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Conference Abstracts Booklet

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18th BNAC Nepal Study Days
Hosted online (Zoom) by UCL Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way, WC1H 0AL
22-23 April 2021
Contact: bnacstudyday@gmail.com | 0044 7885756370

(NB: For participation, registration is required: Please register here: https://forms.gle/R5gj74mY4fKGBF699. Closes on 21 Apr 2021)

Conference Programme

Keynote: https://ucl.zoom.us/j/92736293787. Meeting ID: 927 3629 3787

Parallel session A (Both days): https://ucl.zoom.us/j/92736293787. Meeting ID: 927 3629 3787

Parallel session B (Both days): https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86332268644. Meeting ID: 863 3226 8644

Day 1: Thursday, 22 Apr 2021	
8:45-9:00	Zoom entry (registration) https://ucl.zoom.us/j/92736293787
9:00-9:10	Introduction: *Krishna Adhikari* BNAC Chair Welcome: *Elaine Unterhalter* Co-Director, Centre for Education and International Development, UCL Institute of Education
9:15 – 10:00	**Keynote** - https://ucl.zoom.us/j/92736293787 **The manipulation of participatory process: Constituent assembly and the promulgation of 'regressive' constitution in Nepal** *Professor Mahendra Lawoti*, Western Michigan University *Chair: Tejendra Pherali*

Parallel Sessions	
Time	**Parallel Session A - https://ucl.zoom.us/j/92736293787**	**Parallel Session B - https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86332268644**
10:05 – 11:35	***A1. Migration, Diaspora and International Relations*** Chair: Krishna Adhikari	***B1. Governance*** Chair: Ben Campbell
	The growing influence of power: The party diplomacy of the Communist Party of China and its impact on Nepal-China Relations *Naresh Khapangi Magar*, *King's College London*	**Uprating community forest management in Jalthal Nepal** ***Lila Nath Sharma***, *Forest Action Nepal;* ***Bhaskar Adhikari*** *and* ***Mark F. Watson***, *Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh*
	The "True Nepal" through Chinese content creators' lens *Zezhou Yang*, *SOAS, University of London*	**Function of endogenous institutions in governing the commons and private property resources among Thakalis of Mustang** ***Bhola Nath Adhikari***, *Lumbini Buddhist University*
	Resettlement and Rehabilitation: A study of Lhotshampa Community ***Sneha Agrawal***, *Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai*	**The provincial health policies in Nepal: Opportunities and challenges for an effective implementation** ***Sharada P Wasti***, ***Padam Simkhada***, *University of Huddersfield;* ***Edwin van Teijlingen***, *Bournemouth University;* ***Simon Rushton***, *and Julie* ***Balen***, *University of Sheffield*
	'The most deprived': Needs assessment of elderly ex-Gurkha soldiers in the UK ***Lokendra P. Dhakal***, ***Krishna Adhikari*** *and (late)* ***Chandra Laksamba***, *Centre for Nepal Studies UK*	**Federalization and health system in Nepal: A systematic review of the literature** ***Pratik Adhikary***, *PHASE Nepal;* ***Sujata Sapkota***, ***Sujan Gautam***, *and* ***Sujan Marahatta*** *(Manmohan Memorial Institute of Health Sciences);* ***Sarita Panday***, ***Andrew Lee***, ***Julie Balen***, *and* ***Simon Rushton***, *(University of Sheffield);* ***Edwin van Teijlingen***, *Bournemouth University ;* ***Padam Simkhada***, *and* ***Sharada P Wasti*** *(University of Huddersfield);* ***Madhusudan Subedi***, *Patan Academy of Health Sciences*

11:40 – 13:10	**A2. Language and culture** Chair: David Gellner	**B2. Identity and space** Chair: Punam Yadav
	Nepal Bhasa: Consequences natives face when a language dies *Roji Maharjan, Tribhuvan University*	**Before belonging: Settler emplacement in the Far-west Tarai** *Amy Johnson, Northumbria University*
	Use of software systems in the preservation of Nepali cultural history *Sanyukta Shrestha, Pasa Puchah Guthi UK*	**Naessian biocentric self in Tharu folk songs: A study of nexus between ecology and subjectivity** *Mohan Dangaura, Tribhuvan University*
	The fame of chhoyela (and yomari): Newar foodways in London and the spatiotemporal expansion of the Newar self in a transnational context *Marilena Frisone, University of Cambridge / University of Padua*	**Ethnicity and the City: Production and division of social spaces in Kathmandu Valley** *Bawesh Pradhan, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India*
	Comparative study between Nepali and Sri Lankan-Tamil diasporic youth in the UK – Culture, tradition and art forms *Richard Antony and Sangita Shrestha, Centre for Nepal Studies UK*	**Hashtagging heroes next to memes of Empire: A look at evolving senses of Gurkha identity through digital spheres** *Premila van Ommen, University of the Arts, London*

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">Lunch

Early career researcher mentoring 13:10 – 14:00

(Coordinator: **Premila van Ommen**, *University of the Arts, London* Facilitator: **Edwin van Teijlingen**, *University of Bournemouth*)
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Time	Parallel Session A - https://ucl.zoom.us/j/92736293787	Parallel Session B - https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86332268644
14:00 – 15:30	**A3. Society and politics** Chair: Michael Hutt	**B3. Education** Chair: Tejendra Pherali
	Which way forward for Dalit liberation in Nepal? *Krishna P. Adhikari* and *David N. Gellner, University of Oxford*	**(Re)constructing a 'good' school: Materials, affects, and meanings of education in post-earthquake Nepal** *Uma Pradhan, University of Oxford*

	The role of social capital in disaster resilience in remote communities after the 2015 Nepal earthquake **Sarita Panday**, **Simon Rushton, Jiban Karki, Julie Balen** and **Amy Barnes**, *The University of Sheffield*	**Towards understanding Janajati students: Learning performance in Nepali schools** **Jiban Khadka**, *Nepal Open University*
	Mapping out hierarchies in a mid-Western prison **Charlotte Ramble**, *London School of Economics and Political Science*	**Teacher identities and hierarchy: Narrative inquiry of primary teachers in Nepal's public schools** **Khim Raj Subedi**, *Tribhuvan University* and **Martha M. Canipe**, *Northern Arizona University*
	Do political quotas work? The lived experiences of women politicians in Nepal **Punam Yadav**, *University College London*	
Day 2: Friday, 23 Apr 2021		
Time	Parallel Session A - https://ucl.zoom.us/j/92736293787	Parallel Session B - https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86332268644
9:00 – 10:30	*A4. Covid-19 and migration* Chair: Jeevan Sharma	*B4. Gender relations* Chair: Kumud Rana
	Knowledge, attitudes, and practices amongst the literate cohorts of Nepal about COVID-19 **Mohan Kumar Sharma**, **Shanti Prasad Khanal,** and **Ramesh Adhikari**, *Tribhuvan University;* **Jib Acharya**, *ANC, Premium Services Ltd./Bournemouth University*	**Are GBV response and rehabilitation services provided through One- Stop Crisis Management Centers in Nepal inclusive of needs of women and girls with disability?** **Sapana Basnet Bista**, *Liverpool John Moores University;* **Padam Simkhada**, *University of Huddersfield;* **Edwin van Teijlingen**, *Bournemouth University* and **Shaurabh Sharma**, *Humanity and Inclusion*
	The Impact of Covid-19 on Dalit communities in Nepal **Gopal Nepali**, *Samata Foundation;* **Ujjawal Sundas**, *Samata Foundation* and **Krishna Adhikari**, *Oxford University*	**Gender relations among Nepali care worker's families in the UK: Implications of migration from intersectionality approach** **Sanjaya Aryal,** *University of Essex*

	Employment narratives in the midst of Covid-19 in Western Nepal *Kamal Bahadur Mahat, Triveni Rural Municipality, Salyan*	**Masculinity, ideology and change in the People's War in Nepal** *Heidi Riley, University College Dublin*
	Impacts of men's migration on non-migrating spouse's health and the implications for Nepal: A systematic literature review *Shraddha Manandhar, Philip Brown, and Padam Simkhada, University of Huddersfield; Edwin van Teijlingen, Bournemouth University.*	**Homestay tourism as a form of women's empowerment in rural Nepal: Implications, opportunities, and challenges of development practice** *Jana Schmid, University of Zurich*
10:35 – 12:05	**A5. Health and care** Chair: Padam Simkhada	**B5. Panel: Menstruation and social attitudes in Nepal** Chair: Sara Parker *Conveners: Sara Parker & Kay Standing, Liverpool John Moores University; Madhusudan Subedi, Tribhuvan University; Stefanie Lotter, SOAS, University of London*
	The Double-edged sword of 'community' in community-based psychosocial care: Reflections from rural Nepal *Liana E. Chase, Durham University*	**Dignity without danger: collaboratively analysing stigma and taboos to develop innovative strategies to address menstrual exclusion in Nepal': The fluidity of menstruation practices: Perceptions of Agency told by Nepali women** *Lina Baniya – 'East' team DWD*
	An assessment of grip strength and BMI on vegetarian and non-vegetarian Nepalese children *Usha Acharya, Nepal Open University*	**Politics of control- From fear to Shame: dictating women on how they should practice menstruation** *Rajya Laxmi Gurung– 'West' team DWD*
	Transnational AIDS networks, regional solidarities and the configuration of male sexuality in Nepal *Kumud Rana, University of Glasgow*	**A preliminary investigation into educational materials on menstruation in Nepal** *Evie Clarke, SOAS*
12:05 – 12:20	Tea/ Coffee Break PhD Dissertation Prize 2021 – Announcement: https://ucl.zoom.us/j/92736293787	

Time	Parallel Session A - https://ucl.zoom.us/j/92736293787	Parallel Session B - https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86332268644
12:20 – 13:05	**A6. Media/ business** Chair: Uma Pradhan	**B6. Maternal health** Chair: Puspa Raj Pant
	Polish print media on Nepal in the interwar period *Paulina Stanik, University of Warsaw*	**Maternal mental health and under-nutrition in children under 5 in Rupandehi, Nepal** *Manisha Singh, Tomasina Stacey, and Padam Simkhada, University of Huddersfield; Julie Abayomi, Edge Hill University*
	Testing asymmetric information in Nepalese reinsurance market *Rajendra Maharjan, Golden Gate International College, Kathmandu*	**Maternal and neonatal health services in Jumla, Nepal: A health facility survey** *Pasang D Tamang, Padam Simkhada, Paul Bissel, University of Huddersfield; Edwin van Teijlingen, University of Bournemouth and Rose Khatri, Liverpool John Moores University*
	13:05 – 13:30 Lunch	
13:30 – 14:30	**Britain Nepal Academic Council – AGM (BNAC members only)** Zoom Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83675326594 Meeting ID: 836 7532 6594	

Keynote

Chair: Tejendra Pherali

The Manipulation of Participatory Process: Constituent Assembly and the Promulgation of Regressive Constitution in Nepal

Professor Mahendra Lawoti, Department of Political Science, Western Michigan University

Abstract:

Participatory approaches have become popular and have often empowered the poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups but the outcomes have not always been progressive. Literature critiquing the participatory approaches have pointed out that powerful groups can manipulate the process to cut back on reforms, maintain status quo, or reinforce privileges and power and even harm the powerless groups while legitimizing the outcomes by claiming them to be the result of participatory process. However, less is known about how manipulation occurs, and under which circumstances it becomes possible. This presentation, using the constitution-making process in Nepal and the federal debate in particular, will show, by interrogating principles of participatory processes, how the political leaders hailing from the traditionally dominant ethnic group manipulated the participatory process to derail the reforms in the first stage and eventually impose mono-ethnic-male agenda. The new Nepali constitution (2015), promulgated by a Constituent Assembly –generally thought as a highly participatory constitution-making process, institutionalized some political reforms (republicanism, reformed parliamentary system, empowered local governments) but regressed on socio-cultural issues (minority and gender rights). Hegemonic control of the state (executive, administration, judiciary, security forces) as well as societal ("mainstream" media, civil society and academia) and political arena (major political parties' leadership) by the historically dominant ethnic group enabled it to manipulate the participatory process for crafting and imposing a regressive constitution, which undermined the rights of marginalized groups while institutionally protecting the dominant ethnic group's power and privileges. I employ process tracing method and use archival data, including CA records and reports, newspaper accounts, and interviews with CA members and others to lay bare the abuse of participatory process.

Parallel Session A1

Migration, Diaspora and International Relations

Chair: Krishna Adhikari

The growing influence of power: The party diplomacy of the Communist Party of China and its impact on Nepal-China relations

Naresh Khapangi Magar, King's College London

The Party-based diplomacy is a vital tool of Chinese diplomacy, and China has relations with 600 political parties in 160 countries. China is aspiring to become a superpower and to achieve that, it requires a robust regional back up from its backyard. In recent years, China has been adopting proactive diplomatic tools and other soft power conduits, such as party-based diplomacy in South Asia. The relations between the Communist Party of Nepal and China reached their highest level after signing a Memorandum of Understanding in Kathmandu in 2019. The more frequent political engagements at different levels in both countries than ever before was occurring until the COVID-19 pandemic. There is a plethora of literature on Nepal- China relations, but the perspective of party-based diplomacy has remained an under-researched topic. This paper aims to fill that gap and examines the characteristics of Party based diplomacy. It further explores how far it has shaped two states' bilateral relations.

Drawing upon semi-structured interviews conducted between 7th and 17th July 2020 with the Central Committee leaders of the Nepal Communist Party and Nepal's foreign policy experts, this paper argues that relations between the two ruling parties of Nepal and China have improved after the rise of communists in Nepal's political leadership. The relations further intensified after the abolition of monarchy in 2008. The paper further argues that the political relations between two communist parties mainly focus on party-building, economic development, and the expansion of Chinese foreign policy. Party-based diplomacy has also contributed to building mutual trust between the parties, further bringing the two nations closer than ever before. However, due to its geopolitics and Indian influence on Nepal's political affairs, Nepal cannot rely on ideology-based relations.

The "True Nepal" through Chinese content creators' lens

Zezhou Yang, SOAS, University of London

The heterogeneous globalised experience between Nepal and China is comparatively new, dating to the first decade of the 21st century. For the first time in history, many Han Chinese individuals from mainland China have been setting foot on Nepal, and the recent decade has witnessed many new forms of transcultural contacts between the two Himalayan neighbours. My paper empirically explores several forms and interlinked transcultural activities between Chinese and Nepali people in Nepal. By doing so, it aims to examine two seemly contradictory, but interconnected categories of globalised transcultural experience, homogenous and heterogeneous, respectively, between the two Global South countries. Nepal, for several years, has been receiving the influx of Chinese content creators who claim to expose real life in other countries, especially in other developing countries. In this paper, I analyse several short videos posted online by Chinese content creators when they travelled in Nepal. These videos are commonly themed by their claim of the exploration of so-called real life in Nepal. In these videos, "true Nepal", to a large extent, represents a form of life experience in the chaotic, developing country, featured by backwardness, chaos, inferiority, instability, lack of civilisation, and many other traits characterising examples of non-modernised countries. This paper explains the social and cultural contexts where these videos were produced; analyses the contents of these videos; and describes the methods through, which "true Nepal" is represented. Moreover, it discusses the notion of Nepal as an undeveloped country representing an increasingly powerful dynamic that challenges the Nepal as the Shangri-la. It also proposes that as a category of cultural practice circulated in the fields of informal globalised experience, these videos connect both Nepali and Chinese people to the "non-hegemonic world-system" (Ribeiro, 2012) physically and imaginarily.

Resettlement and rehabilitation: A study of Lhotshampa community

Sneha Agrawal, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

Refugee issues worldwide have affected 70.8 million individuals who have been forcibly displaced because of conflict, identity, and violence. The purpose of this study is to explore various aspects and elements of Bhutanese refugee crisis to comprehend the question of identity, citizenship, and their role in transmuting geopolitics. The Lhotshampa people of Bhutan reside in a small mucky camp compressed in the outskirts of Damak named Bedlangi, which is one of the 7 refugee camps gradually constructed after their displacement. Beginning as simple labourers in the 17th century, the Lhotshampa people abided in the southern lowlands of Bhutan, bringing over a unique culture from their homeland Nepal. As the Lhotshampa families flowed in from Nepal, their population in the south ballooned, constituting of 45% of total population, eclipsing the native Bhutanese residents which resulted as a matter of concern to the monarch of Bhutan. In

1985, Citizenship Act of Bhutan declared numerous Nepalese as non-nationals because Lhotshampa community were perceived as a threat to the political order and ethnic culture which pushed them to cross borders via India and live in Nepal as displaced and stateless individuals. Even though 110,000 refugees took shelter in 1991, which constituted 1/3rd of the Bhutanese population2, this exodus is unfamiliar to the people thus, becoming one of the world's most forgotten eviction of people. Therefore, the aim of the paper is to understand the cause and history of migration of Nepalese to Bhutan further examining their return/ eviction. This will give a more clarified historical overview to address the question of identity politics of 'Who is a Nepali?' and 'who gets a citizenship?' and further to comprehend the perception of the non-resettled refugees on resettlement programme and their thinking of future.

'The most deprived': Needs assessment of elderly ex-Gurkha soldiers in the UK

Lokendra P. Dhakal, Krishna Adhikari and (late) Chandra Laksamba, Centre for Nepal Studies UK

Over 15,000 ex-Gurkha soldiers or widows have migrated to the UK following the change of UK government policy. Migration of elderly Gurkhas, widows and spouses since 2009 in particular have been problematic as it brought a big cultural shock to most of them inviting multifarious problems, ranging from mental health issues to every coping and integration. In recent years there have been a limited number of studies to understand their mental and general health issues; however, issues and problems faced by the elderly immigrants from Nepal remain to be largely undocumented. The current paper aims to offer some systematic information to this respect.

This paper is based on a 'comprehensive needs assessments' of the elderly Gurkhas carried-out by the Centre for Nepal Studies UK (CNSUK) for the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association (SSAFA), who have provided an emergency support primarily to these elderly Gurkhas for past 5 years through their Gurkha Services Project. An observational mixed method study, with semi-structured survey (N=83) together with key informants' interviews and focus group discussions were employed to assess the perceived needs of the respondents in the autumn of 2019. Respondents, who were predominately male (78%), came to the UK between 2002 and 2019 from 21 districts of Nepal, and were of eight different ethnicities. Initial support provided by SSAFA (mainly financial, start-up material support and food vouchers) to the newly arrived ex-Gurkhas was appreciated by them. Our findings show a large number of respondents (about three in four) lacked 'functional literacy' even in Nepali language, let alone being able to communicate in English, thus making them to have to rely on the mercy and support of others in order to maneuverer for their everyday needs. Lack of English language skills perceivably counted as 'the mother of all needs': ranging from the access to medical facility, to the seeking of welfare supports.

Living separated from the families at an old age, unaware of what is going around them (in terms of bigger political developments), and lack of citizenry privileges and 'civic' engagements, these impoverished elderly Gurkhas are one of the most deprived, isolated and disenfranchised groups in the UK living a poor quality of life. They, however, have carved a niche around them to pass time, which needs to be understood to better help them in the UK. Support systems built through pulling the strengths of existing local Nepali social organisation and recruiting paid Nepali speaking volunteers, who are well versed with the ex-Gurkha issues in coordination with the existing support networks and local government system, is suggested as a way forward.

Parallel Session B1:

Governance

Chair: Ben Campbell

Uprating community forest management in Jalthal Nepal

Lila Nath Sharma, Forest Action Nepal, Bhaskar Adhikari and Mark F. Watson, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

Forest Action Nepal, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE), and local partners in Nepal are engaged in a 3-year project focused on community forest (CF) management in Jalthal forest, South East Nepal. Jalthal forest is a 6000 ha remnant moist tropical forest with diverse ecosystems (swamps, lakes, rivers, hillocks), and is an important biodiversity area with several threatened flora (Cycas pectinata, Rauvolfia serpentina, Dioscoreadeltoidea) and fauna (Indian pangolin, Asiatic elephant), and has unique assemblages of tropical and subtropical plant species. The forest is managed by 22 Community Forest User Groups and is an important livelihood source for over 80,000 local people, including marginalised indigenous groups. Nepal's three-decade long CF programme has largely been successful in improving forest coverage. However, its role in conserving biodiversity is contested due to its emphasis on extractive use and focus on a few timber species. The main objective of our project is to mainstream biodiversity conservation into Nepal's CF programme through participatory action research in this ecologically and biologically important forest. This presentation highlights some of the on-going project activities, some of which have already shown to been effective, not only in conserving the unique biodiversity of the forest, but also to improving the livelihoods of the local people.

Function of endogenous institutions in governing the commons and private property resources among Thakalis of Mustang

Bhola Nath Adhikari, Lumbini Buddhist University

Traditional mountain communities of Nepal have distinctive set of beliefs, institutions and practices governing the sustainable utilisation of natural resources. These institutions and practices function to ascertain the fundamental association between socio-cultural systems of people and ecology. By taking the cases of Mukhiya systems in relation to the land and forest management in Marpha and Jomsom villages of Mustang district, particularly related to the (a) common and private lands management, (b) agriculture calendar and crop management, (c) livestock and pastureland management in Marpha, and (d) management of Yarsagumbha conservation and cultivation in Jomsom, this paper shows how the pattern of human interactions and adaptive strategies play role in the equitable distribution and sustainable utilisation of resources. Endogenous institutions emphasize on grassroots level democratic decision-making, innovative participatory system, sanctions, equitable distribution of resources, and coherent adaptive system for the sustainable utilization of resources. This paper concludes that the traditional institutional mechanisms and practices among the Thakali people of Mustang designed for governing the common property resources are coming increasingly under threat due to increasing out migrations and changing livelihood patterns driven by modern capitalistic market forces, despite trying to incorporate in-migrants, though with limited rights, in the functioning of the system.

The provincial health policies in Nepal: Opportunities and challenges for an effective implementation

Sharada P Wasti, Padam Simkhada, University of Huddersfield; Edwin van Teijlingen, Bournemouth University; Simon Rushton, and Julie Balen, University of Sheffield

The health sector is complex, involving many stakeholders, multiple goals, and different beneficiaries. In 2015 Nepal became a federal republic and as such, many health policy related documents have been revised or newly created, with a large number still awaiting formal endorsement. This review highlights the underlying principles for provincial health policy and identifies key challenges and opportunities for effective implementation, focussing on two provinces, namely Karnali and Lumibini. Both provinces' health policies envision access to quality health care with the long-term moto of a healthy and prosperous province. There are encouraging goals in the provincial policy statements: to improve the coverage and access to quality health services through restructuring current health infrastructures and making greater

use of technology; to promote patient-friendly health facilities; to improve the quality of health services; and to ensure health emergency response down to ward level. Karnali's policy envisions making a role model health facility, whereas Lumbini's aims to have a provincial urban health strategy, address environmental health issues, control the use of harmful pesticides, and improve waste management. In terms of resources, however, both are very ambitious, for example increasing the health budget by 10% and increasing per-capita income to £ 1,500 within five years. It is unclear how the resources (financial, human and capital) can be generated to reach these targets.

The health policy and priorities of both provinces represent an important milestone and offer encouraging signs, but there are a number of challenges to translate these into practice. Both policy documents provide ample opportunity to change the healthcare system, but the provincial governments should ensure strategic planning and guidelines, and identify sustainable means of resources - trained personnel, uninterrupted logistic supply and funding - to ensure access of quality health care for every citizen.

Federalization and health system in Nepal: A systematic review of the literature

Pratik Adhikary, PHASE Nepal; Sujata Sapkota, Sujan Gautam, and Sujan Marahatta (Manmohan Memorial Institute of Health Sciences); Sarita Panday, Andrew Lee, Julie Balen, and Simon Rushton, (University of Sheffield); Edwin van Teijlingen, Bournemouth University; Padam Simkhada, and Sharada P Wasti (University of Huddersfield); Madhusudan Subedi, Patan Academy of Health Sciences

Nepal transitioned from a centralised to a federal governance system in 2015, with 753 local bodies across seven provinces. Local governments are entrusted with "exclusive responsibility" for basic health services, making it imperative for them to engage in policy formulation and build capacity to develop and implement those policies. While research on the impact of federalization on Nepal's health system is emerging, to our knowledge there have been no reviews conducted on this topic. This study systematically reviewed available evidence on federalisation in Nepal and its impact on the health system. We searched published and grey literature in English and Nepali available since 2015 through electronic databases such as PubMed and Medline, and hand searched local journals, the WHO research portal and the website of the Ministry of Health and Population. Our findings illustrate that the federal health system faced structural and functional changes, with current involvement in activities such as developing policy guidelines and implementation. Many positive changes were identified particularly in planning, resource allocation, health service delivery, health financing, devolution of power and decision making and governance. The role of the local government was clearly visible in the management of COVID-19 cases. Negative changes were also identified, including delays in the deputation of human

resources, and receiving implementation guidelines, and poor practices of online health management information system reporting.

This review provides a deep and rich understanding of the Nepal health system's transition into a federal structure. While early structural and functional changes are noticeable, these have come with positive and negative impacts on the system functioning. However, the system is still in flux and these limited early findings may not reflect the complete or final picture/outcome of federalization. Further studies can help elucidate the full impact of federalization on Nepal's health systems.

Parallel Session A2:

Language and Culture

Chair: David Gellner

Nepal Bhasa: Consequences natives face when a language dies

Roji Maharjan, Tribhuvan University

Nepal Bhasa or Newari (a term used internationally) is a mother tongue of the Newars; an ethnic group of Nepal. It is colloquially known as NewaBhaya by the locals (Gellner, 1999). It is a highly developed language with extensive literature used by the local inhabitants of Kathmandu valley (Maharjan, 2018). Nepal Bhasa, once a national language, has become a minority language in Nepal. The invasion of Kathmandu valley by the Parbatiya Hindu King Prithvi Narayan Shah (1768-9), autocratic Rana rulers suppressing the writings in Nepal Bhasa (1846-1951), and 1960's 'One Nation One Language' policy forced by the Panchayat government of Nepal ignited the Khas-Kura (Nepali) language hegemony against the ethnic groups of Nepal (Shrestha, 2012). The Newar intellectuals have been working on the revitalisation and preservation of the Nepal Bhasa. Despite the efforts of the scholars, Newari parents are emphasising Nepali and English languages over their mother tongue for their children to get better job opportunities (Toffins, 2005). The transmission of language to younger generations is failing, as speakers are ambiguous about its significance (Maharjan, 2001 as cited in Maharjan, 2018). So, paper discusses the importance of Nepal Bhasa along with the consequences and changes Newars will face in their everyday life if their mother tongue dies. I examine the notion of language as part of everyday interaction through social construction lenses. Drawing upon narratives of the participants gained from semi-

structured interviews along with my own lived experience as a Newar in the Kathmandu valley, I argue that Newars become disconnected from their histories, indigenous knowledge, and local resources and lose the emotional connection with the socio-cultural and religious events they perform as their mother-tongue dies.

Use of software systems in the preservation of Nepali cultural history

Sanyukta Shrestha, Pasa Puchah Guthi UK

This paper illustrates the use of software systems, including multimedia and interactives, in the preservation of Nepali cultural history. It discusses in brief a number of animated documentations and interactive gaming platforms that were developed in the last decade in the UK. Prepared mainly for more than 400 members of a west London based Nepali cultural organization, but also consumed internationally in most cases, these software projects include (i) interactive systems developed to learn ethnic language and scripts, (ii) entertaining games to educate about Nepali cultural heritage, (iii) research tools to document and analyze traditional Nepali artworks, and (iv) animated short films and full-length features to recreate historical folklore and myths. The paper also evaluates the usability and effectiveness of some of the above systems based on the historical data of their usage. It further enumerates the social and technical challenges in the development and consumption of these systems and concludes with some suggestions for further work.

The fame of chhoyela (and yomari): Newar foodways in London and the spatiotemporal expansion of the Newar self in a transnational context

Marilena Frisone, University of Cambridge / University of Padua

Food and feasts play an important role in defining Newars' social practices both in Nepal and abroad. However, although the religious and symbolic value of specific food items shared by Newars in Nepal has been studied in detail (Toffin 1977, Löwdin 1985, Gellner 1992, Allen 2000), the significance of food and foodways in the Newar diasporic context is yet to be explored. Newar Londoners regularly engage in practices of socialisation in which food plays a central role. From annual Mha Puja celebrations to Yomari Punhi, and the various Guthi Bhwoye, these events require an enormous organisational effort by members of the community grouped in different committees. This activity also requires a significant amount of time in searching for specific ingredients, and in arranging additional entertaining performances occurring at those events. However, the "social life of Newar food" is not exhausted in the process of production and consumption in London, but rather it "reverberates" in the mediatic sphere of social media, publications, and more recently online events on Newar food. Based on ethnographic fieldwork

started in 2015 with the Newar community in London, this paper focuses on two iconic items of Newari food, namely chhoyela (roasted meat) and yomari (sweet elongated dumplings), following their pathways from their production and consumption to their presence in songs, webinars, up to the last edition of Master Chef programme. Drawing on Nancy Munn's (1992) idea of "fame of Gawa"—as generated by food exchanges and gifts that, carrying the names of those involved in the transactions, make the Gawans known to distant others—the paper will argue that the circulation of food in events and media contributes to the spatiotemporal expansion of Newars' collective selves beyond London, enhancing the fame of Newars and Newari food in the transnational sphere and among the UK public.

Comparative study between Nepali and Sri Lankan-Tamil diasporic youth in the UK – Culture, tradition and art forms

Richard Antony and Sangita Shrestha, Centre for Nepal Studies UK

There has not been any comparative study between Nepali and Sri Lankan Tamil diasporic youth in the UK until now, and specifically the comparison between youth communities is an under-researched phenomenon. Sri Lankan Tamils mainly migrated to UK due to ethnic conflict. However, there has been a long history of Nepalis living in the UK. Drawing upon diaspora theories – Hall's (1990) idea of 'cultural identity' blended with other forms of youth theorisations – Crenshaw's (1991) 'intersectionality' and Gidley's (2007) 'youth inter-culture', this paper discusses socio-cultural and political elements connected to both communities in the UK and highlights the similarities and differences between the two diasporic youth communities – their interest, lifestyle, experience and expression while paying attention to broader issues of migration, ethnicity, diaspora identity and South Asian community. The idea of hybridisation and fluid nature of identity with complexities bring out how Nepali and Tamil youth experience mainstream British culture. The existing body of research indicates that a significant number of youth in Nepali (Adhikari et al, 2016) and Sri Lankan communities (Antony, 2012) are engaged with parent cultural activities – language schools, religious beliefs, traditional dance, and spicy-home country food. However, the majority of youth follow and practice British culture and therefore, a detailed study is needed to be carried out to understand hybridised cultural identity and fluid nature of lifestyles with the combination of both cultural aspects in blended forms of diaspora context. We will discuss the similarities and differences of identity, ethnicity and community in South Asian diaspora in general and young hybridised Nepali and Sri Lankan-Tamil generation in particular. It will also be a basis for further exploration of other diaspora communities.

Parallel Session B2:

Identity and Space

Chair: Punam Yadav

Before belonging: Settler emplacement in the Far-west Tarai

Amy Johnson, Northumbria University

Strident claims of belonging to the Far-west Tarai animated the competing politics of federal restructuring championed by indigenous Tharus and Hill-origin Hindu caste settlers in Kailali district during the final days of Nepal's constitution writing and its implementation after 2015. In this paper, based on a dissertation chapter, I attend to the condition of emplacement—the modes and moods of situated living—in order to shed light on the complex and contradictory affects grounding settler politics of belonging within and beyond the Nepal Tarai. I form my arguments through an ethnographic examination of ordinary gendered routines of household labor accompanying basāi-sarāi (residence-shift), operationalizing a widespread Nepali idiom as an emic heuristic for interpreting settlement in line with literatures in geography and anthropology on the phenomenology of place and settler society. Drawing from ethnographic fieldwork conducted in a town I call Pathakpur in the eastern part of Kailali district between 2016 and 2018, I argue that mundane practices of making and keeping a household—house construction, grass- cutting, and buffalo herding—which predominately fall to women (daughters-in-law, especially) are crucial for attuning households to the material and social qualities of an (unfamiliar) Tarai landscape. Performed in the wake of state-sponsored settlement campaigns (malaria eradication, land distribution), these everyday activities highlight the gendered dimensions of basāi-sarāi and the significance of emplacement settler politics of belonging.

Naessian biocentric self in Tharu folk songs: A study of nexus between ecology and subjectivity

Mohan Dangaura, Tribhuvan University

Being a clan of immense wildernesses of plain land, the way of life of Tharu relies upon the equivalent encompassing where they reside and from where they get meaningful assets for endurance. The folk dance tunes of Dangaura Tharu mirror the empathy and eco-cognizance

rehearsed from a crude age. Tharu people generally have endured living respectively with nature, using and battling against catastrophes. Tharu dance melodies: Sakhiya, Sajana, Dhamar, Jhumra mix the issue of eco-subjectivity introduced in the vehicle of eco-musicology. Thus, the development of Tharu-self can be concentrated through examining their folk customs luxuriously plated with natural subtleties. The tunes are sung by famous Tharu society vocalist Maniram Karyamaghariya, Santaram Tharu, and late Patiram Tharu under various music creation house (Hamar Music Bagiya, CS Films, Hamar Tharu Music) alongside all the accessible oral writing gathered from the different local performers will be taken into basic thought from profound natural standards of Arne Naess and George Sessions. Along with this, Tharus customary practices of annual rituals will be dissected from the view of verbal performance as the exhibition of Tharu subjectivity. The arrangement of eco- circular libertarian subjectivity decorated in Tharu people dance tunes and ceremonies arises as perhaps the most neglected areas to be stomped all over.

Ethnicity and the city: Production and division of social spaces in the Kathmandu Valley

Bawesh Pradhan, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, India

Urban planning recommendations for Kathmandu, made possible by the interventions of international development agencies in the 1970s and 80s, have envisaged the city as a source of economic growth. Forty years later, Kathmandu has grown faster than it was envisaged by its creators to become the most populated city of Nepal with increasing challenges of urban management. The city today is met with newer public infrastructure demands such as the ring road in order to ease this expansion, which requires more land around the Kathmandu valley to be acquired. Steps taken to bring about such planned urbanisation have become highly contentious, given incessant resistance by the indigenous communities native to the city. The Newa people regularly come out in protest against these infrastructures, questioning the very notion of 'development' by calling it 'binash' and not 'bikash'. Indigenous people's resistance in South Asian contexts are mostly located away from the urban centres, associated with struggles over natural resources, and resulting in erasure of identities. However, in Kathmandu it is the reverse, here the Newa people form the highest percentage of population, reaching 70% in central wards of Kathmandu 6 and live right in the centre of the city. Hence, their simultaneous belonging and exclusion from the valley is of contemporary importance and relevance.

In this context, this paper explores the disjuncture between 'representational space' of various decision makers and the 'lived space' of ethnic population, borrowing from Henri Lefebvre's notion of spatial triad. By doing so, it will bring out the paradox facing the indigenous communities: being native to and at the same time feeling displaced from within the Kathmandu valley.

Hashtagging heroes next to memes of Empire: A look at evolving senses of Gurkha identity through digital spheres

Premila van Ommen, University of the Arts, London

What does the idea of the Gurkha mean during a time of global discontent at legacies of the British Empire? How has it shaped the way young British Nepalis see themselves as they navigate through discourses of decolonisation and race? In what ways have notions of belonging been shaped from reconfigured relationships to place and space through global lockdowns?

The 2020 Covid-19 pandemic brought about monumental changes in creating greater digital connectivity as most of the world was forced to stay indoors. However, despite health concerns, an unprecedented number of young people went outdoors in Britain to join Black Lives Matters marches inspired by protests in the USA. In Nepal, youth also took to the streets to protest over caste-based injustices and the government's Corona virus response. British Nepali youth saw both #blacklivesmatter and #dalitlivesmatter trending in their social media feeds, as they began to reflect, examine and discuss forms of imperialism and racism. They mobilised to partake in activism and community care both in Nepal and the UK. As they posted memes and critiques about the British Empire, they also expressed pride over Gurkha family members and health workers as everyday heroes.

This paper looks at these shifts of social consciousness through transnational networks and digital spheres. It shows updates to my ongoing doctoral research on the impact of Gurkha military heritage on young Nepali men in the UK. I will examine identity formation through cultural production in forms of art and leisure events and discuss disruptions and continuities in evolving senses of identity from digital practices accelerated through lockdowns and asks us to think through mediated ways of diasporic place-making in absence of former access to physical space.

Parallel Session A3:

Society and politics

Chair: Michael Hutt

Which way forward for Dalit liberation in Nepal?

Krishna P. Adhikari and David N. Gellner, University of Oxford

The status of Dalits in Nepal has undergone considerable changes in recent decades. Nepali Dalits are not short of political or activist leaders offering them liberation or at least government support, though there is none of international stature. However, Dalits themselves are divided over what the best way forward is and could be. Dalits are a relatively understudied social group and there is a considerable debate over whether the legally adopted classification as Dalit is as emancipatory as it is supposed to be. This paper, based on long-term observation and secondary analysis, aims to develop a typology of the pathways that Nepali Dalits are pursuing in their search for dignity. Using illustrations, both from fieldwork in Kaski and Chitwan districts and from interviews with activists in Pokhara and Kathmandu, we explore the diverse ways in which Dalits in Nepal have imagined a different future for themselves. At least five characteristic (partially incompatible but sometimes combinable) ways of avoiding the stigma of the past and embodying an egalitarian future can be identified: (1) Assimilation: a desire to assimilate and entirely get rid of a stigmatizing past, a position characteristic of upwardly mobile and non-activist households. (2) Revolution: the revolutionary option, most obviously represented by the CPN-Maoist party in its heyday and now by extreme leftist, revolutionary Maoist fractions. (3) Reparation: The mainstream political and NGO response is to build an identity politics that work to build a single Nepali identity labelled 'Dalit', focused on suffering and subordination under the caste system (across all the divisions of Hill and Plains, and different castes), in order to achieve reparations and reservations. (4) Ethnicizing identity: There exist also counter discourses, which resist the official identity discourse of victimhood, and often the term 'Dalit' itself, and try instead to base Dalit identity on the artisan skills that were associated with their former status as castes providing services to the rest of society. (5) Exit: the attempted partial or total exit from Nepali society and culture exemplified by conversion to Christianity.

The role of social capital in disaster resilience in remote communities after the 2015 Nepal earthquake

Sarita Panday, Simon Rushton, Jiban Karki, Julie Balen and Amy Barnes, The University of Sheffield

Social capital is widely regarded as a key element in recovery from and resilience to disasters. Yet, little attention has been paid to the specificities of what supports or undermines remote rural communities' social capital in disasters. Here, we examine how bonding, bridging, and linking social capital operated after the 2015 earthquake in three remote Nepali communities of Sindhupalchok and Gorkha Districts, which have varying degrees of access to infrastructure, relief and recovery programmes. We draw on community-based qualitative research conducted in 2018 (including data from Participatory Videos, Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews) to show how different forms of social capital 'matter' more in different phases of recovery. Immediately after the earthquake, high levels of bonding and bridging social capital among residents reduced barriers to collective action and helped efforts to rescue and support affected individuals. This dissipated, however, once external relief arrived. Already-marginalised groups with low social capital of all types were less able to access relief items and funding for rebuilding compared with those of higher social status or with political links. Pre-existing socio-cultural inequalities, including those driven by weak bonding relationships in families, gender inequalities and the remoteness of villages, further undermined communities' social capital and their resilience to the earthquake. Disaster relief programmes should target women and the elderly to improve the resilience of marginalised communities to future disasters. For long-term resilience, disaster programmes should consider social capital in terms of power and pre-existing inequalities, so that linking capital would not just serve elite groups.

Mapping out hierarchies in a mid-Western prison

Charlotte Ramble, London School of Economics and Political Science

This paper is based on eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork carried out in an around a rural prison in the Karnali Region between June 2018 and January 2020 as part of my PhD thesis. After first introducing the different decision-making figures at the prison, I will turn in more detail to a group with a particular position at the prison, the naikes – prisoners appointed by the administration to fulfil a number of logistical duties, as well as being representatives of prisoners and mediating points between the prisoners and the authorities. The formalisation of a working relationship between staff and naikes has resulted in the extremely variable character of power dynamics where it is not uncommon for the naikes to have a decisive influence on much of daily life at the prison. They can become 'big men' in their own right within the realm of the prison. This creates a fluctuating dynamic between a variety of different hierarchies that coexist, feed

and/or undermine each other within the space of the prison. Different naikes employ different strategies to navigate these, partly informed by their own caste, class, gender and personal experiences. These reveal contrasting ideas of leadership and social organisation that echo the radically different models of state formation Nepal itself has gone through over the past thirty years.

Do political quotas work? The lived experiences of women politicians in Nepal

Punam Yadav, University College London

Women's political participation in Nepal has increased significantly, climbing from 5% to 41% within a decade. This significant transformation has been possible due to the enactment of a mandatory quota. In this paper, I examine the lived experiences of women politicians in Nepal, especially those who had no prior background in politics before being elected to their current positions, through Bourdieu's theory of capital. This study suggests that the quota policy creates a new role for women – a new subject position, which comes with a set of power. The power and prestige attached to these political positions bring immediate changes to the lives of women politicians. The quota policies are one step towards achieving gender justice.

Parallel Session B3:

Education

Chair: Tejendra Pherali

(Re)constructing a 'good' school: Materials, affects, and meanings of education in post-earthquake Nepal

Uma Pradhan, University of Oxford

When the earthquake hit Nepal in 2015, it affected the government schools disproportionately; accounting for 92 per cent of the total damage in education sector. This natural disaster not only caused huge destruction to the government schools but also revealed the prevailing fault lines in the education system of Nepal; especially the unequal infrastructure provisions in public and private education. As a response to this, the Nepali state proposed a large-scale reconstruction programme, including the construction of & model schools & which would act as exemplar

government schools in Nepal. Drawing on long-term fieldwork in Sunaulo School, this paper will explore the construction of 'good' school by paying close attention to this connection between materialities of schooling and its affective experiences. These affective experiences such as pride and hope generated by the new school building and fear and anxiety invoked by the old earthquake-damaged building, are not necessarily the enactments of vain affective attachment to material things. Instead, they reveal 'structure of feeling': feeling prompted by the context of the structural relations of power and status that elicit them.

(Re)constructing a 'good' school is, therefore, a socially constituted process where the school building was at once a marker of an effective state and a promise of good education for its students. The analysis presented in this chapter shows that, in the context where uneven provision of infrastructure marks social inequality, the shift in resource allocation for the school also constitute negotiation over social meanings of education. These new school buildings, thus, were utilised to perform claims of effectiveness by the Nepali state and claims of social prestige by parents and students. The new school buildings presented particular visions of high-performing 'model schools' to tackle the crisis in public education, as well as to foster a feeling of nation-building amidst all the destruction. The tangible materials of education such as buildings, classrooms, and other school infrastructures also played an important role in students' self-formations and in creating specific types of schooled subject.

Towards understanding Janajati students: Learning performance in Nepali schools

Jiban Khadka, Nepal Open University

Students' learning performance is a major concern in Nepali schools. This paper explores the issue of learning performance among Janajati (indigenous) students in secondary schools through mixed methods research. The first phase-results of quantitative research yielded from the analysis of the grade XII results of 901 students at a case school from 2015 to 2019 showed the lower learning performance of Janajati (Rai, Limbu, Magar, Gurung, Tamang, Chaudhary and Newar) students as compared to Jat (Bhramin/Chhetri) students in general and by gender. From the follow up (qualitative) study through the interview of five participants (three students and two teachers from Janajati ethnic groups), home-related factors as compared to school-related factors were more prevalent for lower learning performance. Specifically, poor economic and educational family background, and cultural factors were found to be the key factors of Janajati students' low learning performance. Furthermore, as perceived by the participants, the indifference and demotivating actions of some teachers, their less friendly teaching methods, non-native language medium of instruction are also notable. Improving these context variables: Economic and educational factors through interventional programs may bring improvement in the current learning performance of Janajati students. As the freedom-oriented and sports-like

is the nature of Janajati students that demands the specific teaching strategy for them. Policy intervention considering the language diversity and curriculum relevant to Janajati's day-to-day life may be attraction for their community towards education that is crucial for learning performance.

Teacher identities and hierarchy: Narrative inquiry of primary teachers in Nepal's public schools

Khim Raj Subedi, Tribhuvan University and Martha M. Canipe, Northern Arizona University

The article aims to explore how teachers' professional growth and sense of identity are shaped in traditional hierarchy-dominated educational culture in public schools. Using narrative inquiry and Gee's (2000) identity framework we examined the professional identity development of teachers. In particular we considered factors such as academic qualifications, professional positions, and job security. The data revealed that hierarchy and power relations between the teachers and the social context fundamentally shaped the development of teacher identity. However, the study further showed that professional hierarchy wasn't uni-layered, the power was not one-directional, and the domination is not permanent/stable but rather dynamic. Factors like academic qualifications, job status, technological skills, and social status made the hierarchy complex. More interestingly, in some cases, hierarchical relationships did not always undermine teacher empowerment and confidence. For example, when a teacher in a marginalized position due to some factors, was viewed as a role model or capable of success in spite of challenges they achieved a high value from their fellow colleagues. Implications of these complexities within specific social and cultural school contexts of countries like Nepal are discussed in order to draw more general perspectives about teachers' identity.

Parallel Session A4:

Covid-19 and migration

Chair: Jeevan Sharma

Knowledge, attitudes, and practices amongst the literate cohorts of Nepal about COVID-19

Mohan Kumar Sharma, Shanti Prasad Khanal, and Ramesh Adhikari, Tribhuvan University; Jib Acharya, ANC, Premium Services Ltd. /Bournemouth University

Knowledge, attitudes and practices are key factors that help explain how the COVID-19 spreads within families and communities. It is a communicable disease that is activated by a newly discovered micro-organism known as coronavirus. People with underlying medical problems and old age are more vulnerable. This paper reports on the knowledge, attitude, and practices relating to COVID-19 amongst the students, teachers, and health workers including staff members of the NGOs/INGOs. The study used a cross-sectional quantitative research method with 224 participants who took part in a self-administered-structured-questionnaire survey to share their views about the pandemic. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 20.0. The two-thirds of the participants were males. Even though nearly 50% of the participants had held an M-Phil/PhD degree (with only 4.9% with secondary-level qualifications), the study revealed that only 28% of the participants had showed proper knowledge about the pandemic whereas only 41% showed positive attitudes and 54% experienced good health practices to be safe from the possibility of catching the disease. The study found the level of knowledge on the pandemic to be statistically very significant where attitudes and practices were found poor. Hence, we conclude that the public health approaches such as public awareness, mass-education-campaigns focusing on food and health seeking behaviours are urgently required to control the outbreak. This study suggests that to improve the health status of the people, it is crucial to increase the level of health awareness campaigns.

The Impact of Covid-19 on Dalit communities in Nepal

Gopal Nepali, Samata Foundation; Ujjawal Sundas, Samata Foundation and Krishna Adhikari, Oxford University

This paper attempts to contribute to the understanding of the impact of the natural disasters and pandemics on the most excluded and marginalised groups in Nepal. In the face of the

unprecedented situation and challenging, yet useful opportunity created by the Covid-19 pandemic and national lockdown, this study was conducted to investigate the responses to and perceived impacts of the pandemic on Dalits (the erstwhile 'untouchable' group, numbering about 4 million or 13% of Nepal's population) in Nepal. Due to historically inbuilt structural design, Dalits are one of the most excluded and marginalised groups. Our findings confirm that they face massive challenges and are at higher risk during natural disasters and pandemics. The data used in this paper come from a nationwide (primarily) telephone survey conducted between June and September with respondents (N=1,500) from across 751 local government areas, combined with a complementary qualitative interviews and focus groups discussion with 35 elected representatives, lawmakers and civil society representatives. The survey results show that, despite their financial insecurity, Dalits generally (92%) supported the national lockdown. However, they paid a big price as 82% of them faced financial difficulties and 45% lost employment, the only source of their livelihood. Over half of them faced food crises: two in five had food stored only for a week or less; 40% of them had problems securing essentials due to the lack of supply, and 88% were affected by price rises of essential foodstuff. One in five were not happy about the ways local governments handled rescue and support. Only half of those surveyed thought that those in most need received relief packages, and 40% of those surveyed believed that there was no needs assessment made. The relief received was not sufficient (in two-thirds of cases). Some respondents even experienced caste-based discrimination. We find the social identity theory of Henry Tajfel (1979), with its focus on in-group and out-group, very useful in explaining the plight of the Dalits vis-a-vis other groups during the pandemic. We also propose the idea that caste relation scan act as a social contagion (virus) that compounds the impact of Covid virus on the most vulnerable groups.

Employment narratives in the midst of Covid-19 in Western Nepal

Kamal Bahadur Mahat, Triveni Rural Municipality, Salyan

Article 33 of the Constitution of Nepal (2015) has enshrined employment as a fundamental right of Nepali citizens. The Right to Employment Act (2018) has the provision of a minimum of one hundred days employment to the unemployed person in one fiscal year. The employment programme in Triveni Rural Municipality (RM), Salyan Nepal where Prime Minister's Employment Programme (PMEP) and Chief Minister's Employment Programme (CMEP) have been implemented. Nepal government started the PMEP in Fiscal year 2018/019 announcing that within five years no Nepali will need to go for foreign employment. After the Covid-19 pandemic, a large number of people returned to Triveni RM from India and Arab states losing their employment. In this paper, I argue that a significant number of people benefitted from the P/CMEP but a majority of economically disadvantaged people were still left out from the one hundred days employment programme. Subsequently, mostly the rural road maintenance

projects have been chosen due to seventy to one hundred percent allocation of money to labour's wage in the cash for employment directives, so the quality of infrastructure and materials needed projects like drinking water, irrigation canals have not been on the priority list. From my nearly two years of ethnographic research, I argue that women have largely benefitted from the cash for work programme with receiving an equal wage.

Impacts of men's migration on non-migrating spouse's health and the implications for Nepal: A systematic literature review

Shraddha Manandhar, Philip Brown; Edwin van Teijlingen, Bournemouth University; and Padam Simkhada, University of Huddersfield

International migration is in an increasing trend globally; internal migration is also very common, particularly in LMICs where the rural population migrate to cities for work. Migration is predominantly a male phenomenon. Little attention has been paid to the impact of migration on non-migrating spouses' (NMSs) health. Therefore, we undertook a systematic literature review to examine what is known about the impact of men's migration on NMSs' health in LMICs. We searched five databases: CINAHL, Google Scholar, PsychINFO, PubMed and Scopus using key search terms 'left-behind', 'women', 'migration' and 'health'. Sixteen peer-reviewed publications are included, the majority of which focus on mental health, followed by sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and health-seeking behaviour of NMSs. Whilst the review incudes four papers from Nepal, the findings from this review are highly relevant for Nepal due to the high level of men's migration and lack of literature on NMSs.

Findings suggest that NMSs had increased access to healthcare due to better financial positions (via remittances) and increased empowerment/autonomy in the absence of their husbands leading to increased decision-making regarding their health and increased freedom of mobility to seek healthcare. Remittances led to improved food and housing security, a critical wider determinant of health. However, a few studies reported that in the longer term, the general health of NMSs is negatively impacted. Almost all studies on mental health reported higher depressive symptoms among NMSs. From an SRH perspective, NMSs feared contracting sexually transmitted infections from their migrant partners.

Early policy implications suggest that national and local policies should include local support groups and counselling services at the local health centre for NMSs. From a research perspective, we recommend further studies on the areas presented above as well as unexplored areas such as vulnerability to violence and impact of remittance on health and nutrition.

Parallel Session B4:

Gender relations

Chair: Kumud Rana

Are GBV response and rehabilitation services provided through One Stop Crisis Management Centers in Nepal inclusive of needs of women and girls with disability?

Sapana Basnet Bista, Liverpool John Moores University; Padam Simkhada, University of Huddersfield; Edwin van Teijlingen, Bournemouth University and Shaurabh Sharma, Humanity and Inclusion

One in two, over 55% of women and girls with disabilities in Nepal experience sexual violence and 80% of them face physical violence. One in three women worldwide experience physical or sexual abuse in their lifetime. Gender- based violence (GBV) is evidenced to kill more women than traffic accidents and malaria combined. UNFPA reports that globally, women with disabilities are nearly three times more likely to experience sexual violence than those without disabilities. Nepal has made remarkable strides in laws, policies, and legislation in combating GBV, but is often criticized to lack implementation. As part of the National Action Plan on GBV 2010, One Stop Crisis Management Centres (OCMC) were established within hospital setup, to provide unified, integrated, and effective response and rehabilitation services to the survivors at local level.

This paper is informed by the inclusion analysis we undertook to review how accessible, need specific, safe, and inclusive are the services provided at these OCMCs to women and girls with disabilities. It covers 21 OCMC from all 7 provinces, employs in-depth interviews with representatives and staff members of OCMCs and site observation for accessibility assessment. Our findings highlight that despite growing numbers of OCMCs and capacity building efforts, current structure and services provided do not explicitly address the needs of women and girls with disabilities. Lack of accurate data on survivors with disabilities resulted by not having to capture disability specific data on the record register continues to make their needs invisible therefore lacked measures to protect dignity, confidentiality, and autonomy. Available facilities and services in OCMCs pose physical and communications barriers for persons with disabilities. The paper will make recommendations for tailoring current services and for making reasonable accommodation to ensure OCMCs are inclusive of the needs of women and girls with disabilities.

Gender relations among Nepali care worker's families in the UK: Implications of migration from intersectionality approach

Sanjaya Aryal, University of Essex

Migrants are in high demand to absorb care works in the global North. Participation of Nepali women and men and their attraction in this global care market is not an exception. This research uses data from in-depth qualitative interviews with Nepali care workers in the UK. The article addresses three research questions: What are the major factors influencing gender relations among Nepali care workers and their spouses in the UK? How do the couples' sociodemographic characteristics influence the changes in gender relations? And, how do the different factors intersect and influence each other in the process? This research contributes to study the complexities associated with the changes in gender relations among migrant couples in the host country. It argues that patriarchal gender relations travel with the migrants. Since the alteration to the gender relations is rarely a goal on its own for the migrants, they do not challenge the deep-rooted cultural expectations within the households. Hence, the migration either brings varied degree of changes among the families based on intersectional factors or keeps on reverting back the changes already gained.

Masculinity, ideology and change in the People's War in Nepal

Heidi Riley, University College Dublin

Masculinity associated with armed groups tends to be built on assumptions of violence and insecurity. This book, however, examines other ways in which the experience of participation in an armed group may impact upon notions of masculinity held by low-level male combatants, both during conflict and in the aftermath. Using the case of Nepal, the research focuses on how men of the People's Liberation Army experienced and engaged with an ideology espoused by the leadership that advocated for a more gender equal ideology than existed in traditional Nepali society. Focusing on masculinity change across four different timeframes: pre-conflict, conflict time, the DDR period and post-conflict, the analysis pays close attention to changes in attitudes towards gender specific roles and conduct, and perceptions of gender hierarchies. The analysis is taken from in-depth qualitative fieldwork using narrative analysis from interviews with former members of the PLA in Nepal. This is an important approach as it includes the voices of low-level former combatants that are rarely heard within scholarship on insurgency. In examining changes in masculinity, it focuses on shifts in attitudes towards gender specific roles and conduct, notions of acceptable behaviour within male/female interaction, and changes in perceptions of gender hierarchies. It also takes an original analytical approach that is grounded

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in identity theory and is located both in feminist scholarship on masculinity and the literature on peace and conflict. Whilst providing fresh insights into these literatures it also exposes how masculinity change is not straightforward but influenced by both past and present, which leads to contradiction and continuity in a post-conflict context.

Homestay tourism as a form of women's empowerment in rural Nepal: Implications, opportunities, and challenges of development practice

Jana Schmid, University of Zurich

In recent years the demand for alternative tourism forms has rapidly increased in Nepal due to growing number of tourists, and subsequent challenges in terms of environmental sustainability. Furthermore, due to the country's largely mountainous terrain, with many remote rural areas, the accommodation of the many visitors has become a challenge in terms of infrastructure. In this context, the concept of homestay tourism has emerged on a new scale of relevance. This form of tourism describes the hosting of visitors in private households of mostly rural communities. The goal is to not only offer new forms of touristic accommodation, but additionally allow for a particularly authentic experience of the unique cultural setting. Homestay implementation and promotion projects are popular, not only in the tourism field, but in development practice as well. Rural community-based development through homestay tourism projects is emerging as an important category of development initiative. Women present a special target focus in this regard as homestays present a gender-specific entrepreneurial opportunity. It allows for female economic participation within their traditional domestic setting. Hence, many projects are initiated with the goal of encouraging women to run homestays, often with outside management support and starter help in form of funds and hospitality training courses.

This paper explores the relationship between development practice and rural women's perception of their own empowerment in context of homestay projects, as well as related implications, challenges, and potentials. Fieldwork for the case study consisted of qualitative, semi-structured interviews with female homestay operators in several rural communities in the Middle Hills of Western Nepal's Machhapuchhre region. Furthermore, expert interviews with policy-level actors complemented these findings to reveal and highlight complexities as well as discrepancies between perception, lived reality, and practice of gender-specific rural development.

Parallel Session A5:

Health and Care

Chair: Padam Simkhada

The Double-edged sword of 'community' in community-based psychosocial care: Reflections from rural Nepal

Liana E. Chase, Durham University

The movement for global mental health has stoked hopes that 'task-shifting' to community workers can help fill treatment gaps in low-resource settings. In Nepal, the training of community-based psychosocial counsellors has gained traction as a strategy for extending services into underserved rural regions. The fact that community workers inhabit the same local moral worlds as their clients is widely framed as a strength in the global mental health literature, with little consideration of the ethical and relational dilemmas this might create in the face of chronic, stigmatized afflictions. Drawing on 14 months of ethnographic research, this paper explores some of the tensions that community psychosocial workers in rural Nepal navigated between formal psychosocial modes of responding to mental illness and the responses demanded of them as community members, neighbours, and at times, kin. To bring these tensions into sharper relief, I relate two instances in which community psychosocial workers became involved in caring for members of their extended families. These cases reveal how psychosocial counselling works at the limits of kinship, generating new possibilities for care where responsibility has otherwise been abdicated or exhausted. Yet in both cases, counsellors were never completely outside of kin and wider community relations, and the divergent logics and goals of informal care threatened to hijack their therapeutic practice. I close by suggesting that the deeply relational and morally freighted nature of 'psychosocial problems' pose unique challenges for community-based care– challenges that demand further critical attention amidst the burgeoning enthusiasm around task-shifting.

An assessment of grip strength and BMI on vegetarian and non-vegetarian Nepalese children

Usha Acharya, Nepal Open University

This paper examines the differences of grip strength and BMI of vegetarian and non-vegetarian children of Nepal. Study area was Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal Rautahat and Mahottari districts. A field survey was conducted between August 2014 and August 2018. The subjects were

children aged 6 to 13 years (614 boys and 415 girls) from Koiri and Yadav castes. The survey item were height and weight measurement, grip strength, meals, parent's education and income were included. Measurement tools were used interview schedule, physical measurement recording sheet and measurement equipment height: TK - 11242a seca Portable Height Meter with Level seca213L: As One; weight: weighing scale ([UC-321-SV reciprocal sensitivity 50g] made by A & D); grip strength: T.K.K. 5401, Takei Scientific Instrument were used. Calculating the grip strength and BMI in between vegetarian and non-vegetarian children, non-vegetarian children were found stronger in grip strength and bigger BMI than vegetarian children for both boys and girls. Big differences observed in boys than girls. Similarly, strong correlation observed in between BMI and grip strength of both boys and girls.

Transnational AIDS networks, regional solidarities and the configuration of male sexuality in Nepal

Kumud Rana, University of Glasgow

Abstract:

This paper critically examines the powerful effects of transnational HIV/AIDS networks and resources on the consolidation of one of the earliest identity categories used within an emerging Nepali lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) movement in the early 2000s. The paper specifically traces the emergence and changing meanings of the 'meti' identity category to show how a seemingly local or indigenous category might be more closely linked to modern configurations of male same-sex sexuality in response to opportunities available for political mobilisation. I argue that political identity formation in resource-poor contexts with limited domestic support for queer organising has been a cumulative effect of the interaction between the 'local' and the 'global', and the exclusive networks and resources that are part of such interactions. Furthermore, I show how the interaction between identities, resources and networks have reinforced marginalisation along the lines of class, caste/ethnicity and gender identity among activists in Nepal.

The paper is based on analysis of interviews with 71 participants and participant observations conducted during seven months of fieldwork in Nepal between 2016 and 2017, and on document analysis. The paper highlights the significance of social networks and resources in the consolidation of identity movements, which have important implications for the understanding of identity formations while also raising pertinent questions about the inclusions and exclusions created by social movement processes. Going beyond existing emphasis on resource flows from the global North to the global South which sees 'local' actors as passive recipients of ideas and aid, this paper instead highlights the significance of South-South solidarities in social justice movements.

Parallel Session B5:

Panel: Menstruation and social attitudes in Nepal

Chair: Sara Parker

Dignity without danger: collaboratively analysing stigma and taboos to develop innovative strategies to address menstrual exclusion in Nepal': The fluidity of menstruation practices: Perceptions of Agency told by Nepali women

Lina Baniya, 'East' team DWD

Menstruation practices are not fixed they vary with place and culture and within a single family over several generations and even within a lifetime. This ethnographic research analyses menstrual practices and examines the social context that frames these practices. Through interviews with women of the Hindu Brahmin/ Chhetri community subjective experiences, knowledge, perception, restriction, and practices are recorded, compared and analysed. Cultural variation of mensuration practices reveals regional and cultural differentiations of stigmas and taboos as well as conceptual, customary and religious barriers preventing change. Information about menstruation practices is not confined but carried between places and communities and it adapts through various spheres of engagements such as school, health visits and work. Most of the participants in this study said that 'Change' is taking place over time. While some participants report a lack of biological/medical knowledge most confirm that despite adequate knowledge traditional practices are inherently conserving. While in the remembered past social stigma and taboos forced women and even men to follow restrictions during menstruation the memory of celebrated menarche is less common. Most of the participants expressed a desire to see menstrual practices to improve, not just in terms of the materials available to manage menstruation, but also in terms of the cultural beliefs and attitudes that serve to circumscribe females in a pre-ordained and inferior social position. People used to say महिनावारी भाको महिला लाई देक्यो भने साइत पर्दैन (it is bad luck to see menstruating women while going out). While concepts are fluid and have been modified through an increase in awareness, education and migration the religious core of restriction remains valid for many.

Politics of control- From fear to Shame: dictating women on how they should practice menstruation

Rajya Laxmi Gurung, 'West' team DWD

Through the narratives of 48 women from Dailekh, Jumala and Accham of Nepal, this paper explores the menstrual practices of women under three distinct socio-political order –religion and mysticism; Maoist / conflict period and liberal democracy. These three socio-political orders have played crucial role in shaping the menstrual practices in Nepal especially in above mentioned three districts. The paper also explores the strategies adopted by these socio-political orders to shape the menstrual practices and how the women have experienced and interpreted those pressure to abide or to change their menstrual practices. Drawing from these narratives our paper reveals the important dynamics of power, hierarchies within different centres of power and use of fear and shame to either subjugate or forcefully liberate the women but in both instances denies women from choice and from her own voice. The findings of the paper can be used to inform and shape the strategies adopted by current programs around Menstruation in Nepal which is still Kathmandu centric and have the tendency of "saviour complex".

A preliminary investigation into educational materials on menstruation in Nepal

Evie Clarke, SOAS, University of London

In Nepal, belief in myth and menstrual related practices prevail and vary in accordance to time, generation, caste and class. Physical seclusion, and/or restrictions include the consumption of certain foods, the ability to touch certain people and objects, and restricted access to water sources. These restrictions not only put women at risk of poor health outcomes, but they also promote discrimination and challenge fundamental human rights (Ranabhat et al, 2014; Yadav, 2016).

As part of my final year from the School of Oriental and African Studies, SOAS, studying Intensive South Asian Studies, this qualitative study with participants from Nepal aims to understand knowledge production, the educational experience and perceptions of educational materials on menstruation within the country. This extended dissertation was conducted in line with the British Academy funded project, Dignity Without Danger - a two-year research project exploring menstrual stigma, shame and cultural taboos in Nepal. Analysing contemporary resource materials is vital in understanding the discourse around menstruation is a first step towards a better future for women and girls (Bobel, 2018; UNESCO, 2000). This study is based on interviews as well as workshops in schools in Kathmandu, Pokhara, Bhotenamlang and Sikles. In total, this study is based on 31 interviews and five workshops with 28 boys and 67 girls. Ultimately, this this paper provides a set of pragmatic and perhaps unexpected suggestions on how to improve circumambient issues related to education on menstruation.

Parallel Session A6:

Media/ business

Chair: Uma Pradhan

Polish print media on Nepal in the interwar period

Paulina Stanik, University of Warsaw

The struggle for unification and reconstruction is what best defines the period from 1918 to 1939 in Poland. Although the news regarding domestic matters dominated the stage, the country's interest in global issues was noticeable even in the less influential provincial newspapers. This study examines the portrayal of Nepal in the Polish print media in the interwar period. The analysis points to the media's tendency to emphasize the negative sides of the Nepalese society, which tends to be portrayed through the power-knowledge relation lens. Also, the political status of the Himalayan country was of major interest to the press in the stated period. In light of the analysis, Nepal was not seen as a fully autonomous state. Its representation was not free from bias stemming from the Polish media's heavy reliance on foreign content with regard to international news and the lack of direct links with the country. The research material consists of Nepal-centred articles available in a digitized form in online newspaper archives.

Testing asymmetric information in Nepalese reinsurance market

Rajendra Maharjan, Golden Gate International College, Kathmandu

Availability of correct and accurate information is key in any kind of decision-making financial market with reference to the insurance market is no exception. As reinsurance market provides strong indirect capital to insurance market thus insurers need to provide adequate information to the reinsurer for charging fair reinsurance premium along with creating a favourable environment to Reinsurance Company to remain in the Nepalese insurance market. Thus, this article examines whether there remains asymmetric information in Nepalese insurance market with reinsurers perspective in different portfolios and in aggregate. The study uses descriptive and causal relation research design. The study uses secondary data of 14 nonlife insurance from 2008/09 to 2018/19 with 168 firm year observations. The finding of the study reveals that only in fire, marine and overall portfolios there exists strong asymmetric information. Rest of the portfolio like motor, engineering and miscellaneous there is no evidence of existence of asymmetric information.

Parallel Session B6:

Maternal health

Chair: Puspa Raj Pant

Maternal mental health and under-nutrition in children under 5 in Rupandehi, Nepal

Manisha Singh, Tomasina Stacey, and Padam Simkhada, University of Huddersfield; Julie Abayomi, Edge Hill University

Maternal mental health plays a significant role in child's physical and mental growth. Recent studies have shown the association between maternal mental health and child under-nutrition. However, the findings from different countries are conflicting. To date a few studies have been conducted to understand maternal metal health, limited to depression and almost none to explore possible association between maternal mental health and child malnutrition in Nepal, despite of evident burden of malnutrition in children under-5 years of age. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the association between maternal mental disorder and under-nutrition in children under-5 years in Nepal. A cross-sectional survey was conducted in Rupandehi, Nepal where a total of 4000 mother-child dyads were recruited. The children included in the study were 0-5 years of age. Anthropometric measurements such as height and weight along with Mid-upper Arm Circumference were measured to determine the nutritional status of children. Self-Reported Questionnaire (SRQ-20) was used to measure common maternal mental disorder (CMD). In addition, data on demographic and socio-economic variables were also collected. Data entry and analysis was conducted in SPSS statistical software. The results show that 27.2% of the mothers had CMD whereas, 28.4% children were found malnourished where 15.9% were moderately acute malnourished (MAM) and 12.7% were severely malnourished (SAM). There was a significant association between maternal mental health and child under-nutrition (p-value-.00001, df-1). We conclude that maternal mental health should be recognized as a significant public health problem in Nepal as it has implications on both maternal and child health. To address child under-nutrition specifically, maternal mental health should be incorporated in the national maternal and child health programme.

Maternal and neonatal health services in Jumla, Nepal: A health facility survey

Pasang D Tamang, Padam Simkhada, Paul Bissel, University of Huddersfield; Edwin van Teijlingen, University of Bournemouth and Rose Khatri, Liverpool John Moores University

An estimated 1,200 women die in Nepal every year during pregnancy or while giving birth, i.e. an average of three women per day. Women in Nepal still face the risk of death during childbirth due to the high rate of pregnancies and the limited access to quality maternal care mainly in rural areas. Hence, this study aimed to assess the health facility readiness of providing quality of maternal and neonatal health service. A survey was conducted in 31 public health facilities (HF) in Jumla in early 2019. Among the 31 HFs, 29 were health post (HP), 1 Primary Health Care Centre (PHCC) and 1 Hospital, Twenty-three HPs were birthing centres (BC) and the remaining six are in process of being upgraded to one. Twenty-five HFs provided delivery and newborn care (birthing centres, PHC and hospital) 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. The waiting time for all HF was less than 30 minutes and all the HF thinks that the opening hour is convenient for the service user. Only 8 HF allowed women to have companion of her choice during childbirth. All the HFs had availability of waste bins, impermeable sharp container, soap and water, energy infrastructure. Fifteen HF considered that their facility was moderately stocked, ten poorly stocked and six well stocked. However, most HFs (n=21) experienced shortages of essential medicines over past three months. The most common out-of-stock medicines were Amoxicillin (n=10), paracetamol (n=10) followed by Vitamin A (n=7) and Metronidazole (n=5). All the health facilities are well in terms of infrastructures however, stock out of essential medicine and supplies were common in most of the health facilities. Very few HFs allowed women to have companion of her choice during childbirth.