

LIVED EXPERIENCES OF I/NGO PROFESSIONALS TOWARD COMMUNITY
TRANSFORMATION: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY

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A Dissertation

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AN ABSTRACT

of the dissertation of Govinda Chaudhary for the degree of Master of Philosophy in STEAM Education presented on 16 February 2025 entitled Lived Experiences of I/NGO Professionals Toward Community Transformation: A Narrative Inquiry.

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My study explored the experiences of I/NGO professionals' contributions toward community transformation through their narratives. With a key research question, how do I/NGO professionals account for their lived experiences of being involved in community transformation? I commenced academic research, using narrative inquiry and applying critical social theory, covering four different I/NGO professionals. My research paradigm is multi-paradigmatic and includes interpretivism, criticalism, and postmodernism, which deal with multiple realities and critical analysis and expression in different ways of the arts. I explored how I/NGO professionals contributed to transforming whatever they do for or with the people. I purposely selected the four research participants, my former colleagues from different I/NGOs.

In my research, to ensure quality standards, I used praxis as a democratic inquiry method, incorporating inductive knowledge from fieldwork. I emphasized interpretivism and criticalism, fostering reflective awareness and transformative learning. Critical reflexivity was crucial, involving self-awareness and challenging epistemological choices. Additionally, I employed peer debriefing with knowledgeable external peers to enhance research quality, providing detailed briefing documents.

This study applied a qualitative research method, where participants' information was collected through a narrative inquiry method. The insight from this

research explored I/NGOs' experiences of the participants who had been working in different sectors but mainly with individuals and community people.

The major finding of this study is that the professionals of I/NGOs are active and innovative, often seeking from the organization to be motivated in different ways, both extrinsically and intrinsically. In terms of community transformation, themes like self-motivation, individual empowerment, unlearning and adaptability, inclusive engagement, Community-Based Rehabilitation approaches and social dialogues, and respecting diverse perspectives and reintegration are needed. Contributing positively to change in society, both individual and collective efforts are needed, and there is a strong alignment with the government and people's priorities with changing concepts of the organizations (I/NGO).

The professional contribution towards community transformation seemed outstanding by applying various approaches and individual efforts to change the community by empowering individuals and creating a welcoming environment in the community for sustainable development. Even though the efforts were small, they seemed like a pillar to take initiatives. As a result, the research findings will help stakeholders realize the advantages of employing narrative inquiry and professional experiences towards changing the community for sustainability. Furthermore, this study empowers I/NGO workers to be active in community transformation going beyond their everyday professional engagement in development activities.

Finally, the I/NGO workers are facing criticisms in their everyday life, and despite their weaknesses, it is expected that the narratives of I/NGO professionals' contribution in social changes present their potential roles in community transformation. It allows change agents like I/NGOs act as the leaders of community transformation benefitting the sustaining of what they do in their professional life.

.....

16 February 2025

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शोध सार

स्टिम शिक्षामा दर्शनशास्त्रको स्नातकोत्तर डिग्रीको लागि गोविन्द चौधरीको शोध प्रबन्धको शीर्षक “समुदाय रूपान्तरणप्रति राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैरसरकारी संस्थाका पेशागत जीवन अनुभव: एक संकथन” ४ फागुन २०८१ मा प्रस्तुत गरिएको थियो।

.....
उप. प्रा. इन्द्र मणि श्रेष्ठ

शोध निर्देशक

मेरो अध्ययनले समुदाय रूपान्तरणतर्फ राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्थाको पेशागत योगदानका अनुभवहरूलाई उनीहरूकै कथाहरू मार्फत अन्वेषण गरेको छ। मेरो मुख्य अनुसन्धान प्रश्न थियो: आफुले समुदायमा काम गरिराख्दा कसरी त्यो समुदायलाई रूपान्तरण गर्न योगदान पुर्याउनु भयो भन्ने थियो।

मैले चारजना राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्थामा कार्यरतहरूलाई समेटेर समालोचनात्मक सामाजिक सिद्धान्त (critical social theory) र कथात्मक खोज (narrative inquiry) विधिको प्रयोग गरी अनुसन्धान प्रारम्भ गरेको थिए। मेरो अनुसन्धान दृष्टिकोण बहुपरिप्रेक्ष्यात्मक थियो, जसमा अर्थव्याख्यावाद (interpretivism), समालोचनावाद (criticalism), र उत्तरआधुनिकता (postmodernism) समावेश गरेको छु। यी दृष्टिकोणहरूले बहुविविध वास्तविकता (multiple realities) लाई सम्बोधन गर्छन् र विभिन्न कलात्मक अभिव्यक्तिहरू मार्फत आलोचनात्मक विश्लेषणको सम्भावना मार्फत अश्र्वाउने प्रयास गरेको छु।

मैले समुदायमा परिवर्तन ल्याउन राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्थाको पेशागत योगदानलाई अन्वेषण गरे, चाहे वहाहरूले प्रत्यक्ष रूपमा केही योगदान गरेका हुन वा समुदायसँग मिलेर काम गरेका हुन। अनुसन्धानका लागि विभिन्न राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्थाहरूबाट चारजना सहभागीहरूलाई उद्देश्यपूर्वक छनोट गरेको थिए, र विभिन्न समयमा वहाहरूसँग काम पनि गरेको थिए। मेरो अनुसन्धानमा गुणस्तर मापदण्ड सुनिश्चित गर्न praxis लाई लोकतान्त्रिक अनुसन्धान विधिका रूपमा अपनाएको थिए, जसले क्षेत्रीय अध्ययनबाट आगमन (inductive) ज्ञानलाई समेट्छ। मैले अर्थव्याख्यावाद (interpretivism) र समालोचनावाद (criticalism) मा जोड दिए, जसले reflective awareness र रूपान्तरणात्मक शिक्षण लाई प्रवर्धन गर्दछ।

यस अध्ययनमा गुणस्तर अभिवृद्धिका लागि आलोचनात्मक आत्मनिरीक्षण (critical reflexivity) महत्त्वपूर्ण रहेको थियो, जसमा आत्मचेतना (self-awareness) तथा ज्ञानमीमांसा सम्बन्धी विकल्पहरूको

खोजी सामेल थियो । साथै, अनुसन्धानको विश्वसनीयता बढाउन बाह्य जानकार सहकर्मीहरूसँग विचार-विमर्श (peer debriefing) पनि गरेको थिए ।

यो अध्ययनले गुणात्मक अनुसन्धान विधि प्रयोग बोकेको थियो, जहाँ सहभागीहरूको जानकारी वर्णनात्मक दिशानिर्देशहरू मार्फत सङ्कलन गरेको थिए । यस अनुसन्धानबाट प्राप्त अन्तर्दृष्टिले राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्थामा काम गर्ने व्यक्तिहरूका अनुभवहरूलाई उजागर गर्दछ, जसमा सहभागीहरू विभिन्न क्षेत्रमा काम गरिरहेका छन्, तर मुख्यतः व्यक्तिहरूको क्षमता विकास र समुदायका बिकास र मानिसहरूको बिकाससँग संलग्न छन् ।

यस अध्ययनको प्रमुख निष्कर्ष के छ भन्ने राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्थाको मा कार्यरत व्यक्तिहरू सक्रिय र नवप्रवर्तक हुन्छन्, जो सधैं संगठनबाट विभिन्न तरिकाले बाह्य र आन्तरिक रूपमा प्रेरित हुन खोज्छन्, । समुदाय रूपान्तरणको सन्दर्भमा, आत्म-प्रेरणा, व्यक्तिगत सशक्तिकरण, अवगतिहरू परिवर्तन गर्दै अनुकूलनशीलता, समावेशी संलग्नता, सीबीआर (CBR) दृष्टिकोणहरू र सामाजिक संवाद, विविध दृष्टिकोणको सम्मान तथा पुनः एकीकरण जस्ता विषयहरू आवश्यक छन् । व्यक्तिगत तथा सामूहिक प्रयासहरू सकारात्मक रूपमा परिवर्तन गर्न योगदान आवश्यक छ, साथै सरकारका प्राथमिकताहरूसँग सशक्त रूपले मिल्ने गरी संस्था (गैर-सरकारी संस्था र अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर-सरकारी संस्था) को बदलिँदो अवधारणासँग पनि समायोजन हुन आवश्यक छ । सामुदायिक रूपान्तरणतर्फ पेशागत योगदानहरू उत्कृष्ट देखिन्छ, जसमा विभिन्न दृष्टिकोणहरू लागू गरेर र व्यक्तिहरूलाई सशक्त पार्दै दिगो विकासका लागि समुदायमा स्वागतयोग्य वातावरण सिर्जना गर्न मद्दत पुर्याएको देखिन्छ । प्रयासहरू साना भए तापनि वहाहरूले गरेका पहलहरू समुदाय रूपान्तरण गर्नको लागि आधारस्तम्भसरह देखिए । फलस्वरूप, अनुसन्धानका निष्कर्षहरूले सरोकारवालाहरूलाई समुदाय रूपान्तरणका लागि वर्णनात्मक अनुसन्धान र पेशागत अनुभवहरूको गहिरो बुझाईबाट सकारात्मक फाइदा लिन सहयोग गर्नेछ । यस अध्ययनबाट उत्पन्न ज्ञानले ज्ञान सिर्जना र कार्यान्वयनको क्षेत्रमा योगदान पुर्याउनेछ, किनभने यसले पेशागत व्यक्तिहरूको मौलिक र जीवन्त अनुभवद्वारा नयाँ ज्ञानका थम्बहरू थप्दछन । राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्थाका कर्मचारीहरू र वहाहरूले अँगालेका दिगो सकारात्मक परिवर्तनका पहलहरू र प्रत्यक्ष योगदानबारे गरिएका अनुसन्धान भएकोले यसले समुदाय परिवर्तनमा योगदान पुर्याउनेछ । अन्ततः, आशा गरिन्छ कि यस यात्राबाट उत्पन्न नवप्रवर्तक वर्णनहरूले राष्ट्रिय तथा अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय गैर सरकारी संस्थाकासँग मिलेर सामुदायिक रूपान्तरणमा नयाँ दृष्टिकोण ल्याउनेछ, जसले परम्परागत अभ्यासका कठोरता तोड्नेछन् । यसले परिवर्तनकारी व्यक्तिहरूलाई हालको अभ्यासमा आवश्यक परिवर्तनको दिशा बारे सोच्न प्रेरित गर्नेछन, जसले अन्ततः समुदाय र सबै सरोकारवालाहरूलाई फाइदा पुर्याउनेछन् ।

.....

४ फागुन २०८१

गोविन्द चौधरी

उपाधि उम्मेदवार

This dissertation entitled “*Lived Experiences of INGO Professionals Toward Community Transformation: A Narrative Inquiry*” as presented by Govinda Chaudhary on 16 February 2025.

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I understand and agree that my dissertation will become a part of the permanent collection of the library of Kathmandu University. My monogram below authorizes the accessibility of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

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DECLARATION

I hereby state that no candidate for any degree has received this dissertation.

.....

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16 February 2025

DEDICATION

This work is profoundly dedicated to my facilitators of Kathmandu University School of Education (KUSOED), my family (Mother-in-law, spouse, brother, and son), my I/NGO colleagues, friends, my dissertation supervisor, my research participants, and directly/indirectly involved people of the organizations who have been part of my life and to whom I am always indebted. It is because of their efforts that I was able to complete my degree.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Anno Domini
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BS	Bikram Sambat
CBR	Community-based Rehabilitation
CBO	Community-based Organization
CST	Critical Social Theory
CT	Community Transformation
DFID	Department for International Development
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECD	Early Childhood Development Centre
EGR	Early Grade Reading
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HRDC	Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children
IDDC	International Disability and Development Consortium
ILO	International Labor Organization
INGO	International Non-governmental Organization
IT	Information Technology
KUSOED	Kathmandu University School of Education
LGBTIQA	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer/Questioning, Asexual
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
SHG	Self Help Group
ST	Social Transformation
SWC	Social Welfare Council
UN	United Nations
UNCRPD	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A Way for This Research Journey

Since 2009, while teaching mathematics in a classroom, I made an unlisted choice that changed my life. A call from an unknown professional opened a new door, leading me from my role as a community facilitator to working in an INGO/NGO. This transition came with a significant increase in financial benefits, which was an immediate attraction, but the potential for broader community transformation truly motivated me.

Once in this new role, I began conducting training sessions for my workplace, aiming to shift from the traditional, teacher-centered, and rote-learning methods I had seen. I approached these sessions with a critical perspective, focusing on participant-centered methods. Despite the quantitative achievements, I realized that old approaches were unsatisfactory and didn't genuinely benefit the participants, which pushed me to adopt more interactive and transformative strategies in my sessions, which aligned better with my goal of fostering real community growth.

A similar case happened when I enrolled in STEAM education. I was extremely unaware of STEAM's approaches. I am seeking another faculty member for my future academic career. However, fortunately, someone influenced me to enroll in this STEAM stream, and within a minute of our conversation, I chose STEAM Education. I am tremendously thankful to the person who encouraged me. I feel now that this is the right selection to envision my dream and walk through it by increasing my capability. It considers emancipatory knowledge transmission as a mosaic of knowledge production possibilities embedded in a sociocultural context, in addition to pedagogical knowledge transmission.

Every moment, I try to present myself with a new challenge and opportunity in my life. My diligence assures my achievement. I am convinced by what Mother Teresa said, 'I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples. As a professional I personally contributed micro activities in the community which are valuable because these initiatives enabled to connect individuals with wider community involvement. We in a team engaged in conversations, discussion, and reflection to understand their unique perspectives,

designed activities in collaborative ways, and we tried to ensure that each activity reflects their input and contextual with immediate needs. This participatory approach supported to create trust and local ownership that makes all feel valued and invested in the progress. I always focus on one-on-one interactions that create a meaningful platform and it changes at a grassroots level. It also fosters a sense of group work towards the community and shared responsibility with future plans. I was involved in very small activities but it yet it creates impactful steps, we empower individuals and drive collective progress toward our shared goals to bring positive changes in the community.

Many micro-events have accumulated to enrich this research. I was searching for ways to connect with community needs and personal empowerment through my work. Some questions started bothering me: 'Does my work meet the needs of humanity? Additionally, how, to some extent, are individuals satisfied? To what extent does satisfaction work towards community transformation or sustainable transformation?' The analysis of my work and ways of delivering in the past now compare those works with the lenses of the transformation: the reality, perception, and direction for future steps, as I expressed with the following lines;

I lurched toward perfection

I felt proud saying, 'I worked for you,'

Announced greatly, 'I did a lot for you,

Expressed many happy moments, provided physical benefits to you

I became a man who lurched toward perfection.

Promised lots and completed targets highlighted here and there.

I worked day and night, claimed to work for you.

Bracketed activities forced me to deliver what we have

I want to know, how are things going with you?

I don't know your current situation.

But

I became a man who lurched toward perfection.

I can go back on the mentorship experiences I have had personally and professionally over the past 15 or 16 years, which are all beneficial and significant. I reflectively contemplate while engaging in this bracketing process, allowing fixed ideas and predispositions to enter and releasing my attention. I consider that how much my work has been aided in nurturing personal emancipation and community

positive change to advance renovation for locally sustainable. But again, the question for me is, "How"? My passion is to explore the means and ways of community transformation, considering the lived experiences of I/NGO professionals.

The Social Welfare Council (SWC) reported that between 1977 and 2014, Nepal registered 39,759 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Correspondingly, 189 International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) from 26 countries were recorded (Karki & Comfort, 2016), and the number of NGOs registered in Nepal is growing, as evidenced by one of the publications of the SWC's report, which presented that the list of NGOs is 51,513 as of *Ashoj* 31 in 2077 B. S. Based on this information, we can predict a high motivation for opening NGOs in Nepal and working with marginalized, and vulnerable people. Many people and professionals are making NGOs and INGOs as their means of livelihood, engaging in social service work through these organizations.

The government of Nepal has recognized the SWC as a wing under the Social Welfare Act, 2049 BS (1992 AD) to offer for the fulfillment of additional activities as a Social Welfare Council using different not-for-profit organizations and NGOs' various activities relating to social welfare work, empowerment, mobilization, and support for the overall development of the country. SWC may operate the social welfare program through the concerned Ministry and Social organizations and institutions

According to Bhatt (2022), the government and NGOs are two mechanisms that complement each other. They are like two sides of the same coin, and the NGO Federation of Nepal is an umbrella body of around 7000 Nepali Civil Society Organizations. She added that one of the major duties of NGOs is to acknowledge and support the government's good deeds and warn the government of flaws and wrongdoings. The major distinction of NGOs in Nepal is assessing the community needs and development programs accordingly. It shows no possibility of reaching everywhere with limited resources and human expertise. Therefore, NGOs' role is important in identifying and filling the gaps.

Bhandari (2014) reports that changes appear in all sectors, including the political structure, where viable economic, equitable social change, and cultural reconstructions occur. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBO) are the primary players in promoting change in Nepal. NGOs and INGOs are essential in supporting the government in several areas. In

particular, INGOs aid the Nepal government in health promotion and education reformation, enabling and empowering social issues, increasing capability for poverty reduction, environmental protection, emergency support, and many more. Therefore, we can assert that I/NGOs promote national growth and improve citizens' living standards. The fundamental role of I/NGOs is to support the government as an implementer, catalyst, and partner (Lewis, 2010). The watchdog or oversight role is vital for NGOs (Karanicolas & Kwoka, 2022). NGOs ensure accountability, transparency, and adherence to ethical standards. They also monitor government policies, corporate activities, and societal practices, exposing corruption, mismanagement, or rights violations. By advocating for marginalized voices, they promote justice and maintain checks on power structures for equitable governance.

There are numerous ways to demonstrate how learning as an I/NGO worker occurs. One is external, focusing on the results of applying experience. The other is internal, involving realizing, understanding, and perceiving things. 'Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through transforming experience.' (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). As learners, everybody learns from each event, situation, interaction, observation, and other modes. However, a great deal is how we reflect on these experiences and learn daily.

Acharya (2016) argued that NGOs take direct action in the communities by involving themselves with the local communities and using and building on already existing local resources to create sustainability. NGOs have a critical role in supporting these alterations through program activities, community-building activities, policies, organizational well-being, and praxis. NGOs, Community-based Organizations (CBOs), and INGOs are values-based organizations. The contribution to social change can be thoroughly investigated using a narrative inquiry technique through the description and reflection on the lives of I/NGO professionals.

Daiute (2014) preaches that narratives are kinds of stories, it is an imagination, micro-events or vignettes of everyday life, memories or collection of news reports of notable events, biographies, rumors happened in life, and other spoken, experienced and written portrayals of the past, present, and future. This method can discover the meaning in deep ways, and sometimes it is behind the reality of the dynamic relationship that we can practice as professionals in delivering dialogues about local social justice, values, individual empowerment, institutional enhancement, and awareness in people's daily lives.

Bhandari (2014) stated that local community leaders who are motivators can address community problems in innovative ways that can be more effective when all community members understand each other by sharing their lived experiences, practical nuances, lived challenges, and learnings that have been learned in life. This is the exploration that particularly contextual, or the scenario is given meaning by narrative inquiries, narrative exploration, and narrative stories that aid comprehension of the contextualized events (Rushton, 2004).

There are many ways of acquiring and receiving knowledge from the traditional culture. However, constructivism looks at generating knowledge differently and is dissatisfied with traditional ways of reproducing knowledge. Glasersfeld (1984) expressed that knowing is a dynamic adaptation process towards viable interpretations of experience. Therefore, knowledge is constructed or generated with the individuals' experiences in context. Each individual has a learning journey.

This dynamic relationship, directly or indirectly, can greatly affect people personally and socially. Narrative inquiry is a basic approach emphasizing human character and lived experiences as research subjects. The word narrative has been used to support various perceptions and beliefs. As a narrative, a way of knowing, and more recently, a method of inquiry, it has received diverse interpretations (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009).

According to Connelly and Clandinin (2016), seeking information through narrative stories is one way of describing and portraying the opulence and determinateness of experiences. Narrative inquiry reveals feelings, stories, and life events and brings together research, invention, exploration, and connection. Telling tales as different means using stories, poems, drama, and drawing pictures are as research data or as tools for data assessment or demonstration of outcomes. It also exemplifies the expressions and individualities of engaged I/NGO professionals. Sfard and Prusak (2004) stated that individuation and activities arise from and through the compilations of vignettes, and people can generate and express the ideas that they live in their journeys of lifetimes.

Everyone contributes to life by reflecting on and reshaping their experiences, connecting past and future events. People are aware of their actions and often reflect through storytelling. For community transformation, individual engagement in various learning and interaction processes while critically expressing their feelings can lead to significant personal and community change.

The community transformation is about to bring long-term positive change. It is beyond meeting an immediate need. It starts by identifying the needs, developing the participatory strategies, building the capacity of the locals, and implementing the designed activities together to bring about a specific change. It occurs when individuals actively participate in different learning and interaction processes. People develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their surroundings by engaging in these activities. When individuals critically express their thoughts and emotions, they contribute to a collective awareness and dialogue within the community. This critical expression fosters personal growth and encourages others to reflect and act, creating a ripple effect that can lead to broader community change. Thus, individual actions and reflections are crucial in driving significant and positive transformations within the community.

Background of the Study

The roles of NGOs and Community-based Organizations (CBOs) in Nepal are to support and empower the government and the locals in their well-being, create awareness, and direct a positively changed life in the community. Mostly, the sectors of economics, health, advocacy, and social transitions have always been important and usually beneficial. They facilitate and organize needs assessments, develop programs, and conduct training for local needs. NGO programs are accountable to the locals (Abouassi & Trent, 2015). NGO registration at the district level can be considered to identify local issues and support services at the local level with locally available assets.

Therefore, running activities and any projects are valuable for those who can benefit. Importantly, the position of NGOs is to spread veracity and bring about positive change. The NGOs illustrate and present evidence of global, cultural, and socioeconomic change from various foundations and persuade locals to engage with and deal with their ever-changing premises. Empowerment, awareness, enhancement, and contribution towards meeting the nation's priorities are major responsibilities of NGOs for lifting the status of poor, marginalized, and backward people and society for social transformation (William, 1991).

Being involved for a prolonged period and working with the people and community establishes professional and emotional connections because it offers the opportunity to directly interact with situations, realities, perceptions, and problems and always try to find resolutions.

I/NGO professionals should differ because of their experiences, professional engagement, and immediate reflection of nature. Emotionally and physically, professionals always have a target to meet the immediate needs and empower for the future both individually and institutionally.

Joshi (2018) stated that the government of Nepal provided I/NGOs with the authority to govern the organization, identify the problem, define and design the activities, and implement the projects/programs to reach the excluded areas of vulnerable populations. I/NGO can proceed and open access to national and international funds from bilateral/multilateral aid organizations and worldwide corporations. I/NGOs have maturity in the sense that they have their mission, vision, objectives, and guiding principles of adjudicating, digging and planning, evaluation procedure, and creating choices about organizational and professional experiences in a manner that is more in tune with the real situation, connectivity and permanence, thoughtfulness, and rationality of the past, present and future. This cumulative experience may support motivation to achieve longer and more meaningful goals.

I have been engaged with the I/NGO sector for a long time, where I have gained insights, understanding, and experiences that extend beyond my official responsibilities. In this journey, I realized that I rarely paused to reflect on my development or how I approached my work. This led me to question how my actions and those of my organization drive a sustainable future for the communities and individuals we serve. It's a shift from simply fulfilling professional duties to understanding the long-term impact of the efforts.

Roles of International/Non-governmental Organization (I/NGO) in Nepal

The World Bank defines an NGO as a private organization that pursues activities to reduce suffering, identify and promote the interests of the poor, marginalized, disadvantaged, and neglected people and their areas, initiate different activities to protect the environment, provide burning services or undertake community development (World Bank, 1995). As a result, NGOs began to materialize significantly worldwide, both vertically and horizontally, to reach the beneficiaries directly by assisting the government.

In Nepal, the government alone cannot meet the numerous needs of the people and community. It has many limitations. Among them, the most important is its bureaucracy, which limits itself to reaching the grassroots level. Therefore, it has been

admitted that the organizations should substantiate or supplement the government to effectively reach the people at the grassroots level.

In Nepal, the number and size of NGOs in the last few years have been on the rise, which necessitated a separate institutional arrangement on the part of the government to deal with the entire NGO sector. The goal of NGOs is to empower people and attain sustainable development. Some key roles of NGOs are conducting microfinance programs, capacity building, and empowering people (Khanal, 2021).

Islam (2015) stated that NGOs follow a participatory plan. It is very important to ensure everyone's participation in following the steps of the project management cycle from the beginning to the end. Accountability is one of the strongest weapons for maintaining governance in the organization. Making the NGOs accountable to stakeholders, as well as personal/professional, and meaningful participation is significant for sharing common agendas. Views and perceptions of individuals, either personal or organizational, can greatly influence the progression of the organization and produce results for others.

Planning participatory performances is one of the recent and decent practices to mobilize valuable resources, tactfully reaching the recent needs of people or community. In Nepal's scenario, we recently have a new political system and have been practicing new approaches for some years, where I/NGOs and professionals have supported different ways to implement their plans for the accessibility of government and people. Both CBOs and NGOs have been prominently working with the government and the people to develop, support, and reform the system in Nepal as part of different forms of practicing democracy.

The Social Welfare Council (if registered in the Social Welfare Council) has the authority to mobilize and monitor non-governmental organizations to fulfill the guiding principles of the state. In this regard, the relationship between the government and NGOs is positive, but there is a lack of formal structure regarding the quality of their cooperation.

Ebrahim (2005) notes, 'NGOs are not simply passive recipients, NGOs hold conferences, meetings, and dialogues on global ideas to transform these ideas locally and present international, national, and ground situations through different funding' (p.4). NGO professionals frequently engage with stakeholders and communities to share and discuss global ideas. They actively work to redefine local situations by exploring alternatives and integrating local and global findings and discussions. By

aligning these global concepts with local realities, they help bring about meaningful changes. Various international practices and themes intersect and influence each other, reshaping global ideas and approaches. This ongoing exchange of ideas and practices helps to spark broader structural changes on an international level. Through their efforts, NGO professionals play a crucial role in connecting local and global perspectives, driving progress, and fostering understanding across different contexts.

The connections of I/NGOs with grassroots problems, people, politics, and promotion are strongly bound and, therefore, have significant employment generators locally. In Nepal, these I/NGOs played a vital role in different crises, political reformation and implementation, recovery of the damages of post-earthquake situation, and continued support for empowerment, access to education, health services, advocacy, and other required activities in the community and the state (Bhandari, 2014).

Promoting local NGOs and CBOs is also the government's priority because these organizations have a prodigious role in portraying the individual's information, joining the ground-level people, community, local government, and state with international construct. This is a well-practiced and resourceful means of allocating resources and uplifting the people. Joshi (2018) states that I/NGO has decisive roles in development, contributing as close partners of the government. Nepal's government has committed to achieving the agenda of sustainable development goals by 2030. Sustainability with all the targeted indicators and fully supporting roles of I/NGO is in place for the federal government structure. Civil society actors, including the media, NGOs, professional groups, and self-ascriptive civil society forums, are key change makers. The mobilization of these groups, representing dispersed and diverse constituencies, played a critical role in dismantling the royal government (Shah, 2008).

The NGO/INGO approach to development, while seemingly effective in addressing the needs of downtrodden and poor communities in the twenty-first century, has certain inherent limitations. Although it often collaborates with international governments to produce positive and constructive outcomes, the approach is not without criticism. Key limitations include: a. Lack of sustainability, b. Limited sectorial coverage or narrow focus, c. Insufficient alignment with the actual needs of local people, d. Absence of a strong social welfare motive, e. Inadequate execution of established goals, f. Political affiliations (ties to specific political

parties), g. Limited special provisions for establishing NGOs, h. Poor coordination, i. Weak monitoring mechanisms, j. Differences in priority setting, k. Disruption or modification of local culture and technology, l. High expenditure on remuneration for foreign experts, m. Failure to reach targeted beneficiaries, n. Lack of accountability, and o. Lack of transparency (Ghimire, 2008).

In Nepal, there are many socio-economic and environmental needs for individual well-being. NGOs play a key role in creating opportunities for stakeholders and reforming foundations. Holistic transformation is crucial for progress and can be applied in various ways. However, change takes time and doesn't happen quickly without innovative interventions.

In my study, transforming, restructuring, regeneration, and shifting for change where people can adapt to the ever-changing scenarios are actualized as a global and local combination of experiences. However, in terms of nature and socioeconomics, earthquakes, natural disasters, epidemics, and social justice, empowerment can be global and local, but in today's world and my scenarios, such problems at a certain longitudinal locality have a global impact and cause comprehensive concern with local responsibilities (Bhandari, 2014).

I reviewed a completed project report named "Sachetana's Completion Report". It concluded that the project had been completed successfully. The involved team members felt that the project was a success and also mentioned that the project successfully achieved gender equality and social inclusion, showing the segregated percentage of females, marginalized, LGBTIQA, ethnic minorities, and people with disability (Maina Devi Foundation, 2022). I found it to be the basic trend of the report of NGOs in Nepal that emphasizes quantification rather than ensuring the quality and its long-term impact on the individual and community. We can see more focus on the physical targets and achievements. If the target is achieved, the organization or team celebrates the success, which means stopping for further sustainable learning, organizational learning, and reflection.

Literate? Literate

Open me, and you will find treasure,

Read me, and you will feel pleasure.

I am the one searching for you,

I am the one calling to you.

Empowerment, where are you?

*You can't see
Because your lenses are blurred
I am with everyone
You can feel if you critically reflect.*

Justice, where are you?

*You can't see
People made me thin
I am in your friend's pocket
I am in your boss's cupboard
I am in your head of the family.*

Inclusion, where are you?

*Division deeply rooted, a reluctant admit
Enforcement of ignorance, with an indoctrination
Dominance illusion, no inclusion
I really fight hard, so I could see
Dissonant with uncertainty.*

*Community Transformation
for whom?*

*Explore emancipo, apply emancipo
Look at the approaches
Ascertain the terror
Comment on the ideologies
Just not blaming others
Alone can't change*

With an invitation, they disremembered how these could be done!!!

Everyone should dance and learn,

Critical dialogues, Understanding a situation,

Forming a critical consciousness,
Knowing for action.
Violence and repression are questioned,
Should promote the narrative,
Must be enslaved; being roused is imperative.
Liberty and justice establish strength, social harmony, and legislative,
It will not be I who turns his back to leave,
The community is the one that will have left,
We all must be curtsy to post-modernity.
For
Transformation! Community Transformation!! Sustainability!!!

Statement of the Problem

NGOs' reports in Nepal emphasize quantification rather than ensuring quality and its long-term impact on the individual and the community. The importance of I/NGO and professionals is vital for bringing existential progress and changes in many facets, empowering individuals, and increasing awareness in the community for community transformation to fulfill the requirements of the people and the community.

Chitrao et al. (2022) illustrated that most respondents in their research considered money as a motivating factor for I/NGO professionals in India. Furthermore, it can be stated that money, salary, and the management of the employees are the motivating factors for the employees working in that organization. Considering the respondents' experiences with their organizations, most would have had a good experience, as the correlation between salary and performance appraisal is the highest motivation factor among NGO professionals.

Uddin et al. (2019) have concluded that NGOs in Bangladesh contribute to the innovative creation of different jobs in the country. Also, causative effects on internal communication, job security, and employees contend to stimulate self-resilience fundamentals in employees' careers. Many such outstanding innovations from the NGOs and professionals are towards satisfaction in reaching where the people are excluded from the government's resources. Motivational constituents like compassion, care, and self-sacrifice have been recognized as encountering many experiential achievements and learning. They practice these motives in their daily

professional lives and are affected by their professional satisfaction in different circumstances.

Bhandari (2014) noted that interest and investment in civil societies are growing, with more activities seen in the West than in the East of Nepal. However, notwithstanding noteworthy investment from locally established organizations, community-based organizations, local NGOs, creating and generalization of locals' knowledge, and its ways of generating in Nepal haven't enhanced, therefore, people can not feel the changes, changes are lacking in the community. Many new organizations or community-based organization have seen emerged in purpose to transform the situation in recent years in Nepal. Many things are changing rapidly, including conceptual paradigms, the hierarchy of problems, the needs of the people, the nation's priorities, and the pace of change. These are the continuous needs to follow the global and local systems.

Karkee and Comfort (2016) stated that NGOs may cease operations when funding ends. Consequently, NGO contributions rarely have a sustainable impact on a country and tend to achieve only short-term goals. This can make the host country and its people less productive and more dependent on NGO donations. As a result, the government may fail to address problems independently.

We need to change our ways of doing, thinking, and planning. Somehow, the hegemonic flavor of generating knowledge dominates, and we, as conscious citizens, are transforming things into becoming independent in many ways. As I/NGO professionals, we need to think as stated above, but no evidence exists to support our community's change forever reflecting my ways of thinking and acting while delivering activities in the community as I felt.

Your Camera, My Lenses

Your needs, my interest,

Your problem, my idea,

Your lyrics, my music.

Your land, my seed.

Your vehicle, my driver,

Your choice, my control,

Your food, my spoon.

By saying

Don't worry because I am with you,

*I can do many things for you; I can change your life,
 Just do what I say, follow what I suggest.
 Don't worry, I have lots of ideas,
 I can solve your problems because I am the change agent,
 I know everything; therefore, follow what I guide you.*

Issues with people and communities may not be enclosed if there is no appropriateness of bringing discourse without approaches of transformational agendas to emancipate the people and their community (Omodan & Dube, 2020). Omodan (2020) suggested that social research could be on the wider conceptualization and application of different transformative paradigms. These paradigms include participatory action research, narrative transformative approaches as research designs to explore hidden social in-depth piecing together, influencing economic factors, and human-centric wellness with contextual analysis. These approaches can engage people aiming to reveal social issues for the emancipation of societies.

Louis and Montiel (2018) expressed the significance of respecting individual expressions. The mechanism should be developed to share each other's perceptions from the decolonization scuffles of backward people who have 'existing skills and knowledge and can be transformed' (p. 5).

On the other hand, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been criticized that their work can contribute to rather than addressing true sustainable transformation. First, NGOs existed mainly due to weak governance and inadequate public resources. There is the potential that they may contribute to a weaker government by imposing their agendas and programs with little or no reference to the host country's government agenda (Tvedt, 1998). If there are many NGOs, their program may overlap with each other and that of the Government, making developing consistent and workable policies difficult and potentially duplicating services (Green, 1987). In such cases, the question is raised about the implementer and how they handle, develop approaches, and bring innovative ideas to divert and convert these efforts towards fruitful changes and proper utilization of funds.

From multiple angles, the role of individual professionals is vital. Therefore, recognizing and understanding the real-life experiences of those involved in community transformation is essential for individuals and professionals in I/NGOs. This involves listening to people's stories, learning from their insights, and incorporating their perspectives into the work. By valuing these lived experiences,

I/NGO workers can create more effective and meaningful programs that truly address community needs. It helps build trust and ensures that the transformation process is grounded in the community's experiences and challenges, leading to more sustainable and impactful outcomes.

I/NGO professionals are driven by extrinsic and intrinsic motivations to perform their tasks and stay committed. Extrinsic motivations include tangible rewards such as salaries, benefits, and career advancement opportunities. These incentives help attract skilled professionals to the sector and maintain their engagement. On the other hand, intrinsic motivations stem from personal satisfaction, a sense of purpose, and a commitment to positively impacting communities.

Many I/NGO professionals are inspired by the desire to contribute to social change, alleviate suffering, and support marginalized groups. The factors which motivate employees are (a) job security, (b) personal loyalty, (c) interest in work, (d) working conditions, (e) discipline, (f) monetary benefits and compensation, (g) feeling of being on in things and (h) appreciation of work done (Rethina Bai & Hemalatha, 2024). Somehow, I/NGO provides the motivational factors; therefore, people are attracted to seek jobs with these organizations.

This combination of external rewards and internal fulfillment creates a strong and dedicated workforce for successfully implementing I/NGO projects and initiatives. However, there is a gap in how and why they are attracted. Are they motivating for only personal benefits or something more for community change? I found that professionals in the I/NGO sector contribute their ways toward social change. However, I realized that including a transformative paradigm and critical analysis of the activities is important. It digs beyond the bracketing responsibilities if we aim to transform the perspective of individuals and make a wider contribution towards awareness, empowerment, community change, or transforming societal issues for a good life, which is essential in our context.

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to account for the lived experiences of I/NGO professionals engaged in different targeted activities and how these activities can lead to community transformation.

Research Question

How do I/NGO professionals account for their lived experiences of being involved in community transformation?

Significance of the Study

Understanding what could be of full advantage to I/NGO professionals in relationships with community transformation is important. It could motivate I/NGO professionals with the perception that they are too focused on physical benefits rather than valuing sustained tasks to justify the motivational factors. Regular reflection and actions guide establishments while designing and carrying out activities and offerings consistent with a transformational mindset.

Joshi (2018) has noted that municipal and provincial duty-bearers have inevitably encountered significant breaches in problem identification and strategic mobilization of locally available resources when assigning professionals and their jobs and responsibilities. As a result, the starring role of development associates and I/NGOs in digging out and nurturing these gaps is critical. This study cares for those directly or indirectly attached because it covers how people can move forward to fulfill the gap and necessity.

This study can help raise awareness in higher education institutions, encouraging individuals to contribute personally to support the efforts of I/NGOs and professionals in driving sustainable change. For society, this study functioned as a way to think and reflect on self for transforming knowledge and skills in the community.

The study examines how NGO professionals change the required situation, reproduce culture, and generate new knowledge in the community or society. In many ways, people are advancing from NGOs, and NGOs are furthering from social support to establish a global structure (Bhandari, 2014).

Therefore, this study for community members, scholars, organizations, and professionals with related stakeholders may be very broad and insightful for future program development. Specifically, this study focuses more on the lived experience, self-contribution, critical analysis, and interpretation of the understanding of the I/NGO professionals.

Delimitations

This study mainly focused on how I/NGO professionals contribute toward community transformation. Community transformation is itself a vague area. Therefore, not all components were considered here for this study, and it was delimited into the areas for transformation: individual empowerment, transformation for social and cultural reconstruction, social inclusion in terms of diversity, justice,

respect, and gender inclusion, and the final area it covered was the physical environment in terms of natural disaster. Likewise, research participants were selected based on their experience and availability. Therefore, the research participants only represented a portion of Nepal's professional community, limiting the generalizability of the findings. This specific sample may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives, experiences, or practices found across the broader professional landscape in Nepal.

My Standpoint

The transformative power of I/NGOs lies in the lived experiences of professionals engaged in diverse targeted activities. This study contends that by delving into the firsthand experiences of I/NGO professionals and the impact of their work on communities, we can uncover the intricate dynamics of community transformation and gain valuable insights into the efficacy of I/NGO interventions.

My standpoint highlights the significance of exploring the experiences of I/NGO professionals and their connection to community transformation. There is a symbiotic relationship between I/NGO activities and the communities they serve, emphasizing the need to examine this relationship closely to comprehensively understand the transformative potential of I/NGOs' activities.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I shared a personal story about my experiences as an I/NGO professional. I explained how I work as a professional to deliver activities that support community and social change. I discussed problems and potential solutions, encountered a research obstacle, set my delimitation of the study, and outlined the study's goal. Finally, I provided a brief justification for my research standpoint and defined the scope.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review is a core task that connects the entire research and establishes relationships among all the required components. Challenges are addressed through various techniques to maintain quality and strive for the highest standards.

I started the literature review in this chapter with my nuance thoughtful, I aided by a poem. I started with thematic reviews to create meaning that is appropriate to my research heading. This involved exploring different connected themes that define my study goals. I explored themes such as lived experience, community transformation, individual empowerment, social inclusion, and environmental justice. Following, I conducted theoretical reviews, I focused on critical social theory to comprehend how individuals or I/NGOs professionals engage in various community activities.

Next steps, I moved to an empirical review to design the research method, regulate the nature of the research to identify gaps. I compared it to other related studies. Finally, I addressed the research gap, developing new insights, and knowledge to enhance my understanding that I/NGO professionals can contribute towards community transformation.

Thematic Review

Under the thematic review, I established and identified patterns to explore the possibilities for answering the questionnaire. As a researcher, I mainly focused on the lived experience, transformation, individual empowerment, social inclusion, and physical environment.

Lived Experience

Experiences and life events are always together. Therefore, we all have some life experience and lived life, and we internalize many ups and downs that individuals somehow face. Feelings, expressions, and thinking patterns are different for individuals. Thus, these familiarities make people distinctive, but people can also hitch many hearts together for a common understanding to lead societies. Gained experiences are the sources of knowledge that can influence the futures of social change-makers, whether knowingly or unknowingly, covertly or openly that may

serve as important catalysts for community change and labor with a purpose. (Sandhu, 2017). Living and experiencing is inimitable because experience is not only approximately what is experienced, but also "being experienced makes a special impression that gives it lasting importance" (Gadamer, 2004, p. 53). It also demonstrates the criticality of the connotation recognized in the familiarity and reflects it in working areas. From the view of qualitatively derived narratives of lived experience may not be a complete meaning if it is only descriptive; it needs also to embrace the person's compassion to his/her standing. It may not be a complete scenario if it is only communicative; it must also contain the people's perception, feelings and insights into its importance. Living and experiencing will not be complete if its residues are graciously evocative. It should encompass an elucidation that makes sense to the person and makes meaning to others.

Dewey's insightful assertion from 1933 resonates with the profound truth that genuine learning is not merely a product of experiences. However, it emerges from the deliberate act of reflecting upon those experiences. To truly absorb knowledge and acquire skills, one must engage in a thoughtful and introspective examination of the lessons embedded in the fabric of their encounters. Learning is a complex and nuanced process beyond acquiring superficial or easily gained knowledge and skills. It requires a deeper engagement, demanding individuals to transcend the surface and delve into critical thinking and self-analysis. In this pursuit, it becomes evident that the mere accumulation of information may not inherently contribute to meaningful change unless coupled with a conscious effort to contextualize, understand, and internalize the knowledge gained. Dewey's wisdom serves as a reminder that the transformative power of learning lies not solely in the experiences themselves but in the mindful reflection that follows, fostering a continuous cycle of growth and development.

Community Transformation

Every individual discusses how we can bring long-term changes to the community. Transformation is identifying issues, using local resources, or even creating new ground rules for how things are done, with the connotation of ascertaining and influencing innovative sources of power (Cebrowski, 2006). While all development is transformation, not all is development; transformation mainly deals with positive changes for a better utopian world. One of the key roles of inclusive

transformation is the encouragement function NGOs perform for the disadvantaged (William, 1991).

Transformation in the views of I/NGO or as professionals is sustaining the project's core activities, and it's able to identify the deeper connections of internal and external entities. Transformation never ends; it is an ongoing process and changes over time because transformation is about constructing or predicting the upcoming consequences to individual/community and national needs (Cebrowski, 2006; Bhandari, 2014) and to change any of the areas we should change, and accommodate all stakeholders. Transformation should create new fields of competition and capabilities that consider individual empowerment, realizing reality for action, justification for the environment, and others. Transformation should be the idea of exploring new competitive arenas and capacities, considering factors such as human empowerment, the acceptance of actionable reality, environmental rationale, and others.

Transformation involves the co-evolution and co-construction of implemented models, progressions, organizational history construction, and technological forming and reforming (Cebrowski, 2006). Professionals involved in the process should increase their knowledge and skill in evaluating the process implicit in the concept, analyze the processes, organization, and familiarity with the local, and find the suitability of the applied technology.

Transformation is social, individual, power-balancing essential ups and downs in how humanities are organized. Resources are distributed and distinguished as par the five interconnected dimensions of shifting the situations: the political revolution, the economic reformation, the technological update, the demographic reach, and the cultural sensitivities, which together create the platform for the social realm and initiate the modification (Haas et al., 2020). Nonetheless, we as I/NGO professionals can distinguish that this is a beginning, and we undeniably hope that the positive towards people and community, which relies on individual exploration and its fundamental rudiments as drawn below, will endure progress through unrelenting application, corroboration, and modification.

In this study, community transformation dealt with the following issues-

- Capacity enhancement to recognize the local resources
- Ability to evaluate the process, concepts, implementing process, and planning
- Debating skills for the generation of new ideas or knowledge

Individual Empowerment

The cumulative increase of a person's or group's capacity makes critiques sort out self-developed holistic thinking patterns to adopt the pertinence and to interpret in the real circumstances those pronouncements into anticipated arrangements, and their outcomes are considered empowerment. Individuals and collectives' assets that should be built and also need to enhance the effectiveness and fairness of the organization and as well any institutions. These are the key determinants to restructure and maintain good governance within the organizations. Empowerment is dynamic words however, here, we can refer it to self-reflective transformation, creating the environment that enables individuals and enhancing policies encompasses a wide range of concerns, and the leading emphasis is on increasing access to information, enclosure and engagement, culpability, and local organizational awareness and capacity development (World Bank, 2013).

It involves bringing together the supply and demand aspects of growth, changing the living conditions of the poor, and helping them develop and use their resources. People with more power are expected to have better development opportunities, results, and overall lives. Rappaport's (1987) concept of empowerment 'conveys both a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power, and legal rights' (p.121). With this notion, Empowerment can happen on three levels. On a personal level, it means gaining more control over daily life and getting more involved in the community (Keiffer, 1984); at the small group level, empowerment involves groups' sharing experiences, analyzing them together, and influencing their actions (Presby et al., 1990); and at the community level, where empowerment involves using resources and strategies to increase community control (Labonte, 1989).

Considering different dynamics of empowerment, my contextual and experiential knowledge includes individual empowerment with the following abilities-

- Ability to analyze self (Self-reflection)
- Ability to bring a self-determined change
- Improving efficiency and fairness
- Seeking new opportunities
- Access to information

Social Inclusion

Social inclusion means ensuring everyone can fully participate in society, regardless of background or situation. This involves removing barriers that prevent people from accessing education, employment, healthcare, and social activities. It's about creating an environment where everyone feels valued and has the same opportunities to contribute and benefit from social, economic, and political life. We aim to build a more equitable and cohesive society by promoting social inclusion.

Enhancing conditions for individuals and groups to participate in society and increasing the ability, opportunity, and dignity of people marginalized by their identity to engage in society are the bases of engaging people for inclusion (World Bank, 2013). Social inclusion deals with not excluding from the gain of opportunities and depriving of access to resources; rather, it is a process that ensures that those at risk of poverty and social marginalization who are far from these necessities meaningfully engage in economic, social, political, and cultural life and enjoy a standard living that is considered normal in society in which they live. "It ensures that they have greater participation in decision-making that affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights (World Bank, 2013).

In Nepal, social exclusion is an alien concept, although *adibashi janajati* (Indigenous People), *Madhesi* (Tarai people), *Dalits* (occupational caste groups), *Muslims*, and other marginalized communities have been experiencing the effects of social exclusion for centuries.

In Nepal, the notion of social exclusion is unfamiliar. Despite indigenous peoples, Tarai peoples (Madhesi), occupational caste groups (Dalit), Muslims, and other marginalized communities enduring social exclusion for centuries is not a widely recognized concept in Nepalese society (Gurung, 2019). The concept was not used in Nepal until the beginning of the twenty-first century. In their donor group meeting in London only in 2001, international aid agencies, such as the World Bank, DFID, UNDP, EU, and ILO, introduced the concept of social exclusion in their donor group meeting (Bhattachan, 2009).

Identifying the factors contributing to social exclusion to mainstream those groups or people is essential. In a socially diverse nation like Nepal, social inclusion is not just an ideal but a crucial necessity. It's indispensable for fostering human development, promoting social cohesion, upholding social justice, and advancing democracy by encouraging broader participation and ensuring fair representation.

Tikly and Barret (2012) stated that participation would require detecting, confessing, and responding to the entitlements, needs, wishes, and objectives of individuals who have been excluded from training, including "the right of individuals and groups to have their voices heard in debates about social justice and injustice and to participate in decision-making actively" (p. 13).

Social inclusion is crucial yet relatively new. Indigenous people, Madhesi, Dalit, Muslims, and other marginalized communities have faced social exclusion for centuries, a concept only recognized in the early 21st century. International aid agencies like the World Bank and UNDP (2001) introduced it publicly. Identifying factors contributing to exclusion is vital for mainstreaming marginalized groups. Social inclusion fosters human development, social cohesion, and democracy by promoting participation and fair representation. It involves recognizing and addressing the needs and rights of those excluded, ensuring their voices are heard in social justice discussions.

Considering all these, in our context, we can deal with social inclusion in the following ways:

- Cultural reintegration
- Participation in decision-making
- Maintaining dignity, respect, and inclusion

Environmental Justice

The environmental justice movement is concerned that physical environmental dangers, which are the proximity of people's homes to more unsafe or prone areas, may be more common in low-income or sectional localities. Furthermore, these communities may lack the political clout and social links necessary to improve the situation. A sizeable portion of the delicate and crucial Himalayan ecology is found in Nepal. As a landlocked nation with various physiographic features, Nepal's rising temperatures may result in glacial melt and glacial lake outburst floods (USAID, 2012).

Droughts are already occurring more frequently in Nepal during the winter and in typically dry regions. Extreme weather occurrences like floods, landslides, hailstorms, droughts, and unexpected rain are common in the nation and are likely to rise due to future temperature rise and rainfall variability.

Nepal is particularly vulnerable to climate change, with 25% of the population living below the national poverty line (Asian Development Bank [ADB], 2018) and

66% of the population depending on farming for a living (Food and Agricultural Organization [FAO], 2019). In addition, temperature forecasts indicate that Nepal will warm by 1.8 to 5.8 degrees Celsius by 2090, with the rate of warming predicted to be higher in the winter (USAID, 2012). Nepal must, therefore, create adequate organizational and policy solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change. However, precise statistics are needed for effective responses. In this research, the physical environment mainly considers the professional's contribution to the community's resilience, and it covers natural disasters (floods, landslides, earthquakes, droughts, etc.).

Regarding environmental justice and ways of working of I/NGOs and professionals in Nepal, we can go with the ideas created by different environmental justice and expertise. Environmental justice is both a social movement and a principle founded on the belief that everyone has the right to clean air, clean water, and a healthy community where they can thrive. As defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (2022), environmental justice focuses on ensuring the fair treatment and meaningful participation of all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, or income, in creating, applying, and enforcing environmental laws, policies, and regulations.

Over time, activists and scholars addressing environmental justice challenges have identified various forms of justice that, when achieved collectively, can help realize environmental justice (Lee, 2021). These include distributive justice, which focuses on ensuring equitable environmental outcomes from policies and decisions, and procedural justice, which emphasizes fair decision-making processes and meaningful opportunities for public participation. Epistemic justice highlights the importance of valuing diverse forms of knowledge, including the lived experiences of community members. In contrast, structural justice calls for creating fair systems, policies, and institutions. Together, these forms of justice provide a comprehensive framework for addressing environmental justice issues.

Theoretical Review

Theoretical verification is a mechanism that backs up a theory by introducing and explaining my research topic, attempting to demonstrate knowledge of and comprehension of theories and concepts pertinent to the study issue. This investigation incorporates a broader spectrum of knowledge by considering specific

principles of critical social theory and extensively applying them throughout the study.

Critical Social Theory (CST)

My exploration focused on how individuals or professionals engaged in various identified activities within the community. I aimed to understand how these activities contributed to both individual and communal change, particularly emphasizing their positive impacts in the future. This was the core concern of my study. Therefore, with the support of CST, I tried to bring my research participants' voices into how I/NGO professionals addressed social issues like gender-based violence, sexual harassment, caste discrimination, religious diversity, educational accessibility, occupational or political revolution, and technological ideologies. Bringing these issues in hand can impact the community people, empower them, bring changes in behavioural patterns, and the changes in their situations. These types of social relations are perceived as inherent attributes resulting in a similar transformation of consciousness (Mezirow, 1991).

CST encompasses a diverse range of disciplines, all aimed at furthering the liberating potential of knowledge. Its objective is to enhance the role of critique in the pursuit of community change. Within the realm of transformation, CST asserts that quality is directly linked to the extent of critical analysis available to people.

As my research paradigm is also interpretivism, it believes that reality is shaped by how people experience it. This idea was important in humanistic psychology in the 1950s and 1960s, which focused on the holistic development of fully functioning (Rogers, 1969) or self-actualizing persons (Maslow, 1970). Humanistic psychology looks at how people grow and reach their full potential. Interpretivism is about understanding people's experiences from their perspectives. Including everyone in society is important because it respects how people live.

CST holds significant value due to its emphasis on fairness and empowerment. Originating from the Marxist-influenced Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt and New York, this theory prioritizes social justice and the interplay of knowledge, power, and ideology in the learning journey. Paulo Freire, a prominent Brazilian educator, championed CST in education, opposing the traditional banking concept of education where participants are merely passive receivers of knowledge and authority lies solely with the teacher. Instead, he advocated for a more human pedagogy based on continuous dialogue, where educators and learners actively participate in

understanding reality. This approach aligns with current theories that advocate social inclusivity and learners' engagement in the learning process, bringing sustainable change to the community. The three main generic cognitive domains (Work knowledge, Technical Knowledge and Emancipatory Knowledge) in which human interest produces knowledge are distinguished by Habermas (1972).

Among the three domains, keeping the first two domains, i.e., work knowledge or technical knowledge, also known as instrumental knowledge, is the knowledge that is founded on empirical inquiry and guided by technical principles. In this study, I applied my work knowledge to open up my life during my professional career tenure. This helped me explore the basic information, which was the process's key. This explains how the professional ability to manipulate reality effectively determines whether a certain action is appropriate or not.

The principles of emancipatory interest, as outlined (Habermas, 1972: Grundy, 1987) were applied in research methodologies to foster empowerment, critical reflection, and meaningful interaction. In the realm of research, applying emancipatory interest involves creating a framework beyond mere survival or collaboration.

As Habermas (1972) elucidated, emancipatory interest concerns empowerment, critical reflection, and meaningful interaction with subjects and the world. Unlike technical interest, which is concerned with survival only, and practical interest, which is concerned with survival through collaboration and communication, in emancipatory interest, survival is associated with creating social justice. It is ecologically approachable (Grundy, 1987). Considering these ideas in the research process, I brought the notion of critical reflection and challenge to the status quo by encouraging constant questioning of beliefs, values, and practices throughout the research process. I created opportunities for participants and myself to challenge the prevailing societal norms and question power relationships. This promoted my critical perspectives on power relationships, deconstructing hegemony, and raising awareness of false consciousness within the research context.

It is more about knowing why, questioning, and reflecting on oneself. So, it promotes critical and emancipatory knowledge. It is praxis-oriented and based on subjective reality. The interest in emancipatory knowledge seeks the active and meaningful participation of all the stakeholders and expects an ideal speech situation

for everyone concerned with the change. I provided equal opportunity to my participants to put their views on anything related to the research.

Regarding the power relationship during the research, power and authority shared between my participants and researcher was maintained carefully. As a researcher, I promoted and shared emancipatory knowledge by involving them in developing research questions and methodologies beyond technical or practical interests and focusing on creating social justice. I adopted a praxis-oriented approach that integrates theory with action, encouraging participants to actively engage in the research process. I strived for critical and emancipatory knowledge that empowers individuals and groups to take control of their lives.

In Grundy's work (1987), I recognized that emancipation required the cultivation of critical consciousness. This consciousness acknowledged the culturally constructed nature of the educational enterprise and fostered discussions about the fundamental presuppositions and taken-for-granted interests, supporting the culture of teaching and learning. These discussions aimed to address social inequalities and inequities that emerged from these deeply ingrained aspects of education.

As I reflect on it, the emancipatory interest concerned empowering individuals and groups' capacity to take control of their lives in autonomous and responsible ways. In contrast to the other two interests, technical and practical, which both revolved around control and sympathy, the emancipatory cognitive interest focused on liberation and empowerment. As Grundy (1987), described the cognitive interest that helped as a core element that appeared from sincere, critical observations of structure of human society. During that time, this interest was pivotal in shaping the understanding of the need. It also focused on for autonomy and responsible control over one's actions for sincere freedom and empowerment through capacity building.

The term emancipatory always explores about the “the self-identity or self-critique domain by one must be interested in how history and biography manifest in how one views oneself, duties, and social expectations. Emancipatory knowing refers to the human ability to recognize and critically examine the social, personal, cultural, historical pattern, and political status quo, understanding how and why it has developed in its current form (Chinn, 2017). Emancipatory knowing focuses on the knowledge required to remove barriers that make health and well-being difficult or impossible for those who are disadvantaged and create environments that promote

health and well-being for all. Emancipatory knowing is integral to empirical, ethical, personal, and aesthetic knowing.

Critical self-awareness-based insights are emancipatory in allowing one to identify the true causes of a problem self-emancipation through reflection results in a modified consciousness or perspective, which is how knowledge is achieved.

Reflecting on the past, I acknowledge that the self-identity or self-critique domain, emancipatory, held a significant place in my understanding. Back then, I recognized the importance of being interested in how my history and biography shaped my self-perceptions, duties, and social expectations. The insights derived from critical self-awareness were, in essence, emancipatory. They provided the means to identify the true causes of personal issues, paving the way for a journey of self-emancipation through reflection. Looking back, it is evident that this process resulted in a modified consciousness or perspective, representing the transformative power of knowledge attainment through self-reflection.

Empirical Review

Empirical review is a method of obtaining knowledge and detailed insights to develop connections through direct and indirect observation or experience. This review helps me design a research method, research nature, and research gap compared to others who conducted related studies.

More people usually expressed positive things to say about NGOs' efforts, approaches, reaching door-to-door to make social changes, hearing individuals, and support to eliminate societal issues. These can claim improvement, and they are a reflection of empowerment socially, and individually. Generally, NGOs are in operation locally and have a positive reputation in society. The research finding has indicated that decentralization and self-guided management rules were important parts of changing community through empowerment (Islam, 2012).

Community transformation is facilitated by sincere and persistent efforts, such as involvement in welfare programs, awareness campaigns, and in-person interactions (Jain, 2017).

According to Lombard (2008), the non-governmental segment and self-motivated organizations play a vital role in creating democracies that work for the broader benefit of all populations. Changes are possible even from the first decade of democracy when the disliked position stepped up by rebuilding that situation in the

next decade and was recognized as a contributor to South Africa's reconstruction, restructuring, and development.

According to Bhandari (2014), the role of civil society in addressing social issues will always be important. Nepal nurtures its uniqueness in many ways by serving humanity and nature. A unique representation of Nepalese culture, religion, and geography is to maintain self-identity. Services are based on social norms and values passed down from one cohort to another. Such commissioned services to people and nature are organized as social traditions and cultural rituals.

According to Thamminaina (2018), NGOs with deep knowledge of their communities take an ethnically subtle approach to bringing about the anticipated transformation. This kind of attitude builds trust with people. This is the basis for educating people about the expected outcome of the intervention. NGO volunteers live with potential legates and interact with them in prescribed and casual settings. This makes it more consistent and helps the program run efficiently. However, not all NGOs are effective. The biggest disadvantage of such NGOs is the implementation of their programs within the given time frame.

The paper by Majid et al. (2013) emphasized the objective and subjective aspects of working in NGOs. NGO experts felt that money (i.e., rewards) was less of a priority. They could endorse themselves in sophisticated positions but didn't realize it was career advancement. They valued the meaning and purpose of their work more.

Effective motivation is crucial for managing and progressing competitively and creating an environment where high employee excitement and commitment are essential for task accomplishment. Rethina Bai and Hemalatha (2024) concluded that good wages, favorable working conditions, appreciation, achievement, responsibility, the nature of the work, job security, and organizational culture and policies drive NGO/INGO professionals' motivation. These elements are crucial for fostering a sense of motivation within the workplace and helping employees feel valued and purposeful in their roles. By enhancing motivation, they maintain a high level of engagement, which keeps employees actively involved in their tasks. This engagement helps employees stay dedicated, showing commitment and enthusiasm toward their responsibilities. Ultimately, this combination of motivation, engagement, and dedication drives improved performance, leading to greater organizational success.

Research Gap

Going through the literature, I found that professionals are motivated by remuneration and want to be promoted to a higher position. In our context, multiple motivating factors can influence professionals, and among them, the financial benefit we receive is prominent. Some NGOs are more engaged in executing the activities; the execution focus does not fully account for the changes that happen to transform the society. Whole classes discuss thinking patterns and diverse paradigms and reflect on the pros and cons of various approaches and methodologies, fostering a deeper understanding and critical evaluation of different perspectives, resulting in exploring the transformative steps in the community.

It helps me develop my insights and discover what I see to develop new understandings and knowledge. People are critical thinkers. We need to create incremental updates for social change and a sustainable future for our communities. Examining the different means and benefits of compiling, recording, and reviewing expert contributions in the Nepalese context is important.

The research gap identified from these statements lies in understanding the comprehensive motivational factors influencing I/NGO professionals beyond financial benefits. Existing literature emphasizes remuneration and promotions but overlooks how motivational elements like recognition, work environment, job satisfaction, and good wages support community changes. Furthermore, the focus on activity execution rather than transformative societal change reveals a need to explore different approaches and methodologies. Examination with how I/NGO professional contributions are compiled, recorded, and reviewed. This can deliver new understandings into ways of fostering, critical thinking, community change, and sustainability of life of people in their communities.

Chapter Summary

Primarily, I went through various research ideas, research articles, related books, theses, and journals to illuminate the concepts of my study. Introducing the concepts through various I/NGO professionals' perspectives on how they are motivated to drive positive change in the community, highlighting their professional and personal experiences, working strategies, and the impact of their work. After that, I explored Critical Social theory. It supports the critical analysis of participants' voices. It expands the ideas of emancipatory interest, concerned with empowerment, critical reflection, and meaningful interaction with subjects and the world itself.

Having explored some previous research studies, I finally identified a research gap for my study.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of this chapter is to integrate the ideas and methodology of this research study, in which major philosophical considerations, research design, research paradigms, qualitative research (interpretive and critical) as a research method, description of narrative research, selection of the study area, participants, quality standards, and ethical considerations for this study are thoroughly discussed. The research methodology is conceived to examine how research is done. Identifying the problem and solving the problems with appropriate ideation through research is imperative (Kothari, 2004). This indicates that methodologies for research can lead to wider lenses and steps that a researcher takes to uncover and probe a problem. The methodologies also help us to look at real connections and provide the reasoning behind them.

According to Chilisa and Kawulich (2012), choosing a research methodology begins with deciding which research paradigms will influence the research. Additionally, it includes a theoretical framework for selecting literature, a research paradigm, quality standards, interpretation, and research practice with research implications.

I started with my attitude and followed the questionnaire to understand the research methodology and its applicability in my research. Which paradigm is it, and how does it influence my research? What theory influenced my prime exploration topic? Which research tactic is suitable and why? What types of information can be used to respond to my research questions? And what are the sources of my research? To what criteria are the design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of research findings adhered to? To answer these questions, we must first identify which paradigms are the most suitable for social investigation based on the intentions of the participants and the research theme. By way of explanation, for decent planning, the research paradigm setting is very basic (Omodan, 2020).

To respond to these queries, I first decided on my research paradigm. Given the study's aims, appropriateness is important for my social research.

My Research Paradigm

My research paradigm is multi-paradigmatic and includes interpretivism, criticalism, and postmodernism, which deal with multiple realities, critical analysis, and expression in different ways of arts. I explore how I/NGO professionals contribute to the transformation of whatever they are doing for or with the people.

Multi-paradigmatic Research Design

‘Transformative research is a multi-paradigmatic approach as and for professional development’ (Taylor et al., 2012, p. 10). Transformation in multiple areas requires many approaches - the shift of methodology, updating the systems, defining many facets of inclusiveness, empowering the individual, mobilizing people and groups, and achieving wider societal consensus. Thus, in this epoch, a single paradigm might not be enough to cover as we wish to see changes or transformations.

As a critical researcher, I should pick up the paradigms and the mix of methods to address the situation's complexity following the association of professionals and their practices. The multi-paradigmatic paradigm majorly ensures the quality standards applied in the research. Therefore, it supports and justifies the production or generation of different types of knowledge through narrative inquiry. Arts-based research, including multi-paradigmatic studies, introduces new literary genres, ways of thinking, and quality standards (Taylor et al., 2012).

As a narrative inquirer, I believe in individually constructed perception through experiences and socially constructed multiple realities, that individuals have different learnings and live throughout their life or working span. People perceive and gradually shape their daily life activities and lead activities for social improvement.

This is a narrative inquiry because it covers my philosophies and my participant's personal experiences, feelings, perceptions, and contributions regarding learning and living, actual events, and their life activities for a better social life in the community with the notion of interpretivism, criticalism, and postmodernism.

Interpretivism

Focusing on individuals became important when education began using a ‘bottom-up’ approach in the late 1970s. This human-centered approach strongly influenced how people viewed personal experiences, encouraged caring for others, respected different opinions, and helped understand cultural ideas through long-term connections. It also promoted exploring these ideas from an insider’s perspective. Learning is wide, and it should be sustainable because everyone can enjoy the

surroundings and live a better life individually and in a group. Thus, Taylor and Medina (2011) highlighted that understanding the culture is crucial to bring changes within maintaining and reconstructing knowledge ‘of others’ by learning to ‘stand in their shoes’, ‘look through their eyes,’ and ‘feel their pleasure or pain’ (p. 4).

Thus, the construction process of knowledge or the epistemological realm of this paradigm of generating knowledge is inter-subjective. The researcher and participants interact with each other, sharing their lived experiences, describing, evaluating, and analyzing the events, and from these events analysis, some kinds of themes can be generated. Interaction methods like formal and informal interviewing and focus group discussion establish ethically good relations, and the researcher's interpretation constructs trustworthiness and authentic descriptions of the culture in line with constructing knowledge with others.

The notion of this paradigm relating to educational research empowers me to construct a wealthy and empathetic analysis of the real situation where I was involved as a participant in contextual considerations of the living world and reflective experiences of professionals and societies. As I agreed with what Taylor and Medina (2011) stated:

Knowledge construction and quality standards are varied, but arguable that of Guba and Lincoln (1989), who developed standards of trustworthiness and authenticity that are distinctly different but “parallel to” the validity, reliability, and objectivity standards of positivism (p. 4).

With this way of thinking and my professional experience in the I/NGO sector for over a decade, I have developed a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities in driving social change and empowering communities. Localization is a lower priority, focusing more on adapting other styles, knowledge, and practices. This shift can raise questions about the authenticity of the learning, as it may overlook the value of locally relevant approaches and perspectives. Therefore, the ideas of constructing knowledge and maintaining the quality standards of components of trustworthiness (credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability) are crucial to moving from the traditional realm to the current modernization era, and I strongly believe that this paradigm supports building the local deep understanding of individuals and reconnection to the wider circumstances.

Criticalism

Individual empowerment is a decisive weapon to bring changes or transform whatever is favorable and suitable for many. Empowering is deliberation, knowledge, skills, and a refreshing attitude. People can become imaginative and critical thinkers, increase their capability to raise questions, and stand up independently to solve problems logically. The critical research paradigm addresses this issue by enabling and setting the environment to practice power balancing (Taylor & Medina, 2011), which entails identifying the burning issues and moving ahead for community transformation by bringing and reconstructing the unjust social structures, policies, beliefs, and dominant practices.

As a researcher, my role is not just to interpret and bracket this research into the collection of lived experiences and stories. Rather, I aim to empower the participants involved regarding what and how we can contribute to community transformation. I planned to involve them in collaborating writing, being involved in critical discourse, and respecting the inner ideas of the participants. Also, through the critical dimension, various means of critical analysis are employed to critique established ideologies, policies, belief systems, and guided practices, aiming to challenge and transform them for greater social justice and equity.

I raised my critical consciousness, as highlighted by Brookfield (2000), and used my way of thinking and broader visioning to construct a longer transformation with a bright vision of a better community where the researcher has the role of a community practitioner. I have been working with the community since 2009, providing technical support, empowerment, and awareness of healthy living and a justifiable environment. I have played different roles, such as an advocate, change agent, and coordinator for various policy dialogues, among many others. However, it was/is more bracketed and target-oriented, and therefore, this research and critical paradigm have supported me in bringing critique and critical reflection to whatever we are doing. This drives me to increase my ability to adapt to changing situations.

Postmodernism

Since the paradigm of post-modernism was newly launched in the educational era, it is challenging. However, it unlocks the many facets and the emotions of the people as the important notions of representation as highlighted by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), who add that there should be the connection of minds and heart to mobilize hands for performance, and it brings the devotion and increases access to the

surroundings. There is no instant magic that can see what exactly others are thinking and their ways of performing. That's why; the best we can do is “represent” our thoughts and feelings through various means of communication like language, art, dance, cartoons, different genres, gestures, drawings, etc. (Taylor & Medina, 2011, p. 8).

In my research, I applied the two types of ethnographic writing, enhanced and semi-fictionalized, out of four ideal types: plain, enhanced, semi-fictionalized, and fictionalized (Humphreys & Watson, 2009). Through enhanced ethnographic writing, I used presentational techniques, descriptive scene-setting, and dialogues and presented my character to claim the truth according to cases or events. I restructured the events into a single narrative description or more using the features applied in the enhanced writing.

This post-modernist paradigm flourishes the notion of arts-based educational research, which deals with emotional connection, respecting emotions, and making meaning with new forms of interpretation. It believes in what can be visualized rather than abstract things. It also emphasizes alternative modes of reasoning (Taylor & Medina, 2011), such as metaphorical, dialectical, inductive, romantic, and utopian thinking (Taylor et al., 2011).

Narrative Inquiry as Research Methodology

In my exploration of qualitative research methodologies, I found that many researchers fell short in addressing the intricate issues surrounding human-centric concerns and the authentic voices of people. A prevailing critique suggests that these approaches inadequately tackle the genuine issues associated with the quality of learning and teaching (Mertova & Webster, 2020).

Recognizing this limitation, some esteemed professionals have acknowledged the need for exploration and investment in alternative approaches. The aim is to discover new methodologies that can effectively capture the essence of human experiences, providing updated opportunities and facilitating informed decision-making.

The challenge lies in demonstrating the quality of learning and teaching, which is crucial for improving human pursuits like learning and the overall quality of life. Amidst this complexity, narrative inquiry emerges as a research method that empowers professionals to delve into the analysis of these phenomena. It allows for a

comprehensive investigation, enabling the profound unpacking of intricate concerns related to the quality of learning and teaching.

I chose narrative inquiry as my research method to clarify the specific lived experiences and distinguish individual experiences from one another. Throughout the study, I aimed to explain how people perceived situations correlating with my views. In human experiences, this typically involves delving into in-depth data and assessments (Odoman, 2020).

According to Asghar (2013), the critical paradigm offers fresh and innovative insights for comprehending challenges and instigating change within the realm of understanding and directly in the world itself. It was suggested that those viewpoints should be explored and developed by contemporary researchers. However, I selected critical social theory in my study due to its flexibility and individuality in examination of individuals reality. It sheds light on a broader empathetic, encouraging closer attention to and perception of, processing, and interpretation facts.

The effort within the transformational paradigm was epistemologically grounded in the individual's lived experience, knowledge, and subjectivity. It emphasized the significance of individual perspectives, involvement, and enlightenment. This approach recognized the remarkable ability of humans to comprehend subjective experiences and intuitively understand others' motivations and commitments. Odoman (2020) emphasized the need for critical reflection on taken-for-granted beliefs and social-conventional intelligence.

As an arts-based investigation, narrative emerged as an elegant and highly effective method to unveil the subtleties and details of historical encounters. It went beyond mere storytelling, delving into sharing personal, cultural, and social activities. The investigative method utilized lived perception through storytelling to reveal nuanced aspects. According to Clandinin (2013), "narrative inquiry is an approach to studying people's experiences, with nothing more and nothing less" (p.38). In her description, she portrayed narrative not as a mere tool or expression but as the living framework of a story that embodies the experience itself.

My study focused on social and emancipatory philosophies, methodologies, and research designs that aligned well with my adopted transformational paradigm. The study philosophy encompassed all supporting ideas in theoretical descriptions of transformations, incorporating critical theory, various neo-Marxist theories, and Mezirow's experiential learning theory (Odoman, 2020).

According to Mertens (2007), the transformational paradigm also fell within the scope of narrative investigators, emphasizing the subtleties of emancipation, which was relevant to the methodological design of my work.

In data production techniques, I utilized interviews, focused group discussions, and interactions, all under the transformational paradigm's purview. Hence, my choice of the transformational paradigm was not confined to the philosophy and its research method alone. The narrative transformative paradigm's mechanisms, including axiology, ontology, epistemology, and methodology, were extensively discussed in my study.

Through narrative inquiry, I tried to motivate the participants to share their stories and experiences during the interviews and other information collection processes. At first, I conducted in-depth interviews and maintained a diary with each research participant regarding different phases of their experience and stories in their engaged activities and personal experiences. I took the interview under different categories three times. The first interview was about one hour, which helped me to gain experience of the nature of the organization and the activities they engaged in. In the second phase, the interview was an open conversation for two to three hours. It helped me get in-depth stories of their lived experiences with different activities and their impact on community transformation.

In the last phase, I shared their stories and transcribed experiences with them through Google Docs for more discussion and conclusion of the findings. At the same time, more unclear questions and responses were made understandable mutually. After that, I organized the story and experiences chronologically, transcribed interviews, and provided a structure. Then, I developed them into narratives to further explore their attributes, experiences, beliefs, and practices about professionals' experience in community transformation.

Selection of Participants

According to the methodological premise of transformational paradigms, the research aims to dispel untruths, erroneous beliefs, and incomplete knowledge to enable individuals to take action and inherently modify their society (Chilisa & Kawulich, 2012).

Mertova and Webster (2020) stated that narrative inquiry is better suited to small participant sizes while also being sensitive to how knowledge is developed. Consequently, considering the research landscape, my study participants were those

who have been engaging in I/NGO sectors in Nepal for more than five years. Five research participants were planned to be recruited. Still, due to the unavailability of one, I selected the five participants purposefully to engage them deeply in exploring the experiences, understanding, and learning, and through it, to establish knowledge and understanding. Five was the ideal number, then the remaining number, increasing or decreasing, and finally, four were determined to seek the information. As Creswell (2013) stated, “Narrative research is best for capturing the detailed stories or lives of a single individual or a small number of individuals” (pp. 73-74).

The purposeful selection of participants enabled me to get a lot of important information from the data collected from the different I/NGO professionals working in Kathmandu Valley. All the selected participants were the researcher’s colleagues working in different organizations. This enriched my descriptions of the participants' major influences, reasoning, and findings.

Narrative Collection and Generation Approaches: Fieldwork Process

An open questionnaire and discussion were used as data collection tools. Interview tools were developed based on the research question.

I had conversations with people directly when using this approach. As the investigator, I asked the contributors a series of questions individually in face-to-face interviews. I collected the perception through individual discussion for common consensus, recorded the audio/videos of the conversation, and took down the interviewee's responses. This data collection method was appropriate because only a few respondents out of my many professional colleagues were involved in this data collection process. I got the appropriate information in the first interview and some in the second, and both the researcher and participants decided together on the next interview.

I collected information from the participants during the research period about shaping their habits/behavior by interviewing and discussing. There were various ways of collecting data from sources. I selected my participants purposively since I already had some connection with them as colleagues or I was organizationally familiar with them.

For the research, I collected their information and perceptions, analyzed their actions, and tried to establish a new ground of knowledge. We confirmed the places and sat together for the interview, formally and informally, and the frequency of interviews depended on the situation.

During the data collection, I tried to gather additional information through multiple sources like reflective journals, audio recordings, and videotapes. I applied several sources like audio/video recording, note keeping, and others as per the need for research to collect the data and organized individual discussions for interconnecting the perceptions and their actions.

As a researcher, I mainly explored the following while generating data: First, I explored the personal experience as a starting point. Secondly, I outlined the etymological sources. Thirdly, I searched for idiomatic expressions. Fourthly, I described the information or experiences, and lastly, I detected the different literature on experiential and transformative description by consulting narrative inquiry literature for the final knowledge establishment.

Meaning Making

For the deeper understanding, in the narrative inquiry, the researcher applies research method, data analysis critically, and evaluates with well organizing the interview transcripts, discussion notes, or other non-textual materials that the researcher gathers. My data collection and analysis also included the researcher's personal experiences. By using enhanced and semi-fictionalized ethnography, the interpretation of data created an understanding or explanation of the data that went beyond the data points and analysis.

Ensuring Quality Standards

In research fields, educational research has its significance and quality of conduct. The researcher tried maximally to sustain the excellence of the research study by considering the multiple responsibilities for accuracy and establishing the truth of the realities.

During the research process study, I tried to maintain the maximum quality of the procedures while conducting the interview, designing the action plan, collecting information, and interpreting or discussing findings. In my research, trustworthiness, in narrative inquiry research, was about establishing four things: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Additional criteria for narrative inquiry to sustain the quality standards included honesty of the researcher, ease of access for participants and the researcher, verisimilitude, authentication of the research process, familiarity, and being reasonably reachable in terms of the economy (Brookfield, 1995; Webster & Mertova, 2020).

Merriam (1998) explained how the qualitative researchers overview the authority. They more focus on how the researchers answer the queries and how they maintain the consistency, and at what level they are reliable. Also maintain how conclusions are relevant. So, it's important that the research feels trustworthy to the participants. For this reason, I made sure the situation seemed believable from the participants' point of view.

To maintain my credibility, I continued collecting data and study-related information. I spent substantial time with the participants until the data was saturated, and I kept a deep and detailed description of the data gathered. Quality and transferability appeal to the concept of the applicability of research outcomes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, cited in Collier-Reed et al., 2009). This refers to the demonstration of the applicability of the research of one study from one context to another.

Dependability refers to whether the conclusions of an investigation might be repetitive if the investigation were to imitate the same studies in a similar circumstance. This means dependable research is stable with its data over time and conditions. Kvale (1996, cited in Collier-Reed et al., 2009) outlines three places in an explanatory investigation where the dependability of investigation conclusions can be affected. The first section concerns the investigator during the fact-collection exercise; the second pertains to the information recorded during the conversations; and lastly, dependability concerns, which I highlighted again during the analysis. I utilized the auditing strategy to ensure dependability, which means keeping thorough records of all stages of the research process, including problem construction, contributor assortment, fieldwork notes, interview transcripts, and data analysis.

Also, confirmability is another criterion for maintaining trustworthiness in my case. Confirmability is a triangulation effect of investigator bias (Shenton, 2004). I used the participant's response to maintain confirmability, and there was no potential bias. I assured that the investigator's bias did not distort the interpretation of the participants' comments.

Keeping imperative applications of these standards (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability) at the center of the research ensures the integrity and reliability of the findings, making them trustworthy and applicable across different contexts. However, narrative inquiry is a research method that focuses on understanding and interpreting the stories and experiences of individuals or groups. It is considered a 'situated' and 'relational' practice because it considers the context and

relationships in which the stories are told and the researcher's role in the process is played. As a researcher, I aimed to explore the contextuality and effectiveness of the transformation through the narrative inquiry to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and significance of the studied experiences. We can link the notion of narrative inquiry within the three-dimensional space of "temporality, sociality, and place" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 1).

I, together with my co-researchers and the participants, was thrilled as our journey began. We realized our story was more than our own; it was something greater. We reflected on who we were and considered how to shape our ideas to inspire those around us. This study confirmed the completeness of the study from the initial to the final stages, considering all the above quality standards.

Praxis

In this study, our approach to knowledge construction was inductive and based on fieldwork experiences, and praxis is one of the quality standards. A democratic method of inquiry, research as praxis, is characterized by conciliation, mutual benefit, and encouragement (Lather, 1986).

Interpretivism and criticalism aim to be reflectively aware of how our experiences can shape the learning derived from them. Being aware of the structure of my own experience of this narrative gave me clues for orienting myself for transformation to all the other stages of interpretive and critical research.

Critical Reflexivity

Reflection is affected by concerns researchers may have about a phenomenon, whereas reflexivity involves questions about researchers as agents in a circumstance (Hibbert et al. 2010). Being self-conscious of one's evolving subjectivity and engaging in critical reflexivity encompasses both the idea of exposing oneself and being aware of the constraints of one's chosen epistemology, approach, and theoretical referents (Denzin, 2003).

In this case, reflexivity is not just for something but also about something (Gemignani, 2016). My goal was that the research required for transformative conceptions of knowledge were free reflexivity from post-positivism and impact through interpretivism and criticality (Braidotti, 2013; Gemignani, 2016).

In this study, I employed Kolb's experiential learning theory (1984) and the Institute for Cultural Affairs' 'ORID' model for concentrated discussion to apply the idea of reflexivity (Standfield, 2000). We are encouraged to consider our professional

experiences on different levels. The first is objectivity, which describes a particular tangible experience. The second is reflectivity, which highlights our responses and spirits. The third is interpretive, which makes sense of the experience through the different lenses of transformation, and the last one is decisional or critical, which analyzes our own beliefs and assumptions.

This exploration and struggle determine how these experiences inform or reform future rationality and action. Participants were asked to challenge presumptions and acts taken for granted using this method, which also promotes critical reflexivity, and to consider who they are and would like to be (Cunliffe, 2004).

I prioritized maintaining high-quality standards in educational research, focusing on trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in my narrative inquiry as quality standards of interpretivism. Credibility involved ensuring findings aligned with participants' experiences, while transferability explored the applicability of research across contexts. Dependability sought consistency in study outcomes over time and conditions, addressed through meticulous record-keeping and auditing. Confirmability addressed potential bias, utilizing participant responses to prevent distortion.

The study also embraced narrative inquiry's contextual and relational nature, delving into the three-dimensional space of temporality, sociality, and place. I emphasized the transformative potential of narrative inquiry in shaping ideologies and influencing surroundings.

In my research, Praxis is applied as a democratic method of inquiry. It involved inductive knowledge construction based on fieldwork experiences. I applied praxis to align with interpretivism and criticalism, promoting reflective awareness and transformative learning. Critical reflexivity emerged as a key focus, involving self-awareness and challenging epistemological choices as quality standards of criticalism. Further, as a transformative researcher, I explored some dimensions of postmodernism and its quality standards to centralize the ideas and notions. I applied verisimilitude or peer debriefing.

To optimize quality standards in my research, I implemented peer debriefing or principles of verisimilitude by carefully selecting knowledgeable peers who were external to my study. Before the debriefing session, I prepared a comprehensive

briefing document outlining key aspects of my research, including research questions, methodology, and preliminary findings.

During the session, I presented an overview and actively sought constructive feedback on rigor, authenticity, and ethical considerations. Encouraging open dialogue, I addressed queries and concerns raised by peers, fostering a collaborative environment. Thoroughly documenting the feedback, I reflected on insights gained and revised my research, accordingly, ensuring alignment with established standards and continuous improvement.

Expressing gratitude for the participant's contributions, I considered multiple sessions at different stages to maximize the robustness of my study, as stories and vignettes needed to be judged based on their truthfulness and lifelikeness (Luitel, 2009). This iterative process enhanced the overall quality and credibility of my research.

Ethical Considerations in Narrative Inquiry

Negotiation and incorporation between researcher and respondent are the prime focus of this study. Ethical considerations are present throughout narrative research, from sharing personal experiences and building relationships to creating and sharing research materials (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Huber & Clandinin, 2002). There are several truths in every story. Each person has multiple voices. As a result, the researcher must make it clear in the presentation of results that any narrative that appears in the final report is a construction of the interpreter. This will not likely be completely conciliated individuals who find some components of how their work has been portrayed or interpreted problematic (Clandinin, 2007).

I applied a narrative inquiry approach to explore my research. In this approach the research participant's relational links include professional experiences, practical learning, and insights towards community transformation. Thus, the information provided by the participant is highly sensitive to the moral character and ethics of the researcher. Here, ethical considerations constituted the procedures, respect for participants, informed consent, maintaining the privacy of every participant, use of language, negotiating and securing access, protecting my participants' information, and ensuring good faith as the key things involved in the ethical considerations.

Issues of ownership and complexity are immensely crucial in narrative investigation and can lead to postponements or unintended consequences of the research. Therefore, with my participants, I tried to maximize respecting ethical issues

by reaching informed consent, bracketing harm and risk, and maintaining privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. I maintained the privacy of participants and respected their views and ideas. I considered all the above ethical issues related to this research study.

Chapter Summary

My research methodology is guided by narrative inquiry, which helps me understand my participants' experiences and stories to deliver activities to contribute to community change. I listened to the experiences and stories of my participants based on ontology and epistemology. I applied multi-paradigms (interpretative, criticalism, and postmodernism) to explore the experiences of I/NGO professionals. I interpreted and analyzed the stories and experiences by reflecting on my own stories and experiences.

I purposively chose four participants who could execute activities in the community. I used a narrative story approach, conversation, and life story interviews to gather information. The trustworthiness and its four components (credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability), additionally to sustain the quality standards, included honesty of the researcher, ease of access for participants and the researcher, verisimilitude, authentication of the research process, and familiarity. It tried to maintain the reasonably reachable in terms of the economy and taken into consideration for the stories. Through the narratives of I/NGO professionals and how they conveyed messages to the communities, I explored how they were executing activities in their communities to change for transformation.

CHAPTER IV

A PROFOUND JOURNEY UNVEILED THROUGH KARMA'S NARRATIVE

In this chapter, I presented the lived story of one of the participants, *Karma*. He has been working and engaged with various NGOs/INGOs since 2015. He has an educational background in public health and holds a bachelor's degree from a Nepalese Institute. He has been working with the same organization as me for two years. As a result, we have been implementing the same activities with community-led organizations and beneficiaries, each with different roles and responsibilities.

Due to the easy availability and familiarity of the scenarios in the implementing field, we have had opportunities to organize both formal and informal sharing sessions and interviews and engaged in back-and-forth member checking to ensure common consensus and gather detailed information to generate a broader understanding of social transformation. I conducted three formal discussions and engaged in informal sharing on numerous occasions. From his stories and internal discussions, we identified some interpretations together. I have generated themes based on Karma's data and discussed them to make meaning.

Self-motivated Actions Contribute to Community Transformation (CT)

Karma began his career in the NGO/INGO sector in 2015 when he was introduced to this field due to a devastating earthquake. He initially joined the Full Moon Association as a volunteer for one month, supporting the victims affected by the earthquake.

Karma's interest in charity-related activities was sparked during his school years when he benefited from a program of that nature. This experience motivated him to explore similar activities and find different ways to support others, improve their well-being, and expand their access to resources. As an opportunity arose to assist patients at the Teaching Hospital, Karma distributed relief packages to those affected people within the hospital premises.

Unexpected events sometimes lead to surprising journeys, which was the case in Karma's life. He did not anticipate his volunteer work would pave the way for a professional career. However, someone within the volunteer network recognized his abilities and offered him paid work. This development brought him joy, aligning with

his aspirations and allowing him to apply his academic knowledge practically, benefiting individuals and communities.

The NGO/INGO sector, known for its reputation and impact, greatly appealed to *Karma* with no other comparable options, and consequently, he eagerly accepted the offer. Before being offered the position, he had completed an examination and demonstrated additional skills and powerful English communication abilities.

I felt his excitement when he expressed his euphoria about the first day of selection or joining the new office, which was an INGO. I asked him to express more about his feelings when offered. He said that he had captured his emotions in his diary with the heading "My dilemma and my excitement". Again, I asked him, 'Could you share your expression?' He replied, "Yes, I can, but I need to search." I responded, "That's okay, please take your time, and if you find it, share it with me. He agreed. After one week, he sent me his expression through Google Docs, but he admitted that it was a slightly modified version.

My dilemmas! My Excitement!!

Brighten my Aura as I set out with hopeful cheer,

Today's the day I feel the thrill as I head out to land my first job.

My nerves racing, and my heart beating fast; I look in the mirror many times.

Did rehearsals, practice, and equip my backpack.

As I walk through the doors at last,

A new world opens up to me, full of possibilities and opportunities.

I remember my past, childhood, my family, my community (Karnali),

'The fullest of difficulties'

My brain was chasing me, holding and rushing to hold that position.

The only reason was the fame of INGO, fair return, visibility, and exposure.

*I lost my imagination; my curiosity was unlimited, and I remembered the event I
participated in.*

I was eager to learn, please, and ready to work hard and achieve with ease.

Trying to conceal my excitement inside,

The first day is daunting, I won't deny, but I'm determined to give it my best

To learn the ropes, do it right, and make the most of every moment and sight.

The hours tick by, and the work is tough, but I persevere, never giving up.

I push myself to do my best and find that I can surpass the rest.

As the day draws to a close, I reflect on what I've achieved and chosen,

*I'm proud of what I've done so far and am excited for what's to come.
I've made it through my first day of work, and I'm filled with a sense of worth,
I've taken the first step on my journey and know I'll succeed with certainty.
(Karma, March 2023)*

Learning from various experiences, getting directly involved, and being deeply committed to responsibility, *Karma* was attached emotionally and physically, connecting with different groups like Rotaract, local youth clubs, and informal networks, and was actively involved wherever possible. Therefore, for him, learning is the biggest source of every activity, capacity-building, training, and incentive. From his practical experience and academic knowledge, mingling was charming, direct opportunities were to direct contact, and exposure with the beneficiaries was his target. He could directly access the services and situations of the people and locality. This firsthand experience aligns with the rational model of human motivation, which suggests that decisions to initiate behavior change often occur as sudden, significant events (quantum) rather than gradual or step-by-step processes (linear) (Resnicow & Page, 2008).

The awareness of a motivational significant that can be applied as a metaphor to boost professionals, community people to take bold, thoughtful, and powerful steps toward to achieve their goal line. It digs approving a quantum-like attitude, behaviour change-focused, innovative, energetic, and transformative steps in the professional or daily life. In this context, a motivational realm could represent the idea that success is not predetermined but instead depends on the choices and actions in the present instant. It could encourage individuals, groups, organization to grip uncertainty and take risks in pursuit of their goals. Motivated people can step up as particles in the transformative realm that can exist in multiple states concurrently and take unpredictable paths to bring positive changes in the community.

Ryan and Deci (2000) stated that from the Self-determination Theory about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, intrinsic motivation denotes to the inner-drive and push personal enjoyment that individual's experience. It enhances the engaging force in activities for their own sake rather than for external rewards or pressures.

Regarding community transformation, intrinsic motivation can play a significant role in enhancing and sustaining such change. However, extrinsic motivation is external effects, including physical and visible things that might be tangible or symbolic rewards and punishments, remuneration, visits, exposure, gifts,

social approval, and rejection. Again, intrinsic (internal) motivation is an inner significance that contains human emotions, feelings, and comprehension.

It is important to think about the statement that internal motivation is intrinsic, but not all internal motivation is purely intrinsic. On the contrary, internalized extrinsic motivation is very common. It is also apparent that a single form of motivation can neatly characterize a few activities or individuals. Motivation in most contexts is a mixture of intrinsic and different forms of extrinsic motivation, all experienced simultaneously.

Karma expressed that when he was young and in his school life, he participated in one of the activities of an awareness campaign on the school premises. He was attracted to see his personality and presentation style, which differed from regular teachers.

He shared, 'When I got an opportunity to participate in one of the school awareness campaigns organized by a local NGO, I was inspired and always sought such a job.'

He was further curious about how to get this type of job. *He thought, 'Is it possible to get it for me when I grow up?'* From that conversation, he aimed to study public health and be an NGO/INGO professional.

As a researcher, I found a mixture of both internal and external motivations in him. Intrinsic motivation energies, passion and commitment toward a cause or social issue. If individual or professional genuinely care about a particular issue, they are motivated to invest their, energy, time, attitude, and resources to bring about positive change in the community. Motivated professional, and their innate motivation reinforce them to stay resilient and dedicated. Such motivated professional can create innovative solution even in the face of obstacles or setbacks.

People who are motivated intrinsically also empower other individuals to take ownership of their actions and decision-making processes. They are more tend to think critically, explore innovative solutions, and take risks to address individual and social challenges. They are ready to fight with external constraints these constraints do not bind them, and they are able to think creatively and to find unique approaches toward community transformation.

External rewards or physical encouragements provide immediate motivation but may not withstand individual engagement in the long run. Extrinsic motivation

focuses on goal-driven reasons, e.g., rewards or benefits earned when performing an activity (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Extrinsic motivation, basically it is driven by peripheral rewards or commissions which can provide initial incentives for academic performance (Khalid, 2024). Intrinsic motivation indicates the pleasure and inherent satisfaction derived from a specific activity (Deci, 1975). Intrinsic motivation promotes continued engagement, involvement and commitment. Professionals who are driven by internal factors are more expected to stay engaged over an extended period, continuously working towards transforming, bringing long-term change, even when the initial excitement or external support diminishes. Professionals are very so often self-driven, curious to know, identification of new knowledge, tests different ideas, and passionate about their work, finding fundamental value in learning. (Fishbach & Woolley, 2022; Khalid, 2024).

Intrinsically motivated professionals carry a sense of higher personal pleasure and fulfilment. When professionals feel intrinsically rewarded for their efforts, it enhances their overall well-being and mental health. Intrinsic motivation drives individuals to participate in activities purely for personal enjoyment and satisfaction (Pandya, 2024). This positive experience contributes to their continued motivation and dedication toward community transformation. They derive satisfaction from their progress, impact, and actions' alignment with their values.

Intrinsic motivation has a contagious effect (Krishen, 2013). Intrinsic motivation originates from an individual's thoughts, feelings, and values. It can have an impact on others and potentially be contagious. When others witness individuals passionately pursuing community transformation, it can inspire and influence them to get involved. The professionals who are genuinely committed and enthusiasm of intrinsically motivated, they can catalyze broader individual and community engagement. They can attract more other professional to join the cause and strengthen the impact of the transformational efforts and able bring positive impacts.

Society is a complex phenomenon. Therefore, for community transformation, it requires a dedicated and continued long-term passionate effort that can help for sustainable change at various levels in the community. Intrinsic motivation helps drive this sustainable change by encouraging a sense of personal, individual responsibility and internalization of values, contextual and societal beliefs, a sense of urgency, and relevant actions in building togetherness. If individuals genuinely care

about a social issue, they are happy to move to work toward systemic change. They advocate for policy reforms and engage in collective action that can have long-lasting effects. It is crucial to note that while intrinsic motivation is a powerful driver of community transformation, it does not discount the need for external factors such as supportive structures, resources, and collaborations. Combining intrinsic motivation with external support can create a potent force for positive social changes in the community.

Individual Empowerment and Community Transformation

When I joined the office in 2015, there was limited access to technology, especially knowledge about computers and how they work. I recognized the importance of technology, so I started practicing it and sharing my knowledge with my juniors to improve official communication, including email, records, typing, and computer skills. (Karma, 2023)

Many official and personal matters were maintained physically, for example, diary maintenance, the handwriting document through registration, during the work, learning various things through training, workshops, methodologies, replication, and sharing with others. Here is the conversation between the researcher and the participant

Researcher: What is empowerment for you?

Karma: Specifically, empowerment here, in my programmatic context, is not expressed in a single word; instead, it contains many phases as the organization has set some milestones as an achievement by the end of any project. For me, by keeping the program in the center, empowerment is the realization of the problems, participation in the intervention, and change as guided by personal and actionable positive changes.

Researcher: How do you ensure empowerment?

Karma: Many issues are identified, and solutions are created to promote empowerment. To strengthen individuals' abilities, actions are taken to build skills, such as participation, leadership, roles like chairperson, and basic group functions.

Researcher: How do you differentiate the understanding regarding empowerment from your understanding (not taking the references of any formal program)?

Karma: For me, empowerment is not a one-size-fits-all approach but requires tailored interventions and strategies that consider the specific needs and aspirations of the individuals or groups involved. For some specific barriers, one cannot develop one's capability as other people act in the community (Mainstreaming). (Karma, March 2023).

The design, implementation, and evaluation of interventions with an empowerment approach redefine the relationship between professionals and the target population. Instead of assuming the roles of experts and counselors, professionals assume the roles of collaborators and facilitators. In this new dynamic context, professionals actively engage with the participants, seeking to understand their cultures, worldviews, and the challenges they face.

Empowerment is broadly described as the process and outcome of addressing disempowerment. In contrast, disempowerment refers to the exclusion or absence of power, resources, and decision-making capacity due to marginalization, exclusion, and other structural, institutional, and discursive constraints. Empowerment may include social, local, cultural, individual, professional, organizational, economic, and political empowerment. Empowerment is a process with many spiral points to consider, contextual rather than taking specific roots.

To critically analyze the notion of empowerment in management practice, the root constructs of power and control from which the empowerment construct is derived must be considered. Essentially, control and power are used in literature in two different ways, and, consequently, empowerment can be viewed in two different ways - (i) Empowerment as a Relational Construct and (ii) Empowerment as a Motivational Construct. In the management and social influence literature, power is primarily a relational concept that describes the perceived power or control an individual actor or organizational subunit has over others. Power in this motivational sense refers to an intrinsic need for self-determination (Deci, 1975) or a belief in personal self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986).

Kanter's theory (1993) viewed empowerment as access to information, support, resources, and opportunities within the work setting. Empowerment is developed or supported from within the organization; it is external to the person. She describes six components of empowerment: (a) opportunity, (b) information, (c) support, (d) resources, (e) formal power, and (f) informal power. Kanter's theory maintains that people are empowered to reach organizational goals if their work

environments provide access to information, support, and resources necessary to perform their jobs and access to learning opportunities. Personal behavior in organizations is determined by the work environment and conditions related to the organization's operation, not by individual personality traits.

Empowerment can be examined from an organizational level as well. As a psychological construct, empowerment is often seen as different from work autonomy. Merriam-Webster defines autonomy as self-directing freedom. Autonomy can be attributable to the design of the job, allowing the people to be in charge of how they act about their work and how they use personal initiative to complete their jobs.

Others cite that job autonomy is a determinant of empowerment. Highly autonomous tasks encourage empowerment, allowing the individual to choose job-related activities, although autonomy alone does not reflect empowerment.

If empowerment in the community emerges from the individual, how does the person gain the skills to be empowered? In the cognitive psychology literature, empowerment means to enable one to act. Psychological empowerment at the individual level links a sense of personal control, efficacy, and willingness to change and take action. Empowerment enables individuals to understand the relationship between their actions and outcomes, allowing people the power to achieve the desired results.

Spreitzer (2008) summarized psychological empowerment as a motivational construct that manifested four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. The four dimensions, she argued, combine additively to create the resultant mindset that is an overall construct of psychological empowerment. Empowerment is an intrinsic motivation comprising four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. These reflect a person's orientation to their work. Building on this premise, the four cognitions can be defined as follows -

Empowerment comes from within the individual and manifests in decision-making. Motivation regarding empowerment is present throughout literature, but what seems to be lacking is an explanation of what factors motivate people to change their behaviors successfully and determine the time required for behavioral change.

Wach et al. (2016) suggest empowerment is the belief or motivational state found within the individual. Knowledge and skill are necessary components but insufficient to bring out change. Viewed through the lens of the Self-efficacy Theory

developed by Bandura (1986), human behavior is a continuous interaction between behavior, cognitive, and environmental influences.

When individuals with low self-efficacy encounter stressful situations, they doubt their abilities, decrease their efforts, or give up altogether. On the contrary, people with high self-efficacy will exert greater effort to bring about the desired changes.

Empowering an individual will increase their self-efficacy. Empowerment at the community level involves people uniting to accomplish common goals. Two underlying assumptions exist in the literature regarding empowerment and the community. First, every person has the potential to become empowered. Second, it is an assumption that empowered communities develop from empowered individuals working together to achieve a mutual goal for that community. Fostering relationships within the community is an integral part of successful empowerment.

Empowerment is easy to define in its absence: powerlessness, real or imagined; learned helplessness; alienation; loss of a sense of control over one's own life. It is more difficult to define positively only because it takes a different form in different people and contexts.

Empowerment is most easily recognized when it is lacking, as it manifests through feelings of powerlessness, helplessness, or alienation. When people feel they have no control over their lives, they experience a profound disconnect from their surroundings, unable to shape their actions or influence outcomes. This state, often termed learned helplessness, reflects a belief that their efforts will not make a difference, leading to disengagement and apathy. Alienation follows, with individuals feeling isolated, undervalued, or out of touch with their communities or workplaces.

However, defining empowerment in a positive sense is more complex, as it differs across individuals and situations. Empowerment can mean having a voice in decision-making for one person, while for another, it may signify the confidence to take risks or pursue personal goals. In various contexts, empowerment may involve financial independence, educational attainment, social influence, or self-acceptance. Its diversity in meaning arises from each person's different needs, values, and environments. Ultimately, empowerment is about reclaiming control and recognizing one's ability to shape one's life through individual choices, shared authority, or collective action. Therefore, empowerment, in my understanding, combines structural and psychological empowerment, as shown in the figure.

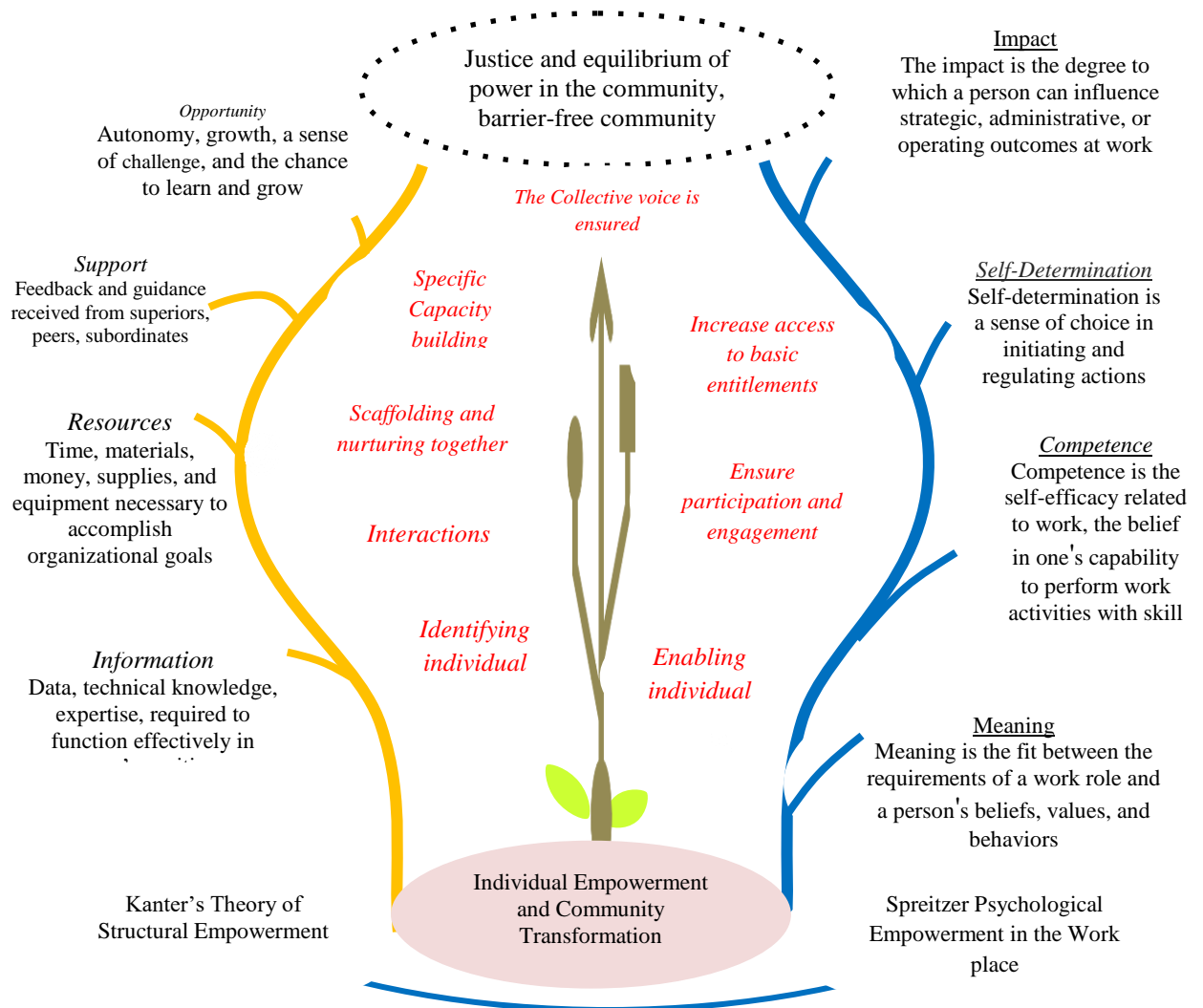
Figure 1*Individual Empowerment and Community Transformation*

Figure 1 portrays the modality of empowering individuals, and it is pivotal for nurturing towards community transformation. Illustration from Spreitzer's (2008) framework, it necessitates recognizing the significance of individuals' work, sensitivity and capability of completing tasks. It has the autonomy to make decisions, and considerate the influence of professional actions. Additionally, Kanter's (1993) perspective underlines the reputation of access to information, support each-other, resources sharing, and seeking opportunities within the workplace. It extends to broader community contexts where all people enjoy and participate.

Identification of individual strengths and needs is the key insights. It interacts individuals and community stakeholders within the community. It ensures participation and engagement of the people in the community. Thus, it creates a

supportive environment for growth together. Through framework and nurturing, individuals can be empowered to take on community leadership roles and contribute meaningfully to community initiatives. Moreover, if there is an increment of access to basic entitlements such as quality education, easy access of healthcare, and sustainable economic growth, resources sharing and enhancement. These initiations boost up individual agency and it fosters community well-being for all. Specific capacity-building of individual efforts further equip professionals with the innovative skills and appropriate knowledge that is necessary to address community challenges collaboratively. Ultimately, empowering individuals cultivates a collective voice, ensuring that diverse perspectives are heard and valued in driving sustainable community development.

Unlearning in Community Transformation

‘Experiences regarding working with various I/NGOs or community-based organizations and communities. I discovered diverse philosophies, ways of learning, and methods of expression. Many of them wished to share their experiences or knowledge gained’ (Karma, 2023).

To initiate positive change in a community, it is crucial to understand the community situations, community strengths, local resources, and its people from diverse perspectives. This involves unlearning assumptions, beliefs, acquired knowledge, and skills that may hinder progress. By portraying this approach, I/NGO professionals can better understand community needs, community challenges, community strengths, and aspirations because they are reaching the community and door to door directly. It allows people and the community for more inclusive and effective efforts that transform community.

Certainly, the community is not easy to work, as it is a complex structure that presents numerous opportunities for learning and growth. Communities comprise diverse personalities with various backgrounds, experiences, learning, and outlooks. Engaging with the community and people provides a platform to know and learn from others and it also supports gaining valuable insights.

Valuable insights are cultural and social learning, which is beyond transforming knowledge from one to another, and it is actual learning because we have a mandate to recognize local resources, expertise, local opportunity, and the threats (the threats in the sense of social beliefs and norms, their living and driving factors). Keeping particular issues and communities

identifying strengths and shortfalls and then intervening to bring changes in the community in certain periods, however, is not easy. Consideration of such malpractices and bringing in the mainstreaming need to connect the individual to community and community to policy level. (Karma, 2023)

In addition, unlearning is a collective process and collective efforts, it is not just a personal process and personal effort. Transforming community needs to work together, it consists of people, group, and organization that hands together to success any work in the community. For this realm, it hints questioning existing structures, policies, and ways of delivering and whole systems. It also encompasses probing power dynamics, decision making process. Unlearning unites together to build societies that are more inclusive, enjoyable and fair.

Ultimately, unlearning is indispensable for a fair, sustainable, and empathetic society. The processes of unlearning in the societal transformation toward sustainability can be of strategic and pedagogical importance. Additionally, unlearning is a key tool that has been identified as enabling professionals to respond to the demands of a changing world (McGuigan & Kern, 2016).

The processes of unlearning in the community toward sustainability can take many forms, depending on the specific context and challenges being addressed. However, some general principles and strategies that can help promote unlearning are included. Exploring literature, anecdotes of the participants, and self-experiences supported the conclusion that learning is real “if we wear others’ shoes.” Community people have living experiences, ways of learning, and life-living skills. They are connected between their feelings and literature and between themselves and their peers; thus, it can promote personal transformation (Macdonald, 2002).

In the transformative social context, a significant contribution of unlearning injustice, learning to live together, building trust, and creating a welcoming environment in a transformed world was revealed. Strategies identified that effectively promote unlearning discrimination, patriarchy, and violence include total immersion, personal reflection, storytelling, reading, and writing.

Karma expressed that I do not have much background support and enough literature-reviewed knowledge regarding unlearning. However, I practiced here and there and heard from seniors about the importance of unlearning. With the following support, I always bring my ideas into action in the real field. I do this by recognizing and questioning existing assumptions and norms. I

embrace complexity and uncertainty. I engage in situational learning. I also focus on building collaboration and participation (Karma, 2023).

Sustainable transformation is not linear and simple. It contains navigating complex systems and dealing with difficult problems that have no easy solutions. Unlearning helps to explore different hidden solutions in this situation. It means being comfortable with the situation without having all the answers. It also directs trying new and creative innovative ways to find the ways of resolution.

Transformative learning, attitude, and behavior is more than gaining new information. It enhances changing how we see the world and ourselves. In this process, unlearning is decisive to dig out the local original realities with way forward. It requires us to look for new experiences. We must also challenge our old assumptions and biases. Real transformation needs many people to get involved. This includes community members, experts, real right holders, and policymakers. Unlearning here means creating a platform for dialogue. It pushes making decisions by us for us together.

The goal of unlearning is not always to solve problems. Some problems may not have clear solutions. Instead, unlearning helps us to see more possibilities. It opens up new ways to take action (Rogers et al., 2013; Nygren et al., 2017). A key step in unlearning is self-awareness. We need to look at our own beliefs and actions. We must ask how they might lead to unsustainable results. This takes honesty and a willingness to listen to others.

Power and inequality are major issues in our community. Many harmful practices come from unfair power systems, lacking basic foundations for social justice. These include racism, gender inequality, discrimination, and colonialism. Unlearning means recognizing these gaps in the community. It means standing up to injustice. It means helping to build fairer and more inclusive systems in the community with support from all concerned people. Therefore, unlearning is a powerful tool to bring all concerned to the front for long-term social change. By questioning the way things are, we open doors to new ways of thinking and acting social activities. When people work together and embrace uncertainty, we can help create a just and sustainable future for all.

Adaptability and Transformation in the Local Communities

I belonged to a special ethnicity and remote area of Nepal (Karnali province. I got the opportunity to serve marginalized people in different ways; wherever I

went as an INGO professional, I prioritized adapting to their culture, values, norms, language, and ways of knowing. My professional and academic journey from Kalikot to Kalimati (which represents the ultra-remote and ultra-urban of Nepal) involved working with different populations of orphaned children in Karnali province and waste workers in Kathmandu. I changed my beliefs and assumptions and mingled the ideas into their locality. (Karma, 2023)

Adaptability is an imperative personal skill. It helps us deal with ambiguity, uncertainty, and stress in the community. It also helps us work beyond traditional time and place limits (Pearlman & Barney, 2000). In simple terms, adaptability means making changes in the community. These changes improve how a system responds to outside stress (Brooks, 2003, p.8). Adaptability in social and ecological systems results from individual and collective action and multi-level interactions. I can relate it with a dual sense as a system's ability to familiarize with disturbance and change and to navigate system transformation. Adaptability is learning and combining different knowledge and experiences to develop new pathways (Boschma, 2015). Adaptability is a cognitive process, receptiveness to change, and flexibility that plays central roles in personal and professional growth. Adaptability refers to the ability of an individual, organization, or system to adjust, modify, or change in response to new circumstances, challenges, or environments.

Adaptability means being flexible, adaptable, and open-minded to accept others' ideas. It also means staying strong during change or uncertainty. In daily life or in professional work, it helps us handle surprises. It allows us to learn new skills and adjust our actions. This helps us reach our goals.

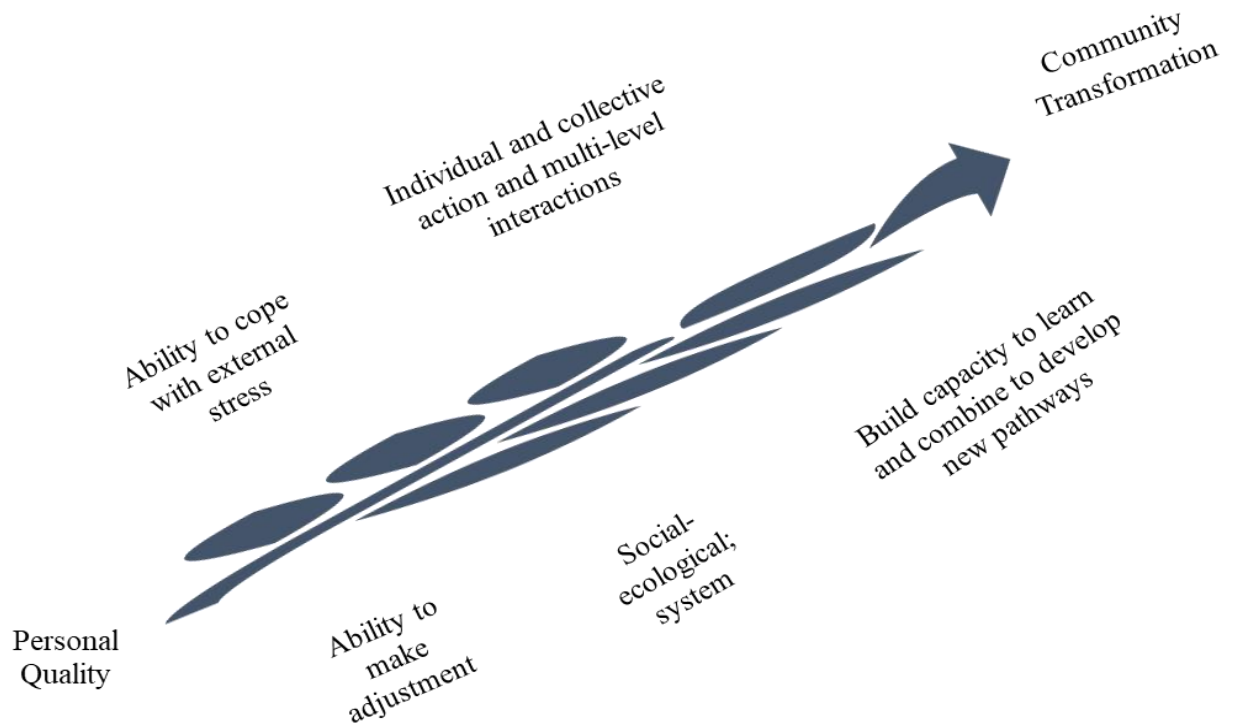
Being adaptable means embracing change. It means taking action early and stepping out of our comfort zone. For organizations, adaptability is key to survival and growth. It means responding to changes in the community. It also includes meeting the needs of right holders and keeping up with new technology. Adaptability helps both people and organizations face uncertainty. It helps them spot opportunities and succeed in new situations. It requires staying open, learning constantly, and responding well to change.

In project designing, the first stage of the project cycle management is the intervention or identification of the community's problems, situations, strengths, and gaps. Living with the community and people is the key to knowing their

reality, structure, and social phenomena. As a team, we apply different community-based tools to assess the community assets. (Karma, 2023).

Figure 2

Adaptability: Personal Quality Leads to Community Transformation



Adaptability is one stage where people realize something different from the existing situation. Adaptability does not mean accepting all changes; it is an adjustment if others' views and perceptions seem positive. There might be many steps for adaptability, and all the stages may not necessarily be moving toward transformation. However, in adaptability, if there is a situation of learning and combining ideas as a new pathway, it can be the gateway to community transformation. Transformation inherently involves looking toward the future, and the adaptation process can occur either reactively or proactively depending on its timing (Smit & Wandel, 2006; Lof, 2010).

Community transformation needs fresh ideas and new ways of doing things, it includes both global and local ideas. It often includes social experimentation and innovation to solve problems (Anderies & Norberg, 2008). Before talking about transformation, we must understand adaptability. Adaptability means being able to

adjust or change when faced with new situations. It applies to individuals, organizations, and systems.

Adaptability means being flexible and open-minded. It also means being strong during change or uncertainty. It helps people and groups deal with even having critical situations or surprises. It creates to learn new things, and change their actions to get suitable results. It requires welcoming change. We say (MATO SUHAUDO: माटो सुहाउदो) acts as it is appropriate. It means preparing for what's to come. Being adaptable also means acting early and stepping outside your comfort zone. In community transformation, adaptability is very important factors to included or understand. Communities must adjust to new conditions and changing needs. They must also keep up with technology and changes in both local and global settings. An adaptable community can handle uncertainty. It can spot new chances and grow stronger through change.

Temporal Rehabilitation and Re/Integration for Community Transformation

In terms of rehabilitation and reintegration of excluded people in the community, Karma expressed his ideas and feelings toward transformation with the following sentences;

'In my understanding, transformation is vague sometimes. It is smaller, and sometimes it is bigger.

The transformation consists of individual recognition and broadening contributions; whatever the activities are, they should benefit individuals and others.

Rehabilitation for a short period includes comprehensive activities aimed at individual empowerment, resilience, and increasing capabilities to help individuals cope with future challenges in the community. Simultaneously, it aims to create an environment that promotes community awareness, fosters a welcoming atmosphere, develops necessary infrastructure, and enables stakeholders to maintain and continue the situation.

Identified orphan children in the community are provided temporary shelter, where efforts are made to create a homely environment. Basic requirements such as food, love from a family, security, education, and ultimately, reconnection with their organized family are provided. The shelter offers motherly care and compassion and explores various alternatives to find and

empower families that can provide a child with real parents. Schools are constructed to engage these children and the entire community, and physical enhancements are made, providing the opportunity for quality education (in English medium) even in ultra-remote areas of Nepal (Karma, 2023).

Rehabilitation provides a platform with thick descriptions, interactions with the problems, and solutions. It also allows for exploring the mechanism that supports connecting the individual to the wider community, which forces the creation of such a policy that sometimes causes policymakers to include and address the barriers and problems in the community. Fadyl et al. (2020) stated that ‘rehabilitation systems and structures can embody normative values that are a poor fit with their purpose (enablement, social participation, and inclusiveness) ’ (p.7).

The meaning or concept of transformation can vary in scale and significance. It involves both personal growth and positive contribution to others. Rehabilitation efforts focus on empowering individuals, building resilience, and enhancing community awareness and infrastructure. For example, orphaned children are given temporary shelter, with efforts to create a nurturing environment, eventually reunite them with family, and reintegrate with the community components. Schools are making prominent access to build the self through providing quality education, even in remote areas of Nepal, aiming to engage children and the community together for learning and changing existing situations.

Karma's experiences and expressions stood out from the other participants. He shared his real-life challenges and hardships from childhood, giving a deeper understanding of his difficulties. His insights into the places where he was born and raised reflected a profound connection to the struggles of his community. Having lived through scarcity and hardship, he understands the realities of life in a way that few others do.

I felt that *Karma's* genuineness was striking. His stories carried an authenticity that revealed his deep-rooted understanding of life's struggles. This intrinsic awareness allows him to envision sustainable changes that positively impact others. His experiences have shaped his perspective, and he approaches problems with a rare depth and sensitivity.

His words and actions show Karma's passion for creating positive change. He has the core insight and dedication needed to address real-world challenges effectively. His life experiences make him uniquely equipped to bring meaningful and

lasting change through his work and future endeavors. His understanding of hardship and his genuine desire to make a difference will allow him to create a significant impact.

Chapter Summary

Chapter IV focused on Karma's stories. The researcher developed different themes from the participant's narrative. These themes showed how the participant contributed to bringing change to the community. The researcher found several ways to support community transformation. These include self-motivated actions, individual empowerment, unlearning, adaptability, temporal rehabilitation, and reintegration.

Self-motivated actions come from within individuals. When people are driven by their own goals, they can achieve great things. This motivation builds resilience and helps them grow. Individual empowerment means giving people appropriate tools and confidence. It helps them make decisions and take charge of their lives to bring changes. This builds self-worth and encourages them to get involved in the community's activities. Unlearning is also central to contribution towards community transformation. It means letting go of old beliefs and habits. It allows people to think and act in innovative ways. Adaptability helps people adjust to new situations or scenarios in the community. This is critical in fast-changing communities. It helps people stay strong and relevant. Temporal rehabilitation helps people return to society after big life changes. It focuses on healing and starting fresh and leads to a better future in the community.

CHAPTER V

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IDENTIFYING VULNERABILITY IN COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION FROM KAPIL'S JOURNEY

In this chapter, I presented the lived stories and professional reflections of one of the participants, *Kapil*. He has been working and engaged with various NGOs/INGOs since 2014. He has an educational background and a master's in business administration (MBA) from a Nepali Institute. He has been working in a leading position at one of the disability rehabilitation centers for a long time (8 years). Between 2017 and 2020, we worked for the same organization and implemented it for empowerment, increased access, and physical well-being of children with physical disabilities.

Due to the easy availability and familiarity of the scenarios in the implementing field, we have had opportunities to organize both formal and informal sharing and interviews and engaged in back-and-forth member checking to ensure common consensus and gather detailed information, thus generating a broader understanding of community transformation. I conducted two formal discussions and engaged in informal sharing on numerous occasions. From his stories and internal discussions, we identified some interpretations together. I have generated themes based on Kapil's data and discussed them to make meaning.

Identifying Vulnerability is the First Stage of Community Transformation

Vignette1: Kapil graduated with an MBA in information technology (IT) and joined an IT company to enhance his academic knowledge and skills. In this duration, he got an opportunity of what? In rural areas with rural schools and children. It was a different scenario for him to work with children. However, the goal was to foster knowledge and skills related to IT with children. In the rural setting, the problems, ways of living, ways of knowledge generating, and living style of those community people are different from his surroundings like daily living activities, community's ways of living, education system, beliefs, and execution where he grew.

All these scenarios and settings encouraged him to think. It took a few months to decide whether to continue the same job related to IT or change the job for and with those vulnerable people. Finally, he agreed to go to those who were backward, marginalized, stigmatized, and excluded. He left the IT Company and explored

professional life, which could run longer. His interest was diverted from the academic profession to applying knowledge and emotions to those of needy people. Indeed, such people need a lot of support and access to living. This internal feeling and motivation led him to explore and continue his passion for them. In this regard, he shared,

The identification of such vulnerable people is significant. Diagnosis is the foremost priority in intervening in the health system; the same is true in the community. Identifying vulnerability is the most important for planning and action (Kapil, 2023).

Furthermore, he emphasized that community transformation is paramount within our domain, specifically in NGOs/INGOs. Based on his extensive experience in this field, he enthusiastically shared that it is vital to involve all stakeholders and make them aware of the initiatives and methods to improve their circumstances. He mentioned his active engagement with a hospital that caters to children with disabilities, highlighting that the scope of activities extends beyond the confines of the hospital. Numerous initiatives and events occur within the community to support and empower these individuals with disabilities.

Vulnerability- What and How?

Vulnerability is the increased risk of experiencing harm, discrimination, or disadvantages due to physical, mental, or emotional impairments. Individuals with disabilities may face vulnerability in various areas of life, which include health and safety, economic and employment, social inclusion and isolation, and individual empowerment that ensures holistic access to education, health services, and basic rights.

Kapil expressed that many children with disabilities, especially from remote areas, came to the hospital to seek services by walking and carrying their children for a week. Children had different limitations like walking and no access to basic rights (education, love from parents, caring, and so on) (Kapil, 2023).

The existence of multiple definitions for vulnerability has resulted in extensive conceptual efforts in the creation of terminologies. Vulnerability is place-based and context-specific, and that there are two different approaches, denominated top-down and bottom-up (Dessai & Hulme, 2004), end-point and starting-point (Kelly & Adger, 2000), biophysical and social (Brooks, 2003), or outcome and context

vulnerability (O'Brien et al., 2007). In the field of disability, vulnerability is often seen in a protective way. People with disabilities are viewed as needing protection and guidance, it demands additional care and empowerment.

The way we are doing sometimes can add dependency on such vulnerable people. It does not help to empower individuals with disabilities. Vulnerability and risk are closely interlinked. They are often seen as two sides of the same coin. This link shows the deep sense of insecurity in discussions about vulnerability. It also reveals feelings of powerlessness.

Whether the topic is poverty, environmental issues, or political unrest, vulnerability is a lens. It helps us understand power and how resources and opportunities are shared in a community with people. Understanding the link between vulnerability and risk is important. It helps us deal with deeper social problems and phenomena.

It also supports the building of strength and self-confidence in people and communities. Vulnerability means being open to harm, risks, or negative effects. It can come from many causes. These causes make people or groups more exposed to hardship or exploitation.

Vulnerability appears in different forms. It can be social, economic, environmental, or health related. In social settings, it can come from poverty, inequality, and/or discrimination. It can also result from a lack of access to services available in the communities. Economic vulnerability may come from financial stress, job loss, or depending on one income source. Environmental vulnerability can be caused by natural disasters or poor infrastructure. Health vulnerability includes physical or mental health issues that make life harder. These conditions may limit how a person handles stress or barriers.

Therefore, to address these situations, it is important to identify vulnerability of people and community. This helps us know what people need and how to support them. By seeing and responding to these needs, we can build resilience in people and community structures. This reduces the harm from tough situations and leads to community transformation.

How does the Identification of Vulnerability Support Community Transformation?

Kapil stated, "Readymade programs looking from the centrally existing views sometimes do not reach the vulnerability. Many organizations and people in

Nepal prefer to design the project or activities according to their experience and knowledge, which do not address the local scenarios like pain, context, living, and ways of surviving " (Kapil, February 2023).

While vulnerability refers to the conditions that make communities susceptible to harm, resiliency refers to coping with and recovering from a hazard that has already occurred. Like its sister concept of vulnerability, resiliency is used across various fields, including physics, engineering, economics, ecology, psychology, sociology, anthropology, public health, geography, and disaster management (Bruneau et al., 2003; Norris et al., 2008).

At a general level, resiliency refers to an ability to recover from disturbances. At a more specific level, resilience can pertain to items as divergent as the elasticity of physical materials to individuals' psychological reactions to trauma. For example, psychological resilience describes whether people can positively adapt to situations of stress and adversity (Luthar et al., 2000; Rutter, 1987). Ecological resilience deals with the ability of coping with mechanisms or upgraded systems that are able to resolve any troubles, stress, and changes. These unsuitable changes can occur from nature or environment, from human activities, or from any other pressures (Gunderson, 2000; Holling, 1973).

Resilient systems can raise the capability to fight against such situations and force them to stand up to cope with them, keeping their core functions and structure. They stay stable and can restructure without breaking the entire circle. These resilient structures or capabilities help the entire ecosystem keep supporting life. It maintains restructuring of biodiversity, a system of energy flow, and a cycle to continue even under stress and lacking.

Resilient ecosystems can recover from damage. It supports keeping the identity of all and supports long-term health, nutrition, and well-being in nature. It is important to note that some programs, designed from a central perspective, may miss the real issues of community, resilient issues, and other important related issues. These top-down programs might not see the actual needs of vulnerable people or communities.

Occasionally we go with the idea of 'centrally existing views. It does not bring core changes as we need because such centrally designed programs are often created far from the local identification of problems and analysis of real situations. It ignores local challenges, local ways of creating knowledge, and diversity in the community.

This can lead to solutions that do not work well on the ground, and occasionally we can see the results on paper only. As a result, despite their intentions, these programs may not effectively address the reality of vulnerability on the ground. Therefore, it can now be an “inclusive we” for development. This “we” includes both “top-down” and “bottom-up” forces and attempts put together in a state (Kaiser, 2020, p. 105).

Individual Well-being (Physical, Social, and Economical) Contributes to Community Transformation¹

The organization has contributed to pediatric disability since 1985, and *Kapil* has worked with them for 8 years. Since his career in the organization, he has continuously searched for people who can get services from the organization for corrective surgery (medical intervention), follow-up, family well-being, schooling, and inclusion in the community (Social intervention). He follows the identification, treatment (Intervention), rehabilitation, and social reintegration approaches.

The particular vision of the organization is to ensure equitable access to quality of life through appropriate interventions and enabling environments for children with physical disabilities. Each staff member of the organization, including Kapil, is part of the organizational approach. Kapil mostly plays a role in identifying children and bridging to connect individuals to institutions with physical disabilities for identification and intervention. Many approaches are applied; one is a health camp in a community in different locations in Nepal. Screening is done on the spot, and the operation starts with the particular individuals. Yearly, approximately twenty thousand children with physical disabilities get intensive consultation from the Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children (HRDC) only, and so far, 1,08,981 children are served (HRDC, 2022).

Many disabilities are no disability after interventions, and many have easier movement for daily life and professional activities. Many people with disabilities are employed within and outside of the organization. Life has changed for the self and for a good contribution to society and other people with disabilities.

Including case studies and personal stories of transformation can be much more informative and valid than hard quantitative measurements alone (Woolnough, 2013). It is clear that much top-down aid (a) gets dissipated through governments and intermediaries and (b) causes dependency in the receptor because of the expense of maintaining Western-style technology and economic structures. We need ‘to listen to

the poor'' (Narayan et al., 2011) to ensure that the most appropriate form of development is targeted, which is sustainable, holistic, and relational and which seeks a state of 'peace' between the people, the community, and their world.

Although individuals play a relatively small role in improving collective and planetary well-being, adopting a relational approach to well-being by connecting to self, others, and nature will be instrumental in driving much-needed societal transformation in response to major societal challenges (Kemp et al., 2022).

Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) Approach for Community Transformation

Vignette 2: *Kapil* expressed that many disabilities are not corrected and need to be developed habilitation. Habilitation refers to the situation or condition of a person who needs to develop the capability to accept their bodily impairment.

Due to poverty and unawareness, many parents want to leave their children with disabilities in hospitals, rehabilitation centers, institutions, and other places because they do not want to take on the burden of severe disabilities or impairment. Some parents do not want to expose their children to the community, so they are kept in closed rooms or treated like animals (Kapil, March 2023).

Gradually, parents lose love for their children, and the children become isolated from their parents, family, and community, with no access to basic rights such as health, education, and care. Even when parents bring their children for treatment in hospitals, the treatment takes a longer time to recover due to multiple interventions such as corrective surgery, physiotherapy, orthosis and prosthesis, and counseling.

Kapil shared one of the events that happened in the organization: a parent left their child at the hospital and became unresponsive upon returning home. This unexpected circumstance required careful handling, as the child's well-being was a top priority. Our community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) supervisor immediately addressed the issue. They worked diligently to establish contact with the parents, who had not communicated after leaving the hospital. After numerous attempts, the supervisor reached the parents and, with the assistance of the local government, traveled to their residence. The collaboration with local authorities was crucial, ensuring a swift and coordinated response to the situation. Once at the parent's home, the

supervisor explained the urgency of the matter and provided the necessary support and guidance. The parents were receptive, understood the situation's importance, and agreed to return to the hospital. This reunion was a significant relief for all involved, as the child was safely back with their family. This incident highlights the importance of quick action, effective communication, and strong community support in managing sensitive situations involving families and healthcare. (Kapil, 2023 March).

This is just one example of the cases we encounter, as there are numerous challenges in managing these individual situations and barriers within the community. Kapil refers to it as a '*vicious cycle*' of poverty and disability. Therefore, to overcome these challenges and ensure the rights of these children, we have developed a mechanism called the community-based rehabilitation model. This model creates an environment where individuals can enjoy their rights, be with their family and community, receive schooling, and actively participate in community activities.

To bring about community transformation, Kapil's organization provides modular primary rehabilitation training to CBR workers, organizations of persons with disabilities, civil society organizations (CSOs), community practitioners, and the medical staff of local governments. This training enables them to identify individuals and refer to us; sometimes, they can manage it within their community if feasible. Simultaneously, they formalize local community-led organizations and mobilize them to recognize resources from the government. They organize advocacy campaigns in the community and lobby with the government to bring about reforms and inclusion.

Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) is a comprehensive approach embedded in broader community development endeavors aimed at rehabilitating individuals with disabilities, ensuring equal access to opportunities, and fostering their social integration. The implementation of CBR involves a collective endeavor, with active involvement from individuals with disabilities, their families, local organizations, and communities, as well as relevant governmental and non-governmental entities responsible for healthcare, education, vocational training, social support, and other pertinent services.

Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) brings people together with the required empowerment of people. It involves community leaders, people with disabilities, their families, local government, and concerned citizens.

The goal of the CBR approach is to create equal opportunities for all. CBR helps people with disabilities and other marginalized people access these opportunities in their own communities.

In 2004, a key paper on CBR was written. It was created by three UN agencies International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and World Health Organization (WHO). This paper highlights that CBR needs many disciplines. People with disabilities often need support from different sectors (ILO et al. 2004).

The community is made up of different people, different groups, different categories, and of different ages. This includes people with disabilities and marginalized groups. They are at different stages in life. Their needs and situations are diverse and complex than others. Some may need especial health support and care. Others may need help with access to education or some may need jobs according to their capability, physical structures. Therefore, no single sector can meet all these diverse needs. A one-size-fits-all approach does not work in such diverse scenarios. That is why Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) is important and centrally can play to bring these diverse in mainstreaming. CBR brings together different sectors to address varieties of needs. It includes health, education, livelihood, social, and empowerment services. This multi-sectoral approach helps address varied needs. It ensures that people with disabilities and other marginalized people receive full support. It promotes inclusion and equal opportunities for all in the communities.

In 2010, WHO, ILO, UNESCO, and International Disability and Development Consortium (IDDC) created the CBR Guidelines. These guidelines bring together global experiences. They show how CBR can support the rights of people with disabilities. This approach is based on the CRPD, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The guidelines have five main parts: Health, Education, Livelihoods, Society, and Empowerment. Each part includes smaller, related elements. Together, they form the CBR matrix (WHO et al. 2010).

Figure 3

Stakeholders' Engagement towards Community Transformation (Framework of Human Rights-Based Approach)

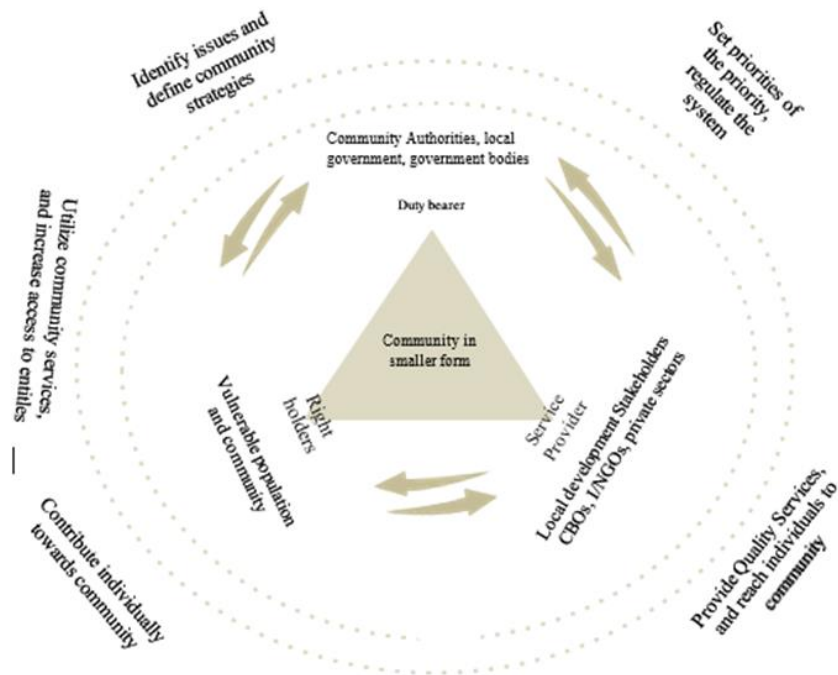


Figure 3 shows a big change in the community. This change comes from the teamwork of many groups within a community. The image shows how duty bearers, service providers, and right holders work together. They are placed in a triangle. This shows the Human Rights-Based Approach. Each point of the triangle has a specific role. Duty bearers have core responsibilities. Service providers give needed services and empower both parties of duty bearers and right holders. Right holders claim their rights.

When these groups work together, society starts to change. It becomes more inclusive and fairer to enjoy rights. This triangular teamwork leads to empowerment and growth to reach the specific destination. The figure shows how powerful change can be when everyone works for a common goal. Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) aims to improve life for people with disabilities, marginalized and their families. It helps them take part in personal and community life. CBR is not only for people with disabilities. It also helps those who are vulnerable or excluded from the community. It is a modality to comprehend the excluded people into included realm.

The CBR matrix is used to plan, organize, and track these activities (Aldersey et al., 2023). To make this work, we need strong community involvement. Government support is also key. We must involve many sectors. This helps solve both the core problems and the vulnerabilities. The CBR matrix helps guide this important work.

Overcoming Limitations to Support Vulnerable Communities for Community Transformation

We have some abilities, resources, and physical access to work with different communities. We try to use the support we get from others in the best way. But the needs of underserved communities are large. Often, they are more than what we can handle. We understand the struggles of individuals, communities, and local governments. Still, we face many limitations. This stops us from helping everyone. Children with physical disabilities are especially affected. We want to give them services that help with movement and education. But our resources do not always meet the needs. This gap shows the need for more support, wider reach, and better teamwork. We must work with local and global partners. With more help, we can make sure all children get the care they need. Every child should have the chance to grow, learn, and live fully (Kapil, 2023).

Kapil said that every year, some children with disability cards come to the organization. After treatment and regular follow-up, many of them improve. Some reach a stage where they are no longer disabled. This is a big achievement. These children once faced many challenges. Now they can take part in daily life. Their quality of life improves. The organization helps them with medical care, therapy, and support. These results show why accessible healthcare is important. Children need support all the way through. When their needs are met, they grow stronger and more independent.

They get a chance to live a better life. The approach used is based on an inductive method. It helps people grow step by step. The goal is to build responsible citizens. These citizens can help their families, communities, and nations. The focus is on individual growth. This slowly leads to change in society. But this process takes time. It involves finding people in need. They are brought to the institution. There, they get treatment and counselling. Each step needs effort and resources. Still, every part of this journey is important. Even if it is slow, it brings strong results. When

people are truly empowered, the change lasts. This way, we build strong communities. In the end, the result is a stronger nation.

Chapter Summary

Chapter V concentrated on *Kapil's* narratives, where the researcher explored various themes. The researcher examined how *Kapil* contributes to community transformation through specific activities. The analysis identifies several aspects of community transformation, such as recognizing vulnerability and taking action, enhancing individual well-being, using Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) approaches, and overcoming limitations in potential capabilities.

Recognizing vulnerability means examining who is at risk. Need to analyze these people that may face problems because of financial access, social phenomena and structure, or environmental injustice. Taking action means helping them to come up with these kinds of context. This can be done by making them resourceful, support different ways, and increasing access to quality education. These steps can make them stronger and sustainable in their communities.

Enhancing well-being means making life better. It includes caring for the body, mind, and emotions. It also means giving access to healthcare. Promoting good habits is part of it too. CBR is a way to help people with disabilities and others who are left out. It works to improve their lives. It brings together the community, health workers, and others. They work as a team. They provide support and help people take part in community life.

CHAPTER VI

DEEP'S STORIES AND MOVING TOWARDS COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

In Chapter VI, I presented the lived stories and professional reflections of one of the participants, *Deep*. He has been working and engaging with various NGOs and INGOs since 2007. He has an educational background in sociology and is currently a PhD scholar. He has worked with multiple organizations and is also a leader of an organization (it's a member of the board of directors). We worked together for 8 years with an organization and got the opportunity to deal with people with leprosy, persons with disabilities, and ultra-marginalized people.

He has been with his research center and provided leadership and experiences with an NGO in his district. He was in the final stage of his PhD; he had been collecting data from the required sources. Because the scenarios in the field of implementation are easily accessible and familiar, we have had chances to arrange formal and informal sharing sessions and interviews and engage in member checking to ensure information and gather details about it. This process allowed us to understand professional contribution and community transformation comprehensively. We participated in one formal discussion, virtual sharing, and Google Doc sharing and had multiple instances of informal sharing. Through his narratives and internal discussions, we collaboratively identified certain interpretations.

Vignette 1: He had been engaged in various themes since the year 2007 and worked particularly to meet and achieve the goals of specific organizations where he was engaged.

The activities I was involved in followed a specific structure, with a greater focus on targets and achievements. The targets were to be achieved within a certain period. For example, if the project spanned five years, the activities were planned for different years and broken down into months. This allowed community mobilizers or project staff to achieve all the objectives promptly. To some extent, it was a linear process; however, identification and prioritization were participatory with the beneficiaries, and these experiences

changed the community by initiating such micro activities in the community.
(Deep, 2023)

He thought that when he was implementing these activities, it was moving forward for change in the whole community. However, looking at different lenses of transformation, the activities and approaches at that time focused more on the individual. For example, the identification of leprosy-affected people and others, the formation of their groups, and the registration into formal institutions (cooperative), and the coverage of those people were thorough. Still, the approaches were not enough; they were limited by fixed guiding principles. They stayed within groups and their members. They did not talk much about the larger community's involvement and their meaningful participation. They also missed the community's diverse parts beyond people with disabilities and leprosy-affected people. It is hard to find certain people in the community, i.e., identification of vulnerability. This also includes people affected by leprosy, ultra-poor people, discriminated people, and some of the excluded people in the community. Finding them in a real situation is a challenging task.

Deep emphasized that these individuals, who either received treatment for leprosy or are currently undergoing medication, faced significant discrimination within the community. As a result, affected individuals were reluctant to openly acknowledge their condition and its associated consequences. In some instances, affected individuals resorted to registering under pseudonyms and providing alternative addresses when seeking regular medical care at health institutions.

In this context, personal transformation occurs when individuals become self-aware and can acknowledge the truth. It is important to recognize that this transformation does not stem from past wrongdoing but from recognizing that the issue at hand is a disease rather than an individual's fault and has consequences for the individuals, their families, and society as a whole. On the other hand, community transformation occurs when community members understand the nature of this disease and eliminate discriminatory attitudes or behaviors towards those affected. However, these are lacking in the practical realm (Deep, 2023).

Considering his past experiences regarding particular facts and efforts to get specific results, he had bigger concepts regarding how to bring positive changes in the community as a board member of the organization, as a researcher, and considering

some support for societal theories. He expressed that '*community transformation is non-linear.*' Not a single effort or activity determines the transformation. Community and people are complex to understand, and many ways are required to reach the targeted context.

'Community transformation is non-linear' means that bringing about significant changes within a community does not progress in a straight or predictable line. Instead, it involves twists, turns, setbacks, and unexpected developments. Unlike a linear process where each step leads directly to the next, community transformation often involves complex interactions between different factors, such as social, economic, cultural, and political dynamics. Progress may not always occur steadily or uniformly; there may be periods of rapid advancement followed by stagnation or regression. This understanding acknowledges the unpredictable nature of community development efforts and the need for flexibility, adaptation, and resilience in addressing the diverse challenges and opportunities that arise. I have generated themes based on the participant data and discussed them to make meaning.

Addressing Discrimination and Fostering Community Transformation

People who are suffering from leprosy generally do not want to expose themselves within their family or their community because it is considered to have high discrimination or stigmatization due to disease (Deep, 2023).

Discrimination is a negative behavior towards individuals involving negative and mythical considerations with particular attitudes and ways of looking. In the community, people have different ways of practicing and holding beliefs. Sometimes, due to a lack of awareness, proper education, or good practice, one person discriminates against others. There are several layers of discrimination in the community, including gender discrimination, racial discrimination, caste discrimination, marginalized discrimination, economic discrimination, disability discrimination, discrimination due to different diseases (such as HIV/AIDS, leprosy, chronic diseases, and more), learning discrimination, and more.

Discrimination is generally understood as the 'unfair treatment of a person or group based on prejudice' (Webster's Dictionary, n.d.). Prejudice is deeply ingrained within social, cultural, hierarchical, political, and personal dimensions. Its manifestation is contingent upon the composition and characteristics of institutions. While social stratification is inherent in societal dynamics, the unequal distribution of resources and authority exposes numerous individuals and groups to vulnerabilities

arising from their limited control over and access to resources. Discrimination frequently arises in society due to prejudice or stereotypes that have formed over time. However, discrimination can exist independently of prejudice, and likewise, a person who holds prejudiced views may not always act discriminatorily (Dewi et al., 2022). Discrimination involves actions, attitudes, or behaviors that harm an individual or group. It often occurs when the majority group exercises dominance over a minority group.

Various individuals and communities with diverse sexual orientations face discrimination and exclusion. This includes people living with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, women, children, and various occupational groups (such as sex workers and agricultural laborers). Additionally, communities residing in marginalized or segregated areas like relief camps and slums, along with socially disadvantaged groups like *Dalits*, *Adivasi*, Muslims, and other persecuted minorities, also confront instances of discrimination. Simultaneously, these groups often experience intersecting forms of marginalization due to their exposure to social discrimination.

The injustices experienced by the poor range from exclusion from equal opportunities and resources to being targeted through expressed violence, stigma, and exclusion via stated or unstated societal sanctions. As deeply explained by Antonovsky (1960), the social meaning of discrimination emphasizes discrimination as a system of social relations and institutions with its processes, not merely an issue of psychological prejudice or individual behavior.

Different social structures and systems create and continue social discrimination. This discrimination causes serious problems in accessing basic entitlements of human beings. One big problem is unfair inequality in daily life activities.

Many people do not get basic rights and are far from provided activities of the duty bearer. They also miss out on important chances to lead life activities with dignity. Everyone should have these rights and opportunities to enjoy and consume resources. But discrimination takes them away. This creates a place where equality is missing. People's lives are shaped by unfair treatment, not by their rights.

People with disabilities face double or multiple discriminations, with those people who belong to lower caste in the community. Even members from the

lower caste are not allowed to save their monthly money for the group or cooperative (Deep, 2023).

Another perspective on discrimination in the community is that, situated at the lowest layer of caste, class, and gender hierarchies, Dalit women encounter multi-layered caste-based discrimination. Both violence and sexual assault are employed to perpetuate the subordinate status of Dalit women and to demean the broader Dalit community.

The vulnerability of Dalit women is further accentuated by their limited financial autonomy, inadequate education, subpar health and nourishment, early marriages, restricted (or nonexistent) access to land, and often deeply conservative and patriarchal societies. Coupled with factors like age, marital status (divorced, abandoned, or widowed), physical disabilities, or mental illnesses, the detrimental health effects disproportionately magnify for Dalit women. Seeking healthcare introduces an additional dimension where both Dalit men and women encounter negligence and denial, exacerbating their experience of discrimination.

Inclusive Engagement (How and What) and Social Equity (Why) for Community Transformation

As an NGO/INGO professional, it was my foremost duty to bring inclusiveness and equal treatment, but social hierarchy in the community always stood as a challenge (Deep, 2023).

Individual engagement refers to the active participation of different individuals (right holders, duty bearers, and service providers) in the lives and affairs of their communities, society, and government. It involves a range of activities and actions that individuals undertake to contribute to the well-being of their community and influence public decisions and policies.

Civic engagement tends to generalize people's participation in the process of changing the lives of the community people to change and improve conditions for other people or support to build the community's future (Adler & Goggin, 2005). Engaging people in community activities is a kind of public service. Some definitions of civic engagement highlight meaningful participation in voluntary service to the local community people. The ways of volunteer service are different. Some can act as individuals, while others can or support them as participation in a group. For example, civic engagement is an individual's duty to embrace the responsibilities of citizenship

with the obligation to participate, alone or in concert with others actively, in volunteer service activities that strengthen the local community' (Diller, 2001, p. 21),

Creating this type of cultural change is slow and intentional, and finding those who can commit to intentionally using their individual and collective civic agency requires a great deal of patience. Boyte (2009) defines civic agency as 'self-organizing, collective citizen efforts to solve problems and create public things in an open setting without tight prior scripts' (P. 1). *Deep's narrative explains this situation:*

Vignette 2: Identifying the particular victimized people is important in the community. The top priorities were picking individuals, being aware of them, equipping them with knowledge and skills, and explaining and realizing the reality and gap. Then, move to another stage of forming or uniting. In this stage, those individuals unite and form a self-help group (SHG). Regularly, people call meetings and discuss their personal and collective issues in the group. They do the discussion and try to find the solution within the group; if not, seek support from outside. Participatory group members analyze the situation and establish goals. To achieve the goals, they organize orientation on different issues, regularly do saving and credit, organize campaigns, participate in different capacity-building trainings, and organize dialogue and networking within the different SHGs. (Deep, March 2023)

The description above straightforwardly places the targeted people at the center, supporting their ability to live within the community with dignity, as all citizens have the right to a respectable life. There should be no discrimination, exclusion, bias, or injustice in the community. Our society is diverse; it is complex, with various observations, people's beliefs, cultural influences, and ways of establishing truth. Numerous legal regulations are in place to address and overcome discrimination in the community.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006) is an international human rights treaty that aims to protect the rights and dignity of individuals with disabilities. The convention promotes inclusion, accessibility, and equal opportunities for people with disabilities in various aspects of life, including education, employment, healthcare, and social participation. The UNCRPD emphasizes the importance of eliminating discrimination and barriers that may prevent persons, women, and children with disabilities from fully enjoying their

rights and participating in their communities, and the Nepal government has accepted the UNCRPD and is committed to implementing it.

Further, Article 5 of the UNCRPD (2006) talks about equality and non-discrimination and ensures that all people are equal before and under the law and are entitled, without any discrimination, to equal protection and benefit of the law. It also prohibits all discrimination based on disability and guarantees people with disabilities equal and effective legal protection against discrimination on all grounds. Promotion of equality and elimination of discrimination is necessary to accelerate or achieve de facto equality for people with disabilities. It shall not be considered discrimination under the terms of the present Convention.

Article 18 of the Constitution of Nepal (2072) has mentioned under the ‘right to equality’ that no discrimination shall be made in the application of general laws on the grounds of origin, religion, race, caste, tribe, sex, physical condition, condition of health, marital status, pregnancy, economic condition, language or region, ideology, or on similar other grounds.

Considering these realities and legal documents should always raise questions about establishing social equity in a community. Whether people, government, state, or local government all have those legal entities, actual people are far from these entities. Social equity in a community refers to the fair and just distribution of resources, opportunities, and privileges among all community members, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstances. This concept is grounded in justice, inclusiveness, and human rights. There are several important reasons why social equity is crucial in a community. In this regard, *Deep* stated,

‘Justice and fairness’ are fundamental for an adjusted society where everybody is treated with regard. These values guarantee that individuals have a voice and that their rights are maintained. ‘Equal access to opportunities permits everybody to reach their potential, regardless of foundation. It guarantees that individuals have the same chances to succeed, advancing a level playing field. ‘Economic growth’ is additionally significant because it gives assets and opportunities for individuals to move forward in their lives. A developing economy underpins occupations and advancement, making a difference in the quality of life in communities.

‘Social cohesion’ keeps society united. It encourages collaboration and understanding among different groups, which reduces conflict and promotes

stability. Reducing inequality brings balance and fairness, ensuring no one is left behind. 'Public health and well-being' are fundamental to a thriving society. Healthy communities are more productive, resilient, and able to achieve long-term goals.

'Social mobility' is essential, allowing people to improve their lives and advance in society. It enables hard work and talent to be recognized, regardless of where someone starts life. A diversity of perspectives brings new ideas and innovation. When people with different backgrounds contribute, society gains a fuller understanding and broader solutions to its challenges.

(Deep, March 2023).

Transforming Individuals and Communities by Engaging in Different Layers
The first stage was to share and learn with community people and SHG members and interact with local leaders, policymakers, and different committees (local market management committee, forest user group, cooperatives, financial institute, women's groups, schools, and local clubs). Secondly, it is important to respect the situation of individuals and recognize the contributions that lead them to transformation and sustainability. The third or last stage, i.e., institutionalization of the groups and members by registration cooperatives led by themselves. Institutionalization leads the people in many ways by incorporating community members to change their perceptions towards those discriminated against and by leading together the oppressed and dominant people by empowering and creating a platform where all can enjoy life, enjoy their rights, and increase dimensions of capacities and capabilities for resilience. (Deep, March 2023)

Deep had been engaging himself in different organizations to apply his knowledge and experiences; he had been with a national social mobilizer group, voluntarily empowering and sharing his experiences with initiators who could contribute to mobilizing the community and people. Through community research, participants have explored how local governments lead local governance. He was with one of the leading NGOs in the district in a decision-making position. He explored the diverse perspectives of the organization and community so that he could bring about changes as per their requirements. He had been actively engaged in different civil discourses to connect global exploration with explicit implementation.

Therefore, as an I/NGO professional, a participant can contribute in multiple ways to bring about change and transform individuals and communities. Providing time and effort to nonprofit organizations, community projects, and charitable activities can bring people together to address common concerns, advocate for changes, and work towards shared goals. Speaking out on behalf of a cause or issue often involves contacting public officials, activity implementers, and policymakers to express opinions and push for relevant changes.

Participating in local government meetings, town halls, and public forums to voice opinions and gain insight into government processes and the realities of the surroundings were the means of contributing towards social change. Participating in public demonstrations to raise awareness about issues and advocating for change requires people to join larger efforts to promote social, political, or environmental change.

Engaging in respectful and constructive conversations with others, even when there are differing opinions, can lead them to something to bring change. Civic engagement is crucial for a healthy and functioning democracy, as it helps ensure that the voices and concerns of citizens are heard and considered in decision-making processes. It fosters a sense of community involvement, encourages accountability among elected officials, and contributes to the overall betterment of society. Our societies are full of complexities and resources for information, local knowledge, and sharing. Diversity in our community, including addressing discrimination, is crucial in creating positive community transformation. When discrimination is confronted and mitigated, it can lead to various positive outcomes.

Addressing discrimination helps create a more equitable society where everyone has equal access to opportunities, resources, and rights. This fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion within the community. Combating discrimination encourages the inclusion of diverse perspectives, experiences, and ideas.

To truly transform a community, it's important to implement comprehensive strategies that address discrimination at various levels, including education, employment, housing, healthcare, and social services. Collaborative efforts involving community members, organizations, and policymakers are essential for sustainable change. The participants' involvement in the transformation of issues needs to be elaborated.

Deep contributed to changing lives in many ways, not limited by the approach to justice and fairness; for him, these are primary principles that ensure no one is treated any differently from anyone else without any form of prejudice. He actively participated in a number of campaigns for expanded equal opportunity that strengthened the fact that all individuals deserve the same chances for education, work, and personal growth without discrimination.

He believed that another milestone of his involvement was economic development, which is important for raising living standards and reducing poverty; it creates wealth and provides jobs. At the same time, he presented various approaches that brought out social cohesion, referring to the strength of relationships and a sense of solidarity among community members, necessary for a society to be harmonious. It reduces inequality by narrowing the gaps in incomes, wealth, and access to resources to foster a more balanced and fair society.

Lastly, it is vital to note that diversity of perspectives will enrich decision-making and innovation processes by including a wide range of experiences and viewpoints. He focused on long-term sustainability in meeting current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs, ensuring a balance between economic, social, and environmental factors and an ethical imperative underpinning the moral responsibility to act in ways that benefit society as a whole.

Chapter Summary

Chapter VI focused on *Deep*'s stories and how participants helped change the community. With narratives of the participant, the researcher developed themes related to community transformation. The researcher looked at the things *Deep* did to bring about this change with his efforts and professional engagement. The chapter showed that *Deep* worked to address the issues that contribute towards discrimination. He tried to include everyone in the community activities to feel included and respected. This meant challenging unfair beliefs and treating all people fairly. The chapter also discussed social justice.

It highlighted that everyone should have equal chances, opportunities, and equal access to basic rights. It has focused especially on those who are often out of the mainstream. *Deep*'s narratives and developed themes have encouraged people in the community to take part in the process of decision-making. He encouraged people to share their ideas and help shape their future with approaches he applied in the community. The chapter also explained how these efforts helped make lasting positive

changes in the community. These changes were meant to assist the whole community's system, growing people's status; therefore, they can live and stay strong.

CHAPTER VII

JOURNEYING THROUGH SENTI'S STORIES: NAVIGATING PERSPECTIVES

In Chapter VII, I presented the lived stories and professional reflections of one of the participants, *Senti*. She has been actively involved with various NGOs/INGOs since 2011, primarily focusing on education. With an educational background in a Master of Education, Senti has collaborated with some non-profit organizations and is currently dedicated to early-grade reading-related projects. Her work has encompassed different marginalized groups within the community, including people with disabilities, individuals affected by leprosy, and those seeking economic enhancement in the past. Her current role is to foster schoolteachers, local government, and like-minded stakeholders to engage in early child reading activities. She also promotes the physical and technical enhancement of the Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD).

Senti has been affiliated with an organization that has contributed to Nepal's education sector since 1976. Professionally, as a researcher, *Senti* collaborated for five years within the disability sector. However, since 2016, *Senti* has been a part of another organization, working towards bridging gaps and improving the state of the current education system. While *Senti's* organization addressed numerous thematic areas, her primary focus was on Early Grade Reading (EGR). Within this thematic domain, specific activities include material development, teacher training, and enhancing access to schooling for vulnerable children, supporting schools in promoting well-being, and establishing local government networks to allocate resources and ensure sustained support.

Senti's Stories and Moving Toward Community Transformation

Vignette 1 (the first meet): First, I shared the objective and modality of the research and discussed briefly how I/NGO professionals contribute towards community transformation through project activities where individuals engaged with the organization. Exploring and narrating her stories slightly differed because of her beliefs, assumptions, and current working scenarios. She was more focused on the small and micro activities, and she said this was a kind of '*Haati Ko Mukh ma Jeera*' (Cumin in an elephant's mouth, which means an insufficient amount). Initially, she expressed anger through the following statement:

Why do I give narratives/stories? What and how do my voices support others?

Do my stories or sharing give meaning to others?

We are engaged in very small activities. Therefore, how do these small activities/concepts support community or social transformation? Social transformation is a big change in the community, which is possible through the movement of civil society organizations. (Senti, March 2023).

Furthermore, *Senti* wanted to express more about how many factors can contribute to bringing change into the community. The major things that can bring changes in the community are reforming the policy and building capacity to implement the policy and activities. She added, “*There are many challenges/barriers to transform or change the community*”. Again, I asked, ‘How are you facing barriers or challenges from your experiences to change the communities or achieve the organizational or project goals? Are you or your activities not helping people or community change? She did not answer my questions in detail. She said she was short on time. She asked me to come another day. I looked at *Senti’s* data. I found some themes from it. Then I discussed these themes to understand them better.

Exploring Perspectives on Community Transformation and Professional Contributions

Can NGO/INGO or professionals contribute towards community transformation? We support the individual people and government in delivering the targeted activities. We are more focused on completing the activities because we have had certain periods to complete. (Senti, March 2023)

Empowerment and completion of projects are different things; however, they are interconnected. For example, Individual empowerment and community empowerment are linked to each other and are concepts that can play significant roles in driving community transformation. When both these aspects are effectively fostered, they can create a powerful synergy that leads to positive changes within a community. Individual empowerment and community empowerment can support and drive community transformation. As I/NGO professionals, I/NGO professionals seem more focused on individuals' well-being, capacity building, and increasing access to different entitlements, such as health, education, economics, government services, and others. It is significant to some extent, but ending the project or program goals to focus on individuation might not bring transformation or sustainable changes in the community.

Empowerment is such a mechanism that stands as a foundation approach within effective and continuing actions aimed at organizing communities' initiatives. (Maton, 2008; Sandoval & Rongerude, 2015). Increasing individual access personally or institutionally is the groundwork. Nevertheless, there needs to expand or increase the circle of individuals because the community transformation does not just talk about the individual, it talks about the surroundings, leading more people and communities' culture in a positive direction. Therefore, collective and individual empowerment and identity are important to bring change in a community.

Collectively, empowerment entails fostering and advancing a shared sense of identity and purpose among a group of individuals united by a cause. Moreover, this collective identity or formed groups realize that through capacity building and collaborative efforts, they can collectively address shared challenges of the community (Coleman, 1968; Maton, 2008). Therefore, designed projects or activities might be the means of entering the community. Flexibility and adaptability of the project or program activities can support changing the community because many remaining issues can be adaptable to changes and unforeseen challenges that may arise during project implementation. Further, adjusting project activities based on feedback and evolving community needs to ensure relevance and effectiveness can move towards changing the community or transforming individually and collectively for a sustainable life.

Pyles (2009) posits that the higher the degree of empowerment among residents in influencing change, the greater the long-term viability of the organizational effort. Community empowerment involves a gradual progression where communities come together, enhancing their shared ability to drive social and structural enhancements (Aiyer et al., 2015). Including the residents' voices in community change processes and research is critical to understand the actions needed to facilitate positive community change (Brown & Baker, 2019). Critical analysis of the multiple factors keeping the major identified issues in the center and digging relevant subjects can lead a bigger population and wider community to go together to discuss participatory problems, build trust in each other, develop local problem-solving leadership skills, motivate community people and their engagement, and find out essential factors to revitalize people and community assets.

Fostering and optimizing the different capacities to contribute towards changing communities is not straight. It is a spiral that needs meaningful

representation, reflection, and appropriate, consistent efforts to bring change in the communities. Developing and optimizing the collective potential to drive societal transformation necessitates nurturing a sense of unity within a community cohort. Social cohesion has been defined as a fundamental aspect of community empowerment that unites community members to scrutinize, express, and advocate for changes within the community. It's also considered a prerequisite for mobilizing and involving the community (Carrasco & Bilal, 2016). Keeping the participant's lived experiences and considering the expressed words, social cohesion facilitates a sense of belongingness and promotes shared values among community people (Rothman, 2008). To achieve successful community transformation initiatives, social cohesion, and empowered leadership abilities are pivotal factors that constitute the community's capability for change (Rothman, 2000).

Mingling the participants' narratives and the researchers' lived experiences highlights that individual and collective empowerment play pivotal roles in transforming communities. Individual empowerment involves equipping community members with the tools, skills, and knowledge they need to make informed decisions and control their lives. When empowered, individuals become active participants in their community's growth, contributing to unique talents and perspectives that drive innovation and change. On the other hand, collective empowerment fosters a sense of unity and collaboration within the community. When individuals come together, pooling their strengths and resources, they can address common challenges more effectively, advocate for shared goals, and amplify their impacts. A community that embraces individual and collective empowerment creates a dynamic synergy where personal growth and communal progress go hand in hand, leading to holistic and sustainable transformations that uplift the entire community.

Vignette 2: It was a slightly more positive environment than the first day of the interview. The interview place and location were different, making it easier to communicate deeply. Here I continued the questioning regarding barriers and more personal ideas that could contribute widely to change the communities.

We have been implementing activities like 'ghoda ko lagaam' (like a horse bridle, which means very straight), the first barrier to changing the community. (Senti, March 2023)

Many of us, guided by technical approaches, tend to focus more on quantitative achievements, primarily counting how many people benefit. The central

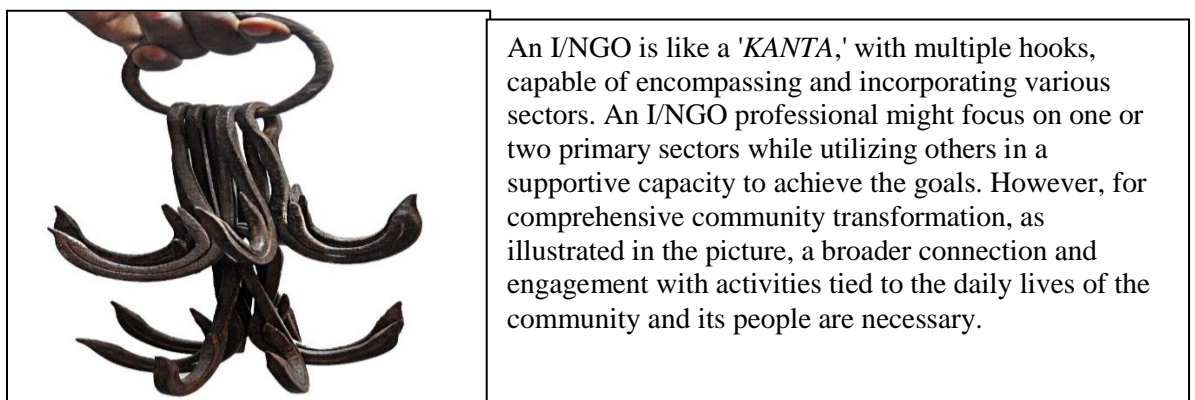
focus is often on targets versus achievements. Once the physical targets are accomplished, we often disregard the actual outcomes or impact. Another barrier is the lack of coherence and consistency in project goals, specific objectives, the execution of activities, and the capacity and motivation to deliver those activities effectively.

We, as professionals, focus more on organizational values, partner interest, and the power of decision makers, sometimes less effort for the well-being of targeted people. Strong involvement and motivation toward all the phases of project cycle management lead to meaningful change in the community. Keeping these instant professionals or targeted activities and completing mechanisms to accomplish, considering the professional experiences and reality for the community transformation. We can claim that transformation is not a single entity, and it is also not driven directly or indirectly.

I (Senti) said that community transformation is like the working modality of KANTA (कान्ता). KANTA (In Tharu language) is an instrument with multiple hooks that pull fallen water buckets from a well. KANTA is a term used for a specific instrument or tool used where people use the well as a water source. When a water-pulling bucket falls into a well, people use it to search for the bucket and search for the lost bucket. This KANTA also explores the different necessary or unnecessary things from the well. The function of KANTA is related to moving and thriving from aid to transformation. (Senti, April 2023)

Figure 4

A Metaphoric Representation of KANTA's Multiple Task



Transitioning Towards a Deeper Social Dialogue on Community Change

Engagement and interaction of stakeholders within communities, therefore, can build strong cohesion and bring a multi-disciplinary approach to solving the local problems. We have been engaging in and out of such activities, but the concern is how intensively the activities/issues are carried out. (Senti, April 2024)

We established different modes of communication strategies in the communities while delivering the targeted activities in communities. I/NGO professionals or organizations organized different sharing and interaction sessions with different levels of the project advisory committee. Social auditing is also one of the requirements for updating the files with the departments concerned. Besides these, there are workshops, seminars, panel discussions, learning and sharing meetings, and reporting with planned communication lines.

Social/community dialogue on any issue refers to communication, negotiation, and interaction between various social partners (stakeholders) within a society/community. These partners typically include governments or public authorities, civil society organizations, trade unions, private like-minded sectors, and sometimes other relevant formal or informal groups. The purpose of social dialogue should be to reach consensus, facilitate understanding, and promote cooperation on various social, political, and economic issues that affect a community, resulting in discrimination, exclusion, educational reformation, labor policies, employment conditions, wages, social protection, and broader economic and social development.

Social dialogue can facilitate the transition toward more sustainable economic and social issues and future leading by developing a joint understanding of the challenges and how to address them. The ILO defines social dialogue in a way that includes all types of negotiation, consultation, and information sharing among representatives of governments, social partners, or between social partners on issues of common interest relating to economic and social policy.

So, working with different organizations or community people is a place where people who care about something can talk about what they care about. They share their thoughts openly and constructively and find solutions positively. The goal is to find solutions that work for everyone and consider what everyone thinks. When people talk and work together, it helps make fair rules and ways of doing things. By fostering communication and collaboration, social dialogue contributes to creating

policies and practices that are more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable. It also stops problems, keeps society steady, and enhances society's overall well-being by involving those directly affected by decisions in the decision-making process.

Community awareness and education have two sides. One side brings change. The other side keeps things the same. These two sides are not always balanced. The balance has changed over time. It also changes from place to place. Different communities and countries show different patterns. Even different parts of the world are not the same. Therefore, there should always be a connection locally and globally. Ideally, education would reproduce the good and transform the bad, but good and bad are value-based and inherently political (Desjardins, 2015).

Social dialogue is the process that significantly improves participation of the individuals which moves towards social justice. It creates a platform for open discussions, sharing and collaborations for common goals. It includes many stakeholders, such as individuals, service providers, communities, different organizations, and local government. Social dialogue is a space which creates platform where different perspectives are heard and valued for collaborative efforts that lead to solutions transparently and finally it promotes social justice. It empowers individuals and communities, raises awareness, and drives positive change by addressing inequalities and advocating for fair treatment and opportunities for all. Therefore, it should not be just completion or achievement. It is more important to discuss the socio-cultural and socio-political contexts in which I/NGO professionals can deliver that matter for the transformation of society in ways consistent with notions of social justice. For example, in developing countries like Nepal, the working modality of I/NGOs often involves technical deliberation (deductive approach). The deductive approach deals with activities designed out of priorities or interests, and ways of delivering are ready-made, already defined with a global context.

Emancipatory Exploration Adds Community Transformation

I was not limited to delivering activities related to education (educational material development, teachers training, parental involvement in the process of the education system, empowering local government authorities and policymakers), but also forming groups in the community. For example, Tole Shiksha is an approach that brings hidden interest, challenges, and contextuality. These all brought together to think about the community people critically. (Senti, 2023).

Emancipatory exploration is a process of inquiry and action to free individuals and communities from social, economic, or political constraints. In community transformation, this approach involves engaging community members in identifying and addressing issues hindering their growth and well-being. It empowers them to critically examine their circumstances, question oppressive structures, and take collective action towards change.

As societies aim to become transformative, the emancipation of individuals and groups emerges as a vital factor that upholds the existing social justice concepts. This involves both conscientization (Freire, 2005) and the level of freedom individuals can achieve in recognizing and pursuing their priorities (Sen, 2009). Formal and informal education, awareness, and empowerment hold the potential to cultivate this form of emancipation. However, social science consistently reveals that this process is not straightforward and cannot be taken for granted.

Enhanced community transformation through emancipatory exploration deals with the fact that it is only at the level of depth and meaning in change. This process encourages self-awareness and self-determination, which enables people to realize their potential and actively participate in shaping their environment. It creates that feeling of possession and control among the members since they receive help and are contributors to the transformation process themselves.

In addition, emancipatory research most often leads to sustainable changes due to the local capacity and resilience forming. By removing these root problems, like inequality, discrimination, or poverty, communities can devise long-term strategies for the betterment of the community. This transformation approach changes not only the physical and social structures of the community but also propagates a cultural shift towards more justice, equality, and empowerment for all of its members.

Chapter Summary

Chapter VII delves into Senti's narratives; it highlights various themes from her narratives. The generated themes are supportive hands for community transformation. The researcher explored how Senti's response and actions in the community contribute to the notion of community transformation through targeted activities and professional ideologies. The key aspects that were identified in the narratives and analysis included individual and community empowerment, which explored wider professionalism, social dialogues, meaningful interaction, meaningful

engagement in the project cycle management, and emancipatory exploration within the timeframe and boundary of the project in the community.

The generated themes, like individual and community empowerment, enable people and targeted audiences to take control of their lives and actively shape their surroundings with increased capability and skills. Secondly, themes like Exploring Wider Professionalism enhance skills and knowledge and attitudes that can foster a more capable and resilient community. It is more related to making the people and community stronger and more resourceful. Thirdly, social dialogue promotes the level of understanding each other in the community and builds harmonious cooperation among diverse groups and people with well-facilitated inclusive decision-making. Last but not the least, the theme is like emancipatory exploration that encourages thinking about things critically and acting against oppressive things happening in the community to lead to sustainable change. If we work together, these components help us to understand each other and to build capacity to identify the community and people's challenges. It supports promoting equity and helps to achieve sustainable positive changes in the community.

CHAPTER VIII

READING BETWEEN THE LINES: COMPARING NARRATIVES

Chapter VIII described the interpretation and further interconnections of the participants' narratives. Transcription is the process of converting spoken language into written text. After transcription, the steps of interpretation and analysis have been completed. Therefore, as the next step in interpretation and analysis, this chapter derives meaning and insights from interpreting and analyzing different themes and meaning-making.

In this chapter, I drew participants' narratives and interpretations for further connections. Research is an exploration of stories, narratives, ideas, and practices. Throughout this chapter, based on the analysis, I reflected on my journey of the research process and presented what I learned. Also, I explained the connectivity of the participants' interpretations. Finally, I presented insights with a summary for reflection and conclusion.

Summary of Karma's Narrative Interpretations and Analysis

I summarized the narratives of Karma; his narratives can be brief in the concepts of learning, motivation, and empowerment in the context of localization of community transformation. It highlights both types of motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation push to drive individuals' commitment towards changing community in continuous ways. The narrative of the participant expressed a personal journey toward empowerment through personal experiences and interactions with community people. It highlights the role of technology, sharing different knowledge, coordination, and collaboration in how we can contribute toward community transformation.

The social dialogue explored the platform and how empowerment takes place in multifaceted nature. This dialogue process contextualizes activities that professionals are acting on in the community. There are various connected psychological theories that illustrate practically how empowerment can take place effectively. Empowerment is internal motives that arise from personal belief, motivation, self-efficacy, and collective actions.

Empowering individuals is significant because once the person is empowered, it fosters sustained social change, and it consists of intrinsic motivation, external

support, and holistic engagement with real interest. However, still the following additional actions and ideas can lead the community and people to sustainable change:

- Self-motivated actions contribute to community transformation
- Individual empowerment and community transformation
- Unlearning in community transformation.
- Adaptability and transformation in the local communities
- Temporal rehabilitation and re/integration for community transformation

Karma's stories depict learning, motivation, and community empowerment through transformation. In this view, both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation play a role. They work together to support change. This change reflects personal empowerment. It encourages growth through technology. It also involves gaining knowledge from different perspectives. Finally, it includes working with others in collaboration with local knowledge, local resources, and global context.

The dialogue peels into the multi-dimensionality embedded in empowerment, involving self-belief, motivation, and action. It points out empowerment drives sustainable social change through intrinsic motivation, external support, and community participation. There are dominant themes of self-motivation, individual empowerment, unlearning, adaptability, and temporal rehabilitation for community transformation. However, it is important to keep in mind that external motivation like remuneration sometimes may create the negative impacts of the government staff who are poorly paid. Government workers with low pay are more likely to apply for positions with NGOs. With an NGO, the pay disparity can be up to 20 times greater. This may lead to disparities between government and non-governmental personnel, which could demotivate government employees. (Karkee & Comfort, 2016).

Summary of *Kapil's* Narrative, Interpretations, and Analysis

Identifying the vulnerability of the people and community is crucial and significant to design the activity or treatment therefore, it is the initial stage of community transformation involves. It requires a deep understanding of various perspectives, reality and existing norms, values of that community. *Kapil's* journey exemplifies this as he shifted from IT professionals to support marginalized rural communities by exploring the vulnerabilities of children with disabilities, their families and communities. Context-specific vulnerability arises from different backgrounds of the people. Mainly, vulnerability is connected with poverty, discrimination and people attitudes, additionally it rises from diverse influences that

central to vulnerability to harm. *Kapil's* modality to implement activities in the community is community-based rehabilitation (CBR). This approach fosters individual capability; it supports community and duty bearers to push for a common and inclusive environment to ensure each right, including those of people with disabilities. It supports establishing excluded people in their communities with dignity and respect.

Another milestone ensures that resiliency complements addressing the vulnerability through aiding recovery strategies and situations from harsh conditions. Applying modality in the community contains stakeholders' collaboration, togetherness in planning, identification and overall support from government, and integration of the CBR matrix in various aligned sectors. Ultimately, this approach helps to explore and address the vulnerability that is the core for promoting social equity, well-being for all, and positive social change for the long term.

- Vulnerability: what and how?
- Individual well-being (physically, socially, and economically) contributes to community transformation.
- Community-based Rehabilitation (CBR) approach for community

Transformation

The initial phase of community transformation involves recognizing vulnerability through diverse perspectives, exemplified by *Kapil's* shift from IT to aiding marginalized rural communities. Vulnerability arises from various factors leading to susceptibility.

Kapil has experience in the modality of community-based rehabilitation (CBR). From his explanation, this model enhances and empowers to foster inclusivity and to ensure rights for marginalized people, especially focusing on people with disabilities. Resilience in community helps balance vulnerability with appropriate solutions and supports mechanisms for recovery. In community transformation, there needs to be teamwork and support from the local government. and CBR integration, which are aligned with holistic well-being.

Summary of *Deep's* Narrative, Interpretation, and Analysis

It is a negative attitude and behavior based on prejudice; it mirrors itself among the various strata of community life, including gender, race, caste, economic status, and disabilities, among others. Discrimination is based on deep-rooted societal hierarchies and unequal opportunities in access to resources. Inclusive engagement

and social equity are key avenues to stemming discrimination. Civic and individual engagement are crucial for community transformation.

Combating discrimination will make society fairer, diverse in ideas and views, innovative, and productive economically. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the Constitution of Nepal are leading legal frameworks based on principles of equality and non-discrimination.

This means that to transform the communities, efforts must be made at different levels of society- efforts to link local knowledge with global insights and create inclusivity so that positive change can be realized.

- . Addressing discrimination and fostering community transformation
- . Inclusive engagement (how and what) and social equity (why) for Community Transformation
- . Transforming Individuals and communities by engaging in different layers

Discrimination, rooted in prejudice, affects community life through negative attitudes. It roots gender, race, caste, economic status, disabilities, and poverty. It is driven by societal hierarchies, values, and traditional beliefs. It is important to combat this discrimination because it creates barriers to bringing change to the community. To bring the positive in the community, it requires inclusive empowerment, engagement, and participatory development of norms and values of the community with social equity.

Involvement of such discriminated people in society activities is vital. Activities that address discrimination and nurture fairness, respect diverse views, innovation, behavioral change, and inclusive growth. Legal frameworks like the UN Convention and Nepal's constitution emphasize equality, but in practice, it is not taking place. Community transformation and its approaches mandate engaging society's layers, combining local-global knowledge, and fostering inclusivity.

Summary of Senti's Narrative, Interpretation, and Analysis

In an interview, the I/NGO professional, Senti, uncovered her professional role in community transformation. She exposed the reality of her professional engagement for community transformation and also explained some constraints that are barriers to bringing change in the community for the long term. She highlighted some challenges like quantitative achievements and time constraints. However, small activities or that can foster bringing community transformation. There is a need for collective empowerment and coherence to emerge sustainable change in the

community. Community transformation was likened to an instrument called '*KANTA*', which represents moving from aid to transformation. Social cohesion, collective identity, and meaningful representation were emphasized. Social dialogue emerged as crucial for consensus-building and sustainable development. Balancing transformative and reproductive dimensions in education was discussed. The interview underscored the role of I/NGO professionals in fostering social justice through collaboration, awareness, and addressing inequalities for holistic community change.

- Exploring diverse perspectives on community transformation and professional contributions
- Transitioning towards a deeper social dialogue on community change

I/NGO professionals have diversified perspectives regarding community transformation. There are many challenges to implementing it in the community because of small activities, quantitative focus, and time limits. Beyond these challenges, we can bring collective empowerment, coherence, and ideas as the '*KANTA*' instrument works from 'aid to transformation'. Social cohesion, representation, and social dialogue emerged for sustainable change.

Balancing community-changing dimensions and I/NGO's role in justice and collaboration were underscored. Exploring varied perspectives and professional roles in community transformation while moving to profound social dialogues for change is crucial to consider while delivering the targeted activities in the community.

Integration of Different Analyzed Topics of Theme Development

It is this synergy of self-motivated actions that embarks as a catalyst in the journey of community transformation. Individual empowerment becomes a cornerstone in this tapestry of social change. Unlearning is ensured at key avenues as the community progresses and stays prepared to manage local challenges. It reveals its vulnerabilities, making it contemplate its nature and extent.

Transformative growth in communities mirrors improvements in individual well-being across physical, social, and economic dimensions. This transformation is personal and collective, as positive changes in one area encourage growth in others.

CBR (Community-Based Rehabilitation) plays an important role. It helps everyone and fights against discrimination. CBR supports fairness and equal treatment for all. With the CBR, communities can create spaces where everyone is

welcome. People can take part in all community activities, no matter what their ability or background. CBR involves people in every step toward fairness.

This helps create big changes in the community. It also gives space to those whose voices are often ignored. Everyone's opinion is heard and respected. As a result, communities become stronger and more flexible. People can grow in social, economic, and physical context in the community. This brings change that helps both individuals and the community where people can enjoy themselves and create an environment to make others participate.

CBR does not only explore short-term problems. It also creates long-term improvements, builds the system of sustainable plan, and makes everyone responsible. These improvements help everyone in the community for their wellbeing and connect many to work together. Sustainable change affects both people and communities and creates a platform to think for future. It always seeks new ideas and multi-perspectival views in the community.

This talks about deeper and more meaningful engagement for self and others in the community. Therefore, INGO workers are important and can play a key role in these talks. They share what they know, experiences and local situation with global scenarios. They help guide the discussions and lead for a meaning decision together. As talks go on, they shape the path of change, feelings of ownership, responsibilities, rights and duty to take over.

They help people focus on key goals and with strategies and milestones. Regular communication builds teamwork, and it also brings fresh and practical ideas that immediately works and leads for future activities. Together, people build a shared vision, mission and objectives with appropriate activities to be carried out. Regarding community transformation, progress comes from both experts and locals with continue efforts together.

By working together with strategic views, they make good changes in the community and this teamwork leads to a better and fairer future for all living creatures in this world.

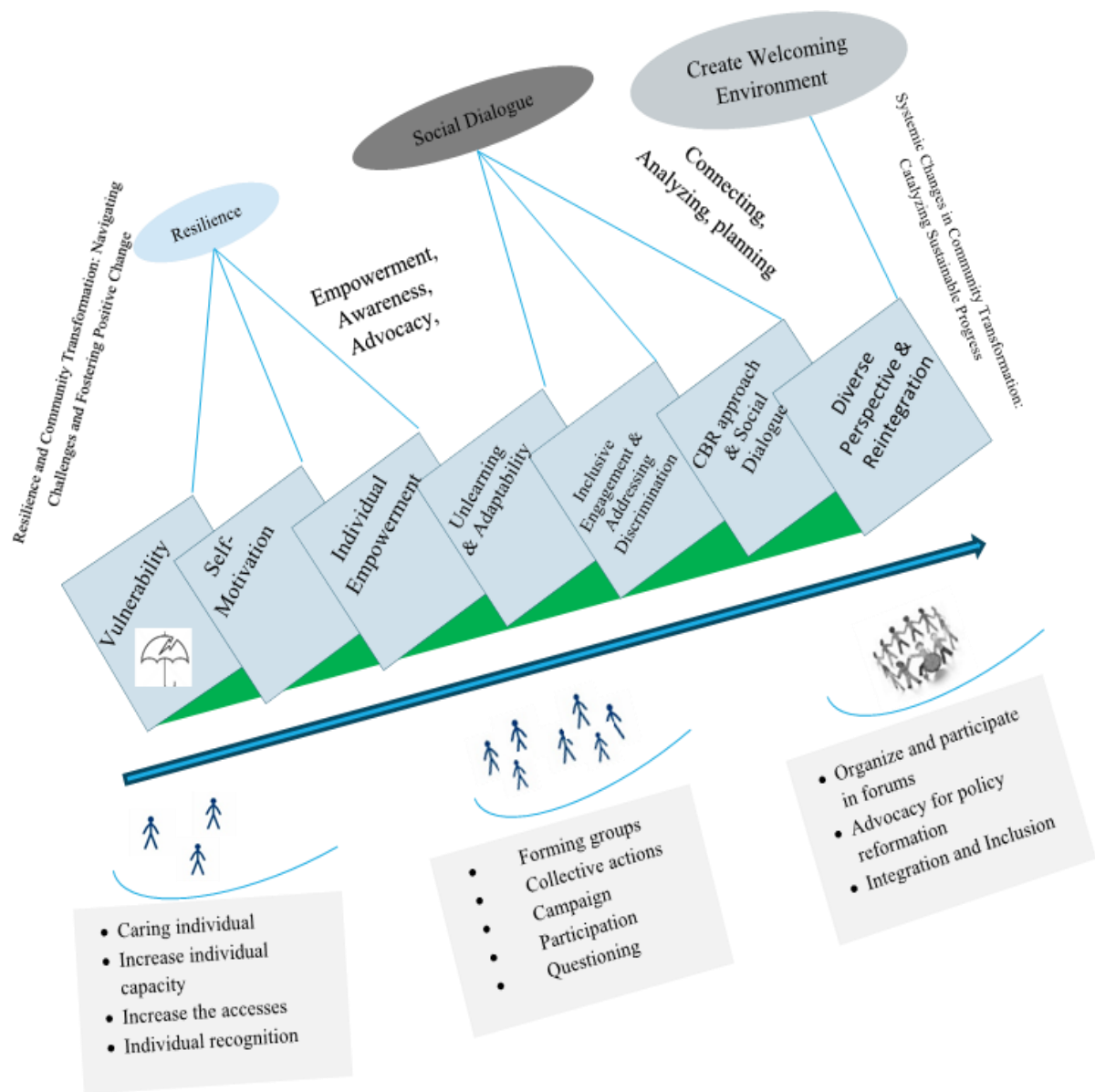
Figure 5*Integration of Child Themes to Develop Parent Themes*

Figure 5 gives a clear summary of the main themes found in the stories of participants. It shows a visual map of connected themes for community transformation. This diagram shows the many connected ideas, views, and professional experiences in the data collected. Each part of the diagram shows a different theme that contributes towards community transformation. These themes can include and address social issues, personal successes, and cultural reintegration in detail.

This diagram assists people and professionals to understand the stories better and also supports designing activities. It turns deep and complex stories into simple insights that professionals act on in their practical projects. It is a virtuous starting point for more learning and study for professionals. It also helps explore the lives of I/NGO professionals and their ways of delivering activities. It shows the common points that centrally affect the transformation of communities, and it is shared by I/NGO professionals. These shared points connect different views and situations, even in the designing, implementing, and evaluation of any projects in the community.

Resilience and Community Transformation: Navigating Challenges and Fostering Positive Change

In consideration of multiple approaches applied by I/NGO professionals and exploration of related literature, I/NGO explores the dynamic interplay between the resilience of individuals. Here, resilience means taking references of coping capability, capability and technicality of bouncing back, changing, and motivating accordingly with changing scenarios, and community transformation, unveiling how communities navigate adversities to catalyze a meaningful and sustainable change.

It is a multidimensional process that provides the tools for a person's empowerment, builds social cohesion, and leverages a crisis into an innovation impulse. The change process weaves environmental sustainability, cultural preservation, and equitable participation as basic principles for sustainable positive impact. Cultivating resilience takes place through collective networks and visionary leaders not only to overpower adversity but also to bring about holistic and lasting transformations that will surmount the challenges of today and set forth a more inclusive and vibrant future.

Systemic Changes in Community Transformation: Catalyzing Sustainable Progress

I/NGO professionals are at the forefront of interacting with real community issues, a link felt from global scenarios down to local identifications. Much good practice and knowledge produced globally becomes localized but too often inaccessible to governments for central reasons. Consequently, vulnerable people do not have access to basic facilities and rights. They are unaware of the knowledge, information, and skills to utilize them. As a result, they are far from basic entitlements in the community. Therefore, professionals need to focus on key issues. These issues are important for bringing change in the community to transform them. The

foundation for community change or transformation lies in the empowerment, equipment, and expansion of access circles within the community. However, achieving sustainable community change necessitates these steps and systemic changes, policy enhancements, and broader coverage of the community populace to ensure that every individual and system can lead fulfilling lives.

Systemic shifts for community transformation are an important illustration of the linkage between systemic and general community change; it looks at how things happening in the upper levels bring about transformation and sustain it along the trajectory. Strategic realignment of policies, institutional evolution, and recalibration of societal norms toward attaining inclusive development would be part of this trajectory. Key elements of this paradigm shift are economic restructuring, environmental stewardship, and technological integration, all with substantial value to equity and social justice. For I/NGO activities or professionals, comprehensive collaboration across community sectors and innovative leadership must be embraced. Community changes grow as the leading energy pushes communities beyond challenges and starts laying the foundation of their journey toward comprehensive and enduring progress.

Chapter Summary

Chapter VIII analyzed the different themes of the participants' narratives and marked a wider meaning from these generated themes. The researcher brought the generated themes in tune with his experiences and reconnected those themes with long-term changes that can contribute to the community. Therefore, the parent themes generated from the child themes are community resilience, social dialogue, and the creation of a welcoming environment in the community. The researcher presented these themes in pictorial form, which helped to understand the stakeholders.

CHAPTER IX

FINDING, REFLECTION, AND CONCLUSION

Within this chapter, I undertook a process of introspection and concluded my research study. Research represents an expedition into the narratives, ideas, practices, and stories that shape our understanding. Throughout the following pages, I engaged in a reflective analysis of my research journey, offering insights from this exploration. Furthermore, I elucidated the research agenda and questions that guided my investigation. The construction of the methodological framework and its alignment with my research questions is also expounded upon. Lastly, I offered a presentation of insights accompanied by implications and a concluding summary, encapsulating the essence of this research endeavor.

Finding

Finding for this study has been represented the key insights which support toward community transformation, and it is based on the research participants' narratives and thematic analysis. Each theme that has been generated is the findings of this study because these all-generated themes can contribute to change the community. Individual efforts and applied approaches of the professionals are unique, the participants are conscious about how to change and bring long term change where they work with.

The central focus to community change is the empowerment of the individual of community people, to ahead of the notion, staff need to be self-motivated and empowerment. Empowering individuals is very grassroots and essential approach to add for community transformation. Individuals are the assets of the community, they are the driver of the community, they can change their community if they want, participation of the individual in each small initiation in the community is crucial. Empowered individuals can add to exploring the real problems and opportunities of the community. They can design and execute as needed for transforming the communities. In this concept, professionals who are motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically can drive individuals by utilizing the resources appropriately toward positive change, particularly through self-belief (long experiences), sharing the learning and knowledge with the local collations.

Mapping the communities with their resources, individual and collective strengths, opportunities, and their individual and community vulnerability, is the very initial stage for transforming the communities. Particularly, marginalized people (*Dalit, Muslim, janajatis*), ultra poor, persons with disabilities, are the most vulnerable. Therefore, recognizing them in their particular context and innovative ideas that are applied to reach them can transform one situation to another in the sector of accessing education, health, and income generating activities. Approaches like Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR) and its models can address vulnerability and design the activities so they can rehabilitate in their community. By applying the principles of CBR, it supports developing and promote the inclusivity, foster individual and community for resilient community, and ensure the inherent rights of the vulnerable people in the community.

Among marginalized groups, some communities belong to special groups and experience a high level of discrimination. Working with them to bring them into the mainstream is crucial for dismantling societal hierarchies. Efforts to promote social equity and individual justice impact various social strata. In these communities, participants (professionals) engage community members in various platforms such as inclusive participation, social dialogue to reform the basic practices, and increasing equal access to basic entitlements. Equity-based approaches are essential instruments to break down social barriers and promote fairness and human rights.

Professionals or actors and their synergies are key to changing the individuals and community for longer run, to keep and continue the synergy from intrinsically is driven from the concept of self-motivated actions, community-based rehabilitation, reintegration approaches, and social equity forms that all creates the foundation of sustainable community transformation. Resilience and system changes are the gateway for transforming the communities. These approaches are critical in navigating challenges, opportunities, and bring long-term impacts by fostering the internal capabilities and mindset toward community well-being.

The efforts of professionals alone are not enough, as holistic and genuine resilience is only possible if all concerned stakeholders take responsibility and stay updated on techniques and strategies for transforming communities. Policy enhancement and equitable capacity building to help people and communities cope with various stresses and shocks require the development of systemic progress and

tracking mechanisms. Additional support is needed to strengthen the capacity of I/NGOs and local governments comprehensively.

Transforming communities is a non-linear process, requiring the inclusion of various factors from the initial stages to completion. Some factors have a direct influence, while others are indirect. Community transformation needs to capture contextual strengths, local patterns, needs, and capabilities. Therefore, professional engagement with I/NGOs must consider additional and innovative approaches to bring about remarkable changes in the targeted location within the given timeframe.

Reflection

Reflection of the study covers mapping out the research focus, articulation of the research issue at hand, contemplating methodological pathways addressing research questions, and reflecting on the professionals on community transformation.

Mapping out my Research Focus

The agenda of my research study is I/NGO professionals' experiences and contributions towards community transformation. I have been in the sector of I/NGO since 2009 and have been with marginalized and vulnerable people for their well-being and increasing access to different sectors. I started my career after completing my master's in mathematics education from Tribhuvan University as a community development facilitator. This was my foremost entry into the realm of community work. I found a different picture of my acquired knowledge and the requirements of communities. Beneficiaries were leprosy-affected people with disabilities and marginalized people. There was high discrimination and stigmatization of those people in the areas where I worked. Discrimination due to leprosy is a long-standing issue that has historical roots.

As professionals, my team and I implemented activities that focused more on raising awareness of the disease and its consequences. Yet, the community's acceptance was very low because of a lack of proper knowledge regarding the disease. It was a great challenge to bring such affected people even to their families and their community. As time passed, I moved to another organization where the focus was the well-being of children with physical disabilities. Hence, children and their parents were the beneficiaries.

As a student of KUSOED, I am experiencing that the practice of teaching and learning is not limited only to fostering individuals but also to focusing on how we can change the community and people for a sustainable future. Everyone has extended

knowledge and experiences that can construct new knowledge and understanding to fit socially and culturally. During my MPhil degree, I learned that to transform society, community, and individuals through various means in sustainable ways, knowledge is possible through sociocultural learning and interaction among various locally available sources and resources.

Every society has a different culture, with different approaches to establishing and leading beliefs and assumptions. At this stage, I realized that most I/NGO professionals are based on achieving their physical targets and guided approaches. I have experienced that most beneficiaries are attracted to the activities of I/NGO for immediate benefits rather than changing themselves and contributing to others and the community. Also, most I/NGOs and professionals are focused on completing and achieving the targets, and quantification is the central measure to claim success.

Having long engagement with community people, I found that most beneficiaries benefited from the short attraction. Beneficiaries enjoy the current activities, taking part in training, meetings, and discussions within and outside the group to share and learn from each other. But when the project is completed, we can see no more activities as continuity or regularity, so investment in particular can be sustained longer.

I joined a master's program in sustainable development. Then, an MPhil at Kathmandu University School of Education will seek the answer on how we, as I/NGO professionals, can contribute to community transformation. During my MPhil study, I have gone through many academic courses, learning theories, practicing research papers, and articles, inspiring me to change my existing learning practices in the community and with I/NGO co-workers.

I envisaged that professionals have multi-perspectival experiences that can bring changes and share in a wider group to incorporate many reflections while designing and implementing activities in the community. Similarly, I explore and connect the community activities, locally available sources, and resources that can emerge with the project activities. After that, I visualized that I would conduct my research with my narrative inquiry based on the experiences of I/NGO professionals of how communities or people can contribute to positively transforming themselves.

Articulation of the Research Issue at Hand

The research questions focused my interest in the research area. At first, I was unable to clarify my research questions. Yet, when I started to think about my

previous dealings with the marginalized and my associations with other organizations, I read various articles and research papers. Then I was more interested in researching the professional experiences of the I/NGOs in discussing the project activities and organizational issues. As a community facilitator, I saw the community transformation with targeted activities, and the constraints of organizational strengths may not be adequate for affecting a long-enduring community change.

Going through these thoughts in my mind, I developed my research questions. How do I/NGO professionals experience transform the community? After that, I collected data from my four research participants in the form of narrative inquiry to get the answers to my research question. I intended to explore the narratives of I/NGO professionals' experiences of community transformation in the community through the research questions I had developed.

Retrospective View of My Theoretical Ground

After developing my research question, I had to go through theoretical references and focus on how I used theories in my research study. I went through many theoretical references and started analyzing which one would fit my research. I studied a lot of articles, papers, and dissertations. Then I collected some professionals' experiences of executing activities while choosing the theory as I got an opportunity to go through research of multiple natures with different theories.

Finally, I chose 'critical social theory', which explored how societal factors like injustice, discrimination, and ideologies impact our perception and consciousness, echoing Marx and Habermas. It delved into three cognitive domains: technical knowledge rooted in empirical inquiry, social knowledge managed by consensual norms, and emancipatory interest focused on empowerment and critical reflection. Emancipatory interest challenges the status quo, promoting critical perspectives, and shared power relationships. Emancipation involves acknowledging cultural influences on education and prompting change. Self-identity and self-critique drive knowledge transformation.

Contemplating my Methodological Pathway

This research study was based on interpretivism and criticalism. I selected I/NGO professionals working in different organizations for a long time. Initially, interviews were planned to be conducted with five participants, but due to the unavailability of the last one, I chose only four participants currently working in Kathmandu. For the chosen participants, I visited each participant and explained

briefly about my research topic and its objective. I requested them to give their valuable time and share experiences of project activities where they engaged themselves. All participants were interested in sharing their experiences and stories with me.

In my research study, I applied narrative inquiry as a research method. I conducted an in-depth interview to capture professionals' experiences of community transformation with my research participants. I conducted interviews separately with research participants in different places. Also, research participants wrote the narrative diary in a few days at home.

I conducted comprehensive interviews with the participants, ensuring ethical considerations and audio recordings were made. While male participants readily engaged and shared their experiences, female participants were hesitant in revealing personal narratives. Once the narratives were collected, a significant challenge emerged: developing appropriate themes from the transcription rooted in these participants' accounts. Seeking guidance, I conferred with my supervisor, who advised me to integrate the participants' stories and proposed the concept of thematic development. Consequently, I generated themes grounded in the narratives, drawing on both Critical Social Theory and Emancipatory principles. Subsequently, I undertook an analysis to extract and interpret the underlying meanings.

Addressing My Research Questions

Built upon the formulated research questions, selected theoretical framework, and crafted methodological roadmap, this section illustrates the trajectory of my research voyage to address the question: “How have I/NGO professionals been experiencing project activities towards community transformation?” Subsequently, I studied to uncover responses to the research queries. During the research endeavor, I gathered accounts from four research participants, comprising three male and one female professionals. After transcription, these narratives were converted into a narrative format to provide coherence, ensure readability, and capture the essence of the participants' experiences in a structured storytelling style. To follow this, I organized the narratives into different multiple chapters aligned with major research questions. Following this, the narratives were organized into multiple chapters aligned with the research questions. I meticulously captured the participants' perspectives. Based on the basis of major questions, I developed some subsequent questions to support the purpose of the study as follows:

1. Professional Journey and Motivation:

∴ Please, express your feelings about your professional journey. Express in your own words. What are your dilemmas and excitement? What are the motivational factors for hanging out with I/NGO sectors?

2. Activities and Implementations:

∴ What are the activities you engaged in? What is your understanding of community transformation and its components? How are you implementing it?

3. Challenges, Opportunities, and Unlearning:

∴ What are your challenges and opportunities as a professional towards changing communities? What are the possible processes of unlearning toward community transformation?

4. Technology and Community Transformation:

∴ How can you adapt technology to the local community? How can this technological awareness contribute towards individual empowerment and community transformation?

∴ How have you contributed to community transformation (beyond the professional responsibilities)?

Research Participant's Reflections on Community Transformation

Each research participant uniquely expressed his/her working modality, organizational themes, and ways of empowering individuals, carrying out the specific objectives, and targeting people for their well-being and increasing access. Each area they were engaged in and provided information is interesting and necessary to uplift community transformation. However, professionals seem more engaged with particular issues and bracketed objectives. Each participant expressed his/her personal and organizational strengths and limitations on heading toward transformation. I did not find the comprehensive circle for community transformation, but whatever they are doing or creating issues, modalities, approaches, and ways of execution can add a cornerstone for community transformation.

The journey of community transformation thrives on self-motivated actions, with individual empowerment as its foundation, intertwined with social change. Adaptability, unlearning, and inclusive engagement navigate local challenges, exposing vulnerabilities that prompt introspection (*Karma's* narratives).

Individual well-being catalyzes communal growth, guided by the Community-based Rehabilitation approach, which confronts discrimination (*Kapil's Narratives*).

Through diverse perspectives of I/NGO professionals, resilience fuels positive change, equipping individuals and fostering social cohesion. The transformation process integrates lasting local sustainability, cultural preservation, and equitable participation under visionary leadership (*Deep's Narratives*).

Achieving enduring progress demands systemic changes, encompassing policy enhancements, economic restructuring, and technological integration, anchored in equity and social justice (*Senti's Narratives*).

The dynamic interplay between the microcosm of individual resilience and the macrocosm of community transformation is testimony to the intricate process of achieving lasting change. Professionals in I/NGOs meticulously facilitate empowerment, adaptation, and inclusivity along this continuum. These stories thus converge to emphasize that systemic changes are the only lever for community-wide change, which can be achieved only through extensive collaboration and innovative leadership.

In facing such challenges and embracing resilience, communities weave a tapestry of enduring progress driven by collective action, equity, and a shared vision of a more inclusive and vibrant future. Growth in an individual, within a community, and the evolution of a system become mingled in a complex dance of change that illuminates the path toward realizing holistic community transformation.

Conclusion

This research aims to narrate I/NGO professionals' experiences with their respective working organizations and the experiences contributing to changes within their working communities. Altogether, four participants are selected purposively from different I/NGOs and are currently available in Kathmandu Valley. The participants' personal stories are used as important information in this research and might be correlated with the similar experiences of many other I/NGO professionals.

This research will mark a milestone in shaping future actions and programs, especially in ensuring activities that will bring about transformational change in the community and the people through a holistic approach at every step of the designing, planning, and implementation. Some of these components are empowerment, lived experience, social inclusion, and environmental justice, among others, in which the value of the notion of transformation lies. They were aware of the concept of the

component for transformation but were explicitly unable to apply it by using holistic approaches.

When my participants, who were professionals, started to discuss their contributions, ways of delivery, and links to execution during the transformation process, it was quite difficult to convince them that individual actions were important in initiating transformation. After dialogue and discussion with the researcher, the participants were further motivated and believed that individual work is the pillar for changing communities.

Being a qualitative researcher, this work used the narrative inquiry approach to collect information from the participants with the help of narrative guidelines. The results of this study unearth the experiences of I/NGO professionals in providing input and executing various targeted activities with the community and people.

From the start to the end of this process, the stories and narratives of the participants were collected to comprehend their experience regarding the implementation of project activities and how these brought forth changes within the community. I used the lenses of critical social theory, emancipation, and critical reflection. With the help of the learners and their stories, I was able to make a reflection on what they experienced and did in the execution of community activities in their own areas. It is somewhat understood that, in one way, their learning and experience are purpose-driven, emphasizing the number count and actual completion of the task. However, they also tackled interesting issues, concentrating on individual capacity building, well-being, and improvement of access to education, health, social services, and institutional engagement, which directly or indirectly contribute to bringing changes in the community.

Later, I perceived community change as a combination of work toward transforming circumstances and for them; the process to learn and gain experiences was to make them explicit. However, many pitfalls came up, ranging from organizational culture, funding, small windows of opportunity, geographic, entrenched beliefs of decision-makers, and paucity of transformational knowledge among partners and stakeholders. They went ahead to discuss and share a range of strategies to change the circumstances of people's lives: physical, economic, and social.

The themes generated are the key insights, therefore informing how professionals can identify areas of vulnerability within the community and plan for

field-level activities with the community, upon which sustainable change will be achieved. Community transformation can be realized through these strategies that deal with immediate concerns and future sustainability.

Implications

I am not a proposal developer; instead, I am a community facilitator and project activities implementer. I am responsible for implementing the designed projects. I engage in different levels of project cycle management, but many I/NGO professionals have been facing discontinuity due to contract-based work. Through narrative inquiries with professionals, I realized that effective and focused implementation is hindered by the evaluation system, which focuses on questions like 'how many people get benefit? How many resources have been consumed? Did we meet the monitoring and evaluation criteria? '

This study provides insights to I/NGO professionals, including program developers, evaluators, implementers, administrators, local government members, and community people. It provides inspiration and guidance on how to implement and incorporate strategies that contribute to community transformation effectively. My study focuses on I/NGO professionals and their contributions to community transformation. The study demonstrates how participants can generate narratives for interpretation and meaning-making. It also inspires further research on transformative changes within the community based on individual experiences.

From this study, I understand that community transformation is a nonlinear process shaped by various contextual factors. Communities are complex entities, which means that achieving transformation is not straightforward or guaranteed. While it may be essential to focus on specific issues, it is equally important for professionals in the I/NGO sector to recognize and consider the unique contextual aspects of each community before designing, implementing, and taking action on interventions.

All organizations have specific issues and agendas to carry, and they also have related expertise. Therefore, they can address those particular issues with appropriate solutions. However, in the context of true exploration for changing communities and people, it needs some beyond-the-box ideas and thinking approaches. This is because transformation is wider coverage, and it is not limited to just the designed activities and their completion. It requires a set of combined activities that address various

aspects of life within a community, ensuring improvements in the quality of life and fostering sustainable changes.

A holistic approach goes beyond addressing immediate needs or a single issue; it considers the interconnectedness of various economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions. This perspective enables the creation of interventions that are more inclusive and responsive to the community's actual needs, rather than being limited to a narrow focus.

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of a nuanced understanding of the complication and the contextuality of communities in the line of transformation. For professionals in the sector of I/NGO or researchers, going with an all-inclusive approach is essential for realizing meaningful and sustainable changes that enhance the overall well-being of the community people. If we go this way, certainly, we can ensure that our efforts are not just addressing quantitatively but are contributing to lasting and positive transformation.

Implications for the I/NGO Professionals

Our community is diverse; individuals learning and leading the activities vary. As I/NGO professionals, we are in front of people and the community. We have many practical and hidden scenarios, which we, as professionals, can explore in reality and identify the needs and potential capabilities of the people and community. Therefore, we just need to focus on the selection of approaches we need to consider. The core suggestion is that when we go to the community to deliver the aimed activities to achieve milestones, we need to think critically and investigate ways not limited to quantitative achievement but rather go with the qualitative approach, which supports exploring deeply and can contribute to long-term changes.

We have in our scenarios distinctive qualities because our communities have unique ways of generating and practicing knowledge; I/NGO professionals have a comprehensive strategy that takes into account the social, economic, and ways of sustaining. We, as professionals, need to analyze these components and their interconnections.

This study encourages more I/NGO professionals or researchers into transformations based on individual experiences, and it provides a framework for meaningful interpretation and understanding of community dynamics through participant narratives. Therefore, in the community, every person has some kind of

lived experience, and they might be full of innovative exploration through transformative approaches.

Implications for the Implementing I/NGO Activities

Developing countries like Nepal need supportive hands from other organizations like I/NGO, CSO, and other contributing organizations to explore the problems or gaps and search for solutions. Implementing the activities and community transformation are not the same. Implementing activities is the means of changing the communities. Therefore, for I/NGO or organizations, implementing a community transformation needs comprehensive approaches that necessitate embracing a holistic strategy that does not only ask for an immediate requirement but also addresses the interconnected and multifaceted components like empowerment, economic enhancement, cultural reintegration, social cohesion, and environmental justice of communities.

One of the strong roles of the I/NGOs is that they are in the community and can listen to individuals' voices, are ready to cooperate with government officials and require need-based training or capacity-building packages both in the global and local contexts. Therefore, they can recognize the complexity and uniqueness of them. Such organizations are always ready to incorporate the situational environment to redesign, design, re-identify, and to re-implement interventions that are context-specific and inclusive. This is imperative if we are considering approaches for transformation because the approaches for transformation not only meet immediate needs but also foster sustainable, long-term improvements in the community. So, I/NGOs should be able to prioritize the approaches of community-driven strategies. Then, only I/NGOs can ensure their efforts and contribute to meaningful and lasting transformation, rather than merely addressing surface-level issues by capacitating and motivating the entire staff of the organization.

Implications for Myself

It is significant to think about how the findings of this study apply to us because it helps us better understand the subject and need to realize how it connects to our personal and professional growth. When we reflect on what we have learned, we can figure out how to use that knowledge in our own personal and professional lives. This is one of the ways that supports exploring various options for better decision-making.

It does not only solve the problems but also supports developing appropriate skills to find ways to solve problems more effectively and think more clearly and critically. Being aware of this also keeps us open to learning and adapting as things change in our field. When we see how research can benefit us directly, we are more motivated and involved in our professional work. We take more responsibility for our learning and are more likely to use what we have learned in real life.

In the end, this leads to real and lasting improvements in how we act and work. And just like the insights I shared for others like I/NGOs and professionals, these points also apply to me, since I work in the I/NGO field too.

My goal is to become an agent for community transformation for sustainable change, which I mentioned in different chapters regarding the major components of community transformation. For instance, lived experience, inclusivity, cultural reintegration, environmental justice, and individual exploration through their stories/narratives directly delineate my professional career about how I can handle and perform my roles as a community facilitator. This whole process and findings of the research guide me always to explore the means of qualitatively guided approaches for sustainable change. During this research, one of my research participants emailed me about his queries and attachments regarding community change and its dynamics. He mentioned his understanding this way-

Dear Researcher

I hope you're doing well. I'm writing to share some concerns about the things that are holding me back from feeling truly empowered. Even though I've tried hard and have big hopes, there are several challenges I've noticed.

One major issue is the lack of access to opportunities and resources that could help me grow and develop my further skills. On top of that, there are bigger problems in the system like quality and practical education, dignified workplace, and social settings that make it harder for me to move forward. I've also found it difficult to get the guidance and support I need, which makes it even tougher to face these challenges. I know, these scenarios are a way to move forward. I am sure if I get or able to search for this solution, definitely, I can step up in life and contribute more effectively to the community. However, I have been asking myself many questions:

- *Have I had trouble getting educational or job opportunities that could empower me more?*

- *Are discrimination or bias standing in my way, Can I solve the issue of discrimination in my community?*
- *Do I struggle to find financial support, training, or personal growth resources from any other?*
- *Are the lack of mentors or supportive people in my life holding me back?*
- *Has poor access to quality education affected my professional development?*
- *Am I stuck in a cycle of limited job options or no career growth in my future, like the head of the organization?*
- *Have cultural or gender expectations made things more difficult for me?*
- *Have I tried to speak up for myself, but nothing changed?*
- *Do self-doubt or my personal beliefs stop me from claiming my rights to ensure other rights too?*
- *Have parts of my identity like my gender, background, or income created extra layers of difficulty?*

If these questions are real and valid, why are they not addressed? And if they are not, then why do I still feel not empowered as I expect? I do not know why I want to truly experience what empowerment feels like. It should be something that everyone can see, feel, and live every day.

I am sure that if I take these issues seriously and create such an environment where people work together and support to create equal opportunities and support systems, there would be real empowerment. This real empowerment is possible not just for me, but for our whole community. In this regard, I am ready and committed to taking that journey and helping make positive changes happen in communities.

Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,

Karma 2023

This email means a lot to me. I am truly overwhelmed. It makes me think deeply about the concept of community transformation and its components such as empowerment, motivation, integration, approaches of community transformation that how I work with. The questions in it keep me searching for better approaches and simply understandable definition and its ways of delivering. Whenever I face a challenge, I remember those questions that need deeper exploration of reality and

appropriate modality. They remind me to stay curious and not stop at easy answers, keep me always updated.

My research participants encourage me to look deeper into any situation and scenarios. I try to see all dimensional sides of a problem before deciding the activities to implement. This helps me solve problems better and more practically in the community. It also keeps me motivated and focused on the exploration of global and local context. Because of this email, I stay committed to doing my best with connected stakeholders. It helps me keep growing and improving in my professional work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Research Interview Consent Form

Purpose of Interview:

This interview is a part of research for the award of an MPhil Degree at Kathmandu University.

Documentation of Consent

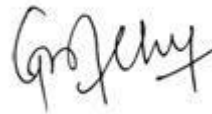
I have been asked to give my permission to take part in this research study, which will need me to complete one to several interviews. I have been told that there are no risks to taking part, and the research committee for the M. Phil. will only have access to the participants' identities under strict confidentiality.

I am aware that the interviews could be utilized in the dissertation, essay, or book, but only in conjunction with the use of the study participants' aliases. All of the aforementioned research ethics will be upheld by the researcher.

Please sign this form to show that we have agreed its content.

Participant with name:

Researcher: Govinda Chaudhary



Annex B: Sample Interview Questions

Contact Information

First and Last Name

Address:

Organization

Email

Phone

Explanation of Work

1. How and why did you choose this occupation?

Intrinsic	Extrinsic
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

2. How do you see the social transformation?

.....

.....

.....

3. What kind of personal transformation do you see taking place among your beneficiaries and/or staff?

.....

.....

.....

4. What would you attribute that transformation to in terms of your programs or efforts? What are you doing to foster that personal or social transformation?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. How, if at all, do you measure this personal or social transformation?

.....

.....

.....Would you be willing to share a sample of your tools, process, metrics, and/or any key data points? (Eager to share case studies, micro/macro events of such impact)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ We do not have anything to share at this point

If yes, please provide details.

.....

.....

.....

6. How does the personal transformation you are seeing relate to or drive your social impact outcomes, either in theory or supported by your measurements? (For example, an increase in empowerment = a decrease in inequality or more contributions.....)

.....

.....

.....

7. What resources are you most interested in measuring the intersection of personal transformation and social change? (Select as many as you wish)

- ☐ Literature reviews, evidence reviews, white papers
- ☐ Metrics and tools for measuring personal transformation.
- ☐ Metrics and tools for measuring social change.
- ☐ Metrics and tools for measuring the impacts of personal transformation on social change
- ☐ Webinars on related topics
- ☐ Interactive learning sessions with practitioners, researchers, funders
- ☐ News and updates on related topics
- ☐ Other (please specify)

How does it support the sustainability of the planned activities?

.....

8. What writings (books, articles, studies) or other resources that relate to the personal transformation and social impact intersection do you recommend?

.....

9. Detail provides about your work (geography, target population/beneficiaries, short-term/long-term impact, issues you work on).

.....

10. What issues do you work on (e.g., poverty, access to health, access to education food security, disability, human rights, racial equity, gender equity, etc.)

How does this issue support change or transform the individual or society?

.....
.....
.....

11. How is the matching of your interest and your organizational ways of
deliberation? What do you think about the changes in the community?

Suggestions.....