Year 23, No. 21, September 2021

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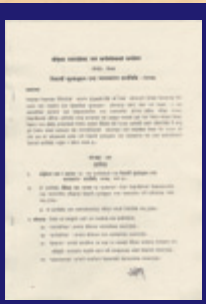

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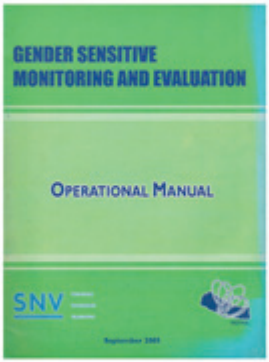
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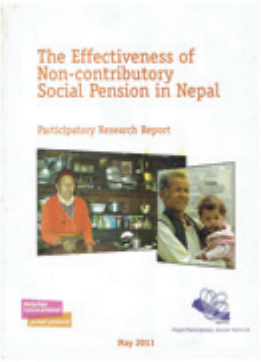
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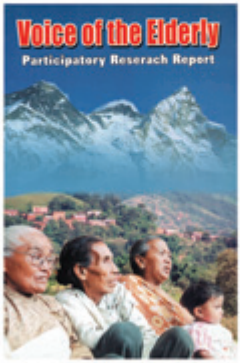
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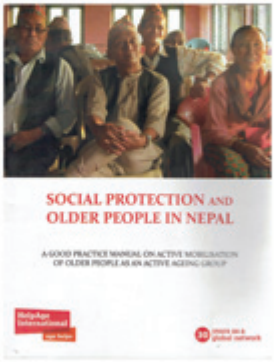
SOCIAL PROTECTION AND OLDER PEOPLE IN NEPAL
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EDITORIAL NOTE

Dear readers,

Namaste!

This year appeared no different to last year, as communities across the world reeled painfully from the impact of COVID-19, conflict and disasters; consequentlythe human development through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) has setback seriously. Tens of millions of people around the globe suffered severe pain and agony due to irreparable loss of family members as after all, in much of the world, Covid-19 is still running rampant. Many governments locked down people at home and their business shut down in response to the second and third deadly wave of COVID-19. Consequently, government shave rather focused on public health and responding to people in need of services. As a result, economy suffered, people lost job and those who were already marginalized suffering hardship and mental-health strain, further left behind. They are poor people especially women, children, persons with disability, members of LGBT community, older people, marginalized and religious and ethnic minority group of people. Many of them are even deprived of food, health and education opportunities.

Therefore, this means that more than ever before, there is a need for us to embody the spirit of human development and respond with wisdom, patience, and generosity through 17 SDGs. Even as we practice social distancing and other public health measures, we can support one another in this time of great difficulty by showing compassion and kindness. Through evidence- based and thought-provoking articles, let's remember those of us who are suffering, those who have lost loved ones and those battling illness and support Government agencies in expediting SDG targets localization process at the province and local levels.

On this note, the 21st volume of PARTICIPATION presents 18 articles on various SDGs contributed by academicians and development professionals from Nepal, Canada and USA with a view to generate new evidences and provoke further research, discussion and analysis in every corner of society. The articles covering SDGs localization attempt to address issues on poverty, hunger, gender, health, education, water/ natural resources management, and project management. The model and approach presented in the articles are believed to support government, CSOs and NGOs in reviewing SDG targets and localization process.

Plus, a year ago, PARTICIPATION brought together informed thoughts and findings to influence policy frameworks of government and shape people behaviors in New Normal. It trusts that readers and contributors shall help us further shape policy discourses and actions with ideas, facts and figures.

Let's remember a quote made by Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), scientist and inventor of the pasteurization process: let me tell you the secret that has led to my goal. My strength lies solely in my tenacity.

Finally, regardless of the troubles that beset us, we wish you all a blessed and peaceful days, months and year ahead. !

No One to Be Hungry: Localization of SDG-2 in the Federal Context of Nepal

YAMUNA GHALE, PhD

Abstract

Securing food is securing life. Right to food is a human right. SDG and many other international instruments enshrined right to food as their important elements. Government of Nepal has ensured constitutional provision of food security: right to food and food sovereignty. Furthermore, the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act has elaborated the constitutional provisions for its execution into reality. The paper is prepared based on the policy reviews of federal, provincial and local governments and interactions with different tiers of governments and other stakeholders during field visits and virtual meetings.

While discussing about the right to food for all, it is important to understand, interpret and commit for rights of all so to not Leave No One Behind (LNOB). Within the population, there are issues related to age, class, caste/ethnicity, geographical variation and many more factors, therefore applying the lens of intersectionality matters the most. This is more so, during the time of crisis and vulnerabilities as women and other vulnerable groups are affected disproportionately.

In the federal governance of Nepal, the constitution has provided exclusive rights to the local governments for agricultural extension and other associated services as well as nutritional security. There are shared roles of three tiers of governments and other stakeholders to make sure right to food for all in being facilitated, supported and ensured. Ultimately, no one to suffer from hunger and be able to enjoy right to life ensuring right to food..

Keywords: Hunger, Leaving No One Behind, Right to Food, SDGs

1. Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) with its 17 goals, has considered poverty reduction as its first goal followed by goal two as elimination of hunger. The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) had similar goal aiming to "reduce" hunger, whereas SDG refined its goal to "eliminate" hunger. The goal two therefore aims for Leaving No One Behind(LNOB) from enjoying their right to food (RtF) (UN, 2017).

Nepal being a signatory and or party to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and Child Rights Convention (CRC), and SDG, has an obligation to fulfil the rights of its citizen to enjoy right to food. To translate the provisions enshrined in the different conventions into national levels, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) devised the Right to Food guideline. The Right to Food Guideline defines major three pillars such as i) respect; ii) protect; and iii) promote in the spirit of ICESCR (FAO, 2005; p. 6).

Nepal's Constitution in its Article 36 states the right relating to Food as: *(1) Every citizen shall have the right relating to food; (2) Every citizen shall have the right to be safe from the state of being in danger of life from the scarcity of food; and (3) Every citizen shall have the right to food sovereignty in accordance with law* (NLC, 2015; pp. 17). Likewise, Article 41 and 42 of the constitution provisions for Rights of Senior Citizens: *The senior citizens shall have the right to special protection and social security from the State*; and Right to Social Justice respectively (ibid, p. 19).

Furthermore, promulgation of the Right to Food and Food Sovereignty Act, 2018 is a fundamental move to translate the constitutional provision on right to food into reality. The Act in its Article 2.e has defined food sovereignty as: i) farmer's participation in food related policy making process; ii) choice to adopt profession in food production and or distribution system; iii) choice of agricultural land, labor, seeds, technology and farm machineries; and iv) protect from negative impacts of globalized agricultural trade (NLC, 2018; pp. 2). Furthermore, the Act in its Article 5 has elaborated for identification of targeted households who are suffering from poverty, geographical remoteness and any other reasons, and Article 6 defines provision for food support identity cards (ID) with specific focus on women headed households to secure food for those vulnerable groups (ibid, pp 5-6).

2. People of Nepal in Hunger Landscape

Table 1: provincial and ecological belt specific disparities (weilt hunger hilfe and CONCERN worldwide, 2020

Province	Child stunting (%)	Child wasting (%)	Child mortality (%)
Province 1	32.6	11.8	3.6
Province 2	37.0	14.4	5.2
Bagmati Pradesh	29.4	4.2	3.6
Gandaki Pradesh	28.9	5.8	2.7
Province 5	38.5	7.6	4.5
Karnali Pradesh	54.5	7.5	5.8
Sudurpashchim Pradesh	35.9	9.3	6.9
Ecological zone			
Mountains	46.8	6.1	6.3
Hills	32.3	6.4	3.8
Terai	36.7	12.2	4.9
Total	**35.8**	**9.7**	**4.6**

In the global scenario, Nepal holds 19.5 score with moderate state of hunger (weilt hunger hilfe and CONCERN worldwide, 2020).[i] Within Nepal, there are disparities among the geography, class, caste/ethnicity and gender (see Table 1 for provincial and ecological belt specific disparities on child stunting and child wasting).

Karnali province and mountains have highest rate of child stunting, whereas province 2 has highest rate of child wasting.

3. Recognize the Diversity - Leaving No One Behind

Citizen groups are not homogenous. The intersectionality matters as per the age, gender, caste and ethnicity, resource-based possession, profession, religions, geographical variation and physical state. Therefore, it is always important to understand intersectionality while defining the citizen group to ensure right to food for all. It is the true spirit of Leaving No One Behind[ii] .

Figure 1: Faces of diverse rights holders (Ghale, 2021)

To make the situation even clearer of the above context of discriminatory practices and its impact, following representative cases are presented below:

Case 1: Women affected by HIV\AIDS

HIV\AIDS became a widespread disease in the Payal Village District Committee (VDC) of Accham, where the majority of men migrate to India for seasonal work. As a consequence, many women are getting infected through their husbands. The bitter truth is that once the husband dies, ***women are denied access to nutritious food and treatment***

Case 2: Farmers affected by dams

More than 3000 families living in five VDCs (Holiza, Betahani, Fattepur, Gangapur and Matahaiya) are badly affected by the inundation and land erosion caused by the Lakshmanpur Dam built on the Rapti River. Local communities affected through **insecurity, displacement, lack of proper safety measures and compensation**.

Case 3: People affected by natural disaster

In August 2011, 8 families of Juwa Pani Village of Barha Bis, Bajura were affected by landslides, who . received temporary relief packages but no further intervention for their **safe settlement, reviving their production potential and supporting them to find alternative livelihood options**.

Case 4: People suffering during COVID-19

There were huge inflows of Nepalese migrant workers and Government of Nepal (GoN) managed them in quarantines. Across the country, quarantine centers were poorly managed with no basic facilities including **drinking water, nutritious food** and safe space for women.

Case 5: Food supplies to different excluded groups

Many women specially of women headed households, wage workers, single women, LGBTI and people with disability had difficulty to **access relief food supplies** due to lack of legal identity like citizenship card.

Figure 2: Few cases of how people from different spheres are affected discriminately

Source: Ghale, 2021

i. Nepal had score of 37.4 (alarming) in 2000, 31 and 22.8 (serious) in 2006 and 2012 respectively and 19.5 (moderate) in 2000, meaning that Nepal is in progression.

ii. The United Nations System Shared Framework for Action (UN, 2017) emphasized on importance of LNOB to ensurefull realization of human rights, without discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status. The special emphasis on those le furthest behind and the most excluded focuses in particular on women and girls, children, youth, persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, among others.

Among the population of different gender, class, caste/ethnicity and geographic remoteness, certain groups of people get affected disproportionately during the time of crisis and vulnerabilities. A study carried out by UNWOMEN shows that among the other women, people with old age and people with disabilities (PWD) suffer the most. They therefore need special attentions and response mechanisms for the faster outreach and types of foods they will need as per their age and health conditions (Refer figure 3).

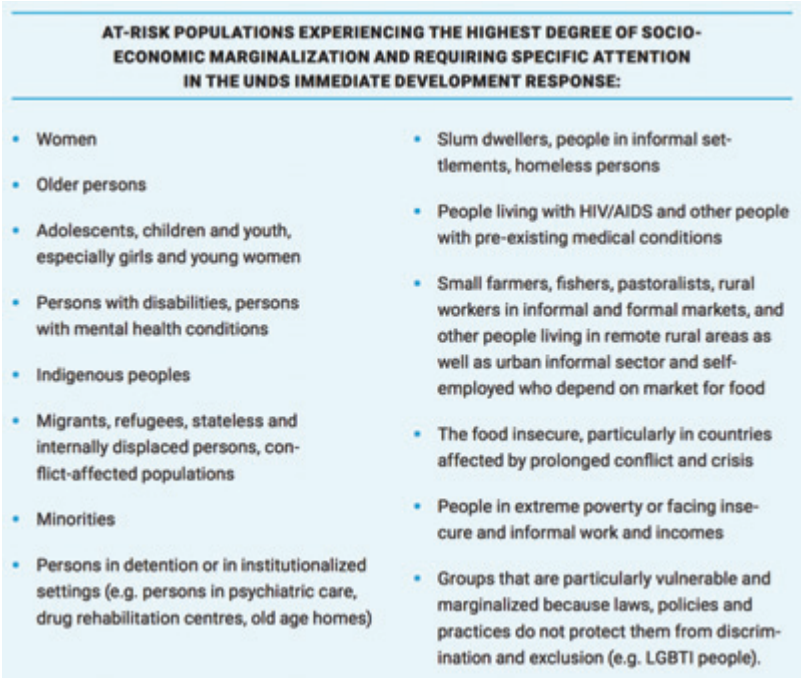

Figure 3: Population at risk during crisis (UNWOMEN, 2020)

The study conducted by Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD), World Food Program (WFP) and Australian Aid in2020 shows that there are different impacts at the households of different income groups, household management structure and province wise food stock management types. Among the provinces, province one and Bagmati province have market share to fulfill food requirements by 57% and 69% respectively. Likewise, among the sufferings, 52% households are from agriculture-based daily wage laborers. Moreover, women headed households (22% compared to 22% male headed) and with lower level of education (34% illiterate against 13% with above

secondary level of education) are suffering the most in terms of access to adequate food during Covid-19 pandemic of 2020. Of all, 87% of households managed their intakes with less preferred and less expensive food (see fig 6) below:

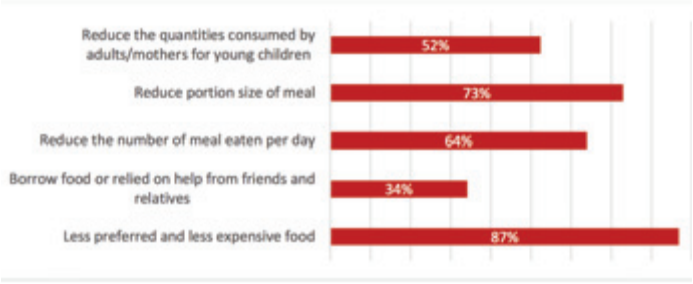

Figure. 4: Dietary habits by access to food and coping strategies (MoALD, WFP and Australian Aid, 2020)

4. Some of the Contested Assumptions

There are certain assumptions, which dominate the thinking process of responsible stakeholders, guiding the policy formulation processes, programming, budget allocation and devising institutional mechanisms. Some of the most dominant assumptions that are prevalent in regular discourse are explained below:

- ***People's representatives can always ensure people's right to food through legislative provisions:*** There is a deep understanding among the major stakeholders that people's representatives are responsible to ensure people's aspirations in laws and policies. Therefore, it is not always necessary to engage people in policy formulation processes;
- ***Policy provision is the main driving force to ensure food for all:*** There is a strong bunch of people who assumes that once policies are formulated, other steps followed after are of lesser importance. Unfortunately, many policies end up with no further supportive mechanisms, resources and capacity;
- ***Food security is a technical solution:*** There is a strong argument that food security is all about production and productivity. If production and productivity is enhanced food security can be ensured. Unfortunately, the political aspects of food security and multiple dimensions of food, especially of human rights dimensions are neglected in the food system discourse as most often the issue is looked as technical solution either to produce and or to supply through market and or releif;
- ***Food security important than nutritional security:*** There is still a dominant argumentation that since people are suffering from hunger, the priority should be of filling the belly. There is still a problem of not considering non-nutritious consumables as food;
- ***Market supplies food if there is an income:*** Many argue that market will supply foods and the major problem are unemployment and low income. However, the importance of family farming, home-based nutritional supplies, and cultural importance of indigenous crops/breeds/ foods are overly neglected;
- ***Food aid/supplies can fulfil food security during crisis***: There is a tendency of relying on food aid in case of emergencies and crisis. However, there is a lack of preparedness, and age, caste, ethnicity specific requirements, and timely supplies for all. Moreover, the food and nutrition security programs are not properly linked with the disaster preparedness policies, plans as well as safety net measures.

As discussed above, hunger is largely understood as technical issue, which can be dealt by a blanket approach with market intervention as the most powerful solution. This kind of understanding has been rooted in the mindset of policy makers, service delivery related actors and together, they are seeking for technical solutions. This kind of understanding has emerged due to a lack of holistic perspective and inability to conceptualize rights-based approach (RBA) into practice that ensures intersectionality related concerns in the policy processes, their execution, proper follow up and monitoring.

5. Some Reflections on SDG Localization in Nepal and Role of Three Tiers of Government

In terms of SDG localization, there are efforts for coordination, cooperation and collaboration among the three tiers of government as well as other responsible stakeholders. However, there are certain challenges of i) sustained increase in food production, ii) ensuring year-round food availability in far-flung and remote regions and communities through better storage and distribution networks, and iii) reaching to the unreached (8.7 percent population) that has less food intake than the daily nutritional requirement. The ground reality shows that the above assumptions are floated around, however not fully aligned with the efforts taken by the three tiers of governments as duty bearers and other actors as responsibility bearers. Moreover, people in general as the rights holder still neither have access to information, nor do they have collective voices to claim their rights. This pose challenges to further reach out to the most vulnerable among the general public to ensure their right to food.

In terms of provincial and local government roles and responsibilities, there are different policy and action plans are being devised with some targeted interventions. However, the targeted policies and programs are not properly linked with mainstream policies and programs. Moreover, inter-sectoral ministerial policies and programs are disconnected. For example, the agriculture and food security programs are not well connected with the social security, health, education and employment generation programs, such as agro-tourism. More importantly, there are many different forms of limitations in the spheres of access to and control over production resources, program management, institutional and process management, with gender, youth and social inclusion lens applied throughout. This limits the policies, institutional mechanisms, and programs are being transactional as a yearly program with targets to achieve rather to adopt transformatory programs that brings sustained changes for leaving no one behind.

In the time of crisis and disasters such as COVID 19, vulnerable groups such as women, children, senior citizens, people with disabilities, sexual and religious monitories, people in remote areas and other disadvantaged groups are affected more disproportionately. Unfortunately, there were no such specific preparedness foreseen at the federal, provincial and local government level though some local governments managed to revise local food banks, food supplies during the covid-19 lock down period, feeding people in the quarantines etc., as an immediate response. However, there

were many cases where agriculture sector and food supply chain were heavily disrupted. Farmers were unable to receive agricultural inputs, advisory services, sell their produces, and youth got frustrated and went back to migration cycle. Farmers were not able to sell their products in the market. Employability and income sources were limited and their purchasing power was heavily affected. On the other hand, food price went higher. In a nutshell, people mostly engaged in agriculture wage labor, in remote areas, women and vulnerable groups such as sexual minorities were affected the most from food and nutrition security as there were no proper data with the local governments about them, some lack government identity cards, some could not reveal their real identity.

6. Proposals for way forward

To address the needs and priorities of people from different spheres of life considering the intersectionality and to make the whole process inclusive, following proposal with 5Ps is proposed to consider.

Figure 5: Five module to respond inclusive ways forward LNOB

(Source: Ghale, 2021)

Policies:

- Ensure consistent provisions in policies, institutions, and mechanisms in all three tiers of the government

Perspectives:

- Ensure the provisions are driven by the evidence-based policies, rights-based perspectives and inclusive programming

Participation:

- Ensure all the policies, programs and plans are properly consulted among all the three tiers of the government and other key stakeholders to have common understanding and ownership by all

Partnership:

- Ensure there is adequate capacities among the duty bearer (the State), responsibility bearers (private sector, civil society organization, cooperatives, development partners etc.) and rights holders (people)

Programming:

- Ensure mainstreaming of SDG targets and targeting for people's access to space, voices and influence to make policies and provisions based on diverse people's needs, priorities and demands

Conclusions

The overall scenario shows that there are policy provisions such as constitution of Nepal, the right to food and food security act, gender policy as well as some targeted policies devised by the provincial and local governments. However, there are many limitations in implementation of those policy provisions due to a lack of

clarity of roles and responsibilities among three tiers of governments, appropriate institutional mechanisms and adequate capacity among responsible ministries, and different levels of understanding, and translating the concept of right to food and food sovereignty at three tiers of the governments with proper mobilization of state machineries as duty bearers, civil societies, private sectors as responsibility bearers as well as right holders with their proper sense of claiming rights being responsible to fulfil their part of obligations too.

There is an increasing realization on the disproportionate impact on women and other discriminated groups in enjoying right to food. However, there is still a huge gap in identifying and responding the needs and priorities of these vulnerable groups looking into the inter-sectionality of them in terms of age, gender, state of disabilities, displaced peoples due to disaster and crisis situations such as floods, fire, earthquake, COVID-19, etc.

In the context of federal governing system in Nepal, there is an ample opportunity to enhance coordination, cooperation and collaboration among three tiers of government and other stakeholders to make policies, mechanisms and strengthening capacity inclusive and responsive.

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Poverty Alleviation, Sustainable Rural Tourism and Community-based Homestay Development in Nepal: An Exploratory Assessment

CHET NATH KANEL

Abstract

Since 2015, every member country/state of the UN has been paying much attention towards attaining sustainable development goals (SDG) within the stipulated time, i.e 2030. In Nepal, National Planning Commission (NPC) is taking lead in the implementation of the SDGs. The Goal No. 1 is associated with poverty alleviation initiatives aiming at 'no poverty' by 2030. Among different means, tourism is one of the major means for poverty alleviation, which contributes about 3 percent of total gross domestic product (GDP) in Nepal. In this qualitative study, undertaken between Feb. - July 2021 covering more than seven tourism destinations of Nepal, an exploration has been made to dig out the issues associated with the roles of community-based tourism and homestays in rural Nepal and their sustainability concerns. The study has come up with some implications based on the identified challenges and opportunities. Among the key implications, local-level orientation of SDGs for mainstreaming the intents in the local development process, linking tourism/homestay with SDG goals with proper planning, capacity development of local stakeholders/ tourism operators, considering ageing issues in rural tourism/ homestay, special supports for post-COVID revival of tourism sector, and, boosting climate change resilient tourism products and activities are key suggestive outputs of the qualitative exploratory study.

Keywords: COVID-19, Homestay, Poverty Alleviation, Rural Tourism, SDGs,

1. Introduction

In September 2015, as the successor of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the United Nations (UN) declared the "UN 2030 Agenda", which is called the "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)". Since then every member country/state in the globe has been paying much attention towards attaining these goals within the stipulated time. Nepal, as a member of the UN, is obviously as a part of this global initiative.

The first task for each country/government was to nationalize and then localize the SDGs in own contexts so that the goals become more understandable and implementable with full internalization and ownerships. The SDGs carry 17 goals, 169 targets and 232 sub-indicators. No doubt, 'sustainable development' has been a global agenda for the last three decades (NPC, 2021).

In Nepal, National Planning Commission (NPC) is taking the lead in orientating the key stakeholders, redefining the goals in local perspectives, re-visiting all targets and indicators. According to NPC (2017), the SDG goals were reviewed in 2016 from national perspective, and targets/indicators were redefined/re-developed except on the Goal No. 14, which is associated with "marine biology and oceans" ('Life below water'). In Nepal detailed work plans and targets were developed on sixteen goals (NPC, 2020).

NPC developed a total of 16 goals (except Goal No. 14), 169 targets and 479 indicators (NPC, 2021). All goals are 'interconnected', and these demand an integrated approach towards the full implementation of the SDGs by 2030. Multi-stakeholder roles are expected to fulfil these goals, which include government sector, private sector, civil society/NGO sector, and of course, media sector. SDGs give more emphasis on three dimensions under sustainable development activities such as: economic, socio-cultural and environmental issues.

Out of 16 goals, Goal No. 1 is associated with "poverty alleviation". The Goal No. 1 states, "No poverty by 2030", means "eradicating poverty of all types from all places". It is an overarching goal of the SDGs too (SDGs National Network Nepal, 2020). Under the poverty eradication goal, Nepal government has set a *'leave no behind'* approach to expedite the process of poverty alleviation. According to the Government of Nepal (GoN)'s Economic Survey Report (2018/2019), the overall economic (income) poverty rate is 18.7 percent; however, the multidimensional poverty rate is 28.6 percent. Income poverty ('monetary poverty') is based on the basic needs approach; in which the multidimensional poverty is based on basic capabilities approach. Multidimensional poverty encompasses various deprivations experienced by poor people in their daily lives – such as poor health, lack of education, inadequate living standards, disempowerment, poor quality of work, the threat of violence, and living in areas that are environmentally hazardous, among others. In general, poverty is known as 'multidimensional problem' because where there is poverty there is shortage of food, malnutrition problems, housing and safety problems, and so on.

Poverty in Nepal differs from place to place, such as rural and urban, mountains and Terai, east and west. Additionally, it varies across different castes, ethnicities,

gender, age, disability, level of education and so on. Among 7 provinces in Nepal, there is vast difference in the level of poverty. Karnali province has the highest rate of poverty. After Karnali, incidence of poverty is high in the Province 2 (NPC, 2019).

Alleviating poverty from Nepal has been a big challenge for decades. Several measures and means have been adopted to reduce poverty in the rural as well as urban areas with the efforts from government, non-government, private sector and cooperatives (Kanel, 2019a). Agriculture, livestock, forestry, tourism, domestic as well as foreign jobs, industrial productions, and small-scale enterprises have been the major disciplines for poverty alleviation initiatives. Remittances and tourism sector have greatly contributed to earn foreign currencies. For example, in the year 2019 alone, tourism sector contributed around US$ 0.75 billion as revenues (MoCTCA, 2020). This data shows that Nepal's tourism sector has been an integral part of the development and poverty elimination processes. Thus, in the national annual budget also, tourism gets high priority (GoN, 2021).

Urban tourism, rural tourism, mountaineering tourism, trekking tourism, eco-tourism, sports tourism, health tourism, agro-tourism, water/rafting tourism, adventure tourism, cultural tourism are major tourism types followed in Nepal. Among these, rural tourism plays dominant role in contributing to the rural economy (Dangol & Rana, 2007). Since the beginning of this millennium, 'sustainable' rural tourism (SRT) activities are going on in various parts of Nepal. SRT approach takes care of local community, culture, environment and biodiversities (Pandey, 2014). A UNDP-supported project called 'TRPAP' (Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme), which ran from 2002 to 2007 in six districts of Nepal-covering all eco-zones, intensified the SRT approach in its practices (GoN/UNDP, 2007). According to the project, pro-poor, pro-environment, pro-rural community and pro-women were the key features of SRT. This project's lessons were considered as 'worth replicating' in Nepal, as well as in some foreign countries such as Bhutan, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Laos, Combodia, etc.

SRT comprises of several types of 'niche tourism', including Community (-based) Homestay Tourism. Under this, local communities, through an exposure and empowerment programme, initiate themselves to develop homestay-based tourism activities in their settlements (Kanel, 2019b). Hospitality services are provided to the visitors at their homes on a cost-basis. Normally these are cheaper than the rates of hotels/resorts. Foods and accommodations are provided with new tastes and comforts. Also, local guided-visits are arranged, cultural shows are performed; and, guests are provided with chances to observe or take part in farming, social and various types of household chores to gain a new experience. In rural homestays, guests can enjoy by practicing all types of rural traditions, cultures, foods and costumes (Sharma, 2019; NRB, 2015). Sirubari, Ghalegaun, Ghanpokhara, Bhujung, Hattibang, Briddhim, Shree Antu, Bandipur, Tanahunsur, Kaulepani, Baglungpani, Dallagaun, Gabhar Valley, Namje are some of the renowned homestay sites in Nepal. Sirubariis considered to

be the first organized homestay village in Nepal, which officially began in 1997. Gradually other sites were developed based on Sirubari-model. Ecologically, culturally and from societal point of views, homestay is viewed as a viable option to enhance rural incomes, particularly in the middle-income class people (Kanel, 2021; Sedai, 2018).

In this article, some of the issues associated with the rural community-based homestays, their contributions in generating incomes/ reducing poverty, and challenges faced are explored. The article has also made effort to dig out some implications from opportunity-perspectives.

2. Objectives

The main objective of this study was to explore the issues related with SDG (Goal 1) focused on homestay tourism. The objective is specified below:

- To explore the challenges in the development of SRT/community homestays in Nepal;
- To dig-out new opportunities of expanding the roles of homestays for increasing rural incomes and contributing to poverty alleviation efforts.
- To suggest some practical implications based on the empirical explorations.

3. Methodology

In this study qualitative approach is used by applying various methods including literature review, non-structured interviews with key actors/stakeholders, field observations and, to some extent, some virtual conversations. Field reflections have also been key parts of the 'data/information' for the article. Key stakeholder interviews and virtual/telephonic conversations were mainly held in Chitwan, Tanahun, Palpa, Rupandehi, Sindhupalchok, Kavrepalanchowk and Kathmandu. A total of 26 non-structured interviews (18 male, 7 female), and 14 virtual/telephonic professional conversations (10 male and 4 female) were held. Themes, sub-themes and issues were developed based on the 'field'-notes and diaries. Participants' anonymity has been maintained as per their consent/advice.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Sustainable development and Tourism Sector

Nepal's planned development process started only in 1956 AD when the National Planning Commission was formed, and subsequently the first 'five-year national development plan' was formulated. Since then Nepal has been continuously practicing the periodical development approach by formulating five- or three-year periodic plans. So far Nepal has come up with 15th plan (NPC, 2019).

Tourism has been an integral part of the development process particularly from 1960s, when a separate Tourism Department was set. Later, a separate ministry for tourism sector was also provisioned; and gradually civil aviation department/authority was introduced, along with the establishment of Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) in 1998. NTB is an autonomous body formed representing government and private sector. This is one of the good models of 'PPP' (public, private partnership) approach. Tourism promotion and marketing is the prime job of NTB. It also facilitates to develop new tourism products and services, enhance tourism knowledge

and skills, and some research works (NTB, 2020). It collaborates with various government organisations, private sectors, non-governmental organisations, and some regional/international organisations. Sustainable tourism is one of the approaches adopted by NTB. For which Sustainable Tourism Development Unit (STDU) is set up; and under its initiation a Sustainable Tourism Network (STN) has also been formed and functionalised (UNDP, 2007).

According to the UN World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), "Sustainable Tourism (ST) is tourism that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Similarly, World Commission on Environment and Development/WCED has defined ST as, "Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities". Thus, ST gives emphasis on making the 'host' and 'guest' communities equally responsible. In this perspective, 'Responsible Tourism' is also used alternatively to follow the values of ST.

According to a senior manager at NTB, sustainable tourism development practices in Nepal are trying to focus on the reduction of firewood use, plastic use and proper waste management. Citing an example from Annapurna Conservation Area (ACA), he mentioned that the successful implementation of conservation-focused 'green-tourism' (sustainable tourism) in ACA area provided good confidence in replicating the practice in other parts of Nepal as well. In East Nepal, Kanchanjungha Area Conservation Programme (K-CAP) is doing well replicating the ACAP model in conserving resources, developing tourism and strengthening local livelihoods/ culture. A Sherpa entrepreneur at K-CAP area, Ghunsa village, claims that the area is well protected and new activities for promoting tourism are also going on. Sustainable rural tourism practices and local conservation activities should be well tied up for their continuation. Where there are active local actors with greater understanding on this reality tourism impacts are always positive from many perspectives: economic, social, cultural and environmental.

Good examples from Sagarmatha, Langtang, Manaslu, etc. are also performing well towards the adoption of sustainable practices in day-to-day livelihoods and conservation-based eco-tourism activities. These practices are also practised in other rural destinations as well, such as- Sirubari, Shree Antu, Ghalegaun, Bandipur, etc. A homestay operator at Chitwan Chepang Hills states, *"We are very much concerned about protecting our forests and water resources, making our foot trails waste free, and reducing the plastic and chemical use."* However, based on my observations, there are still big gaps between 'understanding' (knowing) and actual 'doing'.

Nepal's Tourism Policy (2008 AD), National Strategic Tourism Plan/NSTP (2016-2025) have also given due emphasis on promoting pro-environmental sustainable tourism in Nepal (Kanel, 2020). One of the tourism experts, who also get involved in finalising the NSTP, opines, *"If properly implemented, out policies and plans are well crafted internalising and accommodating the main principles of sustainable tourism practices adopted universally and locally."*

Despite all the practices, as one Master's level tourism student commented, *"'Carrying capacity' approach to tourism development and management is not practiced in Nepal, due to which proper projections/planning and controlling mechanisms are lacking to achieve ST goals."* Being the tourism industry a 'smoke-free' industry, maintaining it from those beauties is a big challenge.

Homestay tourism, which is a key element of community-based tourism particularly in the rural settlements, is rapidly increasing in Nepal. According to the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA, 2010), homestays can be operated both in rural or urban areas. However, at present, most of the homestays are located in rural parts of Nepal. It is obvious that urban areas are rich with accommodation facilities registered under various categiries such as star hotels, non-star hotels, guest houses, resorts, apartments etc. However, rural homestays are found mainly focusing on two services: accommodation service and cultural exchange service. If rural homestays are viewed from accommodation perspectives only, that would be an incomplete definition for homestays. Homestays should always serve as 'cultural homestays'.

According to MoCTCA statistics (2020), there are 138 star hotels and 1,151 non-star tourist-standard hotels making a total of 1,289 hotels having altogether 43,999 beds in Nepal. Similarly, the data reveal that by the end of 2019, there are a total of 389 units of registered homestay (houses), having a total of 663 rooms and 1,088 beds. According to the chairperson of Homestay Association of Nepal (HOSAN), *"There are several homestays in different parts of the country which are being run without registration. One of the executive members of HOSAN claims that there are at least 3,000 homestay beds in Nepal. Before COVID-19, he further adds, "at least one homestay used to be added everyday in Nepalese accommodation sector"*. A tourism journalist also states that homestay administration is not functioning well in Nepal, due to which haphazard openings are occurring, which cannot ensure proper recording, registration and facilitations.

Whatever the number and emerging issues, these homestays thrive for making them 'green' and 'environment-friendly'. This is a daunting task for every homestay operator. A homestay operator and member of the local homestay committee in Nawalparasi (Amaltari), also associated with HOSAN, says, *"We always encourage our homestay members to practice green (eco) concepts in all activities: welcoming, serving foods and drinks, health and sanitation, local tours, handicrafts and souvenirs, and so on"*. He also stated that the …Homestay Operation Directive, 2010Ú developed by MoCTCA, has clearly guided the operators to systematically adopt environment- and local community-friendly homestay enterprising in Nepal.

In recent times, some provincial governments and some local governments have also developed their own guidelines for homestay development and management in the region (Kanel, 2020). They have also started providing special grants and other materialistic supports to the operators of such homestays. Among other provinces, Gandaki Province is ahead in providing such grants and supports to the homestay operators. According to an official at Gandaki Province's Industry, Forests and

Environment Ministry, there are dozens of sites with homestay facilities which have been receiving grants from the governments.

4.2 Community Engagements, Achievements and Commitments

Homestay tourism, spread from east to west Nepal; and from Terai to the Himalayan areas, has evidently been a popular enterprising in rural areas. It formally began in Nepal since 1997 from Syangja district's Sirubari village. And, in these 24 years' period, according to HOSAN, homestay campaign has spread in more than 50 districts. MoCTCA data (2020) reveals that there are now around 1,500 homestay units in Nepal. It has primarily flourished in ethnic communities such as: Lepcha, Limbu, Rai, Sherpa, Gurung, Magar, Newar, Thakali, Tharu, etc. There are very few homestays run by Brahmin, Chhetri, Dasnami, Dalit, Muslim and Madhesi communities in Nepal. Why? A Board member at NTB says, *"This is due to openness and closeness of the society. Ethnic communities are more open than other ethnic groups in Nepal"*. "Host's openness becomes a good factor to sustain the homestay business in any parts of the country", adds a rural tourism expert based in Kathmandu.

Homestay engages almost all family members in a family. However, this is considered to be a women-led family business. A female homestay owner in Kaski (BhadaureTamangi), who is the chairperson of local Women's Group (*'AamaSamuha'*) as well, expresses:

"Homestay is mostly mothers' business, although supportive parts could be played by father, son, daughter, daughter–in-law etc. And, mostly we adults and seniors ('budhabudhi') are engaged in homestay. New generation is not in the village since they have gone to the city areas or foreign countries for study, work, or whatever could be the reason."

Her expressions imply many meanings. Those meanings were self-explanatory as well. If the situation is like this in every village where homestay tourism is taking momentum and getting popularity, how these businesses survive after the first generation? Will the new (youth) generation love to continue the business? This is a critical issue for homestay-based rural tourism sector (TGDB, 2016). These narratives suggest that ageing perspectives must be considered while thinking and establishing the homestays so as not to miss the opportunity of sustainability. Ageing perspectives and inter-generational representations in homestay business could be vital factors for sustainable tourism and holistic/integrated community development. Integrated community development encompasses various disciplines including education, infrastructure, health, agriculture, micro- and meso-industry and trades, tourism and so on. *"For this, proper orientation, training, exposure visits and continuous facilitations are required in every homestay sites",* laments a community-based tourism trainer and campaigner in Chitwan. And,*"At the same time, gender and social inclusion issues must be incorporated into the process of community development through the use of such disciplines",* states a gender and social inclusion (GESI) expert in Tanahun. She further adds, *"So far rural tourism initiatives, including homestays, have tried to address GESI issues to some*

extent, but they are not well-designed and not adequate."

In some observational moments in Chitwan and Tanahun, it was found that local interests in embracing rural tourism/ homestay businesses have heightened, nevertheless, proper facilitation schemes are immensely lacking. One of the rural municipality chairs in Chitwan opines that Federal and Province-level governments have failed to provide technical services to local governments as anticipated, owing to this, many municipalities have not been able to develop long-term visions and plans for sustainable tourism development. He further adds, *"We are committed and dedicated to develop our sites as famous tourism destination(s), however, proper guidance, support and facilitations are immensely lacking. In such conditions, sometimes, we are confused to decide- what to do, and what not to do, like a 'crow in the cloud' (**'haamikuhirokokaagjastaiharayeka chhaun'**)"*. These expressions and statements reveal that rural tourism development processes in Nepal are urgently demanding adequate facilitation and technical supports.

4.3 Challenges

Both sustainable development initiative and sustainable tourism development activities are facing big challenges in Nepal. The 10-year long internal political conflicts (1996-2006), and the 2015 earthquake were big hurdles for accelerating development processes. Tourism was hit hard during both the times. For example, in 1995, there were a total of 363,395 foreign tourist arrivals in Nepal; however, after 10 years, in 2006, the number remained almost static, being just 383,926 (MoCTCA, 2020).

These figures reveal how serious the problem was and how big the challenge was! In the same manner, the 2015 devastating earthquake, which had an epicentre at Barpak village, Gorkha district- a famous rural tourism destination; also seriously hampered Nepal's tourism sector, which broke the tourism development efforts. For instance, in 2014 (pre-earthquake year) a total of 790,118 foreign tourists visited the country; however, in 2015 that number came to just 538,970. It took almost one and half years to recover from the "number of arrivals" point of view. Rebuilding the damaged structures took almost six years (MoCTCA, 2020).

Since the beginning of 2020 we have been fighting with the global pandemic corona virus 'COVID-19'. This has again devastated our tourism system, along with many other disciplines of the development process (Pandey, 2020). Health, economic and social sectors have been ruined. The year 2019 was a very good year from tourism perspective. In this year, a total of 1197,191 foreigners arrived in Nepal; and spent on an average 12.7 days; which generated revenues approx. Rs. 75 billion (MoCTCA, 2020). According to NTB and MOCTCA officials, however, due to COVID, tourist arrivals and businesses have lowered by almost 80% . A national expert on tourism says, *"Globally, tourism is the sector hardest hit by COVID-19, and Nepal is no exception. We have to realise the fact that the damage recovery time would be at least 2-3 years."*

These conflicts, disasters and pandemic have negatively impacted time to time in Nepalese tourism sector. Sustaining the businesses and livelihoods has been a new challenge. Sustainable practices within the

sustained tourism will be another concern to observe and study in the days to come ('new normal'/Post-COVID situation). Increasing adverse climatic conditions ('climate changes') have also threatened our destinations. Heavy rainfall, draught, flash floods, landslides, extreme cold/hot weather, storms, forest fires, thunder and lightning, burst of glacier lakes are some of the effects and impacts of climate changes. Two famous tourist destinations, Helambu and Manang, are the latest examples being threatened by adverse climatic conditions in Nepal. *"A few years back, another famous destination in flat land inner Terai, Sauraha (Chitwan) faced the same problem",* recalls a professor. These types of challenges are regular phenomena in Nepalese tourism and sustainable development initiatives. Developing climate change/disaster-resilient tourism has been a challenge not only for Nepal, but globally.

4.4 Opportunities

Nepal's unparalleled natural and cultural beauties, adventure opportunities and high-level of hospitality services have provided Nepalese tourism with abundant hopes and aspirations. According to MoCTCA and NTB officials, despite COVID-19 pandemic problems, tourism infrastructure development works, product enhancement, virtual promotions and marketing activities are ongoing in various parts of Nepal. Local governments and Province governments have also initiated some activities to sustain tourism sector including: plan preparation, product refinement, grant supports, etc.

In recent years, Nepal government has made efforts to diversify tourism products, and for that purpose, it has taken some steps, e.g, selecting prime/new (100) tourism products and enhancing them with local stakeholders' leadership and participation. Province governments have come up with their long-term tourism plans. *"NTB has also planned to decentralise its plans and activities to all 7 provinces soon",* says the chief executive officer at NTB.

Irrespective of damages created by several hurdles, Nepal's tourism has high potential to become a world class destination due to the unparalleled prime world heritage sites (WHS), namely, Mt. Everest region (*Sagarmatha*) (natural heritage), Lumbini (Buddhist/cultural heritage), and several places of Kathmandu Valley (cultural heritages). In addition, there are dozens of cultural heritage sites; and culturally rich villages/towns in Nepal, which are waiting for global recognition and UNESCO/WHS-listing. One former parliamentarian and tourism actor, in this connection, says, *"If we properly develop our tourism sector, it will be one of the major sectors for contributing to the GDP and achieving sustainable development."* Obviously, Nepal's highly potential sector tourism has many things to do in order to gain and sustain its images and boost people's courage. Lessons from the Sagarmatha region and ACAP region have provided further confidence to Nepal's tourism sector towards creating and maintaining 'sustainable eco-destination'. Where tourism is sustainable, other sectors of development also remain sustainable since tourism is an amalgation of integrated 'green' product and service intermingling diverse cross-cutting issues led by SDGs.

5. Conclusions and Implications

As stated earlier, SDG goal No. 1 is directly associated with tourism, it generates incomes and directly contributes to poverty alleviation efforts. Tourism sector's GDP contribution in Nepal is around 3 percent

only; which is very low compared to its huge potential. However, growing interests among rural dwellers to open new destinations and homestay services have given new hopes and courage to develop, manage and sustain local tourism sites. Incomes, employment, resources utilisation and management, empowerment of local people, wider network buildings and several other benefits could be harvested from sustainable tourism development initiatives. Homestay's popularity is increasing day by day in Nepal. However, proper facilitation is lacking. It is therefore that sustainable supporting mechanisms and local capacity development efforts are urgently realised by the stakeholders.

The inter-link between the SDG targets and local community development is another part felt requiring well-informed plans and activities. Federal structures' decentralisation, Provincial governments' proactive supports, and Local governments' own initiation with full commitments and dedications are sought by local people. Participatory inclusive tourism can better ensure sustainable tourism practices, especially in the rural parts of Nepal, where a blend of culture, nature and adventure exist.

The study draws the following implications to stakeholders engaged on the tourism sector:

- National goals/targets for achieving of SDGs should be injected at Province and Local levels, therefore the localisation process should be expedited. To this end, intensive orientation and planning activities should be carried out.
- Role of tourism sector in fulfilling SDGs should be further explored and internalised from the national/ federal levels to the province and local governments.
- Homestay development has taken a momentum. However, capacity development processes are lacking. Operating homestay facilities sustainably depends on the local capacity enhancement and firm commitments; thus, especially, local governments are more responsible for such initiatives. Equally, ageing perspective should be considered from the very beginning so that homestay efforts continue in the long-run as well.
- Environmental degradation/ climatic changes and tourism development are directly connected issues. Thus, an integrated and concerted approach is required to tackle with the impacts of such climate changes.
- Post-COVID situation will definitely bring new opportunities for tourism since 'inbound' and 'outbound' tourism activities have seriously shrunken globally for almost two years. Thus, 'new normal' situation in the tourism sector should be critically thought and planned so as to cope with the emerging challenges of economic, ecological and socio-cultural implications.

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Relationship between Emotional Labor and Burnout in Good Health and Wellbeing Goal of Sustainable Development: The Role of Work-Family Conflict

PRABIN RAJ GAUTAM

Abstract

Using survey data from 244 foreign nurses, this research investigates the association between emotional labor, work-family conflict, and burnout. The LISREL analysis is applied to evaluate the direct and indirect impacts of emotional labor on burnout conducted in the capital city of Nepal, Kathmandu, in May 2021.Work-family conflict is used as a mediating variable to explain the relationship between emotional labor and burnout. The result showed that emotional labor is linked to burnout, with work-family conflict mediating. This research helps to localize emotional labor in the Nepalese context and offers scholars a new field of inquiry to investigate emotional labor in all other service industries. So, the significance of the direct effect of emotional labor on burnout is reduced when the indirect effect of emotional labor through work-family conflict is included in the total effect model. Consequently, emotional labor is positively related to foreign nurse' burnout, and work-family relationship plays a mediating role in this relationship.

Keywords: Burnout, Emotional Labor, Employee Health, Sustainable Development, Work-family Conflict,

1. Introduction

Emotional labor is a method of controlling feelings and expressions to meet emotional demands (Wharton, 2009). Scholars have examined the association between emotional labor and burnout (Jeung, Kim & Chang, 2018; Yilmaz, Altinkurt& GÜNER, 2015; Baik& Yom, 2012: Bayram, Aytac, & Dursun, 2012). Some argued that all dimensions of emotional labor positively contribute to burnout (Jeung, Kim & Chang, 2018; Tolukan, 2019; Çelik, Tabak, Uysal, Sigri, & TURUNC, 2010). Emotional labor refers feelings of someone when they need to suppress their own emotions (Tolukan, 2019). To put it another way, having to have a smile on face all day because employee work in the service business, regardless of how an employee is feeling and the fear of getting complaints from customers and bosses if an employee is not, is emotional labor (Grandey, Kern & Frone, 2007). However, the empirical results are mixed. Some studies found a multidimensional effect of emotional labor on burnout instead of unidimensional way (Zhang & Zhu, 2008). The varied outcome gives rise to a concern about whether emotional labor is always the cause of burnout. Most studies examining the independent effect of emotional labor on burnout ignore that work-family conflict mediates the strength of the emotional labor-burnout relationship (Yin, Huang & Chen, 2019).

Sustainable development goal (SDG) 3 ensures healthy lives and promotes well-being for all ages (Desa, 2018, p.26). Health professionals all around the globe are dealing with physical and psychological problems because of the current health crisis. Nepal, a South Asian nation, is no exception, and the epidemic has had a significant effect on the country's economy and health system (Khanal et al, 2020). Yet, during epidemic management, the mental health impacts of an outbreak are often overlooked, even though the repercussions may be expensive. For example, in the case of nursing staff, the psychological state of a nurse has a significant impact on their performance (Luthans & Jensen, 2005). There were media declarations of insufficient test kits and a lack of PPE during the first reaction to COVID-19, on the one side, and delivering services by suppressing emotion, even if patients or their families were unpleasantly presented the other. Nurses need supportive work environments to enhance their mental health, and their behaviors must be carefully monitored, particularly during medical crises. During an emergency, timely evaluation of nurses' mental health state and mental health requirements helps management reduce and minimize psychological issues and enable them to care for patients. Nurses in Nepal are likewise working in a challenging environment and providing the best care possible. However, the professional position requires emotional control, even when the patients or their family members unfavorably show themselves. They get burned out due to this emotional work, and they develop physical problems (Michelle Rowe, & Sherlock, 2005). If the present situation continues, Nepal will struggle to meet SDG goal 3 in the health sector.

Medical employees, particularly nurses, often face emotional labor in their professional life (Cricco-Lizza, R. 2014). Though empathetic care offers many advantages for patients, it can

be emotionally draining for healthcare workers (Kinman & Leggetter, 2016). Likewise, the expectation that certain emotions be exhibited while others are kept hidden in the workplace is a cause of stress that can jeopardize nurses' health and lead to burnout. Likewise, emotional labor controls emotions throughout encounters to attain professional goals and conform to work role criteria. Therefore, studies argue that emotional labor has a primarily negative impact on the organization (Grandey, 2000). These negative consequences directly impact employees in service contacts, and they propagate to customers and businesses.

Furthermore, employees suffer stress, sadness, panic disorder, psychological pain, and dissatisfaction at work because of emotional labor. Yonsei Medical Journal identified emotional labor as a risk factor for burnout in 2018 (Jeung, Kim & Chang, 2018). Control theory views emotional labor as a resource of deviant behavior such as burnout (Huff & Scarpitti, 2017). It states that behavior is determined by what a person wants most at any particular time rather than external stimuli. Lapierre and Allen (2012) argue that control theory indicates that the weak social systems such as the demand of emotional labor in the organization and work-family conflict situations welcome unexpected behavior like burnout. Likewise, control theory explains why people adhere to rules. It also describes how people's behavior conforms to societal and workplace expectations. For example, nurses in Nepal suppress their emotions to deliver services according to organizational and work expectations, detrimental to their mental and physical health (Sapkota, 2014). SDG 3's objective of guaranteeing healthy lives and fostering well-being for everyone, on the other hand, is difficult to achieve due to the emotional labor issue of the health sector.

To respond to emotional labor, employees need to have coping strategies to minimize burnout and achieve good health and well-being as defined by sustainable development goal three (Desa, 2018, p.28). SDG 3 aims to guarantee everyone's health and well-being, including a strong commitment to eliminating AIDS, TB, malaria, and other infectious illnesses epidemics by 2030. It also aspires to attain universal health coverage and ensure that everyone has access to safe and effective medications and vaccinations. However, in the case of universal health coverage, emotional well-being is also a significant issue. As a result, emotional labor and workplace burnout cannot be excluded from the SDG 3 goal. According to control theory, work-family conflicts arise from an individual's need to gain and maintain power and control within a relationship (Lapierre & Allen, 2012). Thus, Work-family refers to work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict (Haslam, Filus, Morawska, Sanders & Fletcher, 2015). When emotional labor is experienced, it may affect the work-family relationship in many aspects. An employee can handle the adverse condition through coping strategy but cannot control the mental and physical harm due to this situation.

Excessive and sustained stress can lead to burnout, a state of emotional, bodily, and mental exhaustion (Leiter, Maslach & Frame, 2014). Furthermore, it happens when anyone is overloaded, emotionally spent, and unable to keep

up with incessant demands. Therefore, employees suffer from stress, sadness, panic disorder, psychological distress, and dissatisfaction. Work-family conflict can enhance employee burnout and negatively contribute to the sustainable development goal of achieving good health and well-being for all ages (Bora & Saikia, 2018). The dimensions of work-family conflicts, work to family and family to work, enhance the conditions of employee burnout (Haslam, Filus, Morawska, Sanders & Fletcher, 2015). Accordingly, work-family conflict plays a critical role in formulating and activating emotional react to emotional labor demand. Work-family conflict may enhance emotional labor and result from burnout. However, very few empirical studies have examined how emotional labor could play a role in burnout.

In this study, prior studies are included to understand the effect of emotional work on burnout. This study aims to investigate how emotional labor affects burnout among Nepalese nurses working in healthcare settings. First, using control theory as a lens, the hypotheses are developed and tested on such mediating effects using a sample of nurses working in the hospitals of Kathmandu valley, Nepal. Next, the research is focused on the role of work-family conflict in the relationship between emotional labor and burnout by examining the direct effect of emotional labor upon burnout and the indirect effect of emotional labor upon burnout through work-family conflict. The next section of this paper reflects the research design, literature review, and hypothesis of this study. Then, the paper presents the methodology and the results of empirical study and data analysis. Discussion and conclusion are presented in the last section.

2. Research Design

Under the quantitative research methodology, the questionnaire survey approach is adopted to collect data. The multivariate data analysis technique was then used to test the hypothesis derived from the literature reviews. For doing so, this study adopted the two-dimension (work to family and family to work) Work-Family Conflict Scale (WAFCS) developed by Haslam, Filus, Morawska, Sanders, and Fletcher in 2015 for the following three reasons:

1. This model is one of the few work-conflicts theories that deal with the interrelationship between emotional labor and burnout.
2. The WAFCS not only provides the measuring scale but also contributes to handling the emotional labor.
3. This scale is widely used in many studies in the subject area.

The purpose of this study was to examine the moderating role of work-family conflict on the relationship between emotional labor and burnout in Nepalese health institutions among the nursing staff. For testing the hypothesis, three types of relationships between the dependent variable (emotional labor), moderating variable (work-family conflict), and dependent variable (burnout) are examined through three steps.

In the first step, the direct relationship between emotional labor and burnout was examined. In the second step, the relationship between emotional labor and work-family conflict was tested. Finally, in the third step, the relationship between

work-family conflict and burnout was investigated. In this study, six observed variables measured emotional labor, two observed variables measured work-family conflict, and three observed variables measured burnout. The following sections present the literature review and hypothesis development of this study.

2.1 Emotional Labor and Burnout

Emotional labor involves a process of controlling one's emotions and expressions in order to meet the emotional demands of a job and analyzing and making decisions about the expression of emotion, whether felt or not, as well as the polar opposite: the repression of feelings that experience but not voiced (Hochschild, 2010). This study distinguishes six dimensions of emotional labor, including frequency, intensity, variety, duration, surface acting, and deep acting, as the literature suggested (Hochschild, 2010; Wharton; 2009; Jeung, Kim & Chang, 2018; Baik & Yom, 2012; Bayram, Aytac, & Dursun, 2012). The role of emotional labor on burnout has been acknowledging in the emotional labor literature, as per the evidence from Jeung, Kim, and Chang, (2018) study, the positive influence of emotional labor on burnout over the period. From the perspective of control theory, emotional labor can be regarded as a source of burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Such source plays a significant role in exhaustion, cynicism, and low efficiency of an employee. An employee with emotional labor cannot discover an innovative way of providing services and hardly respond to job role challenges (Jeung, Kim & Chang,2018).

Prior studies have employed various burnout measures such as disengagement, depersonalization, overall physical and psychological fatigue, professional fulfillment, and concentration (Malach-Pines, 2005). Such measures are necessary, but three dimensions of burnout are vital to measuring the health workers' burnout (Grau, Suñer, & García, 2005; Rössler, 2012; Maslach & Leiter, 2016). Thus, subjective burnout measures include perceived exhaustion, cynicism, and low efficiency (Walters &Raybould, 2007). Unfortunately, there is a lack of guidance on burnout measurement in the research field of emotional labor, given the difficulty in defining burnout (Fahrenkopf, Sectish, Barger, Sharek, Lewin, Chiang, &Landrigan,2008). The meta-analysis of Melchior, Bours, Schmitz, & Wittich (1997) found burnout as a dependent variable and found the most considered dimensions of burnouts were exhaustion, cynicism, and low efficiency. Following this suggestion, this study considers these dimensions. Here, exhaustion comprises the state of being extremely tired, cynicism is concerned with the profoundly distrustful condition, and low efficiency includes a condition where an employee completes a task inefficiently.

Several studies have suggested that the dimensions of emotional labor can lead to burnout (Jeung, Kim & Chang, 2018; Yilmaz, Altinkurt& GÜNER, 2015; Baik, & Yom, 2012; Zhang & Zhu, 2008). The frequency dimension of emotional labor reflects the frequency of emotional display that led to more significant chronic tiredness. According to the control theory, the frequency of emotional display led a person to deviant behavior (Jürgensohn, 2007). By continuing the frequency of emotional

display, the person faces physical and psychological hardships. Intensity indicates severe job stress that causes high psychological pressure on the job. Employees may experience sadness and anxiety as a consequence. (Kim & Choo, 2017). Variety of emotional labor such as mental load, mental burden, clerical labor, and invisible labor led an employee to the psychological pressure to barely handle the job stress (Beck, 2018).

The duration is another dimension that reflects how long an employee is facing emotional labor. The study believes that the duration of facing emotional labor contributes to burnout (Etzion, 2003). The surface acting refers to the fake smile by controlling emotion at work due to the job demand (Gracia, Estreder& Martínez-Tur, 2019). It positively contributes to burnout, so that in most of the studies, it has been taken as an independent variable to measure the relationship between emotional labor and burnout (Jeung, Kim & Chang, 2018). Likewise, deep acting refers to making an effort to experience and express the desired emotions (Mann & Cowburn, 2005). It is also regarded as a contributor to burnout (Jeung, Kim & Chang, 2018).

Accordingly, emotional labor issue in workforce development is crucial to maintain an excellent working environment in an organization. If employees face burnout, there may be a chance of increasing exhaustion, cynicism, and low efficiency. Thus, emotional labor may be a predictor of employees' burnout. This argument led to the following hypothesis.

H1: Emotional labor will be positively related to burnout.

2.2 Emotional Labor and Work-family conflicts

Emotional labor is critical for employees to handle work-family conflict (Yanchus, Eby, Lance, & Drollinger,2010). Work-family conflicts such as work to family and family to work conflict describe those conflicts occur when the job role's energy, time, or behavioral demands collide with family or personal life duties (French, Dumani, Allen, & Shockley, 2018). This two-dimensional work-family conflict model contributes to analyzing the psychological pressure of the employee. The work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict are positively associated with emotional labor (Seery, Corrigall & Harpel, 2008).

The frequency and intensity of emotional labor in the work and family domains are linked to affective reactions to each domain linked to work-family conflict and enrichment. Likewise, family-to-work conflict is favorably associated with emotional labor at work, whereas work-to-family conflict is equally highly associated with emotional labor at home. For this, emotional labor's variety and duration dimensions are regarded as two major contributors that play a positive role in increasing work-family conflicts (Yanchus, Eby, Lance & Drollinger,2010).

Surface acting and deep acting of emotional labor dimensions influence employees' day-to-day life even after leaving the workplace (Lu, Wu, Mei, Zhao, Zhou, Li, & Pan,2019). Thus, the daily surface acting and deep acting are connected to increasing work-to-family and family-to-work conflict.

According to the above, emotional labor with frequency, intensity, variety, duration,

surface acting, and deep acting dimensions is connected to increasing work-family conflicts. Therefore, the work-to-family and family-to-work conflict can be utilized to understand the influence of emotional labor on employees' work-family conflicts. Based on this, the study can reasonably expect a positive relationship between emotional labor and work-family conflicts. Hence, the following hypothesis was developed. *H2: Emotional Labor will be positively related to work-family conflict.*

2.3 Work-family conflict and Burnout

Burnout is defined as an employee's persistent psychological response to job-related interpersonal and emotional pressures, as seen by exhaustion, cynicism, and low productivity. (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001). The three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism, and low productivity, represent the feelings of being overextended and inability to engage with the job due to job demands. Burnout is a symptom of emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficiency due to work-family conflict. Likewise, the work-family conflict has a positive relationship with emotional labor and is often associated with high employee turnover (Seery, Corrigall &Harpel,2008; Maslach & Leiter, 2006).

The growing work-family conflict and burnout have costs on the physical and psychological health of employees. The studies confirmed the direct positive relationship between work-family conflict and burnout. Also, burnout is a major problem for both employees and organizations because it reduces employee effectiveness and negatively affects its functions. The study also identified that increasing burnout negatively affects work-to-family and family-to-work conflict. Therefore, work-family conflict is a negative factor in burnout.

According to the above, work-family conflict contributes to increasing burnout. It is believed that work-family conflict is critical because of its positive relationship with burnout. Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H3: Work-family conflict will be positively related to burnout.

2.4 The mediating effect of work-family conflict

According to some studies, the link between emotional labor and burnout is more complex than a simple main effect (Pugh, Growth & Hennig-Thurau, 2011). As previously stated, hypothesis 2 predicts that emotional labor would be positively linked to burnout, and hypothesis 3 predicts that work-family conflicts will be positively linked to burnout. These two hypotheses present a link of emotional labor with work-family conflict and burnout. It indicates that the link between emotional labor and burnout is thought to be indirect. As a result, work-family conflict is a mediating variable between the independent variable of emotional labor and the dependent variable of burnout. The discussion implies that work-family conflicts mitigate the burnout impact of emotional labor. Therefore, while emotional labor contributes to increased work-family problems, it significantly impacts burnout. As a result, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H4: Work-family conflicts will mediate the relationship between emotional labor and burnout.

3. Data and Measures

3.1 Sample and Data Collection

A questionnaire survey approach was employed to collect data, and all items required seven-point Likert scale responses ranged from 1 "strongly disagree," through 4= "neither agree nor disagree," to 7= "strongly agree." The study's participants were foreign nurses registered with the Nepal Nursing Council in Kathmandu. This study selected foreign nurses as subjects due to their contribution to the Nepali health sector regardless of their language and cultural challenges. The total number of foreign nurses are 845 in Nepal. The researcher calculated the sample size from this population by employing 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error (Fox, Hunn& Mathers, 2009). Based on the sample size received from the calculation, the researcher emailed a questionnaire to 265 foreign nurses, but only 251 responses were received, with seven of them being incomplete. The remaining 244 valid and complete questionnaires were used for the quantitative analysis. The six dimensions of emotional labor were Frequency (F), Intensity (I), Variety (V), Duration (D), Surface Acting (SA), and Deep Acting (DA) (Jeung, Kim & Chang,2018; Yilmaz, Altinkurt& GÜNER,2015; Baik& Yom, 2012; Bayram, Aytac, &Dursun, 2012). Burnout was measured with three dimensions: Exhaustion (E), Cynicism (C), and Low efficiency (LE) (Jeung, Kim & Chang,2018; Yilmaz, Altinkurt& GÜNER,2015; Baik& Yom, 2012; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter,2001: Etzion,2003). Furthermore, work-family was measured with two dimensions of Work-to-Family conflict (WTFC) and Family-to-Work conflict (FTWC) (Haslam, Filus, Morawska, Sanders & Fletcher, 2015; Bora &Saikia, 2018; Yanchus, Eby, Lance & Drollinger, 2010; Seery, Corrigall &Harpel, 2008). Cronbach alpha and composite reliability were used to assess the multi-item scale's reliability for each dimension, and reliability measures were higher than Bagozzi and Yi's recommended minimal criterion of 0.60. (1988). Both reliability measures in this study are greater than 0.70.

The direct and indirect effects of emotional labor on burnout were investigated using LISEREL analysis. This study produces a chi-square value and five indices to confirm the path models. The goodness-of-fit index (GFI), the Adjusted Goodness-of-fit Index (AGFI), the Normed Fit Index (NFI), the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and the Root Mean Square Residual (RMSR)are the indices. For emotional labor, GFI=0.97, AGFI=0.94, NFI=0.93, CFI=0.97, RMSR=0.02, work-family conflict, GFI =0.96, AGFI=0.93, NFI=0.94, CFI=0.96, RMSR=0.01, and burnout=0.93, AGFI=0.92, NFI=0.91, CFI=0.95, RMSR=0.03, the fit indexes of confirmatory factor analysis varied from adequate to good.

Furthermore, the chi-squares of the three models of emotional labor, work-family conflict, and burnout were fewer than three times their degrees of freedom, with 132.51/58=2.28, 210.54/96=2.19, and 62.29/23=2.70 correspondingly. Thus, the confirmatory factor analysis results revealed that the models of emotional labor, work-family conflict, and burnout fit the data well (Anderson & Gerbing,1988).

Furthermore, convergent validity was determined by comparing path coefficients from latent variables to related items using t- statistics.

Table 1: Measurement Dimensions and Reliabilities

Construct	Dimensions	Cronbach alpha	Composite Reliability
Emotional Labor	Frequency	0.75	0.76
	Intensity	0.84	0.85
	Variety	0.77	0.76
	Duration	0.76	0.77
	Surface Acting	0.82	0.83
	Deep Acting	0.86	0.87
Work-Family Conflict	Work-to Family Conflict	0.84	0.85
	Family-to Work Conflict	0.81	0.82
Burnout	Exhaustion	0.75	0.76
	Cynicism	0.81	0.82
	Low Efficiency	0.85	0.86

This analysis demonstrated statistical significance, with the highest t-value for emotional labor being 9.3 and the lowest t-value for burnout being 2.10. These numbers are higher than the typical t-value 2 criterion (Anderson & Gerbing,1988). Hence, it confirms that all dimensions have excellent convergent validity.

This study used the confidence interval for each pairwise correlation estimate to satisfy the discriminant validity (i.e., ± two standard errors) should not include 1, the percentage of variance extracted, and measure the correlation between each pair of constructs, one at a time, equal to 1. (Anderson &Gerbing, 1988; Lucas, Diener & Suh,1996). These satisfied all pairwise correlations in three measurement models. The proportion of variance extracted exceeded the construct's shared variance with all other constructs. The correlation between each pair of constructs is equal to 1. Furthermore, in all cases, the chi-square difference was significant at the $p \leq 0.001$ threshold of significance. As a result, discriminant validity between all pairings of constructs is satisfied by each measurement model.

3.2 Measures

Drawing the previous studies, this study used 7-point Likert scale to measure emotional labor, work-family conflict, and burnout (Yang, Chen & Zhao, 2019; Badolamenti, Biagioli, Zaghini, Caruso &Sili, 2018; Loscalzo, Raffagnino, Gonnelli, & Giannini,2019; West, Dyrbye, Sloan, &Shanafelt, 2009). The six dimensions of emotional labor were frequency, intensity, variety, duration, surface acting, deep acting. Three items measured frequency, three items measured intensity, four items measured variety, three items measured duration, four items measured surface acting, and four items measured deep acting. Likewise, two dimensions of work-family conflict were work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict. Five items measured work-to-family conflict and the other five items measured family-to-work conflict. Furthermore, three dimensions of burnout were exhaustion, cynicism, low efficiency, and each dimension measured by three items.

4. Results and Analysis

The hypothesized link was investigated using LISREL 8.52. The statistical significance of the path coefficient was assessed for each path between constructs. With GFI=0.932, AGFI=0.866, NFI0.988, CFI=0.97, RMSR=0.0133, and the chi-square 72.05 (df=40), the model was found to be a perfect fit.

Table 2: Standardized Path Estimates

Hypothesized relationship				
Hypothesis	Variables	Path Coefficient	t-value	Result
H1	*Emotional labor will be positively related to Burnout.*	0.46*	7.41	Supported
H2	*Emotional Labor will be positively related to work-family conflict*	1.22**	11.83	Supported
H3	*Work-family conflict will be positively related to burnout*	0.52**	8.35	Supported

$p<0.05$, $p<0.01$. n=244 (two-tailed test).

All three H1, H2, and H3 hypotheses are supported, as predicted. In addition, it suggests that there is a positive link between emotional labor and burnout ($\gamma 11 = 0.47$, t= 7.41), a positive relationship between emotional labor and work-family conflict ($\gamma 21 = 1.22$, t= 11.83), as well as a positive association between work-family conflict and burnout ($\beta 12 = 0.52$, t= 8.35).

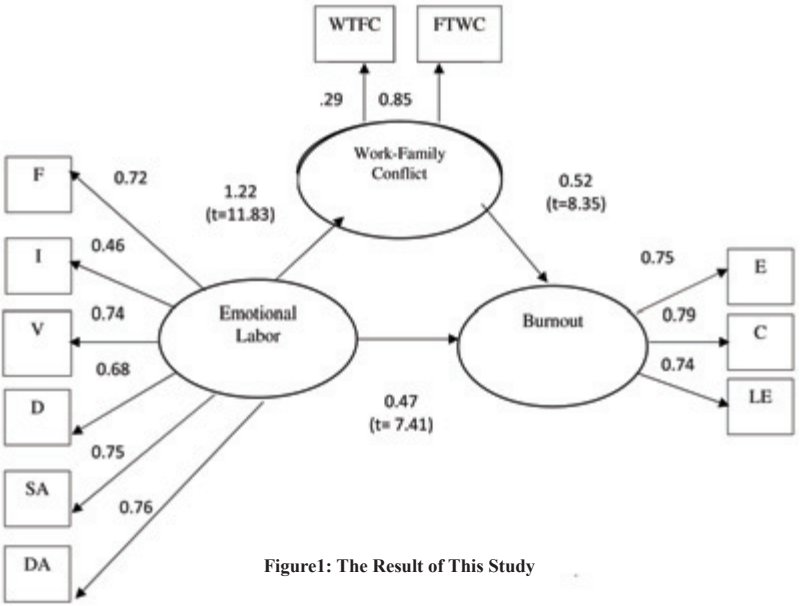

Figure1: The Result of This Study

The three conditions, according to Bagozzi and Yi (1988), must be proposed in an empirical investigation with a mediating variable:

1. The independent variable influences the mediating variable.
2. Without a mediating variable, the independent variable has a significant impact on the dependent variable.
3. On the other hand, the mediating variable reduces the correlation between the independent and dependent variables while revealing a significant association between the mediating and dependent variables.

The independent variable in this study was emotional labor, with work-family conflict as the mediating variable and burnout as the dependent variable. Using LISREL analysis, I examined three conditions. According to the findings, emotional labor significantly affects work-family conflict (γ 21 = 1.06, t= 13.09). Thus, the first criterion has been met. The findings also demonstrate that emotional labor significantly affects burnout (γ11 = 1.33, t= 12.01). Thus, it fulfills the second criterion. In the third condition, emotional labor significantly affects burnout (γ 11 = 0.63, t= 9.36), and work-family conflict has a significant positive influence on burnout (β12 =0.67, t= 9.62).

The researcher looked at the change in chi-square value for the emotional labor variables before and after entering the work-family conflict for the third condition. The chi-square value changed significantly after the work-family conflict variable was included ($\Delta\chi 2$ = 44.55, Δdf= 1, p<0.001).

When the indirect effect of emotional labor through work-family conflict is incorporated in a total effect model, the direct effect of emotional labor loses its significance. These findings demonstrate the role of work-family conflict as a mediating factor.

As a result, H4 is recommended. This model shows that work-family conflict mediates the association between emotional labor and burnout (total effect =1.05, indirect impact = 0.66, $p<0.001$, direct effect = 0.41, $p<0.05$), according to H4. In the presence of work-family conflict, the indirect influence is significant, and the direct path remains significant (although diminished). However, it only accounts for 43.19 percent of the total influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable, with the remaining 54.63 percent being mediated by management support. All of this backs up hypotheses 4.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This study offers a conceptual framework for examining the function of work-family conflict in moderating the relationship between emotional labor and burnout. The findings demonstrate that emotional labor can positively contribute to burnout. However, the direct positive association between emotional labor and burnout will be reduced if work-family is incorporated as a mediator. Emotional labor has been shown to have an indirect effect on burnout through influencing work-family conflict. As a result, Work-family conflict serves as a mediator.

There are some limitations of this study. This study was unable to analyze causal relationships between variables due to its cross-sectional character. A long-term study will provide further insight into the work-family conflict. Further investigation into the causal inference of this model could be done using a longitudinal strategy. This research investigates the possibility of a mediator in the relationship between emotional labor and burnout. Other elements, such as culture, family structure, economic standing, and other possible resources, are not considered.

In addition, the researcher is aware that if working conditions were to amend, emotional labor and burnout could be affected. Finally, because the study is dependent on self-report results, there is a risk of common method bias. The test for common method bias, on the other hand, shows that it is not a significant concern in this study. Multiple measures were employed to support the consistency of the data and the outcome, including Cronbach alphas, composite reliability, and convergent and discriminant validity.

Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals focuses on worldwide efforts to eradicate disease, improve treatment and healthcare, and address new and emerging health concerns. Emotional labor is not yet considered as a significant issue in developing countries' service industries (Rathi, Bhatnagar & Mishra, 2013). In Nepal, emotional labor is hurting nurses' physical and psychological health due to the job overload during the COVID-19 pandemic (I have suggested some references below). Everyone's health is always a priority, but the health of healthcare providers is often overlooked.

Patients' unpleasant behavior during in-office visits, therapy, and discharge contributes to emotional labor, work-family conflict, and burnout in a favorable way.

Nurses strive to mask their emotions while on the job and deliver services with a fake smile. This condition contradicts Goal 3 of the Sustainable Development Goals. So, in the context of Nepal, this study is an attempt to describe the current state of emotional labor and burnout relationships with and without the mediating role of work-family conflict. The emotional labor problem in workforce development must be properly handled to accomplish SDG goal 3 on a national and local level. Furthermore, since emotional labor is a new problem in all service industries, further study is needed to look at its impact on employee's health in other industries, including hotels, airlines, and education. Beyond the fundamental responsibility of maintaining occupational health and safety, businesses have tremendous potential to improve the health and well-being of their employees. For example, work-related mental illness and stress have a detrimental impact on employees' productivity at their workstations. Through improving health, well-being, and equality in the workplace, including employees and workers in the value chain, the business may explore possibilities linked to SDG 3. Therefore, it is essential to consider how encouraging employee health and well-being and excellent occupational health and safety benefits both workers and businesses.

Finally, emotional labor is an important issue in the workplace. This research on the association between emotional labor and burnout underlines the crucial role of work-family conflict as a mediation factor. The insights offered in this study have major consequences for service companies in today's dynamic environment.

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Tracing Mental Health-Related Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal

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Abstract

Mental health was brought to recognition as a global issue only after its explicit inclusion in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nation's SDGs set out 17 goals with a more holistic approach towards development. Mental health-related targets move implicitly around goal 3: Good Health and Well-being. In low and middle-income countries like Nepal, mental health issues pose challenges for development. Tracing mental health-related SDGs in light of national strategies and related resources can depict an existing picture of mental health and a way forward. The main objective of this study was to provide an overview of how explicitly mental health-related SDGs and their targets are traced in the national context of Nepal, along with the existing challenges. Secondary literature review was used as a part of the study. The three mental health-related specific SDGs targets in Nepal were to reduce mental health problems, the suicide rate, and to increase the life satisfaction of women aged 15-24 by 2030. The existing challenges in achieving the mental health-related SDGs targets are limited resources, socio-cultural barriers, ineffective mental health legislation implementation, and the challenges posed by natural disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Scaling up the budget allocation, adequate investment in human resources, increase mental health literacy, and proper research communication among policy-makers is needed to achieve the SDGs in Nepal.

Keywords: COVID-19, Mental Health, Sustainable Development Goals, Challenges

1. Introduction

Mental health, "an integral part of an individual's capacity to lead a fulfilling life, including the ability to form and maintain relationships, to study, work or pursue leisure interests, and to make day-to-day decisions about education, employment, housing or other choices."(World Health Organization, 2013), is an important determinant of the national economy (Layard, 2017). Unsound mental health can be a struggle for many countries as poor mental health and poverty are closely connected (Kumar & Kumar, 2020) and because mental health problems contribute to a 13% of the world total disease burden. Further, the majority of disease burden due to mental health problems lies in low and middle-income countries (LMICs) (Tomlinson, 2013). Mental health problems present the highest health burden causing 22.9% of all years lived with disability (Whiteford et al., 2013) and are the largest contributors to non-communicable diseases (Acharya et al., 2017). Four out of five people with severe mental health disorders do not get any form of psychological intervention in LMICs, creating a significant treatment gap (Tomlinson, 2013).

Mental illness leads to poor health outcomes, premature death and human rights violations (World Health Organization, 2003). Moreover, people living with mental illness have worse health conditions than others because of suicide attempts and interference of mental health problems with self-management of physiological states (Park et al., 2018). The risk of suicide has been reported to be 5-8% for people living with mental disorders worldwide (Bradvik, 2018). Also, people with severe mental health disorders die about 10-20 years earlier than general populations (Liu et al., 2017).

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) did not explicitly focus on the mental health issues despite the growing burden and extensive social and economic consequences of them (Thornicroft & Votruba, 2015). The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set up in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly fulfilled the gap in MDGs embedding mental health into its health-related goals to address the unmet needs of the 450 million people with mental illness in the world (United Nations, 2015). Among the 17 SDGs stipulated within the time frame of 2030, goal 3 (ensure healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages) has set specific targets to address the existing gaps in mental health. The SDGs target 3.4 aims to reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases by one-third through prevention, treatment, and promotion of mental health and well-being (Izutsu et al., 2015; United Nations, 2015). The SDGs have also focused on reducing this treatment gap for people affected by mental health disorders to improve mental health for whole populations (Patel et al., 2018). However, it became a challenge to achieve this target in most LMICs, where there are limited financial and human resources for mental health services (Iemmi, 2019; Jimba et al., 2019).

The SDGs target 3.4 is equally pertinent and common for all the countries that adopted the 2030 agenda. However, depending upon the level, gaps, and structure of development, each country has its challenges and developed its strategies to attain this goal. In the context of Nepal, a comprehensive National Mental Health

Policy formulated in 1996 never came into existence. Mental health is one of the least prioritized areas of development with limited resources that is far less to address the mental health services needed in the country(Rai et al., 2021; Luitel et al., 2015).Moreover, many Nepalese people tend to hide their mental health problems instead of seeking mental health interventions because of the stigma and discrimination attached to mental illness in society (Luitel et al., 2015). Although the UN has developed the targets in its agendas to guide mental health care service actions, it still calls for a deeper understanding of its usefulness in the context of LMICs like Nepal. Therefore, this article aims to trace the explicit mental health-related SDGs target 3.4.2 under goal 3.4 (to promote mental health and well-being by 2030) and the challenges present to accomplish this goal by 2030 in the context of Nepal.

2. Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are to trace the mental health-related SDGs target (specifically reduction of the prevalence of suicide, mental health problems, and increase in life satisfaction among women aged 15-24) and barriers in the achievement of SDGs targets.

3. Methodology

The methodological approach of this article was based on a secondary literature review. We tried to review articles, reports, and related instruments regarding existing mental health policy, strategy, and legislative provision in the Nepalese context. The data collection process included searching for information through various printed documents and websites, and databases.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Tracing the Explicit Mental Health-related SDGs

The final status report of MDGs showed that Nepal made significant progress in related areas, and thus, it opened new paradigms for the adaptation of 17 interlinked SDGs (Asadullah et al., 2020; Dhimal et al., 2017; NPC Nepal, 2017). Nepal was one of the first countries to adopt the SDGs formally ("Voluntary National Review", 2020). The three mental health-related specific SDGs targets in Nepal are (a) to reduce mental health problems from 14% in 2015 to 4.7%by 2030 (b) to reduce the suicide rate from 25 per 100,000 population in 2015 to 1 per 100,000 population by 2030 (c) to increase the life satisfaction percentage of women aged 15-24 from 80.8% in 2015 to 95% by 2030 (NPC Nepal, 2017). This section also discusses means to accomplish these goals, specifically about resources and policy and legislation-related documents.

4.1.1 Decreasing the Prevalence of Mental Health Burden and increasing life satisfaction

One of the specific goals of SDGs was to decrease the prevalence of mental disorders to 4.7% by 2030. Studies after 2015 show contrasting findings regarding the prevalence of mental disorders. For example, a pilot study conducted in three districts in Nepal demonstrated the prevalence of 11.2% among adolescents between the ages of 13 and 17 and 13.2% among adults (Jha et al., 2019). Another nationwide cross-sectional study among Nepalese adults aged 18-65 (N=2100), in contrast, revealed a 22.7% prevalence of anxiety and 11.7% prevalence of depression (Risal et al., 2016). Scoping

review of Chaulagain et al. (2019) showed a prevalence of 10.7% to 53.2% of psychological disorders in children and adolescents.

These facts about prevalence are unable to ascertain whether attainment of this goal has taken the right course. Also, frequent natural calamities like earthquakes and landslides accompanied by the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to threaten this health-related SDG target ambitious and challenging to attain within a decade. Thus, a strong effort is needed to accomplish this goal in limited resources setting like Nepal.

WHO in 2014 estimated 24.9 suicides per 100,000 people in Nepal, 6,840 suicides annually, ranking it 7th by suicide rate globally (Marahatta et al., 2017; Thapaliya et al., 2018). Karki et al. (2017) reported suicidal ideation among 4.5% of the people at some point in their life. National mental health survey (pilot study) demonstrated suicidal ideation among 8.7% of respondents of the selected districts of Nepal (Jha et al., 2019). Data of Nepal police showed a 16.5% prevalence of suicide, and the national mental health strategy has proposed to reduce the rate up to 10% by 2025 (Government of Nepal, 2020). Such alarming status of suicide and suicide ideation makes it challenging for the government to accomplish this goal. However, the inclusion of suicide rate reduction as a specific aim in the national mental health strategy sheds some hope to accomplish this target.

The Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (NMICS) reported data on overall happiness and satisfaction with different aspects of life for females aged 15-24. The data revealed that 84% of adolescent girls were happy with their life. Also, 86% were satisfied with their family life and friendships, 80% were satisfied with their health status, and 76% were satisfied with their living space (UNICEF Nepal, 2016). There is a significant association between the measures of life satisfaction and mental disorders like major depressive symptoms, anxiety disorder, suicidality, and substance dependence (Fergusson et al., 2015). People with higher life satisfaction show better self-efficacy and adherence to healthy behavior and eventually have lesser mental health issues. A study found that younger Nepalese women of rural origin were more likely to be satisfied with health and estimation of happiness (He et al., 2018). However, continued adverse events accompanied by urbanization in the country can endanger the accomplishment of these particular SDGs of increasing life satisfaction among Nepalese female adolescents.

4.1.2 Resources and Mental Health Programs

With the growing burden of mental health disorders in the nation, adequate resources and mental health programs are needed to achieve the SDGs target by 2030. However, human resources in mental health areas are scarce. Data shows that there are 0.22 psychiatrists and 0.06 psychologists per 100,000 population in Nepal (Luitel et al., 2015).A study done in 2015 reveals that around 400-500 para-professional counselors (trained by NGOs) and 867 general doctors /PHC workers who have received short mental health training worked in the field of mental health (Luitel et al., 2015). Thus, a possibility of task shifting (Jordans et al. 2013), which means delivering services by less trained non-specialists, is there. Even though task shifting can be a valuable option in

a low resource setting, task shifting alone cannot ensure quality care for people suffering from psychological distress. The mental health strategy of Nepal targeted to produce 7000 trained professionals by 2025 (Government of Nepal, 2020), and this may not be sufficient to address the mental health issues of people.

The Management Division, part of the Department of Health Services (DoHS), mental hospital, and some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have taken the initiative to train PHC workers in a few districts. Across the whole country, Patan Mental Hospital is the only hospital specialized for treating mental disorders, with a capacity of 50 beds (Rai et al., 2021). Around 440 in-patient beds (112 governmental and 327 private hospital facilities) for people with mental illness are estimated to be present in big cities of Nepal in recent days (Luitel et al., 2015). Government of Nepal tried to address these barriers in accomplishment of SDGs by planning five years strategy to tackle lack of physical and human resources.

The mental health budget allocation is less than 1% of the total national health budget (Luitel et al., 2015; Rai et al., 2021). Rai et al., (2021) reported a decrease in the proportion of mental health budget to health budget in 2008 and 2020. Thus, budget allocation, which is an important contributor to human resources and infrastructure development, is insufficient to achieve SDG.

The mental health programs in the country are operationalized by the Non-communicable Disease and Mental Health Section. Also, different NGOs and INGOs have initiated the promotion and development of mental health services through advocacy, awareness, providing service more on broadly defined distress, and reducing stigma. The suicide rate has been increasing with each passing year in the country (5124 suicides in 2017, 5317 in 2018, and 5785 in 2019). The COVID-19 pandemic has further increased this suicide rate by 20% in Nepal (Singh, Baral&Mahato, 2020). Since so many lives are lost to suicide every year, hospitals like Tribhuvan University, Teaching Hospital and Kanti Children Hospital, and different NGOs have started suicide prevention hotline right after the corona virus pandemic (Clinic One, 2020). These services are not only useful for preventing suicides but also to promote both the physiological and psychological well-being of the Nepalese people, which is the general target of mental health-related SDGs.

4.1.3 Mental Health Policy, Strategy and Legislation

The Constitution of Nepal ensures the right of every citizen to receive free basic health care from the state and have equal access to health care. Mental health-related services have been included in the list of basic health services in sub-section 4 (E) of Section 3 of the Public Health Service Act 2018. Mental health problems have been included in the list of basic and emergency health services, and provision has been made to make them available from the federal, state, and local levels (Government of Nepal, 2020). In 2017, The Act of Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities was enacted to Clause (1) of Article 296 of the Constitution of Nepal. The Article 35 and 36 included Chapter 7 of the same Act states that the Government shall provide free medicines and consultancy service required for the persons with mental or psycho-social

disabilities, and any person with mental or psycho-social disability shall not be held in prison in the name of treatment or protection respectively (Nepal Commission Act, 2017). In the same year, the Ministry of Health and Population developed the Community Mental Health Care Package Nepal to facilitate the implementation of the 1996 National Mental Health Policy. Based on this package, the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) has been conducting different community programs related to mental health nationwide (Rai et al., 2021).

The 15th five-year plan (Fiscal Year 2019/20 – 2023/24) of the Government of Nepal included a plan to make mental health services accessible at all levels. The Government also included activities to prevent and control mental health problems in its 14th periodic plan. The National Mental Health Strategy 2077 acknowledged that it would be better to formulate and implement a concrete mental health strategy and action plan based on past achievements and experiences. It included a provision to revoke the existing policies related to mental health after formulating the detailed thematic strategy (Government of Nepal, 2020). The five key strategies this mental health strategy and action plan are:

(i) To ensure easy and equal access to mental health services for all the population of Nepal.

(ii) To manage the necessary human and other resources to deliver mental health and psychosocial services.

(iii) To raise awareness among people to remove existing superstitions, myths, and misconceptions about mental illnesses and promote mental health.

(iv) To protect the fundamental human rights of people with psychological disabilities and mental illnesses.

(v) To promote and manage health information systems and research under mental health programs.

Although the legislation of Nepal vows to protect the right of people with mental illness, remove discrimination, and ensure the environment that enables people with disabilities to earn a self-reliant and respectful living (Nepal Commission Act, 2017), firm implementation is needed to ensure the human rights of people with mental illnesses. The Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) is responsible for developing and implementing general health policies/plans, as well as regulating, monitoring and evaluating health-related activities and outcomes. In 2018, The Non-communicable Disease and Mental Health Section of the Epidemiology and Disease Control Division (EDCD) under Department of Health Services (DoHS) was authorized for the administration of mental health programmes in Nepal (Rai et al., 2021).

4.2 Challenges to Attain Mental Health-related SDGs in Nepal

Although the Government of Nepal, along with the various NGOs and INGOs, have taken baby steps to mitigate the mental health problems in Nepal, these steps are not enough to achieve the SDGs goal as the mental health problems are growing exponentially throughout the country. The challenges to attain mental health-related SDGs in Nepal are:

4.2.1 Budget Allocation and Human Resources

Both the budget allocation and human resources are limited in the national

context of Nepal (Luitel et al., 2015). These are creating discrepancies between the demand and access to mental health care services in the country. Mental health only gets a mere 1 % of the total health budget. This limited budget would not be enough to address the increasing mental health problems in Nepal. Although the human resource of trained mental health professionals by NGOs is increasing, there is still a scarcity of more qualified mental health professionals of psychiatrists and psychologists in the country. Also, the mid-level health workers like nurses, health assistants, auxiliary nurses, and female community health volunteers who could positively influence reducing the gap in mental health care receive no or minimal training on mental health in their education. Moreover, the training is often without practical exposure (Aryal, 2019).

In addition, present mental health resources are not distributed equally; the hospitals and the health professionals are clustered in a few big cities (Luitel et al., 2017). Most of the people living in the rural areas of the Hilly and Himalayan regions lack proper access to health care. Although some initiatives have been taken to stem the mental health problems. Most of them are beyond the highly marginalized communities.

Also, while rendering the services, Evidence-based treatment is essential to reduce the prevalence of mental health problems (Fairburn & Patel, 2014). Further, delivering such treatment requires competent mental health professionals. However, a lack of reliable and valid measures of therapist competence impedes the dissemination of evidence-based psychological treatment. A scale named Enhancing Assessment of Common Therapeutic Factors (ENACT) rating scale was developed in Nepal to measure therapist competence. Even though further research is needed to evaluate applications for therapy quality and association with patient outcomes. (Kohrt et al., 2015).

Apart from this scale, there remains no any other tool for mapping the therapist competency. More so, no representative study confirms the regular use of this scale. Having said that, even this scale demands further research to evaluate applications for therapy quality and association with patient outcomes.

4.2.2 Socio-cultural Barriers

One of the significant challenges in mental health-related SDGs in Nepal is the high levels of stigma surrounding it. People either hesitate to talk about it or seek any form of mental health services and opt for traditional healers that imply low mental health literacy in the country. Low mental health literacy hurts the treatment of mental health-related disorders. Misconceptions about mental health problems and the stigma associated with them hinder access to treatment (Luitel et al., 2015).

The mentally ill are discriminated against society, and their rights provided by the constitution and laws are often violated (Regmi et al., 2004).Even if people are willing to receive any form of mental health care despite mental health-related stigma and discrimination, there still lies other barriers like financial difficulties, lack of accessible treatment places, and adequate human resources.

Culture and religious beliefs are another relevant challenge to mental health-related SDGs in the country. Nepal is

a multicultural country where various forms of worship and meditation are practiced for happiness and wellbeing. Here culture has a strong carriage on how mentally ill individuals are treated by local communities who believe mental illness is the product of black magic and the punishment of negative deeds from their previous life (Regmi et al., 2004).

4.2.3 Implementation of Mental Health related Instruments

A comprehensive mental health policy formulated by the Nepal Government in 1997, aimed to provide basic mental health services to the Nepalese population. However, this policy was not endorsed. Although Mental Health Strategy 2077 has come into existence, it still poses a substantial challenge to be effective and successful, owing to a lack of mental health awareness, prevailing stigma in society, low budget, and scarce human resource. The laborious situation in the effective implementation of mental health-related instruments in Nepal has created an enormous challenge to accomplish the mental health-related SDGs goal within a given timeframe.

4.2.4 Natural Disasters and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, landslides, and crop failure are common in Nepal, which further escalates mental health problems (Regmi et al., 2004). For example, the same year when SDGs were announced, a massive earthquake hit Nepal, leaving nine thousand people dead and declaring a state of emergency in the country. Studies have shown an elevated estimates of mental health problems such as stress, anxiety, depression, suicidal ideation, and hazardous alcohol use due to the negative mental health impact in the aftermath of the 2015 earthquake (Kane et al., 2018). Apart from natural disasters, the recent outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has created an extensive challenge to ambitious and aspirational SDGs. Mental health in all spheres of human lives, across all borders, has been negatively affected due to this novel pandemic. The COVID-19 clear-cut escalated mental health problems among the Nepalese people and disrupted Nepal's fragile mental health care services (Chalise &Paudel, 2020).

5. Strength and Limitation of the Study

The mental health-related SDGs is relatively neglected among the broader and more specific other physical health-related SDGs in Nepal. This is the first study to track mental health-related SDGs and their challenges to achieve within the stipulated time frame of 2030 in this low-resource country. However, this study is not free of limitations. First, this study did not include other SDGs closely linked with mental health-specific SDGs. Second, this study was carried out based on secondary data in the literature, which may entail low-quality data than the primary study with an in-depth qualitative research design. Also, this study lacks the international context comparison as it might have provided more insight about the strategies for overcoming challenges to accomplish the SDGs goal in the stipulated time frame in Nepal.

6. Implication to Policy Arena

Policymakers, responsible authorities, and advocates need to recognize the salience nature of mental health for achieving a broad range of other SDGs in Nepal. The method of quantification is necessary to assess measurable and achievable specific mental

health targets. For this, the incorporation of indicators is an important step to track the achievement of mental health-related SDGs in the country. This service coverage would include a community-oriented package of mental health intervention for Nepalese people with mild to severe mental health disorders like depression, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorders, and schizophrenia. There is a need for active integration of mental health services into primary care centers located in urban and rural areas to achieve SDGs goal no 3.4 in the national context of Nepal. Further, scaling up mental health budgetary allocation, human resources, and mental health literacy programs are desirable for the effective implementation of the National Mental Health Strategy 2077 BS for alleviating t the national mental health situation for walking to the road of achieving mental health-specific SDGs in Nepal.

7. Conclusion

The mental health burden is increasing in Nepal, so does the challenge to attain the mental health-related SDGs target within the stipulated time frame by 2030. On the way to meeting these targets, stronger policies on mental health problems, suicide and women's' life satisfaction can express the implicit support for psychological well-being. The challenges in achieving the target are limited financial and human resources, mental health-related stigma and discrimination, cultural beliefs, problems with mental health policy implementation, natural disasters, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Policymakers, responsible authorities, and advocates need to recognize the salience nature of mental health and scale up mental health budgetary allocation and human resources to achieve mental health-specific SDGs s in the national context of Nepal.

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Analysis of Education Policies in Nepal from the Lens of Leave No One Behind Principle

JANAK RAJ PANT

Abstract

"Leave No One Behind" is among three universal values of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which carries the essence of transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Goals (UNSDG, 2017). This article presents an analytical overview of the Leave No One Behind (LNOB) principles in the education policies in Nepal conducted in July 2021 by reviewing the implementation status and account for civil society roles to advocate for the policy influence and implementation efforts. The major finding of the analysis suggests that articulation of LNOB principle is well positioned in multiple policy procedures whereas implementation mechanism is still unclear and inconsistent due to the resource constraints, capacity gaps and lack of political commitments and ownership which has direct implication on the realization of the LNOB principles and mainstreaming the left behind communities.

Key Words: Sustainable Development Goals, Leave No One Behind, Right to Education, Inclusion

1. Background

In the past few decades, the development sector has been heavily loaded with the borrowed terminologies which have also borrowed many different concepts and practices. Although every initiative claim that they have been extremely participatory and owned by the nations (VNR 2017, VNR 2020, Sustainable Development Goal Status and Roadmap 2017), local communities and people; it is not necessarily the case in every instances. Many of those initiatives have rarely reached at the level of the local communities especially the left behind and therefore the agenda for the left behind is in many ways raised by the local elites who claim the representation of the voices

of those communities. Although it is not necessarily inappropriate to help engage the local communities in such initiatives by facilitating the discourse, trying to become voice for them, it is more crucial to create environment and mechanism that can capture their voices in the relevant platform. So, the local communities do not feel that these are the borrowed concepts but an essential mechanism to keep them connected with the outer world to move one step further for the benefit of all the parties involved together. But it is important to look at those borrowed concepts and practices, and how much it has contributed for the preservation and promotion of the cultural values, plurality of knowledge, maintaining diversity and distributing the opportunities equitable ways. Serious reflection is also required if there have been adequate and successful attempts to protect and promote indigenous knowledge, skills and value systems in the global context.

2. Sustainable Development Goals and Leave No One Behind

The concept of the sustainable development has evolved through the centuries continuous discourse. Later in 1960s and early 1970s the discourse was more focused on the progress, sustainability, growth and development which gradually evolved as the sustainable development (Pisani, 2006). It was only in 2015 September, when the world's leaders adopted the 17 goals as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 and named the agenda officially and Sustainable Development Goals are introduced as the means accomplish transformative ambition through the features of universal applicability (UNSDG, 2017). The SDGs are claimed as the instruments to ensure that they abide by, protect to and promote individual rights to benefit from the development initiatives in accordance with the international human rights law and reach to the most marginalized communities including the ones facing or at the risk of gender inequality, and other forms of discrimination that hinders the realization of their rights and ambition of the sustainable development on those individuals and their communities.

2.1 Left Behind Communities in Nepal

Leave no one behind (LNOB) is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals (UNSDG, 2017). However, there is a need for critical and constructive reflection on the current policy provisions at national and local level that can truly bear the essence of the sustainable development global initiatives and ensure that the fruits of the sustainable development are accessible for all communities and individuals. It has been very important to consistently review, reflect and revise the strategies based on the periodic review and lessons learned from the past engagements so that the sustainable development can truly be used for the benefit of the local people and communities; all the human being in general and most marginalized and left behind in particular.

The United Nations has stressed the importance of the LNOB as not only the conceptual paradigm but an operational mechanism that demand changes in the way of working especially identification of the priorities, engaging with the different actors and measuring and reporting the achievements and the shift is not about the

changing the work but also the workforce to represent the world's diversity whether it is in terms of gender or geography or disability or any other aspects that may be the reasons for the discrimination (UNSDG, 2017).

Although we hear the terminology of leave no one behind too often in development process, in practice it is not always the case. In fact, "the kind of development that prevails today pushes them behind, making them worse off in absolute terms, reducing their standard of living, depriving them of their livelihoods, and in the worst cases, depriving them of their lives" (Elson, 2018). The discrimination and overrepresentation of the marginalized communities is everywhere; may it be a developed or a developing or under-developed nation. It is common that the "indigenous peoples face systemic discrimination and exclusion from political and economic power; they continue to be over-represented among the poorest, the illiterate, the destitute" (UN DESA, 2009).

Although leave no one behind and left behind are very frequently used terminologies in development initiatives, it is not so straightforward to present who is essentially left behind. It really needs careful consideration and monitoring of the different aspects of the developments and associated indicators. In a study carried out by Pradhan & Gurung (2020) on Who Are Left Behind? Tracking Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals in Nepal, the researchers have assessed 40 different SDG indicators and concluded that women are in general left behind compared to the male, almost in every aspect except gender parity index of the secondary education. Similarly, Madhesi Dalits, Hill Dalits, and Muslims lag behind in most of thetracked indicators. There are 51 different sub-groups within the Madhesi Dalit, Hill Dalit, Madhesi Other Caste, TaraiJanajati and Muslim categories, which comprise nearly 40 percent of the entire population and are thus left behind. The study also indicated that certain indigenous communities within this category such as Thakali and Gurung are in much better position in different development indicators.

Constitution of Nepal (2015) has recognized different groups and subgroups as the marginalized communities and thus has protected their rights such as in Article 42.1 Right to Social Justice has recognized women, Dalits, indigenous, Ethnic, Madhesi, Tharu, minority groups, persons with disability, marginalized groups, Muslim, backward classes, gender and sexually minority groups, youths, peasants, laborers, the oppressed and the citizens of backward regions, and economically poor Khas Arya for the consideration of the right to employment in state structures on the basis of the principle of inclusion. Therefore, this can be considered as a broader guidance on the left behind communities for further legislature and policy procedures. Although the constitution has protected the rights of Dalit and women under fundamental rights which is another important indication on the social groups that are left behind.

2.2 Education Policies in Nepal and Leave No One Behind

Policy is 'a law, regulation, procedure, administrative action, incentive, or voluntary practice of governments and

other institutions' (CDC USA, 2015). Education policies offer 'the strategic link between the education's vision and day-to-day operations of education system' (Acharya, 2019) and therefore review of education policies is important for the implementation of any of the accepted principles, leave no one behind is not an exception.

Review of the education policies in this article has been very much focused on the major legal provisions as well as other strategic and programmatic guidelines that are developed to facilitate state education practices and standards.

2.3 Constitutions of Nepal 2015

Constitution of Nepal 2015 is an outcome of the extensive peace process aftermath the 10-years long (1996-2006) armed struggle led by the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist), and move towards the Federal Republic system led by an alliance of seven major political parties of Nepal. In the constitution, there are a number of provisions that assure and protect the rights of the left behind communities and has paved the ways for the implementation of the Leave No One Behind principle of the sustainable development goals before it has been endorsed by the member states.

The provisions that centre to the left behind communities include the preamble of the constitution that stresses the 'protecting and promoting social and cultural solidarity, tolerance and harmony, and unity in diversity' and committed for the 'fundamental rights, human rights' (Constitution of Nepal, 2015). In the same way, Article 31 Part 3, rights relating to education has protected the right of every citizen to access compulsory and free basic education, free secondary education and special provisions for the persons with disabilities and other left behind communities.

2.3.1 Federal Education Act

The Education Act that was developed and endorsed in 2028 BS when National Education System Plan started its implementation with subsequent amendment is no longer applicable to the federal context in which nature and state obligation has significantly changed including the roles and responsibilities of the different level of the governments. There have been the needs for and discussion on the development of the federal education act with the implementation of the federal structure in the nation in order to operationalize the new governance structure of the nation with the transition from unitary monarchy system to the federal republic which has also been recognized in the School Sector Reform Plan developed and approved by the Ministry of Education in August 2009 and the then legal provision were considered as the interim mechanism for the transition. As presented in it "the current Education Act and regulations provide the legal basis for the implementation of the plan until there is an amendment and enactment in current laws and by laws".

However, after more than a decade has passed since then there is no progress on the development of the Federal Education Act which has major implication on the education sector in general with the disproportionate impact on the left behind communities in particular which has also been noted by the civil society organizations when in their submission

on the right to education to the United Nations Universal Periodic Review saying "education Act is absent and other available Acts and Policies developed at the national and local levels do not truly carry the essence of the constitution" (NCE, 2020). This indicates the lack of consistent and harmonious state efforts for the development of the education policies in favor of the left behind communities with the significant space to question on the political commitment for their seriousness of intention in favor of the left behind communities. The subsequent delay in the development of the federal education act has raised is primarily due to the lack of the commitment of the political leadership for the realization of the "inclusiveness in all aspects of development, including education, has been a significant political issue since 1990, when Nepal became a multiparty democracy and many diverse groups began to express their opinions openly and to assert their identities and rights" (Neupane, 2019).

2.3.2 The Act Relating to Compulsory and Free Education 2018

This is another important legal provision which is expected to protect the right to education of all children as per the essence of the constitution of Nepal. However, this lacks clarity on the mechanism for the implementation of the right to education as articulated in the Constitution of Nepal 2015 and has therefore been criticized by the stakeholders for not being able to 'ensure full provision of free and compulsory education' and remaining silent about the education facilities and education model that 'lack the proper mechanisms to implement free and compulsory education provision as outlined in theConstitution (NCE Nepal,2020). The current status provides adequate space to question the political leadership for their commitment to implement the fundamental rights protected in the constitution in the same essence and consistent interpretation.

2.3.3 School Sector Development Plan (2016-2022)

Implementation of the Education Sector Development Plan (SSDP) started in the year 2016, the year when the Sustainable Development Goals implementation started and therefore this was the best opportunity to localize the global framework in the national and local context.. The School Sector Development Plan has reiterated its commitment for the SDGs and 'ensuring the equitable and inclusive quality education and promoting lifelong opportunities for all (MoE, 2016)'. However, the commitment in the background lacks sufficient focus in the strategies, resource allocation and establishing the baseline and target to ensure the disaggregated date for the left behind communities. Consequently, until it has reached close to the end of the implementation, there is lack of the quality disaggregated data that can demonstrate the baseline and progress made and therefore it has limited the state efforts to concentrate on the areas lagging behind which has been noted by the SSDP mid-term evaluation as "the level of disaggregation required to monitor the impact of the targeted interventions for gender equality and social inclusion" is not met and "it can be noted that several indicators set to monitor the different objectives are either not fully adapted to monitor progress (e.g. Objectives 3 and 9), or not regularly/fully updated" (MOE, 2018). In this sense, although the background of the SSDP is

very much focused on the right to education for all with explicit focus on the equity and inclusion dimension, this has not equally been considered in the course of the planning and its implementation. The careful consideration of the existing gaps are resulting from the combined impact of the lack of adequate capacity of the state authorities mechanism, availability of the resources and ownership of the local governments to roll out the SSDP plan.

2.3.4 Other Policy Provisions

There are a number of other policy provisions developed by the government of Nepal such as Consolidated Equity Strategy (2014), Inclusive Education Policy (2016), Equity Index (2017), Sustainable Development Goals, Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030 (2018), Science Technology and Innovation Policy (2019). However, effective implementation of those policies has been in question with the responsibilities of the basic education transferred to the local level government without proper orientation on those policy provisions and guidance and lack of the adequate human resource. Neupane (2019) has highlighted this reality as the "local government faces significant challenges in meeting this responsibility effectively […] shortage of experts, and local leaders are not sufficiently experienced to handle these challenges appropriately; more generally, local institutions have limited human and financial resources".

2.4 Steps to Materialize Leave No One Behind Agenda

Recognizing the strengths and responding to the gaps in the education policies is the first step toward the effective implementation of the LNOB Principles. However, it is more important to further understand and unpack the underlying barriers that have further created challenges in the development of the policies and their effective implementation. The challenges created in implementation of the LNOB Principle is presented in the figure below:

Figure 1: Cyclical relationship of the key challenges of Leave No One Behind Principles Implementation

(source: developed by author).

As presented in the figure above, based on the experience with the CSOs and analysis of the policies in the current review, the author has developed schematic presentation of the cyclical relationship of the key challenges of LNOB principles implementation in which the financial and infrastructure resource limitation has been recognized as a challenge for the schools and local governments to adequately respond to the needs of the left behind communities. However, this has further resulted into limited capacity to acquire the well-trained human resource that can respond to the needs of the children with diverse needs and background. As the implementation unit lack both adequate human resources and financial resources and infrastructure; they are hesitant to own the agenda for further implementation which in turn limit their ability to effectively explore the cost-effective strategies and maximize the available resources

for the benefit of the existing situation. As a result, there is disproportionate benefit to the left behind and mainstream communities with a number of indicators demonstrating the unequal advantage from the education system such as 19.7 per cent of children from the lowest wealth quintile are developmentally on track in literacy and numeracy compared to 73 per cent from the highest wealth quintile and the same kind of discrepancy can be seen in Kathmandu Valley urban 71.6 while Province 2 rural is only 21.2. (CBS, 2020). This shows the visible gaps in terms of the fundamental principle of LNOB. As it is key to LNOB that the 'prioritisation and fast-tracking of actions' for all groups and sub-groups including the poorest and most marginalised people but when policy is implemented among and for the better-off groups first and worst-off groups later, the gaps are likely to increase and the LNOB principles remain unimplemented (Stuart and Samman, 2017) which has been the case on education policies in Nepal as well.

2.5 Civil Society Organizations in Nepal and Leave No One Behind

In implementation of the SDG and LNOB principle, civil society organizations (CSO) are recognized as the watchdog and are expected to contribute with the constructive comments. Although, referring to CSOs for advocacy and accountability is very common, there is no consistency in defining CSOs, however, the available literature clearly acknowledges the unavoidable role of civil society (Bhandari, 2007) and this is true for the leave no one behind agenda implementation as well. Advocacy for the LNOB agenda by the CSOs to influence the other actors' decision and practices in relation to the LNOB, is critical to showcase their own internal policy and practices which has also been recognized as "the strengths of civil society: its connections to communities, its ongoing work to identify who is being marginalised or excluded, its commitment to amplifying unheard voices, and its focus on advocacy and accountability" (OECD, 2018). The CSO internal policy and practices not only provide them strong moral ground to advocate on these agenda but also has an empowering impact on the left behind communities towards building their own confidence to claim the rights back. But it is not always the case that civil society organization that fight for the left behind communities, transparency and human rights based approaches are always able to demonstrate these principles in practice.

British Council commissioned an independent research study entitled Civil Society in a Federal Nepal: A Landscape Study found out that "weak CSO transparency, accountability and governance is a major problem for civil society in Nepal that needs a concerted effort to improve them substantially" and concluded that the civil society is "partially successful in using its understanding of, and connections with, communities to raise awareness of social issues and seek potential solutions". This indicates that the civil society organizations need continuous self-reflection to best use the number of spaces available to lobby and influence the leave no one agenda implementation.

However, it is also true that, the influence of such organizations has been limited in many ways compared to the spaces available, the needs of the marginalized

communities and the agenda positioning of the civil society networks and organizations. Sénit (2020) prefer to call is 'democracy–influence paradox' and claimed that "the actors with the capacities to engage repeatedly and informally with negotiators are seldom those that are most representative of global civil society" which raises the major concern on the way civil society organizations themselves apply the leave no one behind principles in their operations and development efforts may it be service delivery or advocacy. This major concern of the civil society organizations is still valid in Nepal context as well. Among a few of the question for reflection regarding CSOs representation and ownership to the agenda raised are 'Do these CSOs represent the left behind communities? 'What tools, strategies and practices are there to validate the agenda by the left behind communities? What are the strategies to break the barriers to the left behind communities?' Considering the complexity, it may not be possible to answer these questions but such question still provides an opportunity to reflect and plan and implement for continuous improvement in CSO practices.

Currently the civil society groups are globally have to choose two tough options as they have to operate in the increasingly political environment in which being too much defensive may risk their space and remaining not being defensive they "may leave the most courageous and necessary advocates for the SDGs stranded without support and ultimately sell out the communities who need us [civil society] most, just to seek our own [civil societies'] survival" (Kharas, McArthur, & Ohno, 2020).Civil society groups seems to have been closer to the second choice for their convenience and easy existence which needs consistent self-reflection and review of their roles and positions with the focus on the results through awareness, empowering and engaging with the left behind communities.

3. Conclusions

This comprehensive review of the education policies in Nepal provides a real picture of state positions on the agenda for the left behind communities and articulates how the civil society stakeholders have been able to influence the state efforts in the realization of the existing policy provisions and hold the authorities accountable for their commitment in context of Nepal.

This article reveals that there are some progressive policy provisions in favor of the left behind communities and that provide a good background for the implementation of the Leave No One Behind agenda such as the provisions in the constitution in Nepal, however, there are bottlenecks in the development for the programme strategies and mechanism for its effective roll out which has created barriers in the implementation of the Leave No One behind principle. Such bottlenecks or challenges are due to the capacity gaps, resource constraints and poor political commitments and ownership. In order to effectively respond to the challenges and support the state efforts on Leave No One Behind, the civil society actors can play an instrumental role, however there is need for more explicit and bold CSO position in support of the left behind communities to truly accelerate such efforts the state and other actors closely connected to the right to education.

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A Study on SDG 4 Localization in Nepal

RAM GAIRE and SHRADHA KOIRALA

Abstract

The Education 2030 envisions "localization of SDG4" at the local level to ensure implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)' and wider ownership and participation of local stakeholders. This article analyzes SDG4 localization process in Nepal, especially in terms of policy harmonization, coherence, adoption, dissemination, local stakeholders' capacity and implementation status. Based on the systemic review of the documents, policies, studies and informal conversations with the local governments and education officers in March- May 2021 held virtually, it reflects experiences of the SDG4 localization in the local education policies and practices. In order to articulate the power struggle in terms of federalization of policies and its implementation, Bourdieu's power theory has been discussed. The article highlights about the localization gap of SDG4 in terms of policies and practices at the local level. It concludes that the progress on implementation of SDG 4 remains incomplete without the progress on localization.

Key Words: Localization, Sustainable Development Goals, Local, Province, Federal Governments, Power.

1. Introduction

The history of formal education in Nepal can be traced back to the initiation of Jang Bahadur Rana[i] to educate the Rana families' members at the palace. The Nepal National Education Planning Commission 1956 was a radical departure to promote mass education through formal schooling. After 1970s, education in Nepal grew up rapidly with the formation of the various educational plans and policies. National Education System Plan for 1971-76 supported to bring many children to the school education. Significant achievements in the education sector over the last few decades have been made with the implementation of sector wide programs

i. Jung Bahadur Rana is a ruler of Nepal and founder of the Rana Regime in Nepal. Jung Bahadur took control of the government after killing an alleged usurper, Gagan Singh, who was accused of plotting with the junior queen in 1846 to become prime minister by putting the queen's son on the throne.

such as the Education for All National Plan of Action (2000-2015) and School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) (2009-2015). Nepal's commitment and partnership since Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 for the achievement of the Universal Primary Education helped to achieve the better education with increased net enrollment; as the focus of MDGs was to improve in primary education and gender parity (NPC, 2017).

After the completion of the MDGs period, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) succeeded it as a new global development agenda with a spirit of transforming society through key principle of Leave No One Behind (UN, 2015). Nepal as a UN member state also has committed to achieve these goals by 2030. Thus, it is crucial to incorporate and link these goals with national planning processes, policies and strategies connected to all dimensions of SDGs (Krantz & Gustafsson, 2021). Amongst the seventeen goals of SDGs, SDG4 talks is about the education which includes ensuring equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2015). Also, SDG4 is central to the realization of the overall agendas for of the Sustainable Development Goals. Hence, it is also taken as a crosscutting goal.

To achieve SDG 4 in Nepal, the School Sector Development Plan (SSDP 2016 – 2022), which is the successor of the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP), is a sectoral plan to achieve SDG 4 that contributed to improve equitable access to education (MoEST, 2019). Moreover, the targets and objectives of SDGs including SDG4 have been well incorporated in the five year's periodic plan of the country (NPC, 2020). Also, for the effective implementation of the SDG4 targets and indicators, the Government of Nepal has developed the Nepal National Framework for SDG4 which guides to promote the education system through the achievement of the SDGs targets and goals (MoEST, 2020). Furthermore, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is working for the effective learning system, curriculum, teacher's management, quality and inclusive education and lifelong opportunities for all leaving no one behind.

The adoption of SDG4's targets and indicators as per the framework and structural attempts on developing policies and plans are in line of Constitution of Nepal 2015 as it has identified education as a fundamental right ensuring that every citizen has the right to access free and compulsory education up to basic level and free education up to secondary level (GoN, 2015). In line with the spirit of the Constitution, an Act relating with Free and Compulsory Education has been promulgated in 2018. Besides, the government has formulated National Education Policy, 2020 to guide education sector in the federal structure of Nepal. Also, the local governments, responsible to manage the basic and secondary level education, are also in the process of formulating local education laws and policies in inclusive and participatory manner so as to value and respect the representative voices of marginalized and deprived communities (Paudel and Sapkota, 2018).

In the context of SDGs implementation, National Planning Commission is an apex body and it also coordinates with the line ministries to localize the SDGs targets and indicators. As the line ministry of SDG4, MoEST has nominated national coordinator, person responsible for the

overall implementation and monitoring for SDG4 and alignment of national education sector plan in light of SDG4. At the policy level, School Sector Development Plan (2016-2022), Nepal National Framework for SDG4 (2020) and, National Education Policy (2019) are the major policy milestones. Similarly, appointment of SDG4 coordinator is the key institutional milestones for the SDG4 localization in Nepal.

In this article, localization in this context means the process of taking into account the subnational contexts (Global Task Force, 2016) for the attainment of SDG4. Relating to how local and province governments can support in the attainment of SDG 4 through their actions and providing a framework for the local policy development has been the major area of concern in Nepal's case. Localization of SDG 4 has far been little in focus as there is little emphasis by the concerned stakeholders; since it involves dissemination, contextualization, mainstreaming, integration, capacity development and monitoring activities (Patole, 2018). Also, this is more about securing adequate financing, empowering the people and policy makers so that polices are formed to support the implementation (Krantz & Gustafsson, 2021). Besides, providing leadership capacity to the local authorities is also important and fundamental in the process of localization (Boaren, 2019). Hence, this article considers localization of SDG4 as the Nepal's initiatives to embed it in the wider country's economic, social, cultural and political context. The SDG4 localization requires that all province and local governments need to develop their respective SDG4 roadmaps to contextualize the SDG4 agenda and federal government to provide the SDG4 framework to support the localization process (MoEST, 2019).

However, it has been observed that neither province, nor local governments have SDG4 roadmaps at their level and even the federal government has not provided a clear localization guidelines. Thus, the central concern of this article is to analyze Nepal's approaches to localization and provide insights in localizing efforts for the achievement of educational agenda. Using both primary and secondary data, this article has attempted to answer the following questions: a) how SDG4 has been localized in the local education policies and b) what are the issues and challenges in SDG4 localization? In so doing, interpretive approach has been applied to interpret the existing status, gaps, challenges and issues of SDG4 localization in Nepal. The insights generated from review of documents are corroborated by the information collected from informal conversation with the key actors of policy formulation and service providers such as bureaucrats and local government authorities to understand the firsthand information on SDG localization and policy implementation. In addition, the field realities that authors have gained are reflected in the article.

2. Localization of SDG 4 in Federal Policies

While the SDG4 is globalagenda, achievement of its target and indicators is highly dependent upon the ability of government to make it attainable in local level. This is where the discussion of localization is more focused. The achievement of SDG4 targets' is directly related to the responsibilities of the local government. Hence, integration of

SDG4 within the federal, provincial and local level planning is a crucial step for its localization. For this, at the national level, the Education Sector Plan known as School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) 2016-2021 is at the local level which aims to promote equitable access to quality education thereby stimulating the good governance and teacher management, building resilience and overall efficiency in education system..

Besides, the assessment / review of the progress against the implementation of SDG in the form of Voluntary National Review (VNR) carried out in 2020 indicates localization of SDG 4 at the national level (NPC, 2019). Nepal has also adopted SDG 4 National Framework to implement Agenda 2030 focused on social equality, gender equality, sustainable and resilient education system, knowledge and innovation. As per the framework, it is the role of province governments to prepare Action Plan and local governments to have the implementation plan to implement SDG4 at the local level. However, the linkages of this action and framework at the local and province levels has not been much effective thereby it has challenged in the implementation of this National Framework for SDG4. One of the major reason for this is the lack of localization including dissemination of National Framework for SDG4 by the federal government.

Also, Nepal has set out its national SDG roadmap with goals, targets and policy strategies to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The framework aims to bring all three levels of government in line with the constitutional provision of cooperation, coexistence and coordination and guides to develop the SDG4 action plan at the province level and implementation plan at the local level (MoEST, 2020). In order to achieve this aim, Ministry of Education Science and Technology is yet to ensure that the provincial and local levels are provided with the technical support and guidelines to develop an implementation plan and action plan as per their local context. Also, the federal government is yet to make clarity in the responsibilities regarding the linkages of SDG localization and implementation along with formulation of action plan and implementation plan at province and local levels.

Furthermore, SDG 4 has been integrated in the 15th (three-year plan) (FY2019/20-2023/24) of federal government prepared by the National Planning Commission (NPC, 2020). Inter departmental working group to implement the SDGs has been formed by the National Planning Commission in the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. This reflects the government's willingness to integrate SDGs into its national policies. However, clear roadmap for integration of SDGs at the local and province levels are yet to be addressed by similar action plan or policies. With the federal polices comprising the major sentiments of the SDG4 for ensuring the inclusive, equitable and quality education and lifelong learning (UN, 2015), effective implementation strategy with clarity in role, financing and funding provisions for the achievement and decentralizing them into the local level (Acharya, 2018) is yet to be established. Similarly, SDG4 has been integrated in School Sector Development Plan (SSDP); education sector plan which aims to strengthen the school education sector in its core dimensions: equity, quality, efficiency,

resilience and management (MoEST, 2016). Thus, SSDP is considered as an important vessel to enable Nepal to achieve the SDG 4 targets and indicators.

3. Bridging the SDGs to Local Levels

While the overall implementation of SDG4 is primarily at the national level, achievement of the SDG4 is highly dependent upon the progress made at the local level. However, *limited attention has been paid so far for the implementation of SDG4 at the local and province level, says Mr. Manish Bhusal (name changed), chair of Municipality in Bhaktapur district. He further adds: "we neither have implementing nor reporting mechanism as per the SDG4 framework and even we have not received any orientation on SDG4 targets or indicators. Government is preparing new Education Sector Plan for beyond 2021. However, consultation with the local governments has not been made yet and neither was it in any previous federal documents or progress reports in relation to 2030 agenda."*

The 2030 agenda is an integrated and transformative agenda (UN General Assembly, 2015) that requires multiple levels of government to collaborate across different sectors. This is fostered by integrating SDGs into the institutional mandates and promoting collaboration at all government levels. Nevertheless, adjusting the local or provincial institutional structures and implementing the mechanisms that better support integration of 2030 agenda at the local and province levels is yet to be emphasized by the federal government.

4. Accountability for Localization

Constitutionally, it is a major responsibility of the local government for managing education up to secondary level (GoV, 2015) which has been further clarified by the Local Government Operation Act, 2017 prepared by the federal government that articulates the 23 duties of local government with respect to education. However, the Local Government Operation Act, 2017 has restricted the responsibilities of local government for secondary education, contrary to the national constitution (Paudel& Sapkota, 2018). The federal, provincial and local level governments have their absolute and concurrent rights. However, lack of clarification in the roles and responsibilities of the three tiers of the government in the Federal Education Plans and Policies is the major issue hindering the localization of SDGs. In a virtual interview, Mr. Bimal Sharma (name changed), Education Chief of a local government expressed: *'Federal Education Policy has ignored the local innovativeness and also some good practices at the local level. It is more instructive and does not respect the principle of cooperation and coexistence as envisioned by the federalism. Local governments were neither consulted in the preparation process nor are they now engaged in the process of other policies preparation'.*

The notion of federalism in Nepal is to ensure that every government are autonomous but the federal government should facilitate local governments by providing the policy frameworks, guiding Acts and guidelines (Paudel and Sapkota, 2018). However, centralized mindset of the federal government officials are not supportive to fully localize the SDG4 including other policies (Bhattarai, 2019). Hence, prejudiced mindset of the federal government is responsible to create obstacles in the policy localization. Henceforth, in this new discourses of

hybridization in the policy development, the federal government requires to set the framework and the local government proactively lead the process (Whisnant, 2012). This has been explained by the power perspective of Pierre Bourdieu (1984) which puts emphasis on the power struggles between people from varying social classes leading to socially constrained behavior, with a stronger focus on the role of groups.

Power has two opposing roles in the society such as power as domination and power as transformation. Power as domination is the thought generated from the conflict perspectives and power as transformation aligns with the ideas of functionalism (Rutar, 2017). Often, power is used either for transformation or for domination. The power used for transformation brings development, peace and prosperity, however power used for domination creates hegemony and segregation (Whisnant, 2012) and also the status quo in the development. Looking into Bourdie's explanation, there is power struggle among the different government levels to formulate and implement the education policies. This struggle of power among the different governments has led towards less localization of the SDG4 resulting in limited the education and learning opportunities to marginalized communities. Theirs rights are unattained due to inadequate processes and inadequate opportunities.

Localization process requires the federal government to consult with the province and local government, province government to consult with the local government and local government to consult with local community, minority groups, individual organizations, civil society organizations and private sectors to develop the plans, policies and programs. However, after 3 year's completion of the province and local government, still few provincial and local governments have prepared their policies that is in coherence with the 2030 agenda (Paudel& Sapkota, 2018).

Most of the local policies lack clarity for ensuring access of marginalized communities to quality education, lack of consideration of gender issues or mainstreaming gender and inclusion issues in local education budget, lack of addressing mechanisms of discriminations related to gender, caste, class and , poverty (Acharya, 2018;, International Alert, 2019). In addition, the existing policies lacks the clarity about providing equal opportunity, addressing the needs of diverse learners and leaving no one behind and sufficient provisions for marginalized children (Dhungana, 2019). In a conversation, *Mr. Bikash Sharma (name changed), Chief of Education Development and Coordination Unit mentions "Localization of the SDG targets and indicators has also not been made thereby creating a chaos at the local level in aligning SDG4 with the local plan and policies. We follow stakeholder consultation process in preparation of our local plan however, have we are not aware of any consultation meeting organized by the province or federal governments in setting the targets for their plan. As a result, how can SDG4 be attained until and unless its targets are reflected into the local actions?"* The consultative process in terms of localization of SDGs was basically designed to enhance awareness raising and promote partnership among the different level of the governments and local stakeholders.

However, Nepal government has employed practice of informing about policies rather than consultation in the policy

preparation process. *Ms. Sunita Sharma (name changed), deputy chair of rural municipality in Kapilvastu district shared 'I am unaware of the SDG4 National framework and was never involved in the consultation process for its preparation. I am also unaware about our responsibilities in SDG4 localization. Local governments are neither involved in such policy preparation process nor consulted for it. It has not properly been disseminated up to the local level. While formulating report of High level Education Commission and National Education Policy, the federal government didn't consult with us'.*

The cooperation, coordination and coexistence among the three levels of the government is the main essence of federalism but it is to be reflected in the Act, plans and policies of all the three level of governments (Paudel and Sapkota, 2018). Rather, the tendency of federal government for representation rather than participation or no representation in some of the cases for preparation of policies adhering to the 2030 agenda has been critical concern regarding accountability of the federal government.

The SDG "leave no one behind" principle envisions equality and equity in the educational opportunities so that socially discriminated, economically underprivileged and educationally deprived are in the forefront of development. Despite of several achievements, lack of capacity of local stakeholders was identified as one of the shortcomings for the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) target. It indicates that the achievement of MDGs required ownership, local accountability and efforts from the local institutions (Oosterhof, 2018). This suggests that the role of local government, communities and stakeholders is crucial for accelerating the progress of SDGs. Localization of policies also needs decentralization in the management and operation of the educational activities (Boeren, 2019). However, the centralized mindset of the federal government (Paudel and Sapkota, 2018) has been hindering for stakeholders involvement in the policy formulation processes. Based on the learning from the MDGs, attainment of 2030 agenda depends upon local contributions; restriction to which can hinder progress.

5. Gaps on Localization of SDG 4

The National Planning Commission, as the apex body for planning of SDG implementation under the federal government and other federal line agencies is responsible for the thematic goals (NPC, 2020). Likewise, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology is a key agency at the federal level to implement and localize SDG4 outcome and targets. As per the current federal set up, there are seven Planning Commissions in the seven provinces. They are responsible for designing the provincial plans and policies. There are 753 local governments of the country which are responsible for delivering education related fundamental rights as provisioned in the constitution. Hence, the province and local governments need to harmonize their policies and plan as per the SDG4/E2030. It requires local and province governments to consult with local communities and civil society organization to ensure local stakeholder ownership over the SDG4 and its achievements. However, the efforts of local and province governments are not enough to harmonize their policies and plans as many of these

governments were not aware of SDG4 targets, outcomes and strategies. Also, the SDG4 was less considered in the process of formulating plans, policies and guidelines by the local and province governments (NCE Nepal, 2020). One of the reasons is ineffective dissemination of federal plans and policies at the local level.

The budget allocation for education sector is not harmonized as per the commitment of the government by allocating 20% from the national budget and 6% from GDP. Under financed education sector leads towards difficulties in localizing the SDG4 in the country. Despite different efforts made in the effective implementation, there remains gaps in action for the achievement of SDG targets. There is also a need of the enhancement of the technology, capacity and proper & adequate financing (more financing gaps and inefficient utilization) for the attainment of the targets defined in SDG (NCE Nepal, 2020). With the change in the structure of federalism, the major responsibility of the local government is to ensure effective implementation of the actions at the local level.

Localization of SDG4 requires institutional arrangement and capacity, together the institutions need to have capacitated with adequate human resource (Boeren, 2019). Gaps in human resource at the structural level may create the menace in basic and secondary education service disruption. Furthermore, these gaps are compounded by the uneven capacity of staff deployed and lack of certainty regarding the pace of deployment. Also, the knowledge ability as human agency has not yet shaped the local governments as key structures for making effective functioning to promote education at the local levels (Giddens, 1984).

Developing countries like Nepal often observe and face the political instability. This has resulted in frequent changes in government mechanism particularly in the transformation of staffs. With the frequent changes, it may contribute in losing and accessing the institutional knowledge. Loss of institutional memory poses a risk in terms of evidence-informed decision-making and long-term priorities which ultimately challenges in localization of SDG4 as it requires evidence based and informed decision making to accelerate the localization and implementation of policies (Patole, 2018). Data, cases and evidences are the important tool to ensure scrutiny of the localization and implementation. They are also essential to ensure informed and evidence-based decision making. However, as result of changes in the institutional arrangement, it has become difficult to produce quality data from monitoring of the progress of SDG4 localization. Also, it is difficult to track the progress made in the implementation and localization.

Also, it is necessary to have interconnected among the governments as structure and community people agency (Gidden, 1984). Because SDG4 localization, implementation and achievements are in the mutual accountability (UN, 2015) where government institution structure as and community and people as agency need to have strong collaboration, partnership and wider ownership (Krantz and Gustafsson, 2021). But, it is not clear how all the provinces and local governments' policies link and harmonize and how they coordinate and collaborate with each other to smoothen the localization and implementation of SDG4 .

The constitution clearly envisions the local governments' absolute role in regards to management of school education. But, there is power struggle among the different governments regarding management of education in terms of policy making, implementing and even transferring forming the powers to others. The struggle in power has led chaos in the localization process thereby posing risk for the attainment of 2030 agenda. While the SDGs theoretically require actions at the local level and there has been policy provisions for localization, the practical process of SDG localization is still questionable in the context of Nepal.

6. Conclusion

Nepal has recognized need of localization of SDG, yet, comprehensive holistic approach for bringing the SDGs to the local action has not been practically observed. Nepal has set localization in its national plan along with a concrete mechanism and even legislation for localization of 2030 agenda. However, plans are yet to be implemented. The holistic approach that support vertical and horizontal coherence embedded in the 2030 agenda has missing link in the localization process. Alignment of SDGs at all the levels of government requires a strong commitment and accountability to mainstream the localization into action. The structures and management systems of different levels of governments differs, but it is critical that the integrated nature of 2030 agenda is well included in the action of all the levels of government.

Gap in the dissemination, localization and contextualization of SDG4 targets and indicators in terms of addressing them from the local policies, disseminating them to sensitize people and empower them for creating ownership has been analyzed in case of Nepal. Enhancement of the inter-governmental coordination and collaboration is crucial for harmonization in localization. Government's institution and community people should have collaboration and there also needs to be interconnectedness among different levels of government, government to people and people to people. The integration of SDG4's targets and indicators in the education policies requires political willpower and support, community empowerment and mobilization, participation, and cross-governmental coordination and management. Also, the integration of the government efforts can create synergic effect in partnerships among SDG stakeholders.

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Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Nepalese Women and their Implications for Achieving Selected SDGs

MILAN ADHIKARY, PhD and ANITA PANDEY PANT

Abstract

The on-going COVID-19 pandemic has ravaged economy and social system of almost every country in the world, producing far-reaching consequences for the lives and livelihoods of its people. Especially, women and girls are the ones who have borne the brunt of the crisis. They are not disproportionately affected in terms of contracting the disease itself but its socio-economic and psychological ramifications are felt more severe among them. Literature widely available on the Internet was reviewed during the month of June 2021, which has found that Nepalese women in their all forms – be them farmers, domestic workers, informal sector workers, unpaid household workers, professionals and entrepreneurs – have undergone tremendous upheavals such as unfavorable work environment and physical, mental and psychological pressures both at home and work place owing to the consequences of the pandemic. This highly gendered nature of the COVID-19 crisis calls for urgent actions by the government, private sector, civil society organizations, academic institutions, local community and individuals, such as formation of emergency basket fund and emergency coordination committee on the part of the government for providing and monitoring humanitarian services to the needy men and women, so that there would be no reversal of the progress made so far towards their empowerment.

Key Words: COVID-19, Nepal, Women, Gender equality, Women's empowerment, Women's health and well-being, SDGs 3 and 5

1. Background

The Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), which first appeared in December 2019, spread so rapidly across the world by early 2020 that the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it as a pandemic on 11 March 2020, and called for countries to take urgent actions and to scale up emergency measures (WHO, 2020). In response, many countries started imposing restrictive measures to curb the spread of the virus. Nepal went in a complete nation-wide lockdown on 24 March 2020, which meant unnecessary movement restrictions, physical distancing, school closures, shutting down of businesses and suspension of international flights. At the same time, setting up of quarantine and holding/isolation facilities, particularly at the international borders with India for a vast number of migrant returnees and Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) testing were carried out. Despite this, the disease hit Nepal and many other countries around the world very hard. As many as 220 countries and territories registered COVID-19 cases till 27 June 2021 (Worldometer, 2021). It has now been more than one and half year into the pandemic and it is still continuing.

The pandemic has not only destroyed 3,934,258 human lives (as of 10.00 GMT 27 June 2021), but has also challenged the social, economic, health and education systems globally. It has been reported that socio-economic disruptions caused by COVID-19 have led to falling of millions of people into extreme poverty, while the number of undernourished people, currently estimated at nearly 690 million, could increase by up to 132 million by the end of 2020 (ILO, 2020). The economic fallout of COVID-19 has been immense, with a large number of people losing employment and income. Staying at home, physical distancing, isolation, and closure of educational institutions, workplaces, fitness and recreational facilities have resulted in deteriorating physical and mental health conditions. In many cases, economic worries and lack of in-person human interaction have even caused depression.

In the Asia-Pacific Conference held in 2016 in Hanoi, experts across the globe have reported that any tragedy impacts men and women differently (Asia News Network, 2016). Studies in the recent past have shown that in the emergencies, women and children are affected most as they are more vulnerable than men (Asia News Network, 2016 and WHO, 2015). As per the Asia News Network report of 2016, women and children globally are 14 times more likely to die or be injured during a disaster than men. For Nepal, which is now just in a reconstruction phase following the devastating earthquake of 2015, the pandemic has been the second major blow to the country. Furthermore, it is a low-income nation, where basic healthcare services and infrastructure, nutrition and sanitation are of inferior quality and fail to reach a large proportion of the population. Therefore, dealing with COVID-19 becomes highly challenging for Nepal. Especially, rural women have limited access to basic healthcare services not only due to lack of their awareness but also because of their high costs and low availability. Thus, they are mostly at the risk of periodic epidemics of infectious diseases (ADB, 2010). Historically, Nepal has predominantly been a patriarchal country, where inequalities between

men and women in terms of food and nutrition, education, healthcare services and employment persist. Inadequate food security and low level of nutrition, particularly among women and girls, further have increased their vulnerability to the consequences of the pandemic (UN Women, 2020a; Adhikari et al., 2021).

Countries like Nepal with multiple vulnerabilities are having a hard time confronting the multi-dimensional impacts of the pandemic. The country is also a member of the United Nations and has signed various global initiatives and human rights agreements, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which was endorsed and adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015. This has called for Nepal's commitment towards achieving targets regarding good health and well-being (SDG 3) and gender equality and women and girl's empowerment (SDG 5) i—among others-- by 2030, which has been now a huge challenge due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to secure fundamental rights of women, the Government of Nepal has amended several discriminatory legal acts. The political movement of 2006 in the country has further led to the promulgation of new constitution in 2015. Various national periodic plans, including the current l5th Plan, have been fully aligned with the SDGs. The government of Nepal has mainstreamed and localized the SDGs through mobilizing internal and external resources in all its development endeavors (NPC, 2020). As a result, progress has been made in the role and status of women in socio-economic and political arenas in the recent years. According to the Global Human Development Report 2019, Nepal has made a significant progress in Gender Development Index (GDI), reducing gender disparity in human development (UNDP, 2020a). However, the challenge still remains in terms of implementing the SDGs and mainstreaming them at sub-national levels (NPC, 2020), for bringing about gender equality and inclusive transformations (ADB, 2020). This has vividly been reflected in lower Human Development Index (HDI) value of female (0.549) against male (0.619). The Gross National Income of Nepalese Women is just half of what Nepalese men earn, which is relatively low compared to most of the South Asian countries. The gender disparity within the country in a normal situation in terms of food, nutrition, health, education, employment and income have put Nepalese women low in socio-economic ladder compared to men, which gets worse in emergency situations like the current COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has been a serious challenge to accelerating efforts to achieve selected SDGs, particularly the SDG 5 of empowering women and girls by 2030. The loss of job, over burden of household chores and family care work, domestic violence and mobility restrictions all have affected physical and mental health of women (UN Women, 2020a).

i. The proposed specific targets for SDG 5 for Nepal include: (i) eliminate gender disparities at all levels of education by 2030 particularly in tertiary level education (which currently stands at 0.71) and in the literacy rates of women and men aged 15-24 years (which currently stands at 0.85); (ii) eliminate wage discrimination for similar work; (iii) Eliminate physical and sexual violence; (iv) eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage; (v) increase the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament to 40 percent; and (vi) increase women' share in public service decision-making positions to at least 28%..

Despite making a remarkable progress in improving maternal health by dropping the Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) from 258 in 2015 (SDG baseline year) to 239 in 2019 per 100,000 live births, the country has already experienced 200% increase in the MMR since the lockdown began, and also increased cases of domestic and sexual violence (Shrestha and Leder, 2020). This illustrates how the COVID-19 crisis constitutes a grave challenge for Nepal to meet its MMR target of 70 per 100,000 live births, including other targets of SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) Please delete this in the bracket and SDG 5, by 2030. Therefore, the country needs to put much more additional efforts to counterbalance the setback posed by the pandemic so as to achieve the SDGs by 2030, as planned (NPC, 2020 p.33)

2. Objectives

The article discusses the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nepalese women workers involved in the informal (women farmers, domestic workers, unpaid household workers), and formal sectors (professional women and women entrepreneurs) as well as their implications for achieving SDGs, especially those related to women and girls' health (SDG 3) and gender equality and empowerment (SDG 5). It further provides important insights into the ways as regards how to deal with the worst impacts of COVID-I9 on women and girls for the consideration of the government and other responsible agencies.

3. Methodology

Based on secondary sources, the article particularly draws on information available on the Internet, taking advantage of digital technology. A host of studies and reports from the year 2011 to 2021 brought out by the national government agencies, UN agencies such as UN Women, International Labour Organization (ILO) and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), and other international organizations were reviewed during the month of June 2021.

4. Impacts of COVID-19 on Nepalese Women Workers

4.1 Women Working in Informal Sectors

The ILO estimates that the COVID-19 pandemic in its first three months has caused a 60% decline in income of informal workers worldwide. In the context of Nepal, where approximately 5.7 million or 80.8% of workers are in informal jobs, this loss of income is expected to result in a significant increase in relative poverty. Being a low-income country, Nepal's share of workers earning below 50 per cent of the median could increase by more than 50 percentage points (ILO, 2020b p2).

Female informal sector workers have severely been affected by the COVID-19 crisis. Women's share of employment in such sectors as construction and manufacturing is already low in Nepal as compared to men. The mobility restrictions and business closures during the lockdown period have brought tremendous disruption to their work. This has reduced household income leading to hunger, malnutrition, high risk of illness among women (and their families) during this critical period, majority of whom lack social protection and access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services and sanitation. As per an estimation, a 10% proportional decline in short-acting reversible contraceptive use has caused a significant increase in

unwanted pregnancies (Puri and Stone, 2020 p. 313). Moreover, due to the halt in transportation, women are compelled to give birth at home, putting their and the newborns' lives at risk. It has been reported that in quarantine/isolation too, women have not been given food that is nutritious and can meet their specific requirements, suffering badly, especially pregnant and lactating women (Adhikari et al., 2021). According to the Kathmandu Post published in May 2020, women do not have access to antenatal and post-natal services, including essential medicines during the lockdown (TKP, 2020). This not only reflects the detrimental impacts of COVID-19 on the health of women and newborns in Nepal but also endangers the progress made in SRH services in the recent years (See Annex 1 for targets and progress).

Moreover, women without having citizenship certificates as a proven document of their identification are not considered eligible to be included in government's relief program (Aryal, 2020). Therefore, the on-going COVID-19 pandemic is highly likely to reinforce inequalities, marginalization, social discrimination and exclusion, which are already widespread in the country, pushing the country to lower positions than the current ones in Human Development Index (HDI) as well as Gender Inequality Index (GII). The slow pace of progress of GII by 0.023 points from the SDG baseline year 2015 against 0.38 target in 2019 constitutes a threat to ending all forms of discrimination against women and girls across the country by 2030 (See Annex1).

Although Nepal has made a significant progress in reducing the cases of sexual and domestic violence against women and girls by meeting one of the targets of SDG 5, 2019,465 cases of Gender Based Violence (GBV) have been reported across the country during the three months of lockdown between March to May 2020 (K.C., 2020). Furthermore, a total of 267 women and girls were rescued in 2020 in suspicion of trafficking in 2020 (TKP, 2021). The situation bespeaks how challenging it is to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment (SDG 5) in Nepal by 2030.

4.1.1 Women Farmers

Women make essential contributions to agricultural and rural economies in all developing countries, including Nepal. The Nepal Living Standard Survey (NLSS) III revealed that about 77% of economically active women (aged 10 years and above) in the country are engaged in agriculture as their primary occupation since employment prospects in other sectors are very limited for them (CBS, 2014). A number of studies have further shown that agriculture has been increasingly feminized (Sugden, 2018 and Upreti, et al., 2018) due to out-migration of men (which has posed additional drudgery on them). Thus, women represent a crucial resource in agriculture through their roles as farmers. However, being deprived of land ownership, they face more severe constraints than men while accessing productive resources such as land, capital and credit. In the absence of possibility of borrowing from formal institutions, they have to largely depend on informal loans at high interest rates.

Problems faced by women farmers – majority of whom are small-scale and landless – have got worse during the

ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The nationwide lockdowns imposed by the government in various time periods over the last one and half year have hit them the most. A study carried out by Baroha et al. (2020) revealed that despite the lockdown, a third of women reported of increased productive work, leading to increased workload and increased time poverty and increased vulnerabilities. Restrictive measures, such as market closures and movement control, have prevented them from buying essential agricultural inputs and harvesting and selling of agricultural produce. Without or less earnings, their household food supply system has been disrupted and many women have been unable to feed themselves and their families. In a survey carried out in Dang district, women reported that more often they are eating less, skipping meals and even going hungry compared to men (Barooh et al., 2020). Another survey conducted in April 2020 revealed that access to food and vulnerability to shocks have been further deteriorated among female-headed households and daily wage laborers (Adhikari et al., 2020).

This will impact further on women's health, making them more vulnerable to several diseases, including acute anemia, which has been already increasing by 5.8% in 2019 as against the base line year 2015, posing a grave challenge to achieving the SDG target (See Annex 1). The same study reported that 85% of men and women farmers have lost their income during the pandemic. This has led to a vicious cycle of poverty as a drop in income severely affects the whole cropping season and even beyond, threatening food security for the following year as well. Nepal is a country where seasonal food shortages are already quite common in its many parts. Resilience capacity of women to the impacts of the pandemic gets further reduced because of crop failures and natural disasters in the monsoon season, both of which are very common phenomena in the country. All these represent challenges to addressing gender issues, specifically achieving health and well-being for women and girls (SDG 3) and equality and empowerment for them (SDG 5) in the time of COVID-19.

4.1.2 Women Domestic Worker

Out of 67 million domestic workers globally, 80% are women. Similarly, Nepal has 200,000 domestic workers, and a majority of them are women and girls (ILO, 2020c p2). Women domestic workers make a significant contribution to the household activities and constitute an important component of labor market. According to General Federation of Nepalese Trade Union (GFONT), 'domestic workers are those who work for others within household chores either full or part time' (Gautum and Prasain, 2013). Domestic workers are mostly from disadvantaged and poor community, compelled to migrate from rural to urban and semi-urban areas of the country for employment. Women's (and girls') involvement in domestic work is based on the traditional concept of gender division of labor. In the South Asian context, women are the ones who take responsibilities of household chores such as cleaning, washing dishes, preparing meals, washing clothes, and looking after small children, the elderly and the sick. However, their work is grossly undervalued. As domestic work comes under informal work, domestic workers are often excluded from social and labour

protection. Therefore, they are exposed to high risks of exploitations in one or other ways such as long hours of work, low remunerations, and physical and even sexual abuses. Despite all these, compelled by poverty, domestic workers take on the tasks.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made domestic workers further vulnerable. The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that as of 15 March 2020, 49.3% of such workers were impacted globally during the early stage of the pandemic. This percentage went up to 72.3% in early June 2020 (ILO, 2020c p3). In the context of Nepal, domestic workers irrespective of their work type (part or full time; living with employers or not) suffer in terms of job loss, wage/salary reduction and delayed payment. Especially in the case of part-time workers, job losses have been on the rise due to mobility restrictions and employers' fear of virus getting transmitted to them. Domestic workers are faced with financial difficulty to meet the expenses for their food, accommodation, children's education, etc., and hence, are highly likely to get affected psychologically as well.

Although those working full time and living with employers mostly have not lost their jobs, they too have been affected in one way or another. Work-from-home regime of lockdown period demands more cooking, cleaning (dishes, kitchens and work areas) and room services, and hence substantially increases the workload of domestic workers, reducing their leisure time. Moreover, there is no guarantee that such workers receive their salaries on time, as most of them do not have formal agreement with the employers.

4.1.3 Unpaid Women Household Workers

Women often carry out triple roles – productive, which includes multiple on-farm and off-farm activities contributing to household economy; reproductive, which includes managing households, and bearing and rearing child; and community, which includes tasks of supporting community improvement. In a patriarchal society of Nepal, the responsibilities Please make it back to "responsibility" of household work, taking care of children, and elderly as well as sick family members and so and so forth, fall on women (and girls). Despite being essential for the well-being of the households, these activities are considered non-economic due to unpaid labor that goes into them, and thus remain unlisted in national accounts and undervalued (UN Women, 2017).

According to national statistics (CBS, 2014), in the pre-COVID-19 period, on an average, women work six times more hours per week in non-economic activities than men. In a recent study carried out by the UN Women in 38 countries, both men and women have overwhelmingly confirmed of increased household chores during the COVID-19 period (UN Women, 2020b). Obviously, with family members being home during the lockdown, demand for domestic work has soared. The same study has further showed that women's share of the household work is much more than that of men. Rapid Gender Assessment (RGA) carried out by the UN Women has also revealed that although household work has substantially increased during the pandemic (UN Women, 2020a), the burden has not been shouldered equally among the family members. This is because of the traditional gender

division of labour that assigns the prime responsibility of such work to women (and expects girls to assist their mothers). This reflects the reinforcement of pre-existing gender inequalities and discrimination within the household during the crisis. A heavy domestic workload of women and girls aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic prevents them from spending time in education, training and skill development, pushing them further behind (K.C., 2020).

4.2 Women in Formal Sector

4.2.1 Women in formal Professions (Professional Women)

Although the Constitution of Nepal 2015, guarantees equality between men and women in work and remuneration, gender disparity largely exists. As per the Nepal Labor Force Survey III, 2017/18, while female working age population (15 years and above) is 25% higher than male working age population, female employment rate is 41% lower than male employment rate (CBS, 2019), reflecting huge gender imbalance. Furthermore, women are primarily confined to part time and informal jobs owing to low level of education and inadequate technical and managerial expertise. Women in Nepal are generally stereotyped as household workers responsible for preparing meals, cleaning, taking care of children and the like, which adversely affects their participation and performance in the labour market.

Women who are in full-time formal jobs are already overwhelmed performing their dual role at home and work. Being unable, many are even forced to abandon their jobs. They further face two-way exacerbation of their existing problem during these difficult times of COVID-19. On home front, they have to take on a lot of additional household chores with other members, especially male, being at home, and on work front too, they are required to work more under a COVID-19-induced work-from-home situation. In the absence of demarcation between office and home, women's work time and space get encroached and the environment becomes unconducive to work, making them more stressed and less productive.

With many such agencies having their headquarters in the US and Europe, women (and men as well) are required to work even at night, due to the time differences, especially when there are virtual meetings/ webinars. Thus, mixing-up of home and work life becomes a nightmare especially for women, who shoulder huge household workload as well, by making them work at odd and for longer hours than usual (Cohnut, 2020). Since there is no sign of winning the COVID-19 battle any time soon, the likelihood of professional women not continuing their jobs is very high. They might roll back to their traditional roles in the post-COVID-19 era (K.C., 2020) and never return, which will further widen gender gaps between men and women in professional and technical works and bring about detrimental effects on SDG -5 target, aiming to increase women's representation in decision-making level both in private and public spheres (See Annex 1). Thus, the current pandemic threatens to reverse decades of progress made towards the ideals of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (UN Women, 2020b).

4.1.2 Women in Business (Women Entrepreneurs)

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a serious setback for the gradual progress made towards gender equality globally in the last few decades, jeopardizing women's economic (and social) capabilities directly and disproportionately (World Bank, 2021). Nepal is no different, where a majority of women are home-based workers (approximately 1.4 million) running micro and small to medium enterprises (MSMEs), which produce cane goods, paper and wooden crafts, traditional food like pickles and nuggets, and many more, for export. With less availability of and access to financial resources and global supply blockade, survival of these enterprises has been threatened (ILO, 2020b and WTO, 2020). Fifteen percent of the businesses in the country have collapsed since the lockdown began, and the rest too are running below their capacity (TKP, 2021), owing to the lack of funds much needed to pay for staff salaries and rents, repay loans drawn from banks/cooperatives and to buy raw materials. Similar observations were made by a survey conducted by the Nepal Rashtra Bank, which found about 61% of cottage industry and SMEs, including large enterprises, stopped running in the month of July 2020.

However, following the relaxation of lockdown, some of these enterprises have resumed their operations, yet still around 46% of them are not running in their full capacity and 8-16% of cottage industry and SMES are totally closed (NRB, 2020 p4). On an average, there was a cut-off in overall employment by 22.5% in July 2020. Although this percentage decreased to 12.5% in mid-November, employment in SMES, such as hotels and restaurants, was cut by 28.5%. The crisis has affected women, especially from lower income groups, disproportionately than men. According to a study conducted by UNDP, 28% of men lost their jobs during the lockdown, compared to 41% of women (UNDP, 2020b). Women, who are mostly involved in cottage industry and SMEs, have obviously been affected severely and their economic lives have come to a virtual standstill. In order to get the wheels turning again, women need greater support than ever for the revival of their businesses, which are — besides being their means of livelihoods – a key to their empowerment.

5. Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic, like any other disease outbreaks, has caused detrimental impacts on women in Nepal, which has direct bearings with achieving SDGs set out by the United Nations in 2015, to which Nepal is committed. Particularly, the pandemic has placed SDG 3 (women's health and well-being) and SDG 5 (gender equality and women's empowerment) in jeorpady. Work environment and conditions have turned adverse both in formal and informal sectors; job loss has been rampant; household income has reduced; household workload has increased; health, nutrition and well-being have been compromised; and subsequently women's empowerment might possibly go to the backward direction.

The COVID-19 pandemic will seriously derail the achievement of the SDGs unless measures to fight the disease and its impact are taken into account (UNDP, 2020 and Adhikari et al., 2021). Immediate actions are necessary from the government as well as national and international organizations

in order to nullify the threat of reversal effects of the pandemic on achieving SDGs, particularly those on women's health and well-being, and gender equality and women's empowerment.

6. Promising Ways Out

The world, including Nepal, now is amidst a great deal of fear and uncertainty as to when the COVID-19 pandemic will be over and people will be able to resume their normal lives (although newly gained normality will not be the same as the pre-COVID-19 era in many ways) since there does not seem any drug on the horizon that can be used to treat the disease. Therefore, it is imperative to identify measures to deal with the wide-ranging impacts caused by the pandemic without any delay. The government, private sector, civil society organizations, local community and individuals in the country should take immediate actions at their respective levels, but working together and supporting one another, so that Nepal would survive the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly its female population, who have been affected the most.

6.1 Government level (Federal/ Provincial/Local)

In order to address various issues facing women workers during and after the pandemic, it is necessary on the part of the federal government to conduct a series of meetings with UN agencies, diplomatic missions, bilateral and multilateral organizations and INGOs in relation to support post-COVID-19 recovery plans and programmes. Besides, it is also important to create a multi-agency basket fund with sufficient budget for launching projects to support vulnerable group that includes women in coordination with provincial and local government. Establishing and strengthening a high-level Emergency Coordination Committee comprising parliamentary members, community leaders, social activists, and not to mention women networks, to coordinate and monitor cash and kind flow in the community would be crucial.

At the local level, municipalities should create and maintain a detailed household database disaggregated on the basis of gender, age, ethnic group, disability status and income to ensure gender-responsive and socially-inclusive humanitarian assistance as well as to record incidence of domestic violence, employment and income status, food security and other social issues. The information thus collected should be made public so as to seek support from national and international agencies. The local government should ensure that essential SHR services are not disrupted during the pandemic by addressing need of specific health services such as vehicles for pregnant women to reach health centers and mobile clinics for check-ups and safe delivery of babies.

The local government should also provide the most vulnerable groups with emergency relief package consisting of food, and health- and hygiene-related materials through wards in coordination with humanitarian service agencies such as Lion's club, Nepal Jesis, Red Cross as well as civil society organizations without any pre-conditions such as presenting citizenship certificates or other identity cards. Registration for domestic workers (both part-time and full-time) should be made mandatory by the local government. Ensuring domestic work as exploitation-free and decent, a standard operating

guidelines and standard contract, including clauses of emergency situation, such as COVID-19 pandemic, need to be prepared in relation to the effective implementation of the National Labor Act 2017. It is crucial that the local government undertake mobile market concept for collecting agricultural produce from farm and distributing agriculture inputs to the farmers in coordination with farmers' groups and women's cooperatives. Such measures as provision of low-interest and without-collateral loans for women farmers and MSMEs owned by women; and exemption or imposition of only minimal tax during the period of lockdown are necessary to prevent their enterprises from being closed down completely.

6.2 Private Sectors/National and International Organizations

Private sector and national and international organizations should advocate and support the government in preparing GESI standard checklist to conduct an on-line survey to understand the situation of women along with other vulnerable groups of the community during and post COVID-19 period. The outcome of the study should be used to prepare a GESI-responsive emergency plan in their organizational annual work plans for immediate (and future as well) actions on their part to address issues pertaining to disaster and disease outbreaks like the current COVID-19. Their another major role lies in advocating with the government at all levels for gender-responsive budgeting in the health, education, agricultural and MSMEs sectors. Lobbying for the implementation of GESI-friendly approach to work-from-home system with sufficient screen breaks and minimum webinars or virtual meetings at night, particularly for female staff, is also expected from private sector, national and international organizations.

6.3 Civil Society Organizations/ Women's Networks of the community

Civil society organizations and women's networks should direct their efforts to raise community awareness about health, hygiene and sanitation to prevent COVID-19 from spreading through FM radio and TV programmes, street dramas and songs, pictures and posters, etc in local languages. Moreover, these media channels should also be used to disseminate information related to government schemes on health services, agricultural loans and distribution of relief packages, including raising awareness on violence against women (and girls). Besides, they should also focus on organizing health and counseling camps during and post-COVID-19 period at the local level to address mental health problems, such as stress and depression.

At the family level, efforts should be made to value unpaid household work and promote sharing of household responsibilities among men, women, boys and girls (adolescents) in the family so that women are not over loaded. Families and communities should be encouraged to focus on saving such scarce resources as water, energy and food during the crisis, and even beyond. Community-level actions should also include providing cash or kind support to the needy and emotional support to the COVID-19 victims.

Annex 1: SDG Targets and Achievements

SDGs Targets (To be achieved) by 2030	Baseline 2015	Target 2019	Progress 2019	Target 2030
End all forms of Malnutrition (SDG 2)				
i) Prevalence of Anemia among women of reproductive age	35	26	40.8	10
Reduce Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) (SDG 3)	258	125	239	70
Universal access to Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services				
i) Contraceptive prevalence rate	47	52	43	60
Achieve universal health coverage				
i) Percentage of women paying antenatal care visits as per protocol	60	71	56.2	90
ii) Percentage of institutional delivery	55.2	70	77.5	90
End all forms of discrimination against women and girls (SDG 5a)				
i) Gender Inequality Index (GII)	0.49	0.38	0.47	0.05
Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls				
i) No. of women aged 15-49 years with experience of physical and sexual violence	26	19.1	11.2	6.5
ii) No. of women and girls trafficked	1697	725	946	325
Ensure Women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities (SDG 5b)				
i) Women's representation in decision-making level in private sphere	25	30.3	29.61	45
ii) Women's representation in decision-making level in public sphere	11	17	13.6	33

Source: NPC (2020)

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PAR: Tools for Strengthening Approaches to Local WASH Planning to Reach Unreached Populations

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Abstract

Participatory Action Research (PAR) aims to engage the local Municipalities and community groups to strengthen local capacity for better identification, planning and targeting unreached population by water and sanitation services. WaterAid Nepal commissioned Vertex Consult to carry out the research in between March-December 2019 in Kavre, Bardiya and Kalikot districts. Through a participatory approach, data and evidence of unserved Ward, communities and families affected by water and sanitation problems were collected using social mapping and group discussion. Subsequently, the identified most marginalized Wards, unserved communities and families were ranked and prioritized, developed the action plans, and several rounds of follow up action and re-plan, progress reviews and reflection were conducted to change and improve the actions and their results as a continued part of PAR cycle. PAR was found an effective approach to empower and engage community groups to generate data on unserved, actively engaged local authorities and community in examining the data, coming together with solutions and committed to action, understanding of bottom-up 'pathways of change' to drive and improve planning and resource allocation. Evidently it created a platform for all three actors – communities, Wards and Municipalities to understand each other role and accountability in localizing SDG 6.

Key Words: Participatory Action Research (PAR), Pathways to change, Strengthening Local Planning Process, SDG,

1. Introduction

Participatory Action Research (PAR) for Water, Sanitation (WAS) inequalities is a community-led action research to identify gaps and address the issues for the purpose of strengthening local planning process and sustainable development plans using participatory approaches and methodology. It aims to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) *'Leave No One Behind'* - WASH access for everyone, everywhere. National Planning Commission (2015) prepared a document of Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030), SDG 6 is about ensuring the availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. Actually, Millennium Development Goal (MDG) had envisaged to achieve 100 percent national goal on water and sanitation by 2017. While developing SDG roadmap by 2030, basic water supply coverage in Nepal was 87% and sanitation 82% of the population in 2015. Also, in the 15th Plan (2076/77-2080/81) about 89% of Nepal's population has access to basic water supply, while only 21% have access improved (high and medium level) water (NPC, 2015, 2018a, 2018b). SDG 6 has 6 targets and more than 15 indicators.

A research study conducted by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) made a number of recommendations to guide WaterAid's future work, which included the need to improve data on populations left behind, the need to ensure local planning and prioritization processes offer more inclusive and accountable services, and the need to support the implementation of the decentralization agenda. WaterAid Nepal (WAN) has implemented Sustainable Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (SuWASH) project in the hard-to-reach areas of Kalitkot and earthquake affected areas of Kavre and other WASH program in Bardiya. PAR was initiated to help local Municipalities better identify and target unserved populations in the local WASH Plan and budgets through evidence base data and community-led action. This article covers the summary documentation experiencing on the development of PAR methodology, tools and action to strengthen approaches to local planning for water and sanitation. WaterAid Nepal has conducted a year around study on the types of approaches to generate evidence that can enable Municipalities to identify and priorities reaching the unreached and unserved populations in their local planning processes. As a key component of this study, WaterAid Nepal has commissioned Vertex Consult Pvt. Ltd. to conduct a PAR in the selected Municipalities: Chaurideurali Rural Municipality, Kavre, Palanta Rural Municipality, Kalikot and Bansgadhi Municipality of Bardiya.

2. The Objectives

The objective of PAR was to mobilize and sensitize the people on WASH, especially water and sanitation issues through participatory action research. The specific focus of the action research is as follows:

(i) identify unserved populations, major problems and solutions in the selected areas by developing participatory action research processes and tools;

(ii) empower and engage communities generating collective data, analysis,

reporting and learning that strengthen local ownership of issues by enhancing community-led participatory action research to advocate local governments and service providers;

(iii) address issues of inequalities with local project planning, and prioritization processes in water and sanitation by building community and local stakeholders' commitment to identify unserved population and evidence-based decision making.

3. The Study Area

The study was carried out in three districts: Chaurideurali Rural Municipality, Palanta Rural Municipality and Bansgadhi Municipality of Kavre, Kalikot and Bardiya respectively. The Municipalities were purposively selected by representing geographical region: mountain, hills and Terai. The Municipalities were identified by WaterAid Nepal considering low WASH status and to generate research-based evidence to inform the local authorities to address WASH inequalities in their Municipalities. Whereas the Wards and communities were identified based on priority ranking during consultation workshop by local Ward and Municipal representatives which were not working areas of WaterAid Nepal.

4. The Close Camp

A three-day Close Camp for PAR was organized on February 7-9, 2019 in Dhulikhel for WaterAid staffs, partner NGO Karnali Integrated Rural Development and Research Centre (KIRDARC) and Centre for Integrated Urban Development (CIUD) representatives and PAR local consultants. The purpose of the Close Camp was to identify participatory methods and tools to engage with Municipalities in helping them to reflect and find ways to reach unreached and unserved population through water and sanitation (WAS) services**.** The workshop was facilitated by Stanley Joseph from Praxis, India and Kyla Smith and Priya Nath from WaterAid, UK. During the three days, local consultants (Gopal P. Tamang, Mahanta Babu Maharjan, Salpa Shrestha, and WAN key officials SanojTulachan, Supriya Rana) and other participants learned about the participatory action research including practices in Praxis India, and did some practical exercises in Panchkhal Municipality. The Close Camp also helped to develop common understanding of appropriate PAR methodology, methods and process as a simple tool, as well as its limitations. The strategy for the field research, development of PAR implementation process, preparation of tools/checklists and field work plans were formulated based on the lessons learnt from the Close Camp.

5. PAR Framework

In traditional census, WASH surveys, baselines and municipal profiles are more likely to focus on Level 1 and Level 2 exclusion factors or characteristics, while PAR better engages Level 3 exclusion factors or characteristics. The combination of the outputs of all these processes combines and produces recommendations for how planning processes and data gathering processes can be improved or amended to ensure better targeting of those unreached and unserved.

Level of exclusion

Level 1	Technical: Unserved population- no access to basic water within 30 minutes journey		
Level 2	Economic situation- poorer areas, communities or households Geographical situation- tough, urban informal settlement, dry, or arsenic environment		
Level 3	1.1 Group based: Caste Landless Bonded laborers Migrant groups Migrants or displaced people Sex workers Pastoralists Minority religion	1.2 Individual: Gender (male, female, third gender) People with disabilities (physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments) and their families, Older people or child headed households Chronic health conditions (HIV/AIDS) Sexual orientation	Entrenched inequalities/ Combinations of these make people harder to reach
Is it a physical (environmental) an attitude, belief, language, behavior (social) or is it because of policies, laws, traditional practices (institutional)			

Figure 1: Framework of PAR for WASH inequalities

(Source: Close Camp for PAR, 2019)

6. PAR Cycle and Methods

Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an approach to community-led research, where small action research groups follow a cycle of gathering evidence, action and reflection in a continued cycle (See Figure 2.2). Participation, community-led actions and evidence gathering and documentation are emphasized.

*Imagine a roll*ing ball - multiple cycles over time

Maximizing participation in each phase and over time

Figure 2: PAR Cycle (Source: PAR team adopted based on Kurt Lewin's Action Research Model, 1946).

The WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program (JMP) for Water Supply and Sanitation was began monitoring the sector since 1990. The JMP has been instrumental to benchmark progress, and responsible for tracing progress towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal targets related to drinking water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). The JMP uses service ladders classified as *safely managed, basic, limited, unimproved and surface water*, based on the criteria (accessibility, availability and quality). The JMP estimates and analysis have informed the development of targets, policies and investment of programs for reducing inequalities in access to WASH, and supported critical reflection among WASH stakeholders (WHO and UNICEF, 2017). In order to meet the threshold for a *'safely managed'* service, the improved water source should be located on premises, available when needed and free of faecal and priority chemical contamination. The *'basic'* service is categorized; the *'improved'* water source is accessible close to home (i.e., a round trip to collect water, including queuing, takes 30 minutes or less). If a household uses an improved source that is not readily accessible (i.e., a round trip to collect water, including queuing, exceeds 30 minutes), then it is categorized as *'limited'* service. The *'unimproved'* service, the populations using drinking water from an unprotected dug well or unprotected spring. At the bottom of the ladder, *'surface water'* or no service, populations using surface water such as river, lake, dam, pond, stream and canal (WAN and NFN, n.d).

2.2 Relevance of PAR in Water and Sanitation

The ambitious and overarching targets of SDGs and to "Leave No One Behind" calls for a well-designed implementation strategy that identifies the right kind of intervention, investment, finance, and partnerships. Nepal Water Supply, Sanitation, and Hygiene Sector Development Plan (2016-30) coincides exactly with the SDG period. Of the three phases, the first phase (2016-20) focuses on universal access to basic WASH services and improved service levels and reconstruction. Political Economy Analysis (PEA) has noted that Ward members lack the ability to hold Municipal Chairs/Mayors or Chief Administrative Officers to account for delivering water and sanitation services in their Wards. Ward Chairs reported that they don't feel they have a formal role in the planning process and community members feel that their elected Ward officials have limited voice at the Municipal level. As a result, horizontal accountability within the local levels of government also appears to be weak. The PEA recommended to carry out Participatory Action Research process, in which local municipal authorities will be engaged to generate evidence about how unserved populations can be better identified and targeted through local WASH plans and budgets (WAN, 2018). The evidence gathering stage of the action research process is crucial. It is only when people can see for themselves what is happening, and can carry out their own analysis, so that they could own the findings and disseminate them to others (Burns, D. et al. (2018). Without accurate information on who the excluded populations are, where they reside and why they are excluded, WASH plans and investment remain poorly targeted and incapable of addressing inequalities effectively. The PAR process is useful to produce evidence, action and reflection in an ongoing process of change

through engaging community, Wards and Municipalities to develop ownership and act upon the local planning process and methods.

7. Methods and Tools

7.1 Consultation Meeting

Initial participatory consultation meeting held before PAR begins with selected municipal authorities by sharing concept of participatory approaches. The discussions were held to agree and express their willingness to fully cooperate to the extent required for the way forward.

7.2 Situation Assessment Workshop with Key Stakeholders at Municipal and Ward

A consultative and plenary workshop were held among local level representatives including Mayors, Deputy Mayors or Chairs, Vice-Chairs, municipal members, Ward Chair and members and officials as key stakeholders at the municipality level. The workshop was focused to problem situations on drinking water and sanitation (WAS) in each Ward and area, andidentified the Ward which has a major problem using participatory approaches, priority ranking tools and matrix. A rapid situation assessment workshop has been held with selected Ward members, the Ward is divided into different communities/ settlements/toles to map out existing water and sanitation situation and ranking to identify the most unreached and unserved communities.

7.3 Social and Resource Mapping at Community

Social mappings were conducted at selected community/settlement/tole using PRA tools (include complementary tools resource, mobility and transect walk) and group discussions with community representatives in order to identify the existing situation of drinking water and sanitation, issues, unserved and unreached families or excluded groups and challenges. Participation of both men and women including young and older people has been overwhelming in drawing the Water and Sanitation (WAS) map and group discussion.

7.4 Formation of Community Action Group

Photo1: Social mapping and leadership training for CAG members in Dhaulagoha, Kalikot

In order to follow up action, the next step was to form the CAG and train – which villagers agreed to form and carry out PAR activities accordingly. CAG members have been provided the social mapping and leadership development training including the sessions about 7 Steps Planning processes to create as a co-researcher so that they establish with increased knowledge and capacity to work as a *Change Agent* and are able to take actionable steps to hold regular meetings with communities, collection of information and update data, lobbying and advocacy.

7.5 Workshop with Stakeholders and Action Plan Development

As the bottom-up process, findings of social mapping exercise and the priority

action plan has been shared between CAG members and the Ward representatives through a joint participatory sharing workshop. Based on the community level sharing and the interaction among Ward representatives, Ward office has come up with action plan for effective management of data and actions points to address the WAS issues in their Ward. Along with WAS mapping exercise, identifying and ranking specific problems, simultaneously these series of planning actions initiated by Community Action Group, Ward and Municipality. For this, actions were developed (each level) related to around the priority issues and the extent of the problem situations, planning and executing plans. The action plan contents include problem/issues, actions (activities), support needed for internal sources and external sources, timeline and responsible for.

7.6 Follow up Activities: Actions, Adaptation and Progress

The PAR is an ongoing process of research, action, adaptation and reflection. PAR team organized rounds of field support visits, facilitation of joint meeting and workshop(s) with the local Municipality, Ward and Community Action Group to monitor, review progresses and update action plans over a year. The follow up action plan contents were action plan (activities), progress update, supporting factors, challenges, additional resource required and new timeline. As a result, there is willingness among community, Ward and Municipal authorities actively working together in order to change and improve to access water and sanitation and Municipalities have been committed for the investment as a top priority in this sector.

7.7 Analysis of Data

The information was taken from Municipality and selected Ward representatives through consultative workshop, group discussions and priority ranking based on their knowledge (there is no exact official data documentation available). The qualitative and quantitative data were taken from social mapping, group discussions and observations on identification of communities/households and their exclusion. Information was obtained focusing on the overall coverage of water and sanitation, such as availability, water quality, unreached and unserved populations/families, layers of exclusion, problems/barriers and opportunities. All the information documented relates with the Municipality, Ward and community levels were critically reviewed and findings were systematically presented in the format for documentation and reporting.

8. Key Findings and Observations

8.1 WAS Mapping and Ranking of Wards

Through participatory workshop, the issues of water, sanitation, present challenges and coping strategies were discussed and assessed by municipal Mayor/Chair, Deputy Mayor/Vice-Chair, Municipal and Ward representatives, the Chief Administrator Officer and other officials in each district. There were no official data on water and sanitation across Municipality. Mapping of Wards, group discussions and information were collected focusing on three main criteria (accessibility, availability and quality) of drinking water and status of sanitation facilities. The priority ranking tool has been used with the participation of Municipality and Ward representatives to identify the most marginalized Wards. When asked

which Ward can be the most marginalized for water and sanitation in terms of accessibility, availability and quality in the Municipality, the representatives ranked the first, then ranked second, third, so on. Through priority ranking, a remote area Ward 2, Dhaulagoha from Palanta, Kalitkot, Ward -1, BabaiChepang and Ward -4, Bathuwa from Bansgadhi, Bardiya and Ward -7, Madankudari, Chaurideurali, Kavre were identified as top unserved area.

8.2 WAS Mapping and Ranking of Village

A similar participatory workshop processes and criteria were followed in the selected Ward to identify the existing situation within Ward with the representation of Ward Chair, Secretary, members and other officials. There was also no official data at Ward level. Selected Ward has been divided into different clusters or settlements and ranked with the existing situation of water and sanitation facilities, based on the knowledge and the judgement made by the Ward members. The PAR exercises using social mapping, ranking and group discussions, Banjada and Sitangaoun in Palanta, Bhangaha, Asneri East and Asneri West in Bansgadhi and Tadi village in Chaurideurali Municipalities were identified communities as the largest population struggling to access safe drinking water.

8.3 Household WAS Mapping

Following PRA – social mapping tool, WAS mapping has been conducted in seven selected villages as the most affected areas of four Wards with focusing on water and sanitation. Participants visualized the existing water and sanitation problem situations based on the criteria of accessibility, availability, quality and affordability including information about households' composition, caste/ethnicity, sex and people with disabilities, single headed households. Social mapping followed by the group discussions and observations focused on unserved and unreached families from WAS facilities because of water scarcity, remoteness, political and social factors, other emerging issues and impact, such as migration, women health and workload and children education. The PAR exercise also focused on future priority and actions. The analysis of narrative and visualize data is presented below.

In Kalikot district, mountainous terrain and remoteness of Palanta Rural Municipality, drinking water was stated a problem, especially in all parts of Ward no. 2. There are nine different settlements/toles. Respondents noted in previous years, "we had water in the streams and wells nearby the village, now there is no water." There is a piped water in temporarily (until Thalatalseri water scheme completion) supplies from the small stream water source belong to Ward no. 3 and storing in a water tank. The social mapping identified a total of 113 households in Banjada and 38 households in Sitalgaon, all are Brahman and Chhetri. Water becomes scarce in all areas; the stored water was insufficient to meet the needs of the community. Some of the households were migrated to cities and other areas in the past years.

To fill a single jerry-can, the community have to stay in a que for almost 4-5 hours from the tap installed on the tank. So, alternatively, some of the families (mostly women) have also been travelled

to nearby water sources to fetch water which also takes them around 3-4 hours, it also becomes scarce during the dry seasons. Main (piped) water supplies connected to storable tanks, but the group discussion and observation was showed broken water pipelines, leakages, people cut the pipes and taken for other purposes, in which several water supply schemes were planned and implemented in the yesteryears but lack of community ownership and poor management led to the defunct situation. The sanitation situation is extremely poor, where along the roadside open defecation were practiced. The major reason behind was that majority of the toilet were not

Photo2: Participants on Social Mapping and Female Community Members (left) and Fetching Water alongside String Containers

in operational condition due to limited access of water. Since the habitants of the area have very low income, not sufficient to family throughout the year, male head of household or youth include few children from most of the households go to India, as result heavy workload among women and girls.

A three-years, Thalatalseri water supply scheme for Ward 2 has been under construction which was yet to be completed (expected completion by July 2076). The available water source is (in upper mountainous area) 21 km far away from the village, around 11 km main pipelining was completed till April 2019. Remaining main (pipe) 10 km and community pipeline connection work with collecting tank has been delayed. Participants reported that main pipelining work has been delayed (halted due to snow fall during winter) due to lack of proper technical design and estimation and high skilled technical staff (Ward office has only one sub-overseer for the supervision and technical support). In this issue, Municipal authority noted that the Rural Municipality has been looking for a senior engineer for two years and vacancy announcement and selection of candidates for a couple of times but no one interested to stay there due to geographical remoteness.

4. 1: Participants on social mapping and female community members at Banjada fetching water alongside of string containers are left in que

In Kavre district, the remote hill area of Chaurideurali Rural Municipality, drinking water situation is extremely poor in Madankudari (Ward no. 7) because most of the water sources including wells dried up after devastating earthquakes in 2015. Tadi (upper and lower) is one of the seven settlements, there was 123 households, in which majority of Tamang- Janajati (95%) and Dalit (5%). Of them, it was found that around 61% households have no or limited access to drinking water. Within Tadi there are six mini toles, households used different ways of accessing water. Drinking water is collected in upper dada tole in a tank of the capacity of 20,000 liters and distribution upper dada tole. Piped water supplies from the Bhalukhola are distributed in a turn system by tole. The supplies are not in regular. In some of the toles, water supplies available after a week. In the lower Tadi, some of the households used to either Sunkoshi River and streams nearby, which takes 2-3 hours to fetch water. Heavy workload among women due to household chores. Women mostly go to fetching water, while occasionally by males, elderlies and children. Some children even missed their school classes because they have to go to fetch the drinking water.

In Bardiya, BabaiChepang (Ward no.1 of Bansgadhi) is situated across the Bardiya National Park adjoining with Salyan district in the north. Bhangaha is one of the five remote villages, there were 41 households. Majority of populations are Brahman/Chhetri (60%), Janajati (20%), Dalit (10%) and others. About 20 years ago, CARE Nepal supported a drinking water project sourced from one the streams of Bhangaha river passing through the village which mix with Babai river. However, it was completely destroyed by a

Photo 3: Community Participants Drawing Social Map and Dried Tube-well

monsoon flood in 2015. No efforts were made to rehabilitate the system. Since than villagers are dependent on unprotected water source at the bank of river near the village which cannot be accessible during monsoon floods. In Ward no. 4, East and West Asneri is one of the eleven settlements lies in the upper belt of Bathuwa. Except Tharu community (58%) are predominant, hill Brahmin and Chhetris (40%) and Dalit (2%). Interestingly, hill people were migrated in this area and trend of migrating is continue. The drinking water is especially difficult in this area. Social mapping identified there are total 209 households (99 HHs in Purba tole and 109 in Paschim tole). Of them, around 95 HHs have without tube-wells – those do not have own tub-well in their premises fetch water from their neighbors. The tube-wells are drying up in this area. Fifteen people were identified having some form of disabilities and three households headed by women. No safe drinking facility in 40-50% HHs with presence of high level of arsenic. (See Figure 4.3 of Social Map).

However, deep-boring overhead-tank scheme was initiated before local level election; from fiscal year 2073/074 with the completion period by 2076/077) by Drinking Water and Sanitation Sub-Division Office (DWSSO) for the drinking water supply in Asneri, which has been halted since last three years. The district DWSSO has been merged to Banke district during federal restructuring. The user committee was formed but they did not have much to say. During the social mapping exercise, participants discussed the issues including deep-boring installation in the area fall under the national park. They were also in suspicion whether National Park allows or does not allow for the construction or need prior approval of Bardiya National Park and Forest Conservation

Diagram 1: Stylized Social Map to Show Households and Water and Sanitation Situation

Figure 4.3 of Social Map

Division. The lack of connection between community people and Ward or Municipal authorities was confirmed during the first round PAR process, with line of communication and coordination between different governing bodies (Ward, Municipality and DWSSO). One of the major action points was follow up this deep boring issues. To follow up on this matter, the Community Action Group (CAG) members visited Ward office and organized meeting with Ward Chair and members that brought their attention and attention to follow up with concerned authorities. However, the Ward office did not have all necessary information as it was started before the election of local level. Because of growing concerns, the Ward office forwarded the concern to the Municipality for follow up with concerned authority. The communities were facing hardship of accessing safe drinking water, but Municipality was unable to support a big water facility because of the budgetary constraints. The PAR key findings present a large proportion of the people who had not access improved water and sanitation according to the WHO/UNICEF Joint Monitoring Program. They mostly fall under the category/definition of limited, unimproved and surface water or no service.

8.4 A Joint Commitment through Participatory Dialogue

A participatory dialogue process has been created to bring voices of communities and Ward members in developing action plan (include alternative possible action points and strategy), revisiting these action plans (continuing PAR cycle: plan, act, review and replan), developing common understanding and ownerships of actions being formulated. In doing so, a series of follow up meeting and workshops (Workshop 1, 2, 3, 4) were organized with the Municipalities along with Ward and CAG representatives and WAN partner NGOs to monitor the progress and revisit the future action plans were held at all levels. As a commitment and mutually agreed, a joint MOU has been made and signed among CAG, Ward, Municipality, WAN partner NGOs and WAN with action points to address water and sanitation issues at each Municipality level.

9. PAR Final Reflection and Learning

Photo 3: Workshop on sharing social mapping findings of Tadi toles and discussion at Chaurideurali Rural Municipality

At the end of the PAR exercise, as part of handover process, the outputs and outcomes of the PAR was shared by starting cross-learning and a photovoice of situation before and after actions taken and changes across three Municipalities, followed by reflection of process and the outcomes of PAR processes in each district. Participants have realized that the PAR process is useful to produce evidence about ongoing process of change, such as visualization that accurately captured the present water and sanitation problem situations, identifying the gaps in data, further possible

actions taken, progress achievements and challenges which has been made an eye-opener. Participants noted that there has been growing awareness on right to water and sanitation, empowering unreached/unserved communities and focus their efforts on advocating with Municipalities about the issues they are facing and hold them (duty bearers) accountable for.

The importance of PAR process has been an evident that created a space or platform to bring together all three actors – communities/CAGs, Wards and Municipalities around the water and sanitation issues, reflecting on themselves, understand their role and make them accountable in localizing SDGs. To align with the SDG 6 target of universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water, the local Municipalities have given re/emphasis the One house One tap initiative that access a water facility at the doorstep of every house as promised in their policy and budget as well as during last local election. As a sustained effort Municipalities have been collected the required information for the formulation of local municipal WASH Plan as a periodic plan. According to the Learning Brief: The SuWASH Project, the experiences of PAR shared by WaterAid Nepal in the sector was recently included as prominent components of WASH Plan preparation led by the Ministry of Water Supply, Department of Water Supply and Sewerage Management (WAN, 2019).

Photo 4: PAR final reflection and learning wrap session at Bansgadhi Municipality

10. Increased Commitment and Amount of Budget on Water and Sanitation

There has been increased budget on water and sanitation, to some extent, for the targeting unreached population. The PAR processes have also been contributed to this achievement. There was willingness to increase budget and formulation of plan for water and sanitation. Some of the examples, in Kalikot, Palanta Rural Municipality noted that WASH budget has been increased to 25% out of total budget in fiscal year 2076/77 by. Of them, NPR 3.6 million has been allocated for the orientation, awareness and software for data management that will contributed to WASH Plan development.

To address the issues of open defecation due to poor and dysfunctional latrines, 101 improved toilets were constructed in Banjada (Ward no. 2). This was possible that Community Action Group actively engaged to advocate to Rural Municipality and received NPR 1.5 million amount for the construction. Similarly, to complete the Thalatalseri biggest project (Provincial budget) remaining total NPR 7.1 million was allocated in fiscal year 2076/77.

In Bardiya district, Bansgadhi Municipality has allocated a separate budget of NPR 3 million for feasibility and detail project report (DPR) study in Ward no. 1 in the fiscal year 2076/77. For unfinished work on overhead tank in Asneri (Ward no. 4), Municipality has been initiated their attention and follow up continue with Drinking Water and Sanitation Sub-Division Office that will contribute additional fund for fiscal year 2077/078. Similarly, as a long-term plan, Municipality has also allocated a total of NPR 50 million as matching fund for the community development projects including drinking water, this aims to raise additional funds with anticipating around NPR 250 million through collaboration with I/NGOs and other bilateral agencies.

In Kavre district, Chaurideurali Rural Municipality, ranked as the top priority of water and sanitation sector in the annual plan of Rural Municipality, which otherwise would have been ranked at the 6th in the last two years. Notably, highest percentage – 33% of budget has been allocated for water supply (57% budget on social sector in fiscal year 2076/77).

11. Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from this Participatory Action Research (PAR) relate to main issues: strengthening its approaches to how unserved populations can be better identified and targeted through local WASH Plan(s) and budgets. There was lack of data documentation officially in the local levels. Community, especially unserved/ excluded groups can contribute evidence base data on the true scale of the problem situations and on how can be resolved. Using participatory tools, include social mapping and group discussion, priority ranking and other PRA tools, participants have been identified the gaps by focusing more on the qualitative and quantitative evidence of who is still excluded and why.

The output of the PAR process has been created opportunities for enhancing local capacity and empowering locals that strengthen bottom-up planning process, resolving the gaps in planning and informing resource allocation. The community people have recognized the importance of PAR process which can be a tool to actively engaging, observing and reflecting on themselves, and they have started to raise their voices. The Municipalities have realized the issues on WASH and understanding of how data is useful for planning and decision-making. As a result, there are gradually in the process of prioritization and increasing investment in water and sanitation as well as exploring the possibility and the strategy of additional funding sources. It has also formed the basis of engagements with Ward and Municipalities and local communities engaging in adaptive learning processes to participatory and community-led governance for water and sanitation. Participatory approaches that can support government and non-government agencies in their efforts to ensure that 'No One is Left Behind' in meeting SDG 6, which aims to provide access to water and sanitation for all by 2030.

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Implications of Inter-generational Occupation Changes for Productive Employment and Decent Work in Nepal

BADRI ARYAL

Abstract

Occupation – generally referred to as a type of work performed to keep oneself occupied in some activity to earn one's livelihood which constantly changes over time. A study conducted among grandfathers and grandsons at Ichhchhakamana Rural Municipality of Chitwan district in Bagmati Province, Nepal during September-November 2020 revealed that the grandfathers' generation were mostly carrying out subsistence farming-related activities. However, the grandsons' generation had adopted off-farm enterprises, which generated better income than that of traditional farming. In terms of the localization of SDG-8, which is about decent work and economic growth, the study suggests that creating more market-based off-farm employment opportunities for the youth would go a long way towards promoting full and descent employment for the upcoming generations.

Key Words: Generation, Grandfather, Grandson, Occupation,

1. Background

An occupation refers to the type of work performed by a person employed (or done previously if currently unemployed) during a reference period, irrespective of the industry or the employment status of the person. Persons are classified by their occupations through their relationship with a job, for example farmer, mason, barber, teacher, etc. A single job may have several different work activities or duties connected to it but they do not count as separate jobs. For instance, different agricultural activities (weeding, herding cattle, and collecting water for cattle) are simply different aspects of

the same job (CBS, 2008; Tiwari, 1998, CBS, 2018). Occupation is a dynamic concept and gradually changes over the generations.

The term 'generation' – which is also known as procreation -- is the act of producing offspring. A generation can also be a stage or degree in a succession of natural descent like a grandfather, father and grandson. A generation is defined as a cohort of thousands of people who share similar, but not identical, experience because they are born, live and die within a common historical period (Devkota, 2010). It is difficult to designate a precise time span to a generation. However, a new generation can be said to have appeared approximately every twenty to thirty years, considering the time span required for one generation to reproduce and rear the next one to physical and social maturity (Celik&Guorcuglu, 2016). They may or may not live within the same society or locale. Neither is it necessary for them to experience the same socio-economic environment. But their times provide a common point of reference, and is central to their lives. Moreover, skills and wisdom of an older generation are often considered less valuable by younger generation possibly due to technological changes, and break down of traditional social and cultural identifications. For the sake of this study, the grandfather and the grandson of the same family have been taken as representatives of two different generational members. In order to trace out inter-generation variations, comparisons have been drawn between the grandfathers and grandsons in terms of their occupations.

Children's wealth, income, education, occupation and living standards are very much related to those of their parents. The "Theory of Inter-generational Mobility" (Narayan et al., 2018) and "Human Capital Theory" define issues surrounding this relationship (Becker & Tomes, 1979; Becker & Tomes, 1986; Solon, 2002; Solon, 2004) and several other studies from the region and around the world support it (Lenz & Laband, 1983; Dunn & Holtz-Eakin, 2000; Asadullah, 2006; Azam & Bhatt, 2015; Chakavarty, 2013; Long, Leigh & Meng, 2010; Emran & Shilpi, 2010). Some of the issues identified by the empirical studies are: perhaps mentioning of a couple of issues would be useful there is connection in the level of education, income, occupation, wealth and lifestyles of the parents and their children, but the precise relationship is defined by a particular society.

Parents and their offspring have different values, beliefs, thinking and behaviour. The variation in overall circumstances and lifeways between the two describes such differences. Hence, there are also controversies surrounding whether a generation gap is good for a society. With changes in socio-economic status, livelihoods of people undergo changes over the generations. Although there are several studies that describe occupational and other kinds of relationships between parents and their children, literature on occupational relationship between grandparents and their grandchildren is relatively limited. The present study, which investigates the kind of relationships that exist between the daily activities and occupations of grandfathers and those of their grandsons, intends to fill this lacunae Furthermore, it analyzes the range of occupations adopted by the grandsons in reference to their grandfathers and based on its finding produce the policy

suggestions in contextualizing the goal eight of the SDG.

The inter-generational occupational changes is closely associated with the eighth goal of the set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were set out by the United Nations in 2015 and are to be achieved by 2030. As the SDG-8 promotes sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and descent work for all (NPC, 2015), this study specifically relates to the second target of SDG-8, which is about decent work and economic growth. It intends to assess level of occupational diversification and specialization of work of people towards more market-oriented from the traditional occupations, which are mostly limited to agriculture and allied activities (NPC, 2015). Moreover, the current Fifteenth Plan (2019/20-2023/24) of Nepal has intended to internalize the SDG by aligning the progress made against the goals. The 17 goals are further re-grouped into social goals, economic sector goals and infrastructure-related goals (NPC, 2020) and this study closely matches with the economic sector goals.

It is within this context that the present study explores the occupational variations between the grandsons and their grandfathers. It provides an understanding on how far the grandsons are following the kind of occupations adopted by their grandfathers and in what ways their occupations are changing over the generations. Based on this understanding, the study also devises policy suggestions on the localization process of SDG-8 in Nepal, particularly in rural setting.

2. Research Methods

This study was conducted at Ichchhakamana Rural Municipality of Chitwan District in Bagmati Province of Nepal. Ward numbers 1 and 2 of the municipality were purposively selected in order to collect data related to occupations of grandfathers and grandsons. These two wards were selected based on the ease of accessibility of the settlements via a rural road that joins them toFisling Bazaar in the Prithvi Highway. A total of 62 pairs of grandfathers and grandsons -- which covered most of the settlements in those wards -- were surveyed during September-November 2020 using a structured questionnaire. Quantitative information on daily work/activities and occupations of the respondents were solicited. Information was first gathered on what the grandfathers and grandsons actually did and later were categorized into different kinds of occupations. The grandsons who were at least 15 years of age and their grandfathers were included in the survey. When there were many grandsons of a particular grandfather, the eldest one was chosen as the respondent. Information was collected either from grandfather or grandson, depending on who was available for the interview. The data were then analyzed applying descriptive statistics such as mean, range, standard deviation and percentage.

3. Results and Discussion

The data thus collected were analyzed. Table 1 presents information on socio-demographic status of the respondents -- grandfathers and grandsons, basically, their age, their age at marriage and number of their offspring (Table 1).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of selected socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents(n=62)

Description	Mean	Std. dev.	Min-Max
Age of grandfathers (years)	73.59	9.85	50-94
Age of grandsons (years)	23.00	6.24	15-42
Age of grandfathers at first marriage (years)	17.79	3.41	12-30
Age of grandsons at first marriage (years)	19.50	1.82	16-23
Number of daughters of grandfathers	2.79	1.79	0-8
Number of daughters of grandsons	1.43	1.09	0-3
Number of sons of grandfathers	3.59	1.92	1-10
Number of sons of grandsons	1.18	1.32	0-4
Number of children of grandfathers	6.38	3.17	1-16
Number of children of grandsons	2.56	2.30	0-7

Source: Field survey, 2020

On an average, the grandfathers were 74 years of age and their grandsons 23 years of age. There has been sufficient agegap between the two groups to study the changes in several other socio-economic variables. The age of grandfathers at their first marriage was 17 years, while the same was 19.5 years for their grandsons. Similarly, the grandfathers had, on an average, six children, while this number was three in the case of grandsons. These clearly showed that over the generations, the marriageable age increased and the number of offspring reduced .

Now turning to analyze the daily work or activities of the grandfathers and their grandsons. Since the setting of the study is rural, the kind of jobs done by both the grandfathers and grandsons were primarily related to?? the agriculture and allied sectors of the economy, albeit with varying the level of engagement?? between the two generations (Table 2).

Table 2: Daily Activities of the Respondents (n=62)

Daily activities of grandfathers	Percent	Daily activities of grandsons	Percent
Caring animals/children	9.6	Running bakery / contracting business	3.2
Carpentry/iron works	3.2	Farm work/labour	8.1
Mill operation	1.6	Government job/teaching	33.8
Doing nothing	12.9	Collecting firewood/fodder	3.2
Farm work/labour	14.5	Feeding/grazing animals	6.4
Feeding/grazing animals	43.6	Operating fancyshops	9.6
Collecting firewood/fodder	11.3	Masonry/iron works	9.6
Shopkeeping/basket making	3.2	Studying	16.1
		Doing nothing	1.6
Total	**100**	**Total**	**100**

Source: Field survey, 2020

The activities presented in Table 2 indicate what the grandfathers and grandsons normally performed each day. In the grandfathers' generation, the daily activities were focused on rearing and caring of animals, birds, crop plants and children, collecting firewood and fodder, grazing domestic animals in the households The daily activities of an elderly member consist of caring of domestic animals and small children, firewood collection, fodder collection and grazing of domestic animals among others. The range of activities carried out by the grandfathers proved that the nature of farming then was subsistence. Only a very few of the elderly members of the households were performing specialized kind of works like carpentry, iron works, grinding mill operation, shopkeeping, weaving bamboo products to make baskets cane goods etc. Thus, by taking responsibility of children and domestic animals' care, food preparation, vegetable and crop production, and overall household management, the older members were of great help to economically more active younger members in the family.

On the other hand, the activities performed by the grandsons were more diverse and economically productive. The youth in the study area -- like in other parts of Nepal — were engaged in skilled works so that they could secure more income for fulfilling their

household obligations. The range of activities they were involved in included bakery business, driving, excavator operation, contracting business, fancy stores operation and shopkeeping, and salary-based jobs like teaching, and even studying.

The study also found that there were numerous works which overlapped between the two generations, for example fodder and firewood collection, grazing animals, feeding animals and birds, and taking care of children. In the morning and evening times, the youth were also engaged in several kinds of household works such as cooking food, fetching water, cleaning the house and utensils and the like. The holding of a particular day's work involve negotiation with the need of that particular day and urgency of a specific work as well as the availability of more leisurely members. From the range of works carried out by the grandsons, it was evident that the younger generation was engaged in a more diversified and specialized kind of market-based jobs, which generated additional income for their families. Therefore, there is large room for localizing SDG-8 by creating more of descent, diversified and market-based employment opportunities for the youth. This could be more effectively done by the synergetic effect of three levels of governments viz. federal, provincial and local in the present system of governance in Nepal.

The above account of daily work or activities undertaken by both the grandfathers and grandsons are further clustered into broader groupings (Table 3).

Table 3: Main occupation of the respondents (n=62)

Main occupation of grandfathers	Percent	Main occupation of grandsons	Percent
Businesses and trades	1.6	Salary-based jobs	6.5
Farming and allied activities	87.1	Businesses and trades	19.4
Other statuses (the Disabled, the sick, etc)	11.3	Farming activities	21.0
		Wage labour	40.3
		Other statuses (volunteers??? unemployed, students, etc)	12.9
Total	**100**	**Total**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2020

An overwhelming majority (87 percent) of the grandfathers were involved in farming-related activities, whereas 11 percent of them were accommodated by other status category (very old, sick, unemployed, disabled and those who were not interested to work). On the other hand, the grandsons were engaged in a more diverse kind of enterprises like salary- and wage-earning jobs, businesses and trades . An overwhelming majority of the grandsons' generation turned out to be wage labours, involved in farm work such as ploughing, digging, crop cultivation and harvesting, and non-farm works like carpentry, masonry, driving and plumbing. Wage work – mostly belong to informal sector — represents the most widely available economic opportunity for the grandsons, requiring more skills and expertise to earn better income. Farming comes second to the wage work followed by businesses, trades and salary-based jobs. Such a high involvement of younger generation in the informal sector underlines the need for more regular paying jobs in the formal sectors. Besides, informal sector also has to be highly regulated for creating jobs with assured incomes to the employees. The current 15th National Development Plan (2019/20-2023/24) of Nepal has well set out a vision for achieving a rapid, and balanced economic development, prosperity and happiness of all citizens. In order to achieve the Plan's objectives, is needed (NPC, 2020). Effective implementation of the 15th Plan – through collaboration with private, community, cooperative and other relevant sectors -- would be a milestone in achieving SDG-8.

The recent initiatives of the Government of Nepal, such as minimum wage policy and social security fund, are commendable in this direction. Moreover, there are also provisions mentioned in the budget speeches and plan documents of the government, for example securing minimum employment for the so far unemployed youths; concessional loans for start-up businesses and educational loans. Hence, what is important now is that the government should put in place mechanisms for assured implementation and monitoring of these initiatives.

4. Conclusions

The findings of the present study reveal that the earlier generation was mostly involved in traditional subsistence agriculture and allied activities. On the contrary, the later generation has adopted off-farm employment, which is market-based and can generate more incomes. Therefore, the expansion of the public sector (government sector) to create more of regular-paying remunerative jobs on one hand, and proper regulation of the informal sector (on the other hand is extremely important. Relating this finding with SDG-8, produces policy suggestions for the federal, provincial and local governments for creating

more inclusive, sustainable, descent and full employment opportunities for the youth in Nepal. There are lines of hope from the latest moves such as minimum wage policy, social security fund, employment focal person at the municipalities of the government that the Goal 8 of SDGs and its associated targets will have tangible realization by the year 2030.

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Localization Of SDG 11 In Nepal: Disclosures for Local Actions in Achieving the Targets

RAKESH K. SHAH and NARAYAN GYAWALI

Abstract

The government of Nepal endorsed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and committed to achieving it by 2030 through the 14th periodic plan 2017-2020. The National Planning Commission has developed SDGs Status and Roadmap: 2016-30, SDGs Baseline Reports 2017, Needs Assessment, Costing and Financing Strategy for SDGs etc. for achieving the SDGs through proper planning, resource allocation and monitoring framework. The paper is based on a research carried out in November 2019 to identify the local government and communities' plans, policies and actions that are directly or indirectly contributing to achieving SDG11. The data and information was collected by applying mixed methods. Secondary data were collected from different sources including government reports, documents, various research articles etc. and the primary data were collected and verified though focus group discussions and key informant interviewscarried out in Saptari District of Province 2 in Nepal. The research has shown that the targets of SDG 11 cannot be achieved solely by the national government unless capacity building, resource allocation and engagement of the local government and communities are ensured. Small actions at the local level are very significant to realising SDG 11. However, the local government and communities have very limited information and knowledge regarding SDGs. There are also some gaps in monitoring frameworks, baseline data and targets at local levels. Therefore, for achieving targets of SDG 11, there is a need for awareness raising, resource allocation, robust monitoring framework and engagement of the communities and local, regional and national governments, and international organizations,, national, regional, local and community stakeholders with following a holistic approach.

Key Words: SDGs, Resilience, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, DRRM

1. Introduction

Global Goals were introduced by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 and are intended to be achieved by 2030 (UN 2015). The 17 SDGs and their 169 targets are global aspirational roadmap that are integrated and indivisible and balance three dimensions of sustainable developments: the economic, social and environmental (UN 2015; Mamello 2018). A total of 193 members States of the United Nations have adopted SDGs and are working together towards achieving them (UN 2015). However, achieving SDGs is not only the responsibility and within the capacity of the national government. While SDGs are global targets, all of the SDGs have targets, which are directly related to fall under the responsibilities of local and regional governments. Hence, meeting the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires the engagement of stakeholders from all sectors of the society, including the civil society organizations (CSOs) and individual citizens, which is clearly defined in SDG- 17: Strengthening Partnership for Goals (Mamello 2018; GTLRG 2016; NPC 2017a). Achieving SDGs require localization of goals and targets and strong multi-stakeholders structures in place to plan, implement, monitor and review (NGO Federation 2017).

Government of Nepal has agreed to the implementation of SDGs starting fiscal year 2016-17 through the 14th periodic plan 2017-19 (NPC 2018). The ownership of Nepal government for SDGs implementation is manifested in the institutional set-up of the Steering Committee which is chaired by the Prime Minister.There is a Coordination and Implementation Committee and also Thematic Working Groups. Nepal has endorsed the SDGs, and for their realization, has developed plans, policies, monitoring framework, institutional arrangements and for implementation and monitoring framework. However, there are several issues concerning targets and indicators. For the country like Nepal the targets for several goals are highly ambitious, because some SDGs targets are less relevant, so additional targets would be necessary to address the challenge at the local level. Many of the targets and indicators would require huge dataset which the country like Nepalcan take years to generate ("Nepal Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap : 2016-2030" 2017). The SDGs progress 2016-2019 also states that there is no important indicators related to urban infrastructure, and green spaces, planning and resilience as stated in The SDGs progress 2016-2019 (NPC 2020).

The paper aims to review national plans, policies and frameworks and identify gaps and challenges at the local government and community level for localizing SDG 11 (make cities and human settlement inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable) and achieving its targets.

2. SDG 11: Make cities and human settlement inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

Disasters threaten all the three pillars: social, environmental, and economics of sustainable development and this is happening more rapidly and unpredictably than anticipated across multiple sectors, and in varying dimensions and scales. Disasters have taken a drastic leap in frequency and have continued to occur at a consistently high rate over the past 20 years (FAO 2021). Reducing

disaster losses is directly linked to the achievement of sustainable development goals through SDG 11: make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Nohrstedt et. al. 2021). SDGs and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) are intrinsically intertwined and must go hand in hand (Uitto and Shaw 2016). The United Nations has defined 10 targets and 15 indicators for SDG 11 where the targets specify the goals and the indicators represent metrics by which the world aims to track whether these targets are achieved (Ritchie et al. 2018). The Government of Nepal has adopted SDG 11, and determined related targets and baseline values as documented in the baseline report 2017 (NPC 2017).

The articleconsiders 3 targets and 4 associated indicators to study actions of the local government and communities for the localization and subsequent achievements of SDG 11. These targets and indicators were selected based on the data availability to enable comparisonof the targets with the present status and identify how communities can directly contribute to achieving them.

Table 1: Targets and Indicators of SDG 11 Considered for the Research

Targets	Indicators
Target 11.1: By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing, and basic services and upgrade slums	**11.1.2** Household units with thatched/straw roof (%)
Target 11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and decrease the economic losses relative toGDP caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.	**11.5. 7:** Deaths due to other natural disaster (number) **11.5.9:** Injuries due to other disaster (number)
Target 11.b By 2020, increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans toward inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation, and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the forthcoming Hyogo Framework, holistic disaster risk management at all levels	**11.b.2** Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies

Source: ("Nepal Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap : 2016-2030" 2017)

3. Methodology

The paper is based on a field research carried out in Saptari District in Province 2 of Nepal in November 2019. It draws on both qualitative and quantitative information was collected through the combination of primary and secondary methods. Information on SDGs, disaster events, losses of lives and properties and the like were gathered from different

published and unpublished reports, research papers and other documents available in print and on-line. The information thus acquired were verified through Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) carried out in Sakhubani Community of Ward No. 3 in Saptakoshi Municipality and in Dalwa community of Ward No. 14 in Hanumannagar Kankalini Municipality of Saptari District. Nine people (6 women and 3 men) from Sakhubani Community and 8 people (3 women and 5 men) from Dalwa Community within the age group of 27 to 55 years participated in the FGDs. Besides, Two Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) (both with men) were also carried out -- one with DRR focal person in Saptakoshi Municipality and the other with Ward Chairperson in HanumannagarKankalini Municipality. The FGDs and KIIs were also used to obtain information on progress made and existing gaps regarding disaster risks, their vulnerabilities and impacts, community's preparedness, response and recovery mechanisms, and local government's DRR plan and its implementation??. The community and local government were also asked about their knowledge of and understanding on the SDGs and their targets and indicators, plans, monitoring framework and progress made. A detailed analysis of the data and information was carried out to analysegaps and establish linkages and recommendations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Disaster Scenarios and SDG 11 Indicators

The analysis of data from the Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal (http://drrportal.gov.np/ data accessed on 28 May 2021) for the period 2015-2020 showed that 77 people lost their lives and 1 person was missing in Saptari District due to various disasters, namely fires, thunderstorms, floods, snakebites and cold waves.. Similarly, the economic losses caused was evaluated to be around 616.85 million rupees, affecting 4,384 families. Figure 1 depicts the losses of lives due to different disaster events in Saptari between 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2020.

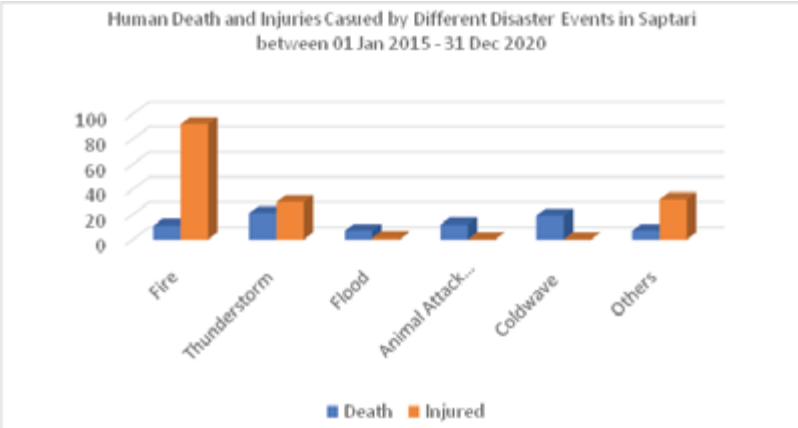


Figure 2: Death and Injury caused by Different Disaster Events in Saptari 2015-2020

Table 2: The SDG target 11.1 and its Indicators

Targets and Indicators		2015	2019	2022	2025	2030
Target 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing, and basic services and upgrade slums						
11.1.1	Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing					
1	Population living in slum and squatters (‘000)	500	400	325	250	125
2	Households units roofed with thatched/straw roof (%)	19	15.3	12.5	9.7	5
3.	Households living in safe houses (%)	29.8	37.8	43.9	49.9	60

Source : (“Nepal Sustainable Development Goals Status and Roadmap : 2016-2030” 2017)

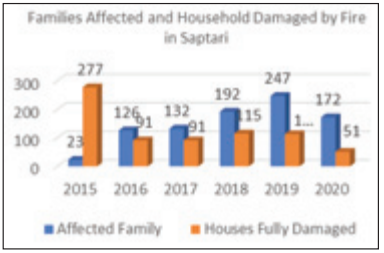
The indicator values of the target 11.1 are of national average values. However, the baseline values of the year 2015 do not represent actual data and situation at the local level. The progress on Target 11.1 during 2016 -2019 is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Indicators of SDG Target 11.1 and their achievement upto 2019

	Target and Indicators	2015	Target 2019	Progress 2019
	Target 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing, and basic services and upgrade slums			
11.1.1	Proportion of urban population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing			
1	Population living in slum and squatters (‘000)	500	400	200
2	Household units roofed with thatched/straw roof (%)	19	15.3	9.1
3.	Households living in safe houses (%)	29.8	37.8	40

Source : (“Nepal Sustainable Development Goals Progress Assessment Reprt : 2016-2019”)

The national progress does not reflect the situation of Saptari district. For the localization of SDG 11 (and for others as well) it is necessary to set local targets and monitor progress that can be accumulated to project a national figure.



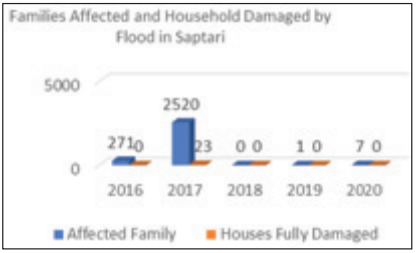


Figure 3: Families affected, and household damaged by fire and flood in Saptari (2015-2020)

(Graph based on data from Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal for the period 01-01-2015 to 31-12-2020)

Among 121,064 houses in Saptari, 62,465 (51.6%) were having thatchedroofs (CBS 2019). The disaster data from 2015-2020 showed that a total of 2,069 houses were destroyed by different fire incidents (1,331 partially and 738 completely). Similarly, floods in the same period has wrecked 2,822 houses (2,799 partially and 23 completely). While the SDG indicator has a baseline value of 29.8% houses with thatched roofs, 51.6% in Saptari is much above the baseline, requiring special planning and resource allocation to achieve the target. During the FGDs, the community representatives informed houses' dense construction and thatched roofs as some of the reasons for their loss in huge numbers. The poor people living along the Koshi flood zone have houses with mud/bamboo walls and thatched roofs, which can be easily ruined by flood waters. They do not have enough financial resources to move to safer places. Neither does the local government have plans and budget to relocate them to safer zones. The mere relief and recovery support to the affected households -- in coordination with external support agencies -- is what is offered whenever flood or other disasters hit the communities. However, if the Government of Nepal is really looking forward to achieving SDG 11, there is a need to invest in safe housing for poor and vulnerable people of the communities. Districts like Saptari, which have baseline values far above the average, especially need to focus on ensuring access to safe housing.

Table 4: SDG Target 11.5 and its Indicators

Targets and Indicators		2015	2019	2022	2025	2030
Target 11.5: By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and decrease the economic losses relative to gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations						
11.5.1	Number of deaths, missing persons and directly affected persons attributed to disasters per 100,000 population					
1	Deaths due to natural disaster (number					
2	Injuries due to disaster (number)	22300	0	0	0	0

The indicators of Target 11.5 do not have adequate baseline and target data. The baseline value for injuries due to disaster, which is 22,300, has considered only the injuries due to the earthquake of 2015. However, when the communities are under the risks and vulnerabilities of multiple hazards like floods, fires, snakebites and thunderstorms, it is necessary to have segregated data at the local level so as to enable review and monitoring of the progress.

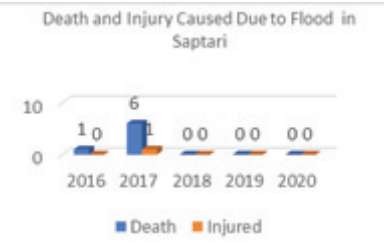


Figure 4: Death and Injury by Flood and Fire in Saptari 2015-2020

Source: (Graph based on data from Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal for the period 01-01-2015- 31-12-2020)

The Government of Nepal has clearly set up targets to be achieved under SDG 11, which states "By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and decrease the economic losses relative to gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations." However, many people in Saptari have been losing lives to floods, thunderstorms, fires, wildlifes, epidemics, heat and cold waves, snake bites, etc. This scenario clearly shows that for achieving SDG 11, it is necessary that the government's plans, policies and resource mobilization support reducing vulnerabilities of people exposed to different hazards.

Table 5: SDG Target 11.b and its Indicators

Targets and Indicators		2015	2019	2022	2025	2030
Target 11.b: By 2020, increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters and develop and implement, in line with the forth-coming Hyogo Framework, holistic disaster risk management at all levels.						
11.b.1	Number of countries that adopt and implement national disaster risk reduction strategies in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030					
11.b.2	Proportion of local governments that adopt and implement local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national disaster risk reduction strategies					

Unless there are segregated data at the local level, monitoring progress and reporting achievements for realizing Target 11.b become challenging. The only data available is that 28.9 percent of local governments have local disaster risk reduction strategies (NPC 2020). While DRR plans, policies, strategies are to be regularly updated, there is no mechanism to track their update and ensure that those being implemented are relevant.

Saptari is one of the most flood vulnerable districts in Nepal and has been ranked high in the flood risk /exposure sub-indices (MoE 2010). During the FGD with the Sakhubani and Dalwa, the participants informed that they have formed Community Disaster Management Committees (CDMCs) with the support from local NGO, INGOs and donor agencies in coordination with the municipality and ward offices. They have been trained in local risk and vulnerability assessments and flood early warning system. They have prepared social hazards and risk maps which have allowed them to identify the most flood vulnerable areas and safe spots. They have also developed a flood early warning information access and dissemination network which has helped them to be well prepared and carry out timely evacuation. They have also identified evacuation routes and temporary shelters. The communities have developed DRR plans and participated in flood simulation exercises to enhance their flood response capacities.

In response to the question "What difference has the communities undergone with support in flood resilience?", the communities informed of the drastic reduction in losses of lives and properties following their capacity buildingtraining in flood early warning, preparedness, response and recovery. This is also evident from above tableswhich show during the 2015-2020, only 7 human casualties were reported in spite of the occurrence of two massive floods -- one in 2017 and the other in 2019. The communities also reported of decrease in the loss of assets, livestock

and crops in comparison to the past and also to those communities who have not institutionalized community-based disaster risk reduction (CBDRR). The communities acknowledged the development agencies (NGOs, INGOs or donor agencies) as well as the local government for increasing their capacities for early warning, preparedness, response and recovery.

When comparing with fire incidents, the community representatives informed that the municipality and community did not have resources for fire control like fire extinguishers, fire hydrant, fire brigade, fireproof clothing and trained human resources which can be helpful in saving livesavoiding injuries and minimizing property losses. Creating awareness, improving the availability of fire-control measure and changing the housing materials (from mud or bamboo walls and thatched roofing to brick walls and at least corrugated galvanized iron sheets) would surely help in reducing the number deaths or injured,and increasing the number of households living in safe houses, which is one of the targets of SDG11. With the years of training and community mobilization, they have gained better knowledge and experience in mitigating, preparing and responding to fire incidents, which can be useful in other hazards and risks as well..

During the KII with the DRR focal person of SaptakoshiMinicipality, it was learned that the municipality had drafted local DRR Acts, plans and policies were helpful for DRRM at local level. However, in its plans and policies, the municipality should focus on shifting resources from response and relief to preventions, mitigation, and preparedness. During the KII in HanumannagarKankalini, the ward chairperson shared that the municipality had to carry out scientific risk and hazard assessment as well as develop and enforce its DRRM plans and policies that would guide it in providing unbiased support to the vulnerable people to save their lives, livelihoods and assets. The local governments in Nepal lack adequate technical concepts, knowledge, resources for localization of DRRM acts, plans and policies (IOM 2019) and for achieving SDG 11.

During the FGDs and KIIs, it was also observed that the community and local government representatives were unaware of the SDG targets, monitoring the progress, documentation, and reporting. Meeting SDG 11 would require a clear road map with sound DRR plans and policies for the reduction in disaster events, and losses of lives and properties, at least at the district level.

3.2 Localizing and Achieving SDG 11 through supporting Community-Based Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

It is evident from the FGDs and secondary information presented above that the communities have been able to reduce losses of lives and properties as compared to the past due to their increased knowledge and capacities in flood early warning, preparedness, response and recovery. This is equally applicable in relation to thunderstorms, fire incidents, wildfires, snake bites, epidemics, heat and cold waves, etc, all of which will ultimately support Target 11.5. Similarly, for integrated and sustainable human settlement planning, and mitigation of and adaptation to climate change (another target of SDG 11), capacity building and

engagement of the communities and local governments, and resource availability to local governments, in addition to awareness on safe and affordable housing, would be required?. Nepal stands in the second position in the mortality ranking, as 80.2 percent of the total area of the country and estimated 25.9 million of its population are at risk, among others in the Hind Kush Himalayan region (Vaidya et al. 2019). Therefore, localizing and achieving SDG11 for saving lives and properties assumes utmost importance. It would further play a catalytic role in accelerating the progress and achievements of other SDGs and in safeguarding the gains. There exist various plans and policies like localization of DRRM Act at municipal level; preparation of Local Disaster and Climate Resilience Plan (LDCRP); localization of Building Information Platform Against Disaster (BIPAD) portal at municipal level; establishment and operationalization of Local Emergency Operation Center (LEOC). However, the municipalities have not localized the DRRM plans and policies as envisioned by the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2017 of Nepal. There are a total of 25 targets related to DRR in 10 of the 17 SDGs, firmly establishing the role of DRR as a core development strategy (UNISDR 2015). Thus, prioritizing the achievements of SDG 11 is extremely crucial for supporting the other SDGs as well.

3.3 Information and Knowledge of SDGs at the Community Level

The participants of the FGDs were asked if they knew about the Sustainable Development Goals. Only one male participant in Sakhubani community informed that he had heard about them but did not know any details. Similarly, the DRR focal person and ward secretary also informed that they had heard about SDGs during some trainings and orientations, but were unaware of the targets, indicators and plans at local level. The engagement of local governments, communities, private sector and other stakeholders for achieving SDG depends on their level of awareness, understanding and knowledge, meaning that Nepal should draft specific plans to raise awareness on SDGs by driving a national campaign.

4. Conclusion

In order to achieve the ambitious goals of SDGs, there is a need for close collaboration and joint planning among all the three tiers of the government – Federal, Provincial and Local. Similarly, the roles and responsibilities of the private sector, civil society, development partners and other stakeholders is pre-eminent. The monitoring framework of the SDGs in Nepal has segregated targets and indicators at national, sub-national and local levels, which reflects that achieving SDGs is possible only through shared responsibilities and involvement all the three tiers of government as well as the private sector and civil societies in making plans, policies and allocating resources (CBS 2019). It is, thus, necessary that the government and international agencies make a proper planning for capacity building, resource availability, knowledge and technology transfer and develop monitoring framework to ensure that the communities and local government also understand and adopt the SDGs. It is important that they are familiar with the targets and indicator, and are aware of how their small plans and actions can

have compounding effects on achieving the national SDGs.

The research findings suggest that there is very limited information, knowledge and understanding regarding the SDGs among the local representatives , and almost none among the community members. The national?? government and concerned agencies should focus on creating awareness and ensuring engagement of the local governments and the communities in mainstreaming the SDGs. The review of literature reveals that there is a gap in the data (baseline value and targets) in the monitoring framework and that there were also evidences of the data being inconsistent. This is also corroborated by National Planning Commission, which states that data for nearly 100 indicators are not yet available. According to the SDG progress assessment report 2016-19, the progress on SDG 11 is slow,calling for an urgency in its localization. Therefore, capacity building of the local government, the communities and all other stakeholders for saving lives and properties is very important. As planning for DRRM and monitoring of the SDG 11 would require field-based data and information, there is a necessity for the establishment of Disaster Information Management System. The government has developed Building Information Platform Against Disaster (BIPAD) portal for managing information at local/ municipal levels. However, during the research, it was found that none of the 18 municipalities in Saptari have updated BIPAD portal. Achieving SDG 11 (and all other SDGs as well) would require that all the three tiers of government, donor agencies, I/NGOs, CBOs and the community have a clear understanding about SDG 11, and its targets and indicators. They should also make a coordinated effort to strengthen community resilience. and the monitoring framework should also be able to capture the community-based DRRM activities that are enhancing community resilience.

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Transboundary Flood Risk Management in the Koshi River Between Nepal and India

Er PRAKASH GYAWALI and Prof. NARBIKRAM THAPA, PhD

Abstract

The study aims to assess the climate-resilient transboundary flood risk management in the Koshi River between Nepal and India, with a particular focus on the institutional framework, the gap of institutional set up and a way forward. The literature review method was adopted to collect the information for this study which shows that there is a lack of adequate coordination and a complex organizational structure under a bilateral agreement between Nepal and India. The study found that around 25,000 people have been affected by the Koshi River flooding in the last 53 years. During the period, 2,521 families were displaced and 4,077 biga of land (1 biga equal to0.400 acre) were swept away. The Koshi flood of August 2008 in the eastern lowlands of Nepal affected around 2.64 million people in India and Nepal, including 65,000 people and 700 hectares of fertile land in Nepal. The effect of climate change on river basin hydrology have a direct impact on irrigation water availability and irrigation crop coverage in the region. The bilateral treaty between Nepal and India should be amended including the existing policies and institutional structure for the smooth running of barrage.

Key Words: Disaster Management, Flood, Management, Inundation, Terai

1. Introduction

Flooding has become more frequent and devastating events occurring around the world. It is one of the most hazardous natural disasters that have a severe impact on life and property. According to a recent report, floods are the most frequent type of disaster which accounts for almost 43% of all the climate-related disasters occurring in the last two decades and affecting more than 2 billion people (UNIDRR, 2018).

Worldwide more than 286 river basins (TWAP, 2016) and around 600 aquifers cross sovereign borders. A total of 154 States have territory in these basins, including 30 countries that lie entirely within them.

Without transboundary water cooperation inclusive sustainable development is severely curtailed, and risks to peace and security increased. Around 40% of the world population lives within shared river basins and almost 90% of the world population lives in countries sharing transboundary waters. The 14 transboundary river basins with the highest levels of economic dependence on water resources collectively comprise almost 1.4 billion people.

Floods do not respect borders, neither national nor regional or institutional. This means flood risk management is regarded as transboundary. The great advantages of transboundary cooperation are that it broadens the knowledge base, enlarges the set of available strategies and enables better and more cost-effective solutions. In addition, widening the geographical area considered by basin planning enables measures to be located where they create the optimum effect. Finally, disaster management is highly dependent on early information and requires forecasts and data from the river basin as a whole.

Integrated flood risk management requires adoption of a river basin approach to planning that involves many disciplines and stakeholders in efforts to reduce flood vulnerability and risk and to preserve ecosystems. It also seeks to strengthen adaptive capacity to climate variability and change. It is based on the following principles (UNDRR, 2009):

River basin management: Water management should be based on boundaries of the river basin, not on administrative areas or country borders, thus taking into account a river system as a whole, from source to mouth.

Solidarity: Problems should not be shifted to neighboring countries or regions. Negative effects between upstream and downstream areas should be prevented, and positive effects should be stimulated.

Sustainability: IWRM aims at a combination of economic development, ecological protection and improvement of social welfare and justice. River basin management should start with a cohesive approach in which a broad spectrum of interests, disciplines and policy fields are involved. Different aspects, e.g. water quality, water quantity, groundwater use, land use, economy, ecology and the environment, need to be balanced. In the context of flood management, the principles of sustainable development involve ensuring livelihood and security among different population groups as well as the viability of ecosystems and floodplain functions, including in the long term.

Public participation: Active public involvement in the development and implementation of water management strategies and plans (Figure 1 below).

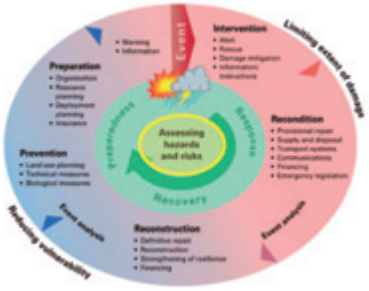

Figure 1: Cycle of Integrated Flood Risk Management:

Source: Transboundary flood risk management report, United Nation, 2009

Flood causes fatalities, human displacement, economic loss and a huge impact on the ecology and environment. These events occur due to many natural causes as well as anthropogenic activities. High precipitations, deforestation, unplanned development works in are some activities that cause or triggers flood events. Nepal has experienced devastating floods, mostly in Terai region, frequently by the Koshi River. Every year, the Koshi breaches its embankment and millions of people have lives and livelihoods disrupted by flooding in the bordering region of Nepal and Bihar state in India.

2. Objectives

The following objectives have been set for this article:

- Identify flaws in the Nepal-India bilateral pact in the study areas;
- Assess impacts of climate change on the flow of the transboundary Koshi River for irrigation facilities and map out the challenges of transboundary flood issue in the study areas; and
- Conduct a review the existing policies, institutional mechanisms and identify the gaps in the Koshi treaty between Nepal and India.

3. Study Area

The Koshi River, begins from China's Tibetan region, flows through Nepal into India, and then reaches the Ganga River in Kursela in the Indian state of Bihar after around 200 kilometers of Indian Territory. The overall catchment area at the exit is roughly 70,000 square kilometers, while the Koshi River's total length is 720 kilometers. The Koshi is a perennial river with varying levels of water discharge. The Koshi has a significant sediment load. The largest yearly silt load reported in *Barahaskshetra*, right before entering the Terai, is on the order of 229,860 acre-feet (Upadhyaya, 2012).The Koshi River oscillates over a vast tract of land forming numerous channels with the result that built up property and vegetation are destroyed, which causes immense suffering and instability of life. During the period from 1936-1950, the river moved westward at the rate of 0.54 km per year on an average. These traits of the river combined, present an effect which causes heavy damage to life and livelihoods of the people residing in Koshi basin. This was the reason that the Koshi River was called the "Sorrow of Bihar"(Figure. 2).

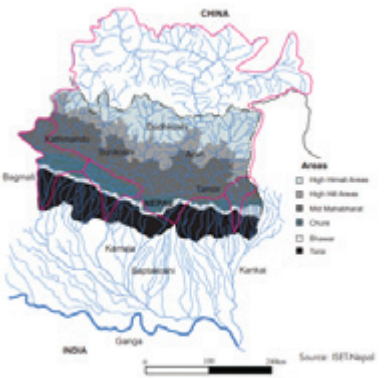

Figure 2: Koshi Basin in Tibet (China), Nepal, and Bihar (India)

3. Method of Data Collection

The literature review method was used during the information collection. Mainly, the study has been based on secondary source of information. The descriptive statistics like frequency distribution, per cent was used for the analysis of information. The recent field observation and direct interaction with the respondents regarded as limitation of the study due to COVID-19 pandemic.

4. Results& Discussion

4.1 Koshi Treaty

After the severe floods in 1953-1954, Indian government to prioritized the issue and negotiate the Koshi treaty. This project was meant to render irrigation and flood control benefits to India and Nepal (Upadhyaya, International Watercourses Law and a perpesctive on Nepal-India, 2012). The Koshi Project comprised a barrage, headwork's and other appurtenant work about 3 miles upstream from Hanuman Nagar town on the Koshi river the afflux and flood banks, and canals and protective work on land lying within the territories of Nepal for the purpose of flood control, irrigation, hydroelectric power and prevention of erosion of Nepal's areas on the right side of the river upstream of the barrage.

Table 1: Flood control embankment on Koshi River in Nepal and India

S.N.	Name of Embankment	U/S or D/S or Koshi Barrage	Length in Nepal portion (Km)	Length in India portion (Km)	Total Length (Km)
1.	Eastern afflux	U/S	32.0	-	32.0
2	Western afflux bund	U/S	12.0	-	12.0
3	Eastern Koshi Embankment	D/S	0.5	125.0	125.5
4		D/S	16.0	101.0	117.0
Total Length:					286.5

Source: (DPRI, 2019)

Nepal and India have signed a deal to improve relations between the two countries. The agreement has been heavily criticized in Nepal by the political parties in opposition and public at large after it was signed. It has been described as 'envisaging enormous benefits in India but for insufficient and even some negative consequences to Nepal' (Table 1).

Given the large size and great diversity of the Koshi basin, the selection of study sites posed a challenge. Since the purpose of the study was to identify responses to too much water and to too little water, rainfall extremes were one obvious criterion. Using annual rainfall records as an

indicator, the team first selected the three districts of Sankhuwasabha, Dhankuta, and Kabhrepalanchok, which respectively receive high (more than 5,000 mm), moderate (about 2,000 mm) and low (about 1,000 mm) rainfall (the location of the study districts is shown in Figure 2).

Figure 3: Trends in total rainfall amount over the last 30 years in part of the KoshiBasin

Source: ISET NEPAL, 2008

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4.2 Existing Policy and Organizational Arrangement

The Koshi treaty signed between India and Nepal in 1954 (and revised in 1966) forms a base for the setting up of a bilateral mechanism for the overall management of Koshi River flooding. The treaty on Koshi consigns the overall management (including the maintenance and repair) of the barrage and embankment (including in Nepalese territory to the Government of India.

4.2.1 Indo-Nepal Mechanism for Bilateral Cooperation on the Koshi River

Several bilateral committees and commission at the different political level have been set up consisting of the officials from both the countries to look after the issues of co-operation in the water sector including Koshi flood management. In response to the 2008 flood disaster, India and Nepal decided to establish a number of mechanisms, including a Joint River committee a minister level to prevent such catastrophes in future .The two sides also decided to reactivate a Secretary-level Joint Committee and set up eight technical committees to be in regular touch over various issues concerning the sharing of common river water (Uprety & Salman, 2011).

The current institutional framework between Nepal and India for the management of the KoshiRiver .The governments of Nepal and India have set-up a three-tier bilateral mechanism to manage, discuss and coordinate on water sharing issues (www.asiafoundation.org). Joint Ministerial Commission for water Resources (JMCWR) headed by Ministry of Water Resource of India and Nepal commissioned after the 2008 flood is the highest level (Figure 4).

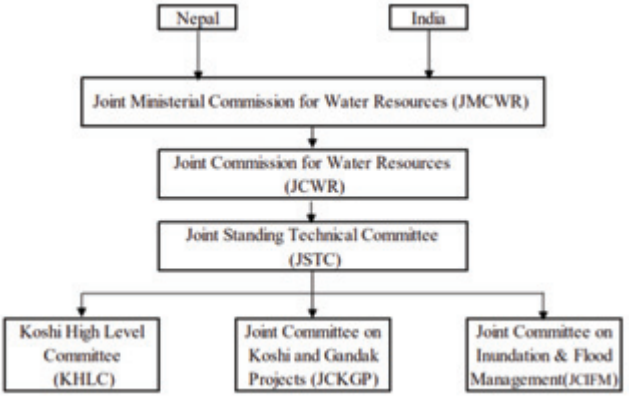


Figure 4: Institutional framework for Management of Koshi River

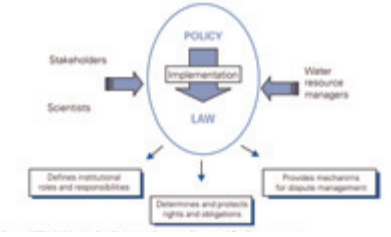
Body there is the provision to meet at least once in a year. The JMCWR is responsible for discussing and deciding plans for maximizing the benefits of water resource development through bilateral cooperation. It takes policy decision on bilateral cooperation. It takes policy decisions on bilateral cooperation, investment in joint project and further recommends public investment required for projects and activities jointly identified. JMCWR is followed by Joint Commission for Water Resources (JCWR) headed by the secretaries of the respective ministries of India and Nepal which was set up in 2000. It is responsible for assessing the compliance of provisions of all the agreements reached between the two countries on water related issues, monitor the progress of different committees and groups and approve and/or recommend necessary action by the concerned governments to expedite progress or to meet agreed objectives. Seven meeting have taken place since its establishment. The third one formed after 2008 flood is the Joint Standing Technical Committee (JSTC) which was constituted to rationalize technical committees and sub committees existing between India and Nepal related to flood management, inundation problems and flood forecasting activities. The JSTC coordinates all technical committees and sub-committees under JCWR and has met on five occasions till date. The two specific committees concerned with the management of the Koshi flood. Despite the formation of these committees and commissions, little has been achieved in the management of Koshi flood and their effectiveness is often questioned.

According to the Koshi treaty, the Koshi project office of the Water Resources Department (WRD) of the Bihar state Government undertakes the implementation of the repair and maintenance works of the embankment and other related structures (Shrestha, Tripathi, & Laudari, 2018). Koshi high level Committee (KHLC) headed by the chairman of Ganga

Flood Control Commission (GFCC) is responsible for the monitoring and review of the repair works carried out by WRD and also recommend protective measures to be taken before the next flood season. KHLC constitutes of members from Bihar government, Central Government of India as well as the Government of Nepal. The complex communication and administrative mechanism often hinder the effectiveness of these responsible institutions.

4.2.2 Gaps in the Current Institutional Mechanism

In the current institutional mechanism, Nepalese institutions don't have the authority to undertake any works, although the barrage and embankments lie in Nepalese territory. However, two of the Nepalese members of the KHLC can communicate and put their views the KHLC but only after taking approval from the Ministerial or Secretary Level. Since Nepal cannot directly interfere at the field level for advising maintenance and repair works, they do not prioritize regular field monitoring. But it is the moral responsibility of Nepal to be concerned about the issues and act in the best possible way as Nepal will be first affected when a disaster strikes.



Source: APFM, 2006a. Legal and institutional aspects of integrated flood management.

Figure 5: Policy and Law Implementation Process

On the other hand, the Koshi treaty is signed between GON and GOI while execution of the Koshi Project is assigned to WRD, Bihar. There is no direct connecting medium between the Bihar government and Nepalese authority at the same political level (Shrestha, Ahlers, & M. and Gupta, 2010). For any consultation related to flood control works with the Nepalese side, the Bihar government should first consult with the Central government, India which in turn communicates with Nepalese side. Even the communication and coordination among the concerned institutions in the Indian side is not always smooth and prompt. Such a complicated network of connections after impedes instant decision-making (Figure 5).

4.3 Loss due to Flood

People who were displaced by the Koshi floods around four decades ago are still living on the banks of the river in Railway, Jabdi, Bichpani, Mahendra Nagar, Bange, Bharaul, Madhuban, Rajbas, Prakashpur and Aaradi, among other areas, in Sunsari district. Today, more than 25,000 people live as squatters in these areas. Around 25,000 people have been affected by the Koshi River flooding in the last 53 years. In that period, 2,521 families were displaced and 4,077 biga of land were swept away (TheKathmanduPost, 2009). Koshi flood of August 2008 in eastern lowlands of Nepal affected around 2.64 million people in India and Nepal, including 65,000 people and 700 hectares of fertile land in Nepal.

4.4 Impacts on Irrigation Water Availability in Koshi River

The monthly or half-monthly (as opposed to annual or seasonal) water availability

is crucial for the design and management of irrigation schemes in developing countries. In many irrigation schemes in developing countries, water diversion mechanisms, from source to irrigation canal, are still operating on gravity flow, without pumping or impoundment. With a command area of 68,000 ha, the Sunsari Morang irrigation scheme is the largest in Nepal. It diverts water from the Koshi River near *Chatara*. There is no weir, barrage or pumping mechanism for this water diversion; inflow into the main canal depends only on hydraulic head differences. Thus, the water level (flow rate) of the river determines the water supply to the main canal. Although the river water level is high in the wet season, it is lower than desired in the dry period (November to May), limiting irrigation canal discharge and hence the cropping area that can be served in this period. The main crops grown in this period are wheat, pulses, oilseed, maize, sugarcane, potato and vegetables in the winter (November/December to March/April); and spring paddy, sugarcane, spring maize, jute and vegetables in the spring (April/May to June/July). Monsoon paddy is the dominant crop in the monsoon season (Kaini, Nepal, Pradhananga, Gardner, & Sharma, 2020).

Water storage mechanisms, either surface or subsurface, can improve community resilience to seasonal water scarcity and help farmers grow crops when water is scarce (Vaidya, 2015). Sound development of infrastructure for water storage is needed immediately to buffer the projected changes in seasonal water availability and to improve access to water for irrigation and other water resources projects in the greater Koshi River basin (Molden & Vaidya, 2014). Annual renewable groundwater resources in the southern plains, also known as the Terai, of Nepal are 8.8 billion cubic meters, and only about 22% of the available dynamic groundwater recharge is being utilized (Shrestha, Tripathi, & Laudhary, 2018). Groundwater resources can provide additional socio-economic benefits from agriculture production in the Terai (Nepal, Neupane, Belbase, & Pandey, 2019). Hence, extraction of underutilized groundwater resources and provision of surface water storage could aid irrigation during the dry season to cope with lower Koshi River flows in the future. In the Koshi River, hydropower potential is estimated as 30,000 MW and irrigable land of nearly 500,000 hectares (GoN-WECS, 1999).

4.5 Rainfall-Runoff Process in the Terai

The past experience shows that flooding and inundation occur following high intensity rainfall in the Churia hills and Terai. A rainfall intensity of 350 mm for consecutive 48 hours is considered as high intensity rainfall (Sharma, 1988). In addition, rainfall exceeding 70 mm per hour is considered as cloudburst rainfall (Gyawali, 2011) which disrupts both the slopes and channel equilibrium at the local as well as regional scales. The recent survey shows that rainfall exceeding 70 mm per hour is considered as cloudburst rainfall which disrupts both the slopes and channel equilibrium at the local as well as regional scales.

Table 2: Rainfall Data of Terai Region, Nepal

S.N	Station Code	Station Name	District	Mean Annual Rainfall (mm)	Max Mean Monthly Rainfall (mm)	Month
1	0215	Godavari	Kailali	2,279	700	July
2	0416	Nepalgunj	Banke	1,338	426	July
3	0705	Bhairahawa	Rupandehi	1,609	509	July
4	0906	Hetauda	Makwanpur	2,283	566	Aug
5	1121	Karmaiya	Sarlahi	1,718	443	Aug
6	1421	Gainda	Jhapa	2,853	683	Aug

Source: (DHM, 2011)

Precipitation events exceeding 375 mm in 24 hours have been recorded in different parts of the Terai between 1959- 1993 and maximum rainfall data has shown below (Table 2).

5. Conclusions

Transboundary flood issues remain problematic every year, particularly in the rainy season due to unequal benefit sharing. Nepal has no clear jurisdiction over the flood management decision-making process for the Koshi River. The problem of flooding observed during the rainy season in bordering areas of Nepal is due to weak coordination between two countries. The lives and livelihoods of the local people have been damaged due to floods that create tensions at the local level. Both India and Nepal should develop monitoring system including tracking progress comparable evaluation methodology, data management, and a standard reporting mechanism. It can foster assistance and increase accountability as a result. The cooperation between the two countries should also strengthen climate change resilience which can prevent and resolve conflicts over water resources. The bilateral treaty between Nepal and India should be based on the local situation and experiences in order to settle outstandingwater related problems.

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Localization of Life on Land Sustainable Development Goal-15 through Conservation of Forest and Mountain Ecosystem in Nepal

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Abstract

The study assessed localization of life on land: sustainable development goal-15 in Nepal. The secondary source of information is used to capture the information onlocalization of life on land which relates with SDG 15. Nepal's overall progress in the SDGs-15 seems to be mixed. The forest area is gradually increasing in Nepal: from 39.6 % in 1987/88 to 44.74 % in 2019/20. Around 23.39 % of the total forest areas have been declared as protected. The rapid increase in forest areas during 1987-2015 is attributed to the successful implementation of forest conservation programs, migration from rural areas, and active participation of the community, etc. Forests under community-based management reported to account 42.7 % of the forest areas. There has been an increase in the number of wild tigers and rhinos due to community-led anti-poaching efforts. Similarly, the conservation of around 1000 lakes, wetlands, and ponds is also taking place. There is a large gap in financial resources in the public and private sectors, weak capacity particularly at the provincial and local level governments, and the negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic remained major challenge of SDG-15 implementation to achieve the goal as planned.

Key Words: Anti-poaching, Conservation, COVID-19, Community-based Forest Management, Sustainable Development Goals.

1. Introduction

The United Nations (UN) has formulated the Sustainable Development Goals (2015-2030) at the global level to replace the Millennium Development Goals. The 2016-2030 agenda for Sustainable Development is a blueprint of peace and prosperity for people and the planet

with a commitment that no one will be left behind. The UN (2015) has stated that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a bold, universal agreement to end poverty in all its dimensions and craft an equal, just, and secure world for people, planet, and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs and 169 targets are a part of transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted by 193 Member States at the historic UN General Assembly Summit in September 2015, and came into effect on January 1, 2016 (UN, 2015).

In short, it has been grouped into five Ps that include:

Planet: Protect our Planets natural resources and climate for future generations;

People: End poverty and hunger in all forms and ensure dignity and equality;

Prosperity: Ensure prosperous and fulfilling lives in harmony with nature;

Peace: Foster peaceful, just and inclusive societies; and

Partnership: Implement the agenda through a solid global partnership.

In this article, it has focused only SDG 15- life on land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

MOFE (2018) has stated that even before the adoption of the United Nations Biological Convention (1992), the Forest Nationalization Act 1957 is one of the pioneer policies of its kind. This policy had an intention to protect the public forests from individual misuse and encroachment (MOFE, 2018). Dhakal (2018) has further elaborated that Nepal has formulated a biodiversity conservation policy from local to central levels. The Constitution of Nepal gives especial attention to all three tiers of the government to conserve, manage and use biodiversity resources as a concurrent subject matter. The National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act (1973), Forest Act (1993), Environmental Protection Act (1994) and control of International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Act (2017) and their subsequent regulations are the visible policy reforms for biodiversity conservation in Nepal (Dhakal, 2018). However, biodiversity conservation practice from the community people is an age-old tradition of Nepal.

The country opened itself to international influence and joined the United Nations in the 1950s.There were then fickle, short-lived attempts at democratic constitutionalism, but only in 1990 did the nation become a full-fledged multi-party democracy. Coincidentally, another major earthquake, in April 2015, hastened Nepal's political parties to end a protracted post-conflict transition by promulgating a new constitution that institutionalized a federal republic in an inclusive polity with ambitions to aspire for lasting, broad-based prosperity (NPC, 2017). Nepal has adopted the sustainable development goals as per the national context. While all the 17 SDGs and 169 targets are legitimate development objectives seen through a global lens, a resource-strapped country like Nepal needs to prioritize, localize and motivate a bottom-up path towards greater progress. Nepal has prepared a home-grown roadmap that is consistent with the SDGs, yet rooted in quintessentially Nepali events.

NPC (2017) has mentioned that Nepal's relative underdevelopment is somewhat of a paradox with compelling potentials of a uniquely attractive country sitting under-utilized because of politico-institutional weaknesses. Nepal can no longer wait. The young republic has no choice but to ramp up its economic vigor if it is to match the tall political achievements of recent years and to meet the rising aspirations of nearly 30 million Nepalese who are increasingly educated, politically conscious, and globally connected (NPC, 2017). Historically, the pace of economic change in Nepal has been sluggish. The decadal average growth rate over the past 50 years has hovered between 2 and 5 %, with investment levels grossly insufficient to deliver the kind of economic change seen elsewhere. Over the past decade, lack of well-paying jobs at home has fueled temporary migration on an epic scale making the Nepali economy heavily reliant on remittances (NPC, 2017)

2. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- Assess current status of progress against baseline related to life on land sustainable development goal -15 (2016-2030) in Nepal;
- Map out the existing situation and find out the gaps and prevailing challenges in order to achieve the progress against targets in the context of Nepal by 2030.

3. Methodology

The desk review method was used in order to carry out the study due to COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal. The information collection is based on secondary source of information using available published documents published by the Government of Nepal, National Planning Commission, United Nations Development Program, development journals and other institutions. The information has been verified citing relevant references in the bottom of the article.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Status of Biodiversity in Nepal

Nepal is a Himalayan country with a fragile ecosystem. The country is cognizant of the need for a fine balance between the protection and sustainable regeneration of natural and biological resources, livelihood opportunities of the mountain people, promotion of their indigenous knowledge and culture, development of infrastructure and building resilience from natural disasters. The promotion of a holistic approach to all dimensions of sustainable development is more critical in the mountains than anywhere else. The protection of the mountain environment has immediate and multidimensional impacts on the low lands in view of their linkages through water, energy, food, diverse products and other ecosystem services from the mountain resources (NPC, 2020:52-54).

Uprety (1998) has explained that Nepal has about 54 % of the surface area under some sort of vegetation. A total of 118 ecosystems have been identified in different physiographic zones. In addition, 75 vegetation types and 35 forest types are identified which is bio-climatically divided into ten zones. Besides a large number of deep valleys, the considerable vertical extension of the Nepal Himalayas has contributed to the formation of many isolated localities, favorable for new species. Nepal contains only about 0.1% of the total landmass in the world while it harbors about 2 % flowering plants, 3 % pteridophytes

and 6 % bryophytes of the world's flora. In addition, about 5 % (246 species) of the total flora reported is endemic to the country. The endemic species accounts to about 30 % for whole of the Himalayas. Based on the currently recorded species, Nepal could be considered as a meeting point of several floral species because of altitudinal and climatic variations (Uprety, 1998). Manandhar (2002) has pointed out that most Nepalese depend on plant resources for their livelihood.

Traditionally, Nepalese people have considered forests as a source and a symbol of creation (Manandhar, 2002). Thapa (2014) has stated that more than 134 wild edible plants have been identified in Nepal. The rural people have been taking roots, tubers, rhizomes, leaves, and fruits derived from wild sources during the food scarcity period (Thapa, 2014).The biodiversity conservation work are directly related to livelihoods of the indigenous people as well in Nepal.

However, there have been the problems of the unplanned construction of road tracks, soil erosion, degradation of mountain watershed and unsustainable extraction of sand and pebbles around the bank of rivers. Similarly, a balance between the protection of the ecosystem and development activities, as well as sharing of benefits with local people and payment of ecosystem services needs to be strengthened.

4.2 Tracking the Progress

The community forestry program in Nepal has been incredibly successful in protecting forests and utilization of resources with local community ownership, as well as sharing of benefits with the community.

Table 1: SDG 15 - Protect, Restore and Promote Sustainable Use of Terrestrial Ecosystems

Targets and Indicators		Baseline 2015*	Target 2019*	Progress 2019**	Target 2030*
Target 15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems					
15.1.1	Forest area as a proportion of total land area	44.7	-	44.7	-
1	Forest under community-based management (% of total dense forest areas	39	39.8	42.7	42
15.1.2	Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity that are covered by protected areas, by ecosystem type				
1	Protected area (including forest, in per cent of total land area)	23.2	23.3	23.39	23.3

2	Conservation of lakes, wetlands, and ponds (number)	1727	2599	1000	5000
Target 15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests					
15.2.1	Progress towards sustainable forest management				
1	Handover of forests to leasehold forest groups (000 hectare)	44.6	44.6	45.4	44.6
2	Afforestation in public and private lands (hectare per annum)	-	5000	4000	5000
15.3.1	Proportion of land that is degraded over total land area				
1	Forest density (Average number of trees per hectare)	430	487	430	645
15.5.1	Red List Index				
3	Wild tigers (number)	198	205	235	225
4	Rhino (number)	534	600	645	783
5	Community led anti-poaching units mobilized (number)	400	400	126	400
Target 15.9 By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning					
15.9.1	Progress towards national targets established in accordance with Aichi Biodiversity Target 2 of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020				
1	Plant (floral) species under conservation plan (number)	3	30	7	15
2	Animal (faunal) species under conservation plan (number)	5	48	10	15

*Source: Adopted from *SDG Status and Roadmap: 2016-2030; **SDG Progress Report (2016-2019), NPC, 2020*

As a result, areas covered by forests have increased, and the benefits accrued from the protected forests have been shared by a larger number of the local population. Similarly, integrated watershed management and community based eco-tourism, together with forest and biodiversity conservation, would further contribute to achieving the targets of SDG-15 (Table 1).

The forest area is gradually increasing in Nepal. It was only 39.6 % in 1987/88 whereas a forest area has increased to 44.74% of the country in 2019/20. The forest density has remained at 430 since 2015 while it was supposed to be increased to 487 in 2019. The rapid increase in forest areas during 1987-2015 was due the successful implementation of forest conservation programs, migration from rural areas, and active participation of the community in the protection of forests. The forest coverage under community-based management account 42.7% of the total forest areas in Nepal. With an effort to conserve biodiversity, 23.39 % of the total land areas including forests have been declared protected. Similarly, the conservation of around 1000 lakes, wetlands and ponds are also taking place. There has been an increase in the number of wild tigers and rhinos as a result of community-led anti-poaching efforts, which drastically decreased illegal killings. However, the number of community-led efforts have decreased since 2015 and stood at 126 in 2018/19.

4.3 Impact of COVID-19 in Sustainable Development Goals-15

The COVID-19 pandemic could immensely affect the capacity, resources and mobilization of partnership for the SDGs. Poverty is likely to be increased together with its cascading impacts on health, education, employment opportunities and other economic activities. This will have substantive negative impacts on the achievement of the SDGs. The special global cooperation programs should be initiated and strengthened to support national recovery around the world. The international community should prioritize vulnerable countries like Nepal in providing necessary support to deal with the deleterious impacts of COVID-19 on the lives and livelihoods of people. There has been increased illegal logging and poaching of wildlife in mountains, hills and *Churia* range of Terai region of Nepal.

4.4 Localization of SDGs

Nepal has a federal structure with provisions of distribution and sharing of power, duties and responsibilities under the new constitution. The provincial and local level governments and legislative bodies have to play key roles in integrating the SDGs into their respective areas of responsibility. There is a need of institutionalization of local level planning at the provincial and local level government in order to localize the SDGs. Similarly, there will be a need for the consolidation of efforts and capacity building of all federal units, particularly in the local level government. It should be effective integration and implementation while promoting disaggregated data collection, comparative analysis, monitoring and evaluation at the provincial and local levels.

At the same time, more efforts are needed to enhance resources and technologies for addressing climate and environmental issues at the provincial level as well. It has been learnt that Nepal has good capacity to develop plan, strategies and policies. However, it has been observed that the weak capacity of local government on implementation, monitoring, evaluation and utilization of development budget has affected implementing SDG 15 targets.

4.5 Gap Analysis in SDG -15

- **Forest Fire:** The forest fire is identified as gap in Sustainable Development Goal -15 that is in increasing trend that resulted loss of biodiversity, forest coverage and life and livelihoods of the local people in hills and Terai areas during dry season in Nepal. Biodiversity loss makes agriculture more vulnerable to climate change, pests and diseases.
- **Climate Change:** The Climate Change is a major issue as identified in Sustainable Development Goal -15 which has negative impact in the life and livelihood of the people, plant and planet. The local adaptation plan of action needs to be properly implemented to address climatic actions. The policy level lobbying and advocacy work need to be actively done to influence policy, practices, ideas and belief at local, national and international level communities. **Nepal** has already been suffering from **climate change**-led **impacts** such as depletion of snow cover, glacier retreat and glacial lake out-burst flood. At community level, problems like erratic rainfall patterns, water hazards, water shortage and vector borne diseases are reportedly growing.
- **Conflict between Human and Wildlife:** The conflict between human and wildlife in the buffer zone is one of the important issues that have increased over the years. This issue should be seriously taken into account in order to building good relationship between human and wildlife.
- **Mobilization of Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations:** The active mobilization of private and civil Society organizations has yet to take place. The private sector and Civil Society organizations are also major drivers of change to respond to SDGs 15 targets. The civil society organizations act as watch dog and rigorously monitor progress through social audits, budget analysis, and shadow reports etc on the SDGs.
- **Mobilization of Media:** The mobilization of print and electronic media can highlight major issues and gaps in Sustainable Development Goal-15 targets. This is an important stakeholder in order to raise awareness, opinion building, mass campaign and advocacy works to influence policy and practice at local level and contribute to the localization process.

4.6 Challenges of SDG -15 Implementation

The following challenges have been envisaged to effective execution of sustainable development goals:

In Nepal, fragility of the mountains and hills, climate change impacts, migration and some business practices have put tremendous pressure on natural resources. While Nepal have increased

protected areas as well as the areas covered by forests up to 44.7 % of the total land area, biodiversity loss, soil erosion, floods, droughts, erratic weather patterns and climate change have undermined the lives and livelihood opportunities of a large number of people. Building resilience of all, but especially those at the bottom, is critical to mitigate the impacts of these disasters and challenges. Environmental unfriendly activities have resulted in the environmental pollution, land degradation, global warming/climate change and biodiversity loss. These issues have directly affected the quality and **sustainability** of ecosystems.

Therefore, the local government should focus on sustainable management of natural resources at local levels. It needs adopts a low-carbon economic growth measures with sustainable use of natural resources, and expects the international community to also commit itself to a higher level of ambition of Green House Gas emission reduction and an enhanced level of support to climate-vulnerable countries and communities like Nepal. There is a large gap in the financial resources in the public and private sectors. It The coordination between the three-tier governments has been less effective due to capacity constraints at the provincial and local level governments. In addition, 2015 Gorkha earthquake led to huge losses of lives and property, and also had extensive adverse impacts on Nepal's development efforts. Similarly, the negative impacts of COVID-19 pandemic remained another major challenge of SDG implementation in order to achieve the targets.

4.7 Measures on Conservation of Forest and Ecosystem Services

Thapa (2020) has drawn the following measures based on lessons learnt in order to conserve the forest and ecosystem:

- Forest and wildlife conservation program should go together for species and ecological sustainability. However, local people should be in the centre of biodiversity conservation.
- Plant, animal and human inter-relationship is important factor for the ecosystem/ecological sustainability.
- Commitment to action of Forest Care Takers (Ban Heralu) has remained praiseworthy in order to conserve the forest and wildlife with small incentives. The mobile based technology has become instrumental to increase their efficiency in terms of forest patrolling to control illegal activities.
- The ecotourism activities particularly the homestay has become the means of income generation of the local indigenous people. This is a good linkage between biodiversity conservation and economic development. The local people have realized that wildlife and forest are good source of income through ecotourism. Now, the local indigenous people have established love and affection with wildlife, forest and river.
- Regular trainings, review and reflections workshops and positive response from forest staff is needed for the capacity development of Ban *Heralu*, community based anti-poaching unit, rapid response team members, youths in order to boost the morale for biodiversity conservation.

- The sustainability is ensured by linking biodiversity conservation works with livelihoods of indigenous people. The forest and wildlife are closely linked with local people's livelihoods. So, we could not undermine the local people in order to forest and wildlife conservation.
- The mobilization of local youths (women and men) for the conservation of forest and wildlife is instrumental. There is need of linkage between self-employment generation of youths and biodiversity conservation works in order to sustain the species and ecosystem.
- The biodiversity conservation work is the fun rather than burden to the state, community and professionals. People can enjoy in biodiversity conservation works. Let's make biodiversity as a major fun for people
- People, plant and wildlife should live together with co-existence and they should love each other if there is no threat for their life, livelihoods and habitat. People, plants and wildlife are the creation of Mother Nature. The conservation workers always should think as integrated approach (Thapa, 2020).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

It can be concluded that Nepal's overall progress in the SDG-15 seems to be mixed. The forest area is gradually increasing in Nepal. The figure suggests that there is good progress in community forest management, and biodiversity conservation. However, the gaps exists in controlling forest fire, mitigating impact of climate change, conflict between human and wildlife, mobilization of media and civil society organizations as identified in SDG-15..Nepal lags behind in the areas related to climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. The earthquake of 2015 had significant impacts in the past, and now the COVID-19 pandemic is going to have serious consequences across the sectors, especially on the vulnerable population. Therefore, building resilience, targeted support for the vulnerable groups, especially at the time of disasters, and strong focus on disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness seems to be critical. In Nepal, fragility of the mountains and hills, climate change impacts, migration and unsustainable business practices have put tremendous pressure on natural resources. Environmental unfriendly activities have resulted in the environmental pollution, land degradation, global warming/climate change and biodiversity loss. These issues have directly affected the quality and sustainability of ecosystems. Hence, the priority should focus on sustainable management of natural resources at various levels. Capacity of local government should be strengthened in implementing the SDG -15 targets with sufficient resource base.

5.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been put forward based on the analysis of literature review:

5.2.1 Capacity Development of Provincial and Local Level Governments

- Provincial and local level governments should be capacitated through training, orientation on SDG 15 targets and educational tour;

- SDG document should be translated into Nepali and other national language and dissemination to provincial, municipal level and other local stakeholders to internalize;
- SDG 15 targets should be incorporated into local level planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluation system;
- Proper monitoring tools and techniques should be ensuring in place in order to tracking the progress;
- Policies and related Act should be prepared in a timely manner by Federal, provincial and local level governments.

5.2.2 Financial resources mobilization at provincial and local level governments

- Financial resources need to be strong enough to implement the SDGs at local level;
- Local resources should also be effectively mobilized local revenue/ income;
- National and international financial commitment should be fulfilled on time to achieve SDG-15.

5.2.3 Coordination between three tiers of governments

- Effective coordination between federal, provincial and local level governments should avoid duplication, and ensure timely decisions and release budget on time;
- Regular meetings, review and reflection workshops should be organized between the three tiers of government machinery and elected people representatives;
- Time bound action plan with clear responsibility centers should be prepared and implemented accordingly.
- The conflict between human and wildlife should be resolved at policy and practice level and maintain good relationship through habitat management keeping the appropriate population of wildlife in the specific areas of national parks.

5.2.4 Community mobilization and active participation of civil society organizations

- Active community participation should be ensured for plantation, management and control illegal logging and poaching of wildlife;
- Forest fire should be strictly controlled with active participation of local communities and local government;
- Local political parties cadres and elected representatives should be actively mobilized for forest management and ecosystem conservation works;
- Civil society organizations should be actively mobilized to aware, organize community people in order to conserve forest, wildlife and ecosystem services.
- Local Adaptation Plan of Action should be implemented to mitigate negative impact of climate change at local level.

5.2.5 Mobilization of Media

- The print and electronic media should be mobilized to create awareness, mass campaign and advocacy to influence policy and practice at local, national and international level;
- The print and electronic media could be used as watch dog to control

illegal logging, wildlife poaching, and conservation of biodiversity and ecosystem;

- Media could be used for public hearings or social auditing to promote transparency as a tool of monitoring the progress of SDGs at local level.

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Analysis of Conflict-Sensitivity Issues in Development Programs of International Organizations: A Study in Gorkha District, Nepal

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Abstract

This study captures and analyzes the key issues of conflict sensitive project implementation with reference to post-earthquake reconstruction and development projects in Gorkha district of Nepal. Analyses are based on in-depth qualitative interviews with local community participants carried out between Aug'. 20 and Feb. 21; content review of organizational reports; observation of project activities in Ajirkot, Barpak-Sulikot and Dharche rural municipalities and observation of personnel's behaviors of implementing organizations in the aid recipient communities. Descriptive analysis of the findings infers that most of development projects executed by international organizations are not conflict-sensitive in practice. In view of 'conflict-sensitivity' perspectives; handling of procurement, partners' relationships, feedback & accountability mechanisms and exit strategies are merely poor in the project processes. Besides, approaches of international organizations in terms of targeting, community relationships and government relationships are also contributing to negative effects of the interventions. Overall findings conclude that the actions and behaviors of international organizations are not compatible with the several fundamental principles of conflict sensitivity including 'Do-no-Harm', transparency, accountability, complementarity, neutrality, respect and inclusiveness. For these reasons, they should focus to capacitate their human resources on conflict sensitive project implementation as well as to produce real-time context information so that project interventions shall be tailored in a conflict-sensitive process throughout the project cycles.

Key Words: Conflict Sensitivity, International Organizations, Issues, Actions, Behavior, Principles

1. Introduction

Foreign aids can cause both positive and negative impacts on conflict. Having engaged in analysis of this phenomenon, numbers of practitioner-scholars (Anderson,1999; Uvin, 1998; Uvin, 2001; Bush, 1998; Reychler, 2006) have necessitated aid delivery should follow a different approach while working in conflict affected situations. Most initial analyses are influenced by the violent conflicts that occurred during the 1990s and 2000s in Rwanda, Bosnia, Uganda, Liberia, Burundi, Mozambique, Afghanistan and many other countries and ineffectiveness of aid provided in those areas (Uvin, 2001; APFO et.al, 2004). Despite a significant flow of aid on humanitarian, development and peacebuilding sectors; growing internal conflicts in the recipient countries had badly distressed the international organizations causing physical harm on one side, and questioning the relevance of their presence on the other side (Haider, 2014). This necessitated Conflict analysis (CA), conflict impact assessment (CIA), Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA) and Conflict Risks Assessment (CRA) must be made compulsory in designing and implementing development projects, programmes and regular project performance monitoring system, yearly reviews and periodic evaluations (Upreti, 2010a). Indeed, application of Do-No-Harm approach helps to identify and promote connectors - capacities for peace, and minimize dividers - capacities for tension (Anderson, 2000). In order to streamline these reflections in practice, the international organizations - bilateral, multilateral, civil society or private sectors who are involved in humanitarian, development or peacebuilding contexts have expressed their public commitments to work in conflict sensitive manner. Defining Conflict Sensitivity, Haider (2014) states:

"... means the ability to: understand the context in which you operate; understand the interaction between your intervention and the context (how the context affects the intervention and how the intervention affects the context); and act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximize positive impacts" (p. 2).

Given the legacies of a decade long armed conflict and other experiences of violent conflicts and political turmoil in Nepal; the international organizations working in the country are expected to unequivocally consider the conflict-sensitive principles in their interventions. But, in contrast, and as exposed by the press-medias ("INGOs in Controversy", 2016; Sapkota, 2016; HPN, 2011), the acts of international organizations are frequently imparting negative images in the development field. Dhungana& Cornish (2021) points out growing public concerns on haphazard aid distribution acts of international organizations in post-earthquake situations including fraught relationships between the GoN and non-governmental actors. Similarly, Sapkota (2016) explains negative effects on the local economy due to unnatural growth of house rent and other services in Gorkha district after the entry of international organizations to provision post-earthquake assistance to the earthquake survivors. Having considered these contextual background, this study aims to systematically investigate the operationalization of Conflict Sensitivity in development interventions to answer

two pertinent research questions: (i) How the 'acts' of international organizations are being perceived in communities in terms of minimizing negative effects and maximizing positive effects of aid supports; and (ii) To what extent the Conflict Sensitivity principles are upheld by the international organizations in actual practices. Thus, this article shall present exploratory information in the field of conflict sensitivity research.

2. Conceptual Framework

Conflict Sensitivity application in development interventions begins from 'do-no-harm' (Khaled, 2021) and its overall mainstreaming pledges for minimization of negative effects and maximization of positive effects of processes and actions undertaken in a specific context (Goddard, 2014; Upreti, 2010a; Upreti, 2010b; Upreti, 2014;). The Do-No-Harm manual (CDA, 2016) draws attentions of practitioners on: (i) Patterns of actions - Theft, Market Effect, Distribution Effect, and Legitimization Effect; and (ii) Patterns of behavior - Respect, Accountability, Fairness and Transparency (Transparency shall cut across other three behaviors). Similarly, Conflict Sensitivity guidebook developed by the Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (2012) focuses on a set of conflict sensitive issues: Targeting, Procurement, Relationships with Communities, Feedback and Accountability Mechanisms, Relationships with Partners & Donors, Relationships with Governments, and Exit Strategy on which international organizations should pay attention during implementation of their development interventions. Further to this; other relevant guidebooks, instruments, research findings, and practitioners' handbooks (SDC, 2006; ADB, 2012; United Nations Nepal, 2018; USAid, 2016; RMO, 2010) points out Conflict sensitivity is founded on several key principles such as Flexibility, Sustainability, Partnership, Responsibility, Participation, Inclusiveness, Respect, Impartiality, Neutrality, Coordination & Complementarity, Transparency, Accountability and Timeliness. Reflection of these normative principles helps to gangue mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity in practice. Based on these reviews, a conceptual framework of conflict sensitivity operationalization is drawn below to help analysis of the findings:

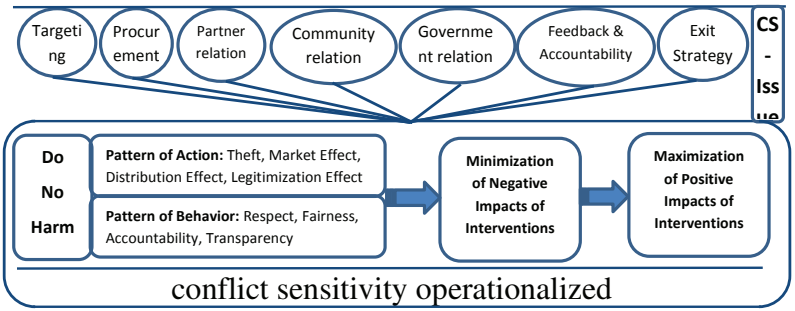

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Study (Source: Developed by Authors)

3. Methodology

3.1 Selection of the Study Site

Gorkha district is purposively selected for field-work considering long presence of international organizations since their first entry in Nepal about seven decades ago (Karkee& Comfort, 2016), and their increased physical presence (OCHA, 2015) after the incident of mega-earthquake in 2015 having its epicenter in the same district. Some other features of the district such as: highly conflict-affected district (Hatlebakk, 2009) during the armed conflict between 1996-2006, continuous presence of some of international organizations for several decades (e.g. Care Nepal); geography fulfilled with cultural, ethnic and ecological diversity (Gorkha Statistics Office, 2018) etc. made this land prosperous for the research. Interviews and observations are carried out in district headquarter as well as project communities situated in Ajirkot, Barpak-Sulikot and Dharche Rural Municipalities of the district that are identified through a snow-ball sampling process.

3.2 Research Methods and Data Analysis

This study applies qualitative research methods both for collection of primary information and their analysis (Glesne, 2016; Silverman, 2000; Lofland et.al. 2006; Neuman, 2015). In-depth interviews (N=24) carried out with local stakeholders have enriched anticipated information with regards to actions and behavior of the international organizations in their locality. The sample considered for this study satisfies the information saturation (Boddy, 2016) by comprising diverse informants including local political leaders, journalists, local government representatives, local NGO leaders, and freelancers. Considered sample is also good-enough for narrative enquiry approach (Guetterman, 2015) followed in this research. By observing (Jorgensen, 1989) the project communities of international organizations and reviewing the contents of internal documents; the information collected from interviews have been validated. As suggested by Okumus, Altinay, & Roper (2007), difficulties are experienced to get access of internal documents of international organizations to validate them with the information of participant interviewees, however personal approach of the researchers with some personnel of international organizations has helped to interview informally (Swain & Spire, 2020) and collect some of documents for academic use.

Researchers have physically visited three project sites located in Ajirkot, Barpark-Sulikot and Dharche Rural Municipalities of the district to observe post-earthquake reconstruction and development interventions. A specific focus has also been given to draw a case study (Yin, 2003) from Kerauja village of Dharche Rural Municipality which was devastated by the earthquake internally displacing more than 350 families due to geological collapse.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Operationalization of Key Programming Issues of Conflict Sensitivity

Targeting

'Vulnerability' is the most common attribution used by development organizations with respect to their target population though the indicators of vulnerability are found varying from organization to organization. Field data reveals the volume of resources available with development organizations and their institutional and project objectives have

been the major determinants of target group selection, rather than actual vulnerability conditions of the beneficiaries. Some evidences like (i) Phase Nepal's wheel-chair distribution to physically impaired individuals in a blanket-approach irrespective of recipients' body-mass, body size and age; (ii) UNDP's socio-technical assistance to build houses for already construction completers - are the worst practices of targeting. From these supports neither the targeted families became satisfied nor the excluded one who could not access the support. In some other cases, international organizations have carried out a baseline prior to delivering their support and endorsed the support plans through local governments. Still, time lag between baseline and project execution is a problem as most of pre-planned interventions are found losing their relevance in a long gap.

On dealing with the targeting issue, different organizations possess different abilities. WFP, OXFAM, USAid/Suaahara have used fresh primary information and baseline to figure out their target beneficiaries, whereas other projects like UNDP's Housing Reconstruction and UNICEF's Water Supply project in Barpak-Sulikot Rural Municipality are found negligent to identify target beneficiaries on their own effort. As a consequence, the beneficiaries who had completed housing reconstruction have received project benefits from UNDP, but other eligible and poorer beneficiaries were left-behind. Similarly, from the UNICEF's water-supply project, a marginal Dalit community of Sulikot village could not get water access, but other communities near to them were privileged from piped-water connection. Such behaviors of large and renowned organizations are found responsible to surge the local tensions rather than increasing the positive impacts of the interventions.

Procurement

Procurement procedures being actioned by international organizations suggests that they are strong from a documentation point of view. But, analysis of observed field data shows: (i) Some of local NGOs are invoicing different rates of purchased goods to different upward-partners even if that are purchased from same supplier on same dates, (ii) Most of large procurements are sought from out of district despite capable suppliers are present within the district - undermining the local economy, (iii) Large procurements are done directly by international organizations rather by the local implementing partners - daunting the partnership principles, (iv) Donor organizations tend to select their main supplier (first layer implementing partner or budget managers) mostly based in own country letting them to keep large amount of funds as service charge and office running costs - inhibiting their accountability to recipient communities and host country governments. Indeed, the first layer partners of donor organizations procure additional layers of partners composed of international NGOs or private sectors who again retain a chunk of budget as overhead and management costs. An analysis of partnership channel and fund flow in a 40 million GBP's DFID funded project shows 83% of funds has been spent by international organizations on their own management and staffing and only about 17% budget from bilateral agreement is reaching up to the community level. This indicates that procurement of 'service-providing-agencies' by donors does not appear

responsible towards the benefits of recipient communities. Similarly, most of bilateral/ intergovernmental organizations have procured the vehicles from grants or loans they agreed with the Nepal government. Such vehicles are given diplomatic number plates and are being provided to INGOs or private sector organizations who do not possess diplomatic status in the country. Such practices are responsible to promote misuse of development resources and violates the Basic Operating Guidelines - BOGs of international organizations[i] that are signed by eleven donor organizations, United Nations in Nepal and Associations of International NGOs in Nepal. Clause 14 of BOGs states "We do not tolerate the theft, diversion, or misuse of development or humanitarian assistance". In contrast, above descriptions clear that the diversion or misuse of development assistance are embedded in the practices of international organizations.

Relationships with Communities

Project personnel working in international organizations are found able to impress the local communities on their agendas by having a good communication policy. During their sporadic visits, project personnel of international organizations hear local voices and turn to local partners for remedial instructions in order to redress community grievances. However, local communities are found embarrassed by suspicious activities of unfamiliar visitors who possess potential affiliation with international organizations. Such activities include reasonable/unreasonable photography, videography, and disappearance of girls and women from villages, price-hike in local communities and their fragranced relationships with young girls and boys through social media. Manipulation on reports, particularly prepared by the faith-based international organizations to inform their donors appears as another major concern of local stakeholders. This also reinforces - despite the trust-building abilities among the staff, most of behaviors of international organizations are increasing the local tensions rather than minimizing the negative effects of their behavior in communities.

Feedback and Accountability Mechanisms

District level presence of UNDP, Mott MacDonald, CARE Nepal, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), USAid/Suaahara, Good Neighbors International are accompanied with visible and accessible office locations. On their notice boards, visitors can see basic public information about project cover areas, promotional materials, project infographics, standard operating procedures for staffs, notice about the complaining process etc. Their offices usually contain at least one complaint box in spite of limited use and impractical to illiterate people and confidential complainants. Meanwhile, Releigh International, Practical Action, WFP, People in Need, Phase Nepal, JICA projects haven't set-up their offices in the district so that interested individuals can directly access and communicate with them. International Organizations who have contact offices in the district, also

i. The Basic Operating Guidelines (BOGs) signed by international organizations in Nepal contain15 point parameters for their self-regulation abided by the principles of impartiality, accountability, transparency and inclusion. https://un.org.np/basic-operating-guidelines

have appointed responsible grievance-handling officers and provisioned both open and anonymous online complaint processes for the general public and their own staff. Even if feedback mechanisms are set-up in their offices, it is also evident that international organizations are handling the reported issues and grievances with low priority. If complaints are about the sexual or financial misconduct of staffs and directed to senior management, the chance is higher to suspend the offender even prior to completion of investigations. But, issues are sometimes mystified or kept on hold if further action troubles the managers. Practices of too big consortium and too long project delivery channels appears to be an impediment of better feedback and accountability mechanisms. Impractical 'feedback and accountability mechanisms' of international organizations is convincingly spelled by one of respondent project personnel "in a big consortium, responsibility of all organizations sometimes becomes responsibility of none" - (Anonymous, personal communication, October 13, 2010). An open type of political affiliations of NGO leaders and INGOs' managers also appeared as a cause of loose feedback and accountability practices in the development projects. In most of cases, hiring of community level staffs, selection of beneficiary communities and partnerships with local organizations are directly associated with the political aptitudes of related individuals. Coinciding political interests deters the effective feedback and accountability between and among the actors. Hence, the overall feedback and accountability mechanisms of international organizations are constrained by centralized management of many organizations, loosely held responsibilities in a consortium of many organizations and politically triggered biases among the actors of aid delivery clearly indicating the negative impacts of aid in recipient communities.

Relationships across the Partners

Partnership chains of international organizations are found usually consisting of 3-layers: fund providers, fund managers and implementing agencies. But, the number of agencies involved in a single chain could be unimaginably high as seen in a DFID funded reconstruction project where at least 23 international and national organizations worked on different roles within Gorkha troubling even for communication and coordination. In a partnership channel, straight relationships between donors and local implementers are found shielded by the intermediary international organizations. In turn, this results, local implementing organizations are acting as an instrument more than as partners of international organizations without benefitting from capacity development resources emitted by the donor communities. As observed in the field, local NGOs are promoting the logos of donor organizations; most often the USAid, JICA, and Government of India without mentioning their own organizations in most of the displays. Similarly, local NGOs are compelled to focus on those communities who are already defined by the upper tier INGOs or donor organizations without building a common discretion of all involved organizations. Indeed, as the chain of aid passes in layers, each of downstream organization feels as subordinate and the upstream organization feels as the boss. Infusion of these attitudes in development practices are not contributing to enhanced capacities of the local organizations and their dignity.

Further observations clearly articulate: (i) interfere of international organizations within rules, regulations and policies of local partners, (ii) International Organizations exhibit reluctance to provision service cost/ overhead expenses to local organizations, (iii) International Organizations' involve on direct implementation of several community level activities, and (iv) Setting-up of multiple layers of partnership composed of international organizations themselves. These patterns of actions are increasing the cost of development delivery on one hand, and undermining the capacity and importance of local organizations on the other-hand. As per Nepal's legal regime, INGOs regulated by the Social Welfare Council (SWC) are not allowed to implement the project thorough itself and they cannot spend more than twenty percent of agreed budget on management activities (Imperial Law Associates, 2020). But, increasing trend of donors to partnering with private sector development organizations who perform beyond the SWC's radar, and allowing the creation of multiple layers of international organizations to implicitly increase the management cost spread the tensions within a partnership channel, and between the government and international organizations blaming the aid sector as dollar misusing enterprises. These behaviors further trouble the partnership functions, and elongate dependency over the aid among local communities and local implementing partners.

Relationships with (Local) Governments

With the promulgation of new constitution in 2015 and beginning of federalization process by the local election held in 2017, local governments are equipped with some constitutionally provisioned powers (Nepal Law Commission, 2015) in Nepal. Possessing an obvious interest to directly interact with the funding communities is inevitable to local governments so that their priorities shall be aligned with the resource commitments of international organizations beginning from the planning process. Indeed, jointly executed projects with NGOs have good outcomes in terms of timely completion, enhanced transparency and clearer documentation. Despite these facts, very few organizations are able to accompany the local governments due to their predefined activities and reflect non-governmental resources in local-governments' budgets. As experienced by local-government representatives, bypassing local governments has gradually culminated in recent years than in the initial years of local election in 2017, which is a positive outcome. Gradual nearing between international organizations and local governments is an unavoidable praxis. But, most of international organizations are staying aside from formal agreements and operative partnerships due to some pre-occupied mindsets assuming (i) local government staffs' ego erupts beside a feeling of competition with non-governmental workers, and (ii) there exists power conflict between elected representatives and government staffs; and within among the local elected representatives. But, the field reality reveals, local-government staffs and representatives are in a dilemma with regards to policy provisions about partnering with and regulating the activities of international organizations. From the Conflict Sensitivity perspectives (Conflict Sensitivity Consortium, 2012), unless the government is contributing to violent conflict or oppressing particular groups, it is essential to build relationships with

them to gain access to areas where project activities are targeted or in order to influence policy and practice. Analysis of field information further suggests the current state of International Organizations-Local Government relationships are not conflict-provoking although they are not strongly established even in the five-years period of federalization process.

Exit Strategies

The exit process and practices of international organizations appear adverse in resolving tensions that are cropped up between the withdrawal of assistance and commitment to achieve program outcomes. During the field observations, we have evidenced incomplete and broken water-supply schemes in all three rural-municipalities - Ajirkot, Barpak and Dharche, for which local users blame the local leaders who represented the user committees. But, users are unaware about the implementing organizations. Similarly, a landslide protection structure built by CARE Nepal had been swept away in the last decade beneath the Laprak village and the debris flooded several hectares of arable land and human settlement in Machhakhola area of Dharche Rural Municipality. The affected population could not receive any compensation despite the bad results of land-slide protection interventions. These examples contradict with Gardner, Greenblott, & Joubert (2005)'s anticipation that states "(international organization's) exit strategies can help clarify and define the sponsor's role to host countries and local partners as being time limited and reducing the potential for misunderstandings and future dependency" (p. 7). It is also important to integrate capacity building, community ownership and participatory processes as the non-separable components to resonate an exit strategy noble for development programming. Conflict Sensitivity Consortium (2012) emphasizes that exit strategy should be designed in consultation with the target communities, partners and project staff and should be widely shared and explained. But, observed practices of international organizations are found confined within very short-term **activity-bound partnership agreements** with local implementing organizations, and not practicing to prepare and document well defined exit strategies in consultation with the beneficiary communities. As experienced by the local NGOs, international organizations are poorly investing in capacity development of local communities and implementing organizations, and are more focused to invest on current needs rather for long-term benefits of the communities. This *status quo* is responsible for producing dependency in rural areas rather for building self-reliance in communities and sustainability of the development results. Further informal interviews with project-personnel also reveal that building robust and durable infrastructures is not the priorities of international organizations because they think it can slow-down the job market of current employees in aid sectors. These findings reinforce the conflict-insensitive exit process of development interventions inadvertently contributing to the negative effects and failing to generate positive outcomes of the aid support.

Main Findings from Kerauja Village Resettlement Interventions

As a consequence of 2015's devastating earthquake, Kerauja village settlement of Dharche Rural Municipality got collapsed,

and more than 350 families were displaced from the village. As narrated by the local residents, the whole village spent 2 years under tarpaulin and zinc-sheet-tents in nearby areas. They sustained lives on relief items provided by the government and non-governmental organizations. Local school, health-facility and other essential services were managed under the tarps for two years. Despite the devastating situations, this village could receive relief and other supports very late because of difficult geological location situated above 2000 meters' elevation, accessibility constrained by Budhigandaki river, nearest road-head located beyond 12-hours of walking distance, and occupancy of innocent ethnic population comprised of Gurungs and Dalits.

At the time of field-visit after five years of the quake incidence, Kerauja's reconstruction status emits a very miserable picture. The displaced villagers are organized in 5-new settlements in 5 minutes to 3-hours farther areas. But, none of new settlements are able to receive supports from national reconstruction authority's 'Vulnerable and Integrated Settlement Development Program'[ii] to develop basic infrastructures such as walking trails, water supply, and other public amenities. Very few restored service facilities are not able to fulfill the basic requirements of the villagers in terms of health, education, water-supply, livelihood and social security. One of the most pressing issues identified from the study is related with the displacement and resettlement interventions which is associated with land grants provisioned for internally displaced households through National Reconstruction Authority (NRA). As per NRA guidelines[iii], 'internally displaced families' would be provided a maximum amount of NPR. 2 lakhs (approx. 2000 US$) cash-grant to purchase a land for house construction if they do not have ownership of habitable land elsewhere in the country. As per this criteria, 344 out of 354 displaced households were eligible for the 2-lakh land grant. Until the date of field survey, only 276 beneficiaries had accessed the land grants as shown below:

Size of Land-grant received (NPR)	No. of recipient Families
200,000	134
150,000 - 99,999	25
100,000 - 149,999	81
50,000 - 99,999	32
≤49,999	4

(Source: Grant Management and Local Infrastructure - GMaLI Office, Personal Communication, August 9, 2020)

Conversations with the local beneficiaries and ward-level representatives revealed that about one-third of the beneficiaries had already purchased 'enough sized' land (about 127 to 254 square meters) for house construction at prices lower than 2 lakhs prior to NRA's decision regarding provision of land grant for landless and internally displaced households. Later, the decision of '2-lakh' was abruptly caught by local government representatives, local land-holders and facilitating NGOs. Then, each small plot of land of 127 to

i. http://nra.gov.np/np/resources/details/9VrTBZPwJV1C5Zyicy0XpEH5uGh6xewL5vhOHLj3YqI

ii. Guidelines for habitable land purchase for Earthquake-affected. Endorsed by NRA Executive Board on June 5, 2017. Available at: http://www.nra.gov.np/en/content/newsletter/0#

190 square-meters was priced NPR 2 lakhs from a (elites) meeting in the ward office. After all, buying and selling happened exactly on the highest ceiling of the grant amount, rather on the actual market price. In reality, a land area having good-size for a house (127 to 190 square-meters) costs 60 thousand to 1 lakh rupees (US$ 1,000) if someone wants to buy on their own expense in the new settlement areas. Two-lakh is enough for a 0.05 hectare (500 sqm.) or bigger size of land in locals' experiences. On the other-hand, the grantee was free to decide by himself/herself to purchase land anywhere within the district within a two-lakhs limit. But, a very few people who were known about this rule had attempted to move away from the original location and many of them continued within the village premises.

As discussed individually with some of the beneficiaries - they just know that the government has purchased land for them on 2 lakh rupees. Paper works were completed by some other organizations, and the NRA handed over the bank-cheques to 'sellers'. This practice also contradicts with the article - 10 of the guidelines that states "... maximum 2-lakhs shall be provided to the beneficiary" - not to the sellers. The recipients suspect their land is not as good to pay 2 lakhs, but on the name of land scarcity, the ward office and landlords fixed the rates without giving options to individuals to negotiate and find out land by the beneficiaries themselves. The international/ national organizations like People in Need (PIN) and Community Self-Reliance Center (CSRC) had been involved to facilitate the same processes. These findings shall be interpreted in following ways with respect to the Do-No-Harm approach:

Theft: Resource diversion has occurred to benefit certain land-holders and, probably, some intermediaries. Once the whole community seeks the truth in future, it retains a high potential of conflict risk.

Distribution effect: This practice has clearly benefited local landlords and elites higher and the innocent and poorer beneficiaries at a lower ratio. Thus drawing a line of division in the community is also a conflict creating factor.

Legitimization effect: In this case-study, facilitation of international organizations has been found contributing to implement the conflicting choices of government authorities that had fixed an inappropriate price of land to unilaterally benefit the certain land-holders. As a consequence, it encouraged misuse of reconstruction grants provisioned for the vulnerable beneficiaries and also provided a conducive environment to legitimize the unseen fraud and corruptions embedded within this action.

Market Effect: A clear market effect can be observed in this case that has intensified the cost of land when external resources are involved. The international organizations who are involved in the facilitation of land acquisition process are found going through the processes that are favoured by local elites without contributing to prevent its negative impact in a wider community.

5. Conclusion and Implications

Analysis of the actions and behaviors of international organizations in post-earthquake reconstruction and development contexts impart a clear message about their negligence to fundamental conflict-sensitivity principles. In Nepal, international

organizations have publicly spread their commitments to conflict-sensitive practices through 15-point basic operating guidelines. But, in practice, the aid delivery processes are leading to negative consequences due to clear debility in managing several project implementation issues in a conflict-sensitive manner. The case-study of Kerauja village further illustrates that the interventions of international organizations are increasing the dividing elements in society. From conflict-sensitivity perspectives, the patterns of actions and behaviors of international organizations in Kerauja are 'doing harm' to the society and not more than contributing for the positive impacts. Targeting the beneficiaries without proper baselines, and procuring the goods and services without encouraging local economies have raised serious conflict-sensitive risks. Similarly, exposition of suspicious behavior in local communities, disrespecting local implementing organizations for their values, and not caring upon proper exit from the project communities are additional concerns upon the acts of international organizations.

In Nepal, where kinds of micro-level conflicts prevail along with its long legacy of armed conflict and political unrest, international organizations are required to think critically in the areas where they have missed or neglected their commitments. Implementation of development activities aligning them with the local governments' plan from the beginning of planning processes can help international organizations to deal with the sensitive issues in changing governance contexts of the country. To this end, international organizations also need to transfer promising skills and knowledge about conflict sensitivity among the staffs who are engaged in delivery of the development services. Given the resource limitations for community development projects, the government shall expect aid support from international organizations, but it is equally critical that the cost of foreign aid would exceed higher when they poorly manage the conflict creating issues during project implementation. In order to ensure positive outcomes of development interventions, government authorities should equally uphold their responsibilities of regulating the development actors not by creating bureaucratic hassles but cooperating in a way that can remove multi-layer partnership-agreements, regulate private-sector development organizations and transfer maximum resources to actual services.

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Civil Society Roles and Challenges in SDG Localization: Experiences in Nepal

UTTAM UPRETY

Abstract

As a people-centered set of universal and transformative goals, the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is an important endeavor that requires multi-stakeholder participation. Civil society organizations' (CSOs) role in SDG localization is considered vital for them being locally rooted, and better qualified to represent people's needs and priorities. This exploratorystudy, undertaken in Kathmandu in early 2021, engaged civil society leaders and explored the challenges that prevent Nepali CSOs from putting their best efforts into SDG localization. The study found that CSOs can bridge the voices of marginalized communities to ensure leaving no one behind if governments across the levels are ready to give that space to them. A lack of an enabling legal environment, a result of government across the levels' perception that both CSOs and the SDGs belong to an external agenda, has created a bottleneck for Nepali CSO's engagement in the process. However, CSOs are weak in effectively advocating to claim the space since only a few CSOs understand their role in SDG localization. Since one third of the implementation period of SDGs has elapsed, it is of the utmost importance that governments across levels create space for CSOs and recognize their contribution.

Key Words: Enabling Environment, Localization, Local Governments, SDGs

1. Introduction

Despite being a challenging task, the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) is a widely discussed issue in development studies (Jönsson & Bexell, 2020) and it manifests a global call for action for a 'win-win' agreement of a people-centered set of universal and transformative goals (UNDP, 2019) encompassing economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. The concept of localization aims at embedding global norms in the local social environment that essentially

brings territorial elements into the discussion (Jönsson& Bexell, 2020; Lanshina, Barinova, Loginova, Lavrovskii, & Ponedelnik, 2019). Since the 2030 Agenda is human rights-based and focuses on the inclusion of marginalized and vulnerable groups (Wymann, Bracher, Peralvo, Perez, & Adler, 2018), with its localization, SDGs give countries more freedom and allow nation-states to fully align the global agenda to their national priorities (Lanshina, Barinova, Loginova, Lavrovskii, & Ponedelnik, 2019), though translating global goals into different tiers of the governance system is a daunting task.

Though Nepal proactively produced preliminary SDG Report in 2015, even before the formal adoption of the 2030 Agenda (Sigdel & Keitsch, 2019), the extent to which multi-stakeholder partnerships (which itself is considered as goal #17), including that of civil society organizations, (Jönsson& Bexell, 2020) have been promoted in the process of SDG localization is a concern. Although SDGs are not legally binding, localization provides some form of legal accountability and opportunities for enforcement (African Civil Society Circle, 2016) with the engagement of civil society organizations (CSO), whose roles and level of involvement vary differently across and within the countries (Corella, Nicolas, & Veldkamp, 2020).

While the idea of participation is at the core of the 2030 Agenda (Long, 2019) that specifically calls on major stakeholders to report on their contribution to the implementation of the SDGs, CSOs' participation in the localization of SDGs is important. Being a voluntary and citizen-driven entity, their independence and voluntariness should be respected, should their contributions be harnessed. As (Jönsson& Bexell, 2020) rightly highlighted, understanding the complexity of the SDGs localization process, given the blurring boundaries between global and locals, is necessary. This article thus focuses on the complexities and challenges that Nepali CSOs experience in localizing SDGs.

2. Study Methods and Approaches

An exploratory and qualitative research approach informed this study that uses a case study design. An inductive approach was used to collect and analyze the qualitative information gathered through three key informants. Three representative cases were chosen to understand the issue in broader contexts - professional background of the informants, physical setting, and geographical particularities they represent. To inform the study with participants' world views and perceptions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000) of SDG localization, the study purposefully selected cases to represent the spectrum of professional backgrounds and current engagement (Merriam, 1998). Following an unstructured interview method and open-ended questions (Fontana & Frey, 2005), interview themes were generated.

The three respondents bring ample experience in SDG localization from their day-to-day professional life. Mr. Daya Sagar Shrestha, a long-time CSO activist and development professional, is a chairperson at National Campaign for Sustainable Development (NACASUD-Nepal). He is also a former Executive Director of the NGO Federation of Nepal (NFN), an umbrella organization of Nepali NGOs. His opinion represents the CSOs

focused on SDG localization. Mr. Arjun Bhattarai, who is currently chairing the Nepal SDG Forum, has been with the NGO Federation for about a decade. He carries institutional memory of the NGO Federation, which is the focal institution leading the Nepal SDG Forum. Finally, Ms. Rita Kumari Shah represents civil society activists who advocate for the rights of marginalized communities. Her participation brings a gender perspective and the voices of underrepresented CSOs, particularly from Terai.

Informed consent (Fontana & Frey, 2005) was received before an interview, along with permission to record. Furthermore, participants gave consent to mention them in the article. To derive meaning, field data was managed, analyzed and interpreted by reviewing all the notes immediately after each interview (Merriam, 1998), and the interviews were transcribed in the same order they were conducted. After this, a systematic thematizing process was employed to analyze the qualitative data into the development of four empirical categories: (a) CSO's role in the SDG localization, (b) the role of an enabling environment for CSO contribution in SDG localization, (c) the state of government readiness to confirm its commitment, (d) weak CSO capacity to hold the government to account in creating an enabling environment.

3. Results and Discussion

This section briefly presents findings from literature review on concepts of SDGs localization, importance and urgency of localization, CSOs' role in the localization process, and challenges in the process.

3.1 Definition of Localization

Localization is an important process to ensure that no one is left behind. As quoted in the (African Civil Society Circle, 2016) GTF et al., (2014: 5) localization is …the process of defining, implementing, and monitoring strategies at the local level for achieving global, national, and subnational sustainable development targets. It involves various concrete mechanisms, tools, innovations, platforms, and processes to effectively translate the development agenda into results at the local level.

Localization intends to achieve SDGs through an inclusive process. By adjusting strategies, and making monitoring and evaluation at subnational contexts effective, localization enables local and regional governments to achieve SDGs from the bottom up (ElMassah& Mohieldin, 2020). By bringing something local in character (Patole, 2018), it makes development intervention at the local level robust. As Corella, Nicolas &Veldkamp (2020) put it, the localization of SDGs involves various concrete mechanisms, tools, innovations, platforms, and processes to effectively translate the development agenda into results at the local level. They argue that localization is an inclusive process that involves various forms of CSOs having a local government at the frontline of development. By creating more opportunities for engagement across levels of government, and taking community priorities into consideration, the localization of SDGs promotes greater inclusivity (Wymann , Bracher, Peralvo, Perez, & Adler, 2018). Localization is not a binary opposition to global or international goals (Jönsson&Bexell,

2020); rather it is an intricate, interactive political process based on harnessing local opportunities, priorities, and ideas.

Empowering local stakeholders is at the heart of SDG localization (Tjandradewi& Srinivas, 2018). It does so by taking national and sub-national contexts, challenges, opportunities, and governments in all global agendas, from the setting of goals and targets to implementation, monitoring, and reporting. By 'putting the last first' (Chambers, 1997), localization promotes an inclusive approach that utilizes local knowledge to tailor the ambitious global agenda to the local context (African Civil Society Circle, 2016). Similarly, localization promotes local awareness of the 2030 agenda and further makes the initiatives grounded in local community needs (Wymann, Bracher, Peralvo, Perez, & Adler, 2018).

Localization is essentially a political process as to how political decisions at the global level are adopted by political institutions at lower levels and integrated into the policy ambitions of those institutions (Jönsson& Bexell, 2020). This implies that it is the government (political institutions) vested with the responsibility to lead the process and adopt global decisions. ElMassah & Mohieldin (2020) argue that the concept of localization combines the benefits of both centralization and decentralization mode of governance where local priorities are tailored. As a "system-wide" goal, localization allows governments to effectively tailor SDG strategies and builds resilient communities by allowing them to learn from their own experiences (ElMassah& Mohieldin, 2020). Localization provides the local government ample opportunities to demonstrate effective local governance that is inclusive of diversity, and that creates broad-based ownership, commitment, and accountability (Tjandradewi& Srinivas, 2018).

3.2 Localization is Important and Urgent

Whereas the inherent quality of SDGs, such as getting rid of the 'developing' versus 'developed' dichotomy (ElMassah& Mohieldin, 2020), and diffused ownership are "deliberate products of a grassroots process" (UNDP, 2019), these qualities are not going to be realized without localization (Oosterhof, 2018). Similar to the conscious efforts made to seek inputs from and engage with a range of actors – civil society organizations, intergovernmental and multilateral organizations, individuals, and other stakeholders while setting the 2030 Agenda, it is equally important to continue streamlining all the efforts (Nepal SDGs Forum, 2020).

To fulfill the international commitment that "no one will be left behind" it is urgent to localize SDGs - from international to national and from federal to provincial and local levels (National Planning Commission, 2017). Similarly, targets and indicators are to be localized at Provincial and Local Levels since many SDGs are to be implemented at Provincial and Local Levels (NGO Federation of Nepal, 2017). "Whose reality counts?" (Chambers, 1997) is a key concern while localizing SDGs. Since setting priorities is the first important step in localizing SDGs (Wymann, Bracher, Peralvo, Perez, & Adler, 2018), a whole-of-society approach is required to realize the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda (Wayne-Nixon, Wragg-Morris, Mishra, & Markle, 2019).

However, though it is important as well as urgent, localization of SDGs into practice is not only a difficult task but it is also getting late (UNDP, 2019). Nepal SDG Forum (2020) highlights that the priorities of local governments are not necessarily guided by the SDGs and further argues that due to a lack of knowledge and expertise, the local governments are unable to translate and integrate SDGs in local level policies, programs, and budget.

3.3 CSOs Role in Localization

CSOs' role in SDG localization is embedded in the 2030 Agenda itself. Not only because of its potential contribution in achieving the ambition and scope of the SDGs, even goal 17 calls for multi-stakeholder participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It implies that the government alone cannot achieve the goals and thus, the government should facilitate the participation of CSOs.

Globally, it is found that CSOs are one of the key drivers of SDG localization (Jönsson& Bexell, 2020) because of them being locally rooted, making them better qualified to understand people's needs and priorities (ElMassah& Mohieldin, 2020). CSOs have even played an active role in shaping the 2030 Agenda of SDGs. According to Dattler (2016), in addition to their participation in sessions of the intergovernmental negotiations and the Open Working Group, CSOs provided inputs to their governments that influenced the governments' positions in setting Agenda 2030. They worked in coalitions across sectors, countries, and regions. Long (2019) argues that the scale and level to which CSOs could contribute towards SDG achievements depends on their diversity in many respects - CSOs possess vastly different missions, capacities, resources, and spheres of operation. CSO engagement could vary - mapping their activities onto SDG targets and aligning with the set of SDGs and global indicators; complying with the SDGs through their functions as employers, researchers, facilitators, advocates, and beyond; realizing and monitoring the values of the leave no one behind principle; and achieving policy coherence in their work.

Whether civil society takes formal roles such as formal consultations on government implementation plans and measures (Dattler, 2016) or informal roles, their inclusion in the SDG localization process is imperative (African Civil Society Circle, 2016). For this to be materialized, an enabling legal environment for CSOs, and their recognition are essential (Nepal SDGs Forum, 2020). Cambodian experience (Schröder& Young, 2019) demonstrates that a shrinking civic space has negative impacts on development outcomes and is very likely to have negative outcomes for several human development SDGs. Corella, Nicolas, & Veldkamp (2020) highlight that there are multiple forms of space for CSO engagement, be that invited or claimed, formal or informal, ad-hoc or long term/institutionalized. While civil society is invited by authorities as observers, for consultation or even active participation in decision-making, the claimed spaces, by contrast, are established on the initiative of civil society and are often informal, organically based on common concerns and identification. It is further emphasized that claimed and invited spaces are two parallel tracks - invited and claimed spaces can be seen and can interact in a given country, fulfilling

different mandates and/or involving different groups of actors.

It is found that CSOs have utilized both claimed and invited space with a variety of functions in the localization of SDGs. Apart from advocating and working as a watchdog holding the governments to account (Dattler, 2016), they are offering technical services. As the NGO Federation of Nepal (2017) claims, Nepali CSOs are playing a pivotal role towards the SDG process on different fronts: they represent marginalized communities and the local contexts due to better understanding of local realities (Fowler & Biekart, 2020) as well as holding the concerned authorities to account for SDGs.

However, the key areas of CSOs' engagement are not free of contestation. Long (2019) labels three specific areas of the potential contribution of CSOs in SDGs, including regulation (as watchdogs) and representation (as voice for people, especially those 'left behind'), as well as the realization of sustainable development outcomes through service delivery, which he believes would be possible only when a broad understanding of the contribution is developed. African Civil Society Circle (2016) argues that CSOs' contribution to localize these goals include four key areas, such as giving a voice to the poorest and most marginalized citizens, serving as agents of accountability, acting as a service delivery provider, and monitoring progress through data collection and reporting. In addition, Corella, Nicolas, & Veldkamp (2020) see five key areas for CSOs to play their role in the implementation and follow up of Agenda 2030 including (i) CSOs giving a voice to the poorest and most marginalized citizens to ensure their voices are heard; (ii) advocating for change; (iii) collecting data and monitoring progress; (iv) serving as watchdogs and agents of accountability and, (v) acting as service delivery providers.

Nepali CSOs have been proactively contributing to the localization of SDGs in many ways. In a Joint Declaration, Nepali CSOs have expressed their commitment to implement SDGs while successfully adopting the five principles of redistributive justice, economic justice, social justice, environmental justice, and downward accountability (to the people). Nepali CSOs have made concerted efforts to accelerate SDG localization (Nepal SDGs Forum, 2020). About 50 federations and alliances and over 500 organizations from across the country are members of the Nepal SDG Forum. A range of Nepali CSOs' work portfolio indicates that they have supplemented or complemented various SDGs in many different ways. They have been promoting prosperity and reducing poverty, promoting growth and social inclusion that complement the government's initiatives to achieve SDGs, and mobilizing significant amounts of resources for development programs (NGO Federation of Nepal, 2017). This helps them reach out to the wider community with innovative development solutions that are key for SDG implementation. In addition, CSOs have been organizing marginalized communities and making their voices strong to advocate for their empowerment and inclusion that is critical to ensure that SDGs' leaves no one behind principle.

3.4 Challenges in the Localization Process

Despite the proactive initiatives of preparing baseline reports for SDGs in early 2017,

Nepal is believed to have faced challenges in localizing the SDGs across the breadth and depth of government planning and budgeting. Given that the federal structure of governance has been in place, it is a serious challenge when almost one-third of the implementation period of SDGs has elapsed (Nepal SDGs Forum, 2020) without effective localizations.

Several challenges in the localization process are documented, the poor understanding of its importance being one of them. Making CSOs understand their roles is a pre-condition for their engagement in the localization process. However, a lack of awareness on the scope of SDGs and CSO's roles is widespread. As Jönsson & Bexell (2020) pointed out, unless knowledge of the SDGs is reached out beyond a limited circle of elites - be that within the political institutions, or other social institutions - localization of SDGs (a politically charged field) is difficult. The province-level consultations organized by Nepal SDG Forum revealed that a large proportion of the CSO representatives are not even aware of the SDGs and their localization processes whereas mostly the CSO representatives were concerned about the state's inability and unwillingness to recognize the roles played by the CSO groups in development. It is not only among the universal CSOs, rather Indigenous People's Organizations (IPOs) were also found to have a complete lack of awareness about SDGs, their roles, and possible benefits. Umbrella organizations of IPOs also seem unaware of SDGs and how it impacts them. The awareness-raising activities neither recognize the indigenous people (IPs) specific issues nor specify the ways of ensuring their participation in decisions and access to benefits. Therefore, as Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2017 reveals, IPs have limited ownership of the SDGs process.

Another challenge for localization is the absence of adequate disaggregated data, the absence of which makes it difficult to ensure that 'no one is left behind'. As the African Civil Society Circle (2016) highlighted, the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Agenda called for a "data revolution" that implies data collection systems should be low-cost and reliable, and they should ultimately ensure that data is accurate, timely, and immediately available to policymakers, the public, and CSOs. Similarly, ElMassah & Mohieldin (2020) also consider 'adequate data' as one of the fundamental requirements for effective implementation of Agenda 2030. Patole (2018) even argues further that concerted and coordinated effort needs to be made for SDG localization that requires data disaggregation if it is meant to avoid the pitfalls of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). While highlighting its urgency, Wymann, Bracher, Peralvo, Perez, & Adler (2018) warn that a lack of disaggregated data corresponding to the SDG indicators is a challenge though waiting until the data availability has improved will be too late already. The African Civil Society Circle (2016) sheds light on the potential role of CSOs in the data revolution by not only encouraging people to use data platforms, but also tracking the implementation status and directly monitoring the local implementation of SDGs. Civil society can produce shadow reports, particularly when it believes that a country report is biased.

The concept of data-driven governance as presented by the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development calls to overcome the challenge to "increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data by 2030" (ElMassah& Mohieldin, 2020). It helps the localization and integration of SDGs, embeds the needs and priorities of marginalized groups, and distributes resources accordingly. However, Patole (2018) found that most of the indicators that carry the SDG mantra of "leaving no one behind" lack data disaggregated by income, race, ethnicity, migratory status, or disability status, or relevant subgroups. Leaving no one behind largely depends on initiatives and effectiveness on generating and managing disaggregated data (Nepal SDGs Forum, 2020; Patole, 2018). The Nepal SDG Forum (2020) further considers it ironic that available data are scattered across ministries, departments, and line agencies that have affected transparency, accountability, and just distribution of resources and focus.

The Nepal government's commitment to the institutional approach in 'leaving no one behind' is questionable. With institutional arrangements in place, the government can ensure forward-looking obligations and retrospective accountability (Jönsson& Bexell, 2020). The European Union highlights the importance of formal and standardized mechanisms for VNR and High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), the absence of which results in a lack of critical perspective. The extent to which CSOs can raise voices on behalf of women, Dalits, marginalized IPs, persons living with disabilities, senior citizens, persons living with HIV and AIDS, sexual minorities, such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, and Asexual (LGBTIQA), etc. depends on legitimate space. Given that CSOs are pursuing distinct agendas and interests, their access to these mechanisms is a key concern, particularly if CSO representatives are hand-picked by government authorities without any transparent process (Corella, B. S., Nicolas, J. E., & Veldkamp, T., 2020). Who represents whom, and how often their representation brings institutional memory to the process, are serious concerns. CSOs' representation (non-institutional) is limited to an 'invited member' in the implementation, and coordination committee. CSOs' participation is not mandatory in the thematic working groups. As the NGO Federation of Nepal (2017) highlights, the frequent changes of invitees reduce the effectiveness of CSO participation. Similarly, the representation of IPOs in national structures and mechanisms developed by the government for SDG implementation is poor.

Corella, Nicolas, & Veldkamp (2020) pointed out that the level of engagement of CSOs is subject to several conditions, including trust between the state authorities and CSOs that results in space for CSOs' inclusion in the national institutional framework. Global experience also indicates that an enabling environment at multiple levels would allow for effective SDG localization – or in other words a "whole of government" approach for SDG localization (UNDP, 2019). For Corella, Nicolas, & Veldkamp (2020), expecting CSOs' contribution without ensuring civic space is simply a contradiction. With the extent to which the government

devolves powers and clearly defines subsidiarity roles and responsibilities of local governments (Tjandradewi& Srinivas (2018), it is unlikely that CSOs have access to funding and other resources (Corella, Nicolas, & Veldkamp, 2020).

According to UNDP (2019), weak governance hinders the localization of the SDGs. It argues that with the absence of mechanisms for strong stakeholder engagement; institutions for coordination, planning, and delivery; and mechanisms for oversight and accountability of such institutions, the SDGs are likely to remain aspirational goals. The argument of Jönsson & Bexell (2020) is remarkable; that localization needs political institutions at all levels to assume or be assigned responsibility for SDGs. Hence, an unclear allocation of responsibilities among the stakeholders, including that of CSOs, could be a bottleneck for SDGs localization.

3.5 Discussion of Responses

This section presents what study respondents said about the rationale for CSO engagement in SDG localization, key challenges, and way forward.

3.5.1 CSOs have a key role in SDGs localization

Though SDGs are inclusive of broader development agendas that they have been advocating for a long time, realization without CSOs' active engagement is not possible. All three respondents have similar opinions about the need for CSO engagement in localizing SDGs. They further opined that from a human-rights perspective, CSOs can play an important role in mainstreaming the issues of marginalized, vulnerable, and minorities through SDG localization. As they believe, after the COVID-19 pandemic, the CSOs' participation is even more prominent for two reasons, which Arjun Bhattarai, Coordinator of Nepal SDG Forum, prefers calling participation (CSOs' involvement in achieving some of SDG targets), and pressure (CSOs' role in monitoring government actions and advocating as required.)

3.5.2 Enabling environment is a must for CSOs to better contribute to SDGs localization

A lack of enabling environment is the main challenge for CSOs to contribute to SDG localization. All study participants agreed that the readiness of local government in engaging CSOs in SDG localization is mainly due to the lack of enabling environments across the levels of governance. There is a fear that the civic space will further shrink in Nepal, as some LGs have taken harsh decisions against CSOs and civic space. Since the legal framework is not CSO-friendly, an absence of an institutional mechanism is apparent. Even the NGO Federation District Chapters, which is an umbrella organization of NGOs in Nepal, are not invited for consultations. Hence, despite the 2030 Agenda considering CSO as one of the key drivers to implement SDGs, the absence of mechanisms and platforms has hindered them to contribute to the best of their potential. Most of the CSOs are engaged in service delivery, and the resource crunch, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic pushed most of the CSOs, who were already dependent on external funding, to further marginalization. Draining resources to the health sector reduced funds to other

human rights related issues. Compared to Province 2 and Karnali Province, it is claimed that donor funding is squeezed, and the CSOs in the five other provinces are also experiencing resource constraints. After the federal structures in place, there is a lack of dedicated funds at the local government that CSOs could access. The third challenge for CSOs' contribution in SDG localization is the poor awareness among the CSOs themselves. Though national level and a few local CSOs are aware of the SDGs, most of the CSOs at the local level are not fully aware of their role in SDG localization.

3.5.3 Government readiness doesn't conform to its commitment

A lack of readiness among government levels is one of the bottlenecks for CSOs' engagement in SDG localization. A feeling among the LGs that they have their regular source of funding, and institutional set-up also leads them to ignore CSOs at the local level. Similarly, LGs lack mechanisms and processes to engage CSOs. Many CSOs have experienced that they are not invited at the local level planning. Lessening the local level planning process from 14 steps to 7 steps has also squeezed civic space for their contribution. All respondents agreed that existing policy at the federal level is not well adapted at the local level.

One of the factors for the low readiness of LGs towards CSOs engagement, as well as in localization of SDGs, is the lack of awareness about the gravity of SDGs. The widespread feeling that SDGs have been imposed on the government has contributed to the poor buy-in of the 2030 Agenda at the local government level. Since the urgency of localization, and the capacity to do so are both missing, the local level planning process still follows the 'business-as-usual' mode. For most of the LG representatives who are socialized with a 'top-down' culture, clear guidance from the federal government is required, and an investment in their capacity building is an urgent need. Study participants believe that the SDG localization resource book prepared by the National Planning Commission (NPC) is useful, but its dissemination is not satisfactory, and the capacity building of LGs is not well invested in. As a result, neither the NPC document is owned by the LGs nor the inter-ministerial plan takes overlapping issues well into consideration. However, there are some good practices - for example, the federal grant is tied up with the SDG-informed plan in Gandaki province.

The weak capacity of the local government is also an impediment to SDG localization. Research-based planning is a serious weakness across the local level governments. Arjun Bhattarai and Rita Shah both highlighted the need for research-informed planning and resource allocation. Similarly, the lack of human resources is making the M&E component weak.

Leaving no one behind demands an inclusive planning process, which is possible when CSOs can represent the voices of the voiceless so that the development divide could be minimized. Unless the overall perception towards CSOs is improved it is impossible.

3.5.4 CSO capacity is weak in holding the government to account in creating enabling environment

Another challenge that CSOs face includes weak CSO capacity in advocating for their space. For better CSO contribution in SDG localization, all respondents agree that while CSOs should be advocating effectively for their space, it is equally important that the government also comply to its international commitments and create that space for CSOs to better contribute to SDG localization. All study participants consider it as an important way forward. An enabling environment for CSOs not only ensures spillover understanding of the broader civil society contributions, but also institutionalizes mechanisms for mandatory CSO participation, which CSOs can claim. CSOs also have to strengthen their collective effort, mobilize their international networks and build their technical and financial capacity to better contribute towards the localization of SDGs. Once the citizen-generated database is duly acknowledged and they are engaged in the local level planning process, it will further develop CSOs' capacity as well. However, they believe that diminishing activism and volunteerism among the CSOs are responsible for their weak advocacy.

4. Conclusion

Agenda 2030 has envisioned CSOs' role in localization of SDGs, and globally it is recognized that, as one of the key drivers, despite their varying missions, capacities, and sphere of operation CSOs have multiple roles – representing voices, ensuring accountability, reaching out with service delivery, and advocating for change and monitoring. Both the claimed, as well as created spaces are important for CSOs to play their role. Globally, several challenges in localization are documented. While poor understanding of their role in the localization process has weakened CSO advocacy to claim their spaces, a lack of enabling environment has shrunk created spaces.

Apart from these global challenges having been equally applicable, Nepali CSOs have experienced some additional challenges. All study participants agreed that as expected, CSOs have a crucial role to play in the localization of SDGs, similar to their contribution in shaping Agenda 2030, to ensure 'no one is left behind'. A lack of readiness among governments across levels is one of the hinderances for CSOs' engagement. There is a strong feeling among CSO actors that local governments are not ready to give due space for CSOs to contribute to the process, primarily for two reasons – poor understanding of the gravity of SDG localization, and their top-down mindset. Respondents agree that an enabling environment is a pre-condition for better CSO engagement in the SDGs localization process. Since the legal framework is not CSO-friendly, mechanisms and platforms for the institutional representation of CSOs in the localization process are missing. Space claimed (by CSOs) and created (by the governments) are both go hand in hand in the localization of SDGs. While CSOs are weak in advocating for their space, government also fails to conform to its commitment. Given that almost one-third of the implementation period of SDGs has elapsed since the federal structure of governance has been in place, without effective localization, it is utmost important for the government to recognize CSOs' contributions and create CSO-friendly legal frameworks across levels.

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How Sustainable Development Goals Went from a Roadmap for Buildinga Dynamic and Inclusive Future for All Citizens to a Spectator Sport in America

EARL JAMES GOODYEAR, PhD

Abstract

As the US confronts a plethora of crises simultaneously: among them a global pandemic, congressional disparity, racial inequality and economic concerns, it becomes clear how the attainment of sustainable development goals (SDGs) will require the current leadership to establish new norms around trust building and evidence-based decision-making. The complexity of these intertwined relationships and the societal differences that exist in the United States are explored for their critical impact on combating the persistent and pervasive challenges documented in each one of the seventeen SDG's. Failure to address SDG issues systematically leads to greater risks in times of crisis for America. And with more disasters looming on the horizon, the need to develop positive actions has never been more important.

Key Words: Equity, Human Rights, Democratic Governance, Development Principles, Societal Challenges, American Leadership

1. Introduction

In September 2019 the UN General Assembly met with heads of state and government for the first time to assess global progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) since its adoption in 2015. Significantly absent from this meeting was a report from the United States - the only OECD and G-20 member nation not to have contributed a report on its progress to advance social, economic, and environmental development. The SDGs do

reflect and reinforce America's values and the principles that have historically guided America's growth and prosperity. What has happened to the United States?

Back in 2015 world leaders convened a significant conference at the United Nations in New York with the landmark aim of an end to poverty, halt environmental deterioration, and raise the quality of life for global citizens by the year 2030. The global leaders endorsed a package of 17 goals[i] and 169 targets, including three key strategies for ending global deprivation by creating an economy that leaves no nation behind and addressing the existential crisis of climate change.

With the end of the decade now approaching rapidly, the global leadership is likely to miss the attainment of most of the SDGs. Eliminating preventable deaths among newborns and under-fives and getting children into primary schools may be the closest among all the goals to being achieved. In contrast, estimates show 430 million people to be living in extreme poverty by 2030, and targets to end hunger and protect climate and biodiversity are completely "off track". Two-thirds of the poorer nations are not expected to achieve targets akin to meeting their own basic needs.

Perhaps five years is too short a time to expect to see real progress towards economic transformation, an imperative if the very important SDGs are to be achieved. And, perhaps the rules of the game of global progress need a revision.

2. Objective

The primary objective of this article is to offer a foundation for understanding the complex circumstances occurring in 2016-2020 in the United States that uncoupled its commitment to the achievement of SDGs. Focusing attention on the 45th President of the United States, a twice-impeached president and now facing both civil and criminal charges for malfeasance and abuse of power, should reflect on the need for solidarity, from the top to the bottom of the economic and social ladder, to achieve any sustainable change.

3. Methodology

The author has approached this paper by examining the SDG data available from reputable sources and relevant to a policy context and aligned to policy-making decisions at the national, regional, or community levels. Data selected for reference was recently published, with preference given to data covering the year 2019 or later. Whenever possible, data was used to chart possible outcomes. In cases where outcome data was unavailable, process or output indicators were used to track policies or actions that may have a research-supported impact on outcomes.

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i. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals to transform the world: 1. No Poverty, 2. Zero Hunger, 3. Good Health and Well-Being, 4. Quality Education, 5. Gender Equality, 6. Clean Water and Sanitation, 7. Affordable and Clean Energy, 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth, 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, 10. Reduced Inequality, 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities,12. Responsible Consumption and Production, 13. Climate Action, 14. Life Below Water, 15. Life on Land, 16. Peace and Justice Strong Institutions, and 17. Partnerships to Achieve the Goal.

The methodology noted above builds on the process employed for the SDG Index and Dashboards Report (Sachs, J; Schmidt-Traub, G.; Kroll, and C., Lafontune, G., Fuller, G) in 2018.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 InherentConstraints

In June 2019 the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) ranked the United States 35th out of 162 nations on the basis of sustainable development. Soaring above the United States, with the worst index across OECD countries with a score of 74.5%, were the Nordic countries Denmark, Sweden, and Finland. This report found that none of the 193 member states of the United Nations, having adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, were on track to achieve these goals by 2030.

The United States was credited with its best results seen in SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth). Inherent constraints including poverty, income inequalities, and universal access to healthcare another other public services, continue to exacerbate the challenges to attain results in SDF 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). The United States continues to seek ways to address high levels of Co2 emissions, pollution, and biodiversity challenges in addition to halting negative environmental and security externalities (or spillovers) that undermine neighboring countries' achievement of their SDGs.

The United States may have joined world leaders in 2015 to adopt a new global development framework aimed to eradicate poverty and inequalities and spur economic growth while respecting planetary boundaries. Yet, the challenges to each signatory of this global accord can be viewed simply in four arenas:

4.2 Government buy-in to achieve SDGs by 2030

The sustainable development goals, to be achieved by 2030, must be embraced and integrated into national planning and policies to deliver the impact envisioned in the SDGs. The United States has, since 2017 with the election of a new President, been faced with leadership that refused to acknowledge climate change, seek renewable energy alternatives to fossil fuels, prioritize poverty reduction over tax reductions for big industries and the mega-rich, and cooperation and support with the developing world and economic partners. The administration under President Donald J. Trump saw less-developed nations as inconsequential to receive support and former adversarial nations like Russia and North Korea joined an elite "untouchable" category - thus alienating global allies and internally creating a schism in the US government.

Under President Joe Biden, beginning in January 2021, there is renewed hope to see a coherent, coordinated approach to address poverty, racial inequality, the Covid-19 pandemic, jump start a vibrant economy, restoration of a sagging infrastructure, and the renewal of America as a global partner in world peace and social development.

4.3 Engaging all Societal Partners

The work of the national government should not be a "spectator sport," rather it should be formed based on shared goals for development cooperation within a

solid economic structure. Transparency, participatory decision-making, and mobilization of the strength and innovation of representations from local governments, the private sector, and civil society are the mainstay to achieve the SDGs. The Trump presidential years shall be marked with the collapse of an "open book" policy for information sharing and confidence in governmental leaders. Thus, from a twice-impeached president now facing both civil and criminal judicial issues, the Biden administration is returning to a partnership that multi-stakeholder initiatives can change lives through citizen engagement. The present leaders must now ensure that dialogue begins across all SDG sectors.

4.4 Resource Allocation is a Priority

Even as the SDGs are made a national priority by the US government, the implementation of the tasks to achieve the SDGs shall require a buy-in of fiscal institutions: both in the public and private sector and national and international institutions. For the US, it is domestic resources that will underwrite the cost of SDG initiation as opposed to least developed countries (LDCs) that may solicit financial support from the World Bank, regional development banks, and new development finance institutions such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

It is, however, the onus on national leaders to ensure an enabling environment and good governance to encourage financial resources to flow in the proper direction. The US, unfortunately, in the period 2016-2020 has substituted sound fiscal policies with that of a myopic and misaligned president.

4.5 Ownership and Accountability

For any nation accepting responsibility to achieve SDGs, it is a priority that requires significant efforts to work in a collaborative, coherent, and coordinated manner within their government structure and externally with a plethora of partners beyond their geographical boundaries. At the national level leaders can and should demand accountability. In the private sector, laws and regulations will demonstrate the impact of a judiciary system to shape development impact. National leaders can insist on reports from civil society organizations, cities, and the private sector on topics ranging from environmental, social, and labor issues, respect for human rights, and racial tension.

Governments need to be accountable to their citizens which should be a basic human right at the core of sustainable development. National leaders can create better-managed and protected developmental systems through the inclusion of citizens in decision-making while seeking a system of environmental transparency of accountability and justice. This is imperative since the UN, as an intergovernmental body, is only able to measure the SDG progress of sovereign member states based on voluntary progress reports.

4.6 American Identity

"The SDGs are our common language," said Hawaii Governor David Ige[ii].

ii. Second Annual Event co-hosted by the UN Foundation and the Brookings Institute on the sidelines of the Un General Assembly.

Through alignment of local, state, national, and international action, we can align our canoes in the same direction to help each other arrive at a more sustainable, equitable world for all of us. Governor Ige launched the state's Voluntary Local Review, becoming the first US state to track and report on its progress on, "what has been accomplished to date, take our bearings and chart a course for a better Hawaii that we all want to see."

Regretfully, not all the states in the US are willing to follow a developmental roadmap to determine how underlying problems, i.e., a worldwide pandemic, raging wildfires, systemic racism, climate in crisis, and cybersecurity, are overshadowing the underlying problems embedded in our nation today. The average American now, particularly one affected by the economic and social impact from the coronavirus, is focused on income inequality to disparities in education, access to health care, and searching for lifelines to sustain their existence.

With a politically divided nation, where a large segment of the American population believes in the "Big Lie"[iii] spread by Republican supporters, the Congress of the US is divided along political lines on today's urgent issues. By focusing issues from poverty to healthy ecosystems together in one framework, the SDGs offer a common language that connects efforts across issues and sectors, like the "Rosetta Stone". While the US has overcome some systemic barriers faced by other nations, i.e., availability and reliability of data, real capacity, and technical know-how, the lack of a unified Congress to recognize and access available financial resources shows the lack of political will for tackling deep, underlying and interconnected challenges.

Amid the waves of media channels in the US, many of the pressing challenges to build a sustainable future often are overshadowed by political figures seeking to sway voters in the next 2022 midterm elections. Fatimata Cham, a youth poet and former Teen Advisor with the UN Foundation Girl Up initiative said, "The greatest communities in America are the ones who never make the front page of news stories, the ones who show the importance of collective strength".

4.7 Trust Building and Human Right Approach

The world has witnessed in 2020, that the impact of COVID-19 demonstrates, that health is not purely an individual physical phenomenon, but is influenced by the conditions in which one lives. The 45th president of the USA addressed his nation and said that the pandemic was being contained by China early in 2020, that the autumn season would kill the virus, like a summer flu, and that there was nothing to worry about. Now, as of June 2, 2021, the US has seen 33,288,092 cases with 595,242 fatalities to this killer. Worldwide, the figures are equally frightening with 171,269,117 cases and deaths of 3,567,132 people.[iv] As the US confronts the pandemic and

iii. 50% of Republican voters are estimated to believe that Donald J. Trump lost the 2020 presidential election due to voter fraud.

iv. Source: John Hopkins University,CSSE, Esri Living Atlas, Center for Disease Control.

other demons of racial inequality, police brutality, and now new state regulations to restrict Black, Hispanic and indigenous communities voting rights, it becomes clear that the unequal provision of services and benefits underlie and deepen the crises in the US and other nations.

The current state in the US was not the result of "bad luck" but was made by policy choices and practices intended to deepen inequalities between races to perpetuate unjust biases over centuries of history. As inequality has been made by humans, it can be undone. Solutions shall require policymakers to be accountable to just and proper outcomes. Today, more than 100 scholars that study democracy have issued a letter warning that "our entire democracy is now at risk." The letter explains that the new election laws in Republican-led states, passed with the justification that they will make elections safer, in fact, are turning "several states into political systems that no longer meet the minimum conditions for free and fair elections."

Today, US citizens are awakening to the notion that they have been in the audience watching a zero-sum game, where there's only one winner. If you succeed, I fail. If you get ahead, I fall behind. If you are offered a job, I lose my livelihood. And even more onerous is the notion that if I hold you down, I lift myself up. Current US President Joe Biden has countered this line of thought by stating that, "If you do well, we all do well." Thus, by establishing new norms of trust-building and evidenced-based decision-making, the US may be able to approach the SDGs more systematically, even in times of crisis. With more global disasters on the horizon, the need to witness national leaders take action has never been or critical.

4.8 What Needs to be Done?

The United Nations has confirmed an unwelcome thought that the coronavirus pandemic has put the SDGs out of reach for attainment by 2030. Goals, such as to end poverty, protect the environment, and support well-being by 2030 were already lagging behind before the pandemic closed the door to progress. Under one proposal from a group of UN science advisors, the 17 SDFs and 169 associated targets would be redistributed into 6 "entry points" These would include human well-being (which would include eliminating poverty and improving health and education), sustainable economies, access to food and nutrition, access to, and decarbonization, of energy, urban development, and the global environmental commons (combining biodiversity and climate change).

The global horizon in 2015 was one of rising economic growth and positive international cooperation that led to the Paris climate agreement. Now, the world has seen the US leave too many accords and decades-long partnerships aside (2016-2020) as the coronavirus leaves the world on a once-in-a-century depression, postponement of the crucial international meeting on environmental protection and aid to help the poorest of nations is set in a decline mode. The US is now awakening from a period of sleepwalking where action to address the SDGs, with sound and scientific forethought, was handed to narrow-minded, ill-prepared individuals incapable of creating and comprehending mainstream synergies to address the SDG challenges.

Perhaps for the first time in history humanity has demanded that the world share a common goal — the eradication of the coronavirus. When we have succeeded in that task then the nations of the world must again reflect on how to achieve the same with the strategic development goals — namely as the universal vision for a new world and as the basis for future global coordination.

5. Conclusion

The underlying purpose of the SDGs was and still remains a central commitment to leave no one behind. In practical terms, this means prioritizing the most vulnerable and building sustainable societies that uplift and support economic and social mobility. The United States had advocated that notion prior to the appointment of the 45th President in 2016. California's House Representative Eric Swalwell recently stated, "Like many of the world's most despicable dictators, former President Trump showed an utter disdain for our democracy and the rule of law"[v].

In contrast, President Joe Biden and his new administration have recognized that the world is now in a defining moment in history. In a recent op-ed[vi] Biden made the case for clean energy and infrastructure investment to enable democracies both to compete with China and to protect their people against unforeseen threats. He reiterated US support for allies, "who see the world through the same lens as the United States. He asks, "Can democracy come together to deliver real results for our people in a rapidly changing world? Will the democratic alliances and institutions that shaped so much of the last century prove their capacity against modern-day threats and adversaries?" President Biden said: "I believe the answer is yes. And this week in Europe we have the chance to prove it."

While 2030 is still a few years away, we can speculate and hope that our global leadership, the champions of industry and civil society, and academicians will have linked arms and have developed holistic strategies to address the challenges posed by the SDGs. We may further hope that 2030 may be marked with progress in economic wellbeing, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability. Let's envision that this combination brings a new era and a clear and concise definition for mankind being a part of the solution rather than contributing to its demise.

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Earned Value Management: Project Performance Analysis Method for Improving Stakeholders' Commitment for SDG Localisation

ANOJ CHHETRI, PhD

Abstract

This article presents about project management method called Earned Value Management (EVM). It intends to articulate potential application of EVM in the localization of sustainable development goals (SDGs). A desk review was undertaken in June 2021 with special reference to SDG localisation efforts. In general, project manager invests a significant amount of valuable time in reporting the project progress to the stakeholders. Most of the times the reports produced by project management team do not use quantitative technique akin to EVM. As a result, stakeholders cannot have a real picture of project status. In this context, this article aims to show how EVM method can be easily used in order to report project status-based on work-schedule and expenditure, presenting quantitative data to stakeholders. The illustration of project status can lead project managers to increase project stakeholders' commitment to localisation efforts and ownership of the results.The paper presents calculation method of EVM values with an example of food adequacy targets in Nuwakot district linking with SDG2. I also draw conclusion and recommendations that EVM can be an useful method for provincial and local government in managing portfolio of SDG targets and generates additional commitment from stakeholders in the SDG localisation process.

Key Words: Earned Value Management, SDGs, Localization, Nuwakot, Nepal

1. Introduction

Nepal is one of the least developed countries potentially for graduation by 2026 because of its impressive development performance on key indicators: health and education. The available information from UNDP[i] suggests that Nepal is progressing well in terms of human development index (0.587) and literacy rate because 67.91% people (five years & above) are literate. Now that only 18.7% people fall below the poverty line and 87.55 % people in Nepal have access to the electricity (almost 50%[ii]), it seems that performance of development targets are satisfactory. Yet, the potential contribution of high number of youth population (40.34% between the ages of 16 to 40) is yet to be fully realised as majority of them are unemployed.

Likewise, there are large disparities in the rates of poverty by gender, social group and geographical area (NPC, 2015 p vii). Nepal is emerging from a politically and socially fragile post-conflict situation, structurally generated poverty and inequality, and deeply entrenched forms of social exclusion. That said, the Committee for Development Policy (CDP) has recommended Nepal's graduation from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) status with the preparatory period of five years. This means the graduation of Nepal would come into effect in 2026[iii] meaning that Nepal should put extra effort in place for some development agenda outlined under the sustainable development goals (SDG).

In order to coordinate and balance development agenda, Nepal has formulated its first SDG[iv]-aligned development plan (the 15th Plan) building on the key Millennium Development Goal achievements such as improvement in extreme poverty, child mortality, enrolment of school children, and HIV/AIDS infections. Indeed, the 2030 Agenda emphasizes the need for an inclusive and localized approach to the SDGs stating, 'governments and public institutions will also work closely on implementation with regional and local authorities, subregional institutions, inter-national institutions, academia, philanthropic organisations, volunteer groups and others' (UCLG, 2018, p 16).

The SDG localisation requires strong political commitment, and willpower towards the implementation process which can find solutions at the local level for the global challenges and objectives (UCLG, 2018). As an example, Nepal government has been making concerted efforts to localise targets and outcome of SDG in the local level planning documents. At the provincial level, six provinces initiated or prepared SDGs baseline to inform their periodic plans. Across the seven provinces, municipalities have implemented 17 SDG localization demonstration projects. The 17 SDGs are

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i. https://www.np.undp.org/content/nepal/en/home/about-us/

ii. But internet accessibility might have gone up to 89% as per https://risingnepaldaily.com/business/almost-89-per-cent-population-has-access-to-internet

iii. https://www.nepalisansar.com/business/nepal-to-graduate-from-ldc-status-in-next-five-years/

iv. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

integrated—meaning, they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability[v].

However, it also requires full ownership by communities and stakeholders. The provincial and local governments have a key role to play in triggering that ownership, and an important responsibility in fostering implementation by integrating the various agendas on the ground and ensuring territorial cohesion (UCLG, 2018, p.8). That being argued, there are many challenges in the localisation process. One of the main challenges for localizing SDGs remains in addressing provincial and local governments' access to finance (UCLG, 2018, p 9). To this end, local government should have concrete evidence of portfolio of SDG performance based on key financial information. There are some challenges attached with some SDG targets which are less relevant for Nepal while new and additional targets would be necessary to address country specific challenges (NPC, 2017, p 25).

As the "Localizing" is the process of determining the means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress (UCLG, 2018, P16), this paper attempts to articulate "earned value management" as a potential method of producing visible evidence of progress against SDG targets. This article considers some purposively adjusted data from three Gaupalika of Nuwakot district of Nepal: Gaupalika 1, Gaupalika 2 and Gaupalika 3 (names remain anonymous) while calculating variances and index.

2. Objective of the Article

This article sets out with the broader development context for providing the Project Managers with basic information about Earned Value that allows project managers to manage invaluable resources and produce results efficiently. It provides a documented basis for making future project decisions for confirming or developing a common understanding of project scope among the stakeholders.

3. Earned Value Management

3.1 Definition

Earned Value Management (EVM) is a project management method that integrates schedule, costs, and scope to measure project performance. Based on planned and actual values, EVM predicts the future and enables project managers to adjust resources accordingly (Reichel, 2006). This method allows the project implementers to measure the amount of work performed by a project based on a review of cost and schedule targets.

The project plan is the foundation to solid earned value practice. The narrative description of the project scope, including major deliverables, project objectives, project assumptions, project constraints, and a statement of work, provides a documented basis for making future project decisions and for confirming or developing a common understanding of project scope among the stakeholders (PMI, 2004, p. 370).

v. https://www.np.undp.org/content/nepal/en/home/about-us/

The utility of cost and schedule variances is found in managing costs in pre-agreed delivery cycles, and guides Project Managers for certain actions (Prasad, V., et al 2006). In business, clients want to minimize their cost and time risks (even without knowing the exact scope of the assignment), and generally negotiate for a lower than the Appropriate Firmed Fixed Price for engagements, in order to meet their annual budget targets and get maximum work done whereas service providers want to get a higher revenue from the engagement in order to meet their objectives of profitability. It is apparently very difficult to resolve this matter of interests, but EVM analysis can help Project Managers to manage their interests (Prasad, V., et al 2006).

3.2 Significance of EVM

The available literature suggests that EVM supports managers to optimise the Return On Investment (ROI) achieved for investments which are dependent on projects and project performance for delivery (Henderson, K. 2005).

"Strategic commercial imperatives" are defined on the basic EVM cost and schedule metrics and demonstrating how these metrics provide "early warning" of project performance issues, thus enabling proactive project based corrective actions to be undertaken (Ibid).EVMs unique ability to statistically predict final Costs at Compete (CAC) based on the project performance to date can demonstrate how this important EVM "early warning signal" can allow project cost risk to be proactively managed while most of the cost budget remains intact (Ibid).Using EVM to proactively monitor and manage project cost risk is an important feature of the methodology for protecting the initial project-based investment and positively influencing the ROI ultimately achieved from that investment (Ibid).

EVM is equally effective in project portfolio management (such as SDG outcome level targets contributed by multiple projects on SDG) which deals with organizing and managing a set of projects in an organization. However, there are some challenges to track project performance across the entire portfolio of targets in a timely and effective manner, allowing managers to diagnose performance trends and identify projects in need of attention, giving them an opportunity to take management action in a timely fashion (Cable, et al 2004).

3.3 Critical Path Analysis

EVM can be applied to all project activities particularly activities on the critical path as it can affect the final project results. For instance, a project may have a Schedule Performance Index (SPI) with less than 1 value owing to an activity not on the critical path, tracking the activity out of the critical path can eventually contribute to the final milestone (Novaes, 2006).

Hence, in many cases, there is a focus on critical path activities only, to reduce efforts on this analysis, but this depends on the project requirements. For instance, resources being invested on a non-critical path activity can be diverted to the activities on the critical path. If there are concerns about people motivation, it would be important to look at the cost performance index for all the activities to find out financial issues (Novaes, 2006).

3.4 EVM Basic Elements

Table1: Three Essential Elements of Earned Value Management

Element	Definition
Planned Value	Scheduled cost of work planned in a given time. It is Budgeted Cost of Work Scheduled. Planned Value = (Target %) X (BAC)
Actual Cost	Actual expenditure. The cost incurred for executing work on a project
Earned Value	Quantification of the worth of the work done to date . Earned Value= (Achieved %)X (BAC)

There are three essential elements of PVM. These elements are used below in calculating variances and index. The data relating with three *Gaupalika (rural municipality)* are modified on purpose in order to demonstrate three level of performance: behind schedule, on schedule and ahead of schedule. The Budget at completion(BAC) is the project approved budget. EVM requires total project duration as well as the duration that project has passed. It also needs project performance (% of results achieved) outsourced from the indicator monitoring.

Table 2: Basic Performance Measure, Definition of Metric and Interpretation of Metric

Basic Performance measure	Definition of metric	Interpretation of Metric
Schedule variance **(SV)**	SV= EV-PV	'+ve' indicates project is ahead of schedule, 'zero' indicates project is exactly on schedule '-ve' indicates project is delayed
Cost Variance **(CV)**	CV= EV-AC	'+ve' indicates project is within budget, 'zero' indicates project is exactly on budget '-ve' indicates project has gone over-budget
Schedule Performance Index **(SPI)** (Also called Work Efficiency)	SPI = EV/PV	'>1' indicates project is ahead of schedule, '= 1' indicates project is exactly on schedule '<1' indicates project is delayed
Cost Performance Index **(CPI)** (Also called Spending Efficiency)	CPI = EV/AC	'>1' indicates project is within budget, '=1' indicates project is exactly on budget '<1' indicates project has gone over-budget
Critical Ratio(**CR**) (Meredith, 2000, p 479), (Lewis, 2004, p 315-316)	SPI*CPI	'>1' indicates project is better than planned '=1' indicates project is exactly as planned '<1' indicates project has gone worse than planned

(Source: Prasad, V., Rajkumar, P., & Rastogi, S. C., 2006).

The application of table 2 is made on the table 4, 5 and 7 below in order to measure project performance and draw overall comments. The data presented below do not truly represent current status of given Gaupalika because data are modified to show three levels of project status (on schedule, ahead of schedule and behind schedule).

Table 3: Project Results Tracking Sheet

Results	Indicators	Targets	Q1	Q2	Q3	Total	% of results achieved	Comments
1. Outcome: Poor and marginalised HH increased food production by at least 20%	HH No	224	50	50	79	179	80	Data are only focused on paddy, corns and millets
1.1 output: farmers taken part in the improved production	HH No	100	20	15	20	55	55	
1.2 output: farmers received improved varieties of seeds	HH No	150	30	25	15	70	47	
1.3 output: farmers received training on organic fertiliser production	HH No	100	30	20	10	60	60	

(Hypothetical data constructed for presentation of EVM results)

Calculation of Results and Discussion:

Average value of outcome X: 80%

Average value of Outputs Y: 54 %

% of results achieved: (X+Y)/ 2 = (80+54)/2= 67%

The table 4 shows two level of results chain which can be obtained from the monitoring and evaluation framework. It helps managers to calculate results achieved within a specified period of project. The consolidation of results is made against each target and added up both outputs and outcome to produce average results. In additional, the project matrix captures qualitative information in the comment section. For example, Gaupalika 1 has achieved 67% targets considering the average value of outputs and outcomes. The calculation of targets for other two Gaupalika(Gaupalika 2 and Gaupalika 3) followed same method.

Table 4: Planned and Earned Value Calculation

Basic Detail					Model base calculated values		
Gaupalika	Total Budget (Rs. '00000)	Total time spent	Target	% of results achieved	Planned Value (PV)	Actual cost (Rs. '00000)	Earned Value
	10	6	50%	60%	5.00	6	6.00
Gaupalika 1	78	11	92%	67%	71.38	69	52.13
Gaupalika 2	83	5	42%	100%	34.51	73	83.00
Gaupalika 3	86	7	58%	50%	50.14	68	43.24
Average	82	8	64%	72%	52.01	70	59.46

(Source: author's own product)

The table 4 shows that there are three projects in Nuwakot districts to be completed in 12 months. The average budget of the project is Rs. 8.2 million. On an average, about 8 month of the total project period has passed (which is 67% time of the project), and the schedule says that only 64% of the targeted HH have secured food adequacy. In this case, the planned value is the value of the work that should have been completed so far (as per the schedule) meaning that project should have completed 64% of the total work, so the planned value = 64% of BAC (budget at completion), viz., 52.01 (Rs.'00000). Now that earned value (EV) is the value of the work actually completed to date, earned value shows the value that the project has produced. EV is the value of performed work expressed in terms of the approved budget assigned to that work for an activity. Hence, EV = % of results achieved X BAC, viz., 59.46 (Rs.'00000).

Table 5: Calculation of Variances and Index

Basic Detail	Variance				Index				
Gaupalika	Schedule Variance	Conclusion	Cost Variance	Conclusion	Schedule performance index	Conclusion	Cost performance index	Conclusion	Critical Ratio
	1	Ahead of Schedule	0	Onbudget	1.20	Ahead of Schedule	1.00	Onbudget	1.20
Gaupalika 1	-19	Behind Schedule	-17	Over budget	0.73	Behind Schedule	0.76	Over budget	0.55
Gaupalika 2	48	Ahead of Schedule	10	Under budget	2.40	Ahead of Schedule	1.14	Under budget	2.73
Gaupalika 3	-7	Behind Schedule	-25	Over budget	0.86	Behind Schedule	0.64	Over budget	0.55
Average	7	Ahead of Schedule	-11	Over budget	1.14	Ahead of Schedule	0.85	Over budget	0.97

(Source: author's own product)

The conclusions are drawn through two types of variances: schedule and cost variance. The schedule variance is the difference between Earned Value and Planned Value and Cost Variance is difference between Earned Value and Actual Cost. It lets us know how much project is ahead or behind schedule in terms of money. If the variance is equal to 0, the project is on schedule. If a negative variance is determined, the project is behind schedule. If the variance is positive the project is ahead of schedule. In the table above, the average value of schedule variance is 7 ('0000), hence the projects are ahead of schedule at least by 13%; however looking at individual cases, the situation is quite different. Looking at the cost variance, it appears to be negative, hence the project has spent budget more than planned. Interpreting numbers, it has overspent almost Rs. 1,100,000 in terms of monetary values, therefore has incurred loss at least by 15% of the planned value.

Like variances, indexes also help us compare the planned progress with actual progress. This helps us understand how efficiently project is progressing against program schedule. There are two indexes in Earned Value Management: Schedule Performance Index (SPI), and Cost Performance Index (CPI). SPI and CPI allow us to assess the project's performance.

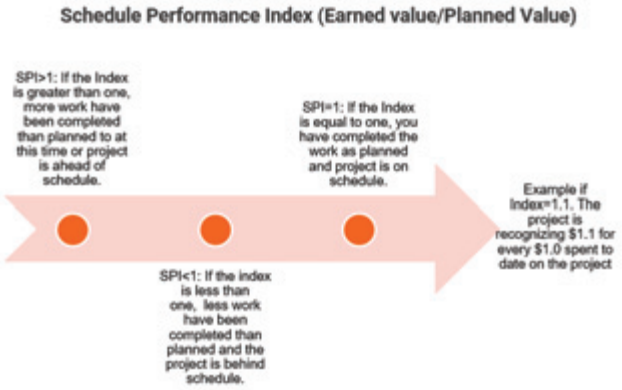

Diagram 1: Flow Diagram of Schedule Performance Index

SPI shows how project is progressing compared to the project schedule. SPI measures project target efficiency, expressed as the ratio of Earned Value to Planned Value.

Schedule Performance Index = (Earned Value) / (Planned Value): SPI=EV/PV

In the table 5, the average project value shows completed more work than planned because the SPI is greater than one (1.14); the project is slightly ahead of schedule. However, Gaupalika 1 and Gaupalika3 have less SPI values than one, so they have completed less work than planned meaning that they are behind schedule.

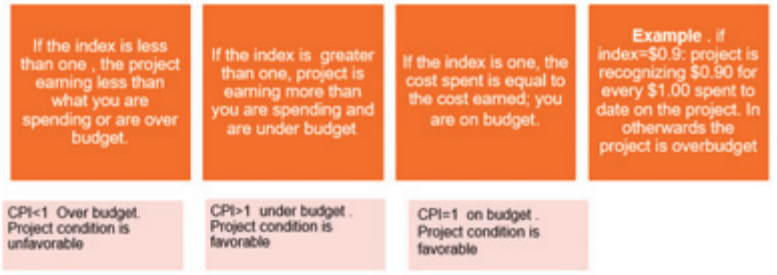

Diagram 2: Cost Performance Index (Earned value/Cost value)

The CPI helps us analyse the cost efficiency of the project. It measures the value of the work completed compared to the actual cost spent. CPI is a measure of the cost efficiency of budgeted resources, expressed as a ratio of Earned Value to Actual Cost. CPI specifies how much we are earning for each dollar spent on the project. It

shows how well the project is sticking to the budget.

Cost Performance Index = (Earned Value) / (Actual Cost)

Looking at the table above, the average project is earning less than what project has spent because the CPI value is less than one (0.84). Hence, the project is over budget. However, Gaupalika 2 is earning more than what project has spent because the CPI is more than one (1.14). Hence, the project is under budget.

3.5 Potential factor of Favourable and Unfavourable Cost Performance

The main factor for favourable CPI value is cost efficiency being realized because of simple but well-planned schedule without requiring revisions in the budget. It requires competency of human resource, team approach and conducive working environment for proper localisation process. The political environment and other risk factors (market prices, disaster such as COVID) are also associated with the higher CPI values. The assumptions that were set before the project implementation should be realised.

In contrast, when the work-schedule is more complex than anticipated and there are incompetent staff or organizational issue resulting in high staff turnover for some reasons, the project implementation process is badly affected. The social and political environment can also affect project efficiency incurring irreparable loss in terms of time and budget.

Table 6: Forecasting Techniques in Project Management

Basic Forecast Metric	Definition of Metric	Formula
Authorized Work	Budget at Completion (**BAC**) (budget approved at project start)	
Forecast (revised) Budget	Estimate At Completion (**EAC**) (expected project cost, at the completion, based on progress)	EAC = BAC/ CPI ; (when there is no variance from the BAC) or AC + ETC (When original estimate was defective) or AC+BAC-EV (when current variances are unusual) or AC+(BAC-EV)/ CPI (When current variances are normal)
Forecast Budget Variance	Variance At Completion (**VAC**) (expected variance of original budget and the forecast revised one)	VAC = BAC- EAC
Additional Budget required to complete Project	Estimate to Complete (**ETC**)	ETC = EAC- AC

(Source: Prasad, V., Rajkumar, P., & Rastogi, S. C., 2006).

The forecasting process helps project managers predict the future performance of projects. It requires the Estimate at Completion (EAC) which gives the amount of money the project will cost at the end. If CPI = 1, then EAC = BAC. This means project can be completed with the approved budget analysis.

Table 7: Calculation of Values for Forecasting Techniques

Basic Detail	Forecasting					Overall comments on project performance
Gaupalika	Estimation at Completion	Estimate to Complete (ETC)	Remaining funds	Remaing work	To Complete Performanc	
	10.00	4.00	FALSE	4.00	#DIV/0!	Gaupalika should continue to carry out regular and periodic follow up/reflection meetings with the stakeholders even if the project is ahead of schedule.
Gaupalika 1	103.25	34.25	34.25	25.87	0.76	Gaupalika to set up a meeting within the next maximum three-four weeks with the stakeholders, where the Gaupalika officials and stakeholders must analyze together the reasons why the project is behind schedule; and agree actions accordingly
Gaupalika 2	78.00	0.00	10.00	0.00	0.00	Gaupalika should continue to carry out regular and periodic follow up/reflection meetings with the stakeholders even if the project is ahead of schedule.
Gaupalika 3	135.24	67.24	67.24	42.76	0.64	Gaupalika to set up a meeting within the next maximum three-four weeks with the stakeholders, where the Gaupalika officials and stakeholders must analyze together the reasons why the
Average	96.93	26.93	26.93	22.88	0.85	During the upcoming regular follow up/reflection meeting, the Gaupalika and stakeholders must analyze together the reasons why the project is behind schedule; and agree actions

(Source: author's own product)

Using model above, Estimate at Completion (EAC) is Rs. 96.93 ('0000), hence if the project continues with CPI = 0.85 until the end, the project will have to spend Rs. 26.93 ('0000) to complete it. The table 7 allows Project Managers to make realistic budget revisions with the estimation of the overall cost that project may take to complete. The To Complete Performance Index (TCPI) values estimates how fast project has to work to achieve the remaining target, so it is the estimate of future cost that Project Manager may need to complete the project within the approved budget. Based on the table above, it can be concluded that Project Mangerhas to perform with a better cost performance than the past cost performance if the TCPI value is greater than one. You can continue with the same cost performance if the TCPI value is equal to one. It is good if the TCPI is less than one, while with performance indexes, the reverse is true.

Table 8: Formulae for Projecting various Scenarios

	AC > EV	**AC = EV**	**AC < EV**
PV > EV	Behind Schedule Over budget (case -1)	Behind Schedule On budget (case -2)	Behind Schedule Under budget (case -3)
PV = EV	On Schedule Over budget (case -4)	On Schedule On budget (case -5)	On Schedule Under budget (case -6)
PV < EV	Ahead of Schedule Over budget (case -7)	Ahead of Schedule On budget (case -8)	Ahead of Schedule Under budget (case -9)

(Source: Prasad, V., Rajkumar, P., & Rastogi, S. C., 2006).

Depending upon each of these scenarios, the Project Manager should take measures in terms of human resources, processes and tools. These measures will enable the project team to meet its competing objectives of scope, time and cost (Kerzner, 1998, p 742).

Table 9: Possible Causes and Corrective Actions

Ahead of Schedule /On Schedule	
Possible Causes	**Corrective Actions**
Productivity higher than estimated	Ensure that Quality is further improved
More resources deployed than necessary	Redeploy resources to other future deliverables within the project and outside
Process automation tools deployed	Replan remaining tasks to manage target margins
Original planned schedule was very conservative	Review planned schedule and sustain performance
Behind Schedule	
Productivity lower than estimated; Wrong estimates	Redeploy resources from less to more critical tasks; introduce automation/ reusable components/ re-estimate and ask for Change Requests
Excessive Rework	Use Productivity tools, Retrain resources; get clear specifications; motivate team
Lack of Scope Clarity	Discuss with end users
Unclear Roles and responsibilities	Clearly define and communicate Responsibility Assignment Matrix
Skilled resources not available in time	Try for better skilled resources; invest in training
Scope creep is absorbed	Define scope change process; raise Change Requests; re-plan
Delay is caused by client's processes or indecision	Involve senior management team from client's side to resolve issues
Low utilisation of budgeted resources	Closer interactions with team to resolve their issues; change the team if necessary
Under Budget / On Budget	
Lower cost resources deployed	Ensure Quality is not suffered;
More team productivity than estimated	Ensure cost efficiency does not lead to delay
Process automation/ Tools deployed	Celebrate- for contributing to higher profit margin to company

Original Estimates were on higher side	Re-estimate remaining Tasks; off-load resources to other projects
Over Budget	
Low productivity of resources than estimated	Introduce automation/ reusable components; invest in training
Low utilization (high idle time) of resources	Improve planning and review; Identify team issues and resolve them
Excessive re-work	Use Productivity tools, retrain; get clear specifications; motivate team
Expensive resources deployed	Try monitoring the Off-shore- On-shore ratio; or have right mix of resources
Resources lack required skills	Train them; or possibly replace them
Unplanned resources deployed	Improve planning process, re-deploy idle resources if possible; train for future needs
Scope Creep absorbed	Define scope change process; raise Change Requests; re-plan
Delay caused by client's processes	Involve senior management team from client's side to resolve issues
Incorrect original project Effort estimates	Re-estimate the remaining work and ask for CR
Expensive delivery process	Reduce avoidable Direct, Indirect, Fixed, and Variable costs

(Source: Kerzner, 1998, p 742).

4. Scope and Limitation in the Application Process

The EVM method bears a huge scope in both the development and profit-making world. It can be applied to a spectrum of activities of development project and determine project status on periodic basis as mentioned in previous section. However, the quality and availability of data on target achievements and financial expenditure determine scale of predictability because the indexes are used in the budget and program revision process which can support in removing some non-critical activities. Similarly, nature of project determines scope of data application. For instance, the Gaupalika 2 has 1.14 CPI value in the table 5, meaning that it does not need any additional money to complete the remaining work because it has already completed 100% results. Hence, the utilisation of remaining budget needs to be adapted based on widespread consultation and priority setting exercise. Hence, precise calculation of target achievement based on the M&E framework is an imperative in the EVM application process.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

It is based on illustrations presented above that allows to conclude that

EVM bears an immense potential in technique for generating consistent and plausible quantitative data about the project status (in terms of cost and schedule). The benefits for the entire organization – from funding partners, beneficiary to stakeholders in all levels – with precise quantitative data can have a very clear picture of overall project status. However, the EVM method should be employed with some basic ground rules: organize project team and scope of work, using a work breakdown structure such as Gyatt Chart scheduling the tasks in a logical manner. Eventually, it controls project by analysing cost and performance variances, assessing final costs, developing corrective actions, and controlling changes required to complete the remaining works. It also strengthens awareness, policy commitment and ownership among stakeholders and their communities as a shared responsibility. The outcome of EVM if applied on SDG target reviews can be equally useful in voluntary local review as well and report directly to the Government on SDG progress toward achieving the SDGs.

- The NPC should enroot this method at provincial and local level government agencies and orient local government staff to the application of method. The portfolio of SDG targets can be assessed and reviewed at districts and provincial levels with this method.
- The values generated by EVM method can support the identification of priorities and areas for 'acceleration', i.e. areas where progress has been lagging. It can support in identifying non-critical paths and priotise available limited resources.
- The local government organise voluntary local review (akin to voluntary national review) and foster integration of specific references in the implementation of the SDGs at provincial and local levels.
- NPC should support the integration of index values into the national and local policy-making, planning and budgeting processes. It will require coordinated action from all sectors of society, and leveraging knowledge and resources of the private sector and non-government actors as well as Government systems and capacities at the central and local levels.
- A capacity development workshop/ seminar in each province is required for NPC to aware government officials followed by other interaction meetings. As a pilot test, it can start from Bagmati province and apply the tool in a select local government offices.

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Assessing Climate Resilience – A Generic Evaluation Framework

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Abstract

This article articulates that conventional evaluation approaches are no longer suitable to address the complexities and uncertainties created by global climate change and its interactions with other development interventions. Based on the literature review and analytical approach undertaken in July 2021, the article discussed some challenges for the evaluation of climate actions and proposed an evaluation framework embracing a system thinking approach. It considers various aspects of climate resilience and its assessment processes. It also provides generic guidelines for systematic data collection and analysis that enables stakeholders to assess the contribution of climate actions in strengthening resilience in a given circumstance.

Key Words: Climate Change, Evaluation, Paris Climate Agreement Resilience, and SDG

1. Introduction

The greatest danger for evaluators in times of turbulence is not the turbulence—it is to act with yesterday's logic and criteria. Michael Quinn Patton (2021)

Climate change has emerged as one of the preeminent challenges facing humankind in the twenty-first century. Impacts of changing climate express themselves in a multitude of ways including the severe impact on the life and livelihoods of people around the world. The climate change effects are already visible and are expected to be catastrophic globally unless they are addressed immediately. It is disrupting national economies now and is projected to be affecting even more in the future (Uitto et.al., 2017). Nepal is one of the countries vulnerable to climate change. A study carried out in Nepal showed that climate change may produce a huge economic loss (from 1.5 to 2% of annual GDP) by 2030 (IDS et al., 2014).

Over the years, Nepal's development strategies and policies have emphasized addressing the challenge through the implementation of adaptation and mitigation measures to make its development actions climate-resilient. It has also set its national

targets to contribute to international commitments made through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate change (NPC, 2016).

Sustainable Development Goal 13 (take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) is one of the 17 SDGs established by the United Nations in 2015. The Goal has 3 targets to be achieved by 2030 in Nepal and calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. The goal is intrinsically linked to all 16 of the other Goals. In addition, the Paris Agreement (2015) aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise in this century to well below 2 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels. The agreement aims to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change, through appropriate financial flows, a new technology framework, and an enhanced capacity-building framework. The Paris Agreement is an important milestone on the road towards a zero-carbon, resilient, prosperous, and fair future.

Assessing the effectiveness of climate interventions targeted by SDG 13 and the Paris Climate Agreement requires systematic and comprehensive evaluation frameworks that help governments and other stakeholders to design and execute evaluation in meaningful ways and support transformation (Patton, 2021; Uitto et.al., 2017). The 'Agenda 2030' has also focused on the country-led evidence-based evaluation. But, the current approaches to evaluate climate actions are far from adequate as the conventional evaluation frameworks do not address the current challenges, such as complexities, knowledge gap, and other unknown including temporal, spatial, and thematic interconnectedness, posed by climate change and other ongoing complex socio-economic interactions (Uitto et.al., 2017; Patton, 2021; Douxchamps et. al., 2017).

This article critically reviews various documents, analyses ongoing challenges, and assesses potential evaluation approaches required to evaluate resilience. For this, the author scanned relevant journal articles, reports and other grey literature mainly related to climate change, assessment of resilience and evaluation. A review of relevant theories such as general systems theory, resilience theory was also carried out. Based on the review, information was categorized and analyzed based on the themes of the study. Finally, a heuristic model for evaluating resilience was prepared based on the review as well as the author's own experience. The article is focused on the evaluation of climate resilience (SDG target 13.1) and provides a generic evaluation framework that might be useful to adapt to specific circumstances and needs.

2. Evaluation of Climate Actions – Approaches and Challenges

Evaluation refers to the process of determining the merit, worth and value of something, or the product of that process (Scriven, 1991). Program evaluation is the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgments about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming (Patton, 1997).

The SDG 13 and the Paris Climate Agreement include a set of ambitious objectives by addressing problems that have multiple causes and at various levels.

The Paris Agreement aims to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by 'increasing the ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change and foster climate resilience and low greenhouse gas emissions development, in a manner that does not threaten food production, among others (Agreement, P. 2015).

Assessing the effectiveness of these ambitions requires a paradigm shift in the way societies operate until now. To align with this shift, it also requires an innovative evaluation framework that enables us to assess the effectiveness of climate actions (policies, plans, programs, and projects related to adaptation, mitigation, and resilience); and provides learning to comprehend the challenges and guides stakeholders to find better and transformative solutions considering the specific circumstances. Besides, this should also provide opportunities to stakeholders to innovate different approaches including methods and organize effectively to enhance win-win situations and reduce potential trade-offs of various climate actions (Patton, 2021, UNFCCC, 2019; and William et. al., 2021).

But the evaluation of climate actions is full of challenges. Some of the challenges include i) climate change is a global goal(so difficult to find who is responsible to what extent); ii) climate actions are frequently multi-sector, multi-objective, multi-tiers complex programs that aim to affect not just the environment but also poverty, livelihoods, health, income, and food security); iii) climate actions aim (such as transformational objectives) to affect not just immediate outcomes but outcomes over generations; iv) inadequate data and capacity related to climate change risk and impacts; v) inadequate innovative and proven approaches to address the complexities brought by climate change (Patton, 2021; Uitto et al., 2017). In addition, vi) there is no clarity on how climate change risk unfolds in the future and how and to what extent impact manifest itself as the impact are highly context-specific; and vii) there is a lack of universally agreed definitions of various climate-related terms (such as resilience, adaptive capacity) and assessment protocols (i.e. indicators).

All these challenges make the intervention environment extremely fluid, complex and context-specific. The conventional development evaluation approach is, therefore, no more suitable to address these complex situations. A new approach is, therefore, required with an evaluation framework that is sufficiently comprehensive and responsive. A system theory approach would be a foundation to start work on this that may lead to serving the evaluation objective while remaining simple and manageable by the stakeholders.

2.1 Resilience and Systems Theory

There is no consensus on the definition of resilience. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), resilience is defined as the 'ability of a system and its parts to anticipate, absorb, accommodate, or recover from the effects of a hazardous event in a timely and efficient manner' (IPCC, 2012). The resilience derives from three critical capacities: absorptive (the amount of change that a system can undergo while still retaining its function and structure), adaptive (the amount of learning, combining experiences and knowledge, and adjustments to external drivers), and transformative (the creation

of a new system when the initial state is not bearable anymore) (Folke et al., 2010, Folke 2016, Khanal and Pradhan, 2021). The resilience of a system results therefore from the interactions (trade-offs and synergies) between these three features (capacities), as well as from the degree to which the system is capable of self-organization (Béné et al., 2014).

Inadequate clarity on the definition of resilience and its construct makes it difficult to know what it is and how it has to be measured. Theoretical definitions and frameworks on resilience assessment do not provide easy ways to assess resilience for some reasons. Current quantification attempts while assessing resilience are mostly limited to the household level. There is no adequate straightforward work carried out to link with the individual, sector, and national levels. In addition, it is difficult to measure adaptive capacity as it has cognitive, cultural, social, political, and financial components attached to it. Similarly, there are other issues i. e. vulnerabilities and future resilience that limit the ability to measure resilience.

Measuring resilience needs to embrace complex adaptive systems and their components in a dynamic way (Khanal and Pradhan, 2021, Khanal, 2017). This complicates the choice of indicators. Climate is a complex system with variations, causes, and effects. It integrates many scientific fields to explain and predict the complex effects of greenhouse gas, energy balance, weather patterns, and ecosystems as well as economic and social systems. The climate responses (adaptation and mitigation) have synergies and trade-offs with unintended effects at various temporal and spatial scales. All these themes with multiple objectives at different tiers of management are part of the climate actions management; hence assessment of resilience. Considering these interconnections and associated challenges, a system theory approach integrating spatial and temporal scales, agents, institutions, and ecosystems is required to understand and assess climate resilience.

The attempts made so far to assess climate risk and improve climate resilience are found mostly unidirectional and do not adequately consider the dynamic complexity of emergent properties of the complex socio-technical systems. Recognizing the nature of complexities, it requires general system theory which helps to understand the circumstances and identify some plausible solutions. The system theory has six important features and they are i) holistic—whereby, emergent issues that cannot be quantitatively resolved are explored to reveal salient linkages; ii) systematic—employs a methodological, consistent, and repeatable approach; iii) systemic—considers decision-making as an emergent system where small things integrate into complete wholes; iv) risk-based—sets priorities to identify risks associated with the domain being explored; v) optimal—determines trade-offs between competing factors such as quality of the knowledge produced, time, and costs associated with the learning processes; and vi) sustainable—considers specific actions which are capable of creating a lasting footprint of networks and best practices and reveals possible up-scalable activities (Mkandawire et.al., 2021). With these attributes, the system theory or approach can help in solving challenges related to assessing climate resilience.

2.1.1 Climate Resilience in Nepal's SDG 13

The SDG 13 in Nepal aims at (i) strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters, (ii) integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies, and planning, and (iii) improving education, awareness-raising, and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning, among others (NPC, 2016). This article has focused on the resilience theme of the first target. The review noted that the list of indicators, such as Green House Gas (GHG) emission from agriculture, transport, industries) provides a narrow focus on quantitative indicators and no appropriate and adequate indicators are provided to assess how the climate actions strengthen resilience at the individual, institutional and systems level.

3. Evaluation Framework

An evaluation framework provides a structure and process of systematically collecting data/information by using a variety of methods and sources that can be used to assess progress and learn from the interventions and support decision making process based on the evidence collected through the framework.

There are no theories that solve all problems. In this case, the general system approach can be inclusive and appropriate as it would help in managing ongoing climate challenges through enhanced understanding of socio-ecological interdisciplinary structures & interrelationships and system dynamics and collaborative works among the key actors (Mkandawire et.al., 2021).

Given the challenges brought by the climate change and complex interactions within the socio-ecological systems, there are some frameworks available (Contas et.al., 2014, Douxchamps et. Al., 2017) on resilience-based evaluation but they are not adequate to address the dynamic nature of the complexities. Considering these frameworks and the system theory approach, the proposed framework integrated other important aspects which are critical to for assessing resilience. They include, for example, development of theory of change at the outset, assessment of ongoing socio-ecological systems, emergence, and development trajectories recognizing the multi-dimensional, multi-directional, multi-tier and non-linear nature of resilience and provides a process to assess the resilience under changing socio-ecological systems.

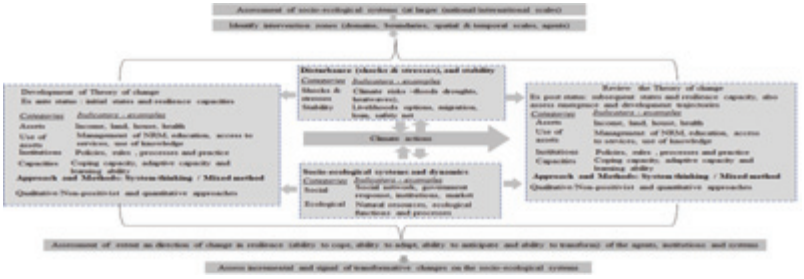

Figure 1: Climate Resilience Evaluation Framework

Source: Adapted from various sources including Contas et.al., 2014, Douxchamps et. Al., 2017.

The evaluation framework has seven important components. They include; i) identification of interventions zones (domains, boundaries, spatial & temporal scales, and agents), ii) developing a theory of change and review of the theory of change; iii) capturing states assets, use of assets, institutions, and capacity; iv) assessing emergence and development trajectory (to see the interaction of transformational actions with the development trajectories); v) assessing the status of climate shocks and stresses and stability (during the implementation time); vi) monitoring ongoing socio-ecological systems and dynamics, and vii) proposing a mixed-methods approach of data collection and analysis (figure 1). Based on the nature of climate change and its risk, qualitative methods may include process tracing, pattern matching, sense-making, inductive reasoning by using participatory tools such as key informant interviews, focus group discussions, change mapping, stakeholder analysis, rubric and spinning wheel analysis whereas quantitative methods may employ household survey, multi-dimensional index, and multi-stage factor analyses.

4. Conclusion

The climate change has a serious impact on the environment and sustainable development; hence it is considered one of the biggest challenges in the 21st century. International communities devised development strategies and mechanisms, such as the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement, to address climate risk both now and in the future. But with the rapidly changing climate and other socio-ecological factors, there is a need to have a comprehensive evaluation framework to assess whether the climate investment is demonstrating the results in the way they were designed and what contribution the interventions are making in strengthening climate resilience. It requires a new systems-thinking approach in evaluation to capture the issue of complexities, interconnectedness, and transformation. For this, a generic evaluation framework has been suggested to assess the climate resilience by considering various aspects of resilience and how it can be assessed. The framework considers the local context and multi-dimensional nature of resilience that can be used in different contexts with some adaptation.

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Conducting Evaluations During Pandemics: Practices that make sense under all conditions

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Abstract

This article presents evaluation practices conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation practices are based on the experiences and insights the author gained from remote Indigenous communities in the Northwest Territories (NWT) of Canada and from evaluating infectious disease tracking programmes. While initially, it was challenging to think about conducting evaluations while the world was coping with COVID-19 pandemic, implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) was not put on hold. As the pandemic continued, program implementation and evaluations could no longer be put off. The article reveals that evaluators started looking for and found methods that worked without being face-to-face. It is believed that many of the adaptations are worth considering once the pandemic is over, and will contribute to achieving SDG 13, 'take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts'.

Key Words: Stakeholder Engagement, Evaluation Planning, COVID-19, Canada

1. Introduction

Excluding those exceptional people for whom the COVID-19 pandemic has the best excuse they have had for staying at home, most of us yearn for our usual human contact – a chance to meet face-to-face with those providing us with information. Initially, knowing what to do in this new environment was a challenge. Early advice from UN Women was: if you answer no to any of the following question, postpone or delay the evaluation:

Will the evaluation provide critical information for the COVID-19's efforts?

Can rights holders be reached through remote data collection methods?

Is the evaluation required by a donor or organization? (UNWomen, 2020 p.4)

That was before anyone knew how long the pandemic was going to last. During the early months of 2020, it was difficult to imagine that this pandemic was going to effect well into 2021 and possibly 2022. Postponing the implementation of programs or evaluation of those programs became impossible. But the evaluations needed to be planned and implemented differently. As noted by Patton, 'Everything changes in a crisis'. We must embrace rather than resisting change. Consequently, 'all evaluators must now become developmental evaluators'. (Patton, March 2020).

2. Changes in Evaluation because of COVID-19

Some of the implications of COVID-19 are described by Rogers and Macfarlan:

Needing to describe new things. *Given the focus on changing service delivery to deliver new services or existing services in different ways, evaluations are likely to need to include information about new activities, outcomes or contextual factors. There are unlikely to be systems in place to effectively collect, manage and analyze data about these factors*. (Rogers and Macfarlan, December 2020) Being in lockdown and unable to travel is one of the most significant contextual factors. This means that services had to be delivered differently with little information on best practices. Hence the evaluations had to look at innovation and flexibility. What are some of the creative ways of delivering service? What do programs do when those do not work out?

2.1 Implications of barriers to physical or usual data collection methods (like interviews and observation).

With many restrictions in place globally that limit travel and face-to-face contact, there has been an increasing use of technology, 3rd party collection, remote collection, secondary data. With these changes come important implications for data management and data analysis, as well as implications around equity and who is involved in evaluation in terms of data collection and analysis(Rogers and Macfarlan, December 2020).

Despite the barriers, the same principles of gender balance and inclusion are important. With the NWT seniors project, some of the smaller remote communities had to drop out of the program because of lack of internet connectivity and limited human resources. This was despite efforts to include them through telephone. What, if anything, could have been done to support those communities better?

2.2 Increasing awareness of the disproportionate impact of the pandemic and the lockdown measures on certain communities. *This has implications for how data are analyzed and visualized – and hence how it needs to be collected so that data are gathered about the experiences and perspectives of the most marginalized, and can be disaggregated to show patterns in terms of service access and outcomes* (Rogers and Macfarlan, December 2020). The United Nations suggests that those populations that are already marginalized face even more barriers during a pandemic. *Emerging evidence on the impact of COVID-19 suggests that women's economic and productive lives will be affected disproportionately and differently from men. Across the globe, women earn less, save less, hold less secure jobs, are more*

likely to be employed in the informal sector. Evidence also indicates that women are frequently in jobs that expose them to COVID 19 such as front-line health care workers. (United Nations April 2020) This may make it more difficult to include them in data-gathering, but because of their perspectives it is extremely important to include them. So how should evaluations be conducted where face-to-face contact is not possible and some of the vulnerable more difficult to reach populations are even more isolated? The following are typical steps for planning and implementing an evaluation that must be undertaken with minimal or no personal contact.

1. Stakeholder engagement is more important than ever during a pandemic when people are generally feeling isolated and out of control of much of their lives. Adequate stakeholder engagement supports:
    - Fairness, equity and balanced power relationship by ensuring that all voices are heard;
    - Participation and inclusion of those whose voices are not often heard, particularly program recipients; and
    - Evaluations that make a difference. Meaning, using the evaluations to improve programs and make a positive difference in people's lives.

This can be much more challenging during a pandemic particularly for hard-to-reach stakeholders who may not have a virtual connection.

A project carried out in the Northwest Territories (NWT) of Canada, has many similarities to Nepal with remote Indigenous communities, many of which do not have a stable internet. In Canada, most Indigenous peoples are much more comfortable with face-to-face connections. This was not going to happen.(Unclear what was not going to happen? Please articulate.)

The NWT did not have a high COVID-19 incidence and wanted to keep it that way. It did not have adequate medical facilities to care for high numbers of COVID patients, so it closed its borders to anyone from the outside. Communities within the NWT shut of access from other communities in order to protect themselves. Engaging anyone face-to-face was not possible.

Instead, key stakeholders including program funders, service providers and beneficiaries were engaged through virtual platforms and, where that was not possible, telephones. Was it ideal? No. Did it work? Generally, yes. Building trust among stakeholders was much more difficult, particularly for an outside evaluator from the big city. But ultimately trust can be built with patience. Service providers needed to become virtually literate in order to plan their programming and work with the funders. In the end it worked. Some tips for building trust through virtual platforms:

- If possible, have your video on during introductions. You are more a person that way, rather than just a disembodied voice. Because the audio can be unreliable when the video is on, you will likely want to turn it off once introductions are completed.
- Use interesting slides with lots of pictures and graphic and very little writing.

- Listen and acknowledge what is being said, similar to what you would do in any other meeting or interview, only more so. It is important to convey the message that you are interested in the stakeholders and their concerns.
- Engage your stakeholders in discussion. Ask questions. Facilitating a virtual session is similar to a face-to-face session. Some people need more encouragement than others to speak out.
- Give more time for responses. Because you can't see the body language, it is difficult to know whether a person is thinking, formulating their response. Interrupting can be thoughts as well as sentences can disrupt the flow.

2. Evaluation planning is likely going to take a bit more time and is likely to require a partnership with the commissioner of the evaluation, while at the same time supporting the independence of the evaluation. Planning under these circumstances will involve the same elements as any plan: the development of a theory of change or logic model, determining the evaluation questions, and setting out how those evaluation questions are going to be addressed. Many of the interactive platforms have features that allow interactive planning. For example, there is an online platform for building logic models that allows participants to jump in and add their own contributions. The adding and removing of ideas creates a dynamic environment in which participants are highly engaged. Of course, as with any evaluation plans, there are strengths and limitations. Those limitations need to be stated with an indication of how they are to be addressed in the implementation of the evaluation.

Flexibility is key. Changes will occur during this planning and implementation phases.. Lockdowns may be put in place or it may be removed. Adapt the plan to fit the current situation. Sometimes compromises must be made, replacing one form of data collection for another or adjusting the ways in which data collection is carried out. It may require collecting data from different sites than originally planned. In the end, the key question to ask of the evaluation plan is whether it will provide credible information upon which decisions can be made.

In another evaluation of a different program in the NWT, the planning is occurring over a three-to-four month period. Planning is highly collaborative, working with a commissioner project team, a steering committee and an advisory group of program users and others with relevant live experience. This requires the plan to be reviewed by each of the groups, which takes time. However, it provides the opportunity to build trust with the people who are essential for gathering data. Because of the challenges in reaching people, these experts in the program are being consulted for suggestions on how to reach the various stakeholder groups.

Innovative data collection methods need to be pursued. Old methods can be carried out in new and different ways. It can be exciting to find new ways of gathering information.

Because many programs are being implemented virtually, information can more readily be gathered virtually. A couple of methods that work well are:

Observation – This was an exciting discovery. Without having to take time to travel to sites, there was time to observe the implementation of the programs. As with any observation, it is important to set out what factors to observe. Some examples are:

- Number of people attending a session
- Topics covered
- Active participation in the session as demonstrated by making remarks and asking and answering questions
- Evidence, such as relevant questions or other contributions, that demonstrate that participants understood the information being presented
- Results of the session being observed

Informed consent for the observation was obtained. Program participants were aware that an observer was in the virtual room, but once sessions began the observer became 'the fly on the wall' who was not noticed by program participants.

Photo-voice – This can work surprisingly well. With the proliferation of mobile phones, evaluation participants can send pictures that are important to them in relation to the program. Interviews and focus groups can be built around discussion of the photos, exploring what is most representative and why it is representative.

Interviews, focus groups, and desk reviews have often been done virtually in the past and can easily be done during a pandemic. In an evaluation carried out for the World Health Organization, five different countries were visited, conducting an in-depth evaluation of the use of an app for tracking tuberculosis. While interviews and desk review were the primary data collection methods, it was possible for the technical experts of the team to look behind the app and assess whether improvements could be made. In this instance, infectious disease experts were a primary source of information who made themselves available. Interestingly, one of the frequently explored questions was: What is the impact of COVID-19 on the treatment and spread of tuberculosis?

If face-to-face interviews are very important, use local planners who can conduct interviews using COVID safety protocols. With the NWT project, because many of the stakeholders have severe disabilities, communication over the telephone or on a communication platform was not possible. Substantial effort was put into forming a local team who can conduct interviews, focus groups and public meetings. This got past the self-isolation required upon entry into the NWT. Local people are also fairly safe in meeting face-to-face because the pandemic is well under control in the NWT. Use of local

people has several advantages. Local teams reduce the amount of travel required, substantially reducing the carbon footprint produced by travel during an evaluation. The local team members have in-depth knowledge of the context. And they speak the local language which can result in more accurate understanding of the information being provided. This practice was encouraged prior to the pandemic. For example, with an outcome evaluation of the UNDP Nepal Country Program Outcome 2 – Vulnerable Groups have Improved Access to Economic Opportunities and Adequate Social Protection, the team was comprised of one international evaluator and three highly competent local team members with expertise in the subject matter. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in Nepalese. Government documents did not need to be translated for the team to use them in the evaluation. Using local team members resulted in an evaluation with greater depth of understanding than could have been achieved by having an outside team.

4. Reporting, seemingly has not changed much. Often reports are presented virtually. While in-person reporting no longer occurs, clients have become so adept at the use of communication platforms that full engagement in the review of the report is possible. Findings can be presented using slide decks. Facilitated discussion regarding the implications of those findings can occur. Stakeholders can be involved in formulating realistic recommendations that work for them.

Barbara Klugman summarizes the changes necessary for planning and implementing evaluations:

I think doing serious thinking work in a way that strengthens group cohesion around what they are doing and why they are doing it, requires attention to the immediate context, the emotional space participants are in, and the ensuring of individual space for reflection and generating of new ideas alone and drawing on collective wisdom. Doing this using an online platform, and with people from multiple time zones, means slowing the pace, listening carefully, and shifting plans as needed Barbara (Klugman, March 2020).

3. Some Changes for the Good: Ecologically-Friendly Evaluation Practices

One of the most exciting outcomes of conducting virtual evaluation is the decrease in the footprint left by the evaluator. Recently increasing emphasis has been placed on including consideration of environmental sustainability in all evaluations just as we consider cross-cutting issues such as gender equality and social inclusion. *Footprint evaluation focuses on the 'footprint' that human systems make on natural systems [...]. Footprint evaluation is grounded in the premise that all evaluations should include consideration of environmental sustainability, even when this is not a stated goal of the intervention.* (Rowe, et.al., no date). COVID-19 has forced evaluators to use environmentally-friendly evaluation processes. Some of the questions that need to be asked when planning an evaluation, whether during a pandemic or not, are:

(i) Is it necessary to increase the carbon

footprint by traveling to the site to get information? Prior to the pandemic, some evaluation organizations were already working towards reducing their carbon footprint by only traveling when necessary.

(ii) Could the data gathering be better done by local people? In many cases, the answer is yes. Local people speak the language and they understand the context.

(ii) Does this evaluation require creative and flexible planning? All evaluations should be as creative and flexible as possible, with the primary goal of carrying out an evaluation that will be used, make a positive difference to the program and make a positive difference to program beneficiaries.

Although COVID19 has created challenges with just about all aspects of life including evaluation, it has also created opportunities for those who have embraced the challenge. It has been an opportunity to do things differently and some of the changes that reduce our carbon footprint and produce better evaluations should continue once we are free to gather once again.

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The simple practice of citation follows the author/date format. To cite a specific part of a source, indicate the page, chapter, figure, table, or equation at the appropriate point in text following the APA style. Always give page numbers for quotations. Example: Chhetri (2016) says, \"ICT makes world a global village\" (p. 219). Insert citation is available in the MS Word under Reference. Authors are encouraged to use the MS Word features.

When we paraphrase, page number is not necessary. Example: It has also been noted that the knowledge and skills teachers acquire during their college days are not enough for their future career (Gnawali, 2008). The general rules of in-text citations are as follows:

1 author (Lawoti, 2005) (Lawoti, 2005, p. 25)

2 authors (Gautam & Basnet, 2004, pp. 24-48)

3/5 authors (Gautam, Basnet, Chaudhari, Tamang, &Tharu, 2003) Next cite: (Gautam et al., 2003)

6+ authors (Gurung et al., 2001)

Chapter (Lawoti, 2005, chap. 2)

No author (Shortened Title, 2000) when it refers to a book;

No author (\"Shortened Title\", 2000) when it refers to a paper or book chapter

Organization as author (Nepal Participatory Action Network [NEPAN], 2016) Next cite: (NEPAN, 2016)

In Press (Uprety, in press)

Personal communication (These are not included in References) (M. N. Parajuli, personal communication, April, 6, 2016)

Multiple (Dahal, 2015; Gurung, 2016; Kanel, 2016)

No date (Yadav, n.d.)

Two authors with the same last name (Sharma, S. R., 2012) (Sharma, M., 2016)

Multiple works by the same author, same year (Luitel, 2010a) (Luitel, 2010b)

Multiple works by the same author, same citation (Wagley, 2015, 2016)

At the End of the Paper

References is the listing of all citations made in the text of the paper. At the end of your main text, in a new page, type 'References', centred, and list all citations in an alphabetical order. No materials should be included in the list that are not cited in the text.

A Book with a Single Author

Acharya, M. R. (2002). *Nepal culture shift!: Reinventing culture in the Himalayan kingdom*. New Delhi: Adroit Publishers.

A Book with Two or More Authors

Bongartz, H., & Dahal, D. R. (1996). *Development studies: Self-help organizations, NGOs and civil society*. Kathmandu: Nepal Foundation for Advanced Studies.

An Edited Book

Bhattachan, K. B., & Mishra, C. (Eds.). (1997). *Developmental practices in Nepal.* Kathmandu: Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Tribhuvan University.

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Dahal, K. R., & Paudyal, B. R. (1998). Legal perspective of decentralization in Nepal. In G. B. Thapa (Ed.),*Promoting participatory democracy in Nepal: An assessment of local self-government*(pp. 43-57). Kathmandu: Political Science Association of Nepal.

Corporate Author

Department of Education (DOE) (2004). *School level educational statistics of Nepal: Flash Report I, 2004*. Kathmandu: Author.

An Article from a Print Journal or Magazine

Koirala-Azad, S. (2008).*Unravelling our realities: Nepali students as researchers and activists. Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 28*(3), 251-263. doi: 10.1080/02188790802270245

An Article from an Online Source

Onta, P. (2000). Nepal education: Finding a ray of hope. Retrieved from http://www.epw.org.in/35-47/comm6.htm#top

A general Reference to a Website

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An Unpublished Thesis/Dissertation

Gnawali, L. (2001). *Investigating teacher practices: A proposal for teacher development of the secondary school teachers of English in Nepal* (Unpublished Master's dissertation). University of Exeter, England.

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Gautam, B., Adhikari, J., & Basnet, P. (Eds.). (2004). *Nepalmagaribikobahas*[Poverty debates in Nepal]. Kathmandu: Martin Chautari.

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In text: (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1970/1990).

Encyclopedia Article

Bergman, P. G. (1993). Relativity. In*The new encyclopedia Britannica* (Vol. 26, pp. 501- 508). Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica.

Multiple Authors (up to seven)

Festinger, L., Cramer, C. J., Riecken, H., Boyd, E. C., Cohen, E. G., Gill, T. G., &Schachter, S. (1956).*When prophecy fails.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Eight or more Authors

Roeder, K., Howard, J., Fulton, L., Lochhead, M., Craig, K., Peterson, R., ... Boyd, E. C. (1967).*Nerve cells and insect behavior.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

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Newspaper Article

Prashrit, M. N. (2002, July 12). Bhanubhaktako sirjana ra rashtriya ekikaran [The creation of Bhanubhakta and national unification]. *Kantipur*, p. 5.

NEPAN Ghar

(National Participatory Development Resource Centre)

NEPAN members, Old and New, always aim for developing NEPAN as a **National Participatory Development Resource Centre** in future, the long-term vision are therefore putting lots of effort to ensure that vision to be materialised. NEPAN has its own three-storied building (NEPAN GHAR) with necessary equipment, spaces, including an official training hall for workshops, trainings, meetings and other activities along with WiFi facilities. NEPAN has its own Resource Centre (RC) for promoting participatory approach in development interventions and decision making of public affairs.

Participation

Year 23, No. 21, September, 2021

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