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Original Article

My Unending Journey of Migration: An Autobiographical Inquiry



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Abstract

In the journey of my life, I am moving hither and thither, which helped me to devise and construct the life stories of migration. I have echoed my real-life experience of migration, which I have attained from my childhood to till date. Academically, there is a dearth of migration research that is carried out using the autobiographical inquiry. The purpose of writing this article is to craft my stories, which I have experienced in the journey of migration. For this, I have instilled autobiographical inquiry to knit the stories, as the field of autobiographical inquiry is to imply 'self-study'. Using an avenue of non-positivistic paradigm, I have interacted with the contexts to draw the stories of migration. Pertinently, the stories of migration are a revelation of my subjective feelings. To interpret my personal stories, I used the structuration theory from which I have explored the dialectical relationship between the system (policies, rules, and norms) and agency, that is me. Genuinely, the government and social systems, and personal decision of migration induced me to shape the stories of migration. At this age of my life, I have visited short to long distances internally and externally and lived there for a few days to some years. On other days, I do not know, where I will go and settle, it may not be in my control because I will be dependent on children and their decisions. For me, migration is an unending journey.

Keywords: *Migrant; Story; Village; Autobiographical Inquiry; Migration*

At the Beginning

I (Lal Bahadur Pun, male, 49) was born and brought up in Baglung. After the departure from my birthplace and before the settlement in Kathmandu, I experienced many blisses and plights. At the moment, I am living in Kathmandu for more than one decade. Consequently, I have presented myself

as a migrant in this academic article. And, as a doctoral researcher, I read some theories, research articles, and books related to migration, which fed me ideas about migration through this article. I literally have attempted to share my true stories, which I experienced till today.

Nevertheless, the migrants are the ones, who are on the move (Inchley, 2014). My understanding is also that the movement of every individual from one place to another is a part of life. In a study, Subedi (1996) articulated that migration is an inseparable part of cultural life because moving behaviour is an innate quality of mankind for the betterment further. My movement in everyday living is not anything else more than a construct of moving culture because my behaviours and practices guided me to move here and there to fulfil the immediate needs, and to enhance the better way of living. Wherever I went, worked, and lived, the memory of the birthplace is laid in my mind. To substantiate this view, Subedi (1993) used the term 'ghumphir' to derive the meanings that, even going out from the origin community, migrants memorize the origin community and cultural practices. In the local overtone, leaving the old place is taken as a relocation from the birthplace (Hutt, 1998). Based on my experiences of moving from one place to another, I have attempted to knit my personal stories of migration. To me, migration is a process of being familiar with the new context. It is a notion of being acquainted with the spatial difference such as sending and recipient

communities (Lee, 1966). In other words, it is a process of changing the geographical location. In my migratory journey, geographically, the detachment and attachment became a part of my life.

As time passes by, while I came to know myself as a migrant, I thought that I would inscribe the stories of migration because I was born in one place, but I was brought up in another place. At present, I am living in quite a different place other than the places, where I had spent my childhood and teenage. In the journey of my life, I moved from one village to another village, town, and city. More often, I would go back to the home community. Based on age variable, location of stay, and professional engagement, I came across the different stages such as child, student/educational, circular, and professional migrants. Since my childhood, I have visited many places within and outside the country and became familiar with the new contexts. All these features were incurred as the sources of stories of my migration from which I weaved my personal stories. Hence, this is a retrospection of my own experiences of migration, which I have surpassed over time. As Bullough and Pinnegar (2001) also viewed that the

truth of a well-rendered autobiography is deeper than life itself. I have tried to reveal real-life experiences. It is also retrieval into self (Jayaannapurna, 2017). For me, self-reflection is an avenue of revelations. The platform of self-reflection is about what it means to do (Petersen, 2013). So forth, this text echoes my self-reflection inscribing the migratory stories in which I have carved the joyful and painful moments as a migrant.

Assertively, I have depicted child migration, which was my new pathway to life. After that, I have produced the stories of educational migration in which I also have discussed the secondary and campus-level studies. At times, I have also become a labourer and circular migrant in my life. In addition to this, I have presented myself as a professional migrant, as I had worked in some professional organizations and, at the same time, I also have joined the university for postgraduate degrees. I also have echoed a short reflection on migration, what it means to me. The purpose of this article is to craft the journey of my migratory stories, which I experienced in my lifetime. Thus, this article is a barn of my stories of migration, a method (autobiographical inquiry), and

a theory (structuration theory-structure and agency). At the end of this article, I have presented personal insights. Setting the introductory scene in this section, I have discussed the methodological genre in the subsequent section.

Methodological Genre: An Autobiographical Inquiry

Constructing the introductory scene in the previous section, under the interpretative paradigm, I have created my positionality on a qualitative research approach in this section in which I have used an autobiographical inquiry to inscribe my experiences of migration because autobiographical accounts are a rich reservoir of qualitative data and provide a valuable source of experience (Power et al. 2012). The flow of my stories of migration is described in an autobiographical way. Being a narrator, I have translated migrational stories into this text. Understandably, I am the story-builder based on my life experiences of migration. Hence, self-study is a tool to devise stories.

The autobiographical method has revealed its power in giving great

importance to the narrator, who is considered not only an actor of the life story but also an author of narration to shape the life and the story (Domecka et al., 2012). I am submitting myself as a builder of stories of migration. From this research, I have attempted to establish autobiographical inquiry as a research method in the academic field, as 'autobiographical research is concerned with studying one's own (auto) life-story (biography)' (Domecka et al., 2012; Taylor & Settelmaier, 2003). From the position of an autobiographical researcher, I have written my own stories from the first-person narrative point of view. Memorizing and recalling the past stories, I have attempted to draw the contextual meanings of migration based on my life course of migration. Methodologically, I have coined the stories from the self-reflective process. According to Hipchen and Chansky (2017), an author becomes self-reflective in their writing, hoping to hear personal voices that would form parts of a conversation. This is a text in which I have echoed my personal stories of migration.

In addition to this, the writing style is of autobiographic type in which I have presented own 'self-reflections'

(Petersen, 2013) and 'personal experiences' (Taylor et al., 2012), and 'autobiographical story' (Rubin, 1986). As autobiographic reflections provided me with "a valuable resource for exploring, presenting, and representing the self" (Haynes, 2011). Herewith, this is my self-exploration of migratory stories. According to Jayaannapura (2017), accounting and self-reflection are touchstones of auto/biography. Through this text, I have revealed 'subjective reality' (Lincoln et al., 2011) in which I amplified conscious awareness about the migration process. According to Jayaannapura (2017), autobiographical works are by nature subjective. Remarkably, I have echoed my feelings with the contexts that I engaged myself consciously. Thus, a life narration is an autobiography, which includes particular attitudes. Hence, interpreting autobiographical testimonies entails understanding a consciousness. To substantiate this statement, Jayaannapura (2017) articulated that autobiographies give a novel approach and insight into the way how individuals define themselves and understand their own experiences. Having said this, I have decided to use an autobiographical inquiry as a methodological genre, which deals with 'a broad framework whose key

contribution is to force research to consider the timing of when events occur in individual's lives and the consequences are for variations in this timing over change' (Yabiku & Glick, 2013). In addition to this, a life course, which I have been surpassing, is a subject of discussion. After presenting the methodological genre, I have discussed the theoretical positionality to interpret this text.

Making the Theoretical Pathway: Structuration Theory

In the previous section, I have presented the ideas about the methodological genre. I have discussed the theoretical positionality in this section, as I have used the structuration theory of Anthony Giddens (1986) to interpret the structure and agency, which deals with a dialectical relationship. So, they have both enabling and constraining relationships to each other. Furthermore, the structuration theory refers to the interaction of collectivities and individuals and their response to physical and social environments. Deriving the ideas from this theory, I understood that migration happens because of both collective and individual responses and efforts because

the systems usually dictate people to move, and in the same way, individuals also influence systems, as individuals create their spaces within the systemic premises. As Bourdieu (1986) remarked that an individual reflects the limited but real ability of social groups to make independent choices. Thus, individuals also influence systems. In my journey of migration, I became a part of the system.

Preferably, I have used the 'system' and 'individual' in this text. From the structuration theory, I have drawn ideas about how the system forces an individual to migrate from the current communities. Within the system, how migrants decide to move away for the betterment. Based on my past flashback, migration is induced by the system, which is associated with individual responses because the system influences individuals or vice versa. Behind the journey of my migration, I did not stand alone, as I was influenced by the societal influence.

In the journey of migration, the system sometimes dictated me to move and not to move and, many times, it did not work on me because I had decided to leave one place and go to another. As I was guided by the system, which, on

and off, created challenges to me. In childhood, my family took me to that place, where they went and settled because I was a part of the family system, which was a collective effort of migration. After I had grown up, I made decisions to go to new places and contexts, which were my individual decision but I was dictated by the system. Sometimes, family, working agency, and government systems forced me to move from one place to another, and many times, I had decided to move around but I was an inseparable part of the existing systems, values, and norms. This text is full of personal stories, which I have echoed verisimilitudes of my experiences. Having set the theoretical positionality in this section, I have discussed child migration, which I experienced in the new pathway of life.

Child Migration: My New Pathway of Life

In the previous section, I discussed the theoretical positionality i.e. the structuration theory. In this section, I have echoed my memory as a child migrant, which was the new pathway. Even today, I remember a day in around December 1986. In an evening, we, all the family members, were at the dinner time. We had a chit chat about various

issues, the past, and the current ones. At that time, my mother began to share when, why, and how we had migrated from a village named Kaule to the current village, Sagdi of Baglung District, which lies in the Province 4 or the Gandaki Province of Nepal. During the conversation, my mother told me about the place, where I was born. Till that day, I was unknown about my birthplace. Then after, I came to know about it. Before that day, I thought I might have been born in Sagdi, where I had been living at that time. I also knew that my parents had brought me to the current place from the other ones. From this, it was the foremost evidence that I was a child migrant. The nature of a child migrant is dependent particularly upon parents. In most cases, parents make almost all decisions on behalf of a child. Emotionally and socially, they are the sole responsibility-holders of children. For my migration, parents had made all the decisions and arrangements because, at that age, I was fully dependent upon them. My parents decided to migrate from the Kaule village to Sagdi while I was a child. Since I was inseparable from them, my migration was obligatory. At this stage, I became a part of the family system, in which I did not have any role in the decision-making process because I was

too young to make a decision. The family structure became influential in my migration because it is a collectivity of family members in which I became an inseparable part.

From the migrational point of view, Kaule was the origin community, where I stepped onto this earth; whereas Sagdi is the receiving community, where I grew up as long as I turned into an adolescent. Thus, migration from Kaule to Sagdi was the first internal migration in my life. As a child migrant, my rearing, caring, and socialization began in the recipient community but my ancestral root goes the origin community. In addition to this, my physical, emotional, spiritual, and mental growth was developed in the new village. Today, my identity is very much concerned with Sagdi rather than to my birthplace because I was brought up there. My memory and sense of attachment go to later home, Sagdi. In a study, Subedi (2017) unfolded that the sense of nostalgia remains in migrants, where they are brought up. Hence, the new places, where I visited, fed me local knowledge and skills. The amount of time that I had spent to acquire knowledge and skills in Sagdi was the time spent by a migrant. The structuration theory of Giddens (1986)

also has substantiated this story, which talks about the notion of knowledgeableability and capability of an individual. Along with my growth, I acquired the new knowledge and skills as a child migrant.

Even today, a blurred memory comes into my mind about the arrival date in the recipient community. The next day, after I arrived in the new village, one of my cousins came to play with me in the morning. It was a welcoming gesture in the new home. To substantiate this view, Pun (2018) opined that, in the initial days, the newcomers are welcomed in the receiving community. After that, the journey of everyday living began in Sagdi. I began to be familiar with the local customs such as cultures, social systems, values, and norms of the new village. I got accustomed and engaged myself in ritual practices such as birth and wedding ceremonies, and funeral procession. Not only this but also, I learned to worship the ancestral deities from my elders. It was the place, where I broadened my horizon of capabilities. In addition to this, I got accustomed to relatives, neighbours, acquaintances, and villagers. It was a social process in which I became familiar with the socio-cultural heritage and natural

endowments of the new village. It was a prerequisite for me to be accustomed to places or locations, natural resources, water sources, animals, people, etc. In other words, a precondition of a migrant is to be familiar with the local context. I was groomed with the direct care of parents, and indirect care of relatives and neighbours. The new migrants must familiarize themselves with local institutions, and must often immerse into a new culture (Carrington et al., 1996). One of the main capabilities of a migrant is to be ready to settle in the new context because I experienced that the new system of the new context influences an individual to make adjustments. This feature is substantiated by the theoretical tenet of Giddens (1986). As a migrant, I made myself adjustable in the new context.

In the new home, my schooling began at the age of nine, which I remember even today. Beginning from the pre-school stage, I completed primary and lower secondary school education from the new village. As a child of a Magar family, parents' interest was to prepare me to join either in the British Contingent or in the Indian Contingent. My schooling began to serve for that purpose. In the Magar community, it is not a new practice because the Laure

culture has become a part of Magar tradition over hundreds of years. Officially, many able-bodied youths of Nepal join British and Indian Contingents after Sugauli Treaty of 1816. Professionally and culturally, the culture of the village is to be *laure* (Kansakar, 1974). The motivation of my family and community was to make a mercenary in the foreign armies, which is a source of lucrative earning. I was an inseparable part of that tradition but the course of life story turns towards another direction because the *laure* culture is a system from which I was influenced and my way of living was shaped. Thus, the system is conditioned by the structure (Giddens, 1986). Along with the change of locations, I got opportunities to devise different stories because the new context fed me new experiences. As a child migrant, my new pathway of life began in the recipient community, Sagdi. After discussing child migration in this section, I have presented educational migration in the subsequent section, which helped me to acquire the new knowledge and skills in the new place.

Educational Migration: Experiencing the Urban Life

After the completion of the primary and lower secondary level education in the village, the journey of my educational migration began. To attain the secondary level education, I went to Shantipur and Bharse of Gulmi District, which was the second internal migration. In the initial days, I had to walk on foot every day from the village, Sagdi to the small town, Shantipur. On an average, I had to walk on foot for about four hours up and down. Except for walking on foot, I did not have any other alternatives. As time passes by, I managed to live in the hostel as a student migrant. From this place, I completed the eighth and ninth grades. In this place, I had an opportunity to be acquainted with new friends, teachers, and local people. Also, I knew the new cultural contexts and the ways of people's living. For the first time, in Shantipur, I had an opportunity to be mixed up with the diverse groups of people and cultures other than in my village. As a newcomer, I faced some challenges of adaptation in Shantipur, in the initial days, because it was a small town with the intersection of some villages. And, the context and people

were different and they were new to me. In the beginning, I did not have any relatives and acquaintances except the formal relationship with teachers. Likewise, it became eye-opening for me in the area of educational attainment because some of my teachers showed me the new pathway to move and grow further.

In addition to this, the journey of my educational migration continued. In 1988, I went to Bharse for the tenth grade. Along with the formal learning in the school, living in the new context, gave me a new insight into the new cultural performances, practices, behaviours of local people and their ways of living. Likewise, I also knew more about the geographical, cultural, economic, and educational contexts of Bharse. It was quite easy for me to adjust there because so many of my relatives helped me to settle there. And, family kinship ties also made me easier to adjust there. I was from a Magar village and so was Bharse. There were marital as well as hereditary relationships between these two villages. In the beginning, my schooling began living in a relative's house. The movement to Bharse was the third internal migration in the journey of my life. From Bharse, I appeared in the

examination of the school level certificate. And, I completed high school graduation i.e. school leaving certificate. After this, I went back home. Simply saying, going back home is a normal process of a student migrant of secondary school. The nature of student migration becomes temporary as well as circular migration.

While I was in New Delhi, India, I received a letter from home that informed me that I had passed the school leaving certificate board examinations which is considered to be the iron gate in the Nepali context. The result of the school leaving certificate was published in June 1989. In such a jovial situation, I requested my parents to send me to Kathmandu for higher studies. My parents accepted my proposal. After parents' consent, I went to Kathmandu to enrol in the intermediate level as a student migrant, which was the fourth internal migration. Going to Kathmandu and living there became possible because of the network with relatives. One of my relatives, who was familiar with Kathmandu, escorted me up to there. From the network, I took the basic information about the localities and cultural contexts of Kathmandu. At this point, I faced the challenges about which stream of

education to be opted for because I had multiple choices. For a while, I remained in dilemmas but in the end, I decided to study intermediate of arts under the discipline of humanities and social sciences. Sometimes, the system creates confusion in individuals (Giddens, 1986), which had happened to me too. Despite the fact, I got admission in Ratna Rajya Laxmi Campus at Pardarshani Marg. I studied there up to the bachelor's level as an educational migrant. In this tenure, I was delving into the new educational and cultural contexts. Academically, it was a leap forward to boost up my academic career. The campus life of Kathmandu helped me make a network with new friends and local people further. To support this story, I have added a statement of Tilly (2007), as he articulated that migration is a process of making the new network. As an educational migrant, I left no stone unturned for making a new network. To make a new life successful, I delved into the new cultural context of Kathmandu. It became possible through the network with the new groups of people.

In Kathmandu, I experienced that the lifestyle of people was new to me. Instead of walking on foot, I began to

use vehicles such as cycles, tempos, and public buses. Without changing my behaviours and lifestyles, it was difficult for me to adapt to the new context of Kathmandu. Eventually, I began to change my behaviours to adapt to Kathmandu. As Hedberg and Kepsu (2003) shared their views that the cultural migration has multi-dimensional cause for adaptation. Particularly, the pattern of migration was rural-to-urban, so it was futile to expect similar types of system and practice of the village in Kathmandu because as much as the distance increases, divergent cultural practices are found. The close ties are better in the short distance than in the long (Ravenstein, 1889). At that time, going from Baglung to Kathmandu was a distant location. Crossing the distance means to engage in the new contexts.

At this stage, abandoning the rural context, traditional or agrarian systems, I entered into the of inferiority complex embedded into my mind, on the one hand, but on the other hand, I had an opportunity of taking double benefits such as knowledge of both origin/sending and receiving urban life of Kathmandu. I delved into modern systems and global touch. As a newcomer, I had come up with the old

experiences of the origin/sending community, and the new community fed me the new ways of living. Simply, migrants experience buffer states of dual behaviours after they arrive in the new community (Samchez, 2009). As an educational migrant, I not only achieved educational outcome but also, I became familiar with the cultural contexts and systems of the urban setting. On the contrary, as a student, I usually faced a crisis of money because I used to be fully dependent on parents' resources, as I had to buy everything from the market. After presenting the stories about educational migration, I have discussed the stories of labour and circular migration in which I held multiple occupations at this stage of life.

Labour Migration and Returnee Migrant: Acquiring Occupational Experiences

In the previous section, I discussed educational migration. In this section, I have discussed labour and circular migration. In March 1988, the fragile politics of the country forced me to leave the village or the country itself because, from the student life, I used to voice out against the absolute monarchy

and the *panchayat* system. The *panchayat* system had banned the democratic or multiparty system imposing its one-party system. According to Giddens (1986), an individual becomes a victim of the system. Nonetheless, those people, who used to oppose the system, did not have a favourable situation. They either had to live cautiously or leave the country because they could be detained. In such a condition, my parents forced me to leave the village for safe living. Because of this, I went to Delhi, India where I spent about four months as an international migrant. In this journey, for the first time in my life, I saw a tractor and travelled in this vehicle. It also was the first time; I crossed the border of Nepal. This was my first international migration. For this, I was escorted by a villager up to New Delhi. And, one of my villagers received me in Delhi, who had already settled there. After that, I began to spend days in Delhi. I did not have any ideas about what to do and what not to do, what to eat, and where to live there. The first and foremost condition was that I should find a place to live in and look for the work in the new place. It was totally a new place for me. People were new and the cultural context was different. I neither knew the local

language of India, Hindi nor was familiar with the local systems. I was there with a blank mind and blind eyes. The situation was not favourable to me there. As Svasek and Domecka (2013) articulated that crossing the borders, one still carries along all the unsolved problems, which sooner or later have to be addressed. In Delhi, the other Nepalese fellows, who had migrated there before, supported me to settle there.

With the help of a villager, I began to make a network with other villagers, who had already gone to Delhi. I met them and requested to look for a job for me. Finally, I got a job in an office. I worked as an office boy as well as a dishwasher. Sometimes, I was assigned to fetch water from the pump in the bucket from the ground floor to the top of the house. I had to do manual work there. In a sense, I made the status of a labour migrant. For the first time in my life, I was engaged in such a work being away from the home. Even, my educational qualifications, knowledge, skills, and experiences, that I possessed in Nepal, did not work in the new place, India. From this, I understood that, though I spent a short time in Delhi, but it gave me tremendous learning. At the moment, I can imagine, how labour

migrants face such challenges in the new context.

Even today, I can still remember those days that I spent in Delhi. I faced challenges in the job because of the language barrier. I neither could speak the local language nor could the staff in the office speak and understand my language. I was not given any orientations about the official systems and the work to be performed. From day one, I was deployed at work without any orientations. The other way around, the snobbery of local people is a challenge for migrants. The local people pretend to be knowledgeable and superior in front of newcomers. Sometimes, they showed their bossy attitudes. It was not easy for me to adjust there. I was excluded from the local people and their behaviours. As Inchley (2014) remarked that migrants are often victims of exclusion by the recipient community. I was passing the time there. After the fourth month of stay in Delhi, I decided to come home.

Returning home, I engaged myself in farm-related activities such as collecting grasses, fodders, and firewood from forests and grasslands; taking domestic animals for grazing to pasture lands; planting and harvesting crops; digging

and tilling the fields and farms, and fetching water from the stream in the pitcher. Besides this, I used to go to work in the fields throughout the day. Usually, I used to get up early in the morning and work till the late evening. Mostly, I used to store food items in the barns and baskets, which were collected from the fields and farms. In a study, Rubin (1986) articulated that a complete understanding of autobiographical memory would require knowledge of basic memory processes in the individual as well as of influences of the society in which individual lives (p. 1). My everyday life was 'closely linked with the agricultural activities; whereas other activities were scheduled after the farm-related activities' (Parajuli, 2002). There were very few options for agriculture in the village.

Even today, I remember, I had enough knowledge about trees, herbs, and shrubs, types of stones and mud, local insects, birds, and animals, where I was grown up. And, I knew the usage of these things in everyday living. I also had knowledge and skills of using the tools and implements such as sickle, spade, plough, and other tools. In the village, I was engaging in the occupational system, which was a continuation of the forefather's turn.

Even after, returning home, I followed the same occupation, which I used to practice before migration. In addition to this, I became familiar with ritual functions i.e. birth celebrations, marriage ceremonies, and death processions. Proactively, I engaged myself to celebrate local festivals such as *Dashain, Tihar, Maghesakranti, New Year, Sawane Sakranti, Teej*, and many small festivals in an original way. I learned these practices from my elders through informal learning, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the formal education of schools and campus, and exposures of the new places opened my eyes to oversee the same pattern of work differently. At the time of returning home, I brought the new knowledge and skills to my home village. Besides this, I broadened the horizon of thinking.

In the village, there were not many options for agro-farming activities. At a time, there was a vacancy announcement published for a teacher in a school. I applied for that position. I was fortunate to be selected as a teacher there. I taught there for two years. After joining that school, my social and professional status enriched. Hence, students and local people began to address me as 'Sir'. Educational

migration elicited me to make a new identity in the village. I began to live up in the old village with a new identity. Besides, educational migration had helped me to cultivate the new knowledge and skills, which I used in the village. The formal education, knowledge, and skills, that I acquired, became useful, particularly in the teaching profession. Imperatively, I not only used the knowledge and skills but also my horizon of thinking became wider after living in the new places within and outside the country. Anyway, migration ingrains additional knowledge and skills in me. I discussed labour migration and returnee migrant in the current section, and in the subsequent section, I have presented professional migration and postgraduate studies.

Professional Migration and Postgraduate Studies: Building a New Identity

In the previous section, I discussed labour migration and returnee migrant. In the current section, I have discussed professional migration and postgraduate studies. In my lifetime, as a professional worker, I visited different parts of the country, Nepal, and spent many years,

where I got opportunities to observe people's behaviours, living styles, cultures, and activities. In addition to this, I saw many people, who have been moving here and there in search of a better livelihood, happiness, and prosperity. Many of them used to go to nearby locations and some of them have crossed long distances to maintain the means of survival. In 1999, I spent two years in the district headquarters of Baglung. Living there, I worked with government offices every day. One of my tasks was to make a network or a sound relationship with different governmental authorities and the people. I believe; the job of the migrant is to make a broader network and relationship with the new groups of people (Coleman, 1988; Putnam, 2000). Essentially, I experienced that building a network is a precondition for a migrant.

In the journey of my life, in October of 2001, I joined a non-governmental organization in Kathmandu after the completion of my Master's Degree. It was totally a new experience for me. After spending about six months in Kathmandu, the organization transferred me out of the valley for professional work but I did not go to my village. I went to Lamjung and Butwal for work

respectively. From that organization, I got opportunities to visit many places from the east to west and, from the north to south. I spent a huge chunk of time in Lamjung, Butwal, and Bhaktapur respectively. I became familiar with the diverse natural, socio-cultural, professional, and economic contexts of these places. From there, I also learned a new way of living there. I understood that the cultural and environmental contexts of Lamjung were not similar to that of Butwal whereas the cultural and environmental contexts of Butwal were dissimilar to the context of Bhaktapur. As a professional migrant, it was my obligation to familiarize myself with these circumstances. As Massey (1999) claimed that individual obligations enforce migration. In the journey of my professional life, I had to move towards the new places.

Likewise, I got opportunities to visit different countries such as Thailand, the USA, the Philippines, Cambodia, and India. In some countries, I have spent some months and, in many countries, I have spent a few weeks. In the initial days of visits, I found difficulties in the customs of some countries because I was not familiar with the systems. So, the system usually becomes a constraint

for settlement, which is substantiated by Giddens (1986). The culture, language, and customary practices of the countries where I visited were new to me. In such a state, I understood that a migrant should be familiar with locations, cultures, systems, behaviours, and habits of the people of the new community because knowing other people and diverse contexts makes a migrant easier to settle. While I delved into the professional field, I made networks with different cultural groups and professionals. I took a lot of insights from them because I worked with both junior and senior-level staff. Not only this but also, I worked with the people of poor strata. The other way around, I met high-level dignitaries of the country. In the journey of professional work, I became away from both old and new homes. From this, I realized that, in my professional life, a profession pushes someone to different places because a person becomes a slave of the system and a servant of an institution. In front of the organizational system, the personal choice does not work. The organizational decision supersedes the individual interests. According to Giddens (1986), the structure consists of professional norms in which an individual demonstrates his/her roles. In my professional

migration, I did not have personal choice, as I was dictated by the organizational system.

In around 2008, the organization decided to transfer from Butwal to Kathmandu. This transfer gave me a golden opportunity for academic growth. Another level of educational migration began at this stage. In Kathmandu, along with engagement in the professional sector, I advanced my academic career further. I joined the university for a Master of Philosophy leading to Doctor of Philosophy. In the later part of my doctoral studies, I dropped the job and have been continuing Doctoral Studies.

As an educational migrant, I went to different places of Nepal for secondary, campus, and university education. These levels of education helped me to develop new knowledge and skills. In addition to this, I got exposures to different places, cultural practices, and social systems within and outside the country. These exposures helped me to generate new ideas and to broaden the horizon of thoughts. Likewise, the knowledge, skills, and exposures helped me to engage in the chosen professional field. The remuneration, I received from the organization, was used in everyday

living. I began to save some amounts because of which I bought a house in Kathmandu. Pertinently, the professional migration helped me to improve the economic conditions.

Assertively, I began to settle in Kathmandu because of three reasons; the first reason was that my job placement was in Kathmandu; the second reason was that I joined the university for postgraduate studies; and the family interest also signified to settle in Kathmandu. After this, my life took a turn. And, the personal and family obligation was to be familiar with the local cultural contexts and people and, to accept them in everyday living. Now, my life in Kathmandu began to be mind-blowing. I started to engage in the local customary practices. Besides this, I began to be away from the customs of my village and forgot the things, which I used to do in the village because I did not have to do the same thing in Kathmandu. The living pattern is different in Kathmandu because I have to use the new recipe. In the morning, I take breakfast items, which are different from the items that I used to have in the village. In addition to this, leaving agriculture-related activities, I have been engaging in the digital-based activities such as working on the

computer, using mobile phones, and watching television. I usually use the internet to surf Facebook, Messenger, Viber, Skype, and emails. In such a state, I see less application of informal knowledge and skills of the village in the cities, where I have been living today because the cultural context of Kathmandu significantly varies. I have been engaging in non-farming activities in the new community. The life, I have been living in Kathmandu, varies. However, the stamina, I developed in the old village, has helped me to live in the city, Kathmandu.

In Kathmandu, as a migrant, I have made a new identity i.e. 'Baglunge'. I have made is distinct in the new community, Kathmandu. For locals, I am an alien. The locals are also new to me. I have been living a blended life, as duality is a feature of migrants (Giddens, 1986). The life, I have been living, is a hybrid. The hybridism is a characteristic of migrants (Hickman, 2005), what I feel. I neither left the old habits nor adopted the new systems and practices. Thus, I have been living a dual life. This is a space that I made as a professional migrant. In this section, I discussed professional migration and postgraduate studies. I have presented

my experiences as a migration in the subsequent section.

Migration: What Does It Mean to Me?

In the previous section, I discussed professional migration and postgraduate studies, which helped me to make a new position in the new community. In this section, I have discussed migration-what does it mean to me as a migrant? In my lifetime, migration became an instrument to connect between/among different places. It facilitated me to connect the origin community from the recipient community. Besides this, I knew that my mother's maternal home was in Sagdi, where she was brought up. After the marriage with my father, she had gone to Kaule, which means, my parents had a kinship relationship in Sagdi. As time passes by, from Sagdi, my parents and I extended forward (new place) networks with relatives and acquaintances of other places. From the current places, I also made backward (native place) networks with the origin/sending communities. As a migrant, I made both forward and backward networks. In the words of Coleman (1988) and Putnam (2000), it is a social capital because it signifies a social network, which is a resource. In

addition to this, wherever I went, I made social relations with individuals, different groups of people, and institutions there to maintain professional as well as personal matters. The professional business, as usual, helped me to create individuals as well as institutional connections. As Faist (2019) articulated that migration needs to be placed for social transformations. Because of migration, I made significant positive changes in my life. From this, I understood that migration is a connector, which ties people. Thus, migration facilitated me to build a relationship with the different groups of people.

Because of migration, I took exposures to national and international communities from which I became familiar with the new cultural practices and behaviours of people. I somehow shared culture with the new groups of people. As Giddens et al. (2018) claimed that migration is a process of promoting the culture. Likewise, educational migration became a supportive tool for me to obtain knowledge and skills as well as analytical capabilities. In addition to this, labour and circular migration cultivated a sense in me on how I should pour my toils to shape life. So

far, professional migration cultivated professionalism in me from which I made better earnings. This also helped me to make better economic arrangements. I realized, migration created an avenue for me to create better educational and professional opportunities. It became possible after my migration. Thus, migration became bliss to me.

On the contrary, after migration, I faced some challenges in the new communities. One of the main difficulties, which I faced in the new communities, was the new behaviours of people. And, the local people did not feel sound about me. In this connection, as a testimony, I want to add my personal experience. Undoubtedly, my verbal expression was shaped by the local dialect, which I learned from my predecessors, neighbours, and villagers but the way, I speak, does not suit for the people of the new communities, which I faced at the workplace, college, university, and in the new community. Sometimes, I felt insulted by some people in the new places. Some new people took me as a person, who cannot pronounce the words and speak properly. The way, I used to speak in the origin community, sounds good to all my family members, neighbours, and

villagers because all of them speak in a similar way, which I do. Seemingly, the integration of migrants is a challenge because the newcomers come up with different habits and behaviours (Haines et al., 2007; Levin, 2013). After migration, I missed the nativity of the origin community, which I used to perform and practice. Migration made me difficult to cope with the new setting. I have experienced multiple challenges of integration in the new places. In another end, migration became a plight to me. Thus, I am living a blended life of bliss and plight in the recipient communities even today.

In the End

Today, where I am living is the result of migration because I am away from the birthplace followed by the workplaces. In the journey of migration, I came through multiple stages such as a child migrant, an educational migrant, a labour migrant, a circular migrant, and a professional migrant. Since my childhood, I have been perpetually moving from one place to another. As Subedi (1988) also unfolded that migration has an incessant feature for better living. It will continue on other days. It also creates both joyful and painful moments. In other words, I can

say, migration is a combined form of bliss and plight.

In my case, migration did not happen not because of my own decisions only but now and then, it had happened because of systematic as well as societal constructions, which have been authenticated by the structuration theory of Giddens (1986) because, for me, migration is no more a single decision only, as I was dictated by the systems. The contemporary social and economic conditions can push me further on other days. At the cost of structure, an individual becomes weak. According to Subedi (1993), migration is a part of everyday living. The existing situation becomes powerful in migration. I agree with the view that ‘migration is not one-stop-shop’ (Benton et al., 2015), because a migrant does not stick in one place. In the journey of my life, I spent some years in one place and other years in other places. Thus, I came to the conclusion that after birth, every person moves from their birthplace to other places but the duration and locations of movement vary. In childhood, my decision did not work for in the journey of migration because I was dependent on parents. At the active or youth age, I became independent to make migration decisions. Likewise, the professional

organizations in which I engaged, made the decisions for migration. For future migration, I cannot predict, where I will go and live till the end of my life, because at an elderly age, my decision does not work, as I will be dependent on my children. In the childhood age, I was dependent, whereas, at an active age, I became independent, and at an elderly age, again, I am going to be dependent on children. In the end, the journey of my migration may continue in the future, which can be an unending mission till the end of my life.

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