

USE OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN  
REINTEGRATION OF CARE HOME LEAVERS

Sabin K Singh

A Dissertation

Submitted to

School of Education

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master in Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Kathmandu University

Dhulikhel, Nepal

November 2022

© Copyright by Sabin Kumar Singh

2022

All rights reserved.

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted for the candidature of any other degree to any other university.

November 08, 2022

---

Sabin Kumar Singh

Degree Candidate

## DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my Late father Shailesh Singh who always encouraged me to pursue higher educational degree and contribute to the development of the society through the insights I will get from education. I also want to dedicate this to my mother Laxmi Singh who kept on pushing me to perform my best in life and never lose hope at hard times as you can always change situations by your faith and belief. Lastly, I dedicate this to my wife who has stood by my side and encouraged me and also to my sister and brother for their love and support.

*Master in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (MTVET)* dissertation of *Sabin Kumar Singh* entitled *Use of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Reintegration of Care Home Leavers* was presented on November 08, 2022.

APPROVED BY

\_\_\_\_\_

November 08, 2022

Asst. Prof. Suresh Gautam, PhD

Dissertation Supervisor/HoD Development Education

\_\_\_\_\_

November 08, 2022

Sanjay Hamal, PhD

External Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_

November 08, 2022

Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD

Dean/Chair of Research Committee

I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Kathmandu University Library. My signature below authorizes the release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

\_\_\_\_\_

November 08, 2022

Sabin Kumar Singh

Degree Candidate

## ABSTRACT

An abstract of the dissertation of *Sabin Kumar Singh* for the degree of *Master of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (MTVET)* presented at Kathmandu University School of Education on November 08, 2022. Title: *Use of Technical and Vocational Education and Training in Reintegration of Care Home Leavers.*

Abstract Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Asst. Prof. Suresh Gautam, PhD

Dissertation Supervisor

The national operational policy on childcare homes clearly states that a child is considered as of 18 years and below and further states that 18 years and above cannot stay at the childcare homes and they need to be reintegrated back into society. As a vulnerable group of children is placed in childcare homes deinstitutionalizing them it has drastic negative consequences where they feel lost, unprotected, and clueless which can result in educational, housing instability, and unemployment. As a result, the government has made the care homes provide an opportunity to implement employment-oriented skills according to the care leavers' age, interests, and abilities during reintegration. The policy on skills' training is given importance since skills training is believed to enable people to be competent and deal with one's competency concerning opportunities towards career development, ensuring employability, and building a social, personal, and professional identity which will help them to overcome the curse of unemployment in future. Based on the findings of this study, it aims to explore the contribution of Technical Education and Vocational Training during the reintegration of care leavers.

Many of the studies have emphasized TVET skills training and role of reintegration but few have looked into the contribution of it towards care leavers. In order to seek answers to this, two research questions were formulated: a) How has TVET aided in the process of successful reintegration of youth leaving care homes? and, b) In what ways are the Child Care Homes reintegrating the care leavers in the community?

Using interpretive research paradigm, I began my research journey to examine how the skills training has impacted in transitioning from institutional care to independent life for young care leavers. Conducting in-depth interviews with six care leavers who had undertaken vocational skills training and also two CCH where they had been institutionalized, I found TVET contributed in reintegration. In the study, I explored care leavers journey to why they had to leave the care of the parents and were placed in care homes, their academic attainment, their reintegration stages, their decision to take up vocational skills training, perceptions towards TVET and how the skills training contributed in reintegration. The participants' shared experiences had been transcribed and narrated in the form of their stories and thematically analyzed. As for the CCH, their provision towards skills training, how skills' training was implemented and the stages on how reintegrations are conducted were looked into.

It was also seen that the motivation for participating in the TVET program by the care leavers was to manage employment. As the care leavers knew that once they would leave the CCH they had to be independent socially as well as financially. So, to seek skills training as a contributor in equipping them with skills and competencies to enter the labor market and lead them to employment was the major factor. TVET was also seen to help in smooth reintegration from CCH back to the community as it decreased dependency and mostly it developed confidence among the care leavers to

be independent. As in the case of CCH, provision of career counseling was seen as an initial stage of reintegration. Counseling was given to SEE appeared children where the decision on continuing general education or taking up vocational skills training was given. Based on this, information on types, and natures of TVET programs were presented and career prospects were highlighted.

The experienced care leavers concluded that there was huge potential in the TVET program among the care leavers. TVET was not only equipped with occupational skills but also built confidence towards smooth reintegration which justifies the provision of TVET in care leavers' reintegration.

.....

November 08, 2022

Sabin Kumar Singh

Degree Candidate

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to my dissertation supervisor Asst. Prof. Suresh Gautam, PhD, for his support throughout this research. I am thankful for his guidance, insights, feedback, and valuable time during the study.

I am grateful to Prof. Bal Chandra Luitel, PhD, Dean of KUSOED, and Prof. Mahesh Nath Parajuli, PhD, former Dean of KUSOED, Lina Gurung, PhD, MTVET Program Coordinator for their continuous encouragement and guidance to accomplish this work. I would like to express my special gratitude to Mr. Prakash K. Poudel, PhD Scholar, Bikash Ghaju and Jeevan Tamang Research Asst's for guiding and giving me constructive feedback and assistance in finalization of my research.

I am also thankful to Mr. Raju Dhamala, Exexutive Director, Mr. Umesh Raj Regmi, Program Coordinator (Education & Youth Empowerment) of Nepal Youth Foundation and Ms. Sunila Baniya, Board Member of Punarbal Plus for giving me the permission and linking me with the research participants for the research study, without whom this study could not have been conducted. I am thankful to all my research participants who shared their experiences which turned out to be a great asset for me to shape up this research work. My sincere thanks to those authors and publishers whose work I have listed in the references, from which I have borrowed many ideas to complete this work.

It would be unjust if I failed to spot the support, tolerance and encouragement of my mother and my wife in the course of carrying out this research. Equally, I am thankful to Mr. Surendra Bhatt for editing the English language and maintain APA guidelines of the dissertation. Finally, I thank all my colleagues of Kathmandu University for their insights and suggestions. I express my sincere gratitude to the

KUSOED faculties, including the administrative as well as library staff for their kind co-operation during my study.

Sabin Kumar Singh,

Degree Candidate

## ABBREVIATIONS

CCH	Child Care Homes
CH	Care Homes
CCWB	Central Child Welfare Board
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CTEVT	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
GON	Government of Nepal
ILO	International Labour Organization
NCRB	National Child Rights Board
OJT	On the Job Training
SEE	Secondary Education Examination
SWC	Social Welfare Council
TSLC	Technical School Leaving Certificate
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	i
ABBREVIATIONS .....	iii
CHAPTER I.....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
Selection of the Topic .....	2
Statement of the Problem .....	5
Purpose of the Study .....	6
Research Question.....	6
Significance of Study .....	7
Delimitation of the Study .....	8
Outline of the Dissertation .....	8
CHAPTER II.....	10
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	10
Background of Child Care Home.....	10
Leaving Care .....	12
Policies Regarding Youth Care Leavers Reintegration.....	15
Vocational Skills Training .....	16
Vocational Skills during Reintegration .....	17
Status of Skills Training during Care Leavers Reintegration .....	19
Review of Empirical Study .....	20
Theoretical Referents .....	23
Research Gap.....	25
CHAPTER III .....	27

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	27
Research Design.....	28
Interpretive Research Design .....	29
Brief Introduction of Participants.....	32
Data Collection.....	33
Data Analysis .....	35
Quality Standards .....	35
Ethical Considerations.....	36
CHAPTER IV .....	38
CARE HOMES REINTEGRATION.....	38
Punarbal Plus:.....	38
Care Leavers Reintegration Policy .....	41
Skill Training for Care Leavers .....	41
Reintegration Process .....	43
Nepal Youth Foundation .....	44
Care Leavers Reintegration Policy.....	46
Skill Training for Care Leavers .....	48
Reintegration Process .....	49
Chapter Discussion.....	50
CHAPTER V .....	53
YOUTH CARE LEAVERS STORIES.....	53
Ashok: TVET equipped me with skills and competencies .....	53
Why I chose Vocational Skills Training.....	54
Perspective towards TVET .....	55
Reintegration Phase .....	56

Skills Contribution in Reintegration.....	57
Subash: An incident developed a passion in me to be an Electrician .....	58
Why I chose Vocational Skills Training.....	59
Perspective towards TVET .....	60
Reintegration Phase .....	61
Skills Contribution in Reintegration.....	62
Shova: Skills help you become saleable .....	62
Why I chose Vocational Skills Training.....	63
Perspective towards TVET .....	64
Reintegration Phase .....	65
Skills Contribution in Reintegration.....	66
Manish: TVET helped me find good and stable job .....	66
Why I chose Vocational Skills Training.....	67
Perspective towards TVET .....	68
Reintegration Phase .....	68
Skills Contribution in Reintegration.....	69
Priya: Vocational skills training as alternative to academic studies .....	69
Why I chose Vocational Skills Training.....	70
Priya’s TVET Journey .....	70
Reintegration Phase .....	71
Skills Contribution in Reintegration.....	72
Ganga: I always wanted to be Nurse.....	72
Why I chose Vocational Skills Training.....	73
Perspective towards TVET .....	73
Reintegration Phase .....	74

Chapter Summary.....	75
CHAPTER VI.....	77
DISCUSSION ON NARRATIVE ANALYSIS .....	77
Institutional Care Experiences .....	77
Factors Influencing Enrollment in TVET .....	79
TVET Equips Skills and Competencies .....	83
TVET Builds Confidence.....	85
Vocational Skills Training Provides Employment.....	88
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS .....	91
Summary .....	91
Conclusion.....	93
Implications of the Study .....	94
REFERENCES .....	96
APPENDICES .....	107
APPENDIX 1: Interview Checklist to Child Care Homes.....	107
APPENDIX 2: Interview Checklist to Child Home Care Leavers.....	109

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The International Bill of Rights considers every individual's right to family to be a fundamental human right. Despite the fact that family is the ideal environment for a child's healthy development, some children have few options because they have no parents and are vulnerable due to parental separation, poverty, illness, disability, conflict, disaster, or discrimination. To cater to these needy and vulnerable children Child Care Homes (CCH) were established which provided them with care, support, and access to education, health services, and security.

In accordance with the 20th anniversary of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the UN General Assembly presented “Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children” in 2010. The guideline was there for improving implementation of CRC in regards to children who were deprived of parental care. In the case of Nepal, the Government of Nepal (GON) formed a statutory body Central Child Welfare Board (CCWB) in 1993 following the Children’s Act 1992 which was responsible to contribute to ensuring the rights of the children in the nation in line with the standard set by the UN CRC for protection and promotion of children. CCWB was then responsible for looking into the operation of CCH in Nepal. In 2018 the CCWB was dissolved and replaced with National Child Rights Board (NCRB) in accordance with the Children’s Rights Act-2018.

In 2012 CCWB published *Standards for Operation and Management of Residential Child Care Homes*, which states that a child is considered 18 years and below (GON, 2012). The standard also mentioned in it that only children are to be kept in CCHs and as children of care homes turn into youths they are to be

reintegrated back into society. Further in Criteria 75 of the CCWB Standard of Operation and Article 55 of the Act Relating to Children, 2018 both highlight the responsibility of the concerned CCH to support the child welfare authority in the children's rehabilitation and social reintegration residing at that CCH.

This is in line with Article 131 of UN Guidelines for Alternative Care of Children; which instructs the care provider agencies to ensure an appropriate aftercare to the children in care and to prepare for reintegrating the child into the society through acquiring social and life skills. Further in Article 133, it recommends educational and vocational training options in order to assist the care leavers in becoming financially independent and generating their own income.

### **Selection of the Topic**

I have been associated with a non-government organization that has been providing residential care to children for long. The children at the organization were very small when they came and slowly as time passed by, they started growing. From the very beginning we knew that the children we looked after would not be with us forever and they had to be reintegrated back to their families when they would turn adults - 18 years, following the national policy guidelines. As the children turned 16 we had to think of how we would plan for their reintegration and during this stage we were limited with the choices of what next.

Having made a commitment to bring about change in the lives of the children we served, we needed plans to develop competencies among the care leavers so that they could assist their families once they left the care of our organization. As all of the children came from poor economic background, the families would not be able to provide for their higher education and in that case, the organization had to step in to support their education. Many organizations like us that are dependent on donor

funds, lack the resources for supporting them to continue education which are quite expensive and lengthy.

While exploring CCHs policies on reintegration, they clearly depict provision for vocational skills training during the reintegration. As a scholar of Master in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (MTVET), I have seen the impact of skills training in providing opportunities for young people to find employment and make a living out of it. While exploring TVET and reintegration, I came across several studies on child care homes and children living at CCH in Nepal but found very limited studies conducted particularly on reintegration of care leavers' transition. Relating to this, I strongly felt vocational skills training is an important component in transition and examined how vocational skills training as part of TVET was being practiced by child care homes and shared insights on the care leavers' experiences on TVET and its contribution.

In the research, there are a couple of keywords and hence, definitions of the keywords are provided below to help the readers understand the research.

### **Residential Care**

According to the UN Guidelines (Article 28) for the Alternate Care of Children (2010), residential care is described as “care delivered in any non-family-based group environment, such as places of safety for emergency care, transit centers in emergency situations, and any other short and long-term residential care facilities, including group homes”.

Residential Child Care Homes (CCH) are defined as “homes established by the Government of Nepal or any other organizations in accordance with the law to provide care and protection to orphan children and those in need of special care and protection” (GON, 2012).

## **Reintegration**

The act of helping some people reintegrate, rejoin society, or resume communal life after a predetermined period of disassociation is commonly referred to as “reintegration” (Nagrath, 2005). Further, in terms of reintegration of those leaving care, we see reintegration to be described as “the process by which a separated child makes what is expected to be a permanent transition back to his or her family and community (typically of origin), in order to receive protection and care and to find a sense of belonging and purpose in all spheres of life” by the Better Care Network (BCN), an international network of organizations dedicated to supporting children without adequate family care around the world (Better Care Network, 2013). As of Machel (2001), reintegration entails assisting disadvantaged youngsters in reentering society on a social and economic level.

## **Care Leavers**

In this study, reintegration is related to kids who spent a sizeable portion of their childhood in foster care and have now reached an age at which their guardians especially the institutional care homes consider it appropriate to stop providing support and expect them to leave the facility. This group of young children and their journey to adulthood is referred to as “care leavers”.

“A person, typically over the age of 18, who spent a significant amount of their childhood in residential care (such as orphanages, children's homes, or rehabilitation facilities), and who has since left the official alternative care to prepare for independent life, may be eligible to aid with education, finances, psychosocial support, and housing” (Better Care Network, 2013).

### **Statement of the Problem**

Children without parental care are only temporarily housed in child care facilities and as the children of CCHs grow and turn youths, the CCHs cannot keep them as per the CCWB Act on Nepal and so, they have to be reintegrated back to the community at some point of time. These young people are seen as an especially vulnerable component of the care-experienced population since they leave care through emancipation rather than gaining stability (Haggman-Laitila et al, 2018; Courtney et al, 2019).

According to Dutta (2016), an abrupt and fast transfer out of the care facilities frequently has dramatic effects on the persons leaving care. They have a profound sense of loss, vulnerability, and ignorance that leave them with a vast mental void and there is a great risk of relapsing into the vicious cycle of the past from which they have emerged. Thus, settling in completely new environments is quite challenging in the case of care leavers.

As young people in care are considered as a vulnerable group, their reintegration becomes very important. With unplanned and poor reintegration practices, the reintegration of them can lead to difficulty in education attainment, housing problem, lack of supportive connections and getting jobs. Biehal et al. (1995), Powell et al. (2002), Stein (2008), Pinkerton (2011) and Tanur (2012) all have shown that poor outcome of young leavers leads to further vulnerability.

As reintegration is part of CCHs, children should be given the opportunity to learn employment-oriented skills according to their age, interests and abilities during the departure, reintegration or reunification plan. On the basis of this, we can clearly see national policy provisions to vocational skills training towards youths leaving care homes in Nepal (GON, 2012). Prasad (1979) highlighted that vocational training

provided the beneficiary with the necessary skills to earn a life with dignity and self-respect which contributed immensely towards care leavers finding a job which was the first step towards their independent living.

From this we see that as care leavers have gone through lots of difficult life experiences and have been traumatized due to their past, it is crucial for them to have better life as they move into independent adulthood. For this right to access education, training, and employment can be crucial for care leavers at the stage to find meaningful towards life goals.

As skills training are in line with government policy towards the CCH on provision to skills training during the reintegration, it is necessary to look into TVET and reintegration. For this, we need to see how TVET has been contributing in reintegration which is believed to enable people to be competent and deal with one's competency in relation to opportunity towards career development, ensure employability and to build a social, personal and professional identity. Thus to prove whether TVET is contributing towards smooth reintegration of care leavers and providing employment to them, this study is conducted.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study's main goal is to examine how child care homes have offered technical education and vocational training and how it has helped young care leavers reintegrate into society.

### **Research Questions**

To achieve the above purpose, the following research questions are formulated in the study

1. How has Technical Education and Vocational Training aided in the effective reintegration of young people leaving care homes?

2. In what ways are the Child Care Homes reintegrating the care leavers into the community?

### **Significance of Study**

Skills development during reintegration has been found to be very helpful for young adults to improve their capacities, assist them in finding job, and make the transfer easy and successful. As a student of TVET, this research will help me better understand and form my opinions about the value of vocational education and training for care leavers.

This research will also help me significantly in my professional field, as I have been associated with CCH that has been providing residential services for almost 15 years. As the children in my organization are growing old, we have to design reintegration strategies according to the government policies which have prioritized provision of skills training. The research will add to accessing strategies and practices being used by other CCHs and the contribution towards care leavers for successful reintegration using skills training.

As no such previous research has been carried out in the context of Nepal to look into the relationship skills training and transition of young adults from CCHs to society, this study would be much important. It will provide relevant information on how skills training can help in the transition and contribute to sustainable livelihood through economic participation. The policy makers can also find this study to be extremely helpful in formulating effective plans of action and moving forward with securing the rights of children in CCH in Nepal. It can also significantly contribute to addressing the reintegration strategies and plan. It will further help the various CCHs prepare on how to effectively transition the young adults to socio-economic development of the nation.

### **Delimitation of the Study**

This study has been delimited to six youth care leavers who had undertaken vocational skills training before being reintegrated from two CCHs. Similarly, the study has been delimited to the care leavers' shared experiences regarding access to TVET and CCHs' contributions during their reintegration.

### **Outline of the Dissertation**

I have divided this dissertation into six chapters. Chapter I introduces the reader to the purpose and the direction of the study. It has introduced the background understanding of residential care and its significance. The keywords associated with the research are also provided and further elaborated on the problem considered for the research. The purpose of the study along with research questions for investigation and its significance are provided.

Chapter II provides a review of the literature done for this study. It comprises of defining child care homes, care leavers, what reintegration is, national policies regarding reintegration of care leavers, the transition stage, the definition of vocational skills and their role during the reintegration along with different scholarly works on the reintegration of care leavers.

The chapter III deals with the research methodology. It highlights why I took up the specific research journey, research design, research site, sampling techniques, short details on research participants, and ethical considerations during the research.

In chapters, IV and V qualitative findings of the research are presented. In chapter IV, two CCHs from where the research participants were selected for the study are presented. These CCHs are the research site of the study. It was important to also find out about the institution's background, their directives regarding intake, care facilities, and age of discharge, the organization's reintegration policy, skills training

provision to care leavers, and finally the reintegration policies to better understand the reintegration of youth care leavers overall. This study also assisted in cross-verifying the narratives of the study participants.

The chapter V presents narrative stories of the research participants who took up vocational skills training prior to leaving the care home. Their live stories are presented in themes - their journey to child care homes, family background, and experience of residential care, education attainment, and shift from general education to vocational skills training, departure from CCH, reintegration stage and contribution of skills training towards reintegration.

And in chapter VI, I have presented a discussion of the findings of the study. And finally, in chapter VII, the summary, conclusion, and recommendations are presented.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The main reason for reviewing the literature is to understand the phenomenon of investigations in areas where similar concepts and methodologies have been used successfully. This chapter provides an extended explanation of various concepts and theories concerning the reintegration of children of CCHs and the various strategies and practices during the transition of children from CCHs back to society as they turn to adulthood and have to leave the institution.

#### **Background of Child Care Home**

A Child Care Home serves as a temporary residence for children from fragile and at-risk families as well as those without relatives. There are many children who are displaced by internal conflict, fragmented family, and poverty and are at high risk of being abused and victimized. According to Subbian (2006), children are typically placed in institutions because of failure of safety nets when they or their families are dealing with difficult issues which lead to children being vulnerable and lack special care and attention. Further, it is seen that CCHs are functioning with the assistance of international organization and/or under the sponsorship of private individuals, religious organizations, or individual charitable organizations.

Even though CCHs are the final resort for keeping orphans and vulnerable kids, sending such group there has become standard procedure. Sigal et al. (2003) claim that poverty is the primary factor leading children from 'economic transition' nations to ending up in institutional care. Relating to this, Guragain et al (2015) and Gale & Khatiwada (2016) have both seen to have highlighted the main causes of child institutionalization in Nepal, its poverty's overt effects and, more specifically, parents'

and other family members' expectations that residential facilities will provide children with better living conditions. This is a more common practice and allures parents from isolated rural regions to give up their kids because they believe they would have access to greater educational opportunities, improving their chances for a better quality of life.

A study on 'Alternative Care in Nepal' published in 2014 by St. Xavier's College & Amici dei Bambini (Ai.Bi.), concluded that disadvantaged families place their children in care homes as a preventive strategy towards their children, which is leading to more kids living in residential child care facilities. Furthermore, it is also a practice of sending siblings at care homes which we can see to be in line with UN General Assembly's Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children's Article 17 stating that in general, siblings with established relationships should not be separated by placements in different care unless there is a demonstrated risk of abuse or other justification in the best interests of the child. Unless it is against their preferences or interests, every effort should be taken to keep siblings in touch with one another.

Typically in the care homes we can see many children living together, and this is a form of group fostering approach as of Udayan Ghar, an Indian residential care facility for orphaned and abandoned children has adopted. The main goal of the approach is to build group fostering with fewer children in order to reproduce the comfort and security of a home and family for children who lack biological homes. From this, we can see that the principal agenda of care home is to provide a homely environment for those living in it which is one of the strengths for them.

Like many developing nations, Nepal has seen a sharp rise in the number of CCHs during the past 20 years. Data collected by the CCWB shows that the number of CCHs in 2016/017 was 567 where 16,536 (8318 boys and 8218 girls) children

reside (GON, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, CCWB, 2017). As of NCRB in 2019, there were 533 registered CCH in 46 districts, where 15,045 children were residing (Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens and National Child Rights Council, 2020).

Although they were first designed for orphans and abandoned children, parents, communities, and government officials are increasingly seeing them as the greatest choice for providing disadvantaged children with a solid education and appropriate health and nutrition facilities (Organizing Committee of Policy Dialogue for Center for Child Welfare Board, UNICEF, Save the Children & SOS, 2013). CCHs in big cities, in the opinion of many parents and local authorities in rural regions, are the greatest alternative for children to receive a quality education, for weaker families to decrease their financial burden, and to guarantee that the child's fundamental requirements are addressed. Additionally, it is prestigious for parents to have kids who are purportedly at school in the city (Karki, 2013).

The care homes not only provides the child a family like environment but also are established to fulfill their basic requirements such as food, shelter, education, love and care for the proper development. These initiatives aim at ensuring the child's rights and uphold the child's best interest, living in such institutions. The Nepalese government is particularly concerned about children where we can see the constitution prioritizes interests of the child, and specifically cites child rights to life, protection, growth, and participation in Article 39. In section 2 of the article, right to sports, maintenance, good care, and education are all included.

### **Leaving Care**

Most often, when a young person in alternative child care reaches adulthood, they must leave care and begin living on their own as adults. This process is referred

to as leaving care or transition and the person going through this stage is referred as a care leaver (Karki, 2013). On the basis of this, we clearly see that when a child in the CCH reaches a particular age, the State or the non-governmental organization is no longer obligated by law to provide for their care towards them, and they must leave the facility. The legal age to leave foster care is generally 18 years; however, this might vary from nation to nation. It is seen that leaving the care is a life turning event from dependence on care provider to being self sufficient.

Mr. John Frederick (ILO-IPEC consultant) presented in a workshop on Directions for Building the Foundation for Reintegration Activities in 2004 at Kathmandu, Nepal, the four core purposes of those working with children as: first, to safeguard and heal those in our care; second, to fortify them; third, to get them ready for reintegration; and fourth, to help them reintegrate into society;. The focus on helping the child to have a smooth reintegration out of the care home considering their rights is quite visible from this. Dutta (2016) has shared three ways on how leaving care or reintegration is conducted: first, younger children are adopted or placed in residential care; second, older children are rejoined with their families after varying duration of time spent in care; and third, young adults leave care when they attain the age of majority as of system.

Each care leaver is distinct; each has its own life trajectory and different options, opportunities, and choices. Some may do very well in life while others do not. Care leavers, on the other hand, have some of the worst results in society as a group. According to international studies, young people leaving care are one of society's most vulnerable groups, and they are significantly disadvantaged in contrast to their peers.

## **Transition Stage**

Supporting kids who are getting ready to leave CCH care is crucial. This involves supporting children who want to go back home and reintegrate with their families as well as young people who are 'aging out' of the foster care system and making the transition to independent life. In either scenario, exiting foster care should be a carefully planned and monitored process that includes ongoing assistance.

For young individuals, the shift from alternative care to independent life can be difficult. Young people may not be emotionally or financially prepared to handle change, if their departure from care is abrupt or unplanned, despite the fact that some separations from care may be well-planned. Without sufficient preparation for leaving care and assistance, young people may run the danger of experiencing problems including long-term unemployment, substance misuse, criminal activity engagement, educational difficulties and housing instability (Better Care Network, 2013).

According to the UN CRC recommendation, the process of moving children from foster care to aftercare “should take into account children's gender, age, maturity and individual circumstances and involve counseling and assistance, particularly to avoid exploitation”. Encouragement should be given to children exiting foster care to participate in aftercare life planning. In order to support each kid's independence while leaving care, extra efforts should be taken to provide to each child, wherever feasible, a specialist individual.

Working with kids to make plans for life after care and adulthood can help reduce these risks. This includes assisting them in choosing the best living situation, helping them to develop the necessary life, financial management, and employment skills, and making sure they have a solid support network. Children should be supported in pursuing educational, vocational and career options and encouraged to

stay in touch with their prior caregivers and friends. They should also have access to basic services and decent accommodation with financial aid. Research have shown that gradual, prolonged, and supported transitions out of foster care are better for young people's outcomes than early, abrupt departures (Better Care Network, 2013).

### **Policies Regarding Youth Care Leavers Reintegration**

In Nepal, 16 years is considered to be the legal majority age. Children must leave residential care at the age of 16, however, if there are concerns with their livelihood or economic instability, this age restriction may be extended for an additional 2 years (Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare and SOS Children's Villages, 2014) which is in line with the CCWB 2018 where a child is considered as 18 years and below and above 18 years cannot stay at the CCHs (GON, 2012). As of Article 55, it addresses that children's home is responsible for helping the child welfare authorities with the rehabilitation and social reintegration of the children residing at such facility.

The UN Guideline on the Alternative Care of Children, 2009 has prescribed after-care support to children by providing counseling and on-going educational and vocational training opportunities as part of life skills education in order to assist them become financially independent and produces their own income. The departure of children from residential child care homes is certain and efforts are made to help them adapt to an independent life easily. Support may include vocational training, life-skills, emotional stability and awareness of social norms and behaviors. Therefore, it is crucial that resident child care homes prepare and implement care plan for an individual child. The provision to provide skills training during the reintegration of care leavers is also stated in the national guideline for the Operation of Child Care Home 2012 article 76 (GON, 2012).

## **Vocational Skills Training**

Words like Vocational Skills Training, Skills development, Technical Education, Vocational Education, Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training (TEVET), and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) are used interchangeably to mean skills training and development (McGrath, 2012). Taking this into consideration TVET terminology has been used in the research study.

According to UNESCO (2010), TVET is “is a process of education that results in the acquisition of practical skills, attitude, understanding, and knowledge relating to occupation or trades in diverse sectors of economic and social life”. Technical and vocational education is further understood to be an integral part of general education which means it prepares for occupational fields and for effective participation in the world of work. In addition, the UNESCO (2012) defined vocational education as educational programs intended to help students develop the information, skills, and competences necessary for a certain trade, career, or group of vocations or crafts. Successful completion of such a program results in vocational qualifications relevant to labor market, that are recognized as occupationally-oriented by the appropriate national authorities and/or the labor market. The ILO regards TVET as an aspect of lifelong learning process and has stressed the importance of TVET and skills development in the improvement of fundamental employability abilities.

Vocational education, often known as technical education, prepares students for careers that are generally non-academic and entirely tied to a particular trade, activity, or vocation in which the student engages. TVET is defined as education and training that equips individuals with the information, skills, and attitudes necessary to find employment in the labor market (Ekpo & Onweh, 2012). This leads us to the

conclusion that TVET has a role in alleviating youths' access issues to education, training, and employment. Ayonmike et al (2015) highlights TVET to be directly related to achieving learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and competence gained at the end of the learning process) that fulfill the expectations of main stakeholders such as students, parents, employers, and the community.

As of Sharma (2008), TVET primarily serves three purposes in Nepal: first, it equips individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to succeed in the job market; second, it helps to meet the nation's needs for skilled human resources; third, it satisfies employers' demands for trained workers crucial to business survival and growth. Building on these justifications, Anderson (2009) asserts that two fundamental productivity presumptions underlie VET: 1. Education increases productivity and economic growth (training for growth); 2. Skill development increases employability and creates jobs (skills for work).

For economic regeneration and poverty reduction, all worthy individuals regardless of social, cultural or geographic origin are required to have equal access to be engaged in TVET programs (GEFONT, 2011). From this, we see every individual to have equal access to TVET no matter from which background they come from. TVET is a way of enhancing a person's employment and earning capacity which play a role in the socio-economic development. TVET is supposed to equip technicians and skilled individuals to compete for higher paying employment in the local and international labor market. On the basis of this the importance of TVET can be huge in making a difference in the lives of people.

### **Vocational Skills during Reintegration**

CCWB has emphasized that residential facilities must create individualized reintegration programs for care leavers that include employment-orientated skills

training according to age, interest and abilities (GON, 2012). Chaffin (2014) has stated that programs for reintegration may include financial education, value chain development, cash transfers, employment or agricultural development, skills training, loan-led or savings-led microfinance, income-generation plans, and cash transfers. According to him, economic strengthening is crucial for the reintegration process to enhance livelihoods for assisting the children in care during the transition. From this we can see that TVET is considered as part of imparting skills based knowledge and preparing the young care leavers to be economically active and be employable.

According to Mr. Nepal, Director of SOS Children's Village, "reintegration must be carefully planned and practiced. While leaving rehabilitative care, two components of reintegration must be recognized: social and vocational". He further highlights that "social reintegration aims to strengthen the youngster and integrate him/her not only into society but also links to employment". This can be linked to Dr. Gale & Khatiwada (2016) where they have argued the best practices for family reintegration plans are: provision of technical vocational skills, access to further education, and job placement aid.

In a study carried out in the United Kingdom in 1997, it was found that the educational achievement of children living in care was lower than the national average. According to this study, a mix of personal, familial, social, and policy-related conditions might affect these children's educational attainment. It is considered that child's family backgrounds and early childhood environments might have a significant impact on their academic achievements in school (Brodie et al, 1997). Stein (2009) also has concluded that young people leaving care are seen to have lower levels of educational attainment and are beyond the minimum school leaving age than other young people. Similarly, young individuals migrating from out-of-home care

have lower educational results than their non-care counterparts - it has been highlighted by Jurczynyn & Tilbury (2012), Mendes, Michel & Wilson (2014 and Mendes & Snow (2016). Based on this literature review, the option to pursue vocational skills training rather than continuing general education can be linked.

An important domain to be addressed as a young person's transition to independence is education, training and employment (Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. (2012). When a youth care leaver is transiting from the institutional care, they must be equipped with education, training and employment. As education and training lead to finding employment, the role of provision to TVET is immense. Caves et al. (2019) opine that TVET assists the care leavers with proper support regarding career helps in determining the career goals, understands the opportunities and realizes their expected choices.

From all these, we can see the importance of TVET component for the care-leavers. For years at the CCHs, all of their needs are met by the institution and it has created a sense of dependency among the children. As the mandate of CCHs is that children above 18 are to be reintegrated back to the society – critical analysis of the transition to make it at ease is the ultimate agenda. During the stage, children's future needs to be considered and taking this into account, they must be provided with psycho-social needs to make them mentally prepared along with some work related occupational skills which can be achieved through TVET.

### **Status of Skills Training during Care Leavers Reintegration**

It has been observed that in typical practice, even though there are national policies and provisions targeting reintegration, there is very little preparation, facilitation, or follow-up help available to young people and families who have been

alienated from their own residences for many years in usual procedures of remaining at CCHs.

However, a number of NGOs have gradually boosted their work with young people as they prepare to leave care. Some of the services given to care-leavers include assistance in obtaining housing, employment, and access to higher education. Some of the organizations, such as SOS Villages and Hope for Himalayan Kids Nepal, offered assistance to young people exiting foster care in many elements of social integration, as well as what they saw as very important is 'the development of self-esteem and self-empowerment.

### **Review of Empirical Study**

When I tried to look into some of the studies by different researchers on care leavers' reintegration, I found very limited studies. Some of the reviews I came across are here.

For a successful social reintegration, Benbenishty & Schiff (2009), Harder et al. (2011), and Sulimani-Aidan et al. (2013) have focused on developing interpersonal relationships, problem-solving skills, and psychological well-being in addition to acquiring skill training, access to higher education, living arrangements, and financial independence.

For care leavers to become capable adults, Dinisman & Zeira (2011) placed a strong emphasis on two categories of life skills: physical tangible abilities, like managing money and obtaining employment, and intangible skills, such building connections and communicating.

In their study on the social reintegration of child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Johannessen & Holgersen (2013) discussed a social

reintegration framework that addressed each person's psychological needs, acceptance by family and society, and vocational training.

Boyden (2003) drew from several studies on children's social reintegration before coming to the conclusion that in social reintegration programs for various groups of vulnerable children, their resilience and coping must be taken into account.

In their study, Kongeter et al. (2008) noted that young adults exiting foster care in Germany are assisted in pursuing education, job placement, and vocational training. Germany has a sizable database on benefit claims, but there are gaps when it comes to tracking the outcomes of care leavers.

In order to effectively disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate (DDR) child soldiers in postwar Angola, McMullin (2011) has emphasized the need of building an environment that supports “the child’s health, self-respect, and dignity” (Article 39, UNCRC). Family tracing and reuniting services, services of family mediation, temporary housing, food, psychological therapy, educational assistance, and vocational training were all suggested as child-specific solutions.

The reintegration of institutionalized children into Zimbabwean society was the subject of another Muguwe et al. (2011) research. It says that the Child Protection Society takes all ages into account for reintegration beginning as early as three months. According to this report, attempts have been made to place individuals who haven't been reintegrated by the age of 18 in transitional homes where they can get life-skills instruction.

A study by Gilligan & Arnau in 2017 among 22 care leavers, revealed the importance of the role of care homes in the work-related progression of young care leavers, especially in gaining work experience. The qualitative research demonstrated that care homes were crucial in creating chances through fostering skill development.

Further emphasis is placed on the role of caregivers in helping young people locate and commit to jobs, as well as in acquiring job-supporting skills.

One of the main causes of the challenges faced by children in institutions is poverty, which frequently denies them access to school and appropriate vocational training. As a result, providing each institution's students with high-quality vocational and educational instruction becomes their major obligation (Modi et al., 2016).

The effect of care experiences on young people who leave residential care was highlighted by Stein & Dixon (2006) in their surveys carried out in Scotland. A policy analysis of all 32 social work departments was conducted, as well as a survey of 107 young people from three authorities, 61 of whom were followed up with during a six-month period. Their research has shown that these young people benefited from high-quality residential homes that guaranteed stability and continuity, and that stable relationships encouraged resilience and helped them achieve strong educational and professional success in the future. They also discuss how to enhance access to jobs, training, and education.

In her study 'Preparation for Social Reintegration among Young Girls in Residential Care in India', Dutta (2018) discovered that 66% of the female participants in CCH believed that receiving vocational training will help them become financially independent in the future. This developed confidence among them and increased level of readiness to leave the care.

While conducting a review of the literature, I came across a study published in 2014 by St. Xavier's College in Kathmandu and Amici de Bambini (Ai.Bi), a non-governmental organization, titled *Child Welfare Policies, Services and Their Aptitude For Care and Protection of Vulnerable Children and Their Families*. In this study, the researchers discovered that the majority of young care leavers reported that they were

struggling to support themselves after leaving the residential CCH. According to the report, this is because they had to handle everything on their own with just a minimal amount of assistance from the company. As a result, they had come to the realization that throughout their time at the residential CCH, they needed appropriate counseling regarding many facets of social life in order to know and understand themselves and the world so that they might make better informed decisions about long-term career aspirations and schooling. Furthermore, they discovered that at their research site - St. Xavier's Social Service Center, the organization offered vocational training to young people who were unable to complete their formal education for a variety of reasons. In it, young people leaving foster care said that the CCH should help them obtain employment and offer training in life and livelihood skills.

Supporting young care leavers' reintegration is another topic covered in the article. Young people leaving foster care should get help from agencies and organizations involved in child welfare and protection programs for their further education, vocational training, and job search. For the purpose of job placement, CCH must identify and create a productive partnership with corporate giants and/or vocational training centers.

### **Theoretical Referents**

According to resilience theory, a person's ability to deal with hazardous, vulnerable, and dangerous situations allows him/her to bounce back (Rutter, 1985; Hunter, 2001; Stein, 2005). Resilience theory is a body of concepts that examines how people and families respond to stressful experiences and how well they have adjusted as a result. Resilience is the ability that allows certain young people to achieve fulfillment in their life in spite of their challenging upbringings, difficulties they may have faced, or stresses they may be under. Overcoming challenges, coping, and

recovering are all aspects of resilience. Following are some questions that guide resilience research: What makes a difference for children whose lives are in danger due to hardship or disadvantage? How do some people manage to grow up and conduct competent, well-adjusted lives while encountering great challenges? The answers to those questions would give critical advice for mitigating the detrimental effects of adversity on child development and well-being (Masten, 2011).

Skills Development Scotland has emphasized the need to provide young people with the knowledge, self-assurance, and resilience to manage transitions in addition to teaching them the vocational skills they need to succeed in life. A substantial amount of research supports the usefulness of resilience as a theoretical referent for comprehending variables that enable effective transition throughout critical life-course turning points (Masten, 2011; Rutter, 2012; Schofield, Larsson, & Ward, 2017).

On the basis of this it is crucial to examine how we can encourage young people leaving care to be resilient. In an article by Mike Stein from 2008, the resilience of young people from impoverished families is examined using research on children who have left foster care. These conclusions are applied to young people's lives as they are growing up, including their time spent in foster care, their transitions out of care, and their post-care life. There are three primary categories of young people that may be distinguished from studies on those who have left foster care: those who are “going on,” “survivors,” and “victims”. It is suggested that strengthening the resilience of children exiting foster care will necessitate more extensive interventions throughout their lifetime. This will include better quality care to make up for the negative pre-care experiences through stability and continuity, by supporting their educational goals and helping them form a positive sense of identity;

skills training to give them opportunities for more gradual transitions out of care, that are more similar to normative transitions; and finally, better quality and longer term support (Stein, 2008).

### **Research Gap**

While reviewing different studies as a researcher, I found most of them have emphasized vocational skills training during the reintegration of care leavers should be in line with the UN CRC policy. It was also seen that very limited academic studies have been done in the sector as coined by Stein & Munro (2008) where they state, unfortunately, there is only a limited amount of documented literature available about preparation and experience of social reintegration among care-leavers. As most literature highlighted the need for skills training during the reintegration of care leavers, I wanted to look deeper into the contribution of vocational skills training during the reintegration to see how successful the reintegration of care leavers had been with access to skills training. But to my dismay, there were very limited studies in the sector. The ones which were found were usually international studies and some of India but I come across no such study in Nepal. During the research study, I learned that even though skills training were provided to care leavers by some of the CCHs in Nepal, the learning from the practices was limited to the organization or the donor partners' agencies. To prove and strengthen that vocational skills training can bring about change and contribute towards care leaver, this study was conducted to fill in the gap.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have presented empirical and thematic review, theoretical referents and research gap. I reviewed starting with the reason why child care homes were established, what they offered, transition out of the care homes, policies on care

leavers and reintegration, provision towards vocational skills training during reintegration and linked my reviews with empirical studies. I incorporated resilience theory as a theoretical referent which focused on people leaving care to be resilient. Finally, I discussed the research gap to acknowledge how my research was different from that of others.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the research methodology applied to address the research problems. This chapter contains a full account of the research process starting with the research philosophy, research design chosen to explore the research question, research site, and short description of research participants, data collection techniques, and process of data analysis and meaning-making. It ends with discussion on quality standards and ethical considerations followed during the entire research period.

#### **Research Philosophy**

Research philosophy is the foundation of any research as it explains the set of beliefs the researcher holds about the development of knowledge. According to Saunders et al. (2012), research philosophy is the assumption about how the researcher views the world. At every stage in your research, you will make several types of assumptions - ontological, epistemological, and axiological (Burrell & Morgan 1979).

The study of existence is known as ontology (Crotty, 1998, p. 10). Ontological assumptions are concerned with the nature of reality. Based on this, the ontological philosophical point is the social reality of care leavers. As CCH exists in our society, the children residing in them turn adults and are to be reintegrated back to the society. This transition can be both smooth and rough which shapes the future of the adult leaving the care home. Understanding these life experiences of the youths is the key to this research. The ontological point in the research is the realities of how vocational skills' training contributes towards the participants. It also looks into the nature of skills training, employment and how they are reintegrated.

Epistemology studies the nature and forms of knowledge (Cohen et al. 2007, p. 7). Epistemology is concerned with the creation, acquisition, and communication of knowledge, or what it is to know. Creswell (2003) summarizes it as “how we know what we know”. The epistemology of this research was to interpret information shared by the participants and for this multiple in-depth interviews with the participants were taken in order to get much information as possible. The information given was cross-examined with the participant's respective CCHs for ensuring validity and reliability. I also looked into the relationship between skills training and employment.

The involvement of values and ethics in the research process is referred to as axiology. This includes considerations regarding how we, as researchers, deal with our own values as well as the values of our study participants (Saunders et al. 2012). Taking this into consideration, in my research the participants came from traumatized situation so they were fully given opportunity to express themselves and in situation when they felt uncomfortable they could skip the question. However, during the multiple interview process they themselves felt comfortable in sharing their stories.

### **Research Design**

David A De Vaus (2001) defines research design as the overall plan you select to combine the many components of the study coherently and logically, assuring you will properly solve the research topic; it serves as the blueprint for data collecting, measurement, and analysis.

As of my research study I choose to use qualitative research design as it is in line with the central objective of qualitative research which is to find out answers to the question: ‘how’ and ‘why’ people think and behave ‘in a particular way’ (Ambert et al, 1995).

Qualitative research is a method for researching and comprehending the value that people or groups place on a social or human situation. The research process involves formulating study questions and methodologies, collecting data in the participant's environment, inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher presenting interpretations of the data's importance. The final written report's structure is flexible. Those that engage in this form of study advocate for an inductive research strategy, focus on individual meaning, and the necessity of conveying a situation's complexity (Creswell, 2007).

This research study which explored the youth's transitions from care to independence is quite complicated and cannot be answered simply with a yes or no. To understand how the TVET contributes to the different stages of their lives and for getting a full picture of the situation, a qualitative method was selected. Within qualitative research there are several methods and among them I choose Interpretive Research Design for this study.

### **Interpretive Research Design**

As my research explores the contribution of skills training during the reintegration of care leavers, it is an element of the social phenomena and so is linked to interpretive research philosophy. To get a better understanding of social interactions, interpretivists use qualitative research methods that focus on individuals' views, motives, and reasoning rather than quantitative facts. According to interpretivism, access to reality occurs through social creations such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, and tools (Myers, 2008). Because interpretive researchers believe that social reality is integrated within and hard to separate from their social environments, they "interpret" reality through a "sense-making" process

rather than a hypothesis testing procedure. On the basis of this, the study facilitates me to understand the contribution of TVET during reintegration.

During the research I learned that the participants came into institutional care from different socio contexts and as they turned to adults they had to leave the institutional care and be reintegrated back to the society. At this transition phase, the participants had undergone lots of hardship, experiences, perceptions which were part of the process of reintegration which was a social reality of those in institutional care as highlighted by Litchman (2013). The experiences of these youth and the contributions of TVET are to be studied and the learning from this can be applied to other youths who are in transition phase of being reintegrated.

As my study is based on life journey on why the children were placed in care homes, their experiences, skills training attainment and reintegration, which is part of the social reality that needs to be interpreted and studied in order to understand the participants' perception.

Apart from this, a narrative research strategy is also utilized to investigate, in which the researcher studies the lives of persons in order to produce tales about their lives. The researcher will frequently retell or restore this knowledge into a narrative timeline. Finally, in a collaborative narrative, the story blends perspectives from the participant's life with those from the researcher's life (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The narrative has helped to reflect on the past life events and experiences related to the care leavers.

### **Research Site and Participants Selection**

According to Higginbottom (2004), the sort of sampling strategy used in qualitative research is decided by the issue under inquiry rather than the necessity to provide generic conclusions. Based on the research criteria of residential child care

home and vocational skills training towards the care leavers, I started exploring CCHs within Kathmandu. I choose purposive sampling method to identify them. Purposive sampling is a non-random sampling approach that relies on the researcher's discretion, in that, the sample to be included will comprise the most distinctive or typical traits of the population (Strydom, 2011).

In preliminary stage I came across some and approached them. But to my dismay, many of them did not respond and were hesitant to provide information regarding the status of the reintegrated care leavers. During the process, I learned the reasons for this. The organizations wanted to maintain confidentiality on the matter, since they required approval from their donor partners which was time consuming and some felt that care leavers would share sensitive matter during the reintegration which they did not want to be out.

Finally, two child care homes were very much positive on the issue and they were selected as research site for the study. One of the CCHs has been providing residential home services to HIV affected / infected children and orphans from 2009 onwards. Likewise the another CCH provided vulnerable children such as orphans, abandoned, disabled children, child laborers, street kids and poor kids a safe home to live and be educated from 1992 onwards.

The organization linked me with the care leavers who had been reintegrated from three months to almost two years. The care leavers were found to have taken vocational skills training ranging from short-term duration training of six months to long-term skills training of 18 months and 3 years and they were identified and selected for the research. The purpose of having different care leavers of TVET was to have diversity and uniqueness of participants.

### **Brief Introduction of Participants**

A total of six participants were selected for the research out of which three were male and three female, ages ranging from 21 to 25 years old. Below is a brief introduction of each of the research participants:

**Ashok – 21 years:** originally from Kailali had lost his mother when he was 2 years old and his father at 5. After losing both of his parents, he was admitted to the child care home at the age of 6. He completed his SLC and took up 18 months of Technical School Leaving Certificate (TSLC) course in Electrician from Balaju School of Engineering and Technology. He has been successfully reintegrated for almost a year and is currently working as an electrician earning 25,000/- per month.

**Subash – 24 years:** was just a year old when he was rescued along with his 3 elder sisters and ended up in the child care home. Subash was unable to pass the SLC and thus opted for 6 months of Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) Level 1 Electrician skills training from Sanothimi Technical School. He has been out of the residential care home for 3 years and is working as an electrician earning 25,000/- per month.

**Shova – 25 years:** a resident from Kanchanpur who lost both her parents when she was just 5 years old. She was 8 years when she was brought by the organization to Kathmandu. After completing her 10+2 she took CTEVT Level 1 Montessori skills training and 1-year Early Childhood Development training. Currently working in Samsara School, she is earning 15,000/- per month and pursuing Bachelor's degree in Education.

**Manish – 25** from Ramechhap lost his father at the age of 5 in a road accident. Referred by one of the villagers, he was brought to the child care home. After completing 10+2, he undertook 6 month Diploma in IATA Foundation in Travel and

Tourism. After completing the training he worked in a trekking office for a year and went to Dubai for foreign employment. He has currently returned to Kathmandu and is planning to start his enterprise.

**Priya – 24:** from Rauthahat district was institutionalized at the age of 3 due to poor family background along with her 2 elder sisters. As being weak in her studies, she was unable to pass the SLC examination and took up 6 months of apprenticeship bakery training at Lalitpur. After completion of the training, she worked in the same bakery earning 10,000/- per month for 2 years. She has been married for almost a year and is planning to set-up a small bakery shop in the village.

**Ganga – 21:** originally from Dang at the age of 4 along with her younger sister was admitted to the child care home. She was very interested in nursing. So, after SLC she took up 3 years Diploma in Ophthalmic Science from the Balaju School of Engineering and Technology. She has recently moved out of the organization and has found a job in an eye clinic.

### **Data Collection**

In research, data collection is a process to get a deeper understanding by exploring the research participants. According to Creswell (2007), the primary aim of data collection is to collect real descriptions of the concerned field to generate clear and accurate reports of aspects of human experiences. Setting the parameters for the research, gathering data using semi-structured or unstructured interviews and observations documentation, and visual materials, and defining the technique for capturing information are all part of the data collection stages (Creswell, 2007). To explore the contribution of skills training towards care leavers and in doing so, I applied data collection tools such as in-depth interview, observation, and field note to capture the care leavers' life journey experiences.

### **In-depth Interview**

To gather information, the research was divided into two phases. In the first phase, the child care homes were identified and interview with the organization was conducted to gather information on the organization reintegration policies, strategies and process. Followed by the preliminary data, in-depth interview with the research participants was conducted on a one on one basis using semi-structured interviews that intended to provide a comprehensive picture of a participant's opinions or perceptions on a certain issue (De Vos et al, 2011). As a result, this strategy was deemed acceptable for addressing the research objectives in this study. The interviews began with introducing the objectives of the research to the participants followed by their consent towards the research. In this study, an interview guide was designed and used to guide the interview process. The questions were divided into different parts such as background information, education, skills training followed by their reintegration stage and current status.

It was semi-structured interview where the participants were free to share their stories and their journey. This helped to build trust among them and make them comfortable sharing their stories. The interview was carried out in 2-3 sessions of almost an hour per session. During the interview, I took notes along with recording with consent of the participants to prevent missing out of information. The interview was later transcribed and presented under themes.

### **Observation**

Based on my personal experience and knowledge, I also used observation tools simultaneously along with in-depth interviews to collect data and information. I observed the residential care facilities where the care leavers were provided with the residential care to understand the environment. This helped to visualize how the child

care homes were providing their services and also opportunity to interact with some of the children that were staying there.

### **Data Analysis**

After collecting the data, analysis was done to make meaning out of the collected information. According to Merriam (1988) and Marshall & Rossman (1989), data collection and processing must occur concurrently in qualitative research. According to Creswell (2007), making sense of textual and visual data is what data analysis requires. It includes organizing the data for analysis, doing various analyses, delving further and deeper into comprehending the data, portraying the data, and producing an understanding of the data's wider significance.

The collected data from each of the research participants were considered as an individual case and transcribed individually. With my professional experience, I chronologically reviewed each data individually, interpreted the data, categorized them as per the nature, coded them and then broke them down into themes as suggested by Bloor & Wood (2006) for interpretation and meaning-making process and have presented them.

### **Quality Standards**

In any academic research, maintaining the quality standard is very crucial. In order to maintain quality and trustworthiness of this study, I followed the four criteria by Lincoln & Guba (1985) of qualitative research: credibility, dependability, conformability and transferability. In order to create credibility, researchers must verify that persons engaging in study are correctly recognized and documented. The stability of data through time and under varied settings is referred to as dependability. Conformability refers to objectivity, or the possibility of agreement between two or more independent persons about the veracity, relevance, or meaning of data. The

capacity to extrapolate is referred to as transferability. It is based on the assumption that results may be generalized or transferable to different situations or populations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As my study applies interpretive paradigm that deals with different aspects of truth, it tries to seek the understanding and meaning-making of the participants and situations, interpreting their situation as it is rather than researcher's own perspective. For credibility, several rounds of interview were conducted with the participants and some of the information they provided was cross verified with the CCHs. During the research I made sure that the participants felt comfortable to share their experiences and gave priority towards their time, value and socio-cultural aspects. I let them freely express themselves by not interfering them during the interview process and above all, their feeling and voices were quoted as they were said directly to ensure credibility.

Dependability addresses the fundamental issue "the way a study is conducted must be consistent across time, researchers, and analytic methodologies" (Gasson, 2004). Following that, the data gathered from the participants should be explicit and reproducible interviews. The data collections were recorded in written forms during the interview and later grouped into themes for presentation. As of conformability, multiple participants were selected in the study which helped to legitimize the information collected. As the participants were from similar background, their responses were as likely to be repeated with each other where transferability is also linked to.

### **Ethical Considerations**

When undertaking any sort of study, ethics is extremely important. Creswell (2013) emphasizes the need of paying attention to ethical considerations before

initiating a project, during data collecting and analysis, and during reporting, sharing, and preserving data. In accordance with this, the study was carried out with ethics in mind at every stage of the research process.

Prior to conducting the research study, approval from the college was taken. At the beginning of the study the concerned organization was informed about the purpose of the study and they provided the details of the potential participants whom I could interview for the study. After receiving the details of the participants, each was made aware about the purpose of the study and before starting of the interview; their informed consent was taken into consideration as it is the important ethical consideration for this study. No one was forced to participate in the study and each responder was free to leave at any time. The significance of voluntary participation cannot be overstated, and this study ensured that no participants were coerced into participating in the survey. Because the majority of the research participants had experienced trauma in their lives, I was extremely careful not to hurt their feelings or cause pain by asking questions that they did not want to disclose.

Throughout the process of the study, upholding the rights of the youths was considered. Efforts were made to foster a secure, open, and trustworthy environment in which participants might openly express themselves without fear of negative repercussions. The participants were not influenced to provide information where they felt uncomfortable and privacy and confidentiality were two principles which were strictly adhered to. As part of protecting the identity of the participants pseudo-names are used.

## CHAPTER IV

### CARE HOMES REINTEGRATION

This chapter offers description of selected two child care homes – Punarbal Plus and Nepal Youth Foundation as the research site. It provides background of these CCHs and practices during the care leavers' departure from the care home. It also looks into how these organizations have been conducting skills training to the potential care leavers, the reason for choosing skills training during the reintegration and the stages on how reintegration measures are conducted by the organization to the care leavers:

#### **Punarbal Plus**

Punarbal Plus, founded in February 2007, is a non-government and non-profit organization registered with District Administration Office, Kathmandu and affiliated to Social Welfare Council (SWC) works in the field of HIV & AIDS. The organization's mission is to serve HIV infected or affected children, as well as orphans who are denied an education owing to their HIV status and poverty. It was seen that the organization works in three main areas of need, associated with HIV-infected children: medical and psychological care, schooling, and raising awareness among the population.

To fulfill the organization's mission, two projects: Shikshya Sadan and a Punarbal Home are being implemented.

**Shikshya Sadan:** started in 2007 was the first educational institution in Nepal to provide opportunity to attend school to HIV infected or affected children. Once the school started people began stigmatizing the school as a school for exclusively afflicted children, and they understood the significance of incorporating other

students. As a result, students from low-income families, orphans, and conflict-affected youngsters were accepted to the school the next year, marking the organization's first move toward inclusion. This provided opportunity to the infected children who once lived in isolation to study, communicate and play with other children. This had a favorable outcome on bringing change in the attitude towards children infected of HIV and the disadvantaged who have previously been unable to attend school.

However, the solution of having a separate school for the infected was not the long-term solution. As the school was a primary school, the need for integrating the children in another school once they got into higher classes was also a concern. The organization lobbied for infected children's rights to education with school authorities, government officials, doctors, like minded organizations and journalists. Punarbal successfully integrated its first batch of grade 5 pupils into a government school in Sitapaila in 2013. The school decided to allow only older students at first because school officials were concerned that smaller children would fight and become sick. However, as time passed, the school decided to integrate students from grade 2. At the same time, Punarbal Plus was forced to close Punarbal Shiksha Sadan School owing to a lack of finance. Non-infected youngsters from the neighborhood were enrolled in other schools that provided free education. The smaller affected children were home schooled by the hostel in charge of Punarbal Home, with the goal of integrating them when they reached grade 2. This technique aided youngsters who came from remote areas and were unable to attend school owing to the disease's widespread stigma and prejudice. This was a gift in disguise because the organization's purpose has always been to close the school once the community is ready to overcome discrimination and enable afflicted children to attend local schools.

This was a significant accomplishment the organization had achieved through its wide range of works towards awareness among the people.

**Punarbali Home:** After opening the school, demand for admission for HIV affected and infected children/orphans began to come in from all across the country.

Enrollment of these children in the school showed the need for a center for them. So, in November 2009, it started a residential home, a place of care and assistance for youngsters who had nowhere else to go owing to prevalent prejudice. The home guaranteed that the children grew up in a safe and caring environment free of discrimination, and that they had the resources they needed to establish a secure future for them. The children at this home received healthy meals, a clean environment, a weekly medical check-up, psychological assistance, and, most importantly, a stigma-free atmosphere.

These kids were living in poverty before moving into the home and faced prejudice and exclusion from the neighborhood. Although there were plans from other donor groups to offer financial incentives to guardians who cared for the impacted orphaned children, they were mostly motivated by money greed rather than concern for the wellbeing of the kids.

One of the requirements for running child care homes in Nepal is that there must be separate houses for males and girls when the kids start to become adults. As a result, the organization moved in June 2016, about 1 kilometer away from the old location. The new place had two buildings with 25 rooms each and bigger play areas for the kids. The first structure at the compound's front has the boys' housing, an office, a conference room, a room for two volunteers, and a television room. Like with the previous house, the boys will share a room, but in this one, they have a lot more area to walk around and play.

A well-equipped infirmary, kitchen, dining space, a school for younger children, and the girl's house are all located in the second building at the back side of the courtyard. There is a sizable courtyard between the two buildings where the kids may play games together, unwind in between lessons, and feel free to socialize after school in safety.

35 underprivileged children are currently housed at the CCH who without assistance, would most likely have had to endure great deprivation and prejudice.

### **Care Leavers Reintegration Policy**

In order to find out about how reintegration was being practiced, I had interviewed two of the organizations' board members and also looked into organizations' internal policies. In this manner one of the board members Mr. Shrestha shared:

*The home is a temporary shelter for the children and once they turn adults, they need to be reintegrated back to the society. As we operate under the government and National Child Right Board, we must abide by the law which allows us to house children up to 18 years and after that they are to be reintegrated.*

He further emphasized that reintegration is carried out in a participatory approach along with care leavers. He also focused on skill training as one of the processes of reintegration in the policy of the organization. In this manner, I saw clearly that the organization was in line with national CCHs policy and they had emphasized on skills training as part of reintegration process.

### **Skill Training for Care Leavers**

Looking deeper into the skills training it was found that the organization had been enrolling the elder children in different skills training from 2018 onwards. So

far, five youths had been reintegrated out of which four had taken vocational skills training. When further investigated on the type of skills training, it was seen that two took health related trades, one electrical trade and another plumbing trade.

While talking with another board member Ms. Baniya on why the organization chose vocational skills training as part of reintegration strategy, she informed:

*There are three reasons behind this, first is due to the funding issues of the organization. General education is quite expensive as it takes a longer duration of time, which the organization cannot afford. Second is the care leavers' themselves as most of them are quite weak in their studies due to which some are able to complete SEE and some are not. To find a way out and reintegrate them into the community, vocational skills training is the best option as it is cheaper than general education and also there are scholarship provisions by the government and the third reason is they can have faster income generation through employment.*

Based on the information provided it was seen that the organization was also very much concerned with the financial comparison between the general education and vocational skills training. After completion of the SEE, generally the prospect is to continue education in +2 and then Bachelor degree which generally takes total of six years to complete. As the CCHs are not provisioned to keep the youths above 18 years, the youths have to be reintegrated or the organization has to look into other ways of providing assistance. It was seen that continuing to support the youths in general education is quite expensive due to the length of duration in terms of the time. As the reintegration time of these youths is approaching, providing them with skills training was more viable and feasible. It was seen the skills training the organization

had provided was generally for 18 months and the cost associated was also quite cheaper in comparison to the general education.

Upon further investigating on how the youths select the type of skills training Ms. Baniya mentioned that:

*After completion of the SEE, we conduct group counseling and provide them information of both general education and skills training. The organization's priority is on vocational skills training but it all depends on the interest of the youths if they want to peruse skills training or go for general education. Once they select, we further provide them with different options on each stream.*

The right to choose one's path is clearly seen as the organization does not enforce its decision towards the youths. The youths have freedom to choose which path they want to take. If any of the youths chooses general education, s/he would be enrolled in college as per their field of interest and those opting for skills training were provided with counseling on different types of TVET options. Based on their interest, the trade for the skills training was finalized. After finding out the trade, the organization coordinated with training institute and the youths were placed there for training.

### **Reintegration Process**

Regarding how the organization had been practicing reintegration and process involved in reintegration, Ms. Baniya shared:

*The ultimate objective of the skills training is assistance towards reintegration of the youths and once undertaking skills training, the planning of the reintegration also starts. As for the reintegration, firstly, finding out where they want to go is very important. Do they want to return to their family / guardian / village or want to settle in Kathmandu?*

From this, we could clearly see, while choosing the career path the care leavers' reintegration plans were also being considered side by side. It was seen that during this time, strategies on exit plans were developed along with the care leavers and stages were planned accordingly which would be of greater assistance later during the reintegration period.

Ms. Baniya further added "Once the youths complete their training, we facilitate in finding employment for them. And once they are employed, we work together with them in finding a room on rent and settling them". This highlighted that the organization seemed to be very much concerned about the youth leaving care and wanted to be with them to be fully settled down with employment in hand as it would make the transition smooth and for better future. It was seen that the organization had provided full set of amenities required for them to settle in the new room such as bed and kitchen utensils. Besides these, the organization also provided three months of advance room rent to ease the youths. In some cases, two youths care leavers were also kept together to help them better adjust in starting to live independently.

### **Nepal Youth Foundation**

Olga Murray, a California Supreme Court attorney in her sixties, traveled to Nepal in 1984 to go trekking. During the trip, the children she came across touched her as they were primarily unschooled, from a low socioeconomic background, and in ragged clothes. She made the decision to go back and aid the children after witnessing their terrible destitution in the countryside.

In her second visit in 1987, she met with a young physician who had recently started a tiny hospital for children who were severely crippled and were in need of free treatment due to poverty. Through this link, she started providing scholarships to

disadvantaged kids and as the number of scholarships increased, she made the decision to launch a foundation to provide these children with structured aid.

In 1990, a nonprofit organization with U.S. registration Nepalese Youth Opportunity Foundation (NYOF) was established to offer the neediest children in Nepal access to human rights, housing, healthcare, and education. Later, the group adopted the name Nepal Youth Foundation, or NYF. NYF increases help for these children via educational initiatives, health care, and the empowerment of girls. In addition to offering scholarships to kids, NYF runs a number of additional initiatives, such as saving girls from being bought as bound slaves and paying for their education and teaches moms about child care and nutrition while restoring severely malnourished children to full health.

NYF is an international NGO with worldwide offices in Australia, Hong Kong and the United Kingdom that aim to raise funds and engage new supporters, while the office in Nepal is in charge of program execution and U.S. office serves as the organization's global headquarter.

### **Olgapuri Village – Children's Home**

The main goal of NYF is to protect and provide education to vulnerable children by giving them a secure place to live. J House for boys was the first children's home established by NYF in 1992. This arose out of a need since NYF was unable to locate a decent boarding school that would accept the complete varied group of boys it was supporting and it didn't want to separate them because they had gotten so close and the older children were so helpful to their younger ones. In order to start the children's home, NYF rented a tiny two-bedroom residence.

After two years, the J House was completely occupied, and so, it relocated the children to a bigger, more luxurious house. By that time, they had also welcomed

several female residents, making J House coed and adding six female residents to the top level. By 1994, even the larger house was insufficient due to the rising number of kids. Therefore, it rented another neighboring home, giving rise to K House (for females).

From the beginning, these homes provided a safe haven for orphans, abandoned and differently bred children, child workers, street children, and children who had been living behind bars with an incarcerated parent who had experienced additional traumas and suffering at a young age.

A Children's Village, also known as Olgapuri Village, was planned and built by NYF in Lalitpur in 2016 to guarantee a perpetually nurturing atmosphere. 80 youngsters are housed in a lovely home with 4 houses (Junior Boys, Junior Girls, Senior Boys, and Senior Girls), a farm, and a vocational training facility. Children are given the chance to pursue their educational goals and to live out their aspirations in the home, which offers them a secure and caring atmosphere. The needs of the children are handled at the children's home using a comprehensive approach that includes schooling, regular medical, dental, and psychiatric treatment, as well as a robust schedule of extracurricular activities. NYF pledges to ensure the children's long-term security from early life through college and until they are independent.

### **Care Leavers Reintegration Policy**

Regarding the organizations policies on reintegration, it was found that the organization operated under the guideline of Nepal Government – National Child Rights Board and Social Welfare Council. As of the mandate for the operation of residential child care home, NYF abided by the national laws. As of Mr. Regmi – Program Coordinator for Education and Youth Empowerment stated:

*As per the national policy up to 18 years, the children turn to youths and still can reside at the residential home but the organization's internal policy is drafted which allows youths up to the age of 20 years to reside in the care home. This is for those youths in special cases who wish to continue studying Bachelor's degree where we find a hostel outside our residential home, if they wish to leave the care home. We will keep supporting them till they find a job and are capable of independent living.*

This was quite surprising to see that the organization has internal policy of 20 years as reintegration age rather than 18 years. Analyzing the context of the organization, it showed that the reintegration depended on case by case. The reason behind this was seen that as the organization believed on the principle that education could lift the children out of poverty and give them opportunities they desired to grab, it had set no limit for the education and even one could pursue till PhD degree if they wanted. The organization was seen to have upheld individual choice of education as one of the reasons why the organization had age limit of 20 years for the reintegration. In my opinion, this was also due to organization being an international organization and so, they had sufficient funds to support youths in their care.

Apart from the age, looking into reintegration policy, the organization had provision towards both general education and vocational skills training. It was seen that the organization had been running vocational education program from 2007 onwards. This program offered career counseling and vocational training to help impoverished young adults get ready for employable careers. In accordance with the program, participants received instruction in more than a dozen occupational skill training programs tailored to their requirements, and NYF provided assistance with job placement or self-employment after training.

To meet the growing demand for high-quality training, NYF launched the Olgapuri Vocational School in 2017 as a social enterprise. The vocational school on average has been sponsoring about 500 young people training in high-demand, skilled trades including electrical, plumbing, welding, and carpentry, as well as a caregivers program since then. Training programs range from three months to three years and cover a diverse array of fields, and participants receive career counseling and support in finding employment.

### **Skill Training for Care Leavers**

After the children appear at the SEE examination, the organization organizes group career counseling which is similar to the practice of Punarbal Plus. In the counseling session, option to pursue general education or taking vocational skills training is provided and choice of the career path is totally up to the youths leaving care. On this, Mr. Regmi shared:

*We provide two options to the youths – general education or skills training.*

*Based on their interest they select one. As we have Olgapuri Vocational School, this also motivates the youths to take vocational skills training as they have observed other people taking training and earning quite well.*

From this, we can see that having the vocational school was an asset to the organization, as it provided motivating factor for the youths to take skills training. Upon further conversation, it was found that in spite of having its own vocational school, most of the youths taking skills training were provided with training outside the organization. The vocational school was limited to five trades - electrician, plumbing, carpentry, welding and caregiver. It was seen that when the choices of skills training did not quite match with the trades, the organization's vocational school was providing the care leavers with training outside the organization based on their

individual interest. It was seen that the organization facilitated in finding the best training institute upon requests of the care leavers and in some cases the care leavers themselves looked for one.

When further investigation on reasons for why the youth leaving care opted for vocational training, Mr. Regmi shared “due to skills training being of shorter duration of time than the general education, many in transition show interest as they believe it will help in quickly moving out from the care home and start earning”. On the contrary Mr. Regmi expressed that:

*The organization usually prefers long-term skills training from 18 months to 3 years. We believe that better qualified skilled human resources are produced with longer duration training programs which will help in long-term career development of the youths. This will lead to acquisition of higher skills and better earnings.*

This reflected that even though organization believed on longer duration of the skills training to equip with better skills and competencies for better income and long term career growth, some of the youth care leavers chose short term skills training as they wanted to move out from the CCH quickly.

### **Reintegration Process**

In case of the NYF, it was found the process of reintegration was similar to the Punarbal Plus. When the youths were ready to leave the care home, the organization firstly found out where they wanted to go – back to their families or settle down by themselves and in the process the families of the youths were also consulted. As the reintegration process was based on mutual understanding, cooperation and joint planning is seen among the organization, care leavers and care leavers’ families were

seen. Counseling was also seen to be provided on timely basis to the youths preparing them for reintegration.

On how reintegration was practiced, Mr. Regmi shared “Generally once they complete 10+2 or take vocational skills training, we work closely with them to reintegrate after they find a job”. This highlighted that as the youths grew up and had skills everyone wanted to get employed, linking them with employment was a way of helping the youth care leaver to adjust better in the society. It was also seen that for employment most of the care leavers preferred staying in towns as employment opportunities were high and organization was there in supporting them to adjust. As part of the reintegration, the organization also assisted in searching for rooms, provided required amenities along with payments of 3 – 6 months of room rent. After they moved out from the care home, regular follow-up was done on timely basis. If they had any issues during the stage, the organization provided further support and necessary counseling.

### **Chapter Discussion**

The two CCHs were the research site of the study that provided the background setting for the investigation of the research. It looked into how the organization was establishment and its objective towards addressing the social issues. It was seen that the organization did not have any plans of starting the child care home during its establishment but later on due to the need of having a safe shelter and protection for the beneficiary children, the organizations started residential care home.

As falling under the child care home, these institutions abide by the laws which further states that a child is considered as 18 years and below and above 18 years cannot stay at the CCHs (GON, 2012). As the children turn from childhood to

youth, the children turned to youths residing at the CCHs are to be reintegrated back to the society. So on the basis of this, I have investigated whether the organizations internal policies are also in line with the government or not. During the process I have found out that even though 18 years is mentioned in their policies Punarbal Plus abided by the policy of 18 years while NYF had been keeping youths up to 20 years. This showed that NYF had diverse by laws and provision towards working with youths. Therefore, based on this bylaw, they had youths up to 20 years residing at a separate building to house so as not to abide by the governing law of CCH.

Based on this guideline of the UN which encourages ongoing educational and vocational training opportunities to be imparted as part of life skills education towards those leaving care, I wanted to look into the skills training provisions provided by the two organizations. It was seen that both the organizations provided counseling to the youths after they had given the SEE examination. In the counseling, decision on continuing general education or taking up vocational skills training was totally given to the youths themselves and the decision was not enforced by the organization. When the youths chose vocational skills training, information on different types of training, both short-term and long-term, were provided and the youths went for their individual choices based on their interests. This showed the organization respected the rights of individuals in making decision. Following this decision, the institutions enrolled the youths in TVET programs.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I presented two organizations that have been operating CCHs. These two organizations' background information offered why the organizations were started to address the vulnerability of children deprived of education and later the need of providing residential care towards the children they served. The two

organizations provided the children provision for the safeguarding and welfare care, education, shelter, nutrition and environment to grow.

As CCH is operated under the national guideline, when the children residing there turn to youths, they are to be reintegrated back to their families or community. Keeping this in mind, the organization practices and strategies of reintegration were also investigated. In case of practice, the organization was found to have been providing the children turned youths with education up to grade 10 or SEE and as they completed the exams, the option for continuing general stream of education or taking up vocational skills training was provided.

In terms of skills training, it was seen that based on the interest of the youths, they were provide with skills training from six months to three years in different training institutes. As of reintegration was of concern, it was also seen that preparation of leaving care started from the early stage of choosing the career path. After completion of the training, smooth transition to the reintegration was jointly (the care leaver and the organization) done in consideration of the care leavers' choices at every step and the organization was seen to have been facilitating the youths in finding a job which was the first stage of the process. As the youths were now employed, finding a rented room and providing all the needed amenities were looked after at this stage. Thus the entire process of the reintegration was seen to be practiced by the two CCHs.

## CHAPTER V

### YOUTH CARE LEAVERS' STORIES

In the previous chapter, I looked into the organization policies and procedures regarding the reintegration of youths from CCH. In this chapter, I explored the real life stories of the six adult care leavers who took up vocational skills training prior to leaving the care homes. Their experiences are an integral part to explore the contribution of TVET during their reintegration to independent livelihood from institutional care. To examine the contribution of the skills training in the care leavers' reintegration, the findings are presented in narrative stories. In the first section, the participants' background information on how and why they were deprived of parental care and placed in an institutional care, their experiences at the institutional care, their formal education attainment are presented. The reasons of why they choose vocational education apart from continuing general education, their perspective towards TVET, their reintegration phase and finally contribution of skills training in the reintegration are presented in themes.

#### **Ashok: TVET equipped me with skills and competencies**

Ashok a resident of Kailali had lost his mother when he was 2 years old. At the age of 5 his father passed away due to HIV infection. After losing his parents, he was being looked by his grand-father and uncle. For his father's treatment, the family had spent lots of money by selling their property and after his father died, the family had a very tough time. Ashok's grand-father found that in his village one of the staff from a child care home had come for a field visit and during this time the grand-father approached the organization for providing his grandson with a shelter in the child care

home and supporting Ashok in his education. The organization happily accepted Ashok and brought him to Kathmandu at the age of 6.

Ashok remembered that it was his first time when he had left his village and relatives. He was very depressed and did not want to leave them but his uncle and grandfather consolidated him by telling that he could go to school, wear good clothes, make new friends and also have good food in the new institution. Once at the care center, he encountered many children like him and everything seemed new to him unlike his village. The space was quite small as it did not have much place to run around like his village. For a couple of days he used to cry at night remembering his grandfather and uncle and aunt who used to look after him. But slowly he bonded with the other children who were there and adapted to the new environment.

Ashok was enrolled in grade 1 at a school near the residential care home and successfully completed his School Leaving Certificate (SLC) in the year 2016.

### **Why I chose Vocational Skills Training**

Ashok was provided with career counseling after he had successfully completed his SLC. In the counseling session, he was provided with various options on undertaking TVET. When I asked him why he chose vocational skills and training instead of continuing his education, he shared:

*From early age, I knew that the residential home was a temporary shelter for children like us. As we grew older we had to leave the care home one day. It was during grade 10 the organization provided us with counseling and discussed on our reintegration strategies. I also realized that the organization could only do this much for us and couldn't always keep on supporting us. One day we had to leave and start living independently. As I had seen the previous brothers and sisters leaving home care after receiving skills training*

*and they used to talk with us on the importance of skills, I too wanted to take up the skills training as it could get me employed quickly and the transition could be smooth.*

Ashok's statement showed that he was very much aware of leaving the care home and as he had seen his elders at the care home taking skills training, he understood that the importance of having skills in hand was one of the factors for him to choose the career path. I could also see that with skills, the training provided opportunity for employment which could contribute to smooth reintegration as another factor. With assistance from the organization he chose electrician sector and joined 18 months Technical SLC at Balaju School of Engineering and Technology.

### **Perspective towards TVET**

In terms of perspective towards TVET, Ashok recalls:

*During the initial training days, we had to grind rods at the time of the practical classes which were very physical works. It was difficult to understand why we had to do this. The theory was also complicated to understand and slowly once we were to perform the different tasks, it helped me to relate the practical tasks with theory.*

This statement of Ashok showed that in the beginning of the training due to physical works, he found quite difficult coping with the training. He was not aware that this was to help him get familiar with physical works during the training and later in the profession. As he was an average student, the theory part felt quite complicated but slowly as practical sessions started, he could relate both theory and practical which helped him understand better. On this, he stated: "Technical and vocational skills increase through practice and hard work".

When asked what skills are required during the training, he said:

*Confidence is the key aspect that anyone who wants to pursue technical training must have at first. With confidence, you learn fast and also build the skills required for the profession. Secondly, as it deals with muscular works, one must always be ready to work in every sort of environment and must not hesitate.*

Ashok regarded confidence as the major aspect while taking up vocational skills training. Confidence is also seen to be in relation with learning attitude which assists in quickly grasping what is being taught and builds skills through it. It is also seen that as skills training is quite a physical work, willingness to work in any environment is required.

During the course of study, Ashok had to perform 6 months of On-the Job Training (OJT) which exposed him to real work scenario and equipped him with the skills in the work place. He even said that OJT helped him to better understand the profession and master his skills.

### **Reintegration Phase**

Ashok, while pursuing his TSLC degree, was provided with various counseling sessions on reintegration by the organization. He had been informed that he had to leave the care home once he could find a job after the completion of the course. He had his aunt (mother's sister) at Kathmandu and even went to meet her for suggestion. She told him that he had made the best decision to study a technical subject and electrician profession had a very high demand. Hence, she assured him not to worry much about finding a job after the completion of the course.

Like his aunt had told him earlier during his OJT, he had already started earning some money. He had built good relations with the supervisors and local

contractors and they seemed very happy with his performance. During OJT, he was earning on average Rs. 350 day and it was during this time, he decided to move out of the care home. He discussed about leaving the care home with the organization supervisor and with support from the institution, he rented a room in Kirtipur and moved from the care home.

Leaving the care of the institute and staying in the rented room was quite difficult during the initial phase. Having lived for a long time in a group, living alone was quite challenging as cooking his own food was new for him because in the care home, he used to have meals provided by the authority. He even felt quite depressed being alone and managing money for new skills he had to learn.

### **Skills Contribution in Reintegration**

Ashok recalls the contribution of skills training in OJT as:

*Immediately after the completion of the degree, I started working as a helper earning Rs. 350 per day at Godawari for 3 months in a newly ongoing building construction site. I was working under a contractor. Seeing my performance, the contractor asked me if I was willing to go outside Kathmandu and work. I willingly accepted and then worked in Rasuwa for 3 months where I was paid Rs 500 per day and then was shifted for 3 months at Nuwakot for Rs 800 per day. While working under him, I also got the opportunity to meet with other contractors and they even approached me. After working for nearly 10 months with him, I decided to move on and joined Electrical and Supplier Company in Jomsom, Myagdi where I was earning Rs. 1000 per day. On an average, I earned about Rs. 25,000/- per month.*

From this, we can clearly see that the role of OJT in skills training has a huge impact in employment. In the OJT, real work place environment is provided which

helps developing competencies on the trade. It was also observed that OJT linked their trainees with employers who provided opportunities to show one's skill and based on this, more employment opportunities were open to skilled personnel. Further, talking with him on how the skills training has contributed to skills in reintegration, he stated:

*The technical education has capacitated me to make decisions regarding reintegration. I gained skills and competencies which have enabled me to find a job and earn my living. It has increased not only my knowledge and skills but also has made me competitive in the market. Every day I get the opportunity to learn new skills which enhance my competency in work place. Furthermore, if I had not got the opportunity to get technical and vocational skills training, then I would still have been searching for a job. For youths like us who have spent their childhood in the institutional care, TVET has provided them the platform to get skills for quick employment.*

From his statement, it clearly depicts TVET has developed skills and competencies which resulted in providing quick employment. By being employed, it showed increase in decision making power which led to enhance the level of confidence to leave the care home.

### **Subash: An incident developed a passion in me to be an Electrician**

Subash was just a year old when he was rescued along with his 3 elder sisters and ended up in the child care home. His father had abandoned the family and his mother was an alcoholic, which led to the entire family in the care of the CCH.

Subash, being very small when he was brought to the CCH, did not have clear memory of his family and his first encounter at the institution care. Having 3 elder sisters, he felt the CCH was his home. It was later as he grew up; he realized that

the CCH was a temporary shelter which provided him and his sisters with alternative care due to his father's abandonment and mother being an alcoholic.

Subash from the early age started going to school. He was an average student and gave his SLC from Lalitpur. In the first attempt, he failed in Mathematics and Science subjects and had to give compartment examination. Even in the second try, he was unable to pass successfully.

### **Why I chose Vocational Skills Training**

Subash was quite weak in his studies and despite his second attempt at the SLC exam, he failed. During the career counseling provided by the institution which the CCH performed every year after the children appeared at their SLC, he was provided with the option of pursuing technical education and vocational skills training. At the CCH, he had regular counseling and motivational sessions where it emphasized on career paths for livelihood. While reviewing different options and working with the counselor, he urged to take up short-term electrician skills training. When asked why he selected the specific trade, he shared his encounter story:

*When I was studying in grade 7, one day an electrician came to the institution for electrical repair works. The electrician repaired all of the electrical works in 2-3 hours and charged Rs.2000/- for his service. Seeing this, I was assured and started developing passion in me to learn electric works and started to repair minor electric malfunctions at the institution. One day, while doing a repair work, I mistakenly created a short circuit which led to a question in my mind why this had happened. From this incident, I developed a passion to be an electrician since having skills; I could earn money in the shortest possible time like the electrician who came to repair at our home. .*

The reason for opting for vocational skills training appears to be linked with one's personal past experiences, from the perspectives of Subash. During the childhood, we always dream to be so and so and when we grow old, this childhood passion is linked with our daily experiences and when we turn old, we need to look into these experiences which can develop our passion to become one like we dreamt in our childhood. The childhood incidence of Subash clearly depicts this and affects his decision to take up electrician skills training. With this background and personal encounter, he joined 6 months CTEVT Level 1- Electrician training at Sanothimi Technical School.

### **Perspective towards TVET**

Subash too said that during the initial training period, he had some hardship in the theoretical parts as basic Mathematics and English were needed to understand what was being taught. But as the course moved to practical session, it helped to understand the theoretical part well. As of him "critical thinking is very essential while performing the practical training sessions". He further shared his experience as:

*Physical work was another challenge during the training period. Many of the students of electrician training tend to pursue that electrician work is quite an easy task and not very much labor oriented. But during the initial training period session, it was a very laborious work. Filing of rods brought hand wounds (tela), but as we had to do it for days, we got used to the laborious work and I enjoyed it. In the training, all of the practical works were done on wooden boards but when I went for OJT I was asked to chop up brick walls which were very tough and 2-3 days I had lots of hand and back aches. During this time, I finally could relate to my initial training day's labor work.*

The perspective provided by Subash can be seen to relate with the perspective of Ashok. Both of them highlighted skills training during the initial training days to be quite laborious and physical tasks and as time went by, they seemed to get along with the training. Subash has showed that the practical works that are being practiced during the skills training are different from real work place environment which can be quite hard and difficult. In the real work environment, the occupation has varied tasks which are unimagined but out there, one has to do the tasks as required. Subash admitted the role of skills training to have built confidence in him.

### **Reintegration Phase**

During the OJT, Subash got the opportunity to work under a contractor and immediately after the completion of the training; he joined the contractor and started working under him. In the beginning, he was paid Rs.400 per day. In the case of Subash too, we can see that while during the skills training period, the organization was providing him with counseling regarding reintegration. After finding the job with the support from the organization, he searched for a room and shifted there. During the reintegration phase, a full set of bedding and kitchen utensils was provided along with 2 months of room rent. He even recalls:

*As I had 3 elder sisters who had already been reintegrated, they guided me in my reintegration from the care home. At first, I had adjustment problems as I felt very lonely and cooking skill was something I lacked. But as I was being mentally prepared from 2-3 years for leaving the care home, the transition went on smoothly when I had a job.*

In care home setting, it is seen, the practice to keep kinship together to avoid family separation and strengthen family bonds among the relatives is very essential. The role of kinship is seen to contribute in reintegration from the experience of

Subash. Having family member reintegrated earlier prepares the care leaver beforehand and the transition seems to be smooth. In the initial days of reintegration, loneliness is seen among many. Being in institutional care, one is always in a community living environment but when they start to live independently it can be quite challenging. Basic skills such as cooking are essential for all during the reintegration.

### **Skills Contribution in Reintegration**

According to Subash the training has helped him a lot and he said that it has developed 80% confidence in him to be independent and a free agent in reintegration. He shared that the training helped him to find a job which was the major factor for his confidence to leave the care home. After he was reintegrated, he had been working under several contractors in new projects of under-construction buildings in and around Kathmandu valley. He is currently earning Rs.1000/- per day, which equates to Rs. 25,000/- per month on average.

### **Shova: Skills help you become saleable**

Shova, a resident from Kanchanpur was 1.5 years old when her mother fell down from a cliff while collecting grass for the cattle. Being an infant, her father was unable to take good care of her and so, she was taken to her aunt's (fupu) house in Dadeldhura to be raised. Her aunt looked after her as her own daughter. In the village, she studied in the government school till grade 4 when she was brought by the organization to Kathmandu. For better education, her aunt and uncle decided to hand over guardianship to the organization because if in village she had stayed, her studies would have been stopped after grade 10 and she would be married away according to the local traditions in the village.

Shova recalls that she cried a lot while leaving her aunt and when she came to Kathmandu, she was very amused seeing concrete buildings everywhere. At first, she was very much scared of the organization and wanted to run to her aunt. As there were many other children at the organization, she recalls that elder sisters were given the responsibilities of taking care of her. Slowly with love and affections from all, she got used to the new environment.

Shova was enrolled in class 1 as she was quite weak in her studies. During the SLC, she failed in Optional Math and had to give compart exam. In the second time, she successfully completed SLC with 2<sup>nd</sup> division but due to this, she had 1 year gap. After completion of SLC, she joined Caribbean College in Hotel Management.

### **Why I chose Vocational Skills Training**

Shova was an average student and in her +2 examination she secured only 50% grade. To be admitted in Bachelor's degree she needed 55%. Consequently, she was very confused and in dilemma about what to do next. During that time the organization provided counseling to pursue technical and vocational skills training as it would help her in her career path.

With guidance from the organization, she chose to take up 3 months Montessori training at Bijulibazar. When asked why she took up the Montessori training, she replied:

*I always loved children from my early age while staying at the organization. We had lots of children all around, and I loved spending time with them playing and teaching them. When we were asked to share our interest, I told I loved children and Ma'am told me that Montessori training would be best for me as I could spend time teaching children and also become a teacher.*

From the statement it was seen that the things we love doing can be upgraded with skills enhancement and this can be developed into a career. The decision to become a Montessori teacher requires one character to be friendly and child loving personnel. The decision of selecting specific skills training is seen to be related with one's nature and passion towards it.

### **Perspective towards TVET**

For Shova the training exposed her to different Montessori techniques involved in the early childhood education. The training helped her to realize that teaching children using the Montessori training methods not only helps the children to learn but also contributes in their cognitive, physical and social development. The training exposed her to new methods of teaching children and build confidence in her. During the time of her training, she was still staying at the organization and this helped her to practice the learning in the training center at the organization with the young children.

Shova successfully completed the 3 months training and started looking for a job. In the meantime, she kept on practicing teaching the young children at the organization. Having exposed to the foundation of Montessori training, she wanted to pursue her career on this but also realized that the 3 months training was not quite sufficient for her. She learned about 1 year course on Early Childhood Development and immediately enrolled herself in the program. The 1 year program was very intense and with practical activities in different Montessori and day care centers. Out there, she learned different child activities such as phoenix, rhymes, crafts and games along with child psychology.

The experience of Shova has highlighted that sometimes the short term skills training is not sufficient for developing skills and competencies for employment and

furthermore develop a career from it. The three months skills training only provided with elementary level of competencies on the trade which is not quite sufficient to compete in the labor market. To develop career and long term employment skills, training of long term will be more effective in some cases as seen from Shova's experiences.

### **Reintegration Phase**

During the 1 year Early Childhood Development training program, Shova was placed at Samsara: The Little School at Pulchowk as practical site. There she got the exposure to apply the theoretical learning into practice. She really enjoyed being with children and helped them learn through the skills she received from the training. Looking at her performance, the school offered her the job upon completion of the training and she happily joined the school with a starting salary of Rs. 8000/-.

As she started working in the school, her reintegration phase also started. Along with the organization support, she searched for a room and shifted. During the stage, the organization provided all the necessary amenities for kitchen and bedroom along with two months of room rent. Leaving the care of the organization was quite a challenge for her. She shared her experience and recalls:

*Having stayed in a group created loneliness when I started staying alone. Whenever I felt lonely I used to call the organization and they provided counseling to cope with the situation. But slowly as I got used to work, coping with loneliness and living independent automatically formed into my habit.*

The role of child care homes even after the reintegration is very essential for success of the care leaver. Organizations should always be ready for providing any needed assistance towards its former beneficiaries, which helps in better coping with the new environment. Every one of the care leavers feels lonely immediately after

being reintegrated and needs support at the initial time. So, role of organization even after reintegration is seen to be very crucial in the adjustment period.

### **Skills Contribution in Reintegration**

Shova is still currently working at Samsara School earning Rs. 15,000/- per month. She has realized the need of further education for career development and has joined Bachelor in Education in first year. When asked on the contribution of skills training, she highlights “it has developed skills, self-confidence and decrease of dependency. She further added “if one has skills, you become saleable”.

Shova’s experience has highlighted on the need of developing skills on timely basis. In many cases, we believe that once we take skills training we are competent but in reality the skills we have are to be developed through additional skills as per the market demand. It also shows that if one is very much concerned about developing a career of their skills, they must have learning attitude and be willing to take up further training. Skills training seemed to develop confidence among the care leavers, which contributed in feeling like a free-will agent even without the care homes and ultimately opened doors to employment.

### **Manish: TVET helped me find a good and stable job**

Manish aged 25 is from Ramechhap. His father expired in a road accident when he was just 5 years old. Due to his father’s death, the family had a very tough time managing food and fulfilling the basic needs. They did not have much of land and whatever was produced was consumed. Due to the financial condition, he was not even sent to school. Seeing the family condition, one of the villagers referred Manish to the organization where he would be looked after and also he would be able to study.

Manish successfully completed his SLC degree in 2<sup>nd</sup> division and joined +2 in management at Caribbean College Kumaripati. He successfully completed the +2 examination.

### **Why I chose Vocational Skills Training**

After successfully completing 10+2, Manish was confused about what degree to pursue further on. As he had already grown to adulthood, he recalls:

*I need to get a job quick as I could not stay in the CCH for a longer time. With just my +2 degree, I cannot get a good job. So, I need to equip myself with some skills that would help me find a good and stable job immediately after completion of the training.*

As the care leaver reaches the age of youth, they realize the need of having some skills with themselves which will assist them in the transition from the care homes. Secondary education only cannot always open doors for employment. One needs further higher education or needs to have skills in hand to be in a stable employment. This was clearly seen from the case of Manish and for developing skills, he discussed with the organization counselors and was provided an option to go for short-term TVET courses where he recalls:

*I was very confused on taking up the skills training as none of the training quite lured me. Most of the training involved physical labor works and so I was in much dilemma on what to take. After several rounds of counseling, I was asked on my personal interest by the counselor. I immediately replied I wanted to travel to different parts of the country. It was then I was suggested to take profession in travel and tourism.*

Choosing which skills training to take is always a difficult choice for many. When we are facilitated and assisted on this we relate to our interest most of the time

and this leads to our decision to select the skills training we want to take part in. This decision making creates commitment to learn and develop a career from it. It was also seen that labor related skills training might not be the choice for some and they look for other alternatives. After learning about his interest, Manish searched for a training institute that fits with his interest and then joined 6 months IATA Foundation in Travel and Tourism.

### **Perspective towards TVET**

In respect to his perspective towards TVET, Manish highlighted:

*Skills training has helped develop skills on dealing with customers with politeness which is the most important in travel and tourism sector. Technical vocational skills are a mixture of both theory and practical experiences, which helps the learners to learn. In this way, we become equipped with the knowledge being provided by our teachers and it makes us better understand the situation.*

In any occupation we need to deal with customers and when we deal with politeness, we have better relation with the customers. Being polite is very essential in any job and this is also taught during the skills training. As TVET skills training is a mixture of theory and practical tasks, it helps the learners to understand and gain better skills by linking theory and practice.

### **Reintegration Phase**

Manish immediately after completion of the course with reference from the organization staff, got a job as ticketing officer in a travel agency with a starting salary of Rs. 11,500/-. He was very happy because he got the job immediately after the training and equally found himself working in the sector of his interest. After getting the job, he started looking for a rented room and shifted out from the care

home with the support from the organization when he got one. The organization provided all the required amenities for him to shift along with two months of room rent.

Everything was going on smoothly as he was getting used to his work and also was able to send money to his mother in the village. While working in the travel and tourism sector, he was offered a foreign job at Dubai. At first, he hesitated as he had to bear the cost associated with foreign employment by him. He believed that the job in Dubai could help him and his family. That is why, he consulted with his uncle who agreed to provide a loan for the foreign employment and he finally went to Dubai. Out there, he worked in the travel and tourism sector earning monthly AED 2100 (approx NRs 70,000/-). This was a turning point for him. He worked in Dubai for 26 months and returned to Nepal with a saving of almost four lakhs rupees after paying all of the debts he had taken earlier. He is currently in his village and planning to start a wholesale enterprise with the money.

### **Skills Contribution in Reintegration**

For Manish, skills' training has made a huge contribution to his reintegration. Like other care leavers, he too has emphasized on developing level of confidence within himself through the skills in hand. Skills training enabled him to get employed which helped him to move out from the care home. By being skilled, he was able to show his competencies in the field which had helped him to get opportunities to grow. He also shared that with skills, he was able to financially support himself and his family.

### **Priya: Vocational skills training as an alternative to academic studies**

Priya, 24 years old, is from Rauthahat district. Her family was very poor and unable to cater to the needs of children. So, they had 2 daughters already at the child

care home. Priya was just 3 years old when she joined her sisters in the child care home and her younger brother also followed her the next year. As she had her sisters in the organization, she was a pampered child out there. Everyone treated her like a family member and she found a homely environment there.

### **Why I chose Vocational Skills Training**

After completion of SLC, Priya was provided with counseling on career path by the organization. She was provided with an option to continue her studies or take up vocational skills training. Regarding this, she recalls:

*I was not very much keen on continuing my higher studies and so I consulted with my sisters and mutually decided on taking up vocational skills training. I was very much confused on what to take. Then the counselor suggested me to take 6 months bakery training at Higher Ground Bakery, Bhanimandal. I happily agreed to it and took up the training which was apprenticeship based skills training from 8 in the morning till 6 in the evening.*

From Priya's statement, we can see that when one is not very much interested in continuing one's education, s/he opts for vocational skills training. Everyone wants to succeed in life and for this they require to be employed where the skills matter a lot. The decision on skills training is not always by oneself and sometimes others also take decisions on behalf as is seen in the case of Priya. .

### **Priya's TVET Journey**

Priya's training institute was also a café where she got the opportunity to work as a waitress. Besides training on bakery, the training institute also provided her with life skills as it was a social enterprise institute with a vision to equip underprivileged people with income-generating skills, employment prospects, rehabilitation, and counseling. This was a huge plus point for her as during the training, she had other

young girls learning, who were victims of violence and from poor economic background.

When asked about how she felt during the skills training, she shared:

*In the initial time, it was quite difficult and challenging as all of the ingredients were to be in right proportion along with timing. I was also scolded by Sir when I made mistakes but I learned to never take it personally when I was scolded. Early morning we had classes and had to bake and afterwards also I worked as a waitress.*

It was seen that during the initial training days, difficulty in learning is there for all. The trainers sometimes can be harsh when one makes mistakes but the learner must always be humble, accept their mistakes and take it as a learning phase. She also shared that one has to be very careful of not making any such mistakes because in a real work environment the mistakes are not always acceptable. She further shared that the skills training helped her realize her mistakes and helped in correcting them. The training provided her with knowledge on bakery and every day the learning got interesting and skills were being enhanced. It was seen that as the training was apprenticeship based in the first month of the training, she was not paid but from the second month she got monthly Rs. 2000/- as pocket money. She shared that “getting money while training, I felt very happy and this motivated me to perform better in the training”.

### **Reintegration Phase**

Priya, after the 6 months of training, was offered the job in the bakery and earned Rs. 6000 per month. After getting the job at the bakery, the organization helped her find a room on rent and shift. The organization provided various kitchen

utensils, bed, mattress and other amenities during the reintegration and also provided counseling at this stage.

After working for some time at the bakery, her salary was raised to Rs.10,000/-. As Priya also had 2 elder sisters who had been reintegrated, she was guided by her sisters along with continuous support from the organization. Recently she has been married and settled down in Rauthahat. She is currently planning to start a small bakery shop in the village with the skills she has learned from the training.

### **Skills Contribution in Reintegration**

When asked on the contribution of skills training during the reintegration, Priya highlighted that “training has equipped her with the skills for employment which leads to a better livelihood and makes her able to live independently”. Everyone is seen to relate skills training with employment which is seen to be the major contributing factor for reintegration of the care leavers.

### **Ganga: I always wanted to be a Nurse**

Ganga originally from Dang at the age of 4 along with her younger sister was admitted to the child care home. Her father had gone for employment in India when she was very small and abandoned the family by marrying another woman in India. Her mother was suffering from mental illness due to which the sisters were being looked after by their maternal uncle. Due to their situation, they were brought to the child care home.

For Ganga in the beginning, everything seemed new and she was very confused thinking where she had come. She was initially crying and wanting to be with her mother but slowly as time passed by, she adjusted to the new environment as there were many other children like her. There were older children who would look

after her and accompany her everywhere she went. With the love from them, she got used to staying in the residential care.

### **Why I chose Vocational Skills Training**

Ganga completed her SLC from Ullens School and wanted to continue her studies in management in another college. After SLC, she was provided with counseling where she gained interest in taking up vocational skills training rather than continuing in management.

*From early years I wanted to become a nurse. During the counseling session, I was suggested an option to take up 3 years Diploma degree in Ophthalmic Science at Balaju School of Engineering and Technology as the demand for the course was also very high. As both nursing and ophthalmic science were branches of medical field, I was fascinated with the course and opted for studying 3 years diploma in the ophthalmic science instead of nursing.*

The case of Ganga is no different from the cases we had seen earlier. Based on the personal interest, the TVET program is selected. We also see the role of the organization which focused on occupational demand of the trade as the reason for enrollment in the program. High demanded occupational trades usually have lack of trained and skilled human resources which is why they have greater chances of employment opportunities.

### **Perspective towards TVET**

In the first year of the course, Ganga found difficulties catching up with what was being taught as the subject was very technical. But slowly as the course moved on for practical sessions where she worked as a trainee in Tripureshwor Eye hospital, it helped her to implement the theoretical learning into practical lesson and thus enabled her to understand the subject. Ganga further added:

*We usually tend to forget those things we study but when we are engaged in the skills training we have hands on experience of implementing theory into practical exercises which help us to remember and apply in our work. Skills training not only equip us with skills and competencies but also help us in how we should work and deal with people. Most importantly, one must have interest in what one does and wants to learn and should not be afraid of hard work and dedication.*

This highlights that learning theory only is seen to be quite difficult to many to understand and when theory blends with practicality, the result of learning is greater and the learner is better equipped and understands the theory. Here it also shows the importance of dealing with clients as a crucial part in occupation. Hard work is necessary in every step of the way and with hard work, one learns better.

### **Reintegration Phase**

In the three years course program, there was a provision of three months OJT. As the trainees themselves had to select OJT site, Ganga selected her home town Dang Rapti Hospital. During her stay, she also got the opportunity to take care of her mother who was undergoing treatment. She had been staying at her sister's house and there she discussed about her reintegration from child care home with her family members. Discussing with them, she decided that after completion of the course, she would come back to Dang and settle down with the family.

After completion of OJT, Ganga returned to Kathmandu and she discussed with the CCH about her reintegration strategies. Along with the organization she decided that she would stay in Kathmandu for a while and look for a job and later go back to her family. She found a job in an eye clinic with assistance from the

organization at Lalitpur and moved out from the care home. She had plans to stay in Kathmandu for two years and then only move to Dang with her family.

### **Chapter Summary**

In this chapter I have presented stories of the six youth care leavers where three were male while three were female participants who took up vocational skills training prior to leaving the care home. It was seen that all of them had been institutionalized at a very early age due to their family economic conditions, or loss of their parents. At the care homes, they were provided with living facilities and were also enrolled in schools. As they started turning to youths, the organization had prepared plans for their reintegration and during this as most of them were in grade 10 or completed SEE exam, they were provided with options for continuing education or choosing vocational skills training.

While conducting the interview with the participants I noticed that when the care leavers were given counseling on choosing TVET or continuing academic education, the organization had also provided career guidance to them. This was quite surprising as I was not expecting this at that stage. With career guidance counseling, the care leavers had chances to visualize their future prospects in the industry. This, in a way facilitated in making decisions on choosing TVET.

As the study was among the participants who opted for vocational skills training, all of my participants were enrolled in short or long-term TVET programs. All of the participants had taken different TVET programs which were - 18 months TSLC in Electrical Engineering, three months short-term Level 1 - Electrician training, three months Level 1 - Montessori training, six months IATA Foundation in Travel and Tourism, 6 months apprenticeship based Bakery Training and three year

Diploma in Ophthalmic Science. It was seen that all of them made choices based on their interests through personal life events and experiences.

Apart from this, it was also seen that organizations facilitated the care leavers in finding employment after completion of the training. With skills training, the care leavers were seen to be economically stable and this enabled them to leave the care home and reintegrate back to the community. All of the participants shared their experiences and regarded TVET as the contributor in decision making during the reintegration from the institutional care. They also emphasized that TVET equipped them with skills to be competencies to enter the labor market and earn a living which made the whole reintegration process smooth. TVET might not have been the first choice for some but the perspective towards TVET and the contribution of TVET have been realized to be immensely great for all the participants.

## CHAPTER VI

### DISCUSSION ON NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter presents discussion on analysis of the narrative stories and experiences of the six research participants. The chapter starts with participants' institutional care experiences and the reasons for choosing TVET program over formal academic education, which is an important aspect in finding out the participants' TVET journey and its contribution to their reintegration. Based on the research findings, I have categorized three themes on the contributions of TVET that the care leavers have highlighted: TVET equipped care leavers with required skills and competencies, built confidence and decreased dependency and finally, provided employment. These themes are presented below:

#### **Institutional Care Experiences**

It was seen that all of the six participants were provided with the alternative care at the child care home at an early age. Ashok after losing both his parents was placed in CCH at the age of six, Subash was the youngest to be placed at the institutional care when he was just a year old after three of his elder siblings, when their father abandoned the family and mother being alcoholic was unable to take care of the family. Likewise, Shova was living with her aunt after her mother passed away when she was only four years old and at the age of eight, when the relatives were unable to look after her, she was placed in the care home. Manish was brought to CCH at the age of five after his father's death due to road accident, Priya at the age of three along with her two siblings due to family financial crisis and Ganga at the age of four along with her younger sister after her father abandoned the family.

Looking at the participants' background, I found that the reasons for being placed in an institutional care at an early age were related with the issues in the family and they were taken to CCH due to death of parents, abandonment of the father, and illness of their parents or financial background of the family. These findings were in relation with Dr. Subbian (2006) who states failure of safety nets to be the reasons of why the children are placed in institutional care homes. Furthermore, the economic condition of the family was another reason of the child being placed in the CCH which can be in relation with Sigal et al. (2003), Guragain et al (2015) and Gale & Khatiwada (2016) who all have coined poverty as the main reason for the child to be placed in an institutional care home.

It was also seen that three of the six participants Subash, Priya and Ganga had siblings accompanying them in the CCH, which is relevant to the UN General Assembly's Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children where we see guidelines on not separating the siblings for the best interests of the child.

In terms of the experiences of transition from the child's parental home to residential care, it was seen that all of the six participants went through anxiety and adjustment problems while they were placed in the CCH. The environment was totally new for them and being very small, they did not understand why they had to leave their parents and stay in a new place. Many times the children cried and made tantrum for days and even tried to run away from the care homes. To help the child adjust with the situation, it is seen that in all of the care homes small groups consisting of elder and younger children were formed where the elder children were responsible for taking care of the younger ones. This system of taking care of one another is a strength in any child care home and this environment makes staying in the

care home comfortable and they develop kinship which is very effective for the new child to cope up with.

One of the major reasons why the children were placed in the CCH was for education. This can be directly linked with Ashok where his grandfather believed that placing him in the CCH would provide him with a shelter and education. Similarly in the case of Shova, we see that for better education, her aunt transferred the guardianship to the organization so that she could get higher education which in the village was not possible as Shova could have been married and sent away after studying up to class 10 because of the local traditions in the village. In the case of Manish too, we see that after his father passed away, he was dropped out of school. All of these cases show that when someone assures better living conditions with education towards the children, parents and guardians handover the child to the organization. As of Karki (2013), this is due to the belief that their child will receive quality education which will contribute in securing a better future for them. Overall, we see that usually CCHs are founded with the intention of giving underprivileged children security, care, assistance and education.

### **Factors Influencing Enrollment in TVET**

All of the six participants in the research study had some academic backgrounds and were later shifted to TVET during their transition from the CCH. Career choices differ from individual to individual and are affected by many factors. Since making a career choice becomes a turning point in each student's life, making the right career choice becomes imperative in their lives. Investigating on the various factors that influenced their interests in TVET enrollment was one of the objectives of the research study. There are several factors that can influence the decision to pursue or not to pursue the choice of career.

Based on the findings from the participants, the first factor that led to the influence of enrollment in TVET was career counseling session provided to the participants by the CCH. As part of provision to providing TVET to the youth care leavers, we could see that all of the six participants were provided with career counseling, especially after they had given their SEE examination. As the participants at the care homes were turning to youths, the care homes had to plan for their reintegration which involved mutual plan strategies where both the care home and care leavers involved. This practice of counseling being provided to the potential care leavers by the care homes can be linked to St. Xavier's College & Amici dei Bambini (2014) and Caves et al (2019) where both regard counselling to assist the care leavers in determining the care leavers' plans for future career prospect. Linking to this, we can see Mourshed et al. (2012), favour enhancing communication and interacting abilities early in the process to ensure students' goals to be effectively matched and equip them for employment in their chosen profession.

During the career counseling, all of them were provided the opportunity to freely choose the career path they would tread, which was continuing general academics or taking up TVET programs. This choice of freedom is characteristic of a good counselor, which is to provide relevant information and explore within the clients to make decisions by themselves. When I started to further investigate into the process, I learned that the care leavers were provided with several rounds of counseling. They were given information on different options of skills training and had plenty of time to think about and also discuss with their peer or relatives in the decision making process. Finally, the decision was on the consent of the care leaver and in situation when they were confused, the counselor facilitated by exploring their inner interests which helped them make the decision and take up TVET program.

Choosing specific career is always a hard decision which takes time and reflection on one's interest, experience and observations is an effective tool for decision making. Ashok recalls choosing TVET due to having seen former care leavers leaving care homes takes skills training and then gets employment. On the other hand, we can see Subash talk about an incident in his childhood where he saw an electrician getting paid Rs.2000 for merely 2 hours of work and developed the passion to become a good electrician when he grew up. Shova and Manish both seemed to be in confusion after their 10+2 examinations and with guidance during the counseling, they reflected on their interest that made them take the decision of selecting TVET. Shova realized that she would always help the younger brothers and sisters in the care homes with homework. Then, she wanted to be a Montessori teacher. As of Manish, he was always fond of traveling and seeing new places and based on his interest, he selected travel and tourism sector. Ganga's interest from childhood was to become a nurse and help people serve and therefore, she chose Ophthalmic Science as a means of serving people. In the case of Shova, even after several rounds of counseling, she could not take decisions regarding which skills training trade to take. The organization in this case helped her take apprenticeship based bakery training.

From the participants, the factors leading to making their choices on taking up TVET program can be related to incidents in life, experiences and personal interests which we can coin to Abdul-Aziz et al, (2019) where they have showed that all push and pull factors have a substantial impact on student enrolment in TVET institutions. According to the study, the biggest pull element is professional prospects, whereas the main push component is students' interest. It is observed that taking

interest on TVET evolves from seeing graduates of TVET getting employment after completing their skills training.

Another reason why the participants selected TVET was due to being average or weaker students. This can be clearly seen in the cases of Subash, Shova and Priya. . In the interview, Subash shared his transition to skills training due to failure in the SLC examination despite his second attempt. Shova and Priya both had said that being weak in their studies they did not wanted to continue their higher academic education. I related these findings to the study and literatures by Brodie et al, 1997, Stein 2008, Jurczynsyn & Tilbury, 2012, Mendes et.al, 2014, and Mendes & Snow, 2016 who all talk about young people in care having lower levels of educational results than their non-care counterparts.

Financial background was another reason why the participants chose vocational skills training. As the participants had all turned 16 years of age and older they were well aware that they had limited time to stay at the care home. Manish has clearly stated that once he was out of the care home, he could not be able to afford to continue education and needed a way to be quickly employed. This issue has been realized by all of the participants as they came from weak financial backgrounds that led them to the care homes in the first place. All of them knew that they could not continue education by themselves and so, the best option for them was to enter the job market. With no skills, this is not possible. Skills training are very essential to enable the individuals to have saleable occupational skills to be employable. Relating to this in the research, we see some care leavers have preferred to pursue technical education and vocational training can contribute much to their reintegration.

### **TVET Equips Care Leavers with Skills and Competencies**

The major contribution of TVET has been linked to equipping the participants with skills and competencies. All of the six participants have emphasized on developing skills and competencies as a result of undertaking TVET programs. In the interview, Ashok has greatly emphasized that the 18 months skills training developed competencies in him, which helped him to be competitive in entering the labor market. He believed that the skills and competencies acquired through the training would help him to blend in the real work environment and provide an advantage for him more than unskilled people. In the case of Subash, we can see that during his childhood, he was very much fascinated in electric repair works after observing an electrician getting highly paid for a small repair work. Seeing this, he started performing some minor repair works at the CCH. During one such event, he happened to short circuit the electric line and questioned himself on what mistake he had done and realized his skills were not sufficient and he lacked knowledge. For him, the skills training provided him with enhancing the knowledge on electric occupation and developed his skills and competencies to become an electrician which was his passion from childhood. Both of the cases of Ashok and Subash were consistent with Caves et al. (2019) who stated that TVET contributes to enhancing knowledge, abilities, skills, and competencies, where individuals identify the professions best fit for them. Both of the participants were very much aware of the profession they wanted to take when they would grow older. The skills training contributed in developing their knowledge on the occupation and developed their skills and competencies.

Shova liked helping the younger ones at the care homes in their homework and wanted to become a Montessori teacher where she lacked the skills required which TVET contributed in developing her skills to become a teacher. In her case, she

initially had taken three months of CTEVT Montessori training and when she was looking for being employed, she felt the training only provided elementary skills and then she took the decision of taking 1 year Early Childhood Development skills training. She shared that the training enhanced her skills and competencies and seeing her skills, the school where she was doing her practical sessions, offered her the job immediately after her graduation. Manish, on the other hand, considered TVET as being a mixture of both theory and practical classes that helped him as a learner to learn and be equipped with the knowledge and skills on dealing with customers, which was in line with Ganga who also said skills training developed her skills and knowledge to deal with patients and provide service towards them. For Priya, skills training developed knowledge on bakery and it enhanced her skills which made her realize the mistakes she would be doing while in training and take necessary correction measures in dealing with them.

From all of the six participants, we have seen skills training to be very essential in enabling occupational skills and develop competencies which are in line with the UNESCO (2010) definition of acquisition of skills and competencies needed for career development. Each of the participants was enrolled in the TVET after realizing their interest and career prospect development in their selected field of occupation. The participants lacked the skills and competencies which TVET contributed in enhancement and equipping the participants with the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge and developing the skills, about which Sharma (2008) has stated in his study.

Development of skills and competencies among the participants has not been limited to the training period. ILO and UNESCO (2012) regard TVET as a lifelong learning process to contribute in acquiring of skills and competencies. Based on this,

we can see Ashok recalling his skills and competencies being enhanced not only during the training but also during his working period. Similar mindset about TVET has been shared by the rest of the participants during their interview and they regarded TVET as the primary step towards developing hands on experience to learn new things which eventually assisted in the field of work and developed one's skills and competencies. From this, we can conclude that vocational training enables people to be skilled and competent to deal with one's competency in relation with their work and its demand. It is for this reason; skilled work is put at the center of vocational learning and training.

### **TVET Builds Confidence**

Confidence can be described as believing in one's abilities and beliefs. All of the six participants highlighted that TVET along with enhancing their skills and competencies, contributed in building confidence. While transcribing and meaning making of confidence, two types of meaning were generated from the participants' statements. The first type was related with the occupation or career of the selected field of training. For Ashok, confidence is a key aspect for those who want to pursue TVET. Ashok feels when one has a strong belief of the decision one made was right, it develops confidence in learning attitude and the learner quickly learns and develops the skills to become a trained and skilled personnel. Further, with confidence, the learner is always ready to do any physical works which might not be expected during the training or in work place environment.

In the case of Shova, she talks about TVET capacitating her with confidence to pursue career in teaching. She shares TVET has exposed her to new methods of teaching which she would practice among the children in her organization. With this method of practical exercises, her confidence eventually developed as she was aware

that the skills being taught would be relevant during her employment period.

Confidence was seen to increase with time and practical exercises which we saw in the case of Priya. The errors she made during the initial training days were being corrected with more of practical exercises and her confidence in her work was seen. After the reintegration, Priya had been married and not been employed for quite some time. Despite this, she shared she was planning to start her own enterprise in bakery at her village which she was very much confident about.

All of the participants shared that TVET has equipped hands on skills and embedded internally among the trainees not only short term confidence but also long term strategic strength in making future plans. The participants' experiences of TVET in developing confidence in the reintegration, can be related with Dutta (2017) that eventually through acquiring of the skills and mastering towards overall development of career led the participants to have positive influence towards their care-leaving experiences .

The second type of confidence the participants expressed about is linked with decrease of dependency. Subash has strongly stated, TVET helped him develop 80% of confidence which aided him to be independent and in his reintegration. Manish also is seen to link TVET with confidence in leaving care home. From childhood, the participants had been looked after and provided with all of their needs by the care home, which had created dependency towards it. While taking interview with the participants, they expressed that during the period of their reintegration plans, they were very nervous about how this would take place as they had nothing with them to sustain themselves and hardly imagined living out of the care homes. For them, earning a living was the most important part and when they started taking part in the skills training, they realized that this would help them cope with the reintegration. The

skills training developed the required skills and competencies to get into employment which brought sense of assurance among them that with skills they could earn their living. This assurance developed a sense of belief and confidence within the participants that helped to decrease dependency on the care homes.

TVET was seen to build a strong self-belief and confidence among the participants and they began to define their own values and beliefs through their actions. Based on Gilligan (2008) who highlighted positive life and educational experiences to strengthen young people's resilience, allowing them to develop their capacities, self-confidence, and self-esteem; we can see the participants going through the same stages in their lives. With training not only they were developing skills and competencies but also the confidence that the skills training would provide them with employment was very much strong within them. In line with Arnau-Sabates and Gilligan (2015), TVET developed confidence and capacitated the participants to be resilient and transitioning into training and work was seen as a critical step towards economic and social independence.

On the basis of this, I related confidence to resilience theory. Whenever confidence becomes strong, it becomes resilience which creates assurance and stops fear, confusion and disappointment within oneself. Confidence was seen to have created the care leavers with resilience to feeling hopeful that when they came out from the CCH, they would be able to live independently. It was seen that confidence made the participants take the decision to leave the care home environment. With TVET to back them, they knew that they could create potential environment for themselves with the skills they acquired.

### **Vocational Skills Training Provides Employment**

One of the major factors leading in selecting TVET by the participants was the belief that TVET programs would lead to employment prospect. This belief among the participants was very strong. All of the six participants had been employed immediately after completion of the training. Ashok and Subash both underwent OJT during the last three months of their training. At the OJT, the skills and competencies they had developed through training, were clearly reflected which the employer was very happy with and offered employment immediately after the completion of OJT. Priya's case was also similar to Ashok and Manish. She underwent apprenticeship based skills training and in her case too, we can see employment being offered to her by the employer. Through the three cases of the participants we can see OJT and apprenticeship based skills training to have huge impact during, and immediate after the result of the training.

In case of Manish and Ganga, we see the institution facilitated in finding employment for them. This practice of organization is relevant to the study by Gilligan and Arnau (2017), which has highlighted on the role of care homes in acquiring jobs. It was seen that without being employed, the care homes did not reintegrate the youths out from the care homes. The organization is very much concerned of successful reintegration and has felt their responsibility towards the care leavers in finding employment for them. On the other hand, Shova in the interview has strongly argued that TVET equipped her with the skills and made her saleable where she linked the term saleable with employment. The participants' perceptions on TVET were that skills training acquainted them with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude and helped them in finding employment in the labor market, which can be related with Ekpo and Onweh (2012). TVET is seen to be a crucial investment to

close the gap in the labor market as it offers the specialized skills needed by a variety of occupations in the job market, increasing the employability of TVET graduates. In the labor market, those who enter with skills and competencies are seen to be easily consumed and others with lack of skills find employment can be challenging and time consuming.

The participants also highlighted that they took up TVET program as they wanted to be financially independent and for this, they wanted quick employment. They believed that after completion of the training, they could get a job immediately rather than waiting for vacancies to open and apply. This we can relate to Klyachko (2019) where the sociological surveys showed that the main reasons for choosing TVET are earlier access to the labor market. Further, we can also relate this to Modi et al., (2016) who opine that leaving care should be organized so that when a child leaves the institution, s/he is departing with the abilities to become financially independent and self-reliant. In the participants' views, TVET contributed in providing employment to all and led them to leave the care homes.

Employment provides chances for increased self-worth via worthwhile accomplishments, facilitating the smooth transition to independence (Dinisman & Zeira, 2011). It was determined that a strategy to improve employability must include education and training as vital components. They enable young people to benefit from employment prospects and sources of income. To ensure that young people successfully transition into the workforce and have access to career-oriented jobs, it is essential to develop their employability.

## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the findings of the research have been presented into themes and discussions were made on them. In the first part, we looked into why the care leavers were placed in an institutional care and described their experiences at the care. There we also looked into access to education and fulfillment of their basic rights by the CCH.

Secondly in the chapter, the factors influencing enrollment in TVET and the stages and practices were analyzed. Career counseling was the initial step during the overall procedure. It enabled the care leaver to choose the path between continuing general education and selecting TVET program. It was seen that reasons behind some of the care leavers' selecting TVET program were their weakness in studies, personal interests from childhood to take up vocational skills training, future prospect of getting employment immediately after completion of the training and seeing former care leavers doing well after receiving skills training.

In terms of the contribution of TVET it was seen that TVET equipped the care leavers with skills and competencies which helped them to enter the labor market, find employment and created smooth reintegration from the care homes. It was seen that TVET developed confidence among the care leavers which contributed in enhancing the hope that with skills training they could be able to leave the care homes and sustain themselves as hands on skill would help find employment and access to economy lead to sustaining themselves.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter includes the key insights that I drew from the narrative analysis and discussion in the previous chapters. These insights are formulated as per the research question was developed in the beginning of the study. This also consists of my personal experience and reflection from the care leavers. Finally, I present the conclusion and implication of the study.

#### **Summary**

This study aimed to explore the contribution of technical and vocational education and training by youth care leavers during their reintegration from CCH. While conducting the research, I learned that not much studies has been done in the field of status of youth care leavers in Nepal and those that had been done were only limited to institution or the donor agencies. This research study only explored those who had taken TVET as part of transition from two CCHs which have a very small population compared to those who have continued with formal education.

In this research, six participants' stories have been told in narrative style to examine the role of experiences and the impact of TVET. To cross verify the data, two organizations were also interviewed to learn about their policies and practices which contributed in strengthening the participants' experiences. In this way, I found that vocational education and training being used as a tool during the reintegration by the CCH, have assisted the youth care leavers acquire skills and competencies which guided them to find employment and have smooth transition out from the CCHs.

While assessing the reasons why the youth care leavers chose TVET, it was seen that from observation of previous youth care leavers who had taken skills

training and done quite well in terms of getting employed and having smooth reintegration, the participants also preferred TVET as previous care leavers also motivated them. . Another reason was that due to having low grade and weakness in education, some took TVET as they believed that even though they could not secure good grades in studies, they could do better in TVET. While asking whether what they assumed TVET to be easier than formal education, all of them responded that in the beginning they felt it quite difficult but due to their interest and passion in the course of TVET they said TVET was meant for them. If one has passion to learn, then despite it being difficult they can learn and successfully complete the course of study. The reason for choosing TVET was for quick employment. All of the participants shared that TVET equipped them with skills which were very much in demand in the market and by which they could get quick employment rather than applying for jobs and waiting for a long time to get employed.

Another key objective of the research study was to find the youth care leavers' perspectives towards TVET where I saw that most of them had difficulty during the initial days of enrollment in TVET. Before joining the course, they assumed that in TVET it would be practical works which were easy to learn but in reality TVET was a mixture of theory and practical tasks. In terms of theory, most of them had difficulty in understanding it in the beginning and later on when practical sessions started; it helped them to understand better as practical sessions made them understand the theory better. Thus, they acquired the skills and competencies from the skills training.

The contribution of TVET among the youth care leavers can be seen to have developed skills and competencies in all, which helped them for smooth reintegration from CCH back to the community. It helped decrease their dependency on CCH who had provided them with shelter, education and security in time when they had none to

stand by them during their critical time of childhood. Acquiring skills and competency, they felt that now they could earn their living and be financially independent. On the whole, one of the key insights all of them highlighted was—confidence. TVET equipped them with confidence which was very essential for getting employed and with skills they became saleable and ultimately could link to smooth reintegration.

### **Conclusion**

Technical and Vocational Education and Training has a huge impact on the lives of these youth care leavers. Being in an institution care, children are in a state of mind that when they grow older to adulthood, they are to move out from the CCH. Questions arise in their mind on how the transition would take place and they are worried about it. The practice of career counseling after SEE depicts that participatory approach of involving care leavers in choosing their own career path creates the best environment to uphold the rights of the care leavers to make their own decisions and take up the career paths.

TVET program during the transition from care homes, equips the care leaver with skills, knowledge and competencies to enter the labor market. The skills training develop the necessary labor market skills' requirements which accelerate higher employment opportunities. Access to employment develops a sense of decrease of dependency among the care leavers towards child care home, which is the main factor in developing confidence among them to start the transition from care to independence.

From organization's perspective, TVET is the best option for those leaving care. TVET is shorter and less costly than general education, which develops market-oriented skills for employment. TVET helps develop market required skills,

competencies, decrease dependency, build confidence and above all provide employment to lead the youth leaving care to smooth reintegration out of the CCH. Overall, the study comes to the conclusion that the key to a positive future for youth care leavers is a well-planned, gradual, and easy transition out of care backed by a strong network.

### **Implications of the Study**

The implication of my study includes the following, which could be useful for young care leavers in transition, child care homes, as well as for future researchers:

#### **Implication to Care Leavers in Transition**

TVET to youth care leavers is seen to be viable in terms of CCHs in Nepal because of the provision made by the government on reintegration of care leavers. The national policy to provide TVET as part of reintegration was seen to have direct impact on creating and equipping the needed requirements to care leavers during the transition period. The contributions of TVET towards the young care leavers from the study were in tune with market based technical skills and competencies. Additionally, the research has seen that skills training lead them to gain employment. Being employed they were able to earn their living and accesses to finance and develop confidence within them to be independent. From the study, it is discovered that the participation in TVET creates smooth reintegration and on the basis of this, the care leavers in transition can explore different TVET programs based on their interests.

#### **Implication to Child Care Homes**

The study shows TVET is seen to have contributed very much in the smooth reintegration of the youth care leavers from the care home setting. This shows the success of the policy in ground level and with frameworks for the CCHs, the policy on reintegration with skills provision can work as a great contributor to all those

children that are still in stages of reintegration. The organization is really worried about the future of the kids they have been caring for such a long time as they must be reintegrated. The study provides evidences that TVET creates market required skilled human resources who are easily consumed in the labor market through quick employment. As employment is necessary for career development and sustaining oneself, CCH can adopt TVET as means for reintegration. Furthermore, CCH can collaborate with TVET providers and institutions for networking and provide necessary guidance towards developing skilled personnel and secure better future of the care leavers.

### **Implication to Future Research**

This research study was limited to six individual care leavers and two child care homes. As the study was conducted in a tiny population, it cannot co-relate to the entire population where there are above 500 CCHs with almost 15,000 children in Nepal. Every year, as children turn into youths, they are deinstitutionalized and there are no data to be found on this. Reintegration is being conducted at institution levels and the practices and learning are not highlighted. Due to this, it is difficult to learn about whether reintegration has been effective towards this set of vulnerable group. As from my study, I have concluded that use of TVET during reintegration contributes in developing skills and competencies among the care leavers, which assist in providing employment and ultimately creating smooth reintegration. As the study only looked into one part that was skills training, further research study can be done on other practices by CCH on reintegration and care leavers. These further studies can help develop new policies and interventions in the sector of reintegration and contribute much in case of making a transformation in the lives of the vulnerable group of people.

## REFERENCES

- Abdul-Aziz, S. N. B., Zulkifli, N. B, Mat-Nashir, I. B., & Abdul-Karim, N. A. H. B. (2019). Pull and push factors of students' enrolment in the TVET programme at community college in Malaysia. *Journal of Technical Education and Training, 12*(1), 68-75.
- Ambert, A. M., Adler, P. A., Adler, P., & Detzner, D. F. (1995). Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 57*, 879-893.
- Anderson, D. (2009). TVET and ecologism: Charting new terrain. In: Fien, J., Maclean, R., & Park, MG. (Eds) *Work, Learning and Sustainable Development*. (pp. 147-162). *Technical and Vocational Education and Training: Issues, Concerns and Prospects* (Vol 8). Springer, Dordrecht.
- Arnau-Sabates, L., & Gilligan, R. (2015). What helps young care leavers to enter the world of work? Possible lessons learned from an exploratory study in Ireland and Catalonia. *Children and Youth Services Review, 53*(1), 185-191.
- Ayonmike, C. S., Okwelle, P. C., & Okeke, B. C. (2015). Towards quality technical vocational education and training (TVET) programmes in Nigeria: Challenges and improvement strategies. *Journal of Education and Learning; 4*(1), 25-34.
- Benbenishty, R., & Schiff, M. (2009). Perceptions of readiness to leave care among adolescents in foster care in Israel. *Children and Youth Services Review, 31*(6), 662-669.
- Better Care Network. (2013). *Guidelines for Children's Reintegration*. Inter-agency Group on Children's Reintegration.

- Better Care Network, Child Protection in Crisis Network, Child Recovery and Reintegration Network, Family for Every Child, International Rescue Committee, Maestral International, Retrak, Save the Children, War Child Holland and Women's Refugee Commission (2013) *Reaching for home: Global learning on family reintegration in low and lower-middle income countries*. Family for Every Child.
- Better Care Network, Government of Kenya [UNICEF]. (2013). *National Standards of Best Practice in Charitable Children's Institutions*. Authors.
- Biehal, N., Clayden, J., Stein, M., & Wade, J. (1995). *Moving on: Young people and leaving care schemes*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Bloor, M., & Wood, F. (2006). *Keywords in qualitative methods: A vocabulary of research concepts*. Sage Publications.
- Brodie, I., Berridge, D., & Beckett, W. (1997). The health of children looked after by local authorities. *British Journal of Nursing*, 6(7), 386-390.
- Boyden, J. (2003). Children under fire: Challenging assumptions about children's resilience. *Children Youth and Environments*, 13(1), 1-29.
- Brewer, L. (2004). *Youth at risk: The role of skills development in facilitating the transition to work*. Geneva: International Labour Organization.
- Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis: Elements of the sociology of corporate life*. Heinemann Educational Books Inc.
- Caves, K., Ghisletta, A., Renold, U., & Kemper, J. (2019). *Meeting in the middle: TVET programs' education-employment linkage in developing contexts* (No. 460). KOF Working Papers.

- Central Child Welfare Board [CCWB] (2012). *Standards for operation and management of residential child care homes*. Pulchowk, Lalitpur: Ministry of Women & Children. Government of Nepal.
- Chaffin, J. (2014). *The impacts of economic strengthening programs on children*. Child Protection in Crisis Network.
- Clandinin, D. J., & Connelly, F. M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. Jossey-Bass. Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education (6th Ed)*. Routledge.
- Courtney, M. E., Park, S., Harty, J., & Feng, H. (2019). *Memo from Cal youth: Relationships between youth and caseworker perceptions of the service context and foster youth outcomes*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.)*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J.W. (2013). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*. Sage Publications.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundation of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Sage Publications.
- De Vaus, D. (2001). *Research design in social research*. Sage Publications.
- De Vos, A., Strydom, H., Fouche, C., & Delpont, C. (2011) *Research at grass roots: For social sciences and human services professions*. Van Schaik Publishers.

- Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.  
(2012). *Supporting young people transiting from out of care to independence in Australia: Good practice 2011/12*. Australia.
- Dinisman, T., & Zeira, A. (2011). The contribution of individual, social support and institutional characteristics to perceived readiness to leave care in Israel: An ecological perspective. *British Journal of Social Work*, 41(8), 1442-1458.
- Dutta, S. (2016). Institutional care in India: Investigating processes for social reintegration. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 66(1), 144-153.
- Dutta, S. (2017). Experiences of young Indian girls transiting out of residential care homes. *Asian Social Work and Policy Review* 11( 1), 16-29.
- Dutta, S. (2018). Preparation for social reintegration among young girls in residential care in India. *International Journal of Child, Youth and Family Studies*, 9(2), 151-170.
- Ekpo, A. B., & Onweh, V. E. (2012). Coping with the global economic crisis: A challenge to technical vocational education and training (TVET) in Nigeria. *African Research Review*, 6(3), 165-175.
- Frederick, J. (2004). *Conceptual clarity: Defining institutional and community-based care*. In Compassionate Care Proceeding of Workshops.
- Gale , C., & Khatiwada, C. (2016). *Alternative child care and deinstitutionalisation: A case study of Nepal*. <https://ncrc.gov.np/uploads/topics/16439523398517.pdf>
- Gasson, S. (2003). *Rigor in grounded theory research: An interpretive perspective on generating theory from qualitative field studies*. In M. Whitman, & A. Woszczyński (Eds.). *The Handbook of Information Systems Research* (pp. 79-102). IGI Global.

- General Federation of Nepalese Trade Unions [GEFONT]. (2011). *A study of technical education and vocational training programs in Nepal: A study report*. Kathmandu: Nepal.
- Gilligan, R. (2008). Promoting resilience in young people in long-term care: The relevance of roles and relationships in the domains of recreation and work. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 22(1), 37-50.
- Gilligan, R., & Arnau-Sabates, L. (2017). The role of carers in supporting the progress of care leavers in the world of work. *Child & Family Social Work*, 22(2), 792-800.
- GON, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Central Child Welfare Board. (2012). *Standards for operation and management of residential child care homes*. Lalitpur: Nepal.
- GON, Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, Central Child Welfare Board. (2017). *Child friendly governance: Respect to child rights protection - State of children in Nepal 2017*. Lalitpur: Nepal.
- Guragain, A., Paudel, B., Lim, A., & Choonpradub, C. (2015). Orphanhood and living arrangements of children in Nepal. *Asian Social Science*, 11(12), 84-92.
- Haggman-Laitila, A., Salohekkila, P., & Karki, S. (2018). Transition to adult life of young people leaving foster care: A qualitative systematic review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 95(4), 134-143.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2018.08.017>
- Harder, A.T., Kongeter, S., Zeller, M., Knorth, E. J., & Knot-Dickscheit, J. (2011). Instruments for research on transition. Applied methods and approaches for exploring the transition of young care leavers to adulthood. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(12), 2431–2441.

- Hunter, A. J. (2001). A cross-cultural comparison of resilience in adolescents. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing, 16*(3), 172-179. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1053/jpdn.2001.24180>
- Higginbottom, G. M. A. (2004) Sampling issues in qualitative research. *Nurse Researcher, 12*(1), 7-19. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7748/nr2004.07.12.1.7.c5927>
- ILO., & UNESCO. (2002). *Technical and vocational education and training*.  
UNESCO and ILO.
- Johannessen, S., & Holgersen, H. (2014). Former child soldiers' problems and needs: Congolese experiences. *Qualitative Health Research, 24*(1), 55-66.
- Jurczynszyn, R., & Tilbury, C. (2012). Higher and further education for care leavers: A road less travelled. *Developing Practice: The Child, Youth and Family Work Journal, 33*(33), 10-22.
- Karki, S. J. (2013). Overview of national framework of UN guidelines on alternative care of children: National arrangement. In Maskey, B. K (Ed) *Alternative care of Children: Challenges and Emerging Opportunities in Nepal*, 36-39.  
Organizing Committee of Policy Dialogue Publication.
- Kongeter, S., Schroer, W., & Zeller, M. (2008). Germany. In M. Stein & E. R. Munro (Eds.), *Young people's transition from care to adulthood* (pp. 64-78). Jessica Kingsley Publications.
- Klyachko, T. (2019). The main issues of the state policy in education in 2019. *Russian Economy in 2019: Trends and Outlooks. Moscow. 2*(41), 329-341.
- Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education. A User's Guide*. Sage Publications.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

- Machel, G. (2001). *The impact of war on children: A review of progress since the 1996 United Nations report on the impact of armed conflict on children*. United Nations Children's Fund, NY.
- Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (1989). *Designing qualitative research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Masten, A. S. (2011). Resilience in children threatened by extreme adversity: Frameworks for research, practice, and translational synergy. *Development and Psychopathology*, 23(2), 493-506.
- McMullin, J. R. (2011). Exclusion or reintegration: Child soldiers in Angola. In Özerdem, A. & Podder, S. (Eds.). *Child soldiers: From recruitment to reintegration* (pp. 246-266). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mendes, P., Michell, D., & Wilson, J. Z. (2014). Young people transitioning from out-of-home care and access to higher education: A critical review of the literature. *Children Australia*, 39(4), 243-252.
- Mendes, P., & Snow, P. (Eds.). (2016). *Young people transitioning from out-of-home care: International research, policy and practice*. Springer.
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. Jossey-Bass, San Francis-co.
- Ministry of Women Children and Social Welfare and SOS Children's Villages (2014). *A report on the assessment of alternative care in Nepal and quality care in residential child care homes in 10 Study Districts*. Kathmandu, Nepal: Author
- Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens and National Child Rights Council. (2020). *Assurance of the rights of children: Foundation of prosperous Nepal - state of children in Nepal*. Lalitpur: Government of Nepal.

- Modi, K., Nayar-Akhtar, M., Ariely, S., & Gupta, D. (2016). Addressing challenges of transition from children's home to independence: Udayan care's Udayan Ghars (Sunshine Children's Homes) & aftercare programme. *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care*, 15(1), 87-101
- Mourshed, M., Farrell, D., & Barton, D. (2012). Education to employment: Designing a system that works. *Mckinsey Center for Government*, 18.
- Muguwe, E., Taruvinga, F. C., Manyumwa, E., & Shoko, N. (2011). Re-integration of institutionalized children into society: A case study of Zimbabwe. *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa*, 13(8), 142-149.
- Myers, M. D. (2008) *Qualitative research in business & management*. Sage Publications.
- Nagrath, M. (2005). *After care programme for boys: A case study*. (MA Thesis) Tata Institute of Social Science, Mumbai.
- Organizing Committee of Policy Dialogue for Center for Child Welfare Board, UNICEF, Save The Children., & SOS. (2013). *Alternative care of children: Challenges and emerging opportunities in Nepal*. Organizing Committee of Policy Dialogue for Center for Child Welfare Board, UNICEF, Save The Children and SOS.
- Pinkerton, J. (2011). Constructing a global understanding of the social ecology of leaving out of home care. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 33(12), 2412–2416. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2011.08.020>
- Powell, S., & Kelly, B., P. (2002). Best practices in reintegration and special education exit decisions. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.), *Best Practices in School Psychology IV* (pp. 535–551). National Association of School Psychologists.

- Prasad, V. E. (1979). Education and unemployment of professional manpower in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 14(20), 881-888.
- Roller, M. R., & Lavrakas, P. J. (2015). *Applied qualitative research design: A total quality framework approach*. New York: Guildford Press.
- Rutter, M. (1985). Resilience in the face of adversity: Protective factors and resistance to psychiatric disorder. *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 147(6), 598-611.  
<https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.147.6.598>
- Rutter, M. (2012). Resilience as a dynamic concept. *Development and Psychopathology*, 24(2), 335-344.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2012). *Research methods for business students (6<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*. Pearson Education Limited
- Sharma, T. N. (2008). Connecting technical education and vocational training with employment in Nepal: current problems, issues and trends. *TVET Development Journal*, 2(9), 1-13.
- Schnarr, A., Yang, S., & Gleibner, K. (2008). *Vocational education and training and the labour market*. Germany: UNEVOC.
- Schofield, G., Larsson, B., & Ward, E. (2017). Risk, resilience and identity construction in the life narratives of young people leaving residential care. *Child & Family Social Work*, 22(2), 782-791.
- Sigal, J. J., Perry, J. C., Rossignol, M., & Ouimet, M. C. (2003). Unwanted infants: psychological and physical consequences of inadequate orphanage care 50 years later. *The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 73(1), 3-12.  
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0002-9432.73.1.3>
- Soderback, M., Coyne, I., & Harder, M. (2011). The importance of including both a child perspective and the child's perspective within health care settings to

- provide truly child-centered care. *Journal of Child Health Care*, 15(2), 99-106.
- Stein, M. (2005). *Resilience and young people leaving care: Overcoming the odds*. Research Report. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Stein, M. (2006). Research review: Young people leaving care. *Child & Family Social Work*, 11(3), 273-279.
- Stein, M., & Dixon, J. (2006). Young people leaving care in Scotland. *European Journal of Social Work*, 9(4), 407-423.
- Stein, M. (2008). Resilience and young people leaving care. *Child Care in Practice*, 14(1), 35-44.
- Stein, M., & Munro, E. (2008). *Young people's transitions from care to adulthood: International research and practice*. Jessica Kingsley Publications.
- Strydom, H. (2011). Ethical aspects of research in the social sciences and human service professions. In: De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B., and Delpont, C. S. L., (Eds). *Research at grass roots: For the social science and human service professions (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.)*. Van Schaik, Pretoria, (pp, 113-130).
- St. Xavier's College, & Amici dei Bambini (Ai.Bi.). (2014). *Child welfare policies, services and their aptitude for care and protection of vulnerable children and their families*. Kathmandu: Author.
- Subbian, D. (2006). The impacts of institutionalization: Concepts of community-based care. In Subbian, D. (Eds.). *Compassionate Care* (pp. 16-25). Kathmandu: ILO.
- Sulimani-Aidan, Y., Benbenishty, R., Dinisman, T., & Zeira, A. (2013). Care leavers in Israel: What contributes to better adjustment to life after care? *Journal of Social Service Research*, 39(5), 704-718.

Tanur, C. (2012). Project Lungisela: Supporting young people leaving state care in South Africa. *Child Care in Practice*, 18(4), 325-340.

UN General Assembly (2010). *Guidelines for the alternative care of children:*

Resolution adopted by the general assembly. New York: United Nations.

UNEVOC, & UNESCO. (2013). *Conceptual and position paper: Technical and vocational education and training*. Santiago.

## APPENDICES

**APPENDIX 1: Interview Checklist to Child Care Homes****Institution Questionnaire**

- i. When was the institution established
- ii. What are the mission / vision / goal / objectives of the institution?
- iii. Background of how the institution was formed
- iv. Program / project and different activities of the institution
- v. Does the institution have reintegration policies?
- vi. How does the reintegration policies guide towards reintegration?
- vii. How is the reintegration process carried out?
- viii. Are the TVET / skills training part of the reintegration?
- ix. How did you come up with the concept of providing TVET / skills training?
- x. Details of different TVET/ skills training related programs of the institution?
- xi. Objective of the skills training?
- xii. How many beneficiaries are there? (currently and past)
- xiii. How are they selected?
- xiv. How is the TVET programs implemented? (networks / partners)
- xv. Which specific programs are you involving the institution children / youths in?
- xvi. How long is the program?
- xvii. How do you vision that the TVET will assist in the reintegration of the institution youths
- xviii. Why have you chosen TVET for the reintegration? Were their any other options besides TVET (focusing on general education)
- xix. What types of training are given?

- xx. How does the institution select the different types of training?
- xxi. Is the interest of the youths taken into consideration for the training?
- xxii. After learning the skills, what percentage of have been utilizing their skills for their income generation?
- xxiii. During the time of reintegration what are the different supports provided by the institution?
- xxiv. How does the institution support in the employment of the youths?
- xxv. If anyone is interest in self-employment how does the institution support them?
- xxvi. What are the various challenges / problem in the overall process?

## **APPENDIX 2: Interview Checklist to Child Home Care Leavers**

### **Section 1: Personal Background**

- i. Name of the participant:
- ii. Sex:
- iii. Age:
- iv. Permanent Address:
- v. Education Background:
- vi. Name of the Institution from:

### **Section 2: Background of Participant**

- i. How long have you been at the institution care?
- ii. Do you have a family? No. of family members? Brief background of the family
- iii. How did you come to the institution? Life before coming to the institution?  
(Detailed historical background information)
- iv. How did you feel the first time when you came to the institution?
- v. Did you have any adjustment problems at the institution?
- vi. What are the different services / facilities you have received from the institution (Lodging / food/ education / extra curriculum activities etc.)? How did you find the services at the institution?
- vii. Have you visited your families during the stay at the institution care?

### **Section 3: Skills Training**

- i. Which skills training are you currently pursuing / or have taken?
- ii. How long is the training program, length (hours per day)?
- iii. Where are you being provided the training at?
- iv. Why did you choose the specific training?

- v. Is it your personal interest or did the institution enrolled you in the training?
- vi. How is the training program different from general education?
- vii. What are the challenges you have encountered during the training period?
- viii. How are you finding the training program?
- ix. What sorts of skills are required during the training?
- x. How is the institution supporting you during the training period?

#### **Section 4: Reintegration**

- i. Are you aware that you have to leave the institution care and go back to your family at some point of time after the skills training?
- ii. Have the institution being providing you with counselling on the reintegration?
- iii. How are they being provided?
- iv. What is your personal feeling towards reintegration?
- v. Are you mentally and physically preparing to leave the institution care and be reintegrated?
- vi. Do you feel that if you continued general education would be the better than the training in the reintegration?
- vii. What is your perception on how the training program will assist you during the reintegration?
- viii. After the training, how do you plan to be reintegrated back with the family?
- ix. What is the plan for employment after the training?
- x. How will you find a job / employment?
- xi. Do you have plan for self-entrepreneurship? If Yes, How will you do it? If No, why?