crisis Group 2016; Haviland 2015).

Methods

The study aims to answer the following questions: How have women been involved in Nepal's political transition since 2006? How have women contributed to the management of and recovery after natural disasters in Nepal since 2006? Where is the overlap in these activities or types of involvement? To answer these questions, the authors organised their research using four processes: an in-depth literature review, the systematic identification of participants, data collection through semi-structured interviews conducted in Nepal, and grounded coding and thematic analysis of the data collected in those interviews. The authors limited the temporal scope of this study to 2006-2016, from the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) until the year in which the fieldwork was conducted. The focus of the study is on the post-conflict developments and the 2015 earthquake that took place during this period. Recognising the diversity of Nepali women and the often political nature of civil society work and advocacy, the authors interviewed civil society leaders and government officials from a variety of backgrounds and political affiliations, focusing both on large well-known organisations and smaller grassroots organisations. Although national and international actors lead many recovery processes, the authors emphasised civil society contributions to understand how a whole network of actors contributes to change over time. The authors made a particular effort to include women from different political, class, ethnic, social, and religious backgrounds. The majority of this research was conducted in Kathmandu, but the authors also interviewed individuals from different parts of the country over the phone or via Skype.

Literature Review

Existing literature articulates that there are significant challenges to the full advancement of women's rights. Women are prevented from participating fully in Nepali society due to barriers to citizenship, which are connected to defined gender roles, social stigmas, and caste and ethnic affiliations. Some authors emphasise that the legal framework of citizenship is based on *jus sanguinis*, or blood right, but that this process is only straightforward for men (Malla 2015; Latschan 2015; Desouza 2015; White 2009, 28-29). Others further discuss the barriers for Nepali women who are single or widows, trafficked, or who marry non-Nepali men; their children become stateless if unable to gain citizenship (Sharma 2015; Thapa 2015; Aryal 2014;

Taormina 2015). Other authors note that the significant differences in the treatment and opportunities for women in different ethnic and religious groups, long a feature of Nepali public life, have been enshrined in the new constitution as well (Tamang 2011, 293-308; McCray 2015; Haviland 2015; Laczó 2003, 76-82; International Crisis Group 2011). The literature illustrates that barriers to gain citizenship create challenges when trying to achieve meaningful participation in public life, particularly for women who are single, internally displaced, part of an ethnic minority, and/or of lower socioeconomic status.

Some authors emphasise that women's invisibility in public spaces and lack of political experience reinforce the challenges of ushering women into formal systems (Pradhan 2004-2005, 65-77; Tamang 2000, 127-156; Sajjad 2013; Tamang 2009, 61-80). Authors repeatedly identify the new constitution and the Constituent Assembly as two sites that have fallen short of promoting full participation. Tamang (2009, 61-80) argues that while the Constituent Assembly was meant to be the most representative body in Nepal's history, its structure favoured large political parties whose members continue to be mostly men from high castes. Research conducted by the National Democratic Institute (2015), Human Rights Watch (2015), International Crisis Group (2012a, 2012b), and Karki and Edrisinha (2014) identify specific ways in which the new constitution includes discriminatory statutes based on gender, ethnicity, and caste. Some authors support this claim by identifying the process by which gender discrimination was embedded during the drafting and final revision of the constitution (Langford and Bhattarai 2011, 387-411; Mathema 2015; Karki 2016; Sharma, C 2015; The Kathmandu Post 2015a, 2015b). In particular, Koirala and Macdonald (2015) and Giri and Shrestha (2015) emphasise how the constitution discriminates against the Madhesi people of the Tarai region.

Women's Roles in the Transition

The past decade of Nepal's history, its political transition marked by a devastating earthquake, reveals how marginalisation of women complicates and inhibits recovery and reconstruction processes. In the aftermath of the conflict and the earthquake, gender-based discrimination prevented women from accessing political, economic, and social rights as well as recovery efforts. Crimes that disproportionately affect women, such as sexual violence, went underreported in the recovery periods. Legal restrictions against women prevented them from possessing the documentation necessary to access reparations and relief. Social norms concerning widows, most commonly referred to as single women, severely

restricted their access to aid. The limitations imposed on women's ability to recover from these traumatic events have hampered the overall recovery of the country. Understanding how gender-based discrimination affected women similarly after the conflict and after the earthquake can help create stronger and more comprehensive policies for renewal.

For Nepali women, the instability of the conflict and the devastation of the earthquake brought increased challenges to their discriminated status in a patriarchal society. The conflict included a number of women combatants as part of the Maoist guerrilla group, but very few have had the opportunity of their male colleagues to integrate into the Nepali security forces.³ Women were the population most affected by the earthquake,⁴ which is characteristic for natural disasters (Alam, Bhatia, and Mawby 2015). The state's response to these events followed pre-existing patterns of neglect for women's specific needs. As a civil society leader noted, 'Women have always been coopted, used, and not really given their due when such times appeared in our history... I personally feel the mission of the state has failed [women]'.⁵

The dramatic events in the past decade have underscored that the vulnerabilities that Nepali women face in times of extreme instability, across political and disaster lines, may not be adequately addressed. A male civil society member succinctly noted a pattern: 'Men will drink tea, women face all the problems'.⁶

No Accountability for Sexual Violence

Ranking among those problems is the lack of justice for survivors of sexual violence perpetrated during the conflict and after the earthquake (Human Rights Watch 2014). When sexual violence was reported, little was done by law enforcement to investigate the claim.⁷ The first official assistance provided to conflict victims by the state, known as the Interim Relief Program (IRP), did not recognise victims of sexual violence as entitled to its benefits (Center for Civilians in Conflict 2013). Furthermore, the statute of limitations for rape restricted the time of reporting to 35 days after the incident,⁸ making it highly unlikely that a report would be filed

3 Interview with government official, August 22, 2016b.

4 Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016a

5 Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016b.

6 Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016a.

7 Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

8 In November 2015, the statute of limitations on reporting rape was extended from 35 to

in time (Human Rights Watch 2014). Similar factors stifled justice for sexual violence victims after the earthquake. Displaced women residing in makeshift shelters were at high risk for sexual abuse, as communal toilets and shared living spaces afforded little privacy or protection (Oxfam 2015). Women reported feeling very insecure, particularly given the high rates of human trafficking in earthquake-affected districts.⁹ These incidents were rarely reported or investigated, given the earthquake's damage to basic infrastructure combined with the distance to justice institutions. The Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC) created nearby health centres with trained counsellors for earthquake survivors to document GBV.¹⁰ The opportunity to report sexual violence safely led many women to report assaults perpetrated not just after the earthquake, but from other periods as well, including during the conflict. While WOREC has helped to document these crimes, this has not translated into prosecution or accountability. Lack of justice remains a barrier to many women's full reintegration into society after the upheaval caused by the conflict and the earthquake.

Legal Barriers Hinder Recovery

Gender-based discrimination codified in Nepal's constitution and legislation obstructed women from accessing state aid after the conflict and the earthquake. The longstanding and inequitable standard for men and women's citizenship restricted possession of the citizenship cards necessary to access state-based aid.

There are over 4 million people living in Nepal without citizenship cards (Sharma, G 2015). Nepali women do not have equal rights to the principle of *jus sanguinis*, or citizenship via descent. The 2015 constitution does not grant automatically grant citizenship to a Nepali woman's child if the father is a foreign man; it also requires proof that a father is *not* a foreigner before granting citizenship if a father is absent (Desouza 2015). While the 2007 interim constitution provisionally granted equal citizenship rights, longstanding patriarchal practices meant that district officials rarely allowed children to gain citizenship without the presence of a Nepali father (Latschan 2015). Stateless people, those without citizenship and identity cards, cannot open a bank account, receive a driver's license, or apply to college (Sharma, G 2015).

180 days. See The Kathmandu Post, 'Statute of Limitations on Rape Extended to 180 Days', *The Kathmandu Post*, November 30, 2015.

9 Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016a.

10 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c..

In emergency contexts, the lack of proper documentation for women and their children limits their ability to get state aid and hampers overall recovery. During the political transition, those trying to document crimes committed against them during the conflict or access state services needed citizenship cards to do so. Similarly, lack of documents proving land ownership were an obstacle. Only 19 per cent of women have legal ownership of land (International Organization for Migration 2016); when women's husbands or fathers were killed, disappeared, or fled during the conflict, women had no legal claim on their homes. In addition, reparations recipients must have proof of citizenship to receive compensation from the state. Due to discriminatory legislation, women are less likely to receive conflict-related assistance if a male relative is not present. The consequences of gender-based discrimination have been dire for earthquake survivors as well. Government relief and registration of land for rebuilding purposes was restricted to those with proper documentation, who are overwhelmingly male.¹¹ Women were unlikely to have land titles, and if their husband was gone or missing, often did not have citizenship cards for other forms of relief.¹² In this way, discriminatory legislation prevented women from receiving aid when an emergency occurred.

Social Norms Deepen Vulnerability

Single women encountered additional challenges due to social norms that limit their mobility and social access. Social stigmas (i.e., that widows are unlucky) created a barrier between single women and their communities.¹³ This increased isolation during the turbulent post-conflict and post-earthquake periods intensified instability. Single women were at high risk of sexual violence, given their segregation from the community.¹⁴ Social norms for how single women should behave also limited their rights. During the conflict, men were disappeared by involved armed actors. In part due to stringent behavioural constraints for widows, the state mandated that women had to wait years before officially registering as widows if their husbands went missing.¹⁵ Women could not gain access to property for six years,¹⁶ leaving the land unused or open to being claimed by others

11 Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 24, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c

12 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

13 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

14 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

15 Interview with civil society member, September 8, 2016.

16 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

in the interim. After the earthquake, with thousands dead, mourning requirements for widows proved a barrier to relief distribution; women had to navigate the restrictive practices (including not touching others and strict eating limitations) and meeting subsistence needs.¹⁷ Widowed earthquake survivors had difficulty accessing the relief they needed.¹⁸ These consequences were exacerbated for Dalit women, who faced these challenges in addition to caste discrimination.¹⁹

Conflicts and disasters affect women in similar and overlapping ways, and both exacerbate women's existing vulnerabilities. This directly impacts women's abilities to recover and rebuild in the aftermath of crises. However, women in Nepal were powerful actors in securing services for women, rebuilding their communities, and leading the reconstruction of Nepal.

Women's Organisations Responded to the Needs of Women and Marginalised Groups

Conflict and disaster exacerbate vulnerabilities for those who are already marginalised or excluded from resources, and post-conflict and post-disaster effects often manifest in similar and intersecting ways (Ferris 2010). Women's CSOs filled key gaps, particularly for underserved communities, tackling needs which otherwise might have been unaddressed. In particular, CSOs rapidly expanded the scope of their focus and activity; many women's groups had long histories of working for women's rights but quickly mobilised to provide earthquake relief. Other groups with a focus on disaster risk reduction began to incorporate gender equality work in their efforts. Women provided both rapid response and long-term capacity-building, addressing the needs of marginalised communities by a) responding directly to resource and service needs to serve more people more effectively, and b) channelling women's voices and needs to government institutions in order for government processes to consider the needs of communities comprehensively.

Responding Directly to Resource and Service Needs

Women's CSOs are key actors in addressing the needs of marginalised groups throughout Nepal, particularly marginalised and underserved women. Women's organisations worked to address women's needs and experiences holistically during a turbulent transition period in which the government

17 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

18 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

19 Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016b.

dissolved and reformed, an interim constitution continued for eight years, and former guerrillas were voted in and out of power. During this time, women's CSOs tackled the effects of conflict-related sexual violence,²⁰ created clinics for maternity services and family planning to communities without easy access to health care (WOREC Nepal 2016), supported food security and community sanitation where local infrastructure had been destroyed (Feminist Dalit Organization 2014), and encouraged women entrepreneurs to help revitalise the economy (Feminist Dalit Organization 2016). Women's organisations equally played an over-sized role in earthquake response and recovery, saving lives, preserving communities, and rebuilding livelihoods. They responded immediately to earthquake needs, despite few working on disaster response previously. Even in areas that were difficult to access, women's CSOs were able to leap into action because of their existing networks which provided quick local forces for distributing aid.²¹ These aid packages included basic health necessities (UN Women 2016),²² financial support,²³ relief centres specifically for women,²⁴ psychological support (UN Women 2016),²⁵ and information about how to access government or international relief.²⁶ Many of these organisations specifically prioritised women in their response,²⁷ including focusing

20 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

21 Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, September 15, 2016.

22 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 26, 2016; Interview with civil society member, September 8, 2016.

23 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 24, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016d; Interview with civil society member, August 26, 2016.

24 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

25 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

26 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, September 8, 2016; Interview with civil society member, September 15, 2016.

27 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016d; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, September 8, 2016.

on the additional challenges facing pregnant and lactating women and adolescent girls.²⁸ They also took on traditional disaster recovery tasks. Women cleared rubble, provided first aid, organised their communities, built temporary shelter, and rebuilt houses.²⁹

Reacting to the earthquake, many organisations mobilised their existing resources of networks of volunteers and expertise, much of which had developed because of the conflict. Nagarik Aawaz operated a kitchen for conflict-affected homeless and displaced communities beginning in 2004; after the earthquake, it created a kitchen for displaced survivors. Nagarik Aawaz worked closely with Tewa to create the joint Earthquake Relief Fund (ERF).³⁰ The ERF provided financial support for an outburst of activity, which included 289 volunteers reaching 23,271 households in 118 communities across 15 districts. They also supported five hospitals and fed 36,026 people through their soup kitchen (Tewa 2015). Other organisations, like WOREC and the National Alliance of Women Human Rights Defenders, mobilised their national networks of women in communities across Nepal, which had been previously activated for political movements, advocacy, and post-conflict capacity-building. They communicated, provided support, and sparked coordination through these networks for earthquake relief.³¹ Smaller organisations were among the quickest responders, working with whatever resources they had available; Bishnu Devi Mahila Saving and Credit distributed the money it had saved to victims in the immediate aftermath.³² This mobilisation was not an easy task. The earthquake also affected these organisations, both in terms of physical infrastructure and the lives of staff and volunteers. Organisations had to work with significant staff and funding limitations.³³

Discussing the prompt and sustained response by women's CSOs to the country's political and disaster needs, many interviewees expressed that women are especially effective in addressing other women's needs.

28 Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016c.

29 Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016d; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 26, 2016; Interview with civil society member, September 14, 2016; Interview with civil society member, September 15, 2016.

30 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b.

31 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

32 Interview with civil society member, August 26, 2016.

33 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a.

Some noted that including women on the committee to draft the interim constitution had helped make it gender-friendly³⁴ and having conflict-affected survivors on Local Peace Committees would help to provide justice and benefits for victims.³⁵ Others noted that training women on disaster management is effective because they talk with their community members and train their friends, spreading the training farther.³⁶ They also help other women feel more comfortable discussing their needs after a disaster, often related to children, disabilities, and sexual and reproductive health. Given these expressed beliefs about the efficacy of women helping other women, Nepali women's CSOs had greater legitimacy, and thus increased effectiveness, than many external organisations providing conflict and disaster aid.³⁷

Channelling Women's Voices to Government Institutions

In addition to service provision on the ground, women's CSOs channelled government and international attention to conflict and earthquake survivors. Women's organisations connected women survivors with resources from national and international actors to address their specific, gendered needs (UN Women 2016).³⁸ Tewa connected women with lawyers and local government officials to help them gain citizenship,³⁹ while WOREC documented cases of violence against women and shared them with the government's National Women's Commission.⁴⁰ Women for Human Rights (WHR) provided names of earthquake victims to international aid organisations to guide their response, referred GBV cases to relevant stakeholders, and helped widows file cases with village development committees (VDCs) for post-earthquake relief.⁴¹

Some organisations focused on providing clear information on resources for those affected by the earthquake. WOREC created 'female-friendly

34 Interview with government official, August 18, 2016a.

35 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

36 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016b.

37 Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016d.

38 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, September 8, 2016; Interview with civil society member, September 15, 2016.

39 Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b.

40 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

41 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, September 8, 2016.

spaces' that referred women to available resources from the government and international response teams.⁴² WHR created information desks as a central location for disseminating information,⁴³ and Accountability Lab organised meetings and created local groups to spread information to affected communities about available resources.⁴⁴ Similarly, the National Network of Community-Based Disaster Management Committees (NCDMC) acted as a bridge between local communities and responders to encourage communities to take advantage of available aid.⁴⁵

Other organisations created more formal partnerships to improve state services and to ensure that women would be well-served by government institutions. For example, Saathi's GBV mitigation programme is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare in order to strengthen the relationship between the government and civil society.⁴⁶ Nagarik Aawaz connects youth and women volunteers with the Ward Citizens Forum (a forum formed under the aegis of the Ministry of Local Development for social mobilisation and community development) to provide information to local government institutions about services needed in rural areas, which were particularly affected by the conflict.⁴⁷ These relationships help to integrate women-centric services into state institutions and provide additional capacity to government actors. In these relationships, government institutions benefit from civil society expertise, develop a conduit to isolated citizens, and become more effective in addressing the needs of women.

In other instances, women's CSOs monitor government institutions to assess the effectiveness of institutions and how sensitive they are to women's needs. Nagarik Aawaz organised women to observe members of Local Peace Committees, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the Commission of Investigation on Enforced Disappeared Persons and how they act or vote.⁴⁸ Additionally, the 1325 Action Group, a civil society

42 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

43 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

44 Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016c.

45 Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016a.

46 Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a.

47 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b.

48 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b.

network led by Saathi,⁴⁹ monitors implementation of 1325⁵⁰ in Nepal and monitored the Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF),⁵¹ a body responsible for supporting the Comprehensive Peace Accord.⁵² These organisations work to connect women with government bodies and to ensure that government institutions are responding appropriately and effectively to women's needs.

Women's Groups Simultaneously Worked at National and Local Levels

In addition to leading service provision and resource allocation, women's CSOs invested in advocacy at the national level while concurrently conducting capacity-building and organising at the local and district levels to address women's needs. This multi-level approach created multiple pressure points for making survivors' voices heard for political and disaster-related issues. National advocacy pushed for legal and political change, while local organising created accountability at the local level. Unlike many organisations that invested solely in rapid relief efforts, women's CSOs envisioned a long-term trajectory of change.

National-level Advocacy

National-level policy has far-reaching effects in setting the values and priorities for states transitioning out of conflict. In Nepal, as the state created a new constitution and new legislative priorities, women advocated for new policies to benefit, protect, and empower women; in effect, women pushed for their concerns to be central to rebuilding and reshaping the country overall.⁵³ Key goals for the women's movement included influencing the

49 1325 Action Group Members as of 2016: Center for Social Development, Didi Bahini, Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO), Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), INHURED International, Institute of Human Rights, Communication Nepal (IHRICON), Media Advocacy Group (MAG), National Network for Women's Security, Rural Women's Development and United Center (RUWDUC), Sankalpa, Shantimalika, Women for Human Rights, Single Women Group, and Saathi.

50 For more information on monitoring of the Nepali NAP, see: Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction and 1325 Action Group/Saathi, *National Action Plan on Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 & 1820, Mid-Term Monitoring Report*, 2014.

51 The Nepal Peace Trust Fund served as the coordinating body for peace-related initiatives, acts as a funding mechanism for the Government of Nepal and donor resources, and monitored the peace process.

52 Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, September 8, 2016.

53 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with government official, August 18, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with government official, August 23, 2016; Interview with government official, August 24, 2016a.

new constitution and shaping citizenship rights,⁵⁴ with women's groups advancing these goals by mobilising their extensive networks, advocating around high-level legal documents, using the Supreme Court to support policy change, and pushing national and international bodies for disaster relief. This work was not homogeneous or apolitical; many women's groups in Nepal are affiliated or aligned with political parties, and influencing national policy is inherently political work. Women across Nepal come from different backgrounds and work for different political ends, but across civil society, many united around these common causes.

After the conflict ended, women's organisations participated in consultations for constitution-drafting⁵⁵ and focused much of their attention on broad legal rights. Sujata Singh of WOREC argued that WOREC focused on the constitution because it is the only medium that decisively ensures rights.⁵⁶ Women's organisations focused particularly on a quota for women's representation, equal citizenship for women, and property rights.⁵⁷ A leader of a women's organisation argued that policies that ensure representation have long-term effects,

'And [sic] the initial phase that [men] would think like, '[Women] are just here trying to grab their post and trying to grab their seat'. But now their perspectives have been changed. Now they will think, 'Oh, there should be women'. This is how the change happens. It won't just happen overnight, but slowly. It will happen. It is a slow process, but it is impactful.'⁵⁸

Advocacy on the constitution tied into the long-term approach championed by women's CSOs who worked within the existing consultative structures to push their views. Women's CSOs also lobbied government institutions from the outside. One of the primary foci of lobbying was increasing women's

54 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a.

55 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

56 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

57 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with government official, August 18, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with government official, August 23, 2016; Interview with government official, August 24, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a.

58 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

representation at the national and local levels,⁵⁹ including in the conflict-related Local Peace Committees,⁶⁰ earthquake-related Emergency Fund Committees,⁶¹ the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,⁶² and the national cabinet.⁶³ Women's organisations also lobbied for the following issues:

- faster justice for conflict-affected communities;⁶⁴
- financial support for widows;⁶⁵
- extending the statute of limitations for rape;⁶⁶
- preventing political influence from swaying the outcome of cases related to violence against women;⁶⁷
- providing earthquake relief more effectively for women;⁶⁸
- property rights for women;⁶⁹
- supporting joint ownership of land between husbands and wives;⁷⁰ and
- changing policy so families would be able to receive aid from NGOs as well as loan support from the government in the aftermath of the earthquake.⁷¹

NCDMC, a loose network of organisations focused on disaster management, also advocated for women's property rights and widow's rights, arguing that women's rights are a critical part of rebuilding communities.⁷² Their lobbying position illuminates the connection between political and post-disaster concerns; women's ability to be resilient and to rebuild their

59 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, September 15, 2016.

60 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

61 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

62 Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b.

63 Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016a.

64 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b.

65 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

66 Interview with civil society member, August 17, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b.

67 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

68 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 24, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, September 15, 2016.

69 Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 24, 2016b.

70 Interview with civil society member, August 24, 2016b.

71 Interview with civil society member, August 24, 2016b.

72 Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016c.

communities after both conflict and disaster depends upon the security of their rights. Women's lobbying also recognised that both conflicts and disasters threaten women's political, economic, and social status. In March 2016, a group of CSOs⁷³ gathered to create a 15-point Kathmandu Declaration on implementing effective and gender-responsive disaster management (UN Women Nepal, facilitator 2015). The Declaration was explicit in its view that disaster management and post-disaster efforts were an opportunity to address gender inequalities and to create a more equitable society.

Women's CSOs organised demonstrations to push for national change. Women's organisations mobilised collectively to organise mass protests related to women's rights and representation.⁷⁴ This effort involved organising across CSOs as well as mobilising local networks across the country. Women's organisations demonstrated to support widows' rights,⁷⁵ a women-friendly constitution,⁷⁶ strengthening protections and recognition for victims of rape and domestic violence,⁷⁷ and equal citizenship rights.⁷⁸ These demonstrations brought diverse groups of women together and required a significant level of logistical coordination and cooperation. Women's organisations divided responsibilities for organising these demonstrations, including planning, providing resources, and mobilising allies. Many demonstrations involved occupying public streets, marching or taking part in vigils, or participating in hunger strikes.⁷⁹ Organising demonstrations required the mobilisation of many people and resources. Women's CSOs used these tactics successfully to extend the statute of limitations for reporting rape and to protect single women's access to emergency resources.⁸⁰

73 Women's Rehabilitation Center (WOREC Nepal), SAATHI, Feminist Dalit Organization, Jagaran Nepal, Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), Women for Human Rights, Single Women Group (WHR), Beyond Beijing Committee, Media Advocacy Group (MAG), Sancharika Samuha, and Home Net South Asia, with assistance from UN Women Nepal.

74 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b.

75 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c.

76 Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a.

77 Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a.

78 Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b.

79 Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016a.

80 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 18, 2016c.

Grassroots Capacity-building and Organising

Alongside national advocacy, mobilisation for large campaigns requires action at the district and village levels as well. Women's organisations created networks across the country to support national campaigns and to increase women's local participation.⁸¹ These networks organise lobbying as well as training and capacity-building⁸² and simultaneously support the work of CSOs at the local and national levels.

Local-level advocacy played an important role after the earthquake, when the CSO Lumanti worked with local government to adjust regulations related to house size and construction.⁸³ Kirtipur Women's Network, a local women's organisation, advocated for aid to be distributed by family rather than household, as multiple families lived in one household together.⁸⁴ NCDMC also worked with district chairpersons to make sure that women were secure after the earthquake and had access to land and opportunities for income generation.⁸⁵

Some organisations provided training and capacity-building for women at the district and village levels to lobby for change at the local level.⁸⁶ These trainings often focused on political and electoral education,⁸⁷ conflict transformation or community-building,⁸⁸ and knowledge of rights.⁸⁹ Some organisations, such as WHR, developed women to lobby and join district committees (e.g., Local Peace Committees), and WOREC advocated for women's representation at the community level while enhancing women's capacity to participate. CSOs such as Action Works Nepal and the Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) empowered women

81 For example, the Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) boasts over 53,000 women members through 2100 women's groups; and Women for Human Rights, Single Women Group calls upon 100,000 members across 1550 single women groups. See: 'About FEDO', Feminist Dalit Organization, accessed July 9, 2016. <http://www.fedonepal.org/about-fedo>; 'Progress of WHR at National and International Level', Women for Human Rights, Single Women Group, accessed July 9, 2016. <http://whr.org.np/achievements/#.WWLq0NPYv-Y>.

82 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016a.

83 Interview with civil society member, August 24, 2016b.

84 Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016d.

85 Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016c.

86 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, September 8, 2016.

87 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, September 8, 2016.

88 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016b.

89 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016c.

to challenge political leaders and provide suggestions at the district and village level.⁹⁰

In addition to preparing women to engage with local leaders, organisations such as the National Society for Earthquake Technology–Nepal (NSET) also provided training on specific skillsets that women could use to prepare for future disasters and improve the quality of their lives; this included training women as masons and to create ‘go bags’ in case of future disasters.⁹¹ Other organisations, such as WHR and NCDMC, provided training for women about how to take care of themselves and their families, medically and legally, in the event of a disaster.⁹² Some of these women, such as those in the Kirtipur Women’s Network, then trained other women how to secure their homes and save others through ‘non-structural mitigation’.⁹³ While many of these trainings focused on women’s everyday activities, by providing a foundation for increased prosperity and security, the trainings contributed to a broader empowerment agenda.

Women CSOs’ national-level advocacy provided a framework for local activities, while local capacity-building supported national efforts by creating networks of women engaged on these issues and advocating for change in local institutions. Creating networks established a way for women to make their voices heard locally and nationally and to build institutions that better address women’s needs.

Conclusion

Disasters pose serious challenges for building peace in conflict-affected states; likewise, political volatility can inhibit disaster recovery. As shown in this case study on Nepal, women are key to rebuilding states and communities during periods of multi-layered instability. Women’s specific

90 Interview with civil society member, August 21, 2016b; Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016b.

91 Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016a; Interview with civil society member, August 19, 2016b.

92 Interview with civil society member, August 16, 2016c; Interview with civil society member, August 22, 2016a.

93 Interview with civil society member, August 25, 2016d. Per the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, ‘Structural measures are any physical construction to reduce or avoid possible impacts of hazards, or the application of engineering techniques or technology to achieve hazard resistance and resilience in structures or systems. Non-structural measures are measures not involving physical construction which use knowledge, practice or agreement to reduce disaster risks and impacts, in particular through policies and laws, public awareness raising, training and education’. See: ‘Structural and Non-Structural Measures’, PreventionWeb, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (February 2017), accessed July 9, 2017. <http://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/terminology/v.php?id=505>

vulnerabilities, due to gender-based discrimination and lack of rights, exacerbate challenges confronted when recovering and rebuilding after conflicts and natural disasters, slowing progress overall. However, Nepali women's CSOs had a significant impact in pushing forward an inclusive and comprehensive recovery process. They provided direct services to marginalised communities, channelled government attention to those traditionally isolated or disregarded, and invested in long-term recovery through a two-pronged and mutually reinforcing strategy of combining national advocacy and local capacity-building. These efforts contributed to minimising instability and maximising recovery, providing lessons for how advancing the status of women and enabling their full participation can yield a stronger response to multi-layered instability.

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Perception of Gender Norms Transformed through Innovative Technology in the Sectors of Agriculture and Natural Resources

Case Studies from Nepal

SUSHILA CHATTERJEE NEPALI & KANCHAN LAMA

Background

The international development community increasingly recognises the influence of gender on agriculture and natural resource management (NRM) sectors. Gender norms in a given society can lead to differences between females and males in social position and power, access to resources and services, and agriculture and NRM-related behaviours. Traditional practices can reinforce gender inequalities at the community level, creating more barriers to positive change towards viewing women and men's contribution in NRM sectors. Manfre and Rubin (2012) mention that the word gender is different from the word sex. While the former is socially constructed differences between women and men, the latter refers to universal biological characteristics that differentiate them. They also say that gender here refers to the economic, political, and cultural attributes associated with being a man or a woman (Manfre and Rubin 2012, 3-4). The attributes differ both across and within countries and communities and change over time. Innovation in agriculture and natural resource management is critical to reducing rural poverty. It is observed that innovation processes have been ignoring gender inequality, and end up limiting their impact and increasing risk worsening the poverty, workload, and wellbeing of poor rural women and their families. This lack of understanding of the relationship between gender and innovation limits our capacity to design and scale out agricultural innovations that enable both poor women and men to participate and benefit.

Researchers like Colfer and Minarchek (2012), Manfre and Rubin (2012), Lama (2011), Nightingale (2003) emphasise that power relations, gender norms, social perceptions, and men's roles and behaviour influence the process of women's effective participation in forest decision-making,

leadership, and benefit-sharing. Paudel (1999), Khadka (2009), Nightingale (2002) and Rai-Paudyal (2008) have indicated that managing and using natural resources in a particular society is gendered, suggesting men and women participate in and use natural resources, including biodiversity, differently with varying degree of power, needs, information, indigenous knowledge as their livelihoods needs and concerns have been different. Nepal's natural resources such as forests, water, wetlands, rangelands, wildlife, and soil constitute the main resources on which around 83 per cent of rural women and men depend for meeting their socio-cultural, environmental, and food security needs (CBS 2012). Gender in NRM is considered as a critical variable in shaping agriculture resource access, use, and control. It is well known today that there are differences in access, control, and rights over natural resources by gender, which cross-cuts with other domains of social relations such as class, caste, ethnicity, age, culture, occupation, and location as addressed by Rocheleau and Edmunds (1997), Verma (2001), Lama and Buchy (2002), Nightingale (2003, 2006), Elmhirst and Resurreccion (2008), Ahlborg and Nightingale (2012). They also indicate that social and power relations in South Asia, in particular India and Nepal, generally privilege high-caste women when accessing certain resources.

Materials and Methods

The methodology features a comparative qualitative approach, i.e., focus group discussion (FGD) among middle class, youth, and women, built on the World Bank global studies *Voices of the Poor*, *Moving Out of Poverty*, and *On Norms and Agency*. At the village level, case selection and classification was done, based on the information on variations across two dimensions expected to shape interactions between gender norms, agency, and agricultural and NRM innovation processes such as gender gaps in assets, capacities, and economic dynamism. Tackling this knowledge gap is urgent to achieve more inclusive and prosperous rural development; therefore, the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Research Program launched a global qualitative field study of gender norms and capacities for innovation in agriculture. The CGIAR's objectives for this major research initiative were to:

- Provide robust empirical evidence on the relationship between gender norms, agency, and agricultural innovation, and how these interactions support or hinder the achievement of its development objectives across varied contexts;
- Inform their research programmes' theories of change and related

research portfolios through identifying the gender-based constraints that need to be overcome in different contexts in order to achieve lasting and equitable improvements in agricultural outcomes.

This study tried to generate in-depth understanding of how interaction between gender norms and capacities for agency, understood as ‘the ability to define one’s goals and act upon them’ (Kabeer 1999), in agricultural innovation shape agricultural development and natural resource management outcomes in CGIAR Research Program (CRP) target regions. In order to analyse the disparity in gender equality, the study aimed to assess the transformation of gender norms in the sector of innovation and development of agriculture and NRM in Tandi, Chitwan; Jagatipur, Jajarkot; Jheen, Myagdi; and Devdaha, Rupandehi.

Site Selection

Nepal is also a part of this study. The study team first consulted with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center South Asia, and the officials of Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC) about the planned processes to be followed by the research. The Director of CIMMYT organised a national consultation workshop to discuss about the project and to collect suggestions for selection of study areas and where the study team explained the 2 x 2 dimensional approach for site selection.

The workshop participants worked out the mapping of district selection process in three steps: (i) identifying the districts with CRP intervention, (ii) assessing the districts’ conditions under economic and gender dimensions, and (iii) preliminary identification of the potential pocket areas for the study. The assessment also took into consideration the situation of road connection for travel and political stability besides earthquake risks. Thus, the major determining factors for selecting Tandi, Chitwan; Jagatipur, Jajarkot; Jheen, Myagdi; and Devdaha, Rupandehi as potential study areas were driven by (i) CRP-technology intervention for maize production; (ii) gender dimension in education, mobility, participation, and leadership; and (iii) economic dimensions.

Primary Data Collection

The sample sizes and selection procedures varied with the information and data collection tool. The primary data was collected through key informant interviews (KII), in-depth interviews based on questionnaire survey, direct measurements, or observations, along with community discussions using

GENDER CONTEXT	
High ←	→ Low
ECONOMIC DYNAMISM	High ↑
	Low ↓
Jheen, Myagdi Rain-fed dry soil, low economic conditions, poor farmers High gender activities, organic village started by women's group DADO support, winter wheat, local technologies and new breeds	Tandi, Chitwan Irrigated/rain-fed fertile soil, high potential Medium and rich farmers Gender and social inclusion less Agriculture extension office Maize hub site, high production, tractors used, urea and complex fertilisers also used
Devdaha, Rupandehi Irrigated/rain-fed fertile soil, high potential, medium and rich farmers Gnder and social inclusion high Agriculture extension office Areas for special hybrid maize, sown early and bad fertility Used Rajkumar, C.P. 808, Rampur Composite, Arun-2	Jagatipur, Jajarkot Rain-fed, mid-hills of mid western region Low fertility, medium farmers, food scarce Innovation for wheat by seeds intervention Gender and social inclusion weak DADO office and previous CIMMYT site, organic farming practice Wheat important site, use of fans for dehusking. Used new varieties Gautam, WL 1204, NL

different participatory tools. During the FGD and KII, several key questions were addressed:

1. What are the local norms for men's and women's expected roles in the domestic sphere?
2. What do they understand about equality between men and women?
3. What are local norms for men's and women's roles in agricultural/NRM livelihoods? Do these norms vary for poor vs better-off women and men? For younger and older women and men? If so, how?
4. Is domestic violence a concern for the community?
5. What levels of and trends in empowerment are reported by middle-class and young people (levels only) for their own gender? What leading reasons older vs younger women provide for explaining their trends in/levels of empowerment? And older vs younger men?
6. What role do gender norms play in men's and women's descriptions of innovators?

7. What local norms govern women's physical mobility and inclusion in the public 'spaces' of their community?
8. To what extent do local norms support or hinder women's access to and participation in credit, labour, and other markets? In agriculture extension opportunities? In other networks beyond their households? What about men's participation?

For FGD, the team ensured to have the respondents to be between 18–55 years, whereas KII was carried out among the age group 35–65 years. For the youth, it was ensured to gather information from 18–25 years of age group.

Results and Discussion

This section provides an overview of key findings of what has been learned in the research communities about gender norms and men's and women's capacities for innovation in agriculture and NRM. The study looked at the cases of men and women's role in a society that transforms gender norms into innovation and development in case of agricultural and NRM practices. We learned that gender-neutral development strategy does not make significant impacts on existing perceptions about gender roles.

The study tried to explore and analyse the concept of gender roles among men and women in Nepali society, which is a key factor that supports the transformation and innovation. Table 1 (below) describes the expectations of the women respondents about women's and men's daily roles, and it is clear that men are expected to stay at home and help in household activities, hold a job and earn money, and help in agricultural works, while women should be doing household works, e.g., clean, cook, wash, feed cattle, collect fodder, do household work and agricultural activities, take care of sick family members, participate in meetings and trainings, go to the market for shopping, send children to school and take care of them, and save husband's earnings. Men have the opportunity to travel outside the village, but women's responsibility to mostly staying at home to do household works limits their opportunity to be innovative.

Table 1: Men and Women Spending their Days

What a man does?	What a woman does?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stays at home and helps doing household activities • holds a job and earns money • helps in agricultural works • always does hard work • takes care of livestock • helps in household chores • takes care of children • helps wife while staying at home • earns money and feed the family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • does household work, e.g., cleaning, cooking, washing, feeding cattle, collecting fodder, doing household works and agricultural activities. • takes care of sick family member and participates in meeting, trainings • goes to market for shopping • sends children to school and takes care of them • saves husband's earning • cooks food on time • 'husband's earning in other country can be noticed every easily, but I work since morning till evening. I do not get spare time to even comb my hair but my work remains unnoticed'

During the FGD among men and women, the common roles of men and women did not differ much between different locations, but compared to Brahman and Chhetri groups, the other caste-group men do more household work and they also share the work burden.

Equality between a Man and a Woman

Majority of the women respondents mentioned equality as a situation where men and women both do the same work, men treat women as equals, women have freedom of movement, women do not face any hatred from men, and where people do not think that the household jobs are only for women. They also related equality in regards to equality at work and wage between men and women. The majority of male respondents stated equality as equal treatment for women and men in doing labour work, but at the same time, they also mentioned on having different labour rates for women and men. For example, men earn NPR 500 to 600 per day and women earn NPR 300 to 400 per day even when the work is the same. The common finding of equality among men and women is to have equal salary, understanding and respecting each other's role, helping each other, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity in jobs and education.

Local Norms affecting Men and Women's Roles in Agriculture/NRM Livelihoods

For understanding differing capacities for innovation, it is important to know the men's and women's role in the farming and NRM sectors. The respondents agreed that in general, production work is done equally by men and women, but processing is done mostly by women, where trade is done only by men. In the case of agriculture, the women think that good male

farmers are the ones who know about new variety of crop seeds, fertilisers, soil quality, agri-business, and pesticides. The male respondents viewed a man as a good farmer as the one who knows how to raise cattle and do most of the farming, has knowledge in minimising chemical fertiliser and how to use correct amount of fertiliser for better yield.

When it comes to decision-making in the NRM sectors, the common understanding among men and women was that the community forestry users' groups, the water users' groups, the school and sanitation committees have 60 to 100 per cent of the villagers participate as needed, and 30 to 50 per cent women are members in these groups and committees and actively participate in discussions.

Wage Differences as a Disparity Issue

Table 2 shows that there is a wage difference between female and male agricultural workers at present (NPR 400 and NPR 800 for female and male respectively), whereas they used to be given lower wage rate ten years ago, when men used to earn NPR 200 and women used to get NPR 80 to 90. Presently, non-agricultural male workers and non-agricultural female workers get NPR 300 to 550. Previously, the wage rate was equal for both men and women at NPR 80 per day.

Table 2: Patterns of Payment for Agricultural and Non-agricultural Labour (NPR)

Categories	Daily wage now	Daily wage 10 years ago
Male agricultural worker	300-800	200 or 1 pathi rice equivalent to 80
Female agricultural worker	200-400	80-90
Non-agricultural male worker	300-550	80
Non-agricultural female worker	350-400	80

There is an increase by 50 per cent in women's participation in providing labour in other people's farms, which was only 10 per cent ten years ago. Around 60 men and women do wage labour in the village.

Men and Women's Descriptions of Innovators

During the FGD, both men and women were asked to mention the characters of good innovators and describe what factors support them and/or hinder them to become good innovators in the agriculture sector and NRM management. The main characteristics, as mentioned in the Table 3, are able to speak, have knowledge, be able to share, and have time for farming.

Table 3: Characteristics of Innovative Farmers

Women's views		Men's views	
For women	For men	For women	For men
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who can speak boldly and are clever • very active and hard working • possess money • can go anywhere for information • always curious to learn and know new things • women are more trustworthy than men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who can speak boldly and are clever • very active and hard working • possess money • can go anywhere for information • always curious to learn and know new things • feeling of selfless help to other farmers • ability to convince people and disseminate information • knowledge about agriculture, seeds, fertilisers, plant diseases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • giving time for farming • knowledge on farming and supportive • sharing and caring about others and help other farmers • visit and learn from JTA and technicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • who is a retired army personnel and now doing farming with new knowledge • giving time for farming • knowledge on farming and supportive • sharing and caring about others and help other farmers • visit and learn from JTA and technicians • build coordination all the time • be very positive in farming and hard worker

Based on FGDs, most of the respondents mentioned that both men and women could be innovators, but their capacity of innovation may differ (Table 4 below). Participants in FGDs among women agreed that for innovation, women should have ability to convince people and disseminate information; be educated and hardworking; curious to know and learn; have knowledge about agriculture, seeds, fertilisers and plant diseases; and learn from news or television. In the case of men, they mentioned the supporting factors for individual innovations as access to information and mobility, learning attitude, technical support from DADO and service centre, availability of seed and fertiliser in a reasonable rate, examination of the soil by a technician and recommending the suitable soil. In addition, they stated that market is also important because farmers always work hard but cannot get reasonable price for their produce.

The participants in FGDs among women also discussed the capacities that hinder innovation among men and women. Women respondents said that lack of a proper irrigation system, increase in pests and insects, not getting the price for the seeds they sell, not having access to required quantity of chemical fertilisers, and restriction on mobility and decision-making hinders their capacity for innovations. Men also mentioned that seed quality being bad

Table 4: Factors that Support Capacities for Innovation

For women	For men
trainings on agriculture such as on new hybrid crop seeds, new method for crop cultivation	financial support is needed
subsidy on electricity for using agriculture electric unit	have land suitable for farming
introduction of different hybrid varieties of crop seeds by agriculture office	have strong rules and regulation
availability of irrigation facilities such as pump-set and electric pump	have social consultation and strong network
introduction of mechanised agricultural tools	access to the local market
easy access to the agriculture service centre	following a timetable important for irrigation, spreading fertiliser, and weeding
formation of cooperatives and both men and women getting organised in farming	

and fake, not having proper training and intensive cultivation, middlemen being active in marketing and farmers thereby losing direct economic gain, inadequate education, and youth not being involved in farming are some of the hindrances for innovation (Table 5 below). Compared to men, women

Table 5: Factors that Hinder Capacities for Innovation

Hinder capacities for innovations for women	Hinder capacities for innovations for men
lack of facility providing right amount of compensation to the farmers during loss of crop	not knowing how to take benefits
unavailability of mechanised agricultural tools in agriculture office	expensive seeds
women farmers cannot take trainings without joining groups	farming policy not strong
expensive to hire thresher and tractors discourage farmers	not getting fertiliser on time and high cost, inadequate irrigation
lack of knowledge on climate change effects and plant diseases	lower frequency of JTA's visit and when they come, come for only a short time
inability to form women's groups and associations in the village like women farmers group, cooperative	high cost of seeds while buying but lower price while selling the seeds
not getting informed regarding trainings organised by agriculture office and other organisations	
lack of willingness to learn new things among people in this village	
Lack of knowledge on climate change effects and plant diseases	

do not take risks, and if the farmer is rich, then they are able to cope with hindrances and able to take more risks.

The women respondents found the factors hindering innovation to be lack of irrigation, insects and pest damaging the crop, absence of market nearby to sell the products, and confusion between hybrid and local seeds related to production. The men respondents viewed the factors hindering innovation to be lack of new farming methods, increase in pest and insects, and insufficient knowledge.

Women's Physical Mobility and Inclusion

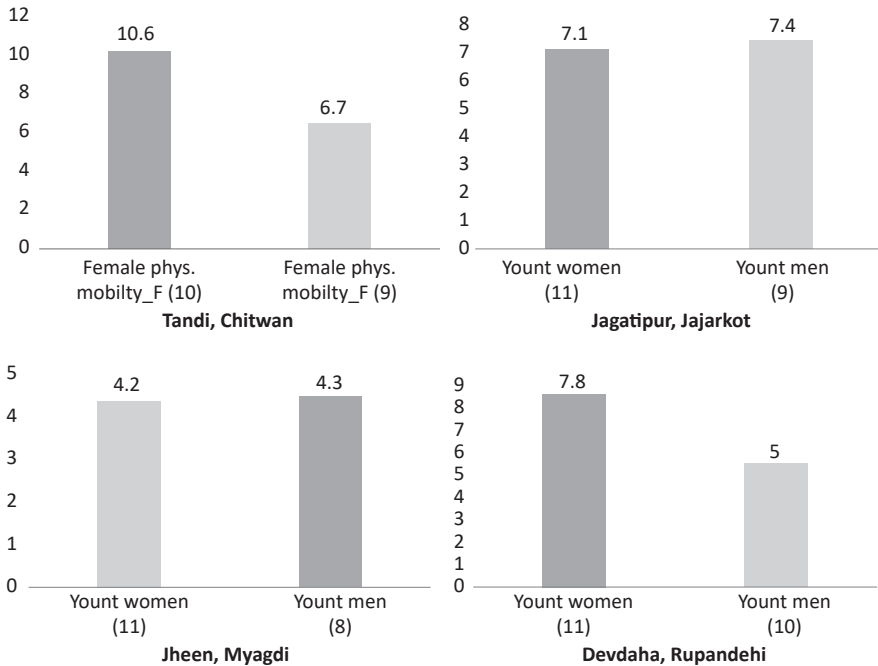
The transformation in gender norms very much depends on the physical mobility of women and their inclusion in all stages from development planning to implementation. The restricted mobility of women can be observed in various class and caste in our society. For example, mobility of women is more flexible in ethnic groups than Brahmin and Chhetris. For both men and women to be innovative, mobility is a big issue, i.e., if they can move out of their territory, they can explore more of the outside. This is confirmed by the study findings that women's mobility restricts them to be innovative. Figure 1 (below) shows the differences in perception of physical mobility pattern of young women and men. The average rating was 4.2 per cent to 10.6 per cent by women and 4.3 per cent to 7.4 per cent by young men, indicating rating of women's decision over movement.

Table 6 below with further breakdown presents the perception on mobility of women. Some 27 per cent participants felt there was free movement, and 72 per cent assessed the movement to be with restriction.

Among the women, especially for unmarried girls, it would be difficult to go and work in another city because the everything will be new, and some time is needed to adjust in a new place.

In case of young women returning to village after having migrated for work, the women respondents hold the view that if people would appreciate being independent, it would become easier for other young women to go out and more opportunities could be obtained after returning to village such as organising training, starting job as per work experience, and giving right suggestions to others.

The common reasons for women's mobility are for education, marriage, and job search. Both men and women in all the villages think that movement for women is important, but with restriction, keeping in mind the social factors.

Figure 1: Mean Rating of Women's Free Movement (Young Men's vs Young Women's FGD)

Note: The scale for the ratings ranges from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating practically no women move freely on their own and 10 practically all do. Table 6 below with further breakdown presents the perception on mobility of women. Some 27 per cent participants felt there was free movement and 72 per cent assessed the movement to be with restriction.

Power, Freedom, and Decision-making

Empowerment is related to the word 'power'. In English, the concept leans on its original meaning of investment with legal power, permission to act for some specific goal or purpose (Rappaport 1981). We all know that the most deep-rooted forms of inequality, built into the structure of Nepali traditional society, are those based on caste and on gender.

Figure 2 below shows the different trends in empowerment as reported in the ladder of power and freedom by middle-class men and women and young people today and 10 years ago. The respondents were asked to rank the capacity of decision-making for today and 10 years ago. Analysing first with men, the result showed that all the adult men ranked their decision-making capacity to be in step 5 (step 1 being equivalent to having almost no power or freedom to make decisions) today, which they rated step 3.4 10 years ago. All the men responded that men reported becoming household heads after their fathers and their decision-making capacity had increased. They also

Table 6: Perception on Women who Move Freely

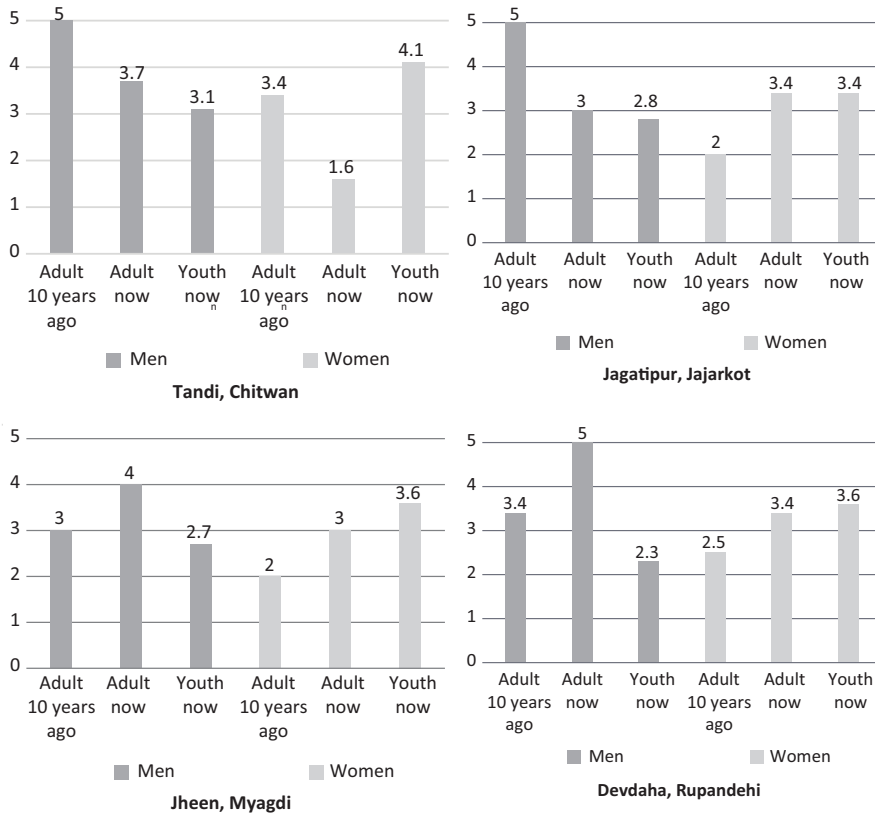
Areas	Practically no women move freely on their own in the village	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Practically all women move freely on their own in the village
Jheen, Myagdi	Responses by women		3			8						
	Responses by men				6	2						
Jagatipur, Jajarkot	Responses by women						4		3	2	2	
	Responses by men				6	2	1	1				
Tandi, Chitwan	Responses by women								10			
	Responses by men						6	7				
Devdaha, Rupandehi	Responses by women						6		4		1	
	Responses by men						6	2	1			

Note: The scale for the ratings ranges from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating practically no women move freely on their own; 10 practically all women do.

reasoned to be in lower steps before because they used to work together in a cooperative rather than individual approach in farming practices.

The analysis with young men showed that they rated their capacity at 2.3 on average to make decisions, which was comparatively lower indicating inability to make certain major decisions. The main reason for having lower rating in decision-making capacity given by the young men was that some could not make their own decisions. The same analysis was done for the women and they (10 women) assessed their level of power and freedom at step 5, 4 and 3 today, which they rated at step 3 and step 2 ten years ago. They reasoned that most of the women rely on husbands even to make small decisions. The overall finding is that today more women can make their own decisions; however, men still make all the decisions.

Figure 2: Ranking on the 5-steps on the Ladder of Power and Freedom (n=approximately 40 FGD Participants from 4 Focus Groups)



Perception on Gender Differences of Paid Work

Table 7 (below) presents the female respondents' assessment that women working for wage is rare for a young single woman and an older married woman today than 10 years ago. It was not a common practice for a young single woman and a widow in the past and even today to work for pay in village. Female respondent feel that the society's view towards women and men are different; for example, if a woman earned good amount, then people will not say anything, but if not, then people would say, 'She worthlessly killed her own precious time, it would have been better to spend quality time with the kids'. Some women thought that 'If a woman has good character, then people would not say anything', which, however, is not said of men. The difference in perceptions of who gets a paid job or not from men's and women's perspective for today compared today to 10 years ago is presented in Table 7 (below).

**Table 7: Women of the Village Working for Wage on the Ladder of Life
(Women's vs Men's Perceptions)
Ladder of Life FGDs,**

Rare (0-2 women in 10).....1
Common (3 or more women in 10).....2

Areas	Categories of women	Women (n=10)	Women (10 years ago)	Men (n=9)	Men (10 years ago)
Tandi	A young single woman	1	2	2	1
	A young married woman	2	2	2	1
	An older married woman	2	2	2	1
	A widow	2	2	2	1
Jagatipur	A young single woman	2	1	2	1
	A young married woman	2	2	2	2
	An older married woman	1	1	2	2
	A widow	2	2	2	2
Jheen	A young single woman	2	2	2	1
	A young married woman	2	2	1	1
	An older married woman	2	2	1	1
	A widow	2	2	2	1
Devdaha	A young single woman	1	1	1	1
	A young married woman	2	1	2	1
	An older married woman	2	1	2	1
	A widow	1	1	1	1

Domestic Violence, a Constraint for Transformation

Domestic violence is prevalent in the study communities. Although both men and women respondents voted for the need to reduce the incidences of domestic violence, their rating differed in degree. Out of 38 women respondents, around 47 per cent of them mentioned their views as 'almost never happens' for today and 46 per cent women said that 'occasional violence happened here' 10 years ago. No women mentioned frequent incidences occurring either today or 10 years ago. Looking at the men's perception on domestic violence, 44 per cent mentioned 'almost never happens and occasionally happening' today, while 56 per cent voted for 'occasionally happened 10 years ago' as presented in Table 8 below.

The main reason for differences in domestic violence against women happening 10 years ago was that there was less job for men and they would drink and get annoyed and frustrated and take it out on their wives. In Tandī, women said there is a rule that if men drink and create commotion in the village, he will be punished by the mothers' group.

Table 8: The Extent of Local Women being Hit or Beaten in their Households

	Women's opinion		Men's opinion	
	Over the past year	During 2004	Over the past year	During 2004
1. Almost never happens here (0 women in 10)	18	8	17	8
2. Occasionally happens here (1 to 2 women in 10)	12	17	17	22
3. Regularly happens here (3 women in 10)	0	13	3	8
4. Frequently happens here (4 or more women in 10)	0	0	0	1

Social Harmony as Building Block for Social Transformation

Social integration and social cohesion are difficult terms to define. Larson (2013) defines 'social cohesion as the belief held by citizens of a given nation-state that they share a moral community, which enables them to trust each other'. The importance of trust has been strongly emphasised in contemporary sociological thinking (e.g., Möllering 2013; Frederiksen 2012; Reemtsma 2012; Barbalet 2009; Cook et al 2005; Hardin 2004). If we return to the definition of social cohesion provided above, we are now able to specify the most important aspect of the contents of the 'shared moral community'. During the FGD discussions, the responses gathered on the relevant tensions existing in all these villages were caste discrimination, alcoholic husbands, drug use by young kids, kids not getting education, not having landownership certificates, and unemployed husbands. Though the tensions still exist, these days, people get along better compared to the past.

During the focus group discussions, the study team was interested to know the level of trust and helping one another in the communities. For this question, the team used a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating that villagers are extremely suspicious and do not offer help when it is needed, and 5 indicating that the villagers are extremely trusting and helpful. FGD findings in Table 9 (below) reveal that social cohesion and trust had increased more today compared to 10 years ago. They reasoned that today especially women have become active and close to each other due to formation of different women's groups and associations like mothers' groups, women farmers' groups. They also reasoned that earlier during the Maoist conflict, it was difficult to trust one another due to insecurity in the village, but now people trust each other and come forward to help during difficulties.

There are several factors contributing to less tension today. First, people

Table 9: Ratings of Social Harmony Today and Ten Years Ago

	My neighbours are almost always suspicious, reserved, and rarely helpful when needed	1	2	3	4	5	6	My neighbours are almost always trusting and friendly, and helpful when needed
Jheen, Myagdi								
NOW								
Men				1	1	6		
Women						9		
10 YEARS AGO								
Men			2	5	1			
Women				9				
Jagatipur, Jajarkot								
NOW								
Men				1	1	7		
Women					1	6	3	
10 YEARS AGO								
Men			2	5	2			
Women			4	2	4			
Tandi, Chitwan								
NOW								
Men					8	2		
Women					3	2	5	
10 YEARS AGO								
Men			9	1				
Women					3	2	5	
Devdaha, Rupandehi								
NOW								
Men		1		1	4	2	1	
Women					8	2		
10 YEARS AGO								
Men			1	3	2	3		
Women			10					

have lots of social gatherings and interactions and are more aware about working together, and that creates less tension in the community. Second, if natural disasters occur in the area or there is food scarcity in the area, then everyone helps each other. Third, religious festivals and formation of the

groups have helped people bring together. The Table 9 indicates that more women mentioned the tensions to be lower today, which could perhaps be due to the fact that men are out of the area often and they are not involved.

Discussions

Nepal is a male-dominated society where women are subordinate to men. Men are considered as the head of the family, and they take major decisions by themselves. This might be the reason women often deny discrimination even if they experience it. Preference for a son is common almost in every community. Gender-based discrimination in different forms starts right after the birth and continues throughout life. Discrimination against women in Nepal is related to the deeply rooted traditional culture, which establishes the hierarchical relationship between male and female. Discrimination can be seen in the form of gender roles defined by the society and can be observed in the terms of mobility, property, education, interaction, and decision-making.

While NRM governance, policy-making, and implementation practices in Nepal are yet to be gender sensitive and responsive (Khadka 2009; Khadka and Bhattarai 2012), renewed interests of the government, donors, and development organisations towards social and environmental goals such as gender equality, poverty reduction, climate-change adaptation, and biodiversity conservation are the opportunities in the NRM sector to make development practices gender equitable. Because of deep-seated gender norms, rules prescribing men's and women's expected roles and behaviours in their society, men and women have different capacities to contribute to and take advantage of innovation in agriculture and NRM. The good social cohesion is a step towards having good governance and transparency in the village and less tension among men and women. In rural areas, social cohesion can be an important step for addressing transformation of gender norms promoting innovation and development; for example, women should be allowed and trusted to move freely to participate in trainings and development activities.

Conclusions

Women seemed to be quite aware of societal discrimination in property, occupation, education, parental behaviour, and discriminatory behaviour in the society. In contrast to societal discrimination, household-level discrimination is not taken seriously by women as they seemed to accept some discrimination. Respondents are quite aware about the discrimination. Majority of the respondents have seen or experienced

societal discrimination in one or other form, but they are not aware about the discrimination they are facing at the household level. The overall findings show the importance of gendered perspective to collect information in disaggregated form. Regarding the customs of men and women doing certain agricultural activities, there were no traditional taboos for them. Normally, both men and women work together. They mentioned that the farming practices have changed within the 10 years with introduction of new methods of farming because of trainings organised by the agriculture office and other organisations and also due to access to information through trainings, television, and radio. They also explained the availability of different hybrid seeds, chemical fertilisers, irrigations facility, mechanised agricultural tools, and promotion of Krishi Mela (agricultural product exhibition and sales) had given them the exposure. Women were part of community forests; however, men were still in the important positions and most of the decisions were made by them. Majority of the researches do not give gender-disaggregated data, and we seldom get adequate information to judge the findings as one-sided perception can be biased. Gender-mainstreaming and -integration has been a challenge in policy-making and implementation of projects. In the study areas, gender roles are shaped as 'women at home and field and men going out to earn'. Men are accepted as household heads whereas women are expected to take care of children and household matters, including agriculture. However, with the change of time and increasing trend of men going out to India and Arab countries, the role of women in the study areas has been changing quickly from 'home-makers' into 'subsistence as well as commercial farmers'. By taking control over new knowledge, and achieving economic gains from hybrid maize cultivation, they enhanced their self-worth as commercial farmers rather than subsistence farmers alone. It has been much debated and felt that women empowerment has been instrumental in achieving gender equality. Within the frame of women's oppression, subordination, and domination, there are several aspects in everyday life to experience inequalities, and although recognition of the gender dimension of poverty is increasing, the economic gap between women and men is widening. There are still gender discriminations with regards to outward mobility (main market), wage rate, nature of technologies (which are more targeted at men), and lack of women extension staff. Especially in terms of access to technology and market, women are still not able to take a lead on an equal footing with men although majority lead farmers are women.

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Anxiety, Assertion and the Politics of Naming

The Making of ‘Assameli-Gorkha’

SUMIT KUMAR SARMA

Definition of the ‘self’ in the modern times is not just an individual’s quest for self-identification but also a political statement of one’s status in the society. A common cause including a common origin, shared beliefs and values, and a common sense of survival has been a defining feature of humankind uniting themselves under various identities. On the basis of one’s definitions of belonging, communities can develop complex formal systems of individual and group stratification. Hence, a great deal of one’s ‘self-identification’ depends on the nature of the polity and society where one belongs to.

This paper attempts to analyse the (re)construction of a hybrid identity and its underlying process, both pedagogical and performative. Set in the province of Assam in the Northeast India, understood and seen as a troubled region due to ethnic and secessionist conflicts since independence, this study explores a lesser known but persistent movement for ethnic redefinition amongst the ‘Nepali-speaking Gorkha’ population of Assam. After facing years of displacement and discrimination, the community to a great extent has been accepted as an indispensable part of the greater ‘Assamese Society’, resulting in the birth of ‘Assameli-Gorkha’ identity.

As an extension of the eastern Himalaya, both geographically and culturally, Northeast India has an overwhelming ethnic diversity. Despite the ethnic categories being reified and bounded, they tend to be more fluid, overlapping, and messy on the ground. The region has been a battleground for ‘homeland’ politics where ‘origin’ of a community decides its fate as indigenous or immigrant (Baruah 2003, 44-66). The focus here is not on the most expressive and overt forms of ethnicity but rather on the subtler aspects of collective attachments and how such attachments change and modify over time.

The Context

The Northeast of India is characterised by diversity, based on ethnicities, languages, cultures, and religions. The region shares international borders with China, Myanmar, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. Some of these borderlands are contested, resulting in permanent anxiety in the region. Inter-state borders too are far from being settled. This region further lies in the crossroads between the larger regional entities of South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia, sharing its language and culture (DeMaaker and Joshi 2007, 381-390).

Being connected to the mainland India by a narrow landstrip of about 23 kilometres, popularly known as 'Chicken's Corridor', this region is connected to its immediate international neighbours culturally and demographically. The international borders play significant roles in the life of the people here as the borders' existence unites and divides people as well as cultures, communities, and economies (DeMaaker and Joshi 2007, 381-390). The presence of the border allows as well as forbids the mobility of bodies and goods across nations, shaping the nature of society in this region. Thus, one can comfortably admit that the collective identities in these societies are the product of contesting, coexisting, and, at times, overlapping geopolitical realities of being borderland frontier.

The state of Assam too is no different in this aspect. Since ancient times, the state of Assam, known as Pragjyotishpura and later Kamrupa, has been a site of migration and movement of population. The present communities inhabiting this province are descendants of migrants who settled here in different points of time. The erstwhile province of Assam has gone through various instances of fragmentation and division into smaller provinces based on tribal and ethno-linguistic demands. Thus, 'homeland' politics marks the political landscape of the region. The scramble for natural resources constitutes an important factor behind the demand for new states. Such exclusive demands often lead to confrontation with the state as well as violent conflict with other groups who make counter-claims over land and resources (Karlsson 2000).

Assam in general and the Brahmaputra valley in particular is an amalgamation of racially and culturally diverse groups of people. The unique geographical location and its fertile alluvial soil attracted streams of migrations since ancient times. The present population of Assam has four basic racial traits: the Proto-Austroloid, Mongoloid, Aryo-Mongoloid, and Indo-Aryans. Ethnolinguistically the entire population can be divided into three major language groups: Austro-Asiatic, Tibeto-Burman, and Indo-European. The earliest inhabitants of Assam were the Austro-Asiatic

group of people whose traces can be still found amongst the Mon-Khmer Khasi community of Northeast India. These were followed by the Tibeto-Burman language group comprising present-day communities like Bodo, Karbi, Mising, Tiwa, and various Naga groups. Since the first millennium, Assam or the state of ancient Kamrupa has been a major destination of the eastward Indo-Aryan migrants from the plains of North India. With the Muslim invasion around the turn of 12th century, a new trickle of Muslim migrants started to settle in the form of soldiers, artisans, craftsmen, and technicians, sometimes as invaders and, at other times, sponsored by local kings (Barpujari 1990).

After the British annexation of Assam in 1826, new political and economic conditions emerged. The British tea companies opened large tea estates in Assam. Labourers for the estates were recruited from tribes of the Chotanagpur area belonging to the Mundari sub-family of the Austro-Asiatic ethnolinguistic groups. At the same time, a large number of people from Bengal, Nepal, and North India reached Assam in quest of livelihood, motivated by the opening of the new avenues of economic upliftment in the recently opened frontier 'wasteland'. In the first half of the 20th century, Muslim peasants started coming to Assam in large numbers, driven by the availability of cultivable land. In more recent years, especially after the partition of India in 1947, a large number of Hindu Bengali refugees has taken shelter in Assam. The post-partition migration had a major impact in the demography of the region and has been a cause of political volatility in the state (Baruah 2003).

As a whole, Assamese society is an inclusive one with diverse racial and cultural elements assimilated into one broad community. The present society has taken a composite character. The religious reformist movement of Neo-Vaishnavism, initiated and popularised by Srimanta Sankardeva in the late 15th century, helped in the creation of an atmosphere of tolerance and mutual respect amongst culturally diverse population of the state.

In this heterogeneous setting, explaining and analysing the concepts of 'nation', 'culture', and 'community' could be helpful before discussing the Nepali-speaking Gorkha community. This might help us to understand the source of anxiety of a community whose quest for recognition as a part of the national community is yet to be realised. Drawing on ideas from a host of scholars, this article has attempted to reflect on the issues that have important implications for understanding the identity construction amongst the Gorkha community of Assam in particular and India in general.

Nation-State and Membership: Ingredients for the Politics of 'Belonging'

The term nation-state usually signifies an analytical or normative ideal type of political organisation. In the former sense, a nation-state is a category of analysis used to make sense of the social world. While in the latter, it is a category of practice, a constitutive part of the social world. Nation as a category of practice is also deployed in the struggle to make and remake the social world. In both forms, as a part of analytical idiom of social science and as a part of the practical idiom of modern politics, the nation-state is often understood and represented in a highly idealised manner (Brubaker 1989).

An idealised conception of the nation-state began to take shape after the French Revolution and was developed in both political and theoretical reflections during the first half of the 20th century. The coming together of the 'nation' and 'state' posits the congruence of two political organs that were situated far from each other. Brubaker (1995) notes that the idealised conceptual model posits a set of relationships linking state territory, national culture, and citizenry. First, the frontiers of the state as an actually existing territorial organisation should match the frontiers of the nation as conveyed by Anderson's (1983) idea of 'Imagined Community'. Second, political sphere and culture ought to be similar or congruent. It demands that a distinctive national culture be diffused throughout the territory of the state and should cease at the boundaries of the national state. Such an imagination entails that the state ought to be culturally homogenous within and be sharply distinguished from other states. Third, the territory and citizen should be congruent, i.e., all permanent residents should be citizens and all citizens should be residents of the state. Finally, cultural symbols and legal citizenship should co-exist making all ethno-cultural nationals natural citizens, and citizens should be nationals. The nation-state, in short, is conceptualised in both socio-scientific analysis and political practice as an internally homogenous and externally bounded political, legal, social, cultural, and, at times, as economic space.

This idealised model has significant implications for mobility and membership of people in the 'nation-states'. The nation-state has come to be understood as an internally fluid but externally bounded space. It has free social and geographical mobility within, in both vertical and horizontal dimensions, but the mobility is limited by the national boundaries.

To illustrate how the above-discussed model of nation-state can give rise to the politics of belonging, let us begin by drawing four distinctions. First, the politics of belonging or membership is very broad and plays itself out in

a variety of sites: cities, churches, clubs, neighbourhoods, associations, etc. But the focus of this paper is with the question of belonging with the nation-state. This belonging differs greatly to other kinds of belonging, which are mostly voluntary. Membership of a nation demands certain obligations on the part of the citizen. Second, the politics of belonging to a nation-state should be distinguished from the politics of citizenship in a nation-state even though they are closely linked in practice. Third, the politics of belonging has both formal and informal aspects. Certain kinds of formal membership or legal nationality come within the domain of codified rules and are administered by specialised personnel. Whereas, informal national membership or belonging is decided by ordinary people in the course of everyday life and activities, using tacit means to identify who belongs and who does not, marking boundaries between 'Us' and 'Them'. The everyday form of membership practices need not conform to the codified formal citizenship. It is a kind of an ethnic claim over the nation-state by a 'core' nation that sees the state as an extension of its kinship rights.

Fourth, an important aspect in this particular paper is the distinction between internal and external dimensions of the politics of belonging. The internal aspect of politics of belonging applies to those members who are permanently situated within the boundaries of the nation-state but are not seen or fully accepted as members of the state. Their loyalty to the nation is a matter of doubt and contestation. They are seen as the perpetual 'other'. The external dimension of the politics applies to those groups of people who are situated outside the territorial jurisdiction of the state but are seen to belong to that nation and therefore part of that nation-state. They need not necessarily be citizens or formal members of the nation-state in question. In both instances, the membership status of these groups of people are contested and challenged by groups who see them as 'intruders' and perennial 'migrants'.

This categorisation fits comfortably with the condition of the Nepali-speaking citizens of India whose claim to full citizenship, both in formal and informal sense, is contested as they are seen to 'belong' to another 'nation'. Here, it is important to remember that the Nepali-speaking population has been a part of this land much before the modern sovereign nation of India and Nepal came into existence. If one follows the logic of nativity based on the concept of 'land of origin', then none of the groups inhabiting the territory of India or Northeast India would qualify as natives. The ancestors of most of the population in Northeast India have migrated either from Central Asia (the Indo-Aryans) or from Tibeto-Burman plateau (the Mongoloids).

Exclusionary Nationalism and the Indian Nepalis

Some communities in the post-colonial nations are named with a hyphen while many others are not. The term 'Indian-Nepali' is considered to be meaningful while 'Indian-Bengali' or 'Indian-Punjabi' makes little sense even though the latter groups are found in other sovereign nations of the Indian subcontinent apart from India. What is pertinent to note is that while the latter groups are treated as natural members of the Indian nation, the identity of the former is always under question mark. Then we will have to consider another important question about the construction of the non-hyphenated citizens in contrast to the hyphenated ones.

Since ancient times, most nations have tended to define themselves as a sacred entity with power of assimilation, domination, and exclusion. The overt loyalty of a nationality, therefore, becomes a matter of historical immersion to the concept of civilisation from which the nation is born (Gellner 1983; Smith 1989). Thus, the statement 'Nepalis are after all Nepalis' becomes crucial even though their presence in India dates back several centuries and both the lands have been historically a part of the same culture and heritage. As mentioned earlier, the understanding of the state as a political entity based on distinct identities of the nation resulted in the birth of the nation-state. This paradigm shift paved the way for the birth of an exclusive logic of nationalism followed by an ethno-cultural notion of citizenship (Brubaker 1995). The Indian nation-state too is not an exception and, thereby, builds on the contradiction of the co-existence of a desired homogeneity of the national culture with the ground reality of the presence of varied forms of heterogeneities. To use Bhabha's idea, the 'other' of the nation-state emerges out of the oscillation that takes place repeatedly between the 'Pedagogy' and the 'Performative' (Bhabha 1994).

The question of Nepali identity in India is, thus, caught between the interplay of cultural significance and the certainties of a nationalist pedagogy. The case of Nepali-speaking population in India is best represented as a double-edged character of national identity, i.e., the double narrative movement of pedagogy and performative. This is characterised by the capacity of defining who is a member of the national community and who is an 'alien'/'other' or 'outsider'/'foreigner'. In other words, the presence of the 'other' nation becomes imperative for the existence of the national community. Thus, the nation can be read as having a dual identity that cannot be understood without the role of the 'other'. This idea challenges the understanding of a nation as a self-contained autonomous unit. This dual relationship can be seen in the attempts made by the Indian-Nepalis to popularise the term 'Indian-Gorkha' as a nomenclature to distinguish

themselves from the Nepalis of Nepal, i.e., the 'other'. Even those who do not see the Indian-Nepalis as true Indians or contest their claim of being Indian are victims to the same line of thinking which sees double identification as a requirement for the existence of a national community (Nag 2003).

Between Culture and Identity: The Making of Hybridity

It can be argued that the Nepali-speaking Gorkha community of Assam to be in perennial quest for establishing an identity that corresponds to both its cultural and political needs. As an act of defining its identity, the Gorkha community has resorted to new terms of discourse and created a space to represent the 'in-betweenness' of identity. This 'in-betweenness' provides the community with a terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood, singular or multipolar, in order to initiate and establish new signs of identity. In effect, the community is inventing new sites of contestation as well as collaboration, shaping its own identity.

The very birth of 'otherness' as a result of the intersection and displacement of domains of differences paves way to the intersubjective and collective experience of 'nationness' wherein negotiation of 'community interest' and 'cultural interest' takes place. Here, it is important to understand how the 'in-betweenness' is formed, from being different or from an urge to be similar. Also, it is of interest to see how strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in a space where competing claims of communities, despite shared history of deprivation and discrimination, are not always collaborative but at times are antagonistic and even incommensurable (Misra 2011). How do we reconcile such facts in the construction of a community that claims a hybrid identity?

Both associative and antagonistic terms of cultural engagement are produced performatively. The representation and social presentation of cultural differences, especially from a minority perspective, is a complex on-going process that seeks to construct cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation as a response to the changing socio-political needs (Hall 1996). Traditions are reworked through the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness affecting all those who seek to find refuge in the newly found identity. Hence, the recognition that the new tradition bestows is a kind of partial identification with the national community. In the restaging of the past, the process introduces other incommensurable cultural temporalities into the invention of tradition. It is in this context that the formation of the 'Assameli-Nepali/Gorkhali' community should be understood. There is a continuous interplay of the logic of culture and identity in the construction of this new-yet-old

‘community’. The duality along with the hyphenated nature of the term signifies an important form of assertion on the part of the community. The ‘in-betweenness’ of the community is accentuated by the fact that it desires to be seen as an integral part of a society which resembles ‘newness’ and at the same time carries a cultural legacy which gives it a unique identity.

Nepali, Gorkhali, or Assameli-Gorkha: One People, Many Terms

In the case of the Nepali-speaking population of India, the problem of identifying themselves with a single nomenclature is a problem of modernity. One of the defining features of modernity is that the subjects are tied to the abstract notion of nation and nationality (Chakrabarty 1997). The modern identities are, thus, reflection of the symbolic boundaries as premediated by the structure of national culture and national identity. Thus, the complexity of naming a community has to be understood in the context of nation, culture, territory, space, and history. Identity, thus, is a complex matrix of all such structures. It is by understanding such structures and its interplay that we may analyse a term like ‘Assameli-Gorkha’ with special reference to the post-colonial making of the Indian nation in general and the Assamese nationalism in particular.

The term ‘Gorkha’ is derived from the small principality (now a district) in Nepal by the same name. In India, the term ‘Gorkha’ and ‘Nepali’ are used interchangeably depending on the socio-political and cultural context. However, the term ‘Gorkha’ got precedence over ‘Nepali’ owing to various political movements that sought to distinguish between the citizens of India and Nepal. The term ‘Gorkha’ (Gurkha) in India was popularised by the colonial administration with reference to soldier recruitment from the hills of Nepal. The recruitment of soldiers was limited to certain specific communities who possessed ‘martial’ qualities according to the military administration of British India.

When it comes to the North-eastern state of Assam, most of the Nepali-speaking population who settled in this part were pastoral farmers along with some ex-Gurkha soldiers who preferred to remain back even after retirement. The community played a major role in the independence movement, a fact which has been well documented in various scholarly works. Chabilal Upadhaya of Behali was the President of Assam Association in 1920 when it became Assam Pradesh Congress Committee. In the preceding years during the Civil Disobedience Movement, stalwarts of the community like Dalbir Singh Lohar, Bir Bahadur Chettri, Anantalal Sarma, Bhakta Bahadur Pradhan were imprisoned and tortured by the British administration. During the Quit India Movement, the Nepali freedom

fighters of Assam were also sentenced to rigorous imprisonment and kept in different jails of Assam.

The Nepalis in Assam have preserved and maintained their own traditional social customs along with high degree of assimilation with the Assamese society. The festivals celebrated by the community, food habits, and matrimonial relations all reflect a high degree of assimilation with the host community.

In the year 1979-85, Assam witnessed a popular mass movement against the illegal immigrants, popularly known as the Assam Movement. As a result of the Assam Movement, a settlement treaty (Assam Accord) was signed in 1985 with the central government [of India]. According to this Accord, all those foreigners those who entered Assam after 1971 were to be deported under the Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunal Act (IMDT), 1983 as amended in 1985. The political status of the people of Nepali origin continued to remain confusing even after the Accord. On the one hand, in Assam, all foreigners entering without valid travel papers after 25 March 1971 were to be considered illegal immigrants; on other hand, the 1950 Treaty continued to grant the Nepalis a reciprocal right to settle in India (with no time-bound curtailment). This tension between the central government directive and the 'sons-of-the-soil' movement over the political status of the communities of Nepali origin in Assam was a by-product of the Assam Movement. The 1980s saw expulsion of Nepali-speaking population from various states of Northeast as a result of the nativist 'sons-of-the-soil' movement that demanded supremacy of indigenous communities in social, economic, and political life.

As a result of such periodic expulsions and displacement accompanied by occasional killings and extortions, the Nepal-speaking Gorkha community began to feel threatened, leading to a sense of vulnerability and insecurity. A rethinking of the identity began with such incidents when the community was labelled as 'intruders' and 'foreigners' in spite of the immense contribution made by the community towards the host society. It was a time when the term 'Nepali' came to be seen as something associated with the sovereign country of Nepal. During the same period, in the hills of Darjeeling of north Bengal, there began a violent movement for Gorkhaland, a separate administrative unit or state within the Indian union for the Nepali-speaking population of India in general and Darjeeling in particular.

The practice of addressing the Nepali-speaking population of India as Gorkhas is not new. In the year 1943, the All India Gorkha League (AIGL) was established with branches all over the country. The AIGL expanded its

network in Assam by constituting numerous local units (1944), two district branches (1946-47), and subsequently a provincial branch by the name of Assam Pradeshik (Provincial) Gurkha League was established in the year 1945. However, due to some differences regarding the conversion of AIGL into a political body by the central leadership of AIGL, the Assam branch, in the year 1966, rechristened itself into Assam Gorkha Sammelan (AGS). This was to remain the apex body of all Nepali/Gorkhali organisations in the state for a very long time.

The AGS since its inception till date has achieved many objectives towards the greater interest of the Assamese-Nepali population. Some of the notable achievements are: it helped in providing permanent settlements to the Assamese-Nepali farmers in many districts of Assam; it saved many families from deletion of their names from the voter lists in many districts of Assam; it stood against the alleged harassments of the Assamese-Nepali during the Assam Movement (1979-1985); and in other isolated cases, it helped in sanctioning a hundred positions of school teachers for the Nepali language subject and publishing text books in Nepali; it was instrumental in reinstating the status of 'protected class' to the Nepali cultivators-graziers in the tribal belts and blocks of the state in 1996 that had been withdrawn in 1969 by the government; it ensured the selection of one Assam Public Service Commission member from the Assamese-Nepali community; it ensured the grant of a plot of land for the AGS in the heart of Guwahati city where a building has been constructed for its permanent office-cum-boardings; it ensured the representation and notification [in the gazette] of the Assamese-Nepali in the Autonomous Councils in Assam; and last but not the least, the AGS has been recognised as a force to be reckoned with by the political parties too, both national and regional, and is consulted in the matters of sharing of power and governance in order to please a greater section of the Assamese-Nepali in the state.

Along with the aforementioned achievements, the AGS played a key role in popularising the notion of 'Assamese-Nepali' which later became 'Assameli-Gorkha'. Most of the later leaders of the organisation showed preference for the term 'Gorkha' instead of 'Nepali'. It was more of a political choice rather than social, inspired by a desire to distance them from Nepal. Today, the most vocal organisation of the community, the All Assam Gorkha Students Union (AAGSU), founded in the year 1976, is the most ardent supporter of the use of the term 'Assameli-Gorkha' for the Nepali speakers of Assam. The leaders of this student body regard the Gorkhas to be an indigenous community of modern-day Assam. Thus, it is apparent that the term 'Assameli-Gorkha' was a product of a situation that

demanded the creation of an identity of a minority community to reflect the nationalism of the dominant community.

Situating the 'Assameli-Gorkha'

Although Nepali-speaking population has always been a part and parcel of the collective past of Northeast India, they hardly find any space or mention in the history of the region. There is no dearth of historical and socio-political literature of the region, but there is hardly any work except H.K. Barpujari's *The Comprehensive History of Assam* series and Amalendu Guha's *Planter Raj to Swaraj*, where the Nepalis find some space. But even here, they are not dealt as 'people' but as 'migrants'. The difference between the history of people and that of migrants is substantial. While 'people' are dealt as embodiment of emotions, hopes, aspirations; 'migrants', on the other hand, are dealt as 'things' whose movements and actions are just 'recorded' and retold as struggles and aspirations (Subba 2003). While people are central to history, migrants are just adjuncts of it. In the history of various states like Assam, Arunachal, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland, only the majority community is covered while Nepali speakers are hardly mentioned. Such majoritarianism has only provided us with a fractured history and rendered a huge group of people without a history.

For a community that is already caught in complex and confusing discourses and terms of identification, a new term might be of little or no significance. Yet, the term 'Assameli-Gorkha' assumes significance when seen in the context of assertive identities in this part of the world wherein the politics of categorisation and classification decides the fate of the community. The term is a political statement of assertion to be seen as a part of the greater whole of a society, where separation is not a viable option. It will not be simple for the community to easily embrace this 'newness', not just of nomenclature but also of a new way of looking at itself. Also, it requires that this new form of self-identification is accepted by the 'others' who play a significant role in identity construction. Since no form of identification is static, this too may change over time, keeping in track the changing socio-political needs.

By using the term 'Assameli', the Nepali speakers are asserting their roots in this very land of Assam. It is also a statement which attempts to show the community ought to be considered an indispensable part of the region as well as the Assamese society. This society as discussed in the earlier section is made up of diverse groups and ethno-linguistic communities. Herein, it is important to note that the history of the region has been marred with 'anti-outsider' as well as nativist movements. Hence, the community sees

the requirement of establishing themselves as a 'native' community of the region if it is to avoid chauvinist backlash in future. By claiming itself to be native, the community also makes a political statement for others to consider them to be an important political constituent. At the same time, they are reluctant or unwilling to forgo their 'Gorkha' past and legacy of being progeny of a community, which made a special name for itself in history. Also, by not completely giving up their ethno-linguistic identity at the risk of being considered as 'Nepali speakers', the community is grounded in the culture of its forefathers while adapting to new socio-cultural settings.

Conclusion

The process and performance of this hybrid culture has made the community to revisit its 'self', which again has been received differently from within the members of the community. Based on interactions with members of the community from various walks of life, ranging from politics to academia, one can easily distinguish between three broad sets of responses: Active proponents/supporters, Sceptics, and Indifferent.

- **Active Proponents**

The most vocal proponent of the 'Assameli-Gorkha' identity are the political activists of the community. The leaders among them feel that it is their obligation and duty to establish the community as a 'native' of the region. For them, this can be done only by using 'Gorkha' and avoiding the term 'Nepali' as much as possible. This group is closely followed by the youth leaders and student organisations of the community, who also feel that their identity is best reflected in such constructed terms. A majority of them are uncomfortable to be linked with the land of their ancestors. They see their association with the Nepali nation as a burden of history. Anxious not to be seen as foreigners, they struggle for their rights and confront the state regularly on matters like upgrading/ updating National Registrar of Citizenship (NRC), doubtful voters, land *pattas*, etc. These groups of people try their best not to be labeled as 'Nepali', which for them refers to a person from Nepal and, thereby, should not be used to address them. Over a period of time, it has been seen that organisations and associations using the term 'Gorkha' has risen while those who use the 'Nepali' have been decreasing. Even various mediums of social media use the word 'Gorkha/Gorkhali' instead of Nepali. Bodies like All Assam Gorkha Student Union and Assam Gorkha Sammelan have been actively working in this end. Even

government-instituted bodies for socio-economic upliftment of the community like the Gorkha Development Council can be seen as an attempt to popularise the term. At the same time, it should be noted that these sets of people are also active proponents of safeguarding their language and culture and maintaining a distinct identity within the larger 'Assamese' community.

- **Sceptics**

There is another set of people largely composed of academicians, writers, businessmen, and most senior members of the community. These people do not see a need for any new term to identify the community as they believe that an important element in identification of any community is how 'others' define them. Thus, when it comes to the Nepali-speaking population, they are referred to as 'Nepali' by others. Just as other communities like Assamese, Bengali, Punjabi, etc., do not use any suffix or prefix to identify their community, the Nepali-speaking too ought to be comfortable with being addressed as 'Nepali'. According to them, the community should be comfortable with its existing identity and attempt to make others realise they too are co-nationals and equal partners of the national community. For them, just making a new term will not automatically make the community acceptable as 'native' by others or even by the state. Here, it is to be noted that members of this group project the community as being a part of a large global network of people speaking the same language and following similar cultures. The community, according to them, will benefit in a globalising world by being connected with its co-ethnic groups all over the world. Most people who do not favour new terms of identification are well educated and know the history of their ancestors. They are able to differentiate between 'citizenship' of a nation with 'culture' of a community, wherein citizenship is a national phenomenon whereas culture can be transnational. This group, however, is not overtly against the new term of identification for the community. Many of them having lived in the turbulent years of anti-foreigner movements of the region are apprehensive of the consequences. Being mature and educated, they believe that the community should focus more on economic and social upliftment and not just on political activism.

- **Indifferent**

There is a large section of Nepali-speaking population who are indifferent to this movement towards the new hybrid identity. They

are largely composed of the lower and marginalised section within the community. A good number of them belong to the displaced population from within the state as well as neighbouring states of Meghalaya and Manipur. Being displaced from their age-old settlements, these people find little respite in the new term. Many of them live in and around urban settlements and carry on dairy farming and allied activities. They are insecure about their status in this land and feel that they might get evicted anytime. Also, many of them desire to go back to the land of their ancestors. According to them, they would be 'safe' there. A section of them who have done well economically have been able to buy property in the many urban centres of Nepal. The ongoing process of the National Registrar of Citizenship (NRC) in the state of Assam has accentuated their fear of eviction and harassment. This is the most vulnerable section of the Nepali-speaking community due to their low level of literacy and ignorance of basic rights.

The above discussion points to the fact that the community has a long way to go before the new 'hybrid' identity can be established from within and accepted by others as being the genuine identity of the community presented. The differences of opinions and outlooks towards the '(re) construction' of the new term shows the complex nature of 'identity' building in the contemporary globalising world. What is important is that the community has realised the need of positively asserting its history and debating the various aspects of its unique culture. Identity formation is a continuous process, and, thus, the identity of 'Assameli-Gorkhas' too takes its own course, depending on the willingness of ethnic entrepreneurs to take it forward. The term is a reflection of the Nepali community's long wait for recognition as a member of the national community in India.

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Assessment of the Support to Education of Nepali Marginalised Girls

SHRISTI SIJAPATI

Introduction

Education is a fundamental human right (UNOHCHR 1989). It is a key resource for overcoming poverty and inequality globally. To give everyone the opportunity to lead a productive life, it should be ensured that children throughout the world have unrestricted and equal access to quality education that provides them the necessary knowledge and skills (Lewis and Lockheed 2008). Unfortunately, a considerable number of children, especially in the underdeveloped and developing countries still, do not have access to basic education. Approximately 57 million children from around the world still do not go to school. Out of the 28.5 million children that are not getting a primary school education, about 19 per cent are from South and West Asia (UNESCO 2013).

The value of education holds irrespective of gender. In fact, girls' education is essential for the social and economic development of individuals, families, and nations. Better-educated girls have proven to make better decisions at home and at work. Also, educated mothers are known to raise their children in a healthy and sound environment (UNESCO 2015; Khanal 2015; King and Hill 1993). Girls' education is a key determinant of social development and women's empowerment and has a strong trans-generational effect (King and Winthrop 2015). However, in most developing countries, girls fall behind in terms of education and generally constitute the majority of out-of-school (OOS) children. About 31 million school-aged girls do not get the opportunity to attend elementary school (Glum 2016). About 16 million girls between the ages 6 to 11 do not enter school compared to 8 million boys. In the South and West Asia, 80 per cent of OOS girls will never start education compared to 16 per cent of OOS boys. This implies that about four million girls from the region will remain excluded from education (UIS 2015).

The World Education Forum that was held in Dakar, Senegal, in 2000,

concluded stating that the long-standing gender bias and discrimination are the key factors adversely affecting the achievement of Education for All (EFA). The Forum developed a clear and transformational vision that progresses in achieving EFA and a dynamic source of development and empowerment cannot be achieved until all girls and women have access to education and literacy (UNESCO 2000). However, this path towards achieving gender equality in education seems to be long and complex with persistent barriers. Now, even after seventeen years, the world is still struggling with the same issues of gender disparity and different forms of gender inequalities in education. Data shows that in 2015, approximately 481 million women of 15 years and above lack basic literacy skills. About 64 per cent of women of 15 years and above are still illiterate, a figure unchanged since 2000 (UNESCO 2015).

The international community pledged to expand their work in the education sector during the two decades beginning 2000. Education for All Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI) has been a landmark effort in this direction (UNESCO 2010). It has been trying to bring structured and comprehensive reforms with the objective of getting an equal number of girls and boys entering the education system and completing the primary school (EFA FTI 2010). Even though it has been bringing significant improvements in developing countries in terms of girls' education, there is still a lot to be done to make it specific to the needs of the individual countries. Hence, the EFA FTI design needs further fine-tuning. More importantly, in order to make it acceptable to all, local education partners and governments have to be brought together to jointly develop strategic plans and collectively chart clear directions for reforming girls' schooling. Countries, especially those with slow progress, have to be helped in reviewing their implementation experiences and subsequently in ascertaining unique interventions that address the constraints and limits and produce the greatest impact (Clarke 2011).

It is evident that the efforts of the government alone are not enough to bring about the desired reforms in the education sector. The main focus of national policy-makers and international agencies is currently on collaboration between governments and non-government basic service providers. The aim of such collaboration is to support common goals for achieving universal provision. Studies conducted in South Asian countries have shown that such collaborations can be successful where non-government organisations (NGOs) invest time in building an informal relationship with government officials (Rose 2009). In such cases, collaborations not only enhance NGO service provisions but also offer

greater opportunities for engaging in broader policy advocacy through insider influence.

NGOs are observed to play an increasing role in education service delivery. Even though international NGOs (INGOs) are generally at the forefront of education provision, NGOs with limited geographic focus are also expanding in many developing countries. Often seen as a filler of the gaps left by the failure of states in meeting the needs of the marginalised communities across the developing world, questions are sometimes raised of their comparative advantages given their inclination towards the donors (Banks and Hulme 2012).

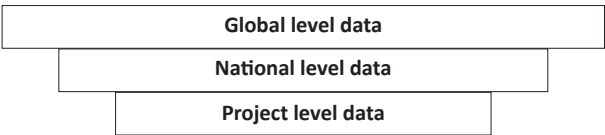
This paper tries to explore the pressing need and value of girls' education, especially marginalised ones from the developing world. Its key research questions are:

- 1. What are the key barriers to education for the marginalised girls of the underdeveloped countries?
- 2. What kind of supports have INGOs been providing to the marginalised girls for their education?

Methodology

The research methodology comprised a mixture of data collection process from primary and secondary sources at global, national, and project level. A reverse pyramidal model was followed for data exploration. At the onset, literatures on global scenario of girls' education were reviewed with the objective of exploring the specific gaps and deriving the research question. Then, data at the national level was explored to a greater depth. And finally, a sample case project was explored to the greatest depth possible (see Figure 1 for schematic representation).

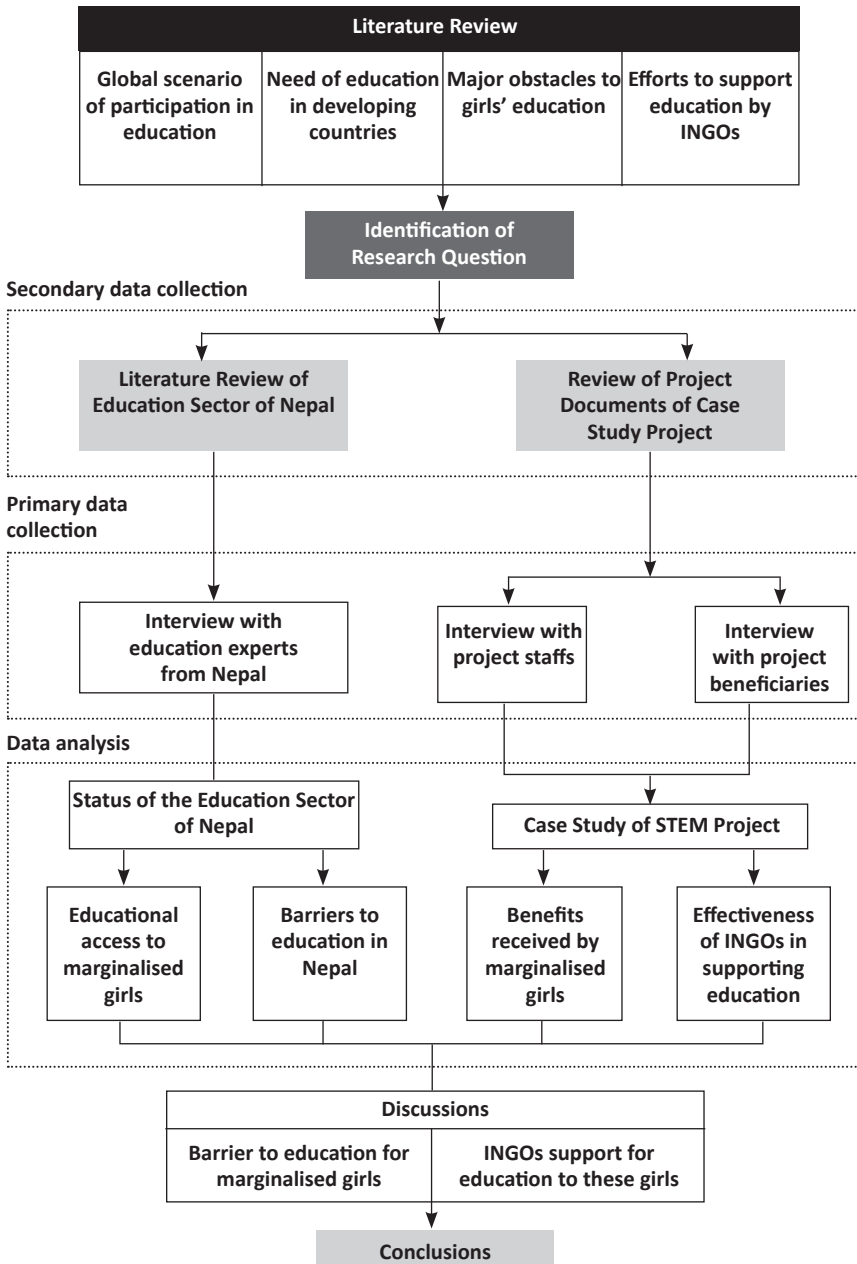
Figure 1: Model for Data Exploration



Based on the identified research questions, a conceptual framework of the research design was prepared. It consisted of a mixture of methodologies that provided various lenses to closely explore and analyse the identified research questions and complement each other, and ultimately helped

in deriving sufficient information for discussions and conclusions. This conceptual framework has been presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: Research Conceptual Framework



First, literatures related to the research question were reviewed and education experts were interviewed in order to assess the situation of the education sector of Nepal. Then, project-level analysis was carried out with a case project of INGO support to girls' education by first reviewing the project documents and then augmenting this information with primary data collected through qualitative interviews from both the project implementers and the beneficiaries.

Open-ended questionnaires were used for the interviews. This helped to establish rapport, encourage cooperation, clear up any misunderstanding, and test the limits of the respondent's knowledge (Cohen et al 2007). The most appropriate individuals were selected as informants (Merriam and Tisdell 2016). For the information on the status of Nepal's education sector, two education experts were selected. Similarly, for the project-level information, two full-time project staff including one at the central level and the other at the field level were selected as informants. Likewise, two girls who directly benefited from the identified project were selected as informants on behalf of the beneficiaries. All interviews were recorded, transcribed, translated, and later analysed.

The primary data of this research are the transcriptions of interviews, which are qualitative in nature. Since qualitative data are more explicitly interpretive, creative, and personal (Denscombe 2003; Denzin and Lincoln 2003; Cohen et al 2007; Creswell 2007), they were analysed by organising, accounting, and providing context in terms of situations, patterns, themes, categories, and regularities.

For the validation of the findings, the informants were again consulted. The feedback obtained from them were incorporated into the interpretations of results. This was done to check the data for researcher's bias (Maxwell 2012). Moreover, cross-verification of information was carried out by collecting data from both the project implementers as well as the beneficiaries of the case project.

Literature Review of the Education Sector of Nepal

According to the 2011 National Population and Household Census, the average literacy rate of Nepali population is about 65.9 per cent; 75.1 per cent men and 57.4 per cent women are literate. (CBS 2011)

Nepal has been emphasising on expanding access to education throughout the country since the genesis of planned development in the 1950s. During the 1960s and 1970s, through the support of international aid, significant expansion of public school systems took place. Since the 1970s, the country has been continuously targeting universal primary education

and women's and girls' education in its policies and programmes (Timilsina 2011). During the last two decades, its education policy has also responded to international treaties on EFA with the aim of enhancing children's access to education, with a special focus on girls and children of disadvantaged communities. Following the Dakar Framework of Action for EFA, Nepal, in coordination with international donor agencies, has also embarked specific programmes for promoting girls' access to and participation in education (MoE 2015).

Through the efforts of the government and the international donors, Nepal has been able to make significant progress in the education sector during the last few decades. From 1980 to 2013, the youth (age 15–24) literacy rate rose from less than 50 per cent to over 88 per cent. A net enrolment rate of 95.3 per cent was achieved for primary education¹, with a gender parity index of 0.99 (NPC of GON and UNCT Nepal 2013).

In spite of some remarkable achievements in the overall education sector of Nepal, it still has some problems. Females are lagging behind in certain aspects. The figures of total literacy rate by gender show that male literacy is 75.1 per cent while female is only 57.4 per cent (CBS 2011). Moreover, the survival rate at grade five as of 2009 is only about 62 per cent (UNESCO 2012).

In higher education, female enrollment is only about 41.8 per cent. Only 35 per cent of the teachers are female (DoE 2015). As a whole, the participation of Nepali girls in educational programmes has still not been able to reach the levels sets by the EFA initiatives (Timilsina 2011).

In Nepal, access and enrollments have also been observed to differ within and between regions and groups. Some geographic regions, especially Far-Western and Mid-Western Regions, are lagging behind. Almost one-fourth of children from the bottom consumption quintile remain out of school (NPC of GON and UNCT Nepal 2013).

Most importantly, some groups seem to be left behind in terms of education. Dalits gained access to formal education only after 1951 (Koirala 1996), and they still lag behind in terms of educational participation and attainment (UNICEF 2007). Dalit girls are consistently enrolled at lower rates in schools than those from high castes (Brahmin and Chhetri). They also experience more frequent grade repetition as well as higher dropout rates (DoE 2015). DFID reports that Dalit girls are almost twice as likely to be excluded from educational opportunities as compared to high-caste girls. A research on Dalit students at Tribhuvan University showed that only 1.4

1 The present school system in Nepal comprises four levels: primary (grade 1 to 5), lower secondary (grade 6 to 8), secondary (grades 9 and 10), and higher secondary (grades 11 and 12).

per cent of the university students were from the Dalit community even though they make up 12 per cent of the country's total population. Even out of this 1.4 per cent, only 30 per cent were female. The literacy rate among the Dalit community (33.8 per cent) is much lower compared to the national average (53.7%) (Bishwakarma 2011).

Dalit women's literacy rate reveals great gender disparity. Similarly, even though enrollment of Dalit students in the Far-Western Region in primary and lower secondary level (53% and 52% respectively) is higher compared to boys, the number of girl students in the secondary and higher secondary level decreases to 45 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. Thus, it can be concluded that the enrollment of Dalit girls declines with the increase in the level of education. The same also holds for Janajati students (DoE 2015). The number of women belonging to a low socio-economic background with higher education is extremely limited.

INGOs started playing an effective role in health services, literacy, family planning, population, and environmental conservation after the re-establishment of democracy in Nepal in 1990. INGOs have shown that they are more efficient and effective in providing education for all, especially through non-formal education (Bhandari 2014). The main target for inclusive education are Dalits, girls and women, minority ethnic groups, disabled children, trafficked and conflict-affected children, severely poverty-affected children, bonded labourers, children in jail, HIV/AIDS-infected children. In spite of this clear priority, progress has been slow mainly due to lack of sufficient involvement of the main stakeholders, namely the parents, teachers and communities (Khanal 2015).

Interviews with Education Experts

In order to supplement the information from literature review, primary data was also collected through face-to-face interviews with two education experts. Both of them, Ram Prasad and Hari Prasad,² are learned people with long careers in the education sector of Nepal, both in the field and at policy level. Their insights are believed not only to fill the missing information but also to further enrich it. The key information collected from them on the related topic has been presented below.

Challenges in the Education Sector of Nepal

The Nepal's education sector faces several constrains. The major problem is lack of sufficient qualified teachers. This is even more acute in rural areas

2 These are pseudonyms.

because most people prefer to work in urban areas. Lack of use of modern technologies is also restricting teachers to limit themselves to their textbooks. This affects their teaching pattern and does not give space for innovative teaching processes. Moreover, the schools also lack sufficient basic infrastructure. The effect, therefore, is reflected in terms of quality of education. Hence, the main challenge for the education sector of Nepal at present is to enhance the quality of education.

Focus on the Girls from Marginalised Community

The overall status of girls' education is improving. In the urban areas, it is very rare to find any girls not going to school. However, there is a need to make concerted effort to uplift the girls of the marginalised communities. The policies formulated are not properly implemented and monitored.

Effect of Availability of Physical Facilities on Girls' Education

Physical facilities such as classrooms, blackboard, computers, textbooks, etc., have a huge impact on the children's education as these basic requirements are missing in many government schools.

Cultural Barriers to the Education of Girls in Nepal

Cultural barriers are one of the major setbacks to education for the girls of Nepal. The cultural practices and the value systems are different in the different regions (mountains, hills, and Tarai) and with different ethnic communities. Most parents, especially those from marginalised communities, make clear distinctions between boys and girls. The main reason for this is the traditional value system and the lack of awareness and education of the parents themselves.

Supports Necessary to Reduce Girls' Dropout Problems

There may be many measures for reducing girl's dropout problem. For poor families, the government has to provide some grants for income-generation activities so that they can afford to send their children to school regularly. Awareness-raising among the parents is equally important.

The Extent to which I/NGOs have Fulfilled their Roles in Nepal

INGOs have been mainly engaged in spreading awareness, organising related events, and providing scholarship opportunities to poor students. They have also distributed incentives to parents, e.g., free lunch, if they send their daughters to school. However, INGOs have not been able to reach the grassroots level.

Communication and Coordination between Educational Institutions and INGOs

There are some shortcomings in terms of communication and coordination between the educational institutions and INGOs. INGOs do not work together as desired from planning to evaluation. The government has to monitor closely for these INGOs to work within its framework. It has to develop some mechanism for closely supervising the activities of the INGOs.

Review of STEM Project Documents

Supporting the Education of Marginalised Girls in Kailali District (STEM) Project has been taken as the sample case in this research. This project officially started in June 2013. Mercy Corps, an INGO with country office in Nepal, was awarded the responsibility for implementation. The inception period went up to December 2013. Actual implementation of the project activities started from January 2014. The project works in thirty 'treatment' schools from one sub-metropolitan city, one municipality, and ten village development committees (VDCs) in the district. Two types of girls are targeted by the project: 1) In-school girls (IS) studying in grades 6 to 10; and 2) Outofschool girls (OOS) who were previously enrolled at secondary level but dropped out in the past seven years (MC 2014).

The project has been conducting a wide variety of innovative activities for supporting the marginalised girls with school enrollment, academic learning for attaining self-efficacy, and accessing income-generating opportunities under the umbrella of Educate Girls Alleviate Poverty (EGAP) campaign. Awareness was raised on the importance and broader impact of educating girls through different mediums of communication such as radio jingles, door-to-door campaigning, street drama, and rally to broadcast messages. For IS girls, specific activities included awareness campaigns, three-month intensive School Leaving Certificate (SLC) coaching classes, and distribution of educational material like newsprint paper, marker, masking tape, etc. While for OOS girls, activities conducted were business, and vocational training in topics like house wiring, cooking, beauty parlour with complementary financial support; access to economic opportunity through provision of girls' transition funds to support education and income-generation opportunities (MC nd).

Another positive aspect of the project was that it supported not only the girls but also their parents, school authorities, government line agencies, and broader community members. The parents were provided Parents for Quality Education (P4QE) training for developing awareness on the importance of education and Financial Literacy Training (FLT) and Financial Education Training (FET) to improve their financial management

capacities. The related schools were supported in the form of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities and different trainings and workshop to teachers, School Management Committees (SMCs), and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs).

Throughout the project implementation, the project activities were closely monitored. Moreover, the results of all the treatments were carefully noted using the standard Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) indicators (MC nd).

During the thirty-six months of its implementation, two evaluations of the project were conducted: mid-line and end-line. Both evaluations showed positive results and the end-line evaluation showed even wider reach amongst both IS and OOS girls' parents. Before the P4QE training, the parents hardly visited their children's school, but after the training, their participation in different school functions was found to be increased significantly. They even actively developed action plans for creating an enabling environment in the schools such as repairing roads, toilets, and hand pumps, and increasing the quality of education, which were executed within a month following the P4QE training.

Both evaluations showed that parents of targeted girls recalled that the project activities, especially radio advertisement, poster pamphlet distribution, and two years of strong campaigning, contributed positively to the multiple indicators. As compared to mid-line status, the awareness level of parents improved significantly resulting in positive outcomes in enrolment, attendance, and reduced dropout. This was verified through school data as well as qualitative information (FDM and MC 2016).

The EGAP campaign is found to have a positive impact on the enrolment figures for targeted schools. The parents of IS girls (90 per cent in mid-line and 95 per cent in end-line) felt that they needed more than primary education. This indicates greater awareness of parents on the benefits of educating their daughters. Moreover, they are not only enrolling their daughters at school but also encouraging them to pursue higher education and allowing them more time for study. All this has increased the likelihood of girls staying in school for longer and improving their learning. The EGAP campaign also reached a wider audience than anticipated beyond targeted parents, as a result of wide-reaching messaging methods, such as radio campaigns. Likewise, it has also contributed to the marginal decrease in the dropout rate of targeted schools. This, in turn, is again linked to higher promotion rate in these schools. This improved promotion rate of targeted schools can be attributed to both regular girls' clubs as well as SLC revision clubs. These clubs have reinforced classroom learning and consequently improved girl's ability to perform better in exams (FDM and MC 2016).

The attendance rate in the targeted schools has also shown significant improvement compared to the mid-line. Even though the attendance rate still remains low in the months of April/May and October/November when schools reopen after the long breaks, and in July/August, which is the peak plantation season, consistent improvement is observed in the attendance rate in all other months. This is believed mainly due to change in parental attitude brought about by STEM's EGAP campaign. It has also been observed that the girls in targeted schools return to education at a faster rate compared to control peers. It is a reflection of the positive effect of the work on attitudes and behaviours of girls and their gatekeepers (FDM and MC 2016).

Learning under the project was measured primarily by literacy and numeracy scores. They indicated that girls in 'treatment' schools were performing better than 'control' schools in both Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Early Grade Mathematics Assessment (EGMA) tests. The end-line EGRA/EGMA scores of girls in the targeted school were even better than their mid-line scores (FDM 2015). This improvement is believed to be a result of the girls' clubs, which had supported and reinforced girls' learning. Moreover, the additional time that the girls allocated to their studies (independently and/or with parental support) is believed to be due to STEM's EGAP campaign, which not only shifted attitudes in a positive direction but also developed causal relationships for improving the girls' learning outcomes (FDM and MC 2016).

This STEM project was closed in November 2016. In the meantime, the project derived different lessons from its experiences with the different treatments tested. The project also documented these lessons and developed suitable strategy for sustaining the impacts of the project.

The EGAP campaign and girls' clubs have been observed to bring about a positive impact. Hence, it is considered appropriate to institutionalise the girls' clubs developed by the project into the existing community-based organisations (CBOs). Similarly, it is also being considered that the District Education Officer (DEO) should be suggested to pilot the idea of an all-girls or an all-boys school, inferring from the success of the all-girls approach adopted by STEM's girls' clubs. Similarly, acknowledging the fact that needs for school students differ by gender, it is also proposed that government teachers should be provided with gender-sensitive training during their initial Teacher Professional Development (TPD) training (FDM and MC 2016).

Similarly, considering the positive impact on multiple indicators by the EGAP campaign, DEO and treatment schools are suggested to incorporate

EGAP activities into the existing enrolment drives conducted each year by the schools. This is expected to decrease the dropout rate and maintain regular attendance at schools (FDM 2015).

Moreover, most parents of marginalised girls were found not to pay sufficient attention on their children's studies. This was accepted as a major challenge and P4QE training was considered to be a viable solution to address this issue. Parents who had taken the P4QE training categorically admitted that the training motivated them to pay more interest in their children's education, which then translated into lower dropout, better attendance, and better performance at school. Thus, it was suggested that Mercy Corps should try to incorporate similar training in future projects on similar thematic areas. Similarly, in order to control the dropout rate due to the migration of parents for work in India, it was suggested that Mercy Corps should collaborate with other income-generating projects (FDM and MC 2016).

It has also been suggested that project planning and improvisation have to be done with the provision of a feedback platform for facilitators. Moreover, since the EGRA/EGMA tools were found to be inadequate in measuring actual learning of students, it is suggested that country- and grade-specific tests matching the local curricula and contexts needs to be administered (FDM and MC 2016).

Interviews with Project Staff

In order to supplement the information collected through the review of project documents, efforts were made also to collect primary information from the STEM project staffs through Skype interview. Central-level female staff Srijana Singh and field-level male staff Raju Chaudhary were selected for the interview to represent voices of the different types of staff. The key points extracted from the interview are presented below under different subheadings.

The marginalised girls of the project area were found to be facing many problems like early marriage, lack of awareness, migration, financial issues, lack of quality teaching/learning materials, lack of gender-friendly infrastructure, lack of commitment from the teachers, lack of parents' involvement, and priority of boys' education over girls' education. Girls are confined within the house and mostly engaged in domestic work and cannot attend their classes regularly. Mr Chaudhary disclosed, 'In my opinion, the key problem of girls' education in the project area is the lack of appropriate supports from family members'.

Physical Facilities Affecting Girls' Education in the Project Area

Physical facilities have been found to play a vital role in the education of the girls in the project area. The distance to school is noted as an important factor. Similarly, closed classrooms, comfortable desk benches, adequate toilets, and drinking water facilities at school would contribute to a comfortable learning environment. Also, in Kailali district, the summer temperature reaches up to 45 degrees Celsius and without proper ventilation, it is difficult for the girls to study. Moreover, unavailability of separate toilets for boys and girls makes it very difficult for girls.

Problems Girls have to Confront within the Classroom

Due to the socio-cultural barriers, girls in the project area are generally hesitant to speak in front of boys in the classroom.

Cultural Barriers to the Education of Marginalised Girls

Girls in the project area face some cultural barriers while pursuing their education. There is racial discrimination against some ethnic groups and communities (Dalits, Tharus, Janajatis, and Madhesis) and inequality between sons and daughters. The girls are expected to support in household chores, look after their younger siblings, and even work in the fields.

Parents' Perception on the Value of their Daughter's Education

Due to the socio-cultural norms and values in Nepal, education of boys is given higher priority than that of girls. Boys are considered as bread earners and their education is considered important. On the other hand, girls' education is taken as a burden. Parents generally perceive investment in girl's education as a waste of resources as they get married off to a different family.

Moreover, the roles and responsibilities assigned to boys and girls are also different. Once back from the school, girls are expected to support in all the household chores which leaves them with very limited or no time to study. On the other hand, boys do not have such responsibilities and can spend their time playing, socialising, or studying.

Effect on the Girls' Educational Achievement due to Support at Home

The level of support/encouragement that girls have at home significantly affects their interest in education. Parents play a vital role in supporting and continuing education of their children as the children spend more time with their parents at home than at school. When the parents and other family members are supportive and encouraging, then they create a

friendly environment for girls to communicate, interact, and be open about their needs, desire, and problems in their life.

Parents' Difficulties for Continuing their Children's Education up to Secondary Level

People living in poverty are dependent on very low wages, and the priority is usually on fulfilling basic needs such as food and household expenses. Education for children at the secondary level is more of opportunity cost as it forbids the family on investing in income-generation activities. Parents from poor family cannot afford to provide physical facilities, cannot give time to children, and cannot even send them to school.

Difficulties while supporting the education of marginalised girls

The effort for supporting these marginalised girls also has its own challenges. They need to first be identified and their exact needs have to be properly assessed. The support packages have to integrate with and cater to their specific needs. In this regard, support with livelihood and income-generation opportunities was observed to be necessary.

Girls should also be encouraged to indulge in various training and self-efficacy skills. Moreover, in order to motivate the students, scholarship and prizes should be provided to those students with regular attendance and good academic performance. Additionally, access to learning resources such as libraries, technology to aid in learning, proper gender-friendly infrastructure, and WASH (drinking water tank with filter, running water inside the toilets, new separate toilets for male and female) facilities inside the school are also very helpful to reduce girls' drop-out problem.

STEM's Support to Local Communities

STEM provided bicycles to all the girls attending at least 50 per cent of the sessions at the OOS girls clubs. Srijana mentioned, 'In total, we distributed 600 bicycles'. Once the schools fulfilled the project's EGAP targets, they were provided WASH facilities. In some schools, boundary wall, matching fund for the new building, computer lab, and solar panels were also provided as EGAP Upgrade Award.

Interviews with Project Beneficiaries

To further enrich the project information, primary information was also collected from the STEM project beneficiaries. Two OOS beneficiaries twenty-year-old Nira and twenty-two-year-old Kiran were interviewed. The key points from their interview have been presented below.

Problems faced by Marginalised OOS girls

Most of the OOS girls are those affected by conflict. Due to poverty and unconducive environment, they were not able to perform well in their studies and dropped out of school.

Support from STEM

STEM supported the education of the marginalised girls by providing them tuition support through teachers from the same school as well as by providing teaching materials. It also created income-generating opportunities for them through girls' clubs.

Outcome from STEM Support

STEM supports not only helped the marginalised girls in economic terms but also provided them with a lot of encouragement, motivation, and moral support.

Suggestions for Further Improvement

The beneficiaries think that STEM could have done much better by concentrating on a few successful interventions instead of trying to do too many things.

Discussion

Barriers to Education for the Marginalised Girls

Marginalised girls are those who have been economically, politically, socially deprived from different opportunities and access to resources. Information collected at different levels and from different sources in this paper makes it quite evident that the marginalised girls in the developing countries face multiple and often intersecting barriers to education. These barriers include family poverty, social norms and cultural practices, resource constraints, and lack of awareness among parents.

Family Poverty

Marginalised girls are usually from homes below poverty line and have to struggle with basic requirements like food, shelter, and clothing. As is revealed through the interviews with the project beneficiaries, they face difficult choices between education and economic survival. First, the cost of schooling itself is a burden for them. It does not just entail school fees and textbooks but also many associated costs like uniforms, transportation, educational materials, etc., which generally are more expensive for girls.

Second, for them education is also an opportunity cost as it precludes other income-generating activities. The children from poor families who do not join schooling can either get involved in income-generating activities or take the share of household chores like looking after younger siblings, house cleaning, etc., so that the parents can focus on earning for the family. Sometimes they may even have to migrate from one place to another.

Social Norms and Cultural Practices

Literature review of Nepal and the interviews with informants both at the national and project level has clearly shown that the social and cultural norms and practices pose restrictions on the education of marginalised girls. Early marriages practiced by some societies have been observed to result in teen pregnancies, forcing girls to abandon school early in their life (Field and Ambrus 2008). Additionally, the value system of some societies, generally of giving more priority to boys, has been found to limit girls to household chores and less in their education. These barriers are also found to be usually compounded by other issues like ethnicity, caste, religion, and remoteness (Chitrakar 2009). However, it is worth keeping in mind that these traditional and cultural practices cannot change overnight and take time and persistent efforts.

Resource Constraint

Marginalised girls usually attend public schools, which, in underdeveloped countries, have their own problems. As revealed by the literatures on education sector of Nepal and the interview with education experts, they commonly suffer from resource constraint. The schools are located at far-off distances. Moreover, sufficient classrooms are not usually available, forcing a large number of students to sit in one classroom. There is also a lack of basic infrastructure like covered classrooms, computers, boards, markers, etc. Furthermore, lack of gender-friendly facilities like separate toilets for girls and boys makes it uncomfortable for girls and female teachers (Ravi 2011). Additionally, as mentioned in the case of the Kailali district, the schools do not have air-conditioning facilities and are unbearable during extreme climates.

There is also lack of certified teachers. Lack of use of modern technologies limits them to their textbooks. Moreover, the teachers working in public schools are not sufficiently motivated because of their low salary. They are not focused on teaching and some are even involved in politics. Thus, even the limited teachers available in public schools are not very regular. Moreover, the government which has the overall responsibility of

providing necessary services like education, health, security, etc., through its revenues has not been able to manage it properly.

Lack of Awareness among Parents

The parents of the marginalised girls are themselves not educated. Hence, they are ignorant and not aware of the processes. They are not able to understand its value and benefits and are sometimes indifferent about it. As revealed by the interviews with the education experts, they are also not able to guide their children with their studies and provide them academic support.

Only ensuring access to education for girls is not sufficient. Factors like, unsafe school environments and biases in the teachers' attitudes and behaviours, teaching and learning processes, curricula and textbooks, etc., affect the academic accomplishment and achievement for girls. The crucial element in promoting girl's education is to increase level of women's literacy. Collective action from a range of actors, especially civil society, and the private sector is vital for advancing girls' education (King and Winthrop 2015).

INGO's Support to Marginalised Girls for Education

Review of literatures both at the global and national level has revealed that efforts of government alone are not enough in supporting marginalised girls for education. In this space, INGOs are observed to be another key actor in that field.

INGOs have gained popularity due to their innovative ideas and ability to easily connect with beneficiaries (Murray and Overton 2011). However, they are also not devoid of criticisms. They are accused of focusing only in easily accessible areas and not covering remote areas where the need is even greater. They are also criticised for having centralised programmes and not reaching out to the grassroots level. Similarly, as cited by the education experts, some INGOs are not very transparent. They work in isolation and do not involve the stakeholders.

As revealed by the literature review, INGOs play a variety of roles in supporting marginalised girls for education. Some are engaged in advocacy to put pressure on governments, some support in improving the quality of government provision while others are directly involved in providing educational opportunities. The specific case taken up in this research reveals many innovative ways in which INGOs can support marginalised girls.

As outlined by the project staff in their interview, the project has been

conducting a wide variety of innovative interventions for supporting the marginalised girls. The project conducted awareness campaigns, carried out capacity-development activities, and provided various support packages to the target groups. Its positive aspects can be outlined as follows:

Holistic Support

The support provided by the project to the girls was more of an integrated package. It included both software as well as the associated hardware. Along with awareness campaigns, and vocational trainings, the girls were also provided complementary financial support and transition funds so that they can put the newly acquired knowledge and skill into action.

Comprehensive Coverage

The support provided by the project was also quite comprehensive. Not only the girls but all the stakeholders including their parents, school authorities, government line agencies, and broader community members were supported in different ways. The parents were provided P4QE, FLT, FET trainings; participating schools were supported with boundary wall construction, matching fund for the new building, computer lab, WASH facilities, and solar panels; and the teachers, SMCs, and PTAs were provided opportunities with different trainings and workshops.

Progress-based Incentives System

The incentive provided by the project was somehow linked to the progress. Bicycles were provided to only those girls attending at least 50 per cent of the sessions at the OOS girls' clubs and awards were given only to those with more than 78 per cent attendance at the girls' clubs. Similarly, only those schools that fulfilled the project's EGAP targets were provided WASH facilities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This research sheds light on the different barriers to education for marginalised girls in the underdeveloped countries, more specifically in Nepal. It also explores different ways in which INGOs have been supporting in the education of marginalised girls.

This research reveals that marginalised girls face a complex range of interconnected barriers, both within and outside the classrooms. They also face problems within the family and in the community. Inclusion of the marginalised girls in education will require multiple strategies focused on the full range of actors in the educational community and the different

elements of the educational sector. It cannot be achieved by the efforts of the government alone, and a collaborative effort and good communication and coordination between the government and INGOs is crucial. From this research, it is quite evident that INGOs have good scope for making a significant contribution for improving the status of education of the marginalised girls. In this regard, the INGOs need to adopt more innovative ideas. Based on the primary and secondary information collected from different sources, this research has made some recommendations.

This research clearly indicates that there is more to be done in terms of supporting girls' education. It also provides some specific recommendations for forthcoming plans and programmes to make the support to girls' education more effective.

It suggests multiple strategies addressing the different levels. Improvements have to be introduced at the national, district, as well as at the local/project level. At the national level, the government needs to allocate more fund and ensure necessary level of education services to the marginalised girls as required by collecting more revenue from all the citizens.

At the district and local levels, some of the successful approaches that are being tested through the Innovative Window of GEC of the STEM project should be promoted. In the districts, all-girls schools should be established and grade-specific tests to test the learning should be developed. Also, the government teachers should be provided with gender-sensitive training during their initial TPD training. Likewise, the EGAP campaigns like radio advertisements, poster/pamphlet distribution, and street drama performance, and the various girls' clubs should be institutionalised into the existing CBOs. At the local level, P4QE, SLC support, and other vocational trainings, which have been found to be beneficial and widely accepted by the local communities, can be further expanded in the days ahead. Also, in order to control the dropout rate, it is suggested that collaboration should be maintained with other income-generating projects. INGO also have to expand their networks in rural areas.

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Local Faces and Places

Tourist Art and Representational Practices of Culture and Identity in Darjeeling Hills

AGASTAYA THAPA

The Kalimpong Art Gallery was instituted in 2008 by the private efforts of the Kalimpong Artists' Association. It was established for the sole purpose of displaying fine art efforts and practices in Kalimpong. The gallery offers a visual testimony of the fine art scene in the hills. The paintings are mostly effected with oils, and the themes are enmeshed within the socio-cultural milieu of the hills, resplendent with the depictions of *himal* (mountains), *dara ra kara* (hills and ridges), hill beauties, and genre scenes. Since most art practitioners in the hills straddle both spheres of what has been locally nominated as commercial arts and fine arts, a kiosk located outside the gallery is dedicated to the tourist arts of scroll paintings, cloth dolls, handmade paper products, and cloth purses and carryalls. One of the most ubiquitous items on display was the scroll paintings. Local scroll art consists of hand-painted or embroidered portraits and landscape scenes of Darjeeling, usually rendered on black cloth. They are easily portable for tourist consumption. The local scroll art has over the years undergone much reconstruction, but the idiom in terms of the subject-matter and form has always been about the representation of hill peoples, rendered on cloth, black cloth being the convention. Many other 'traditions' of the local scroll art has emerged, and accordingly new nominations have been proffered. It is also referred to as *tapeta* painting,¹ black-cloth painting or Ava Devi painting, alongside scroll art painting. In this present work, I will be using all these versions at different points to refer to the same representational practice.

The Nepali and Tibetan dancing figures, the distant Kanchenjunga mountain framing a rural scene, coquettish Nepali and Tibetan ladies, and old Tibetan folks with their prayer wheels, these stereotypical images of the hill people are made with strict adherence to schematic codes. For

1 The term *tapeta* could be a Nepali corruption of the English word 'taffeta' considering the fact these paintings are made on cloth.

instance, Tibetan traders have to be on yaks, and old Tibetan men have to twirl their prayer wheels. The nineteenth-century colonial photographs provide powerful frames for the study of these artefacts in such a way that 'tradition' in these arts may actually refer to or be constituted by colonial photography, particularly the ethnographic portraits of the native 'types' like Lepcha girl or Tibetan man. This fixity of cultural identities based on visible external accoutrement of costume and the focus on culturally-specific ways of life is ethnological in its approach. Such a display of culture in these paintings, which emerged out of the tourism complex, has to be investigated against the recent political developments in the hills of ethnic identity mobilisation or the 'objectification of collectivity' among the various hill groups for political recognition by the state (Shneiderman 2014, 280).

Tourism and Tourist Art in the Hills of Darjeeling

In the 1970s, Nelson Graburn led an inquiry into the field of tourist art in the seminal work *Ethnic and Tourist Arts: Cultural Expressions from the Fourth World* (1976). In this volume, he set out his agenda of unveiling a new direction in the study of anthropology of the arts. Graburn differentiates between two forms of arts in stratified societies that consist of the dominant and the conquered. These are (1) Inwardly Directed Arts—these are made for personal consumption by the mainly conquered people who make use of these artefacts to maintain a distinct ethnic identity and social structure and to inculcate and instil values in group members, and (2) Tourist or Airport Arts—these are made for consumption by outsiders and are often derided by art connoisseurs as unimportant and debased. These artefacts have the ethnic touch to them that Graburn describes as the 'ethnic image that must be maintained and projected as a part of the all-important boundary-defining system', and according to him, these practical and decorative arts act as boundary markers that are needed to demarcate the external from the internal (2006, 414).

The expansion of tourist art and market is linked to the rapid growth of tourism during the Victorian era in the West (Baranowski et al 2005, 100-130). The cultural contact between the coloniser and the colonised produced diverse forms and greater quantities of objects, defined by their stylistic hybridity and the structural transformation engendered in their ritual status. The process of commoditisation moved the objects from one system of value to another, usually from its traditional sphere where it served use value as ritual object or sacred icon to that of the commodity sphere where it was secularised and denuded of prior ritual or religious

connotations. The incorporation of western motifs or techniques that again removes the object from its cultural context constitutes hybridity. The commoditisation and hybridity of these objects has often led to a dismissive stance and refusal to seriously engage with them in both art historical and anthropological contexts. Hybridity of style is seen as unreflective of the true culture of the producers, while the production of these objects meant especially for the market comes in conflict with the ideas of authenticity (Phillips and Steiner 1999).

In the case of Darjeeling tourist art, the black-cloth painting as well as the commercial fine-art painting are hybrid arts that are rendered in the Western neoclassical and Old Master-style and theme placed within a Himalayan milieu [Figure 1]. Johann Baptist Hofner's (1832-1913) *The Shepherdess* (1866) is a popular nineteenth century art referent



Figure 1: *Bhutia Shepherdess*, fine tourist art outside Kalimpong Art Gallery, Darjeeling.



Figure 2: Johann Baptist Hofner, *The Shepherdess*, 1866, oil on canvas.
Source: Internet.



Figure 3: The *Tibetan Shepherdess* against the mountain landscape, wall hanging painting at the Tibetan Refugee Self-Help Centre showroom.

Figure 4: The *Lepcha* Shepherdess in the fields at Thangka House, Kalimpong.



for these tourist art makers [Figure 2]. The translability of the theme is commendable as Tibetan shepherdess and Lepcha shepherdess are depicted distinguishable by their costumes and landscape in the background. The Tibetan shepherdess in one instance was shown with snowy peaks in the background [Figure 3] while in another instance the Lepcha shepherdess was shown against an agricultural backdrop [Figure 4].

The specificity of Darjeeling's location as a hill station pushes the production of handicrafts and fine arts towards the tourist market, which can have economic, social, and cultural consequences for the artefact in question. Tourists buy souvenirs because they offer physical evidence that they were some place else, and these objects can be shared with family and friends, more importantly 'what one really brings back are memories of experiences' (Graburn 1976, 33). The 'feast or famine'² nature of tourism renders those artists and artisans involved in the production of tourist art and the sellers of tourist art, especially in the unorganised sector, vulnerable to tourist trends. According to the formulation provided by the both Nelson Graburn and Valene Smith, tourism in Darjeeling can be considered to be

² Valene E. Smith (1983) uses this phrase to describe the seasonal nature of tourism, which may 'leave hotels empty, carriers and tour operators with the idle wheels, and employees jobless'.

a Natural or Environmental type (Graburn 1976; Smith 2007). The natural or environmental type of tourism is regarded by Smith to be an adjunct to ethnic tourism, where the land instead of people are the focus of touristic attention and popular destination activities include tours of tea plantations and such.

Tourism as one of the major industries in Darjeeling provides employment and support to the locals. The central, state (West Bengal Tourist Development Corporation), and local (Gorkha Territorial Administration) administrative units run Darjeeling tourist or visitor information centres across the district. Tourism is intimately connected to another major industry in the hills, the tea industry, and both provide reinforcement and validation to one another. Nothing could indicate imperialism more succinctly than the joint nexus of the tea industry and tourism, both creations of a colonising imperial past as pointed out by Lee Jolliffe (2007) in that the development of the tea industry in India was predicated on the intense colonisation of the country under the British rule.

This was nowhere apparent than in Darjeeling where migrant labourers were brought in from Nepal to work in the plantations, leading to complex configurations of the social, political, and cultural, whose effects still haunt the local populace like a spectre.³ The imperial legacy of tourism is underscored in the way '[t]ourism became a part of the legitimization of Empire - tourism was not the reason for and did not justify imperialism, but nor did it undermine the enterprise. Touring firms, travel brochures and magazine features, shipping and railway companies, and colonial touring bureaucracies, propagated favourable images of Empire destinations' (Baranowski et al 2005, 107).

The commodification of culture in the ambit of tourism can lead to the perpetuation of stereotypes constructed by the touristic gaze of local people, and the locals may aid in such constructions of self to match the tourists' image, thus making tourism 'an empowering vehicle of self-representation with local communities purposely exercising choice to reinvent themselves through time, modifying how they are seen and perceived by different groups of outsiders' (Patnaik 2014, 229).

3 The popular narrative on Nepali migration to Darjeeling during the second half of the nineteenth century as labour force to the tea plantations deals with the eventual displacement and marginalisation of the indigenous Lepcha population by the majoritarian Nepalis. The privileging of the Nepali language itself has brought forth complexities with regard to intra-Nepali group relations as many hill communities with their own language and culture had to accept Nepali as their *lingua franca*. History has come to haunt the present as massive indigenisation is being actualised in the hills in a bid to secure political recognition as Scheduled Tribes and recover the submerged past.

Figure 5: Ramesh Kharel,
Doko scene, tapeta
painting at Manjusha,
Darjeeling.



According to Ramesh Kharel, a local artist from Kalimpong engaged in scroll-painting production for more than a decade, there are two main genres of black-cloth painting, portraiture and scenery. These tourist art works for him are mainly cultural artefacts which let the tourists know and recognise 'this is who we are' for 'tourist art conveys messages about village, regional, and national ethnicity' (Silverman 1999, 66).

Portraits of the local hill folks are mainly made in three-quarter length or full length. These portraits are ethnographic in nature as they purport to provide a visual description of the distinctive cultural traits of the three main hill communities, Bhutia,⁴ Nepali, and Lepcha, by foregrounding markers of cultural identity as ensconced in costume. Landscape and genre scenes are folded into the category of the scenery. In the trifurcate division of the scenery into Procession, Tea Garden, and Kanchenjunga, the first category is further divided into Nepali and Tibetan processions scenes. The Nepali procession scene consists of *doko* paintings where the subjects are shown carrying local produce like tea or oranges to the market

⁴ Bhutia is an all-encompassing category which is derived from the Nepali word for Tibet, *bhot*, and it includes all those peoples who come from Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan.



Figure 6: ‘Traditional’ Art and Artist. The artist Ramesh Kharel at his workshop, with a triple yak scroll painting, Kalimpong, 2013.

place [Figure 5], marriage scene and dance scenes, *maruni*⁵ and *madale*.⁶ The Tibetan procession scene consists of paintings of traders on yaks carrying their ware towards Kalimpong. These scenes are named according to the number of yaks depicted on them; for instance, a popular category is the ‘triple yak’ where three yaks in a single file carry their masters and mistresses across borders [Figure 6]. The main significance of these paintings is to show culture. Thus, the focus is on *bhesh bhusha* (appearance and costuming) which has to be *thet* (colloquial or typical?) in the case of Nepali paintings. The Tibetans are shown with their traditional *chhubas* (robes) and jewellery. Most Tibetan men depicted in these paintings are shown wearing a long pendant earring on one ear, which marks them off as noblemen. Old Tibetan ladies and men are traditionally shown with

5 Traditional Nepali folk dance usually performed during festivals like *tihar* (Diwali) by men dressed in women’s clothing.

6 One of the other Nepali folk dance forms performed by men with *madals* (two-sided percussion drum); they play the instrument and simultaneously dance to the ensuing beats.

7 This translation of the word *thet* has been taken from Theodore Ricardo’s interpretation of the term in his *Four Nepali Short Stories* where he describes the Nepali used by Pushkar and Shivkumar Rai as, ‘they write in a colloquial direct style using words known as *thet* in Nepali that is short for colloquial or typical, it is the kind of Nepali in which people think and speak’.

the prayer wheels. In the case of Lepchas, they are depicted with their musical instruments like the *satsaang* (stringed instrument similar to the Indian *sarang*) or *tungbuk* (another stringed instrument) or with their long traditional swords called the *ban*. Kharel also makes dolls, which are also cultural artefacts depicting hill people in their traditional costumes.

Tourist Art and Showing Culture

The showing of culture within the tourist complex has special implications in the context of Darjeeling hills as the various hill groups are now undergoing processes of ethno-genesis and self-fashioning as they learn to become indigenous. The colonial anthropological type or category of hill tribes is being reconstructed for purposes of gaining state recognition as one of the Scheduled Tribes of India, which is tied to the broader agenda of bringing 'tribal area' status or statehood to Darjeeling. This self-ethnological project is seen as the consequence of a people whose shaky recognition by the Indian state has given form to the organisation and reconstitution of ethnic groups as acknowledgeable communities (Middleton 2010).

According to Sara Shneiderman, such objectifications of identity are predicated not only on state and market forces, but they also emerge out through 'group-internal, deeply affective ritualized actions oriented toward both the divine world and other members of the group' (Shneiderman 2014, 280). In her study of the Thangmi community in the hills of Darjeeling and Nepal, she notes that in the process of consolidating their ethnicity or what she calls 'Thangminess', the participants are aware that identity was produced through processual action, but this consciousness of identity-as-process did not preclude their desire for identity-as-object. The capacity to engage in ritualised action that produced 'Thangminess' as a recognisable object was key to community membership. That such ritualised action could take multiple forms, from deity propitiations to political conferences, was understood as a key feature of the synthetic, collectively-produced nature of Thangmi identity itself (Schneiderman 2015, 5).

These practices of representation can be understood according to the formulation provided by Stuart Hall. He argues that the practices of representation are always implications of 'the positions of enunciation' and that enunciation is never straightforward, 'though we speak, so to say "in our own name", of ourselves and from our own experience, nevertheless who speaks, and the subject who is spoken of, are never identical, never exactly in the same place' (Hall 1990, 222).

Therefore, identity no longer implies a complete coincidence between representation and subject but something that is a 'production', which

is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation' (Hall 1990, 222). Cultural identity is seen as spatially and temporally constructed in that it is seen as coming from somewhere and having history, and, according to Hall, it is subject to constant transformation since it is historical and hence, instead of being 'eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture and power - identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past' (Hall 1990, 225). Thus, these positionings of the essentialised selves in the hills can also be seen against the monolithic Nepali or Gorkha culture that was constructed under the aegis of *bhasaprem* (love for language). Nepali *bhasa* (language) movement which gathered momentum in the 1970s⁸ can be traced back to the efforts undertaken by Nepali nationalists in the 1920s with the establishment of the Nepali Sahitya Sammelan in 1925, which led to slow foment of stringent Nepali nationalism on the issue of *bhasaprem* or 'love for language' that was focused on working towards the constitutional recognition of Nepali language as:

Language was much more than simply a medium for the transmission of ideas: it became a territory for the contestation of cultural authority and control, a symbol of community recognition, and provided the means for fixing and propagating some fundamentals of Nepali identity (Chalmers 2009, 111).

Bhasaprem was centred on an integrationist agenda of uniting the various Nepali *jatis* (communities) on the issue of Nepali language as being the *matribhasa* (mother-tongue) for all. As Parasmani Pradhan, one of the most ardent Nepali language crusaders and ideologues, would express in verse his vision for a Nepali nation:

Limbu, Jimdar, Tamang, Khas, Magar, Gurung
Hayu, Chepang ra Kami

⁸ The forerunner would be the Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasa Samiti (ABNS), formerly known as Nepali Bhasa Samiti which was established in 1972. The organisation was formed at the backdrop of a stringent Nepali nationalism that was converging on the issue of *bhasaprem*. Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Samiti was formed to unify, consolidate, and perpetuate a cogent Nepali identity in India through its support of all art, literature, and such cultural pursuits in Darjeeling. The Nepali Bhasa Andolan was taken up for the enshrinement of the Nepali language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution, which was accomplished in 1992. Various community leaders and literary figures, Nepali, Lepcha, and Bhotia, had worked towards the recognition of Nepali language in the Constitution of India.

Sunwat, Lapche, Kusunda, Giil, Puri, Thakuri
Tharu, Newar, Thami
Nepali jati hami bhanikan sable
Bol Nepali bhasa
Hamro bhasa yahi ho bhani tan man le
Mandai chan matribhasa (Choudhury 2008, 90).

This can be roughly translated as calling on all the various Nepali *jatis* to speak and accept Nepali *bhasa* wholeheartedly as *matribhasa*. However, not all *jatis* wanted to embrace the *matribhasa*. There was resistance from certain Lepcha quarters against such attempts at homogenising the hill community, as can be gauged from this passage on the predation of Nepali language and culture on Lepcha consciousness, which had reduced the indigenous hill community to a minority in their own *mayel lyang*⁹.

Among us Rong folk, we now find that there are many who by now have so much mastered the Nepali language that articles in magazines and newspapers in the language are appreciated by the Nepalese themselves. One or two have been found running Christian religious journals in Nepali, and take pride in their achievements. The same goes for the other cultural facets, such as singing, reciting poems and poetry, etc. Our boys and girls, particularly in the urban areas, know and sing more Nepali songs than our own traditional ‘Vaams.’¹⁰ Some of us are seen to take part in open competitions and walk away with prizes as well. In the prestigious recitation competition of the classic Bhanu Bhakta’s *Ramayana*, a few Lepcha young men and women have proved themselves unbeatable (Lepcha 1987, 304).

The majoritarian threat of assimilation and gradual erosion of Lepcha culture and traditions presented by the diffusion of Nepali cultural hegemony in the hills is seen as being realised through the insidious mobilisation of language, culture, and history. The projection of their people as a ‘dying’ or ‘vanishing’ race has accelerated such a preservationist drive. With the formation of the Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board in (MLLDB) in February 2013, their efforts have made shifts towards identity assertion centred around mytho-historical figures like the seventeenth-century Lepcha chieftain, Gaeboo Achyok. The foundation day for the MLLDB is

9 *Mayel lyang* refers to the land or country of the Lepchas which extends from Darjeeling district, eastern Nepal to Sikkim and south-western Bhutan.

10 *Vaams* are traditional Lepcha folk songs

celebrated every year, since its inception in 2011 at Ronaldshey Park, Dr Graham's Homes, Kalimpong, which hosts state dignitaries like the Chief Minister of West Bengal [Figure 7] and representatives from other ethnic organisations in the hills, who are demanding tribal status from the state government like the Limbu, Emi Bhutia, Singsha Bhutia, Bhujel, Mangar, Khas Hitkari, Newar, Khambu, Rai, Mukhia, and Bengali. Every year, Pano Gaeboo Achyok birth anniversary is celebrated on the 20th of December at Damsang Fort, next to Alagara, Kalimpong.

The Damsang Fort is seen by the present-day Lepchas as a testimony of Lepcha resistance to oppression and a symbol of hope after what Ren Lyangsong Tamsang of the MLLBD believes to be three hundred seventy-one years of voiceless existence. On Pano Gaeboo Achyok day, after a *munloam* or invocation is made to the presiding deities in Damsang by the high priest followed by the various *Munsong* and *Boongthingsong* from various villages, a procession is taken out by a strong Lepcha contingent from 10th Mile Fatak to Novelty Cinema Hall in the heart of the town and various dance and song programmes are then held at Mela Ground [Figure 8]. A very notable feature of the procession is that a portrait of Gaeboo Achyok is carried with utmost veneration and commemoration as showcased in this illustration by artist Chendup Lepcha. Gaeboo Achyok has attained mythic status and has become a favoured subject of study, especially in the case of painting in the Darjeeling and Kalimpong hills. Besides, the portrait of Gaeboo Achyok that is attributed to the hill artist and scroll painting innovator Bhakta Pariyar [Figure 9], which has become the official portrait of the chieftain, illustrations have been made by other hill artists like Chendup Lepcha [Figure 10]. In the three-quarter profile portrait of the king, Pariyar has



Figure 7: The West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee joining in the festivities at the Third Foundation Day of the MLLBD, Kalimpong, 2014.

Figure 8: Chendup Lepcha, King Pano Gaeboo Achyok celebration, 2012. Source: *Lepcha Life in 2011* (Kalimpong: The Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association 2012).

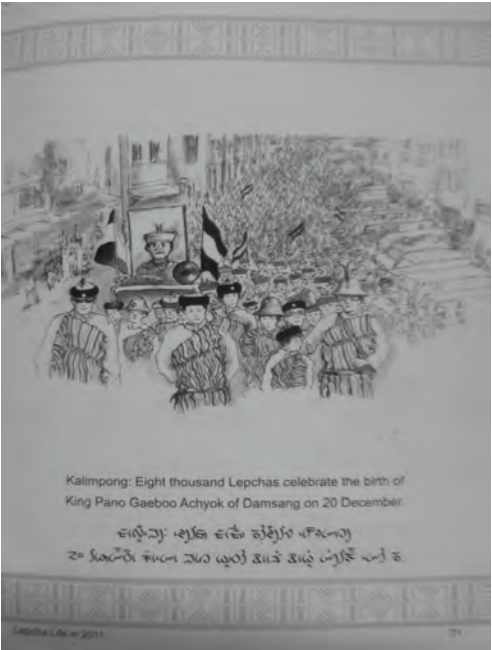


Figure 9: The official portrait of Pano Gaeboo Achyok gracing the cover of the *King Gaeboo Achyok* magazine (2014) as rendered by Bhakta Pariyar.





Figure 10: An illustration of *Pano Gaeboo Achyok* by Chendup Lepcha, depicting the king at the Damsang Fort.

depicted him in the traditional male costume, *daampraa*, with the cotton cloth called *thahradam* usually worn around the body as a wrap, leaving one hand free, and tied up at the waist with a girdle and the Lepcha hat called the *thyaaktuk*. His special position as a leader and king is identified by the much-prized, rare and hard-to-obtain plumes of the racket-tailed *drongo* bird (*num baong aong pano fo*), which adorn his *thyaaktuk*.

With the emergence of ethno-nationalist 'tribal' consciousness among the various hill communities who want the constitutionally recognised Scheduled Tribe status conferred onto them and their own development boards from the state governments, the preparation of their demands have started with the rediscovery of their past. The equation of bringing into existence and sustaining a nationalist ideology requires the presence of culture, 'we are nation because we have a culture' (Handler and Linnekin 1984, 276).

As Benedict Anderson has pointed out that, 'nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind' (Anderson 1983, 4). This edifice of culture is generally built on the idea of the past as a

repository of tradition, which is essential and bounded, handed down from generation to generation. Therefore, it becomes necessary to mobilise 'specialists to discover and even to invent national culture' (Handler and Linnekin 1984, 276).

In the case of Darjeeling, tribal culture has to be instituted through the already-set guidelines of the state, which largely follows the colonial anthropological classificatory parameters. Thus, the 'discovery' and 'invention' of a corresponding tribal tradition becomes an anthropological enterprise as anthropologists and state anthropological institutes are mobilised by the members, mainly elites of different ethnic associations in the hills (Chhetri 2016, 1-18). Anthropological knowledge and voluntary confinement within the ethnographic discourse is sought to aid in the Hobsbawmian project of invented traditions as a set of selected practices of the present, which are shown to have continuity with a suitable past (Hobsbawm 1983, 1).

Such developments of ethnic assertions in the hills are seen with suspicion by some who believe that harm is being brought to the Gorkhaland Movement, the statehood demand of the Gorkhas or Indian Nepalis, which is now being espoused as an inclusive hill community category in the Darjeeling hills, as the focus of the hill communities is being diverted towards ethnic reconstructions (Chhetri 2016, 11). The conferment of development boards on the various ethnic groups by the Bengal government is understood as part of its divisive political agenda which was exposed in the aftermath of the attempted imposition of Bengali language in school curriculum in the Darjeeling hills and the violence that followed in June 2017 with nine official deaths of hill citizens at the hands of state police. Many of the Hill Board members tendered their resignation in what is being seen as the third phase of Gorkhaland Movement underway in the hills (Roy 2017). The tussle between the state and the local administration is symptomatic of the politics of ethnicity and nationalism which, according to Paul Brass, arise out of 'interactions between the centralizing states and elites from non-dominant ethnic groups', and in centralising multi-ethnic states, the alliances between the centralising state and the regional or non-dominant elites may be complex as a multiplicity of the elites of the ethnic groups may engage in conflict or cooperation with each other in which case 'state leaders may either choose neutrality or identification with elites from one ethnic group rather than another or may seek to divide one or both ethnic groups in order to assure the stability of their own power and support within particular regions' (Brass 1991, 8).

After the Lepchas, the Tamangs and the Sherpas have received their



Figure 11: Sherpa celebrations after declaration of development board, 2015.

Source: Internet.

respective developments boards and more hill communities are expected to receive theirs from the state government in the future. The showing of culture becomes a big part of maintaining ethnic culture and distinctions in the hills. As can be gauged from this image of the Sherpa celebrations taking place after the announcement of their development board in 2015 [Figure 11] (Chhetri 2015). Most members are dressed in their traditional costume of the *chhuba* (robe), silk vest, and hats (for the men) as they take the dais to celebrate. The Bengal government also made the announcement to grant aid to ten well-deserving mountaineering families¹¹ in the hills, thereby bringing essentialisations, self or otherwise, full circle for the day.

11 The Sherpas are one of the ethnic groups of Nepal, whose ancestors migrated from eastern Tibet in the sixteenth century; they live in the high-altitude zone surrounding Mt. Everest in northeast Nepal, specifically the Solu-Khumbu region. Since the second half of the nineteenth century, they began migrating to Darjeeling, seasonally or otherwise, taking advantage of the economic opportunities and the wage labour market that had been opened up by the British colonialists. Sherry Ortner (1999) writes that, 'Along with members of other ethnic groups, the Sherpas presented themselves for "coolie" work on road-building projects in the Darjeeling area, for exploration and surveying projects in the surrounding mountains, and for climbing expeditions as these became a distinct form of activity. The Sherpas quickly distinguished themselves: as early as 1907 climbers were marking the Sherpas as particularly well suited for the support work involved in mountain exploring and climbing'.

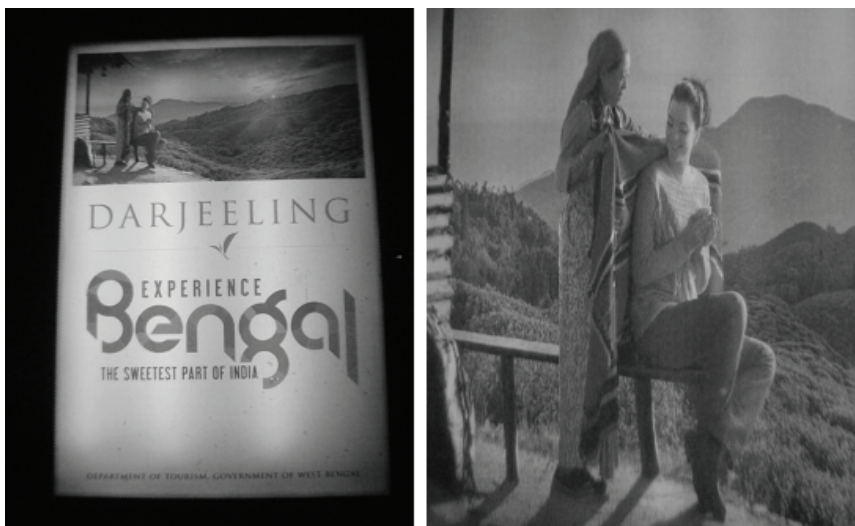


Figure12 Darjeeling- Experience Bengal, Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal, advertisement at Lodhi Road Bus Stand, 2016. Source: Author.

Conclusion

A hinting towards possible ethnicisation of Darjeeling hills tourism could be read from Department of Tourism, Government of West Bengal, print advertisements that appeared on bus-stands and other public places in Delhi in early 2016 as socio-political realities of the hills were seen to be refracted through the tourism lens [Figure 12].

The standardised image of Darjeeling tourism with the rolling hills and the verdant tea garden was still evoked, as was the potential visitor who can be identified as a trekker by her hiking boots. She is shown holding a cup of perhaps Darjeeling tea while being enveloped by the care and warmth of a Lepcha woman who can be identified from her traditional costume as she is shown holding out a shawl—an attempt by the state government to showcase a native product perhaps—to block out the Darjeeling chill, and possibly the social and political realities of the restive hills for the visitor. Land, people, culture, and cultural artefacts are all neatly packaged in a message about adventure, invigoration, and hospitality as the West Bengal government appropriates the ‘type’ or visual codes of the native image to further entrench and perpetuate its colonial agenda in the Darjeeling hills.

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A Combined Analytical Narrative to Study the Politicisation of Irrigation Management in the Tarai

Critical Realism, Hydrosocial Theory and Sociotechnical Approach

ROMAIN VALADAUD

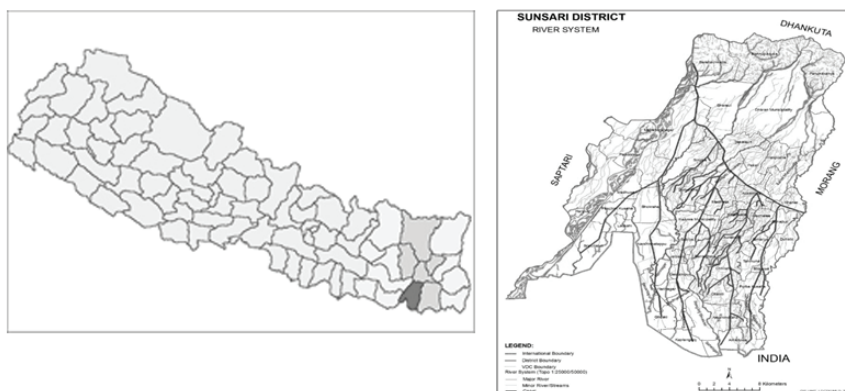
Introduction

Irrigation is an old practice in Nepal and has been studied extensively by many researchers in social sciences. In the late 20th century, traditional irrigation schemes, rebranded Farmer Managed Irrigation Systems (FMIS), have been of particular interest to a group of political scientists and sociologists united under the banner of institutional economics. Elinor Ostrom's *Governing the Commons* (1991) is in part drawn from the numerous studies led by the Indiana University group and the International Water Management Institute (IWMI-Nepal) on these irrigation systems. This approach produced an interesting theoretical framework upon which a type of irrigation policies was developed during the last decades of the twentieth century across the world. Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM), through Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT) programmes, has spread like bushfire across South Asia since the 1980s. It has transformed the management reality of many irrigation systems, large and small, through the creation of Water Users' Associations (WUAs), effectively transferring most of the maintenance and operation duties to, theoretically, democratic and participative farmers' organisations.

Such policies, however, began to be criticised as soon as the early 2000s, both on their theoretical basis and on their implementation aspects. It has been pointed out that such institutional framework is hardly able to create fair participation, as it is often disconnected from the social history of the irrigation schemes it seeks to reform and, thus, ignores the social inequalities inherent to many societies, which are bound to be reflected in water access. The shortcomings of participatory policies have now been well documented across the world (Manor 2004), and especially in

irrigation in South Asia (Swain and Das 2008). Comprehensive critique of PIM in small- and large-scale irrigation systems in Nepal has been carried out by numerous studies (Pradhan 2010).

Fig 1: SMIS map for Sunsari district (Ministry of Local Development 2011)



I reached similar conclusions during my fieldwork (for my master's thesis) on the Sunsari Morang Irrigation System (SMIS), located in Nepal's Eastern Tarai (see Figure 1). Spreading over two districts, this structured irrigation system is one of the biggest in Nepal, as its network of canals is supposed to bring river Kosi's water to a command area of 64,000 hectares (ha). Managed by the Department of Irrigation (DoI) until the 1990s, it is now, for the most part, under the management of a WUA. Characterised by a capture of power by elites, poorly maintained canals, and an unequal distribution of water, the SMIS falls under the classic critique addressed by the literature on PIM reforms (Howarth et al 2004). If the purpose of my master's thesis was to add, descriptively, a layer to this critique, this paper is trying to move beyond this critique to explore the details of the politics of irrigation systems after participatory reforms. Hill (1997) (cited in Veldwisch and Mollinga 2013) has shown how the reality of a policy is never the exact copy of its original design, as many human, and non-human, agencies act upon the implementation and the interpretation of such policies. Therefore, I discuss the actual, *de facto*, model of irrigation management that such 'failed' PIM policies have produced on a jointly managed irrigation scheme, rather than discuss how it should have worked.

One of the critiques, or one of the characteristics, of these modern WUAs is their politicisation (Swain and Das 2008), i.e., their increasing political importance in power relations over the control of a territory. A few authors, in their critique of PIM reforms, have pointed out this aspect (Manor 2004;

Pradhan 2010; Mustafa et al 2016), but it seems that very little literature exists on the topic of the political role that WUA could play in the local or regional politics. This paper works with the hypothesis that WUA on the SMIS have become a reflection of power relations in the local/national society in which they are embedded, and that they have become, in return, a crucial element of local politics, at the centre of the political struggle for the control of a territory.

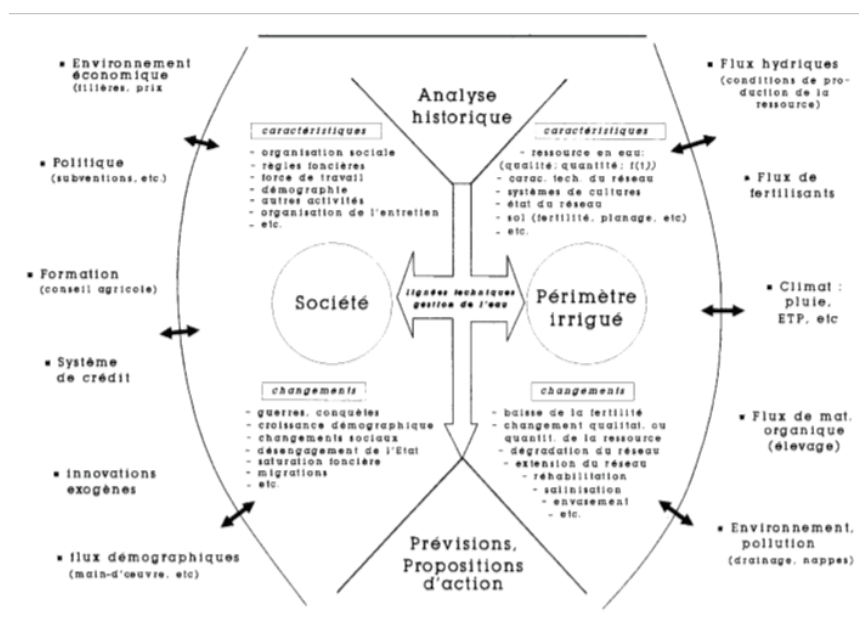
Drawing on my previous fieldwork in 2014, I focus here on discussing a theoretical framework that might help to answer the research question by validating or disproving the hypothesis in the upcoming fieldwork. Faced with the complexity of the analysis of irrigation schemes, Mollinga (2014) has proposed an interesting narrative that, I believe, can be used to decipher the intricate politics of an irrigation scheme. This paper first seeks to introduce critical realism to show how it, through its attempt to unravel the temporal and stratified relation between social structures and agencies, can help to bring together two approaches on irrigation management. Then, the paper moves on to tackle the issue of politics in irrigation schemes through a political ecology approach. The hydrosocial cycle (Linton and Budds 2014), a constructivist approach of the relation between water and society, is helpful to understand how society is dialectically connected to water management, and how much water is politicised. However, as Veldwisch and Mollinga (2013) show that this approach, too, often considers irrigation schemes as a 'black box'. Understanding the role of WUAs in local politics needs a more detailed approach of the management of irrigation infrastructure in order to work out the precise sociotechnical mechanisms through which relations of power are reproduced (or changed) in irrigation management. The analytical focus on irrigation scheme from the inside will be helpful to feed the political ecology reconstruction of the relation between politics and irrigation management. This paper aims, in the end, following Mollinga's footsteps, to show how the hydrosocial approach can be combined with a sociotechnical approach of irrigation studies, inside a critical realist framework. We believe such theoretical assemblage can help to understand the politics of irrigation management on the SMIS as well as the role WUA might play in the complicated context of Nepal's modern politics.

A Critical Realist Narrative for the Study of Irrigation Politics

To understand the power relations and the political weight of an irrigation system, it is essential to situate these political elements in the broader social history of the irrigation scheme. The politics of an irrigation system

are dependent on a great many other variables affecting it, from outside and inside the sociotechnical ensemble. How an irrigation system acquires a political weight, and how power is distributed inside it, can be explained through the systemic comprehension of what makes an irrigation system. To understand the politics of an irrigation system, it is then necessary to unravel the different levels through which this power has been channelled during the historical evolution of such a socio-technical ensemble. Anthropologists have had a great influence in this regard: Molle and Ruf (1995) have come up with a very complete socio-historical framework of understanding of irrigation systems, taking into account all the different variables affecting water distribution (Figure 2).

Fig 2. Systemic representation of an irrigated perimeter
(Molle and Ruf 1995)

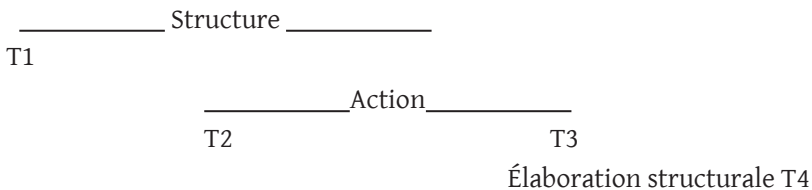


This systemic representation adds a crucial dimension to the usual description of the constructivist theories, which lack analytical strength. However, if constructivist theories acknowledge the interaction, the co-construction between multitudes of variables, they rarely give them a narrative allowing for a comprehensive socio-historical explanation. If the above representation includes a temporal dimension to its explanation, it does not explain enough how the different variables interact in history to produce social structures. With this in mind, Mollinga (2014) argues

that a critical realist approach might be able to give a narrative that is analytical enough to understand the historical construction of irrigation schemes, understood as socio-technical ensembles. I believe this approach is particularly helpful to visualise the politics, inside and outside, of an irrigation system.

Critical realism is a school of thoughts that became popular in the 1980s. In the ongoing debate in social science theory between structure and agency, between advocates of structuralism and those of individualism, critical realists follow the lead of constructivists by arguing the co-construction of structure and agency (Bhaskar 1997). However, they have attempted to take constructivism out of its analytical dead-end, by advancing a few concepts to analyse the mechanisms of social change. Working on the hypothesis of the temporality of a stratified social reality, they split social history in ‘morphogenetic sequences’ (Archer 2004). On Figure 3, Archer offers a temporal visualisation of the relationship between agency and structure. At time T1, a certain social structure exists, in which all action take place. At time T2, an action start that will act upon the structure in which it was born, ending up in time T3. At this point in time, an action, or repeated actions, will have started the process of structural change (T4), thus creating a new social structure in which new action will developed, extending the everlasting cycle of social change.

Figure 3. Archer’s morphogenetic sequence (Archer 2004)

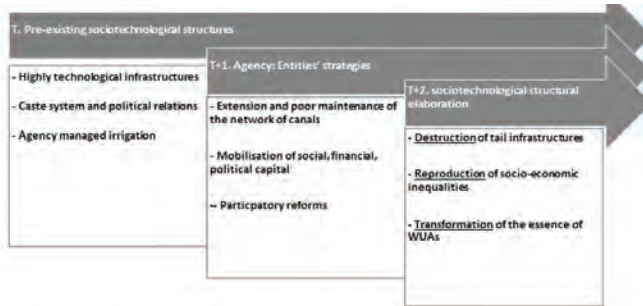


This does not mean that an analysis of a specific sequence of irrigation management does not acknowledge what was before. On the contrary, it is important to acknowledge it, but it is taken as an historical statement to be described, and not the centre of the analysis. Such theory gives precedence to the structures, as every man, object, natural element is born in a social, technical, environmental context. All ‘entities’ are born/created in pre-existing social structures that determine their possibilities of action. For instance, on the SMIS, farmers belong to different social groups and technical elements of infrastructures are built and assembled according to specific scientific standards.

In a critical realist view, reality is nested, stratified, composed of different entities of very diverse nature and scale, themselves composed of smaller entities (Sayer 2000). For instance, a WUA is composed of different levels of water users' committees, themselves composed of water users. All these entities, from the individual to the society, have causal powers, agencies, or what critical realists call emerging properties, a concept drawn from biology. Emerging properties are properties that an ensemble possess but not its components (Archer 2004). For instance, a heart can make the blood flow through our body. However, a heart cell does not possess this property in itself: it is the structuration of entities that gives causal powers to the next level of stratification. We could argue the same thing for the WUA for instance: it is a collection of water users that gives it its power to act upon the local politics. Canals or gates, by themselves, cannot deliver the water to the fields; put together they can. Both institutions and infrastructures are constructions that give causal powers to material or social entities, according to the structural context in which they dwell.

If structures take precedence in this social theory, critical realists do not deny the reflexive capacity of entities on their own position among social structures, and further, their ability to mobilise different capitals to act upon these structures, at a time of their choice. Here, temporality play a crucial role: as Figure 3 shows, there is a specific time for 'structural elaboration' (Archer 2004), where the actors use, or not, their causal powers in order to change, reproduce, or destroy social structures. Indeed, such actions, if undertaken, have outcomes that cannot be entirely foreseen by these entities, as they are also dependent on the mobilisation of causal powers of other entities. When we look at the SMIS through this grid, we see that different actors involved in irrigation management have, through their actions, slowly contributed to modify the type of water management of the scheme. Though water user groups were introduced as early as the end of the 1970s, participatory management was only fully put in place in 1994, and today, they do not match their initial conceptualisation, as local actors have modified irrigation infrastructures and institutions, as Figure 4 attempts to show.

Such a philosophical approach brings together explanations that tend to focus on structures and those which tend to focus on agencies in one theory of social change. It could be an interesting narrative to expose the social reality of irrigation management to show how social groups, individuals, technologies are determined by pre-existing social norms but also how their interaction finally ends up modifying the political structure of irrigation systems. This temporal dimension allows for, for instance,

Figure 4: A 'hydro-morphogenetic' sequence on the SMIS

an understanding of the progressive penetration of the PIM norms into a hierarchical society and the changes this action has created on the overall structure of the SMIS. Such a framework is, as I hope to demonstrate, helpful to coordinate two approaches looking from different but complementary angles at the evolution of politics inside an irrigation scheme. Further, I believe the progressively acquired political weight of the SMIS can then be analysed at the intersection of these approaches, leading to a productive interaction between the study of agencies and the study of social structures, delivering in the process a grid to read the importance of the role played by WUA in local politics today.

The Hydrosocial Cycle: A Political Ecology Approach to the Relation between Irrigation Management and Social Structures

We know the hydrological cycle is the most common representation of how water flows on our planet. However, to many social scientists working on the ontology of water (Wittfogel 1957; Budds 2009), this representation is incomplete, as it overlooks the social and political dimensions of water. The hydrosocial perspective brings them back into this cycle, as described in Figure 5. Linton and Budds (2014, 175) define the hydrosocial cycle as 'a socio-natural process

Fig 5. Drawing of the hydrosocial cycle by K. Ely (Linton and Budds 2014, 173)

through which water and society constantly modify each other through time and space'. I will try to show here how useful such a conceptualisation can be in order to decipher the politics of irrigation, before presenting some of its shortcomings.

In a typical constructivist twist, Swyngedouw (2009) suggests that nature and society have a dialectical relationship. Other authors show how the relationship between society and water is co-constructed. 'In essence, a relational and dialectical approach holds that things become what they are in relation to other things that emerge through an overall process of mutual becoming' (Linton and Budds 2014, 174). Such a framework proposes an ever-changing ontology of water through which one can read the production of social relations, their contestations, and their gradual or brutal changes. As Aubriot (2004) has shown, an irrigation system, through its institutions, is a reflection of the society in which it is embedded. Irrigation institutions often carry the weight of social inequalities, which are a central subject to political ecology and therefore are an important element of the hydrosocial theories. It seems the SMIS fits under this trend, as the unequal access to irrigation water is often determined along the lines of the hierarchical socio-economic system of Nepal.

Fig 6. Socio-spatial distribution in Sunsari District (Candau et al 2015)

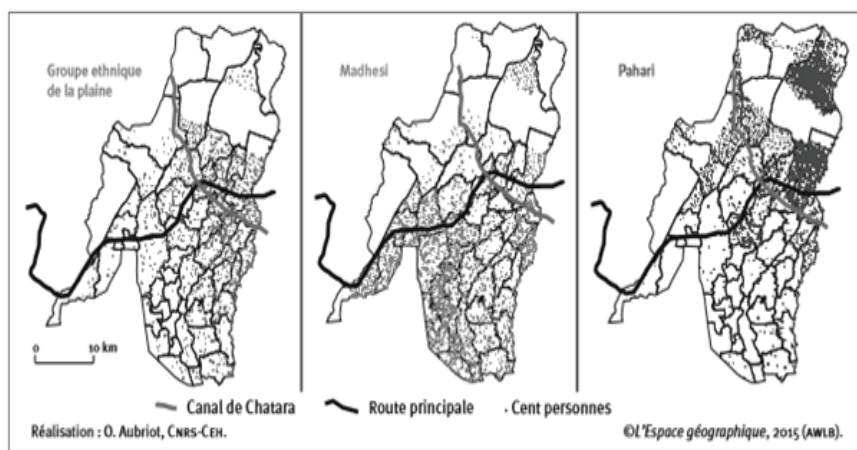


Figure 6 shows the spatial distribution of three social groups in Sunsari district. If we look at the area under the Chatara canal, we see that most Madhesi live in the end part of the canal, whereas most Pahadi live in the head part of the canals. This is not an innocent fact: it is well known in irrigation studies that there is a structural disadvantage to live in the tail of

canals, as tail-farmers are much more dependent on the behaviour of the upstream farmers. Furthermore, on the SMIS, it seems that the state of the canals is not as good in the south of the irrigation scheme compared to the north, as attested these two pictures:

Fig 7. Photos: Tail (left) and head (right) canals on the SMIS (Valadaud 2014)



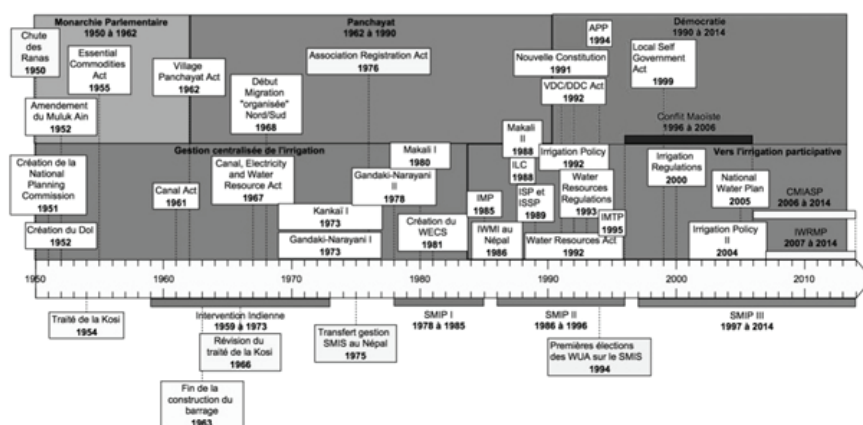
Where social, or hydrosocial, inequalities are flagrant, social struggles generally follow soon after, and where water is involved in these inequalities, water often becomes a conveyor of social struggles. Around the world, hydrosocial struggles, be it for human consumption or for irrigation, are numerous. The most famous of those might be the long-term political fight around water privatisation in Chile (Budds 2013) and more dramatically in the cities of Cochabamba and El Alto (Olivera and Lewis 2004). In this light, the SMIS can also be seen as a hydrosocial structure in which social struggles are expressed through water management. It seems that Nepali political struggles have overlapped onto the debates over water distribution since the participatory reforms.

Many Madhesi farmers encountered during the 2014 fieldwork complained of not being able to access enough water, or not being helped as much as the farmers in the head parts have been. Some of them openly said that they are being discriminated because they are Madhesi. Regardless of the truth of these statements, it is interesting to see that the actors themselves now relate water management to the national struggle of the Madhesi community. Whether some leaders use this argument as a way to put forward Madhesi (or other) agenda is still to be determined. It is the prospect of my doctoral fieldwork, in which I read irrigation as a practice deeply linked to society and a crucial element of local politics.

Wittfogel (1957) has illustrated the relationship between irrigation and politics. He shows how societies have organised through the necessity of controlling water and how, in return, this management structure forged

political regimes. Examples are numerous throughout human history: the power of ancient Khmer Empire and the USA were/are based on great hydraulic infrastructures (Worster 1985), as power flows down with technologically controlled water. This dialectical relation calls back echoes of Marx's analysis on man and nature: 'Through this movement he [man] acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this way he simultaneously changes its own nature' (Marx 1867). The nature of the political regime shapes the way a society will use water, and, in return, this use of water will contribute towards shaping the political regime. Even if the causal link is not that strong, Nepal's shifts in political regime and irrigation management paradigm tend to confirm such a conclusion (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Timeframe of irrigation management policies and projects in Nepal
(Valadaud 2014)



According to Regmi (1978), the Shah Kings of Nepal already considered irrigation as a medium to increase agricultural productivity and, therefore, tax revenue for the Nepali state. Royal edicts were published to encourage landlords to develop irrigation systems. However, before 1950, the Nepali state undertook very few irrigation development projects (Liebrand 2014, 46). This changed from the 1950s onward. As Nepal opened to the world, international capital and Western irrigation technologies found their way in the Himalayan Kingdom. Engineers were trained under Western supervision, and slowly Western technological standards and development paradigms seeped into Nepali irrigation policies. Western development aid came, at first, with the Keynesian focus on state intervention, aimed at increasing economic production. This was a way for the Nepali government to realise an old dream: to make the Tarai the 'granary of Nepal' (Ramirez

2003). Massive investment in infrastructures, among which irrigation, under the control of newly created state agencies (such as the DoI created in 1952), became the norm in post-1950 Nepal, and especially in the Tarai. The SMIS was born in such a context, as a network of canals imposed over a territory by the state, and run, at the time, by the state. Veldwisch and Mollinga (2013) describe the canals of such large-scale agency-managed irrigation schemes ‘as the long arms of the state’s reach out to every village where irrigation is envisaged’, connecting a territory to Kathmandu’s government’s rationality. The SMIS infrastructures have indeed connected different groups of people (Tharu, Madhesi, Pahari) over the years of their construction into a web of technology, institutions, and social relations. In the process, it also destroyed the other surface irrigation schemes (Howarth et al 2004, 7), creating and increasing dependency for all these newly linked farmers to the water provided by the SMIS, slowly integrating them in the process of nation-building that was a central preoccupation of the Panchayat regime (Gaige 1975).

When we look through a political ecology grid, it is possible to interpret the SMIS as a state-led irrigation system that was, from the start, a political question, a question of how to govern the land to create more revenue, and how to govern people to build a nation-state. The weight of the SMIS in the government of local life did not decrease with the change of management regime. The transfer from an Agency Managed Irrigation System (AMIS) to a Joint Managed Irrigation System (JMIS), initiated in the 1990s, has only invited actors other than the state into the power play. The SMIS is still of crucial importance to the government of the region’s people and water resources, the only difference being that it might have become an arena of contestation for political parties through the creation of WUA. My previous fieldwork has hinted in this direction. I attended a few general assemblies of water users in the fall of 2014, on Sub-Secondary canal 1 and Sub-Secondary canal 4. In many of them, discussions on the water calendar, canal maintenance, or water fee collection were used as political tools by farmers from other political parties to destabilise the current president of the WUA from another political party, and to take control of the sub-secondary canal committee. It is here, then, that the political element of the hydrosocial cycle becomes interesting. Its focus on the political ontology of irrigation shows that water is never only water as it has been channelled to serve a purpose. It is not water following its natural course; it has become a commodified object, with a value, serving as a medium to grow crops, later converted in cash, according to a government’s plan. The SMIS can then be interpreted as a governing technology, in the sense of Foucault (2004), an

infrastructure used to control populations and territories. The SMIS is both a reflection of Nepali society and symbol of a political tool of governance.

Socio-technical Approach of Irrigation: the Agency of Irrigation Infrastructures and Institutions

If the hydrosocial cycle is able to reveal an irrigation system as a political assemblage of infrastructures and institutions aimed at controlling a territory, it is hardly an analytical tool with sufficient explanatory capacity to explain how power actually works its way in and out of these irrigation infrastructures and institutions. Indeed, if the caste system plays a role in water management, economic class do as well, not to mention political parties, engineers, private contractors, water users among others. Structures and actors are numerous, and if we keep to a constructivist approach, there might be no way to find a starting point to an analysis of a social reality where all elements 'co-evolve', are 'co-constructed', as mentioned earlier. The hydrosocial cycle is indeed of great help to understand the structures that determine the historical evolutions of water management on the SMIS, but it is harder to understand how these social structures actually materialise in irrigation management and through which elements, persons, and groups, are power relations reproduced or changed. If the hydrosocial cycle is to become a tool to understand the politics of irrigation systems, it needs to be combined with another approach that would focus on the agency of irrigation actors, and on the details of their interaction. Mollinga's attempt (2014) to solve this issue is quite insightful on this front. He suggests that the socio-technical approach of irrigation studies, developed in the past 20 years by the University of Wageningen in Netherlands, could indeed be an interesting empirical and detailed counterpoint to the systemic hydrosocial explanation of the politics of irrigation.

The socio-technical approach has been around for quite sometimes. Law (1992), Bijker (2010), and others have explored the realm of social construction of technology in the last three decades. These authors seek to recount the stories of technical artefacts, from the social context of their design, through their making process, down to the way they are used. Such a detailed approach has allowed them to better understand the agency embedded in technical artefacts, how they represent a vision of what is possible in the world, and how they, through their technical characteristics, shape human agency.

This almost biographical perspective was translated into irrigation studies. According to Veldwisch and Mollinga (2016), this has allowed researchers to realise the importance of perception, choices, and uses

of technological artefacts in irrigation management. For instance, gates and dividers are often identified as nodal points where power disputes arise between different actors of an irrigation system (Mollinga and Bolding 1996). Resolution of these conflicts often involves an innovation either technological or in the use made of these technical artefacts. Technologies, therefore, have their own agencies: they constrain the range of choices possible to distribute water on an irrigation system. Further, they determine where the power is concentrated. If an irrigation system is gated at all levels, the power distribution over water management will not be distributed in the same way as if the irrigation system is only gated at the head of the secondary canals. The latter system will give power to the few individuals that have the legal, political, or scientific authority to let the water flow, as it is the case on the SMIS (Howarth et al 2004, 4). Gate operators are then transformed by the technological characteristics of the irrigation system as key actors. During 2014, it was noted, through the testimony of a retired gatekeeper of the SMIS, that many farmers have attempted to ‘persuade’ him into operating the gates outside of the official water calendar. This socio-technical approach is, therefore, useful to detail the channels through which the power relations, identified by the political ecology approach, flow.

Figure 9. Dimensions of Water Control in Irrigation Studies
(Abdullaev and Mollinga 2010)

	<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Means</i>	<i>Research object</i>	<i>Research techniques</i>
WATER CONTROL	Physical control (technical)	By means of physical infrastructure or technology	Physical shape, type and state of irrigation and drainage system and technologies	Walk-through surveys Direct measurements surveys Expert interviews
	Organizational control (managerial)	By means of skill, authority, command or domination	Institutions, organizations, management	Institutional mapping and analysis surveys Participatory observation
	Socio-economic and political control	By means of law, policy, regulations, incentives, or force	Social and governance structure (local and higher scale levels)	Surveys Stakeholder workshops FTI activities

This detailed approach is not limited to the technical artefacts of irrigation infrastructures alone. In recent years, irrigation studies have extended their reach to other dimension of water control, as summed up in Figure 9. Unravelling the different dimension of the water control on an irrigation system requires looking with care at how these dimensions

interact. Collier (2011) has extended this detailed approach of the 'life' of infrastructures to other techniques of government. In the same fashion, he studies management rules and how, combined with the 'intransigence of infrastructures', they shape the politics of heat management in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia. He makes a very interesting point about the (re)-programming of infrastructure. He details the programmatic characteristics of neo-liberal reforms and how these programmes have had to adapt to the materiality of heat infrastructure and the social norms of Russian people to produce a model of management that is not neo-liberal, but not socialist anymore, relating to the concept of 'policy as process'. Collier ends by showing how retracing the intertwined stories of material infrastructure and norms of management can provide a better understanding of the *de facto* management of a resource. He does this through a close look into an emblematic work on neo-liberalism, World Bank's programmes of management transfer in 1990s Russia, and first-hand data extracted from the heat management sector in two medium cities of Russia. I believe such an approach would be greatly helpful to complete the socio-technical approach in order to decipher the reality of irrigation management by the WUAs.

To adopt such a methodological approach would indeed open the 'black box' of the socio-technical ensemble that is an irrigation system when looked at under the lenses of the hydrosocial cycle. Tracing the history of PIM from its context of creation, through its programming in Nepal, the implementation by the DoI on the SMIS, and finally the interpretation by the water users, should give us a clearer image of the processes at work in reproducing or changing power relations in the SMIS. PIM is born from the encounter of neo-liberal thinking and of the community management paradigm. It advocates a return of the management to the 'natural laws' of society, with a touch of state control in order to ensure fairness, as it believes that local knowledge and incentives are the keys to a sustainable management of resources. Making water users responsible of the management, combined with the marketisation of some services (such as the repairs of canals), under a democratic institutional framework are the key elements of the participatory reforms, elements that we can find diluted in the different programmes of development of the SMIS (World Bank 1978; World Bank 1998; SMIP III 2012).

However, the policy documents are always different from the practice. A socio-institutional perspective can give us insights on the actual process of implementation of such participatory reforms. For instance, on the SMIS, if WUAs were progressively implemented through the 1980s, the first

elections at system level were held in 1994. According to some farmers, the DoI engineers in charge of implementing the election mostly informed local elites already gravitating around the centres of powers (local Panchayats and then VDCs), leaving a lot of water users in the blind (Valadaud 2014). Thus, the election process seems to have become a selection process at lower levels, often based on social hierarchies. This implies a tacit renewal of leadership if no opposition is raised, or election by show of hands if there is more than one candidate. Both practices can subject farmers to a lot of pressure: in some cases, threats on the eve of elections have been reported. As a result, most of the higher-ranked WUA representatives are from the upper strata of the socio-economic hierarchy of Nepal. They often are absentee landlords, or have other interests in urban areas (jobs, shops, properties, and generally belong to high castes even though they belong to different social groups (Madhesi, Tharu, or Pahadi). Such a result does not fit the representative ideal of PIM but shows an irrigation management reality that is all about unequal power relations.

It should be mentioned here that the constitution of WUA has allowed farmers' committees to access two crucial elements of the SMIS: budget and gates. A hold on these elements of the SMIS gives an important bargaining power inside the WUA, but also outside. Though there is some early evidence that hints towards a use of these powers to political ends, it is still too soon to reach such conclusions. However, it implies that, by following the story of PIM reforms, we can start to shed light on the institutional *ad hoc* channels through which power relations and social hierarchies are reproduced or challenged on the SMIS, and how the SMIS under JMIS has become a crucial element of the political fabric in Sunsari district.

This is how, I believe, we can operate a deconstruction of the complex socio-technical cogs through which power passes in an irrigation system. This socio-technical deconstruction, the understanding of how each cog fits together, allows then a reconstruction through a political ecology perspective. How social structures craft power relations on a socio-technical ensemble can only be understood through the detailed and precise observation of human and non-human agencies that are created/born in such structures (and so constrained by them) and then, by their interaction through time and space, contribute to reproduce, or change, these structures. Such a methodological approach, mixing political ecology and socio-technical approach under the philosophical umbrella of critical realism could be useful to understand the evolutions of the political characteristics and role of the WUA through the participatory reprogramming of large-scale irrigation system, in the context of modern Nepali politics.

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THE CONTRIBUTORS

Mona Shrestha Adhikari is the Executive Director of Enterprise for Management, Economic Reform & Gender Equality (EMERGE). She has more than 25 years of experience working in the private sector, national and international non-governmental organisations and international organisations. She has conducted extensive studies and published on the topics of judicial gender equality, gender and trade, and various contemporary socio-economic issues and presented papers at several international conferences. Her chapter ‘Nepalese new women workers in the hotel industry: Exploring women’s work and respectability’, was published in the book *Rethinking New Womanhood: Practices of Gender, Class, Culture and Religion in South Asia* in 2018 by Palgrave Macmillan, United Kingdom. She holds a PhD in Women and Gender Studies from the University of Warwick (UK), Master of Arts (MA) in Development Studies, specialising on women, gender, and development, from the Institute of Social Studies (the Netherlands) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) from University of Pune (India).

Anna Applebaum is an expert on transitional justice, gendering peace processes, and disaster risk reduction. She is currently a JD candidate at New York University School of Law. She received her Master of Public Service from the Clinton School of Public Service and a BA from Washington University in St. Louis. She was the 2015-2017 Hillary Rodham Clinton Research Fellow at the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security.

Bal Krishna Khadka is an Assistant Professor of statistics at Kathmandu University School of Management and has a long experience of working as consultant statistician in various projects. Mr. Khadka was involved as Researcher at Inter Disciplinary Analysts (IDA) between 2007 and 2012, and since 2013, has been involved as consultant statistician. He completed his Master’s degree, with distinction, in statistics from Tribhuvan University, Nepal in 2005. His expertise lies in survey design, sampling design, survey data management, survey data analysis, and report writing. He has co-authored ‘Business Climate Survey in Nepal’ and ‘Nepal Contemporary Political Situation’ (VI, VII, and VIII) with Dr Sudhindra Sharma. In addition, he has co-authored the book *Data Analysis and Modeling* with Professor P.R. Joshi et al. He has more than 10 years of teaching experience at graduate and undergraduate degree

programmes at different universities. Since 2013, he has been involved as Assistant Professor of Statistics at Kathmandu University where he teaches fundamentals of statistics, applied statistics, data analysis for managerial decisions, and quantitative techniques. He has published numerous articles on contemporary social and political issues of Nepal based on survey data findings in national daily newspapers and magazines of Nepal. He has been involved in more than 30 quantitative surveys with varying sample sizes from 1000 to up to 10,000. As a consultant statistician, these studies were carried out by various national and international organisations.

Kanchan Lama has work experience for more than 27 years with proven expertise in women's economic empowerment. She has been actively engaged in gender/HRBA-oriented evaluation of gender impacts of national and global projects and possesses a strong analytical capacity. Currently, she is closely involved in reviewing and designing SDG indicators in the national SDG teams for contextual responses.

Briana Mawby is a researcher and consultant focusing on migration, climate change and disaster risk reduction, gender, and post-conflict reconstruction. She earned a BA in international affairs from George Washington University and a MA in conflict resolution from Georgetown University. She was the 2015-2017 Hillary Rodham Clinton Research Fellow at the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security.

Sushila Chatterjee Nepali, PhD is a resident of Kathmandu, professionally a forester and currently a freelance consultant supporting in GESI policies, research works in climate change and biomeridian studies, as well as a visiting faculty of Future Generations University, US, Kathmandu Forestry College, Institute of Forestry, Conflict Peace and Development Studies and a council member of Agriculture and Forestry University. She has more than 25 years of working experience in the field of conservation and community development. She has also been involved in supporting and developing monitoring and evaluation policies for National Planning Commission and Social Welfare Council. She has travelled extensively throughout Nepal doing conservation work, evaluation, teaching and supporting the policy-making bodies.

Sumit Kumar Sarma is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati, Assam, India. He has obtained his MA and MPhil degrees from the University of Hyderabad, India. Sarma specialises in Ethnic Conflict, Displacement

and Development studies. His present research focuses on the Tea-Tribe community of Assam, India. He has published in a number of national as well as international journals. Presently, Sarma is a faculty member of the Department of Political Science at Hema Prova Borboora Girls' College, Golaghat, Assam, India, an affiliated college under Dibrugarh University, Assam.

Sudhindra Sharma is the Executive Director of Inter Disciplinary Analysts (IDA). A sociologist by training, he completed his PhD from the University of Tampere, Finland, in 2001 and Masters from Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines in 1992. He was a visiting scholar at the German Development Institute, Bonn; Institute of Development Studies, Helsinki; The Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi; and the Institute of Asian Studies at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. He has led over 20 nationwide surveys in Nepal, including Nepal Contemporary Political Situation (NCPS), Public Safety and Security (2007–2011) co-organised and co-authored with SaferWorld, Business Climate Survey (2010–11), and USAID-funded local governance and community development programme, Sajhedari Bikaas (2013–2017). With the commencement of Survey of Nepali People in 2017, supported by TAF and DFAT, Australia, he has led the team on behalf of IDA. He is the author of the book *Procuring Water: Foreign Aid and Rural Water Supply in Nepal* (2001) and a co-editor of *Aid Under Stress: Water, Forests and Finnish Support in Nepal* (2004). He has contributed to and co-authored several policy papers published by the Institute of Development Studies, University of Helsinki. He was awarded Docent in Development Studies at the University of Helsinki in February 2009 and has since begun supervising PhD candidates enrolled in Development Studies at the University of Helsinki.

Shristi Sijapati has an MSc Degree in International Development from the University of Manchester, UK. She completed her BA programme from the Hindu College of University of Delhi, India. Shristi is fully versed with diverse and multicultural societies and has the experience being associated with reputed INGOs, NGOs and private agencies mainly working in the field of development, humanitarian assistance, and human resources development. These include INGOs include Mercy Corps, DanChurchAid, etc.; NGOs include Saathi, Hamri Bahini, etc.; and private agencies like Policy Entrepreneurs Inc. and Buddha Air. She proactively seeks new knowledge and is interested in sharing it with others.

Pranaya Ratna Sthapit has over six years of experience in project management and research, data collection and analysis. He has been involved throughout

the survey process cycle in various surveys of Nepal that encompasses designing research methodology and tools, training staffs, monitoring data collection, managing data, analysing data, and writing reports. He also has a proven track-record in oversight, providing technical assistance, and building capacity of partners in the implementation of various data-related projects. As an experienced trainer, he has experience in training CSOs, students, and others in the collection, analysis, and sharing of data. Pranaya holds a BA in Information Management from Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal; an MBA from Old Dominion University, Virginia, US, and a Graduate Diploma in Social Science from the Nepa School of Social Science, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Agastaya Thapa is currently an independent researcher. She completed her PhD from the School of Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, in 2017. Her thesis, entitled, 'Circuits of Representation: Visual Art Practices and the Formation of the Subject in Darjeeling from the Colonial Period to the Present' looked at representation through the lens of tourist art and colonial ethnology. Her research interests include colonial visual culture, photography, popular paintings and prints, Eastern Himalayan history, and socio-political movements.

Romain Valadaud is a PhD student and Teaching Assistant in Human Geography at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. He holds an MSc in Political Science from Science Po (France) and an MSc in International Development from Trinity College (Ireland). His current work tries to understand how power relations affect natural resources management. After working on Agroforestry adoption in Rwanda, he is currently working in Eastern Tarai (Nepal), where he is studying participatory irrigation practices on large-scale irrigation systems.

Appendix
Conference Schedule

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THE ANNUAL KATHMANDU CONFERENCE ON NEPAL & THE HIMALAYA

26-28 July, 2017, Hotel Shanker, Lazimpat

Social Science Baha, Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies,
Britain-Nepal Academic Council, Centre for Himalayan Studies-CNRS &
Nepal Academic Network (Japan)

SCHEDULE

Day 1: 26 July (Wednesday)

SESSION 1: 9 – 11 am			
HALL A		HALL B	
<u>Panel A1</u>		<u>Panel B1</u>	
Welcome Heather Hindman Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies		Welcome David Gellner Britain-Nepal Academic Council	
The Social Lives of Malaria in the Nepal Tarai: Studies of Environment, the Nation-State, Neighbors/Others, and the Body from East to West Chair and Discussant: Thomas B. Robertson, Director, Fulbright Commission, Nepal		Intermarriage in Nepal Chair: Sudhindra Sharma, Executive Director, Interdisciplinary Analysts, Kathmandu Discussant: Seira Tamang, Independent researcher	
Janak Rai Associate Professor, Anthropology, Central Department of Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Nepal	Adivasi Body, Malaria, and the State in Nepal: Perspectives from Indigenous Historical Analysis	Ivan Deschenaux PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology, London School of Economics, UK	Can Inter-caste Marriage Change Perceptions of Caste?
Amy Leigh Johnson PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology and School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Yale University, USA	Settler Sensibilities and Environmental Change: The Unmaking of a Malarial Landscape in the Far West Tarai	Bimla Kumari Gurung PhD Candidate, Department of Sociology, Gurunanak Dev University, India	Intermarriages and Generational Relations: A Sociological Study in Kathmandu City
Priyankar Bahadur Chand Sickle Cell Nepal	Biological Statehood: Sickle Cell Disease & Citizenship in Contemporary Nepal	Claire Martinus Lecturer, Anthropology, University of Lille 3, France	Intermarriage and Matrimonial Practices in Kathmandu
BREAK: 11 – 11:30 am (refreshments will be served in the dining hall)			

Day 1 SESSION 2: 11:30 am – 1:30 pm			
HALL A		HALL B	
Panel A2		Panel B2	
Conservation and Locals		Empowering Women	
Chair: Hari Sharma , Executive Director, Alliance for Social Dialogue (ASD)		Chair: Heather Hindman , President, Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies	
Discussant: Lokranjan Parajuli , Senior Researcher, Martin Chautari, Kathmandu		Discussant: Arjun Kharel , Researcher, CESLAM, Social Science Baha	
Pooja Thapa PhD Candidate, Sociology, Institute for Social and Economic Change, India	Religion and Development in Sikkim	Bal Krishna Khadka Assistant Professor, School of Management, Kathmandu University, Nepal Pranaya Sthapit Researcher, Interdisciplinary Analysts, Kathmandu Sudhindra Sharma Executive Director, Interdisciplinary Analysts, Kathmandu	Self Help Group's Effects on Women's Empowerment
Nayna Jhaveri Independent researcher	Forest Futures: Tenure Mosaics of Nepal's Terai Arc Landscape	Rajendra Pradhan Managing Director, Nepā School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Nepal Ruth Meinzen-Dick Senior Research Fellow, International Food Policy Research Institute, USA Sophie Theis Research Analyst, International Food Policy Research Institute, USA	Property Rights, Intersectionality, and Women's Empowerment: Examining the Meanings of Property for Women with Different Social Locations in Nepal
Thomas B. Robertson Associate Professor of History, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, USA	"Guns and Fences" Conservation in Asia?: The Origins and Evolution of Nepal's Chitwan National Park	Sushila Chatterjee Nepali and Kanchan Lama Women Leading for Change in Natural Resources, Nepal	Transformation in Gender Norms for Innovation and Development in Agriculture and NRM Sector: A Case Study of Jajarkot, Myagdi and Devdaha, Nepal
LUNCH: 1:30 – 2:30 pm (served in the dining hall)			

Day 1			
SESSION 3: 2:30 – 4:30 pm			
HALL A		HALL B	
Panel A3		Panel B3	
Dalits in a Changing Society Chair: David Gellner, Chair, Britain-Nepal Academic Council Discussant: Sangay Tamang, PhD Candidate, Indian Institute of Technology, India		Traditional vs Modern Practices of Child-rearing Chair: Katsuo Nawa, Professor of Cultural Anthropology, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, The University of Tokyo Discussant: Gaurav Lamichhane, PhD Candidate, University of Heidelberg, Germany	
Krishna P. Adhikari Research Fellow, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology (ISCA), University of Oxford, UK David Gellner Professor, Social Anthropology and Fellow, All Souls College, University of Oxford, UK	International Labour Migration from Nepal and Changing Caste-based Institutions and Inter-caste Relations	Jill Allison Global Health Co-ordinator, Clinical Assistant Professor, Division of Community Health and Humanities, Faculty of Medicine, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada Madhusudan Subedi Professor, Central Department of Sociology Tribhuvan University, Nepal Cathy Ellis Bachelor of Fine Arts, Registered Midwife, MSc., Canada Bhakta Dev Shrestha Medical officer, National Health Education Information and Communication Centre, Nepal Nani Kaway Master in Nursing (Women Health and Development), Institute of Medicine, Nepal Llamo Sherpa Department of Community Medicine, University of Oslo, Norway	Accounting for Local Culture to Promote Safer Births in Rural and Remote Nepal
Steve Folmar Associate Professor, Department of Anthropology, Wake Forest University, USA	Being, Becoming, Belonging: The Paradox of Identity and Mental Suffering among Nepal's Dalits	Obindra B. Chand Research Associate, Social Science Baha, Nepal Radha Adhikari Visiting Research Fellow, School of Health in Social Science,	Ethnographic Exploration of Maternal and Child Health Projects in Nepal: A Critical Analysis of the Data Collection Processes

		University of Edinburgh, UK	
Richard Bownas Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and International Affairs, University of Northern Colorado, USA	Did the Earthquake and Earthquake Relief have a Differential Impact on Lower Caste Groups? A Case Study of Sindhupalchok District, Nepal	Susan Clarke PhD Candidate, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, Australia	Sit up to feed your baby and you will have no problem...An Explanatory Model of Childhood Ear Disease and Gender Inequality in Jumla
Ratna Bishokarma MPhil in Sociology, Tribhuvan University, Nepal			
BREAK: 4:30 – 5 pm (<i>refreshments will be served in the dining hall</i>)			
Public Event: 5 pm			
Keynote Lecture			
Painting the Mythological History of Nepal: The Wall Paintings of the Tantric Shrine of Santipur at Svayambhu, and their origins, history and fate			
by			
Alexander von Rospatt			
Professor for Buddhist and South Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley			

Day 2: 27 July (Thursday)

SESSION 4: 9 – 11 am			
HALL A		HALL B	
Panel A4		Panel B4	
Sexing the State: Negotiating Sexual Politics in Naya Nepal Chair: Susan Clarke , PhD Candidate, School of Public Health and Community Medicine, University of New South Wales, Australia Discussant: Laura Kunreuther , Director of Anthropology, Bard College, New York		Nepali Diaspora in India Chair: Janak Rai , Associate Professor, Anthropology, Central Department of Anthropology, Tribhuvan University, Nepal Discussant: Shak B. Budhathoki , Associate Researcher, Martin Chautari, Kathmandu	
Kumud Rana PhD Candidate, College of Social Sciences PhD Studentship, University of Glasgow, UK	Queer Dissidence in Times of Revolution	Sangay Tamang PhD candidate, Department of Humanities and Social Science, Indian Institute of Technology, India	MULIKI AIN: An Invisible Burden for Nepalis in India
Sarah Rich-Zendel PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, University of Toronto, Ontario	Beyond the State: Social Institutions and the Transformation of Sexual Norms in Nepal		
Shubha Kayastha MA Student, Tribhuvan University, Nepal	Sexuality of Women with Physical Disabilities: Experience and Realities	Sumit Kumar Sarma Research Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, India	Anxiety, Assertion and the Politics of Naming: The Making of 'Assameli- Gorkha'
BREAK: 11 – 11:30 am (refreshments will be served in the dining hall)			
SESSION 5: 11:30 am – 1:30 pm			
HALL A		HALL B	
Panel A5		Panel B5	
Public Finance Dynamics in School Education in Nepal Chair: Steve Folmar , Associate Professor, Wake Forest University, USA Discussant: Nishesh Chalise , Assistant Professor, Augsburg College, USA		New and Old: Challenges in Education Sector in Nepal Chair: Jeevan Baniya , Researcher, Social Science Baha Discussant: Pooja Thapa , PhD Candidate, Institute for Social and Economic Change, India	
Pramod Bhatta Senior Researcher, Martin Chautari, Kathmandu	'Communityization' of Public Schools and the Realities of 'free' Education in Nepal	Lokranjan Parajuli Senior Researcher, Martin Chautari, Kathmandu	Schools as an Arena of Struggle: Reexamining the Panchayat Era Politics of Education
Shak B. Budhathoki Associate Researcher, Martin Chautari, Kathmandu	The Use and Misuse of State Resources in Nepal's Public Schools	Rajendra Raj Timilsina PhD Candidate, School of Education,	Re-emergence of Gurukul in Nepal: Deconstructing Vedic Tradition for Girls

		Kathmandu University, Nepal	
		Shristi Sijapati MSc. International Development, University of Manchester, UK Damodar Khanal Campaigner for Save the Children UK	Examining INGOs’ Support for the Education of Marginalised Girls in Nepal
LUNCH BREAK: 1:30 – 2:30 pm (served in the dining hall)			
Day 2 			

Day 3: 28 July (Friday)

SESSION 7: 9 – 11 am			
HALL A		HALL B	
Panel A7		Panel B7	
Securing the Status quo: Donors, Development and Reconstruction in Post-war Nepal Chair: Mahendra Lawoti , Professor, Western Michigan University, USA Discussant: Sujeet Karn , Independent researcher		Belonging and Recognition Chair: Krishna P. Adhikari , Research Fellow, Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology (ISCA), University of Oxford, UK Discussant: Rajendra Raj Timilsina , PhD Candidate, Kathmandu University, Nepal	
Seira Tamang Independent researcher	Enabling 'business as usual': Donors and Peacebuilding in Nepal Post 2006	Arjun Bahadur BK Independent Researcher	Social Stratification and Dalit Leadership in Nepal: An Ethnographic Study of a Village in Western Nepal
Feyzi Ismail Senior Teaching Fellow, Department of Development Studies, SOAS, University of London, UK	The Post-war Direction in Nepal: Deepening Capital, Deepening Inequality	Gaurav Lamichhane PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology, South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg, Germany	Involuntary Childlessness in Nepal: Instances of Competition, Contestations, and Conflicts, among the Plural Healing Practices and Healing Journeys
James Sharrock Independent researcher	Remote Response: International Humanitarianism and Nepal's 2015 Earthquakes		
BREAK: 11 – 11:30 am (<i>refreshments will be served in the dining hall</i>)			
SESSION 8: 11:30 am – 1:30 pm			
HALL A		HALL B	
Panel A8		Panel B8	
Nepali Youth and the Job Market Chair: Pramod Bhatta , Senior Researcher, Martin Chautari, Kathmandu Discussant: David Gellner , Chair, Britain-Nepal Academic Council		Diminishing Returns of Resources in Nepal Chair: Nayna Jhaveri , Independent researcher Discussant: Feyzi Ismail , Senior Teaching Fellow, Department of Development Studies, SOAS, University of London, UK	
Laura Kunreuther Director of Anthropology, Bard College, USA	Ear-witnesses and Conduits of Voices: On the Labor of UN Field Interpreters	Nishesh Chalise Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Augsburg College, USA	Exploring Social and Economic Disparities in Nepal
Mona Shrestha Adhikari Fellow, South Asia Watch on Trade Economics and Environment, (SAWTEE), Kathmandu	Analysing the Construction of Gendered Work: A Case of Hotels, Resorts and Casinos in the Kathmandu Valley	Romain Valadaud PhD Candidate, Geography Institute, University of Fribourg, Switzerland	A Combined Analytical Narrative to Study the Politicization of Irrigation Management in the Tarai: Critical Realism, Hydrosocial Theory and Sociotechnical Approach

Ram Narayan Shrestha PhD Candidate, South Asian University, India	Work-related Migration Aspirations in Youths of Nepal: An Empirical Analysis		
LUNCH BREAK: 1:30 – 2:30 pm (served in the dining hall)			
Day 3 SESSION 9: 2:30 am – 4:30 pm			
HALL A		HALL B	
Panel A9		Panel B9	
Citizenship, Democracy and Human Rights		Nepali Imaginings	
Chair: Rajendra Pradhan , Managing Director, Nepa School of Social Sciences and Humanities Discussant: Dipak Gyawali , Nepal Academy of Science and Technology (NAST)		Chair: Claire Martinus , Lecturer, Anthropology, University of Lille 3, France Discussant: James Sharrock , Independent researcher	
Sanjay Sharma Master's in Political Science, Central European University, Hungary Neha Choudhary Independent Researcher	Gendered Citizenship: National Security versus Equality	Agastaya Thapa PhD candidate, School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India	Local Faces and Places: Tourist Art and Representational Practices of Culture and Identity in Darjeeling Hills
Shishir Lamichhane Research Officer, Law and Policy Forum for Social Justice, Nepal	Universal Human Rights Versus Domestic Courts: Rethinking The Cultural Relativist Debate In Nepal	Bal Bahadur Thapa Lecturer, Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, Nepal	A Trajectory of Nepali Modernity: A Narrative of Ruptures and Repairs
Mahendra Lawoti Professor, Department of Political Science, Western Michigan University, USA	Poverty, Diversity and Democracy: Breakdown, Erosion and Endurance in South Asia	Kalyan Bhandari Lecturer in Events, Hospitality & Tourism, School of Business and Enterprise, University of the West of Scotland, UK	The Sociology of Mt Everest
Closing Remarks Nirmal Man Tuladhar , Social Science Baha		Closing Remarks Katsuo Nawa , Nepal Academic Network (Japan)	

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