

ISSN 0302-9298

Contemporary SOCIAL SCIENCES

Global Impact Factor : 0.765; General Impact Factor : 2.495
Index Copernicus ICV : 62.45; NAAS Rating : 2.88; InfoBase Index : 3.64

Founder
S. S. Shashi

Chief Editor
Dharam Vir

Volume 29, Number 1 (January-March), 2020



Research Foundation International, New Delhi

Affiliated to United Nations Organization (UNO)

(Autonomous, Regd. Recognized Charitable Organization of
Social Scientists, Authors, Journalists & Social Activists)

Contemporary Social Sciences

Double-blind Reviewed, Indexed & Refereed Quarterly International Journal

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Contemporary Social Sciences (CSS) is a quarterly peer reviewed & refereed international journal published since 1972 under the auspicious of Research Foundation (an autonomous, registered (1972), recognized charitable organization of social scientists, authors, journalists and social activists). The journal is published regularly in the months of March, June, September and December. The annual subscription is ₹ 2000 in India and US \$ 80 abroad, including postage by Registered Post/Airmail. All the subscriptions must be prepaid in favour of M/S Saksham Computers, payable at Meerut.

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ISSN 0302-9298; DOI : 10.29070/CSS

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Journal of National Development

Aims and Scope

The Journal of National Development (JND) is an interdisciplinary bi-annual peer reviewed & refereed international journal committed to the ideals of a 'world community' and 'universal brotherhood'. The Journal is a joint effort of like-minded scholars in the field of social research. Its specific aims are to identify, to understand and to help the process of nation-building within the framework of a 'world community' and enhance research across the social sciences (Sociology, Anthropology, Political Science, Psychology, History, Geography, Education, Economics, Law, Communication, Linguistics) and related disciplines like all streams of Home Science, Management, Computer Science, Commerce as well as others like Food Technology, Agricultural Technology, Information Technology, Environmental Science, Dairy Science etc. having social focus/implications. It focuses on issues that are global and on local problems and policies that have international implications. By providing a forum for discussion on important issues with a global perspective, the *JND* is a part of unfolding world wide struggle for establishing a just and peaceful world order. Thus, the *JND* becomes a point of confluence for the rivulets from various disciplines to form a mighty mainstream gushing towards the formulation and propagation of a humanistic world- view.

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Subscription and Business Correspondence GIF : 2.8186

The annual subscription is ₹ 1500 in India and US\$ 80 abroad, including postage by Speed-Post/Airmail. Special issue in Hindi is free with annual subscription. All the subscriptions must be prepaid in favour of *The Journal of National Development*, payable at Meerut.

ISSN 0972-8309; GIF : 0.842; NAAS Rating : 3.12; IBI FACTOR : 3.46

All correspondence pertaining to subscription, change of address, purchase of back numbers, books for review and advertisements should be addressed to :

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Social Change and its Impact on Post Disaster Reconstruction in Nepal

*Dipesh Kumar Ghimire**

In the midday of April 25, 2015 central part of Nepal faced the great earthquake of 7.6 magnitudes and a major aftershock of magnitude 6.8 on the following May 12. The private and public buildings including archaeological assets were destroyed. The Government of Nepal formed the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) on December 25, 2015 for reconstruction after earthquake. The government along with the foreign aids allocated budget too. Though, the reconstruction works could not advance as targeted. This article tried to find out the social causes of delay post disaster reconstruction in Nepal. The five reasons have been identified as major cause behind it. These are weakening social bond, network and relation in rural community, feminization of village, changing nature of patron-client relationship, passiveness of local and native social/cultural institutions and lack of home insurance.

[**Keywords** : Earthquake, Reconstruction, Social Change, Disaster, Nepal]

1. Background

In the midday of April 25, 2015 central part of Nepal faced the great earthquake of 7.6 magnitude and a major aftershock of

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magnitude 6.8 on the following May 12. Due to this terrifying quake and following aftershocks, around 9 thousand people were killed and approximately 23 thousand people got injured. This havoc had direct impact on nearly one third of total population of Nepal (NPC, 2015).

The government of Nepal published, in Nepal Gazette, an act relating to reconstruction of the earthquake affected structures 2015 on December 20, 2015. Article 3 of NRA Act has provision of the establishment of the NRA for the reconstruction of the damage caused by earthquake and the term of authority is given for 5 years. According to the provision in the act, the NRA was formed in Nepal on December 25, 2015. NRA is the authentic government agency for managing the earthquake recovery and reconstruction in Nepal. During the four years after the disaster, the reconstruction works planned are being enforced in a very tardy manner. Total 767,705 houses were enlisted as eligible for housing grant (NRA 2018). The earthquake recovery proceeded unsatisfactorily therefore the government of Nepal was highly criticized (Gautam and Kumar, 2017; and Acharya, 2017). Regmi (2016) argues that the top-down approach of development has created many problems to sustainable reconstruction and the bottom level is most affected by this modernist approach in reconstruction. Among 76,7705 houses envisaged to be reconstructed, construction of 90,267 houses have been completed till 2018 which is only 11.75 percent of total (Kantipur Daily, 2018). Even though the government is providing NRs. 3 lakh grant each for reconstruction of the residential houses, the result of reconstruction seems very poor. The main aim of this research is to find out the social causes of delayed post disaster reconstruction of residential houses in Nepal.

2. Methodology

The study has chosen qualitative methodologies as the research targets to collect primary as well as secondary data from the sources. For this research, researcher used mainly qualitative data for explaining the situation. This research used both primary as well as secondary data. Similarly, primary data were collected from interview with earthquake affected local people, local level politicians, experts, journalists, government officials and observations. For that researcher conducted 19 semi-structured interviews with earthquake affected people including other villagers. Total 9

key informants' interview was also conducted with the experts. Similarly, researcher organized 3 Focused Group Discussions (FGD) in the study site. Researcher design open-ended questions checklist for collecting the data from FGD.

Similarly, researcher observed the construction works and situations in the study areas. In this study, researcher used the case study as one of the data collection tools and techniques for describing the real situation of the research area. Specific cases of individual were mentioned as and when appropriate. The information about the specific cases was collected through interviews and field work.

3. Understanding Disaster and Social Change

There are different concepts on defining the term disaster based on time and space. Disasters usually create unexpected large-scale destruction and disruption within short period of time like tsunami, earthquake, or tornado. It implicitly or explicitly disrupts the general trajectory of people's life. The term "Disaster" is frequently used to refer to the occurrence of natural phenomena. Thus, events such as hurricane, landslide, earthquake, tsunami, volcanic eruption and flood have been considered direct synonyms for disaster (Darcy, 2008). Disaster describes the interaction of different natural as well as socio-economic factors leading to a serious disruption.

The study of disaster can be carried through two different perspectives. First is the classical or non-sociological and second one is modern or sociological perspective. Aleman (1999 cited in Darcy, 2008) considers disaster as "acts of God". Though, other scholars like Blaikie et al. (1994) challenge to classic framework emphasizing that disaster is socially constructed rather than "act of God". He argues that the disaster events such as hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, landslides serve as trigger for disaster; disaster itself is constructed in social conditions and processes like deforestation, environmental degradation, factors that encourage settlement in hazardous areas, poverty and other forms of social inequality, low capacity of self-help among subgroups within populations, and failures in physical and social protective system. Disaster is predominately a result of socio-economic factors rather than natural. Similarly, social and economic inequality has led to an increase in disaster over time (Phil et al., 1979).

Sociologists are always studying change. They must do so, since nothing ever stays the same for long. Even though social life is

structured, it is still in continual flux. Emile Durkheim (1933) in his book *Division in Labor* argued that social structure depends on the division of labor in a society. In society where there is minimal division of labor, a collective consciousness develops that emphasizes group solidarity. Durkheim termed this collective frame of mind as mechanical solidarity, implying that all individuals perform the same tasks. The group will be the dominating force in society. Both social interaction and negotiation are based on close, intimate, face-to-face social contacts. Since there is little specialization, there are few social roles. As societies become more advanced technologically, they rely on greater division of labor. According to Durkheim it is an organic solidarity. In this solidarity, social interactions become less personal than in societies characterized by mechanical solidarity. In Durkheim's terms, mechanical solidarity is replaced by organic solidarity, a collective consciousness resting on the need a society's members have for one another.

Ferdinand Tonnies (1988) views the city marked a dramatic change from the idea of a close-knit community, which is a *Gemeinschaft*, to that of an impersonal mass society, known as a *Gesellschaft*. The *Gemeinschaft* is typical of rural life. It is a small community in which people have similar backgrounds and life experiences. Social control is maintained through informal means such as moral persuasion, gossip and even gestures. In contrast, the *Gesellschaft* is an ideal community that is characteristic of modern urban life. In this community most people are strangers who feel little in common with other residents. Relationships are governed by social roles that grow out of immediate tasks, such as purchasing a product or arranging a business meeting. Social change is an important aspect of life in the *Gesellschaft*; it can be strikingly evident even within a single generation.

The rural area of Nepal is also vulnerable to the change from rural to urban. Nepali society has been transforming as said by Durkheim and Tonnies. This study has tried to find out the effects of change of rural Nepali society into modern society in the post-disaster reconstruction; specifically in the reconstruction of private houses. It has attempted to find out the relationship between social transformation and delay post-disaster reconstruction. The study was conducted in one of the earthquakes affected districts, Sindhupalchowk district, Barabishche municipality ward number 8 Maneshwara.

Sindhupalchok District was the most affected District during earthquake. According to the population census 2011, there are 66688 households in the District with a total population of 287798. Of the total population, 138351 are male and 149447 females. Similarly, there are 789 households in Maneshwora with 1577 male and 1816 female population (CBS, 2014). The record and data show that 859 people were injured, 3,425 were dead and 63,885 houses were collapsed with partial damage to 2,751 houses in 2015 earthquake. Regarding the data in Maneshwora, a total of 34 people was injured, 57 were dead with 914 houses were destroyed. Regarding the reconstruction in this village, 53 households had taken the third installment while 132 households had only taken the second installment of grant until 30 December, 2018.

4. Weakening Social Bond, Network and Relation in Rural community

Basically, the traditional society has strong social bond. People usually help each other with willingness. In problems, there is strong cooperation among people and this relationship is mobilized for solving the problems. The rural Nepalese society in the past was based on social relationships with robust social capital. There was dense feeling of cooperation among people. When people in the village got sick, for example, the whole village would help take him/her to the hospital. Bourdieu (1986: 248) argues that social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition- or in other words, to membership in a group.' Emphasizing the role of network in the utilization of given resources they accommodated role played by relationships. Institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition like social networks and relationships would help for resisting the natural disasters. But in the latest time, decrease in such social capital has affected to the reconstruction process.

Barabise was also highly affected by the devastating earthquake. The government had declared a loan support of 10 thousand each in the beginning for the affected households. It was not possible for building houses with that mere amount. After August 1988 earthquake event which had similar kind of destruction as of 2015 earthquake, the reconstruction works advanced in a very

good pace. The feeling of help, cooperation and social relationship had played important role. A local person says:

Almost one fourth of houses were destroyed during 1988 earthquake. There was no considerable support from the government for reconstruction. But all the destroyed houses were re-built within one year after the earthquake. The community people helped each other. The people from whole village would help for construction works. Thus, there was no shortage of manpower which helped in speedy reconstruction (Talk on 24 November, 2018).

There was a decent social bond in the past. The liberalism and privatization extended during 1990s which let global market hunt Nepal. Until then, the country was depended on subsistence economy. When Tatopani border's (China-Nepal Border) Custom Service opened, people involved in agriculture previously, started business. People from Maneshwora migrated to Barabishe and started small businesses. Some of them adopted driving profession. There had been variability in ways of livelihood.

The variability in livelihood as well as transformation in economic activities affected the society. The existing social relationships, networks, structures slowly started breaking. People started earning money and hiring manpower for their agricultural and other domestic works in wages. Thus, the labor was sold and bought with money. The help and cooperation among people that existed in the past went on diminishing. This change in society is one major reason for delay reconstruction after 2015 earthquake in Nepal. A teacher from local school says :

Agriculture was the major basis of livelihood in our village before the Tatopani Custom Service started. People started earning money and thus the people started getting help from people by paying money. This brought drastic change in the village that can be seen in reconstruction of houses. Nobody wants to remain in village and help others since they get money if they go to work in the nearby cities like Banepa and Kathmandu or even abroad. People are earning money but losing the social capital. This has major role in delay reconstruction (Based on talk held on 25 November, 2018).

The tradition of parma has been disappearing from the village which was very strong in the past. All villagers would build one house after the other working together. There was no scarcity of

manpower then. The change in labor exchange system has created scarcity of manpower in the village. An 81 years old man from Maneshwora had reconstructed his house within one year of earthquake in 1988 who is yet to reconstruct his house after three years of 2015 earthquake. He says :

People worked as parma in the past. All villagers would work for each other in all sorts of work like farming and constructing houses. This tradition has been disappearing for 15 to 20 years in our village. I am yet to reconstruct my house until three years after the earthquake just because I am not getting labor (Based on talk held on 25 November ,2018).

Case Study-1 : Reconstruction with the help of Parma

Sukekhola is very remote village in Barabishe Municipality ward no. 8, Maneshwora. There are no vehicles during rainy season in this place. Majority of youth either go to nearby cities like Kathmandu or are abroad in search of employment. There are all together 34 tamang households in this village most of which contain only women, children and senior citizen. Though, this was only a settlement in Maneshwora where the reconstruction of houses was found completed during the study. People in this village had received the first installment only. They completed their reconstruction by helping each other. Youth returned to the village after earthquake and helped each other for reconstruction. All 34 houses were built within 6 months of earthquake. "Parma was about to extinct from the village, but our sons and grandsons completed all houses through parma," said a senior citizen of Sukekhola.

There was strong kinship in the village. The relatives were ready to help when needed. Thus, people could be revived easily from simple problems. This kinship system has also been disappearing from the village in the latest time except in this community. The relatives are busy in their own profession and can help financially but cannot present physically to help. This change has brought hindrances in reconstruction works too. An elderly woman of age 65 from the village who is still not able to reconstruct her house says :

In the past relatives helped in any kinds of difficulties willingly and we did the same. We went to my parents' house to help them reconstruct their house in 2045 earthquake. Nobody is available to help us now. In the past, people had no money but

had good faith. Now people have only money, so how are we going to complete our house? (Based on talk held on 24 November, 2018).

In this way, the extension of market and capitalism has led to the destruction of social capital which in turn has affected the reconstruction works in the villages.

5. Feminization of Village

Due to globalization and extension of liberal economic system, male members of households have migrated to city areas and abroad in search of employment. The villages thus have been feminized. Not only for employment, have the youth migrated to cities for higher education too. The females are busy in household works and bringing up the children. The globalization has changed the facades of the villages.

Majority of youth from Maneshwora of Barabishe have gone abroad, some of them have gone to the cities like Banepa, Dhulikhel, Kathmandu among others. Many youths worked in Barabishe and Tatopani but since earthquake, the Tatopani custom was blocked and thus they migrated to nearby cities. The total population of Maneshwora is 1734 which is almost void of male population. Lack of employment in local level, people are compelled to travel far in search of job. Of 32 houses visited during this study, the numbers of youths who have gone out of village in search of employment are enlisted in the table below.

Table-1 : Number of Youths who have migrated out of village for Employment

Abroad		Nearby Cites	
Male	Female	Male	Female
29	3	56	13

Source : Filed study 2018

Seeing the table-1 above, of 32 houses included in the study, 29 males have gone to abroad while the number is only 3 for females. Similarly, the number of males going to nearby cities in search of employment is 56 while the number of females is only 13. This table has made clear about unequal trend of migration of males and females for employment. Thus, the number of females in the village is greater than males.

Females along with elderly people are remained in the villages. The women are busy in household works like cooking, raising children, looking after elderly people, working in farm and raising animals. They are not able to get time out of household works for involving in construction works. Neither they have time to take skilled trainings. Of 19 houses visited, only 2 male people were found in house. One of them was teacher in local school while the next man worked in health post in the village. No other houses had male youth.

In the same way, 9 houses under construction were visited during the study in which no women worker was skilled. A total of 53 workers were found out of which 43 were female workers. If we see in percentage, it is 81.3 percent in total. The male workers were working as skilled labor while the females worked as unskilled labors.

An elderly woman in the village says :

There are no males in the village; they have migrated to cities and abroad in search of employment and for higher studies. Of my 3 sons, 2 are in Malaysia and 1 is in Kathmandu. We are not able to rebuild our house due to lack of manpower. The situation of neighbors is the same. Women are not skilled neither they are free out of household works to involve in construction. (Based on talk held on 26 November, 2018).

The works which were done by males from time being like ploughing the field with the help of ox is now done by females. If anybody is sick and must be carried to the hospital, there are only women to do it. Women carry agricultural products up to Barabishe to sell and carry back groceries to house by themselves. A teacher from local school says :

The trend of going abroad for employment started some 10 years ago. Since there are no good employment opportunities here, the boys right after completing their 10th grade start going abroad. At least one male member from each household has been abroad for employment. Even those who cannot afford the travel to abroad for employment do not stay at the village. The migration has been established as culture. (Based on talk held on 26 November, 2018).

Men were seasonable and surplus worker during the livelihood economics. They worked in farms for certain time and involved in construction works in the spare time. Thus, the globalization has

direct impact on feminization of villages which in turn has delayed the reconstruction.

6. Changing Nature of Patron-Client Relationship

The patron-client relationship existed in Nepal from time being which is being destructed these days. Patron refers to owners and client refers to those who worked for patron. People were depended on owners for their livelihood. This relationship seemed to have been ruling Nepali society for long in the past. This relationship basically existed based on ethnicity. Lower caste people were related to the high caste people in terms of livelihood. For example, the livelihood of blacksmith who did iron works, so called Damai who stitched clothes and so called Sarki who stitched shoes were depended and related to a so called Brahmin/Chhetri community. This kind of relationship is known as patron-client relationship.

If a patron's house was destroyed by any disaster, for example, the clients would come together to build his/her house. They got food grains or money in return. The rest of the people helped each other to build their houses. However, there has been drastic transformation in this kind of relationship in latest time. While the livelihood system has been transforming, the relationship within the rural Nepalese society has also been changing. A so called Brahmin elderly person of 72 years age says :

In the past, other community people would respect the Brahmin community. The elites and intellectuals would come together to discuss on any troublesome matters in the village. Everybody would obey their decision. The situation has been changed. The so called lower caste people are no longer depended on so called higher caste people for their livelihood and thus they are not going to help (Based on talk held on 25 November 2018).

The change in employment and livelihood process has brought drastic change in social relationship. The so called lower caste people have left their traditional work and adopted profession of their choice. They have come out of agriculture and livelihood economics. The untouchable caste system has been loosening. The social relationship, profession and structure are changed. The social activities and the mode of conducting them got changed too. A local so called Dalit of 63 years says :

In the past we did not have our own sources of livelihood neither we had our land. We were supposed to work on owner's land and the rest of time would be spent on domestic chores. We struggled to live with food grains and wages we got. We did everything as directed by our patron. Nowadays our son works in Kathmandu and two grandchildren are abroad for work. We do not have to depend on the owners for living. So, we are not able to help them in return (Based on talk held on 26 November, 2018).

In the rural areas, basically the people who involve in construction works are from so called lower caste family. The destruction of patron-client relationship in villages has compelled people to search for manpower in a different way. Local elderly man of 68 years from the so called Brahmin community says :

Dalits were depended on us in the past. They worked in our farms. Some of them worked on iron, some of them stitched clothes, and some made shoes, others worked for carrying loads. They would come to work for us as and when we desired. Nowadays there is not much value of land. Neither would they listen us as they did in the past. I requested them many times to come and help rebuild our house, but they did not listen. The time has changed (Based on talk held on 24 November, 2018).

Fundamentally there are two reasons for youth to go outside the villages. First one is that the basic salary rate is very low in the village compared to cities as well as compared to abroad. The next reason is that they get respectful living outside the village. They do not have to face caste-based discriminations in the cities or abroad. In this sense, the skilled youths who could get work in their village do not want to stick in the village.

Case Study-2 : Time has been transformed

My name is Min Bahadur Bishwokarma (name changed). I am 63 years old now. I am illiterate. I used to work for our owner since my childhood and helped father in his works of iron. I used to make agricultural tools like kodala, halo, hasiya, khukuri and helped my father. We did not need these kinds of tools because we did not have enough land that we could depend to live in. Thus, these were made for our owners. We worked in their farms and remaining time was spent in our workshop. I gave continuation to what my father did.

My owner's barn was destroyed in 1988 earthquake. We were asked for construction of the new barn. I have the skill of both the corker and mason. Me, my son and wife together helped him construct that barn. We worked in daily wage. It was completed within 5 months of the earthquake. Other owners also reconstructed their houses and barns in this way.

Later, the readymade iron tools were brought to village. We also started getting various works in Barabishe and Tatopani area like in grill shops and factories. The income was better than the village even for carrying loads. Thus, our community stopped depending on our owners. The owners no more needed us and the relationship between us got loosened. We went to Banepa, Kathmandu and Dhulikhel for work. Two of my grandsons are abroad for work. Since we have our own source of income, we do not have to depend on our owners.

Many houses were destroyed in 2015 earthquake too but the reconstruction of these is still incomplete. The truth is that Brahmin people do not have skills to build house. Skilled workers from our community do not want to stay in village and stand the discriminations. It has delayed the reconstruction work in fact.

7. Passiveness of Local and Native Social/Cultural Institutions

In the study area, there were original social organizations like guthi, kul and mukhiya. These organizations worked in groups for solving the social problems. These kinds of organizations are slowly being deactivated or destroyed.

The guthi in Newar community always worked for developing group cooperation. Brahmin community had kul as their social organization. Mukhiya was considered boss of the village and the decision made was accepted by the whole village. There was also the concept of Panchavaladmi in village years before. Five elites of the villages who were respected by the villagers would take decision which was accepted by all the villagers.

These kinds of organizations are being slowly extinct from the villages. An old man of 56 years from Newar community says :

Guthi was very important in the past. People nowadays do not know its value. They neither want to know about it nor adopt it.

The cooperation and support that used to be in the past inside the newar community is like story today. It is being disappeared from the village (Talk held on 26 November, 2018).

A local teacher talks about the effects of inactiveness of social organizations in reconstruction works :

The social organizations which were in the village are now being disappeared. Lack of cooperation has led to delay in reconstruction. Nobody can build a house alone; we need a group. (Based on talk held on 26 November 2018)

The inactiveness of social organization has replaced the existing labor exchange by wage labor. The wage labors do not want to stay in village, nor there anybody else to help. Lack of cooperation and coordination has hindered the reconstruction works.

8. Lack of Home Insurance

There is no provision of home insurance in the rural areas of Nepal. So, people need to carry the risk of disaster by themselves. The poor people who struggle whole life to build their house will have no means to rebuild it. The grant of 3 lakhs from government is not enough to build a house. It is estimated that 6 lakh rupees at a minimum is required to build the house at the standard set by the government spending which should be a great issue for people in the rural areas with no savings.

The organized home insurance system is yet to be developed in Nepal. Though the insurance concept is being extended, the home insurance in rural areas is still a topic of discussion not in practice. The life insurance and animal insurance concepts are being so popular in rural areas though. No house among 19 houses covered in this study had home insurance. A local woman (44) says :

We were not aware of home insurance. We have bought the life insurance premium, but we did not know about home insurance. To the best of my knowledge nobody in this village has bought the home insurance premium (Talk held on 26 November, 2018).

According to the study carried out by Degg (2009), the reconstruction works are rapid in the place where there exists home insurance while the reverse applies for the places where there is no home insurance. In this way, it seems that lack of home insurance has led to delay in reconstruction works.

9. Conclusion

The devastating earthquake 2015 affected 14 districts in Nepal. The private houses, schools, health posts and other public buildings were destroyed. Sindhupalchok district was among the most affected ones. There seem some social and political reasons for the delay of reconstruction works in the village, especially for private houses.

The first social reason is weakening of social bond, network and relation in rural community. In the latest time, the extension of market and capitalism has led to loosening of social bond, networks and relationships. The concepts of cooperation, trust, support and exchange are almost disappeared from the villages. There have been drastic changes in kinship system, the concept of neighborhood and village. While these kinds of social capital and relationships are being weakened, there has been delay in reconstruction after earthquake.

Second reason is the feminization of villages. While men villagers are going out of the villages to nearby cities as well as to abroad in search of employment opportunities, there are very less men in the village. The villages lack skilled or unskilled manpower which is next reason for delay reconstruction.

The third reason is figured out as changing nature of patron-client relationship in the village. Due to the diversification in employment and livelihood system, there have been drastic changes in social relationships. The so-called lower caste people within the caste system have left their traditional professions. They have been evolving in the profession of their choice. Thus, the relationship among the lower caste and upper caste people or the patron-client relationship concepts has been changing which in turn have delayed the reconstruction works.

The fourth reason is passiveness of local and native social/cultural institutions. There existed the native social organizations and relationships like guthi, kul, mukhiya which helped solving the problems of society collectively. The inactiveness and destruction of these kinds of social organizations and relationships has negative impacts on works after earthquake.

The fifth reason is lack of home insurance. The organized home insurance system has not yet been developed in Nepal. Though the insurance concept is rising among the settlements, the home

insurance is still a matter of discussion and has not been practiced widely. This has delayed in reconstruction process.

The Nepalese society is getting speedy transformation. The traditional values, practices, organizations, culture and networks are changing to new forms. In fact, Nepalese society is in transition. The situation of Nepal at present resembles the saying of Durkheim (1993) according to which, mechanical solidarity is replaced by organic solidarity, a collective consciousness resting on the need a society's members have for one another. Similarly, there has been transformation from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft* as said by another sociologist Ferdinand Tonnies (1988). According to him, *Gemeinschaft* is typical of rural life. In contrast, the *Gesellschaft* is an ideal community that is characteristic of modern urban life. This kind of social transformation has led to the delay in reconstruction works after 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to University Grant Commission, Nepal for providing the small research development & Innovation Grant for this research. Without this grant it would not be possible to complete this research. Similarly I am also thankful to Giriraj Adhikari for field arrangement of this study.

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