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Nepal Youth Journal

**Youth Engagement
and
Volunteerism**

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Youth Engagement and Volunteerism

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Our Efforts

We are very much delighted to publish the third volume of Nepal Youth Journal on the theme of ‘youth engagement and volunteerism.’ This journal is an annual publication of Youth Advocacy Nepal (YAN).

Youths are agents of social transformation. So far, none of the social movements have been successful in the world without the participation of young people. Despite their tremendous contribution to political development and socio-economic progress, issues of young people, including meaningful engagement in the decision-making process, access to quality education and health, decent jobs, among others have not been addressed by concerned authorities. The state has not taken the issues of youths seriously.

Although volunteerism is significantly important in the development process in human life, in recent decades the spirit and culture of it has been fading due to growing trend of consumerism and profit-oriented mindsets of the people. In order to continue human civilization, there is no better alternative to volunteerism. In the context of Nepal, the volunteer activities have been performed since ancient times. However, it has not been documented properly that could be inspiring lesson for the present generation. Given the situation,

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young people, still, are contributing as a volunteer in various sectors. Keeping this in mind, the articles incorporated in the present journal have attempted to explore the issues related to volunteerism and youth engagement. I believe that the knowledge and perspectives gained through this journal can be essential resources for policy makers and practitioners.

We are immensely grateful to all the contributors, who provided academic articles for this journal. We would like to thank editorial team Dr Tara Lal Shrestha, Lekhnath Pandey, Shiva Prasad Tiwari and Prabin Shrestha. My special thanks go to Suran Maharjan, Dr Uddhab Pyakurel and Sikha Shrestha for continuous feedback and suggestions for the journal. We also express our gratitude to VSO Nepal for technical and financial support for the journal production. We likewise acknowledge the great contribution of supporting team Ganesh Dhami, Tirtharaj Koirala, Binaya Karki and Rama Bhattai along with Gita Chaudhary, Narayan Kadariya, Manoj Gyawali, Bikash KC, Om Ramtel, Dipak Soni and Diwakar Upreti for their contribution.

We believe our effort of this collaboration will contribute to youth and help in achieving the aims of the publication.

Narendra Khatiwada, President, YAN

Foreword

Sustainable development can be attained with the active participation of citizens and stewardship of the government. Nearly half the population of Nepal is of youth and development aspirations cannot be achieved without active engagement of these young people who bring more innovations and energy to accelerate pace of sustainable development.

I would like to express my gratitude towards the entire team of Youth Advocacy Nepal (YAN) for the publication of the third edition of *Nepal Youth Journal*. It is our pleasure to reinforce our solidarity in youth aspired development by partnering in the publication journey.

VSO strongly believes in ‘A Fair World for Everyone’ and adopts Volunteering for Development (V4D) approach to address issues like education, sexual and reproductive health and rights, livelihoods, social inclusion, gender and governance and resilience. In this context, it aligns with our organizational purpose for strengthening youth and volunteers as active citizens to contribute in sustainable development.

This journal has collected experiences and evidences from the youth sector in Nepal which can contribute as a knowledge product in Nepal’s ongoing youth development and volunteer engagement focused interventions. I wish the journey of

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documenting youth experiences will add value in sustainable development agendas in coming days.

Once again, congratulations for the publication. I hope readers enjoy reading the articles of this journal and will capitalize the learning for aspirations to promote youth responsive development.

Jay Shankar Lal
Country Director
VSO Nepal

Editors' Words

Horace Mann once said doing nothing for others is undoing of ourselves. Endorsing his saying, research has shown that people who volunteer often live longer. So, volunteering works are not being discouraged even at this age of market capitalism.

It doesn't mean that volunteerism is only the wealthy people's cup of tea. Anyone can do it; irrespective of age, sex, gender, qualification, ranks and files, caste, creed, color, background or worldview. Only condition to be a volunteer is that one needs to have humane sense of giving something/sometime for others. Volunteering is not exclusive as it could be any type of contribution or altruistic works for larger societal causes or selfless acts for others. It can be in personal capacity or in organized ways. It could also happen in formal or informal ways.

Generally volunteers are not paid. And they are not paid not because they don't deserve it, but because they are priceless. Over the time, it has become more formal and is carried out in organized fashion as the world has been grappling with the time

value, showing off culture and promoting public image of the volunteers.

Volunteerism exists in all societies in one way or other. However its type and nature depends upon particular historical, socio-cultural or socio-political contexts. Nepal's first organized and recorded volunteerism practices can be traced with a noble initiation of Late Daya Bir Shah Kansakar, who first donated blood in 1944 and established an organization 'Paropakar' to mobilize youth volunteers to serve people during cholera epidemic of 1947. Nevertheless, volunteering works have been embedded in Nepali traditions, values and practices. The very culture of joining at funeral procession when anyone in the village dies or teaching at Gurukul were/are examples of selfless acts associated with Nepali traditions. Likewise, mobilizing people during natural calamities, health endemic or involving in track building at villages are a few examples of volunteering works, which could be elaborated in pages.

Youth are the most active section of human populace and are often engaged or involved voluntarily with certain interests. Linking with the broader framework of youth engagement and volunteerism, this volume of *NYJ* has attempted to produce knowledge, conducting research on different aspects of volunteerism in Nepal. A total of 18 authors were engaged and

12 articles have been produced, which are based on quantitative and qualitative research approaches and case studies.

Abhas Dharananda Rajopadhyaya in “Negotiating Identity through Collective Memories: Reflections from #OccupyTundikhel Movement” talks about collective memories especially of people of Kathmandu about Tundikhel related to socio-cultural, religious and political values. However, at present this space is being encroached in different ways and existence of this precious open space has been threatened. The #OccupyTundikhel movement has brought people together voluntarily against the encroachment.

In “Strengthening Local Governance through Youth Volunteerism” Bhola Bhattarai and Pranav Bhattarai discuss about the engagement of civil society organizations, youth and other marginalized communities with local, provincial and federal governments. They argue that youth can be given knowledge and information to motivate them for their active role in strengthening governance process.

“Young Mothers’ Participation in Antenatal Care Services in Nepal” by Bidhya Shrestha discusses about participation of young mothers in antenatal care services (ANC) in Nepal. The article links ANC services to sustainable development goals on maternal health. Mass campaigns through youth volunteerism

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has been prescribed as one of the best alternative strategies to attract young mothers to meet their needs comfortably and responsively. The author also argues that volunteer-based campaigns for successful implementation of the activism and demonstration with good examples from Nepal and abroad would be good to inspire young mothers and others.

Deepak Ghimire and Kapil Khadka in “Youth Volunteering in Tourism Development in Bhaktapur” talk about the role of youth volunteers in development of tourism as well as preservation of cultures, religions, environment, and promotion of local products of Bhaktapur. Bhaktapur has a unique combination of culture, religion, heritages and monuments, however all these are being endangered due to lack of awareness.

In “Young Generation towards Green Revolution in Nepal” Govinda Rizal presents optimistic picture of participation of young generations in green revolution in Nepal. The article illustrates clear evidence of youth engagement in agriculture to high-value products.

Kapil Kafle and Arjun Karki in “Social Media and Youth Volunteerism in Dr Govinda KC’s Movement” focus on how the use of facebook brought youth together voluntarily to show solidarity in the movement of Dr Govinda KC. In addition to

facebook and other social sites youth and people of other ages have taken help of mass media to generate awareness as the the authors conclude that social media could be a great platform to mobilize youth as volunteers.

Rija Joshi and Ashok Maharjan in “Youth in DRM in Traditional Newari Settlement of Bungamati” discuss about role of youth volunteers to risk reduction and management during disasters. They point out the value of indigenous knowledge to minimize the damage during disaster.

“Volunteering in Recovery from Substance Abuse in Nepal” by Sarah Maharjan and Bishnu Kandel explores the role of volunteers in recovery, rehabilitation and social integration of previous substance users in Nepali context. The authors argue that it is necessary to encourage other youths (not necessarily previous drug users) in volunteering in this sector in order to create an understanding among youths and make the social integration of previous drug users easier and smoother.

Shanta Karki in “Youth in Agriculture: Attraction towards Protected Horticulture” discusses how technological advancement in agriculture has attracted a lot of youth in agriculture in general and in protected horticulture in general. Through her research the author found out that many youth returning from abroad are attracted towards protected

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horticulture. Even the government has promoted this by providing subsidy programs for protected horticulture. Young entrepreneurs have been using new technology to produce quality products with high market price.

In “Dynamics of Youth Volunteerism in Nepal” Shyam Adhikari presents the changing patterns in volunteering practices in Nepal. Adhikari emphasizes that youth are agents as well as beneficiaries of change and their contributions have definitely been beneficial to the community.

In “Empowering Youth through Power of Volunteering” Suran Maharjan and Sushil Khanal talk about empowering youth through volunteering with an example of youth volunteering program International Citizen Services (ICS) being implemented by VSO Nepal. The article concludes that such opportunities are beneficial to the youth, and such initiatives could contribute to overall development of the nation.

“Youth Politico-volunteer Spirit in Nepal” by Yug Pathak presents the dynamics of youth engagement as volunteers in Nepalese politics from the past to the date. He indicates alarming situation of youth engagement in current time in Nepalese politico-volunteer spirit.

All the articles incorporated here might not have been at their best due to several constraints including time and resources but

many of these articles can be called as pioneers in their areas of exploration in Nepalese context and will certainly encourage young scholars to further research in the areas of youth volunteerism. There is always room for improvement in research articles publication. We tried our level best to cooperate and motivate the authors in the process of developing these articles in terms of contents, presentation, coherence, language and other essential aspects. The authors-editors interaction meeting series were really fruitful. Several editor-author meetings with stakeholders really honed both, the authors and editors. We must thank to all the authors, support team, stakeholders for their continuous help. Especially, we must acknowledge VSO Nepal and Youth Advocacy Nepal for entrusting us as *NYJ* editors.

Tara Lal Shrestha

Lekhanath Pandey

Shiva Prasad Tiwari

Prabin Shrestha

Negotiating Identity through Collective Memories: Reflections from #OccupyTundikhel Movement

Abhas Dharananda Rajopadhyaya

Abstract

The Kathmanduites have known Tundikhel, also in a broader sense, as an open socio-cultural and political space. With many associated traditional practices, most of which are now lost, this vast land is also a site where Kathmanduites have had memories since childhood of football, social activities or political campaigns and even festival celebrations. Envisioning the glorious past, as is always the case with collective memories, young heritage activists launched #OccupyTundikhel movement against the continuous encroachment of this vast, open land. The article uses oral-photographic method to explore memories of the open space (some produced their personal collections as well) by the use of photographs as 'media of memory'. With collective memories, the community has yearned for the past. People share their memories to add to the knowledge/memory pool and thus negotiate identity and their Tundikhel connection. That ultimately pushed people to volunteer for resistance against

Tundikhel encroachment and the movement thus became an instrument of the collective memory performance.

Keywords: *Collective memory, Tundikhel, oral-photographic method, identity*

Introduction

At the heart of Kathmandu, Tundikhel serves as 'lungs' of the otherwise crowded city. Almost all of us in Kathmandu have memories here as a child, playing football (or recently cricket) or attending diverse cultural shows or political activities. In any case, it needs to be brought back to life.

Anyone who has come to Kathmandu will know about the 'vast' array of land (see Photo 1 at the end of this article) by the name of Tundikhel (IAST: Tūḍikhela) just eastwards to the core, ancient city.

The extent to which it is valuable to social lives of the Kathmanduites can be deciphered from the statements of an activist struggling to bring back 'lungs' of the city to function.

As early as 1880, Oldfield saw "a level grassy plain, one-third of a mile long, and from two hundred to three hundred yards wide ... grand parade ground ... called Thandi Khel [sic]" (p.108, see Photo 2 for an overview of the expanse). The area was so big that it was considered "[one of?] the largest parade-grounds in Asia" (Joshi, 2019).

Photo 1: A open land Tundikhel in the year 2014



*Source: Wikimedia, retrieved from commons.
[wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tundikhel_in_2014.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tundikhel_in_2014.jpg).*

Now the otherwise large, open public space has shrunk to Khula Manch (literally open platform, and only literally now), including the Dvi-Māju temple premise and much shrunken Tundikhel south of Sainik Manch (used by Nepal Army). The expanse, in the past, would go further south to today's Daśarath Stadium (previously Kamal Pokhari or the lotus-pond) and to

holy Bāgmatī River. It included areas of Mahānkāla temple (near Sainik Manch), Bhadrakālī (one of the eight mother goddesses *aṣṭamātṛkā* around the ancient Kathmandu city), Nāga-devatā (the Serpent Lord), Tripurēśvara temple as one moved southwards. Towards the north, it is said that Rānī Pokharī too belonged to this expanse (see: Lamichhane, 2015). An inscription dated 1670 by Pratap Malla at the northwest corner of Rānī Pokharī states of another adjacent open ground by the name of Māsavakhel (line 27), which Clark (1957) mentions at the north of Tundikhel, "[t]he land south of the Māsavakhel is reported to have been rough woodland, which was later cleared and leveled by Jang Bahādur for use as a parade ground" (p.177).

The name Tundikhel comes from Tuṇḍī-kṣetra meaning the area of goddess Vajra-tuṇḍī; it is named so as "a dowry to goddess Vajra-tuṇḍī by Pratyāṅgīrā-devī and Vajra-Bhairava" (Vajracharya, D., 1963, p.58). Vajra-tuṇḍī has been identified as a goddess near Bhadrakālī, known locally as Lumaḍhī Bhadrakālī. In the local Nepāl Bhāṣā tongue, Tundikhel is termed tu(n)khya: meaning wet, open land. Khel comes from this Newar term khya: or its variant khya(la).

The local Newar population of the ancient Kathmandu city relate many tales and legends to this vast area. Tales of genie Gurimapa (IAST: Gurimāpā, local name: Gurumapa) of Keshchandra Mahāvihār or Itumbahāl connect the monastery with an isolated tree (Nepāl Bhāṣā: Yāka Simā, now non-existing) at Tundikhel (Vajracharya, G., 2004, pp.109). Still the vernal festival of Holi (in February-March month) sees a ritual

in honour of Gurimapa. Also it must be mentioned here that many Newar castes perform their *deguli-pūjā* (*devālī*, Sanskrit: *devakula*) worship here.

This cultural connection is contested at present, owing to the extent of encroachment Tundikhel has seen in recent years. Although the encroachment of this vast land is not a very new phenomenon, this socio-cultural connection had seen little, if any, disturbance in the past. State-led encroachments over time, including the army placement and expansion, construction of stadium and Shahid-Gate (martyr's memorial) or even Simha Durbar, black-topped roads at Bhadrakālī too challenged the socio-cultural connections, and so did more recent ones as bus-parks, shelter for construction workers, vehicle parking and attempts to construct commercial buildings.

Except few media reports and discourses resisting the then ongoing encroachments at Tundikhel, nothing had been done for years. The encroachment did not cease, but with almost no visible opposition, it expanded more. It can be argued, as some respondents in my research did, that the transition period of new Republican state helped this encroachment, as there were no local governments or that the central government was too busy to overlook this happening nearby.

But "people had not forgotten this, they might have only silently watched" this and needed a movement to resist: "OccupyTundikhel served the purpose" (Bijay Shrestha, personal conversation, 4 January 2020 Saturday). Launched on 9 November 2019 with a program of forming a human chain at Tundikhel (see Table 1), the movement easily caught public

attention. Celebrities, elected representatives, political leaders and people from different walks of life joined in for the most visible cause of sustaining the vast, green land. A lot of young volunteers continued efforts both in the field and behind the scene; others expressed their solidarity and concerns over social media. The movement did have doubters and haters, if these are the proper words, but the message of the need for open green land was and still is widely accepted.

Attachment or 'connection' (as I have stated already) with Tundikhel with individual and mostly collective recollection was one of the primary driving forces for the movement, as I shall assert throughout this essay. In the following sections, I revisit these 'collective memories' of Tundikhel in relation to identity and struggle to uphold this identity. First, here is a brief overview on the theoretical assumptions and foundations of the collective memory.

Table 1: List of #OccupyTundikhel Major Activities (Sorted Chronologically)

Date in BS (2076)	Corresponding AD (2019/2020)	Major Events
Kartik 21	7 November	OccupyTundikhel Campaign Promotion rally at southern Kathmandu
Kartik 22	8 November	OccupyTundikhel Campaign Promotion at northern Kathmandu
Kartik 23	9 November	OccupyTundikhel: Human Circle
Kartik 30	16 November	Plantation <i>khariko bot</i> at Tundikhel

Mangshir 7	23 November	OccupyTundikhel Literary Festival at Kharibot, Tundikhel
Mangshir 14	30 November	Sampada Ladai [Fight for Heritage] at Tundikhel
Mangshir 21	7 December	Sportsperson for Nation, Open Tundikhel for Sportsperson
Mangshir 28	14 December	Khula Manch Cleanliness
Poush 5	21 December	Stories of Tundikhel at Khula Manch
Poush 8	24 December	OccupyTundikhel: An Intellectual Churning at Martin Chautari
Poush 12	28 December	Let the Wind Blow, Let the Grass Grow art at Khula Manch
Poush 26	11 January	Vehicle-Free Khula Manch
Magh 4	18 January	Let's Not Forget (Photo Exhibition) at Khula Manch
Magh 18	1 February	OccupyTundikhel Press Meet at Khula Manch
Magh 23	6 February	Protest with banner and placards; letter submitted to Chief Administrator of Kathmandu Metropolitan City

Collective memories: theoretical overview

As a shared knowledge and information pool, collective memory has become a topic of interest across a range of social science disciplines. Mostly French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1887-1945) is credited for studies on collective memory. His seminal works *The Collective Memory* (1980) and

On Collective Memory (1992) are later English compilations of his previous works in French from 1920s to early 1940s.

Collective memories are widely held memories of community members that bear on the collective identity of the community (Assmann, 1999; cited by Hirst & Manier, 2008, p.184). Hirst & Manier (2008) clearly delineates 'collective memory' against others: "If a memory is widely held by members of a community, but has little meaning for the community, then it should be treated as a "shared" or "collected memory", but not a "collective memory"" (p.184).

For a long time it had been loosely defined; Wertsch & Roediger (2008) succinctly see its problem, at least for interdisciplinary studies, in the following lines:

... it continues to be plagued by the fact that it has almost as many definitions as investigators writing about it. Perhaps the only generally agreed-upon feature is that collective memory is a form of memory that transcends individuals and is shared by a group. [New paragraph] One of the reasons for the problems in defining collective memory is that it is not a topic that fits neatly within the confines of a single academic discipline (p.318).

Wertsch & Roediger tend to see 'collective memory' not only as a shared knowledge pool, but in light of entities as identified by Dudai (2002) viz. *a body of knowledge*, an *attribute* and a *process* (p.51). Wertsch & Roediger summarize Dudai's idea as follows:

The body of knowledge is a feature of the culture of the individuals who share some similarity, and individuals may participate in various different groups (with different

collective memories) defined by generation, countries of origin, locale ... and so on. The attribute is "the distinctive holistic image of the past in the group"...The process is the continual evolution of understanding between the individual and the group, as individuals may influence and change the collective memory of the group, and the group can change the individual's understanding and consciousness of being a member of the group.

The purview of collective memory, in interdisciplinary studies, then should not limit to the remembering of 'memory' as knowledge as such, but by how image of past is constructed and the individual-group relations. In the same line, I tend to use the term 'collective memory' in this paper to the body of knowledge, the *glorious* imaging of the past, its meaning for the community and ultimately identity that the group collectively shares with the *glorious* memories of the past.

Any society thus tends to resort to 'collective memory' so as to uphold their identity. These memories "as a set of ideas, images and feelings about the past" are not merely collection of individual memories or did not sprung from nowhere, "but rather...socially articulated and socially maintained 'reality of the past'" (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994, p.54).

Oral-photographic method: retelling memories

As I have intended to use 'collective memory' not just in the sense of remembering, the method too should go beyond checking the knowledge of my respondents. Going out-of-the-box, I had to integrate methods that address 'collective memory' of Tundikhel as the shared knowledge pool, portray the past,

objectify collective experiences and then click to collective identity even. I think oral-photographic method did that the best. Kuhn (2007) observes:

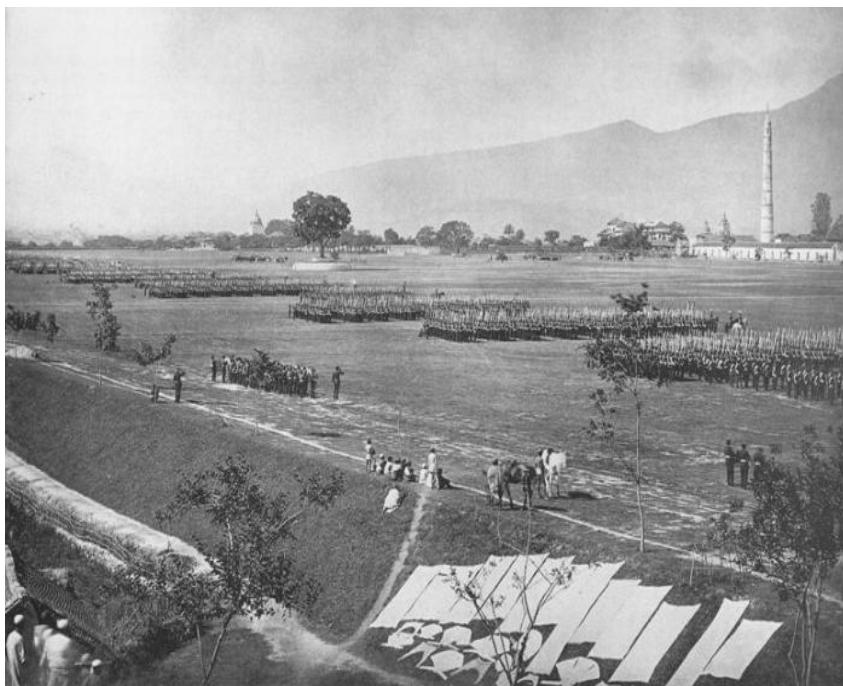
In work on cultural memory, the conjectural method involves taking as a starting point instances or cases - expressions of memory of some sort - and then working outward from them, treating what can be observed in the instances at hand as evidence pointing towards broader issues and propositions about the nature and the workings of cultural memory (p.283).

Generally speaking, this work on collective cultural memory too used expressions of memory. In this regards, I greatly benefitted from oral-photographic method that Kuhn too combines in her cultural memory works.

The oral-photographic method was first used by Martha Langford in her extensive studies of family photographic albums at museums. She is of an opinion that the patterns underlying these albums are the same as that of oral tradition: "[o]ur photographic memories are used in a performative oral tradition" (Langford, 2006). She uses this method to interpret the 'performative viewings' of the photographic album. Photographs do not only serve as mnemonics of memory, but the album itself follows an 'oral structure', which are equally useful for outsiders to weave their own stories with the memory text. Following this and tailoring it for my purpose, wherever deemed necessary, I employed the oral-photographic method to ask my respondents about their collective memories with the photographs of Tundikhel as the instrument of memory. For this purpose, I compiled a total of 40 photographs from

different online sources in close coordination with #OccupyTundikhel activists. I included nine old B/W photographs of Tundikhel (see Photo 2 for sample), five photographs of political speeches at Khula Manch, five photographs showing the plight of the encroached Tundikhel area, six photographs of cultural performances and celebrations at Tundikhel and three representative photographs of the #OccupyTundikhel movement, among others.

Photo 2: A parade on the Tundikhel in 1883 during the premiership of Ranoddip Singh Rana. To the left of the



Dharahara is Bag Durbar. In the background to the left of the khari tree is the Jagannath temple.

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Image Source: Images of a Century: The Changing Townscapes of the Kathmandu Valley. (1995). In Proksch, A. (ed.). Kathmandu: Deutsche Gesellschaft fur Technische Zusammernarbeit.

In addition, I have included four photographs from the aftermath of 2015 April Gorkha earthquake, as hundreds took shelter at Tundikhel in vast open land as thousands of aftershocks followed the quake measuring 7.8 M_w on the Richter scale.

Broadly the album collection contains historical, socio-cultural, green or environmental and political photographs. These are the major categories that #OccupyTundikhel movement activists had a major focus on, and most of my findings too fall into one or many among these broader categories. I will also make interpretations on the "understanding [of] the social and cultural uses ... of memory" that "memory work with photographs offers" (Kuhn, 2007, p.283)

Analysis and interpretation

An elderly Vajracharya from Lagan [southern locality of ancient Kathmandu] had a horrifying experience of being kidnapped at Tundikhel: he wishes, may such thing never happen to anyone. Since returning safe years back, he has volunteered with his organization Tundikhel Sarokar Samaj at every activity here. He showed up at almost each #OccupyTundikhel campaign activity.¹

As expected, everyone lamented the loss at the vast, open space of Tundikhel. The campaign activists had heard (of) many

¹ Alok Siddhi Tuladhar, personal conversation, 2 January 2020.

different individual and community stories, as above, throughout the movement. Not just that these stories were interesting and catchy for the movement or those who cared for Tundikhel or even general public, the retelling of these stories are also equally interesting. How the otherwise unfamiliar story is retold as if had happened to somebody very close gives it a touch of collectivity, perhaps sometimes negotiating with subjectivity and even collective identity.

I was also retold a story of 1934 earthquake (popular as 90 sāl bhūkampa) when a local of Nardevi (in the northern part of ancient Kathmandu) had heard of his pregnant aunt taken to Tundikhel in the aftermath of the greatest of the 20th century disaster. After the birth later when effects had slowed down, the story became talk of the family, relatives, friends and community. Though his retelling was not perfect in details, the enthusiasm with which he shares the story as if his own that to proudly is interesting to note.

In this sense, the performance of memory in the form of retelling a mediated experience was seen to be more subjective in nature, that is to say people participated in their performance of memory. Subjectivizing oneself in the act or performance gives a glimpse on the patterns of changes and transmission of oral narratives: this is why oral performance is mostly complex. Presenting oneself as subject or living the story via memory performance contributes to the identity shaping.

Yet another instance where this was more visible was narrated thus:

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Since there was Tundikhel, there was football culture among youths in Kathmandu. As kids, we used to go there to play football; we enjoyed football the most during rainy seasons. It is how our journey with club-level matches started (Bijay Shrestha, personal conversation, 15 February 2020).

Enthusiasm for football was high among young boys of Kathmandu and Tundikhel (including Khula Manch) was the ground most children played. Also due to this, there were clubs in every locality. Recollecting playing for Machhindra club in 'D' division, he happily shows his old photographs that he shared via facebook as the club clinches 'A' division trophy. He added versions of his story to the photo album that I had produced before him. Similar ideas were expressed in an event entitled 'Sportsperson for Nation, Open Tundikhel for Sportsperson' on 7 December 2019 (see Table 1) arguing that it is due to Tundikhel that sports (not limited to football, however) have flourished in Kathmandu and they have made the nation proud on various occasions.

I interpret two things from this conversation: first, he gives credit to the football career (including that of his brother, who is currently the team manager of the club) and numerous clubs in almost every other locality to Tundikhel. In doing so, I found that he speaks on behalf of many football enthusiasts of his days and the club he once represented; his identity both in football and as a Kathmandu local has been rooted to Tundikhel and the locality he represents (although he no longer lives in the ancient core city).

Second, the 'past' connection is glorified, for instance, a once small, local club latter clinching the 'A' division league championship. The glory is actually of the present, but the 'past' was termed glorious owing to the days when they had nothing to lose, more to gain.

Note the soil patches and loss of green space owing to increased land use in 2003.

Photo 3: Satellite image of Tundikhel area marked in red circle in 1992 (left) and 2003 (right)

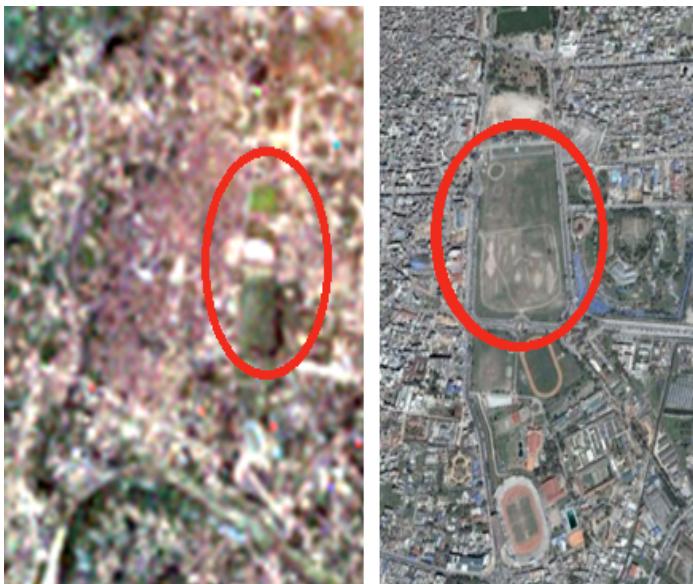


Image Source: Landsat Image and Google Earth, gratitude to Deepak Bikram Thapa Chhetri and Pukar Regmi for support in interpreting the image

I am particularly focusing on this glorification of the past here. Old B/W photographs of Tundikhel as early as 1883 during the premiership of Ranoddip Singh Rana (see Photo 2) show the

vast open space with very few people. The greenery has been maintained thus as the land consumption was sparse. Satellite images (see Photo 3) show that towards the turn of the new century, patches of soil were visible meaning high land use.

In the case of old photos of Tundikhel specifically, the now non-existing Yāka Simā (the lonely tree) relating to Gurimapa and Khariko Bot (nettle tree) were sought as major landmarks. In fact, one of the major events of the campaign included plantation of *khariko bot* at approximately the same place on 16 November 2019 (see Table 1). Stories around these had already permeated Newar folk-life: this 'mythologization' of past things also gives them the glory. The picture of the past always is presented as non-achievable thing: yet the yearning for the past guides the present. #OccupyTundikhel movement too has many a times resorted to the *myths* of the past and this memory picture have been one major driving force of the movement, not just for the activists or volunteers but for general people acquainted with the cause, as well.

One could sense disbelief in this yearning as many things of the past have changed irreplaceably, at the hands of modernization. The disbelief on whether such a thing as restoring Tundikhel back to its glory can happen was evident among many, most see it impossible. The campaign too is unsure if the past can be revived fully, but as activists argue the change has been felt, people have started raising voice against open space encroachment and the need of open space is more felt as city continues to expand at a faster rate in unmanaged way.

In an anthropological perspective, the Tundikhel resource was dissociated from the public during the start of state-led encroachment. It was once a large pasture land for the cattle-rearing population of the city, but as the city has changed to other businesses, cattle-rearing is limited and the cattle connection with Tundikhel is now almost lost. Metallic bars at a smaller part of the otherwise vast expanse also limited the Tundikhel connection for young and the children of Kathmandu: the term Khula Manch meaning open platform was paradoxically surrounded by these bars. This dissociation from locals and negligence of the state paved ways for third party to seep into benefits of illegal use of public land.

This brings me to the socio-cultural and even political uses of memory. What is there in collective memory pool has been shared more as a result of this #OccupyTundikhel concern. It was not just the local Newar community who participated, but as diverse Kathmandu is, so were the participants at the campaign. Memories were then re-negotiated and so was identity. Kathmandu had always been open to diversity and change: so the Tundikhel community too was diverse as it made many indigenous celebrations (as Lhosar, Udhauli-Ubhauli, Maghi among others). Many groups took this connection with Tundikhel to express their solidarity.

What it means for the Kathmanduites? As a fast-growing city and busy marketplace, it continues to add to and draw from the common knowledge resource pool of 'collective memory' and this, in turn, subjectivizes individuals of the sense of belongingness to the memory pool. This is where ultimately

collective Kathmandu identity is re-negotiated time and again, as it continues influencing individual Kathmanduite subjectivity. This was also evident during a photo exhibition entitled Let's Not Forget organized as a campaign activity along with Tanneri Chaso organization on 18 January 2020 (see Table 1).

Visitors associated Tundikhel as a cultural heritage area (especially that of intangible ones, like the Ghode Jātrā festival, *dya lvākigu* ritual during Pāhā Charey festival, Gurimapa worship during Holi festival, *devāli* worship, 12-year Pachali Bhairava dance, rituals at Dvi-Māju, Bhadrakālī and Mahākāl temple) has expanded to its identity as 'lungs' of the city and even the Habermasian public sphere.

Responses on the memories of political speeches by famed leaders at Khula Manch are worth mention here. Public address by prominent political leaders as Sahana Pradhan, Madan Bhandari, Puspa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' are well-remembered in history. The Khula Manch had served a site of receiving international guests to a public forum for national leaders. Oral-photographic interviewees have expressed that they (political leaders) once developed their careers here and now they do not owe the responsibility to this place. Some leaders (from both ruling and opposition party) had *only expressed* their solidarity with the movement, but the action is still a far cry.

It must be noted here that the movement was not without opposition. The current mayor of Kathmandu Metropolitan City himself had labeled it as opposition politics-driven campaign.

Claims revolved that political leaders now in opposition had themselves facilitated encroachment back when they were in power. These are something that I have no concrete answers too, at least for now and thus, I refrain, with sincere apology, to dig into the details on voices opposing the movement. I have put this beyond the scope of my study as I believe that only time will have answer to these accusations. I focus only on how collective memories of the movement shaped an enabling environment for negotiating identity and argue that it is with this negotiated identity that people from different walks of life volunteered to the cause. The politics behind the campaign, if any, is beyond the scope of this study and I reassert my neutrality in this regards.

In any case, mythologized histories of the events at Tundikhel during great 1934 earthquake (Vikram Samvat 1990) are prevalent among locals. Similar to this and the story of an afore-mentioned Nardevi local, Tundikhel also provided shelter in the aftermath of 2015 disaster. But the series of encroachment as the effects of disaster slowed down was easily allowed. The #OccupyTundikhel movement provided a resistance to this and here too collective memories (sometimes aided by photographs) came into play. All respondents agreed that though the end is not fully met, the awareness has been raised. In a legal perspective, as activist and spokesperson of the movement Sanjay Adhikari says, “safeguarding of public land is a citizen duty and every individual ought to stand up to this”.

The collective memories regarding the history of Tundikhel, socio-cultural significance to the Kathmandu community, political hotspot and environment concerns of water-table recharge were primary propositions that the #OccupyTundikhel campaign was put forth. I have found that this collective memory, of any of these categories, had effects on collective identity. When this identity is challenged as Tundikhel connection was compromised for long, people volunteer themselves in resistance movement. Among others, I present that #OccupyTundikhel was a campaign of resistance that saw people, in whatever numbers, turn up to action or to social media to express their dissatisfaction as resistance.

Conclusion

The vast array of land known by the name of Tundikhel bears socio-cultural and religious significance to the Newar residents of Kathmandu and other diverse communities in the capital. But as people's connection with this vast, open land continued to be checked time and again with metallic bars for example, the encroachment went unchecked be it from the state or other land-agents. People were waiting in silence to resist the ongoing exploitation of their traditional open-land.

#OccupyTundikhel movement served the purpose to some extent, and the site of recalling the collective memory was Khula Manch and Tundikhel, along with social media. The knowledge and memory addition to the collective memory pool saw an increase never seen before with the campaign and shared by numerous all across. This helped one more purpose of reconstructing negotiated meaning for the Tundikhel

community, for instance the virtually unknown Tundikhel Sarkoar Samaj found hands working in similar cause. Tundikhel then took onto it the collective identity of Kathmandu, youths, sports enthusiasts, nature-lovers all at once.

It is, therefore, imminent that Tundikhel as what it stands as of now should be preserved and revival of the *community's association* with this open land can guide its sustenance. The idea of *community's association* is important for it is the community that had been at the pivotal role since time immemorial to ensure that the Tundikhel (in one name or the other) exists and continues to exist.

At present, it might not seem probable that the historical past can be restored to its entirety, yet the idea of *glorious* imaging of the past has still been giving meaning to the collective memories of Tundikhel and we, as Kathmanduites, are bound to negotiate our identity based on those collective memories. It is not that the subjective memories do not have any role, but as scholars suggest, they broadly add up to the collective memory: #OccupyTundikhel might have only institutionalized the perpetuation of retelling these memories.

Memories do add up to this identity quest as exemplified in the case of #OccupyTundikhel movement, and in doing so, it is the youths that can give a continuity to historic, collective memories. Institutionalizing such movements should focus on one hand in continuation of knowledge of the memories and on the other to negotiate *association*, hence identity.

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Youth Engagement and Volunteerism

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Strengthening Local Governance through Youth Volunteerism

Bhola Bhattarai and Pranav Bhattarai

Abstract

Youth volunteerism activities relate generally to locally identified and designed approaches to respond to the needs of communities, and as defined by those communities. Youth volunteerism approach assumes a significant role in enforcing the effective implementation of the Constitution of Nepal. After the promulgation of Constitution of Nepal in 2015, the Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project (CS:MAP) was designed and implemented to strengthen civic space, such that civil society organizations including community organizations and youth groups, may perform oversight and voice their concerns in democratic governance system at various levels. CS:MAP has been supporting different Civil Society Organizations, youth and other marginalized communities to engage with local, provincial and federal government, on issues of wider public interest. This study focuses on the role of youth in strengthening governance through their volunteering efforts. A qualitative exploratory case study method has been used in

carrying out this study. Data was collected through the review of project documents, were five focus group discussions, and ten key informants' interviews conducted at eight different locations in the project districts. The study found that local youth volunteers were active in raising public service delivery issues, participating in local planning processes for ascertaining budget allocation pertaining to their needs, and conducting oversight of public service delivery and resource allocation. They were engaged with local governments to formulate policies, program and have developed their capacities for constructive advocacy. Youth volunteerism has been observed as an effective locally driven approach to strengthen youth-government engagement for improvement in local governance. It sustains advocacy efforts and contributes significantly to nurturing networks among youth members of the society. It also contributes to achieve the sustainable development goals locally.

Keywords: *Youth, volunteerism, engagement, advocacy, governance*

Introduction

Volunteerism is a basic expression of human relationships. It is about people's need to participate in their societies and to feel that they matter to others (UNDP, 2011). Youths in different community have engaged in raising voices for effective public services that matters to all people in their community, especially to the marginalized and discriminated groups. It is because of such selfless efforts and the realization that they matter to others. These youth volunteers have been able to

create a niche for the sake of others and have made some remarkable contribution in raising voices for voiceless as well. As often cited, volunteer action should be for the common good, directly or indirectly benefitting people outside the family or household, but at the same time the person volunteering normally get benefits as well (UNDP, 2011). It has been found that youth volunteer efforts have benefited community at large in remote districts of Nepal through improved public services from local government units (Bhattarai, 2017). Their oversight of public services has identified the gaps and raised concerns for the betterment and efforts have been made by the local governments to fill in the gaps. The youth volunteers also have a critical role to play in creating awareness about these gaps to the service providers and recipients alike, and sensitizing people on the public service entitlements and policy making process. The space for Nepali youths to engage with government in meaningful ways has widened with promulgation of the new Constitution because the Constitution has vision of engaging youths constructively in the community and for nation building (Freedom Forum, 2018).

Youth volunteerism is an important term in the area of public policy advocacy and oversight of public resource use and public service delivery (MoFAGA, 2019). It refers to the act of continually pursuing an agenda with the government to achieve desired results, mainly reform in policy and procedure linked to public interest. It refers to efforts that create mutual understanding and common ground rather than differences between those advocating for reform and those in the seat of

power. Constructive engagement, therefore, refers to continual interaction of youth groups with government offices and key officials with the aim of advocating positively for strengthening governance, transformation and reform (Field note, April 2019). Youth volunteering can usually be constructive when it is accompanied with compelling research and data, thereby generating ample evidence for reform (Viswanathan *et al*, 2004). It can exist in the form of meetings, workshops, interactions, roundtables, interviews, focus group discussions, media reporting or written communications. However, single events on a particular issue cannot be referred to as youth engagement for governance reform. They need to be sustained over a period with the capacity for creating reforms or actual actions for reforms.

Youth volunteers can be engaged through various means, reporting in the media being one among them. Constructive engagement would call for reporting that refrains from exposing government weaknesses in critical manner. An example of critical reporting would be simply exposing government failures. Another example of constructive engagement might be explaining such failures considering lack of resources and other limitations under which the government functions. In the latter approach, while the government is reminded of its responsibilities, the reasons for weaknesses are also acknowledged, or possible ways to overcome them are recommended.

Youth volunteering has mainly two purposes for youth engagement in governance reform. One is engagement related

to advocacy for policy and regulatory reform that will lead to an enabling environment for civil society organizations (CSOs) and media to effectively perform their roles in public interest. The other is to monitor and carry out oversight of the government in the use of public resources and in delivery of public services with the aim of holding them accountable and responsible (FHI 360, 2019). This includes requesting information to substantiate accountability. In that sense, the practice of ‘right to information’ can also constitute a form of engagement.

Youth engagement in governance reform cannot be one-off or ad hoc, it needs to be strategic and sustained. For this reason, it is imperative that a review be carried out of what is working and what is not. Engagement needs to build upon what is working well and devise strategies for overcoming areas that are not working too well. This will lead to identification of mechanisms or channels for engagement as well as champions to engage with. Champions are people in decision-making or influencing capacities who can be engaged through advocacy and lobbying and trusted to favorably take up the policy or reform agenda to higher levels of decision-making (Action aid, 2019). Frequency of engagement is also important and needs to be planned both from a point of view of ensuring that efforts are sustained as well as ensuring optimal utilization of financial and human resources. Strategic engagement considers factors such as purpose of engagement, who to engage with, how to engage, frequency of engagement, location of engagement (national, sub-national or both) and core messages that need to be conveyed. A well-designed strategic engagement plan has

more likelihood to be constructive and successful (Hauptmann, 2005).

Devolution of power in Nepal

No government can function without local government and no local government can function without devolution of power (Bhattarai, 2013). Thus, local governance and devolution of power go hand in hand and are mutually reinforcing. Globally, local government with extensive devolution of power have been a parameter to test democratic credentials of a state (Bhattarai, 2012). How democratic a state is largely depending on what level of devolution of powers it has bestowed on the local governments. Thus, decentralization is a key to local self-governance in democratic countries globally (Bhattarai, 2011). In Nepal's context too, if we look at the history of decentralized development and practice of local governments, it goes back to Panchayat regime (1962 to 1990). Various laws regarding local governance were put in place in the last six decades. These legislations and legal frameworks served a basis for decentralizing power from central government to local governance structures at village, municipality and district levels.

From decentralization perspective and initiatives taken so far since early 1960s, Nepal has undergone four distinct phases of decentralization and devolution of power. First phase (1960-1990) was a 'transition phase' which included articulation of a formal decentralization policy framework in 1962 and enactment of Decentralization Act in 1982 and its Regulations in 1984. Second phase (1990-2006) began with restoration of

multi-party democracy in 1990 followed by three local government laws enacted in 1991, local democratic elections in 1992 and in 1997, and the initiation of a fiscal transfer system from 1993. Local governance system was consolidated through the enactment of the Local Self Governance Act in 1999. Third phase (2006-2015) includes a period of post-conflict transition, April uprising (Janaandolan-II-2006), conduct of Constituent Assembly elections in 2008 and in 2013. The fourth phase (2015 onwards) includes promulgation of a federal constitution, and elections to federal, provincial and local governments with devolution of extensive powers to local governments within the new federal system.

The Constitution of Nepal has for the first devolved ‘22 exclusive’ and ‘15 concurrent’ powers to local governments. Devolution of such wide range of powers and functions to local governments is worthy of great appreciation. At the same time, citizens and civil society organizations also bear the responsibility to maintain oversight of policy formulation process at the local level and identify gaps in public service delivery so that they could be brought to the attention of service providers for immediate remedial process. The range of services to be delivered by local governments under new constitutional mandates are quite diverse and various. Municipality/Rural municipality has a mandate to deliver 279 kinds of public services whereas ward offices are required to cater to citizens with 88 different public services- totaling 367 various services (Nepal Law Commission, 2017).

Youth Engagement and Volunteerism

With the new constitution in 2015 and elections of local governments, people got back their elected representatives in local governments after nearly two decades of protracted vacuum. In years without elected local bodies, development efforts were mired in corruption and misuse of public funds. Hence, quality of public services massively deteriorated in the last two decades as the then local bodies were administered by bureaucrats who mostly limited themselves to district headquarters and urban areas.

Thus, elections of 753 local government units in 2017 injected a new lease of life among people, and local government entities now deliver services in line with a new legislation- Local Government Operation Act (Nepal Law Commission, 2017). The decentralization of authorities and power led to people expecting speedy and quality public services, while elected representatives were euphoric about the new constitutional mandate to local governments on public service jurisdiction.

However, with the new public service mandate, local governments have been struggling to meet citizens' aspirations, and are confronting new challenges as well. Some of these challenges are poor service delivery, inadequate human resources, lack of clear policies/legislations, poor transparency in management of public funds, weak participation of citizens in the planning process, poor oversight of public services, leakages in resource allocation and expenditure, and non-participation of citizens/civic groups in policy formulation process.

Space for youth volunteerism

Given this scenario, youths and their volunteering efforts at local level has played some encouraging role in improving the existing status quo in local governance. Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project (CS:MAP) with financial support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Family Health International (FHI 360) in 34 districts of Nepal encouraged, engaged and mobilized youths in oversight of public services, in planning process to seek budgets for social development, in policy formulation process at local level, among others, and made contributions to improving local governance through volunteering efforts. Listening, Discussion and Action Groups (LDAG) is a conscious and well-informed civic group comprising mostly of youths that acts collectively on matters of public interest at the local level. LDAG discussions focused on actions leading to constructive engagement with government, improvement in local governance, identification of public service delivery issues, challenges, and agreement on some form of collective actions. These groups attempted to find solutions in many cases. Youths have voluntarily formed around 100 LDAGs which are spread across 34 districts (Rana, 2018). In these groups, around 1500 youths have been associated and are engaged in public service oversight, participating in local planning process, raising public service delivery issues with local governments, implementing accountability tools and carrying out advocacy on public interest issues.

They also engage in policy formulation process at local level and are into many other activities based on the need of the community. Their voluntary participation in such domains have often led to constructive engagement with local governments making them more accountable, transparent, participatory, effective and responsive in many cases and contexts.

In the above-mentioned context, this study is conducted to explore the role of youth in strengthening governance through their volunteering efforts. For this study, qualitative exploratory case study method has been used. The project documents and relevant literatures were reviewed, five focus group discussions and ten informants' interview were conducted at eight different locations of the project districts to collect data and information. The major findings of the study are presented in the following chapter.

Discussion

This paper discusses major findings of the consultations observation and literatures reviewed. The literatures reviewed are contextual and relevant to this paper, whereas the findings of consultation with focus group, KII and some of the observations were very helpful. The participants have different level of understanding on youth, volunteerism, and local governance. The major findings are discussed below:

Capacity building of youth volunteers on systems thinking

The role of youth volunteers in governance system is crucial. The youth volunteers were trained on concepts of systems leadership, mainstreaming gender and social inclusion (GESI)

in development issues, knowledge on advocacy cycle, negotiation and facilitation skills, process of oversight, and role of youth volunteers in constructive engagement with government. The different capacity building trainings were helpful in developing leadership skills and knowledge in them, which they would use in campaigning for different public interest agendas in the districts (VSO Nepal, 2014). Training was instrumental in deepening knowledge on advocacy, GESI, prioritization of challenges, identifying stakeholders, their interests and biases, and they were trained in how a systems leader should think from multi-dimensional perspectives for improving socio-economic conditions in favor of the marginalized communities at local level. One of the trainees stated,

I have been involved in youth volunteerism for a decade. After attending the training and receiving regular coaching and mentoring from the CS:MAP, I have more clear understanding about advocacy procedure and how we should be raising issues of marginalized people and community in our governance system to bring policy level changes. I'm also more confident about the public interest issues and I've understood that power of data and evidence in our advocacy makes it stronger. I expect regular mentoring from CS:MAP in the days to come.

This statement shows that there is need of skills and knowledge to youth volunteers for their active participation in governance process. In some discussion, youth volunteers argued that after the intensive engagement with various stakeholders they have

built up leadership qualities as well. In the same way, regular coaching and mentoring support are crucial to enhance the skills and confidence of the volunteers. During consultation, one Muslim youth in Gorkha argued that he has developed confidence to work with local government from the support of his supervisor. He further argued that he has been frequently getting mentorship and help from his supervisor so that he can perform better to advocate for effective local governance.

Voice for the voiceless in public service

Case-One

Bhur Radio Listening and Action Group (LDAG) in Jajarkot district discussed prenatal services to pregnant women which was being provided only on Tuesday, once a day in a week. As this was creating problems among pregnant women and was in a way limiting their access to health services, they would not get the service when they wanted. The members of the LDAG took up the issue, discussed it with the ward office, including chairperson of Chedagad municipality, and resolved the issue. Pregnant women now have access to prenatal services from health post on regular basis and seven days a week. Volunteering advocacy efforts of youths in Jajarkot ensured pregnant women's access to prenatal services on all weekdays.

Pregnant women in remote areas of Jajarkot now have access to pre-natal check-up from the health post on regular basis. Women residing in Chedagad municipality of Jajarkot district had only a day in a week when they could go and have prenatal check-up at the health post. Expectant mothers had to wait days even for a routine check-up for pre-natal care. These mothers

were silent and were not raising the issue. They were almost helpless because they were not able to speak about it and demand the services. When these women started sharing about their problems within their peers and beyond, the issue slowly started spreading within the village. Some women associated with LDAG heard about this issue from other women and discussed them within a group looking for ways on how they could resolve them. Women volunteers unified as members of LDAG and approached the Ward Office discussed the issue with Ward Chair and also met chief of the health post and shared problems of the expectant mothers in the village.

Meetings and discussions led by youth volunteers with the various concerned stakeholders drew wide attention and put pressure on the ward office for providing prenatal care to the expecting mothers more frequently and on the basis of their necessity. Advocacy efforts by the volunteering youths to improve public services have changed the mentality of local service providers and their ways of thinking. With the help of these selfless hands, the whole community of expectant mothers have benefited with regular and improved health services. Pregnant women now don't have to wait for a specific day in a week for prenatal check-up. Health post started providing such services to expectant mothers seven days in a week which has ensured constitutional right of citizens to have access to basic health services and their right to have safe motherhood.

Access to information about public services and goods are also a yardstick to measure the openness and transparency of local

governments. Credibility and citizen trust toward governments is built on transparency, accountability and openness. Getting correct information and details about types of services that people should receive from local governments is a fundamental right now. Right to information has been ensured as one of the fundamental rights in the constitution of Nepal (Government of Nepal, 2015). Though it is a fundamental right, people's access to information about public services and other things, is yet a far-fetched reality. Many local governments in different districts don't have citizen charters and never inform the citizens about different types of services through proactive disclosure.

Youth volunteers in the far-flung districts have taken initiatives to keep common people informed and sensitized through citizen charters and by posting information on the websites. These volunteering efforts by the youths at the grassroots mounted pressure on local governments to be more open and promote compliance with proactive disclosure provisions as stated in 'Right to Information Act'. Kapurkot Rural Municipality in Salyan has put in place a noticeboard where it regularly posts information for citizens. A group of youths submitted a letter of memorandum to the chairperson of rural municipality requesting him/her for keeping a notice board outside the local government office building. Citizens now can see the information posted regularly on the notice boards and get updates on upcoming programs and initiatives of the local government. This has eased local government's obligation for proactive disclosure (RTI, 2008) on the one hand and

contributed to promote citizen's access to information on public services and goods on the other hand.

Active mobilization of youths in issues of public interest and issues of social cause have created pressure in local governments to place citizen charters in a place that can be seen by everyone. Citizen charters are mandatory for all public agencies and governments (Nepal Law Commission, 2008). Citizen charters are a means of ensuring citizens access to basic information on public goods and services that they are entitled to receive from a public agency. Constant oversight and feedback to the government by youths have yielded positive impacts, as local governments have appreciated volunteering efforts of local youths in sensitizing them about provisions and laws pertaining to the services they have to deliver.

Youths' participation in local planning process

All the development projects and plans to be implemented by local governments should be formulated in a participatory way right from the community level (MoFAGA, 2018). Participation of youths, elderly, women, children, disadvantaged groups, marginalized community, local civil society organizations, community-based organizations, child clubs, among others, should be ensured in such planning workshops (MoFAGA, 2018). However, many local governments don't comply with this provision of obligatory participation of these groups in local planning process. Planning workshops take place right from the settlement level, but sometimes ordinary citizens are not much aware about it (Freedom Forum, 2020). There are couple of reasons behind

it. Poor awareness and sensitization of citizens about these provisions and local governments' apathy to invite a wide range of citizens for participation are some of the reasons that need to be taken care of. Citizens' failure to participate, submit projects and seek budget through such planning workshops has often led to a small group of elites benefiting from budgets and resources spent by local governments. A large group of people are left deprived of such opportunity.

To fill in this gap in the planning process, youths are voluntarily participating in planning workshops and raising voices for benefit of the marginalized and disadvantaged communities. Attraction of volunteering youths in the planning

Case-Two

Citizens living in Kandakhuti-1 of Ghorahi sub-metropolitan city of Dang district did not have access to safe drinking water. The problem was so acute that citizens had to walk long distance to fetch water for daily use. Due to this situation, volunteering youths took up the issue to the municipality. They were asked to participate in the planning workshop at settlement level and submit the project through there. The youths participated in the planning meetings next year and submitted the proposal for drinking water supply on behalf of other community people. Municipal assembly in FY 2018-19 approved NRs 1,500,000 budget for digging bore well and piped water supply to the households.

process is found to have been driven by two factors - their willingness to raise voice about needs and priorities of the disadvantaged groups, and their desire to be part of decision

making process that affects their community life. Participation of youths in the planning process has allowed them with opportunity to raise their development priorities and needs to the local governments (Bhattarai, 2020). And local governments are also under pressure to listen to concerns and issues raised by the citizens. Effective participation of youths and marginalized community in the planning process has equipped them with budgets which they could use to finance small-scale infrastructure project such as building drinking water supply system and constructing a community building for mothers' group.

Ghorahi Sub-metropolis in Dang allocated NRs 1,500,000 to construct drinking water supply after the youths participated in the planning workshop and put pressure on the local government to allocate enough budget for it. The communities in Dang were facing severe drinking water supply and did not know of a proper way of addressing this problem. Kapurkot rural municipality in Salyan allocated NRs 200,000 for youths to build a community center for mothers' groups.

Janachetana Radio LDAG in Dang knew about the water scarcity in the community and raised the issue during planning workshop at settlement level. This was later addressed by the local government. These two representative examples of youths' participation in the planning process indicated that youths associated with LDAG have served as bridge between the local government and citizens at the community level. Without these youths, such needs and priorities of the community would have most probably remained unheard and

unaddressed. Thus, role of youths in the planning process has significant importance as they can speak about the interests of the community at large and prove that they really matter to others in the community. Seeking budgets for infrastructure projects by participating in the planning workshops at the settlement level has encouraged people in the community to speak about their needs openly and underscored the need to make such planning workshops as much participatory as possible. People have started realizing that they must participate in the process to get what they want in their community and village.

Youths' engagement in public service oversight

Public service oversight has been one of the important areas for engagement of volunteering youths in far flung districts of Nepal. Monitoring of public services, goods and even construction of development infrastructures at local level has attracted youths wanting to volunteer. Volunteers connect community with the service providers. Volunteers are found undertaking a variety of roles and fill gaps in delivering services (Institute of Development Studies, 2014). Volunteering youths worked hard to benefit the community and filled the gaps in raising voices and keeping an eye on quality of public services. Public service delivery at the level of local government has received much public criticism from citizens, media and civil society organizations because of its poor quality, ineffectiveness, non-transparency and inefficiency. Problems exist due to lack of oversight from the citizens and critical feedback mechanisms through which citizens directly or

indirectly engage themselves in monitoring and oversight of public services.

Youths in CS:MAP districts who are particularly associated with LDAGs have tried to fill the gaps in service delivery and voluntarily tried their level best to improve its quality and effectiveness. A group of local youths associated with LDAG in Gauriganga municipality in Kailali district conducted oversight of public road construction, inspected materials used in it and disclosed the use of substandard materials being used in it. With this finding from local youths, the municipality asked the contractor to use standard materials and resurfaced the road again. Later, a ward level monitoring committing comprising seven members was also formed by the municipality of which LDAG representatives are also members.

Youths' engagement in health, education, agriculture and disaster risk reduction sectors at local government levels have exposed major gaps and proposed way forward. Public service oversight by youths in these areas have become eye opening for the local governments because they were sensitized and made aware of their obligations (Kurtz, 2012). Volunteering actions in oversight of disaster sector shows that local governments lacked mapping of vulnerable communities and territories. Local government did not have preparedness and contingency plans for quick response in case of any disasters that strikes. Local governments allocated budget to disaster sector but were not found to have any clear idea of how that budget allocation would be utilized for the community. Oversight by the youths in community schools found that schools opened 220 days in an

academic year and schools conducted classes for 190 days in a year. Scholarship distribution was found good as they were distributed to students on time. Gaps were observed in delay during distribution of textbooks to students, lack of clean drinking water for 24-hour a day, inadequate playing grounds for students and poor seating arrangements for students of pre-primary level. These findings served as feedback to local governments and service delivery units. Active engagement of youths in monitoring of public services have thus contributed to improve the quality of services, and enhanced accountability and responsiveness in local governments.

Youths advocacy on public interest issue

Youths are often marginalized from the state policy and programs in Nepal. They are facing discrimination and inequality which has been a key feature of the Nepali society. The political and social changes and developmental efforts of the past decades have attempted to address the issues and there have been some progress too. Discrimination and inequalities have existed across youths, genders and social and geographic groups. Youth engagement in governance is a concept to

In Tikabhairav, youth volunteers (LADG) team met with local representatives and discussed on the issues of child education and GESI friendly budgets. They are also supporting in local planning process and its implementation in coordination with local government officials.

redress these unequal power relations between different social groups in any society.

The unequal power relations are experienced by people on the grounds of age, gender, wealth, ability, location, caste/ethnicity, language and agency or a combination of these dimensions. Though youth volunteering in governance can be seen as a method of targeting these discriminations and other problems, it is more of an approach, a process for some desired outcomes. In other words, youth volunteerism contributes in a way of development with a focus on ensuring that no one is left out of development programs and government services that are intended to be universal. It is action-oriented and seeks to re-balance unequal power relations and ensure equal rights, opportunities and respect for all individuals regardless of their social identity. A youth volunteering and engagement approach entails the need for robust analysis of the root causes of discrimination, gender relations, local power structures among and between different caste and ethnic groups, and decision making at the household and community level. When there is a clear understanding of the reasons for social inequity and the barriers that restrict marginalized people's access to services, resources or benefits, program designs can be made in such a way that they are more responsive to bringing about positive social and economic changes and have a lasting impact on performance of local governments and service delivery.

Youth's engagement in policy formulation process

To engage youth in local governance policy advocacy issues or to hold local government accountable on their use of public resources and service delivery, youth volunteers first need to be looked upon by the government as credible and legitimate local

actors. For this, youth volunteers were mobilized to generate evidences through participatory evidence-based action research in all project sites. More than 120 reports related to advocacy issues have been generated and used in advocacy campaign. This effort helped them to enrich their skills and knowledge on advocacy and helped to improve accountability of local government. For example, participants from LDAG of Okhaldhunga and Gorkha argued that they have influenced the decision of municipalities in various decisions. In Achham, youth volunteers asked municipality to allocate budget for youth development. The youth volunteers associated with LDAGs are being capable to draw attention of local government to formulate, reformation and enforcement of local policies and laws.

Youth volunteers' group of Gorkha municipality 5, handed over the memorandum to Ward Chairperson and Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA) to replace the wooden electricity poles with poles made of steel. They handed over a memorandum to Ward Chairperson Ram Bahadur Thapa Magar describing possible vulnerable incidents might be occurred by supplying electricity through wood poles. Youth members reminded the commitment made by Ward Chairperson to replace wood poles in his election manifesto. The youth volunteers also collected the data of wooden poles in the villages, which they handed over to Ward Chairperson. Addressing the LDAG member's demand, Ward Chairperson Thapa Magar said,

"We were not sure how many wooden poles are in our ward. Now youth members have provided the data to us, so I will take steps to replace them with steel poles."

Mutual understanding has, been made between Ward Chairperson and youth volunteers to collaborate in the upcoming days.

Issues and challenges faced by youth volunteers

Youth volunteerism in local governance process is new approach in Nepali society. Local policy and laws are inadequate to engage, empower and mobilize youth volunteers in governance process. The skills and knowledge are also poor and inadequate for their effective engagement and intervention for effective service delivery and resource use at local level. Local governments do not have specific program to promote youth volunteerism. During our field visit, we observed that only Gorkha municipality has been allocating fund for the mobilization of youth in different sectors. They also have municipal level network of youth volunteers and supporting for institutionalization. But, majority of municipalities are not giving their attention to promote volunteerism at local level.

In case of continuity and regularity of youth volunteers in CS:MAP project sites, it is observed that majority of youth volunteers have been changed in certain time period. During our interaction, former volunteer from Sindhuli stated that she was interested to engage in local governance, but she moved for higher education in the city. Likewise, the use of ICT is very essential for effective engagement of youth in local governance but youth living in poverty and in inaccessible locations are facing challenges.

The issues of sustainability of youth volunteering is one of the biggest challenges in local level. The access to information,

education, and communication is very difficult to the youths who are living in marginalized communities. They also have insufficient knowledge and skills to involve in local governance process so that youth volunteerism is becoming a challenge in local governance process.

Conclusion

This article is based on current practices of youth volunteers' engagement in local governance process. These youth volunteers are organized in the form of LDAGs that are about 100 in number and are spread over 34 districts. The existing practices of youth volunteering in governance reform have been useful tools to improve local governance system. Youths have been engaged in oversight, advocacy and accountability mechanisms at local levels. Youth's volunteering efforts and their participations have been very powerful transformative means for both political and socio-economic development of the country. It is also instrumental in institutionalizing democratic norms and practices which encourage responsible authority to develop policies and programs that are responsive and accountable (Freedom Forum, 2018). However, youth participation in decision making process, accountable and transparent government should also have democratic characters so as to ensure the rights of youth in policy, service delivery and resource use. Such practices promote democratic skills and establish prosperity in the community. Furthermore, youth's effective engagement harmonizes relationship among the stakeholders and builds trust for mutual accountability in local governance. The meaningful space for youths in governance

carries a fundamental democratic value and can influence the development norms and practices in governance institutions. Thus, this study concludes that there is a need of conducive environment skills and knowledge, policy and program, institution and mechanism to youth volunteers on governance. This approach will help them to engage and interact with government and policy makers in systematic, constructive and meaningful ways. Continuous coaching and mentoring from the government agencies and other I/NGOs are also important to increase their effective roles as watchdog trying to ensure accountability, effectiveness, participation and transparency in local governance and public service delivery. Such mentoring support also enhances the capacity and confidence of youths and their representation at different levels in local government system to enable them to claim their rights, entitlements and raise voices for the voiceless from within the system.

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Young Mothers' Participation in Antenatal Care Services in Nepal

Bidhya Shrestha

Abstract

The voices and specific needs of young mothers are currently under represented in the literature on maternal care. Addressing the needs of young mothers is an essential component of accomplishing the goals set forth in sustainable development goals on maternal health. The study is an attempt to state young mothers and their participation in antenatal care services in Nepal using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative information was based on nationally representative 2016 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey covering 1,321 currently married young women, aged 15-24 years with at least one child in the last three years preceding the survey. Logistic regression was applied for quantitative data to examine the net effect of different demographic and socioeconomic factors on ANC services. Qualitative information was analyzed based on issues to support the quantitative results. The study established that media, household economic status (wealth index) and education are the most dominant factors that affect participation on ANC services. Thus it is recommended that the responsible bodies should focus on strengthening education and media with

special focus on reproductive health program for young mothers. Because these groups are diverse including most at risk of being left behind especially the first time and young parents. It is also noted that secondary level education and above plays a crucial role in the use of health services. It is difficult to deliver universal secondary education for a large population in a short time. Thus the alternative strategy is to design mass campaigns through youth volunteerism to attract young people and meet their needs comfortably and responsively. So, broader localization and contextualization with volunteer-based campaigns is important for successful implementation of the activism and local to global solidarity on young mother ANC issues by themselves i.e. by young, with young and for young.

Keywords: *Young mother, antenatal care, education, media and participation*

Introduction

As the world is changing rapidly, challenges are also growing and every single issue matters more than earlier era. More than half of the world population comprise under 30 i.e. population younger than ever before. The Youth Vision 2025 outlines a vision for Nepali youths to be strong, competent, competitive and self-reliant, and seeks to build a modern, just and affluent Nepal through their meaningful participation and promotion of their leadership capacity. Economic, social and cultural transformation of the society and the country can be

accomplished through youth national campaigns and their active participation in the process of nation building as well as their volunteering role (Nepal Government/Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2015). However, young people's development priorities largely depend on individual lived experiences. And no country can achieve the desired target of development without mobilization, participation and leadership development of these young populations.

Women and men have different health-care needs. Young males will have different development priorities compared with young females/mothers. While talking about the young females, an estimated 252 million women aged 15-19 live in developing regions as of 2016. Approximately 12 million girls aged 15-19 years and at least 777,000 girls under 15 years give birth each year in developing regions (Diarroch, Woog, Bankole, & Ashford, 2016). In Nepal, 17% of adolescent women age 15-19 are already mothers or pregnant with their first child (Ministry of Health, ERA, & ICF, 2017). This indicates the chances of maternal morbidity and mortality because young mothers are especially more vulnerable due to increased biological, socio-cultural, and economic risks associated with early pregnancy and childbirth.

Around 210 million women become pregnant annually, meaning that maternal health is not a marginal issue. Maternal health is key to sustainable development and to future generations. Poor maternal health as measured by mortality and morbidity, however, remains an issue for marginalized women, those women who are vulnerable by virtue of where they live or

who they are (Graham, *et al.*, 2016). However, pregnancy is not a disease but a pregnancy can have immediate and lasting consequences for health, education and income-earning potential of a woman. It often alters the course of her life and depends in part on how old or young – she is (UNFPA, 2013). A woman's chance of dying or becoming disabled during pregnancy and childbirth is closely connected to her social and economic status, the norms and values of her culture, and the geographic remoteness of her home. Generally speaking, the poorer and more marginalized a woman is, the greater her risk of death (UNFPA, 2012). However, these complications are preventable through a cost-effective intervention including antenatal care (ANC).

Antenatal care (ANC) is the crucial step and helps not only young mothers but it also prevents a life of new born. All pregnancy women should visit their first antenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy and should have at least four antenatal visits to avoid the health risk during pregnancy. According to WHO (2016) it is possible to end preventable maternal deaths, but this is not happening in some countries because access to services is still lacking and the quality of care is inadequate. The deaths are shockingly preventable for the most part and challenges still remain. High quality health services have been recommended during pregnancy as a solution to prevent maternal deaths. Utilization of ANC varies within and among countries and generally acknowledged that it is influenced by variety of demographic, socio-economic and geographic location.

Utilization of ANC visits ranged from 18 percent in Guatemala to 81 percent in Nicaragua (Maternal Health Task Force, n.d.). In case of Nepal about 69 percent of women received ANC services for their most recent birth in the last 5 years preceding the survey. Talking about the mothers under age 20, still 44 percent did not receive ANC in all specified months (Ministry of Health, ERA, & ICF, 2017). Recently World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that a woman should have at minimum of eight contacts to reduce perinatal mortality and improve women's experience of care. However, this study has focused on four ANC visits as per protocol. The Government of Nepal (GoN) introduced the 4 ANC incentive programme in July 2009 to further stimulate the uptake of ANC visits. A mother is entitled to Rs. 800 if she completes 4 ANC visits as per the ANC protocol (first at 4th month, second at 6th month, third at 8th month and fourth at 9th month of pregnancy) and has an Institutional Delivery (ID). A cash payment to woman is given immediately after institutional delivery (Rs. 3,000 in mountains, Rs. 2,000 in hills and NPR in Tarai districts). Women who have completed 4 ANC but not delivered at health facility will not get the incentive of Rs. 800. Thus this incentive programme is associated with an increase in institutional delivery (DoHS, 2019).

Despite ANC being one of the four major initiatives of the Safe Motherhood Initiative, its relative contribution to improving the maternal health morbidity and mortality still is challengeable regarding the young mother because of its diverse characteristics. Several studies have shown that women who started ANC attendance early and attended frequently were

more likely to be assisted during childbirth by skilled attendance compared to those who initiated ANC late and attended only few visits (Gross, Alba, Glass, Schellenberg, & Obrist, 2012). Late or no ANC has been reported to be associated with poor outcomes for mother and newborn (Beecman, Louckx, Masuy-Stroobant, Downe, & Putman, 2011). Utilization of ANC services among certain vulnerable groups remain a challenges to health systems around the world. Adolescent and young mothers in developing countries are one of these vulnerable groups (Paxton, Dr P.H., & Wardlaw, 2011). They have increased risk for poor maternal and infant outcomes and it is assumed that they are less likely than older women to utilize ANC services. Different factors have been found to be related with the use of antenatal health care visits. Many studies have looked at the utilization of ANC services among women of reproductive age in general but the focus has not been on factors that are responsible for the utilization of ANC services among young mothers.

A study on the factors affecting the use of ANC services among young mother is therefore in need to provide information on specific intervention that could be directed towards these vulnerable groups. Thus the aim of this study is to explore the factors that affect on the participation on the ANC services among young mothers.

Methods

This study is based on an explanatory sequential mixed methods study design where quantitative study followed by qualitative study to explain and support the results. It partially

mixed design as mixing of the study done in the discussion section. The decision to follow the quantitative-qualitative data collection and analysis sequence in this design depends on the study purpose and the research questions seeking for the contextual explanation of the statistical results (Creswell, 2014).

Quantitative part of this study based on data from the 2016 Nepal Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS), a publicly available from the Measure DHS website (<https://dhsprogram.com>). The NDHS provides data on demographic and health indicators to promote health status of population specially women and children in developing countries. This study has been restricted to the most recent birth to 1321 young mothers aged 15-24 that occurred in the three year preceding the survey period.

The WHO recommends that for the majority of normal pregnancy, a woman should have at least four visits during pregnancy, the first visit should occur within the first trimester and the complete content of care must be received during the visits (WHO). The outcome (dependent) variable of this study is “participation of young mother on antenatal care services” during pregnancy. It was based on the three variables: ANC four or more visits (1=yes and 0= no), 1st visit at first trimester (1=yes and 0= no) and complete content of care (1=yes and 0= no). The participation of young mother on ANC services was formulated adding the value for each three variables that ranged from 0 to 3, which was categorized as binary variable- full participation on ANC services that scored 3 and who scored

less than 3 categorized as no/some ANC services. Likewise, independent variables were selected according to the literature and their availability from the database. The explanatory variables are as follows: birth order, age at first birth, caste/ethnicity, mothers' education, husband's education, province, wealth index, mothers' occupation and media.

On other hand, for the qualitative information respondents were selected purposively to support the quantitative results. Further it had made an attempt to analyze their view on youth for youth concept to increase the young mother participation in ANC services. Open ended interview were conducted for qualitative information. Two government health personnel working in Maternal and Child Health (MCH) services in the community level were selected as key informants to provide sufficient information related to the topics. Likewise, four young mothers (two from Maternity Hospital, Thapathali and two from Kirtipur) were selected for in-depth interview. The interviews were conducted in Kathmandu in December 2019 to support the findings from the quantitative findings.

Kathmandu as it presents a unique situation, where on one side it is one of the most populous districts with young population with both urban and rural areas, and on the other side it has several issues like wide differences between and within district in terms of having diverse socio-cultural issues. Socio-culturally and socioeconomically, it also presents whole Nepal.

Based on survey, this study has made an attempt to analyze the data using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20. First it analyzed the participation of young mother

on ANC services in Nepal based on quantitative data. Cross tables were used to assess the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Chi-square statistics were used to test for strength of association between the research variables and the relationship between the dependent and independent variables under study. In this study, logistic regression analysis was used as the multivariate analysis tool. As the dependent variables were measured in binary scale (yes or no) and most of the independent variables were categorical variables, logistic regression analysis is the best method to analyze the data (Anwar, *et al*, 2005).

Logistic regression was performed to estimate the association between independent variables and ANC utilizations. Furthermore, multivariate analysis was done to show the net effect of variables. In multivariate analysis, three models were established to control the effects of factor which may confound the association. The aim to generate three models was to provide a clearer idea about how different factors influenced the association. Odds ratio (OR) with 95 percent confidence interval was included in the table to estimate the effect of the independent variable on the outcome variable and p value were considered at 1%, 5% and 10% levels.

The results of the quantitative and qualitative studies were combined during the interpretation stage in this study, so as to support the results of the quantitative study as far as appropriate.

Results

Young mother's participation on ANC according to background characteristics are mentioned in Table 1. Data shows that young mother with first birth order and whose age at first birth was at 21-24 were more likely to utilize all ANC services than their counterparts.

Result shows that education of mother and their husband plays important role in receiving the ANC services. For example, about 9 in 10 women with higher education made four or more ANC visits. Participating on full ANC services among mother with higher education was nearly 4 times higher than women with no education (62.6% Vs 14.7% respectively). Other factors are media exposure, wealth index and women's occupation that influences the utilization of ANC services is media exposures. For example, about 43 percent of mother with exposure to both TV and radio were more likely to participate on full ANC services than women with no media exposure.

Likewise, rich women were more likely to participate on full ANC services than women from poor households. Geographical area has also influenced in receiving the services. The differences in pattern of participating on antenatal care use by province shows that mother from province 4, 6 and 7 were more likely to receive ANC services than their counterparts.

All the variables are significantly associated at 1 percent level except caste/ethnicity and occupation in receiving ANC at 1st trimester these are significantly associated at 5% and 10% level.

Table 1: Percentage of young women who had a live birth 3 years preceding the surveys according to participation on ANC services for their most recent live birth by background characteristics, Nepal, 2016 (N=1321)

Background characteristic	ANC 4+ visit with skilled provider	1 st ANC visit at first trimester	Complete content of care	Full Participation on ANC services
<i>Birth order</i>				
1	71.4	71.3	51.2	35.2
2-3	53.8	58.3	41.2	23.7
<i>Age at first birth</i>				
Less than 18 years	60.4	56.9	40.8	23.5
18-20 years	64.2	67.8	48.2	30.3
21-24	74.1	79.5	57.1	44.9
<i>Caste/ethnicity*</i>				
Brahman/ Chhetri	77.1	72.9	59.8	44.6
Tarai/ Madhesi other	56.3	61.3	40.6	22.8
Dalit	61.2	62.7	40.2	26.4
Janjati	66.5	68.9	47.7	30.6

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Others	49.6	57.5	41.1	19.4
<i>Highest educational level</i>				
No education	44.6	50.7	30.2	14.7
Primary	56.9	59.2	34.5	20.1
Secondary	69.8	72.2	53.3	34.1
Higher	91.0	81.5	75.0	62.6
<i>Husband/partner's education level</i>				
No education	49.9	49.0	34.4	18.3
Primary	51.4	58.6	37.5	21.2
Secondary	70.7	71.4	49.7	32.9
Higher	73.3	72.2	60.4	43.6
<i>Media exposure</i>				
None	41.3	52.0	36.6	17.4
Either	63.0	63.6	39.7	25.8
Both	78.8	76.8	60.9	42.9
<i>Occupation**</i>				
Not working	57.2	63.6	48.9	28.3
Non agriculture	79.7	77.5	59.4	48.0
Agriculture self-employed/employee	69.6	66.9	43.0	29.5

<i>Wealth Index</i>				
Poor	60.1	61.3	36.8	21.5
Middle	62.1	64.4	47.7	28.8
Rich	73.4	75.1	61.9	45.3
<i>Province</i>				
Province 1	67.6	72.9	45.3	29.6
Province 2	52.7	53.8	40.4	18.9
Province 3	69.4	69.1	55.6	38.9
Province 4	75.7	76.9	54.1	43.3
Province 5	72.4	76.8	53.0	40.0
Province 6	53.0	52.2	30.7	19.6
Province 7	77.2	71.8	60.5	40.3
Total	64.8	66.5	47.5	30.8

Source: NDHS, 2016 data file.

Note: all the variables are significant 1% level except caste/ethnicity and occupation for 1st ANC visit at first trimester. They are significant at 5% and 10% level respectively.

Table 2 present the multivariate logistic regression analyses. All the variables that were found to be significantly associated with the overall participation on ANC services were included in the multivariate logistic regression model. For participation on ANC services, both gross and net effects are applied in order to show the association between the outcome variable and independent variables. In this study, an attempt has been made

to examine the effects of demographic, socio-economic characteristics and geographical area on participation of ANC services and identify a number of factors that have important influences on young mother's low participation of ANC services in Nepal.

In model I, only demographic and socio-economic variables were included. Results shows that women whose age at first birth was 20 years above were more likely ($OR=1.34$; 95% CI: 0.89-2.01) to participate on ANC service than their counterparts. Likewise, higher order births were associated with lower likelihood of participating in ANC services. This is because of their experience to the previous birth. Result of the qualitative study has also similar findings.

A 24 years old young educated mother with second child who went health facility for the first time when she missed her period said, "Due to previous experience I went to private clinic alone and visited according to doctor's suggestion." Another 24 years young uneducated mother with first child said, "I did not know about the ANC services. My friend told me about the services and took me to the health post for the first time at 4th months and followed every suggestion given by the providers."

Similarly, if a young mother belonged to Tarai/Madhesi other caste she was about 49 percent less likely to have had ANC services than Brahman/Chhetri caste group. Compared to young mother with no education those with secondary education were about 2 times more ($OR=2.22$) likely to participate on utilizing the ANC services. Interestingly, the

corresponding odd of using the services was about 5 times higher if these young mothers attained at least higher level of education. The finding was supported by qualitative results. Among 6 interviews with young mother 3 were illiterate, 1 had secondary education and 2 had higher education. Among them, those who were illiterate were found less likely to participate for ANC services than those who are literate. Late ANC visit was found among illiterate mothers. One of the government health care provider said that Educating mothers using different methods is necessary. Lot of mothers are still uneducated and stays at home, become shy and afraid while they come to our health facility. Similar to health provider's view on young mothers, participants of this study have also found similar findings.

Maya Tharu (20 years) and Bina Rai (18 years) (name changed) visited maternity hospital for the first time at 6th and 7th months respectively. Both had the same voices that due to shyness and fears, they participated late for ANC visits. They said that their relative told them about ANC visits but they ignored it and never visited while they were in their hometown. They were forced to visit for ANC services only when they migrated to Kathmandu. Because their friends circle in Kathmandu suggested and informed about the expected danger signs that could bear if no ANC visits were made. Only then they visited the health centre for ANC. Maya said that if she were educated she would not be late for ANC services. But in case of Bina she is still in confusion about where to go and when to visit again.

In contrast, there was no significant difference on using ANC services according to husband's education. Likewise, the odds of using ANC services among women with media exposure were 79 percent ($OR=1.79$) higher than those with no media exposure. The finding from this study that young mother with media exposure increased participation is consistent with qualitative information. One health care provider said:

...During the older days there were no hospitals so mothers never went for antenatal but with modernization, there are hospitals, clinics nursing home, so mother visits according to their affordability, accessibility and availability. Radio, TV and social media also help them to decide where to go and where not to go. Though the Nepal Government has provided the incentives for complete ANC visits women specially the young one visits less compare to the older one.

The health providers also mentioned that due to media the most of young mothers go economically equipping health centers with laboratory equipment for during pregnancy and delivery. The health personnel were also asked about the role of youth for youth that were not covered by quantitative method. In this regards they both agree that youth for youth concept may increase the participation in ANC services. Health provider I said that youth for youth concept may motivate young mother during pregnancy, delivery and after delivery. It will also reduce stress and combat depression which is the major problem in this period. Because, youth volunteer helps them to counteract the effect of stress and anxiety. And one more important is this concept may help to those young mother with

disabilities or chronic health conditions. They can be benefitted by interacting with volunteer via personally or mobile (media).

Similarly, all young mothers from qualitative study expressed their positive views on youth concept. They told that with peer they feel comfortable. They also told that their husbands have no time to visit health facility time and again. So youth peer is useful.

Quantitative data further indicates that young mother who were engaged in non-agriculture occupation were 52 percent more likely to participate on ANC services than women who are not working. The odds of participating on ANC services among rich mother were about 3 times more likely than mother from poor household status. This is also supported by the qualitative information. Health care provider II said:

Wealth is expected to have a positive relationship with ANC since the use of the service is associated not only with the consultation but also the purchase of recommended medication alongside other indirect costs such as transportation cost. Thus, it is expected that, the higher the wealth of the woman, the more likely is she to use ANC in private institution because she may be able to afford the cost and other expenses that comes with using the service.

The results in Table 2 reveals that the majority of the gap attributed to difference in the distribution of household wealth, individual education, and media exposure (model I).

In model II only the province level were included. Result revealed that mother from province 2 were 63 percent less

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likely to utilize ANC services than mother from province 1. However, the odds of using ANC services were 1.2 times higher among mother from province 4. The last model includes all the variable used in model I and II. This model revealed the same pattern of participating on ANC services by young mothers.

The majority of the gap revealed in model I continued to exert a strong and independent impact on the use of ANC services.

Table 2: Unadjusted (gross effect) and adjusted (net effect) odds ratios for participation on ANC services among young mother aged (15-24)

Variables	Model I demographic and Socio economic variable only	Model II Geographic al area	Model III (Full Model) all variables
<i>Age at first birth</i>			
Less than 18 years	1		1
18-20 years	0.95(0.70-1.30)		0.90(0.66-1.24)
21-24 years	1.34(0.89-2.01)		1.23(0.81-1.86)
<i>Birth order</i>			
1	1		1
2 and more	0.93(0.69-1.25)		0.94(0.70-1.28)
<i>Caste/ethnicity</i>			

Brahman/Chhetri	1		1
Tarai/Madhesi other	0.51(0.33-0.79)***		0.77(0.46-1.28)
Dalit	0.84(0.54-1.31)		0.97(0.61-1.54)
Janjati	0.87 (0.51-1.47)		1.00(0.57-1.74)
Others	0.54(0.38-0.77)***		0.55(0.38-0.79)**
<i>Educational level</i>			
No education	1		1
Primary	1.33(0.82 -2.17)		1.25(0.76-2.05)
Secondary	2.22 (1.40-3.53)***		2.10(1.31-3.37)***
Higher	5.00(2.76-9.07)***		4.83(2.64-.84)***
<i>Husband/partner's education level</i>			
No education	1		1
Primary	0.92(0.52-1.62)		0.80(0.45-1.41)
Secondary	1.06(0.62-1.80)		1.00(0.58-1.72)
Higher	0.84(0.45-1.54)		0.81(0.44-1.51)
<i>Media exposure</i>			
Neither watch TV not listen radio	1		1
Watch TV or listen radio	1.10(0.73-1.4)		1.11(0.74-1.67)

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Watch TV and radio	1.79(1.18-2.69)***		1.72(1.13-2.61)**
<i>Occupation</i>			
Not working	1		1
Non agriculture	1.52(0.98-2.34)*		1.45(0.93-2.26)*
Agriculture self-employed/employee	1.37(0.99-1.88)*		1.23(0.88-1.70)
<i>Wealth Index</i>			
Poor	1		1
Middle	1.89(1.32-2.71)***		1.93(1.34-2.79)*
Rich	3.29(2.31-4.69)***		3.05(2.11-4.40)*
<i>Province</i>			
Province 3		1	1
Province 1		0.66(0.43-1.02)*	0.71(0.43-1.15)
Province 2		0.37(0.24-0.55)***	0.44(0.25-0.75)***
Province 4		1.20 (0.74-1.95)	0.94(0.54-1.62)
Province 5		1.04(0.69-1.58)	1.07(0.67-1.73)

Province 6		0.38(0.21-0.71)***	0.45(0.23-0.90)**
Province 7		1.06(0.63-1.77)	1.09(0.61-1.95)

Source: NDHS, 2016 data file.

*** Significant at 1 percent level, ** Significant at 5 percent level and * Significant at 10 percent level

Discussion and conclusion

Young mother (ages 15-24) population continues to grow rapidly, particularly in low and middle income nations. Their belief and decisions about maternal health are critical to their sexual and reproductive health and rights. Too often, they face obstacle that limit their access to participate on receiving the services of their choice. They experience less informed choice. These truths highlight the pressing need to improve the sexual and reproductive health allow them to implement their decision to have smaller families and open the window of opportunity for the demographic dividend (Aspen Global Health and Development, 2011). In this regard this study has also tried to investigate whether youth participate in ANC services during their pregnancy or not in Nepal. Becoming a mother at early ages disproportionately affect young women. Young women and girls live in a variety of household types across countries and within countries. Demographic factors, socio-cultural norms, policies and employment patterns all play a part in shaping living arrangements of these groups and their life as well. Early motherhood results in many adverse implications

for adolescent girls, including limiting their educational attainment and subsequent occupational prospects as well as increasing the risk of maternal and infant mortality (UN Women, 2019). Maternal health is critical in our societies and knowing what hinders progress would help in addressing the issues that affect young mothers in depth. This study has also made attempt to assess the young mother's participation on ANC services in Nepal. Utilization of antenatal care services has also improved in the past decade. However, this progress may not be adequate to achieve the sustainable Development Goal to improve maternal health (SDG 3) in Nepal. In addition, interaction in participating on recommended ANC services among young mother were analyzed. Furthermore, multilevel analysis assessed factors not only at individual and household level but also geographical factor influence the young mother in seeking ANC. This study mainly identified 4 factors that are strongly associated with ANC services: they are young mother's education, their exposure to mass media, their household economy and where they live in (geographical area) which is also in line with previous study.

According to Kroeger (1983) the higher the formal education a woman had the less likely she was to book late in pregnancy. Study conducted by Navaneetam & Dharmalingam, 2002; Jimoh, 2003; and Matsumura and Gubhaju, 2001 also supported the present study result. Higher the education higher the participation on ANC services during pregnancy. For example a study conducted by Navaneetham and Dharmalingam (2002), revealed that women's education level and living standards were found to be an important factor in

seeking antenatal care in Karnataka but not in Andhra Pradesh in India. The study found that, women with high school education and above were more likely to use antenatal care services when compared to illiterate women in Karnataka. The impact of education is not limited to ANC: highly educated people engage in an array of healthy behaviors more often than less educated people. Education not only increases women's awareness of the importance of health services, but also gives them the ability to select the most appropriate service for their needs (Cutler & Lieras-Muney, 2010). It was realized that women whose husbands had at least high school education were more likely to use antenatal care services compared to women whose husbands had no education at all. Islam and Masud (2018) have found that a husband's educational level is positively associated with adequate ANC use. The qualitative results also support quantitative findings that illiteracy is the main obstacle. Learning from young mother's peer provided opportunity to participate in ANC services.

Young mother exposed to the mass media, especially television and radio, significantly use antenatal care services. Similar results were found by the work (Navaneetham and Dharmalingam, 2002; Sharma, 2004) who found that mothers with high levels of exposure were more likely to seek for antenatal care services. This indicates that the information on reproductive health motivates pregnant mothers to attend antenatal care. Hornik (2002) suggest an important role for media exposure. He stated that if a message gets high exposure it is more likely to be heard by policymakers. These, in turn, may affect the audience behavior. Whatever the path of effect,

the implication of these arguments is clear: Get exposure, get exposure through multiple channels, and get exposure repeatedly over time.

Another most important factor is household economic status which was highly influenced. Increasing wealth of young mother's household also increased the participation on ANC services. Similar observation was made in Colombia by Ortiz (2007). This study concluded that wealthier mothers have more chance of attending a first visit and additional visits than poorer mothers in Colombia. In case of province level still the evidences are lacking in terms of young mother participation on ANC services. Hodge, Byrne, Morgan, & Jimenez-Soto (2014) argued that it remains unknown if supply is the only large factor responsible for the regional utilization gap. Geographical areas have also impact on health seeking behavior of pregnant young mother. Participation of young mother during their pregnancy care in Nepal is associated with both supply and demand-side cash incentives. However, this study is focused on demand side factor.

Poor participation on ANC services of young mothers during their pregnancy lead to poor maternal health and death as well. The SDG agenda 'leaving no one behind' and one explicitly framed health goal out of 17 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages' are the main goal to support young mothers to survive. Just because they are young, it doesn't mean she has to die. They are not dying due to complication during pregnancy or in childbirth; they are dying because they do not receive the health care in time during

pregnancy. This ultimately affects the nation development. If young mother participate on health care during pregnancy in time it would help to young mother, newborn child and nation as well. The analysis presented in this study is affected by several influencing factors worth considering. ANC is the first and foremost process for healthy mother and health nation. In spite of young mother's commonality regarding the basic problem there are many differences among women. Urban women are divided from rural women; unemployed are divided from employed women; uneducated women are divided from educated women. Broader localization and contextualization with volunteer-based campaigns is very important for successful implementation of the activism and local to global solidarity on young mother and their participation on ANC issues i.e. by young, with young and for young. The study established that media, household economic status (wealth index) and education are the most dominant factors that affect participation on ANC services.

Thus it is recommended that the responsible bodies should focus on strengthening education and media with special focus on reproductive health program for young mothers. Because these groups are diverse including most at risk of being left behind especially the first time and young parents. It is also noted that secondary level education and above plays a crucial role in the use of health services. It is difficult to provide universal secondary education for all these young populations in a short time. Thus the alternative strategy is to design mass campaigns through youth volunteerism to attract young people and meet their needs comfortably and responsively.

Volunteering connects one to another and gives opportunity to understand the real issue. There are 51,420 FCHVs in Nepal who are working in community with special focus on maternal and child health. Coordination between them could be an alternative solution to support and connect young mothers for their wellbeing. Thus broader localization and contextualization with volunteer-based campaigns is important for successful implementation of the activism and local to global solidarity on young mother ANC issues by themselves i.e. by young, with young and for young. Engaging young people's solidarity, skills and energy for the future and current mothers is the way we can increase the young mother's participation on ANC services and overall reproductive health. For the diverse group of young mother volunteer engagement is the way of giving and gaining the knowledge that transform not only young mother but also themselves. Though the study pertains to the NDHS 2016 data it is possible that participation of young mother in ANC services may have changed since then. Therefore, results of the study should be interpreted and applied to the timeframe. However, socio-economic and geographical aspects, such as women's education, media exposure and province level, generally are not likely to change quickly which was also supported from qualitative information. Thus it is hoped that the result of this study about the nature of participation on ANC services among young mother remain applicable in Nepal.

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Youth Volunteering in Tourism Development in Bhaktapur

Deepak Ghimire and Kapil Khadka

Abstract

This study investigates the involvement of youth entrepreneurs and local people voluntarily in promotion of tourism as well as preservation of cultures, religions and local products in Durbar Square and Taumadi- Nyatapola Area in Bhaktapur. Volunteerism in Bhaktapur is both important and necessary because its unique culture, religion, monuments and heritage sites are endangered due to ignorance and lack of awareness. The researchers have tried to identify volunteers' engagement in targeted area of research. This research uses survey methodology, interviews and analysis of documents as a means of gathering information. We have interacted with 10 entrepreneurs including officials from Bhaktapur Tourism Development Committee (BTDC). In this research, we have used the descriptive analysis method to know the present status of volunteerism in Bhaktapur by local entrepreneurs and local people. This study shows the different kinds of volunteer activities are performed by youths in Bhaktapur district who are also involved in different types of economic activities. Clean Bhaktapur, Evening Heritage Walk, promotion of different cultural activities by videography, promotion of local product, focus on different rituals and religions are some of the areas

where youths are participating as volunteers and visitors. The average involvement of youth participation is between 50 to 75 percent. Among the respondents, 6 of them believe that the activities are helping them to promote Bhaktapur as a tourism hotspot and 4 of them believe that youth volunteers should not only focus on promotion of tourism but also on the problems faced by tourists coming to Bhaktapur. Some of the problems which need to be resolved are related to transportation facility for tourists especially in late evening and at night, water scarcity, tourism information center at various entry points and availability of tourist guides. This study sheds some light on involvement of youth entrepreneurs and local people in voluntary activities for the promotion and development of tourism and also encourages other people in other parts of Bhaktapur district and elsewhere to engage in voluntary activities for tourism promotion. Moreover, the study explores the involvement of youth volunteers in various social, cultural, religious, economic and environmental activities with aim of preserving their local product, tradition, identity as well as historical and religious places.

Keywords: *Youth, volunteer, tourism, Bhaktapur*

Introduction

Volunteering as a social development concept refers to the act of delivering service by choice or free-will for the benefit of the wider community by an individual, group, or organization without necessarily expecting a monetary gain. Even before the

turn to the millennium, many countries have recognized the critical contribution that volunteering makes to build a strong and cohesive society. It is because government alone cannot do everything. Therefore, governments have supported volunteering as the essential act of citizenship, as a means for combating social exclusion and promoting self-help for community development (Frank et. al. 2017).

Broadly speaking, there are two major benefits of volunteerism; economic and social. Economic benefits are related to the activities undertaken by volunteers which otherwise would have to be funded by the state or by private capital. It adds to the overall economic output of a country and reduces the burden on government spending (Yoga, 2006). Youth volunteering has been found to enhance their self-esteem and psychological well-being, to improve their collective and occupational skills and to strengthen their social attitudes, values, and identities (Penner, et. al., 2005).

According to Brown and Swanson (2003), voluntary action is deeply implanted in most cultures, especially in African cultures. In almost all societies, it comes from the most basic of all values-people helping people and in the process helping each other. It emerges from long-established, ancient traditions of sharing, philanthropy and community service or civic participation and advocacy. Volunteering as the ultimate expression of the willingness and ability of people to help others brings significant benefits to individuals and communities and helps to nurture and sustain a richer social

texture and a stronger sense of mutual trust and cohesion. It is often referred to as the ‘glue’ that holds society together.

Volunteerism and volunteers are at the heart of social capital. It is very important to bring about a better understanding and acceptance of the vital contribution volunteering can make in mobilizing social capital for development as volunteerism constitutes an enormous reservoir of skills, ingenuity, creativity, solidarity and local knowledge. Local people are more likely to invest in a programme of work and be actively engaged with it if they are given ownership and meaningful ways of being involved (Melby et. al 2000).

Volunteers comprise the backbone of many extended community development programs such as protection and preservation of environment, culture, tradition and they can carry out awareness campaigns on social issues such as health, sanitation and tourism. They can also play important role in promotion of local products and services. In the meantime, it is also important to understand how volunteering affects individual experiences. Volunteering not only helps in community development but also in making, developing, recognizing and strengthening community leaders. Focus on volunteerism for tourism promotion means broadening the scope of volunteerism to sectors such as environment protection, social awareness, health, sanitation awareness, cultural and traditional preservation and many more. It is because all these sectors need to be looked after if we want to enhance the tourism potential of a place. Moreover, tourism activities attract youth volunteers due to its indirect economic

benefits such as learning skills of entrepreneurship and solopreneurship. Volunteerism also helps to create better career avenues in tourism industry. Thus, youth volunteerism in tourism sector brings both social and economic changes in community.

Bhaktapur district is taken as a sample of research for discovering and interpreting the engagement of youth volunteers in tourism promotion through entrepreneurship, solopreneurship, and other above mentioned preservation and awareness activities. In order to cover a specific location Durbar Square Area and Nyatapola (Taumadhi) area are selected for observation and volunteers in these areas are interviewed.

The literal meaning of Bhaktapur is 'city of devotees'. It is also known as 'Khwopa', and is in the east corner of the Kathmandu Valley in Nepal about 8 miles (13 km) from the capital city, Kathmandu. According to various chronicles, this city was established in the 12th century by King Ananda Malla. Bhaktapur was the capital city of the Greater Malla Kingdom until the 15th century and was an independent kingdom until the 18th century. The last three Malla rulers of Bhaktapur were Jitamitra Malla, Bhupatindra Malla, and Ranjit Malla who played key roles in building the palaces and temples of what is now called Durbar Square in Bhaktapur. In 1744, Prithvi Narayan Shah, descendant of Dravya Shah, who was the founder of the Gorkha dynasty, began a conquest of the Kathmandu Valley, capturing and unifying Kathmandu, Patan,

Bhaktapur and the smaller towns of the Valley under one rule (Bhaktapur.com).

Bhaktapur has the best-preserved palace courtyards and old city center in Nepal and is listed as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO for its rich culture, temples, and wood, metal and stone artworks. Likewise, Bhaktapur is one of the famous tourist destinations in Nepal. Many tourists prefer staying in Bhaktapur as it is comparatively cleaner and more peaceful than Kathmandu. Popular tourist destinations such as Nagarkot and Dhulikhel can be reached only via Bhaktapur. Such type of location has also helped to increase tourism in Bhaktapur. Additionally, major attractions of Bhaktapur famous among tourists include Taumadhi Square, Durbar Square, Pottery Square and Dattatreya Square. Besides, there are various other places which, if promoted, can become famous among tourists (Shahi, B. K., 2012).

Among numbers of tourism spots, Bhaktapur Durbar Square is a conglomeration of pagoda and shikhara-style temples, mostly dedicated to Hindu gods and goddesses grouped around a 55-Window Palace (*Pachpanna Jhyale Durbar*) of brick and wood. The square is one of the most charming architectural showpieces of the valley as it highlights the ancient arts of Nepal. The golden effigies of the kings perched on the top of stone monoliths, the guardian deities looking out from their sanctuaries, the wood carvings in every place - struts, lintels, uprights, tympanums, gateways and windows - all seem to form a well-orchestrated symphony. The royal palace was originally

situated at Dattaraya square and was only later moved to the Durbar Square location (Wikipedia).

Similarly, another significant spot is Nyatapola which means ‘five-story temple (*Panch Tale Mandir*)’ in the *Newari* language; built in pagoda style and was erected by King Bhupatindra Malla during a 7-month period from late 1702 to 1703. The Nyatapola temple was built and dedicated to the goddess Siddhi-Lakshmi, the Tantric deity who bestows auspiciousness. It rests on a base of five levels with four Ganesh shrines in each of the corners. It is beautifully sculptured building is considered one of the tallest pagodas in the country and is a lovely example of the immense workmanship that went into buildings of this type (Wikipedia).

Being a tourism hotspot, Bhaktapur municipality has become successfully able to preserve and restore its cultural heritage, religions and its local products despite the heartbreaking devastation caused by the great earthquake of 2015. This study tries to focus on voluntary activities performed in Durbar Square and Taumadhi-Nyatapola Area of Bhakapur district. The study will cover different dimensions of tourism such as social, cultural, environmental, religious and economical aspects. This study tries to find out the answer of the following questions:

- What are the present status of volunteer activities performed in Bhaktapur municipality in order to promote tourism?

- What are the activities performed by youth volunteers to maintain and preserve social, economic, cultural, environmental and religious significance of the places?
- What are the feedbacks about these activities?

Objectives

The general objective of this study is to find the present status of youth volunteerism in Bhaktapur and the specific objectives of this study are:

- To find out the different types of activities performed by youth volunteers,
- To know the different problems faced by volunteers and such initiations; which need to be addressed and solved as soon as possible.

Literature review

Zulhaim, *et al.* (2018) concluded that the volunteer engagement enhanced the motivation of volunteers in the tourism sector in the east coast of peninsular Malaysia. This research used survey methodology, interviews and analysis of documents as a means of collecting information that involved 297 youth students from three higher education institutions in the East Coast of Peninsular Malaysia. During the research, the researcher used the Volunteer Functional Inventory (VFI) model. The goal of this study was to identify motives of volunteer's involvement in volunteer activities through the application of the VFI model with the motivation of volunteers to engage in voluntary activities. The conclusion of that study contributes new knowledge about role of volunteerism in tourism sector.

Especially study of volunteer mosque tour guide to youth in the east coast of peninsular Malaysia is particularly interesting. That study is one of the good examples of basis for in-depth study on the motive of volunteer engagement and motivation of volunteers in uplifting the tourism industry.

Butt. et.al. (2015) studied the types of volunteering activities among youth in selected areas of Pakistan and analyzed the various perspectives of volunteerism in Pakistan. Data was collected from two different provinces of the country through questionnaire and data was analyzed through Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The research shows that people are not much interested to formal volunteering. People are more motivated towards general areas of volunteering like in medical centers or educational institutions and have been involved in volunteering in religious activities. Although volunteerism provides young people with opportunity to get engaged in constructive activities, there are generally lack of volunteering opportunities and awareness about benefits of volunteerism. There is need for seminars and programs to be held to make general public aware of volunteering, its uses and benefits to them and the society. The research can help organizations and researchers to study the volunteering activity according to specified volunteering areas. Volunteering can be promoted by focusing on the individual areas.

Vetitne, *et al.* (2014) examines volunteers' expenditure in the context of 2014 Olympic Games in Sochi in Russia. The findings indicate that the average total expenditure per person

per Olympic trip was equal to Russian Ruble (RUB) 15,748. The structure of disaggregated volunteers' expenditure was different from the usual Russian tourist spending: the share of transport costs was more and accommodation cost was less due to free placement. They also bought more souvenirs and tickets at sporting events. Using structural equation modeling,² it was found that a higher level of costs, associated with education, income and status of volunteers, negatively affected their satisfaction, which, consequently reflected in the level of support for the Games and desire to work as a volunteer in the long term.

Fran, *et al.* (2017) examines volunteerism as an effective strategy for developing rural communities in Nigeria. It adopts qualitative research method. The study relied on the secondary sources of information, such as journals, textbooks, the internet, and newspaper. Concerned with the challenges of prevalence poverty in the country and success stories of volunteerism as a viable strategy, the study advocates for the involvement of more Nigerians in delivering selfless services for the benefit of others and their immediate communities.

Methodology

This study has combined historical as well as descriptive research. The data for the study was taken from Nyatapola Area and Durbar Square Area in Bhaktapur Municipality of

²Structural equation modeling is a multivariate statistical analysis technique that is used to analyze structural relationships. This technique is the combination of factor analysis and multiple regression analysis, and it is used to analyze the structural relationship between measured variables and latent constructs

Bhaktapur District. Furthermore, it is designed to examine the voluntary involvement of youth entrepreneurs and local people of Bhaktapur in social, cultural, religious, and environmental and economic activities. Data for this study were collected from primary sources. Both quantitative and qualitative types of data were collected by questionnaires from the representatives of Bhaktapur Tourism Board, local handicraft entrepreneurs, curd entrepreneurs, business persons, coffee shop owners, owners of fast-food outlets and tourist guides.

Sample size and data collection

The lists of the local entrepreneurs were collected from the information available from Bhaktapur Tourism Development Committee (BTDC). Nine local entrepreneurs were randomly selected from list of the entrepreneurs which consisted of two local businessmen, one curd entrepreneur, two handicraft entrepreneurs, two tourist guides, one coffee shop owner, and one fast-food outlet owner.

Primary data were collected by asking respondents to answer the prepared and well-designed questionnaires which covered the general information about the respondents and different types of social, cultural, religious, environmental and economic activities organized by the entrepreneurs for institutional development and tourism promotion. Additional information like places of their involvements, objectives of operating, involvement of youth and expenditure made by organization in these activities were included in the questionnaire. Their opinions about outcome of the activities, reason behind these outcomes and their probable activities for visit Nepal 2020

were also the part of the questionnaire. Participation in volunteerism by these youth entrepreneurs were measured by their involvement in social, cultural, religious, environmental, and economic activities carried out with aim of promoting local products, services and lifestyle.

Findings

Volunteer activities by entrepreneurs and BTB

There are different types of activities organized by Bhaktapur Tourism Board (BTB) and local entrepreneurs for tourism promotion. The activities can be grouped into different categories as discussed below.

There are social activities like 'Clean Bhaktapur Nagar' campaign happening twice a month volunteered by local people. There is also campaign to clean areas around individual's home or work place. Besides different activities, programs to promote local products of Bhaktapur district like curd, handicraft, thangka, sculptures, local garments are also organized on voluntary basis.

The entrepreneurs and local people there have also volunteered in different cultural programs such as making videos of different cultural programs and disseminating them. They are also contributing financially when local people are promoting cultural activities and festivals. 'Evening Heritage Walk' is another cultural program in which they have actively participated without direct economic return. The respondents said that they also have been taking part in religious rituals like *ihhii*, *gufa*, *bratabanda*, *bibaha* and *janku*. *Janku* is a ritual

performed to denote attainment of ‘divinity’ attained by old old aged people when they are 77 years, 7 months, 7 days old. After this first janku, other janku rituals are performed at certain ages. Similarly, *Gufa* is coming of age ritual for young girls slightly before their menstruation. Likewise, *Bratabandha* is a ritual done for early aged boys. And, *Ihi* is a ritual of mock marrying young girls with Lord Narayan in golden form.

The entrepreneurs have also been contributing to promotion of environment friendly ways and behaviors. The tourists/guests are requested to save water as much as possible. The awareness generation campaigns to avoid using plastic bags and instead using paper bags are being run. ‘Clean Bhaktapur Nagar’ program carried out twice a month and ‘Clean the Surrounding Areas Everyday’ campaign also could be called environmental programs. The Bhaktapur Municipality and local people jointly have started maintaining cleanliness in Nyatapola Area and Durbar Square Area.

According to the respondents, different activities to promote the local and cultural products are carried out at their initiation without financial support from any organization.

Involvement of youth entrepreneurs

Youth entrepreneurs and local people normally conduct these types of activities on regular basis according the schedules they have made. Some of the activities like cleaning the surrounding are performed every day. All the respondents replied that there is a large number of youth volunteers involved in these types of activities conducted in Bhaktapur City but unsure about the number of volunteers. For example, in response to our query,

five respondents said that number of youth volunteers could be between 50 to 75 percent. Four respondents said that, the number of volunteers ranged in between 25 to 50 percent and one respondent believed that number of volunteers was more than 75 percent.

Expenditure on activities

According to the respondents, almost all activities where volunteers are involved required some amount of expenditure which was borne by Bhaktapur Municipality and Bhaktapur Tourism Board. According to the respondents, local entrepreneurs and local people also bear some cost whenever necessary. Generally, an entrepreneur spends approximately 1000 rupees a month in these types of activities.

Programs to promote visit Nepal 2020

In order to promote Bhaktapur, a place recognized by UNESCO as a place of historical, cultural and religious significance, different types of activities are organized by Bhaktapur municipality, BTDC and local entrepreneurs combined. There are many individually initiated programs to promote tourists to visit Nepal as well as Bhaktapur.

Bhaktapur by night, Heritage-walk, advertisement through national media, rallies for heritage promotion, and video advertisements are some of the promotional activities about tourist's sites in Bhaktapur. Enhancement of aesthetic beauty of city with the help of flowers and commitment by taxi drivers to make transportation available as and when necessary has benefitted tourism in Bhaktapur. Such activities not only

benefit tourism in Bhaktapur but also Visit Nepal Year 2020. Currently, the Corona Virus disease pandemic has been threatening almost all countries of the World, Nepal Government has suspended Visit Nepal Year 2020. However, tourism has always remained a sector of high priority for Nepal.

Feedback

Among the data taken from nine respondents that included entrepreneurs and members of Bhaktapur Tourism Development Committee (BTDC), five said that the activities organized by local residents, entrepreneurs, municipality and BTDC are quite productive. However, four respondents thought that the activities organized by these institutions have not been able to give satisfactory outcome. They believe that many more problems need to be resolved to increase the number of tourists. The respondents who said volunteering has been productive argue that these activities have helped to preserve culture and tradition in Durbar Square, Natyapola and Taumadi Area. 'Clean Bhaktapur' program has drawn positive feedback from almost all respondents. Increasing number of people especially youth are found interested and participating in religious rituals such as *Jatra* (religious carnival), *Puja* (worship), *Bhoj* (traditional feast) etc. Bhaktapur Municipality and BTDC have been providing the tourist guide training to the local youths; the results of this have however been not as expected and encouraging. In the meantime, problem of electricity is also one of the dominating barriers to tourism in Bhaktapur. As a result, local entrepreneurs are unable to provide promised facilities in

the evening and at night shift in their hotels and restaurants. Clean toilets are not easily available in main tourist areas such as Durbar square, Nyatapola and Dattatraya. Transportation is not much a big problem because BTDC is coordinating with Taxi drivers to ease transportation facilities. However, tourists still have to face some problems of transportation when they have to depart from the city. The respondents said that their volunteerism has made some contribution in promoting tourism potential of the area they are working in but they admitted that their activities are not sufficient to enhance tourism in Bhaktapur.

Conclusion

The study concludes that large numbers of local youth in Nyatapola and Durbar Square Area of Bhaktapur are involved voluntarily in various social, religious, cultural, environmental events. And, majority of participants routinely fund these activities in whatever amount they can.

'Clean Bhaktapur' program that is carried out twice a month, 'Clean the Surrounding everyday' awareness program, and 'Say No to Plastics' awareness program are few activities to make city clean and hygienic. Youth are also participating in various fests, festivals, celebrations and rituals in order to preserve traditional culture and lifestyle. In the meantime, youth entrepreneurs are involved in different economic activities like woodcarving and in making paubha/thanka³ traditional mask, terracotta, metal crafts and curd called *juju dhau*. This form of

³ Paubha/ Thankas: traditional religious painting made by the Newar people of Nepal

curd called *juju dhau* is called king curd because of its standard and the taste. All these activities will have impact on tourism promotion because of preservation of Bhaktapur's unique and traditional identity.

Bhaktapur Municipality, BTDC, local people and local entrepreneurs are promoting various social, environmental, cultural, religious and economic activities which have positive impact on development and preservation of typical culture and tradition of Bhaktapur and hence on development of tourism in Bhaktapur District. These activities are interesting for tourists because of their uniqueness.

However, tourist are facing various problems, where the local entrepreneurs, BTDC, Municipality and other have to keep on vital priority. Problems of electricity, lack of tourist information center, and problem of restroom for national and international tourists, expensive vehicle entry fee and lack of proper and coordinated advertisement of Bhaktapur's tourist potential are some of the existing problems. These need to be solved as early as possible.

Based on our considerations of the relevant theoretical and empirical literatures on youth volunteerism in tourism sector promotion through various activities, we are optimistic that, it is possible to promote youth volunteerism further through social, cultural, religious and environmental activities which enhance tourism potentiality of Bhaktapur. Preservation and restoration of endogenous culture and tradition, centuries old heritage and monuments have become very important and conscious people have started feeling need for such activities.

People may have been to volunteering for different reasons; some of them might have been there with real aim of contributing to society, some for self-promotion and building leadership in them and some for indirect economic gain. Whatever, their motives are they have been volunteering for the cause for tourism promotion. It may be better to make them understand the personal, psychological and social value of volunteering.

Good, coherent, long term policies which can be implemented with success are necessary both to promote tourism in Bhaktapur and youth volunteerism in promotion of tourism. There is also need of practical and sustainable tourism master plan for the whole Bhaktapur district to promote tourism and volunteerism in tourism sector in the areas of our study.

Lack of time and resources were the limitation of this research. This paper is mostly based on answers of the respondents in our research. We have found that further research is necessary to find out the actual impact volunteerism can have in social, cultural, traditional, religious, environmental and economic sectors to enhance the tourism potential of these places. The findings of such researches can be useful to promote volunteerism in tourism sector in other places as well.

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Young Generation towards Green Revolution in Nepal

Govinda Rizal PhD

Abstract

The role of Nepalese youths in agriculture are little understood and overtly underestimated. While out-migration of youth from villages to cities and abroad leaving their farms in the care of aged parents or nobody is sensitively overrated, the rise of young farmer-entrepreneurs from among returned migrants, who are introducing advanced farming techniques, owe a recognition. No study has analyzed the role of Nepalese youths in agriculture, in detail. The questions like ‘what is the trend of youth’s involvement in agriculture? Is it increasing, decreasing or the same?’ necessitates research. In an attempt to address this, one hundred and twenty enumerators volunteered to find one farmer each and collect primary data. Primary data and information collected from field visits in all seven provinces, interaction with farmers, participatory approach, and secondary information from sources such as news media and social networking sites were analyzed. Analysis of data showed that during the last few decades the agriculture system has changed rapidly. Youth farmer-entrepreneurs whose products have a

dominant presence in local markets, as well as farmers exporting agri-products abroad, confirmed that there is clear evidence of youth active in agriculture focusing on high-value products. Although there has been no green revolution in Nepal, the rise in production and productivity of field crops in the last couple of decades was the result of a diffusion effect of green revolutions in neighboring countries. Should the present tendency of youth returning to agriculture sector with ideas and resources continue in the same trend, Nepal will foresee a green revolution in the 2020s decade.

Keywords: *Brain-gain, farmer, green revolution, mechanization, youth entrepreneur*

Introduction

Working-age of Nepalese people is 16 to 60 years that spans the youths aged between 16 and 40 years (Government of Nepal, 2015). Nepalese youths in agriculture can be grouped into three broad categories. Youths in the first category are those who have inherited ancestral land from their parents or fore-parents. They carry on the traditional methods learned from their predecessors. They have both abilities and resources to carry out drastic transformation in agriculture. They need external inertia, guidance and exposure to begin the transformation in agriculture. The second category of youth works on other farmers' land. They follow the guidelines dictated by their owners. Their creativity is little respected, and they have neither an opportunity to manifest their potential nor to learn and implement big ideas. Youths in the third category

are those who have secured some resources to invest in a planned production system. Some of them had earned money working in other sectors and a few are returned migrants who had worked and acquired agricultural skills abroad. The individuals falling in this category are few and geographically scattered; thus, loosely linked with one another. They use the recent technologies on a ‘trial and learn’ basis. The potential and prospectus of this category of youth, majority of who are the subject of this study, are expected to be the pioneering force in the agriculture transformation.

Nepalese youth are fast to learn new ideas and adopt innovations. However, their economic situation compels them to retract from taking initiatives; they are perceived as spoilers, their contributions go unrecognized and they are often vulnerable to exploitation (United Nations Development Programme, UNDP, 2018). They are fast to pick up new slogans as well as propaganda. Energy of such easily motivatable youths can be utilized in various modern agriculture sectors. They are ahead on trial of Agri-tourism and ‘go-green’ practices. They need a favorable environment, reliable market, and farmer supportive policies to retain their profession in agriculture sector.

In many countries, agriculture is not considered as a job for it brings in no periodic salary. It was true in the context of Nepal until recently. Nepalese youths were fashioned to believe that agriculture was for illiterates and laggards. This belief held the national economy captive in the hands of rural folks who could not make to industrial jobs or government services. The

situation has been changing fast. There has been a surge in entrepreneurial motivation in agriculture among the youth. These days, an increasing number of agricultural entrepreneurs are dignifying their presence in society. This change in perception is the product of the interplay of several resultant forces.

Phases in Nepalese agriculture

The evolution of Nepalese agriculture has three distinct phases. The first and the longest phase consisted of traditional agriculture practiced for centuries that became adoptive to the advantages of green revolution of 1970s and 1980s in neighboring countries. In Nepal, where agriculture transformations were yet to take place, the diffusion effect of the revolution had positive ripples in agricultural production and economics.

The second phase that started after the 1990s saw a rapid displacement of youths from farms and villages. The youth migrated either to cities for a safer and easier life or went abroad for higher wages and opportunities. In Nepal, a decade long conflict from 1995 to 2006 and long political instability made living in villages unsafe and unproductive for the people of working age. Back in the villages, farms were left under the weak management of aged and senior citizens who physically could not leave their homes.

The third phase started after the 2015 earthquake. Nepalese people living or working abroad got instigated to return to Nepal and contribute in post-earthquake rebuilding process. Many expatriates voluntarily repatriated. Back in the country,

they invested their skills and earnings in production areas including agriculture. There were government policies and programs supporting youths who had started agriculture entrepreneurship. They were supported with soft loans as well as partial to full grants. Such initiatives were aimed at triggering a revolution in agriculture. This research aimed was to find answers to the questions ‘are the agri-entrepreneurs performing well to keep themselves on the farms as well as to attract others?’

Methods

The author assigned 120 students of a university as volunteer enumerators. Each enumerator was asked to find an economically rising farmer or an entrepreneur in his or her locality and take a short interview. Each volunteer had a few questions and limited time to extract quality information from the farmers-in-transition who were gearing up as successful entrepreneurs. The questions included farmer’s name, age (those between 20 to 50 years), gender, number of family members, address, name of their enterprise, year of establishment of the enterprise and the commodities they are working on. Each enumerator asked the farmer his or her initial investment to start the farm or enterprise and the latest annual profit. Other information like farmers’ educational background, subsidies, and grants they received from external sources were not asked. However, they were incorporated if the farmers mentioned such information without asking. Data and information were collected from field visits in all seven provinces, discussion with farmers, participatory approach, and

secondary sources such as news media and social networking sites. Relevant secondary data and information collected from government publications as well as news media and social networking sites were used to complement and verify the information collected from field visits. Data were compiled in CSV formats and analyzed using R. The statistics on gender, geography, investment, return and presented as graphs and figures were analyzed. Their challenges, success, and potentials were collected, some of which are presented here as quotes and success stories.

Was the rise in agriculture skewed to a certain group of people based on caste or ethnicity? To check the influence of the caste and ethnicity, the family (sur)-names were analyzed to find a homogeneity or heterogeneity of population rising as agriculture- entrepreneurs across the country.

Results

Information of 120 farmers was collected. After curation of data, ninety-six data sets that qualified stringent criteria were used for analysis; information of 26 farmers was either incomplete or outside the range of criteria and was removed. The survey-covered 96 farmers were heads of enterprises or farms. The respondents are from 31 districts and all 7 provinces.

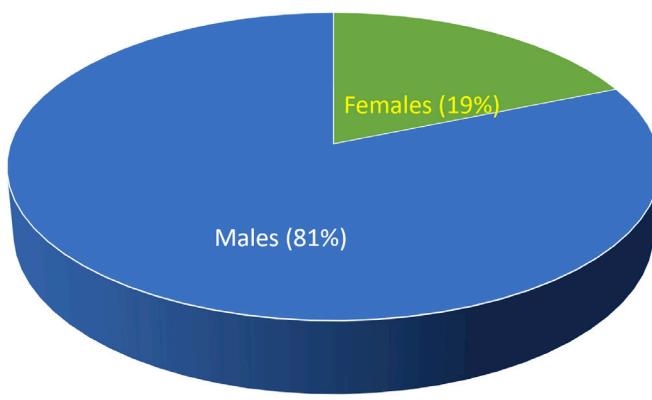
Table 1: Number of Household Heads Interviewed and the Count of Corresponding District and Provinces

SN	Province	District	No. of Household
1	Province 1	3	3

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2	Province 2	3	2
3	Bagmati Province	9	60
4	Gandaki Province	3	6
5	Province 5	9	19
6	Karnali Province	2	2
7	Far-west Province	2	4
Total	7	31	96

The maximum respondents were from Bagmati Province, where a total of 9 districts and 60 households were covered. Among the districts, the maximum respondents were from Kathmandu. This also relates to the fact that maximum number of households adopting advanced technologies are from Kathmandu.



*Figure 1: Percentage of Heads of Enterprise or Household
Gender-wise*

The respondents included 18 females and 78 males (Figure 1). At least 19 percent of the respondents were females who were head of the family or enterprise.

The sample weight is skewed towards positive in comparison to the national data. Nepalese women are rising as entrepreneurs (Dhungana, 2014). In 2019, there were 275,435 small and medium enterprises registered in Nepal (Bista, 2019); at least five percent were women-owned.

Interactions with 96 farmers revealed that youths in agriculture are successful as entrepreneurs. Despite problems of unavailability of inputs like seeds, fertilizers and technical assistance on time, the return from agriculture is higher than their expectations.

Based on the family names, it was found that not a single family-name was dominant in pioneering the agriculture transition.

The number of family names in the respondents' list included 5 Neupanes; 4 each of Khadkas, Pandeys, Poudels, Sapkotas, Tamangs; 3 each of Bastolas, Chaudharys, Gurungs, Shresthas, Subedis, Thapas; 2 each of Tharus, Aacharyas, Adhikaris, Awasthis, Bhattarais, Dangols, Dhakals, Gautams, KCs, Mijars, Tiwaris, Yadavs and 1 each of Aryal, Basnet, Belbase, Bhatta, Bishwokarma, Bista, Budhathoki, Chaulagain, Chhetri, Dhami, Dhungana, Ghimire, Hamal, Humagain, Kafle, Karanjit, Karki, Khaiju, Kunwar, Lama, Maharjan, Niure, Pun, Rai, Shahi, Sunar, Thakuri, and Timalsina (Table 2).

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Table 2: The Respondents Based on Their Surnames

Family Name	Cou nt	Family Name	Count	Family Name	Count
Acharya	2	Dhungana	1	Pandey	4
Adhikari	2	Gautam	2	Poudel	4
Aryal	1	Ghimire	1	Pun	1
Awasthi	2	Gurung	3	Rai	1
Basnet	1	Hamal	1	Sapkota	4
Bastola	3	Humagain	1	Shahi	1
Belbase	1	Kafle	1	Shrestha	3
Bhatta	1	Karanjit	1	Subedi	3
Bhattarai	2	Karki	1	Sunar	1
Bishwokarma	1	KC	2	Tamang	4
Bista	1	Khadka	4	Thakuri	1
Budhathoki	1	Khajju	1	Thapa	3
Chaudhary	3	Kunwar	1	Tharu	3
Chaulagain	1	Lama	1	Timalsina	1
Chhetri	1	Maharjan	1	Tiwari	2
Dangol	2	Mijar	2	Yadav	2
Dhakal	2	Neupane	5		
Dhami	1	Niure			

There were 5 respondents with one family name Neupane. From those 5 Neupanes, they were one each from Argakhanchi,

Chitwan, Dang, Lamatar Lalitpur, and Godawari Lalipur. It showed that no single family-name dominated the pioneering agri-enterprises. The rise was spontaneous and nation-wide.

Case Studies

Success from livestock to flowers

Usha Aryal (33), a mother of two children is the owner of “Cheetanshil Cattle Farm” located at Banganga Municipality Ward No. 2 Kapilvastu. She started the farm in 2064 B.S. with two buffaloes gifted by her family and an investment of Nepalese Rupees 180,000. Twelve years later, (now) she owns 25 cattle that give on average 200 liters of milk per day. She earns on average Rs 300,000 per month and spends 50 % on cattle feed and care. She has a fodder field and also cultivates off-season vegetables like tomato, pea, bean, cauliflower, broccoli, etc. She has employed two permanent staff and gives jobs to dozens on daily-wage earners. She experimented on marigold cultivation. She cultivated marigold in 5 *katthas* (1690 m^2) with an idea of reducing dependency on the imported marigold flower during *Tihar* and other festivals. She earned Rs 120,000 from an investment of Rs 20,000 only. Inspired by the success of her first trial, she planned to extend her marigold cultivation to one hectare. She has a plan to expand her business, add cattle up to 100 and take the enterprise to the national level. Her farm is a model in her locality and Usha welcomes farmers- especially females- to visit, learn and copy from her success. She volunteers to teach them her secrets. (The information of this case study was collected by enumerator Bipin Aryal).

Banana farmers of Kailali goes commercial

Dipendra Tharu (29) of Tikapur Municipality of Kailali District situated in Far-west Nepal, left his sheep and cows rearing work for India in search of work in 2065. He had to support a joint family with low income. He saved IRs 2000 per month for three years. He returned to Nepal in 2068. Dipendra along with two partners started banana farming on 42 bighas ($284,451\text{ m}^2$) of land acquired on lease. He brought tissue-culture-derived plantlets of G9 variety of banana from Jag Gaun, Maharastra. His endeavor turned profitable. Today, Dipendra cultivates 10 hectares of land acquired on lease and earns Nepalese Rs 1,500,000 annually. He has invested in power tiller, power spray, and drip irrigation. He has plans to buy tractors, expand his cultivation area, train unemployed local youth and attract them to banana farming. He is happily engaged in his banana farm that has generated employment for 15 people.

There are challenges. He has limited access to fertilizer, seed, and technical services on time even after payment. Dipendra is a pioneer in banana cultivation in his locality and a model farmer of his community who teaches other farmers on voluntary basis. Through such social engagements, his family gained social and economic empowerment. He is a promoter of family and social harmony (The information of this case study was collected by enumerator Gayatri Phulera).

A farmer in Solukhumbu becomes a model

Janbu Rai (40) of Solududhkunda Municipality-06 Salleri, Solukhumbu is the owner of Krishneswori Krishi Farm established in 2070. Janbu Rai cultivates 7 ropanies (47408 m^2)

of rented land for which he pays NRs 50,000 as land rent annually. Annually he invests NRs 600,000 on the farm and makes a profit of Rs 400,000. Janbu Rai started farming six years ago. Janbu was planning to go aboard for employment, he was unsuccessful to get a visa, lost money that he had given to agents. His wife and two children encouraged him to work in the land. He took an agricultural loan of NRs 50,000 from Krishi Bikash Bank at subsidized interest to start his business. He received assistance from Agriculture Knowledge Center, Solukhumbhu. The officers of the center provided him training and his family supported him. He started his farm growing cauliflower, cabbage, chilly and squash. Now, he also grows Kiwi fruit along with vegetables. He employs one farmer in his field regularly to clean the field and to pick up the fruits. He sells his products in local weekly market called *Hatiya*, throughout the year. He has two cows as part of the household. They provide valuable manure. Now, he has a regular income of NRs 30,000 per month from agriculture and NRs 12,000 from the sale of milk and *Paneer*. He has become an expert in off-season vegetable farming.

Janbu knows very well that vegetable production depends on a range of factors such as weather, temperature, rainfall, and quality manure for the vegetables. He had participated in integrated pest management or IPM training programs from which he learned to use *jhol mal* (liquid fertilizer) and chemical pesticides on his vegetables and fruits in an appropriate amount, and time. He follows legal requirements he has to comply with when using chemicals. Farmers of Salleri visit Janbu's farm to learn the technique of agriculture and the use of

pesticides. “If anyone is interested to learn and observe farming from my farm, all are most welcome, and I give special preference farmers,” Janbu says (The information of this case study was collected by enumerator Babi Basnet).

The sample case studies show that farmers across the country are rising but as isolated cases. If and when the number of such farmers increases, there shall be a positive change in Nepalese agriculture. If that happens within a short time, there shall be a green revolution or a revolution in agriculture. However, initial investments have been problems for the youths to kickstart mega enterprises in agriculture.

Among the 96 farmers interviewed, Lokjan Tharu (29) of Karkado Banke started his enterprise with Rs 1500. Today, he is the owner of Banke Poultry Farm and makes a profit of Rs 250,000 annually. He lives in ward no. 9 of Banke District with his wife, two daughters and one son. 1000 layers and a hatching unit of 50 sq. m. His children go to boarding school in city while his wife helps him on the farm. Banke Poultry Farm is one of the leading poultry farms of Banke District which produces about 7500 eggs and 2500 chicks a month. In 2014 Lokjan went to Qatar intending to earn money to pay off loans and support his family. He was not paid enough. After returning from Qatar, where he worked for three years under harsh conditions, he was unemployed. Then he heard about training and workshop on rearing the layer chicken that was organized by Poultry Development Farm, Khajur, Banke. Since that day his family’s living standards have changed. He started with 15 chicks received as a grant from poultry development

farm. He reared those 15 chicks along with more fowls bought from the market in his backyard. Soon, he started selling eggs in the neighborhood. He also started to produce chickens from those eggs. “Then the price of one egg was NRs. nine and that of one chick was just NRs. 25. Now, I sell eggs at NRs. 14 each and chicks at NRs. 65 each,” he said. Now Lokjan has a big farm with thousand birds rearing in deep litter system. He also owns a small hatchery unit to produce chicks. From there, he keeps some for his farm and remaining he supplies to the farms in hilly region as per the orders. “Demand of chicks is high and is increasing in the hills,” he said. He adds, “It was not easy at first but officers’ regular visits and suggestions regarding the cage size, feeds and poultry diseases helped him reduce the mortality of birds.” He is planning to extend the farm with more 1000 birds and to add new hatchery with more capacity. He uses the litter in his kitchen garden and produces organic seasonal vegetables. Those vegetables are sold at weekly market- every Friday. He thanks his wife for supporting and helping him at this work.

Lokjan is a highly motivated person who says, “It only needs will power, dedication, and patience to work it out. You can earn with just a small effort in your own country.” He is a true inspiration and a volunteer mentor of the youths who want to start poultry farming (The information of this case study was collected by by ennumerator Romi Kunwar).

A successful student

Durgesh Kumar Yadav (25) of Hansapur, Rupandehi, Nepal started with Arambha Akikirt Krishi Farm with an initial

investment of Rs 30,000,000. Durgesh Kumar Yadav a student of B.Sc. Agriculture at Prithu Technical College cultivates 85 *bighas* of rented land. He pays Rs 800,000 land-rent annually. His annual average income is Rs 15,000,000. In 2068 B.S. he took a loan of Rs 30,000,000 from Mega Bank and other financial institutions. In 2076 B.S., Durgesh in coordination with Province 5 Government was, for the first time in the province, able to buy a PMR Block machine to produce feed to the livestock, mainly for buffalo.

The 25 years old youth cultivates black gram, sugarcane, groundnut, papaya, watermelon and has buffalo, goat, fish, etc. He employs 10 permanent staff and 100 other daily-wage workers in his field.

He explained that he has learned the techniques of off-season vegetable farming from training organized by various governmental and nongovernmental organizations. Kumar said, “The soil plays a big role in cultivating good vegetable farming.” Local communities are taking him a community leader. He sells his products to nearby markets like Butwal, Bhairahawa, Manigram, and Suryapurva, as well as sends to Chitwan District. According to Kumar, there are many challenges which arise at some point in time like the problems of loans, agricultural inputs and market price. He also said that along with the challenges there is a huge potential to expand an agriculture enterprise along with the development of agriculture sector of Nepal. (The information of Durgesh Kumar Yadav was collected by enumerator Rishav Pandit).

The above case studies show that the agri-entrepreneurs have started earning at par with their counterparts in other sectors, if not more.

Discussion

Food is the first thing we need every day throughout our life. Farmers provide our first basic needs. Whether they are well-paid or ill-paid, whether they are cared or ignored, farmers have been the first and the last volunteers to support the human civilization and their role has the same spirit and importance. The involvement of youth in agriculture is a positive indication that the human community can continue their activities in peace and surely that they will have enough food in the future.

In Nepal, the youths are needed in and are pulled to all different sectors such as government, construction, development, tourism, business, trade, transportation, foreign employment, among many other sectors that their involvement in agriculture is feared reduced. The roles played by Nepalese youths in agriculture are neither recognized nor respected. Reports frequently appear in news media that the youth have out-migrated from villages to cities and abroad leaving the farms (“Youths And Agriculture,” n.d.) in the care of aged parents or nobody. There are counter reports that mention the rise of young farmer-entrepreneurs from among returned migrants, who are introducing and using advanced farming techniques. Technology-savvy youths have also started to show their dominant presence in agriculture (USAID, 2019). The Nepalese youth are actively taking ICT to farmers. The youths look for comparative long-term advantages, ease of work and profitable

returns. At times they are attracted to profitable and celebrity sectors. During such times, the transformation within the agriculture sector lures the youth back to farms.

Nepal's agriculture evolution has three phases. First and the longest phase consisted of traditional agriculture practiced for centuries that since the 1970s and 80s became adoptive to the advantages of the green revolution in Nepal, where agriculture transformations were yet to take place. The second phase that started after the 1990s saw a rapid displacement of youth from farms and villages. The youth either migrated to cities for a safer and easier life or went abroad for higher wages and opportunities. In Nepal, a decade long conflict from 1995 to 2006 and long political instability made living in villages unsafe and unproductive for the people of working age. Back in the villages, farms were left under the weak management of aged and senior citizens who physically could not leave their homes. The third phase that started after 2015 is characterized by the reversal of the second phase. Now, the aware and skilled youth are returning to farms with skills, ideas, and plans of profitable enterprises. They invest in advance technologies, fine quality seeds of high yielding varieties, and rigorous marketing.

Will there be a green revolution in Nepal?

There has been no green revolution in Nepal. The first green revolution took place in many developing countries between 1966 and 1985. The period witnessed the development and cultivation of high yielding cereals supported by increased use of chemical and organic fertilizers. In the past five decades from 1950 to 2000, the population doubled, the extension of

agricultural land was by 30 % yet the production of cereals tripled (Pingali, 2012). The increase in food production proved the popular Malthusian theory of population and food production (Dunn, 1998) wrong. The period when food production surpassed the population growth was celebrated as the first green revolution (Pingali, 2012). The impact of the Green Revolution was direct on poverty reduction and in lowering the food prices. The improvements in crop productivity came from the germplasm improvement of CGIAR centers and adoption and dissemination. Knowledge and practice were transferred to national agricultural programs (Pingali, 2012). The gain in the productivity from the germplasm improvement only was annually 1%, 0.8 %, 0.7%, 0.6% and 0.5 % for wheat, rice, maize, millet, and sorghum, respectively (Evenson & Gollin, 2003). The high yielding modern varieties were swiftly adopted in countries with high population growth (Herdt & Capule, 1983).

The peaceful era after the devastating Second World War saw a boom in the population. The population growth was more than food production. There was a fear of famine and death. The fear was redeemed from the development of high yielding cereals like rice and wheat. The baby boom was supported by the Green Revolution. Everyone had enough food to eat.

As there was never a green revolution in Nepal except for the quiet ones (Awal, 2015), food production increased from the adoption of modern elite crop and animal varieties, improvement in management practices and increase in production area. The food production increased but at a slow

pace. Then, there were a series of political and economic instabilities in Nepal, that compelled the people of working age to leave their farms for safety or a change. Youths distracted from agriculture due mainly to political instability, a decade long insurgency and foreign employment, are gradually returning to farms. The number of such returnees is small but qualitative in terms of investment ability, innovativeness, and learned skills. Youths new to agriculture-based enterprises need insulation from the fear of failure and bankruptcy. Fluctuating market prices, prevalence of disease pest and natural calamities are a few major fears. The invasions by imported food commodities often make the new entrepreneurs withdraw from competitions. Other factors include deaths and accidents leading to critical injuries or family members. Otherwise, agriculture is more resilient than other sectors in the long run.

The youths in farms are earning better than, if not at par with their counterparts in many other sectors. They have resorted to mechanization and are making their lives easier to live in the farms, than ever before. Should the present farmer-friendly peaceful environment and positive attitudes from stakeholders continue to support the farmers, Nepal will soon experience its first green revolution. The youth and volunteer farmers need constant encouragement for it.

Future

Today, the farmers are no longer confined to traditional subsistence farming. They have knowledge and skills to make agriculture competitively productive and sustainably profitable. The youths with low initial investment or new to the farms

must start with short duration high-value enterprises such as beekeeping, horticulture, poultry, rabbit rearing (Kioko, 2019). Once they are accustomed to rain and soil, they should upgrade themselves and their enterprises taking long duration as well as mechanized enterprises such as grapes, citrus, olive, and nut tree cultivation.

Conclusion

Farmers are seldom recognized as volunteers in society. What would be the cost of making a non-farmer elite to enter a farm clean hays to dungs, spread night-soil to fertilizers? Our farmers have been doing such jobs to provide food for humanity and charge the minimum for their efforts. This unrecognized volunteerism of our farmers needs a deeper realization. Youths who are in a dilemma between blue- and green-collar jobs need guidance to take up entrepreneurship. Young entrepreneurs need insulation from the price fluctuations and invasions by imported goods. The agriculture that was drudgery for ages is transforming it through mechanization. The youths back in the farm need support, encouragement, and motivation so that they produce enough food for themselves and the rest of us. They have the potential and we need them now and forever.

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Social Media and Youth Volunteerism in Dr Govinda KC's Movement

Kapil Kafle and Arjun Karki

Abstract

Nepal has been a part of globalized world and internet based communication has come to occupy very much prominent place especially among youth in urban areas. Taking into consideration Nepal's domestic and international situations, the impact of the social media on youth volunteerism has been studied especially focusing on the civil society movement in Nepal, with a case study of non-political movement led by Dr Govinda KC, an orthopedic surgeon and a professor at Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital (TUTH). The key concerns of the study are the changing pattern of social media uses among youth and the role of social media in mobilization of youth for particular causes. Following mixed method research, we have taken several interviews with youth volunteers, supporters, and analyzed social media contents to find the intensity and gravity of the social movements. Contents of Facebook - posts, videos, and events, related to the movement led by Dr KC have been analyzed, and intensive verification has been made with interviews of key informants in

order to review the impact of the social media on youth volunteerism and engagement. Similarly, some of the latest civil society movements that happened in different countries, where social media played significant roles and had strong impact has been studied. The study argues that social media has profound impact on youth volunteerism and youth engagement in many sectors of social life. It shows in most instances youth themselves are the content creators and promoters in social media to promote social movements that may ultimately lead to reform the systems. This study recommends similar type of future studies in the areas of economic, social, cultural and other dimensions in the society.

Keywords: *Movement of Dr Govinda KC, youth volunteerism, impact of social media, youth engagement*

Introduction

The United Nations defines 'youth' as persons between the ages of 15-24 whereas the Government of Nepal extends the definition to those of between 16-40 years of age, which accounts for over 40 percent of the country's population. The National Youth Council Act, 2015 has also categorized the people of age group 16 to 40 years as youth.

In this age, a person remains energetic and has potentials to do heroic works for the sake of society and the nation. Nobia (2013) connects 'volunteerism' to 'heroism' and argues that volunteerism is the donation of energy and time to create positive impacts in the society without any expectation of the remuneration in return. The author further states that the

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donation of time and energy enhances solidarity, harmony, trust, hope, expectation, anticipation and optimism in society and nation at large.

Volunteerism is a very long held practice in the world. It is believed that the concept of volunteerism emerged in the aftermath of the First World War, when people came together with a single objective of nation re-building. The United Nations claims itself to be the largest youth volunteers' agency in the world and has formally defined volunteerism in 1969 through its general assembly. The General Assembly of United Nations has defined 'volunteerism' as an activity undertaken out of free will, for the public good, and where monetary reward is not the principal motivating factor. The UN has recognized youth volunteerism for peace and development to benefit society, community and the nation at large. The volunteering is categorized in four broad ways - mutual aid or self-help, philanthropy or service to others, civic participation and advocacy or campaigning (United Nations Volunteer, 2011).

Following the same concept, Nepal expresses the hope of nation building with the important contribution of youth. According to National Youth Policy, 2015, 'youths are agents of change in political, economic, social and cultural transformations'. Youths, generally, are found more interested with the new inventions and trends, and are generally more social media friendly (Salanova, 2012).

In Nepal, large numbers of volunteers have been recorded in civic participation at the phase of political transition, democratic revolution and popular movement of 1950, 1990,

2005 and others. Youth had gathered voluntarily for the sake of a single objective of social and national transformation though the cause of the participation was both social and political in nature. Bhatta (2016) affirms that the civil society groups mostly operating in the social space have a clear notion of charity and volunteerism. The author cites an example of overthrowing the Rana regime established democracy on one hand and accelerated social reforms through volunteerism and civic values on the other hand.

Civil society movements

The civil society is defined as a formal and non-formal association that works as non-government party and non-business alliances led by the non-partisan personalities raising people's fundamental issues and criticizing the government or authority whenever necessary. The term 'civil society' refers to an associations or communities that works for the common cause (Shah, 2019). The author states 'civil society' consists of a host of institutions that look after the activities, which are not taken up by the state. The idea of civil society is rooted in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries' European thinking (Singh, 2012), but hard to recognize the first event of it either in Nepal or abroad. India, Nepal's neighbor claims that history of Indian civil society movement began during the colonial period (Singh, 2012). It is believed that during the colonial rule of East India Company of Britain the term 'civil society' was introduced and was extensively used in India.

Bhatta (2016) states though Nepal has had a long tradition of civil society, its current form emerged after 1990. The civil

society and the state both were under the control of ruling elites and after the end of the Rana regime, people openly started interacting with the state mechanisms.

In Nepal, the history of civil society movement is not so clear and most of the time they were politically driven. The political leaders and civil society activists are found working closely in order to get the objective of movements in most of the significant events. Sometimes it becomes difficult to differentiate between the political and civil society movement. Panday (2006) writes on the popular movement of 2006 as:

Political struggle or movements are generally led by the political class and are aimed at accessing political power by one group of people by throwing out another that is a part of the existing regime. The objective of a political movement can thus be, though not necessarily, limited to change in political regime. The goal is to have a new constitutional order that may or may not give birth to conditions that is necessary for social change that would sustain the new political order. Social movements on the other hand are about facilitating change in important aspects of the social order - that gives meaning and substance to the change in the political order.

Youth policy of the Government of Nepal is highly focused on the youth volunteerism for the improvement in social systems. Similarly, National Youth Policy 2015 has the vision of mobilizing youth for equal and equitable participation of the general people and ensuring equitable distribution of resources of the country. The Policy says, 'an environment shall be created for preventing the flight of the genius by creating

within the country itself opportunities of professional development for the genius youth belonging to various sectors' (National Youth Policy, 2015).

Youth Vision- 2025, approved by Nepal government (Council of Ministers) has kept vision of youth participation for the cause of fairness and equitable culture in society. It states, 'in order to enable Nepal to become a fast developing country by the year 2025, education should be made qualitative, professional and employment oriented, and access of the youth to all this must be ensured' (Youth Vision- 2025, 2015). Therefore, Youth Vision- 2025 has prioritized youth volunteerism with an aim 'to develop volunteering as the common youth culture and a campaign (P 13 &19, pillar 4, goal 1)'. It further adds about establishing volunteerism as culture for the purpose of nation building, which provides an obligation to private sectors and educational institution as 'one institutional school one volunteer' slogan. It means, volunteerism can be made for the political change and social reforms or any cause that is related to nation buildings.

Uses of social media

In the world of communications, social media is dominating several forms of mass media. The number of social media users in the world has reached about 3 billion. The number of social media users were 2.65 billion and 2.85 billion respectively in the years 2018 and 2019 and was projected to reach 2.96 billion and 3.09 billion in 2020 and 2021(Statista, 2019). Similarly, about 15 million people are seen to be active in social media in Nepal. According to Pandey (2017), there are 8

million Facebook users in Nepal while 3.02 million Nepali use Twitter.

Behind every type of movement, media play a significant role. Barker (2008) admits that gaining positive media coverage is crucial to get people's participation and make the movements successful. In this modern age, the most powerful media are the new media (social media) because they have distinct characteristics and have global reach and access. Lavietes (2017) reiterates that social media has been used as a powerful weapon in struggle for freedom, justice and equality and civil rights movements. Such movements have capitalized social media's influence to reach to people individually.

In this modern age, most of the people try to use social sites for civic and political engagements. For instance, Yang's (2016) analysis of 26 large-scale protests in China from 2011 to 2013 found that the people had used social media as an organizational tool to increase the intensity of the movements. The uses of social sites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and similar other media have been increasing to mobilize youth in the movements (Salanova, 2012).

The uses of Social Media are not limited to social and national issues but to the global issues as well. The social networking site offers services to users who are interested in taking action in society to address big issues such as global warming, health issues, human rights and poverty (Valenzuela, Park & Kee, 2009).

Even in Nepal, many positive changes have been strongly facilitated by the social media. The Government of Nepal has

used social media to connect people and provide relief at the time of the Earthquake 2015 (Times of India, 28 April 2015). Similarly youths have made different types of mobile apps to facilitate vehicle pooling at the time of 2015 fuel crisis – Pick Me& Carpool Kathmandu, mobile apps, which facilitated many people (Techsansar, 17 May 2016). During such crises, mobile apps had facilitated movements. Even in the fund generation and resource mobilization, social media had been useful in various ways. Chug (2018) states that the Nepalese community in Victoria (a part of Australia) made a Facebook page, 'Victorians Stand Together for Nepal' and disseminated critical information to seek support for the Earthquake victims in 2015. Within two days of the earthquake, about 7000 people joined the page and it became a movement which eventually collected over half a million dollars for Nepalese earthquake victims. Thus, Nepalese society is passing through a phase where social media can contribute significantly in participation of people in different movements.

Dr Govinda KC's movements

Dr Govinda KC worked as an orthopedic surgeon in the government hospital for three decades in Nepal. He is his early 60s, unmarried, thus, has no family responsibilities. He has simultaneously been contributing his time and efforts to revise the health education policy and practices as a civil society activist (Kshetry, 2019a). He became renowned for his hunger strikes for 17 times till the date.

His civil society activism especially focused on the medical sector reformation in the country. Dr KC got retirement from

his government job in November of 2019, however his expertise and skills as orthopedic surgeon has been benefitting people even after that because of his volunteerism. He is famous because he even contributed his salary and remuneration for the poor and needy people (Kshetry 2019a).

Dr KC is most known for being a campaigner against the corruption and undue political pressures faced by the medical sector. His hunger strikes regarding these issues have raised a lot of political and media uproar with thousands of volunteers especially youth joining him in order to express solidarity strongly for the cause he was fighting for and in order to save his life (Timilsina, 2019). His peaceful protests have created impacts in the medical sector in several ways. Being a single man without a family, he has been respected and applauded much for his attempts to reduce and eliminate corruption that lies in almost every sector in Nepal (Timilsina, 2019).

The objective of the movement led by Dr Govinda KC is to improve and transform the medical education system of the nation. Demands of his movement are fully focused on the reformation of medical sector. Therefore, its nature is non-political as it never had any attitudes of changing the regime or the authority, and thus the movement gained momentum and attracted general people.

History of the movement

Dr KC began his movement with the demand of restoration of provision of seniority in the nomination of the Dean in Institute of Medicine (IOM), established in 1972 under Tribhuvan University with the mandate and the responsibility of training

all the categories of human resources needed in health sector of the country. It has got several colleges scattered over the country. As a senior orthopedic surgeon of the IOM, Dr KC saw the flaws in the institute and made demand in order to take initiatives to fix them. Since the concerned authority didn't listen to his demand of appointing a dean on the basis of seniority regardless of the political affiliation of the candidate' he sat for the hunger strike in the form of fast unto the death from 15 to 18 of July 2012 (Kshetry, 2019a). Hunger strike ended with the agreement between Dr KC and the authority. The agreement was also implemented in the beginning, but the spirit of the demands were flaunted time and again by those who were in the governments.

Second round of hunger strike also ended with the appointment of a dean on the basis of seniority. But, newly appointed one was not supported by the IOM administration wholeheartedly and had to resign from the post. Then after, the government appointed a dean on the basis of political affiliation ignoring the agreement with Dr KC and not by taking seniority into consideration. Similarly, third round of hunger strike happened with the demand of ousting the person appointed dean on the basis of political inclination. Gradually additional demands were also incorporated like, separating the IOM from Tribhuvan University and providing it the university status, closing the affiliations to new medical colleges and forming the national health education policy to support the decisions about of affiliations to new medical colleges. At the end of the day, government agreed to address all the demands but, as Dr KC broke the hunger strike, the Government showed reluctance to

implement the agreements. This type of game is going on till the date of this study.

Later on, one of the most important demands was as cancellation of affiliation given by Kathmandu University to two colleges for the medical education and punishing the corrupt officials who broke the provisions, implementing the rules of seniority in appointment in IOM, National Institute of Medical Science (NIMS) and immediate initiations for establishment of medical colleges outside of the Kathmandu Valley especially in rural areas of the country. When Government agreed to form a high level commission headed by Kedar Bhakta Mathema on recommendation of health education committee, and stop all the process of affiliation till the date of formation of the policy on the basis of recommendations, mode of the movement seemed to have been changed. Similarly, government agreed to send the report of the committee headed by Jay Ram Giri to the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) for investigating the anomalies and contradictions. With this the issues raised by Dr KC's movement attracted attention of wider masses.

During successive strikes, the demands of Dr KC started to have impact in the federal parliament, Supreme Court, CIAA, Kathmandu University, several medical colleges and many other agencies. Mainly, powerful individuals who had investments in medical colleges seemed unhappy and angry with Dr KC's demands. These people started influencing the government so as to ignore the demands of Dr KC. By the end

of 2019, he has had already been in hunger strikes for 17 times but his demands are still not addressed.

Achievements of Dr KC's hunger strikes

One of the major achievements of the movement is approval of the National Health Education Act, 2018, formation of the National Health Education Commission as per the act, and closing the new affiliation for medical colleges. The institutions wanting affiliations as medical colleges to run graduate courses in medicine, dentistry and nursing would not be given affiliation to run in the Kathmandu Valley for 10 years. Colleges that have already in the process of affiliations before the date of act could be bought by the government or could be encouraged to shift to outside the valley. Provisions of the affiliations in order to run the medical colleges have been tightened and the facilities increased for the students.

One of the major achievements is commitment of the government for taking care of the general people located outside the capital valley. In order to respect this issue, if any province doesn't have at least one medical college, the government is bound to establish at least one within 5 years. Similarly a task force should be formed to facilitate and support students' enrolment and appoint the officials in Karnali Health Science Institute and also in the University.

Youth volunteers in Dr KC's movements

Contribution of the youth is crucial to make any movement successful and Dr KC's movement is not an exception. Kshetry (2019a) acknowledges that the movement could not get such a

height without the support and solidarity of youths. Dr Kshetry explains that more than 90 percent of the participants were youth. Participants were in different types of street activities to show their solidarity in the movement.

Though the nature of participants in the historic and popular movements of 1950 AD (2007BS), 1990 AD (2046BS) and 2006 AD (2062 BS) were political, social objectives were also incorporated within these. Similar is the case of Dr KC's movements. One of the active participants of the movements, Mr Om Prakash Aryal, a lawyer at Supreme Court stated that participants voluntarily joined the movements and showed their active solidarity for the true cause (Timilsina, 2019). After attaining the objective, most of such active participants disappeared as they have other responsibilities of their own. Nevertheless Dr Govinda KC has been working almost alone to bring constructive and drastic changes in medical education sector in Nepal (Timilsina, 2019).

Dr KC has taken fast on to the death for 17 rounds from July 2012 to January 2019. Volunteers have shown their solidarity and have joined the movements in various ways. They have expressed solidarity through Social Media posts, shares and comments. Many youths contributed or participated in Dr KC's movements individually or through the organizations (Kshetry, 26 July 2016b). Volunteers have written newspaper articles and the media have given a good coverage for news about the movement. The sharing of photos, videos and news reports has helped not only to popularize this movement within Nepal and outside but also to get support for it.

Methods, data analysis and conclusions

By following a qualitative approach, this study subtly explores the impact of social media, especially Facebook in youth volunteerism in a movement led by Dr KC. In the movement led by him, most of the participants were youngsters, who are also very much active in social media. Many of them were health professionals and community people most often joined into it on different stages.

Some of the prominent and devoted members of the movement organizing committee have been interviewed focusing on the issue, and we have made a thorough analysis of the contents published in Facebook page run by them. Different types of media supported Dr KC's movement including mainstream media. In order to mobilize the people in the movement, it is found that Facebook pages were created in 2014 under different names. However, the movements have been launched by 'Solidarity for Prof. Govinda KC' campaign officially.

Data analysis process

The pages have joint administrators. However in Kathmandu, one of the computer engineers has been handling this page voluntarily. The Facebook posts and comments have been analyzed in this study. In addition to that, many news reports, videos and articles in print and online media by doctors, journalists and other stakeholders have also been referred.

The main data source for this study is the official Facebook page of movement- 'Solidarity for Prof. Govinda KC'. The Facebook page status shows that it is founded in 2014 and two

youths, Suman Acharya and Pritam Subedi have been working as admin for the page. The mission of the page is to express solidarity and support for Prof. KC's movement to ensure quality health education, affordable and accessible health services and to end corruptions in the medical sector. The details of the activities in Facebook page, 'Solidarity for Prof. Govinda KC' from 2014 to end of 2019 have been tracked as follows:

S. No.	Details of Publication	Total Numbers
1.	Number of photos posted: Posts by page admin Posts by other users Profile pictures	Timeline posts - 246, mobile posts - 351, cover photos - 24 and posts by other users - 130, profile picture – 6
2.	Number of Video posts	108
3.	Number of events created	49

The Facebook posts show different forms and natures of movements - umbrella movements, lamp movements, candle movements, mask movements, light movements and others. The Facebook posts showing these unique natures got higher shares, likes and comments. These diverse natures of the protests have fueled the movements in many rounds in the national level. All of the interviewees have expressed their motivations for the contribution to the movement as volunteers and are inspired by the life of Dr KC, his demands and his non-violent ways.

Facebook page (photos, videos and events)

Three types of photographs were found in the official Facebook page- post by admin, post by others and cover photos. The number of photos posted in page are as mentioned in the table which are as follows; – timeline posts 246, mobile posts 351, cover photos 24 and posts by other users 130. The page contains posts of diverse areas in addition to medical education problems and invitations to take part in the movements. Posts in this Facebook page are pertaining to but not limited to some issues discussed here. A 13 year old child Nirmala Pant was raped and killed in Western Nepal. There are posts about this case. Similarly, there have been posts about corruption by Gopal Khadka, the then managing director of Nepal Oil Corporation, freedom of speech and opinion, protest against provision in IT Bills 2075 BS. Letter to India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi about encroachment of Lipulekh and many posts about gold smuggling are also there. These cases are not directly related to the movement of medical sectors but people tended to make this Facebook page the platform for discussion of these important issues. The number of shares, comments and likes show that Dr KC has got high level of supports from the general people, especially youths. Several issues and personalities have been found brilliantly connected to the movement with numerous reasons. In general, the photographs and posts comprise of cartoons, sketch, live or still photographs, image files related to rules and regulations, press releases, invitation notices and images about other activities. By observing all of these, it is found that many of such posts are well designed and rich in semiotic meanings. For instance a

post on 10 January 2018 with the information "The Oxygen Mask-man: The Real Hero" was among the most shared, commented and liked posts. It was shared by 123 people, got 459 likes and 24 comments. The post is a cartoon sketch depicting Yamraj, the God of death, Dr KC going towards the death, and in the middle, a vulture is waiting. This image was reposted many times and had more shares, likes and comments than mentioned above. Another most shared matter is the image of 13 October 2017, on the day of Dr KC's birthday— photo depicts Dr KC is on the bed of the hospital without any food for weeks. It has tried to present an irony that is instead of birthday cake and celebrations he is lying down on the bed even on his birthday. This photo of Dr KC has become viral as it is liked by 1.2k people, commented by 193 and shared by 82 people. Among other most noteworthy posts are, the CIAA cases of 10 August 2016 and meal between two famous leaders KP Sharma Oli and Pushpa Kamal Dahal at home of a controversial 'medical businessman' of which Marsi rice was a component. This photo was updated on 15 July 2018.

Likewise, a post highlighted PM exchanging the Govinda KC's demands of starting of MBBS course in Karnali Medical Institute with the meal provided by the businessman. Similarly, social media picked up the issue of Lokman Singh Karki, then chief of the CIAA had passed a proposal which would promote the staffs in CIAA from using Facebook. According to the updates in the social media, Mr Karki instructed to promote the social media page and urged staffs to like and provide positive comments in activities. For many people this decision of CIAA was not appropriate and they were surprised to see this.

The official Facebook page of Dr KC 'Solidarity for Prof. Govinda KC' contains 108 videos till the end of the year of 2019. The longest video is four hours long and was posted on 9 January 2018 showing the activities of the demonstration run by the supporters of the movement. Including this, there are three videos with the length of more than 2 hours. Most of the videos are records of Facebook live of activities in the movements. Except a few, most of the videos are raw and unedited. Most probably it was good decision to post them without editing because they showed the real activities with youth involvement. Comparatively, videos have got more reactions, comments than the Facebook image posts. But the video covers the issue of meal of Marsi rice updated on 12 July 2018 had got the highest number of the viewers among the videos related to the movement. In one of such posts, protesters bring a bag full of Marsi rice to make PM Oli happy, he agrees with the demand of starting MBBS course in Jumla because of favor done to him by bringing Marsi rice! According to the status, in many other colleges, after five years of their establishment, government provided approval for running MBBS program but Karnali Medical Institute did not get such permission even after 8 years of establishment. Video claims 10 thousand people gathered in front of Prime minister's residence Baluwatar asking him to address Dr KC's demand. There are other videos too, highlighting peaceful demonstration in Maitighar, Baluwatar, Basantapur and other places of the Kathmandu Valley.

The Facebook page shows 49 events till the end of 2019. Most of the events were organized based on invitation from social

sites and this method was found to be largely effective. The sharing of the events has also helped to get youth's support for the movements.

Thus overall, it is found that all these diverse posts in social sites, artistic and simple and related mostly with field of medicine attracted people. Other civil movements also like to associate themselves with Dr KC's movement so as to draw the attention of the larger mass.

Other social media (twitter, YouTube and other)

Officially Dr KC's movements have been promoted through Facebook page. Pritam Subedi stated that Dr KC does not have account in other social sites (Personal Communication, 17 March 2020). However, a lot of Hashtags have been created and tweets have been posted. The interviewee further stated that the banners had used many hashtags as per the objectives of the movements and that led to creation of hashtag in virtual platform as well. A few popular hashtags were #IAmWithDrKC, #WearewithDrKC, #LootTantra, #SolidarityforDrKC among others. In these hashtags hundreds of posts were available and they were retweeted, commented and liked by prominent journalists, celebrities and leaders. Contents of three most retweeted, liked and commented hashtags have been analyzed here, purposively.

On 1 January 2019, with #IAmWithDrKC, Amrit Gurung, a popular singer of Nepathy Band shared an emotional experience about his meeting to Dr Govinda KC with photographs showing him (Dr KC) in Hospital bed. The post appeals Dr KC to quit the strike indicating that the leaders had

turned the deaf years. 'If Dr KC remained alive, we can fight again,' states that post. This post is one of the most popular ones with 67 retweets, 1.6k likes and 39 comments.

Another post at #WearewithDrKC, posted on 6 August 2017, by Bibeksheel Nepali, an official account of Bibeksheel Nepali Party, had maximum retweets, comments and likes. The post included two photographs - in one it shows Dr Govinda KC sitting in hospital bed and in the another it has a message stating '14th days' of strike.

The #LootTantra included tweets from diverse areas where the taxpayers have to bear the cost of many cases where funds were not properly used. While analyzing all the posts, one of the most interesting and most retweeted by people was the one by Milan Pandey (an OPED writer and one of the cadres of Bibeksheel party) on 25 January 2019. This post by Pandey invites people to gather for movement to pressure the government to implement past agreement between Dr KC and the government. It reads, 'We are providing one copy of agreement letter in envelop to leaders, one piece candle and one match box.'

The post includes Dr KC's image with open invitation to gather at New Baneshwor in favor of Dr KC and against the government.

Conclusion

Due to increase of digitization and uses of social media, the high presence of youth has been seen in n digital sphere. Social media have emerged as a channel promoting a direct contact with youth. Statista (January 2020) showed that more than 80

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percent of Facebook users across the world are of the age group 16-40. According to the official definition of Nepal government people in this age group are considered youth. Social media platforms have largely been driven, sustained and made popular by youths. The power of the social media have been proved by many movements. Therefore, youth volunteerism played an undeniable role in achievement of Dr KC's movements. Volunteerism has helped on the nation building process in many ways. Youth are the catalytic force for the development of a nation. This study found that youth volunteerism can be enhanced by a continuous communication in social media. It highlighted how the utilization of Facebook promoted volunteerism and youth engagement in the civil movement led by Dr KC. The study therefore recommends similar type of studies about role of social media in youth volunteerism and youth mobilization in the areas of economic, cultural and political significance for the nation.

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Youth in DRM in Traditional Newari Settlement of Bungamati

Rija Joshi and Ashok Maharjan

Abstract

Nepal lies in seismically vulnerable zone and it is evident that Nepal faces one major disaster (earthquake) every 50-80 years therefore people have been coping with the earthquake since the beginning of the settlement. Traditions and customs are adapted with time according to challenges and experience passed with generation to generation. Newari settlements are one of the best examples of planned settlements. They have developed their own techniques and knowledge to cope with disasters and minimize the damage especially in building construction techniques. We can observe unique features of Newari settlements along with distinct practices developed with time. Indigenous knowledge is helpful for the community but is often forgotten, as these practices are not continued and not passed on to new generations. Change in lifestyle and new resources have led to forgetting indigenous knowledge, which is a loss of age long processed knowledge, and understanding specific to the location.

This paper tries to explore the indigenous knowledge prevailed in Kathmandu valley specifically in a Newari settlement to cope with the earthquake and associate it with the involvement of youths for the continuity and support to the society in long run.

Keywords: *Indigenous knowledge, disaster risk reduction, traditional settlement, youth*

Introduction

Nepal is exposed to a variety of natural hazards and human induced disasters. More than 80 percent of the total population of Nepal is at risk from natural hazards. The country is among the 20 most disaster-prone countries in the world. Out of 21 cities around the world that lie in similar seismic hazard zones, Kathmandu city is at highest risk in terms of impact on people. (Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), 2018). Among all disasters, Nepal is a country of highest seismic hazard and experienced the consequences of many earthquakes including those of great earthquakes. 45 million years ago, the Indian continent collided into Southern Tibet. The Indian continent is driven under Tibet, pushing lightweight sediments upwards and thus the formation of the Himalayas. Nepal sits across the boundary between India and southern Tibet, which are still moving towards each other by 2 meters per century. This movement creates pressure within the Earth, which builds up and can only be released through earthquakes. This is the reason earthquakes happen in Nepal. Based on the seismic

record of the number of earthquakes that occurred since 1255, earthquakes of magnitude greater than 8 occurred on average once every 80 years. The 25th April 2015 Gorkha earthquake of magnitude 7.8 was the biggest earthquake in last 80 years. According to the seismological centre of Nepal medium and small size earthquake event occur in a different part of Nepal frequently (Dangol, 2011).

Nepal experience major earthquake every 50-80 years. People have learnt to adapt with the disaster and minimize its damage. This knowledge has been transferred generations to generations. Various studies have depicted the need of documentation of indigenous knowledge. As technology gets advanced day-by-day indigenous knowledge is often forgotten and neglected in due course of time. New generation lacks such knowledge causing loss of invaluable learning from the past to disappear in modern society. Therefore, new generation should be informed and scientific basis has to be investigated to make it more justifiable in present context. Studies have been carried out for indigenous knowledge by various authors in academic and professional research studies. The use of indigenous knowledge for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is important because it represents the essence of self-reliance and sustainability. The strength of societies is based upon their ability to thrive with their own capacities and resources. Disasters happen when hazards strike unprepared societies. There is no better way of confronting a disaster than to prevent it from happening. Thus, indigenous knowledge not only has potential, but a power proven by thousands of years of survival.

Traditional settlements in Kathmandu valley

Kathmandu Valley is the most urbanized region in Nepal and its urban areas have been important economically, administratively, and politically for hundreds of years. The urbanization of Kathmandu Valley goes back over 1500 years, and the old towns of the Valley are characterized by a strong cultural history and pattern-dense settlement with courtyards as in-town open space, squares as intervening open spaces, temples and other cultural sites, and greenery and open space at the periphery.

The old settlements were located at relatively higher elevations, surrounded, and separated from each other by agricultural land; almost all waste was biodegradable, and sewerage were used in agriculture. This is one of the first planning phases for disaster resilient cities as communities were well aware of the hazard caused by flood in Kathmandu valley. Further, these compact settlements on top of the hill ensured controlled settlement growth and conservation of agricultural fields. The agriculture field providing food security to community and provides safe buffering from the water induced hazards, flood. Agricultural fields retain heavy rain within the field preventing flash flood and inundation of the settlements. Today we experience flash flood and inundation of settlements as most of the ground water recharge system are sealed, due to impermeable surface dressing in roads, courtyards, built-up boundary and most public spaces.

Open spaces within the settlement in another important feature of Newari settlement. Traditional opens spaces in Kathmandu

valley consists of closed courtyards, neighbourhood squares, palace squares, open spaces at town periphery and street network. These open spaces provide opportunity for community interaction, friendly atmosphere, and unity in communities. Traditional Newari settlement of Kathmandu valley possess its own identity and character with provision of different hierarchy of urban spaces from city level to residential level. Open space is one of the prominent aspects of the urban space. Open spaces in traditional settlement are more defined as social spaces, following traditional and cultural trends. These are not only the breathing spaces of the city but are the places for interplay between people, activities, movements and urban forms (Shrestha S., 2013) .The open public space structure appears to seek out active individual interaction through application of homogeny, streamlining and calming. The communal life philosophy of Newar demanded a lot more space for interaction than allocated in the classical Hindu patterning of town, and, along with the durbar square and neighbourhood chowk, many crossroad nodes also transformed into communal activity spaces such as market squares or just festive squares.(Tiwari, 2016).

Earlier these spaces have been mostly looked upon as cultural and social space but the 25th April 2015 Gorkha earthquake has realized us these spaces are not just meant for cultural and social activities but it serves community during disaster as safe haven. Further tied up these spaces with cultural and religious significance so that these spaces are properly preserved, unlike today where every small space is encroached.

Indigenous knowledge and practices

Indigenous practice is often the results of application of culture, context and location specific knowledge to solve local problems. These are evolved through many years and locally tailored with locally available resources and owned by community. It includes an understanding of society-nature relationships that have been tested by time and proven sustainable and successful in limiting the effects of hazards. This knowledge has usually been internalized by communities and become part of their life styles, sometimes transparent to outsiders or even to themselves. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) define local and indigenous knowledge as understandings, skills and philosophies developed by societies with long histories of interaction with their natural surroundings. The basic component of any country's knowledge system is its indigenous knowledge. For indigenous peoples, local knowledge informs decision-making about fundamental aspects of day-to-day life. Indigenous knowledge encompasses skills, experiences and insights of people applied to maintain or improve their livelihood (World Bank, 2020). Therefore, each community has their own indigenous knowledge transferred generations to generations evolved over time that help them further develop in their local environment. However, at present globalization trend has resulted in trend of losing local values and knowledge. New invention, new knowledge system, new technologies and change in availability of resources has resulted in the transformation of traditional practices, but nevertheless this indigenous knowledge are resultant of long

evolved knowledge and should be the basis of further development in any community.

A research study on indigenous knowledge in watershed management (Sharma, Bajracharya, & Sitaula, 2009) has depicted that, the wisdom possessed by local inhabitants that has emerged, as a means to survive under remote, isolated and harsh climatic conditions in the mountainous region of Nepal is the only tool that offers a great potential for their survival. Nepal government in indigenous and local knowledge for Climate Resilience and Climate Change Risk Management has carried out various studies. Such studies in indigenous knowledge have focused on climate change in rural context outside Kathmandu valley. Hereby this study is based on indigenous knowledge in Kathmandu valley in Newari settlements focusing on earthquake and traditional practices and youth involvement to cope with it. Since, Kathmandu valley is earthquake prone area and it causes most damage during disaster, there is a large range of indigenous knowledge developed for earthquake resistant structures and managing open spaces for disaster management. There are enough evidences of seismic-resistant elements in traditional building typologies and construction practices. A survey of vernacular building types in various parts of Nepal revealed several earthquake-resistant features being incorporated in local building constructions. These included symmetric configuration, small length-to-breadth ratio, symmetrically located small openings; a low floor-height, and a limited number of stories and use of wooden studs (Dixit, Parajuli, & Guragain, 2004).

Indigenous knowledge is an important source of wisdom for sustainability but it is also crucial for disaster risk reduction. Indigenous people can teach the world about sustainable lifestyles and living in harmony with nature. The Sendai Framework underlines the importance of addressing the needs of indigenous peoples. It also flags the role of indigenous, traditional and local knowledge in fighting disaster risk. It calls explicitly for governments to employ a people-centred approach and engage directly with indigenous peoples in the design and implementation of policies, plans and standards, and to use traditional, indigenous and local knowledge and practices to complement scientific knowledge in disaster risk assessment. Mainly, the inclusion of indigenous youth in global conversations for their history, traditions, languages and knowledge are part of the very bedrock of human heritage. However, this study is focused on indigenous knowledge and traditional wisdom on earthquake resistant technology in Nepal, with active participation of youth.

Therefore, study has been carried out to understand the indigenous knowledge and practices in disaster risk reduction in a community, which includes building structures and other practical implications outside of buildings and addressing role of youths in Disaster Risk Reduction of Bungamati.

Disaster risk reduction

Disaster risk reduction (DRR) is a relatively new concept. There are different definitions of the term in the technical literature but is generally understood to mean the broad development and application of policies, strategies and

practices to minimize vulnerabilities and disaster risks throughout society. DRR is a systematic approach to identifying, assessing and reducing the risks of disaster. It aims to reduce socioeconomic vulnerabilities to disaster as well as dealing with the environmental and other hazards that trigger them. It is the responsibility of development and relief agencies alike and should be an integral part of the way such organizations do their work, not an add-on or one-off action. DRR is very wide-ranging and there is potential and need for DRR initiatives in just about every sector of development and humanitarian work (Twigg, 2009).

Using this approach, system or community resilience can be understood as the capacity to:

- anticipate, minimize and absorb potential stresses or destructive forces through adaptation or resistance
- manage or maintain certain basic functions and structures during disastrous events
- recover or ‘bounce back’ after an event

‘Resilience’ is generally seen as a broader concept than ‘capacity’ because it goes beyond the specific behaviour, strategies and measures for risk reduction and management that are normally understood as capacities. No community can ever be completely safe from natural and man-made hazards. It may be helpful to think of a disaster resilient or disaster-resistant community as ‘the safest possible community that we have the knowledge to design and build in a natural hazard context, minimizing its vulnerability by maximizing the application of

DRR measures. DRR is therefore the collection of actions, or processes, undertaken towards achieving resilience (Twigg, 2009).

Concept of disaster resilience may be new but people have been coping with disaster from the starting of the civilization. Kathmandu valley faces major earthquake repeatedly, old settlements have unique features to cope with disaster, and open space is one of them. This research will make a study on how traditional settlements and its cultural practices have been managed for disaster risk reduction and possibility of involvement of youth. Therefore, this research is an attempt to explore traditional practices and indigenous knowledge prevailed in Newar Community for disaster risk reduction. Further, the research also studies role of youth in disaster risk reduction with case study of Bungamati a traditional Newar settlement in Southern part of Kathmandu valley in Lalitpur District.

Methodology

The research paradigm adopted for this particular research is constructivism paradigm. Research's main aim is to find out traditional practices and indigenous knowledge with presence of youth activities during earthquake 2015. The nature of knowledge is subjective and unleashes the traditional practices and indigenous knowledge in traditional Newari settlements. The research is focused on 'what' and 'how'. What the traditional practices and indigenous knowledge are and how youth can contribute in Disaster Risk Reduction.

Epistemology includes what we need to do to produce knowledge and what scientific knowledge looks like once we have produced it (Neuman, 2014). Here it is believed that knowledge is subjective because it is socially constructed and mind dependent, communities' stories, belief systems, claims of spiritual, and earth connections find space as legitimate knowledge. In this research, information can be obtained through observation, secondary source, field study, interview with key informants, which would be later interpreted. Valid source of knowledge is interaction with people and interpretation of maps and documents.

Methodology is both the collection of methods or rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken (Somekh & Lewin, 2005). Methodology refers to general principle that underlines how we investigate the world and how we demonstrate that the knowledge generated is valid. The purpose of interpretative research is to understand people's experiences. The research takes place in a natural setting where the participants make their living. Assumptions about the multiplicity of realities also inform the research process. The research questions are generally open-ended. Data gathering techniques selected are interviews, observations, personal and official documents, photographs, drawings, informal conversations with focal group discussions, and artefacts. Research Methodology is qualitative using observations and open interviews. To ensure the validity of strategies, triangulation was carried out using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm emerging findings.

To understand the community literature reviews and map of the settlement along with historical studies has been carried out. Unstructured interview of six key informant of Bungamati has been conducted to understand the perception of disaster especially focusing on earthquake and their view on indigenous knowledge and traditional practices. These interviews have been logically interpreted.

Experience at Bungamati

During the research work, authors visited the place several times and interacted with local communities regarding their experience with disaster especially focusing on earthquake. Major disasters faced by Bungamati are Earthquake, landslide, flood, and fire and storm wind in terms of intensity of risk it carries. Most occurring disaster is flood, which persists every year, landslide, storm that occurs in few years, and earthquake and fire are least occurring disaster. Based on the damage on property and frequent occurrence flood damages most in Bungamati. However, this is in case of agriculture and crops and not within the settlement itself. Even with less occurrence earthquake is most likely to damage more property and lives in present scenario.

Despite of knowledge a major earthquake occurs in Nepal every 50-80 years preparation was inadequate for Gorkha Earthquake 2015. In present day most of the disaster preparedness is focused on structural safety, which is quite important. Building bye laws and structural analysis has been focused by local government but they are not applied in practice by majority. They take the process lengthy and time

consuming. In earlier times, people built their houses with locally available materials and they enhanced their skills in building construction. There were special group of people, caste, who followed the profession generation-to-generation transferring skills and knowledge in due course of time. Traditional building practices as mentioned earlier in another study consists of earthquake resisting mechanisms during the construction, various rituals are performed in public buildings so that people maintain and repair the structural elements timely. However, at present such practices are diminishing. Every link associated with culture and tradition has lost its value with due course of time, its significance is forgotten.

Besides structural safety practices disaster preparedness centre is being established in Bungamati so that 300 people can take shelter in the centre during disaster. We can observe in traditional settlements there are enough open spaces in each community. These open spaces can be used for socio cultural events and provide shelter during disaster. The buildings are similar to other Newari settlements but unique architecturally mostly expressed through its famous wood works. Majority of the buildings are mud, brick and wood construction. Nevertheless, there are haphazard infill developments with modern technology disrupting the architectural fabric of the place. Transition from extended to single-family systems has encouraged vertical division in traditional building stocks with unmonitored renovation. There are ample multifunctional public spaces and amenities in the form of temples public squares, monastery squares, rest houses, plinth area, water

conduits, etc. Commercialization, misuse, encroachment, and neglect of cultural spaces are noticeable issues.

Bungamati is ancient 7th century settlement located in southern part of Kathmandu valley. Newars are the indigenous inhabitants of the Bungamati. The settlement is characterised by traditional Newari settlement pattern and architectural significances. Settlement built up is compact, with hierarchy of streets and open spaces. Rato Machhindra Nath temple being one of the significant temple of Bungamati acts as anchoring node for the settlement. Traditional Newari buildings and well-distributed water sources are typical Newari settlement form observed in Bungamati. However, 2015 earthquakes on 25th April and 12th May severely affected Bungamati. 854 houses out of 1351 houses completely collapsed along with Machhindranath Temple, 315 partially damaged. Six lost their lives and several were injured.

As, most of the buildings collapsed and many houses were inhabitable, people had to come out for shelter. Bungamati like any other traditional settlement has numerous open spaces in different hierarchy. These open spaces turned to be safe haven for the earthquake victims. Besides the open farmland outside the core settlement area were extensively used for building temporary shelters. Most of the families stayed in courtyards and other open spaces. Different community members gathered and sheltered in one common place.

First rescue was done by the locals and brought in the courtyards. In later days, different I/NGOs and humanitarian organisations set up camps and provided service to the affected

families in these courtyards. People does not tend to stay far away from their belongings during the disaster situation, therefore traditional open spaces connected to each tole were occupied with the nearby inhabitants. This also safeguarded the property as well as people feel safe in their own locality.

From the very beginning, Bungamati was in highlight after earthquake. Volunteers from Kathmandu University's College of Art department was the first group in the response process at Bungamati from non-government side. They helped with building temporary shelters, conducted art healing workshops, etc. There were multiple groups of volunteers of engineers for preliminary assessments, doctors free check-ups, others for food and water provision. Immediate temporary shelters were built by community and were supported by the government. Besides organisations like Danish Peoples Aid, Centre for Integrated Urban Development, Friends Society Nepal, there were various groups and institutions for the volunteering support in Bungamati.

Rehabilitation and reconstruction work in Bungamati

Much effort has been applied on the rebuilt and restarts the conservation of heritage in Bungamati, by local, national and international level. As mentioned earlier, early respond in Bungamati was carried out by local initiatives it took two days for the authorities to reach out Bungamati according to the interviewees. It was local youth groups who became active in rescue work with the help of few police and armies. However, in later days, Bungamati got much of attention in National and

International media, therefore many organisations came in support of Bungamati.

Volunteers within the locality and from outside the locality from various parts of Kathmandu as well as international volunteers came in Bungamati. Distribution of relief materials and construction of temporary shelter were early response work carried out. Many youth volunteers were engaged during the early response phase. Many help poured in Bungamati as it is near to within easy access to transportation for Kathmandu dwellers, people got emotional attachment with Bungamati as one of the major Temple in Bungamati collapsed completely, media and donor agencies were focusing in Bungamati.

However, the reconstruction and rehabilitation phase seem to be different as there are challenges in maintaining the historical ambience of Bungamati. Reconstruction work require special skill and expertise. Mostly reconstruction work is related to building construction; traditionally local people would build their houses by their own as they had proper knowledge in traditional building techniques. However, continuity to these practices is decreasing. There are just few handfuls of youths involved in woodcarvings and other building works. Therefore, Bungamati has to rely on carpenters and masons from outside for reconstruction work.

It has been observed that reconstruction work carried out by local initiatives is more effective than donor driven reconstruction process. People tend to take ownership and support such support, which make the reconstruction efficient and effective. Reconstruction work in Bungamati started earlier

than other regions as Prime Minister himself inaugurated the reconstruction of Rato Machhindranath Temple on January 16, 2016. Construction company carried out the reconstruction work with Sri Lankan government aid. However, the reconstruction work was not satisfactory and could not continue. As a recent development National Reconstruction Authority, is now working on to reconstruct the temple with community participation. Nevertheless, there are good examples in Bungamati reconstruction where local people have actively participated in the reconstruction work and completed successfully.

Besides reconstruction of private buildings are ongoing in individual level. Government is supporting with Rs. 300,000 to rebuild and Rs.100,000 to retrofit, which is yet not effective as most of the houses are not able to meet government criteria during rebuilding, lack of documents in traditional settlements, and funding not being sufficient.

Cultural views of earthquake in Bungamati

In different places, there is different view on cultural aspect of earthquake. There is presence of practices or rituals during the earthquake. It is also culture as well as indigenous knowledge on earthquake. During research, actively six key informants participated in in-depth interviews. All of them believed that earthquakes are natural phenomenon and is not the results of human activity. There is no any religious value regarding earthquake and no temple has been built related with earthquake in Bungamati. Among six informants, three informants told that there are aware of how people used to

shout from god's name and come out of their house during earthquake. They believed it was practiced so that they could inform other neighbours to be safe and request Narasimha or "Vokha Jaya" (which means *Vokha*: earthquake, *Jaya*: god), to control his anger and reduce shaking of earth and lessen damage of property and lives.

They believed it was practiced so that they could inform other neighbours to be safe and request Narasimha, also known as earthquake god, to control his anger and reduce shaking of earth and lessen damage of property and lives. In addition, during earthquake people stay inside pressing ground with thumb, which seems to be logical, as it will reduce casualties caused due to stumpage.

Guthi practices at Bungamati

There are 21 guthis in Bungamati that are active until today. Most of the guthis in case of Bungamati are based on caste. Our ancestors had started practice of guthi system to conduct special rituals and conduct cultural activities. This same group of people help each other in time of need. These guthi creates strong bonding within the community as well as help them mobilize whenever needed effectively.

The general characteristic of guthi reflects the concept of mutual performance of activities. There are three major professional groups in the guthi, the responsibility of accomplishing any activity go turn by turn during the ritual performance. Thakali of the guthi is changed in a periodic manner and on turn. All three major groups have their senior member as Thakali on a rotational basis. Generally, in guthi

there is a strict role for participation, if anyone do not participate would automatically rule out for further activities or penalised. The guthi executive ensures equality in workload and manages sustainability from generation to generation.

The routine operation of guthi is scheduled and organized according to the traditions. In case of any problems in operation, they are solved through discussion and consensus. The final verdict of decision is circulated through executives and is a ‘must abide’ for the general members. They have strong faith on guthi built over a time through mentoring, transferring ancestral knowledge and ‘sense of belongingness’. During special events guthis are well scheduled and working procedures are well performed with proper coordination as they have gone through generation long practices and systems have been evolved accordingly.

Due to Gorkha Earthquake 2015, the infrastructures of most guthis were partially or totally damaged. Trends of performing rituals in commercial party banquet has increased, which increases expenditure, also this will decrease the community bonding that would otherwise occur during the preparation for the feast by the community members. This is just an example of changing lifestyle and social scenario, which eventually leads to less social youth groups. At present, most of the personnel involved in reconstruction work are Indian carpenters displacing the locals. There are very few cases where local carpenters are involved. Especially locals are involved in guthi buildings and community spaces due to emotiogal attachment.

Trainings are provided for disaster preparedness and new groups are formed but such trend is not supporting the society as per the locals in Bungamati. Such preparedness trainings should be provided to guthi members or other already existing community group for better results. There are very few who genuinely utilize the trainings. Usually people participate only when they are provided with some benefit and discontinue when there is no provision of economic benefit. Due to different organisations who started such trend, feeling for self-help and volunteerism has diminished. This has been major problem observed after Gorkha Earthquake 2015. During our interview with the locals, however there is biased view regarding involvement of youths in disaster response. According to some, there was active participation from youths of Bungamati right after disaster in rescue and search operations. Police, army and support from outside the community were received in later days only. Therefore, it will be more fruitful if the synergy efforts of guthi members and Youth of Bungamati on case of Disaster Risk Reduction.

Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices in Bungamati

There is no specific cultural practice in Bungamati regarding the earthquake safety besides too aware the community people. However, traditional settling of settlement with public open spaces allows the residents for effective rescue and evacuation after earthquake. Proper traditional buildings practices were not followed and old buildings were not maintained timely which caused maximum damage in the earthquake. Cultural practices

of regular maintenance of public and individual buildings need to be conducted regularly.

Guthi is one of the effective group in Newar community to conduct festivals and jatras, besides, they also make necessity arrangements for the effectiveness of the festival by repair and maintenance of required infrastructure. Therefore, such community groups and guthis should be strengthened. Youths should be encouraged to participate in such community and cultural activities actively. Trainings on traditional construction practices and introduction of such knowledge in curriculum can be effective to transfer knowledge to new generation.

Effectiveness of disaster risk management

The age of the buildings and the traditional construction technology using mud mortar, mud brick and wood without appropriate earthquake resistance caused the massive level of damage and also the internal roads are mostly pedestrian that on one hand enhances walkability and health of the community, but during the earthquake, the collapsed buildings blocked most of these routes. The earthquake destroyed majority of pipeline and water supply was a critical issue as the community was short of water supply.

It has been more than half decade since the 2015 earthquake and the reconstruction process is extremely slow primarily due to Nepal's weak governance. Nepal's political environment is not a stable one as institutional bureaucracy; corruption and competition for power are political norms. Post-earthquake, events like constitution issuance, multiple elections of prime ministers created several political conflicts; the most damaging

was Indian embargo for five months that started in September 2015. Inadequate coordination, inexperience of construction management, lack of financial and human resources are some of the barriers to the reconstruction process. The National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) that was established in late December 2015 only began operations after mid- 2016 and effective coordination between the NRA, local governments, and line agencies as well as between the NRA and other development organization has been a continuing challenge in the process.

Youth as key for DRR

During any disaster, the local community and particularly the youth members are the first responders. Involving youth volunteers will help in fostering local ownership making them more capable to take part in development planning and emergency management. It has been observed that when young people receive preparedness training they are more likely to act wisely and protect from different type of disasters due to having unique strengths and skill sets which are enhanced by community support and collaboration.

Knowledge base of disaster management committees play crucial role in their existence. It might be useful to avoid the approach of knowledge sharing which at present is based on *Top-Down* approach. It might be tough for the professionals to transform the knowledge to a nonprofessional. There would be a chance for *Bottom-Up* approach of knowledge sharing through incorporation of local knowledge and technology. On this knowledge management, without active participation of

youth, it seems impossible to reduce the disaster risk in community. In case of Bungamati community, youth shared knowledge of disaster risk toward local people and children including women. Youth played a vital role to aware local community about risk and vulnerability of earthquake during preparedness phase with help of Red Cross Unit and local health post.

A number of case studies have highlighted in engaging youth volunteers in disaster risk reduction and environment management by UN volunteers. Involvement of youth volunteer helped to coordinate relief for tsunami victims in South Asia in 2004, and helped government in disaster information collection and dissemination, damage and relief need assessment and in relief coordination. Similarly, team of student volunteers from local NGOs worked in worst flood affected areas to prevent spread of communicable diseases post 2005 Mumbai Floods. Similarly, there are numerous examples on youth involvement in disaster management worldwide. (United Nations Volunteers, 2017)

A number of example can be found in Gorkha Earthquake 2015 regarding involvement of youth in DRM. There were numerous youth involvement in Bungamati after earthquake as well. Large number of volunteers were mobilised by Nepal Engineers' Association (NEA) and National Society of Earthquake Technology (NSET) right after earthquake for assessment of vulnerable buildings in various affected settlements. Large number of youths mobilised themselves to distribute relief materials in individual as well as in

coordination with the organisations working in earthquake relief. Street Drama Campaigns were organised by Association of Youth Organisation Nepal (AYON), Pathshala Theatre and Youth Initiative jointly to educate and engage people in Post-Earthquake Rebuilding where students from different schools and colleges participated in the event.

Youths today are more engaged than in earlier times, education, profession and other means of socializing has made them busy so they are less interested in social activities according to one of the senior interviewee from Bungamati. Local authorities in wards are also trying to involve youths in the social and cultural activities but has not been much successful. However, involvement of women has drastically increased than previous. Women have become more confident and organized and have formed various working group. Recently, these women groups were highly participated in cleaning the “*de pukhu*”, inner part of Bungamati, as compared with men. Young girls were actively participated in such rehabilitation works. Due to volunteerism, they were increasing the empowerment level, very active to communicate with outer peoples, able to express their view without any hesitation

During reconstruction and rehabilitation phase, voluntary involvement is less observed from those who were involved in immediate rescue and relief work. The reconstruction and rehabilitation work require more technical knowledge and professional skills. This is one of the major reasons for less involvement from the community. Ward has organized discussions with professionals within the ward for technical and

professional inputs in rehabilitation and reconstruction; still there is less participation in professional level for community work. However, people participate in reconstruction and rehabilitation of community buildings and monuments with voluntary support in terms of funds and labour force.

However, there are various challenges that need to be addressed in youth volunteers in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM). Often social norms and culture prevent youth energy to come in frontline during decision-making process during disaster situations. Youth and children are often severely affected due to high level of vulnerabilities. Therefore, youth need to be adequately trained in disaster preparedness and response for maximum function of youth in disaster situation.

Conclusion

It has been observed that the settlements were more united in the past, but at present ideologies and thoughts are varied among the family members. Therefore, rehabilitation and reconstruction works are being delayed. Moral values of helping society, working in community should be learnt from past. The management technique foreseen by our ancestors are slowly diminishing due to modern practices and changing social context. Education system should include the valid traditional practices and indigenous knowledge in curriculum so that youth are aware from very young age, and they drive the society well for tomorrow. Besides change in traditional profession be it agriculture, wood carving, carpentry or any other traditional profession, is leading to loss for indigenous

knowledge. Less economic opportunity in traditional practices is another major cause of the loss.

Most of people in Bungamati belong to indigenous communities whereas youth indigenous people are higher in population, which supports to decrease risk of disaster especially earthquake. Hence, The Sendai Framework underlines the importance of recognizing the roles of indigenous people in addressing disaster risk through closing the gap between indigenous peoples and other peoples in society or using traditional knowledge and traditional technologies to ensure resilience to impact of disaster risk. Simply, Economics shortage in society should be broken through using local knowledge and local ingenuity. Therefore, indigenous people should be passed traditional knowledge from one generation to other generation. Guthi, saving groups “KOSH”, women groups, flute music groups are very important indigenous knowledge of Bungamati, it should be preserved at time, which create resilience for disaster risk. Hence, indigenous knowledge is a vital for DRR because the concerns and capacities of indigenous peoples to be taken into account at all, times when it comes to curbing disaster risk.

Youth can be involved in DRM through various innovative ideas. Working with youth open up new and progressive ideas. With the involvement of youth in relief and reconstruction phase, a country can bring much anticipated development more efficiently and effectively. Involvement of youth introduces more innovative ideas use of modern technology, latest resources and updated working methodology can be achieved

through the involvement of youth. Youth can be involved in awareness raising campaigns, rescue work during the disaster, further for the reconstruction process. Youth has more capability of learning in new environment and implementing innovative ideas. Trainings in technical aspect will be more useful for the reconstruction of the traditional buildings. Engagement of young engineers and architects in reconstruction, doctors in medical facilities after disaster and other professionals in related area can be mobilised during the disaster. Effective coordination committee can be formed by youth for working together with the community and other local organisations.

Similarly, youth could be the best resource for mitigating the disaster risk in traditional settlements if they have proper knowledge on indigenous skills and cultural practices are alive in the community. Therefore, the use of indigenous knowledge, youth and local resources are very important for DRR because they represent the essence of self-reliance and sustainability of society.

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Volunteering in Recovery from Substance Abuse in Nepal

Sarah Maharjan and Bishnu Kandel

Abstract

The alarming rate of drug abuse in Nepal has become a matter of serious concern for the state and the society. Drug abuse has become a tragic reality for a section of youth from their mid-teens to early thirties. The trend of drug abuse by younger generation and easy access to drugs have invited violence- both physical as well as psychosocial, along with inter/intra personal disturbances. Though there are about 300 rehabilitation centers throughout the country, various surveys show that the numbers of relapses are greater than the number of recovered drug users. It has been found that the transition from the protected rehabilitation centre to diverse social environment has created adjustment problems leading to prolonged frustration, depression, substance abuse and even suicide. This paper addresses issues related to recovering drug users, adjustment problems and need of a platform to adjust, explore and involve into recreational as well as adaptive social activities for addicts after rehab. In the real society things are not always structured and orderly and hence, protective space for recovered addicts is

not possible. Thus, it becomes essential for the recovering addicts to get opportunity to dive into an inclusive space after rehabilitation before being constrained by societal norms and values. This inclusive space can be brought in by uniting youths of nation for the recovering youths through youth activism, counseling and volunteerism. These activities create a feeling of belongingness and self-confidence within the recovering addicts which in turn promote physical as well as psychosocial development. This gradually builds in them positive emotions for relatively long time. It also helps to reduce their violent and destructive behavior significantly. The mass awareness campaigns regarding addiction of youths and focus on inclusion of youth volunteers in this process helps to build better society and nation.

Keywords: *Addiction, rehabilitation, volunteerism, youth activism, recovery from drug abuse*

The word addiction can be understood through different models. Two renowned models of addiction are: the disease model and the psychoanalytic model. According to the disease model, addiction is like a disease such as diabetes that can only be managed but never cured and if untreated leads to death. According to psychoanalytic model, the substance abuse or addiction is caused due to the behavioral and emotional problems that are created due to conflict between the unconscious, which is repressed in the ego, super ego, id, and the environment (Khantzian & Brehm, 1992; Murphy & Khantzian, 1995). It has been estimated that 50,000

individuals (approximately 0.3% of the total adult population) take drugs because of addiction in Nepal with a significant increase in this figure occurring in recent years. Overwhelming majority of them are young men who inject a pharmaceutical combination of buprenorphine, diazepam and a sedating antihistamine. Heroin use is less common, but still it is prevalent. (Kinkel *et al.*, 2015). According to the Report of Central Bureau of Statistics, peer pressure is the major cause of beginning of or drug intake (78.7%) followed by curiosity (58.5%) and family problem (19.9%) (Government of Nepal Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014).

Youth and activism

The United Nations, for statistical purposes, defines ‘youth’, as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years, but says that definition of youths can be changed with circumstances, especially with the changes in demographic, financial, economic and socio-cultural settings. There is mounting evidence that volunteering, participating in service projects and other forms of community involvement are more than feel-good activities. They can contribute to better outcomes for youth and for communities (Opportunity Nation, 2014). For previous drug abusers as well as for those who are still engaged in addiction youth activism can be the most appropriate period of transition from the dependent rehabilitating environment of to independent social reintegration phase. It can also help find the answers to questions like, why the society is hesitant to accept drug users in their circle after recovery. It can also help previous drug abusers to understand the types of criticisms

faced by recovering addicts while returning to the society. Volunteerism also helps them to understand impact of constructive and pro-social behavior better. It helps them to actively participate and be involved in volunteering activities which helps them make meaning, friendships and new bonds within themselves as well as with the others which can provide them better understanding about living and life.

Volunteerism challenges

Volunteerism of any type is best way to help substance users after rehabilitation by providing a safe, non-judgmental zone and chance for them to engage with other voluntary groups. Such engagements give them direction to move towards social responsibility and also to understand the social dynamics. Young people who volunteer regularly develop a civic identity, as leaders and change makers, and therefore become more socially and politically active adults (Mitchell, 2011). However, the major challenge they have to face during transition from protective rehabilitation environment to societal environment mass criticism. They are considered to be inconsistent and any mistake committed by them is generally judged in negative light. Though a non-drug user has equal tendency to make similar mistakes, their mistakes are ignored, undermined and at times overlooked.

Sources of data

The necessary data for the paper has been extracted qualitatively from library sources, research papers, journals as well as different websites. Besides we have got authentic information through selected interviews of both male and

female former substance users who are now actively engaged in sectors of drug addiction and rehab in Kathmandu and Lalitpur districts. In Nepal, all organizations providing health services to people who use drugs are organized under the umbrella group “Recovering Nepal” (Kinkel *et al.*, 2015). Peer pressure, curiosity and lack of awareness are often cited as the main reasons for youth getting involved in drug use. It is therefore essential to generate awareness and organize programs in schools and colleges about the ill effects of drug abuse and addiction (Sumra, 2019). Surveys from Substance Abuse and Mental health Service Administration (SAHMSA) have found out that about 7.3% of the population over the age 12 was into drug addiction in 2008. The same studies showed that 23.3 % of this population group was into binge drinking in the 30 days prior to the study and about 7% are alcohol dependent or abusive (2009). In Nepal, it was estimated that about 10% of HIV prevalence could be attributed to injecting drug users (IDUs): current and ex users. The use of illicit drugs peaks at ages 18 to 20 years, with nearly 20 percent of this group indulging at least on monthly basis. Rates decline with age until the early forties. Although rate of drug abuse among college students is virtually the same as for others the same age, college graduates are less likely than other adults to use drugs (SAMHSA, 2001).

Socio-demographic characteristics

The age of injecting drug users ranged from 16 to 57 years and almost eighty-five percent of them in the Kathmandu Valley were below 30 years of age. A majority (73%) were unmarried.

Among the 21 percent currently married, in Kathmandu Valley six percent lived without a sexual partner. The majority had some education with (82%) having attended secondary school or higher education. Less than one percent of them were illiterate. A large proportion of IDUs (39.3%) were from the Newar community, followed by the Tamang/Lama/Magar (24.6%) communities and Chettri/Thakuri (20.1%) communities. Around 80% of the IDUs had been imprisoned or detained at least once for some reason by the police. Out of them, about 60.5 percent had been imprisoned or detained for some reason in the past one year. Two percent of the respondents had injected while they were in prison (National Estimate of HIV 2012). This could have been possible because they could have bribed the people in prison administration who secretly would deliver it to them. They could also have got it by bribing prison guards.

Provisions in Nepal's national youth policy

In the Nepal's National Youth Policy 2072 (2015) under the title 'Strategy and Action Policy' ways of controlling narcotic drugs are outlined. The policy has introduced preventive and therapeutic programs to discourage addiction and other self-defeating practices among the youths. The government along with other private organizations has been trying to work cooperatively in this field. It also includes bringing in rehabilitation centers to help the substance users to get out of drugs. Through these types of provision in Nepal role of volunteerism can have space in order to help the recovering addicts connect with their family and society through

themselves being involved in volunteerism along with other youths. Volunteerism can thus play an important role in the lives of recovering addicts by taking initiatives and promoting activities at the grass-root as well as national level.

Although Nepal government has made such policies research shows that most of the rehabilitation centers have been led by the former substance users with minimal support from the government. The government used to offer financial supports of about Rupees 25,000 to 50,000 in the form of grants to organize certain programs, even such meager support have been discounted since two years ago and the programs has been removed from the planning project (Sharma, personal communication, November 16, 2019). Mr Bishnu Sharma, founder member and executive director at Recovering Nepal, Lalitpur says that these programs have been stopped as government sees problem of drug addiction to be local problem and thinks that major support should come from the locals and international donors.

Drugs are a bio-psychosocial problem. Drug abusers and the ones who are recovering are always looked upon with mistrust and fear. Under such circumstances of mistrust, though one is motivated and has recovered, there are high chances of relapse due to frustration. Sometimes there can be physiological dependence wherein the body of the individual may be dependent on the use of drug even if the individual is unwilling to take it. According to American Psychiatric Association, ‘addiction is a complex condition, a brain disease that is manifested by compulsive substance use despite harmful

consequence.' In 1964 a WHO Expert Committee introduced the term 'dependence' to replace the terms 'addiction' and 'habituation'. The term can be used generally with reference to the whole range of psychoactive drugs (drug dependence, chemical dependence, substance use dependence), or with specific reference to a particular drug or class of drugs (e.g. alcohol dependence, opioid dependence). While ICD-10 describes dependence in terms applicable across drug classes, there are differences in dependence symptoms for different drugs (2010).

However, in Nepal, the word 'addiction' is termed as a crime. There is a difference. This shows biasness towards addicts prevails in the society. Drug addiction can also be termed as a recurring problem. The users might think that he/ she will take it to a 'limit' but it becomes very difficult to control it. Winning over drug addiction and reuniting them back to society and family is like winning a battle. However, there are many people who have not only overcome addiction but also lead a successful, meaningful and prosperous life. These people have also used their motivational skills during their fight with drugs in their present life as well (Sharma, personal interview, November 16, 2019).

Society and prospects on addiction

The prevalence of drug abuse is more on people with psychologically pathological families. This includes broken homes, illegitimate relationships, alcoholic parents or parent's involvement in antisocial and illegal activities. Peer influence, imitation of film stars and teenage idols, media advertisements

like radio, TV, high ambition, urbanization and unemployment and ignorance of the dangers of illegal drug use. Alienation and isolation also can be causes of drug abuse (Abudu, 2008, pp. 5-6).

Recovery process takes time whereas recovering addicts sometimes want instant gratification as it happens during drug abuse. They need to understand that in society it takes time to build and rebuild relations and they should keep themselves ready for this. Mr Sushil Khatri, President at Sparsha Nepal claims to face mistrust from the society even after being clean and working in advocacy against drug use in the same field for 16 years. ‘Complete trust is never won and is exceptional. Society doesn’t trust that a former addict can be totally clean and recovered’. He says, ‘Until this psyche of ‘once an addict always an addict’ is not done away the recovering youths will not be able to feel that society has trusted them’, and hence making the change possible. Khatri adds, ‘we don’t want to be treated in a special way but like every other ‘normal’ individual.’ The addicts themselves have guilt in them for taking drugs thus they go to take treatment and rehab but when society and family doesn’t trust them fully they feel disheartened and always feel that they are stigmatized (Khatri, personal interview, December 8, 2019).

More difficult for women

The Central Bureau of Statistics, Government of Nepal, estimated in 2007 that there were 46,309 current drug users in Nepal of whom 3,356 (7.2%) were female. The United Nation’s Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS) report 2010 speculated

that female drug abusers in Nepal may be larger than reported in official reports (Profile, drug use pattern, risk behavior and selected bio-markers of women drug users from seven sites in Nepal, 2020).

Recovery is most of the time dependent on the type of environment available to recovering individual and also on the perception of the individual. Criticism demonization and exclusion of the recovering individuals most of the time leads to relapse and this is more applicable in case of recovering women drug users (P. Waiba, personal interview). Waiba is a former substance user who has been actively working as a project coordinator in ‘Recovering Nepal Women’ since three years. She believes that volunteerism has a positive impact which helps create awareness in recovered individuals as well as in others through various programs that are conducted regarding awareness of addiction. After recovering from addiction, in case of females there are numerous challenges such as stigmatization, physical, verbal and sexual violence and lack of female support group compared to males. In Nepal, females are more victimized and are more severely accused of defiling ones family. They are outcast by their family. In case of married women, in their husbands’ home they are treated more harshly when they are in crucial need of attention, love guidance and support. They are blamed and made to feel guilty for not handling responsibilities and are taken as criminals. Due to these reasons, they hide their problems and hesitate to ask for external help. Physically they have more complications in health compared to males as drug use affects their menstrual cycle leading to gynecological problems and chances of

unplanned pregnancies. They also have the risk of having premature and or low weight babies with health problems. Moreover, they are more prone to having sex for money. Thus, they have higher chances of suffering anxiety and depression and are more likely to attempt suicide compared to male counterparts.

Drug use is considered as deviant behavior and drug users are stigmatized in many countries including Nepal. When women use drugs the stigma and subsequent social isolation is even more severe. Use of drugs weakens her socially disadvantaged position and increases her vulnerability further. The social setting influences the drug use scene too. Women are more likely to have partners who use substances and are often pushed to use drug by their partners. She is often dependent on the male to buy drugs and other injection paraphernalia. She is at a disadvantage in terms of the power structure and may be unable to exercise her decision not to share injecting equipment (Profile, drug use pattern, risk behavior and selected biomarkers of women drug users from seven sites in Nepal, 2020)

In case of males even though they are addicts and are recovering from it, they have their family to support them. If married it is pre-assumed that their wife should be there for them and can sometimes even be blamed and abused as they being the reasons for their husband's addiction. Addicts are not completely boycotted from their families and are provided multiple chances to improve and be better compared to females. In most cases, female addicts have very few or almost no chance. Even if they are determined to recover they will have

already lost the support of their family members including husband and her children. In case of Pasang Waiba, She feels privileged and blessed as she has been active and confidently presenting herself and supporting female addicts to come out of addiction. Her immense strength and reformation in her wouldn't have been possible without supports from her family. This has inspired her to volunteer and participate in youth activism and be a model for the recovering female addicts.

Problems in marital relations

Marriage after rehabilitation might not be the best way to improve the health of recovered addict says Prawchan Kc, program manager at Sparsha Nepal. As soon as the addict is discharged from the rehab and is in the initial phase of being socially integrated, parents or their relatives directly pose them a question about what they will do next. The recovering addict though out of rehab is learning to integrate with the society gradually. They need support and it is necessary to instill confidence in them. If they feel extreme pressure and frustrated during this period there are chances of relapse. Relapse makes them feel safe for time being but in long run it will cause them more harm and it may even lead to their death (KC, personal communication, December 20, 2019). He has worked in this field for 11 years and based on his experience he says: 'In a particular confined environment, like rehab, the addicts go through modification in their thought and behavior which could make them easier to adopt to society'. When they get discharged from the rehab they do not desire to relapse and come back to rehab and even as a volunteer. They would rather

go back to their working environment or want to be involved in an environment different from rehab and this possibility can be increased with the help of volunteerism and youth activism. They should not be given pressure to get married immediately. So, marriage is also not the solution to addiction if the recovering addict is not ready for it as it creates more burdens and adds more responsibility to them.

Family support in social integration

The major turn backs for the recovered addicts into relapse is mainly frustration caused by mistrust and doubtful attitude towards them even by their own family members after rehabilitation. During such frustration search for pleasure and relaxed feeling may push them again to use of drugs.

Another main cause of relapse is what has been called self-stigmatization. It is not always the society that causes the problem for the recovering addicts as some may not even know whether or not he is an addict. The main challenge comes from within themselves where they stigmatize themselves. Recovering addicts might not always have a preplanned idea of what they want to do after their time in rehabilitation centers. They develop a perception within themselves that they won't be accepted or understood by the people and they themselves presume that they wouldn't be liked even though this might not be said directly by anyone to them. This causes them to be introverts and pile up vivid feelings and emotions in the unconscious which later cause psychological as well as physical problems and may lead to relapse.

In case of social reintegration process, family support and care is the most essential aspect for the recovered addicts to build confidence and engage in any volunteer work or social engagements. Thus, the role of family is very important which provides them the support system to participate in youth activism and volunteerism. They could play significant role for other recovering substance abusers. There is a thin line between being an addict and becoming clean. Families should not judge these recovering addicts by their past and should treat them sensibly and at par with other people at home.

Skills for empowerment

Recovering addicts need a supportive environment in order to accept change because lack of such environment often leads to withdrawal, loss of vitality and resistance towards change. To adjust in the new environment after coming out of protective environment, various recreational activities along with technical and skill based trainings should be introduced which can produce skillful human resources for the nation as well as help enhance growth and confidence of recovered addicts after rehabilitation. Introducing skill-building programs in affiliation with organizations like the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) with active support of the government of Nepal can have immense contribution on recovering drug abusers. Trainings to build entrepreneurship skills could help the recovering addicts to be motivated and self-dependent after they are discharged from the rehab. ‘Rehab is a home away from home which helps individuals to get rid of stress. However, being in rehab is not always the solution and

in order to step outside structured environment of rehab, day care program as well as skillful training is essential.

Spirituality and healing

Physical health, balanced diet and good work are important but spirituality is another important aspect which leads towards self-awareness and consciousness. It helps them to realize impact of their offensive acts, put oneself in the position of the other, self-reflect as well as get rid of the guilt for causing harm to the self and other in psychologically and socially adaptive ways. It releases negative energy, anger, tension, insecurities and increases productivity and confidence which acts as a substitute to drug use (J. Shakya, personal communication, November 18, 2019). One such firm believer of change in recovering from addiction through spirituality is Mr Jitendra Shakya, counselor and coordinator at Richmond Fellowship Nepal. He shares his story of drug addiction and how he tried to overcome it by substituting it with alcohol. According to Shakya, consumption of alcohol also deteriorated his situation because he feel the trap of alcohol addiction.

After three rigorous attempt of rehabilitation at Richmond, he finally could free himself from alcohol addiction in 2000. He has been working in this field since then. According to him quitting drugs doesn't change situation much it just makes them capable to do something. If they do not use their time and energy positively and constructively their capability to work does not get better. Alcohol and drug abuse are often forms of self-medication in which the client attempts to cope with debilitating depression or anxiety. Attempts should be made to

identify and treat the underlying psychological mechanism, as drug and alcohol abuse are often associated with low self-esteem. Efforts have to be made to improve confidence and self-worth of the client. Therefore, one should work on reconstructing self-identities of the substance abusers because addicts often have ‘I am an addict’ type of understanding thereby describing themselves only in terms of their drug abuse. Such ‘totalizing descriptions’ sometimes can shape how they see themselves for long time (A. Kottler, 385). Thus, in order to help recovering addicts live with their highest potentials unfolded we need to lead them to the path of enlightenment through spiritual awakening, which can be brought about through social service and volunteerism.

Conclusion

Research shows that hardly any productive work can be done with a drug affected mind. Therefore, the best way to help these recovering addicts to integrate in society successfully and one of the best ways to do it would be . It also makes them feel that they have met like minded people and helps them to learn new behavior and unlearn their past behavior of engaging in drugs. Some unlearning occurs normally as part of life.

Drug addiction is a leading problem in developed as well as developing countries which affects not only the addicts but their family, community and nation as a whole. It is also the leading cause of suicides including some accidental suicides caused after an overdose. In Nepal, the failure of reintegration to the society after rehabilitation is due to lack of support from the family and society’s negative and suspicious attitude

towards them. Recovery from addiction is not possible without a well-structured support system. Thus, rehabilitation centers, group-counseling modalities, family counseling strategies, social work, family's love, trust and non judgmental attitude play important role. In this context, olunteerism as well as youth activism plays a vital role in the life of recovering addicts. Proper guidance, monitoring and channeled support system provides motivation, self-esteem, spiritual growth as well as power and constructive approach to overcome their feelings of shame, anger and other negative emotions. Such approaches bring out their creativity, potential and skills necessary for self sustainability as well as for betterment of the society and nation as a whole. This type of involvement if kept consistent can be a win-win situation for all. Thus, support from family, society, youth activism and volunteerism leads towards social reintegration process and also fills the vacant space between the recovering addict's past and present life.

All the respondents taken for research were not fully engaged in social reintegration process as volunteers for the recovering youths because of their engagement in their respected jobs. We also found that most of the respondents had a history of past substance use as they found this sector more comfortable and accepting than the rest. They also had underlined fear and were less confident in seeking opportunities outside of this field mainly because of prevailing social stigmatization. Similarly, in the case of youths who had not been into substance abuse, they were not much into volunteering in this sector. In order to increase interaction between these groups of youths, it is necessary to bring the youths without the history of substance

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abuse in volunteering in the sector of rehabilitation and integration of previous substance users. This will let the groups understand each other better. Further research is necessary to find out the ways to achieve this goal.

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Youths in Agriculture: Attraction towards Protected Horticulture

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Abstract

Improved agricultural technologies such as protected horticulture have been able to attract youths towards agriculture. Protected horticulture refers to growing of vegetables, fruits, flowers inside some structures such as glasshouse, polyhouse, net house, screen house. These structures help fully or partially control the environmental conditions inside them which help in offseason production as well as reduce disease-pests thus helping to produce safer products for consumption. Availability of advanced technologies required for profitable protected cultivation has attracted youths. Drip irrigation, fertigation, plastic mulching, and automated remote-control system to switch on these facilities (irrigation, temperature control system) are some of the features utilized in modern structures that reduce drudgery and in the meantime increase resource utilization. Because of deserts or other adverse climatic conditions, countries like Israel practice protected horticulture massively but in Nepal, although, it started since the 1960s it is still in small scale.

Since then this has gradually increased over the years and is rapidly increasing recently. Now the total area under protected horticulture in Nepal is more than 800 hectares. The production of horticultural crops inside protected structures is 3 to 5 times higher compared to the open field conditions. Therefore, the youths who have returned from abroad have been practising protected horticulture as agri-business. Similarly, raising of vegetable, flower and fruit seedlings and saplings inside protected structures has become a common practice to produce good quality planting materials. To make protected horticulture even more profitable and attractive agribusiness opportunity for youths, in-depth economic studies to compute benefit-cost ratio and determination of the break-even point for different structures are required. Protected horticulture has been a good source of youth volunteerism wherein youths who have learned these techniques from abroad have been voluntarily teaching to their counterparts back home. Various forms of youth volunteerism and engagement occur such as farm visits to learn the techniques and the farm owners act as resource persons to teach the technology and they share their experience and motivate each other. The agri-entrepreneurs participate voluntarily in different types of agriculture and trade fairs to showcase their products, provide samples and hence help in promoting protected horticulture.

Keywords: *Agribusiness, case studies, entrepreneurship, off-season farming, protected cultivation*

Introduction

Engagement of youths in agriculture is very crucial factor for its sustainability and global food supply. To make agriculture an attractive enterprise for youths its modernization, mechanization, increasing profit are necessary through use of modern technologies. Among many agricultural disciplines, horticulture is the one with great opportunity and potentiality for the use of modern technologies to improve productivity and hence the total production. Horticulture is one of the subjects in agricultural science which refers to the cultivation, production, processing and marketing of fruits, vegetables, flowers and ornamental plant species.

The average yield (productivity) of vegetable crops in Nepal is 13.798 t/ha (MoALD, 2018) which seems to be on an increasing trend but at a nominal rate (Table 1). Similarly, productivity of fruits in Nepal is also very low compared to that of other countries. The major factors responsible for low productivity of horticultural commodities are lack of improved varieties, poor crop management practices, and lack of appropriate technologies for production. Limited availability of quality planting materials (healthy seeds and/or saplings) and untimely control of diseases and pests also severely reduce production. There is up to 35% post-harvest loss of the agri-products due to poor handling after the harvest.

Due to availability of great genetic, environmental, and geographical diversity, there is great opportunity for increasing production of local as well as imported horticultural plants in Nepal. This can be done effectively through appropriate

utilization of these diversities as well as using modern technologies such as growing inside the protected structures with environmental control facilities. Precise application of fertilizers and water through fertigation facilities with balanced nutrient management mechanism will increase productivity. Use of improved varieties with scientific crop management and proper postharvest handling techniques will drastically increase production. Use of processing facilities to use off-grade production will add to the income and reduce waste. For this proper dissemination of technical knowledge and skills to the farmers is necessary. Compared to open field cultivation, productivity inside protected structures can be as high as 5 folds for many vegetable crops such as tomato, capsicum, and cucumber due to certain level of control over the adverse environmental conditions inside these structures. Thus, production of horticultural crops inside protected structures with integration of other modern technologies such as drip irrigation, fertigation (application of fertilizers with irrigation water using water-soluble fertilizers) and plastic mulching to conserve moisture as well as to control weed growth help in reduction of human labor. Control of temperature, relative humidity, sunlight and protection of crops from physical damages caused by bad weather conditions help in increase of production inside the protected structures. Similarly, this also helps in production of vegetables, flowers, and fruits during off-season (not available in open field condition during that time point) which help the farmers to fetch higher price for their produces. Fetching higher price for their products with the same input helps them to increase their profit. Therefore,

protected horticulture has become one of the popular avenues for youth's attraction to agribusiness. Covering the crop allows regulation of macro- and micro-environments around their growth area, which facilitates optimal plant performance, extension of the production duration, induction of earliness, and obtaining higher and better-quality yields (Gruda & Tanny, 2015). This will help to control diseases, pests and protect growing plants from adverse weather conditions such as harsh wind, heavy rainfall and hailstones.

Table 1: Summary Statistics on Vegetable Production in the Last Ten Years

Year	Area (ha)	Production (t)	Yield (Kg/ha)
2009/10	235,098	3,203,563	12,777
2010/11	244,102	3,298,816	13,124
2011/12	245,037	3,301,684	13,463
2012/13	246,392	3,421,035	13,400
2013/14	254,932	3,580,085	13,419
2014/15	266,937	3,929,034	13,412
2015/16	280,807	3,749,802	13,992
2016/17	277,393	3,958,230	13,518
2017/18	286,864	3,958,230	13,798
<i>Data Source:</i> MoALD, 2018 where 'ha' stands for hectare and 't' for tonne.			

Globally, protected cultivation covered 1,612,380 ha until 2005 (Peet & Welles, 2005) which was a combination of plastic and glass greenhouses as well as large and small plastic tunnels. This area has been increasing recently because of frequent occurrences of climate change incidences and continuous demand for high quality fresh horticultural products by the consumers including in Nepal.

Types of protected structures

Depending on need of the crops to be cultivated and available environmental conditions, different types of protected structures are utilized. Commonly utilized protected structures in different parts of the world include the following but not are limited to only the ones mentioned below.

Hitech glass greenhouse/polyhouse: The structure with walls and roof made mainly of transparent material, such as glass in case of glass greenhouse, and plastic in case of plastic greenhouse or polyhouse. These structures also make use of heating/cooling mechanisms to maintain constant required temperature for the plants being grown, humidifier and dehumidifier to control the relative humidity, appropriate type of automated irrigation system, appropriate lighting system to allow photosynthesis effectively, regulated amount of CO₂ and air filtering system to maintain healthy environment. Therefore, these structures are relatively expensive, and their cost differs from country to country (Peet & Welles, 2005). Plants that require regulated climatic conditions are grown inside. Usually high value, low volume crops are cultivated inside such structures. Also, these are utilized for off-season production.

Rare research materials such as growing rice in Mustang for research purposes can be done under such high-tech structures.

Plastic tunnel: Plastic tunnels are usually small structures made of plastic roofing supported by bamboo poles or GI pipes. These tunnels are used to grow vegetables and saplings.

Walk-in tunnel: Walk-in tunnels are the structures made from galvanized pipes covered with UV stabilized plastic sheets in which favorable environmental conditions are provided to the plants irrespective of the natural conditions outside. These are used for growing vegetables, flowers, producing planting materials of fruits, acclimatization of saplings produced from tissue culture facilities, growing of fruits such as strawberries, grapes and others for export.

Screen-house/plant protection nets/net-houses: Screen houses are structures made up of nets (insect screening material) instead of plastic or glass on four sides. Roof is made of UV stabilized transparent plastic. These provide protection severe weather conditions, as well as exclusion of pests and, are used for cultivation of self-pollinated vegetables and production of fruit and/or vegetable, flower seedlings/saplings.

Soilless cultivation also referred to as hydroponics, aquaponics can be done in these different types of protected structures. To run these structures smoothly, the government bodies especially the federal and provincial together with Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC) should give more emphasis on technology development including generation of improved self-pollinated crop varieties for different species; action points for daily operation and management practices required in different

types of structures for specific horticultural crops. Similarly, quality inspection, certification and assurance of the safe products being produced; development of appropriate marketing channels and providing regular technical backstopping to maintain quality products is essential. Then training of agricultural technicians working at local levels regarding the generated technologies is required from the above-mentioned government institutions for effective technology transfer to the interested and innovative farmers or youth Agri-entrepreneurs in their respective areas is essential.

Methods

Focus group discussion was done in a participatory manner, field visits, key informant interviews and case studies were conducted. Secondary information was collected from Agriculture Knowledge Centres, Prime Minister Agriculture Modernization Project (PMAMP), Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), and the Central Bureau of Statistics. Secondary information related to protected horticulture and other socio-economic information was collected from various published materials and reports of different national and international organization. Benefit-cost ratio (BCR) was computed using the following formula:

$$\text{Benefit - cost ratio} = \frac{\text{Gross return (Rs)}}{\text{Total variable cost (Rs)}}$$

Results and discussion

Protected horticulture started in Nepal since early sixties. In the beginning, the protected structures in Nepal were built at

government farm centers in few places by international collaborative projects such as Indian Cooperation Mission (ICM), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) who helped in horticulture development of the country (Thapa & Dhimal, 2017). Those protected structures were expensive ones made for fruit sapling production, cultivation of mother plants for quality scion production and vegetable seeds and seedlings production. In farmers' fields, simple poly tunnels mostly made of bamboo frames were constructed and these were used to keep plants safe from heavy rainfall during monsoon season and frost during winter months. Recently with access to modern technologies, more advanced protected structures are constructed with full or partial levels of environmental control and automated management systems.

The making of plastic tunnels or polyhouses on leased land to cultivate vegetables has increased. Few youths have been practising hydroponics (growing vegetables in soilless media). Learning from them, some BSc Agriculture, BSc Environment and Business studies graduates have started protected horticulture as their business. Since last year the province governments' subsidy programs also have enabled small farmers to construct few plastic tunnels who have been able to grow tomato, cucumber, capsicum and some leafy vegetables inside the structures and have earned good amount to support their families. Protected horticulture provides opportunities for maximum resource (input) use efficiency (good germination of seeds thereby reduces seed wastage, optimum utilization of water and fertilizers), high-quality products and contributes

greatly to the food and nutrition security due to increased productivity. This is achieved by combination of both simple and advanced techniques for farm, crop and daily weather condition management, precise application of resources (water, fertilizers) so that adverse environmental impact can be controlled, and the use of resources optimized.

Common types of protected structures used in Nepal are screen houses for fruit sapling production especially citrus (Figure 1 A), small plastic tunnels for vegetable seedling production (Figure 1B) and larger plastic tunnels for cultivation of vegetables (Figure 1 C and D) during off-season. These are comparatively cheaper structures and easy to maintain. As Nepal does not have too severe weather conditions, these simple structures are enough to give quality production if crop management practices are done technically right.

Protected structures which are closed from all sides like greenhouses, screenhouses, polyhouses need special attention on the selection of crop varieties to be cultivated, as pollinating agents cannot enter there. Therefore, self-pollinated crop varieties are best suited inside these facilities. If producing high quality fixed amount of products, arrangement of manual pollination of the selected cop variety should be done at right time. Use of plastic mulching to conserve moisture and reduce weed growth has been increasingly practiced inside these polyhouses/screenhouses.

Young entrepreneurs in Nepal have been recently using this protected horticulture technology to produce quality products and fetch high prices in the market. Production, processing

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(grading and packaging) and marketing of these products have provided employment and volunteering opportunities to other youths as well. There are many successful cases in different places out of which five case studies have been presented below.



Figure 1. Different types of protected structures used for horticultural crops in Nepal. (A) Screen house for fruit sapling production, (B) Temporary plastic minitunnels for vegetable seedling production, (C) Permanent screen house for vegetable cultivation and (D) Bamboo-plastic tunnel for vegetable cultivation.

Case studies of young farmers/agri-entrepreneurs

I. Vegetable farming as a source of livelihood in Kathmandu

Mr Rangaman KC who is just 28 years old came to Kathmandu from Jumla. He has been living in the capital city for six years. During this time, he has had engaged himself in three types of

business. At first, he had done mushroom cultivation for three months. He had started mushroom cultivation with only twelve thousand rupees. But he did not continue it for long. Then, he started buffalo rearing with three buffaloes in Chapagaun, Lalitpur. Initially, he spent three hundred thousand for buffalo rearing. He continued it for two years. He realized that in the present context of Nepal, the demand for vegetables is unlimited and is continuously rising with the growth in the population. Furthermore, it is possible to start vegetable cultivation with low initial investment. Realizing this market potential, Rangaman started an enterprise dedicated to the production of the vegetables and became a member of Laligurans Krishak Samuha. Currently, he is successfully running his enterprise. He has been engaged in this field for last three years. He started the vegetable cultivation with twenty thousand rupees only but now he invests fifty thousand rupees and earns more than two hundred thousand from his enterprise annually. He is cultivating five *ropani* (0.25 ha) area with eight plastic tunnels. He grows different kinds of vegetables in different seasons such as Cauliflower, Cabbage, Radish, Carrot, Coriander, Pea, Broad bean, Cowpea, Tomato, Cucumber, etc. He sells his products himself. He faced many challenges during his business and after he attended training organized by different organizations, he updated skills in vegetable farming. The major problem seen in his field was incidence of insects, pests which had damaged most of the vegetables. Now he has learned different techniques to manage the pest population without the use of chemicals. He is doing organic farming so there is high demand for the vegetables in the market. Most of

the costumers are aware of the health so they prefer organic vegetables.

However, success did not come to Rangaman easily. In the initial phase of his entrepreneurship, his farm only managed to recover the operational cost of the enterprise and did not make the expected profit. Instead of getting disheartened or losing hope, he worked harder to bring success to his farm. He said with a smile on his face 'my passion and belief towards hard work made me continue vegetable cultivation and eventually I succeeded'. Rangaman has not only uplifted his wellbeing but also has inspired many youths to stay in Nepal and start their own business. As for future entrepreneurs planning to pursue agriculture, he advises "Every business constitutes risks but with the support from family, friends and self-confidence, you can do anything". He also adds that there are plenty of opportunities in Nepal itself and foreign employment is not always the best option. Finally, Mr KC says that success is only possible if the aspiring farmers first learn to cope with failure. Problems will surely arise, but the farmer should be able to handle different situations, learn to be patient and remain calm.

II. A farm run by a foreign employment returnee

Mr Umesh Karki originally from eastern hills of Sankhuwasabha is happy and satisfied with income from his farm "Karki Tarkari Farm" of Khaasibazar 6, Lalitpur. He had established his farm 2 years back. He is 30 years old and has 3 members in his family. Having stayed for 2 years in Dubai, he felt that he could earn enough money from that much of toil in his motherland. He initially invested about rupees six hundred

thousand which he had earned during his stay in foreign country. He has taken 5 *ropani* land in lease for 5 years at annual rent of Rs 23,000 per *ropani*. He said he grows cabbage, cauliflower, tomato, green leafy vegetables, beans, coriander, cucumber and many other vegetables. He has two plastic tunnels where he grows off-season vegetables and sells them to the nearby market. He earns much profit from off-season vegetable production and his top priority is tomato. He felt sorry as he had not cultivated onion because price of onion this season was as much as Rupees 250 per kg, therefore he could have earned much higher income if he had cultivated onion in his field. He told there is high price fluctuation in agricultural commodities and sometimes the price can be so low that they could not manage to compensate for the cost of production. He earns enough money from his farm to feed his family and send to his parents. He is planning to extend his farm area in near future. On average, his annual input cost is around Rs. 40,000.00 and his annual revenue is around Rs. 250,000.00.

While asking why he chose agriculture, he answered he had no other alternatives left with his low educational background. He expressed that he could have managed to get grants from government if he had higher education. He had participated in some training related to off-season vegetable production. On asking questions about the challenges faced during farming, he answered it is very difficult to prevent diseases and pests attack on his vegetables along with unavailability of fertilizers and seeds on time. He is optimistic and said there is good time ahead. There is still dominance of Indian fruits and vegetables in market in Kathmandu and he told it is difficult to compete

with them at given price. He suggested the government to promote domestic products and give subsidies to farmers so that they can compete with foreign products.

III. BSc environmental science graduate in protected horticulture

A BSc Environmental Science graduate Goma Jini of Lamjung is 23 years old and engaged in vegetable cultivation. She has 24 bamboo-plastic tunnels and 4 galvanized iron (GI) pipe plastic houses which are more permanent and were just built with the support from the Gandaki Province Government. She cultivates tomatoes and other vegetable crops. She sells tomatoes at Rs 60/Kg from her field, the buyers go to the field. Her annual total investment is around two hundred thousand rupees and earns more than one million rupees per year. She also had received a training on protected horticulture and wants to have more such training so that she can learn to control disease pests more effectively. She took up this business after her brother left it. According to her, the business seems profitable as she fetches good price from the farm and she also had visited the Arava farm nearby which is a larger farm run by a group of youths who returned from Isreal. She volunteered there to learn the techniques and they voluntarily supported establishing her farm.

She is happy with her agri-enterprise and being able to self-employ has rejected several offers to teach. She says working for self is more satisfying, joyful and hence so is stress free. She has freedom to manage her time, can do what she feels is right and can work on products of her interest that will fetch

good market price. When I visited her farm, her father asked me ‘how could you convince my daughter in such a way that she even rejected a teaching job offer for this enterprise?’ Before I could answer him, Ms Jini replied with a wide smile and with a sense of pride on her face ‘can’t you see that today madam Shanta has herself come to monitor my field at this time on a Saturday? Would she visit me if I had become a teacher?’ She said she is motivated as she is regarded as a role model by the villagers there. She receives much respect from locals as well as from the visitors who learn from her field activities.

IV. Two junior technical assistant brothers run their own agri-business

Acharya brothers, Pradip Acharya (27 years) and Sushil Acharya (24 years) are role models to youths who want to develop a career in agri-business. They are energetic, passionate and wise in their business. They own an agro-vet center, an agriculture and livestock farm. According to Sushil, combining both agro-vet center and farm, the worth of their enterprise is approximately sixty lakhs (6 million) rupees.

Pradip had completed Junior Technical Assistant (JTA) course in animal science and Sushil has done JTA course in plant science. Pradip, after graduation, started an agro-vet center in 2069 B.S. with an initial investment of Rs 800,000.00, most of which was from the family investment and some were from co-operatives and informal sources (relatives). From 2075 B.S., they have collaborated with Knowledge-Based Integrated Sustainable Agriculture in Nepal (KISAN) II project funded by

the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and presently work with eight hundred rural households of Arghakhanchi district. They provide material and technical support to farmer groups of the district in coordination with the project.

Sushil registered a farm and started commercial farming. At first, he had two Holstein Friesian cows, 2 Jersey cows and 3 *ropanis* of land with vegetable cultivation. The initial investment on his farm was about three hundred thousand rupees and he has increased investment with time. At present, he has constructed two permanent (iron pillar) and two temporary (bamboo pillar) plastic tunnels (four in total) for off-season vegetable cultivation. The major products of the farm are milk and off-season vegetables. They sell milk to dairy co-operative and off-season vegetables from their agro-vet center to retailers and the surplus to vegetable shops in Sandhikharka. On average, the annual cost of agro and livestock farm is about three lakh rupees and annual gross income is about nine lakh rupees.

They stated that farming involves various risks. They pointed out market to be one of the major problems for rural farmers as they are unable to carry out market-oriented farming and it is costly to market small amounts of products. Due to lack of technical knowledge and lack of availability of modern tools and equipment, farmers are unable to shift to commercial agriculture. Lack of manpower and frequent pest infestation are other problems faced by commercial farmers.

Sushil suggested farmers to become aware of the market demand and focus on off-season cultivation of vegetables according to pre-planned schedule so they can do profitable business. He pointed out that it is difficult for farmers to compete with Indian products, therefore he recommends government to implement visionary plan which would promote the use of local products. Furthermore, he advised the government to ensure crop insurance from government authorities instead of private companies.

The case study of Acharya brothers suggests if we have a plan and courage to achieve desired objectives, it is needless to go foreign countries for employment, we can run a profitable agribusiness with self-respect and dignity.

V. Thapa Agro Farm rescues Thapa family

Sharmila Thapa and her family had a difficult life after her husband returned from abroad. Supporting 7 members without job was almost impossible. They kept struggling for two months and finally made a solid plan to start their family agri-business.

In 2073 BS, Thapa opened a vegetable farm in Ramkot. She named it “Thapa Agro Farm”. She started the farm with an initial investment of about 4 lakh rupees. She started a farm in an area of 2 *ropani* with 8 tunnels and gradually expanded to 6 *ropani* with 25 tunnels within one year. She said that starting the farm of their own was much of risk to them as she had borrowed loans from the bank to meet the initial investments. In total, she has invested more than 20 lakh rupees on farm. Despite having started from scratch, Thapa estimates that she

will have covered all her investments in next two years, thus heading towards profit.

At present, she has grown Cole crops such as cauliflower, broccoli and radish in her farm. She said that both on-season and off-season vegetables are grown on her farm. Thapa being an agriculture (CTEVT) student herself has good technical knowledge. Moreover, experience of her in-laws in growing vegetables for long time also helped her. After expanding the farm she has employed 5 workers.

During the early phase of her enterprise, only the family members did all the works. For few months, the farm had to face loss as she did not have enough knowledge about marketing of the produced goods. Later, people in the locality came to know about her farm and marketing of vegetables became easier. At present, the farm is unable to meet the demand of the market. She is thinking to further increase the capacity of the farm as they are gaining profit.

Thapa believes that it is not very difficult to start a business in Nepal, even though it may seem difficult in the beginning, the labor will pay off and become fruitful. Thapa is grateful to her family members who have always supported her and helped her which has made it easier for her to run the farm successfully. She even shares her own experience of those hardships she had to face due to unfavorable climatic conditions. She mentioned that despite many opportunities in the agriculture sector, farmers have failed to make the best of them mostly due to their poor management and marketing skills. To be a successful agri-entrepreneur one must be patient, be able to evaluate risks and

opportunities and have a clear vision of what he/she wants to accomplish.

Benefit-cost analysis

Benefit-cost ratio (BCR) shows the relationship between total variable cost (cost of input, labour, annual land rent, etc. involved in cost of production) and the gross return (total money obtained by selling the products) from the enterprise. If BCR is more than one it indicates that the activity is providing profit and if it is less than one it means the cost incurred is higher than the total income from the enterprise. In case of protected agriculture, the break-even point should also be considered as agricultural commodities have long gestation period and construction of semi or permanent structures are costly. For vegetable crops being seasonal, break-even point is achieved earlier than the fruits which are perennial and hence profit is made thereafter within a few seasons.

Table :2 Benefit-Cost Ratio of the Case Studies

Case number	Variable cost (Rs)	Gross return (Rs)	BCR
1	50,000.00	2,00,000.00	4.00
2	40,000.00	2,50,000.00	6.25
3	2,00,000.00	10,00,000.00	5.00
4	3,00,000.00	9,00,000.00	3.00

Source: Primary data collected during the field visits

The BCR for vegetable cultivation inside protected structures ranged from 3.00 to 6.25 indicating that the enterprise is very profitable. The initial investment in construction of polyhouses/polytunnels is the major cost of production followed by cost of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, labour wages and irrigation which account for the variable cost. Bhandari, Bhattacharai & Aryal (2016) had conducted BCR analysis of open field cultivated tomato and found that average BCR was 3.00 (average from BCR data of 5 different districts). Therefore, in long run, the vegetable cultivation inside protected structures seems to be more profitable.

Volunteerism

Youth engagement in agriculture has been observed as paradigm shift in Nepal. A group of youths (around 200 individuals) who have returned from Israel has started commercial integrated farming most of which include vegetables in Lamjung district with their agribusiness registered as Arava Nepal Modern Agriculture Company Limited in 2016 (anmcagro.com). Volunteerism in such agriculture enterprises involves frequent exchange visits by a group (usually 25-30 persons per trip) from one farm to another on mutual basis. The participants learn from the farm visits by observing the technologies being used in the field, the lead farmers brief the participants, share their skills and allow the participants to engage in different activities without any charge. Hence, learning by doing is a great form of volunteerism wherein both parties are benefitted or are in win-win situation as the farm gets manpower free of cost and the participants get opportunity

to learn different aspects by experiencing hands-on practice. Likewise, they exchange germplasm (seeds of different crop varieties) of their interests and exchange information such as source to buy improved seeds or good quality seedlings and saplings. These successful agri-entrepreneurs are also the role models for their neighbors due to their innovativeness and hence are given training of lead farmers by the Government or non-Government institutions for them to transfer technology to their neighbors. They are recognized as local resource persons who will be provided with refresher training and when they return, they will share the skills learned with their neighbors.

FAO (2017) has prepared good agricultural practices for greenhouse vegetable production in the South-east European countries. This kind of document should be developed in our context as well so that the national standards can be set. These standards will be met by the producers by following the good agricultural package of practices which will facilitate better marketing of their products.

Conclusion

Sedentary lifestyle has led to ever-increasing demand for high quality fresh horticultural products for good health. As such protected cultivation of horticultural crops is on rise to cope up with changing environmental conditions, precise application of inputs including water and to minimize pesticide use for safe food production. This cultivation system requires certain technical specifications of inputs to apply in different protected structures depending on the crop's needs, consequently, it requires educated people to do the cultivation practices.

Moreover, such structures allow use of computerized control systems for input supply and automated control of environment such as shading/cooling, heating, lighting, etc. that attract educated youths for this kind of agricultural production technology. Utilization of existing information and communication technology (ICT) and development of effective ICT tools will help them monitor their daily activities as well as help in effective sharing of information. Adoption of new production and processing technologies and marketing strategies, for example, online order, home delivery in response to consumer's easy market requirements are points of intervention. Youths have ample opportunities to showcase their talent and contribute significantly to global food and nutrition security by engaging and volunteering in this sector of agriculture. Backed up with appropriate research and technological support, protected horticulture will provide sustainable professionalism to the youths interested to contribute to national food and nutrition security. Youths have been developing software and apps by utilizing online resources and volunteering to share their ideas. Therefore, protected horticulture unlike other sectors of agriculture has become very successful in harnessing youth engagement and their volunteering spirit.

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Dynamics of Volunteering Practices in Nepal

Shyam Adhikari

Abstract

Volunteerism exists in all societies in one way or other. Nepal's organized and recorded volunteerism practices was started with a noble initiation of Late Daya Bir Shah Kansakar, who first donated blood on 1944 and established an organization '*Paropakar*' to mobilize youth volunteers to serve people for cholera epidemic of 1947. The understanding of youth is varied according to context, culture, age, behavior and their level of engagement. Youth are often engaged by themselves. They usually get mobilized or involved voluntarily with certain interests. The paradigm shift on volunteerism in the 'first generation' when the organization like *Paropakar* leading the engagement of youth and their involvement as volunteer as 'leisure time activity' was converted to the 'welfare based approach' in the second generation from 1950s onward, where volunteers get mobilized rather than engaged. The trend has still been continued where youth are being mobilized as volunteer by the government and I/NGOs to meet the deliverables of their programmes. The contribution made by

that sort of programmes is two folds: youth being capacitated and mobilizing organizations are completing their programmes. In an absence of organized and effective functioning government bodies, such initiatives, though being scattered, are contributing to the development.

This article based on the review of literature around youth engagement, reviewing some case studies and having discussion with youth volunteers, is an attempt to see the change and continuity of volunteering practices in Nepal.

Keywords: *Youth, engagement, volunteerism, continuation, shift*

Introduction

Nepal is uniquely positioned in defining youth with age, but also with behavior, agility, self-commitment and many more. The age cohort 16-40 years for youth which Nepal has adopted through the National Youth Policy (2015) put 40.33% of population under this age cohort. This population has been contributing significantly towards the national development process through various formal and informal engagements. Their contribution is marked in the national economy, politics, awareness raising, creating social harmony through their engagements. The notion of volunteerism started with the self-help and leisure time activity shifted towards the welfare approach in which external factors played dominant roles to define their volunteerism and making the broader understandings of the discipline.

This study has attempted to define youth by using several parameters of age, international and national policy standards and practices and tried to link the volunteerism practices existed in Nepal with the framework of youth engagement. This has also tried to answer three triggering questions: Where does the volunteerism fit in the engagement framework? Where the existing volunteerism practices in the country is going? and What are some of the challenges volunteers and volunteerism is facing in the country? Relevant literatures have been assessed to address the first two questions, while a discussion among the volunteering organizations and case study were conducted to address the third question.

Who are youth?

Different definitions are available to define youth; from the perspective of age, behaviour, commitment, agility, and sociological and anthropological perspectives. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines the holder of rights under the CRC as ‘every human being below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier’. The United Nations World Programme on Action for Youth- 2000 (UNWPAY 2000) has defined youth as people between 15 and 24 years’ age group, while the UN (1999) Youth Policy Formulation Manual is directed towards “young males and females who are aged from 16 to 35 years”. WHO (2002) suggests that “adolescents are 10-19 years old; youth are 15-24; and young people are 10-24 years old.” Individual countries have their own definitions for youth. For instance, in Nepal a youth is 16-40 years cohort, while in

Uganda a youth is 18 to 30 years, in Kenya 15 to 35 years and in Nigeria, youth are 12 to 30 years.

Curtain (2013) identifies youth as a period of transition from dependence (childhood) to independence (adulthood). Sandoval (2015) asserts that it is essential for young people to incorporate themselves into the world of adults by achieving stable employment and establishing a family. These accomplishments open up the possibilities inherent in adult's social roles, and establish one's status in society. He suggests that emotional, sexual, social, intellectual and physical development is all essential to the development of adult identity. "The adult condition cannot be reached simply by reaching some arbitrary "legal" age, or by reaching some defined stage of biological development. Maturity is achieved when a person is in full possession of their adult rights and duties (Sandoval, 2015).

Evans (2010) suggests a relational interpretation of youth, in which social age is based on a set of social and intergenerational relationships, through which authority, rights and responsibilities are achieved, progressing 'subordinate children' into the status of adulthood through rites of passage, embedded in a web of social relations (familial obligations and relationships of reciprocity) and functions (such as initiation rituals, marriage and schooling). This definition seeks to clarify how youth position themselves within and are positioned by society, and how they seek to move within and across the category.

According to UNESCO, “youth” is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence and awareness of our interdependence as members of a community. Youth is a more fluid category than a fixed age-group. Some favour biological markers, in which youth is the period between puberty and parenthood, while others define youth in terms of cultural markers “a distinct social status with specific roles, rituals, and relationships” (USAID/CMM 2005).

The term youth is defined by sociologists as a transition between ‘childhood and adulthood’ (Roche et al 2004). He notes that alternative term is ‘adolescence’ which is often ‘used within psychology to describe the common biological, psychological, emotional and sexual maturation phases associated with the onset of puberty and the teenage years’. Social anthropologists on the other hand depict the concept of youth from a cultural perspective for instance rather than seeing it from biological view. They study their behavior, cultural beliefs, family lives, social, political organisations and their relationships with each other although it must be noted that most cultural studies are “based upon non-western and traditional societies” (Keily, 2007). Mitchell & Smith (2001) relates the concept of youth from cultural aspect. According to them, 'youth culture' means the 'cultural aspects of youth'.

Framework of engagement and youth

Often engagement and participation come together with same connotation. The semantics of ‘participation’ can be misleading and it is important to differentiate between participation of

youth as agents or as beneficiaries of change. The term ‘participation’ has become a buzzword to cover all forms of relationship between adults and youth, and this has resulted in a watering down of the principles and processes of ‘true’ participation. For example, the WPAY⁴ (2000) mentions that youth should participate in environmental protection by planting trees (meaning “learn from contributing their time and effort”), and it also mentions that youth should participate in decision-making:

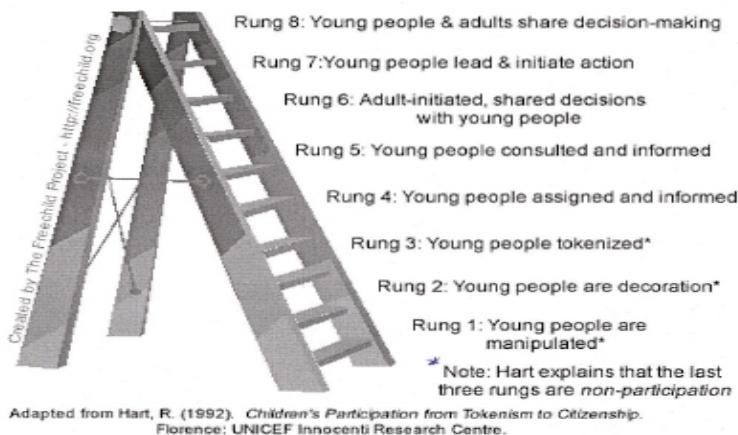
Governments should establish procedures allowing for consultation and possible participation of youth of both genders in decision-making processes with regard to the environment, at the local, national and regional levels. (WPAY 2002, point 72)

One of the most popular conceptions of engagement came from Arnstein (1969) as a way to discuss community development. Arnstein conceived of a “ladder of participation”. The bottom rungs signify participation, which is relatively shallow and even manipulative, where power is wielded solely by the government and sometimes used to convince the public of the wisdom of the government’s choices. The ladder moves through stages of increasing information giving, consultation, partnership, and finally citizen control. The middle rungs constitute some form of citizen involvement, but also often entail a degree of “tokenism” (Arnstein 1969). Disadvantaged citizens have the right to advise, but it “retains for the power holders the continued right to decide” (Arnstein 1969, 217). Hart (1992)

⁴The UN World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. (First Drafted 1995)

later adapted Arnstein's ladder to apply to the situation of children and youth (Figure 1). The primary difference between the two is that Hart's ladder conceives of a role for adults in guiding the process – Hart's top rung involves power sharing, whereas Arnstein's top rung sees citizens having total control. Hart's ladder has been extremely influential in the conceptualization of youth engagement practices over the last few decades.

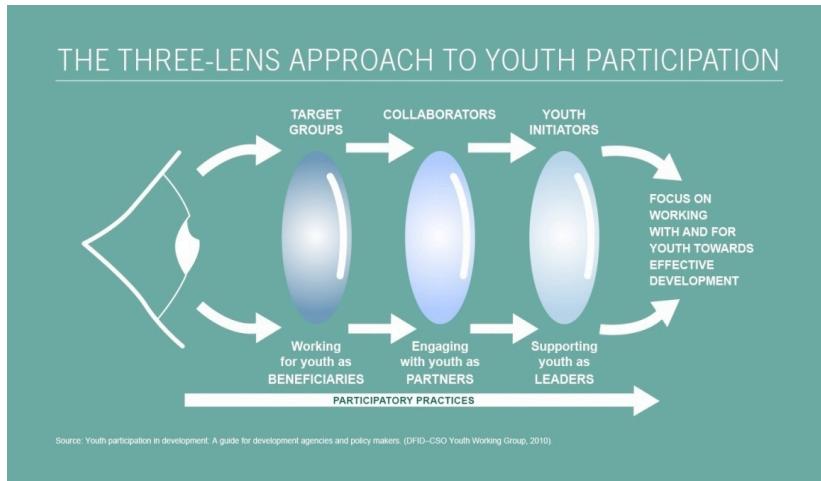
Roger Hart's Ladder of Young People's Participation



Source: Roger hart's ladder of young people's participation (1992)

Lower levels of the ladder are characterised by adult agenda, often manipulating young people in order to claim youth involvement. This form of 'participation' is also referred to as tokenism. Higher levels of the participation ladder are characterised by shared learning and decision-making, where young people are listened to by adults and decisions are made jointly. Engagement lies within the higher levels of

participation, where youth move beyond being beneficiaries towards being partners and leaders, such as outlined in the DFID/CSO Youth Participation Guide (2010) three-lens approach.



Source: Youth participation in development: a guide for development and policy makers. (DFID-CSO youth working group, 2010)

According to Drawing from Czuba (1999), engagement goes beyond participation in that case it is an intentional strategy that both contributes to youth development and enables young people to realise their rights to participate as equals in, and share control over, decision-making and development processes, which affect their lives. Here we can define engagement as involving three elements: participation, as an inclusive process; empowerment, as means to foster power in people for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society; and transformation, as a means to change the way

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adults and youth work together to transform society and sustain this change. Engagement, as Drury (2010) notes, is:

“an active process of change whereby young people progress to greater rights and responsibilities; from being targets of outreach to being actively engaged in the planning and implementation of development interventions”. (Drury 2010)

The International Association for Public Participation (2007) has created a participation spectrum, which condenses and amends Arnstein's ladder down to five steps, summarized in the following table as “promises to the public”. While formulated to apply to the general citizenry, they can be extrapolated to apply to youth as well:

INCREASING IMPACT ON THE DECISION					
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Source: IAP2 International Federation 2014

UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security prioritises youth employment; it also promotes young people's political participation and thus could potentially address the imbalance in employment and participation-related funding. UNSCR 2250 stresses the right of young people to participate in peace-building at all levels of governance, and that their voice should be supported in relevant institutions and interventions.

Genesis of volunteerism in Nepal

As like to the global trend of volunteerism which is ingrained in the culture, the root of volunteerism in Nepal is one of the ancient notion and religious too. Hinduism and Buddhism, Nepal's two major religions, "teach that any voluntary work that brings relief and solace to the people in distress leads one to salvation or moksha" (Neupane, 2002, 1). Volunteerism is ingrained in cultural practices, motivated by a sense of unity, trust, inter-dependence, commitment, cooperation and spontaneous offering of services and sacrifices. The word "volunteer" in Nepali is "Swayamsewak" which means "self-service" or "self-help" and the values and practices of social development, participatory approaches, resource management, self-help, safeguarding, and working together are the ideologies of "Sewanai Dharma ho" ("Serving others is considered as the core duty"). Similarly, "*Paropakar*" (Para means others, and Upakar means benevolence) is well practiced and reflected in the lifestyle of Nepali people. Helping people in need has been widely practiced within Nepali communities, leading to the formation of "Guthi" (voluntary trust organization) as a classical example of the traditional concept of volunteer

mobilization practices. The closest meaning of Guthi in the Newari language is living together in mutual trust and self-service. Additionally, Rodi, Badghar, Guthi, Aama Samuha (Mother's Group) and Parma, construction of Dharmashalas (shelters), Pati-Pauwas (traditional shelters), Chautara (station for having rest) are the examples of traditional volunteer activities in Nepali societies, which promote self-service, sustainability, and a participatory approach as part of Nepali cultural, social and religious ties (Neupane, 2002).

The pragmatism of volunteer and volunteerism is being changed in different epoch of time and context. Traditionally the concept of volunteerism is inbuilt in culture linking with the social development initiatives. Guthi is one of the typical examples of volunteerism which rendered the community services to manage socio-cultural activities in an organized manner. The practice is still practiced in some of the communities and promoting participatory approaches for mobilizing resources and creating the good platform of sharing and learning. Nepal Charkha Pracharak Mahaguthi is one of the organizations registered as non-government organization, which promoted self-help and participatory approach.

Neupane (2002) categorizes the volunteerism into first and second generation and mentioned about the trend emerged in course of volunteerism. During the first generation of volunteerism, the Western concept of 'offering himself/herself' for any service became embedded into the eastern culture. The voluntary concept embedded as a part of its lifestyle and institutionalized in the social system, has been understood as a

“leisure time” service delivery mechanism during emergency for needy people. Since it is more leisure time activity, it is guided with limited commitment. The volunteering mechanism established during this time helped the communities to cope with the natural calamities, implement short term projects and to build the collective infrastructures. *Paropakar*, an institution established during 1948 is one of the successful examples of mobilizing the community volunteers to serve the people of Kathmandu from cholera epidemic. Late DayaBir Shah Kansakar, a recorded first blood donor in Nepal was the founder of that organization on 1947. The organization initially established as a service delivery later shifted to the developmental agency to sustain the institution and to contribute towards national development.

Gradually the traditional volunteerism concept has been shifted to welfare approach done only by the people who have surplus wealth and time. The ‘self-service’ has been shifted to ‘welfare approach’. Receiving services and resources from “others” is being promoted in the developmental programmes. The welfare approach of volunteerism is also known as second generation of volunteerism. This form of volunteerism promotes welfare but also escalate the external dependency (Neupane, 2002). The scope of volunteerism in the second generation is expanded from welfare to essential service delivery, distribution of meals and other materials at the time of emergency. Volunteers played important roles in the process of social mobilization. The management of drinking water scheme, community forests, irrigation systems, savings group, operations of the self-help groups to address the pertinent community problems are the

some of the few issues dealt by the volunteers in the second generation.

Due to the global influences and growing in-country democratic leverage and polices enables to fortify the conducive environment to promote volunteerism. The welfare based volunteerism is being promoted in different ways. Nothing to undermine the role of traditional volunteerism which still exist in Nepalese society, however more organized programme related to volunteerism, issue based and short term volunteerism, external support based volunteerism, educational institutions/curriculum owned volunteerism/internship are more in practice. The motivation of young people is shaped by an interest to get better job after doing volunteerism.

Policy framework of volunteerism in Nepal

Previously, the volunteer services were governed through the traditional practices without any polices or a legal framework. However, the National Education System Plan 1971 that aimed for quality education introduced volunteer programme at higher education students, namely the National Development Service (NDS) programme through Tribhuvan University of Nepal. This programme was developed for the post-graduate students to render their services and learning in rural areas of Nepal. The programme was piloted in 1973 and continued until 1979. The NDS was an integral part of the University education, and certificates were awarded only after the required service delivered through this programme.

The Government of Nepal later came out with some legal arrangements that recognized the existence and operation of

volunteer organizations extended through the Associations Registration Act 1977 and Social Welfare Act 1992. Recognizing the role of youth in promoting volunteerism, the Constitution of Nepal (Article 51, J)⁵ has emphasized on providing appropriate opportunities to youth for their contribution to all round development of the nation. It has clearly stipulated that the youth empowerment would be ensured through provisioning of special opportunities to them in areas such as education, health, employment that would ultimately benefit the nation in all-out manner.

The National Youth Policy, 2015 and Youth Vision- 2025 have clearly defined the mobilisation and promotion of youth volunteerism in nation building process. The National Youth Council (NYC) has a young volunteering programme entitled ‘Contribution of Youth for Society’ where they engage in philanthropic activities such as cleaning campaigns, blood donations, plantation, and campaigns against drug use. The 14th Periodic Plan (2016-19) has a section entitled ‘Youth, Sports & Volunteer service’ where the National Planning Commission of Government of Nepal envisions for massive engagement of volunteers in a campaign.⁶

Nepal Scouts, governed by the Nepal Scouts Act 1952, is regulated under the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), becoming the largest movement for the education of young people by supporting physical, intellectual, social, spiritual, and emotional development; supporting students and young people

⁵ Constitution of Nepal 2015

⁶ <https://www.npc.gov.np/images/category/14th-plan-full-document.pdf>

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for their transformation into responsible global citizens. Currently, 64,670 students are involved in voluntary works, such as sanitation, environmental management, day celebration, disaster risk reduction and other scout activities (Nepal Scouts Report, 2016).

Table 1: Policies related to volunteerism in Nepal

SN	Name of Policy	Estd./Issued Year
1	National Youth Council Act	2015
2	National Youth Policy	2015
3	Youth Vision-2025	2015
4	Nepal Scouts Act	1952
5	Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV) act	1988
6	National Development Volunteer Service (NDVS) procedures	2000
7	National Development Service (NDS)	1971
8	Volunteer Management policy – Nepal Red Cross Society	2002

To promote volunteerism among educated youth in development and service sectors, the Government of Nepal has launched the National Development Volunteer Service (NDVS)

in 2000. It was earlier handled by the National Planning Commission but now falls under the Ministry of Youth and Sports that acts as the prime body regulating volunteer works, guided by the Volunteers' Mobilization Procedure 2017. NDVS has started its volunteer mobilization programme in FY 1998/1999, selecting 220 volunteers in 25 districts with different areas of expertise: engineers, agriculturists, geographers, demographers, health workers, social mobilizers, teachers, herbal plant specialists and solar energy specialists and so on. Now NDVS program has been expanded into 72 districts of Nepal, mobilizing thousands of volunteers almost all over the nation. NDVS has been marking the international volunteers' day in every December 5, by organizing different promotional events. Best performing volunteers has been awarded with certificate and felicitation (MoYS 2017).

The Public Health Division of the Ministry of Health and Population introduced Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHV) in 27 districts in 1988, gradually expanding to all districts of Nepal. At present, 51,470 FCHVs have been working and supporting primary health care activities, acting as a bridge between government health services and communities. It has yielded encouraging results in improving maternal/infant health over the past decades in Nepal (MoHP Report 2018).

As the leading government institution for youth development and mobilization, MoYS initiated programmes for engaging youth volunteers. Aftermath of the devastating earthquake of 2015, MoYS along with the political youth organizations and youth I/NGOs mobilized 10,600 youth volunteers in earthquake

affected areas in rescue, relief and rehabilitation works (MoYS 2017). Under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; universities, colleges and secondary schools have been running volunteer teaching training programmes for the students of the education faculties as a part of their academic requirements. This programme has significant impact, mostly on the rural communities, and exposes students to the on-the-ground reality of societies and communities.

Since 1974, UNV Nepal has been working in Nepal to promote volunteerism together with international and national UN Volunteers. Those volunteers are recruited and deployed into UN agencies and government projects in Nepal. In the past 10 years 371 International and 344 National UN Volunteers have served in Nepal under UNV Nepal's management and facilitation. Meanwhile, some of the UNVs who served different UN missions abroad including peacekeeping and electoral assistance have returned to the country and formed a common platform called RUNVAN (Returned UN Volunteers Association of Nepal) and are now contributing in various sectors of national development. UNV has contributed to national capacity development with the government in the Local Governance and Community Development Program (LGCDP), Phase I and Phase II. During LGCDP I, UNV funded and coordinated more than 100 national volunteers to support community empowerment activities across the country. For Phase II, UNV funded 11 ICT national volunteers placed in the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development and Regional Cluster Units to engage in implementation of E-

Governance and to coordinate 134 ICT Youth Volunteers (UNV Nepal 2018).

Apart from the government and UN-driven initiatives, I/NGOs mobilize young volunteers for personal and professional development vis-à-vis community development. I/NGOs namely, Restless Development, Raleigh International and Volunteer Service Organization (VSO) have been implementing the International Citizens' Service (ICS) program for three months to assimilate international-to-national volunteers⁷. They have their own code of conduct and procedures for mobilizing volunteers in communities. Youth led and youth focused organizations such as Youth Advocacy Nepal, Youth Action Nepal, YUWA, Association of Youth Organization in Nepal (AYON), Youth NGO Federation Nepal and several others have been mobilizing youth as volunteers in their different initiatives. Additionally, young people, university graduates and some retired professionals have continued the notion of volunteerism in different ways. For example, Snow Yak Foundation has been mobilizing educated young people and students to support the education of children in the most remote (educationally, geographically and economically) communities of Nepal (<https://snowyak.org/>).

The Nepal Red Cross Society follows global protocols set by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Society (IFRC). It operates through the Volunteer Management Policy 2008 and Volunteer Management Guideline 2014. NRCS volunteers have been working on organizational

⁷ <https://www.volunteerics.org/>

development, Junior Red Cross promotion in schools, blood donation drives, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), and other initiatives. Until 2018, 10,300 volunteers have been mobilized through NRCS (NRCS Report 2018).

With these positive aspects, the increasing trend of emigration and immigration has influenced the traditional notion of volunteerism as villages and rural communities become shelters for the elderly. Unemployment on one hand, and non-recognition of local resources and expertise on the other has become the driving factor for volunteerism.

Volunteering in development initiatives: three cases

In course of interaction, interview and discussion among the volunteers most of them mentioned about that their motivation for being volunteer is generated automatically. For example, Sujata Adhikari (23) served as a volunteer in a programme related to ending child marriage in Sunsari district for six months. According to her, interest of serving for community is always there when she starts realizing the involvement of the youth like her in the schools and community. A development programme run through the NGO helped her to engage on the programme. She received training, mentorship and regular guidance from the NGO staffs and she worked as volunteer peer educator, conducted community workshop, interacted confidently with teachers and community leaders. She says, “Involvement as volunteer peer educator in Save the Date programme helped me to grow like an activist. I am being invited by the community people, local government

representatives and youth whenever the incident of child marriage and violence against women and girls happens".

Another case is of Umesh Dahal (25) of Kathmandu, who witnessed many young people between 15-19 face different sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) related issues like puberty, body changes and facing stigma. He joined as volunteer in International Citizen Service (ICS) and received intensive training on SRHR and conducted the sessions in schools and communities of Sindhuli district. He says, "Before joining the International Citizen Service I knew what I wanted to do, but I did not know how to get there, what to study or who to consult so that I can address these issues." Serving volunteer for 3 months in Sindhuli, Umesh joined as staff and deployed in Mugu. He mentioned that after training young people, they tell him that they had never had such training before and they wish they could learn more. After hearing this, he started using the replication model to train young people, so after training a group of young people they also train two other people. By doing so, the knowledge is passed along to other young people.

The experience of Manashi Acharya (19), from Udaypur is also interesting. She joined as a volunteer peer educator/trainer for empowering adolescent girl group members. In her community, gender-based violence (GBV) is a serious problem. Girls and women don't experience the same rights as men and are often encouraged to stay at home to perform household chores rather than attending school. Like many girls in her community, she was reluctant to stand up against the social harmful practices that she witnessed on a daily basis. She joined the 'Rupantaran'

training, a package developed for holistic adolescent development designed and implemented by Restless Development Nepal. After participating in the training, Manashi became an adolescent girl facilitator and observe her impact on her community, as well as significant changes in herself. She says that the training allowed her to become more confident and improve her public speaking skills. Today, she is able to raise her voice against bad practices in her community, mostly regarding GBV.

These are few of many instances where young people are serving volunteer and contributing on the community development. In these exemplary cases of volunteerism, their engagement is shaped through the welfare based approach. Unlike to the first generation of volunteerism where people serve to the community as leisure time engagement and not in organized and structured way, this generation volunteers are dependent with the structured programme no matter they mentioned that their motivation is guided with their own interest. To shape their motivation different external factors are playing the role. In an interaction with the young volunteers, some of the volunteers mentioned that, if I serve as volunteer, I can get the better job, my journey to go aboard for further study would be easier, I can complete my study, I can make friends and the like.

In the framework of engagement, they are seemingly involved in the process however, they are not independent to decide what they want. They have to follow the structure and programmes deliverables of the respective organizations they are associated

with. Those organizations also claimed that, they are running independent volunteering programmes but their programmes are shaped with the agreements those organizations made with their respective funding agencies or partners.

Challenges in volunteerism

In course of interaction with the volunteers and reviewing relevant literatures, volunteers and volunteer sending organizations experienced some of the common challenges they face in regular basis. These include:

- Inadequate recognition of volunteers' contribution in their work from the respective authorities and the government.
- Community peoples' high (er) expectations towards volunteers' assigned tasks and sometimes beyond expertise.
- Youth mobility is high towards cities (within country) and at international level which hinder the engagement of local volunteers in the respective community.
- Lack of proper governing authority for volunteer's mobilization. Volunteers' questioned upon the role of NDVS.
- Absence of proper alignment of national volunteers programme for consolidating the dividend of democracy and development in the grassroots though institutionalizing youth engagement on sustainable development.
- Limited resources in organizations to mobilize the volunteers for longer term.

- Safeguarding of volunteers and questionable institutional capacity and expertise in proper volunteer management.
- Less motivation of youth for youth volunteerism, increasing consumerism/immediate financial benefits and ambitious quick-fix solutions.
- Less female participation; predominant patriarchy, cultural stereotypes in the scenario of national/international pairing of volunteers, national volunteers are merely considered as a guide or translator, suggesting thus the need for enhancing their ability and confidence leading to their increased reputation at par with their international counterparts.⁸

Engagement of youth volunteers can be categorized into different areas. The volunteers have been mobilized into the health, education, agriculture, environment, infrastructural development and awareness raising activities. If we see a traditional pattern, many problems in communities are solved through volunteerism. Public goods such as trail roads, temples, inns, water taps, wells and community functions such as marriages, religious and relief works during disasters etc. are all led by volunteers and with voluntary spirit. The pattern of such volunteering has been changing, and volunteer programmes are increasingly organised through the efforts of the government, I/NGOs, self-help groups and corporations.

In course of promoting a new kind of voluntarism, development sectors have been supporting volunteers in most of the cases

⁸ Conclusion derived from FGDs.

monetarily and promoting more structured and organized volunteerism. As a result, voluntarism began to lose its associations with self-help, sustainability, and promotion of a participatory approach. In the name of welfare approach the traditional participatory and leisure time activity based volunteerism is being replaced. The engagement of youth in the name of volunteerism is being commercialized and more tokenism is being promoted. However, youth who are involved in volunteering has been contributing in their personal development as well as to their respective communities and society broadly. Responsible authority and agencies promoting volunteerism have to encourage more self-help approaches in pressing issues in their respective communities. For amplifying the scope of volunteerism, the government needs to bring programmes to recognize volunteers' effort as well as keep specific curricula in the school syllabus so that young people realize the importance and benefits of being a volunteer. The role of National Development Volunteering Service (NDVS) is even pertinent to make systematic and organized. NDVS can play the lead role for coordinating, executing and scaling up the volunteerism practices among different government ministries and development partners. Downstream volunteerism policies in the sub-national level is an opportunity where NDVS can play the vital role. Mainstreaming the volunteerism programmes at federal, provincial and local level focusing the participation of female, sexual minorities, disable, marginalized and indigenous community young people would help to increase the horizon of volunteerism practices in Nepal.

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Empowering Youth through Power of Volunteering

Suran Maharjan & Sushil Babu Khanal

Abstract

VSO Nepal has been running a youth volunteering programme, named International Citizen Service (ICS) since 2012. This programme allows youths between 18 and 25 years old from the UK and Nepal to gain volunteering experience in rural Nepal for 12 weeks. From the first phase of ICS (2012) until July 2019, a total of 1,514 youth volunteers have involved in this programme, among them 774 are from Nepal. Major outcomes of the ICS programme are positive development outcomes in developing countries, personal and social development of young volunteers and the creation of advocates for international development and agents for social change in their own communities and beyond. Since personal development is highly emphasized as an outcome, it is expected that ex-volunteers become active citizens and engaged for social change.

This article outlines the outcome of the study, Impact of ICS programme among ex-volunteers conducted among former ICS

volunteers from Nepal. It finds out that how ICS programme enables former youth volunteers to perform well in their current roles, the connection of learning that is generated during ICS volunteer placement and its impact to their professional life. A mixed approach with the quantitative and qualitative data has been applied for this study.

Major finding of this research is that youth from Nepal are having opportunities to develop soft skills. The experiences of volunteering were useful for youth to make key decisions in their lives in goal setting, creative thinking, self-awareness and critical thinking. Besides, improvement on leadership skills and behavior change are taking place by enhancing youth engagement together with community people.

Key word: *ICS, youth, volunteer, impact, change, engagement*

Introduction

International Citizen Service (ICS) is a volunteer programme that brings together young people aged 18-25 (23-35 for team leaders) from the UK and developing countries who volunteer to work together on education, health, livelihood and civic participation projects in Africa and Asia (ICS, 2019). The programme was launched by DFID in 2011 after the then Prime Minister David Cameron announced the intention of launching “an International Citizen Service to give thousands of young people who couldn’t otherwise afford it, the chance to see the world and serve others” (Comptroller and Auditor General, 2017). The main objective of the programme is to make a

positive contribution to poverty reduction and the sustainable development outcomes in the host country. In addition, the programme supports the longer-term personal and social development of the volunteers: they build skills that enable them to act as agents of social change within their own communities (Cox, Kiberd, & Baraki, 2019).

From 2011 until 2019 March, as many as 37,000 volunteers from the UK been involved in the ICS in 19 countries across Africa, Asia and Latin America. In 2019, the programme was delivered by ICS consortium member organizations VSO, Raleigh International and Restless Development in seven countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Kenya, Nepal, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia (ICS, 2019).

From 2012 to 2019 this programme has been implemented by all ICS consortium members in the different period in 12 districts of three provinces of Nepal. Looking at the trend of ICS implementation from VSO Nepal, it was initially implemented as stand-alone project to contribute to programme area; education, health and secured livelihoods. Collaboration is initiated in the second stage, followed by a strong connection of geographic and programmatic integration where ICS is being treated as internal part of VSO's mainstreaming programme. Also, VSO's approach of volunteering for development is embedded while designing and implementation of ICS. The journey of stand-alone to integrated ICS with Inclusive Education and Inclusive Governance programme has taken place from 2017 in order to maximize the outcomes of the interventions. Starting from 2012, VSO Nepal has mobilized

1,514 youth volunteers in this programme until July 2019, where as many as 774 (51.13%) youths from Nepal has been participated (VSO Nepal, 2019).

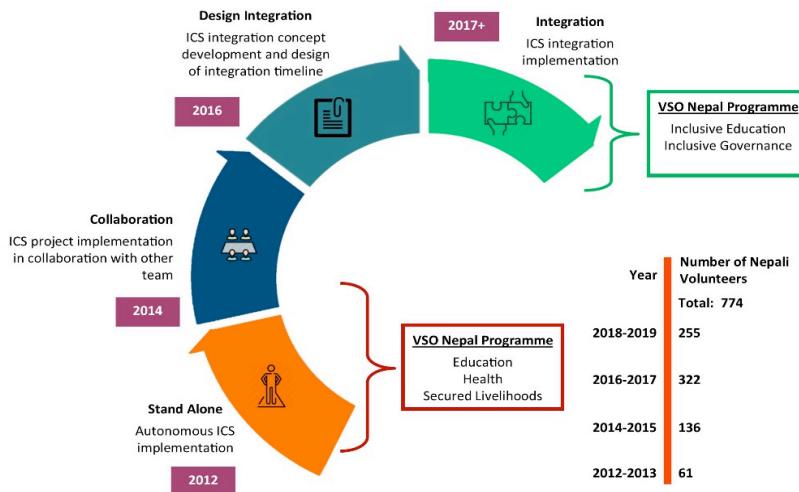


Figure 1: Shifts of ICS in VSO Nepal

Over the period, there are many alumni volunteers either in the country or abroad doing various works such as being active in development sector, became entrepreneurs, pursued further studies etc. The programme was designed in a way that former volunteers could become active citizens. The study measures the outcomes and impacts of the ICS programme among ex-volunteers in various aspects of their personal and professional lives, including soft skills such as cross-cultural communication, communication skills, decision making capability, critical thinking, self-awareness, coping and self-management skills, team work, negotiation skills, time

management, creative thinking, goal setting, leadership and the like.

Literature review

Impact is one of the key considerations of development programmes and NGOs have different ways of measuring the impact of their programmes. Impact is a concept that is used for many purposes and at all stages of development programming (Hearn & Buffardi, 2016). The success or failure of the development interventions is measured against the impact of the programme to the people or the area. Often impacts are envisioned while interventions are being planned. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC), impact is “positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended”. This definition of impact is also used by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) (Hearn & Buffardi, 2016).

The Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, signed in 2005 is a roadmap to improve the quality of aid and its impact on development that lists 5 key principles of partnership commitments (OECD, 2009):

1. Ownership:	Developing countries set their own strategies for poverty reduction, improve their institutions and tackle corruption.
2. Alignment:	Donor countries align behind these objectives and use local systems.
3. Harmonisation:	Donor countries coordinate, simplify procedures

	and share information to avoid duplication.
4. Results:	Developing countries and donors shift focus to development results and results get measured.
5. Mutual accountability:	Donors and partners are accountable for development results.

These principles can be replicated to the context of ICS as it is funded by the UK government's aid agency, DFID for volunteer placements with local partners in the host countries for achieving positive and sustainable development impacts. Though all these five principles can be relevant for ICS to some extent, the most relevant principles are ownership, results and mutual accountability (ICS, VSO, 2017).

There has been a drive among major donors for greater demonstration of 'value for money' and growing importance of demonstrating impact in international development (Hearn & Buffardi, 2016). The ICS programme has also demonstrated impact to the development works on the ground, developing young volunteers and building a legacy of active citizenship. Globally, 92 percent of ICS project partners have said that they are better able to bring about change as a result of working with ICS volunteers; 74 percent of volunteers mentioned that ICS experience has been very useful for their personal development; and two thirds of former volunteers remain active in volunteering and social action even after completion of their volunteering placement (VSO, 2020).

Furthermore, social return on investment (SROI) analysis commissioned by VSO and delivered by NEF Consulting shows that the SROI ratio is 4.64:1. This means for every £1 spent on the programme, an estimated £4.64 in social value is created among volunteers from the UK (Cox, Kiberd, & Baraki, 2019). SROI analysis of volunteers from ICS implementing country such as Nepal is not yet completed.

Another impact of the ICS programme is making the participants as leader in the volunteering for development sector, which is evolved and developed since its inception in 2011 (ICS, 2019). VSO has vast experience of managing youth volunteers and committed to deepen the impact by continuing to develop an understanding of where and how youth volunteers can be best utilised as agents of change, ensuring young people's skills and abilities are being used in the best way.

The Universal Declaration on Volunteering from International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) says that “Volunteering is a fundamental building block of civil society. It brings to life the noblest aspirations of humankind – the pursuit of peace, freedom, opportunity, safety, and justice for all people” (IAVE, 2020). Volunteering can contribute to country’s social and economic development in many ways some countries are showing the evidences of volunteering contribution in economic value. The voluntary sector contributed £17.1bn to the economy in 2016/17, representing around 0.85 percent of GDP in the UK (NCVO, 2020). Similarly, in 2016 Kenyan volunteers’ contribution in

translated approximately 3.66 percent of GDP of Kenya (UNV, 2018). In context of Nepal, such analysis and data evidence is not obtained while working on this study. However, volunteer mobilization has been a key focus in youth sector. The Youth Vision 2025's one of the pillars is mobilization, participation and leadership development. Under this pillar it is targeted that by the year 2025 number of volunteers mobilized in regular situation is 2,500 per year and in emergency situation number will be reached 200,000 (National Youth Council, 2015). Volunteering has a deep meaning, and this can contribute to country's overall economy, it is required to increase investment from the government in volunteer mobilization in Nepal to meet targeted goal. Also, recognition from the government requires to be formalize for volunteers who were mobilized from various organizations in Nepal.

Methodology

A mix-method approach has been used in the study by employing both qualitative and quantitative data largely taken from a series of discussions with the ICS team members, interview with former ICS volunteers, project coordinators and other education project team members. Also available and relevant literatures are reviewed to understand the ICS program and its implication. Global reports, policy and programs of the ICS program are reviewed to compare with Nepalese practice. Primary database includes the official data stored in VSO Nepal office and the interview taken through web-based survey questions to the former Nepalese volunteers of ICS program. During this process, 225 were participated in the survey.

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Besides, two Focus Group Discussion with 18 participants (9 female and 9 male) were conducted to identify their perception, attitudes and experiences towards the ICS program in Nepal. Similarly, some selected case studies are also conducted to understand the impact of the program.

Findings

The findings are based on the direct responses from ex volunteers. Currently, most of former ICS volunteers are students. Out of the sample (N=225), 31.11 percent ex-volunteers are pursuing higher education in various universities in Nepal and 7.56 percent of them are studying abroad.

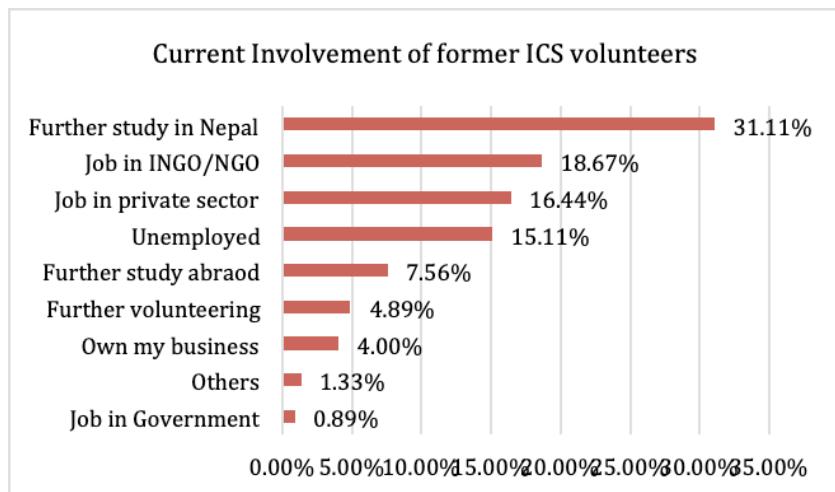


Figure 2: Current involvement of former ICS volunteers

Regarding their employment, 18.75 percent of them are working in non-government organizations (NOGs), while 16.44 percent are currently working with private sector. Only 0.83 percent of them are in government service, while some 4

percent of them are owned their own business. After the ICS volunteering, a total of 4.89 percent youth are continuing volunteering works with other organizations, though 54 percent of the ex-volunteers have partially involved in any kind of volunteering till date. The current involvement of former ICS volunteers is shown in Figure 2.

The experiences of volunteering were very much useful among the ex-ICS volunteers. Most of them acknowledged that ICS experience became fruitful as 31 percent said that it was extremely useful, while 62 percent said very useful. The remaining 7 percent said that the programme became somewhat useful to them. No one gave their negative remarks to the programme.

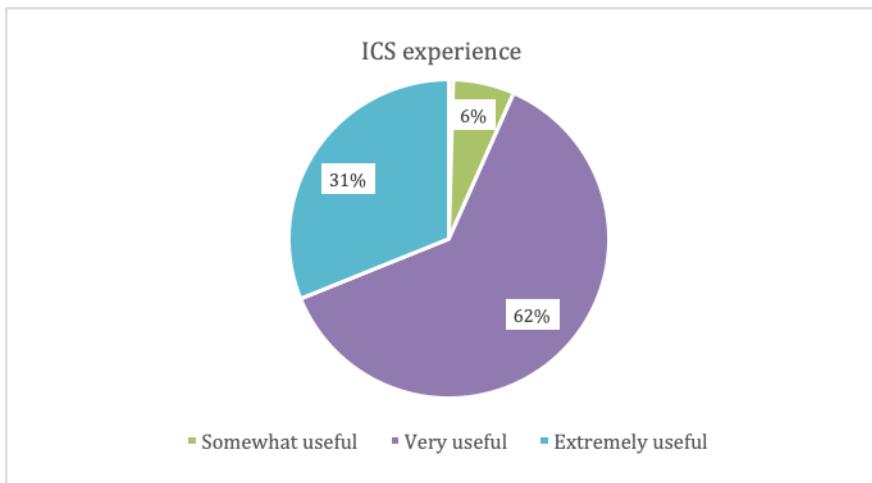


Figure 3: ICS experience

In the interaction, 72 percent respondent said that ICS helped them secure more opportunities and experience. A whopping 82 percent said that ICS experience added value in their CV for

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searching new opportunities. Similarly, 74 percent said they encouraged other youth to become a volunteer. Other 70 percent respondent said they are committed to contribute in community development after completion of programme. The experience of ICS volunteerism has helped to 76 respondents to develop their leadership. In addition, the ICS experience has contributed to 82% participants for their personal development. Similarly, 93% former ICS volunteers believed that the volunteerism experiences were useful for their better life. The detail of their experiences is shown in the Figure 4.

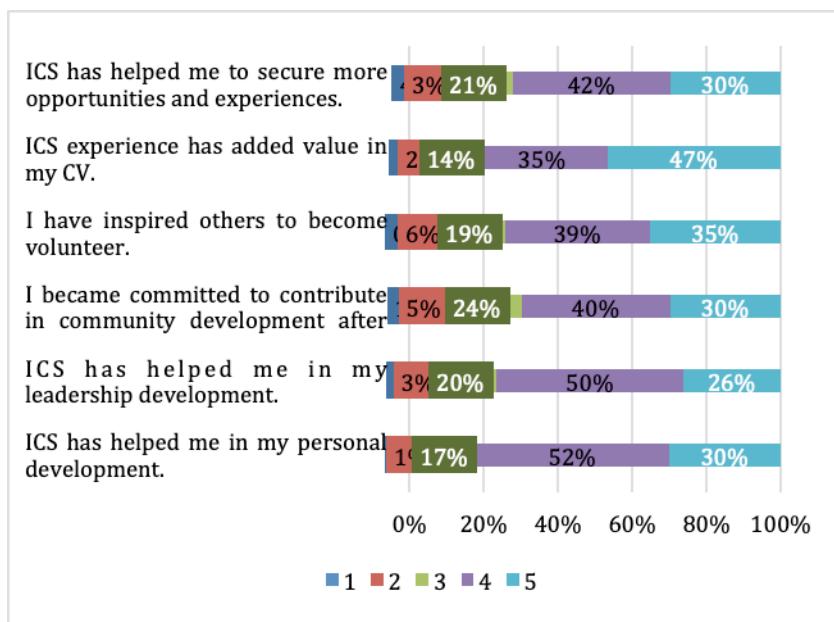


Figure 4: Experiences of former ICS volunteers

Former ICS volunteers are found very confident on different skills. About 99% former volunteers found confident on cross-cultural communication skills and 98% volunteers found

confident on leadership, teamwork, self-management and communication and. Similarly, 95% volunteers found confident on negotiation skill. As shown in Figure 5, they are found strongly confident on teamwork, communication and cross-cultural communication skills.

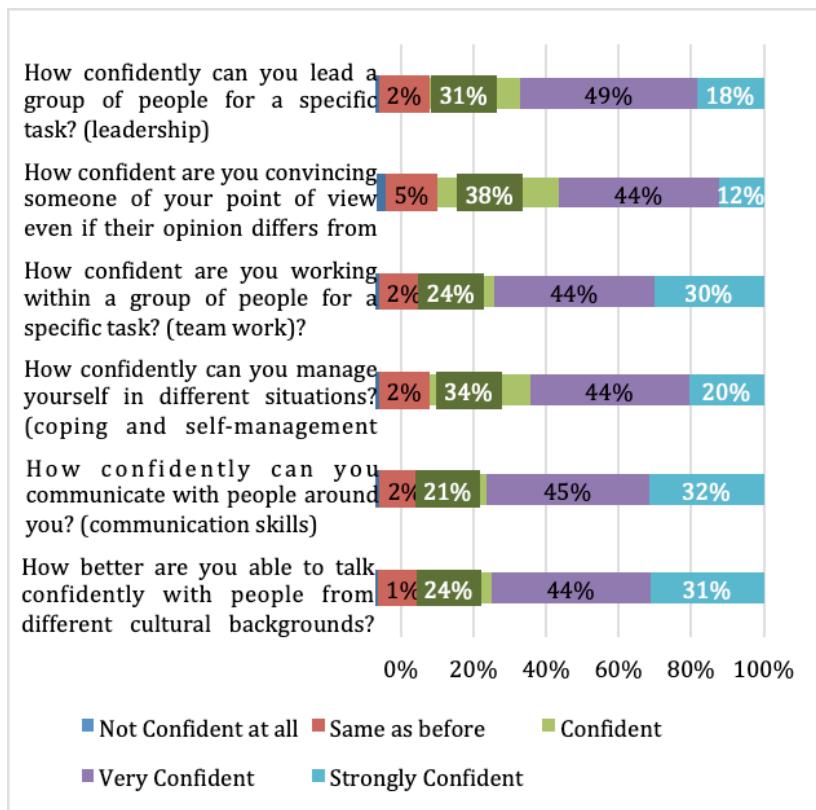


Figure 5: Confident level on different skills

The volunteers are found able to make key decisions about their future, more than 87% of them felt that it is easy task. Similarly, they are found able to make friends with people whom they have just met, more than 93% of them felt that it is

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easy task. Their decision making and interpersonal skills are presented in Figure 6.

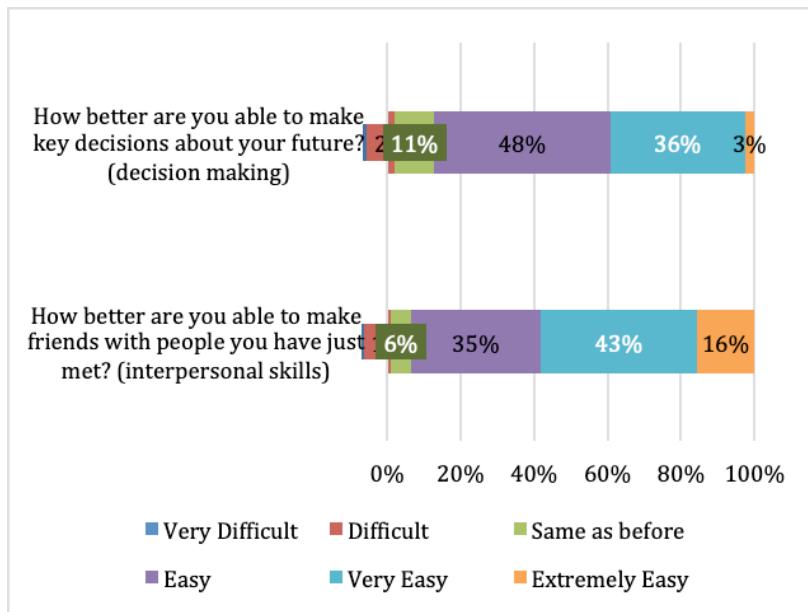


Figure 6: Decision making and interpersonal skills

The volunteers are having strong ability in goal setting, creative thinking, self-awareness and critical thinking. More than 99 percent volunteers are found confident on creative thinking and self-awareness, similarly 98 percent on critical thinking and 97 percent on goal setting. Details of the level of ability is presented in Figure 7.

Another change found in the volunteer's skill is time management. More than 96% volunteers said that they are managing time in an effective way. Details of their ability is presented in Figure 8.

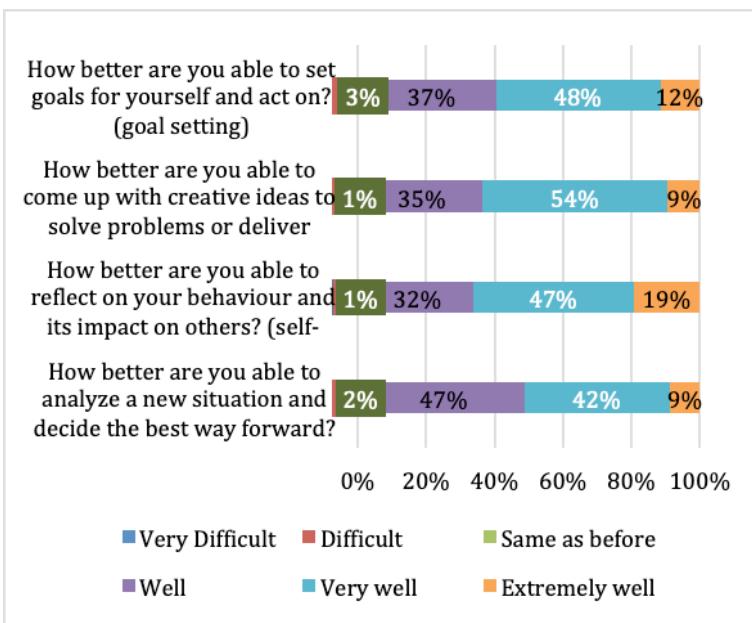


Figure 7: Ability of former volunteers

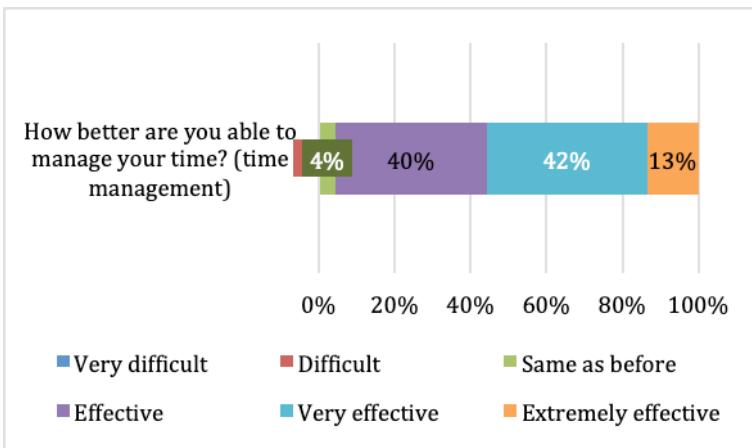


Figure 8: Ability to manage time

Former volunteers thought that ICS played a key role to enhance youth engagement and develop leadership skills. It has connected youths with the community people and greater impact in behavioral change. The program has supported to bring youth and the community people together. Some management issues were raised by the ex-volunteers such as session designs on in-country orientation, provision of updated medical kit and timely responses of complaints.

ICS program is providing opportunities to the youth to develop professional and personal skills. Youth are experiencing of working with different culture and communities in country and with international people. It supports to increase efficiency in English language and inspire others. ICS alumni can lead new innovations for changing the behavior of community people.

Discussion

Young people have passion, enthusiasm, and creativity. Their transition to adulthood is a critical period for shaping their future. Intervention such as ICS programme has provided an opportunity for Nepali youths to take part in community development intervention with the ongoing facilitation and support. The result showing 54 percent of former volunteers are active as volunteer one or other way shows that ICS has inspired youths to be engaged and active in social works. This social capital is developed over the period which is eventually beneficial to the country. Also, this is further evidenced by 31 percent volunteers' response that their ICS experience was extremely useful followed by other 62 percent said that was very useful.

The term “soft skills” refers to a broad set of skills, behaviors, and personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment, relate well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals (USAID, 2020). “Soft skills” are centrally important for human capital development and workforce success (H.Lippman, Ryberg, Carney, & Moore, 2015). A philosophy and approach, Positive Youth Development (PYD) engages youth along with their families, communities and/or governments so that youth are empowered to reach their full potential. PYD approaches build skills, assets and competencies; foster healthy relationships; strengthen the environment; and transform systems (USAID, 2020). PYD hugely emphasized the focus on soft skills for youth. Similar to the PYD approach, ICS programme also has a huge focus on youth to make them active citizens with a slogan ‘challenge yourself to change the world’. The research outcomes show that confidence level in leadership, negotiation skills, teamwork, coping & self-management skills, and cross-cultural communication is very high. In average 24 percent strongly confident and 45 percent are very confident.

Active citizen is a subject that can be defined in various ways, citizens may have connection with geography. Active citizens can be considered as people who are engaged for change or development. “Young people are the active citizens of today and leaders of tomorrow. Today’s youth population is larger than ever: 1.2 billion people are between ages 15 and 24, and 90 percent live in low-income countries” (Oxfam Novib, 2020). Opportunity for youth to be mobilized for society can make them active citizens, they can be inspired by opportunity itself

and there is a huge possibility that youth inspire others to be active or engaged. The research has shown that 35 percent of respondents are highly agree that they have inspired other to become volunteers by indicating 5 in a range of 0 being less and 5 being more, also 39% have respondents have provided 4. This clearly shows that ICS has inspired youth to become active citizens. Also, 70% of respondents have indicated 4 (40%) and 5 (30%) in a statement that they became committed to contribute in community development after completion of ICS.

Similar to the concept of active citizens the transition from childhood to adulthood is also an important aspect. Youth requires many engaging opportunities that they can learn and make foundation for their career. Often in the job market experience are required, volunteering opportunities can add value. The ICS experience has helped youth volunteer to secure more opportunities and experience, and majority of respondent agree that ICS experience has added value to their CVs as shown in the figure 4. ICS has impact to volunteer's development and this resourceful youth generation will contribute to overall development of the country. It also contributes to the national strategy of mobilization of youths for country's development.

Conclusion

ICS volunteering is helpful for youth to develop their capacity. This further adds value in their social capital development and enhance their soft skills, which, is rarely regarded as important aspect for youths' human capital development. This piece of

research has demonstrated the value of volunteering experience in developing and expanding their soft skills.

Meanwhile, volunteers were able to enrich their experiences which can be added in their CVs to attract a potential employer. The focus of ICS is also to make youth as active citizens that will be engaged for community development and become an agent for a social change. Volunteering has a greater impact in nation building contribution of volunteers can be realized in economic value and national gross domestic product. In the case of Nepal, such data analysis is not obtained therefore the contribution of volunteers is not reflected in economic indicators. However, volunteering can contribute to improve country's overall economy. Government's priority on volunteer mobilization can accelerate to meet the development goal of the nation.

Acknowledgements

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Youth Politico-volunteer Spirit in Nepal

Yug Pathak

Abstract

The politico-volunteer spirit of youth has been the driving force of history. Nepal too saw the surge of youths volunteering with sacrificial vigor for political change in different phases of history. Recently youths are perceived to be disillusioned with politics in general and political parties in particular. The politico-volunteer spirit is on downward spiral now. This is basically spotted in the electoral politics. The escalating election expenses have empowered the shrewd Machiavellian tricks, producing the 'distancing effect' that has significantly harmed the leader-cadre/supporter relationship, ultimately distancing the grassroots peoples from the so-called political mainstream. Meanwhile, corruption scandals being the order of the day, the 'integrity deficit disorder' is seen in all political strata. Integrity deficit entails the trust deficit of the political parties and leaders that is forcefully effecting the lowering of youth politico-volunteer spirit. Moreover, the leaders have taken the elitist avatar and distanced themselves greatly from the people, especially the youths that make up the vast majority

of Nepalese population. The practice of stern favoritism like *chakari* is being celebrated as major trait of political culture which is alien to the digital era youth. This study aims at exploring the reasons behind the dismal state of youth politico-volunteer spirit and situating the politico-volunteer spirit at the ideals of grassroots democratic innovations.

Keywords: *Politico-volunteer, volunteerism, politics, elitism, distancing effect*

Introduction

'I am ready to sell my parliament member position to anyone who pays my election debts,' he said. His sentimental outburst was received with grave reciprocity by his comrades. The theater in which he became so vocal was Central Committee meeting of Nepal Communist Party (NCP) held from January 29 to February 2, 2020 in Kathmandu (Subedi 2020). And he is none other than Ram Karki, a well-known leader and parliament member of ruling party, i.e. NCP.

Karki's remark triggered the memory of election days three years ago. The stories of expensive elections were widely circulated in series of news articles and opinions in that period⁹. Several anecdotes and comments about the candidates flooding election with money were shared in social media platforms too. According to those stories, Election

⁹ Few examples being Rai (2018), Bhatt (2017), Satyal (2017), Shrestha (2018) etc.

Commission's ceiling on election expenses was obeyed just on formal documents. A much-lauded report *Study on Election Campaign Finance 2017* concurred with these media reports, speculations and anecdotes (2017). Henceforth, it's safely evident that Karki's remark didn't drop out of the blue.

There is an informal yet well-known abbreviation in political arena: 3M. That means- Mobile, Motorcycle and Money. A political leader who cannot provide 3M to the cadres is supposed to be literally unfit for the electoral politics today. On the flipside, it means political cadres and supporters largely exhibit unwillingness for passionate volunteerism. One should be able to marshal the resources and provide financial and other direct benefits in order to mobilize cadres and supporters for political success.

We can't imagine any political party organizing and operating itself in corporate ways in democracy. The building blocks of a political party are its grassroots organisms. Therefore they can't function like the artificial bureaucratic arrangements. These organisms exist and flourish feeding on the nectar of volunteer spirit. When this volunteer spirit goes down, politics becomes the sheer commercial affair. Democracy thus turns into an operation of extraction that sucks from financial, moral, social and spiritual resources of the state and peoples.

Is Nepal, a newly born federal republic, facing the gross erosion of political integrity? Is the volunteer spirit in politics genuinely at the peril? Is it true that the youths today dispiritedly distance themselves from politics? If so, what might be the causes? What ignites and what disheartens the

politico-volunteer spirit of the youths in Nepal? Hereafter, this article aims to explore this pressing issue.

Politico-volunteer spirit

In general, volunteerism is readily present in all human societies. Without it any socio-cultural spheres we see today could neither have originated nor prevailed. It is the powerful spirit to maintain the social fabric. Traditional or modern, all grassroots volunteer organizations mobilize to serve collective interests. Therefore it is political in nature. Politics, however, is more political. It covers larger map of interests bringing together peoples unknown to each other from larger spectrum of societies of various cultures under the auspices of an ideal. By the term 'politico-volunteer spirit' I have aimed to elucidate such ethos of peoples to flag a common ideal, organize for it and march to champion the cause.

Volunteer spirit evolved at least ten thousand years ago in human history. According to David Horton Smith, the 'grassroots associations' (GA) were originated in Central Asia¹⁰ and started to flourish about 8,000 BC and thereafter as non-profit, volunteer organizations (Smith 1997: 190-91). Though primitive in form, they were political in nature. In the course of history, these 'grassroots associations' developed various offshoots to serve different modes of collective interests. As everywhere else in the world, Nepal too has many traditional

¹⁰ Smith uses 'Middle East' to denote Central Asia. I prefer 'Central Asia' purposefully as a decolonizing effort to deny the European gaze.

volunteer organizations like *Guthi*, *Posang*¹¹ etc. Likewise there are different other philanthropic organizations too, be it religious, educational or others. There are also the political organizations.

In politics, like in the traditional voluntary organizations, self-interest is shielded in collective interest. Objective of all organizational efforts is to bring about the social cohesion. "Political power is ultimately based on social cohesion," as Francis Fukuyama writes, "Cohesion may arise out of calculations of self-interest, but simple self-interest is frequently not enough to induce followers to sacrifice and die on behalf of their communities" (Fukuyama 2011: 42-43). What is more than important in politics is the legitimacy of leaders and organizations. He further describes:

We now have in place all of the important natural building blocks out of which we can construct a theory of political development. Human beings are rational, self-interested creatures, and will learn to cooperate out of pure self-interest as economists assert. But beyond this, human nature provides certain structured paths towards sociability that give human politics its particular character (ibid: 43).

That's why politico-volunteerism is not the sheer selfless endeavor. In fact, any sort of volunteerism is self-interested

¹¹ According to Bhattachan (2002), *Guthi*, originated and practiced chiefly in indigenous Newar community, is a kind of philanthropic trust/cooperative that helps maintain the religious as well as different social functions. They have separate *guthis* for different factions eg. music, death rites etc. (32). *Posang* is the democracy voluntarily practiced by indigenous Syngtan people in Mustang district. They run their own local parliament called Yhul Jhompa (ibid: 28).

with certain degree of relative selflessness. Political mind is always self-oriented. But this selfish mind evolved through networking and bonding with other selfish minds. That's why altruism evolved in human society to serve and get service when needed (Lakoff 2009: 204). The distinct feature of politics in modern times, however, is that it plays the secular logic to encompass and at the same time transcend the borders of all cultures and societies. We locate the politico-volunteer spirit in this imaginary space artificially engineered yet ingrained in the long historical experience of political formation. For this study, such space is the historic experience of democratic political innovations in Nepal.

To track the pathway of Nepal's democratic political formation we need to look at the history of oppositional politics against the traditional regime system since the beginning of twentieth century. Early twentieth century saw different reformist social movements like Arya Samaj movement led by Madhav Raj Joshi, Mahavir School and Nagarik Adhikar Samiti (Citizen's Rights Committee) led by Sukra Raj Shastri (one of the sons of Madhav Raj Joshi) etc. which finally gave rise to a political party called Praja Prishad (People's Council) in the then Nepal valley (Joshi and Rose 2004: 50-56).

Furthermore, Tulsi Mehar was persecuted for promoting Gandhi-style Charka movement (Gautam 2062BS: 36). *Nepal Bhasa Andolan*¹² was another noteworthy cultural movement

¹² The mother language of Newar community is called *Nepal Bhasa*. *Nepal Bhasa Andolan* is the cultural and literary movement by Newar community cultural and literary activists that still persists.

famously known as *1997 Sal ko Parva* (1997 Episode). Noted writers like Siddhicharan Shrestha, Yogbir Singh and Sukra Raj Shastri were involved in this campaign to promote writing and performance in the mother language of Newar community. There was another notable reformist movement called Josmani Saint Tradition. Yogmaya was one of the vehement saint who is often linked to Josmani Saint Tradition. Leading a huge dedicated followers, she challenged the traditional order of Hindu customary rules, further entrenched in regime system in discriminatory and suppressive order by *Muluki Ain* (General Code) of 1854, and called for change to establish *dharma raj* (rule of justice). Her contribution is often overlooked by the historians, however, her footprints have marked a significant transformation we see today (For detail, see Aziz 2001).

The first half of Twentieth century was the vibrant time for political formation in modernist fervor. Nepali Diaspora living or studying in Indian cities like Banaras, Kolkata and Darjeeling borrowed the nationalist zeal from Indian Liberation Movement. They devoted themselves in publishing many newspapers and literary journals there, otherwise impossible at home (For detail, see Devkota 2059BS). Political parties like Nepali Congress and Nepal Communist Party were formed in Banaras and Kolkata which have emerged as the forces to drive the political mainstream today. Many youths volunteered to bring about the historic political changes along this line then and thereafter.

This politico-volunteer spirit, emerged in the first half of Twentieth century, has endured many political upheavals and

finally abolished the two and half century long monarchy. It did orchestrate the 1950 revolution and the overthrow of the Rana Oligarchy. It sustained the 1960 military coup by King Mahendra and continued to survive and thrive underground during three decade long authoritarian Panchayat regime (1960-1990). Many youths did volunteer in oppositional politics in the Panchayat era (See Baral 2012: 285-338). Later on, as the history progressed, the sacrificing spirit for a political change was manifested in unprecedented magnitude in the decade-long Maoist 'People's War' (1996-2006). Politico-volunteer spirit, which has marked every decade since 1950 as the decades of revolt and change, is quite strong in Nepal. Therefore political scientist Lok Raj Baral suggests to conceptualize it as the 'jump theory of history'. He opines:

The twists and turns of Nepali politics continued in a usual pattern in the post-Panchayat period as well. This can be conceptualized as the jump theory of history because Nepal's political development has never followed an evolutionary path ever since the time of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of modern Nepal. Political instability and a unclear roadmap have been a perennial feature of the country's politics (Baral 2006: 251).

The popular revolt in 2006 known as *Jana Aandolan II* was another historic jump effort. The then Seven Party Alliance and Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) did have the partnership effort in that movement, effected by the famous 12-point agreement.¹³ Ultimately there was the Peace Process to end the

¹³ The Seven Party Alliance had the following parties: Nepali Congress, Nepali Congress (Democratic), Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), Nepal Workers and Peasants Party, Nepal Goodwill

Maoist 'People's War', an interim constitution and then the election for Constituent Assembly (CA). First ever CA in Nepal was formed in 2008. Despite the fact that it failed to promulgate a new constitution, the declaration of republic was its major political contribution. Second CA election was held in 2013. Right after the devastating earthquake, it promulgated the new Constitution of Nepal 2015 amid the overwhelming discontents of *Madhesi*, *Tharu*, *Dalit* and *Adibasi-Janajati* (aboriginal and ethnic communities) peoples¹⁴. The discontents are still looming large.

Large demonstrations were still the scene of the day soon after the promulgation of the constitution. This time the hub was *Madhes-Tharuhat*. Thousands of youths in those regions marched on the street demanding the equal rights for the marginalized peoples. *Madhes* and *Tharuhat* movements represented the discontents of indigenous-ethnic and *Dalit* peoples too. Though not-so-vocal, the women activists were unhappy with the constitution that they thought failed to address the issues of historic marginalization. The politico-volunteer spirit was still vigorous till then.

Party (Anandi Devi), United Left Front and People's Front. The 12-point agreement was signed in 22 November 2005. It was after King Gyanendra's takeover that pushed the Seven Party Alliance to form a coalition with CPN (Maoist) which was still in armed struggle against the government. The historic 12-Point Agreement entailed the agenda of State Restructuring along with the Peace Process and Constituent Assembly election .

¹⁴ For details on issues and movements of marginalized communities like *Madhes-Tharuhat*, Indigenous-ethnic, *Dalit*, see Jha (2014), Basnet (2075BS), Hachhethu (2017), Onta (2006), Pathak (2074BS) etc.

It is not to generalize that the politico-volunteer spirit is doomed now. Since the political undercurrent is rife with discontents, a well-engineered political initiative can find surge of youths willing to volunteer a fresh revolt. Yet, one can observe the overwhelming feeling in the air that the politico-volunteer spirit is on downward-spiral. Leaders from almost all mainstream political parties concur this feeling today. At the moment, general frustration is the order of the day.

Integrity deficit

Mutual trust and cooperation are the keys to volunteerism. They are even more important for political volunteerism. Besides, the crucial trait to incite and sustain the politico-volunteer spirit is the Integrity. Integrity is about being honest to oneself and to one's obligation as a leader (Panday 2018: 293). In democracy, it's about keeping the promise made while asserting the role of leadership. Integrity deficit leads to gross corruption. Corruption virus destroys the integrity and it is epidemic in contemporary Nepali politics.

Multiple corruption scandals have erupted recently and many powerful politicians are found involved in them¹⁵. No one

¹⁵ Recently, government spokesperson and Communication and Information Technology Minister Gokul Baskota resigned from the post following an audiotape scandal. In the leaked audio he is heard negotiating a 'commission' deal of Rs 700 million with a local agent of a Swiss company. Immediately after that, a lawmaker Dharmashila Chapagain accused Mr. Baskota to have acted as an associate of the French company INGroupe's Nepal agent, Yeti Holdings, in a parliamentary committee meeting (qtd. in Sapkota 2020). Meanwhile, it was widely reported that sitting Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli has close ties with Yeti Holdings.

knows how many are still hidden under the carpet. Though political corruption is not historically a new phenomenon, it was not expected the newly born federal republic to begin with such a breathe. It is the case of gross integrity deficit. To quote a well-known scholar Devendra Raj Panday:

Nepal's political corruption, obviously, has some special characteristics, but there are also afflictions of general or universal nature. The fetish for power and perks observed in individual and group political behavior and the unrelenting tendency to ignore 'the other' with contagious effects on the larger society are all about an absence of empathy and moral sense. I have called this the general case of integrity deficit disorder (Panday 2018: 370).

General frustration in the society today can be linked to this-integrity deficit disorder. Baburam Bhattarai, former Prime Minister and chairperson of the Federal Council of Samajbadi Party, agrees with the integrity deficit scenario of contemporary politics. According to him, contemporary politics is in the phase of disintegration with a tendency of being driven by consumerism and animalistic fulfillment.¹⁶ Modern mass-politics can't be functional merely through tactical maneuvering, game manipulating and pawns management techniques. It takes integrity based on ideals and dreams along with creative actions to fulfill the promises made in the times of revolutions.

¹⁶ Bhattarai served as a Prime Minister (PM) also from 2011 to 2013 and was longtime leader of CPN (Maoist). His arguments quoted here are based on an interview with him conducted on 27 February, 2020 afternoon.

But leaders destined to fulfill the dream of federal republic seem to be desperately following the old rule-book. While admitting the general integrity deficit, Biswo Prakash Sharma, spokesperson of Nepali Congress, reminiscences the old days when leaders and cadres volunteered for the ideals of democracy and freedom for a long period of history."Those were the days" he says, "It was not personal or familial benefits that we worked for or the lust for power. *Nistha*¹⁷ was at the heart of the politics. Now that the governing system has changed, we took it for granted. Consequently governing behaviors from the old times prevailed."¹⁸ When leaders on every layers of party hierarchy started playing the so-called Machiavellian tricks, value-based and trustworthy politics looked like a lost cause.

On the other hand, Tula Narayan Shah, a researcher and *Madhesi* leader, distinguishes between the electoral politics and politics of movement. "Politics of movement is totally architectural" he suggests, "You need to architect it. It is an art. On the contrary, electoral politics has a set-rule, so you need to play by the rule."¹⁹ It's true that the charismatic leadership skillfully articulates the agenda, wins consent and attracts true-blue volunteers in the times of movement. Question still

¹⁷*Nistha* is a Nepali word with Sanskrit origin and it means good intent with selfless devotion.

¹⁸ Based on an interview conducted on 23 February, 2020 evening.

¹⁹ Based on an interview conducted on 20 February, 2020 afternoon. Shah is the Executive Director of Nepal Madhes Foundation (NEMAF), a research organization focused on Madhes Studies. He is also a well-known political analyst. Two years ago he joined Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum, which is now renamed as Samajbadi Party after the merger with Dr. Baburam Bhattarai led Naya Shakti Party.

lingers- Is the 'electoral politics' everything in parliamentary system? "It's the bridge" He further clarifies:

There is society on the one end and the regime on the other. You did movements in the society, promised to bring about the desired change. Society believed you, produced martyrs while fighting for the cause. Now you need to step into the regime system to fulfill the promises. Once you win the election you are in the power corridor, now you can operate the resources and deliver to meet people's expectations.²⁰

Shah's account of pragmatic politics holds considerable degree of truth. But truth too is made up of perspective. Can the pragmatic politics prevail at the cost of integrity? What about the overwhelming cases of corruption and burning disbelief in the eyes of general mass? What could be the cost society have to bear when the political culture so-formulated trickles down to the youths? What if youths are taught that the integrity is just a naïve wish?

Political culture doesn't take much time to pass down to the ranks and files of political parties. One prominent example comes from Free Student Unions (FSU)²¹. Much worse game is at play there. The then Maoist student leader Lekhnath Neupane urged, sparing the rigorous reform measures, for dissolution of FSU ten years ago. After a decade, now CC member of NCP, he still upholds this argument. "Just closely look at some Tribhuwan University campuses in Kathmandu valley, you will find student leaders lingering around for a

²⁰ Based on the interview (*ibid*).

²¹ FSU is the elected and legally recognized body of students and they are integral part of almost all the campuses around the country.

decade holding positions in FSU" he says, "And don't be surprised if you find student leaders acting like extractive agents or *dalals* (middlemen) preying on the small resources of the campuses."²²

Like any seed inherits the qualities of the parents, the 'electoral politics' should also inherit the characteristics of revolutionary architecture, i.e. ideals, agendas and integrity. Otherwise the organic growth of politics (say, of any political party) might get disrupted. Pragmatism doesn't imply that a horse stops being horse across the bridge. If so, it is no longer a horse. When we hear prominent politicians say that they cannot even run for the election holding the integrity intact, they must have been breathing hard in the dearth of willful volunteers.

It is important to note here what Rekha Sharma, former Chief Whip of CPN (Maoist Center), remarked on the consequences of 2017 elections".²³ Elections have become so expensive, it takes courage to contest the election" Sharma is reported to say, "Why is it that leaders who wish to serve the nation with lifetime politics of faith and integrity run away from elections (Khanal 2017)?" Expensive elections inseparably bring forth the foreseeable corruption. The aforementioned election observation report had rightly pronounced, "This is a cause of concern as higher spending has a direct and negative influence on the electoral democracy and also induces higher level of corruption in the country (2017: 54)." And two years later, the

²² Based on telephone interview on March 1, 2020 afternoon.

²³ Sharma served as Chief Whip of Parliamentary Party of CPM (Maoist Center) in the Federal Parliament before its merger with the then NCP (Unified Marxist Leninist).

Corruption Perceptions Index 2019 reciprocated this prognosis (Transparency International 2019).

When 'integrity deficit disorder' travelled aggressively to the local governing bodies, it confirmed the worst-case scenario. A 2019 survey report of Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) pointed out the rampant corruption in the local governments- municipalities and rural municipalities (Shrestha 2019). Yet, there is the considerable degree of understanding that only the elected officials are corrupt, therefore the party authority can control it. Devi Khadka²⁴, a central committee member of CPN, however, doesn't find this argument reliable. She explains:

It was agreed in our CC Meeting that the elected representatives should be placed under the close scrutiny of the Party to control the corruption. That's not going to happen in reality. Those were the people who had distributed the ticket of candidacy on the basis of wealth-power and gobbled up certain amount of the candidate's resources during the election. Can the same person(s) curb the corruption? It's like finding a right person to carry out an offensive task, training and aiding him/her; and after the task is accomplished, proclaiming one as a judge and the other a culprit. It's a sheer melodrama.²⁵

²⁴ Khadka was elected as a CA member in 2008 CA elections. She also served as State-Minister for the Ministry of Physical Planning and Works from 2011-2013. Now she is working as Dolakha District In-Charge of CPN.

²⁵ Central Committee meeting Khadka has referred here is the one held in Kathmandu from January 29 to February 2. Based on an interview conducted on February 16, 2020 afternoon.

Meanwhile, the reigning idea in the political discourse is the idea of *Sambriddhi*. It literally stands for prosperity, but it is widely understood as economic development and now-a-days sarcastically being portrayed as 'dozer-most development'.²⁶ Dozers are seen clawing far and wide in Nepal these days. Many local representatives own the dozers and excavators. More than anything, a bulldozer driver attacked people with the bucket of the vehicle and injured nearly a dozen amidst a dispute over road construction in a village of Baitadi district. Hence the idea of *Sambriddhi* itself is reduced to dozer-most development.

The charisma of debate on ideas and agendas is fading now. Integrity deficit syndrome has been the crown of politics. It is not surprising that youths aspire for foreign employment rather than any voluntary pursuit.

Distancing effect

Here is a true story. A longtime Nepali Congress leader, Hemraj Tated, contested CA election-2008 on a ticket of Madhesi Jana-Adhikar Forum. It was immediately after the *Madhes* movements. So the heat of the movement was still fresh in the air. He won with great margins from Saptari. A surprising event occurred after the polls closed.

There is a practice that the contesting party provides the booth expense for the volunteers working on behalf of the candidate. He too had provided 5 thousand Rupees for each booth during

²⁶*Dozare bikas* is the phrase often used sarcastically to describe the development model used in Nepal. I have preferred to call it the 'dozer-most development' in this article.

the election. When the booths closed, cadres and volunteers from the Baluwa Gogapur village returned the money intact. They told him that nobody was willing to have tea,*paan*(betel leaf) or anything. So the money was spared. Sometimes after that, now a legislative parliament member, he moved to Kathmandu. There is a saying in Nepali political sphere- no one remains the same after drinking the Bagmati-water.²⁷ And here Mr. Tated was, now a cabinet minister too, living in a good house and riding a shiny expensive car. Things were not the same anymore.

One day a group of same cadres and volunteers from Baluwa Gogapur paid a visit to him in his Kathmandu residence. Their eyes sparkled seeing things and ways he was around. They noted a significant thing during and after the conversation they had with him- he didn't even ask for a meal. A cultural courtesy indeed! They felt an ache in heart. Once like one of them, who was he now? Next time he ran for the election, they voted against him. And he lost the election.²⁸

This story tells a lot about contemporary leader-cadre relationship. Once in the power corridor, leader becomes a member of the ruling elite. A new set of behaviors emerge then. A distance also emerges between the leader and the cadres. Gradually he/she starts looking like an alien to the

²⁷ Bagmati is the major river system in Kathmandu valley. For its historical significance, many scholars and politicians call the Nepal valley civilization as Bagmati Civilization. The saying quoted here characterizes the shrewd political culture practiced in power-corridors of the valley.

²⁸ Tula Narayan Shah narrated this story well-known in Saptari in the aforementioned interview (*ibid.*).

people. The politico-volunteer spirit of the cadres/supporters of Baluwa Gogapur was exemplary when they didn't take even the booth expense or incentive. When elitism of their leader was at display, they immediately realized the power-distance between him and themselves.

A simple truth is that a party is not a company and the leaders aren't expected to be bosses. Definitely it can't provide jobs for all the cadres, let alone supporters. Why then the leaders try to cultivate a boss in them? NCP CC member Khadka blames the lavish and extravagant lifestyle and security arrangements of the top leaders for cultivating elitism in the party. She explains, "top leaders should lead a simple life. If they appeal the cadres and people with an integrity for a mission, things will speed up. But they are the ones who should act first."²⁹

The problem lies in the inadequate understanding of politics and power, according to former PM Bhattarai. He remembers his (including his comrades in communist movement) political life growing up with an understanding that the state-power is only the means to abolish the state itself. He further elucidates, "Power is only the means to transform the society. But there is a race to achieve power by hook or crook as if it is the final destination. With this misleading understanding, ultimate way seems to dive and drown in the power."³⁰ The power-mongering leads to elitism and pushes politico-volunteer spirit to the brim.

²⁹ based on an interview (*ibid*).

³⁰ based on an interview (*ibid*).

What German writer-dramatist Bertolt Brecht calls 'distancing effect'³¹ in dramatic theory is apt to characterize the elitism in politics here. Distancing effect is used in a theater to distance the audience from emotional involvement in the play; similarly in politics, it's the elitism that distances the people from the leaders and the party or in general from the politics itself. Researcher and activist Shah aptly captures such a psyche when he describes, "When in power the leader starts maintaining a distance. His/her behaviors tell you: I am in the power, so I belong to a superior class now."

What is responsible for such a gross integrity-deficit in broader terms? According to former PM Bhattarai, it's the crisis of ideology. If this is so, ideological crisis undoubtedly gives rise to the political crisis. "We are experiencing a global ideological crisis" he says, "This is not surprising that Nepal, located at the margin of the global capitalism, too has to bear the burden."³²

Distancing effect might be the effective conceptual tool to examine this crisis on the pragmatic level. Consider the politics of inclusion before, during and after the CA, for example. CPN (Maoist) raised the issue of marginalization in

³¹ Encyclopedia Britannica defines: Alienation effect, also called a-effect or distancing effect, German Verfremdungseffekt or V-effekt, idea central to the dramatic theory of the German dramatist-director Bertolt Brecht. It involves the use of techniques designed to distance the audience from emotional involvement in the play through jolting reminders of the artificiality of the theatrical performance. <https://www.britannica.com/art/alienation-effect> Accessed on 19 March 2020.

³² based on an interview (*ibid*).

great vigor during the 'people's war'. After the *Jana Andolan II* (2006), it became a national agenda. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 federated the state structure with three tiers of governing bodies- local, provincial and federal. But it failed essentially to address the agenda of inclusion (Hachhethu 2017). The consequences soon became explicit in the elections.

Very few tickets were given to the marginal community members to fight for the first-past-the-post seats in the elections. Moreover, the escalating election expenses conditioned them so badly as to discourage them heavily. If elections are made bullfights, that means the prejudiced-elites are given the sure-shot win. In case of women candidates it was more explicit. According to journalist Suvechhya Bindu Tuladhar, women were discouraged in the very first stage of candidate selection by asking if they could arrange enough election expenses. If they got the ticket by any chance, they faced hard time to arrange the money because the property rights are traditionally monopolized by males in a patriarchal society like Nepal (Tuladhar 2017).

What about the politicians from the extremely marginalized communities like *Dalit* or *Tharu* then? The historical distancing from the state-system and politics still persists in the federal republic. These communities constitute two-third of the population and they were the major source of power Maoist party organized and instrumented in a war against the government forces. Now the slogan of inclusion being reduced to mere lip-service, the politico-volunteer spirit in the youths of marginalized communities is evidently low.

While discussing elitism, there is one more important institution to explore- *Chakari*. *Chakari* literally means favoritism or nepotism. Historically, it was institutionalized as a ruling culture and installed as an integral feature of Nepali social organization in the Rana period (Bista 2008: 90). Rana political elites used *chakari* as a weapon to maintain loyalty of the bureaucratic and social elites to them. Therefore it was instrumental for the Rana elitism. Dor Bahadur Bista explores:

Chakari was officially introduced into secular life during the Rana period, mainly as a form of control designed to keep potential rivals or opponents away from belligerent activities.... With time the practice of chakari was recognized as a criterion for judging loyalty and reliability, and was applied even to less privileged kinsmen as well as other Nepali officials. (2008: 90)

Chakari is so contagious that it took new incarnations in every successive periods of history. It continued in the Panchayat era. The new name *afno manchhe* (person from inner circle of associates) was internalized in this era (Bista 2008: 97-100). It managed to flourish in the multiparty democracy too. This time a new practice was introduced to favor *partyko manchhe* (party elite) for government appointments and other favors. To get the favor, one has to fulfill the certain criteria of *chakari* too. Just like in Rana period, favor-seekers gather in the premises of the powerful leaders' residences still today.

Chakari remains an important institution to practice elitism and demonstrate power. It has been instrumental for party elites to erect a power-wall to limit the access of people in general. Certainly this tendency boosts the distancing effect.

For politico-volunteer spirit to wake up, the emotional reciprocity is vital. But what we see in contemporary political sphere is the thriving elitism and powerful distancing effect. Hence the lowering tendency of politico-volunteer spirit is not strange to observe.

Conclusion

Pushpa Parag was once a Maoist cadre in the 'People's War' period, and now he works as a NGO person. His working sites are those villages of Makawanpur district which used to be his hiding shelters in the past. He often visits those villages these days for so-called development works of his NGO. In the NGO language he is a development volunteer. And, of course, his career as a political volunteer in the past comes along every now and then.³³

"The feeling was totally different when we used to visit and stay in those villages as underground Maoist cadre" He shares, "We had to have a skill to persuade people to get a shelter or food. Then only, in a slow pace, we used to start talking about our missions and agendas." In his experience, people used to appreciate their sacrificing spirit. How would the same people perceive him now? "They don't take us as volunteers" He says, "For them we are those ones for them who bag good lot of money."³⁴

³³ Pushpa Parag is my own brother. He has this penname for he is a poet also. I have used his life-story here to emphasize the distinct nature of politico-volunteer spirit. He currently works for RADO Nepal, a Hetauda based NGO.

³⁴ Based on an interview conducted on March 20, 2020 afternoon.

The contrasting experiences Pushpa Parag garnered tells us something important about politico-volunteer spirit. There are claims that politico-volunteer spirit is being consumed by the mighty consumerism. Some complain that youths are not ready to embody the politico-volunteer spirit, rather line up for petty benefits. Discussion above tells us a different story. There are considerable number of youths who still volunteer for political parties and different social and cultural movements³⁵. If politico-volunteer spirit is shadowed by electoral politics, there are tendencies that are examined above.

On the other hand, there are theories that define international network of development agencies, INGOs and local NGOs as volunteer organizations and their paid workers as volunteers (Barrie 2013; Messerschmidt et. al 2007). Nepali state too has the tendency to run voluntary programs in different fields. National Development Service (NDS) in 1960s and National Development Volunteer Service (NDVS) established in 2001 are noted state-sponsored programs. They are definitely not the alternatives for politico-volunteerism, yet they have been mobilizing large number of youths in every nook and corner of the country. Therefore they have the considerable impact in politics.

³⁵ One prominent example of social movement is the recent Make Books Tax Free movement led by spirited youths in Kathmandu. Youths from different ideological and social strata came together in this movement to demonstrate everyday for half a month in Patan Darbar Square. They used the social media too as a useful platform and ignited a national debate on the issue.

There are criticisms that the (I)NGOs have wasted a lot of money only to distribute dependency syndrome among the poor. More than that (I)NGOs have been accused of uprooting the traditional voluntary spirit. For Biswo Keshar Maskay, all the NGOs only with few exceptions have no roots in the native soil with few exceptions, rather they are the inventions of donor agencies (qtd. in Messerschmidt et. al 2007 : 176). Likewise Chandra Dev Bhatta critiques:

The organized volunteerism promoted by the NGOs has helped harness the concept of mobilizing young people from outside the community to deliver services. In addition, NGOs have developed professionalism in volunteerism and service delivery by increasing the capacities of the volunteers. Unfortunately, however, in promoting a new kind of volunteerism, the NGOs have inadvertently commercialized the notion of volunteerism. (2009: 3-4)

Not only the (I)NGOs, the state-sponsored volunteer programs too did the adverse effect. They all effected the shrinking of volunteer spirit rooted in the cultures. Surrounded by the powerful presence of monetized volunteer programs, politico-volunteer spirit definitely have gone through historical test. However it persisted and at times reached to the height of superior altruism. Now it is again at the test of history and for the good reasons.

Can there be any remedies? One method to revitalize the politico-volunteer spirit would be activating the grassroots voluntary organizations (Smith and Sen 2002: 94). Whether to search a new localized model of democracy or to find a way to

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fight the elitism, going to the roots seems to me an important task. Digital revolution has provided us a powerful platform to connect and communicate in a manner never before. Simultaneously it has given birth to new behavioral traits that can be beneficial for assembling the ideas and people in unprecedented ways. (Gordon et. al 2013). Parties, leaders and regimes can be shaken with clicks now.

Yet again the point is to nurture the politico-volunteer spirit. The diversity of cultures and peoples can provide the organic knowledge to revitalize the progressive politics. We need to reorient the ideological debate towards them. There we can find the plural ideas, methods, aspirations and traits of organic political formations. Political integrity is integrated with the source people. This is where the politico-volunteer spirit will sparkle once again.

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Youth Advocacy Nepal (YAN) is a movement-based youth organization dedicated to protecting and promoting youth rights through advocacy, campaigns and capacity development. Initiated by energetic and vibrant youth, it is registered in Kathmandu District Administration Office (DAO) and Social Welfare Council (SWC) in 2013. YAN is one of the leading advocacy organizations working in the field of youth development. Our thematic focus areas include education, disaster risk management, climate change, employment, entrepreneurship, gender, and social inclusion.

VSO has been in Nepal since 1964 and currently implementing its programmes in 25 districts of five Provinces. Currently VSO Nepal programme focuses on Education, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Health Education, Youth, Livelihoods, Gender & Inclusion, Governance, Climate Change and Resilience. Through Volunteering for Development (VFD) approach VSO aims to be more responsive to and actively engaged in supporting disadvantaged groups.

