

EDITORIAL:

Observations on Social Inclusion and Exclusion, Resource Management, Transformational Politics, Developmental Practices, Gender Relations and Tacit Knowledge

Om Gurung
Laya Prasad Uprety
Tulsi Ram Pandey

The editorial board is pleased to help the Central Department of Sociology and Anthropology of Tribhuvan University to publish the much-awaited 11th volume of the '**Occasional Papers in Sociology and Anthropology**'. In total, there are 14 articles in this volume. The fundamental themes they embody are six: **social inclusion and exclusion, resource management, transformational politics, developmental practices, gender relations and tacit knowledge**. Academically speaking, these themes demonstrate the areas of research in which the Nepalese sociologists and anthropologists have been involved. In other words, these articles reflect the types of contemporary sociological and anthropological research works in Nepal. The editorial board thanks all authors for their contributions to this volume.

Prof. Om Gurung, in his paper entitled "**Social Inclusion: Policies and Practices in Nepal**", presents his critical observations on the policies and practices in Nepal vis-à-vis the issue of social inclusion. Given the fact that the present state is exclusionary, non-participatory and non-representative and it discriminates indigenous peoples, women, *Madhesis*, *Dalits* and other marginalized communities on the basis of ethnicity, caste, language, religion, sex, class and geographical territory, he argues that these marginalized communities are demanding for an inclusive state through its restructuring along the line of federalism on the basis of national regional autonomy. He is sanguine that the recent election for the constituent assembly has paved the path for the formation of the inclusive state once the new democratic constitution is crafted by it. He has critically reviewed the demographic structure of various social

groups, all past development plans and programs of the government, and the issues embedded in the regime of social exclusion. He has cogently argued that social exclusion of indigenous peoples and other marginalized communities in Nepal is one of the widely accepted factors of their impoverization and marginalization.

Mr. Jailab Rai, in his article entitled "**Socio-Cultural Subjectivities of Landlessness: A Case Study of Sarki People from Naubise VDC of Dhading District**", deals with the socio-cultural subjectivities of landlessness surfaced among the *Dalit* people who are considered as the extremely marginalized group in the access to and ownership of land resources. He has analyzed the social, economic and cultural dimensions and processes of the issue of landlessness among the *Dalits*. He has suggested that such socially disadvantaged groups must be provided with alternative economic opportunities for the betterment of their social and economic lives by the responsible agencies.

Dr. Keshav Kumar Shrestha, in his article entitled "**An Ethnography of the Jhapali Rajbanshis**", presents the classical ethnographic accounts of the *Rajbanshi*, one of the few indigenous people of eastern *Terai*. More specifically, he has provided the analysis on the history, social structure, economic system, *rites de passage*, and religion.

Dr. Laya Prasad Uprety, in his article entitled "**Migration and Its Implications on the Local Initiative of Management of Water Resource for Irrigation**", analyzes the trends and causes of in-migration in a traditional *Tharu* community of western *Terai* that triggered the intensification of the local culture of water resource management for irrigation in the expanded command areas, and explicates the implications of in-migration on the local initiative of management of irrigation systems. He concludes that hill-*Terai* interface has not been impediment for the sustained irrigation management in the traditional homeland of the *Tharu* people because the hill caste/ethnic migrant water appropriators have completely learned and accepted the native *Tharu* culture of common property resource management as if they are a part of traditional social structure. He further argues that such unique migrant-native interface which can be a model of the common property resource management for other parts of Nepal *Terai* where similar social structure exists. Notwithstanding this brute fact, migration has also begun having the

adverse effect on the reduction of the command areas of the farmer-managed irrigation systems through the process of urbanization.

Ms. Shyamu Thapa Magar, in her article entitled "**Magars and their Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Practices in Tanahu District**", has tried to analyze the gender aspect of indigenous knowledge systems. She argues that both men and women are directly involved in resource utilization, management and protection by using their indigenous knowledge systems in their specific environments learned from their older generations for their sustained livelihood. These systems of knowledge have been continued because of the inherent organizational culture of underscoring the people's participation in decision-making processes, group dynamism and people's role in resource mobilization, cost effectiveness and sustainability. Hence, promoting valuable indigenous knowledge systems and practices for the sustained livelihood among the indigenous communities is the need of the contemporary world when they are deteriorating due to the interventions of the new modern technologies.

Using the value chain analysis, Mr. Madhusudan Subedi, in his article entitled "**Aromatic Plant Trade and Livelihood Strategies in the Rural Nepal: A Case of Wintergreen in Dolakha District**", has assessed the opportunities for Wintergreen, a natural product's intervention for reducing poverty, strengthening local governance, and improving resource management. He concludes that natural resources are dynamic and perceptions regarding their ownership and access rights are socially embedded, and political forces determine the stake of various actors and stakeholders over such resources. People and their surrounding environment define resources and their use. The Nature, Wealth and Power Framework enables one to understand the various cross-cutting themes. It is a mutually inclusive framework for knowledge management, capacity building, organizational development and arrangement, competitiveness and efficiencies, policy and legal reforms, and integration.

Mr. Chalaune, in his paper entitled "**Water, Wealth and Power: A Case Study from Upper Mustang Nepal**", examines the relationship between micro socio-political institutions and unequal access to water which are ultimately moulded by macro social world. He argues that the

indigenously managed irrigation system existing in Dhee-Upper Mustang is the manifestation or reflection of local kingship, village headmanship, polyandry, property inheritance system, access to and control over land, animal husbandry, state monarchical system, *Bikas* (development), and *modus operandi* of NGOs/INGOs and governmental officials. He cogently argues that the local unequal socio-political complexities led to age old indigenously managed irrigation system which is ultimately triggered and protected by wider social and political structure. Succinctly put in other way, he shows that the community or indigenously-managed irrigation system of Dhee is not isolated from micro and macro socio-political complexities. He has ascertained that it is highly exploitative system because irrigation water reinforces existing social hierarchy making rich the richer and poor the poorer.

Mr. Jiban Mani Poudel, in his article entitled, "**Cultural Understanding of Non-timber Forest Products among Bahuban Community People of Eastern Nepal**", analyzes that all naturally available 'objects' are not 'resources' for all categories of people. He argues that these objects only become resources while people use them to fulfill their needs by interpreting the symbolic meanings, functions and use-values in their socio-cultural and religious lives. Along this line, he further argues that all **non-timber forest products** (NTFPs) have not the same use-values for all categories of people. There are caste/ethnic, religious, class, and age-group differences in NTFPs' uses. Therefore, people's interaction with nature (NTFPs) can be understood only with reference to culture and cultural perspectives. He has further argued that the local people have strong social sanction and tradition belief regarding the use of locally available resources. Such social sanction and traditional belief help to protect over and continuous exploitation of resources.

Dr. Tulsi Ram Pandey, in his article entitled "**Democracy in Cage: Towards a Framework for State Restructuring in Nepal**", analyzes the meaning of state and democratic processes, explicates how the democratic processes were kept into cage by all previous waves of efforts towards restructuring the state, evaluates the contents and implications of current debates on state restructuring in Nepal by relating them with the characteristics of the democratic processes and makes

efforts to identify some additional issues of importance in this regard. He concludes that one of the important fields requiring changes in bringing some reformulation of relationship between state, class and people is the organizational structure of the state and the pattern of distribution of power between its units working under that structure. Devolution of political and economic power of the state to village level units of the government helps to satisfy many of the problems raised in current debates on state restructuring in Nepal. It is a fact that many of the caste and ethnic people are concentrated in some specific parts of the country. As a result, the representative units of the governments in most of those specific localities could be formed of members representing those caste and ethnic people who live there in majority. Devolution of power of the state to these local units allows these members to use that power for the advantage of their community.

Mr. Suresh Dhakal and Mr. Sanjeev Pokharel, in their article entitled **"Local Movements, Political Processes and Transformation: A Case Study of Bhaktapur Municipality"**, have attempted to explain a story of partnerships, communities, political leadership, and management practices to show how with a political will good governance is possible even in a polity that is undergoing significant governability crises and an erosion of political institutions. By studying the transformation of the traditional city of Bhaktapur, they have sought to complicate and problematise the discourse on democracy so that we can look beyond the subtle rhetoric of democracy and draw different conclusions. They have concluded that a program of social transformation – towards more modernity, towards more democracy - can achieve its desired goals if it takes into consideration the social, economic and cultural experiences of the people concerned. Therefore, it is important for a program of social transformation to be compatible with the constraints and opportunities faced by the people in their everyday lives. They have cogently argued that ideologies hold no power in themselves to change a society. What is required is people's active involvement in the processes of determining not only the contents but also the course of social transformation. If people actively participate in the process of determining what needs to be changed and how, desired social changes are not difficult to realize. In Nepal, few programs of social and economic transformation are based on people's own perception about how they can be made fruitful to

them.

Prof. Samira Luitel, in her article entitled "**Dependency and Underdevelopment: The Nepalese Context**", proffers the penchant criticism on the nature of underdevelopment in Nepal. She critically rivets her analysis on history of underdevelopment, foreign aid and dependency, dependency and donor interest, centralized planning and unequal development and traditional bureaucracy and global economy vis-à-vis Nepal. She concludes that the internal political system characterized by the political instability, traditional caste system, class system, fatalism, foreign aid and donor interest and traditionally-oriented bureaucracy have been some of the key factors for the underdevelopment of Nepal.

Ms.Sujan Ghimire, in her article entitled "**Macro Development and Micro Social Processes: Development as Discourse in Nepal**", cogently argues that to understand development processes, examining aid impacts at local level is as important as studying the impacts of development at the macro level. She has tried to explore the intended and unintended impacts of Finnish aid in the Nepali forestry sector and link the impacts of aid at macro level with processes at the micro level following a genre of thought, known as post-development. She has inferred from the post-development writings that different social processes are set off by development at local levels. For her, understanding the context is crucial to ascertain the impacts of development aid.

Ms. Mina Uprety and Ms. Sikshya Adhikary, in their paper entitled "**Perceptions and Practices of Society Towards Single Women in the Context of Nepal**", focus on problems faced by single women and specifically the widows in the context of Nepal. They argue that the problems faced by widows in Nepal are broadly related to the problems of gender relation. As widows, the social perceptions and practices towards them are much more severe in comparison to other categories of women. The patriarchal ideologies and male domination in social practices have imposed barriers to their happiness. However, they observe that circumstance is now slowly but unquestionably changing with new options, opportunities and hope for them to emancipate from patriarchal domination.

John Gray, in his paper entitled "**The Anthropology of Tacit Knowledge in the Domestic Mandala: A Case Study of *Chhetris* in the Kathmandu Valley**", tries to illustrate the tacit knowledge among the *Chhetris*, their equivalences between various planes of existence, the activities of everyday domestic life and the places where they take place (which are multifaceted such as corporeal, social and cosmological). He argues that their houses are multifaceted because they are the places to live their daily lives, they are maps of the cosmos, and they are machines for revelatory knowledge.