GLOBALIZATION AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION: AN ETHNOGRAPHY OF A NEPALI VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the thesis of *Bishal Kumar Bhandari* for the degree of *Doctor of Philosophy in Education* presented to Kathmandu University School of Education on January 29, 2019.

Title: *Globalization and Means of Communication: An Ethnography of a Nepali Village*

Abstract approved:

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The modern means of communication has become an integral part in the everyday life of people and contemporary society. The people, global culture and economic activities are connected through different means of communication. The means of communication has influenced livelihood and local institutions. In this context, this study explores the changing landscape of means of communication, influence of the means of communication on livelihoods and local institutions, and producers and consumers of the means of communication, focusing on rural villages of Nepal.

The means of communication includes television, radio, newspaper, social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), cultural/folk media, mobile phone, telephone and Internet. They are broadly grouped under four categories: mass media, social media, information tools and folk media. As the means of communication wield enormous influence in everyday life, it was deemed necessary to deepen the understanding of the production and consumption patterns of the means of communication and their

influence on livelihood and local institutions from the perspectives of power, expansionism and globalization.

This study employed interpretivism and criticalism. Interpretivism helped in understanding the social world of the participants and their subjective constructions because the means of communication enabled the local people to construct their own world and reality. Criticalism enabled me to explore the voices of the people. Ethnography was chosen as an appropriate research design to observe the influence of the means of communication in socio-cultural settings of the village. The influence of the means of communication in the rural life was explored through observations, interviews and reflections.

The research revealed that the folk means of communication are gradually disappearing from the rural village, with the growing domination of the modern means of communication. Changes seem to have been taking place at a fast speed, overcoming or overlapping the traditional means of communication in rural villages. The research unmasked the situation that the modern means of communication have emerged as a tool to spread the ‘standard culture'.

The patterns of local production, farming and everyday life have been changed. Industrial products and consumption culture are gaining popularity. The modern means of communication have spread the global views, resulting in the loss of volunteerism, participation and cooperation. Local institutions have become weak and defunct. The study concludes that despite a common assumption that the means of communication are the agent of change, they are the instrument to control the society to fulfill the pre-set objectives of the people in power.

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Bishal Kumar Bhandari
Degree Candidate

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to all the people living in the rural area of Nepal and especially to my family members.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been submitted for the candidature of any other degree.

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This thesis entitled *Globalization and Means of Communication: An Ethnography of a Nepali Village* was presented by *Bishal Kumar Bhandari on* January 29, 2019.

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I understand that my thesis will become part of permanent collection of the library of Kathmandu University. My signature below authorizes the release of my thesis to any reader upon request for scholarly purposes.

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_____

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AM	Amplitude Modulation
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CDMA	Code Division Multiple Access
CDO	Chief District Officer
CIAA	Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority
CIN	Community Information Network
DAO	District Administration Office
DDC	District Development Committee
DFID	Department for International Development
DTH	Direct To Home
DWCO	District Women's and Children Office
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GON	Government of Nepal
GSM	Global System for Mobile Communication
HCCAP	Himalayan Climate Change Adaptation Program
INGOs	International Non-Governmental Organizations
INs	Indigenous Nationalities
LPG	Liquefied Petroleum Gas
LSA	Local Governance Act
MCPM	Minimum Condition and Performance Measurements
MOIC	Ministry of Information and Communication
NBA	National Broadcasting Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations

NMS	Nepal Media Society
NTA	Nepal Telecommunications Authority
PSTN	Public Switched Telephone Network
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
TI	Transparency International
TIN	Transparency International Nepal
TRP	Television Rating Point
UN	United Nations
VDC	Village Development Committee

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There are different means of communication available in rural and urban societies. The means of communication includes mass media, social media, information tools and folk media. As the means of communication wield enormous influence in everyday life, it was deemed necessary to deepen the understanding of the production and consumption patterns of the means of communication and their influence on livelihood and local institutions from the perspectives of power, expansionism and globalization.

There has been a dramatic increase of means of communications after the restoration of democracy in 1990. Communications have a huge amount of influence over every domain of society. In this chapter, I explore my lived experiences with some means of communication. In addition, I introduce the key agenda of my research, including means of communication, livelihood, local institutions and production and consumption of the means of communication. Then, I set the purpose and research questions based on the research agenda. Finally, I discuss the significance of this research and essence of the chapter.

Democracy and Means of Communication in Nepali Society

The media world in Nepali society has experienced massive changes after the re-establishment of democracy in 1990. Before the restoration of democracy, the media was revolving around the government and rulers. Nowadays, the monopoly of the state-owned media has become an issue of the past. After the 1990 political change, diverse and unprecedented forms of media are in place, producing varieties of

media contents. The media consumers of the country to get a wealth of information on the events happening in and outside the society they are living.

After the political change in 1990, communications have spread rapidly in the rural area of Nepal (Rijal, 2014). After the revival of democracy, the changing media landscape has become one of the basic characteristics of Nepali society (Wilmore, 2008). Willmore mentions that the means of communication offered unprecedented possibilities conjoining political, economic and cultural network spreading different forms of livelihoods, policies and political systems. Willmore's idea indicates that the modern means of communication is influential in Nepali society, especially after democracy and open market. However, after the democracy, traditional forms of media were less in use due to the expansion of the modern means. The traditional means of communication is developed from its culture and philosophy. I have defined the traditional culture as the human and/or social activities that combine moral values, ethics, philosophy, written and unwritten laws of the society, philosophy, and religion, which is transmitted and learned by the people.

Modern means of communication is becoming the uppermost priority of the people in everyday life because every individual can possess a communication set easily. It has enabled them to exchange messages promptly. They inform others and get informed about national and international issues in a fraction of a second. The modern means of communication is the product of innovation and science. The development of modern means of communication supports modernization and globalization. The modern means of communication enable individuals to be informed about new values and ideas different from their everyday practices and culture. The information gained through media enables individuals to be educated. Media information promotes critical thinking and discussions.

Modernism and globalism are the two sides of a coin. Modernism is the spread of cultures and new values from the global world (Szalvai, 2008). Globalism is, from the business point of view, an expansion of the market and ideas. With the spread of modernism, interdependence among national systems increases by means of trade and culture. The modern means of communication support to spread modern values. The media spread modern values and culture through various means of communication. Especially the electronic hypertext has enabled to network and integrate in the global process. It has also supported the connection between rural areas with the global arena.

As in the past, it is believed that people in the rural villages of Nepal are using different means of communication (Budhathoki, 2014). The satellite TV through DTH, radio, Internet, telephone, mobile phone, movies and social-media transmit information and images from one place to another. Communications enable the rural population to get informed about the knowledge on socio-cultural practices in different parts of the world, linking rural villages to the globe and shaping the practices in rural societies.

The means of communication spread information and knowledge. In Nepali society, the access to and availability of the means of communication have also changed the practices in their use. Communications and knowledge are interrelated in that one supports the other. Means of communication promote education, business and ideas. Use of the means of communication empowers people and community. People from business and political communities pass, and receive, information through different means of communication as per their interest and benefit (Dahal, 2002; Ian & Subba, 2007).

Means of communication cannot be understood properly without understanding power dynamics. The notion of power is related to those who control, mobilize, own and use the means of communication with an aim to fulfilling un/intended interests. While defining power, the notion of production and consumption should be taken together. Production is related to the supply side of communication; whereas, consumption is related to the demand side. Media houses are the producers of information and people/individuals are the consumers.

The relationship between power and media frequently comes in media discourse. Budhathoki (2014) and Rijal (2014) argue that power groups control the communication and information dissemination mechanism. They influence and/or mobilize the means of communication. It is also manifestation of hegemony and control. Dahal (2002) states that power holders limit the proportional flow of information to large masses of society, creating huge gaps. They control media to control public sphere. In the democratic society where different means of communication are available, different power influencers put their presence to fulfill their implicit interests.

Means of Communication: A Tool for Influence

Means of communication are an influential part of everyday life, enabling people to inform, educate, persuade and socialize other masses through information. Nowadays, communications pass information on innovation, new ways of livelihood and new practices. They are influential as they are directly connected to the life of individuals, society and institutional systems. The means of communication support to interact with different ideas, actions and artifacts. Therefore, any means of communication is termed as an important tool in the creation of an interactive society and interactive world that mix all forms of cultures in a new territory. These means

are also symbolized as a means of change and progress as they have political role to bring changes in society (Barnes, 2014).

It is now a high time to explore the role of the means of communication from the perspective of rural people. Nowadays, communications directly affect everyday life. They have a greater effect on the people's interactions with everyday consumable stuffs. They may be foodstuffs, clothes, or any item that comes in everyday life.

The means of communication also have influences on local institutions. They support people to be informed about new practices and institutional systems. The modern means of communication is supportive to flow popular/standard culture and popular policies all over the world (Budhathoki, 2014; Petrova, 2005).

The popular/standard culture refers to the domination or the rule, which is maintained through different (ideological) tools. In the changing context, the means of communication has become a strong tool to influence all levels of Nepali society. Budhathoki (2014) notes that media disseminates the culture of the dominant class, adding that media promotes consumerism culture.

To spread those cultures, the dominant class influences through ideas, values and norms, and behavior of the ruling class. Such groups control the rest of the society opposing local culture and practices (Robinson, 2005). The means of communication becomes a vehicle in the spreading of the popular/standard culture, as the media is controlled by dominant groups (capitalists, politicians, businesspersons, urban elites, intellectuals, etc.). The dominant class depends on the means of communication to spread ideas and behavior that limit or restraint the local norms and values. Democratic norms, governance frame, ethics and values are set by power and spread by communication channels. Popular culture refers to the democratic culture. For instance, the culture of using jeans, The North Face jackets, Samsung mobile

phones, drinking Coca-Cola, eating Horlicks and celebrating New Year, Christmas and Valentine Day is a popular culture (Dhungana & Pfefferle, 2016). It is need of hour to observe the role and influence of the means of communication analytically.

There is a fundamental shift in the spread of communication means and consumption of culture as the communication influences consumption behavior (Dam, Nelson, & Lozinski, 2008). Therefore, communications are tools to conquer societies to establish standard/outer cultures and products and policies (Adum, Kenechukwu, & Abuah, 2015). When the standard and local cultures are mixed, a new form of culture erupts (Adum et al., 2015). In Nepal, the new culture is gaining popularity where media have played an important role. In this research, standard culture is defined as the culture created by the people/countries which are in power or have developed status. The culture of powerful people/countries influences subordinate cultures by taking help of the means of communication.

The means of communication such as mobile phones, telephones, FM radios, televisions, or Internet-mediated communication means are the modern tools to exchange messages and viewpoints (Budhathoki, 2014). They can be categorized into mass media, social media and two-way communication technology. In this study, I have included all forms of telecommunication technology as the two-way technology. These means of communication have changed the way of communication in families, societies, local communities and the global community. In addition, folk media such

as *Katawal Karaune*[1]*, Gandarva Gaune*[2]*, Jhyali Pitne, Damaha Bajaune, Sankha Fukne*[3]etc. are still prevalent in many of the rural parts of the country.

Means of Communication and Society

There are critical concerns of the means of communication in the discourse of communication. In the critical discourse, media is termed as a means of cultural expansionism, political instruments, tools of power and hegemony that exploit society and its resources by influencing them (Dahal, 2002; Rutovic, 2016). In poor localities, there are criticisms and disagreements on the role of the means of communication stating that it perpetuates inequalities and imbalances in the society. The inequalities and imbalances are mostly related to information mechanism system and exploitation.

Investment in media is safeguarded by the liberal market and democracy (Petrova, 2005). The liberal market protects investors, as they are also a power stake. Patrons states that their influences in designing information began with an aim of gain, fulfilling their implicit or explicit interests. It is the interest of the producers of the means of communication. It is associated with expansion of market through a new culture and product. Control over the means of communication supports in spreading the intended messages as designed by the people in power (McKenzie, 2017; McPhail, 1987). This has become a crucial issue in media and communication. I also feel that now the time has come to analyze the media and communication from the perspective of expansionism, imperialism and domination.

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1 Katawal Karaune: A traditional means of communication in Nepal. In this method, a person (*Katawal*) shouts and gives messages to the people in the village or community.

2 Gandarva Gaune: A traditional practice of singing from door to door for spreading messages by a 'Dalit' community, particularly from hilly region of Nepal, which belongs to the Indo-Aryan ethnic group.

3 Jhyali Pitne, Damaha Bajaune, Sankha Fukne: Traditional means of communication practiced in Nepal.

In the heterogeneous society of Nepal, there are inequalities in practice. The inequalities are in terms of caste, class, gender, age or geography, to name a few. Thus, the inequality created by the means of communication is an emerging facet in the Nepali society (Adum et al., 2015). In other words, the invasion of popular culture creates exploitation and manipulation, legitimizing the dominance of capitalism and subordination of the lower class (Gramsci, 1971; Kenechukwu, 2014; McQuali, 2010; Robinson, 2005). This study also tries to explore, explicitly or implicitly, the issues mentioned above.

Jan (2009) states that globalization has four major economic flows — goods and services, labor migration, capital (aid and trade) and technology i.e. means of communication. The means of communication comes under the category of technological flows. And the goods and services are spread by the means of communication.

In this background, the influence of the means of communication on everyday life, particularly on the rural society of Nepal, was explored in this study. I focused on the role and influence of the available means of communication in rural village. I put forward the means of communication, livelihood, local institutions and producers and consumers of the means of communication as the key agenda of the research.

My Lived Experience: An Inspiration for the Study

I drew much of my inspiration to conduct this research from my own family and educational background and experiences. My experience of working in *Kantipur Television*[4] in Kathmandu kindled my passion to inquire into the means of communication and their influences on everyday life. Communications have become, implicitly or explicitly, part of life of every individual and I was not an exception to it.

4 Kantipur Television: One of the private television stations in Kathmandu.

I observed that the means of communication had played a greater role in the interaction among the members in a family and society, in the use of food stuffs and/or in the formulation the policies of local institutions. They had also played a greater role in changing the socio-cultural practices and participation. Market policies, political circumstances, grobolization[5] (Matusitz & Palermo, 2014) are some other domains in which I am interested, inspiring myself to explore more about the means of communication from people's perspectives.

I used to work as journalist in the media house. However, after enrolling myself in Kathmandu University, I focused my research on people who use the means of communication in everyday life. It helped me understand the needs and aspirations of the people. Some 15 years prior to working in the television channel, I had worked as a reporter of a local weekly. Therefore, my experience of working for years in the media prompted me to take an initiative to dig deeper into the means of communication. Usually, cities supply everything to the people in rural area all over the globe. Nepal is not an exception to it. Cities supply tools, technologies and foodstuff, a common practice in Nepali society (Chapman, Slaymaker, & Young, 2016). On the other hand, the means of communication flow necessary information about productions, shaping everyday practices of the rural population.

The village where I grew up inspired me to choose this issue as a research topic. I belong to a rural village of *Dolakha*[6]. The research field I choose is similar to my village circumstances. The community network, the outward flow of people for employment, the access to school and electricity and the connection of road are similar to the ones in my village. The needs and everyday struggles of the people are no

5 Grobolization: Growth of globalization.
6 Dolakha: A mountainous district, about 133km east of Kathmandu.

different. This is the reason why I choose *Thumko*[7] (the brief introduction of *Thumko* is described in Chapter III) as my research field.

In addition, the political background of my parents and their active involvement in the political movement after 1976, when there was the *Panchayat*[8] regime, set a ground for me to view the life from the perspective of people from the lower strata. The political activism of my family enabled me to think of emancipation, liberation and freedom of the people. My parents' regular efforts and engagement in politics motivated me to understand power and struggles, driving me towards developing a perspective against discrimination, exclusion and exploitation in the name of class, caste, culture, tradition and religion. The family background enabled me to advocate justice and equity.

I remember the months of *Chaitra* and *Baisakh* (from mid-March to mid-May) when my parents had been arrested and jailed for one or two months every year from 1987 to 1990. They used to bring me some biscuits and packets of chocolate from *Charikot*, the headquarters of *Dolakha*. They had rejoiced after the restoration of democracy in 1990. After the political change in 1990, the autocratic *Panchayat* regime was changed to a democratic nation as a result of after people's massive movement all over Nepal. I had strong inclinations to my parents' political belief as my home background was a school where I learnt power and politics.

To sum up, my work experiences, my interest in this topic, my familiarity with geographical realities and my family background are some of the crucial factors that pushed me to explore more about the means of communication in our rural society.

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7 Thumko: A top of a hill [pseudo-name of my research field].
8 Panchayat: The party-less political system during the period of 1960-1990 in Nepal.

Setting the Agenda of My Study

In this section, I present my research study based on my lived experiences and the research agenda. Given the context, the research agenda includes the means of communication, influence of the means of communication in livelihood, effects of global policy and practices in local institutions.

Means of Communication and Nepali Society

The widespread use of the means of communication in the Nepali society is an example of a democratic society. As stated in the above sections, there are mass media, social media, information tools and folk media in rural villages of Nepal. They constitute the agenda of this study. Globalization, power interests and hegemony are associated with my research agenda. These views are linked with democracy, livelihoods and local institutions. I have discussed these issues in detail in the coming sections.

Means of communication are disseminating information, educating the masses, with an aim of social change and progress. With an aim of progress, the Constitution of Nepal 2015 clearly states the independent role of media (Government of Nepal [GoN], 2015). In everyday practices, the use of the means of communication differs from culture to culture and place to place (Sparks, 2007). However, in Nepali society, the influence of the means of communication is taken positively. In Nepal, communications have played an important role. For instance, I experienced the crucial role of media during People's Movement II in 2006 and after the earthquake in 2015. I also witnessed the widespread use of media against the border blockade.

The world has witnessed a quick progress in the field of communication. A large section of population communicates with voice, texts and pictures or with the combination of all the three (Thussu, 2000). Thussu further states that the flow of data

has grown heavily, creating a conducive environment for trade and commerce, including ideas, beliefs, languages and socio-economic and socio-cultural systems. Means of communication has become a central element of the society, as it is an important tool to create educated masses. The means of communication flow news, views and analyses that support individuals to learn contemporary political, socio-cultural and socio-economic situations. It has become an integral part of individuals to understand the society. This is why, the media demand wider space in the process of analysis.

The free flow of means of communication and information is also explained as an information capital for influence and control (Ch, Faheem, Binn Dost, & Abdullah, 2011). Democracy and open market have opened the door to multinational corporations that flow their goods and services. In addition, they export policies in their intended market space. This is why, the means of communication demand an intensive study on livelihood and the functions of local institutions.

Modern Means of Communication in Livelihoods

The expansion of livelihoods, especially the modern livelihoods, is associated with the global culture after the rapid growth of capitalistic society (Mcluhan, 1962; Sabir, 2013). The capitalistic market flows goods and services through the means of communication in every part of the world (Budhathoki, 2014; Dahal, 2002).

The livelihood concerns are associated with the global living practices (practices of standard culture) and free flow of capital, open market and liberalization (Ch et al., 2011). With the support of the means of communication, the standard culture, products (both goods and technology) are spreading, with a slogan of ‘curing all forms of illnesses’ caused by underdevelopment (Khanal, 2006). This situation

sparked my interest in learning more about the issue of the means of communication and livelihood.

Means of Communication in Shaping Local Institutions

In this study, the social values and beliefs in terms of Nepali socio-cultural circumstances are referred to as socio-cultural systems. These practices are based on the cultural values derived from *Manusmriti*, an ancient Hindu legal text (Chandu & Banothu, 2016). With the end of the *Rana Regime*[9] in 1950, the state focused on modern governance practices. Modernization was reflected in the modern governance practice during 1970s (Baral, 1975).

Modernization and the means of communication have mutual relationships that the former supports the expansion of latter and vice versa. The modernization process brought several changes in society, especially in the institutional level as the means of communication caused the import by several institutional policies.

It paves the way for us to consider the means of communication as an important domain of the state. Communications also cause the spread of the policy measures developed by the state. Sometimes, these means functions as a cross-check mechanism, giving media the role of a watchdog. Media is considered as the 'Fourth Estate' (Gregg, 2011, p. 1). Further, the means of communication function as a tool that links and transmits the culture, needs and voices of the people. The means of communication build a linkage between different elements of communities and local institutions. The government of Nepal has recognized the role of communications for progress and elimination of inequality and injustice in the society (Ministry of Information and Communications [MOIC], 2012).

9 Rana Regime: The regime that existed for 104 years from 1846–1951 in Nepal and was controlled by the Rana families.

In the rural villages of Nepal, after the introduction of the modern governance system, the practice of self-help has been decreasing. The media have failed to give any attention to these issues. Malpractices and ineffective governance are associated with inadequate information and less empowerment of people. The means of communication have implicit and explicit interests in such ill practices. Media is creating awareness on governance and local institutions, encouraging people's participation. The educated/informed masses have contributed to the society and the governance processes.

In this situation, a question could be raised on the efforts, effectiveness and intentions of both the state and non-state agencies. It is always an elusive question as to why those agencies' efforts have failed to bring expected results. It leads to a further question if these state and non-state agencies are working with a good intention (Roblin, 2011). Such questions inspired me to link my study with governance and communications.

Production and Consumption of Means of Communication

Production and consumption of communications is a debatable issue in the media discourse. Enterprises, political forces, business forces, and local elites who control resources and manipulate them for their benefits come under the production category. The users of the means of communication fall in the consumer category. Consumers depend on the information produced by the means of communication. Farmers, teachers, students, housewives and commoners are the consumers.

The relation between the producer and the consumer of the means of communication is an important agenda of this study. The means of communication circulate messages related to goods and services. Sometimes, policies and practices are spread through the means of communication from supranational level (Kriesi,

2013, p. 206). The supranational forces are global forces. They are producers of the means of communication. They produce new technologies and information to meet their vested interests. For instance, the concepts of universal education and marketization are spread all over the world by the producers (Gellner, 2007).

It indicates that there is a direct and indirect role of global forces either in the expansion of the market of the means of communication or in influencing the state to form a liberal market policy (McPhail, 1987). It leads to the situation of dependency (Bennett, 2006; Mallik, 2013). My study also presented the political and business interests of the people who mobilize the means of communication (Ian & Subba, 2007). The global and national forces want to rule through their ideology and information, to control the masses for their un/intended benefits (Khanal, 2006, p. 178). I believe that the information sharing or dissemination is a visible notion; however, studying the visible notion as such is not enough. Considering the inadequacy of the sharing or dissemination of information, I focused on the production and consumption of the means of communication.

Consumption of Means of Communication in Nepali Society

The recent study undertaken by Share Cast Initiative in 2018 presents Nepal's changing use of means of communication and the prevalence of modern means of communication in Nepali society. The study indicates that the modern means of communication, particularly the mobile and the Internet, is influential compared with radio and television.

The mobile phone has become very influential means of communication in Nepali society. The mobile phone has largely attracted rural teenagers in Nepal. In Nepal, 81 percent of the people use social media, where the share of teenagers covers 86 percent. The study also shows that 86 percent of TV viewers watch television

programs in the evenings, and that more women watch television than men do in the evenings. Men watch television more in the mornings than in the evenings.

The study of Share Cast shows that television, newspaper, radio and online are in access to 38.4 percent, 4 percent, 36.6 percent and 6.2 percent of the people, respectively. Friend and family networks for information sharing are 11.6 percent and 7.3 percent, respectively. The research shows that mobile phones are most common communication means of communication, where 99 percent respondents use mobile phones, among them 64 percent use smart phones. The study reveals that among them, 98 percent people have access to Internet in mobile phones. Facebook users are 86% and an estimated 8 million Nepali people have access to Facebook.

Purpose of My Study

This study aimed at exploring the means of communication available in the rural parts of Nepal and their influence on the livelihood. It also looked into the contribution of the means of communication in local institutions and the relationship between the producers and consumers of the means of communication.

Research Questions

The following questions guided me to conduct the research on the means of communication:

1. What are the means of communication available in the rural parts of Nepal?
2. How do the means of communication influence the livelihood of rural people?
3. How has the contribution of the means of communication been in local institutions?
4. How is the relationship between the producers and consumers of the means of communication?

Significance of the Study

This study has a significant support to the professionals working in the field of media and communication as it provides information about rural life and the use of the means of communication. This research has contributions in five layers: personal, professional, policy, methodological and societal. At the personal level, it provided a broader idea of the means of communication, their uses in rural areas, aspirations of local people and delivery of information by the means of communication. The influence of the means of communication comes in the discussion of social, cultural, political development in the contemporary Nepali society. This study substantially explores the changing context due to the influence of different means of communication.

It is necessary to study the means of communication linking it with socio-cultural and socio-economic dimensions. My study focused on exploring the means of communication and their role and contribution to everyday livelihoods and local and socio-cultural institutions. Consequently, it contributes to the generation of knowledge on how the means of communication are contributing to the rural part of Nepal bringing the notion of changed livelihood and practices in the local and socio-cultural institutions. In addition, it explains the influence of the modern means of communication on livelihood and local institutions. I produced the knowledge that shows the existing means of communication in the rural society and their tendency. I believe that it has added to a new dimension in the field of media knowledge. The relationship between producers and consumers of the means of communication in rural Nepal were the issues of this study. It also adds a new dimension in the field of media knowledge.

For development professionals, this research contributes to develop an appropriate communication strategy in the area of livelihood, empowerment of people and their institutions in the rural area. The study also helps all concerned understand traditional means of communication. This study enables media professionals to address the need of people and formulate appropriate strategies for selecting appropriate means of communication to disseminate information.

This study is also significant to formulate relevant policies. It provides the idea of forming the policies to mobilize the means of communication that affect everyday life of the people. The role of traditional means of communication, more appropriate in culturally guided society is something missing from the national policies. Therefore, this research provides an avenue for advocating the importance of traditional means of communication in the globalized world. This research sets a new way of conducting ethnography. Earlier, the communication theory was largely confined with cultural expansionism or political expansionism. This study tried to develop a cultural-political proliferation.

At the societal level, my research raises critical consciousness in the media discourse. This study helps concerned stakeholders understand hegemony and domination of the modern means of communication and one-way flow of modern governance policy and practices. Further, this research can be a means to understand the real intention of expansion of the means of communication and technologies. It helps its readers to understand who are suppressed and discriminated by the media. This research explores the knowing/unknowing suppression of global power forces; hence, it also explores the reform agenda for advocacy and policy considerations. Thus, this study contributes to social transformation.

Many scholars have discussed roles of the means of communication. This research is something that explored the ones that other scholars could not touch upon. This study explored the issue of cultural aspects and power hegemony of the means of communication. It focused on globalization and imperial forces that are resulting in imbalance, creating unjust flow of information. Hence, this study explored the role of the means of communication in the societies that have just adopted the modern means of communication that have replaced the traditional means.

Organization of this Thesis

This thesis has nine chapters. The first chapter discusses my interest in the field and my academic journey that includes background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study and it limitations. The second chapter critically assesses literature to substantiate this study. In doing so, I present the literature related to the means of communication, livelihood and local institutions. I focus on the means of communication and their influences on local institutions. I discuss the theoretical perspectives and research gaps and conclude the chapter with its essence.

In the third chapter, I discuss the methodological framework. The methodological section consists of the research paradigm, philosophical considerations and data collection details. Then, I discuss the quality standards and the meaning making process. Following the ethical considerations, I wrap up the chapter with its essence.

In the fourth chapter, I discuss my first visit to *Thumko* and available means of communication in the site. Modern means of communication dominate the rural village. I discuss the notion of globalization and technological determinism. In the fifth chapter, I discuss the means of communication and livelihood. In doing so, I

present the means of communication and their contribution in the promotion of modern products, replacing the traditional livelihood culture in the Nepali society. I discuss the means of communication in terms of opportunities and challenges in the changing context. I present influence of the means of communication on local institutions. This chapter illustrates the cultural practices of governance as well as the modern frame of running/ruling the institutions. Further, this chapter shows the situation of saving groups, local consumer groups and the notion of transparency in the local institutions.

After that, I present the relationship between producers and consumers of the means of communication. In doing so, I present the genealogy of communication, peripheral empowerment and *Disneyfication*[10] in the rural village. In the second last section, I present an analysis and discussion, which is entitled as communication today. Finally, I wrap up the study with findings and conclusions.

Essence of the Chapter

The crux of this chapter is to problematize and establish my research agenda that enabled me to formulate research objectives, research questions and its significance. The purpose of this section is to discuss the means of communication, their influence in livelihood and local institutions and their relationship with consumers. For this, different agenda such as the means of communication, livelihood and local intuitions, and producers and consumers of the means of communication have been explained. This section also shows the overall organization of this thesis.

10 Disneyfication: the transformation (as of something real or unsettling) into carefully controlled and safe entertainment or an environment with similar qualities.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

My research has tried to excavate the available means of communication, their influence on livelihoods and local institutions, and the relationship between producers and consumers of communications. Given these key themes of the inquiry, in this literature review chapter, I review relevant literature on means of communication in the context of Nepal. The major purpose of this review is to understand the means of communication in different political regimes. I also present the past studies carried out on the means of communication and their influence on livelihoods, governance of local institutions.

I also present the existing practices of governing the institutions, making it clear that governance practices and policies have been formulated from the central level and disseminated at the local level. I believe that in developing countries, policies are usually imported. It demands viewing the world from the perspectives of globalization, imperialism and technological determinism. I sketch the historical domain of the means of communication and their influence on livelihoods, governance systems in different regimes, and the interests of core and peripheral relationship. I also present previous research studies and gaps identified.

Shifting of Means of Communication towards Modernism

Since the early 19th century, modernism has virtually been synonymous to progress, and development of society. It is used in a positive sense. It indicates the undergoing shifts in the society. Modernism is a philosophical concept, associated with socio-cultural changes. In the 19th century, it was used to refer to arts and liberty

movement, and after that, the term has been used to refer to the socio-cultural changes and the changes in norms, values and beliefs (Mao & Walkowitz, 2008). In this study, modernity refers to the modern society in relation to the means of communication and its influence on society. In this study, modernism is defined as the movement of all the facets of socio-cultural domains, specially the different means of communication. The means of communication is one of the important aspects of modernity (Appadurai, 1990). The theoretical perspective of Appadurai (1990) can define people and contemporary society, media and technology, capital, ideologies and its interaction to the global sphere.

Mediascapes, technoscapes and ideoscapes created by media are derived to understand the means of communication in my study. These concepts are associated with globalization and hegemony. Appadurai (1990) discusses ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes. These terms define modernity and global cultural forces. Among them, mediascapes and technoscapes are moving at a high speed globally.

Modernism of the means of communication refers to the expansion of the modern means of communication, which is like a movement that transfers or modifies the traditional beliefs in according with the modern ideas. The global means of communication are expanding rapidly, especially after the changes in the political environment. Nepal is gradually shifting towards modernity, hence the expansion of modern means of communication. In different political regimes (i.e. pre-1950, from 1951 to 1990, and post-1990) there are observable changes in Nepali society.

In the past, communications were attached to the culture of the society. Means of communication, such as *Katawal Karaune*, was an example of traditional means of communication. In this study, I term such traditional means as folk media because

these media are rooted with cultural practices. *Chautari*[11] *Gufgaf* [12] and *Padhero Guffgaf* [13] are also the means of exchanging information (personal communication with B. P. Subedi, on January 25, 2018). *Chautari Gufgaf* and *Padhero Guffgaf* occurred when local people gathered in traditional meeting places and taps. *Chautari* and *Padhero* are the places where people frequently used to meet every day.

Nepali society is rich in culture that includes diverse customs, traditions, religions, norms and values. With the diversity in culture, *Dharma*[14], lifestyle, behavior, and means of communication are different from community to community. There are 123 languages and 125 castes/ethnic groups (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2012). The peculiarity of our nation is that the languages align with the castes — different languages for different castes. Language is also a means of communication. Sometimes, culture, dress, signs and symbols are forms of communication. In heterogeneous societies, there are varieties of the means of communication.

The folk communications, such as *Sankha Phukne, Damaha Thataune, Karnal Phukne* and *Gandarva Gaune* are associated with the Nepali tradition and culture (Bhattachan, 2016). In addition, the gathering in religious ceremonies such as *Arma Parma*[15]*, Bhajan-Kirtan, Janti and Malami, Guthi, Dewali, Gotha-Dhoop, Mandali* and *Nawaaz Padne*[16] are some functions where interactions take place and individuals share their feelings. These are the strength of our society (Awasthi, 2004). To describe

11 Chautari: A raised platform with slates of stone under trees which is/was used by local people as a place to rest and share feelings and ideas.

12 Chauteri Gufgaf: A practice of sharing feelings and ideas at Chautari.

13 Padheri Gufgaf : A traditional practice of chatting and gossiping at springs or wells.

14 Dharma: Religion/law/moral action.

15 Arma Parma: Bartering of labor for agriculture.

16 Bhajan-Kirtan, Janti and Malami, Guthi, Dewali, Gotha-Dhoop, Mandali, Nawaaz Padne: Traditional forms of communication.

more about the means of communication in the following sub-sections, I discuss different political eras — pre-1950, during 1951-1990 and post-1990 — in Nepal and the means of communication associated with those regimes.

Means of Communication Before 1950

Before 1950, the *Ranas* led the political course in Nepal. A modern press entered for the first time in Nepal in 1850. *Ranas* brought the press to use it in their families and relatives (Devkota, 1967; Rijal, 2014). Devkota further states that Jung Bahadur Rana, the first prime minister of the *Rana* regime, brought the press named *Giddhe Press*[17]. The entry of *Giddhe Press* was considered as the commencement of modernization in the history of journalism in Nepal (Baral, 1975). Soon after that, the *Manoranjan Press*[18] entered in Kathmandu for government publications.

In pre-1950 era, the press was strictly controlled (Wilmore, 2008, p. 69). In 1901, Prime Minister Dev Shamser issued a special decree authorizing the publication and management of Gorkhapatra, the first daily newspaper in Nepal (Devkota, 1967, p. 29). During the anti-*Rana* revolution, the political activist Tarini Prasad Koirala initiated the radio, which named as Nepal Radio, with its station in *Bhojpur* District. Later, it was relocated in *Biratnagar*, a commercial city in the eastern part of the country. The narrative of the first news used to begin this way: *Yo prajatantra Nepal radio ho, hami mukti sangram ko morcha bata boliraheka chhaun* [This is Democracy Nepal Radio. We are speaking from the frontline of the battlefield for freedom] (Kasajoo, 2000, as cited in Banjade, 2007). The post-1950 era is known as a departure for modern Nepal (Baral, 1975).

17 Giddhe Press: The first printing machine brought in Nepal.
18 Manoranjan: The second printing machine brought in Nepal.

Means of Communication After 1950

In 1951, after the establishment of democracy, the political parties, including monarchs, used press for their interest and their own benefits instead of the interest of people (Baral, 1975). The political parties established their own media, especially newspapers, to push their parties' agenda to the masses (Baral, 1975). In 1951, after the establishment of democracy, the first private sector newspaper, titled *Awaj*[19] was published from Kathmandu, of which a renowned poet of Nepal, Siddhi Charan Shrestha, was the editor (Devkota, 1967, p. 34).

On December 15, 1960, King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev dissolved the parliamentary government and established a party-less *Panchaya*t system (Baral, 1975). The King imposed restrictions on the freedom of press. In 1962, the party-less *Panchayat* system was introduced in royal dictatorship known as '*Panchaya*t *Raj* '[20]. By 1965, the number of dailies and weeklies decreased, which were 65 and 101, respectively (Baral, 1975). Before the King's takeover, the number was much higher. In the King's regime, in the absence of other means of communication (newspaper), the monarchy's mouthpiece *Gorkhapatra*[21] found an opportunity to flourish. Baral (1975) notes that the *Panchaya*t established a press commission with the stated objective of the development of press. The Radio Nepal, *Gorkhapatra* and Nepal Television remained as the means of communication in the *Panchayat* regime (Maung & Ghimire, 1997).

Means of Communication After 1990

In 1990, the historical people's uprising restored multiparty democracy. The uprising forced the king to step down from his direct rule. Soon after the restoration of

19 Awaj: A private sector newspaper.
20 Panchayat Raj: Panchayat regime.
21 Gorkhapatra: The first daily newspaper in Nepal.

democracy, a new constitution was promulgated, which guaranteed press freedom, freedom to speech and opinion (Rijal, 2014). The 1990 Constitution introduced media-friendly policies that made possible to operate private and community FM radio stations, televisions and newspapers from community as well as commercial sectors (Banjade, 2006; Ian & Subba, 2007). The media policy of 1992 introduced the private media. The National Broadcasting Act (NBA) of 1993 paved the way for establishment of an independent radio. For the first time in Nepal in 1997, *Radio Sagarmatha*[22] was introduced as an independent radio. In villages, FM radio became an influential means of communication among rural people (Banjade, 2006; Dahal, 2014). Additionally, access to Direct To Home (DTH), a satellite-based dissemination of television channel, increased.

Since 2008, the use of different means of communication such as mobile phones, televisions, radios, newspapers and Internet-mediated social media have been increasing in rural villages. I have observed that the access of mobile phones and the use of Internet in mobile phones is increasing in a rapid pace. It has led to the increased use of Internet-mediated applications such as Viber and Facebook (Nepal Telecommunications Authority [NTA], 2016). Internet users are increasing day by day, with 54 percent of the total population using Internet in Nepal (NTA, 2016). At present, the number of radios has increased to 700, televisions 104 and cable television channels 852 (MOIC, 2017). The MOIC data shows that the number of different means of communication is dramatically increasing, as compared to the past. Additionally, according to a national economic survey, there are 7,174 newspapers.

In 2010, the Internet using population was 6, 62,800, whereas the number was 26, 90,000 and 64, 00,000 in 2012 and 2016, respectively (The Statistics Portal,

22 Radio Sagarmatha: A community FM station in Kathmandu, Nepal.

2016). This figure presents the increased popularity of the Internet. At present, as stated above, majority of people are using social media. The access of Internet is a product of the modern era and is a form of advancement. In the open society of Nepal, the means of communication matters for the political settlement and sole process of development in the country (BBC Media Action, 2016). This study presents that the need and function of media is growing larger due to the flow of global tools and technologies.

Shifts in the Means of Communication and Livelihood

Communications are influential tools of multi/national companies as they can use those means to disseminate their products and services. Among many other instruments such as economy, military, market, media, English education and multinational products, the means of communication and technology such as television, Internet and Internet-mediated communication have emerged as a powerful instrument.

These instruments are also a form of products of global world (Adum et al., 2015). The means of communication spread language, products, cultures, new norms, and values. Therefore, they are taken as important instruments. Means of communication are soft tools that persuade individuals to fulfill implicit interest of global/national power (Dhungana & Pfefferle, 2016).

The concept of global village and global culture comes together with modernization and rapid changes in livelihood (Mcluhan, 1962; Sabir, 2013). The capitalistic market expands the modern means of communication as well as modern goods and products together in that it supports the enlargement of these merchandises. The modern products are disseminated through news and advertisements.

The means of communication are supportive to people because they support them to buy necessary goods to run everyday life. For instance, with the support of mobile apps such as Viber or Messenger, people of rural villages interact with others wherever they live. They share updates with someone who is walking up the hills in the rural parts of the country or someone who is reading books in the library of Oslo University in Norway or someone who is enjoying street food in Lahore of India. In the past, people used to walk for a whole day to reach the place where a landline telephone was to talk to the people living far from them.

The means of communication disseminates different cultures and values. For instance, being in Nepali society, I observe that the growing interest in English language and fast food are some forms of emerging practices caused by the influence of different means of communication. In the neoliberal market, the political and power 'conglomerates' creates its spaces easily, influencing the market (Scott, 2017). Intentionally or unintentionally, the media promote the thrust of those aid and trade, products and culture through means of communication (Melkote & Steeves, 2001).

Enjoying Bollywood films beyond the Indian subcontinent, talking about Hindu and Buddhist philosophies across the globe, drinking Coca-Cola[23] as popular drinks even by the people in the high hills of Nepal, eating the Chinese food *MoMo*[24] by the people in Bangladesh or Pakistan are some examples that show how cultures and values are exchanged. The food culture and customs are transmitted through means of communication (McKenzie, 2017).

The English language becomes a product that promotes other consumable products. I termed this notion as 'glocalization'. Technology, which is more

23 Coca-Cola: A carbonated soft drink produced by The Coca-Cola Company.
24 Mo:Mo: A type of South Asian dumpling, native to Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan.

converged with the culture, spread easily in those societies that have different cultures. It gives rise to a mixed culture. There are several indigenous languages in Nepali society that are dominated by the languages used in products and services (Awasthi, 2004; Mishra, 2007). Globally, the English language has become influential to disseminate goods and services; locally, the Nepali language has become influential (Budhathoki, 2014). The influential languages cause to replace the indigenous livelihood and cultural practices of the local (Mishra, 2007, p. 203).

Governance and Means of Communication: Educating Rights and Duties

The concept of governance highlights decision-making processes and who gets what, when and how through the state and non-state mechanisms (Wilde, Narang, Laberge, & Moretto, 2009). However, governance starts before decision-making. I believe the norms and values are not a single element, but they are associated with socio-cultural domain.

Governance is a collective of norms, values and policies developed by the government that unite, rule or bind the society together. The role of the means of communication is to explore these norms, values or policies to govern the people and society. In any society, socio-cultural as well as informational influences help a lot to run an organization (Uddin & Joya, 2007).

The present system of governance focuses on enabling condition of the state, emphasizing on capability, inclusiveness, transparency and responsiveness with planned, managed and regulated institutions within a set of political, social and economic systems (Khanal, 2006; Mallik, 2013; Upreti, 2012). I believe enabling condition is caused by wisdom/knowledge. Wisdom and knowledge expand either through the cultural values or with the support of means of communication. I believe

governance begins from the individual level and the means of communication play an important role to educate individuals.

In addition, the modern governance encompasses tri-polar aspects — market, civil society and government. The modern governance system is not effective because it is not blended with social and cultural contexts (Folch-Serra & Nogue-Font, 2001). If the history of governance is reviewed, the governance practices were attached with culture, religion and society. According to the Hindu system, there was work division on the basis religion. The *Brahmins* (teacher and priest), *Kshetris* (rulers and administrators), *Vaishyas* (agriculturalists and merchants) and *Shudras* (service providers) had different work to perform. In 1854, the government promulgated the *Muluki Ain*[25] in the form of legal code. It was a compilation of everyday practices in society. The civil code formally divided duties of the people, i.e. *Tagadharis*[26] and *Matwalis*[27] (Satyal, 2011). Bad governance is the outcome of mismatching between the modern governance practices and the traditional ones (Bhattachan, 2016).

In Nepal, it is argued that the governance has been based on four premises: *Dharma*, monarchy, liberalism and multiculturalism (Gellner, 2007). However, the premises of *Dharma* and monarchy are weak and frail due to the entrance of multicultural practices and abolishment of monarchy in 2008. Though Nepal has been declared as a federal state, some of the remains of those premises are still prevalent. The cultural and religious concept in the governance is related to *Dharma*-based practices from the past. Monarchy, which is also stated as an autocratic dictatorship of the *Panchayat* system, lasted for more than 30 years. Liberalism is a step towards

25 Muluki Ain: The general code.
26 Tagadhari: ‘Upper caste’ people.
27 Matwalis: ‘Lower caste’ people.

socialism[28]. Socialism is also mentioned in the Constitution of Nepal (GON, 2015). Socialism focuses on social protection and social security measures.

Gellner (2007) states multiculturalism of the governance is the result of the influence of universal education and marketization. Multinational companies and private sectors, including different forms of media, support multiculturalism. The increasing volume of international aid and trade causes societies to adopt the modern forms of governance and modern means of communication.

Open Market and Changes in the Nepali Society

Capitalist products have put the society under their grip, creating multiple forms of injustice and multiple layers of structure through the support of means of communication. Liechty (2010) states that Nepali society is mired "in-between" tradition and modernity. On the one hand, modern tools are prevalent; on the other hand, the society is still following its culture and traditions. Saurav & Mainali (2017) noted that the Western writers claims that the Nepals society consists of traditional culture, which is rigid and inflexible. The idea terming the traditional culture is only one facets reality. If the Nepali society was inflexible culture, than it gives the space to question- how the modern culture including means of communication can flourish in Nepali society? Saurav and Mainali (2017) depict that the Western scholars define our society as savage, barbaric, cunning and primitive.

As an insider of the Nepali society, I feel that the dominant ideology has played a role to use these terms to refer to our society, and find that the meanings are not clear. Sometimes, power and the ruling class define the situation and phenomenon as per their interest and motive. Saurav and Mainali (2017) state that the powerful

28 Socialism: The political theory that defines that the means of production, distribution, and exchange should be owned or regulated by the community/state.

West mentions powerless countries as over-smart, miser and stupid because they are guided by the motive of rule and control.

In Nepal, after the restoration of democracy in 1990, the state welcomed open market, service sector industries, open and flexible legal settings for means of communication and press, flow of multinational products and aid-trade. It resulted in the change in lifestyle and increased mobility of people. The modern means of communication played an influential role in the change (Sharma, 2015). Globalization, global business and politics, and global communication go side by side (Acharya, 2009).

In an ethnographic account of Kathmandu, Liechty (2010) sees a paradox in Nepali society in relation to globalization. He claims that international aid, trade and foreign labor migration have aided to globalization. The tourism industry has been globalized. Tourism has enabled Nepal to increase income by selling its tradition and traditional ways of living. Liechty claims that expansion of various means of communication has supported foreign cultures threatening indigenous cultures and traditions. In the following section, I present previous research studies related to the issue in question and show my route in this research.

Theoretical Underpinnings

Using a theory in any research work is a real challenge. I believe that if a researcher is clear about relevant theories, s/he will be able to oversee the methodological and other aspects needed for the research at hand. I read literature on imperialism. The colony, protectorate, sphere of influence and economic domain are the themes frequently discussed under imperialism (Boron, 2004). I read literature on media imperialism, cultural imperialism and political imperialism. I found that hegemony, control, domination, supremacy and power are some facets associated

with imperialism. These terms have also a close connection with globalization. I termed globalization and imperialism as expansionism.

Political imperialism used to be dominant in the past. Political imperialism aims to capture all forms of power and resources. With the independence and democratization of the colonized nations, another form of ruling strategy came to the fore. The domination occurred through soft power, creating monopoly over cultures and practices. The rise of monopoly starts from the base of democracy, liberalization and open market (Schiller, 1989, p. 6). Schiller presents imperialism as a manifestation of (balance) of power and a move towards monopoly. The process of monopolization has dramatically increased because of massive increment of service sectors and multinational corporations. Economic facets influenced the 19th century society (Marx, 1843), but technological facets remained an important aspect in the present society (Mcluhan, 1962).

After the development of modern means of communication, society has been under the influence of different means of communication (Mcluhan, 1962). The center always dominates the periphery through products, policy and culture (Galtung, 1971). The culture of the center is termed as a superior culture that suppresses and dominates the society of the periphery ideologically with the help of the means of communication (Lee, 2003; Robinson, 2005; Budhathoki, 2014). Baudrillard (1988) states the society is ruled by different signs and symbols, disseminated through different means of communication. Baudrillard further states that the means of communication spread sings and symbols, which create a structure between dominant and dominated (Baudrillard, 1988). Multinational corporations spread goods, services, and popular cultures through the means of communication (Lee, 2003).

The influence of multinational companies, departmental culture, concentration of people towards urban areas, expansion of all forms of communication and the reach of modern technology are the outcomes of the dissemination of information. In my research project, I discuss the globalization of the means of communication and their strong influence on local cultures.

In this century, the means of communication emerged as a new phenomenon in the anthropological studies that mass media, especially the television and Internet culture, have become influential for the transmission of culture. The means of communication are so powerful that they can manipulate the super/base structure. The super structure "core" disseminates ideologies to meet their interests (Galtung, 1971). They are spread through aid, trade, capital, and recently through the means of communication (Johnson, 2009). The means of communication have been designed with an aim of social control (Schiller, 1989, p. 6).

For Schiller, the cultural expansionism is gaining momentum through media (that are one way communication). It is a top-dowm transmission of the message — of dominant groups to passive audience (consumers of the means of communicaiton). In this research, I focused on imperalism and its various sub-domains.

Previous Research Studies and My Direction

I studied a number of research studies and literature that helped me choose the agenda of my research. I read several books, reports, newspapers and journals. They helped me build confidence and establish my argument logically. In the following section, I present previous research studies, gaps identified and my focus on this research project.

Empirical Review and the Research Gap

The study of Petrova (2005) reveals that the mass media is an important medium to inform the public with the necessary information. Her quantative study conducted in between 1994 and 2003 in 102 countries picked up the variables like media accessability, inequality, freedom and institution . The study reveals that the mass media is the most important source of information related to policies. This study reveals that the mass media is under the control of business groups and elites of the society. The study also asserts that level of inequality leads to lower level of media freedom.

Exploring the mass media's role, Budhathoki (2014) unravels the hegemony of the foreign media in Nepal, adding that media, foreign language and culture are causing distortion in the local culture. I believe that culture creates identity of the society and the nation, but expansion of media to fulfill the vested interest of the people in power and business has threatened our indegenous culture. Budhathoki states that the menas of communication such as telephones, mobile phones, Internet and FM radios are bearing the influence of international media contents that are promoting the foreign culture.

Expansion of culture through media is one of the major issues of mass media. Osorio (2001) states the media anthropology supports us to understand the transmission of culture. He further argues that the standard culture is transmitted to the local culture easily. Osorio's, qualitative study enabled me to study the means of communication, culture and lifestyles. Parajuli (2002) states that the ethnographic notion is criticized as it moves against the established norms of natural science, which are objective and measurable. I argue and add on the idea of Parajuli that the anthropological notion sets some established norms, which are blurred in the changed

context, especially in the media dominated society. The understanding of reality and hyper-reality in the society needs a broad methodological notion (Mandoza, 2010).

Hutt (2004), Banjade (2006) and Wilmore (2008) claimed the qualititive method is more suitable to study media and culture, changes in culture and the influence of media in the culture, with reference to their studies carried out to understand, appreciate, and acknowledge the diversity and mixture of cultures in relation to mass media in the Nepali society. The methodological stance explained by Hutt, Banjade and Wilmore helped me understand ethnography and strengthen my critical thinking skill. To explain the influence of global media in Nepal, Liechty (2010) created ethnography, with Kathmandu as his research site. He explains the role of media in the formation of new identities. Rijal (2014) discusses the policy of media and communication after political changes of 1990 and 2006 with qualitative design.

Alcadipani and Hodgson (2009) state every human being, no matter how ignorant or submerged in the culture of silence, is capable of looking at things critically. There are some basic misconceptions in the culturally ruled society: aged is knowledgeable, senior in age is powerful, upper caste is rich, female is weak, being in the city is being with all good networks that offer resources, and having different means of communication is becoming rich. I believe that an individual can perceive personal and social reality in his/her context and deal critically with them (Alcadipani & Hodgson, 2009; Dunbar, 2009). As a researcher, s/he needs her critical instance to understand the 'real reality' contextually, which I have followed in my qualitative study.

The critical ethnography created by Szalvai (2008), similar to my research, reveals the issue of emerging forms of power, cultural aspects of globalization and the role of media. Due to the cultural aspects of mass communication, international

communication scholars focus on cultural interconnectedness and identity change in a critical way. It helped me understand the theoretical perspective. Harris (2013) worked under the critical ethnographic design to understand power and domination, a critical perspective, which encouraged me to choose the qualitative stream to understand the means of communication in the Nepali society (Mandoza, 2010).

Osorio (2001) argues that mass media anthropology enables us understand the system of transmission of culture. This study focused on the means of communication, transmission of culture and changing lifestyles in rural villages caused by the modern means of communication. In this sense, this study adopted the anthropological perspective. However, this study also took a sociological route because, apart from studying the human beings, I focused on the use of means of communication, effects of the increased use of the modern means of communication on food and clothes, local productions, governance frame and local institutions. Osorio metaphorically terms mass media as "talking-drums" that support the transmission of culture. I elaborate the means of communication as a bridge that connects global life to the local life and vice versa.

My study focused on the influence of the means of communication on livelihood and local institutions. I also focused on production and consumption of the means of communication. Media has nexus with politics and rituals, consumerism, gender, empire building and globalization (Adum et al., 2015). Liechty (2010) has explored the nature of the Nepali society by closely examining the people's practices of going to the movies, listening to popular music, reading film magazines, following fashions and advertisements. The study unraveled the greater influence of the means of communication on the urban life of Kathmandu. On the contrary, my study focused

on mass media, folk media, social media and other information tools available in a rural village.

Many scholars (Petrova, 2005; Broadbent, 2012; Rutovic, 2016) believe that power domination and hegemony are common in the media discourse. Power and hegemony are associated with the agenda of standardization and the dissemination of standard culture. In relation to Iraqi civilian death in America, Bishop (2014) asserts that mass media ignored the death of the Iraqis. It reveals that powerful media take side of the affluent rich and the West (Barnes, 2014).

Rijal (2014) presents a policy expansion in the media sector and discusses the existing policies on Nepal. He notes that policies are in place, but the implementation is a challenge. Banjade (2007) explores the community radio and its contribution in local communities. Ian and Subba (2007) bring to light the political and business interference of community radios in Nepal. The studies mentioned above enabled me to understand the influence and vestted interest of poltics and business. My study is different as this focus on means of communication in the rural area of Nepal, making a contribution to knowledge. This study is new in the field as it brings influence of the means of communication on livelihood and local institutions to light.

Essence of the Chapter

The essence of this chapter is to present the use of means of communication in different political regimes, dependency on the means of communication, changes in the market and changes in Nepali society. The flexible or democratic society offers easy accessability to, and obtainability of, the means of communication. The core idea of this chapter is to review different theoretical insights and emperical studies, which enabled me to design and develop this research study. As per the need of my research agenda, the methodological concerns is described in detail in Chapter III.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapter, I discussed the theoretical domains that supported my research. I raise the issue of globalization and modernization of the Nepali society promoted by the means of communication. To analyze the media and its influence on different aspects of life and culture, an ethnographic approach is necessary as it helps us understand the real-life issues of human beings. In this chapter, I present my philosophical base and methodological approach. More specifically, I highlight my ontological and epistemological stance, describe the field context and outline the methodological framework.

Philosophical Stance in My Study

My research primilary focused interpretivism, which helped me understand the culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social world. Interpretivism enables us to seek the meaning of the social world (Altheide & Johnson, 2011). Interpretivism helped me understand the social world of my participants and their personal view to mass media. It enabled me to understand how they constructed the meaning of their world when they engaged and interacted with various means of communication. It helps us understand the subjective world through cultural perspectives.

In addition, I was guided by criticalism that helped me understand the voices of people. Criticalism helped me explore the voices of masses. Moreover, it enabled me to explore the domination and influence of various means of communication. Criticalism does not limit us to explore meaning constructed through subjective

understanding; it helps us understand how people opined in the situation of domination. In this research, I tried to understand how my participants responded to domination of the means of communication. I tried to see how they accepted/resisted the domination. Thus, interpretivism and criticalism were the guiding paradigms in this research. Under the framework of interpretivism and criticalism, I developed my ontology, epistemology and methodology (Dooley, 2007).

The research philosophy is concerned about ontology, epistemology and methodology. Ontology seeks the answer of what is reality (the study of being); epistemology seeks the answer of how we know something; methodology seeks the answer of how we go about exploring the answer of our question. As a researcher, I began to think whether the reality is universal or contextual. The ontological stance made me depend on the context. I believe that reality is subjective and contextual and it is shaped through the influence of means of communication. The communication technology, Internet and the Internet-mediated media, exchange of knowledge, trade, and advertisement through different means of communication are broad and cannot be dealt objectively.

Researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ingold, 2014) illustrate the importance of the closeness of a researcher in the field. Hegemony of the powerful class and globalization of different capitalistic means such as aid, trade and multinational media corporations have controlled, dominated and shaped our cognitive behavior (Boron, 2004; Robinson, 2005).

I believe that my study demanded contextual understanding, instead of a universal truth. During my field study, I established discursive relationships with the village people, had dialogues, interactions and engagement for long time. It enabled me to develop my ontology. Guided by the ontology, I generated meanings, I

understood and I reflected that led me to unpack the knowledge of the social world. The episteme was derived from understanding the social world constructed by the masses of people. I understood their voices and feelings of suppression, known or unknown. I explored their feelings of joy brought about by the means of communication.

While studying the means of communication and their influences the social justice and injustice emerge together (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The critical ontology helped me understand the new forms of awareness and social consciousness that reshaped our lives. Besides, I tried to understand the voices of people as to how the modern means of communication sidelined the traditional forms of media.

I attempted to go deeper into understanding how the modern means of communication influenced on livelihood and governance patterns, exploring how people responded to domination. I tried to unpack their perspectives. These aspects are included within critical ontology and epistemology (Robinson, 2005). The study on means of communication and its rapid expansion in the rural village enabled me to discern the power relations in (re) construction of social norms and values as the dominant power dominates both ideologies and practices, in everyday world (Kincheloe,2011).

The critical ontological stance gave me a perspective to look into the ideological domination, practice domination and suppression (Boron, 2004; Robinson, 2005). Domination sneaks into ideas before it grips social practices. Given the fact that a means of communication is an influential medium to promote domination, the critical paradigm also played a role to shape my ontology and epistemology.

In the past, dialectical materialism was discussed on the basis of property, resources distribution, power struggle, resources control, exploitation and domination.

Nowadays, situations have changed. With the entry of the new forms of media technology after 1950, the means of communication have become influential. So, in this study, I adopted interpretive and critical paradigms to make meanings from the society that is culturally diverse, historically influenced by politics, power, ideology and the social values due to media influence (Madianou, 2015).

My Values in this Research

This is a value-laden research. The value-laden information was generated from the field. In this study, I explored how the means of communication influence different domains of society. The value laden notion is all about axiology. The idea of axiology helped me understand the value. Given (2008) states that axiology is related to a value-laden study. Given further states that the value-laden study is related to individuals who interpret the world in such a way that they understand things based on their cultural settings, interactions and societal process. I have taken the position on the purposefulness of my study because of its emancipatory analysis.

According to Carter and Fuller (2015), an individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which she/he lives. In this study, the individual interpretation of world was more important because each individual had his/her own preferences that dominated her/his life differently (Mcluhan, 1962). The individuals live in different economic strata, have different degrees of education, and have different access to means of communication.

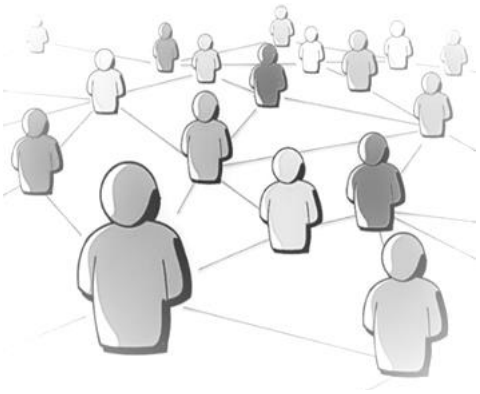
In this context, individual worldviews may differ from person to person. In my field, the participants had different perceptions as they were from different classes, castes and ethnicities. They interpret their lived experience regarding the value of means of communication as per their needs, situations and contexts qualitatively. I studied my own understanding while bringing my participants' experiences,

understandings, feelings and perspectives to the light regarding different means of communication.

Research Approach: Ethnography

I chose ethnography as it supported me to observe the means of communication and their influences on socio-cultural networks. In this research, I divide the means of communication into traditional and modern. The modern means of communication are radio, television, newspaper, mobile phone and Internet mediated media such as Facebook and Viber. When the modern media enter rural villages who were enjoying their own traditional means of communication, they create a hybridized culture. I define the hybridized culture in two ways. The first is the use of modern means of communication and the second is the expansion of the standard culture with support of the means of communication.

Petrova (2005) claims the new culture expands through capital and new technology. She further states that when the new culture enters the place that has its own traditional culture it creates cultural complexity, which is a mix of the old culture and the new culture, in which the new technology and information are dominant.



Picture: Ethnography in networks
Source: https://www.business2community.com/social-media/social-media-networking-3-steps-to-great-relationships-0455079

This has been a common tendency after emergence of the capitalistic market that aims to expand the new products and the new culture, with an aim of owing the capital and resources. This process is a form of invasion, discrimination and oppression (Petrova, 2005).

In the modern society, not only aid and trade, but also the means of communication have established their representatives to

control the mass. It becomes an influential tool to rule over the society as per the interest of the superstructure. Due to influence of the superstructure, the communication culture and the use of different means of communication in everyday life are changed. That is why I was attracted to the naturalistic study through observation over the period of time (Fetterman, 2010).

My research also focuses on expansion of the new communication tools. The ethnography supports me to look the phenomenon in details. The notions such as livelihood, means of communication, products of new information and technology, and the actors of those communication means are associated with each other. Ethnography encompasses the description of people and events in socio-historical settings. When the historical settings come together, it demands the social process, culture, everyday commodities and the related information (Carspecken, 2001, p. 4).

May (2001) describes three bases of critical ethnography. First, critical ethnography adopts socio-cultural perspectives that emphasizes the role of an ideology in sustaining and perpetuating inequality in particular settings. Second, it does not only describe the setting as in conventional ethnography, but aims to change for transformation. Third, it is emancipator in nature. For me, my research approach on the means of communication is an amalgamation of the three. As the communication means influence the everyday life of people, there is a direct and indirect role, in perpetuating inequality and empowering people through information.

Critical ethnography does not only ask, “What is this?” It also asks, “What could this be?” I added these three bases on the study of the influence of means of communication. The critical concerns try to critically understand the socio-cultural reproduction, means of communication in perpetuating ideology, changes (or

otherwise) in the society. In my study, I try to ascribe meaning of the activities of people and behavior with ample descriptions.

I present the processes of unfairness within the live particular domain (Naidoo, 2012). Ethnography as methodology supports me to unmask the hegemony and address the role of the means of communication (Crotty, 1998). Ethnography enabled me to provide different flavors to unravel credible, rigorous and authentic stories of the people in their own context, relying on their expressions and a thick description.

Research Field and Means of Communication

Initially, I visited different places of *Mid-Hill*[29], *Dolakha*[30] and *Lalitpur*[31] in search of appropriate locations for this research. I found that people used different means of communication in all the three locations. However, considering my access, I chose *Thumko*[32], a rural village of a *Mid-Hill* district, as an appropriate research site. *Thumko* has a socio-cultural diversity in terms of caste, class, gender, access and use of means of communication.

My research field — *Thumko* — is located in a *Mid-Hill* district. This is a settlement, a smaller area in a rural municipality. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS (2014)], there are 96 households in *Thumko*. In my research field, there were 14 households of *Dalits*[33] and 30 households of *Brahmins*[34] and *Chhetris*[35]. In 2001, the male and female literacy rates were 44% and 73 %, respectively. In 2011, these percentages increased upto 62.96% of females and 80.92% of males (CBS,

[29] *Mid-Hill*: One of the districts to the east of Kathmandu.
30 Dolakha: A mountainous district, about 133km to the east of Kathmandu.
31 Lalitpur: A district in Kathmandu Valley.
32 Thumko: My research site located at the top of a hill.
33 Dalits: 'Lower caste' people in Nepal, who are considered 'untouchable'.
34 Bhramins: 'Higher caste' people in Nepal.
35 Chhetris: A Hindu caste of warriors and rulers.

2014). Female literacy rate is increasing faster. Literacy is an important domain because literacy and the use of media and communication tools are interrelated.

The traditional means of communication remain a history. The locals remembered the use of traditional means, but it is not in practice nowadays. The *Chauteri* or *Padheri*[36] talk is not relevant now. *Padhero*[37] as one of the local institutions is of no use due to the modern water supply system. In the *Mid-Hill* district, different means of communicaiton are available such as the mobile phone, radio, television, newspaper and postal service.

The locals use the postal service from the headquarters of the *Mid-Hill* district. In the district, there are 12 postal services in different geographical locations with additional 60 sub-postal services. There are eight radio stations in the district, which can be easily listened to in *Thumko*. There are 75 newspapers registered in the District Administration Office (DAO). However, the locals prefer radio and television to newspapers. These days, the use of television and Internet is increasing. In most of the houses, there is television and connection of cable and DTH. Some of the households have access to the Internet service.

Getting Ethnographic Stories

I visited different *toles*[38] in Thumko. Locally, the *toles* are named as *mathillo tole*[39], *Dalit tole*[40], *Bahun tole*[41] etc. While visiting different *toles*, I interacted with the locals and observed the patterns of the use of the means of communication. When I needed additional information for the purpose of my study, I interacted with my

36 Padheri: Interactions among village women at the spring or wells of water.
37 Padhero: A ground water well, spring or spout.
38 Tole : A small community in villages.
39 Mathillo Tole: Settlement at upper part of Thumko.
40 Dalit Tole: The community of so called lower caste people.
41 Bahun Tole: The community of so called upper caste people.

participants in their own communities. The interactions and observations created stories.

While collecting the stories/information, I maintained a diary and noted all forms of information and observations. I also reflected my own analytical ideas, after getting stories. Sometimes, in the observation process, I made some reflection notes and field notes (Brewer, 2000). I reflected even a tiny event in detail to understand the phenomenon in unique ways (Yin, 2003). The stories provided information on the notion of domination, influence, supremacy as well as power of means of communication (Dunbar, 2009).

Initially, I visited different *toles,* and observed and gathered general information. The practice made me familiar with the *toles* of the village. This process continued for more than two-three weeks. Every day, I strolled around the village just for observation. I did this to be familiar with the situation, its population and institutions. Gradually, I started attending different religious and other functions to establish rapport with my participants and other local people.

My aim was to become closer to the members of the village. It took me almost a month to familiarize myself with the surroundings. In the field, some people recognized me as a researcher of Kathmandu University; a very few of them knew me as a journalist. Some of them accepted me like a son or a brother of their own. Their affection was my asset, which enabled me to get in-depth information. This helped me understand the meaning of what they shared in the natural setting. I was trying to understand how and why a particular event occurred. This helped me gather information and candidly capture the experience of the participants in a particular situation.

My participants did not hesitate to participate in both formal and informal discussion series. I had scheduled interpersonal and group discussions separately, as per my need. I also conducted Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to observe and understand different levels of influence while using means of communication. These strategies helped me explore the lived experiences subjectively within their cultural settings (Flick, Kardorff, & Steinke, 2004).

Informal chitchats in teashops also offered me an understanding of reality, how people use means of communication. While the tea-shop conversations enabled me to get quick updates on what was happening in the village, it was also in tea-shops that I learned about the villagers' dissatisfactions towards the government, political parties, existing development practices in the village, and their perceptions on the role of men and women. I feel that when people talk in groups, they express their critical views easily.

I participated in informal discussions in teashops, groceries, meetings of local saving groups, dairy cooperatives, and sometimes in potato fields and maize fields. The conversations took place several times, until gradually there was not possibility of any new information (Flick et al., 2004). When any bit of information confused me, I did not hesitate to ask follow-up questions to my participants to make sure that I understood them correctly. I visited the field frequently, while the information collection and analysis went together or side by side. As a researcher, I carefully deployed several strategies to avoid discrimination (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) such as presenting a hyper-reality, unmasking one-sided view etc.

I frequently visited government offices in the district headquarters and other commercial cities to know the service seekers' responses towards service delivery and means of communication. Information was generated through interviews, focus group

discussions, observations and field notes. (Fetterman, 2010). Fetterman further explains memos or other varieties of written materials, including gestures, postures, drawings and artifacts, which I followed during my study.

I observed the people's use of, and access to, the means of communication. The caste, class, culture and gender notions were covered. The social structure such as *Brahmin, Chhetri* and *Dalit* was given due considerations. Gender-based stereotypes were found. The means of communication and changing role of male and female brought about by the modern means of communication were part of this study. Moreover, perceptions and preferences of children, youths and senior citizens related to the use of means of communication were covered.

As a critical researcher, I think that the present situation, i.e. expansion of the modern means of communication, is the outcome of the historical structure of global and external influences. In the study process, the information was collected through newspapers, reports and Internet.

About my Participants

There were 36 participants in my study. I have used their pseudo-names in this report. Many of them were the users of modern means of communication. I discussed with them in the process of developing the topic of the research. However, I sorted out some of them purposefully with a view to be inclusive of males and females, 'lower castes' and 'upper castes', rich and poor, literate and illiterate, journalists, government officials, teachers, local politicians and, local entrepreneurs. In my research field, middle and lower economic class population was high. Therefore, most of the participants were from middle and lower class families.

One of my participants, Modhnath Sharma (35), who work as a mainstream media journalist, informed me in detail about media and communication. He

graduated from university. I also discussed with Jiven Lama (35), a journalist of a local FM radio. He also graduated from university. Rishna Thapa (55) is a local political leader. He had contributed to schools and social welfare initiatives. Rishna actively involved in the sorrows and joys of the locals. He had completed secondary level education from a local school. Gopal Thapa (48), another participant of my study, represent as a leader belonging to a progressive party. He also graduated from university and had been engaged in local farming.

My participant Shankar Thapa (40) is a local businessperson. He had completed secondary level education from a local school. As his children were abroad, he used the latest communication technologies because they would send modern gazettes to him. Janak Karki (38) is a local entrepreneur, who only completed school education.

Nil Kharel (32) is a young and energetic person. He graduated from college and been working in a mining company in his district. Most of the youths had migrated from the village for foreign destination. His views represented the emotions, sentiments and feelings of youths. Kripti Thapa (23) graduated from a college in Kathmandu. She also represent youths in expressing her views about the use of social media and Internet.

Shiva Baje (28) is a well-known priest in the village. He had completed higher secondary level education and been actively contributing to the society in local infrastructure development activities. Rupak Pariyar, a local youth who had completed his school level education. He is chairperson of the road users' group in his village.

Maili Pariyar, an illiterate woman, belonged to a so-called lower caste and class family. However, with the passage of time, her family became as rich as other

upper class and caste families. She care for her grandson at her home. The case of Maila Pariyar was not different from Maili Pariyar. Maila (70) spoke out his different experiences of using the means of communication in the past and the present. Pramili Pariyar (36), a young woman from a *Dalit* family, and an active social worker in the village. She had completed school level education and volunteered as the chairperson of a local mothers' group.

Another participant, Tiko Sharma (62), a journalist and had graduated from a college in Kathmandu. Maha Bhairab (86), an experienced journalist and a college graduate. He is a retired government officer. He had visited all the 75 districts of Nepal. Ramesh Karki (50) is a teacher by profession and been working as a radio program presenter and producer in a local FM station.

Bikram Karki (52), a government official, had graduated from a local educational institution. He shared the aspirations of government offices from service seekers. I had also discussed with Paru Deuja (34), a local teacher, and a college graduate, and Niki Derji (18), a student, who had just completed higher secondary education.

My Approach in Collecting Information

In this section, I describe how I collected the in-depth information and details. I employed the how and why questions (Marshall & Rossman, 2010) to understand the perceptions of hegemony and power. In ethnography, observation in the setting of participants is of utmost importance. I also employed interviews, FGDs, reflexivity, diary and field notes and undertook my own reflective notes to understand power, privilege and oppression exercised by the people in the heterogeneous setting of *Thumko*. Some approaches are elucidated below:

Interactive and Informal Conversations

In the above section, I presented aspects related to the interactive information. I think it needs further explanations. In the field, I interacted with people individually. The interactions started from 30 July, 2014 and lasted for more than nine months. The interactions were about everyday life, family members and life experiences. I selected some of my participants purposefully thinking their perceptions and experiences would be beneficial to understand the circumstances. I did not ask them any structured questions.

I based myself on informal discussions so that I could build a rapport with them. I started by talking about everyday life, food, family, leisurely activities, and so on. This went on for several of our meetings and several hours during the interviews. I talked with more than 36 males and females from all classes, castes and age groups. Then after, I interviewed with a selected participants as per the purpose and need.

I did interactions with several participants during my field stay. The telephonic conversations were maintained when I felt some gaps or needed more information. I discussed with Modnath Sharma, Rishna Thapa, Gopal Thapa, Nil Kharel, Maili Pariyar, Kripti Thapa, Tiko Sharma, Maila Pariyar, Shankar Thapa, Pramili Pariyar, MahaBhairab, Shiva Baje, Jiven Lama, Ramesh Karki, Bikram Karki, Janak Karki, Paru Deuja, Niki Derji. They are pseudo names. Among them, the views of Rishna, Gopal, Maili, Shiva, Pramili, Ramesh and Nil were used mainly in most of the chapters.

The interviews were in the form of interactive conversations (Fetterman, 2010), where I spent at least from two hours to several hours. The beginning of the conversation was introductory and aimed at building rapport. The rapport building was not my interest, though. Interestingly, while some participants addressed several

aspects in no time, some of them took hours more than I had intended to sit with them. I made sure that my interviewees felt comfortable and relaxed so that I could get information from them easily.

I used the interview opportunity not only to explore information individually, but also to engage myself with my participants in informal discussions. It was meant for understanding the changes in their everyday lives, particularly changes due to the influence of the means of communication. I termed the interactive conversations as 'question and answer conversation'.

The interactive conversations supported me to understand the situation more deeply, and to understand my participant's interests. I feel this is supportive for me to build proximity and familiarity with my participants. The discussions were fruitful as everything they shared was an opportunity for me to understand the reality (McMaster, 2014). I spent many evenings with the participants in their houses; informal conversations ensued and went on for several hours.

Regular interactions made it easier to speak without hesitation. Uddin (2015) defines interview as an opportunity to explore the hidden information. I also took this approach as an opportunity to understand the foundational structure, which could not be observed but be felt. In most of the situations, the inequality, hegemony, suppression issues were felt, which could only be shared through face-to-face conversation through proximity.

As a researcher, I keep myself alert to listen to any bit of information or hints regarding domination and newly-formed structures caused by the influence of the means of communication. In the society, there was already a structure on the basis of caste, class, gender and education. Sometimes, these notions provided me a way to

understand the role of means of communication in formation of thoughts about superiority/inferiority.

In interactive and informal conversations, I also tried to understand the contradictions between the actions and opinions of my participants. I observed how the local norms and values were constrained by external forces, by signs and symbols, and by messages from different means of communication.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

I used FGDs to know the shared understandings based on historical and cultural values that guide and govern the society. I did eight focus group discussions from July to January 2014. The FGDs were held at a teashop, potato farm, maize field, saving and cooperative group meeting, and with a road user group (Creswell, 2012). I had discussions with female members of the *Dalit* community, farmers working in a field and political leaders.

The FGDs were meant for extracting information and opinions related to the means of communication and interactions to understand the shared ideas. The discussions enabled me to analyze the influence of the means of communication among different castes. In the research, I was aware about choosing the participants for FGD. This is because I was aware that dominant people and their perceptions could lead in the FGD and the voiceless people could remain voiceless.

In one FGD, I invited the members of the *Dalit* community. My basic purpose was to understand the influence of the means of communication, its effects in everyday life and in local institutions. The FGDs allowed me to understand the multiple layers of understanding of my participants who belonged to different social structures. The FGDs were also held with the member of road user's groups. The six members of the FGD presented their ideas while others were listening to them. In

conducting the FGDs, I realized that as a researcher I had to see how the so called "lower caste" people express their voices.

My participants were selected individuals who willingly gave me time and showed genuine interests in the discussions. The members of the group had their own stance regarding the structure, consumption of means of communication and the influence of hegemonic means of communication. The idea of one member in a group might be contradictory or similar to others. It was the beauty of the FGDs. They did not only listen to others, but also put forward their concerns and understandings.

The FGDs supported me to interrogate and understand the participants' involvement in social and structural processes. The means of communication have influenced the everyday activities of the people. Moreover, the people who are enjoying power and privileges have created unfair structures in societies. FGDs innovatively benefit both the researcher and research participants, confirming participants' voices regarding changes and influences (Mkandawire-Valhmu & Stevens, 2010). The FGDs supported me to revise my research questions. Chapter II (Means of Communication and Livelihood) is an outcome of the regular discussions in the field. I also modified my first and fourth research questions to avoid overlaps.

Observation

Observation in research is not limited in the field, nor is it limited to recording. Ethnography deals with the writing about culture and people, and it tries to uncover norms, values and shared meanings of those cultures about what s/he is observing (Uddin, 2015). The purpose of observation is to see how things occur, how people act and react while comforting or opposing in relation with different means of communication. For Merriam (2009), observation is embedded with interviews and FGDs.

As an eyewitness of the gestures, postures, and the patterns of the use of means of communication by my participants, I developed a rich understanding regarding the influence of the new means of communication in the traditional settings. The observation continued for six months. I observed individuals and families, males and females, children and adults, and students and teachers to know how they used the means of communication.

Moreover, I observed local people's practices and listened to their experiences, knowledge and behaviors. Fetterman (2010) states that the ethnography is largely an act of sense making by the researcher through the observable phenomena of daily life (p.16). The observation enhanced me to immerse into the life of my participants in the settings, thereby generating proper understanding of social actions, reactions, and interactions in different contexts (Reeves, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008).

I observed my participants in farms, in their houses, in shops, in community meetings, in saving group meetings, and in religious functions and ceremonies. During my stay in the field, two to three days were allocated for observation. Sometimes, interviews and observations went simultaneously. I observed those participants whom I had chosen for in-depth interviews. I used to visit my participants mostly in the mornings and evenings, and during their free time. I was like a *Firante* and *Ghumante*[42] in *Thumko* while being there. My focus was driven towards the means of communication. I became flexible to expand my views beyond the boundary to understand the practices of media. Later, several themes emerged from the field notes, observations, diary notes, my own reflection notes, and interview transcriptions.

42 Firante and Ghumante: A person who roams around a village with or without purpose.

My Positioning of Self as Both Insider and Outsider

I believe both the 'insider' and the 'outsider' positions are essential in research. I am an insider because I am the user of different means of communication and a researcher. I am an insider also because I belong to the Nepali community. However, I may be an outsider because I was not a resident of *Thumko*.

In the literature, these notions were presented as two separate domains. However, I believe these two concepts need to be distinguished in the research on means of communication. Instead, the combination of insider and outsider notions is more relevant to understand the means of communication, their influences, and the change in behavior (Ingold, 2014; Uddin, 2015). As Uddin (2015) states that the essence of positioning is all about presenting live and logical sense of people in contexutal order. The insider and outsider debate especially in communication research does not have significance as the major focus is to explore the situation (Ingold, 2014).

My positioning as both an insider and outsider helped me to obtain reflexivity during this project. There are some debates regarding the positioning; however, I think the debates are for debate only. The researcher's close acquaintance, skills to observe the phenomena truthfully, and the ability to interpret the meaning to the extent of what it is (in the context of people) are the major concerns, which enable the researcher in "maintaining reflexivity" (Ericksom, 2011, p. 49).

In communication research, things could be seen differently as a researcher is also a user of the means of communication, messages, and symbols. In such a situation, s/he is an insider (Ingold, 2014). Therefore, I was an insider because I was from a rural village.

Quality Standards

The following subsections portray quality standards of my research. I tried to maintain researcher-as-an-instrument, reflexivity, regular engagement and description of the social context.

My Reflexivity

For me, reflexivity is my consciousness, awareness of cognitive, emotional filters with experiences, and worldviews of interpreting the historical and structural context of the society (O'Dwyear & Bernauer, 2015, p. 11). Saldana (2015) states this as a process of thinking, reflection and refraction. I have multiple experiences – which is termed as multiple-self.

I worked as a journalist, as a politician, as an academician, and my identity changed, accordingly (Bulter-Kisber, 2010). For me, knowledge is incomplete. I believe that the reality is changed as per the change in time and culture of society, as Szalvai (2008) states. As a critical researcher, I believe that the influence and power dominate the society. Therefore, the signs and symbols, messages and information disseminated through the means of communication are a form of power exercise that influences the society and everyday practices.

This supported me to reflect my idea in the socio-historical base of *Thumko,* with several examples and particular details that I observed. I secured the notes through reflective memos and short statements about the occurring in the society as a human instrument (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011) to maintain credibility. Moreover, reflexivity is interwoven with the understanding of social reality, a "product" that is socially constructed (Altheide & Johnson, 2011).

The reflexivity is also associated with theory (Bourdieu, 1977). The reflexivity based on theory supports me to understand the field stories in logical way. When I

was confused and puzzled with the reality or the stories that I got from my participants, I took my stance with reflexivity, with metaphor and with pictorial representations. The dilemma while understanding the knowledge and reality could be solved through reflections (Soros, 2006; Szalvai, 2008).

In doing so, I regularly questioned my own thinking, my own beliefs, and my own assumptions to connect with the historical and structural bases that create an unjust society. I look at myself, my background, my networks and connection, my behaviors when something unexpected happens, or during a difficult situation. Reflexivity helped me to explore the reality being multiple self, sometimes as participant, as an insider both in terms of subject area and being a member of rural society, sometime as consumer of different means of communication.

Reflexivity helped me understand the influence of modern means i.e. products of globalization — technology and information. The culture and governance system of society is changing towards extended forms, which has changed the traditional historical context of society (O'Dwyear & Bernauer, 2015). In doing so, I was very much sincere as to whether I should bring something new or point my finger at other in which the latter does not encourage transformative thinking (Luitel, 2009). Therefore, I started other facets as Luitel did — looking inward or looking into the self. The changed and added conceptions led me to look and perceive the reality more consciously. The new forms of communication

Courtesy: My descriptive notes during field

have confronted in the ground with divergent problems, cultural differences (mis/understanding), different values and conflict of power and inequalities (Kincheloe & Tobin, 2006), in such the rigorous educational research would be helpful for the understanding of new forms of knowledge.

Thick Description

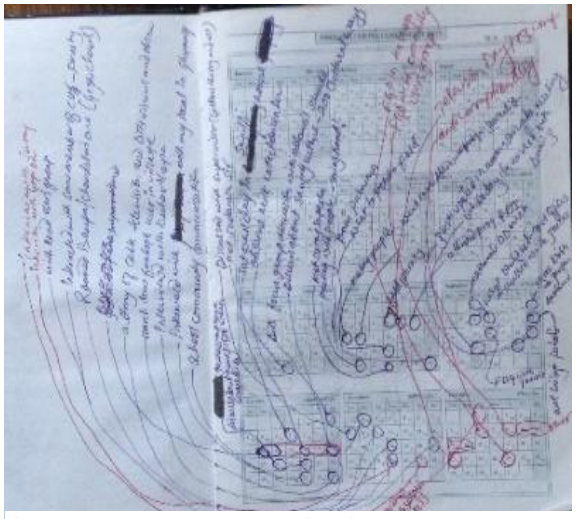
I described the events, happenings and occasions with sufficient details. In the field, I explored the patterns of the use of the means of communication in the cultural and social settings of the participants. I term the thick description as telling a credible story of social structure, sign, and symbol in contextualized settings. The ethnographic story enables me to reveal the voices of people in their own culture and context, typically relying on verbatim quotations and a "thick" description of occurring (Fetterman, 2010). I presented and described the loss and distortion of culture, identity and emergence of unfair power relation, hidden agenda and the power center. Fetterman describes perceptions as a thought of local people — how they feel, imagine and perceive their world.

As Denzin (1989) states the thick description provides the context to act in the field through my critical eyes; to highlight the intentions and meaning of action; evolution and development of action on the historical premise; and presents action as a text that can be explained or interpreted. In this project, I provide detailed information about geo-location to population, available means of communication, local institutions and the changing governance system of *Thumko* critically. I wrote each and everything that I did in the field — my observations, actions, interactions, and reactions. I have detailed the description of my participants and their historical backgrounds from where I generated thick descriptions.

Prolonged Engagement

Prolonged engagement deals with the researcher's engagement in the field for considerable length of time (Lub, 2015). During the research, I spent sufficient time in the field to learn the means of communication in the cultural settings where I invested adequate time observing several aspects of social setting to understand the structural relation, power relation between these aspects to understand the core issues. This permits me to build trust with my participants and make them feel comfortable disclosing information easily.

Staying in *Thumko* for several months, I became a part of their community. It provided me the opportunity to observe the environment and the participants' everyday life. This was an opportunity to learn the norms, values, language, cultural and historical bases of the society and also that of my participants, their habits and actions, which guided me to predict and interpret the meaning of events (Lewis, 2009; Lub, 2015). The prolonged engagement in the field also helped me identify the experiences of the respondents adequately through thick descriptions.



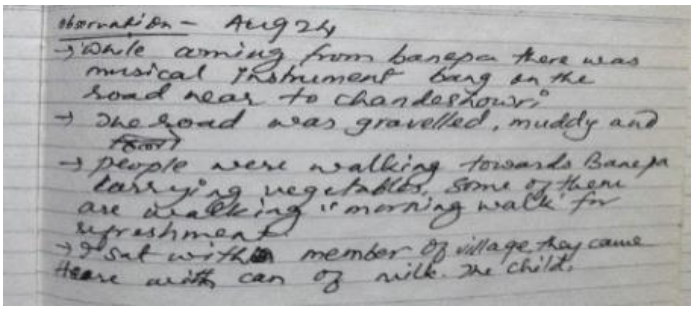
Courtesy: My engagement in Thumko

The prolonged engagement supported me to minimize the distortions as it improved the trust of the participants within their culture (Vicent, 2014). The continuous engagement with my participants supports for open-ended or emergent inquiry (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). The core issues such as loss and distortion of culture, identity, and emergence of unfair power relation, hidden agenda and power

center, structural issues were observed and could be reflected with the proper understanding of participants and culture.

Meaning Making

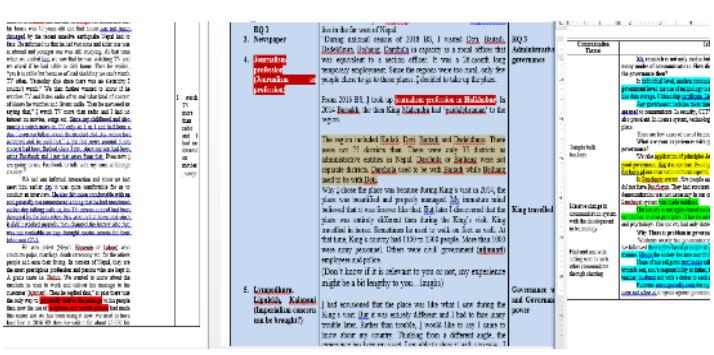
The information and stories collected from the field were analyzed carefully. The information were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions, participant observations, my own reflective notes, field notes, documents, quotations, and observation notes as they are major strategies to collect information and stories (Given, 2008). Besides, my own feelings were also noted down.


Observation – Aug 24
→ While coming from Banepa there was musical instrument bag on the road near to Chandeshowri.
→ The road was gravelled, muddy and
→ people were walking towards Banepa carrying vegetables, some of them are walking "morning walk" for refreshment
→ I sat with a member of village they came there with can of milk. The child

Courtesy: Observation Note; Picture Source: B. K. Bhandari.

In the field, I had taken reflective and observational notes. The interviews were recorded, which I transcribed during my free time. I transcribed the interviews in the Nepali language so that I did not lose the essence and feelings of my participants. Later I translated them into English. There was a bulk of information, which was difficult for me to manage during the editing process. This is the reason I started listening to the information and absorbed necessary information, which is associated with my theme.

I labeled the information texts to form descriptions and broad themes. The coding process was employed to make sense of the information. This was one of the most challenging parts of my project. I coded



Courtesy: Developing different themes; Picture Source: B. K. Bhandari

all the information manually. While doing this, several themes emerged, which were divided into sub-themes for meaning making, an activity breaking down the information and stories, conceptualizing it and then reformulating it (Bloor & Wood, 2006). This process permits me to make sense of those themes. According to the nature of information and grouping, the theme and sub-theme of the research theme were developed to make them readable, reflective, understandable and justifiable (Fetterman, 2010). I uncovered layers of understanding and deeper layers of meaning from the information given by the participants. The socio-economic, political and cultural settings supported me to interpret the views of my participants. In this process, different ideas and perspectives of scholars were employed to analyze the influence of the means of communication in the rural Nepali society.

Ethical Considerations

My research holds that the relationship between power, knowledge, and discourse is produced in the contexts of historical and cultural struggle. The dialectical criticism of homogenization of information, communication, and technology, distortion of culture, uneven information flow, cultural expansionism, and injustice aims to monitor the social justice and advocacy of those who are marginalized in the periphery (Folch-Serra & Nogue-Font, 2001; Szalvai, 2008).

For me, the research regulation as ethical construct is re-thought and re-configured through the voices of those who have been traditionally marginalized (Cannella & Lincholn, 2011). I followed Fetterman's (2010) approach. I maintained my pry into people's innermost secrets, sacred rites, failures and achievements while pursuing personal matters. Ethnographers subscribe to a code of ethics that preserves the participants' rights, facilitates communication in the field (p.133).

During the interview or observation, I sought informed consents of participants in which their autonomy or considerations were fully considered (Escobedo, Guerrero, Lujan, Abril, & Serrano, 2007). In most of the cases, I followed this notion contextually as per the socio-cultural context. In Nepali society, we do not ask people to sign on a letter to ask for their permission. Instead, I informed them orally. The people in the rural parts feel uneasy and reluctant to sign on a letter as permission to be involved in interactions. This is why, in this ethnographic study, I followed the contextual practice. I started my conversations with people directly in many cases. In addition, I considered the issues like non-malevolence, beneficence and justice (Fetterman, 2010), with the aim of transformation and betterment.

Essence of the Chapter

The essence of this chapter is to present my philosophical instance for this study and the necessary methodology. It presents why the subjective instance is crucial for the research of means of communication. Further, the crux of this chapter is to present ethnography, my positioning in this research, bringing different aspects of information collection procedures as well as ethics that I maintained in the field.

CHAPTER IV

AVAILABLE MEANS OF COMMUNICATION AND THEIR USES

In this chapter, I address the first research question: What means of communication are available in rural villages? There are different ways of defining means of communication. For the purpose of this study, I define the means of communication as information tools, mass media, folk media and social media. Further, in this study, the different social networking applications and family functions such as religious ceremonies and rituals are defined as a cultural platform for exchanging messages.

For the purpose of this study, mobile phones and telephones are information tools; radio, television, newspaper, online media, etc. are mass media. Folk media, in other words the traditional means of communication, consist of local-cultural forms of communication like *Katawal Karaune, Gandarva Gaune*, *Jhyali Pitne and Damaha Bajaune*. *Janai*[43] and *Supari*[44] were also important means used to share information or for invitation. Social media consists of Facebook, Viber and others. To use Facebook and Viber, there are separate applications in mobile phones. They are social networking applications. Families and neighbors are traditional local networks.

Based on this understanding on different means of communication, in the following sections, I present the picture of the first day in my research field and the means of communication I encountered in my fieldwork. The available means of

[43] Janai: Janai is comprised of loose, hand-woven cotton threads braided together and held together by a knot. The common English term is 'sacred thread' because threads are all it is, and sacred because it is worn after an elaborate investiture ceremony with archaic rituals typical to Hinduism.
[44]Supari: Betel nut.

communication, their uses and roles in mainstreaming the rural village, new technologies and changing means of communication and choices of rural people are discussed in this chapter.

Dominant Means of Communication in *Thumko*

In this section, I present the means of communication that are available in *Thumko*. These means are also understood as information tools, technology, vehicles, etc. There are different information transmission means in the society such as Direct to Home (DTH) mobile phones, i-Pads, laptops and cameras. Information tools are different from mass media. The DTH enables us to see television. These innovations are gifts of the new-innovations. Particularly, DTH refers to the satellite television broadcasting process from where viewers can watch television in their homes. The DTH technology helps people to view different channels broadcast around world.

The DTH is normal in rural areas. While being in my field, I observed the parabolic reflector[45] outside of homes. The reflectors were erected on the roofs of the houses. People who were living in small cottages made of zinc kept the parabolic reflectors in the yards. Nil had kept the DTH antenna outside his house. Most of the time, I sat in Nil's home. During that time, I saw the features of DTH that offer sound systems, recording channels, movies after paying stipulated money through mobile messages. The DTH offers channels in the pre-paid module. This means we have to pay money in advance to watch the television.

Nil shared, *"The use of DTH is also an example of how the villages are being digitize in Nepal. This has connected the local context to the global arena."* I feel that DTH is gaining popularity regardless of economic constraints of the families. This has

[45] Parabolic reflector: A tool that which has reflective surface to collect radio waves. This tool transforms the income wave traveling along the axis.

fulfilled the dream of people to watch their desired television channels in rural villages. In the past, the aluminum antenna was used to get channels through it. The aluminum antenna was used to capture the channels from terrestrial broadcasting. It used to be installed vertically in tall places. The antenna would be kept on the top of the tall trees or on the roofs of the houses to get clear pictures. It was difficult to watch clear pictures in the village.

Nil said, *"In the past, the old aluminum TV antenna was used. I used to move/rotate the antenna to get clear picture in the television. It is almost vanished from the rural areas now. At present, we have DTH, cable networks in the village. The new technology offered different channels with one DTH in the village."* After satellite system (DTH) came in the use, the old aluminum TV antenna. This indicates that the DTH or satellite cable service provider is gradually increasing. The cable service provider denotes to those companies who provide channels from satellite system. The example is DTH. After the easy access of DTH, different channels are easily accessible in *Thumko*. In search of available means of communication in the *Mid-Hill*, I found local television channel named BulBul TV. The BulBul TV is also available in DTH. The BulBul TV is accessible everywhere in the world. It is connected to the satellite system.

Observing the context of BulBul TV, I feel that the advancement of technology has connected the local channels to the satellite system (global system) . There are two dozens of cable service providers in the local city. However, these days, people choose DTH because of its visual quality. Viewers can pay the charge through mobile phones their houses.

Nil expressed that the people like to watch BulBul TV as it focuses on the local issues. In the village, Nepali national televisions such as Kathmandu TV, Roads

TV, Mount TV, and Nepal Television (NTV) were easily available due to the access of DTH and cable networks. Those televisions were national television broadcast from Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal. They are influential channels to know about the current affairs of national politics and developments.

Nil voiced that the local television gives priority to the local issues, compared to the national television channels. In first week of September 2015, I was on the way to *Thumko* with Nil when he talked to me about the local television. He shared, *"I feel ownership towards the local television. It is our television broadcast from the local level with local flavor. For instance, if the news is broadcast from the local level, it gives us information about fertilizers, seeds, etc*."

Nowadays, not only television but also local radios are connected to the global platform through Internet. The radios that can be listened to in *Thumko,* are also listened to globally through Internet. For this, the radio stations have developed their own websites.

In *Thumko,* the radio stations such as Radio Buddha (106.7 MHZ), Radio ABCD (89.6 MHZ), Radio Middle East (104 MHZ), Radio Enjoy (87. 9 MHZ), Race FM (107.6 MHZ), Leading FM (104.5 MHZ) and Radio Steer (88.4 MHZ) area easily tuned in. These radio stations are located in different parts of the district. Another form of mass media, i.e. newspaper is not available in *Thumko*. In this district, 72 newspapers are published (CBS, 2014). There are some local newspapers, including *Aawaz, Navajivani* and *Sarangi*[46].

I observed that the district had access to national dailies published from Kathmandu. However, during my study, I rarely found them. In *Thumko,* during my stay and several follow up visits, I found only some people that read newspapers. I did

[46] Local newspapers.

not find regular circulation of newspapers in the local level. Some teachers and officials used to bring newspapers in the village. This is because of alternative mass media especially radio and television were available.

The newspapers were mainly available in commercial cities. The content of *Aawaz, Navajivani* and *Sarangi* dailies consisted of both local and national news because of the availability of other forms of mass media such as television and radio at the local level. Only some government teachers and government officials read newspapers on a regular basis. They buy and read newspapers when they visit the cities. The easy access of Internet and dissemination of radio news through FM has decreased the use of newspapers. The news published in the national and district level newspapers are read out by the local FM stations.

Further, in the village, there is use of Internet and mobile phones. The local people can read newspapers online. As *Thumko* is near a commercial city, the hub of different means of communication, it can be called a peripheral area.

The commercial city had different informational tools. The information tools such as mobile phone, telephone, television and radio are the innovations available outside the rural village. However, they are supportive to get information. The mentioned communication means are almost available in different parts of the world. This is why it is a global means. These means become influential nowadays even in the rural village of Nepal.

In my research field, there was availability of mobile phones and landline phones. The landline phones were connected from the commercial city. Nil informed that he had a landline phone. He also shared that there were 15 landline telephones in the village. However, there were only four landline telephones now. They were rarely used, though. It was used for connecting the Internet. The use of the landline phone is

decreasing because the mobile phone has become easy to communicate. The local telephone service providers from commercial city distributed mobile and landline phones in *Thumko*. In the district, there are almost nine thousand Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) lines and 15 thousand Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) and Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) mobile SIM-Card, which is distributed by NTA.

During my field stay, I saw that my participants had at least one mobile phone set in their hand. I feel that the mobile phone has become a personal means and an important part of individual life in the changing society. The increasing use of mobile phones has also increased the number of Internet users (NTA, 2016). I observed that most of the individuals used Internet through mobile phones.

The Internet penetration has played a vital role to connect with one another these days. It is being used for conversation and messaging. Ram and Jung (1990) define the use of mobile phones with usage intensity, usage breath and usage variety. The usage intensity refers to engagement in cell phones basing time. The usage breadth refers to whom he communicate with, and usage variety refers to the use of different social networking applications (p. 68). I call the mobile phone as a 'personal tool' as it offers different colors in terms of sets screen display) and ring tones.

There are different mobile applications, which I called social networking application in this study. They are Viber, Skype, Facebook, WhatsApp etc. They play an important role to connect individuals and offer easy communication among their family members and peers. Globally, the use of mobile phones and Internet is rapidly increasing. There is an increasing use of Internet and mobile phones, which seems linear (Brazier, 2015; Garrahan, 2017). In Nepal, 54% of the total population use Internet (NTA, 2016) and the number of the users of the mobile phone goes higher.

I met Modnath Sharma in the first week of October. We sat together for four or five hours discussing the use of mobile phones. On that particular day, he shared me about the advantages of mobile phones, *"The mobile phone makes me easier to keep in touch with my relatives. It supports me to plan a daily schedule, create work plan, etc. I do not need a laptop or computer. I think that the mobile phone has replaced other devices like clocks, cameras, calendars, recorders, and so on."* As a journalist, he keeps the record of all the programs such as meetings, interview schedules, etc. in his mobile phone.

Further, he also shared that he had customized the option for updates and reminder regarding those programs in his mobile phone. His idea indicates that the mobile phone has become common because of its multiple functions. This is the reason the mobile phone has become an integral part of the society and people of all ages.

Modnath added, *"Nowadays, the excessive use of mobile for texting or using social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter is eroding people's ability to write words and sentences in proper way specially, I am talking about Nepali language."* This shows that the new media tools are supporting for fast communication with short words and jargons. I feel that this is gradually deteriorating the words of language. It appears to be a normal practice as the abbreviations and short forms are used.

It seems as if Internet and games in mobile phones have increased dependency, which is the paradox of technological products (Mick & Fournier, 1998). The mobile phone has become an important mode to engage oneself in free time. I feel that the regular engagement on mobile phones makes individuals disoriented. The anger, distress, fire and fury disappear (Reflective Note, 26 August 2015).

Declining Use of Folk Media in the Village

In this section, I present the declining use of folk media in the village after the emergence of different informational tools, mass media and social media. I term the folk media as traditional media. In the past, the folk or traditional means of communication were in use in the village. These media were developed to fulfill the communication need of the people. The local people managed and mobilized folk or traditional media (Reflection Note, 24 August, 2015).

One day, in the rural village, Rishna Thapa shared his experiences regarding the folk communication. Folk communication is rooted in the tradition and culture. This is why I called it as the traditional communication. The period of traditional communication is not clearly recorded in literature. These communication practices are still visible in the rural parts. Rishna shared that he is known about folk or traditional communication but now due to less practice, those media have become a history. Rishna Thapa shared, *"Blowing a conch, Katawal Karaune* and *Ghanta Bajaune*[47] *are traditional means of communication in the village. They are rarely in practice nowadays."* This indicates the diminishing trend in the use of folk media.

Tiko Sharma informed some other forms of communication were used locally. For instance, the sounds of mills and smoke of chimney indicate that the mill is open. Moreover, the local gathering was important to share communication promptly. The messages are promptly disseminated to intended people. This is why I call it as a platform for communication.

Tiko shared that the local means of communication were used when modern means of communication were not available in the village. He mentioned,

47 Ghanta Bajaune: Ringing the bell.

In the past, there were local means of communication. For instance, the mills noise was also a form of communication. By hearing the sound, the villagers used to know that it is operating. The sound of local musical instruments is also forms of communication.

This shows that the use of means of communication was contextual as per the need of time and availability of the means of communication.

Mix of Local Networks and Informational Tools

In this section, I present the use of local community networks, informational tools, social media and mass media in the information sharing in rural parts. In this study, the social network is defined as the network based on the same groups. The community network is a form of network from where local people exchange information. The family relation and socio-cultural networks in the village are influential these days. Communication tools, especially mobile phones and FM radio, are influential as they are accessible to local communities and their networks.

The mobile phone is an example of the mix of community networks and informational tools. The mobile phone enables the locals to exchange information to each other. They find these networks reliable and conformable. The FM stations are useful because they air the events related to people's everyday life. On 10 December, 2015, I had one focus group discussion with some females where Paru Deuja stated,

The family and cultural networks are influential as we can communicate everything from our networks without hesitation. We use the mobile phone to exchange information. Mobile phones have made it easier for us to exchange information from our family networks in a reliable way.

From family networks, it is easy to share information about local happenings such as bus accident, illness, and availability of fertilizers in cities, meetings of

savings or credit cooperatives. Most of the members shared that the Internet-based social media are influential as they bring people closer by passing on information (Diary Note, 10 December, 2015). I feel that the local networks such as friend and family relation, and socio-cultural networks are influential in *Thumko*.

People felt comfortable to communicate within their networks. This is because they are familiar and known with each other, the language and tone is easily understandable, and in most of the cases, the interest and agenda are common to them. Moreover, the proximity principle also guided me to understand the use of social networks (Reflection Note, 17 December 2015). The proximity principle in this study is the idea of nearness. The people are interested in local or homegrown issues (McQuail, 2010).

For instance, we naturally tend to give interest in those stories of our village, city, provienc or country. Among many national news and local news, the locals prefer to listen to the local issues. In communication discourse, the news and information related to sex, crime, accident and natural calamities spread faster (Heilbrun, Wolbransky, Shah, & Kelly Rebecca, 2010). In addition to this, the news relating to local issues are the subject of interest for local people in rural areas. It is because of proximity.

Soon after the focus group discussion, I went to the house of Maili Pariyar. She had invited me when I was walking along the rural trail. During the discussion, my participants had shared the stories regarding the use of Facebook. I found proximity between their views and the view of Maili. Maili Pariyar shared,

> *It was about three-four years back. There was a bus accident, where some passengers were killed and more than a dozen were injured. The place where the accident took place was near Thumko. Initially, some villagers heard*

> *about it from the local FM stations. They shared the news of the accident in Facebook. Soon after, the information spread across the village. People gathered in the village. Some villagers called their friends or relatives in the contact list stored in their mobile phones to know further about the accident. At that time, some people from the village went for rescue."* (Focus Group Discussion, 10 December 2015)

The people of *Thumko* had family connections and social connections to the neighboring village. The locals were worried about the accident as the passengers of the ill-fated bus could be their family members, relatives or acquaintances. This indicates that the use of social media among the local people is influential. It also indicates that social media and mobile phones are integral parts in family and social networks in local level.

Towards Modern Regimes: Towards Modern Media

I this section, I discuss the use of modern media after the modernization of society. The political changes after the restoration of democracy in 1990 brought rapid changes in the society. The political change brought set the ground for the widespread use of informational tools, mass media and social media. For the purpose of this study, modern means of communication include informational tools (e.g. mobile phones), mass media (e.g. radio, television, newspaper, online media) and social media (e.g. Facebook, Viber etc.). The open society and liberal government policy was an impetus to the expansion of the modern means. *Thumko* witnessed all the modern means of communication after democracy.

In my free time, I used to walk alone, and sometimes with my participants in the field. In those visits, I used to interact with the local people. One day, while walking on the way to the village from the district headquarters, I talked to Nil

Kharel. He shared that the interest of business companies also caused the expansion of the modern means of communication in the village, giving an example of cable Internet and DTH. Nil responded, *"Two years ago, there was cable network in each and every house which made it easier for us to see different channels in television. Liberal market offers different products to its customers."* The liberal market had offered the cable television. The DTH service became easy for us to use different television channels. Nil added, *"After the expansion of Dish Home, the households in Thumko installed it. The people having landline phones started using mobile phones."*

In Nepal, the *Rana* regime and the *Panchayat* regime used their own networks to protect and sustain their regime (Bista, 1991). Both regimes introduced mass media. The *Rana* regime started publishing newspapers; whereas, the *Panchayat* established radio and television (Banjade, 2007). However, the hidden interest was to sustain their regimes. In every regime, power, hierarchy and recognition is obtained through informational tools and mass media (Robinson, 2005), and for this, the mass media is mobilized.

From the power perspective, I feel that the news and information shared by mass media help in gaining or sustaining power. The people in power always desire their ownership or influence in media, especially mass media (Diary Note, 8 September, 2015). Observing the present context, I feel that the technological materialism, in other words the information technology, becomes an important area while analyzing the society (Mcluhan, 1962; Wyatt, 2008).

Media Modernization in Nepali Villages

In the history of Nepali media, the establishment of *Giddhe Press* is a milestone in the modernization of mass media (Baral, 1975). This indicates that the

modernization in media began from the autocratic oligarchic regime of the *Ranas*. Gradually, other forms of mass media also came in the society.

During discussions, my participants shared me that the informational tools such as mobile phones, and mass media, especially newspapers, radio and television had spread in the rural villages before democracy. During informal talks with Nil, Rishna, Maili, Gopal or Shankar, I felt that the mobile phones, television, radio and newspapers are gradually spreading in the rural parts. It means the modernization of media in rural villages began in the past and has been rapidly expanding at present. I feel that the media modernization is speeding up by literacy, mobility and employment. I had discussed with Ramesh Karki regarding the updated technology used in the village. He said that the rural village was becoming advanced, compared to the past. After a long interaction with Ramesh, I wrote,

> *The number of migrant workers is increasing in the village, contributing to the increase in the level of income of the local people. The migrants bring mobile phones and LCD flat television sets back their homes. They buy recent and updated technologies. It is a reason why the villagers are familiar with the new technology*. (Reflection Note, 9 August, 2015).

I feel that the use of mobile phone has been increased. The mobile phone has become a common gazette these days. I think migrant workers are the agents to spread the modern means of communication in rural villages. They are mediators to spread new media tools in the rural society.

In my field, *Thumko*, most of the youth have flown to the gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. The youth from all castes and classes choose Gulf countries for employment. When they return in holidays, they bring mobile phones to their family as a gift. *Dalits* are

regarded in pro-poor groups. However, due to better earning, they use modern means of communication. This strengthens the idea of Mcluhan (1962), who stresses on analyzing the society from technological aspects. In addition to technological materialsim, the dynamics such as empowerment, resilience, migration and mobility need to be seen together while defining modernization of the media in Nepali society.

For an example, in my field, I felt that the better income of family brings changes in the use of informational tools. Importantly, the use of informational tools changes the attitudes, perceptions and feelings of individuals. When I interacted with Maili Pariyar's daughter-in-law, Samita, I found her perceptions and feelings changed. She used Samsung Note (a mobile phone set) that was brought by her husband as a gift.

In *Dashain*, when her husband came to Nepal, he had brought a Samsung mobile set for her. He even purchased an NTC mobile SIM-card, installed Facebook and Viber and opened an account for her. She was very happy after getting the mobile phone as a gift. Now, she was familiar with those apps because she used those apps every day. This indicates that the use of informational tools like mobile phones has spread and strengthened the use of social sites. Even she expressed a different opinion regarding social media.

Samita, daughter-in-law, alleged, *"The social media especially Facebook has helped boys and girls to interact with their friends. The new generation uses Facebook for networking, communicating, interacting."* I feel that the new generation uses mobile phones and Facebook for a purpose of strengthening interactions and networks. Scholars (Awasthi, 2004; Petrova, 2005; Kumari & Dutta, 2012; Dhungana & Pfefferle, 2016) criticize the modern practice saying that it is not integrated with local cultures and custom. The youths are attracted towards information tools and

social networks, which has caused the import of the foreign culture. However, I think modern means of communication have enabled the young generation to live in an interactive society.

For instance, mobile phones help people to connect with both individuals and communities almost everywhere (Turkle, 2011). However, it is increasing the level of dependency (Reflection Note, 24 August, 2015). In an interaction with Kripti Thapa in her home, I felt that the use of mobile phones in everyday life is giving a different shape to the society. Kripti expressed,

> *I feel that the mobile phone is like drugs for me. I must use it every day. Use of Facebook in the mobile phone arouses my consciousness. Sometimes, I wonder if I could ever survive without my mobile phone! How can I live without using Viber, Facebook, WhatsApp and Skype? Honestly speaking, I feel like my family lives inside my mobile and it keeps us together*.

The increasing use of mobile phones is directly proportional to the increasing use of Internet. The flow of new technology are unavoidable notion, claiming modernism is part social entity, where there is the influence of technology and media (Mao & Walkowitz, 2008).

Changing Media and Changing Choices in Rural *Thumko*

In one afternoon, I visited the house of Gopal Thapa. During informal talks, he shared that he had kept a radio set in an aluminum trunk as a memento of the past. I got an opportunity to observe the Panasonic radio set kept safely in his trunk. The radio was black and soft gold in color. He shared me that the Panasonic radio is not in use these days due to the use of the mobile phone. There is a radio application in most of the mobile sets, making it easy to listen to the news and other programs aired by radio stations. (Diary Note, 27 December, 2015).

After the re-establishment of democracy, radio was the only medium of news and information in the rural village. The newspaper was limited to the city area. The Radio Nepal could be heard by the people in the villages. The Amplitude Modulation (AM) was in practice. Gopal added, *"After the development of FM stations in local levels, the culture of listening AM radio is replaced by FM radios."* I was in a tea-talk with Gopal at *Thumko* in the month of December, 2015.

From the idea of my Participants Maili Pariyar, I noticed the change in media and choices of people in the rural society. She shared a story of her maternal home in Nala VDC, *"Giving betel-nut is also a means of communication and practice of affluent people. It was a subject of pride. Only for special relatives, the betel-nut would be shared. At that time, the betel-nut was costly."* In the past, *Janai* and betel-nut were efficient means of communication to invite people in religious ceremonies or any special occasions. Maili further shared that the tradition has been changed. She shared, "*I have a mobile phone. I have Facebook apps in my mobile phone. The other women in the village do not have Facebook accounts. Local boys helped me to open the Facebook account."* This indicates that the scenario is changes in use of media and choices in using modern media.

The choices in using the means of communication are different according to age, sex group and genre of programs. For instance, the preferences of watching television programs and time of watching the program are different for different individuals. Most of my participants such as Rishna, Gopal, Nil, Tiko, Modnath, Maili and Kripti watch television in the evening, whereas old age people and housewives, who are free during the day time, watch television at noon.

Most of the youths like Nil or Kripti love to use mobile phones. They like Internet-mediated communication means such as Facebook and Viber. Kripti liked

Skype to communicate with her sister abroad. Nowadays, individuals surf the entire world through digital devices 'virtually' while being in their own place (Coelho, 2005, p. 83). The regular engagement of digital device created virtual society; however, this has decreased the interpersonal communication within family, the individual is becoming more dependent upon devices.

In the novel "The Zahir", Paulo Coelho mentions that in human relationship the important thing is conversations. After the increasing use of mobile and technology, they do not talk anymore. People sit down near each other, but they engage themselves in technologies. They never do conversations anymore nowadays." (Coelho, 2005, p. 83). I think Coelho's idea presents the context of those societies dominated by technologies. In the field, I interacted with Bikram Thapa several times. In a discussion with him in his room, he shared,

> *All of our family members gather in this common room every evening and watch television. I feel that watching television together brings us closer, and we can even share how our day was like and make plan for the next day.*

He added, "However, this practice is rare nowadays. The virtual interactions have put eye-to-eye conversations and face-to-face interactions to the back burner." The statements of Coelho and Bikram represent the trend of our society: detachment among the family members and increasing attachment towards the virtual world. The overall idea shows the increasing interest and inclinations of people towards the modern media. The society is converging into a virtual space.

Essence of the Chapter

This chapter seeks the situation of the availability of means of communication in the rural society of Nepal, presenting the ethnographic note of *Thumko*. The chapter highlights how the modern means of communication is increasing in the society. It

also presents the blend of modern communication means in traditional network of local society. Mainly, this chapter presents how the local society is moving along the global lane through different means of communication and also the changing choices of local people in using modern means of communication.

CHAPTER V

MEANS OF COMMUNICATION INFLUENCING LIVELIHOOD

In the previous chapter, I discussed different means of communication available in the village. In the present chapter, I try to answer the second research question" How do the means of communication influence the livelihood of the people? There is a growing influence of the modern means of communication on livelihood, resulting in gradual change of the mutually cooperative communities into a virtual society.

The spread of means of communication has changed everyday life and culture. In this chapter, I discuss how the means of communication wield influence in livelihood, examining activities of the local people in relation to local resources and productions. I also explore how the households mobilize the resources to improve their living conditions. In addition, the changing definitions of livelihood and the social practices that help people sustain livelihood come up for discussion.

Modern Means of Communication and Modern Culture

The traditional means of communication promote the traditional culture, whereas the modern tools seemingly promote the modern culture. In Chapter V, I defined informational tools, mass media and social media as the modern means of communication. Modern culture refers to the shift in collective thoughts, development and changing aspirations with the rise of the modern means of communication.

Culture is something that people learn and share from one generation to another. It is difficult to demarcate a line between the traditional culture and the modern culture. However, I have tried to define the modern culture as an everyday

practice that is different from the past but popular at present (Reflection Note, 25 August, 2015). The means of communication play an influential role in everyday practices such as food habits, agro-productions, and import and export of local production. In Nepali society, the traditional means of communication such as *Katawal-Karaune, Gandarva Gaune, Jhyali Pitne and Damaha Bajaune* were the products of the traditional culture. Those involved in message dissemination through the traditional means of communication earned their livelihood.

In a long discussion with Gopal Thapa, I noted down several issues. One day, soon after returning from Kathmandu, I visited Gopal's home. It was my regular visit. We discussed the means of communication. Gopal Thapa said, *"I feel that the traditional means of communication created jobs for the locals. They were the means of livelihood. The traditional means of communication were part of our culture and bedrock of the society."*

In the past, people used to be informed about meetings and gatherings in the villages through the traditional means of communication. *Katawal* and *Gandarva* are the occupational groups, employed by local administrations. They belong to the *Dalit* community. The means of payment was food grains that were produced locally. Gopal Thapa further repeated his saying,

> *Katawals used to collect food grains from the villagers, Gandarvas used to get monetary and other benefits after singing songs door to door or in public places. The people who were involved in Jhyali-Pitne and Damaha-Bajaune traditions used to work for the rulers, especially in the Kathmandu valley, they would be paid by the ruling agents. Those means of communication were only the means of livelihood for Dalits.*

The messengers *Katawals* and *Gandarvas* used to be given food grains in exchange. It unravels that the traditional means of communication are part of livelihood. In the rural society food-grain payment for service mode was institutionalized in the past, but it is not relevant today (Diary, July 6, 2015).

In Sukathokar[48], the place where I was born, I saw people giving food grains to *Katawals* to pay for the work they had done. Three decades ago, soon after the restoration of democracy in 1990, my grandmother used to give food grains to *Damais* (who sew clothes) and *Katawals*. There was a system of giving *panch-pathi-dhan*[49] to *Katawals*.

Rich families used to give them rice, maize or millets as wages. In the hilly region, rice production used to be low. Maize and millets were produced more than rice. The production pattern is the same, but the information dissemination culture has been modernized. For instance, after local FM stations came into existence in the hilly districts, the traditional or folk communication practices dwindled. The FM stations disseminate message about local events and functions.

Gopal Thapa shared, *"Nowadays, the local farmers, teachers, administrators, politicians and foreign migrants depend on the modern means of communication. The Katawal and Gandarva traditions have been replaced by the modern means. The traditional means of communication are rare in the village."* With the arrival of the modern means of communication, both the traditional means of communication and the pattern of everyday life of message disseminators have gradually been replaced by modern means.

48 Sukathokar: The Ward that lies in at Melung Rural Municipality in Dolakha District.
49 Panch Pathi-Dhan: Almost 12-13kg rice.

Means of Communication Supporting Buying and Selling of Local Products

Means of communication support rural people in livelihoods. Economic situation, especially in the hill region like *Thumko,* is low and the locals sell local products for money. In the village, about 60 percent of the total households earn a little money by selling their agricultural productions and livestock. They sell vegetables, milk, ghee, chicken and goat. Sometimes, they sell the cow that gives milk. In most of the households, they had at least two livestock such as cows, buffalos and goats. These livestock were meant for milk or meat. Shankar Thapa shared, *"The locals have local sources of income. Subsistence farming occupies less than 30 percent of the total income in our village*."

Informational tools play an important role in the trading of the local products. While discussing with the participants, the themes of information sharing and the means of communication in relation to livelihood emerged. Information plays a crucial role in today's world. It is seen as a valuable component to run life. I tried to define information and means of communication as important assets. In the livelihood frame, it was not discussed in details.

Livelihood has already been discussed with focus on higher income, well-beings, food security, and use of resources in a sustainable way (Department for International Development [DFID], 1999). Livelihood was not associated with the means of communication. It was not sufficient because it was not able to blend the use of information and access to the means of communication. Livelihood without communication is incomplete in this techno-communicative world (Reflection Note, 1 September, 2015). The techno-communicative sphere is defined as the space/market of communication technology, which is easily available to people.

Particularly, in the livelihood frame, all other forms of capital such as human, social, natural, physical and financial capital are addressed where the space of information or means of communication is unfilled (DFID, 1999). In my field, information played a vital role in the life of farmers, who were the producers of milk, potato and vegetables. The price or demand of the local products was advertised through mobiles phones, thereby enabling the farmers to sell their products. They were also engaged in price bargaining through mobile phones. Suppliers of vegetable products called the farmers, asking for the vegetables, and settled the price deal. After that, the farmers would send the vegetables to the suppliers within a day. The price was determined as per the market value.

For instance, when the price of the potato in *Thumko* dropped and the farmers did not get fair price, they kept it in the storeroom of their houses. The farmers used mobile phones to know the latest price of the potato. After they obtained information about the latest price of the potato in the market, they would decide or to sell the potato in the market or not. Mobile phones enabled them to bargain the price with local agents (Diary Note, 1 September, 2015). The mobile phone is effective for the rural women to earn livelihood. Shiva Baje, who is a priest and farmer, explained,

> *The farmers call their friends in city through mobile phones to know the market situation to sell the local products or to buy necessary stuffs from the city. If the price of the local products goes up, the local farmers sell their potatoes. When the price of the fertilizers goes down, they buy them.*

The information shared by Shiva reveals that the mobile phone played a vital role for the villagers in buying and selling of goods and products.

Means of Communication as a Property for Livelihood

The means of communication are important assets that have enabled the local people to take a decision. In the past, property consisted of land, cattle or houses. At present, means of communication are assets although they have increased the cost. In this study, I have taken mobile sets, television sets and laptops as assets. Spending money to recharge mobile phones or DTH and in the Internet is a common phenomenon. Each family spends Rs. 500-1,000 in recharging them. In addition, the villagers in my research site had spent from Rs. 20,000 to 1, 00,000 in buying mobile sets, television sets, radio sets or laptops.

In my field, my participants shared that the increasing expense in the means of communication was creating a problem. One day, when I was discussing with Gopal and Rishna, they mentioned that they were worrying about the money spent on mobile phones and the Internet. Gopal's expenditure on the mobile phone was higher than Rishna. The expense of Gopal's family on Internet service was high.

Rishna claimed, *"The price of mobile phones and the television has increased. My village is near the city. We decide quickly and buy things quickly. These days, we buy technological goods in a snap of decision. Nowadays, I spend much in technology."* He added, *"Mobile phone is enough for a person. Sometimes, one mobile set is enough for the whole family. But, some people have more than four mobile sets."* This is common in Nepali villages.

However, I analyzed the situation from the lens of expenditure. One good mobile phone costs at least fifteen thousand to twenty thousand rupees. This shows that in one household with five members, need one lakh rupees is spent in buying mobile phone (Diary Note, 5 September 2015). Rishna further added, *"Not only the mobile phone, one television set is enough for one family, but villagers have kept*

separate television sets in separate rooms." To fulfill individual choices, one-room-one-TV and one-head-one-cell-phone have become common in society.

Expenditure on means of communication is increasing despite the fact that they have enabled people to connect each other. The two-way communication is being a common practice. Rishna responded, *"People are physically far away from their home, but the communication technologies have brought them closer."* This is a positive part of technology.

Means of Communication and Supportive Local Cooperatives

This section shows that the means of communication have enabled people to get loan from the bank and finances. In *Thumko,* there was a cooperative, named Krishak Sahakari [farmers' cooperatives]. The locals were given loans from the cooperative to buy fertilizers, seeds and new technologies. The cooperative would provide at least fifty thousand loans to each individual. The members who regularly saved money would get at least ninety-six percent of their deposit as a loan. They had to present other two members of the group to assure the loan officer.

The locals were informed through a leaflet. The leaflet of the cooperative was an important means of communication. Besides, there was a women saving group that would provide loan for entrepreneurship purpose. They invested money in buying cows, fertilizers, seeds, technologies and storehouses.

The loan was manageable as the amount was small. Gopal Thapa, one of the responsible persons of the cooperative acknowledged, *"Most of the loans are taken for agricultural purpose. In most of the families, females have taken loans. Most of them have farmlands. Others have livestock."*

The cooperative focused on commercial agricultural activities such as livestock and farming with an aim to improve economic status. The cooperative

trained the locals and disseminated new information regarding upcoming demand of livestock, farming products and milk through mobile messages. Regular communication from the cooperative and their members helped the locals to increase income through selling local products.

The cooperative also provided training on entrepreneurship, vegetable farming and livestock. Gopal shared, *"We have been supporting farmers through training programs. After long efforts, the farmers are becoming self-reliant and they are eager to work in agriculture."* One of the participants Pramili Pariyar an active member of the cooperative, added, *"My life has been transformed after support from the cooperative. I received a potato farming training from the cooperative. I can frequently talk with the trainer through mobile. The mobile phone has become an important means of communication. When diseases attack in my farm, I directly communicate with the trainers."* This indicates that the cooperative and individuals can use different means of communication for information to increase local farming.

Open Market: The Trojan Horse[50]

Modern goods are entering the village and pushing the locals to further dependency. The modern communication means have become the Trojan Horse.

After the rapid growth of mass media, advertisements on global products have dominated media contents. This has influenced the common consumer behavior. The advertisements have an impact on the viewers, listeners and readers; and due to this very reason, media houses focus on advertisement rather than other news and information (Petrova, 2005). The media earns and sustains through advertisements. National and multi-national companies invest in advertisements to sell their products

50 Trojan Horse: A hollow wooden statue of a horse in which the Greeks are said to have concealed themselves in order to enter Troy.

in a large scale to large masses. Roy (2009) claims that that the media is influenced through faceless corporations; they become a mediator to sell new products and spread the culture.

During my field visits, I observed that commercial products were increasing and the local products were decreasing day by day. It was due to expansion of the modern products. Mass media and social media disseminate the modern products, whereas the local products are away from the media. The modern products integrate mass media in the forms of advertisement. This is why those products could easily reach huge masses (Kumari & Dutta, 2012).

In Nepal, open market is understood in terms of importing good and services from outside the country. In an open market of Nepal, the ready-made goods, junk food, industrial products and technologies are imported. These products were advertised by the media. The imported goods have influenced the society to the higher level. This has even replaced the own practices of culture and lifestyle.

For instance, in *Thumko*, the local shop have several kinds of goods which are not produced locally, instead those all goods were imported from somewhere else. I saw multinational products such as Coca-Cola[51], Pepsi Cola, Fanta[52] and Vodka[53], *Wai Wai, Mayos, Rara*[54] and *Banban* Biscuits and Cream-Cracker. Most the goods were displayed at shops.

There was effect of the earthquake. Besides, everyday life was crippled by the border blockade when I was in the field. The blockade had made everyday life difficult. There was a shortage of fuel, cooking gas and even rice in the village. Due to the scarcity of fuel, there were very few vehicles. Due to the unavailability of

51 Coca-Cola: Carbonated soft drink produced by the Coca-Cola Company.
52 Pepsi, Fanta: Soft drinks.
53Rum and Vodka: Alcoholic drinks.
54 WaiWai, Mayos, Rara : Noodles available in the Nepali market.

vehicles, it was difficult to transport goods. The price of foodstuffs dramatically increased. There was dependency on industrial products. During the blockade, I ate noodles as there was no gas to cook food. In normal time, the price of noodles was fifteen rupees. During the shortage, I bought the noodles for twenty-five rupees. Especially, *Bhuteko Makai*[55] and *Roti*[56] are local food that can substitute noodles and chawmein, biscuits and bread[57] (Diary Note, 2 July, 2015). They just increased dependency in the rural village.

The use of new products and modern fashion shows that the Nepali society is gradually shifting towards modern livelihood. In Nepal, the process of being modern as started after 1950 (Baral, 1975) after the entrance of media and communication, education and democratic process. After democracy in 1990, the new means of communication spread in Nepali villages. After the spread of means of modern communication, the modern livelihood culture also spread in the rural village.

I observed that the mothers in some families were serving tea and biscuits as breakfast in the morning rather than local *Roti*[58] and local food. The children prefer biscuits, noodles and potato chips to homemade meals. It is because of the advertisements given in the means of communication. The means of communication influence children faster.

These days, parents buy biscuits, chocolates or noodles to keep children quiet and happy. This is due to the modern communication tools and their advertisements. The advertisements from FM, radio, television and social networking sites etc. are influential. Advertisements influence children and youth easily (Diary Note, 2 July, 2015). Gopal said, *"We need information regarding pesticides, fertilizers, new seeds,*

55 Bhuteko Makai: Roasted corn grains.
56 Roti: Pancake.
57 Pauroti: Baked bread.
58 Flour Roti: Bread made from flour of wheat, maze, barley, etc.

modern way of cultivation, new technologies for agriculture and market for buying and selling vegetables. However, we did not get an opportunity to hear such information."

Gopal shared, *"I hear the news of Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC)59 established in Kathmandu, a branded watch, lipstick, Fair & Lovely, Olay, Ponds, Mac etc. which are not the primary need of the villagers."* This indicates that the need of people is different from the information presented by the means of communication. The modern means of communication are spreading modern products of multinational corporations (Rutovic, 2016).

Use of Means of Communication in Priestly Activities: Increasing the Income

In this section, I present the use of means of communication in priestly profession of higher castes individuals. It was 24 August, 2015. I met Shiva Baje in his own home. He invited me for morning meals. Earlier, we had met in Shankar's shop. I visited his home. There was *Shradha*[60]. When I reached his home, the floor of the house was coated with cow dung. Since being a *Brhamin,* his house used to be cleaned with cow dung every day. It reminded me of my mother and sister purifying the floor of our house with cow dung and *Rato Mato*[61]. The cow dung is used for purification and it is regarded antiseptic. I just cracked a joke with Shiva Baje.

In his house, I heard the sound of television and I asked as who was watching television? Shiva shared, *"My lovely children are inside."* The children were watching Nick Channel, a television channel that provides cartoons for small kids. I further asked him what kind of programs he loved to watch. He shared, *"I prefer the*

59 Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC): Commonly known an American Fast Food restaurant chain that specializes in fried chicken.

60 Shraddha: A religious function to remember late members of the family.

61 Rato Mato: Red mud.

news and political programs. When I have time, I also watch religious programs and Prabachans[62]. The religious programs help me deal with my Jajamans[63]." This indicates the program in the mass media that meet personal and professional interest are supportive.

Shiva is a Bhaun Baje who conducts *Puja*[64], marriage, death rituals of his *Jajamans* and earns his living. He shared me that the means of communication have changed many things even in his priestly profession. He added,

> *The mobile phone has worked as an effective device to have contact with my Jajaman. In the past, there was only one way to inform Jajamans by walking their home, but after the development of means of communication, now I can inform them through the mobile phone. The mobile phone has made my job easy and effective. Now, I have many Jajamans. My income has increased.*

He responded, *"I also provide service through Internet like making of Cheena[65] in and outside the country like Australia and America."* This shows that the priest is using means of communication to increase his income and provide service to their *Jajamans*. I feel that the means of communication are used to sustain life.

Modern Means of Communication: An opportunity or Challenge?

The use of modern means of communication is not always a promising tool for individual benefit. These tools also disturb the life and livelihood of individuals. I found the related story published in a local newspaper named *Indreni Weekly*[66] of 29 July 2012 from *Tokse* VDC of *Mid-Hill*, where it is shows the challenges of new means of communication in rural village.

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62 Prabachan: Religious speech.
63 Jajamans: Customers of a Hindu priests.
64 Puja : Offering prayers to God.
65 Cheena: An astrological birth chart that describes the future of a person.
66 Indreni Weekly: A local newspaper published in *Mid-Hill* of Nepal.

This is the story of Maya. She was a newlywed. The boy belonged to a medium class family. The family was not able to afford easy life and livelihood from the current source of income of the family. Due to the low income in the family, the boy was compelled to go abroad for better income, that they could sustain their life easily in the future.

Before going abroad, the young bridegroom decided to engage his wife by opening a grocery shop in the Zero-Kilo of Lowland[67] municipality, so she could support family with the income of the shop. They opened the shop. Soon after that, her husband went abroad. After sometime, she started facing problems. Some of the fraud of the village came to know about her situation. The fraud knew about her husband and she was alone in the shop. They blackmailed her by asking for fifty thousand in cash or sexual intercourse.

The fraud also threatened her saying they will publish something about her in Facebook, which could be visible to her husband, which might create family clash. However, within time, she shared everything to her husband. Her husband asked her to sell the shop in even low cost and move to her own parents' home (Gautam, 2012). This is representative example of a newly married couple. After the expansion of new means of communication and social media, even in the rural places these media become challenges to sustain life.

This is an example how the modern means of communication has challenged one's life, if misused. This is a typical case, which shows the demerits of means of communication. After the expansion of modern means of communication in the village, the crime and wrongdoings are prevalent in different ways and different

67 Lowland: The municipality in *Mid-Hill* of Nepal.

forms. The social networking sites and mobile phones are being easy medium frauds. This seems as a challenge in modern community for individuals.

The use of modern means of communication is the topic of debate among various scholars (Alhassan, 2004; Ch. et al., 2011). The expansion of new means of communication in the local communities is working as an influential tool (Galtung, 1971; Nordenstreng, 2013; Dhungana & Pfefferle, 2016). The influence of new means of communication has intended and united results and consequences as in the life of Maya, one of my participants. The intended intension is to inform people. It created some problematic situation in the side of individual life.

Essence of the Chapter

The crux of this chapter is to present the influence of the means of communication that has backed the individual life in rural community. The heart of this chapter is to discuss the role of different means of communication that influences modern culture, and selling and buying of goods. Further, this chapter also explores that the means of communication emerged as important assets of individual that directly affects their livelihoods.

CHAPTER VI

LOCAL INSTITUTIONS, GOVERNANCE AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

In the previous chapter, I discussed livelihood connecting with means of communication. During my fieldwork, the information related to local institutions, participation, accountability and transparency emerged. In this chapter, I try to answer my third research question: How do people see the contribution of the means of communication to local institutions? While answering the question, I present some examples of the local institutions, their governance patterns and the influence of the means of communication on them. I discuss the local practices in the institutions (schools, youth clubs, mother/saving groups, and consumer groups), participation process, use of the means of communication, and the role of developmental institutions.

Conceptualizing Governance and Means of Communication

In this section, I present the governance system under the local and global frameworks, linking it to the means of communication. Nepal is a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual country. Before 1768, there were several states that were self-ruled, which was territorially unified by Gurkhas later (Bhattachan, 2016).

In my research area, there were several voluntary organizations that supported in governing the society. There was a domination of one caste, one religion, one language and one culture in the country that perpetuated poverty and isolation of local communities (Bhattachan, 2016). In the course of time, different governance policies were introduced in the country, aiming at good governance and empowerment of the people.

Good governance means regulation and coordination of the state effective enough to meet the people's aspirations. My study focused on public services, which are directly connected to grassroots. With regard to governance, Roosevelt states, “The government is us, we are the government, you and I” (as cited in Metzger, 2016). For “you and I”, we need communication to perform well. It enabled me to understand good governance and people's expectations. I adopted Roosevelt's idea of individual perceptions and roles in governance.

This study focused on participants' views in the context of Nepali rural villages. The roles and functions of the means of communication come together with good governance. Means of communication help individuals get information about available institutions and their services. Further, regular interactions with the support of informational tools, especially mobile phones and Internet apps (Viber or Skype), help us discuss the services offered by the institutions.

The three pillars — state, market and civil society — are important domains of good governance (Center for Good Governance, 2008). The media sector is a part of civil society. Good governance is promoted only when media is strong and independent. The mass media plays the monitoring role, covering different issues of state, market and civil society as per the aspirations of people for better public administration. Media disseminates the opinions of the public towards activities of the government. It provides a platform for the voices of the people.

Media provides information on services delivered by local institutions. I studied the role of the means of communication at the local level in relation to good governance. In my field, I found various local institutions such as saving groups, community user groups and cooperatives. Family networks, socio-cultural values and means of communication come together while discussing institution. For instance, the

local people visit the headquarters of *Mid-Hill* district for developmental budgets, land registration, citizenship, electricity bills, etc. In obtaining these services, local people encounter different experiences, both good and bad.

Tiko Sharma shared defined governance as peace, harmony and communication between local people for mutual help. When I met him, he was reading a newspaper. It was the third visit to him. We had discussed the governance practice in the country and the role of the mass media earlier. Following the previous discussions, we again continued the discussion on the role of mass media. One day, Tiko Sharma and I were talking about the means of communication and society during his free time in the evening. Tiko criticized, *"The media represent the aspirations of society. The media has a monitoring role. This is also known as a check-and-balance role. Most of the time, Nepali media disseminate information about problematic situations."* He referred the problematic situation as the poor service delivery. On the other hand, the media disseminate messages about accountability of the government to improve service delivery.

As a student of media, I feel that the job of media is to disseminate the news about the problems of the masses. Tiko Sharma shared that inefficiency of the government mechanism directly affects service seekers. Around 7-8 years ago, when I was a Master's level student, one of my teachers stated 'bad news is good news'. To consider bad news as good news is common in Nepali newspapers (Acharya, Pathak & KC, 2010). I think that no news is good or bad. Bad governance, corruption, scandal, blocakde, ineffeciency or scarcity is a bad thing. However, the news about them is not bad. These ill aspects of the government or the society need to be reported well (Reflection Note, 14 September, 2015).

Tiko Sharma revealed the media inform about bad governance and ineffeciency of the government mechanism. This process has been practiced since long, especially after the free flow of the means of communication after 1990. He also added that this sitaution gave a space to re-think regarding the policy of good governance. The policy provisions need to be discussed openly. Tiko Sharma added, *"In Nepali society, there are different forms of governance practices as per the socio-cultural differences. But, the practices of governance are dominated by the global phenomena."* When the issue of corruption and bad governance arises in media, there is a need of debates and discussions. Good governance needs to be viewed from local and contextual perspectives.

Local Governance Practices in Nepal

There are local governance practices in Nepal although they are being overlooked (Bhattachan, 2016). *Posang* is found in *Jomsom* of *Mustang* district. *Posang* is one of the important voluntarily practices of the indigenous people. Every member of a household automatically becomes the member of the Village Assembly. They meet every two years. They communicate all the decisions through their own voluntary networks and exchange information. All households must follow the responsibilities stipulated by the information circulated.

Bheja is another form of local governance mechanisms of Magars living in western Nepal. It consists of some households from the *Magar* community where *Mukhiya* is the leader. The people of *Bheja* community are communicated through their local networks. The group members provide financial and other supports. *Kipata*s was reformed as *Raikar* in 1968 A.D. *Dhikur* is a collection of grains. *Arma Parma* (labor bartering) was also a governance system. *Guthi* was a religious and charitable endowment and now mother groups are in place (Bhattachan, 2016). In

these institutions local people provide information individually. The gatherings and interactions among themselves help them get information.

Governance focuses on rule of law, participation, justice, equality (Mathur, 2008). However, *Posang, Bhejas, Dhikur* and *Guthi* were defined by local people to fulfill the needs and interests of the local communities. Different ethnic communities have different forms of governance practices. *Arma Parma*[68] is all about bartering the labor resources in agricultural farms.

Nil Kharel shared, *"I feel that the practice of Arma Parma is decreasing as most of the people have left farming to migrate to the cities*. Tiko Sharma added, "*The Nepali way of governance was different. There was a focus on volunteerism and help. Swyamsewa[69], Guthi, Kipat[70] etc. were in practice. The communication systems and practices were developed as per the need of the society and culture. For instance, there was the Katawal system in the rural villages."* It shows that the traditional practices of governance and communication are either extinct or there are threats of extinction due to the modern practices (Reflection Note, 7 October, 2015).

Shiva Baje brought a different dimension of the *Dharma*-based governance practice. For him, *Dharma* is the rule of law, participation of people and an impetus to accountability. He claimed, *"Dharma starts from the individual level with the sense of volunteerism, responsibility and duty."* The *Dharma*-based notion was spread through local religious networks. People strictly followed the spirit of *Dharma*. Those who do not follow *Dharma* are called *Adharmi*[71] (Reflection Note, September 19, 2015).

68Arma parma: A system of exchanging laborers in agricultural work.
69 Swyamsewa: Volunteerism.
70 Guthi, Kipat: A form of traditional governance system in Nepal.
71 Adharmi: A person who commits sin.

Political Changes and Means of Communication on Village Life

In the fieldwork, I noted some individualistic statements expressed by the participants during discussions. I termed the statements as empowerment statements. They are here:

> *...ma kina bolna napaune* (Why am I not allowed to speak?); …*jamana paile jasto chaina* (The time now is not like before) ;…*ko bhanda ko kam* (Everyone is capable); …*hamlai pani ta taha cha* (We also know); …*pareko khandama j pani garna sakincha* (We can do anything, if needed); …*sahayog hamilai ni-uslai pani chahinchha* (Not only we, they also need support); …*hamlai manche gandai ganenan* (They did not give us any value), etc. (Focus Group Discussion, December 20, 2015).

These are not simple statements. They are carrying social ethos. The statements represent openness. They are meaningful as they have connotations of empowerment, individualism and courage, which the Constitution of Nepal has ensured (GON, 2015). People are not in the situation they were in the past. They are conscious, concerned and careful now than before. This is important because it enables the citizens to raise voices for proper service delivery. The more the people are able to raise their voice, the more they become empowered, and they can ask for proper service delivery and good governance.

Regular interactions at the places like teashops, farms and religious ceremonies have empowered people. They discuss their everyday needs and necessary support for livelihood. They also discuss the services they need from local institutions. The regular interactions have enabled individuals to get more information. The more information they get, the more empowered they become (Reflection Note, September 8, 2015). Different means of communication such as

information tools, folk media, mass media and social media provide information, thereby encouraging people to engage in interactions.

I was at the research site in the first week of December 2015. I talked to Rishna Thapa and Gopal Thapa. Gopal shared, *"The situation of the villagers has changed now, as compared to the past. Nowadays, they raise questions and argue critically because they have access to information.*" A decade ago, people used to be the follower of powerful elites. They rarely expressed their views. Time has changed due to the widespread availability of the means of communication and interactions. Freedom of speech and openness has become an important facet in everyday life. People seek information relevant to their life. They also become informed about national or international policies and practices. It has become possible due to the free flow of information and access of people to different means of communication.

Rishna shared, *"The time has changed. People ask about everything that affects their life and the events going around them. They have access to media which enables them to receive information and share it."* This reveals that the public sphere has become informed and critical than before. Nowadays, people are empowered and able to express their beliefs and seek information whenever they need. In a democratic society "freedom, equality, and dignity of the individual" are common features that empower people (Vorster, 2012; Pour & Ahmadi, 2016). Dahal (2014) states the expansion of media has been instrumental to the transformation and socioeconomic reforms. The reform in the media sector after the establishment of democracy is crucial and decisive (Bhandari, 2014; Upadhyay, 2015).

Local Institutions and People Participation

During my fieldwork, I attended several meetings in schools, clubs, mother groups, saving and credit groups, road consumer groups. In those institutions, I

observed decision-making patterns and participation. They are important components of good governance. I also observed the use of the means of communication in the local institutions.

Decreasing Participation in Schools and Means of Communication

School is an important institution. It is a hub where children and youths from the society gather in one place for education. The message disseminated from school easily spreads in the society. School is a place where interconnection takes place among students, parents and teachers. There were two schools in *Thumko*: a higher secondary school and a lower secondary school. Means of communication were a big help for the school administrations to operate the schools and encourage parent participation.

I interacted with school stakeholders to understand the school governance and use of different means of communication. The stakeholders were students, teachers, parents and School Management Committee (SMC) members. One government school was near my rented room. There was a teashop, a grocery and different cooperatives nearby. The students thronged the grocery to buy snacks in the break time. It was the mid-day on 2nd November, 2015 when I was in the teashop. I saw groups of students coming to the shop, some of them in the school uniforms and some in casual dresses. School uniform is mandatory for government school students in Nepal. I met Rishna Thapa, one of my participants. Rishna had been the SMC chairperson of the school for 15 years. He was an advisor when I met him for my research purpose.

In the beginning, we had a discussion on participation and the use of the means of communication in the school. He shared that there was Internet, a landline phone and some computers in the school. He shared that the landline phone was rarely

used due to the availability of mobile phones. The school sent him messages to his mobile phone. He shared the head teacher, Ram Bharat Lama, called him in school for meetings. In our discussions, he expressed his worries over the decreasing enrollment rates. Rishna shared,

> *These days, the number of students is gradually decreasing. In the past, the government schools were the only choice. The teachers were energetic. Parents used to love the school and had feelings of ownership. The head teacher used to send letters to the parents for meetings. All SMC members and teachers used to communicate parents for their active participation. However, these days, they do not communicate as frequently as before*.

The school had stored necessary information in the computer. They had stored the data of the students and teachers, segregated in terms of caste, gender and occupation. These are very important information for good governance. They can be used to take decisions and formulate school strategies.

The head teacher uses both formal and informal communication methods to communicate with the SMC members every day. I was in the school and it was before *Dashain*. I observed a classroom, interacted with the head teacher and teachers. During the interactions, the head teacher shared,

> *We employ face-to-face, virtual or written communication. Nowadays, the informational tools, especially mobile phones, have become an easy means to disseminate messages to parents. All of our teachers have mobile phones. They also use social media such as Facebook. Sometimes, we use Facebook to share information.*

Some government school administrations used to write letters for sending message. With the availability of modern means of communication, letters are rarely

used. In the school I visited, sending message through letters was in practice no more. The head teacher shared that he made a list of some prospective teachers and their mobile numbers to contact them. The school was making every effort to increase the enrolment rate and to maintain quality of education. In order to maintain quality, the school would appoint qualified and experienced teachers only. Despite all efforts, the enrolment rate was going down. Decrease in the number of students means decrease in the parents' participation in school.

I have observed that private boarding schools have frequent interactions with their parents. They call them for meetings and talk with them about the progress of their wards. Sometimes, the school administration sends SMS to parents. Nil Kharel shared that private schools offer English-medium education and they properly communicate with parents. They use school-to-home notebooks. Teachers use a daily communication book to share information to the parents.

Fees in government schools do not exceed two to three hundred rupees per month. In boarding schools, parents pay at least three thousand rupees every month, which is exclusive of the charges for transportation, mid-day snacks and health check-up. Although boarding schools are much expensive, most of the parents send their children in boarding schools because of the craze of English (Diary Note, 3 June, 2016).

I interacted with the parents. The views the parents expressed in the discussions revealed that schools were affected by outer factors. The parents enrolled their children in boarding schools because it was the trend in the society. The parents had positive perceptions towards the English language. They loved to see their children to speak in English. However, it caused the decrease in the number of students in government schools (Reflection Note, 23 October, 2015). Importantly, the

means of communication also contributed to invite this situation. The means of communication give emphasis on the English language and private boarding schools in their news and advertisements (Giri, 2014), encouraging parents to send their wards to English-medium boarding schools.

Connecting Youth through Means of Communication

The means of communication have encouraged local youths to participate in the discussions on local issues, albeit virtually. The youths have left their villages due to employment opportunities in and out of the country. From the *Dalit Tole* only, 38 youth were abroad. Some two-three members were in Gulf countries from only one household. For instance, Maili Pariyar's[72] sons were in the Gulf countries for employment. From the upper caste families, 16 members were abroad for employment. They were connected with the means of communication. The youths used to discuss and support local initiatives. However, I observed that there were very few youths in my research site.

There were various youth clubs in the villages until some two decades ago. The clubs were the youth institutions that guided the village youths to help in society voluntarily, empowering the youths through regular engagement and participation. *Thumko* Youth Group, *Chetana* Youth Gorup and *Pragatisil* Youth Group were the youth clubs in *Thumko*. The local clubs developed leadership and organization skills in the youths. However, the clubs were defunct when I visited the village to collect information. These clubs are defunct because of low/no participation.

The youths who have gone abroad for foreign employment were ready to support local events and initiatives being outside from the village. Some youths posted their decisions to contribute to the village on the Facebook wall. Gopal Thapa

[72] Maili Pariyar: A little literate 70 years old grandmother who passed time with her granddaughter

shared that the local youths collected seven lakh rupees from the Facebook network to support the local people soon after the massive earthquake. However, it was difficult to mobilize the donated fund due to the absence of human resources in the village. Gopal Thapa opined,

> *The people of Thumko are silent about the local clubs. In the past, the club was a team and a platform for the local youths to share ideas. Messages would be sent to all from the local club, and the people used to participate in local events and functions. Now the time has changed. The virtual groups are formed in Facebook. Virtual sites are effective to share information in their networks only.*

This indicates that the youth clubs are gradually disappearing in the rural parts. With the extinction of the local institutions, people's participation in local events is bearing the brunt.

Mobile Phones Supporting the Formation of Road Consumer Committee

Mobile phones and Facebook have become an important means of communication to call people to gather in a place for forming consumer committees. During my stay in the field, I participated in the formation of a road consumer committee, named *Bato Upabhokta Samuha*[73]. The initiative was taken by some youths in the village who were involved in local businesses such as grocery, shoe-making or agricultural farming.

The previous committee had been alleged for misuse of funds and corruption. The chairperson of the committee had misused more than one lakh rupees. When the local knew it, they wrote in the Facebook wall. Some of the locals uploaded pictures only without work. The previous committee was not workable. From the allocated

73 Batoko Upabhokta Samuha: Road consumer group.

amount, nothing was initiated except of buying some wire. So, the local youths initiated the formation of a new committee. The youths were planning to form an inclusive committee, where females and *Dalits* would also be the members. The road goes across the *Dalit* community. That is why, participation of *Dalits* in the road consumer committee was essential.

Shiva Baje had called people to form the committee. He informed them through Facebook and text messages. The committee formation meeting took place at the shop run by Shankar, one of the villagers. On 25 August, 2015, I got an opportunity to attend the meeting organized for the formation of the road consumer group. About 20 people had participated in the meeting.

The local people were searching for an active and selfless person to become the chairperson. They had communicated to each other in their community networks for that purpose. Shankar was searching an active youth, who could hold the leadership position. During the meeting, the announcer called the participants to register their names for the posts of chairperson, secretary, treasurer and members.

Altogether 10 people registered names as they were interested in working in the executive committee. Shiva Baje registered his name for the post of secretary. However, the position of the chair was vacant because it demanded much time to afford. Finally, Rupak Pariyar was selected as the chair, upon the request of majority of the participants. Soon after that, the road consumer group's name was disseminated through Facebook. People congratulated the team. They wrote that they wanted to see the team maintain transparency. Some of them opined that the newly-formed team could settle the month-long conflict and hear the voice of people.

Use of Mobile Phones to Increase Female Participation

In villages, almost all females have mobile phones. The mobile phone has become a compulsory means of communication. It has helped rural women to go to meetings or join training programs. Due to out-migration and foreign employment, the number of females is upper than the males in rural areas.

I found the women of *Thumko* using mobile phones to run the local mother groups effectively. There were several local networks such as *Aama Samuha (Mothers' Group), Mirmire Samuha (Dawn Group), Swabalamban Samuha (Self-reliance Group), Udyamsil Samuha (Entrepreneur Group), Didi-Bahini Samuha (Sisters Group), Chhimeki Samuha (Neighboring Group)* and a dairy cooperative.

On August 24, 2015, I had an opportunity to attend the meeting of *Aama Samuha*[74]. I tried to observe the use of mobile phones in the group. Every month, the members of the group gathered in one place and collected money for saving. In monthly meetings, they would choose a responsible person among the members to circulate the notices and decisions of the meetings. The mobile phone was an easy means of communication to carry out those responsibilities. My participant Pramili Pariyar, who was the chairperson of that group opined,

> *We have 60 plus members in this group. Every member must be present in the monthly meetings. They are informed for the meetings through mobile phones. If any member is not able to attend the meeting without prior notice, he/she must pay fine.*

The saving group members established that rule with a view to regulating themselves. Pramili shared, *"Every month we have a transaction of more than twenty*

74 Aama Samuha: Mothers' group.

thousand rupees. The collected money is deposited in the bank. The transaction is transparent and open."

Information Sharing Mechanism and Transparency

The Local Governance Act has made the provision of the citizen charter and public hearing mandatory at District Development Committee (DDC) offices, municipality offices and rural municipality offices. It is mandatory for the government to communicate to the public about development projects and the allocation of budget, timeline of the project and its deliverabels.

In public offices, spokeperson or communication officer is a mandatory post. Service seekers can obtain necessary information from them. Moreover, the information desk or suggestion box (letter box) must be in kept in public offices. Quarterly disclosure of information is mandatory (Acharya, 2013; Khadka & Bhattarai, 2012). These tools were introduced after the introduction of Right to Information Act in Nepal after 2007. However, if we see the situation of public service delivery, it is not as per expections. The studies of Transparency International Nepal (TI-Nepal) in 2015 and 2016 show that public offices have spokepersons, information officers, citizen charters and suggestion boxes, but they are not so effective as expected.

I visited th *Mid-Hill* district headquarters for many times. The situation of the district was not different from the one described above. I also visited the websites of local government offices. I found that DDC website was not updated. In the same way, the websites of Distict Administration Office and District Agriculture Office were not updated.

Municipalities, DDCs and VDC organize public hearing programs only for formality. They conduct public hearing to meet the criteria of Minimum Condition

and Performance Measurements (MCPM) developed my the government. MCPM is a criteria for evaluating the performance of the local government. Every year, the government conducts MCPM and the government allocates budget and programs on the basis of MCPM points.

I had an opportunity to attend a public hearing program of a DDC in the mid of 2014. One of the FM stations had supported the DDC office in the public hearing program. My participant Jiven Lama, manager of a local FM radio, expressed his opinion, criticizing the procedural formality. He shared, *"The public hearing is only a formality to meet the procedural requirement of the DDC.*" This simply indicates that the state has a strong legal provision, but there is a gap due to weak the implementation mechanism.

I discussed with the Chief District Officer (CDO) in his chamber during the office hour. He expressed his dissatisfications over the service seekers' ignorance. The CDO shared,

> *In many cases, people do not read the citizen charter. Instead, they come to my office room to ask for the information regarding the requirements for a citizenship certificate. We have displayed the citizen charter at the office gate, but they do not read and trust it. They want to hear the same thing from the officials.*

This reveals that people still do not believe in the government's communication mechanism. The expression of the government official shows that people are not aware of the institutional communication arrangements.

The CDO shared,

> *Sometimes, people come to my office to ask for information about the procedures to obtain citizenship certificates and register cases. I tell them the*

process. Sometimes, half of my office time is spent in counselling them. People still rely on influential persons who support them while obtaining service rather than submitting required documentats.

After listening to the CDO, I talked to some service seekers to understand the situation deeply. They have different opinions towards the government service delivery. They think that government staff behave them as a second class citizen in their offices. Shiva Baje responded, "*We are norvous when we go to the government offices. We feel ourselves as the second class citizens. The first class citizens are the bureaucrats."* Government staff ask the service seekers about their problems in a loud and discourteous manner. They ask if they are in a proper mood.

I assumed that the government officials behaved that way in order to avoid the service seekers' demand for better and transparent services (Center for Good Governance, 2008; Tamrakar, 2010; Khadka & Bhattarai, 2012). For this, the media sector could work facilitating government offices and people. Moreover, the government and the civil society need to work toegether to inform and empower people for good governance (Odugbemi & Norris, 2009). While talking with the people in *Thumko*, I felt mass media, especially radio, television and newspapers, need to focus on public service devliery.

It was the month of September in 2015. I was hiking a hill with Nil from the district headquarters to *Thumko*. I talked to Nil, who shared that family and neighborhood networks are better and supportive. Nil shared, *"People come to the district headquarters to for revenues, citizenship certificates or land registration. In most of the cases, they return with bad experiences."* This is because the bureaucrats focus on the process only. I think the procedural rules are made for effective service delivery, ensuring truthfulness of the documents and information.

Nowadays, the procedural rules have become a plot to trouble service seekers. The procedural hassles have become the source of earning (TI Nepal, 2016). In the rural part, the lowest level of administrative mechanism of the government is the rural municipality. At the lowest level, the mechanism works for the development and government programs. However, the mechanism has not proven its efficiency in service delivery. Dillydally is a common phenomenon, with a motive to fleece the service seekers. It indicates bribery, nepotism and denial prevalent in the society.

Radio as a Means for Transparency and Accountability

During the *Dashain* festival, in second week of October in 2015, I had an opportunity to discuss with Ramesh Karki. He was a radio program producer and presenter of *'Gaun Beshi'* in a local FM station. He loved listening to radio programs. He had brought a radio set from India in 1984. From that very day, he started to become a regular listener of Radio Nepal. He shared his experience that he was not only a regular listener of the radio, but also sent feedback and requests for various songs to Radio Nepal.

Ramesh started conducting *Harmro Gaun Besi*[75]. The radio participants were from various social strata like old, young, male, female, and even children who used to present their unique performances. They expressed their sufferings, love and affection through songs. Moreover, they expressed truth, integrity, purity, courage, commitment, kindness, humility and politeness through the songs.

The program aired the local folk songs sung by rural singers. I myself was one of the listeners of *Hamro Gaun-Besi*. The program would bring the issues of development, politics, migrant workers, community forestry through folk songs. It

75Harmro Ghaun-Besi: A program run by a community FM station.

was an effective way of presenting local issues. I think, it is a part of local governance.

Ramesh was a teacher by profession. He used to work in school in the day and work in the radio station in evenings. He shared that radio was an influential means in the rural areas. A special program builds radio networks (Rijal, 2014). Rijal's idea might mean the program *Hamro Gaun Besi*. In the rural level, the community radio plays an important role in maintaining transparency. Ramesh Karki shared, *"The radio broadcast the programs such as public hearing, focusing on transparency and accountability."* The transparency issue focuses on regular and accurate information sharing. Ramesh opined,

> *The government offices are accountable to the public and should be transparent. The radio program has made the authority and administrators aware that they should not be involved in corruption; or else, they will be punished. Radio raises awareness in the concerned stakeholders who are working in public service sectors.*

The citizens are accountable for paying taxes and following the rules established by their representatives (Oberoi, 2013). There is an equal role of both the government and the public.

Ramesh Karki discussed the role of Radio Nepal during the devastating earthquake. During the time of the earthquake, he kept himself safe and he brought a radio set with him out in the open. This shows his consciousness towards information and communication. He shared,

> *Within a couple of minutes, we started listening to the radio, but we were not able to listen to the FM station. The FM station had weak infrastructure. I*

tuned to Radio Nepal. I heard a voice from the Radio Nepal: We are with you. Please come to the open and safe places. Do not fear. This is time to help.

This shows that radio is still an effective means of communication in the rural part of Nepal. Radio has become a means to advocate transparency and accountability. In crisis, radio has become crucial than any normal situation.

Essence of the Chapter

The essence of this chapter is to highlight the contribution of means of communication to the local institutions. The crux of this chapter is to present the conceptualization of governance and means of communication, changes in political regimes and changes in the means of communication, the contribution of means of communication in schools, local clubs, road consumer groups and saving groups. It also presents the information sharing mechanism and mindset of the government institutions in the rural society.

CHAPTER VII

PPRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF MEANS OF COMMUNICATION

In this chapter, I answer my fourth research question: Who are the producers and consumers of the means of communication? I discuss the production and consumption of the means of communication, the genealogy of production of communication, the increasing rate of consumerism, Disneyfication effect and growing use of the English language.

Genealogy of Production and Consumption of Communication

In this chapter, I define producers as the owner of the means of communication who use it for their intended and unintended benefits. The producers exert influence through the means of communication in different socio-cultural settings, gaining their favorable perceptions (Reflection Note, 4 June, 2016). Through the means of communication, producers or owners of the means of communication disseminate necessary messages for their benefits. This has drastically changed the life of rural people. A number of areas influence changes in society: education, employment, mobility, economic growth and migration. Among them, means of communication is at the forefront.

I can observe the influence of business and politics on the means of communication (Nye, 2017). Politicians and business persons have some interest. Business owners run the media for profit and politics run the media for political gains. Private media such as online media and community radio are run by political leaders for intended benefits (Ian & Subba, 2007). That is why business persons and political forces are producers of the media. There were small business houses and local

politicians in my research site. They used media for their benefits. In rural villages, businesspersons, politicians, priests, teachers, farmers, housewives, children and youths are the consumers of the means of communication.

At the local level, the participants who are associated with politics consume communication means for political benefit, those who have local shops they use communication to attract customers, those who work as priests, use communication to increase priestly activates and income. This indicates the different circle or different people use means of communication to meet their needs. The ownership, control and access also differ as per their need (Dahal, 2014). Sometime the ownership concern also plays an important role. The owners mobilize the means of communication to fulfill their objectives. For instance, if the owner is government, then the government mobilizes the means of communication to fulfill the agenda of government.

My participant Gopal Thapa opined,

During the Panchayat system, the newspaper named 'Gorkhapatra' served its liberal role towards the king, disseminating the message in support of the king and his initiatives so that people could favor the king's regime. The main motive was to disseminate positive messages about the autocratic rule.

This is an example of how political and business forces take control of the means of communication. We can put forward an argument that no instrument can censor information in an open society. However, I believe that all the means of communication are mobilized with certain objectives of earning profit. If the producer of the means of communication sees the chances of profit or if the message can harm their business or politics, they censor the message (Reflection Note, 4 June, 2016). In the open market where the means of communication is mobilized by business tycoons or politicians (private sector), such kind of censor risk is prevalent.

In Nepal, King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev opened up the platform for the private media (newspapers). The first daily newspaper from the private sector was Aawaz (Devkota, 1967). It was the step taken by the *Panchayat* system with a view to give space for a private daily newspaper (Baral, 1975). The hidden motive behind the privatization of the press was to disseminate the message to the public, which was uncovered by the government media.

After the *Rana* regime, the private newspapers did not dare to write against the government. If they had tried, they would have been seized and penalized. For instance, during the autocratic regime of the *Ranas*, critic and wirter Subba Krishnalal Adhikari was declared as a traitor and he was imprisoned. The state interpreted that Adhikari's book *Makaiko Kheti*[76] was meant for cajoling people into revolt against the government (Amatya, 2016). During that period, the government used different forms of folk media at the rural level.

Gopal recounted some traditional means of communication such as *Jhyali Pitne, Arma Parma* and *Katawal Karaune* that were used in the village when he was young. The folk means of communication such as *Damaha, Bigul and Jhyali* were in practice in rural areas. Such means of communication are not in practice these days due to the domination of the modern means of communication. Gopal shared,

> *My parents used to share the story about construction of Dharahara[77]. When Dharahara was under construction, the citizens used to be informed about the timetable of the construction work. So, a big Damaha and a big bell placed at the Hanuman Dhoka[78] palace were used to communicate with people. Later,*

76 Makaiko Kheti: Maize farming.

77 Dharahara: Bhimsen Tower at the center of Sundhara in Kathmandu. It was built in 1832 by Mukhtiyar (equivalent to Prime Minister) Bhimsen Thapa, but it was destroyed by the 2015 earthquake.

78 Hanuman Dhoka: A complex of structures with the Royal Palace of the Malla kings.

when Dharahara was built, Bigul was used. Bigul was used by the state to inform the citizens about big events like death of the prime minister or other events of high importance.

Gopal also shared that the administration used to inform the citizens about any events by beating *Jhyali*. The *Katawal Karaune* was practiced in the hilly areas of the country. *Jhyali* was used in the capital city only. Gopal went on to state, "*When the people heard of the sound of Jhyali, they used to gather in one place in their community or market for gambling during Tihar*[79]*. Soon after Tihar, Jhyali used to be beaten again to indicate the end of the time of gambling."* Moreover, *Jhyali* was used during local festivals in the Kathmandu Valley. In Patan, *Jhyali* was also used during *Bhoto Jatra*[80] *of Machhindranath Jatra*. In Bhaktapur, *Jhyali* was used to pass message during *Bisket Jatra*.

Gopal further revealed, *"Cannons used to be fired during the state of emergency like birth and death of the royal family members. At that time, I observed that cannons were fired when someone passed away in the Shree Teen family (Rana family). Further, it was used to impose curfews."* It shows that the regimes itself was the consumer of the means of communication. This section shows different forms of communication that had been in practice over the years. Moreover, it discussed the producers and consumers of the means of communication from the state to the individual level.

Peripheral Empowerment through Means of Communication

The production and consumption of the means of communication are different as per the peripheral empowerment. To understand the concept, I discussed it with

79 Tihar: A festival of lights celebrated by Hindus.
80 Bhoto: A traditional Nepalese vest.

Mahabhairav, who shared his ideas on communication. He shared *Katawal* system was very important in the rural society in the past, but it was disappearing in the modern days.

These days, the *Katawal* has been changed as per the demand of time. The *Katawal* system is modernized. In the past, the local *Jimmuwal*[81] used to order *Katawals* to disseminate messages to the people in the village. However, after democracy, the *Jimmuwal* system disappeared from the country.

The *Katawal* system still exists in some places. These days, *Katawals* are modernized. They listen to the information from radio sets and disseminate necessary information to others. This reveals that *Katawals* have been modernized and empowered. Today, *Katawals* use the modern instrument called a microphone. The microphone is a form of modern communication. This indicates that with the change in time, the producers and consumers of the means of communication have changed.

The *Nagarik Daily*[82] published a story on the *Katawal* system. The story reads, "*Some of the villages in Dhading district are not connected with modern communication and technology. People of this place still rely on the Katawal system. In the remotest part of this district, the mobile phone does not work properly. So, they have to rely on Katawals"* (Shrestha, 2016). It indicates that folk means of communication still exist in the places where modern means of communication are not available. The folk media also rely on the modern means of communication.

Disneyfication[83] through Communication Products

Disneyfication is the internalization of mass media and its influence on the mass. Disneyfication means bigger, faster and better entertainment programs,

81 Jimmuwal: Administrator.
82 Nagarik News: One of the daily newspapers published from Kathmandu.
83 Disneyfication: Transformation (as of something real or unsettling) into carefully controlled and safe entertainment or an environment with similar qualities.

produced at the global level and designed for controlling the masses (Matusitz & Palermo, 2014). It is associated with the internalization of entertainment culture. Matusitz and Palermo (2014) term Disneyfication as grobolization that is the combination of growth and globalization, where the means of communication plays a crucial role.

Disneyfication[84] in Village and Children

Thumko is gradually becoming advanced in terms of information and communication. In the past, there was only one means of communication — radio — in the village. However, after 2006, there are 15 plus FM stations. After the restoration of democracy, the number of newspapers swiftly increased in the country. There are 50 newspapers in *Mid-Hill* districts. These newspapers are mostly available in the urban commercial cities.

In the village, newspapers are not easily available. It is not because the villager cannot read, but because there are alternatives of mass media. The radio and television channels are easily accessible in the village. I feel that newspapers are not preferred in the rural village. Instead, television, radio and mobile phones are the most-preferred means. The Direct To Home (DTH), a satellite channel provider, offers than 250 channels in the village. DTH has created easy access of villagers to television. In some families, there were two television sets.

In the evening of 3 November, 2015, I was in a rush, moving towards my room from fieldwork. I was walking along a trail, near Mailis home. From the middle of the road, I heard a sound of cartoon, appealing and catchy. As a researcher, I was

84 Disneyfication: the transformation (as of something real or unsettling) into carefully controlled and safe entertainment or an environment with similar qualities

interested in watching the cartoon. I found that children were watching television. They were enjoying with the Disney channel. Maili shared,

> *I do not know the name of the channel as it is in English, our children prefer it to other channels. I have to care for four-five children. If they do not watch this cartoon, they create troubles. They start bickering. That's why, it's better to let them engage in television.*

This shows that the children consume the cartoon program in Disney[85] Channel. Disney Channel is the producer of the cartoon program. The family is a consumer. The Disney is becoming a culture among the children.

Maili also shared that her children love to watch cartoons in other channels too. The Disney's Channel focuses on children. Disney has become a culture created by the Disney channel. The Disney is one of the biggest companies in America that develops and broadcasts interesting contents for children (Morawitz & Mastro, 2008). The Disney is getting popular among children in the rural villages of Nepal.

The Disney channel teaches children how to act and interact with others in the family, school and society. Children learn from the channel how men and women are supposed to act in certain situation. The children categorize themselves as a male and female, following the same message of gender. The children learn attitudes, judgments and actions are framed through media (Morawitz & Mastro, 2008).

The programs, which are targeted to children do not only consume the time of children but also direct their behavior and emotions to the consumption culture. This is why, the international companies like Disney not only entertain children but also disseminate the popular culture and practices to them. Nowadays, children are

85 Disney: Animation, as part of media, regarded as an industry that commercializes the production of culture, not only businesses it produces, distributes and sells marketable products, animation has another equally important feature.

consuming different media and in diverse ways (Haddon, Livingstone, & the EU Kids Online Network, 2012).

Youths and Effects of Modern Communication

International channels have left different effects among youths. In my fieldwork, I observed that the teenagers loved to use the Android mobile phones. Most of them used various kinds of social media like Facebook, Viber and Whatsapp in mobiles. Among several social media, Facebook was mostly used in the village. The youths also used mobile phones and Internet to watch movies.

I saw my participants mostly engaged in mobile phones. Mobile phones have reduced/lessened the use of other means of communication among youths. The expansion of Internet services in the rural village of Nepal has reduced the use of television and newspapers among youths. All the news updates and information are available in the social media. The rapidly growing use of the Internet and mobile phones is directing the youths towards a techno-life, meaning the culture of using different forms of technology in everyday life. The life without technology is difficult these days (Reflection Note, September 19, 2015).

It is stated that the mobile-mediated communication will dominate the life of people in coming days (Brazier, 2015; Garrahan, 2017). Observing the daily life activities in *Thumko*, I agreed with the claim. This is because people can watch television and films, listen to the radio, read newspapers and pay for necessary deliverables through mobile phones. The multifunctional role of mobile phones has not only expanded the sale of mobile sets, but also increased the users of Internet. In Nepal, 54% of the total population is using the Internet (Nepal Telecommunication Authority, 2016).

Shiva Baje shared, *"Nowadays, the youths are grown up with technology. They mediate cultural values, fashion, national and international practices in the rural village."* Shiva's idea shows that the social media have played a pivotal role of a catalyst among youths. He recited, *"In the changing context, the youths a trust on network. They share their ideas, beliefs, ability and inability, hoping to get supports from their friends through networks."* As stated in Chapter IV, Kripti Thapa showed her craziness on the use of mobile phones and Internet. She also shared that life becomes tasteless without mobile phones and Internet. This indicates that there will be grobolization[86] of technology and communication in coming days.

I remembered one of the influential conversations with my friend Modnath regarding the growth of mass media in the future. He is a Kathmandu-based journalist. He opined, *"In the coming decade also, the agenda will be set by mass media. The social media will be the platform to discuss the agenda raised by mass media.*" At present, observing the situation in my study area, I feel that his opinion is relevant.

In Nepal, most of the agenda related to livelihood, social institution, communication and technology, and policy and plans are influenced by mass media. Importantly, we cannot forget the role of social media. The social media plays a virtual role to disseminate the agenda set by mass media (Reflection Note, 1 September 2015).

There is growing individualization in society. Technology has connected the world, but disconnected the human norms. There is a need of friend-to-friend or family-to-family communication (Thiebaud, 2010). This is because the technology has turned human far away i.e. disconnection of feeling, as there is no frequent eye-

86Grobolization: A blend of growth and globalization.

to-eye conversation among youths. This is why Newman, Duttion and Blank (2012) state that Internet and social media have brought a landslide revolution.

Recently, I read a message shared by one of my friends in Twitter. Her feelings were related to youths and mercilessness rife in society. When something bad takes place, people usually pick up mobile phones and take pictures. They give priority to sharing information rather than helping others in need. Kalpana Bhandari recounted a merciless situation caused by a massive fire in Kathmandu. She wrote, "*Kuleshowerma bhishan aagali bhairacha. Tetra manche jamma bhachan tara haat haatma mobile video khichna besta dehkinchan. k banayo prabidhile manche lai*[87]?" These are the shortcomings of technocratic life. It is due to individualization and the influence of modern means of communication (Reflection Note, 1October, 2015).

Changing Means of Communication and Consumption Patterns

The matured or elderly people use simple mobile phones to receive calls. They love to watch television. Gopal shared,

> *Four decades ago, when I had a chance to tune on the radio, I was glad myself. It was for the first time in my life I had used radio. I had that opportunity in 2030 or 2031 B.S. (1972-73 AD). At that time, there used to be the need of license to use radio, and I had the license. But, time has changed. I have a radio set, a mobile phone and a television set at my home.*

It reveals that the government used to regulate the means of communication in the past. For the first time in the history of Nepal, Nepal Television project was initiated on Magh 17, 2041 B. S. (31 January, 1987) and first test transmission was done on Shrawan 29, 2042 B. S. (13 August, 1985). Before the official transmission,

87 Kuleshower ma bhishan aagali bhairacha, tetra manche jamma bhachan tara haat haatma mobile video khichna besta dehkincha, k banayo prabidile manche lai: There is a massive fire in Kuleshower of Kathmandu. Crowds have thronged the place, but they are busy in taking videos instead of helping the victims. I doubt if the modern technology developing good citizens?

only some people in *Thumko* had a television set at their homes. They brought the television sets from India. During 2041-2042, B.S. (1984 A.D.), people used to watch TV using antennas and videocassettes in rural villages. Gopal shared that they first watched the *Ramayan*[88] first shown on television. He shared that people did *Puja* before they came to his home to watch the *Ramayan* with curiosity.

Gopal went on to share,

> *Then after, gradually, landline telephone came in our village. At that time, we had a single telephone line and all the villagers used to come here for receiving information. We used to collect the message of people and share with them. Even until 2058 to 2060 B.S. (2001 to 2003), our village had only two lines of telephone."*

The context now is different from the past. At present, people have easy access to SIM cards and mobile sets.

In the past, having a set of radio or landline phone was the matter of pride. Gopal stated that he has experienced my changes in the short period. Many changes are still taking place in the sector of technology and communication. In our discussion, he predicted the future, "*I have read that in coming 25 years, there will be no landline telephones; communication will be free; there will be only data transfer; no books will be printed; classrooms will be paperless; all newspapers will go digital*." Referring to the recent changes, he stated,

> *When the mobile phone was introduced in Nepal, it cost Rs. 45,000. A laptop cost around Rs. 125,000 to 150,000. I had purchased a desktop computer for Rs. 40,000 while my father could purchase eight acres of land just for Rs.*

88 Ramayan: An Indian epic television series, which aired during 1987-1988, created, written, and directed by Ramanand Sagar.

36,000. And, now the old technology is being replaced by the new ones. The gadgets are being smaller and cheaper.

Technology is rapidly changing in the country. The techno-culture is increasing. Tiko Sharma stated that there is a rapid change in the communication system, with the development in technology. He shared, *"When Abraham Lincoln died, Nepal knew about it only after three months. However, the time and context is changed. The globalization i.e. technology, has made our society much faster."* It indicates that technology, particularly the means of communication has moved the society far ahead. Tiko further said,

In the city, there were fax machines, photocopy machines, telephone lines, email, etc. I went to The Netherlands in 1994 for study. No one had email address then. In 1995, I used an email address of an organization working in Kathmandu. I used that official email for several times. Later, websites came. Soon after that, news portals were introduced. Now, we do not need to say about all the changes and progress related to technology and communication, it is all visible.

The use of Viber, Whatsapp, Facebook, etc. is rife in cities after the expansion of mobile phones and Internet. Tiko recalled his past,

I used to write letters to send them to my home from Kathmandu. There were three ways of sending a letter — khambandi, hawai patra [89]and postcards. I remember sending letters with a postal stamp on it in rupees one. Now the postal system has been replaced by email and social sites.

Thus, there is a massive growth and globalization of different means of communication as per the choice and interest of different generations.

89 Khambandi, Hawai-Patra: A practice of sending letters from post box.

Production and Consumption for Mass Politics

Politics, media, and state have a tri-polar relation. They are three important stakes that have connections to each other if we analyze the situation of Nepal (Banjade, 2006). The means of communication plays an important role in the structural changes from monarchy to democracy in Nepal. The democratic state has provided a free space for media and independent media is playing the check-and-balance role, bridging the people and the state.

In Nepal, the media is playing the role of an information mediator, either during the decade-long conflict or during the autocratic rule of the *Ranas* and kings. When I was a reporter for *Sailung Weekly* in *Dolakha* in 2004/05, the people were trapped in the war between the Maoists and the government (Upadhayay, 2015). The king had the executive power. At that time, media was playing an important role to aware people with credible information.

My participant Janak Karki shared,

> *At that time, the local people were silent regarding the Maoist insurgency. The people who disagreed with the Maoists were compelled to leave the village. Sometimes, the Maoists-managed FM stations used to coerce the people who competed against their party ideology. Cities were under the government control. The people who spoke against the autocratic regime were considered terrorists. On the one hand, the government had suppressed the political parties; on the other hand, the Maoists had taken revenge.*

The situation of terror was in both rural and urban areas. He added, "*Afterwards, the seven-party alliance, including Nepali Congress, Communist Party of Nepal (United Marxist and Leninist) [CPN (UML)] and some other parties search for a common ground and signed an agreement to move against the king's take-over*."

During that movement, the mass media played an important role. Media was regarded as one of the stakeholders besides the political parties.

There were seven political parties and media was regarded as the eighth party, a strong representative of civil society. It empowered people to march against the direct rule of the king (Diary Note, 14 December, 2015). As a result, the 2006 uprising pressured the king to search for a common ground.

Karki further recited, *"After the re-establishment of democracy, the press and media rules and regulations were vividly made flexible and liberal. The Right to Information (RTI) was ensured by the state."* He further said, *"In the villages, the local politicians used different means of communication such as mobile phones, FM radio and television channels to listen to the news and views of their leaders. Not only that, they also opened FM stations and published newspapers to disseminate their agenda at the local level*." Ian and Subba (2007) state that the trend of opening media houses for political benefits was common Nepal. They further mentioned that politics and commercial forces owned media in Nepal. There is partition journalism and party-based media in district headquarters. Leaders make assumptions to convince their cadres for political benefits (Reflection Note, February 2016).

As an ethnographic researcher, I went to teashops to listen to the hot debates among the locals. Local teashops are the place for gathering. I observed that those who were interested in politics and the government visited the teashops at least once a day to listen to others and participate in the hot discussions.

In the initial days of my study, especially during the border blockade, the locals used to discuss the constitution-making process and the blockade. I felt that the debate was possible due to the information disseminated by the mass media. At that

time, the media had played an important role in disseminating the information about the border blockade, politics and the constitution drafting process.

When I woke up every morning at 7:30 in August 2015, I used to go to teashops to listen to the debates. Rishna Thapa, a local leader, belonged to the democratic line and Gopal Thapa supported the progressive line. The political faiths were quite opposite. They used to argue in line with the interest of the political party they favored. They also constructed their opinions on contemporary issues by listening to the visual media or reading print media. In order to collect political information, Gopal used FM radio whereas Rishna used television channels.

Rishna shared that he watched televisions for news. He claimed, *"Politics and media are important stakes to rule and run the society. Radio and television are working as instruments for disseminating political agenda."* In Nepal, not only television and radio but newspapers also give emphasis on political news than on other social issues (Ian & Subba, 2007; Acharya et al., 2010).

Gopal perceives, *"Without political philosophy, the message or the idea disseminated through different media is not easily understood."* He further opined, *"The reason behind this saying is that one must have some background knowledge of understanding ultimate mottos of the political parties.*" Without political knowledge, the information regarding politics cannot be understood well. So, political background is necessary (Moeller & Vreese, 2015), but when the political news is diluted with a business motive, it creates a complex situation. This is indication as how media is dominated by both politics and commerce. No different is the situation of rural Nepal.

Gopal Thapa stated, *"Young people have their own way of thinking, education level, and friends' circle to influence their opinions. They feel that politics is backed with the criminalization, politics and business. They are informed from their peers*

and social networks." Scholars (Ian & Subba, 2007; Rijal, 2014) clearly note that in Nepal, the mass media is revolving around politics and business.

My participant Tiko Sharma claimed, *"Politically divided FM radios, online portals and newspapers publish information to serve the hidden interest. They create confusions in that people cannot identify which information is right and which is wrong.*" I am also from a political family and worked as a journalist for 15 years for a national media house. From my experience and my background, I feel that media need purifications.

Increasing Expenditure on Means of Communication

The modern means of communication is becoming expensive. The more the new technology enters the market, the higher the price goes up. Janak Karki stated that the city is near and people can buy the technology of their choice. He stated, *"I have a separate mobile set. Each of my family members has a separate mobile phone. Some of them have two mobile sets."* His opinion shows that the number of the consumers using mobile phones is increasing, thereby incurring high expenditure.

Janak Karki shared that price of television was also increasing but the weight of the technology was gradually decreasing. For instance, the mobile phone is portable these days. He recited, "*People have different television sets in their homes. Nowadays, we need one television set with cable connection in each room. The lion's share of income is spent on technology."* I feel that people are interested in buying new and branded television sets and mobile phones.

My participant Paru Dejua shared, "*In the past, people were dependent on their family heads for the new information. Now, the situation has changed. We can have our personal means of communication."* The Nepali market is the importer of

modern goods. This has enabled local people to consume the modern means of communication as per their interests.

Janak Karki also presented his idea from national perspective, stating that Nepal's monetary resources is being used in trading, especially in buying the different means of communication and necessary stuff. He stated, *"Do anybody think that the bigger part of economy has gone for import? In the basket of import, the media and Internet have a big share."* The mass media technology is regarded as an instrument of individual choice, which could not be barred. On the other hand, Nepal does not produce the media technology of its own. This is why, we depend on global technology.

English as the Dominant Language of Production and Consumption

I remember a quote of Allen Ginsberg and Jim Morrison: "*Whoever controls the media and images controls the culture; whoever controls the media controls the mind.*" To control something, the English language is emerged as a dominant language. The images and cultures are transmitted through the means of communication. The English language has become the dominant language. For instance, in mobile sets, we can easily observe the English language as instructional language.

Further, English jargons and words are disseminated to the public through advertisements. When I was a child, my parents and school teachers used to say that knowing English is something to make you good and intelligent. Their view portrays our perceptions towards the English language. These days, most of the institutions use the English language on their products. It has contributed to the increase in the sale of the product and the spread of the English language.

Acharya (2009) discusses the English language used in television commercials. He mentioned that the television commercials have increased the level of the interest to learn the English language. He further stated that people want to be English-friendly to connect ownself with the global market. There are English words and jargons in news or advertisments which has compelled the audience to become familiar with the English language (Reflection Note, 22 September, 2015). Awasthi (2004) discusses that the English language has become central in educational institutions. Educational institutions attract students through English teaching learning practices.

I feel that schools, advertisements, media and communications have contributed in the promotion of the English language in Nepal (Reflection Note, 22 September, 2015). The radio, television, Facebook etc. promote the English language through technology. In the villages, television, radio, newspapers, online-media, Facebook, Viber, Skype, Whatsapp, Mobile messaging, remote channels and tele-serials are the means of communication that spread the English language. The English language is increasingly expanding in the rural villages through different means of communication and global products.

Essence of the Chapter

The spirit of this chapter is to explore the power perspective while understanding the means of communication from the lens of media consumers. This chapter primarily explains how rural people understand the means of communication and its ownership. It also highlighted the Disneyfication of rural village metaphorically that represents the domination and effects of means of communication in spreading standard culture of global.

CHAPTER VIII

COMMUNICATION TODAY: VIEWING FROM WITHIN PRAGMATISM

This chapter presents an analytical overview of my previous chapters. In the previous chapters, I discussed several means of communication, their influence on livelihoods and local institutions. In doing so, I discussed production and consumption of the means of communication. The previous chapters show that there is a heavy influence of modern means of communication in rural villages of Nepal.

A broader understanding is essential to understand the means of communication at a deeper level. I have extracted some major ideas: the blend of traditional and modern means, glocalization of livelihoods, changing forms of governance, the situation of local institution. Cultural imperialism, technological determinism, liberalization, open market, theory of Jean Baudrillard – postmodern theory (media) and globalization are some of the theoretical lenses. Based on these theoretical perspectives, I have developed the idea of cultural-political expansionism, which explains the present changes in society.

Journey towards Modernization

The democratic political movements in Nepal taken place in 1950, 1990 and 2006 have liberalized the state and non-state instruments. The liberalization set ground for the proliferation of various means of communication. Expansion of the means of communication is an outcome of democracy and liberalization. The liberalization has drastically changed the society, especially in terms of socio-cultural practices. It also brought a drastic change in policy related to communication and

technology. It also created an environment to import standard culture and values of the West.

I termed the popular culture as a standard culture. The standard culture has some definite norms and values and/or forms and standards (Robinson, 2005). The culture is seen in products and brands. Ideological domination of international language and trade, democracy and entrance of multinational products all over the world are some of the major examples. In intervention of the standard culture, mass media/means of communication plays a facilitative role. When the media promotes an ideology or a product on a regular basis, it influences the perceptions of the people. Regular dissemination of the information regarding particular products and services through media creates an environment of the consumerism culture.

The dish home, mobile phones, Internet and other forms of mass media such as television, radio and online news portals are some of the examples of modern means of communication used in the rural villages of Nepal. The modern means expanded, the folk/traditional means of communication lost their grip. In some villages (as presented in the example of Dhading[90] district) of Nepal, where the modern means of communication are not extended, the folk means of communication still exist. *Katawal Karaune* is still practiced in the villages though they are not exactly in the traditional form. The microphone is used in the *Katawal Karaune* system, promoting modernization.

The *Jhyali Pitne*, *Bigul Fukne* and *Damaha Thokne* are less in practice in the Kathmandu valley or in urban centers. This is because of the domination of the modern means of communication. This shows that the modern means of communication support the spread of the standard culture and modern means.

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90 Dhading: One of the districts in the central region of Nepal.

In the rural village, expansion of the means of communication began with radio consumerism habits. The journey is still incomplete as there are several forms of media to consume. It is becoming advanced and modern. Dish home system (a channel distributed through a satellite system) and advanced mobile technology have left all other means of communication far behind. Social media is being used excessively. The use of social media is increasing all over the globe (Adum et al., 2015). The consuming culture of the means of communication has changed Nepali society culturally or customarily. For instance, in the village, mobile phones have become an important instrument of communication.

It is the Armageddon of tradition and traditional practices. In every society, the folk communication is supported and protected by socio-culture of society. If these cultures are replaced by the standard culture, it will certainly affect the existing practices that are diverse in nature. The standardization of communication obviously opens up a door for a new culture. In a broader sense, it can be argued that liberalization and democratization area fertile zone for a standard culture that opens the door to a new culture. Within the basket of the standard/popular culture, the modern means of communication become crucial.

Concerns can be raised that with the expansion of the modern means of communication, traditional means are slowly disappearing from the scene. This is an important issue while discussing the modern forms of media, their expansion and cultural practices. According to Piketty (2014), it is because of the capital, trade, aid, technology and liberalization of the policy of the state that the local traditions have remained weak, and modern instruments have dominated the weak traditions. The modern tools influence the society in different ways in a liberal market space. In such a situation, the traditional values and traditional systems are left in the shade.

The open economy and open market policy strips off all the restrictions on socio-cultural, political and economic matters. The global means of communication enter easily in the weak socio-cultural domain of the society. Globalization would arguably be impossible without liberalization (a set of national and international policy and practices) of commercial media that promotes global communication and technology market encouraging consumerism (Mirrlees, 2013).

Chances are high for media houses to disseminate information that support their ideologies. It is called the political economy of media or media economics. Media output (content) has a potential impact. The media economics helps for the globalization of media industries, and offers an interdisciplinary focus. Four forces that control the neoliberal market are: privatization, management and manipulation of crisis and state redistributions (Harvey, 2003), a major mechanism of globalization.

Glocalization of Livelihoods in Nepali Society

The term 'glocalization' is the combination of ‘globalization’ and ‘localization’. It is useful in explaining the existing practice of livelihood in the rural Nepali society. It claims that products or services spread globally and they are adjusted to accommodate the consumers in the local market. More specifically, glocalization of the means of communication plays a crucial role in the spread of new forms of commodity products and practices. It has established popular culture and products in the rural territory. In other words, the modern means of communication have caused the establishment of standard culture that has threatened own descent livelihood practices.

Many research studies (DFID, 1999; Ghimire (2012); Chapman et al., 2016) assert that livelihood is not only associated with higher income, well-being and food security. It is all about sustainability of production. If the society glocalizes the new

practices of livelihood with blind eyes, it will definitely create dependency (Adum et al., 2015).

The modern means of communication encourage the use of global practices such as global culture and values, food items and clothes. For instance, messages about the products of Nike or Dabur or Fair & Lovely or Pepsi or Coca-Cola are frequently heard of in mass media (Ghimire, 2012; Dhungana & Pfefferle, 2016). These are the products of the capitalist global market. The global market pays advertisers of different means of communication to influence the masses (Adum et al., 2015). The global products cannot reach all the masses individually and different means of communication become easy and economical way for them to spread the message of their own interest.

In the field of mass communication, it is argued that news is free, but advertisements are paid (Heilbrun, Wolbransky, Shah, & Kelly Rebecca, 2010). In rural Nepal, news does not promote the local values and culture. Instead paid advertisements are disseminated. The advertisements not only promote new services and products but also introduce new culture and custom (Straubhaar, 2007).

The means of communication supports in establishing different brands of products (Nyarko, Tsetse, & Avorgah, 2015). The products may be goods or services. This could be media's programs like 'Disney' or the Indian cinema and television serials in the rural village. For instance, as stated in Chapter VII, the Disneyfication among the children in Nepali villages is common. The mass media teach new culture and the new culture motivates them to buy new products and services. The global mass media allows communication to cross national boundaries (Matusitz & Palermo, 2014). The advent of mobile phones and the increasing use of Internet brought

revolution that has supported people to be informed about the global products and culture.

The mass media contributes in searching foreign employment opportunities and service sector industry that is available in the local or urban cities. For those who are searching labor jobs to sustain their livelihood, the mass media have become a crucial tool (Mick & Fournier, 1998). The mass media disseminates job-related information through different means of communication.

A recent update of International Labor Organization (2016) shows that flow of labor migrants is high. Foreign employment seekers fly off for foreign employment to sustain livelihood. This is not only a case of Nepal. The trend is all over the South Asian region. The annual outflow of human resources from South Asian countries is 2.5 million per year. The figure presented by ILO shows that India is on the top in sending workers (at 747,000 workers), followed by Pakistan (623,000 workers), Nepal (454,000 workers), Bangladesh (409,000 workers) and Sri Lanka (282,000 workers). This is the reason there is an increasing flow of South Asian workers in Gulf countries for employment (ILO, 2016). This figure is not only about the flow of migrants to Gulf countries (global), but also shows how poor people are increasingly dependent on others to sustain their livelihood (Ghimire, 2016).

Chandrasekhar states that the agrarian crisis, deceleration in manufacturing and growth and inability of the government are some of the challenges in South Asian nations who adopted liberalization (My Republica Daily, 2017). He referred to the cases of Nepal and India. In addition to liberalization, I feel that the local market and industry are threatened due to the limited use of technology and capital. The trend of exporting labor forces seems a remedy at present. However, this can be a severe setback for the South Asian nations in the long run (My Republica Daily, 2017).

Contemplating the context aforementioned, I feel that expansion of the means of communication and technology does not change its role for better livelihood of people (Wyatt, 2008). In this situation, the institutions, culture, policies, laws and the means of communication need to be interlinked (Ghimire, 2012).

Nowadays, it is said that the society is dynamic and progressive. With the technological advancement, the dominant values, products, cultures and philosophies have brought great changes in the other societies. The situation is almost similar in Nepal, Bhutan, India, China and Japan. In fact, the Eastern societies are not able to promote their own cultures and values at all levels because the global forces have used their powerful means such as media, products and policies to encroach upon the traditional cultures. These forces in different forms are threatening the local values. However, the Eastern societies are knowingly or unknowingly adapting the dominant values because media always put pressure on them for legitimization.

After modeling of culture and philosophy, the global forces can rule the market by establishing their own products and policies. The global forces dominates means of communication, livelihood and the local institutions. This does not mean that the existing practices of the society have not been able to uphold the democratic values and practices. However, both the state forces and market need to acknowledge the existing practices. Japan made efforts to maintain the traditions and uphold democratic society, keeping balance between the modern practices and the traditional practices of the society.

Changing Forms of Governance in Modern Time

The modern governance system has ruled the society on political basis (through state instruments) and focuses on written rules and regulations, instead of unwritten culture-based values. The traditional unwritten norms and values were

backed by the culture, associated with faith and beliefs. In Nepali society, these values have an influential role. The local model of governance such as *Jimmuwal, Thari, Mukhiya, Patwari, Chaudhary, Gamesta, Godayet, Subba, Pagari, Majiy* and *Gaurung* are an example of governance practices supported by local values.

In the past, there were the positions of *Mukhiya*, *Talukdar* and *Jimmuwal* in the rural areas. *Jamindar* and *Patwari* were administrators in the Terai areas. They worked within the area of their authority under the norms set by their castes and customs. However, these practices disappeared after the establishment of democracy in the country (Bhattachan, 2016). The old traditional values and systems were considerable failure with regards to development and governance.

It is important to note that media supports the existing government system. In the *Rana* regime, the newspaper was under the control of the *Ranas*. Even the traditional means of communication such as *Katawal Karaune, Jhyali Pitne, Bigul Fukne* were controlled by the state. It shows that regimes keep message-disseminating instruments under their control to spread the policies and cultures of their own interest. If we observe the Nepali society, we see that it is guided by its own religious and cultural philosophies. For instance, the Hindu society believes in God, unity of existence through love, religious harmony and knowledge. It is fully different and contested with global principles.

A large section of our society was guided by Hindu norms and values focusing on duty. The cultural values were derived from *Manusmriti*, an ancient Hindu legal text (Chandu & Banothu, 2016). It focused much on *Dharma* (duty-based society) where the prime concern was the welfare of people (Pandey, 2017). Although, the duty is associated with rights and rights are associated with duty, the notion of duty is not emphasized in the Nepali society. Now, the duty-based governance is blurred.

There is much emphasis on the right-based frame. Why? It is because this frame was developed by those in power, to maintain their existence and hegemony.

In my study area, I found duality. The Nepali society has diverse cultural practices in rural villages and these practices are governed by the traditional cultural values. The society's philosophical bases are Hinduism and Buddhism and the state instruments are developed as per the global sentiment (non-Hinduism, non-Buddhism). Disappearance of duty-based society has created disorder in our society, development, communication, volunteerism and support.

There is a gradual decrease in participation on the part of the community members in social-cultural work and development related functions. In the past, the development initiative in rural villages was backed by volunteerism. Now, development is considered as rights and mainly the obligation of the state. It is understood that development is something that state must invest in. The delay in service and its delivery, corruption, misuse of resources and fraud are active behind the curtain. If we want to clean water, the source needs to be cleaned, instead of the tap. Therefore, I think the guiding principles of our own culture need to be followed for good governance.

Glocalization and globalization are taken positively under the principle of international civilization (Mazower, 2006). However, it is criticized as it is associated with the expansion of the standard culture. Globalization is understood as international civilization, which is criticized as another form of colonialism that promotes 'popular culture'.

In the past, colonization took place for ruling purpose, through military and trades. In the changing context, the standard culture and products are spread through modern media, creating positive influence (Cabelkova, Strielkowski, & Mirvald,

2015). Cabelkova et al. (2015) further state that there is a capitalistic influence on every media organization. This process has supported the universalization of economic, technological, cultural or political flows.

Extensionalism, universalization and homogenization of norms and values, principles, indignity and identity are spread through means of communication (Rutovic, 2016). In rural villages of Nepal, schools, clubs, mothers groups, saving and credit groups, water, forest and road consumer groups were formally instituted. However, they are governed under the global policy. In this situation, a tussle is created in the institutions (Ghosh, 2006, p. 4) due to forced hegemony.

Means of Communication as Soft Global Tools

The main features of globalization are liberalization, free trade, economic activities, borderless globe and top-down flow of multinational corporations (Adum et al., 2015). The market capitalism is defined as an economic system where private actors are allowed to control and use the resources as per their interest. This system is termed as indirect governance (Scott, 2017).

To formalize the indirect governance, the means of communication become useful tools. Even the means of communication are controlled by the liberal market supporting each other. There are competition, demand and supply. To facilitate this process, the means of communication play important roles. Scott (2007) defines that at present the competition takes place in a market with institutional foundations of global means of communication.

Capitalism aims to promote market through the means of communication. For this, the primary action of the means of communication is to expand various means of communication so that they can uphold the market. For instance, the increasing use of mobile technology, Internet and Internet-mediated communication can reach

individuals easily. Trans-National Corporations (TNC) take support of the means of communication, advertisements and news. The powerful countries which are the producers of modern means of communication, mobilize communication instruments to boost the sale of communication tools (Mirrlees, 2013, p. 242).

It shows that media are associated with business. I feel that if business and policies work in collusion, interactive globalization is created which is also called interactive domination. It supports the growth of monoculture (a culture empire which is imposed as a new culture in the other parts of world), which replaces local cultures. Therefore, the globalization/expansionism is a one-way planned circulation, that flows from the developed by powerful nations (Mirrlees, 2013, p. 242).

Media was discussed within the frame of globalization in the post-colonial discourse. Within this discussion, there are several issues. Among them, the globalization of means of communication includes the trans-border cultural expansionism, where the superior culture of the affluent dominates the other culture (Nordenstreng, 2013). Cultural colonialism through means of communication is effective nowadays than the direct colonalism (Boron, 2004; Nordenstreng, 2013). Nowadays, the media domination starts from culture, technology, governance policy, knowledge, migration, job and food (Movius, 2010).

Cultural-Political Proliferation: A New Genre in the Changed Context

After the World War II, the world began to adapt and advance the means of communication, foodstuffs, products, cookeries, shops and restaurant menus and every aspect (Nyarko et al., 2015). The Trans-National Corporations (TNC) are using different means of communication to sell the global products. In other words, the modern means of communication become easy tools for the expansion of multi-national products.

The products of national and multinational corporations are used in the rural villages of Nepal. Noodles, biscuits, chocolates, packaged rice and potato chips are advertised through different means of communication. The expansion of these products has removed the locals' dependency on own products. (Petrova, 2005) states that the means of communication are used for mass selling with an aim of profit and gain. This shows that the commercial products are disseminated through communication means. Due to the expansion of modern means, the consumption pattern has been changed in rural life.

The main motto of proliferation or expansionism is to control over another nation politically, economically, socially or culturally (Adum et al., 2015; Nordenstreng, 2013). In the past, expansionism was based on God, gold and glory. Expansionism, during colonial time, targeted mercantilism, exploiting resources of the colonies. The Mother countries enjoyed monopoly, which were governed under the benevolent protection. However, there is a shift in expansionism, which is 'new expansionism' that occurred with political awareness and with less internal political involvement. The transition of expansionism gained popularity after the spread of democracy in most of the countries. They are protected by liberal market (Boron, 2004).

The expansionism depends on economic actors and their spheres of influence. The actors of expansionism are government, means of communication and TNCs. These actors use the means of communication as an easy tool to influence the perception of individuals so that the commodity culture can be set easily (Nordenstreng, 2013). The products such as Coca-Cola, Hollywood and Bollywood movies, the English language, pop music, blue jeans, Harvard, Columbia, and Stanford and Fulbright, NATO and neo-liberalism, McDomination, Coca-colonization

and Disneyfication are some of the examples of cultural, political and communication expansionism.

In the past, the colonial actors were the countries such as Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, and Portugal (McPhail, 1987). The British policies used to focus on indirect rule. They used to persuade local officers. The local chiefs become puppet administrators. French rule was termed as direct rule, where they employed French officials in the field. The African nations, who adopted the culture (language, dress, and lifestyle) of French nationals, were allowed to become French citizens. It is an implication of direct hegemony and rule. However, time has changed. With the change in time, the ruling purpose and aim is different. The way of rule is different, but the imperialistic or expansionist interest remains the same. In the past, the main purpose of hegemony was to absorb the resource, which has continued differently at present (Alhassan, 2004; Thussu, 2000).

At present, expansionism is mediated through different means of communication, policies and standard culture (Thussu, 2000; Adum et al., 2015). The developing world cannot resist the imperialist expansionism. There is the situation of do or die, meaning that either we must use the modern products or remain away from global mainstreaming politics. The reason is that the traditional life and culture, the traditional means of communication are unworkable. Expansion of the means of communication promotes expansionism. For instance, Facebook has been established as a culture in rural villages. Each person has an easy access of Facebook (Sonia, 2004). In rural villages, the local people buy mobile phones to use Internet and Facebook.

In the rural society, people are empowered, detaching themselves from the inferiority in the absence of information. In this situation, I termed the proliferation

as ‘cultural-political’. In the previous chapters and above section of this chapter, I discussed many theories to explain the use of the means of communication. Cultural imperialism, technological determinism, liberalization, open market and globalization were blended to develop a cultural-political view. Drawing on different theoretical perspectives, I developed the idea of cultural-political proliferation, which supports to explain the present changes of society.

Essence of the Chapter

This is analytic chapter based upon the different research questions. The essence of this chapter is to explore how the rural Nepali society is steering towards modernization due to the influence of different means of communication. This chapter also illuminates the expansion of modern means of communication that has threatened the local productions, the tug of war between old and new forms of law and policies to govern local institutions making local institutions vulnerable and defunct. This section mainly details that the expansion of the modern means of communication causes the expansion of democracy, liberalization and modernization, resulting in the strong hegemony.

CHAPTER IX

REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

In the previous chapters, I presented the information, my feelings and emotions to address my research questions. In this chapter, I present the overall reflections on how the research problem was identified and the research questions were framed. I begin with conceptualization and development of the research questions, followed by development of theoretical premises and my experiences as an ethnographer. I share my own experiences as a student in Kathmandu University School of Education and the challenges I faced during my study. Finally, I wrap up this chapter with conclusions, key implications and future directions.

Conceptualizing the Research Agenda

This research comprises both my experience as a journalist and a student. I used to work as a news reporter for media houses before 2013. I left the media when I was enrolled in university. I am also a student of sociology and communications. My profession and study went simultaneously. I studied books related to communications and social sciences. I participated in the conferences and discussions, particularly on mass media.

A village of *Dolakha*, which I selected as a research site, was a pushing factor that made me conceptualize this research. The rural area where I was born and grown up had an array of societal networks such as schools, cooperatives and local consumer groups. I choose this research project to understand the means of communication from societal perspectives. Driven by the research interest in the field of communication, I joined Kathmandu University School of Education and engaged myself in studying

literature pertaining to communication. I discussed the issue with my peers, presented papers in and outside the university. I reviewed newspapers, journals and available sources in the Internet. After completion of the coursework, I was assigned to focus on the modes of communication and governance. Later, it was turned to the means of communication and good governance. My study followed the ethnographic design, which allows themes to emerge from the field.

In addition, the theme of livelihood and local institution emerged, making it a wide-ranging sociological study, with the means of communication at the center. In the initial phase of conceptualizing the research agenda, I observed the means of communication used by the people in the village. It gave me a deeper insight into the nature of people in society. Initally, I categorized the means of communication into two: modern and traditioal. In the course of time, the concept of globalization and imperialism emerged as a theoretical back-up, leading me to the discussion of capitalism, neo-liberalism, and corporatism.

Developing My Research Questions

Means of communication, livelihood and local institutions are contemporary issues in academia. Earlier, the following questions came to my mind: Who am I for this claim? How do I perceive mass media? What is the role of mass media? What has become better /worse with the expansion of mass media? Prior to developing my research questions, I contemplated on several questions as above. In the initial phase, I did not take any specific research questions; I focused only on guiding questions. As a qualitative researcher, I asked myself a number of questions related to the research topic in attempt to resolve complications through engagement.

In this study, I focused on the availability of means of communication and their influence on livelihoods and local institutions. I tried to explore how local villagers perceive and explain the means of communication in their contexts.

Means of communication is not free from influence. The influence is caused by politics or business (Ian & Subba, 2007). Direct business and political interests in the media result in shaping the intended ideology and information (Khanal, 2006, p. 178). Influence is in both national and global level (Herman & Chomsky, 1988; Petrova, 2005; Roblin, 2011). Going through the literature mentioned above made my research take a critical turn. My engagement in the research agenda set a ground for several questions: How can the means of communication contribute to reforms? Does good governance exist in our society? Are the means of communication operating for the changes of common people or global corporations? How do the means of communication influence patterns of livelihood and local institutions? What are the consequences of the expansion of the means of communication? Finally, four questions were identified to guide my research:

1. What are the means of communication available in rural villages?
2. How do the means of communication influence the livelihood of people?
3. How do people see the contribution of the means of communication to local institutions?
4. How are relations between the producer and the consumer of the means of communication?

Based on these research questions, I explored the perceptions, understandings, experiences and explanations of the people. With these research questions, I believed that I would be able to unravel the nature of the expansion of the means of communication and their influence on livelihood and local institutions.

Developing Conceptual and Theoretical Premises

The social reality is not sufficent to help us understand the means of communication and their influence on livelihood and local institutions. Theoretical premises fill this vacuum. I went on searching the theoretical premises that could aptly explain the agenda I introduced in this research. The means of communication is creating a new order. For me, the new order is something related to the new culture, changed livelihood and institutions. I connect the means of communication with power, which is assosiated with new order (Madianou, 2015). Mostly, the new order or the new culture is set by influence, supremecy and rule. The basic purpose of influence is to control.

The means of communication is also known as a product of capitalism. It promotes liberation in trade, democratization in politics, English in academia, and promotion of consumerism in business as a whole for fulfilling the basic purpose (i.e. rule). In the past, military power, aid and trade were powerful instruments. Means of communication disseminate commodity and culture. They flow the message of the products and services. Therefore, I believed that the reality of the means of communication could not be understood merely by observing social contexts. It made me adopt the concept of capitalism and neo-liberalism.

The scope of the means of communication is vague. Livelihood and local institutions also are broad topics. Scotland (2012) notes that everyday life of people, whereever they live, whatever their situation is, is influenced by means of communication. To define different means of communication such as informational tools, folk media, mass media and social media, and their influence, knowledge about different theories is necessary. The theories of imperialism (Schiller, 1989, p. 6), economic determinism (Marx, 1843), and core and peripheral relation (Galtung, 1971)

were reviewed. My study also demands the theory of globalization and mass media, and technology (Robinson, 2005).

The defenders of neo-liberalism were not late in announcing that the advent of globalization has brought the end of expansionism (Boron, 2004; Sabir, 2013). However, I understood that it is a false claim because the means of communication are controlled by the monopoly of power. I argue that globalization set the ground for expansionism. The means of communication were converted into propaganda factories that demobilized and demoralized the weak culture. In between this, the means of communication have become central and powerful instruments.

Based on these theories, I developed new theoretical premises. Initially, the expansionism theory was chosen. Living together with the people in the field and observing their nature of using the means of communication, I decided to use a new-theoretical construct — cultural-political proliferation. There are several theories in mass media, which cannot define the notion of mass media and other forms of communication, their hegemony, power, consumerism, cultural influence and policy influence.

Working with Ethnographic Design

I choose ethnographic design as it supported me to observe the influence of the means of communication on livelihood and local institutions. There are different means of communication available in rural villages such as radio, television, newspaper, mobile phone. Interpersonal network is another form of communication. The expansion of new culture through the means of communication created cultural complexity. I termed the cultural complexity as a mix of the old culture and the new culture, dominated by new technology and information. Open market, new products

including means of communication, and the external culture enables spaces for invasion (Petrova, 2005).

Ethnography as research design supported me to understand the nature of the means of communication. It enabled me to understand the individual understanding of the people in their context. The ethnographic design helped me understand the understandings and experiences of my participants in their contexts. Influence of the means of communication is a subjective issue. The means of communication (informational tools, folk media, mass media and social media) enable people to exchange information and influence people. The influence caused people to search for new practices in everyday life.

Interpretivism and criticalism provided me with the framework to carry out this research. I believed that knowledge and understanding on the influence of means of communication depend on the socio-cultural context, access and education. Interpretivism helped me understand the social world of the participants and their subjective constructions. Criticalism enabled me to understand the voices of people. Criticalism does not only focus on meaning construction in context, but also on how people respond to domination.

As an ethnographer, I was a primary instrument to gather information. I established interpersonal relationship with my participants to get information from the field. I had visited different places of *Dolakha* and *Lalitpur* districts of Nepal in search of a suitable place for this research. Later, I selected *Thumko*, a rural village of *Mid-Hill* district, as a research site. *Thumko* has a socio-cultural diversity in terms of caste, class, gender, access and use of means of communication. I observed and interacted with the people regarding the use of the means of communication. I noted in a diary all forms of information generated from the field. I created reflections

following the story collection from the participants and interactions with them (Yin, 2003). To gather diverse socio-cultural information, I employed different approaches like reflection, interview-reflection-interview, observations, focus group discussion, and individual and group discussion (both formal and informal). The information gathered from the field. It was transcribed, translated and processed that enabled me to get several themes.

Responding to the Research Questions

Based on the research questions, I gathered information from a rural village of Nepal. The basic purpose was to get initial information about the participants, their settlements and their engagement in the rural village. It enabled me to set time to interact with them. I observed the livelihood patterns and the nature of the local institutions. I observed everyday life of the people and their interactions with different means of communication, in the social context. I conducted interviews, carried out observations, conducted FGDs and had formal and information interactions with the people.

Exploring the Means of Communication in the Rural Village

I used observations and interviews to gather information about availability of the means of communication. I developed several themes from the information collected from the participants. I wrote reflections and maintained a diary. I also read journal articles, research reports, books and relevant literature.

In the beginning, I collected information about dish home, an information tool for people to watch television. I explored the stories about DTH, as I saw DTHs in many houses. I was engaged in discussions with some participants that were not only the users of DTH, mobile phones, radios and newspapers but also had information

about folk media. During the discussions on DTH, the themes of mobile phones and television emerged.

I selected the participants who had DTHs in their homes. I discussed with my participants in the natural settings. During the interactions, my participants opined that DTH is expensive although it has clear visual effects. Television viewers, increasing number of television sets and less use of print media due to its unavailability are some of the topics generated from the discussions on the means of communication.

My participants opined that the use of the old folk media is decreasing in *Thumko*. To understand the situation of blowing a conch shell, *Katawal Karaune* and *Ghanta Bajaune*, I talked to elderly citizens that had experienced the folk or traditional means of communication. My participants were happy because they had innovations at their disposal. On the contrary, I heard dissatisfactions over the import of foreign culture brought about by the modern means of communication. Interacting with the participants, I knew that the local networks and informational tools (mobile phones) are influential means. My participants frequently mentioned mobile phones. I frequently interacted with my participants for deeper understanding on the issue.

My participants perceived that the modern regimes and modern media are interlinked, and they support each other. Discussing with the politically motivated participants, who were cognizant of the political changes and the change in media, opined that the democratic system created conducive environment for the expansion of the modern means of communication. The participants also stated that the new forms of media have offered choices to people.

Influence of the Means of Communication on Livelihood

The participants' understandings on the influence of the means of communication on livelihood in the rural setting were explored. I discussed with my participants and collected their views. Livelihood is not an absolute term. Education, production, employment and other factors affect this phenomenon. Discussing livelihood with my participants, I felt that the means of communication supported people at the individual level. My participants stated that the modern means of communication were destructive in which they caused erosion of the local norms and values and replaced the existing patterns of livelihood and culture of the society. The means of communication enabled local people to be informed about the culture, product and services of the outer world.

The theme of livelihood emerged spontaneously during the discussions with the participants. The modern means and products (including manufactured food and cloth) come together. The ideas and opinions reveal that the traditional practices in Nepal are fading because of the arrival of the new means of communication. Packaged foodstuffs have replaced the local foodstuffs or the local productions.

The participants opined that advertisements play an important role. My participants were empowered and informed about the changing situation. Contemplating their views, I felt that my participants were aware about livelihood patterns and the influence of the means of communication on livelihood in Nepal. They explained how mobile phones helped them to buy and sell the local products. They rejoiced the modern means of communication as assets.

My participants believed that local cooperatives are supportive for agricultural growth. They get loan from the cooperatives. The cooperatives inform their customers through letters and publications as the means of communication. Importantly, the

cooperatives have displayed a list of the products that are in demand, enabling the people to be informed about the products. The information dashboard helped me interlink the means of communication and livelihoods. In rural villages, some people earn through traditional professions. High-caste priests' income is higher these days than before because of the means of communication. The priests use the Internet and mobile phones and talk to their customers. I observed how they used the modern means of communication to help boom their professions thereby increasing the income.

Local Institutions and Means of Communication

The participants' understandings on local institutions, means of communication, the services they received from the local institutions and the service delivery mechanism mostly depended on the social-cultural context. The central role of the means of communication is to help local people through necessary information. In my interactions, I tried to explore their perceptions towards these issues. After the reinstatement of democracy, the local institutions and the traditional means of communication were rarely in practice. Some of my participants informed me about check-and-balance role of the media. I termed this as the role of a watchdog. In the local level, very few traditional local institutions existed. Traditionally, there was *Arma Parma* in our village. *Arma Parma* still exists because of the need of the locals, for human resources have left the country for foreign employment.

My participants experienced *Panchayat* regime as well as the democratic regime. They were the direct witnesses of the changes in the local institutions and means of communication. My participants easily answered, interacted and expressed their views. I also observed schools, cooperatives, saving groups, religious gatherings to understand the use of the means of communication. In schools, there were formal

and informal mechanisms of communication. Head teachers, students, SMC members and parents were my participants in schools. In the discussion, my participants expressed their views on the use of the means of communication and participation. They stated that participation was weak due to poor communication. School authorities were not able to communicate with parents because of the lack of interest, motivation and resources.

I also observed local clubs. I discussed with the past members of the local clubs. Due to outmigration, the clubs were not functioning well. However, the youths were interested in contributing to their village in various ways. It was seen in social media, especially in Facebook.

I also observed the local people's participation in road consumer groups. They opined that mobile phones and Facebook were easy means to communicate among the locals. Members of the local saving groups, which were run by females, also used mobile phones to inform other group members. In my discussions, my participants shared that the governmental institutions were weak in the information sharing process.

To understand the government institutions and information sharing mechanisms, I discussed with service seekers and government officials. There were contrasts between the service seekers and service providers regarding information sharing. In the rural village, the FM radio was playing an important role to maintain transparency and accountability. The FM radio users were also my participant.

Producers and Consumers of the Means of Communication

In this chapter, I discuss with my participants in different ways. I focus on production and consumption of the means of communication. Production and

consumption perspective is related to demand and supply perspective. I linked it with democracy and open market.

To seek information about producers and consumers, I used reflective note, diary, interview, observation and participants' sharing as a technique. Initially, I prepared genealogy of the means of communication from historical perspectives. The consumers of the means of communication in the rural parts are businesspersons, local politicians, local priests, teachers, farmers, housewives, children and youths. I discussed with them the use of folk media in the past and present. My participants knew about folk media, but they did not use them.

I also discuss empowerment of the consumers. These days, the folk media are used differently. I took help of newspapers, research reports, books and relevant literature to understand more about the empowerment of the locals caused by the media. In the age of technology, the folk media are blended with modern tools in rural villages.

I discussed Disneyfication of the rural village with my participants. I observed available factory products used by the locals. I could notice that all children, youths and elderly people were using the global products. I found that the increasing use of junk food had changed the perceptions of the consumers and had influence on local consumption patterns. My participants shared that the modern means of communication increased the consumption of modern products in the village.

Key Learning and Insights

As a researcher, there were several insights from this research. Primarily, I felt that I developed an ability to manage everything including time and resources. In the study time, I developed my own theory to understand the social phenomenon relating to means of communication, livelihood, local institution and production and

consumption of communication. Further, I learned to share the motivation and enthusiastic stories, competence to listen participants, efficient knowledge absorption, and its integration to value add knowledge in an area of knowledge industry.

Key Insights into Theoretical and Methodological Concerns

In this study, I reviewed different literature. I was engaged in the field for more than six months, with frequent visits. In the process of analyzing the situation, I tried to match the data with different theories. I felt that many of the theories could not interpret the phenomenon.

The social theories are defined as the study of scientific ways of thinking about social life. While studying the social life, I followed speculative, descriptive and constructive approaches to develop the theory of cultural political expansionism (Antila, 2013). The speculative approach explains happenings; the descriptive approach gathers information to describe the reality; the constructive approach reviews the existing theories and develops a new theory. I reviewed the aforementioned approaches and developed my own construct — cultural-political expansionism — that can explain the means of communication, corporatism, globalization, power and supremacy of political, economic and socio-cultural notion.

At present, there is a shift in expansionism, which is termed as ‘new expansionism’. Earlier, neo-Marxists explained this notion as cultural imperialism or political imperialism or hegemony. The imperialism is a political word. When it is derived to the field of media, I defined it as expansionism because media expands a particular culture to the rest of the world.

Cultural imperialism or political imperialism is a critical perspective that defines and discusses the control and supremacy of power. It encouraged me to develop the theory from the lens of cultural-political expansionism that could aptly

explain everything related to power, domination and expansionism of media/means of communication. The theory rested on economic and political base of cultural imperialism, political imperialism and weaponization of media. While conducting the ethnography, I felt the need of media ethnography to study and explain the society well. Media ethnography is a broad form of ethnography. I felt that the field, fieldwork strategies, participants and researcher position in media ethnography needed wider spaces for its sustainability.

Thematic Insights

I believe that information is not broadcast in vacuum. They are generated in socio-cultural and historical contexts. In addition, I believe that power plays an important role in the process generation and transmission of information. Means of communication is itself a power instrument and mirror of society that paves the way for debates and deliberations in public sphere. Public deliberations (dialogues, debates and interactions) enable people to be engaged in arguments.

At present, the global telecommunication networks and the spread of Internet services have enabled the rural people to engage in communication through virtual means. A sense of trust on technology is increasing in the society. Trust on technology means trust on the information supplied.

Being in the School of Education

For me, education is not something that is taught in formal education system by knowledgeable/informed people to uneducated/uninformed ones, but it is something that starts from the womb of mother and continues until death. This means education is to inform, aware, socialize and hold the society together. I noted that ‘to inform’ is the role of a teacher. An individual learns necessary ideas through information disseminated by means of communication.

As we know, human beings are social creatures. They create a society and try to adjust in that society. I realized that education is a prerequisite of society that enables people to adjust in socio-cultural situations. In different socio-cultural contexts, there are different forms of knowledge. Education and information help individuals in adjustment in changing contexts. Change in society is a continuous process. As a student of Kathmandu University School of Education, I understood education in a broader context. I learnt not to limit education within a collective of teachers, schools, curriculum and educational policies.

There is a constant reconstruction and change because of the change in aspirations and technology. I felt that education and curriculum need refinement to meet the changing context. The aim of this reform is to enable individuals to make life better and to solve social problems. I understood reform/reconstruction from socio-cultural perspective. Hence, education is nothing more than social adjustment, at least for me. For social adjustment, education and information play a crucial role.

Thus, education is not something that is fixed within a particular territory. Society itself is a school. The means of communication play the role of a teacher, enabling people to be educated through information. This is why, I adopted re/constructionist notion of education. I believe education must free people from discrimination. I believe education must touch individual's life, bringing all forms of transformation. When I think about the re/constructionist notion, the question always remains elusive. In my mind, there are some questions and I am trying to answer them: Is the existing education system increasing/decreasing the gap between the poor and the rich? Is it an agency for rich and powerful people? Does the university degree help our human resources become entrepreneurs or job seekers? These are not only my questions but also are some topics for contemporary discussions. I believe that

education must emancipate the poor. We must develop a system from where students can learn something and can earn to sustain life.

As a student of media and education, I feel that our education system is promoting cultural populism, an expansion of ideas that support people's rights and power. However, nowadays, some professional or influential groups in society set the agenda of populism through different means of communication to create public sphere. So, for me, education and means of communication are something that enable individuals to be informed and educated. Education and information are interlinked. As a student of media and both education, I realized that information disseminated by media educates people.

Challenges during my Study

I joined Kathmandu University School of Education in 2013, with the financial support from International Development and Research Centre (IDRC). Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and IDRC accepted my proposal on community radio in Nepal and good governance. I prepared myself for further study. I read relevant literature related to community radio and good governance. I completed class assignments and prepared presentations. I attended conferences and programs related to community radio.

However, in 2015, my research was directed towards the modes of communication and social justice. As per the direction, I prepared some notes within social justice framework. The issue of discussion changed again with the modes of communication and good governance as a new topic. The topic was broad that covered all forms of communication. The broad topic was interesting, but it was very difficult for me as a researcher to cover all the modes. In March 16, 2015, I defended

my proposal on 'modes of communication and good governance'. The topic was accepted by SDPI-IDRC team of South Asia.

As a journalist working in a newsroom, I was interested in bringing the stories of community radio in Nepal. I had a plan to study radio news, news contents and people's ownership in radio and news. I thought it would make it easier for me to develop a deep understanding. However, my interest remained unfulfilled, with the change in the research topic. With the change in the topic, the research field was also changed, resulting in the wastage of my time. I had planned to choose *Dolakha* district as my research site, but I had to change the site due to the massive earthquake that hit the country in 2015.

This did not only affect the completion of my study, but also caused me financial loss. Changing the research topic and field demanded a whale of time, resulting in the cancellation of research fund granted to me by my funding agencies. I had to bear the field expenses and monthly stipends myself, creating severe hurdles in my everyday life and study. In the meantime, I faced difficulties in finding relevant literature. In search of the literature, I requested my friends studying in different universities.

Conclusions

Based upon the discussion and insights it is observed that modern means of communication are gradually replacing traditional means of communication in Nepali villages. The use of mass media is increasing in the villages, directly influencing the livelihood and the local institutions. The means of communication support people to exchange information, and are the source of entertainment. They connect people with the rest of the world.

Mobile phones and social sites are for personal use. Overall it is concluded that Facebook expands the network of local people virtually as it enables them to exchange the local and global contexts. There is an increasing use of television and radio, but the ways are different. The practice of listening to the radio or watching television in the Internet is on the rise.

In summary, mass media is run with a vested interest of its producers. The interest is related to politics, sale of products and advertisement although rural people have some other needs to fulfill. They expect a supportive role from the means of communication. They need information related to market situation of their agricultural products, fertilizers and market price. It unravels the situation that there is a massive increase in the use of means of communication in rural parts of Nepal, but aspirations of the locals have been untouched. Dominant class people use the means of communication as a tool to gain and sustain power.

The study concludes that the means of communication are accessible, adaptable and affordable to people. However, they are not much supportive in their economic transformation. The modern means of communication have come to the rural villages as a business product that collects and disseminates information on commercial goods and gives priority to modern livelihood patterns.

The media is regarded as the fourth organ of the state. Literature shows that the function of the means of communication is to support people, preserving existing norms, values and socio-cultural practices of the society. In the market-oriented society, the media is run by the private sector. Therefore, they are guided by market rules and business motives, and they fail to meet the expectations of the commoners. On the other hand, modern means of communication are like free prisoners, for they neither cause transformation nor improve the quality of life.

Based upon study, it is concluded that the traditional means of communication can fill the gap created by the modern means of communication, in the transformation of the society. The traditional media are an integral part of the rural society, with the rural people more familiar with the messages, tones, signs and symbols of the traditional means of communication. The traditional culture and traditional means of communication go together. In the meantime, the modern means of communication can be supportive, as an alternative means of communication.

Based upon analysis and insights, modern means of communication are designed to fulfill the interest of big investors and owners of the capital. Media are the mirror of social and political freedom. In contrast, they have become a means to sustain the vested interest of those who are in power. Free press is one of the major components buttressing democratic transitions and consolidation. Free press promotes the value of popular culture. While promoting the popular culture, the local culture becomes defunct. With the increasing influence of the modern means of communication, the use of modern products is going up by the day, resulting in the decrease in the use of local products in villages. Media focus on the issue of migration, English language, and service sectors, creating a homogeneous culture. The homogeneous culture is imported in the villages through media. It is in the process of replacing the existing indigenous values, cultures, livelihoods and governance patterns of local institutions.

The means of communication are supposed to promote the modern governance system and modern values. However, my question is: Whose governance? There is a gradual destruction in local governance systems and values, with the increasing use of the modern means of communication. In this situation, the role of the means of communication needs to be understood in a wide perspective.

Sometimes, the change in the Nepali society makes us feel that the modern means of communication are expanded to control, engage and create loyal society that can respect those in power. Nepali society is in between power and volunteerism, help and support, which was in practice among many ethnic groups in Nepal.

The means of communication in democratic nations have their own “private business”. In rural areas, there is still a situation of voicelessness. The means of communication promote the interest of the profit-seeking population. Developing countries are considered poor and deprived. However, I claim that they are not poor by themselves. Rather, they are made poor and deprived, by means of creating a discourse that they are deprived, backward and weak. However, the discourse was created with a purpose to make them psychologically weak and frail so that they can supply their products and cultures to the so-called poor countries.

Invasion is taking place through the English language, with signs, symbols and simulacra as the technical jargons. It is a symbolic violence and atrocity against the poor countries and weak cultures. For this, several instruments are carefully designed to mold attitudes, perceptions and opinions of the people living in rural parts. For instance, the English language, jeans, the coca-cola or Facebook have been used as the means of invasion. They are not only products, but also tools that are more powerful than military weapons. They change the everyday behavior of people.

Finally, it is concluded that means of communication have blurred boundaries and cultures, globalizing the world through standardized process (Harvey, 2003). Rapid expansion of the means of communication is a characteristic feature of an open, free and democratic society and an 'agent of change'. It is also a way of capturing and conquering power and seizing control of resources in rural parts. The modern means

of communication are the means of cultural-political glorification that work only for powerful elites and businesspersons.

Key Implications and Future Directions

The conclusions of my study have motivated me to draw some implications that can contribute to policies and practices. Therefore, in this section, I present how my study can be helpful in the media industry, academia, research and theory. The implications are presented in the following subsections:

Implications for Policy

Nepal is a land of different cultures. It is important to assure that multiple voices are heard by the media as per the need of the people. The study reveals that the means of communication have not reach the rural people in true sense. People consume the information designed by media houses. The rural people are forced to listen to the information created with a vested interest. There are many crucial issues in rural life.

This research helps policy makers formulate necessary policies to address voices of the voiceless. For this, the existing policy related to information need to be focused towards the common people to ensure the inclusion of their voices in media. Policies have the provisions of right to press, right to freedom and right to information. However, they have not been materialized from the prospective of rural people yet. Preservation of, and familiarity with, the traditional means of communication can be mainstreamed in the entire development plan and administration of local governments.

An alternative can be the incorporation of folk media in government policies. The government can take initiative for the protection of folk media so that the real needs of local people can be addressed. The folk media enable the local people to

participate in designing, sharing and exchanging of information to fulfill their information-related needs.

In the livelihood frame, the role of means of communication has not been recognized yet. The state can take initiative for the incorporation of the means of communication in the livelihood frame. The concept of governance that is borrowed from the global context has undermined the local governance system. It has demolished the local frame of communication. The governance frame needs to be reframed to suit the local context. It is called the need-based governance model. Hence, this study can support the policy makers to formulate the contextual and need-based policies.

Implications for Communication Sectors

The local folk media need to be re-adjusted, enhancing participation of the locals to fulfill their communication needs. The modern state apparatus focuses on the modern means of communication and technology, which is not that supportive in bringing change and harmony in society. It is due to business interest of power groups and their interventions in the media industry.

So, this study reveals that focus should be given to the community radio. Locals' perceptions show that political news with negativity messages and promotion of affluent products are highly emphasized in the media. It can be minimized through the use of local means of communication. The developmental sectors can use folk media in their programs so that interactions and communication process enable people to get information about the government initiatives.

Implications for Further Research

It is an ethnographic study on the means of communication, livelihood and governance, focusing on the Nepali society. The study opened up the various

possibilities for further research. Influence of actors of mass communication on livelihood and local institutions, supremacy of mass media, increasing use of mobile phones in Nepali society and the changes brought about by the media can be interesting areas for further research. They can follow both qualitative and quantitative designs. My research agenda covered the means of communication used in the rural parts, livelihood and institutional changes. The upcoming research can incorporate political changes brought about by the means of communication. Similarly, another research can be conducted, focusing on the supply side of the information and the influence of the information in society or politics.

Moreover, the use of Internet and mobile phones in urban or rural areas is yet another research issue that can be explored in the days to come. I have some specific questions that can be worth-researching: Why and how do radio/television/mobile phones enhance dis/harmony in society? To what extent is the media promoting global interest? What is the next stage of communication globalization in rural society? How has been the role of mass media in expanding democracy or globalization of power? How is media functioning in the neo/liberal market? Additionally, there is a room for understanding the changing dynamics of media portrayal.

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