



GENDER AND RETURN MIGRATION: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE  
EDUCATED RETURNEE WOMEN IN NEPAL

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## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Gender and Return Migration: An Ethnographic Study of the Educated  
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The principal aim of this study is to explore women's access to mobility in the Nepali society associated with international educational migration and return. The study is located at the nexus of gender and mobility scholarship adopting gendered geographies of power as a foundational framework. This study has discussed the trajectories of the female returnee migrants basically focusing on the return phase of migration. It has illuminated the post-return experiences of women while readjusting in the Nepali society. Taking account of gender approach in the return migration, it reflects women's migration, return decision and readjustment in the Nepali society.

This study is conducted in the Kathmandu valley. It has adopted the qualitative methodology with feminist ethnographic approach. Data collection methods for the study were observation, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews. The women who had been abroad for their education and returned to Nepal after completion of their study were interviewed. Also, the researcher tries to understand the returnees' negotiation in the process of return and reintegration in the society and family through observations. The interpretive paradigm is applied while revealing the changing gender structure among the educated women in the Nepali society.

Among the four empirical chapters, the first chapter discusses on the women's decision of migration and return to home. The family decision and personal aspiration were the major factors in their decision of migration. While their personal and professional career choices were predominant in their decision to return. The second chapter discusses the individual's social and academic skills and knowledge achieved during abroad study. The third chapter discusses the returnee women's challenges while implementing their knowledge and skills as part of their readjustment in the Nepali society. The final chapter explores how women renegotiate for transforming gender roles in the Nepali society. Education and access of mobility are the major capitals of the women from which they aspire to change the society and family. The notion of contribution after the abroad education was predominantly raised by these women.

In recent years, there has been the increased number of women migration for work and study across the globe. It is applicable in the Nepali context as well. The burgeoning literatures have reflected the trend of labor migration and economic remittance in Nepal. However, migration studies in the Nepali context have excluded the issues of education migration bringing gender perspective into discussion. This research is expected to contribute the growing body of scholarship on gender geography and mobility. It has revealed the subjective knowledge regarding international education, migration and gender roles in the Nepali society.

The study has brought the interdisciplinary approach in migration research through the discussion of gender, education and return migration. The analysis of the study has not incorporated the traditional approach of the migration study, where the push and pull factors are considered to be determinant. This study has dealt with the social, psychological and anthropological aspects of migration. The study found that

women are facing challenges regarding the renegotiation of their gender performance. Furthermore, it also found that Nepali women's decision of return and the subsequent act of returning to home constitute a temporal phenomenon. This depicts that their return is neither a final decision, nor do they have a final destination. The women show their profound affection to the cosmopolitan life where they could navigate towards a new destination and where there would be the absence of surveillance from the family and society. This will bring changes in the gender role in the Nepali society.

## DECLARATION

The work presented in this thesis is the result of original research carried out while the author was enrolled as a candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of Arts, Kathmandu University, under the supervision of Assistant Professor Dr. Uddhab Pyakurel, Professor Dr. Sagar Raj Sharma and Associate Professor Dr. Karen Valentin.

All works within this thesis constitute my original endeavor. The work presented in this thesis has not been submitted in any University for any other degree.

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## APPROVAL OF THE DISSERTATION

Thesis of Laxmi Dhungel. presented to the School of Arts Research Committee on July 26, 2018.

Title: Gender and Return Migration: An Ethnographic Study of the Educated Returnee Women in Nepal

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother Suntali Dhungel.

## LIST OF TRANSLATED NEPALI WORDS

Kanyadan: Donating daughter to bridegroom as a gift in Hindu marriage system

Ijrat: Prestige in the society

Daan: Gift giving

Nam Kamauni: To get recognition in the society

Nam Rakhni: To be established in the society

Dam Kamauni: Earn money

Chhora paye swarga jaane: The birth of a son paves the way to heaven.

Chhora paye khasi, Chhori paye pharsi: If a son is born, it is celebrated by sacrificing a goat; and if it's a daughter, a pumpkin is enough.

OM: Matra in Hinduism

Ghasi: Grass-cutter

Dhani: Rich (person)

## ACRONYMS

ASMAN	: Association of St. Mary's Alumnae in Nepal
AusAid	: Australian Award
GDP	: Gross Development Product
GoN	: Government of Nepal
GIZ	: German Corporation for International Cooperation
GIS	: Geographic Information System
GRE	: Graduate Record Examination
IELTS	: International English Language Testing System
ILO	: International Labor Organization
INSTRAW	: International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women
IOM	: International Organization for Migration
JUAAN	: Japanese University Alumni Association, Nepal
MA	: Master's of Arts
MoE	: Ministry of Education
MPI	: Migration Policy Institute
NAST	: Nepal Academy of Science and Technology
NCCR	: Nepal Center for Contemporary Research
NELM	: New Economics of Labor Migration
NGO	: Nongovernmental Organization
NIDS	: Nepal Institute for Development Studies
OECD	: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PK	: Padma Kanya
PC	: Personal Computer
SLC	: School Leaving Certificate
SAT	: Scholastic Assessment Test
SPSS	: Statistical Package for Social Science
UK	: United Kingdom
UN	: United Nations
UNESCO	: United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	: United Nations Population Fund

UNIFEM : United Nations Development Fund for Women  
USA : United States of America  
USEF : United States Education Foundation  
VDC : Village Development Committee  
WB : World Bank

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# **GENDER AND RETURN MIGRATION: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE EDUCATED RETURNEE WOMEN IN NEPAL**

## **CHAPTER I**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Women are on the move. Women migration covers little less than half of the international migrants globally (United Nations, 2017). In 2017, it reached 48.4 percent out of all international migrants of all ages. It has been widespread and frequent, especially in the form of study abroad and work (Kim, 2012). Due to the increased economic growth in Asia<sup>1</sup>, the pattern of women migration has changed. Both highly skilled and semi-skilled women are migrating to western countries. The Nepali migration trend also reflects that women are getting an access to education and migration abroad for higher education and work (Adhikari, 2010). Therefore, the number of women migration is increasing.

The majority of migrants were men during the decades of 1960's and 1970's. The women were usually narrowly portrayed as the dependents of male migrant workers (Boyd & Grieco, 2003). The literature on migration reveals the traditional side of women migration that often stands as a dichotomy of modernity. The stereotype of women migration focuses oppressed and uneducated migrant women, especially in the developing countries (Pessar, 2005). It is supposed that migration of such women to the West would help them emancipate themselves from patriarchal suppression, especially being exposed in civilized and egalitarian ways (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2003). The traditional way of looking at the women migration shadowed immense experiences and backgrounds of migrant women. Most of the studies on women migration reveal woman migrants from lower socio-economic background, which has created unbalanced representation in the world of women migration in developing countries (Sijapati, 2015; Oishi, 1996, 2005, 2002). As a result, the migration of skilled women has also been overlooked (Kofman, 2000). However, the migration among the highly educated and skilled

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<sup>1</sup>The Asia-Pacific region continues to be the world leader in growth, and recent data point to a pickup in momentum. Growth is projected to reach 5.5 percent in 2017 and 5.4 percent in 2018.

women is increasing in the global context (IOM, 2014). Basically, women are becoming courageous actors of migration by breaking the traditional definition of the dependent migrants. While bringing the case of women into migration discourse, the feminist scholars analyzed the changed definition of women from migrant's wives into woman migrants as wage-earners who played important role in income generating activities (Ross-Sheriff, 2011).

Hoendagneu-Sotelo (2000) believes that we have reached a third stage in feminist scholarship and migration. In the first phase of the feminist discussion (Occurring in the 70's and early 80's), women's experience was dominated by the male-based narratives of migration. Later, there was "add and stir" approach, where women's stories were brought in relation to male migration. During the 1980's and 1990's, knowledge about the gender and migration increased. In this context, feminist-oriented scholarship brought attention to how migrants' situations are affected by unequal power relationship between men and women by the control that men exercised in social relationship. "The feminist scholars' migration studies have described the issues of concern to women migrants, and, in doing so, they influenced the direction of research on international migration theory building and advocacy on behalf of women" (Ross-Sheriff, 2011). Scholars helped to develop analytical rethinking in the role of gender in the geographical mobility where men and women stories of mobility is discussed (Donato et al. 2006; Pessar and Mahler 2003). This research has also worked with the gender dimension of return migration.

This thesis is about highly educated women who have been abroad for their education and have returned home after completion of their study. It focuses on their return experiences and assimilation in the society. It also illuminates how their exposure to, and confrontation with, other social and professional realities encountered abroad allow them to reflect the qualities of the social relations and practices framing their current lives in Nepal. It analyzes how women themselves perceive their social positions in changing circumstances in the Nepali society, especially with reference to the experiences obtained abroad.

## **1.1 Global Context**

Migration is not a new phenomenon. Since time immemorial, people have been migrating nationally, regionally and internationally. International migration has

been a key component of social and economic life of the migrants. The United Nations General Assembly High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development describes the current times as an "era of unprecedented human mobility" (IOM, 2003). People migrate for a better life, education and employment opportunities. They also migrate depending upon their personal preference and their access to mobility. Some people migrate to escape inequality, injustice and persecution or to reunite with family members (Dickmann & Baruch, 2011). United Nations International Migration Report (2017) mentions that two factors are predominant in the international migration. One is the development of infrastructure like modern transportation made cheaper and faster to move for the job opportunity, education as well as the quality of life. The other is related to the conflict, poverty, inequality and lack of sustainable livelihood which compel people to leave their home seeking better future for themselves and their families (p.1).

International migration is deep-rooted in the history of human life and entire nations have been built on the basis of opening their doors to the world (The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 2006). The number of international migrants worldwide has continued to grow over the past seventeen years, reaching 258 millions in 2017, 248 millions in 2015, 220 millions in 2010, 191 millions in 2005 and 173 millions in 2000 (United Nations (UN), 2017). Due to the faster growth rate, the share of migrants in the total population increased from 2.8 percent in 2000 to 3.4 percent in 2017 (p, 5). The student migration has also a big share in the migration market. The G20 global displacement and migration trends report 2018 shows that the international female student migration has increased enrolling in European countries. There are more females than males among the international students enrolled, such as 59 percent in Italy, 52 percent in France, 52 percent in Korea and 51 percent in the United Kingdom. Likewise, the share of female among international students is at most 45 percent in the United States, China, Canada, and South Africa (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), The International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), and The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2018).

Castle, De Haas and Miller (2013) have termed the century as 'Age of Migration' described it as encompassing five elements that distinguish it from

previous periods: globalization (many countries are simultaneously affected by migration), acceleration (increased worldwide number of people moving), diversity (people of different classes and ethnic groups are migrating), politicization (national and international immigration laws, bilateral trade agreements, and relations impact movement as well as civil society), and lastly, the feminization (the mass movement of female migrants). Therefore, migration, in its multiple dimensions, has become an established feature of the contemporary social and economic world both globally and regionally. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development mentioned that for the development of the country there needs to be coherence between the countries of origin, transit and destination. Scholars have brought forth a debate between migration and development with its nexus bringing the positive aspects between the origin and destination countries (World Bank 2006, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2009, Chappell et. al, 2010). However, in this nexus, gender aspect is less discussed (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2017). Literatures have shown that women are the major agents moving nationally and internationally in the global context (Silvey, 2004; Piper, 2009; Lim & Oishi, 1996).

Women began to migrate from developing to developed nations with the hope to improve their social and economic conditions (Fleury, 2016). This notion of migration is termed as the feminization of migration (Piper, 2006; Lim & Oishi, 1996; Donato, et al., 2006; Ross-sheriff, 2011). The International Labour Organization estimates that women are half of the global migrant population, but in some countries this accounts for 70–80 percent of migrants. Women’s migration has increased with the demand of cheap labour in the care sector. Basically, in Philippines, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, the number of women emigrating now exceeds men. Besides labor migration, highly skilled women have also increased in the global context.

Studies show that female migration is linked with a critical condition where women are facing violence in host country (Petrozziello, 2013; Afsar, 2009). Besides, it is supposed that the destination country is associated with personal freedom, and an escape from cultural and social restrictions (Thang, el al., 2012). Women’s migration is also associated with the improvement of living standard. Globalization, as shown by this report, significantly impacts on women’s work,

mobility and empowerment, and shapes women's labour migration to a great extent (Franck & Spehar, 2010).

Organizations like International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW), and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) are working to raise women's issues of migration in the international forum. In Beijing, the international organization for migration made a four-point appeal to the international community. The first purpose is to recognize the trend towards the feminization of migration. The second is to improve awareness and understanding of the conditions and to define specific policy for the migrant women. The third point is related to promoting equal access to projects and services so that migrant women might fully participate in the benefit; and the fourth relates to design and implement, where appropriate, programmes specifically for migrant women (Paiva, 2013).

Women from Asia are often seen migrating to take up work within the care sector (Bhadra, 2007). Policy makers and academics are concerned about the movement of women from South and South East Asia to West Asia, Europe and the United States (Gulati, 2003). In some countries, women migrate abroad in response to the demand of health services like nursing in the target countries (Adhikari, 2010). Moreover, women are also moving for their skill enhancement and study purpose, which is less discussed in the global context of the feminization of migration (Kofman & Raghuram, 2005). Recent studies of the brain drain highlight the fact that skilled women migrate more than men (Dumont et al., 2007). These women may migrate independently as students, labour migrants, and spouses, some of whom are able to enter the labour market. The significance of educational attainment in the part of woman migrants came into play due to globalization and increased access of women to the labour market (Kabeer, 2016). Besides, women are presented as migrants who wish to settle abroad instead of returning to the homeland (Ilkjaer, 2016). However, the trend of women returning home is also a part of the migration discourse where gender dimension of migration is discussed among the scholars (Bhatt, 2015; Ilkjaer, 2016; Ross-Sheriff, 2011), which is the prime focus of this study.

## 1.2 Migration in Nepal

The history of migration in Nepal dates back to the Lichchhavi dynasty. Many scholars, artisans and traders migrated to flourish Buddhism in Tibet and China at that time. Later, the cultural and religious aspects of migration were replaced by political reasons where many people from Nepal went to India after the conquest of the Kathmandu valley by Prithvi Narayan Shah. Basically, the Malla kings of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur went to India for shelters. Later, the peace treaty of Sugauli established a new form of migration. The recruitment of the Nepali youths into the British Army in 1816 was the first mass migration from Nepal. They were considered the Gorkha migrants (Seddon et al., 2002). The other migration pattern was developed in the 19th century when the Nepali youths migrated to Lahore to work in the army of the Sikh ruler. Hence, the Nepali migrants are sometimes nicknamed as Lahure.

International migration is playing an increasingly important role in Nepal at both macro and micro (household) level. The present trend of migration in Nepal mostly focuses on economic gain (Government of Nepal (GoN), 2014). Building up economic strength has been the key focus in life at present and migration appears to be a means to attain the economic goal of life (Gartaula, 2009). Linking the term 'migration' with economic achievement of an individual, scholars have brought the case of remittance and its contribution towards the social and economic changes (Dahal, 2014 & Sapkota, 2013). Remittance is the major source of economy for the Nepali government. The annual remittance contribution to GDP has been increasing since 2011.

The country received a total of Rs \$8.1 billion in 2018, making it the 19th biggest beneficiary of funds sent by migrants around the world, according to a report released by World Bank (The Kathmandu Post, 2019). Collection of wealth through migration has been an important alternative among many people in Nepal. As a result, a large number of youths have been flying to the countries like UAE (United Arab Emirates), Dubai, Malaysia, Qatar, etc. especially to earn money (Bhattarai, 2005). Scholars mentioned that due to lack of opportunities in Nepal, overseas migration has become an important source of employment (Seddon et al., 2002). Generally, labor migration constitutes the unskilled and semi-skilled individuals who

sell their skills and labor for economic gain. Nearly half of the households in Nepal have at least one member abroad or a returnee (Sijapati & Limbu, 2012).

In the context of Nepal, migrating abroad for education is the latest trend, in which students migrate to some developed countries like the USA (United states of America), the UK (United Kiingdom), Canada, Australia, etc., especially to accomplish their higher studies (Acharya, 2012). The potential students migrate to the developed countries expecting that education they would acquire abroad would be much more advanced in nature and fruitful to their personal, social and professional life in the host country. Many students in Nepal, therefore, make a journey abroad aiming at acquiring special knowledge and skills in the area of their interest (Adhikari, 2010). Such migrants later return to their home country and make attempt to reintegrate themselves with the knowledge and skills they acquired aboard (Ghimire & Maharjan, 2014).

### **1.3 Gender and migration in Nepal**

The gender roles and relationship in the socio-cultural life of Nepal is massively claimed to be unequal and hierarchical (Basnet, 2013). Nepal's migration history portrays women as followers with family and little control over their own migration decisions (Seddon, 2005). The Nepali history of migration has depicted males at the frontline in a discourse of migration.

Research on migration in Nepal usually portrays women as dependent, uneducated and left behind (Chapagain, 2015). There is a pervasive assumption that migrants are young, economically motivated males, which has overshadowed the reality of migration stream dominated by women (Pedraza, 1991). This notion is applicable in the mass male migration in the Nepali context. The Central Bureau of Statistics Reports (2014) shows that over 1,921,494 Nepali citizens are absent from their household working in foreign countries; mostly male household members and that the left-behind are women.

Today, the status and position of the Nepali women are affected by various factors like political changes (Dahal, 2004), access of mobility (Bhadra, 2007) and the encouragement towards education and work. Over the years, the perception regarding role of men and women has changed. Women are coming out of home and making their spaces. They have got an access to schools and entered in various

professional markets. Furthermore, they are developing their expectation to engage in certain professional sectors and search for opportunities along with entering in professions like nursing (Adhikari, 2010). This has opened up their access and aspiration towards the social, economic and physical mobility.

Factors like urbanization, industrialization, media exposure to other culture, information technology, migration and the repatriation of population have been playing important role to change perception regarding gender roles in the Nepali context (Joshi, 2015). Over the decade, the dramatic increase in the number of women moving abroad for work and education shows transformation of married and unmarried women's mobility in Nepal. This has provided opportunities to women to come in the public and practice the freedom and independence which was restricted in the traditional gender norms. However, opportunities for improvement remain unexplored.

While connecting migration with unequal power relationship between male and female and hierarchy and status-quo in their relationship, there emerges the possibility of empowerment, increased awareness and increased access to means and resources necessary for life (Lim & Oishi, 1996). Since migration was restricted for women in Nepal in the past, their empowerment, awareness and access to resources came under question (IOM, 2016). Severe form of patriarchy prevented them from social, cultural and legal opportunities. Patriarchal norms of ruling women did not remain limited to social and cultural cosmos but also to the political and legal sectors (Dhungana, 2014). Their access to economic upliftment, job market, academic practice and decision making in the mainstream development remained too much limited (Acharya, 2017). As a result, various forms of inequality, discrimination, injustice and violence were recorded massively on the part of women.

In recent days, international migration became common for female in Nepal (Sijapati, 2015). The notion of feminization of migration is applicable in the Nepali context where the female migration is increasing for work and study instead of being dependent of male migrants (Kharel, 2016). Adhikari (2010) mentioned that Nepal became one of the leading countries to send nurse in abroad for work. Since education became the key means to empower, the Nepali women have not limited themselves to internal migration; they have also attempted for international migration



for education. To the date, a large number of female students have been migrating to developed countries like the UK, the USA, Canada and Australia for their higher education (Adhikari, 2013). Scholars have recently discussed on the gender and migration (Lokshin & Glinskayai, 2008; Pyakurel, 2016; Sijapati, 2015; Adhikari, 2013; Yamanaka, 2000). However, the return dimension of the education migration in relation to women's mobility is subject to further exploration.

This thesis deals with the confluence of three broad academic fields: gender, education and return migration. The research questions dealt in the research situate at the intersection of these fields. Over the last decades, many researchers are found to deal with the inter-linkage between gender and mobility through transnational education (Kim, 2011; Tamara, 2013; Sondhi, 2013). This research aims to uncover the return and reintegration strategies that are adopted by the Nepali women after their higher education abroad. It deals with the determinant factors which led them in the decision of moving abroad and return to home. It discusses how women define their achievement in individual, social and academic levels. Moreover, it touches upon how women reintegrate in the professional, social and the family level. Lastly, it presents their engagement in transforming the gender roles in individual, community and organizational level. Through this research, the women and their aspiration regarding migration and their participation in the Nepali society as a change agent is presented.

#### **1.4 Gender structure in the Nepali society**

The social structure of Nepal is strictly stratified on the basis of sex. Global Economic Forum 2015 ranked Nepal in the 110<sup>th</sup> position among 145 countries (World Economic Forum, 2015) particularly in terms of gender gap. The society treats men and women differently. As a result, the experiences of men and women appear to be different regarding work, relationship and personal autonomy affecting every dimension of their life (Kharel, 2016).

The country has promulgated the new constitution which has guaranteed the basic rights of every individual Nepali citizen without any discrimination on the basis of language, caste, culture and ethnicity (Constitution of Nepal, 2015). United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2016) report shows that it is in the 144<sup>th</sup> position in the Human Development Index from which it is categorized as one of the

least developed countries in the world. However, Nepal has made remarkable changes in the status of women. Women's participation in the political and bureaucratic level has risen up. The number of women participation in politics has tremendously increased from 5 percent in 1990 to 32.8 percent in 2008 Constituent Assembly Election and it reached 24 percent in the second Constituent Assembly Election in 2013. There is an increase in the access of education for women. Before 1950, education for women was virtually closed. However, girls' enrollment in the school has also increased from 15 percent in 1971 to 45.4 in 2002 (United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), 1997). The Central Bureau of Statistics (2011) shows the literacy rate has increased substantially during the last ten years.

Religiously, women are highly respected in the socio-cultural life in Nepal, which is highlighted through the Sanskrit verse as "*pujyate naari yetra, ramante tatra devata*"<sup>2</sup>. But on the ground of religion, the women as a subject to be respected were not considered to be worthy of participating in religious ceremonies. For example, for whatever reason, the females were not allowed to chant 'OM', the supernatural cosmic mantra. They were also not allowed to participate in 'yagya'. The restriction as such in the past prevented the female being from the opportunity of migration. The social concept about Hinduism and women's position is shaped by various religious texts like the Manusmriti (the code for hindu), Swasthani (story of Lord Shiva and a part of the Skandapurana), the Chanakya Niti (Code of rulers), Sanskrit epic, Ramayana and the Mahabharata (Dhungana, 2014). These scripts appeared to be biased so far the matter of women's migration is concerned. Since then, restricting women from participating in the outside world became a culture.

The Hindu literature highlights the "cult of womanhood" assigning them their duty that has a lot to do with pleasing male figures in order to receive something good, useful, and generous. The legal, political and social authority of the fathers and sons in the institutional society has created women dependence in male authority (Acharya, 2017). The idea as such, perhaps, created the circumstances of hierarchy between the male and female. Chanakya in his *Chanakya Niti Darpan* stated that since women away from family protection are supposed to be unsafe sexually, they are restricted entering the outside world freely. They were, thus, placed at the lower

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2. Pujyate naari yetra, ramante tatra devata: God dwells in that place where the women are worshipped.

position of gender hierarchy expecting to follow the command of male members in the family. And, hence, females appear to be the subordinate and the follower of their male counterparts (Dhungana, 2014). In a traditional Hindu marriage, the bride's father gives her hand to the bridegroom and says "*aba yo hajurki bhai, mare paap pale punye*" (*she belongs to you now and if you kill her you will be sinned, if you protect and secure her, you will be blessed*). The women of Nepali society, thus, lost their freewill in new places, entertain new circumstances and participate in the socio-cultural events and rituals. In this way, patriarchy imperceptibly took its strong roots in the socio-cultural life-world in Nepal. Independent migration, thus, could not become the part of roles and responsibilities of the women in the past.

The scholars have mentioned that the Nepali society has the influence of patriarchy (Tamang, 2000; Dhungana, 2014). The state has reflected the patriarchy at all its apparatus like legal, political, social system and the right to property. There seems inequality in the everyday activities among the people (Toffin & Shakya, 2011). Study shows that the prime work of female is to engage in the household activities, rearing and caring of the children and taking care of all the major activities (Adhikari, 2013). The discussion on the gender role was based on a traditional value system in the Nepali context which implicitly suggests that men are the decision makers and the women are implementers of these decisions (Bennett, 1983; Dhungana, 2014). As a result, males restrict women's mobility. However, the changes taking place in two decades regarding the status of the Nepali women show the different dimension of gender. Basically after 1990, the traditional belief has transformed in many families (Liechty, 1996). As a result, the women of the urban areas are given the opportunity in various sectors like, political, economic, social and educational.

Analyzing the status of the Nepali women, the roles and responsibilities are changing with more women entering in the public sphere (Joshi, 2015). There are more women engaging in education and profession. Moreover, it has fostered a set of competing expectations held towards the women by themselves and others. Consequently, higher education to women is given priority.

### **1.5 Research gap**

In the Nepali migration literature, the trajectory of women's migration is less discussed. Women are presented as dependent and hence are left behind (Chapagain,

2015; Gartaula et al., 2012). On the other hand, women are moving for the economic and social upliftment (Sijapati, 2015; Bhadra, 2007). This study attempts to deal with current gaps in migration literature. Firstly, exploring women's access of mobility, it has transgressed the traditional dimension of the women's migration as a dependent migrant with their husband and relatives. Secondly, it touches upon the return where most of the literature shows that women are reluctant to return because of the fear of losing their autonomy and freedom in the home country (Ilkjaer, 2016). Thirdly, women's issue of reintegration with their challenges and opportunity with the hope of doing something for their own country is supposed to be lacking in the migration literature (Ghimire & Maharjan, 2014).

This study has contributed to the increasing feminization of the Nepali migration which has shaped new gendered mobility trajectories. While dealing with the student migration, Raghuram (2013) argues that current theories of migration do not take into account the unique perspective of the student migration and that further research is required in this area. So, this study has brought the unique dimension of the migration studies by reflecting the women's access to mobility through the international education migration and return.

The women's study in this thesis does not fit the establishment of the dependent, uneducated migrant women usually found in migration literature in Nepali context. They have achieved higher level of education and, in many cases have breached the rules into the 'world of men' by working as professionals or through self-employment. This study brings to light the experiences of an overlooked segment of the migrant population.

## **1.6 Statement of the Problem**

Migration has been a part of human life. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) (2017) has presented the increase in the number of migrants over fifteen years. Migration of religious and cultural importance was massive in the past which has been overwhelmingly overpowered by economic achievement at present in the Nepali context (International Labour Organization (ILO), & German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) (ILO & GIZ, 2015). Sapkota (2013) has mentioned that in Nepal, international migration has reached unprecedented levels. Bringing the

issues of the migration and development, the scholars have presented the remittance and its utilization in relation to development (Dahal, 2014; Sapkota, 2013).

Remittance is broadly spelt out as the development mantra in the migration discourse. Kapur (2004) mentioned that there are multidimensional effects of the remittances. Basically, the benefits of the remittance lie in generating more jobs among families. Besides, migrants help in generating the advance economic development in their countries of origin. So, the traditional focus in migration studies on the causes and consequences of population movements has shifted to the type of migrants and migration that promote development (Faist, 2008).

According to sources at the Ministry of Education, 16,499 students obtained No Objection Certificates in that school year, and the number doubled by 2015-16 with 33,000 students receiving No Objection Letter (NOCs) (Chapagain & Bhattarai, 2017). Altogether, there is an outflow of Rs 30 billion annually to pay for college fees and expenses (Gurung, 2015). As globalization makes travel more convenient, ever increasing students are picking colleges and universities abroad to further their higher education.

Migration of religious, cultural and economic importance was massive in the past which has been over taken by education migration at present (Maharjan, 2013). Scholars have mentioned that behind the motivation of migration, the economic achievement played important roles among the students (Acharya, 2012). Moreover, the education migration and the return among the returnees with motivation of contribution are recently discussed issues (Ghimire & Maharjan, 2014, Ilkjaer, 2016). It is claimed that returnees have expectations to contribute with their knowledge, skills and expectation in the home country and returnees are also expected to change the social, cultural and economic context. However, the education migration from the gender perspective is an unexplored issue in the Nepali context, whereas it has been explored in global context (Kofman, 2013; Tamara, 2013; Kim, 2011).

Migration of male members in the Nepali family was very common in the past, which has been overtaken by female members at present. For example, if we take education migration as a case, female members have increased in the Nepali context. Having resided in patriarchal society in which male members are mostly

prioritized for abroad migration, especially for education and improved economic condition, it often appears as a question in mind how female members in such society are inspired and encouraged for going abroad. The women migration abroad as educational migrants has appeared as a problem to be investigated. This research considering the fact that there has hardly any academic research been conducted in Nepal and that women's achievement in the field of education, especially through migration and their contribution to their hometown, particularly with reference to their abroad education, has still not become the part of academic knowledge in Nepal (Ghimire & Maharjan, 2014). Women's migration abroad is taken as a problem in itself, particularly at patriarchal context in Nepal and, thus, how the women make space for being educational migrants and what attempts they make to bring a change in age-long gender roles and relationship in their home country, especially after their return has mostly been shadowed so far in the matter of gender migration in terms of education is concerned. This research, therefore, has addressed the problem in the field of gender and educational migration and has uncovered the women's decision of migration and return as well as their perception regarding contribution to the Nepali society after their return to homeland.

### **1.7 Rationale for the study**

Migration has often been taken as a gateway to bring change in social, cultural, economic, educational and political life. In gender perspective, the practice of migration vitally influenced the life of male members in comparison to their female counterparts, especially in the past. One reason behind unequal distribution of migration opportunity among men and women is the socio-cultural structure in Nepal, where men and women are placed in hierarchical order. Men, being at the top in the hierarchy, are more prioritized in terms of migration than the women. As a result, the pace of change in socio-cultural, economic and educational life of a woman in Nepal has often been put under question, especially in comparison to their male counterparts.

In the course of challenging the age-long status quo, inequality, discrimination in terms of the opportunity of migration between males and females, women in Nepal, in later days, realized the need of migrating abroad especially for education. As a result, the number of Nepali women migrants abroad increased. However, the trajectories of their abroad migration, the kind of learning they approached during

their stay abroad, their contribution to bring change in gender roles and relationships in their home country, etc. were often observed as the areas to be investigated as the part of academic knowledge. As a result, this study came into play to meet the purpose of the research.

Women in patriarchal society are placed under men in socio-cultural life (Sultana, 2011). As a result, women often lag behind in terms of socio-cultural opportunities. Exploring the trajectories of women migration and their return, this research will be a landmark in the area of gender migration and its influence in the socio-cultural life of women in general and returnees in particular. This research has also challenged the patriarchal mindset towards gender and migration; and has established the notion of migration as a milestone for improving and empowering women who have been compelled to face discrimination, inequality and status quo within their socio-cultural situatedness led by patriarchal thoughts. Furthermore, in the Nepali context, most of the researches are within the economic remittance and its utilization in macro and micro level (Sapkota, 2011; Dahal, 2014). Studies have paid attention to the female and their empowerment after the male becoming the active agent of migrants and the contributor of the remittances (Gartaula et al., 2012). While linking migration and development with the skills and knowledge of returnees, it is paucity. The highly skilled women in association with their migration topic have been recently focused in the international arena (Kofman, 2004). However, in the Nepali context, this area needs an investigation.

This study aims to fill the gap towards alleviating the inadequacies in the migration literature by investing in the return migration processes of educated women.

### **1.8 Objectives of the Research**

The main objective of the study is to explore the phenomenon of educational return migration at both household and societal level with particular attention to the role of gender in Nepal. This study analyzes the experiences of women who have accomplished their education in the foreign land, returned back and settled in Nepal. The specific objectives of the research are as follows:

1. To analyze causes of women migration (going abroad and returning home).

2. To explore the achievements of returnee women which they gained during their study abroad.
3. To examine the challenges of educational migrant women in the process of implementing their knowledge, skills, ideas and technologies while participating themselves in various professions in Nepal.
4. To explore the engagement of returnee women in the transformation of gender roles in the family, society and professional life.

### **1.9 Research Questions**

1. What makes returnee women decide to migrate abroad for education and come back to Nepal after accomplishing their education?
2. How do they explain the achievement they gained during their study abroad?
3. How do they implement their knowledge and skills in their social and professional life-world in Nepal?
4. How do they contribute to transforming the existing gender relations within the family and society?

### **1.10 Navigating the thesis: An overview**

This research has been organized into eight chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the study consisting of the background of the study which basically focuses on the general migratory pattern, the historical background and the importance of the study in the migration discourse. Furthermore, it presents the research gap, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and the research questions.

Chapter two opens up with the conceptual framework of the study. Firstly, the concept of gender, return and mobility in relation to migration is reviewed. Secondly, aspiration of the youths towards migration is elaborated. Thirdly, gender and negotiation for the change through the experience of the migration has been discussed. Likewise, the notion of contribution among the women is discussed with the social remittance approach. In the theoretical aspects, gender geographies and power are brought into discussion to show the mobility and power exercises among the women. Furthermore, Bourdieu's theory of habitus is interpreted to show the pattern of culture regarding education, migration and return among the women.



Chapter three presents the general research methodology and the specific methods of data collection. The researcher has adopted feminist ethnographic approach in the study. Following the discussion on ontology, epistemology and axiology, this chapter presents the research design, the rationale for the qualitative method.

Chapter four explores the impact of gender relations in framing the decision of migration. It discusses how women make decision of migration and what causes them to return to home after completion of their study. Through the narrative of the women, it shows their aspiration for better education and career as the major factors for them to go abroad. The family, social, cultural and individual factors are predominant for them to return. Besides the socio-cultural factor, there is also the professional and career issue while making the decision of return. Basically, women's negotiation regarding the settlement abroad and return to home country is presented with their aspiration for mobility.

Chapter five discusses the women's achievements through migration abroad. The women show their nostalgia of being abroad. The positive learning achievements gained by the women are explained in this chapter. Basically, the achievements of the women are categorized on the basis of individual, social and academic aspects. Chapter six explores the women's engagement in a process of implementing knowledge and skills as post-return experience. It has mainly focused on the reintegration strategy adopted by the women.

Chapter seven examines how the women get engaged in the changing gender role in the Nepali society after their return. In this chapter, the women and their engagement in family, society and organization are discussed. Finally, chapter eight concludes the thesis presenting key findings and conclusion of the study in detail.

## CHAPTER II

### 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter offers major concepts and conceptualizations that help to understand the trajectories of women migration. In doing so, an attempt is made to understand how women get engaged in negotiation with their parents for the decision to return back to home successfully. The major themes; gender, mobility, and return are consulted to frame the women's return migration. Firstly, the issue of negotiation is dealt with the gender roles, reintegration and return perspective. Secondly, the notion of aspiration is discussed in relation to the international migration. Thirdly, the access to mobility from a gender perspective is elaborated with the negotiation for freedom and change. Fourthly, the notion of contribution among the women regarding the implementation of knowledge and skills in the Nepali society has been explained. Lastly, the gender geography and power as a framework of the study is elucidated.

#### 2.2 Migration development nexus from a gender perspective

To address the complexity in migration phenomenon, scholars have dealt with the array of theoretical lenses through which various aspects of the migratory process have been analyzed (Carling & Collins, 2018). Jansen (1969) has mentioned that there are many social sciences which discuss the subject matter of migration. Carling and Collins (2018) have dealt with various issues of human life like imagined, desired, resisted, experienced, managed, and represented in migration study. In the present context, migration theories are not only limited to why people migrate, where they choose to go and how migration flows wax and wane (p, 909.). Global Migration Center (2013) explains that Migration is multifaceted in reality. Such understanding helped to view the term 'migration' in an integrated form of different dimensions of the life of the migrants (Bretell & Hollified, 2000).

Bringing the migration and development nexus, Faist and Fauser (2011) have focused on the remittance and return with the perspective of development. De Haas (2010) has used the word 'pendulum' to elaborate the shift in migration and development debates. He has discussed the optimistic and pessimistic thought on

migration and its outcome. Migration and underdevelopment became the part of migration discourse among scholars during the 1970's and 1980's. Underdevelopment of the poor countries was supposed to be the result of brain drain (Faist & Fauser, 2011) in which the skilled population migrated to developed countries. So, this phase was predominantly pessimistic and portrayed migration as a problem for development (De Haas, 2010).

Faist and Fauser (2011) have identified migration as co-development. In this phase, the celebration of transnational circulation, in which temporary and circular migrations are seen as an ideal and often portrayed as new measures that will facilitate the achievement of development, including community development and post-conflict reconstruction. While discussing education and the skilled migration, the brain drain was defined as a new optimism (De Haas, 2010). Migration development nexus is now an industry, where the various actors at the local, regional and global levels are interested in fulfilling the 'development potential of migration while mitigating its social costs (Raghuram, 2009). However, in this nexus, the gender and migration are less discussed (Bastia, 2013).

In the past, the scholars narrowly explained migration through the perspective of development. De Haas (2010) posits that there needs to discuss on the broader understanding of development. It has emphasized to shift the subject matter of the migration in multiple forms where the scholars should move away from the normative framing of the migration as being used for economic development. Piper (2009) mentions that migration and development nexus is related to development as an economic growth and social dimension of development. So, the researchers are borrowing new dimensions in the migration literature to address the global and the national phenomenon in migration and development nexus (Nare, Akhtar, 2014; Riano, 2015; Kofman & Raghuram, 2005; Oishi, 2005). However, the gender dimension is absent in the discussion of migration and development. While presenting the women's issues with respect to migration and development, it was claimed that women benefit others in the household, in communities or in the countries (Bastia, 2013).

Many scholars have focused their studies on women and gender studies. Basically, they have presented the gender construction in the migration process

focusing on development (Kofman, 2000; Willis & Yeoh, 2000). International organizations like World Bank, the European Union, the United Nations and myriad of organizations have mentioned it as a change agent. Feminist approaches in the migration studies have expanded the horizon of migration (Kofman & Raghuram, 2005; Oishi 2005; Riano, 2015; Pessar & Mahler, 2003; Piper, 2005). These scholars have focused on the subjectivity and identity with the constructive approach.

Silvey (2004) mentioned that while dealing with migration, the individual calculation is insufficient whereas the range of the intersecting component should be engaged. So, there engaged negotiation where the individual agency plays an important role. This research, thus, has brought the women's role in transforming society through their return migration. It has brought the gender construction existed in the Nepali families, their negotiation, the conflicting interest, and the agreement are dealt with. This attempt has contributed towards migration and development nexus from the gender perspective.

### **2.3 Return through a transnational perspective**

Return migration is the process in which people return to their country or place of origin after staying for a specified period in another country or region (King, 2000). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2008) states that the return migration can be defined based on the components like origin country, length of stay in the host and home country, place of residence abroad. Study reflects various typologies of returnees on the basis of time they have spent and the skills they have acquired (Maharjan, 2013).

The very concept of return migration is rather problematic. There is unanimous definition among the researches of what a return migration actually is. It is sometimes called remigration, retro-migration or back-migration (King, 2000). Similarly, the concept of return remains unclear, as it may be used to define a permanent return to home or it may refer to occasional visits to the community of origin. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), (2011), "in a broader sense, return migration is the movement of a person returning to his or her country of origin or habitual residence usually after spending at least one year in another country" ( p.85). Gmelch (1980) has taken this as failed migration. The literature on return migration often treats returning home as a one-way movement

when in fact movement may be more circular. Previously, return migrants on which many of the previous studies are based include asylum seekers and refugees (Koser, 2000), irregular migrants (Laczko, 2000) and guest workers. This study basically lays its emphasis on the highly educated return migration.

Return migration is brought into scholarly discussion from the 1960's. Especially after the 1960's, scholars focused on the return phenomenon and its impact on the country of origin. Moreover, they contributed intensively to the development of the literature on return migration with the notion of co-development with voluntary repatriation of third-country nationals as well as the linkage between receiving and sending countries in relation to the international migration and economic development in migrant's country of origin. Cassarino (2008) discussed the return migration and its linkage with the theory of preparedness. Klinthall (2006) opined return migration as an important phenomenon however there is a lack of empirical work on the topic. Cassarino (2004) stated that the migration literature is blurred in its analytical content which remains unclear while dealing with the return phenomenon. A good deal of new literature has emerged in the last few years on return migration. Indeed, in some countries, the phenomenon is prominent. According to Baganha (1997), perhaps it is the most researched topic in recent emigration studies. Yet, many gaps remain existent. Return migration is obviously an important phenomenon and, therefore, the lack of empirical work on the topic is surprising. So, the researcher is in full agreement with the view that return migration as a social, cultural, economic and political phenomenon requires an extensive, comprehensive and critical analysis of all actors and trajectories involved and the multiplicity of concepts related to it.

In this research, I have dealt the return with the reintegration where I have focused on the transnational aspects of the return migration. Various theoretical approaches have been developed to deal with return and reintegration. The neo-classical perspective of migration analyzed the wage differences between origin and destination countries in a way of return and reintegration (Borjas, 1989). Likewise, The New Economics of Labour Migration theory views migration as a family or household strategy where migrant's decisions are explained by an interfamilial implicit contract based on an unwritten understanding about the benefits and obligations of the two parties (Stark & Lucas, 1988). Once migration goals are

successfully achieved (higher income and sufficient savings), it is assumed that migrants return to their families in the country of origin (Fleischer, 2001).

Network theory has stated that migration is the result of an individual network connection rather than other factors (Massey et al., 1998). The main assumption of this theory is that “migration alters the social, cultural and institutional conditions at both sending and receiving ends” (Kurekova, 2011). This theory has claimed that there is a relationship between the migrants and the nonmigrants in the migration processes. Thus, there is always a connection between the movers and stayers. The new information technologies play an important role in the migration processes (Czaika & De Haas, 2014). Moreover, the present life of the people is influenced with the globalization which is widening, deepening and speeding, and interconnected in all aspects of contemporary social life (Held et al., 1999).

In return and reintegration, structure theories have focused on the social, economical and political conditions in the home countries as the major factor of the decision to return and reintegration (Thomas Hope, 1999). Structural theorists have argued that returnees may not be able to reintegrate and consequently may decide to leave again if the gap between their own norms and values and that home is too large (Cassarino, 2004). Likewise, they may also respond to expectations at home by spending their saving on consumption or unproductive investment. In this research, to see the return and reintegration, the transnational approach is brought into discussion.

Over the three decades, scholars have proposed that there is the need of transnational dimension in the migration research. Transnationalism<sup>3</sup> was explored by the anthropologist in the 1990s by exploring the ethnic and the political unit in the USA (Rouse, 1991). The transnational perspective has gone beyond interpretation which is only focused on sending and receiving. It, thus, provides the analysis of both sending and receiving. It further helps to analyze the different aspects of the migrants’ social, political, economic, cultural dimensions. The transnational approach helps to understand the drivers of migration. It helps to see the process of

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<sup>3</sup>Transnationalism: Transnationalism recognizes ties within the receiving country as well as networks that connect them back to their home country. In this research, the issue of transnationalism is used through the return and the connectivity of the returnees to the host country in their everyday life phenomenon.

migration and also incorporate the new context where the researcher should maintain the connectivity of the homeland and other local occurs simultaneously and mutually inform each other (Carling & Collins, 2018).

Transnationalism sees the migrant's involvement in dual lives with the country of migration and the country of origin (Tamara, 2013). The transnational sees the maintenance of cross border social networks. Dealing with the issues of transnationalism, Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) defined the social field where the ideas, network and relationships are organized, exchanged and transformed. The transnational network is based on the reciprocity, exchange and social cohesion. Olwig calls it transnational research where the researcher brought the practices at home as a household or domestic unit in which many migrants also engage besides focusing on the ethnic organization, diasporas cultural expression (Olwig, 2002 as cited in Liversage, 2012). This research deals with the household unit to raise the issue of gender and mobility through transnationalism.

Scholars have dealt with the issues of transnational in relation to the student migration from the class perspective as well as the connectivity to the origin and destination in the Nepali context (Sijapati, 2010; Valentin, 2014). However, this research has risen transnational with the return and gender perspective. Besides, the return dimension of transnationalism is focused on the learning achievements and the building of social network and implementing the knowledge and skills in the home after completion of the study from abroad. Basically, the social aspects of transnational perspectives are focused in this research. Scholars have mentioned that the return migrants played the important roles in reforming domestic policies (Massey et al., 1998). It has mentioned that the effect of migration is not limited to the remittances and the investment, but the socio-political dimension is also the important aspect in the return discussion.

Recently, studies are more concerned about the post-return transnationalism (Carling & Erdal, 2014). Dealing with the transnational perspective, return refers to the people's return as well as the ideas, practices known as the social remittances<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Social remittances: Social remittances are used to see the achievement of the individuals. Social remittances as the ideas, behaviors, identities and social capital that flow from migrant receiving to sending country communities" contributing to social change in migrants' community of origin.

(elaborated later). This study, therefore, reflects the idea of transnational through the social remittances (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011).

The social and political investments of the tendency of return can contribute to the better society in their origin context (De Haas, 2005). However, scholars are excluding the issues of the women education and migration as well as the return dimension. They are also not recognized as an active agent in the development (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2014). The researchers have touched upon the issue of the women's return and aspiration regarding their engagement in development.

The women while reintegrating with the Nepali society have brought their learning aspects from abroad. While leading their everyday life in the Nepali society, they take the reference to the abroad life, experiences and cultural practices. Basically, in the reintegration, the transnational perspective views the way of belonging and the migrants live between two cultures and activity make choices regarding cultures, thus expressing the transnational (Levitt & Schiller, 2004). Through the structure and agency, the negotiation of the reintegration is analyzed here through , the ideas, learned behavior, skills, and knowledge are discussed.

#### **2.4 Negotiation for return and migration**

The feminization of migration is also associated with the negotiation of migration. In a process of moving from one place to another, women need to negotiate with their family members. This study explores at the family perspective while dealing with the negotiation. In a way of making the decision of the migration and return, the household is the social unit that makes decisions of migration on various factors (Pedraza,1991). There are a number of negotiations on who will migrate, what resources will be allocated and what remittances or household members can be expected to return and whether the migration will be temporary or permanent (Reynolds, 2006). On the way to return, there is a negotiation between the family members in relation to 'what will be the consequences on the return' (Cassarino, 2004). The researcher, thus, perceives the family dynamics regarding the negotiation of the migration and return decision

Migration for economic enhancement in the part of women has provided them a number of outlets. Basically, the economic empowerment of women helped them



to shift their roles and relationships in the socio-cultural and socio-economic context (Bhadra, 2007; Williams, 2009). Migration and economic enhancement of women have provided them with both opportunities and the challenges in the Nepali society. Nepali scholars have also brought the changing gender roles after migration from socio-cultural perspectives (Adhikari, 2010; Chapagain, 2015). Basically, they discussed the women agency in relation to migration and elaborate more on how the migration has helped women to overcome the barriers they face in the existing society by developing their agency.

To deal with the negotiation, the individual engagement in the structure is necessary. Giddings (1984) has elaborated the nexus between the structure and agency. He outlined agency as a continuous process by which action transforms both the structure and the individual. He explained that structures shape people's practices, but also those knowledgeable and enabled human agents to constitute the structure.

Bourdieu's analytical concept has shown the linkage between individual and agency. Therefore, he has presented the three analytical concepts in his theory: field<sup>5</sup>, habitus, and capital. So, there is a power negotiation with the structure and agency (Sewell Jr, 1992). As an individual capital and strategies negotiate in the structure which according to Bourdieu, happened in the field. So, there is an interrelationship between the habitus and field in which the individual is located (Zrim Martinjak, 2015). Bourdieu has also brought the subjectivism with the focus on the actor's experience of the structure. Basically, bringing the constructivism with the notion of habitus, he has rejected the idea that the agent reduced the role of supporter and bearer of structure. So, his notion of habitus is a system of durable and transposable disposition. Bourdieu has defined habitus as a property of social agents (Grenfell, 2012). In this research new developed habitus with its changed form through the migration is discussed. But there is also the predominant habitus which is elaborated while bringing the negotiation with families making the return decisions.

## **2.5 Negotiation for reintegration**

Return is a process where the individuals return home with the expectation to adjust in a society they left before. Cassarino (2008) has defined that reintegration is

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<sup>5</sup> Field: A field, with its own sets of rules, resources that impose themselves on all who enter the field and that are irreducible to the intentions of the individual agents or even to the direct interactions among the agents (Bourdieu et al., 1985, p.724).

the process where returnee participated in the social, cultural, economic and political life in the country of origin. Various scholars have interpreted return migration with various dimensions like reintegration (Kuschminder, 2013), developing entrepreneurship (Demurger & Xu, 2011), political remittances (Rother, 2009), social remittances (Vlase, 2013). Studies have reflected that if returnees failed to reintegrate in the society and later it results to remigration (Kuschminder, 2017). Likewise, presenting the qualitative works, Ammassari (2009) has reflected the perception regarding changes in gender roles, and the cultural environment of the home country from the subjective opinion.

The challenges of reintegration also differ in return populations. In her study of highly skilled return migrants, Ammassari (2009) has determined four categories of reintegration challenges experienced by returnees. The first is in regard to the employment and business sectors that include both trials associated with being employed and business. The second category is the local work conditions which are assessed in terms of work attitudes and professionalism of colleagues. It is found that reintegration was more difficult for people working in the public sector than those working in the private sector. The third challenge is the local living condition which includes contact with friends and family and fourth is reintegration with the gender roles after return. In this research, the researcher has dealt with the issue of reintegration with the qualitative approach. Here, the researcher has analyzed the perception of women regarding the professional and personal challenges in a way of reintegrating in the Nepali society.

Heckmann (2001) has identified the structural, cultural, social and identification integration. Basically, structural integration refers to the acquisition of rights, access to positions and status in the core institutions of the country. Likewise, cultural integration refers to a cognitive, behavioral and attitudinal change of individuals. Similarly, social integration refers to membership of individuals in the society and private sphere including friends, marriages, social relations and participation in associations. Finally, the individual subjective position is given more meaning in the reintegration. In this research, women have navigated to various structural, social and psychological pathways for reintegrating in the Nepali society. So, I have dealt with their reintegration through the transnational approach, by

analyzing the returnee's perception regarding knowledge and skills which they have learnt abroad trying to implement in the home country.

## **2.6 Gender**

Gender is known as one of the cross-cutting issues which play an important role in shaping migration experience. Most of the migration literatures have established gender as a crucial factor in the understanding of the causes and consequences of international migration (Curran, et al., 2006). It is claimed that gender is relevant to most, if not all, aspects of migration (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2009). Recently, the scholars have focused on various aspects of gender issues as an analytical tool in relation to migration (Kim, 2011, Sondhi, 2013). This research has used gender geography and power as a framework in the study which is discussed later. In this section, the gender aspect is elaborated. Talking about gender, it is dynamic according to the context. It is not only about the difference between men and women, but also how the differences are created, evolved and played out throughout migration (International Organization for Migration (IOM), 2009).

Gender is understood to be a social construction and to be reproduced through repeated performances (Sondhi, 2013). West & Zimmerman mentioned that gender is not about the roles but it is the product of social doing. It is developed through interaction. While dealing with the gender, they consulted with Goffman's (1976) who mentioned the "gender display". This means the gender might be portrayed through interaction and seen as "natural," while it is being produced as a socially organized achievement. It happens so because a human being does not only hold biological structure but also equips with religious, cultural, economic, social and political features (Bhasin, 2000). This means an individual migrates from one place to another, not because of his/her biological structure but also his/her socio-cultural, economic, religious and political identity. Gender, thus, should be understood as a socially constructed performance based traits and behaviors, not a biologically determined disposition of an individual which is tied up with their sex (Butler, 1990). If so, gender cannot only be understood in terms of masculinity and femininity of an individual, but also the roles and relationship they perform in their socio-cultural, religious, economic and political situations (Hansen, 2008). The term 'gender' is an abstract notion; it does not give meaning by itself, but by the biological, cultural,

religious, and political performances of an individual. In this sense, gender is a performance-based phenomenon (Nicholson, 1994). In this context, one can suppose 'gender' as human knowledge and social interaction as their 'performance'.

The gender approach enables one to have a greater awareness of the broader social factors that influence women's and men's motivations and roles, the dynamics of gender relations, and a better understanding of the effect of migration on women's and men's position with reference to the temporal and spatial contexts as well as to life circumstances (Pessar & Mahler 2006; Piper, 2005). Discussion on gender is not limited only to the empirical fact however it is used as an analytical tool (Scott, 1986). On the premises of feminist theories, it emphasizes on the various areas like "divides between public/private, political/personal, citizenship/ clandestinely as aspects of personal, collective or specialized national identities (Zavos, 2008, p. 92). These divisions have reflected on the prevalent social practices, relations, and institutions that happen in the society.

Wright (2008) has mentioned gender as an analytical tool to understand institutionalized hierarchies, inequalities and differential entitlements which regulates conditional access to material and symbolic resources. Scholars have mentioned gender as an integral element in migration research (Khalid, 2011; Nowak, 2009; Oishi, 2005). West & Zimmerman (1987) mentioned that while working with the gender they developed the notion of doing gender which sees gender in the institutional arena. But, a question like "how do we exactly incorporate the gender in the migration research?" is still existent. Hondagneu-Sotelo (1999) has mentioned that on the way to implementing gender in the migration research, scholars must move away from bringing only the women's story in the migration studies. She has further analyzed that if we focused solely on women, we might isolate the study of gender. She has emphasized the study of gender in migration which requires comparing men's and women's experiences. Likewise, Mahler and Pessar (2006) have found more difficult while bringing the gender in migration, as the social differences between men and women should be identified. However, Parrenas (2009) has mentioned that instead of focusing only on women in research, we can bring gender into the analysis. While doing so, we speak about both women's and men's experiences in the analysis. In this research, the researcher has also

brought the stories of women and while analyzing the context, the gender has been used as an analytical tool.

Butler in Nare and Akhtar (2014) claimed that gender is not exactly what one is or precisely what one has. Gender is to be explained exclusively as the matrix of the masculinity and femininity. But, this understanding towards gender precisely asserts masculinity and femininity as the binary opposition. Furthermore, Butler has focused gender on the performance of the individual. At the simplest, the “performativity of gender can be seen as an imitation of the dominant conventions of gender” (Butler 1990). So, the women in this research are also in the set under certain gender roles as they need to perform in the society in relation to family expectation, rules and responsibility. But, they also engage in the undoing and redoing while negotiating the gender roles (Connell, 2010). Butler (1990) has further mentioned that there is no static idea regarding gender; the idea is always shifting and moving. In this research, women’s experience of migration is analyzed through the gender perspective. Linking gender and migration, this research has presented the issue of gender with access to mobility, the participants’ role, and gender negotiation among the families and society. By raising the issue of women and the education migration, the participants have reflected the gender structure of the Nepali society.

## **2.7 Negotiation for change in gender roles**

By understanding the complexities and the variability in migration, a number of scholars have mentioned that migration study should take social transformation as its central category (Nowicka, 2015). Scholars have focused on the understanding on how human agency can condition responses to structural factors while dealing with the migration and negotiation (Bakewell, 2010; Vlase, 2013). The concept of negotiation suggests that both women and men are active participants. They sometimes ask or invite and sometimes demand for sharing and reallocating resources. While dealing with the negotiation and gender, scholars have discussed the women’s role and their negotiation in relation to their profession where the women are in less paid job (Whitmarsh, et al., 2007). Researchers have reflected that women are reluctant in the negotiation process. They don’t ask for promotions and better opportunities. In other words, women are much or less likely than men to use negotiation to get what they want (Babcock & Laschever, 2007). However, in recent

days, negotiation has come with the best strategy to balance their private and public life of women.

In this study, the women as returnees function under certain circumstances and restriction regarding the access to mobility. Later, being abroad, they are able to be in the different circumstances and gained the individual capital (various forms of economic, education, social capital). Later, they developed their agency (individual, strategy and capital) and, after return, they engage in negotiation to change the traditional belief and practices taking place in the Nepali society. The returnee women, thus, bring their individual agency and capital in the way to negotiation. Being abroad, the women have mentioned that they were able to learn their individual, social, academic skills from which they are negotiating the change in their household, organization and society.

It shows that the Nepali women have developed their habitus regarding gender role as defined by patriarchal norms and values before they migrate for their higher education. Later, when they tried to adopt the changing thought and practices then there raised tensions. So, the gender practice among highly skilled returnees is presented through this research. The change perception on gender roles is analyzed with the new habit developed by women that creates tensions in the family and society later.

The women in this study are trying to readjust in the Nepali society after their exposure in the international education. These women face challenges in fulfilling their roles in the family and society. They are expected to perform respectable responsibilities assigned to them. Here, the notion of respectable femininity is useful which was developed in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century (Radhakrishnan, 2011). The notion is that women should have performed within the certain periphery. It is expected that respectable women dressed modestly demonstrated self-restraint, should be sober and well-mannered and confined themselves to mainly private spheres (Whiteside, 2007). It claims that domesticity was the central component of respectability where basically good women were dutiful mothers and effective housekeepers (Skeggs, 2004). The women in this study, thus, feel challenged while negotiating their life with the expectation of the respectability.

Generally, migration is analyzed at three different levels: pre-migrations, during migration, and post-migration. Gender relations are related and can be investigated at every stage of migration (Boyd & Grieco, 2003). This research has focused on the post-migration experiences of women. However, the gender roles in the pre-migration and during migration experiences are also discussed.

In Nepali society, there is discrimination in relation to gender which is rooted in the patriarchal concern of the “ijjat” (social honor). Ijjat is a concept that is closely tied to a woman’s perceived sexual purity. According to the Hindu norms, unmarried women are expected to be a virgin, shy and deferential to their parents. As married women are expected to guard their reputation closely and transfer respect to their husband and in-laws. In the domestic sphere, a woman’s honor can be assured through social surveillance by her parents and relatives. The same is ensured by her in-laws and relatives after marriage. If a woman goes outside to her domestic sphere, it is tagged as a social censure which gives the impression that perhaps a woman lacks *ijjat*. Norms of female domestic seclusion vary among the caste and cultural group. In the Nepali families, women are restricted to go away and live somewhere from home in the past. The Nepali legal system has also made a certain restriction for the women to migrate to Arab countries. The discriminatory migration law and policy reflect a desire to constrain young women’s movements and protect them from their own dangerous sexuality (Grossman-Thompson, 2016).

The increased gender gap in relation to economy, participation, inclusion, equality and entertaining human rights in the socio-cultural context of Nepal caused women to live in poverty, exploitation, social margin, exclusion and violent circumstances (Karki, 2014). In the later days, the need and importance of empowering women culturally and socially were felt like one way of transforming the socio-cultural situatedness of the women in Nepal. The major political and social changes have opened up a lot of opportunities for the women (Acharya, 2017). So, women with higher education and abroad experience are the agents of change from where the other women in the society are encouraged to achieve higher education and make their future bright.

The key political change taking place in Nepal has brought many women in school and subsequently in the job market inspiring parents to educate their

daughters. Moreover, women are now seen as family economic saviors, education and migration opportunities are viewed as possibilities for women's freedom and independence (Adhikari, 2010). The women began to shift their role from the household to the wage earning. Scholars have discussed the women participating in the labour market which helps to change the existing gender roles in the socio-cultural context of Nepal (Bhadra, 2007). Nepali scholars have also brought the changing gender roles after migration from various perspectives (Chapagain, 2015). Illustrating gender migration, Adhikari (2010) has highlighted nurses' migration from Nepal abroad. She has discussed how women are getting more access and becoming empowered. Thus, in the socio-cultural perspective, the women migration can be taken as the means of empowering them socially and culturally.

Some studies in Nepal assert social and family change through gender perspective (Tamang, 2000). For example, Bennett (1983) has focused on 'high caste' women and Cameron (1998) focused on 'low caste' women in the socio-cultural rituals in Nepal. These studies, however, overlooked the life experiences of rural and urban women, particularly in relation to their empowerment, migration and change in their roles in the family and community relationships. Liechty (1996) has observed and analyzed male youths with the perspective of economically middle class family ignoring the females.

The urban women in Nepal intend to go beyond the traditional cultural hegemony that dominated their gender roles and relationships in the connection of their domestic and international mobility for centuries. These women in urban context are still adhering to some privileges of middle-class practices creating some paradoxes in between their changing attitudes and existing socio-cultural norms (Joshi, 2015). The woman returnees in Nepal also show the paradoxical characteristics regarding their changing attitude and socio-cultural norms of their society which is discussed in detail in the analytical section of this study. So, through their engagement in family, organization and society, these women are negotiating to the social structure and change. To analyze the negotiation, the structure and agency are applicable. Bourdieu (1977) has emphasized on the role of habitus to construct an agency while developing human agency habitus, repetitively taken for granted. He further analyzed agents produce and reproduce of objective meaning. Bourdieu



facilitates the researcher to understand habitus and deeply held belief (doxa<sup>6</sup>) in particular social field which reinforce internalized structure of cognition, behaviors, tastes, motivation, and dispositions (Throop & Murphy, 2002). Bourdieu, (1990) has mentioned that there is interplay between the objective structure and subjective mental experience of agencies which ultimately produce and reproduce habitus. Here, women agency with their society, their changed habits and understanding the Nepali social structure has been dealt with.

In this study, the perception regarding education migration and return is discussed from gender perspective. While dealing with the change, the perception and the thinking of the women in relation to their social and physical mobility is dealt with. The women, thus, have engaged in the negotiation while establishing their perception regarding the social mobility and the decision of return. The research has thus reflected how the women negotiate with the family while settling themselves in the home country.

Here, I have juxtaposed themes (gender mobility and return migration) under the aspiration and the decision of education migration which are discussed with other headings as (aspiration and the decision of education migration, gender and mobility). It has basically explored the women's mobility in the Nepalese society through the access of international education and the return decision in migration discourse.

## **2.8 Aspiration and decision of education migration**

Aspiration has been dealt with the psychological theory. The scholars have posited it with the psychological and individual construct (Starbuck, 1963). It is associated with “a desire for change which appears to be beneficial in the mind of an individual to improve his/her position on an individual scale of values” (Szefer-Timoszenko, 1981, p. 5). Basically, the motivational theory has reflected the aspiration of the individual (Bandura, 1977). More recent research on aspiration looks at the concept as socially driven. Sociologically speaking, aspiration of migration is the product of society. While making the decision for migration, the

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<sup>6</sup>Doxa: Doxa in particular social fields which reinforce internalized structures of cognition, behaviors, tastes, motivation, and dispositions (Yadhav, 2016).

individual needs to negotiate with the structural factors (i.e. family background, education, social class, employment etc.) to make the journey possible (Carling & Collins, 2018). It is, however, on the side of individual preferences and inclinations that focus on aspiration. Chamberlain (2001) defines aspiration as the personal “ability to believe in making it” in a given life environment (p. 8).

In the recent years, scholars have analyzed the relation of aspiration in the migration studies. They have considered the aspiration into two levels: macro<sup>7</sup> and micro<sup>8</sup> aspects of the aspiration. Ohaina (2016) has mentioned that the dynamics of the aspiration can be divided into two main parts: individual traits such as age, marital status, etc. and the environmental dynamics such as the migrant networks. Everyday contact and social media play crucial roles in facilitating the movement of people. De Haas (2010) has related the aspiration with the individual to their capabilities within a provided set of structure. Scholars have challenged the macro level theorist by emphasizing the need for local scale context in migration studies. Gardner (1981) has focused on the personal or individual characters of migrants rather than the aggregate societal conditions. So, this study has brought the individual stories of the migration study.

This research has brought the issue of aspiration from the sociological perspective. Appadurai (2004) has described aspirations as being heavily influenced by culture and society (p. 187). Therefore, the decision of migration is also the social issue. Aspiration in migration will be incomplete without due consideration on the socially constructed meaning of migration and emigration. In general, migration literature has been slow to accept the challenges of constructivism (Thomas-Hope, 1999). However, migration is increasingly being analyzed as a socially constructed project. Horvath (2008) has mentioned that the aspiration of migration is related to the imagined transformation where the individual is positively viewed and institutionally embedded. Society is reflecting the positive contribution of the migration. Therefore, the culture of migration is seen among the youth (Timmerman, et al., 2014). The trend of the recent nurse migration also shows how the Nepalese female are aspired to migrate abroad by transforming their gender role as a breadwinner in the family and getting recognition in their families (Adhikari, 2010).

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<sup>7</sup> Micro: Individual characteristics (gender, age, social status, educational attainment etc.)

<sup>8</sup> Macro: Social, political and economic context, migration policies and mass media.

In the process of developing aspiration, the individual migrants acquire social recognition and build up interpersonal relation with the peer group. They see the achievements of the peers and develop individual aspiration of the migration (Kandel & Massey, 2002). In this way, migration becomes a part of what Ray (2006) has mentioned to as the ‘aspirations window’ of individuals. Basically, the cultural value of being someone always motivates the individual to migrate. Furthermore, the migration and the relation to the transformation are illustrated by the scholars (Frye, 2012). Sin (2009) has brought the cases of the Malaysian students and mentions that the students’ expectation for better future career and succeeds and fulfills their aspiration through the migration for higher education in the UK. Carling (2014) has mentioned that the perception of poverty among the people is the prominent factor for migration in a way of bringing the aspiration for improving the living standard. Basically, the notion of poverty and aspiration among Cape Verde, towards the achievement for better life encourage the migrants to migrate abroad. While dealing with people’s aspiration, he has mentioned that people are not in the state of poverty but their notion of poverty and becoming economically sound encourage them to migrate.

The potentiality of the Nepali youths has shown their aspiration for better life and economic prosperity is prevalent among the Nepalese youths through migration. Therefore, many youths are migrating for the socio-economic prosperity. Migration has become a common phenomenon in the Nepalese society. It has become an integral aspect of the development discourse in Nepal (Sijapati, 2015).

The capacity to aspire is a future-oriented ability. Appadurai (2004) has discussed the aspiration in relation to capability. He relates poverty and individual capacity of aspiration. The individual aspiration is difficult to achieve because of the poverty. However, in this research, the aspiration of migration is brought into the discussion.

Bourdieu’s theory of habitus has been elaborated to analyze the aspiration of migration among the families, Bourdieu has defined habitus as a property of a social agent (whether individuals, groups or institutions). Grenfell (2012) has mentioned that it is “structured” by one’s past and present circumstances, such as family upbringing and educational experiences. It is structuring in line with the habitus that

helps to shape one's present and future practices. This structure comprises a system of dispositions which generates perceptions, appreciations, and practices. Education is the mantra among the parents of Kathmandu through which they can achieve an unknowable modern future (Lechtey, 2010). It has become the trend among the families to send their children in private schools in Kathmandu and the abroad for higher education. Adhikari (2010) presenting the nurse migration from Nepal says that in the Nepali society, international migration for work and study is perceived in a very positive way. Basically, it is given the level of progress and success if an individual migrates to Europe, North America, and Australia. Later on, this migration has also shared among the family, friends, and relatives. Thus, the family culture has oriented their children to be successful through their abroad migration.

The parents' aspiration to educate their daughter has also increased in recent days in Nepal after the political change. Moreover, women are now seen as family economic saviors. Education and migration opportunities are viewed as possibilities for women's freedom and independence (Adhikari, 2010). Basically, the women began to shift their role from the household to wage earners. The scholars have discussed the women's participation in the labor market which helped to change the existing gender roles in the socio-cultural context of Nepal (Bhadra, 2007).

The Nepali scholars have also brought the changing gender roles after migration from various perspectives (Chapagain, 2015). Illustrating gender migration, Adhikari (2010) has highlighted nurse migration from Nepal abroad. She has discussed how women are getting more access and becoming empowered. Thus, in the socio-cultural perspective, the women migration can be taken as the means of empowering them socially and culturally. Getting access to education and migration is not the product of family culture and socialization. The scholars have mentioned that the political transformation and various social movements took place in the Nepali society have also encouraged women to participate in the economic sector beyond the house and their own local market (Joshi, 2015).

Likewise, the market phenomenon is also there to help the Nepalese women to aspire and enter in the economic sector. The development of the infrastructure like (road, television, phone, and internet) connection has reached upon many houses. Therefore, women have been more exposed to the outside world seeing new images.

This research, thus, observes the aspiration in an individual through the parents' aspiration which is absent in many kinds of literature regarding the migration and aspiration. It has discussed aspiration in migration among the friends and families where the women's education enhancement was predominant. Moreover, it has shown the gender dimension of aspiration for migration where daughters are encouraged for their abroad education by their mother. The aspiration of migration is transformed into the notion of contribution which has also been further elaborated on in this research.

## **2.9 Mobility**

The term social mobility refers to a process where the person moves from one position to another to which people give specific values. In the sociological literature, the term 'mobility' is usually equated with the idea of 'social mobility', referring to an individual's categorical movement up or down the scale of socioeconomic classes (Sheller, 2008). Social mobility is not just about moving people up the earning ladder. It is also about ensuring access to social and educational capital (Leung, 2017). While dealing with the social mobility in relation to the international migration, scholars have mentioned that the research should refer to at least two social spaces. One is the origin community where the migrants live and other is receiving social space. Geographic mobility is increasingly perceived worldwide as a key to academic excellence, career advancement and upward social mobility (Leung, 2017). Elliott and Urry (2010) relate mobility with power relations. The access to mobility, thus, leads to experiencing new culture and taste, from where multiple kinds of mobility are generated and new kind of power is realized by the individual where he/she can develop new ambition and interest. Basically, this research deals with the social mobility from the perspective of gender and return migration. Boccagni, (2017) has mentioned that the individual migration decision or other social mobility plan is decided, whereby the individual can achieve the social mobility which is set by them. Social mobility has been a central feature of the modern system of education. The further conceptualization of the mobility is associated with gender which is elaborated later.

In the present world, a large number of educated young people are moving abroad to seek educational opportunities. They don't see any possibilities in home countries. They use their education as a livelihood and migrate for the opportunities.

This trend is increasing in the developing world (Olwig & Valentin, 2014). This is applicable in the Nepali context as well. While analyzing nurses' migration and its growing trend in the Nepali context, Adhikari (2010) has mentioned the expectation of job in the Nepali market for the women after their education and they are unable to manage due to the physical mobility abroad with the expectation of education achievement along with economic mobility. Most young people of Nepal are also using their higher education as their livelihood and are moving abroad. This number is increasing in recent years.

### **2.10 The women's notion of mobility**

The issue of gender and mobility is raised by the scholars while dealing with power relations embedded in gender. The scholars have presented how mobility and immobility are implicated in creating, reinforcing and changing the meaning and practices of gender (Hille, 1999). Laying the central concept on gender and access to mobility, the scholars have also presented the urban and rural dynamics of mobility (Korzenevica, 2016). Moreover, the geographers and planners have discussed that the access to mobility is the main aspect of empowerment (Hanson, 2010). The scholars, thus, have presented the empowering aspects of mobility in a straightforward manner. It comes from seeing mobility as a means of access to opportunity, enabling people to get to the places, the destinations where they want or need to go (Hanson & Hanson 1980; Kwan, 1999).

The women from the urban context negotiate for their mobile life through education and migration. They take their education as a capital from where they negotiate for international exposure. Besides, there is negotiation for return as well as resettlement in Nepal. This kind of exposure as well as implementation in the society brings conflict among the family and society.

Women began to migrate from developing countries to developed ones with the hope to improve their social and economic condition. This notion of migration is termed as the feminization of migration (Piper, 2006; Lim & Oishi, 1996). Discussing the feminization of migration, the scholars have focused on the increasing number of females with their economic and social contribution (Piper & Yamanaka 2005.). Although the issues on women related migration have been increasing in recent decades, their difficulty has not yet been widely addressed. It appears that

most studies on migration are neutral and utilize models based on male experiences (Boyd, 1989). Moreover, the feminization of migration in relation to highly skilled and education is less discussed in the Nepali society which is the main focus of the study.

Regarding the transnational perspective in the migration studies, the scholars have dealt with the economic perspectives. However, little research from socio-cultural angle is carried out. Moreover, the gender issue regarding the understanding of the women on the move is also less discussed. People link between first and third world countries, where the two different perspectives lie (Tamara, 2013). Basically, this perspective shows the link between the first and the third world countries, where the migrants develop two different perspectives. One is related to their home country and the other to the country where they have migrated. Bringing the gender into a transnational perspective, Gupta (1997) mentioned that women uphold the traditions while living in different social locations.

In this research, the women have also brought discussion in relation to the here and there (home and host) dimension, where they discussed the learning aspects from abroad. Globalization enables the new generation women who experience and create different life trajectories. Therefore, through their experience, they could break the barriers which are created by home. Kim (2011) has discussed the Asian women and mentioned that movement of the individual may signify a change in the self-expression and mobility may be seen not only the physical but also in thinking where the migrants imagine for liberating themselves from social norms created in the local context. Here in this research, the women's perception regarding the individual and freedom is also elaborated with this concept.

The contemporary social theories claim individualization as the centre of analysis in the social science (Beck-Gernsheim, 2002). Basically, the emergence of privatized work and the devaluation of social order through globalization and changing societies have become the powerful individualizing sources (Bauman, 2001). The scholars have mentioned that the current era is individualism. The individual decision of migration is also associated to get the individual freedom in a search for a better life abroad. In this research, the women have discussed how they got the access to freedom abroad. This kind of realization of freedom and

individualization gets lost when they return to home and negotiate to get the freedom of physical and social mobility. Basically, the women present that there is more restriction in their families regarding the physical mobility. The family and society are more concerned about the women's performance. People criticize women independency and freedom and want to see the very loyal and having submissive character. The returnee women, thus, show their dissatisfaction with gendered culture and social practices prevalent in the Nepalese society in relation to the women's physical and social mobility. They are not ready to accept the traditional roles and responsibilities prevalent in the existing families and bring the voice on independence and freedom.

Nepali political discourse has changed with the people's movement of 1990. Nepal has passed through various revolutions (1951, 1990, and 2008). All these movements have established the presidential act for the women. Bringing women's perception on the freedom after 1990 among the people in Nepal, Liechty (1996) discussed the women's perception of freedom after 1990. Therefore, the women are increasing at the policy level and the public sector constitutionally. Their empowerment and active participation in domestic political affairs have increased their status in Nepal. However, in everyday life, they are negotiating for their mobility; it may be social, economic or political.

The parents in Nepal are giving an access to higher education to the Nepali women who were excluded before. This trend has changed among the certain families who are investing their resources for their daughters' education (Adhikari, 2010). Basically, the parents in Nepal are attracted to the lucrative opportunities available in the market. They think the abroad career of their children will have better future in the upcoming days. However, beyond providing opportunities, there is also another aspect of life of the women which they face after they arrive homeland. The women mention that they face challenges to negotiate for their independency after marriage. They are compelled to work in the sector where they don't want to be. They have developed their knowledge and skills regarding the work by themselves like developing the entrepreneurship as well as investing in the small business. However, the parents think that their daughters need to be peripheral of the prestigious job where they earn money as well as the prestige from society.



The idea of acceptable career for women exhibits the gender limitation. Gender restrictions influence employment opportunities where men receive job preference in the traditional societies. So, the women think that there is no freedom for them to work in Nepal. On the other hand, the family and society are more concerned about them and they are asked many questions regarding their marriage and the family life. However, they think that this pressure was absent when they were abroad. Such a response from the home and society compels them to negotiate with their parents regarding their independency.

This research investigates how the women renegotiate their identity after their return. They feel the restrictions and the barriers in a way of reengagement in the society. In Nepali culture, the mobility is highly gendered. They, while being abroad, realize the freedom of mobility. After return to Nepal, they want to lead their life with the same kind of freedom which they enjoyed during their stay abroad. They are discussing their freedom not in terms of their dress and food. But, the freedom in thinking and implementing in every aspect of the decision making in their life is sought by them. They feel that they are restricted with these issues. They need to negotiate for reestablishing their freedom. What they felt abroad is absent in Nepal. So, while negotiating their mobility, they give the example of their access of freedom and independency available abroad.

The participants of this research have also mentioned that they have the access to higher education. Through their education, they make the decision to move abroad for their higher education for which they need to negotiate with their family members. There are two dimensions regarding the return decision. Parents welcome their daughter's decision of return predominantly concerned with their marriage. Parents of the returnee think that their daughter should marry in time and settle the family life. So, marriage has also become the issue among the returnees. Besides, some parents wanted to settle their daughter abroad and lead their profession abroad instead of in Nepal. The parents' expectation is associated with the political and working culture in Nepal is not suitable for their daughter. However, they think that there is a suitable environment for them to work abroad. Therefore, there was sometimes conflict between the parents and the daughters while making the decision of return.

## **2.11 The women's mobility from the return perspective**

There was very little attention paid to women migrants despite early realizations of the role of women in migration (Ravenstein, 1885). To explore the phenomenon of gender and return migration from the access of mobility in the Nepali society, this section deals with the women's mobility in relation to return migration.

The scholars have discussed mobility with micro and macro perspectives (Nguyen, 2015). The macro perspective has dealt with macroeconomics and politics in relation to mobility (Jaksic & Prasevic, 2011). In the micro perspective, it deals with the individual lives and their access with social, economic and physical mobility (Leung, 2017). In the migration literature, mobility has been discussed with social, economic, geographical mobility. Rao (2010) has mentioned that the migration provides individual not only an opportunity to earn money but also to see the new places, experience and culture. Olwig and Sorensen (2002) have said that migration has been associated with both physical and social mobility. Tuan (1974) writes that place means primarily two things: one's position in society and as spatial location. In this research, the individual aspect of geographical mobility and its relation with the social mobility is elaborated.

Mobility has been predominantly used in the migration literature. It has a specific significance for the Nepali women because there are many obstacles and restrictions on women's mobility. However, the access to physical mobility is easily available to men. They are playing the major role in migrating nationally and internationally which are associated with the economic achievement and breadwinner of the family (Korzenivica, 2016). Hanson (2010) has mentioned that the issue of social, physical and personal mobility is poorly documented in gender and mobility. If the issues of the mobility are associated with the women, most of the literatures have focused on socio-economically disadvantaged female migrants and those who work in the sex industry (Kofman, 1999, p.53). This research has illuminated the issue of women's mobility from the return and transnational perspective. Over the past fifteen years, highly skilled women have been migrating but their mobility issues are less discussed. Peake and Valentine (2003) have mentioned that the emerging young feminist scholars are identifying the issue of transnationalism. Marchand and Runyan (2001) have mentioned that scholars are struggling by

bringing the discussion on the gender while dealing with the inequalities in global transformation such as the state, cities and households. Recently, the scholars have dealt the issue with social and economic mobility within education migration from the transnational perspective (Valentin, 2014).

In recent years, the scholars have been focusing on the development through the circulation of individual's goods and ideas. This approach is beyond the area-remittance, brain circulation, and return migration. It studies the impact of emigration on sending countries. Traditionally, the socio-economic changes have been focused on the scholars. However, the socio-cultural issues are raised by the scholars with a new focus on social remittances, norms, practices, identities and social capital moving across borders (Levitt, 1996, 2001; Levitt and Lamba-Nieves, 2011). The overall social remittances and the idea of a contribution to the home country are elaborated in the next section. However, this section deals with the women's access to mobility.

Mobility for higher education is recently an increased phenomenon among the Nepali youths. Many youths from Nepal enter the international arenas such as USA, Australia, UK, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands by migrating for education. The burgeoning literature of migration is inferring on the educated migrants (Ghimire and Maharjan 2014, Sijapati, 2010, Valentin, 2014). From a global mobility perspective, the student is growing in number across broader. De Wit (2002) mentioned that from a global mobility perspective, there is a rising flow of students across borders. Higher education institutions around the world are competing to attract international students from different countries. The flow of international students is from less developed to more developed countries. Given the social, economic, and political conditions of contemporary nations, the mobility of students is generally from South to North (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2010). Focusing on the education migration, Adhikari (2013) has mentioned that the countries such USA, Australia, UK, Norway, Denmark, and the Netherlands are prime destinations for the Nepali nurse migration. The gender aspects of migration like labor migration, has been largely spelled out by the scholars (Kaspar, 2005, Chapagain, 2015). It is excluded from the education migration. As a part of cultivating the research context, it is now important to uncover the space of gender in the existing trend of migration in Nepal through the

gender and access to mobility. Therefore, to see the gender aspects in return migration, this research has explained the gender roles and decision in the context of education migration with the access of mobility. Firstly, the gender and mobility in terms of individualization and freedom are discussed. Secondly, women's mobility with the social change is explored and the last one is related to the negotiation for transformation in relation to individual and society.

Most of the academic and the empirical research relating to the women in Nepal are portrayed as the vulnerable and submissive. However, the women representatives of this thesis show the different characters from those literatures that are also known as the change makers in the Nepali society. These women represent the women who have the access to higher education and economy. In the meantime, these women play the important role to establish new roles and culture regarding the gender practices in their families. The study participants represent the distinct category of women in Nepal. These women have the expectation of the personal freedom and are entering in the public space through their education and professional life.

## **2.12 Mobility and social change**

Migration is a powerful catalyst for social change. Researchers have recently considered the nexus between gender and migration in relation to social change (Pessar & Mahler, 2003). This analysis is still relevant in this research. Scholars have cited that the return migrants played the important role in reforming domestic policies (Massey et al., 1998). Furthermore, it is said that the effect of migration is not limited to the remittance and investment. However, the socio-political dimension is also the important aspect in the return decision. The social and political investments by the returnees can contribute to the better society in their origin context (De Haas, 2005). The returnee women have the major role in their society. They may transfer their knowledge and skills in their home country and contribute in bringing change in their society of origin. However, their active role in the development is not recognized duly (Riano, 2015).

Tamara (2013) has discussed women migration and decision making by employing active personal agency among the Chinese and Indian students. She has discussed how these students make their education as a socially acceptable reason for

departure and show their defiance towards cultural and social norms. Education has become the asset among the women for their freedom of mobility (Adhikari, 2013). Radhakrishnan (2011) has conversed the highly skilled women from IT background. She has discussed how these women navigate the diverse contradiction of the hierarchies of class and gender in their professional context. Ilkjaer (2015) has discussed how the Indian highly skilled women are reluctant to return from the USA. Bringing narrative of the women migrants, she has mentioned how the women are dealing with their unexpected ways of the dealing confusion of return migration. This shows that an increasing number of women are migrating independently across borders. The women of Nepal are moving abroad for their education independently, which has opened up a new path for the young Nepali in general (Ghimire and Maharjan, 2014; Sijapati, 2010; Valentin, 2012; Pyakurel, 2016). The potential students migrate to the developed countries expecting that the education they would acquire abroad would be much more advanced in nature and fruitful to their personal, social and professional life in the host country. Many students in Nepal, therefore, make a journey abroad aiming at acquiring special knowledge and skills in the area of their interest.

Nepali women are facing a lot of challenges in their everyday life, in which they bring their experience of learning and desire to change the circumstances. Basically, the traditional value belief system and practices in the Nepali society are dealt. Bringing the return from the transnational perspective with the gender, Bhatt (2015) has explored the negotiation of return among the IT worker's spouses from USA to India. Dealing with the gender and mobility in migration, it has been dealt with the South Asian context (Bhatt, 2015; Radhakrishnan, 2011). However, this perspective is less discussed in the context of Nepal. Through this research, the women's experience of return reestablishment in the Nepali society is elaborated from the gender perspective while leading their life in Nepal. Research shows that women need to struggle to reestablish themselves because there is a domination of the patriarchal gender pattern (Combres, 2007).

Migration can improve autonomy, human capital, self-esteem as well as women's authority and worth in their families and communities (Mahler and Pessar, 2006). Migration can change traditional norms as women gain access to education and economic opportunities (Fleury, 2016). The introduction of more equitable social

norms can also improve women's rights and access to resources. When migrant women return to home, they often maintain their new found autonomy and bring new norms, skills and expertise. With these new skills, returnee migrant women often start their own businesses (Schurr & Stolz, 2010).

Their migratory journey has associated with their social and economic enhancement through their abroad education. The belief of getting the abroad education is, thus, related to the career and earning more after they enter the professional market. They believe that the education and exposure of abroad will obviously bring a change in their life. Moreover, in the education migration, there is not the individual aspiration but the intergenerational aspiration has also been there where parents are especially playing the important role.

In the context of Nepal, the term migration has a close connection with the economic life of the people. World Bank (2016) has explored that, in Nepal, one-third of the gross domestic product is dependent on the remittance inflow the money sent by the Nepali people from abroad. Traditionally, the economy of the people of Nepal depended upon agriculture. Before reintroducing democracy in Nepal in the year of 1990, the majority of people were farmers. Many of them lived in subsistence farming. Since they had very limited access to the job opportunity available in the cities and towns, they were bound to depend on the economy generated through their agriculture. Those who owned many acres of land were rich while one who worked on wages was poor economically. The traditional caste-based occupations, on the other hand, were also the source of economy of the people in Nepal in the past (Subedi, 2014). But, their traditional occupations had limited productivity and were not expanded at the national and international arena. As a result, the gap between the rich and the poor increased immensely (The Asian Development Bank (ADB), 2017). Gradual economic inequality, discrimination, and injustice resulted increased marginalized and exploitation among many (European Commission to the International Dalit Solidarity Network, 2009). Economic vulnerability, thus, affected the lives of the common people in Nepal.

Economic inequality, discrimination, and injustice did not only create the gap between the rich and poor, but also between men and women. The socio-cultural domination of male over female restricted the female from getting access to

economic resource (Asian Development Bank, 1999). Right after reintroducing democracy in Nepal, women empowerment as a part of economic liberation has been recognized. Job opportunities were created in which women were prioritized. Special provision for women was ensured in the economic sector (Acharya, 2017). As a result, the women belonging to family in the urban area, in particular, began to get access to economic activities available in the country. While doing so, the idea of women migration within the country and abroad gradually came into play (Adhikari, 2010). For this, both domestic and international migration became one of the choices among the women among Nepali families.

In the individual level, it has been noted that although all migrants can be agents of change, migrant women are more likely to have their personal development than men. This is an overtly generalized statement which requires qualifications. Research has shown that women tend to view out-migration more as part of their personal development by breaking out social conventional and gaining status than men (Kim, 2011). In addition to having narrowly defined economic reasons which are typically the main focus in the debate on the 'migration-development nexus', women also and in some cases predominantly use migration as an escape route from unwanted marriage or to get away from abusive relationships or husbands who do not manage to provide for the family (Carling, 2005). So, women's engagement in the social, cultural and organizational aspects is explored in this research and their perception regarding change is elaborated. The upcoming section concerns the notion of contribution among the returnee women.

### **2.13 Education migration and return with the notion of contribution**

The literature on return migration often treats the process of return as one-way movement. In the migration literature, scholars are focusing on the decision making by going abroad and gaining new experiences and skills. A large gap exists in students' migration and dearth in return and reintegration (Kuschminder, 2013). Return is perceived as the natural "end product" of the migration cycle. Studies reflected that migrants are expected to save capital and acquired skills abroad can be productively invested in the sending countries. A large number of studies have reflected the return in tensions and motivations (De Haas & Fokkema, 2011).

The government policies and programmes also play an important role in return and reintegration regarding the highly educated personnel. Kibreab (2005) has mentioned that the government policies such as safety and security as well as the rights play an important role. There seems a clash between the returnees and the local people in terms of their interests. Stefansson (2004) has mentioned that the attitudes of the local population towards returnees can also play an important role in reintegration. On the way to reintegrating themselves, the returnees bring new ideas and customs which engender some kinds of conflict among the returnees and the local people.

Recently, Nepali media have covered the subject of returnee reintegration. Jha (2018) has discussed on the social, political, economic and psychological reintegration. He has mentioned that Nepali government has developed policies regarding the returnees and their reintegration into the host country after they returned. However, there are problems regarding the implementation of the plan and policies that are adopted by the government. Therefore, returnees felt the unfavorable situation in home country to implement their knowledge and skills which they have gained while being in abroad. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 has clearly mentioned that all the economic resources, skills, knowledge, technologies and experiences gained by returnees will be implemented in resources generating activities. Likewise, foreign employment policy 2068 mentioned that the foreign employment is taken as the sources to gain new skills, technologies. The returnees are taken as the resources to generate new skills and technologies and target for the implementation in the home country. However, there lack a favorable environment in the home country for Nepalese migrants. In this research, the researcher has also dealt with the women and their reintegration issues after they returned from abroad.

So far as the matter of return and reintegration is concerned, there should be a distinction between short-term and long-term reintegration. The term reintegration has a different implication for different returnees. More than that, there are several factors that determine an individual level of reintegration such as economic, social, political and environmental factors. Scholars have also brought the return migration in association with developing the small business in the home country (Wahba, 2015). Basically, the migrants use their work experience and new knowledge and skills at home and contribute to the development as a strategy of their reintegration is



also discussed in this study. To deal with the reintegration, the woman returnees basically present their perception regarding contribution in the study.

Many people in Nepal were excluded with the access to education in past. The poor and marginalized people were excluded from formal education in Nepal. The closed economy and the autocratic Rana regime were responsible for the limited access to education in Nepal. In the Rana regime, there was only limited schools and university where the limited people especially the elites got an access to school education. If people wanted to pursue higher education, they used to go to India. Therefore, India has been one of the destinations for many Nepali (Ghimire & Maharjan, 2014) to accomplish higher education. Studies show that there was a political discussion when most of the Nepali youths are abroad. In the political development of Nepal, the Nepali students studying in India had played a major role in overthrowing the Rana regime. A political association like "Nepal Parisad" was conceived among the Nepali students studying in India (Nepal Center for contemporary research (NCCR), 2010, p. 53). The autobiography of many politicians reflects that they have launched the various political movements (Sharma, 1998). So, there was the notion of contribution on them.

The Fulbright program established in 1946 provides grants for the students, scholars, teachers and professionals to undertake research. This scholarship is a merit based scholarship programme which has provided many students to study in the USA. Another programme was the Colombo Plan which encourages students for the international education. These scholarship programmes have been the renowned programmes however, there are the countries specific scholarship programmes from Australia, Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Japan and many others for Nepali students (Ghimire, 2011). The basic assumption of scholarship and studying abroad is that the students after their graduation return to their home country engage in the administrative work and development as the values of the colonial ruler.

Besides the scholarship provision and the facilities, there is a shift in the student migration. Most of the students nowadays are migrating with the self-funding. The United States, Japan, Australia, Germany, France and UK are the destinations for approximately 75 percent of all international students to Organization for Economic Cooperation and development OECD countries. Nepal

has been sending students to various countries and in 1902 the Government of Nepal had decided to send eight Nepali youths to Japan for study and they were recorded as the first Nepali nationals to land in Japan for their study. Later, these Nepalese completed their study and returned with various technologies and skills (Embassy of Japan, nd).

The Nepali people also used to go to India for their higher education. The first educated women recorded anywhere in the history of Nepal were Vidhyawoti Kansakar, Radha Devi Malakar, Dharma Devi Kansakar and Bishnu Devi Mali who were sent to India for nursing and midwifery training in 1928 (Adhikari, 2010). It is notable that these women were not from ordinary families but were religiously motivated or had members from political activists. Besides, a few widely known educated women viz Punya Prabha Dhungana, Mangala Devi Shrestha, Sahana Pradhan and Pushpalata Pradhan had been to Burma. They were part of the Nepali Diaspora in Burma and they received their basic education. When the Burmese Government expelled the ethnic Nepali after the Second World War, they returned to Nepal.

Education and migration have their linkage with the notion of the contribution towards the political, social and economic transformation in the country (Lang et al., 2012). Ghimire and Maharjan (2014) have discussed on how the migrants define about their contribution in the home land. While dealing with the contribution, migrants did not contextualize their efforts in terms of broader national development. The personal desire and motivation to use skills and knowledge to do something new and useful in Nepal is discussed. It is in contrast to the political movement organized by the previous generation. The application of their knowledge and skills is seen from the perspective of personal objectives rather than a communal contribution to society. Besides, the returnees also feel that there should not be the expectation to contribute more in comparison to non-migrants.

Studies show that migrants are interested to implement their knowledge and skills which they gained during their study abroad (Vogiazides, 2012; Saxenian, 2007). Schiller and Faist (2010) have mentioned that migration is beneficial to both receiving and sending countries. Basically, receiving countries gained the talent mind where the best and brightest brain is recruited. For the sending countries, studies

show that economic development and social change is possible through the migration. Moreover, migration is seen as a catalyst for the social transformation (Vlase, 2013).

Literatures have disclosed migrant's contributions to development (Faist, 2008; Saxenian, 2007). Individual and contextual reasons of the migrants inspired them to return their home country (Bastia, 2011; Hunter, 2010). The return migrants are also supposed to contribute to the development of their home country (Sinatti, 2011). Basically, the idea of contribution is discussed at the macro level. Ammassari (2004) has brought the structural implication of return from the quantitative approach. Ghimire and Maharjan (2014) have said that the contribution of Nepali returnees in their home country needs to be discussed with emic perspective. The returnees in Nepal are also expected to have the explicit and implicit knowledge after return in home-land through which they can contribute to the development of the community and nation as a whole. Ilkjaer (2015) has discussed that the notion of contribution among the Indian highly skilled returnees guided by their religious and cultural background have grown up. Bringing the anthropological background, the notion of contribution the ritual and practices among the Indian people is presented. So, through the social remittance, this research also oversees the notion of contribution among the returnee women.

This study deals with women engagement in Nepali society with the expectation of implementing their knowledge and skills to see the women contribution. To see the individual knowledge and skills, the researcher has classified it into individual, social and academic aspects of learning. So, in relation to these achievements, the implementation aspect is dealt with the transnational approach. Nowicka (2015) has mentioned that the scholars need to adequately capture the transnational dimension of practices to see the transformation. He has further analyzed that transforming helps the researcher to understand the meaning of cultural encounter and ask: how do migrants develop the competence to successfully operate within a new society and culture? Therefore, in the analytical section, the researcher has discussed in detail in relation to learning and implementing part where returnees come in contact with Nepali society.

Bourdieu's theory allows us to see the disposition, attitude, worldviews, and practices that people display as a process rather than individual qualities. It allows us to address the transformation of migrant disposition within a complex system of power relation. His theory of habitus allows us to address the dispositions that migrants 'bring with' them to a new country, as well as how they evolve with time in a new social setting (Nowicka, 2015). Bourdieu's notion of hysteresis (1999) is particularly useful in this respect. Through this research, the researcher has shed light on the struggle of the returnee in the field. This theory helps to understand intercultural encounters as a social praxis that is embedded in complex structures of symbolic relations between social actors.

Another form of Bourdieu's analysis in the capital has brought in the discussion. For Bourdieu, capital has various forms. It is not only limited to economic capital in the strict sense (i.e. material wealth in the form of money, stocks and shares, property, etc) but also cultural capital (i.e. knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions), symbolic capital (i.e. accumulated prestige of honor), and the like (Awasthi, 2004). Education as a symbolic capital worked together with other capitals to advantage and disadvantage, and to position social agents in multiple fields (Grenfell, 2012, p.76).

#### **2.14 Social Remittance and the notion of giving to the Nepali society**

The concept of social remittance is important when migrants discuss their knowledge and skills (Levitt, 2005). The extended scholarship on transnational migration has long been argued that explorations of the migration-development nexus should move beyond economic assumptions by incorporating the idea of migrant's social connections (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). In the debate of migration, social remittance is largely overlooked but plays the potential role in migration (Levitt, 2005). Social remittances are the ideas, behavior, identities and social capital that flow from receiving to sending country. The role that these resources play in promoting immigrants' entrepreneurship, community, and family formation and political integration is widely acknowledged. The scholars have classified at least three types of social remittances as normative structure, the system of practice, and social capital (Levitt, 1996).

It is assumed that migrants will assimilate and acquire the knowledge and freedom that exercised in the host countries than in the home country after migrating to the foreign countries. In the return migration, the individual narrate who I am connected to where I am. Both of these connections have an opportunities and challenges (Christou, 2006). Normative structures are ideas, values, and beliefs. They include norms for interpersonal behavioral, standard of age, gender appropriateness, and principles of neighborliness, community participation and aspirations for social mobility. They also include expectations about organizational performance. On the other hand, migrant's notion of identity also shifts with the changes in their social status brought about by migration.

The women migrating to new as well as the developed nation modify their ideas about women's role in response to their more active engagement in the workplace and the public sector. They transmit new ideas about identity back to the arrival place. This kind of behavioral change also affects women who are at home. The women who are in the destination want to adopt and learn the behavior of the women who have been in the foreign land.

On the other hand, non-migrant women use their social remittance to construct the new version of womanhood while their ideas were often somewhat romanticized. They are still represented by the marked changes in thinking about male-female relations. This kind of remittance helps the migrant women to be the role model and other non-movers try to contact them and develop new behavior pattern. This kind of changing behavior helps the women to think once the gender roles are practiced in our context.

Going through the idea of social remittance, the system of practice appears as a component. The system of practices shaped by a normative structure for an individual includes household labor, religious practices, and patterns of civil and political participation. Social remittance counts all the cultural and social skills that are brought by the migrants. While living in the foreign land, they acquire various social and cultural skills which are not counted in the cash economy. In this research, the researcher has analyzed the social remittance of the migrants which are discussed under the social, cultural capital acquired by the individual.

Ilkjar (2015) has brought the notion of ‘giving back’ by illustrating the stories of the returnee migrants of highly skilled Indians. She has discussed the religious belief which is a prominent factor where the migrants developed thinking of return so as to contribute to their community and society. She has further expressed that “all major world religions lay great stress on the merit of gift” (Parry, 1986 as cited in Ilkjar, 2015). In addition, Hindu scriptural ideas are within the periphery of giving known as *dana* or *dan*. There are various typologies (money, cloth, food). Moreover, there is also *netra-dan* (eye donation), *anga dan* (organ donation), (Copeman, 2011 as cited in Iikjar, 2015). Scholars have also brought the discussion regarding *dan* where they say that *dan* is a gift which is granted to others without any expectations for return (Ilkjar 2015). Furthermore, K.C. (2014) has also brought the notion of *kamaune* with the economic generative *daam kamaune* and *naam kamaune* activities existed in the Nepali society.

Agergaard and Broegger ( 2016) have brought how the educated migrants connect rural home and how their relatives make sense of remitting. They have concluded that migrants in the rural area are connected to their rural home by taking part in the social remittances instead of generating the extensive economic remittances. This shows the Nepali people’s access towards the physical mobility for education. They have brought the physical mobility for education as an important learning environment itself. It also shows the contribution of education migration through the internal migration. Carling (2004) has categorized returnees on the basis of their success and failure. He has mentioned that classic returnees are those who are basically recognized as the economic success and the others are those who are from the empty-handed and still some others are those who return no better off than when they left.

The notions of *naam kamaune*<sup>9</sup> and *daam kamaune* are closely associated with Shah’s (2004) descriptions of the concept of *naam rakhne*. Regarding this concept, Shah’s (2004) descriptions of the concept *naam rakhne*<sup>10</sup>(name keeping), *naam*

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<sup>9</sup> Naam Kamaune: To earn recognition in the society: Bhanubhakta Acharya who is regarded as the first poet in Nepal mentioned that he got motivated from a grass cutter of his village to do social works for the society

<sup>10</sup> Dam Kamaune: To earn money

*kamaune* (earning name) are common folk expressions in Nepal. *kamaune*<sup>11</sup> is also related to *samajik ijjat*<sup>12</sup> (social prestige). *Ijjat* means honour or prestige derived by an individual's estimation by others. K.C. (2014) has discussed cultural narratives and moral values defining how male and female should conduct themselves in the society to maintain *ijjat*. While dealing with contribution and development, the concept of "*kehi garne*" (doing something) is analyzed with the decision of return. It is associated with the notion of "*kamaune*" by K.C. (2014) where he has discussed the cultural and economic imaginaries of migration among Gwaldaha in Chalnakhel Village Development Committee (VDC) in Kathmandu District. He has brought the migration decision in the line with the economic prosperity. The main motivation of migration of that village is "*dam kamaune*"<sup>13</sup> in association with the economic prosperity. However, he has discussed various dimensions of "*kamaune*" that is prevalent in the Nepali society. In this research, return decision is associated with the notion of "*kehi garne*" (*want to do something*) which is linked with the notion of "*kamaune*" (*act to earn*). It is associated with the social mobility of the returnees who wanted to establish themselves and their social recognition because of the social capital. While dealing with the capital, it is related to the economic sphere and monetary exchange. However, Bourdieu (1988) has mentioned it in wider forms. He extends beyond the notion of material assets to capital that may be social cultural or symbolic.

The returnees' view of doing something "*Kehi garne*" in the society is also the family phenomenon which they wanted to fulfill by returning after their education migration and settling at home. In a way of capturing their contribution, the researcher has not materialized their return; instead, their perception of return is captured which the result of their socialization is representing the culture of maintaining the status and gaining the prestige "*ijjat*" and *kamaune* from the society. The researcher has dealt with the notion of "*kehi garne*" in the upcoming chapters in the analytical section. While dealing with the notion of the "*kehi garne*", the transnational perspective is analyzed.

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<sup>11</sup> Naam Rakhne: To establish in the society and the country

<sup>12</sup> Samajik Ijjat: Social recognition and prestige given by the society

### **2.15 Gender geography and power as a framework of the study**

This study has found very useful theoretical approaches regarding gender, migration and household dynamics. The framework developed by Pessar and Mahler (2003) known as “gendered geographies of power” is a useful analytical tool in this research. This framework has discussed the issue of gender and power negotiation for social development. It has elaborated the idea with three main elements included in the gender dynamics in migration research.

The concept of geographical scale focuses on the ideal that gender is constantly operating on various spatial (like body, the family, the state). The gender practices change within the particular scale. Nepali society is diverse in its nature. According to census 2011, it shows 125 ethnic and caste groups existed in Nepal. The gender construction is varied among the various caste and cultural groups. While negotiating their gender roles, the women use their international education exposure. The Nepali societal structural is embedded in the highly patriarchal domination (Tamang, 2000). The Nepali women, especially of Hindu caste, have been portrayed as passive, submissive to male authority and subject of Brahmanic idea of purity, obedience and honor (Sharma, 2008). So, in this context, women face challenges while negotiating the gender role (elaborated in the negotiation for change).

The concept of social location deals with the person’s positions within interconnected power hierarchies which are created through the series of socially stratifying factors (Pessar & Mahler 2003, p.816). Scholars have mentioned that the individual action and thinking is the product of the position where the individual lies. Given the different power hierarchies (class, race, gender, sexuality, nationality, etc), the individual is positioned in very different and complex ways in the relations that establish with others. In addition, these positions are not static. However, they are fluid and always shifting depending on the specific context and situations.

In this study, most of the women are from the high castes (Brahmin, Chhetri, Newar and ethnic groups). These women have not discussed the caste and culture. However, the caste hierarchies were prevalent in the historical context. The women, while living in Nepal, need to face challenges regarding the gender role by the notion of respectable femininity (discussed in negotiation for change section). However, while being abroad, they are not compelled with such expectation.



Migration and return decisions are also the product of their social location. Living in the Nepali society and socializing in their family, they have developed certain habitus regarding their prestige and position. While making their journey of migration successful, they are negotiating to their family on the basis of their social performance.

The third aspect of gender geography of power<sup>14</sup> is related to the power geometry. Pessar and Mahler (2003) have dealt with the gender belief and practices that operate in various geographical locations for the restructuring and change. Messey (1994) has mentioned that people are able to apply over the processes that determine their social location is essential to understand the processes of empowerment. In this thesis, the women with the higher education take their education and the abroad experience as a capital from where they develop their agency and they are negotiating for their mobility in the family and society. The family and society take their education and abroad exposure in a very positive way. It discusses how education and migration contribute to develop agency among the women.

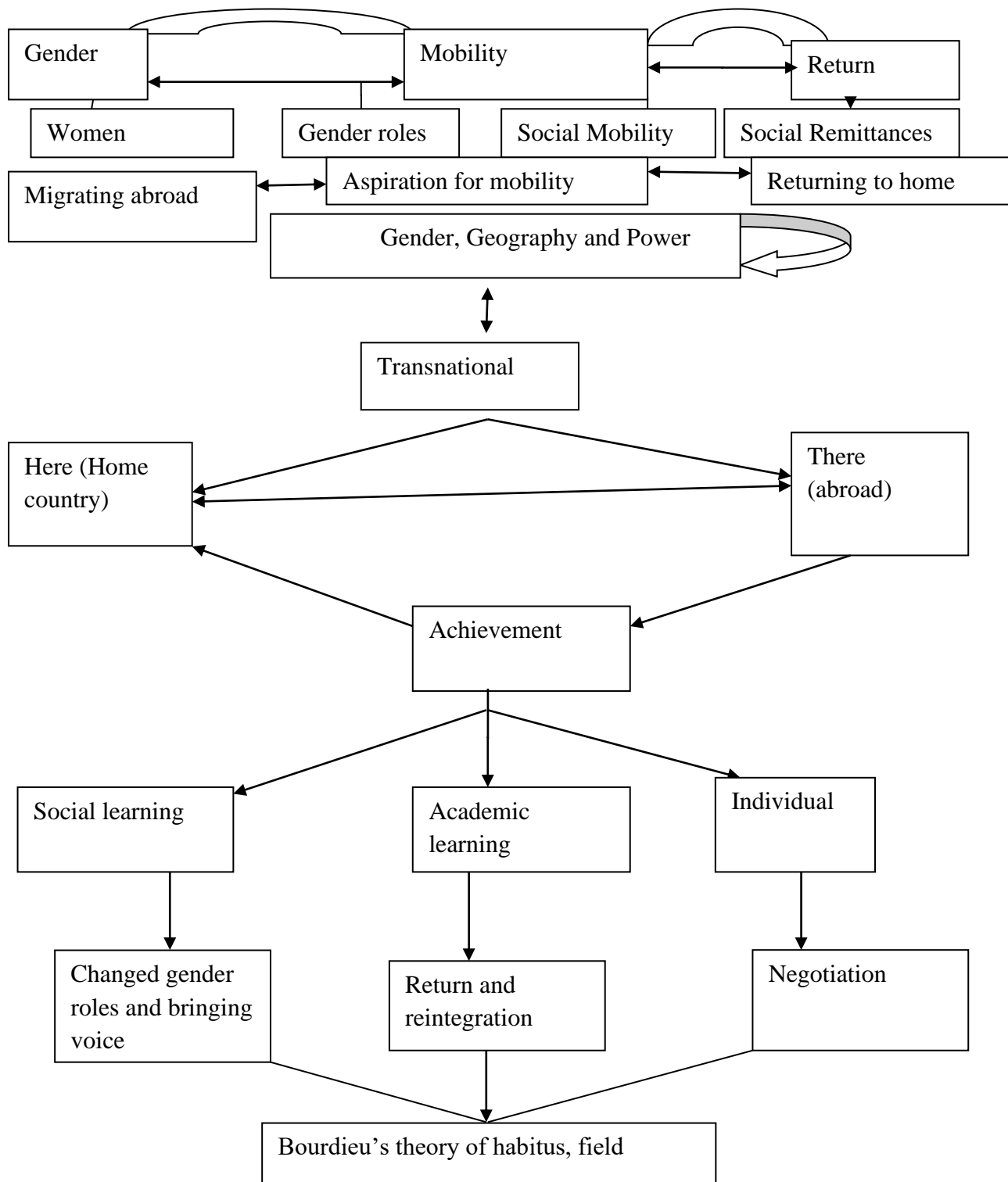
The framework of gender and geographies of power is useful because it allows the researcher to examine how gender proceeds over the interactions that are established between returnee women and their families. Especially, it provides the platform for the researcher to locate and relocate the position within the shifting power hierarchies in the household as well as transforming their social location and contexts. The theoretical model of gendered geographies of power is useful because it allows analyzing in a more detailed way on how gender acts over the interactions that are established among the returnees.

The study has drawn this framework in order to locate the gender elements that determine and are re-affirmed or become modified by the relations that are established and negotiated among the returnees and the non-migrants.

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<sup>14</sup> GGP Framework: GGP framework, developed by Mahler and Pessar (2006), is a tool for the analysis of gendered processes of transnational migration. This is used to see the power dynamics among the returnee women while negotiating the gender role at home through the references of abroad education.

## 2.16 Conceptual Framework



A framework developed by the researcher for the study

## 2.17 Conclusion

In this section, I use a fusion of concepts of gender, mobility and return which contribute to analyze the empirical content of the research. This integrated concepts helped to develop research framework to define the women negotiation and their

mobility through education and migration. The women migration and their return to the home is complex to understand in the patriarchal society like Nepal. The phenomenon of the women migration and return cannot be understood simply through single theory. Therefore, I consulted to various concepts and theories. Basically, I have used Bourdieu's theory of habitus, field, and capital in various forms and contexts.

I was engaged in various literatures while building my own framework. However, my analysis is primarily based on the gender geography of power framework developed by Pessar and Mahler (2003). Basically, in the first analytical chapter, the concept of gender is predominant exploring the decision of migration where I have discussed their aspiration and the access to mobility in the Nepali society. Likewise, to discuss the empirical material, I have consulted Bourdieu's theory of habitus. Similarly, the second analytical chapter is about the women's knowledge and skills which is related to the social remittance where I have classified into social, academic and individual learning. Later, this learning is associated with the Bourdieu's theory of capital where migrants discussed regarding their achievements. Later, the women's role to bring change in the society is discussed with the gender, geography and power framework.

## CHAPTER III

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Women (were) largely excluded from the work of producing the forms of thought and the images and symbols in which thought is expressed and ordered. What men were doing was relevant to men, was written by men about men. Men listened to what one another said.

(Dorothy Smith, 1978, p.281)

#### 3.1 Chapter overview

In this chapter, I have provided a detailed account of the research methodology adopted to accomplish this study. This chapter includes the philosophical assumption (ontology, epistemology and axiology) of the research along with its design and approach. It also discusses the tools and techniques, quality standards and ethics which I considered while carrying out this research.

#### 3.2 Philosophical standpoint

Philosophical standpoint refers to a basic set of beliefs that guide actions (Cresswell, 2014). The philosophical standpoints of this research, therefore, explain the basic principles and beliefs that I followed to redirect my research related actions on the way to accomplishing this research.

#### 3.3 Ontological assumption

In this research, I have taken the women's views regarding their experiences of migration and return as the 'truth' for investigation. Since different individuals possess different understanding and experiences, they see the "truth" in relation to the given phenomenon differently (Hawkesworth, 2006). As a result, in the arena of socio-cultural studies, realities are supposed to be multiple. The way they are exposed to the environment helps them to cultivate the experiences and insights about the phenomenon differently (Ormston, et al., 2013). The women under this research belong to different family, culture and economy. Their socio-cultural diversities shape their lives as they grown up. They see the truth related to the "women migration and return" depending upon their socio-cultural constructs and the environment which they belong to. Hence, I assume that the truth related to women's migration and return

exists in the field of this study in multiple forms. Therefore, the ontological assumption of the study is based on multiple realities.

### **3.4 Epistemological assumption**

The ontological assumption has encouraged me to adopt an epistemic technique to claim knowledge as a subjective phenomenon. This means that multiple ideas (realities) can be constructed by investigating the opinions, insights, and, experiences of the individuals in question (Darlaston-Jones, 2007). Since an individual differs from others in terms of their ideas and experiences in relation to the phenomenon under investigation, their truth claim appears in the subjective form. The epistemological assumption in the research of this kind, therefore, is led by the subjective relationship and belief between the researcher and the phenomenon under the research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The women possess different perspectives on migration for education and return. Their perception regarding mobility and gender roles are also different. Therefore, their knowledge is claimed to be subjective in nature.

### **3.5 Axiological assumption**

There are mainly two value systems that widely govern the academic research tradition in the field of social science. They are absolutism and relativism. Absolute values essentially govern the positivistic tradition of research, where a phenomenon in question is dealt with an objective inquiry. A subjective investigation, like this research, is guided by relative values that allow the researcher to explain the phenomenon under investigation in relation to the socio-cultural context of the subject being researched.

Why is a relative value supposed to be useful and appropriate at this context? The ontological and epistemological assumptions of this research aim at exploring the multiple and subjective realities about the women migration to abroad, their returns and also about their contribution to bring change in the existing gender roles and relationship in their home country. In this ontological and epistemological context, it is only relative (and not absolute) values that pave the way to generate multiple and subjective realities in the connection of this research agenda.

In a humanistic approach for investigating a phenomenon in question, human experiences are believed to have constructed depending upon the time, distance and space human beings encounter and interact with different environment and

circumstances in life (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). They bear different ideas, opinions, insights and experiences related to the phenomenon under investigation. The relative values, thus, helped me to address the differences among the subjects being researched to bring multiplicity and subjectivity in knowledge claim. In the context of this research, woman returnees were the study participants. They varied in terms of their circumstances and the contexts of their abroad migration. They cultivated the migratory experience depending upon how and where they stayed and what learning they cultivated during their abroad stay. They encountered and interacted with different socio-cultural context. They happened to cultivate different migratory experiences and their implication in their life world. Their experiences were explained and interpreted in relation to the values they acquired in their life context to explore the multiple forms of truth in relation to the women migration for education and their contribution to bring change in the existing gender roles and relationship in Nepal.

The relationship between the participants in this research is value- free, neutral and unbiased. However, there are also various factors like personal experience and interest in the topic that helped me to understand the phenomenon. Furthermore, the naturalistic inquiry in the research is value bound with the selection of particular paradigmatic and theoretical lenses which guide the research and dictate the methods used in the data collection, analysis and interpretation of findings.

### **3.6 Research approach**

Based on the ontological, epistemological and axiological assumptions of this research, I have adopted the qualitative course of inquiry as a research paradigm to explore the women's migration abroad for education and their contribution to bring change in the existing gender roles and relationship in their home country. At this stage of research writing, one may ask question of the kind: why and how does qualitative approach of inquiry suit to the investigation upon the contribution of the woman returnees from abroad? To respond this question, it requires an observation on why and how qualitative research is performed in social science.

Qualitative research can be viewed as the humanistic approach of investigation which is performed in a natural setting of the phenomenon (Flick, 2009). In qualitative research, the researcher goes to the deeper understanding the human life, social phenomena and changes being happened in the society (Attride Stirling, 2001).

These researches take a long time to develop the relationship between the researcher and the participants. The researcher needs to develop richer and deeper insights into the subject being researched. The researches of this kind, therefore, focus on the multitude and diversities of experiences, insight understanding ideas and perspectives of the study participants related to the research agenda (Cresswell et al., 2007).

Based on the abovementioned virtues of qualitative research, I received the first-hand experience by observing the research phenomenon in person, especially in natural setting and also by talking, discussing and interacting with the study participants for many days until I got elaborate information about the research agenda. Having acquired the insightful ideas and first hand experiences by engaging myself with the socio-cultural setting of the study participants, I explained and discussed them to make meaning with reference to research contexts and also with reference to some relevant theories, along with self-reflection to develop a theoretical framework about the phenomenon under the research. Such theoretical framework appeared to be a multiple, subjective and context-bound knowledge claim.

In the context of this study, I attempted to maintain multiplicity and subjectivity in my knowledge claim, especially by adopting relative (context-bound, constructive) values and beliefs in relation to the women returnees and their roles in bringing change in the existing gender relation in their home country. While doing so, I went to the subject being studied and I interacted and interviewed with them informally. I explored their ideas, emotions, experiences, etc. and discussed with them in their socio-cultural context. In this way, I attempted to illuminate what it means to be woman migrants and in what way their roles and relationship can be accounted in terms of transforming the existing gender roles and relationship in their socio-cultural context. “To be a feminist social scientist, one must have certain allegiance to the qualitative paradigm, and a willingness to go along with the habit of dualistic either/or thinking” (Oakley, 1974).

Some qualitative feminist researchers openly claim that qualitative methods are more feministic than quantitative. Feminists, like Oakley, has claimed that feminist researchers apply qualitative methods as the best suited to the project of hearing women’s experiences and everyday activities of life (Hawkesworth, 2006). As Devault (1999) has asserted that “qualitative methods” give voices to the women

respondents, and allow them to help determine the direction and focus of the research, and emphasize particularity over-generalization” (Leatherby, 2004, p.176). So, the researcher accomplished this research using qualitative research approach, especially focusing on the feminist way of inquiry by exploring individual stories.

### **3.7 Research design**

I have adopted the basic assumptions of interpretivism to develop a design for this study. The interpretive research design became important for this research context in the following ways:

Interpretivists hold the idea that this social world is the product of subjective thoughts and ideas which can be explored and explained through the eyes of the people being studied. Fossey (2002) has mentioned that the interpretive approach helps to unearth the meaningful nature of people’s character and participation.

Interpretive assumptions hold the position that people’s knowledge of reality is a social construction. It, therefore, examines the meanings and motives of people’s actions, behaviors and interactions with others in the society and culture (Whitely, 1984). Under interpretive, a culture is taken as an integrated system of symbols, ideas, and values that should be studied as a working system or organic whole, where people’s mental context is reflected through their judgments within their socio-cultural situatedness. Culture, therefore, can be understood by studying people’s ideas, thinking and meaning that are important to them (Rao, 1990). On the other hand, it holds the views that an interpretivist does not only focus the presence or absence of a causal relationship, but also the specific ways in which it is manifested and the context in which it occurs. Within interpretive research design, the researcher goes beyond ‘what has taken place’ to look for ‘how it has taken place’ (Elliott & Timulak, 2005).

Interpretive research design paved the way for the researcher to go to the returnee women in person and explore the way they explain their migration abroad for education; and also the way they contribute to transform the existing gender roles in their home country. This research design also helped me to look for the meaning of educational migration for the women in question, especially those meanings that relate the transformation of their gender role with their socio-cultural context. How is women migration perceived by the women themselves in line with their gender roles



and relationship in their socio-cultural life? I have focused this question while adopting interpretive research design.

The interpretive research design, however, appeared to be insufficient for this research context so far as the matter of transformation in the existing gender roles and relationship through the knowledge and skills of the returnee women is concerned. Interpretive assumptions only helped the researcher to look for why women migrate for educational purpose, but it hardly covers the way for challenging the stereotype, inequality and status quo existing within the socio-cultural framework of the women in question. In this context, I felt the need of adapting critical framework for this research. Such attempts within this research endeavor helped me to generate an alternative way of migratory performance within their socio-cultural life that would help them to communicate transformation in their gender roles and relationship.

### **3.8 Ethnography as an approach of inquiry**

I have employed ethnography as an approach to inquire about the trajectory of women migration abroad, especially for education, and their contribution to change their existing gender roles and relationship after their return. In this context of research, one may raise a question to justify the significance of ethnography as a research approach of inquiry. First, the ethnographic way of inquiry helped me to go to the returnee women in Nepal to interact with them and observe their deeds and words, especially in their cultural setting. While doing so, I scrutinized their cultural setting, observed their way of interacting with one another within their socio-cultural setting (Broussard, 2006). Scholars have mentioned that ethnography as a method holds the power to unpack the relationship between society and place in their intricate physical and emotional bonds (Cloke et al., 2004; Herbert, 2000).

This method is all about the people's everyday life where I focused on what they say and do in their place as knowledge (Ritchie, 2013). Kuper and Hodegs (2008) have mentioned that ethnographers studied and documented the social practices, culture, perception, and thoughts of people, communities, institutions, and groups. I, thus, carried out in-depth life narrative interviews as well as other ethnographic methods such as observation and group discussion. On the way to interacting with them and observing their performances and words in relation to their

migration and return, I disclosed the implicit as well as explicit knowledge underlying in migration and their employment in the home country.

Second, it was important for me to intervene their socio-cultural setting to explore how women in male dominated socio-cultural context become the subject of migration for education and in what way they contest against the prevailing inequality, discrimination, status quo and traditional mindset towards gender roles and relationship, especially by employing their knowledge and skills abroad. Third, the returnee women in Nepal are required to live and work in the same socio-cultural context in which they used to live and work before. After accomplishing their abroad education they have come back to their home country not only in physical form but also with new perspective, ideas, and insight as their educational achievements abroad. I also attempted to explore how their educational achievement abroad influenced their attempts to transform the existing gender roles and relationship, especially at their work place, community and family context.

Basically, ethnographic research focuses on the culture and the subculture through the qualitative methodology which provides the thick descriptions of the phenomenon being studied (Mcnamara, 2009). Therefore, in this research, the detailed description regarding the women trajectories of educational return migration was accounted. Thus, feminist ethnography as a useful study approach is applied. Perry et al. (2006) has presented a helpful explanation of feminist ethnography as:

A central tenet of this approach is that individuals' experiences are socially organized, and as such, the researcher begins by examining the individuals' experiences but then proceeds to explore how the broader social relations have shaped them (p.177).

While employing feminist ethnography in this research, I discussed the inherent gender norms, beliefs, orientations, and reflection in the socio-cultural context of the returnee women in Nepal.

The feminist ethnography created a space for me to reveal ongoing inequality, discrimination and status quo in the part of women, especially in relation to educational migration and return (Sevgur, 2012). On the way to explore about migration and returnee with gender perspective, I have collected the experiences of

women as primary data which revealed how they become the subject of inequality and discrimination in comparison to their male counterparts. Their experiences of inequality and discrimination in the field of education migration and return were substantiated with the literature and theories.

By adopting the feminist ethnography, Smith (2000) has mentioned that feminism is the eradication of all forms of inequality in society. Basically, the feminist approach oversees gender as a basic organizing principle that shapes individual lives and experience (Sevgur, 2012). Feminist scholars bring a female into visibility and write about the history of culture which helps to acknowledge the presence, and the oppression of women (Butler, 1998). They identify the ways that gender inequalities build people's experience of migration, of being men and women. So, I felt feminist ethnography as a feminist approach of inquiry to bring oppression, inequality and status quo in the part of women into vision.

### **3.9 Research site**

The major cities of Nepal were selected for the research because varieties of people reside in such areas. Such cities of Nepal include Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur which are hub of returnee migrants and entry point for abroad studies. The effects of globalization, growing political, economic and social effects in one way or the other along with many emerging organizations and the groups can be seen in these cities. Officially, Government of Nepal does not maintain a record of the Nepali citizen who returns home from abroad. But, returnees have recently formed an association in Nepal to provide the scene of their identity. This association is functioning to provide assistance to the returnees. The majority of national and international organizations are located in the valley making it the economic hub of Nepal. I approached the alumni networks (St. Mary's School Alumni Association, Aus Aid Alumni Association, Fulbright Nepal, Japanese University Alumni Association, and Nepal (JUAAN), Norwegian Alumni Association, and Netherlands Alumni Association) and how such networks helped participants to develop their social network. Getting the access with alumni turned useful for me where I got the woman returnees having varieties of expertise. Maharjan (2013) has mentioned that returnees tend to live and work in urban areas after their return rather than going back home in rural areas. This study focused on the perception of returnee women. Therefore, the location was not the major issue for the study. However, the most

important part of the research was the perception and the stories expressed by the participants in relation to the research phenomenon.

Kathmandu is the first metropolitan city of Nepal. It is surrounded by other metropolitan city Lalitpur and a municipality Bhaktapur. This city is known as a city of diversity where most of the caste and ethnic people are living with harmony. However, the city is very much well known for its cultural and religious heritage. Therefore, this is known as a city of the temple. The city has come in the transformation and the rapid modernization after the collapse of the Rana regime in 1951 and the flow of international aid after the late 1950's. During the 1970s, the expansion of the government bureaucracy, trade and tourism, and the establishment of business industries led to an increase in the employment opportunities in Kathmandu. It is the hub of business. Therefore, it has become the central attraction of many Nepali people. Most of the returnees after their education often see Kathmandu as a platform for their business and professional career from where they can explore themselves.

### **3.10 Selection of the participants**

The participants from diverse groups were selected for the study. These participants were from various professional backgrounds like engineering, nursing, management, education and others. To select the participants, the purposeful sampling was adopted to explore a research object in depth. It helps to select information rich cases for in-depth study, size and specific cases depend on the study purpose (Patton, 1990). Purposive sampling is defined as “judgmental sampling that involves the conscious selection by the researcher of certain subjects or elements to include in the study” (Crookes & Davis, 1998).

I adopted the strategy of purposive sampling to add rigor to subject from the various range of participants and setting with their heterogeneity in character (Patton 1990). While selecting the participants, I tried to understand their level of education, time duration they spent abroad, and a range of marital and family status. Both the married and unmarried returnee women were interviewed. The participant's selection process held in three ways. Firstly, I enlisted both male and female returnees through their own network. Secondly, various organizations (earlier mentioned the research site) were visited to approach the returnee women. Thirdly, I selected the participants

from the alumni network (network from various alumni association from the specific country mentioned earlier section) in Nepal.

After reading literature (Hawkesworth, 2006; Korzenevica, 2015), I realized that the feminist researcher should avoid binaries between objectivity and subjectivity and focused on the knowledge generation. Furthermore, the feminist researcher should be concentrated on the transformation through the research. Therefore, on the way to explore knowledge, I focused the subjective knowledge guided by the research question of the participants. Then, I engaged with thirty-four participants. I incorporated the perception of these thirty-four participants while analyzing and interpreting the data.

### **3.11 Data collection procedure**

During the data collection procedure, I checked my own position in relation to the role performance. I ensured that my roles and relationship with the study participants was non-hierarchical, non-dominative, participatory and explorative. But, I also appeared to be critical and appreciative. I constantly kept in contact with the research participants to hold dialogues. I encouraged the study participants to take part in the dialogue, discussion, and interaction. While doing so, I induced them to narrate their experiences orally. While narrating their history on abroad migration, education and return, they also articulated socio-cultural orientation on women migration. Their narratives also emerged with their efforts of acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes as a part of their education abroad. On the way to narrate their 'return' and decision for readjustment, they explained the way they struggled for bringing changes in the existing gender roles and relationship in their family, community and work place.

I conducted series of in-depth interviews to collect data. An in-depth interview is a method for the collection of information and data in qualitative research. Mack et al., (2005) have mentioned that in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participant's perspective on the research topic. It is a technique where the topic is explored in detail from the interviewers' knowledge (Lecompte & Schensul, 1999). In this research, I have presented the participants' attitudes, values, interpretation of events and understanding through the in-depth interview. During in-depth interviews, I considered participants as an expert

in the study. Before conducting the interview, the researcher made a plan regarding the selection of the participants and developed the interview protocol.

The purpose of this method was to learn the perception and understanding of the participants in relation to their educational migration and return. While conducting the interview, I posed probing questions being neutral. Then I listened attentively to participants' responses and asked some follow-up questions as/when necessary. During the in-depth interview, the priority was given to eliciting their experiences, opinions, feelings considering as sensitive topics. I also attempted to seek the connections and relationships among the various perspectives and ideas presented by the study participants. At that time I was able to get more information on the topic of study through this method. My objective was to create a more comfortable environment for the participants to express their understanding of the particular area of study. Therefore, the entire interview was held in a more relaxed atmosphere.

This method provides a wider space for data collection, analysis and interpretation in this research. I, thus, engaged myself to present the participants' perception while being in the field. Later on, the data were presented in the narrative form and then were analyzed with the literature. This approach, thus, helped to search the valid and reliable information and create wider space for me to interpret the context. While engaging in the data collection, I was both interactive and generative. My objective to bring participants' understanding was fulfilled because I got an opportunity to achieve depth answer and produced new knowledge and thoughts by exploring the participants' feelings, opinions and beliefs (Ritchie & Lewis, 2004).

Through the narrative, I focused on the interplay between social change and individual (and group) lives and agency. For Castle (2000), migration is not only a single event (crossing the border) but also is associated with the lives of the non-migrants as well as the sending and receiving countries. So, while engaging in the field, I discussed their migratory journey and also explored their relationship with family, society, and organization.

Participants were encouraged to bring their experiences and perceptions regarding the issue of education migration and return. They were often asked many aspects of their life including their personal issue like family life. Some of my participants felt that why I was so interested in their personal affairs like their family

matters rather than their career and education. In some cases, they did not feel comfortable to share that information. Besides, they focused their decision of migration, their present status, their desire and aspiration, their career and the issue of marriage (in the case of unmarried women). But, I tried to bring their experience of migration and the challenges they faced after their return.

I was conscious not to give a feeling to participants that they were being exploited for the research purpose. In other words, I was just sufficiently cautious not to seem too distant and eager to provide a lot of personal information. However, throughout the interview, I realized that some of the participants sought to verify their ideas, acknowledge, experiences and social realities. Rather, they felt useful to take part in the study. They shared that this type of openness may have some risks, but it became advantageous for the researcher. The participants felt a sense of security knowing that the researcher was one of them and they appreciated the efforts made by the researcher to provide an atmosphere of trust and collegueship which enables them to engage in deep self-reflection and to share feelings, behaviors, and attitudes.

Observation was another technique for data collection. I participated in various programmes organized by the returnee women. Participant's observation usually becomes the main aspect of the qualitative research (Cresswell, 2009). While engaging the observation, I tried to understand the social, cultural phenomenon from the perspective of the participants (Hatch, 2002). The direct observation of the phenomenon helped me to understand the context. Patton (1990) has mentioned that observations help the researcher to add his/her own experience in the setting to the analysis what is happening in the context. I built the close relationship with the participants during the fieldwork; therefore I got the access to participate in various events and the natural setting where they were engaged with. When they were organizing any events, they asked me if I was interested to participate. So, I involved in the programmes.

Since this study has focused on the individual returnees, their experiences and activities, I intended to engage with the participants rather than reporting the whole session and bringing some conclusion of those formal programmes. Besides, I went to their home and met their parents. While engaging in the observation, I made a certain plan and focused on my objective regarding the research. Furthermore, I reputedly

went to the field and engaged in various sites where the participants engaged (home, offices, events, and programme organized by the participants, cultural programmes) (Kruczek et al., 2015).

I conducted group discussion based on research guidelines. Then I went to the organizations of the participants and held the discussion. The discussion was not limited within the female participants. I also conducted discussion among male returnees. I took the particular time for the group discussion. Basically, 6 to 10 persons were there in the group discussion. Initially, I raised the issues and the participants presented their views on the same. Besides, they were also sharing and exchanging their experiences and presenting the challenges as well as opportunities. They also came up with their future plan as a part of their settlement in the homeland.

### **3.12 Tools of Data Collection**

#### **3.12.1 Interview guideline**

I developed an interview guideline which helped me to handle the participants in the research. This guideline covered my introductory activities, basic rules and regulations, and short questions for discussions. This helped me to focus my issue regarding education migration, return decisions and the return and reintegration from a gender perspective.

All interviews were open-ended and were conducted in various places. Participants were free to talk at length on any particular issue they thought significant. I guided the discussions by introducing new topics and/or probing topics raised by the respondent (Hebert, 2009). Interviewers were asked about their educational background, migration motivation, the experience of being abroad, their decision of return and their relationship among the parents. In such situation I probed to elaborate their trajectories of migration, their challenges, opportunities, knowledge and skills, a social network which they developed after return and their issues of reintegration. Thus, in response to one question several different topics were discussed.

I used a semi-structured questionnaire to collect the respondent's information. The participants' were requested to write their brief introduction regarding their family members, caste and ethnicity. Furthermore, the time duration of the abroad study was included. Besides, their professional and volunteer engagement after their return was also mentioned duly.



### **3.12.2 Field notes**

I used the diary to take the important information from my fieldwork. I prepared the field notes while I was in field. Yin (2003) has said that the field notes were the outcome of the researcher's interaction with the participants, observation and document analysis. While I was in the fieldwork, I jotted down the available information. Field notes helped the researcher in probing the real context. Basically, field notes were taken when the researcher was in the participants' home and working place. While jotting down the information, I put the date, time and the information regarding the participants and the site. These field notes helped me to give the description of the field; the events and the socio-cultural setting. While presenting the field notes, I used reflexive information where I recorded thoughts, ideas, questions, and concerns. I tried to be organized and systematic in my field notes and followed the descriptive approach, where I put the detailed information. All the basic concern was focused on the research questions.

### **3.13 Secondary sources of data**

I engaged with the secondary data collection to establish the importance of the study by presenting the current knowledge in the area (Cresswell, 2009). While collecting the secondary sources, my emphasis was on exploring the gap existed regarding the knowledge about the women, their position, opportunities, and the challenges in the Nepali society in relation to their mobility (social, economic, political, and physical). Furthermore, I have used various web-based data archives, national and international articles and research papers.

### **3.14 Challenges of data collection**

The most challenging part of this research is to understand the methodological aspect. Initially, my understanding about an ethnographic study was that it is a study to be conducted on the particular people focusing their cultural aspects. The educational mobility for me was nothing more than an everyday phenomenon. Therefore, I was always searching for the specific area and location to conduct this study. Later on, I gradually developed my understanding to see the things in a very meticulous manner where I was able to analyze the distinct cultural and social practices in the everyday life of the returnee women. Instead of setting the context, fixing the location, the researcher explored individual perception and engagement.

There was not a village or a city where the returnees themselves were settled. I didn't have a specific location to collect the data. Moreover, at the initial stage, I went to the field without any checklist and the guideline. Therefore, it was difficult to follow the systematic approach for the research. The researcher strived to bring both male and female perception in my study. During the field visit, there were many challenges regarding the interview.

James Freguson (1999) discusses that it is a frustrating task to conduct fieldwork in the urban context. For the researcher, it is a difficult task to collect the information from the busy and confusing offered no whole knowable social world of which fieldwork might acquire a sense of mastery of confident familiarity. This kind of fieldwork reflected the urban ethnography situation. I felt like Freguson (1999), where I had an unsatisfied feeling on my engagement in the fieldwork. I sometimes felt despair with uncertainty in the urban context. As defined by Malinowski, in Amit (2003) has mentioned that it needs a public setting for the fieldwork. The major challenge the researcher faced was to receive an appointment from the participants who were so busy in their professional work. Traditional ethnographic study demands participant's observation and prolonged engagement with the subjects under study. So, I was always searching to engage and create such kind of environment. In this study, later, I concluded that I would go for the selection of the individuals and later engaged in analyzing their culture and society.

### **3.15 Being an insider and outsider**

While working with these women, I found myself in the same position as those women. I also represented the woman who is engaging in the study. So, talking with these women, I found as an insider myself. Here, as an insider, I also became the part of the Nepali culture representing the Nepali women, having the experience of migration that brought the emic concept practiced in these groups. Having been brought up in the middle-class family in the hilly region of Nepal, I was also provided with the opportunities of education in the urban area of Nepal. Growing with the Brahminical idea was prominent in the family, where I had also performed the duties and responsibilities as a daughter. In the family, I was given the facilities as my brothers (like going to school). But, there have been certain rules and regulation where I saw differences. In the family, I got an orientation that it is not good to go outside the house. Besides, I was also given the orientation that I should follow the

same cultural rules and value system which was adopted by other women in the family and society, such as restrictions during menstruation and fasting during religious rituals.

In the family, I was encouraged to go abroad for higher education. I saw many challenges to face on the way to approaching for abroad study. For me, there were lots of do's and don'ts in relation to their socio-cultural situatedness. Most of the participants in the study were found to have the same background, where I felt comfortable to express the feelings and taking the information from the participants. Sociologists like C. Wright Mills has expressed that sociological imagination is a way of understanding the world that oversees an individual as a product of social world in which they live ((Holmes, 2009, p.5). They have further said that your life is the reflection of the time. So, stories of the women living in the urban areas were analyzed, where I also maintained the same position as my participants.

However, I found myself as an outsider while doing research with these women. As a researcher, I was there to understand the gender aspects of women's migration, their return decision, and readjustment in the Nepalese society. So, bringing their perception, I worked as an outsider (O'reilly, 2012). While dealing with the perception, I discussed with various theories from the scholarly works. This also provides the outsider perspective in the research.

There is a shared space developed by the researcher and participants in the research process. "As such, the identities of both researchers and participants have the potential to impact the research process" (Bourke, 2014). Mauthner, et al., (2003) stated that in ethnographic research, there is a key debate regarding the researcher's position as an insider and outsider to the culture being studied. The position as an insider provided an opportunity for the researcher to compare with others and its effect in the research process. In this research, I tried to be an insider by understanding the participants' experiences through self-experience being grown up in the Nepali family. At the same time, I tried to explore the views of the participants. In qualitative research, the researcher's self feeling, impression and observation become the part of the research processes and the researcher plays an important role where s/he put their views in a particular topic (Flick, 2009, p.16). Feminist ethnography has provided the researcher to engage in her reflexivity in the research.

Basically, in a way of representing self as a feminist, researchers like Harding, Haraway, and Probyn have contributed to the concepts of "strong reflexivity" (Harding, 1992). Foley and Valenzuela (2008) have mentioned that contemporary scholars have brought the "reflexive turn" in social science and humanities. Similarly, Naples and Clark (1996) have pointed out the advantages of reflective practice in which a researcher considers her own position as well as the social positions and cultural locations of her interviewees in the research process. Letherby (2004) has claimed that both of these reflections can be demonstrated by narrative accounts of how individuals evaluate their own experience and their perception on others.

Many ethnographers agree on the virtue of reflexivity in the theoretical and methodological aspects of the research. Kincheloe and McLaren (2002) have argued that the feminist ethnography means not only informed, theoretical, and contextual but also political and active character. They have given authenticity to the research process where the author is engaged. Therefore, I critically engaged to bring the context of education migration existing in Nepal.

### **3.16 Data analysis and interpretation**

In qualitative research, there are various strategies for analyzing the data. Cohen and Morrison (2011) have mentioned that qualitative data analysis is the process where the researchers make sense from the research participants. Patton (1987) mentions that analysis does three things. First, it maintains order in the pile of data an ethnographer has accumulated. Second, it turns the big piles of raw data into smaller piles of crunched or summarized data. Third, it permits the ethnographer to discover pattern and themes in the data and link them other pattern and themes. The analysis then turns the raw data into the result. I thus transcribed the interviews, organized them in a systematic way and developed themes. Later I connected the interviews and the theme of the research.

It is an analytical process where I tried to bring the clear understanding, insightful trustworthiness and original analysis. I took the references of Lecompte and Schensul (1999), where they have talked the procedure of analyzing data in ethnographic research. I, thus, engaged in the analysis procedure in three ways. First, I was in the field; I took the data from the participants and raised the issues that were discussed by the participants. Second, I returned from the field, the analysis was done

after some time or being at distant from the field. Third, I analyzed the data with relevant theories.

The coding was done using the inductive method. All the collected data were kept in the computer software (Nvivo) data analysis programme. The software, NVIVO, helped me to work more efficiently and saved my time. Moreover, it helped to organize and store the retrieved data which was difficult to manage. While coding the data, various nodes<sup>15</sup> were made. I followed the systematic procedure for it. Firstly, the process of data filtering was performed. Besides, I also coded the data in Microsoft Word.

For me, it was a tedious process. I used open-ended and semi-structured questions while collecting the data. Therefore, there are ample data to be managed from the participants. However, these data were structured and managed to present it in a systematic way. While engaging with analysis at the initial stage, I coded all the data from the field. Later, I organized the data according to the themes and the research questions.

### **3.17 Describe and Explore the Theme with Theories**

After presenting the themes, I analyzed the data. However, at the initial stage, I struggled with the presentation of the ethnographic data in the research. Humphreys and Watson (2009), in the context of research, have provided the style of writing in ethnography. Later, Saldana (2015) has provided the guideline to present the data in narrative style. While adopting the style for data analysis and interpretation, I developed a chapter plan and worked according to the data. It helped me to present the data under the appropriate theme. The chapter plan also paved the way for me to consult the specific literature and theories. Based on the chapter plan I brought Bourdieu conceptual theory of practice into the discussion.

There are a number of specific reasons why Bourdieu's work is important. First, there is the major contribution that he has made the debate about the relationship between structure and actions. Secondly, the contribution has consistently been framed by the engagement between systematic empirical works whether relying

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<sup>15</sup> Node: Nodes created in NVivo are equivalent to sticky notes that the researcher places on the document to indicate that a particular passage belongs to a certain theme or topic.

on ethnography or social survey approach and reflexive theorizing. It is the tension between these two aspects of Bourdieu's work that makes it interesting. The theory without empirical research is empty and the empiricism without theory is blind. His theory demands more argument and reflections. He has provided key concept as an analytical framework as a product of social rules where demographic variables, economic and symbolic capitals intervene.

One of the central themes which unified Bourdieu's work is the attempt to understand the relationship between "subjectivity" individual social being as it is experienced and lived, from personnel inside out so to speak and the objective social world within which it contributes (Nentwich et al., 2015).

### **3.18 Narrative as a way for presenting the data**

In this research, views of the participants were explored through narratives. I illuminated the context and society through the stories. Various philosophical strands of the research guided me to go ahead with the qualitative methodology for this study. The researcher engaged in illuminating the context and society through the stories of the participants. The techniques of narrative helped me to present participants' experiences systematically (Tracy, 2010).

A theory in educational research holds that humans are storytelling organism who, individually and socially, lead stories (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). While presenting the experience of the participant's education, a researcher constructs and reconstructs personal story and other's story. Clark and colleagues (1996) have mentioned that "our story comes from the words and voices of the people involved" (p. 203). Narrative, therefore, captures both the individual and the context. Such way of presenting data helped me to organize the participants' experiences and thereby leading to the knowledge claim. Through this process, I developed a certain framework and presents human experience of the world (Sikes & Gale, 2006). The narrative is regarded as "the primary scheme by which human existence is provided meaningful" (Polkinghorne, 1995, p.1). It is said that human experience is always narrated.

The use of written narratives was selected because this method provides the opportunity for participants to account for personal experiences and how socio-cultural processes have been reflected in their lives in their own words (Clandinin &

Connelly, 2000). The written narratives allowed the participants to be the creators of the data without any guidance from the researcher, without open-ended questions or probes. It encouraged me to provide detail participant's experiences far and wide. This gave me an additional opportunity to understand the returnees and their interpretation of the migratory and return migration.

Being in the field, it was really interesting for me to listen to the women's stories and their struggle regarding their study, career, and everyday life in the Nepali society. However, presenting the narrative data became a challenging task for me. I therefore, borrowed the tools developed by Connelly and Clandinin in 1990. In a process of analyzing data, they have provided with some tools to permit the data narratively, which are: broadening, burrowing and storing and restoring. Furthermore, Saldana (2015) guideline has also helped to develop stories in research. I explored the context with the participant's character or values with their social, historical or cultural environment, which is under the broadening in the analysis. Mishler (1986) has mentioned that narrative researchers need to focus on the cultural context of the story. In this research, I also presented the cultural and social context of the study. Another aspect of the data presentation is the burrowing. Under this method of data, I narrated participants' feeling, understanding or dilemmas, or certain events, impacts on the participants or their surroundings. Here, I also reflected how and why the certain happening took place in the life of the participants.

### **3.19 Delimitations of the study**

This study was delimited in terms of the under-mentioned contents, methodology, and issues:

- a. By content, this study included only the experience of the returnee women while presenting the gender issues in migration.
- b. Only the views related to migration, returns and their reintegration and contribution in transforming existing gender roles and relationship, particularly at family, community and workplace were considered.
- c. The researcher adopted feminist ethnography under the qualitative inquiry in which narratives were used in the form of data.

- d. Migration as an issue can be varied in kind. But, the researcher considered only the migration of women for education and their return as an issue in the context of Nepal.
- e. The returnee women residing in the Kathmandu Valley were only considered as the participants of the research. Only those returnee women were considered as participants who returned from abroad accomplishing their higher education.
- f. This researcher selected the participants from various backgrounds of the study. However, the time duration of the returnees was from one year to 10 years of their return from abroad.

### **3.20 Quality standard in the research**

It was an ethnographic study. I, therefore, brought the stories from the participants embedded in their cultural setting. To bring stories from the participants, I needed to maintain trustworthiness from the participants and crystallized the research. For this, I selected the eight 'Big Tent' criteria of Tracy (2010). As Tracy mentions these big tents are 1) worthy topic, 2) rich rigor, 3) sincerity, 4) credibility, 5) resonance, 6) significance contribution, 7) ethics and 8) meaningful coherence. To maintain a worthy topic, it needs to be relevant, timely, interesting and significant. Likewise, the rich rigor uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate and complex data. It consists of theoretical constructs, data and time in the field and samples, contexts and data collection and analysis processes. As mentioned by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), it is difficult to capture the entire lived experience of the research participants. It was also difficult to include all the people with whom the researcher had talked. I included more relevant multiple views of the research participants. Then I ensured the multiple views and made them legitimate. While engaging in the research, I assured the participants that this research will have no harm further as it is an academic research. Instead of harming them, it will help them to generate the knowledge regarding the returnee women and their social life in Nepal.

The other aspect is sincerity. It focuses on self- reflexivity. But, self- reflexivity does not mean values, biases and inclination of the researcher. The next is transparency about the methods and challenges. While collecting and interpreting the data, I engaged with the diverse methods supported by a range of theories as well as analysis of data from multiple sources. I maintained close relationship to my



participants in the field and dealt with their perception and understanding regarding their space and opportunities and challenges in the Nepali society through the migration perspective.

### **3.21 Credibility**

For credibility, the research is marked by a thick description, concrete, detail and explication of tacit (non-textual) knowledge. According to Denzin (1998) “thick descriptions are deep, dense, detailed accounts. Here, I presented the detailed description and statement that reflects the participant’s experience. The credibility was established through the lens of readers who read narrative accounts. While dealing with the narrative, I employed the constructive approach to contextualize the participants. I presented the detail information of the participants as a thick description.

The other issue of the credibility in the research is the researcher’s engagement in the peer debriefing. I regularly consulted with the seniors and colleagues while developing the proposal, entering in the field as well as disseminating the findings of the research. This process helped me to raise the critical issue of the study. Moreover, the collaboration between the scholars and the researcher contributed to reach the conclusion. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have suggested that this is one way of keeping the researcher honest, and the searching questions which contribute to deeper reflexive analysis.

The other credibility related to the research is to stay at the research site for a prolonged period of time. Fetterman (1989; as cited in Creswell & Miller, 2000) has mentioned that working with people day to day for a long period of time is what gives ethnographic research its validity” (p.46). Engaging in the field, I built rapport from which I was able to disclose the information and reciprocity in the study.

Another credibility of the study is an audit trial where the researcher provided documentation of all the research and activities (Creswell & Miller, 2000). I attended various seminars and the conference and presented my topic nationally and internationally. The findings of the research were presented in various platforms like publishing in peer reviewed journal where the external auditors were engaged and provided a review. “The goal of a formal audit is to examine both the process and

product of the inquiry, and determine the trustworthiness of the findings” (Creswell & Miller, 2000) which was also applied by the researcher.

Triangulation is another strategy that the researcher adopted in conforming credibility. In this research, I dealt with various types of triangulations (data, methods, and theory). Firstly, I consulted various methods of the data collection, interview, group discussion and observations. I compared these methods and came to the conclusion. Secondly, I engaged with various sources of the data in the study such as (key informants, family members, and various personnel of the private and public organizations). Lastly, while analyzing the data, various theories such as gender geography and power were brought into the discussion with Bourdeau’s theory of social capital, habitus and field.

I further discussed the resonance which basically means that the research influence affects the readers or variety of audience through the evocative representation, naturalistic generalization and transferable findings. While presenting the data, I brought women’s stories and the challenges they faced on the way to working for change in their own society. Presenting the stories, most of the participants were emotional regarding their achievement and implementing those achievements in their home society. While documenting, I followed the procedures that are being applied in the qualitative research. I, thus, reviewed relevant literature and acquired knowledge in the research area and built the concept related to the gender and migration area. This helped me to identify the problem in relation to gender and return migration area. Later, for the fieldwork, I developed the tools for the data collection and those tools were applied in the field to generate information. The data were analyzed and interpreted with theories and literature with reflexivity from the researcher. After reaching the conclusion, I engaged in the member checking, where I worked my participants and confirmed their trustworthiness.

Another significant aspect includes that the research should contribute conceptually, theoretically, practically, morally, methodologically, and heuristically. This research has also contributed to migration field by bringing the women and their stories of return. Basically, it unpacked the stories of their reintegration and readjustment in the home, society after their return. It also addressed the issue of significant contribution. While engaging in the field, I have collected the information from the natural setting. Then I engaged with the participants in various spot like their

house, office, park, and restaurants. My main motive to collect the data from their natural setting was to make the environment for expressing their feeling and perception. While collecting the views from the participants, I incorporated the women's views without any bias. They were actively engaged in the research and their voices were duly incorporated in the research. I explored the emic perspective of the research participants while bringing the data. However, while engaging with the emic ideas, the etic perspective was also incorporated. Cresswell (2014) has mentioned that etic data are information representing the ethnographers' interpretations of the participants' perspectives.

Regarding the ethical issue in the research, the upcoming discussion has addressed more on it. Talking about the meaning coherence, the narrative approach of writing was adopted. While presenting the narrative of participants, the story of the abroad migration and the reason of return were discussed. I have presented all the contents from the stories of the participants in a systematic way. Then I also followed the coherence meaning in this research. While presenting the perception of the women, I have presented the social, religious, economic and political construction of the Nepali society. I also felt the same perception in relation to the gender structure of the Nepali society. I, thus, remained empathetic towards women throughout the research. This position was treated in the data representing and analyzing procedure, however, I brought the literature and the narratives of the participants shared in the field. Then minimized the bias and presents the actual happenings in the field. The theme and findings were the results of the engagement of the researcher to explore the everyday life of the participants.

### **3.22 Ethical consideration of the research**

In the initial contact with the participants, I discussed about my research and the participation. In the field study, I had many conversations with several people with different ages and genders, where I developed friendly relations with them. I reassured them of maintaining the confidentiality of their identities and the privacy in the research. Some of the participants expressed enthusiasm about the work and interest in own personal background, which I openly shared with them. This mutual anticipations and information sharing activity helped me to avoid distance or power relation between them and contributed to building trust. Throughout the research, I

maintained the ethics from collecting the data to the writing of findings and conclusion. I categorize the ethical aspects in the following ways:

**Informed consent:** The principles of a research ethics ask that researchers avoid harming participants by respecting and taking their needs and interests into account (Flick, 2009). While engaging in the research, I entered in the field with their consent. At my fieldwork, I developed rapport and friendship with the participants then only she entered in the subject matter. I tried to identify the context which, in the end, benefited both me and my participants. I was sincere not to break the rules during the study. In the field, I respected the participants and requested their interests in a very sincere manner.

**Confidentiality and anonymity:** While presenting the data and findings, I maintained the confidentiality. Instead of writing their real name and identity, I have mentioned their names and pseudonyms. Furthermore, the participants were assured that the data presented by them would be kept confidential. I never revealed their identities to the public. Similarly, in my analysis, I maintained confidentiality.

**Justice:** Flick (2009) has said that the researcher should concern on various ethical behaviors in research procedure. I respected all the participants in the research and treated them equally. Moreover, while presenting the data and analysis, I treated all the data equally and confirmed if there come any contradictory ideas while analyzing and interpreting them.

**Voluntary participation:** I maintained my status and avoid bias while presenting the real contexts of the participants. I approached her participants sincerely. I provided them autonomy to involve in the research. That is, I did not force them to participate in the research irrespective to their interest. The participants were not coerced to participate in the research.

**Avoidance of any harm:** All the things that I did were according to the consent of the participants. The participants were treated in an ethical manner. I did not invade their privacy.

**Autonomy:** The participants were not encouraged to express the fake information. They were not forced to participate in the research. Their decision and

rights were secured while taking part in this research. I, therefore, respected the participants' identity, value and decisions.

No Plagiarism: Throughout the research, I maintained originality and avoided the plagiarism. I have provided the citation as well as the references regarding the content which is borrowed. Moreover, the original data from the participants were explored.

Finally, I presented the data in a narrative form. Through the individual stories, the experience of the migration and reintegration in the Nepali society were reflected.

### **3.23 Chapter summary**

In this section, I discussed the philosophical and methodological stances of the study. Ontologically, I asserted multiple realities and subjectivism as the epistemic stance for the study. Based on constructivists' paradigm, I used ethnography under the qualitative approach of inquiry. Furthermore, I also discussed the quality standard and ethical consideration for this study.

## CHAPTER IV

### 4. TRAJECTORIES OF FEMALE MIGRATION: NEGOTIATION FOR GOING ABROAD AND RETURNING TO HOME

#### 1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter deals with the causes of migrating abroad by the Nepali women and their return to home country. It also includes how they cultivate aspirations and motivations for moving abroad and returning to home. What induces the Nepali women to migrate abroad? What motivates them to come back to Nepal? The data were collected in line with these research questions. While presenting the trajectories of women's migration, firstly, I have analyzed the aspiration and motivation in relation to migrating abroad for higher education. Secondly, I explored their motivations to return to home country after accomplishing their education abroad. The female migration for transnational education has increased in the context of Nepal. I, therefore, have discussed the trajectories of female's international migration for education. While doing so, I have dealt with the concept of mobility to oversee the gender aspects of the education migration. Besides, Bourdieu's theory of habitus is taken as a reference to present the views of the participants.

#### 4.2 Family decision for migration

Family is playing a crucial role in migration decision. Several studies have reflected the important role of the family in emigration and integration in the country of destination (Boyd, 1989; Brettell, 2013). Scholars have basically focused on the impact of the family for reintegration and re-migration (Kuschminder, 2013; Ting, 2015). Migration theories like neoclassical economic theory, the new economics of migration, etc. reflect family as a major decision maker in the migration procedure (Massey et al., 2005, p.53). Studies show that both the family and migrants are benefitted through the agreement of migration (Stark & Lucas 1988). Recently, the migration study has been shifted towards the mutual interdependence instead of an individual benefit. Basically, studies reflect on the family engagement regarding financial support in the migration procedure and expect economic remittances in compensation. There exists an unwritten agreement between family and individuals (Stark & Lucas, 1988). Adepoju (1995) has mentioned that decisions are made in collaboration to minimize the risks. In Nepal, the decision of the family head

(generally male) is taken as paramount (Dhungana, 2014). Boyd (1989) and Reynolds (2006) have mentioned that the migration culture and the migrants' network also play the important role in the decision-making process of migration. However, the family is considered a major institution in the migratory process.

Ethnographers have brought forth the issue of family negotiation while making the decision of migration in the early 1980's. Basically, they have touched upon who determine which members of the domestic unit will migrate, how their contributions will fit into the household economy. It shows that the individuals are inevitably tied to the larger social unit (Boyd, 1989).

Most of the participants in this research mentioned that their family played an important role in making the decision of migrating abroad and returning home. It reflects that the Nepali women give more preference to their family in making the decision of migrating abroad. While responding the question regarding the decision of the migration, Anita, Sneha, Manita, Binita, and others mentioned that families were their main decision makers, who supported their migration decision for higher education. Other participants, Menda, Vidhya, and Maya said that their own decision was important instead of their family decision. So, here Manita's story represents the story of many Nepali women who are engaged in the negotiation to make their international educational journey successful. Manita stated in her story that she is a returnee from the USA. She was a young unmarried woman and the first female member from her family to go abroad for higher education. She spent around nine years in the USA studying liberal arts. She focused her study on public policy and, later she was interested in working in the Nepali public policy. She wanted to develop her career in the government sector in Nepal. So, she decided to return to Nepal. Her story is presented as follows:

*I am Manita Kansakar, a resident of Kathmandu. I am about 31 years old. My father works for an international organization. After being graduated the 12th grade in Nepal, I was interested in studying economics in the USA as a part of my university education. At that time, many of my friends were trying to go abroad for further education. I also thought for the same. Then, I consulted my father about my plan. In the beginning, I prepared courses for SAT<sup>16</sup> and*

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<sup>16</sup>SAT: *Scholastic Aptitude Test*. Every year, roughly two million US students and hundreds of thousands worldwide take the SAT. Most of these students are college-bound, and virtually every college in the US accepts the SAT as a form of entrance exam.

*TOEFL<sup>17</sup> to get a scholarship in the American Universities. I succeeded to get a partial scholarship in a reputed university in the USA from where I completed Master's Degree. My parents supported me while sending their daughter abroad for the study because it was the matter of their pride.*

Manita's experience regarding the decision of abroad education reflects the culture of the majority of the Nepali families. Firstly, she was influenced by her friends where she also developed certain habitus regarding higher education abroad. Secondly, she took the consent of her father. It reflects the habitus of the Nepali women who make the decision in association with the family. Thirdly, Manita's parents supported her in education, which reflects the cultural values inherited in the Nepali family. Young people make the decision of abroad migration because the culture of migration is growing in the present context (Timmerman, et al., 2014). Manita's decision of migration also seems that she was influenced by her friends. Here, Manita's migration decision was also influenced by the existing culture of abroad migration in the Nepali families.

Discussion in the societies and families in going abroad and the family's pride are the key inspirational components for Manita's family that influenced the family decision for sending her abroad for education. Their conversation on education at home often focused on the quality of education which can enable the graduates in question to get access to better job opportunities (Adhikari, 2010). So, to analyze Manita's stories regarding the abroad education, Bourdieu theory of habitus is relevant. According to Bourdieu (1988), the success of an individual is related to the achievement of education as a cultural capital. The cultural capital is to be an important mechanism of social reproduction. In this context, the existing culture of abroad migration functions as a cultural capital for Manita which induces her to make the decision for going abroad for education. It must be the case not just that cultural capital facilitates, the acquisition of educational credentials, and that educational credentials are the important mechanism through which wealth and power are transmitted (Tsang, 2013). In Manita's case, abroad migration is not just for making wealth but the acquisition of educational credentials. While taking Manita's abroad migration into account, the values related to the existing culture of abroad migration causes her to decide for migrating abroad as a part of her habitus. Abroad migration,

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<sup>17</sup>TOEFL: The Test of English as a Foreign Language which is taken for enrollment in US university



therefore, appeared, in the case of Manita, as a dominant habitus revealing her positive attitude towards education.

The habitus, in some ways, is formed by the objective chance of success shared by the group of people. It, in turn, determines the actions of the members of the group (Oliver & O'Reilly, 2010). Studies on education migration reflect that abroad education provides knowledge and helps students develop skills that they need in order to compete in the globalized workplace (Alandejani, 2013). Therefore, parents invest a huge amount of the resources and they believe that studying abroad will make their sons and daughters more matured, as well as give them the knowledge and skills helpful to their personal and professional life. It is also assumed that the migrants will be able to get a good job (Berg, et al., 2012). Social discussion for abroad education, in this context, convinces Manita's family to send her abroad for education. This can be taken as a cultural reproduction in the case of Manita particularly in relation to migrating abroad for education. Born in a patriarchal family, her aspiration for abroad education has been duly respected. Thapa (2007) has observed that female members hardly have their say in a male-dominated (patriarchal) family. In the case of Manita's decision for abroad study, the patriarchal way of treating with female members does not seem to be true.

Here, one can raise a question: what caused change in terms of gender education, particularly in the context of Nepali family? With reference to Manita's narrative, the sense of "daughter education as a family pride" plays an instrumental role in bringing a patriarchal line of thought in terms of female education. Here, the habitus existing in Manita-like families in Nepal is changing. In the past days, parents used to give more importance to education of their sons (Adhikari, 2010). However, the daughters are also encouraged to study further after their school in the present day. The women in the past were basically prepared to marry and go to other's house. They were accustomed with the household task like cooking, cleaning, and worshipping. But, in the present context the parents prioritize the education of their daughters. Liechty (2003) has mentioned that the middle-class families are investing more money in their education for their better future. As a result, many girls are entering the private school and later moving abroad for higher education (Adhikari, 2010). Acharya (2012) has also mentioned that the parents living in Kathmandu are happy and they proudly explain that their sons and daughters are abroad (p.402).

In view of Manita's experience, patriarchic sense has been cursory and equality and inclusivity for education in the family have been prominent. The female members in some privileged families in Kathmandu are thus privileged with the opportunity to keep their say and get their desire implemented as far as the matter of education is concerned. Rajbhandari (2016) has agreed with the changing context for female education in the patriarchal middle-class family in the city like Kathmandu, when she says that women of Kathmandu are socialized with all the facilities in their family without discrimination in food clothing and education. This phenomenon has raised various questions like: can female migration abroad for education be credited to only family pride? What can be the role of existing social structure and confinement of female position in it? How does female's restriction for education at one generation become supportive to female education abroad for another generation? These questions often take place on the way to identifying trajectories for female education abroad. While sharing their journey of the higher education and migration most of the participants discussed the gender and generation issues. Basically, they mentioned their mother's stories which inspired them for their higher education abroad.

#### **4.3 Generational support (Mother) in the migration decision**

The mothers are playing major role in the family while making the decision of education migration. Therefore, returnee women consider mother's role as prominent in their migration decision. Sneha, one of the participants, revealed how her mother encouraged her to make the decision of abroad study. Sneha completed her +2 education in a prestigious school in Kathmandu. She went to the USA and accomplished her Masters in International Relations. Sneha stated her story which is presented below:

*There are four members in my family; grandmother, mother, elder brother and myself. My brother went abroad a few years ago. I continued my school education under the guardianship of my mother and grandmother. I accomplished my secondary education from Kathmandu. After accomplishing my school education, my mother continuously insisted me on going abroad for further education. When I enquired about her desire as such, she told me that she could not grow up with sound education due to family restriction for education. According to her, she had to engage herself day and night in household chores only. Family members at her time opposed her going out of*

*the family either for education or work to generate income. For my mother, my grandmother was strict to the family tradition that forced my mother to confine herself within the four walls of the family. Since my mother did not earn and courage to challenge the tradition, she was bound to remain as a housewife throughout her life. Reflecting back to her life, she feels somewhat suffocation and, thus, she often inspired me to go abroad.*

With reference to Sneha's story, there are some key reasons behind female migration abroad for education. First, female in the family desires to get rid of the age long restriction for higher education. Second, she often wanted to get access to the economy to support their personal growth and development. Third, inter-generational desire for change is another cause that inspires her for abroad education. It has reflected that female migration abroad for education invites a number of causes underlying in the social-cultural context of the traditional family in Nepal. Feminist viewed that hierarchies of power along with gender and generation hierarchies play the key process in the decision making of migration; settlement and return (Pessar & Mahler, 2003).

According to Ali (2018), female education in male-dominated family is often undermined in the South Asian context. The socio-cultural position of the female is supposed to be the basic reason for underestimating female education in such family. Due to global-cultural intervention in the local context and right-based interpersonal performance in a family setting, awareness for female education increased. In the long run, it challenged the local perspective of situating female, especially in terms of education.

In this context, it is vital to raise the question of the kind: Why does the female who belongs to Sneha-like family approach to the broadened scopes in their life? While linking Sneha's story with this question, the idea of power, prestige, and prosperity comes into play. Feminists claim that "social inequality was a consequence not only of women's lack of access to positions of power in public life, but an effect of living one's personal and private life under the surveillance of oppressive cultural norms and ideals" (Tylor, 2006, p. 31). Sneha's mother's desire for overcoming traditional confinement in life requires power in her part.

Sneha's story also reflects the cultural perspective of parents to broaden the level of education for their children. Generally change in life is the part of every individual's aspiration. As a part of love, care and expectation to see the well-being of her daughter, she desires to see the life of Sneha different from herself. She thinks that her daughter should not face the pains created by the educational confinement which was the part of her own life. The idea of Sneha's mother also represents the inter-generational change in the attainment of education in the part of the female. This shows that migrating abroad for higher education is not only the product of aspiring for economic prosperity and increased opportunities but also for accepting the need to change perspective towards life and assimilate herself with the global trend of perceiving and performing life as being a female.

Observing Sneha's narrative with Bourdieuan lens gives a meaning those women, on the way to leading their everyday life, move across various fields (the home, family, workforce and different cultural groups) and position (Thrope, 2009). They may experience conflict between different concepts, orders and ways of behaving that may generate "question as to the naturalness of established gender practices" (Krais, 2006, p. 131 as cited in Thrope, 2009). Experiencing the tensions between different fields can create dissonance and an awareness of objective gender relations in these fields (Thrope, 2009).

The Bourdieuan sense of field and habitus provides the researcher with a space to examine the various fields that Sneha and her mother positioned themselves on the way to leading their life. If her family is taken as her field, she seems to have experienced a sort of conflict between her idea of educating oneself and the concepts of other family members about the redundancy of educating female. Reflecting back to her own unhelpful family (field in this context) concepts for education, she insisted on her daughter's education and suggested her to study abroad. Her mother thinks that Sneha's could not face the same problem and the challenges in the field (family, home, and workplace) in the future.

Sneha's mother actually wants to liberate her daughter from the gender roles and the restriction exercised in her family. Her mother thinks to empower the daughter (Sneha) against all bondage she (mother) faced. The idea of Sneha's mother for sending her abroad for education goes in line with Bourdieu who says that social

actors know how to play the game because of their socialization (Tsang, 2013). On the way to socialization, her mother learned new practices (in this context, female education in the family) and developed the new habitus (i.e. deciding to educate Sweta abroad) (Friedman, 2016). Here, Sneha's mother as a social actor faced the patriarchic circumstances and realized the need and importance of female education in the family. As a result, she developed an insight and feeling (habitus in this context) to send her daughter abroad for education.

Sneha's story also shows the interrelationship between the gender and mobility. Her story reflects how her mother as a female being in the family remained detached from education and how her illiteracy causes unhelpful circumstances in life. Learning from her life circumstances, Sneha's mother has realized the importance of education for a woman and, thus, she inspired her daughter (Sneha) to go abroad for education. Here, Sneha's mother aspired for educational freedom for Sneha. As a result, she made a decision for transnational education in the part of her daughter.

#### **4.4 Aspiration to become better future through education**

Carling and Collins (2018) have dealt with the notion of aspiration and migration. For them, aspiration is a specific type of attitude and migration aspirations refer to an individual's view of migration as a desirable life project (Timmerman, et al., 2014). The concept of aspiration is difficult to measure. Besides family decision, it reflects that the individual aspirations and choices in life also play a significant role in the female migration abroad for higher education.

A question of the kind can be put forth: Why does abroad migration for education become the part of aspiration among Nepalese female? For Lee (1966), migration is seen as a consequence of different wage and employment opportunities and a means to enhance living opportunities which encourages female to make it the part of their aspiration. The cases from the Indian students also show that the aspiration for successful career and the better lifestyle has made them make the decision for abroad education (Khandekar, 2013). For Liechty (2009), it is a prestige for middle-class people to have friends and relatives in the foreign lands which provides them with opportunities to get acquainted with the culture of others. Traveling abroad for education and economy, thus, has been a modern trend among

youths in family. What are the individual choices and aspirations and how they influence their decisions to go abroad for higher education? With reference to this question, the data are narrated and interpreted as follow:

On the way to exploring individual choices and aspiration for female migration abroad, I interacted with Dipa, one of the research participants. She has come back to Nepal from Australia in 2011 by accomplishing her higher studies (Masters in Hotel Management). She teaches in a private college in Kathmandu. While she was asked about the reason behind her abroad migration, she explained:

*Well! After getting through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade exam in Nepal I thought to go abroad for higher education. I expected that higher education abroad, especially in the English speaking countries like America, the UK, and Australia, would largely contribute to my personal and professional development. At the time I thought that I have already had the experience of schooling in Nepal. I also thought that I need to expose myself with global academia especially for better future. I expected that higher education abroad would be recognized than that in Nepal. Ultimately it has contributed to betterment in my life.*

The idea shared by Dipa gives the impression that the individual decision for migrating abroad, especially for higher education is the product of western influence in education. It shows that the female lead themselves abroad for higher education perceiving that the abroad education is better for personal development. One of the major trends in the global education marketplace has been the strong rising demand from students in Asia for tertiary education in western countries. The latest figure released by The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics (2007) has suggested that Asian represent more than half of the total of international students studying tertiary level in the top five host countries for foreign students are UK, USA, France, Germany, and Australia (Sin, 2009). Developed countries like Australia, UK, Europe, and America might have developed a sort of education in the comparison to developing countries like Nepal. The idea as such seems to have governed the decision of Nepalese female migrants abroad for education.

This shows that the Nepalese students see the West as the best destination for higher education. Referring to Dipa Nepalese female students think that schooling experiences in Nepal are enough for them to deal with socio-cultural context at the local level. After accomplishing school education in Nepal they often feel the need of linking and exposing themselves with global, trend of education expecting to support their personal and professional growth and development. De Haas's concept as mentioned in Carling and Schewel (2017) of aspiration and capabilities is applicable here, where he has discussed migration aspiration within a given set of opportunity structure. It reflects people only migrate if they perceive better opportunities elsewhere and have the capability to move (Timmerman, 2014). Here, Dipa's perception that the education abroad is also the result of aspiration where she wanted to develop her personnel and professional life.

The Nepali female migrants towards abroad often think that higher education in the western would contribute to their personal and professional development more than that in Nepal. Sondhi (2013) has presented the cases of the Indian students who show the dissatisfaction among of the Indian students in the Indian education system. They show the dissatisfaction with the Indian education system and their motivation to study abroad to fulfill the need for quality education for future prospects and study a programme that may not be available or accessible in India.

The individual decision for female migration abroad, especially for education, differs from one female student to another. The idea of one of my study participants has something different from Dipa to say about female migration abroad for education. Sangita is the resident of Kathmandu District. She has been working in a government office. She went to Australia to accomplish her higher studies. With the scholarship provision given by Australian University, she completed her Master's and Ph.D. While asking her why she chose abroad for her higher studies, she opined:

*I had just completed B.sc in Nepal in 2008. At times I wanted to equip myself with an advanced form of technology in my area of studies. One of my friends had recently come from the USA by accomplishing her higher studies. I interacted with her about my desire to get acquainted with the advanced technology used in my area of studies. She then opined that advanced countries like the United States of America, UK, Australia, etc. are rich in*

*technology. Since I knew that friends studying in those countries not only contribute to acquiring knowledge but also help equip themselves with the skills to use the technology, I then decided myself go abroad.*

There is hardly any profession which can be performed without using technology. Highlighting the need and importance of technology, Earle (2002) has said that the use of technology increases accuracy, speed and volume of works in the part of an individual professional. On the other hand, the use of technology enhances the efficiency of performing work in the part of the individual. Technological knowledge and skills thus seem to be pertinent for the professional growth and development of an individual in question. In this context, Sangita's idea to migrate abroad for technological knowledge and skills seems to be relevant. This idea is acceptable to the extent that the advancement of an individual and country in present depends upon their up to dated knowledge and skills in terms of technologies. Sangita argues that advanced countries became advanced because of the technologies they use in performing daily works. For Sangita, Nepal as a developing country lacks advanced technologies in her area of work and study which could not address her desire of being rich in technological knowledge and skills. She thus decided to migrate abroad with the purpose of acquiring knowledge and skills related to advanced technology available there.

Scholarship scheme with funding for higher education abroad has been another important reason for Nepalese female migration abroad. Here, story by Saroswati is presented. Saroswati has a different view which is different from Dipa and Sangita in relation to fulfilling her aspiration regarding higher education. Saroswati who had completed her Bachelor in Nepal majoring nursing, had earned her Master's in nursing from Australia. Later, she got a scholarship from Australian Award scholarship programme to study in reputed University in Australia for nursing study. In an in-depth interview, Saroswati opined as,

*Higher education in Nepal is being expensive these days. There is a limited scheme for scholarship in university education. I accomplished my Bachelor degree in Nepal. I then joined a private firm to work. Meanwhile, I attempted to get access to the scholarship scheme for my master degree. But I could not after some years I got a scholarship of my masters in Australia. Scholarship*



*opportunities are amply available abroad. In my opinion it is better for a female student to go abroad for higher education on scholarship rather than doing it in Nepal.*

Individual and state investment for the higher studies invites the opportunity for better education for the individual. The idea is often highlighted in the sector of education in Nepal and abroad. But, higher investment for better education often becomes too difficult for female students particularly in Nepali family. Quality education is often linked with an economy of the family in question (Crosnoe, & Cooper, 2010). Most of the female students in the context of Nepal are willing to study abroad only by getting a scholarship rather than using their own investment. In this context, a scholarship program for higher education seems pertinent for higher education in the part of a female in Nepal. In the case of Nepal, female students often attempt to get a scholarship abroad by getting a scholarship for higher education does not only make them feel being honored but also reduces economic liabilities of parents to educate their children. In this respect, a scholarship scheme for female students seems pertinent. But, getting a scholarship for higher studies abroad does not only provide an opportunity to enhance knowledge in the related branch of studies but also provide with opportunities to earn living.

Here, it is seen that the migration for study in Nepalese context in relation to education migration is the product of the aspiration to achieve something better for their future in one hand and on the other, it is also to achieve freedom from the inequality created in Nepali society. This has contributed to the new approach to the gender and education migration in Nepali society.

Bourdieu's concepts like habitus, field, and capital are applicable in this context to see the migration culture existing in Nepali families. First, the migrant setting of Nepal can be considered a social field, with its own sets of rules, resources, and stakes (Bourdieu, 1994). A field is a social space with a set of objective power relations who enter the field (Bourdieu, et al., 1988). The resources are the various forms of capital migrants bring with them from the new settings. Migrants engage in the game, struggling over the game's stakes, or rewards, which in this context is the very right to pronounce and define what all other migrants are hoping to achieve through migration: 'the good life'.

In Bourdieuan perspective, lifestyles are related through the creation and condition of existence, which produces habitus, or dispositions and tastes for certain behavior (Fridman, 2016). The participants, thus, revealed the reproduction of their family. Basically, it shows that women are more inspired by the structure of the migration that is prevalent in Nepali society. In Nepali society, migration is associated with the economic enhancement and taken as the main indicator of the development. Therefore, to lead an everyday life most of the youth seems to structure their better future through the migration.

#### **4.5 Return decision for female migrants abroad**

This section discusses the various reasons in the part of female migrants abroad that encourage them to come back to Nepal after accomplishing their higher education. King (2000) has mentioned that early writings inferred that migration, in general, was a one-way process with no return. Most of the studies have focused on the economic factor as the main reason to return to the home country (Rother, 2009). Dealing with the economic factor scholars have brought that opportunities available in the home country and the projection of unemployment of recession in the destination country are the main factors where the migrants make the decision of the return. However, there are also noneconomic factor like the quality of life motivates, which determine the return decisions (King, 2000, p. 15). Furthermore, scholars have discussed on family intimacy, longing for the homeland; moreover, other factors include climate, quality of health services, educational opportunities and low crime rates (Gmelch, 1980; King, 1986; Philips & Potters, 2009). Besides, there are other factors which determine the return decisions.

Researchers like Gmelch (1980) and King (2000) have concluded that return decisions are seldom guided by economy alone but influenced by a mix of different considerations, sometimes also referred to as push and pull motivations or cause and effect factors. For returning studies like Afsar, (2011) and Hoang (2011) have disclosed that social interactions, roles, hierarchies, power relationships, abilities to exert autonomy and various politics are the deterministic factor while making the decision of return. Wahba (2015) has mentioned that the rate of return is high among the students who completed their education from abroad. Referring to Thieme (2012) female migrants have different conception, intention and ways of expressing their

intention to return; some of them can be known in terms of their personal, professional and social grounds.

#### **4.6 Return decision: Proximity with family**

Family makes a deep and extensive space in the life of an individual. Family invests care consideration in the upbringing of an individual which influences his/her decision throughout the life. The family influence over the decision to return, thus, becomes vital. In this connection, Hautaniemi et. al., (2013) mention that decision to return from abroad is strongly based on emotional reasons such as a personal longing for the former home country due to cultural or religious reasons. In turn, a migrant's position in relation to these axes influences access to the entitlement of family reunification (Kofman, 2004). Asis (2002), on the other hand, mentions that initiating and carrying out the decisions to return from abroad largely depend on family. A similar idea was expressed by Manita, (Introduced earlier). Her idea in relation to return in Nepal is presented as follow:

*My family is the main driving factor for me to come back to Nepal. I have a 90 years old grandmother. I think that if I don't come now I am not going to spend my time with her. To me, all these things like the job are not that important. In life, you will do 20 different jobs.*

Referring to Manita's point of view, female students for higher education abroad prioritize family values, love, emotion etc. more than their job and international exposure. Manita's decision for returning Nepal is the result of the same.

Why do Nepali migrants abroad decide to come back to Nepal? One key reason for their return is their family intimacy. For Hautaniemi et al., (2013), return decision from abroad is often provoked by major life changes, or critical conjunctures such as retirement, the death of a parent, receiving an inheritance, marriage, or changes in the educational or professional situations of children (p. 36). But in the case of Manita's, family intimacy has come to be a prominent reason behind the decision to return from abroad. Family plays important role in growth and development of an individual. On the other hand, Markus and Kitayama (2001) have said that the bases for an individual attitude, habits, and ways of perceiving self and others are formed on the way to their upbringing and learning in their family.

Due to love, care, and consideration that a child receives from family members in general and parents in particular, they think their parents and family members as the most immediate and closest individual in their life. On the contrary, every educational migrant return to Nepal from abroad does not decide in line with Manita. For example, Sofiya, another participant of this research, is different from Manita, particularly in deciding to return Nepal from Netherland after accomplishing her Engineering. She went Netherland in Scholarship programme and spent three years. She completed her Masters in Engineering. Her opinion about the return decision is presented as follows:

*I prefer to stay abroad and settled, but I am married and I have a family here. In contrary to my wish, my husband wants to settle in Nepal. I always insist him to reapply for the abroad, but he never listens to my views. After marriage, I suffer more; I need to balance my home and profession. You know it is a really challenging task. On the other hand, our education and abroad exposure are only for the profession. Regarding the housework, there is no any help from others. Still, we need to bind in the household work. This kind of work division bound me in limited periphery... I therefore never think others work beside my home and office. So, I wish if I were in Netherland I should not suffer.*

Here, a returnee woman reflects the reluctance to return home after completion of her higher education. She especially wanted to settle abroad after the higher education. Same case is also reflected by Ilkjaer (2016) while focusing on the Indian female returnees. She has explained the gender relation in the home country, family commitments for earning abroad, increased career opportunities in the target country, social and cultural conservatism are some key reasons that induce female migrants abroad to be reluctant in the matter of returning their home country. Here, women's decision to move can be grounded in an understanding of freedom and individualization (Kim, 2011).

In the context of Nepal, some female returnees explain their return from abroad as the part of their family compulsion and liability. In some patriarchal family setting at present in Nepal, females are given the liberty of education abroad (Dhungana, 2014). But they can't deny the traditional cultural norms of performing

roles in household chores while being in the family. Referring to Sofiya, after accomplishing higher education in engineering from abroad, female returnees are bound to feel their socio-cultural liabilities towards their children and husband. In this case, they think to call their husband and children to stay together abroad. In some cases, their ideas as such become successful while, in some other cases like Sofiya, husband, and children in Nepal deny doing so. In this case, the female migrants abroad are bound to come back to Nepal. One question can be put forth in this context: why do female returnees take their return as an obligation but not as a choice? This question can be responded with reference to Sofiya's way of perceiving female in Nepal. According to her, while coming back to Nepal after accomplishing higher education abroad, the female returnees are bound to be limited within household chores most of the time. This situation often comes in the strict patriarchal family. Envisioning their situation as such in the family setting in Nepal, the female students for higher education do not often intend to come back. But their family obligations like taking care of children, supporting their husband, facilitating their parents-in-law in their old age, etc. demand their return. As a result, they come back to Nepal, reluctantly.

As mentioned by Bourdieu, the individual is indoctrinated with the socially constructed habitus system of transportable habitus that established doxa (Bourdieu, 1988). So, Sofiya has also the belief that instead of reveling in the situation and giving priority to self, she prioritized her husband in making major decisions. Why did she develop the skill of acceptance to her husband? It reflects that she is influenced by her socially constructed habitus (in Bourdieuan sense) where everyone talks about obeying husband as an essential duty of a wife after marriage (Bourdieu, 1977). Moreover, she has been observing her mother and grandmother also passed through the same process. Therefore, she has also developed the same attitude in relation to the acceptance of her husband. Besides, the Nepali society is based on patriarchal value belief system where the father and the son are given preference (Tamang, 2011). As a result, Sofiya has also developed the return decision at home.

The society has constructed segregation between men and women, which is perceived as natural (Bhasin, 2003). The social training has incorporated certain perception, behavior and performance in an individual. Bourdieu (1977) has mentioned this performance, thinking, and perception as a habitus. Thus, the

dominated women use the same dualistic categories as the dominating men. That means the women themselves view women as inferior. In this way, they contribute to their own subordination which creates the unequal gender relations. This form of dominance is called as a symbolic violence. This type of violence which is not based on physical force or coercion, but is an invisible form of power where the dominated women are socialized into doxa, which means taking things for granted (Bourdieu, 1999, as cited in Ankerbo & Hoyda, 2003).

Participants like Maya, Menda, Binita, and Shreya mentioned that the self-decision was major while making the return decision. Representing the self-decision Shreya, working in the international organization and studied a bachelor degree in political science in the USA has a different views regarding her return decision. She prioritized self rather than family while making the decision of return. After completion of her study, she had a regular contact with her parents. While sharing on the return, her parents wished her to stay there but she suddenly made a decision to return and returned to Nepal. As she stated:

*I have a habit of taking decision instantly. My parents were happy with my decision to return on the one hand and, on the other hand, they were asking me to apply there for higher education. They said that you have decided to come without any discussion; at least you had to discuss. I decided to come home; bought a ticket and came back to Nepal. I told my parents about my return plan after my ticket was fixed. I discussed that what to do and from where to start at first, but later on I fixed it and I planned to come back. It may be my habit to decide recently but I don't know. My parents were focusing on my higher degree and settlement abroad instead my return home and resettlement in Nepal.*

Here, Shreya shared that she had a habit of making a decision herself. She had developed the free will. While making the decision of return, the free will of migrants plays an important role where the migrants don't take the help of any resources and make the decision of return (Cassarino, 2004). Here, Shreya's decision is also the reflection of her free will. In this context, her parent's desire is different. Her parents were expecting her to go ahead towards higher education. But, she did not accept her parent's decision. She had a yearning to be in Nepal rather than abroad.

While negotiating return to Nepal, Shreya's parents perceived that it is better for their daughter to settle abroad and make a career. The thinking reflects the Nepalese political, social, economic opportunities which they think are not favorable for their children. From a long time, Nepal is going through the political transition where many ups and downs are happening. The human development index of Nepal is in 145<sup>th</sup> position (The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2014). Going through the political development of the country, it had faced civil war from 1996 to 2006. Besides, the economic and industrial developments are not taking place at a massive level. Therefore it comes under the least developed countries. For that reason, parents were also not favoring settlement of their daughters in Nepal. In one hand, there is a parent's desire and women's desire to return on the other hand. So, observing the steps taken by these women, other educated migrants can also step towards the return to home. They can see them as a change agent in the society for further development.

#### **4.7 Love for one's own country**

In recent discussions of the migration and development nexus, skilled migrants are increasingly seen as possessing the potential to provide benefits to their countries. Gimire and Maharjan (2014) have brought the emic concept of knowledge developed by Nepali student's returnees, which they desire to contribute for the development of their country. Ilkjaer (2016) has discussed on the returnee perception and discussion regarding contribution after return to India. She has further analyzed that returnee are more interested to contribute their society. Moreover, the decision of return was also with the notion of contribution towards development. Returnee's women perception of contribution to build up the nation is a widely accepted idea in general. Since females are the citizens of the nation, they are supposed to contribute to their nation's development by their citizenry sense. Female migrants abroad for higher education are not the exception to the abovementioned idea. In this regard, Maya, one of the study participants, explains her opinion. Maya is a returnee from the USA. She grew up in Kathmandu, where she attended a private school and at the age of 17, she received a scholarship to go to the USA. Having obtained Bachelor's and Master's degrees in gender studies, she returned Nepal ten years later, in 2012. As she mentioned;

*I had always a return mindset. At that time, I thought that I would complete my study from there and utilize my knowledge in Nepal. When I made a decision to study abroad, I did not have any plan for the settlement over there. Other Nepalese proceed for a green card but I had not that intention. I was always concerned about the Nepali society during my stay abroad for studies. Here, we have a fragile system. People are not provided any basic facilities. General people need food, clothes, roads, electricity, and houses. We all want that. Because of the unavailability of basic services, people are suffering. We have a bad management system. The roads are constructed but the water suppliers' office digs the roads and makes it muddy. In this context, it is our duty to do something for our birth place. I think we need to have that feeling. Instead of favoring to one and criticizing the other, we should know and perform our duty to our country.*

The spirit of contribution for the nation is another determinant that makes female migrants abroad come back to Nepal after accomplishing their higher studies. During their abroad study, they compare the ways of living abroad with that of Nepal. Being impressed with the foreign ways of performing life, the idea of *kehigarne* (do something) for their own country emerged into their mind. Referring to Lietchy (2003), the female migrants from middle-class family often intend to perform something better for the sake of others and the country as a whole. The notion of “*kehigarne*” reflects the sense of responsibility towards self and society and the country in the part of Nepali female migrants abroad. As a result, they decide to come back to Nepal. They often compare the life in Nepal with the one abroad in terms of basic services like water supply, electricity, roadways, health care, sanitations, opportunities, etc.

So, why does Maya show the patriotic feeling towards the country and mention the main reason for the return home? To analyze her views, it can be related to Bourdieu's families' phenomenon in the women's socialization. Maya's status here represents the people who do not need to think for their basic needs. Moreover, their position is also respected while living in their country and they are able to consume the resources. However, if they lead their life abroad, it is the vulnerable situation for them. Besides, while socializing an individual, the nation and the notion of giving back to the nation is the essence among the families. As a result of her habitus in relation to



the love towards the country, she was dragged to return to Nepal after the completion of her education.

#### **4.8 Marriage and return decision**

Culturally, marriage depends on the decision of parents in Nepali society. However, the trend of marriage changed with the exposure to the education. Although female migrants accomplish their higher studies in most cases they expect their parents to play role in their marriage. Sakya (2000) has presented the Newari practice of marriage. The findings show that the practice of marriage was predominantly based on their parents or the matchmaker “lami” decision which has changed with the significant increase of love marriage. Moreover, there is a negotiation between the traditional and the modern aspiration in marriage. The female who honors a parent’s decision in this regard is supposed to be obedient and cultured one. In this regard, Pratima, Romi, Roji and Manita discussed the issue of marriage in return decision. Pratima one of the study participants, explained how the case of her marriage convinced her to comeback to Nepal. Pratima did her Bachelor of Management in the prestigious institution in Nepal. She shared that she had always the mindset of going abroad and settling abroad but that did not work. After completion of her Bachelor’s education, she went to India for her Masters in a scholarship programme. Her marriage was the main agenda for which she had to negotiate with her parents for her return. Her story goes as follows:

*My parents were searching a guy for my marriage. Marriage was the main cause of my return at that time. They could not share with others that their daughter was in India. So, I didn’t take it negatively. It was all for my future career. Parents never think negatively about their children. Therefore, I also thought that I would get an opportunity in Nepal. My father was also saying that if there is not any opportunity in Nepal, how everyone is here and getting a job. Why not you? Then, I agreed with them and made the decision to return. Going abroad was not welcomed by my parents. They were more concerned about my marriage instead of my career and study.*

Marriage is a universal institution. In the context of Nepal females at the age of their marriage often hesitate to discuss it with their parents. Parents, on the other hand, wait until their daughters for the marriageable age. They then begin to find out an

appropriate candidate who would suit best to their daughter for marriage. When unmarried female stays abroad for education and if they are at the age of their marriage, their parents begin to ask them to come back to Nepal. Referring to Pratima, despite being reluctant to marry, the female migrants abroad for higher studies are bound to come back to Nepal for the same. This shows that education is still not the key factor to decide for marriage in the part of unmarried female migrants abroad, but their age. In some cases, the unmarried female migrants deny to follow the perspective of their parents in relation to marriage in this context, such females are supposed to get married or to be in relationship with the boy of her choice without taking consent to her parents and family members in this case, such female members in the family are criticized for going against the culture, especially on the matter of marriage. Thus, following cultural norms in relation to marriage become the part of the family and cultural ethic for them. The female migrants thus return to Nepal after accomplishing their higher education abroad.

Roji was another participant of this research. She came back from Norway after accomplishing her Master's degree under a scholarship programme. She had a desire to settle over there. But, she did not get any opportunities to stay abroad and she returned to Nepal. While negotiating for the return, her mother welcomed her and appeal to be in the home country. Roji's desire was to settle over there, whereas her mother's concern was on her marriage. In this regard, she explained:

*My mother was happy with my return decision. She was concerned on my marriage instead of other things. She was quite scaptic regarding my marriage and settlement in Nepal.*

Romi's parents were also concerned about the daughter's marriage and they stated that she could do everything and even could settle abroad after marriage. Therefore, Roji's mother was preparing for her marriage rather than her further abroad settlement in the destination country. Instead, her mother had a fear that whether her daughter would marry a foreigner. But, she was insisting her mother to marry within her own Newari caste. So, Roji came to Nepal and struggled to approach various organizations even though she had a further plan for higher studies and abroad settlement. Like Roji and Romi, Manita also brought the discussion of marriage after her return. But, she did not mention that her parents were there to pressure on her marriage as mentioned by Roji and Romi. She only shares that there is a question

regarding the marriage among the highly educated women who stay abroad. She further shares that:

*Females face more challenges. The only thing that I thought up when I decided to come back was I don't want to get into all these marriage pressure and social pressure that was only in my head. Female face challenges after they come to Nepal. While dealing with my friends, they share that they don't want to disclose on social pressure and what others say about them.*

There was an issue of marriage when she made her return decision. Even though there was the pressure, Manita was prepared not to take it in such a way. Her relatives were insisting on her marriage. Taking references of Nepali family, she said that most of the Nepalese females of mid-age are scared of the marriage pressure and they never share regarding their return to home. But, Manita was neglecting the issues of marriage and mentioned that she was not in favor of listing to marriage pressure even though that becomes a major discussion among her relatives and family.

Studies reflected that marriage is still important for Hindu families in Nepal, and everyone is expected to participate in this tradition when they reach a certain age (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013; Bajracharya & Amin, 2010). Hindu mythology Manusmriti, emphasizes giving away a daughter (Kanyadan) at the right age is still perceived as a significant religious event. What's more, marriage is considered a lifetime commitment (Allendorf & Ghimire, 2013). Here, we can relate the parents' perception regarding the marriage to their daughter is also the parent's habitus which they gain while they are living in the Nepali society. The parents have seen the girls' marriage at the age of 20's. The daughters are always supposed to treat as a member preparing for the other's home. So, this kind of cultural practice has shaped the social perception.

Culturally, a daughter's marriage is the prime responsibility for parents in Nepal. The practice of inheritance with the son and the daughter is given a huge amount of dowry (Mahota, 2016). In many cases, women's position and prestige to their husband's home is judged by dowry they have brought. Therefore, parents have to pay more concern for a huge amount of dowry for their daughter. So, dowry has become one of the prominent practices among the Nepali households. Instead, sons are treated as a responsible person to inherit property.

#### 4.9 In-service study and the obligation to return

The desire for the so-called in-service study is growing day by day among service holders in Nepal. In-service studies have been both a choice and a need for individual service holders. Women who hold a job in a government office in Nepal are likely to get a scholarship for higher studies abroad. In such condition, the opportunity for in-service studies abroad plays a decisive role for them to migrate abroad for education. The organization has invested and given them an opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge related to their job. After accomplishing their in-service studies in a foreign country, a woman migrant is bound to come back to Nepal to rejoin her service. As a result, she decides to return. Reflecting the role of in-service studies in deciding for return, Aayusha, one of the study participants, narrates her story on how she went abroad and returned to Nepal after completion of her study. She joined in the government organization after completion of her Bachelor level of education. She was later given the scholarship to study in the UK. As she mentioned,

*I had a job in Nepal. My job in Nepal was related to public communication. I was working in a government organization. Because of the nature of my job, I needed more knowledge and skills in the area of my work. Further education thus becomes important to me, and. I went to the UK for further education after accomplishing my studies; I thought my organization needs me much. I must rejoin my job to perform better instead of staying abroad. My knowledge and skills would be vital to the growth and development of my organization in Nepal. I thus return to Nepal.*

In-service training or studies become important for both the organizational and individual development. Female in Nepal engage themselves in some kind of job. In the changing context of their service, they feel the need of empowering themselves for better delivery of their service. According to Muir (2014), many job holders approach for in-service studies think that their increased qualification would contribute to promoting their career. Referring to Ayusha after accomplishing their studies abroad, the female migrants need to continue their job in Nepal, which causes them to decide to return. Besides, they do not see safe abroad in terms of their career. They, thus, think to return to rejoin their service in Nepal.

#### 4.10 Envisioning the space for service in Nepal

Acquiring education abroad is not sufficient unless it is used in real life situation. Creating the space for using knowledge and skills is a challenging task. The decision to return basically takes place when conditions at home are seen as favorable and the objectives of acquired resources like financial or informational are met (Cassarino, 2004). It often becomes a major determinant for female migrants abroad to decide whether they should come back to their home country or they should adjust themselves in the target country. Most of the women have discussed more on their career and the implementation of their knowledge and skills which they gained abroad. Basically, they have one distinct vision regarding their career in Nepal. On the way to exploring the reason behind her return from abroad, Sneha, (introduced earlier) a participant of this study told that she envisioned ample spaces to deliver her services in Nepal. As a result, she returned from abroad after accomplishing her higher education. While explaining the reason for her return, Sneha expressed her ideas as follows;

*After accomplishing my study abroad I felt that a space to deliver services in the area of development studies and research writing was limited for me. At times, I thought that I could get ample space to deliver my services in Nepal as it is a developing country which needs human resources like me. I, thus, decided to come back to Nepal.*

Identifying proper places for delivering services as a part of the career is an important decision in the life of female migrants abroad. They feel difficult to compete with the residents abroad in their local cultural and linguistic environment. Those who went to study courses on development studies, international relations and women studies feel Nepal as a proper place where their knowledge and skills can be used extensively. For Sneha, Nepal is a developing country which needs a human resource in the sector of development. That is why; she decided to return to Nepal after accomplishing their higher education abroad. It is also true that it is easier for anyone to start a carrier in the home country than abroad, and the idea as such does not take place only in the case of Nepalese female migrants abroad. For example, Neamtu, (2011) has revealed that Indians abroad are moving to India to seize the moment of opportunity to take up new, profitable avenues of business and ventures.

Ting (2015) has mentioned that most of the educational returnees don't make the plan for the settlement abroad. Bringing the stories of the Bangladeshi skilled returnee (skilled professionals and student) in their home country, he says that the returnees return decision is so dynamic. Moreover, he has concluded that instead of making the preparedness of settlement, they are concerned on their return plan by making finance and strong academy. Here, most of the student have narrated that there was an interest to return to home after completion of their study abroad. The women of this study engaged in negotiation when they made a plan of return. Their family members, especially, parents get engaged in the negotiation of return.

#### **4.11 Unavailability of the opportunities in the host country**

Some of the participants in the research put forward different views from other participants. Among thirty four participants, most of them mentioned that there were no suitable opportunities for them to settle abroad. The participants like Binita, Roji, and Sarmila mentioned that the unavailability of the opportunities abroad was the major cause of their return to the home country. Bringing the story of unavailability of opportunity abroad, one of the participants, Sarmila, mentioned that her mother insisted her to apply for abroad and she went to the UK. After completion of the higher degree, she was motivated to apply for the job abroad. Her mother always pushed her to settle abroad but her interest was to work in Nepal. To satisfy her mother, she had applied for a job over there but she did not get an opportunity there. As a result, she chose to return back to her home country. Therefore, her mother was expecting her to be abroad during their negotiation of return. She shared that;

*I had never applied for settlement abroad. But, once my mother forced me to apply for the job then I applied. I didn't get the job. Everyone is out of the country. If you go abroad then it is the prestige of the family. They get the economic freedom if their daughters are abroad for a higher degree. The other thing is that my cousin sisters are abroad and their parents share many things about their daughters. So, my mother always wishes me to settle there.*

*My mum wished me to stay there but I never desired that. I applied there for work but it was impossible for me to get a job as my academic qualification. I always had to limit myself in the manual work which was not my interest. Therefore, I made the decision of return.*

In the Nepali scenario, especially the urban area like Kathmandu, the mobility abroad is perceived as prestigious among the Nepali youths. It has been the practice among the middle and upper-class family (Valentin, 2014). The recent changes in the policies for the students' intake for Australia can be seen as an example where a large number of students are going abroad for higher education with expectation of earning. Additionally, the parents are also spending a huge amount of money for their children's migration with the expectation of educational and economic capital. Likewise, Manita has also mentioned that being from a different background; it is difficult to engage in manual works. She further mentioned that;

*We come from a middle-class family. If the price of salt goes up, it will not affect us. If the bus fare goes up, it will not affect us because we travel by car”, or “people living in Kathmandu represent the middle class. They can't do work such as mopping, cleaning the house, washing dishes. Actually, they are not able to do these things. They never think of this kind of work.*

Here, the returnee women have brought the class perception as the predominant issue while making the decision of return. As mentioned by Manita, it is difficult always to engage in the manual work because of the class position. While being in home country, women are in the prestigious position and they have the habit of leading the luxurious life with the available resources. But again, if they migrate to another country, they need to engage in the manual task which they don't have an experience before. So, this reminds their home status and makes the decision of return. As mentioned by Valentin (2014), the class position is in vulnerable in the transnational context. While discussing about the Nepali students living in Denmark, she has presented how the Nepali students experience their class position while leading their life abroad. Manita also explored the same view as Valentin where she said that the class position was predominant while making the decision of return.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

In this chapter, the causes of female migration for education and their return are discussed. The causes of their return include the form of family compulsion and liability, love for one's own country, the culture of marriage, in-service in Nepal. With reference to Bourdieuan perspective of culture and habitus female migrants abroad for education are tied up with culture, instinct, and lifestyle that often induce them to come back home country. For example, after accomplishing their education

abroad, female migrants think of themselves that they do not go beyond their family, compulsion. They also think that their education must not be limited to their personal growth and development, but for the service to the nation. They also begin to envision space for utilizing their knowledge and skills in their own country. These live of thoughts are the product of their class, culture, and habitus which induce them to come back to Nepal after accomplishing their education abroad. Bourdieu (1977) has forcefully argued that practices are neither a consequence of individual attitudes nor of their thinking or rational calculations; Belonging to a Nepali family most of the female migrants abroad, especially those who are under in-service studies, come back to Nepal to continue their jobs rather than creating space for income in the foreign land.

The Nepali female migration for education and their return seems to have been influenced by Bourdieuan theory of practice. Bourdieu defines habitus as a property of social actors. It is 'structured' by one's past and present circumstances (such as family upbringing and educational experiences), and helps to shape one's present and future practice. Habitus comprises a system of dispositions that generate perceptions, appreciations, and practices (Bourdieu, 1990). Habitus is thus a result as well as a cause for an individual's way of being, acting and thinking. It accounts for the 'practical knowledge' of social actors in the sense that they 'know', through socialization, how to act, feel, talk, holds one's body, etc. (Nowicka, 2015).

Bourdieuian perspective of practice emphasis on cultural performance while linking female migration for education and their return (as presented and analyzed in this chapter) with this perspective there are a number of ideas that reflect the culture, and habitus of women, particularly in relation to their educational migration and the decision for return. For example, the family decides to send a female abroad for education to maintain increased family status. They also see that a number of females in their surroundings have gone abroad for education to maintain increased family status. They also see that a number of females who went abroad for education and have brought a noticeable change in life. Following such a social trend of sending female members abroad for education, the family in question decides to do the same. As a part of the struggle for bringing positive change in their culture and habitus the female being take the course of personal and professional growth, technological advancement and global exposure through education available abroad.



## CHAPTER V

### 2. SOCIAL REMITTANCE AND MIGRATION:

#### LEARNED BEHAVIOR THROUGH TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION

*When you are inspired by some great purpose, some extraordinary project, all your thoughts break their bounds: Your mind transcends limitations, your consciousness expands in every direction and you find yourself in a new, great and wonderful world. Dormant forces, faculties, and talents become alive, and you discover yourself to be a greater person by far than you ever dreamed yourself to be.*

(Patanjali, as cited in Nicholas, 1998)

#### 5.1 Chapter overview

Female returnees stepped onto the foreign land aspiring for certain achievements<sup>18</sup> that could contribute to various spheres of their life. The expected achievement for a particular female migrant can depend upon their socio-cultural and socio-economic situatedness in the host country. In the same way, what female migrants have achieved during their stay abroad can be explained in terms of the socio-cultural and socio-economic context to which they are exposed in the target country.

Referring to Ammassari (2004) and Athukorala (1992) in Maharjan (2013), achievements of women returnees can be judged through three questions: What have they learned abroad? How much useful is their learning abroad? To what extent do they possess the willingness and capability to apply the knowledge and skills in their source country? The achievements of the returnee women in this research can be connected with these questions. This chapter, thus, deals with the learned behavior by the participants. While dealing with the learned behavior, transnational social habitus is used as an analytical tool. Transnationalism is a key manifestation of globalization. It focuses the local practices of individuals and groups that are anchored in nation-states while transcending national boundaries (Vertovec, 2009).

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<sup>18</sup>Returnees have both positive and negative experience while being abroad. This section has dealt with the positive achievements that are explored by the returnee women during the field work.

According to Ghimire and Maharjan (2014), an account of individual returnees in relation to what knowledge and skills they gained from the migration cycle has not been documented in Nepal. In the context of Nepal, female migrants vary in terms of their achievements depending upon their personal and professional setting. Situating on such landscape, this chapter deals with how female returnees explain their achievements they gained during their stay abroad. Although they moved abroad solely for the academic purpose, they also happen to equip themselves with some personal and social qualities which can collectively be termed as their achievements.

In the same vein, Levitt (1996) has explained returnees' achievements not only in terms of economic but also social remittances. Based on the in-depth interview with female returnees, their achievements abroad have been narrated in relation to an individual, social and academic sphere of their life. Oishi (2002) has discussed the integrative approach in the migration study. She has discussed on the multiple levels of analysis of the state (macro), individuals (micro) and society (meso) while discussing the women labor migration in Asia. Here, the micro perspective in relation to the returnee women and their achievements is dealt.

## **5.2 Academic achievements: Pedagogical differences at home and abroad**

Female returnees in Nepal are expected to have acquired skills and knowledge during their study abroad. Berg, et al., (2012) have mentioned that students migrate to the foreign land, especially in Western and European countries expecting that they would grow up with advanced level of knowledge and skills available in the host country. Morrice (2014) has also documented learning as an inescapable aspect of migration process. Realizing the importance of knowledge and skills in returnees' personal and social life, academic achievement becomes the prime focus of their journey abroad. How did academic achievement become the key target for the Nepali returnees? How do they explain their academic achievement? These questions, as a part of the second research question, were introduced to some study participants while holding an interview with them. Most of the participants (Shriya, Maya, Nitu, Shanti, Roji, Romi, Manita, Dipa, Sangita Saroswati, Sneha, Sabina and others) compared the education system of Nepal with that of abroad. Basically, they discussed the theoretical and practical aspects of learning. They opined that the practical aspect of learning is focused abroad which are often not done in Nepal. Among them, Sabina,

who is working in a government organization in Kathmandu, was in Australia for her Master and Ph.D. Recalling her learning experiences in Australia, she narrated:

*During my stay in Australia, I engaged myself in various learning opportunities related to the area of my study. Meeting with experts, consulting libraries, interacting with teachers and friends were the part of my daily routine. The more I consulted literature in the library, the more information related to the subject of my study I collected. At times, I felt that the deeper the information I obtained, the stronger the knowledge I claimed. Writing a paper and presenting them in the classroom, getting feedback to improve the paper was some kinds of learning activities I engaged myself massively. My intense engagement in academic activities as such did not only help me to broaden in-depth knowledge in the area of my study but also helped me equip myself with some key skills like skills of presenting ideas among the academicians, getting feedback, addressing them using different perspectives.*

As a part of the academic achievement, the female returnees often claimed to have acquired knowledge and skills during their stay abroad. What do the term *knowledge* and *skills* refer to in this context? This question seems to be pertinent in the way that the meaning and value of knowledge and skills differ depending upon the need, purpose, perspective and work of an individual in question (Berg et al., 2012, p. 18). With reference to Sabina's need, purpose, perspective, and field of work, academic knowledge can be explained in terms of collecting information and broadening thinking in relation to the subject of study. Morrice (2014) has also explained individual's experiences as the center of knowledge production. The term knowledge is so abstract that one feels difficult to rate it in terms of words and phrases (Ghimire & Maharjan, 2014). With reference to Iikjaer (2016), achievement of knowledge can be rated in terms of the degree of consciousness in the part of female returnees in relation to self and others with whom they live and work. Based on Sabina's story, skills can be explained in terms of the techniques and quality of performing the given task. Reading books in the library, writing papers, presenting them in the classroom, interacting with friends and teachers etc. can be taken as the part of skills for Sabina in particular and female returnees in Nepal in general. Maharjan (2013) has also discussed that majority of the returnee students who are

currently engaged in academia claimed that they understood the value of research and academia after the transnational exposure of education.

In this context of research, it is pertinent to put a question such as which knowledge and skills are supposed to be an achievement in the part of Sabina and why. While connecting Sabina's ideas with Morrice (2014), the knowledge and skills that contribute to enlighten the mind, feeling and course of action are supposed to be achievements. The knowledge in question can also be taken as a construction and transformation of life experiences of an individual. If Sabina is taken as a case, in this context, her knowledge, and skills in terms of reading, writing, ways of thinking, presenting ideas in front of the mass, coping with the challenges brought by the comments and feedback from teachers, and friends can be taken as her achievements.

The knowledge and skills contribute to brightening returnees' mind and feeling in their personal and professional life, which they take as their achievement (Maharjan, 2013). Sabina's ideas can also be explained in terms of practical and theoretical bases of knowledge and skills, which she acquired abroad. Such knowledge and skills of the returnees like Sabina can be compared with the one they experienced in Nepal. A great deal of literature maintains that pedagogical construct of school in Nepal focuses more on copying information from the textbooks, rote learning, keeping the information in memory and pouring them on to the exam paper (Pokhrel, 2015). Perhaps Sabina's way of experiencing knowledge and skills abroad and that of Nepal echoes the same. Highlighting the practicality of her knowledge which she achieved abroad, she continued with the following words:

*I used to obtain good marks in an exam during my school studies in Nepal for which I was tagged as a good student in my class. I used to read books and find the answer to the questions given under the text. I strictly followed the syllabus and my teachers' instructions aimed at the higher score in the exam. Our teacher used to give us a lecture note which we copied in our exercise books. But abroad, I experienced differently. The teachers abroad were to facilitate the students. They never encouraged us for rote learning. They rather encouraged us for case studies and also for consulting reference books in the library. During my abroad study, I had to engage myself intensely in learning activities which I feel now more practical and life-oriented...*

The term achievement often gives the impression that the individual in question has possessed something which she did not have in the past. If it is so, Sabina has achieved practical and life-oriented knowledge and skills during her studies abroad. In this context, it seems important to explain life-oriented knowledge and skills to show how such knowledge and skills become an achievement.

While dealing with learning, Bourdieu mentioned that an individual acquires not only economic capital in the strict sense (material wealth in the forms of money, stocks, and shares) but also cultural capitals (knowledge, skills, and other cultural acquisitions) (Awasthi, 2004). In the same vein, the research participants have also mentioned that they are able to get the opportunity to learn new knowledge and skills which has further enhanced their capacity through the transnational educational exposure.

While connecting such understanding with Sabina's narrative, the personal engagement for sensitizing self and cultivating broadened understanding through the pedagogical construct abroad is "knowledge" in the part of female returnees in Nepal. On the contrary, any attempts that serve otherwise can be taken as non-knowledge. For example, rote-learning, in the case of Sabina is non-knowledge because it did not serve in her life, but in her school exam. This shows that an abroad study helps female returnees to cultivate practical learning more than theoretical one contributing to living life as a human in a real sense.

The academic achievement of the returnees in the above mentioned narrative can also be discussed with transnational perspective. While explaining on knowledge and skills as the part of their academic achievement, the research participants connect their experiences (reading, writing, thinking, and behavioral pattern) in the home and host country. They compared their learning in the host country with the one in the home country and claimed that the academic knowledge and skills which they acquired in the host country are missing in the home country. Pessar and Mahler (2003) mention that transnational spaces include various forms of activity informal and formal, social, cultural and economic, political, and religious practices and the connection between all levels of social experiences. Migrants, thus, reflect the transnational practices which they were exposed to in the host country and reflect the transnational activities which shape the individual's understanding and learning in the home country. So, the women

have portrayed the academic achievement as the major activity undertaken at transnational context even after their return. Portes et al., (1999) have reflected the various types of transnational practices such as economic, social, cultural and political. But in the context of this research, only academic practices at transnational context has been taken into account.

How does education abroad make female returnees practical and life-oriented? This question needs some explicit explanation. For the purpose of responding to this question, an in-depth interview was held with participants and among them Vidya expressed regarding various learning experience abroad. Vidhya is a returnee who studied political science in the USA and she is currently working in a research organization. She explained her experience on what makes the knowledge gained abroad practical and life oriented in the following ways:

*Well, let's think very simply. What is knowledge? You know that a knowledgeable person is supposed to have the ability to identify what is wrong and what is right. Why something is wrong or right? The ability to perform certain tasks can also be termed as knowledge. Identifying wrong and right in relation to one's life issue demands independent thinking, perceiving, analyzing, let's say critiquing. This is what I learned...*

Making choice in life particularly in terms of 'right', 'wrong' and 'usefulness' demands thorough scrutiny of skills in the part of an individual. Regensburg (2012) says that the success of an individual in life may develop upon the choice she makes in life. Study shows that Institution of higher education is critical place for knowledge production, perpetuation and disseminations (Stephens et al., 2008). Vidhya's views of knowledge for identifying what is right seem to be the parallel view of knowledge for making right choice. What is that which enables one to the make the right choice? Vidhya has responded to this question explicitly by saying that it is the skill and ability of thinking perceiving, analyzing and critiquing upon something that enables one to make a useful choice in life. In this nexus, Vidya said that she developed the skills of analytical and critical thinking during her abroad study that serves her to be more practical in life. According to Maharjan (2013), in the process of academic learning returnees have realized the importance of academic achievements and thus learning is very important for student's lives. Within knowledge and skills returnees

are also able to gain systematic learning with critical and analytical skills. Overall, learning has lifted their confidence level.

Through the transnational education opportunities and scholarship programs, the best students are selected for higher education. The students thus get opportunities to shared and created knowledge through exposure to the international arena. Malhotra (2005) has called it as knowledge ecology where the knowledge is created and recreated in various contexts and various points in time. In the learning, process students acquire opportunities to interact with the host country's culture, habits, customs, technologies, lifestyle, and knowledge. So, after getting the higher education students get opportunities to be equipped with qualifications, practical skill and methods, which help in knowledge and skill, transfer to home country (Maharjan 2013). The returnees mentioned the pedagogical differences and the teacher-student relationship abroad from where they achieve that there is no any hierarchy in the learning. In a way of presenting themselves in the classroom, they found such learning environment, therefore, Pererena, one of the participants of this research, mentioned the issue of teacher and student relationship and the topic of study abroad. Pererena is a USA returnee who did her Masters in Management. She studied Bachelor in Nepal and later she went to the USA for her masters. As Pererena mentioned,

*Technology is far better over there; the teacher-student relationship is different. Most important thing is a transparent system over there. Students are not judges by marks. There was no any system of formal exams. We have the very fewer participation of the student. Most of the teacher follows one-way teaching. In the classroom teacher speaks and the class are finished.*

Pererena has compared regarding the system of teaching abroad and in Nepal. The education system of abroad has promoted by giving the examples of students' participation. She emphasized that this is absent in Nepal. Why Pererena feels such differences in teaching between abroad and Nepal is because of her exposure abroad. After gaining education in Nepal she went abroad for her higher education. While being abroad she was exposed to a new environment with new teaching style where she felt differentiation in the teaching style.

### **5.3 Individual skill: Independence and freedom through transnational exposure**

In most of the interviews, the returnees claimed academic achievement as their key focus during their stay abroad. Besides this, they also claimed that they happened to equip themselves with some individual experiences and skills on the way to accomplish the educational journey abroad. Although individual skills and experience was not their target achievement on the onset of their journey abroad, they acquire it while exposing themselves to the people and culture of the target country (Alandejani, 2013). It is understood by the 'redistribution of cultural capital' (Findlay et al., 2011). Through this process, an individual becomes simply different from others and are therefore empowered to achieve distinction. Most of the women returnees explained during interviews that they interacted with the circumstances being all alone in the foreign land which caused to emerge some new skills, experiences, and unhelpful emotions. In this regard, one of my study participants named Aasha discussed the issue of independence while studying in India. Like others, she emphasized how the experience of being abroad taught her to stand on her own feet and to cope with unfamiliar situations. She mentioned,

*When I was living there, it was not only my academic learning, but I learned about independence, creativity, and how to take care of myself. I was the only daughter of my parents, and I was pampered a lot here. I was like that until grade seven. If my mummy would not feed me with her hands, then I would not eat. Such privilege was not available abroad. When I went abroad, I learned that I had to do my work by myself. I have to protect myself and choose closed and distanced friends. I learned all these life skills... In India, I learned to deal with others, from auto-rickshaw drivers to shopkeepers. I remember an incident. I and my friend were going to the ATM. You know, Delhi is dangerous for girls. When we were going there, some boys came and asked, "Are you guys from Manipur? How much do you take for a night?" Then we learned how to tackle such things.*

Aasha is an example of the Nepali returnees who grew up with a higher level of self-confidence to tackle the unfamiliar situation abroad. With reference to Aasha's narrative, it is obvious that the Nepalese female returnees cultivate some knowledge and skills at an individual level that supports them to heighten their self-confidence. They unknowingly grow up with the skills of independent living, creative thinking,



personal caring and coping with unfavorable circumstances that are likely to take place (Morrice, 2014). Although these skills often don't necessarily become the part of the academic discourse in the colleges and universities, they equip themselves with these qualities by interacting with the people and being the part of the culture in the target country (Ghimire & Maharjan, 2014). The quality of independent living, creative thinking, personal caring and facing the challenges brought by unfavorable circumstances remains in the dormant state during their stay with parents in the source country.

This often becomes so because they are overprotected and supported by their parents and relatives during their stay with them. Since they are to interact with new people, new culture and new circumstances abroad being all alone, they happen to uncover their quality of independent living, creative thing, personal caring and coping with unhelpful circumstances by any means (Vianello, 2013). At the time, they feel difficult. But they unknowingly learn to open up these qualities which they suppose as their part of achievement during their stay abroad. The migrant's experience which she gained abroad is linked with her self-improvement. She can relate it with her better living standards, and enhanced professional outcome. These skills can be related to their positioning in the family, community, and workplace (Black et al., 2003). In the same vein, Levitt (1996) has asserted that the migrants develop skills, knowledge, and belief while living in the host country. Such skills, knowledge, and belief can equip them with social remittance in their home country. Aasha, a participant of this research, has also portrayed how her knowledge can be associated with the social remittance in her home country, Nepal.

Maya is another study participant introduced before. In an interview for the purpose of this research, she explained her achievement in relation to individual knowledge and skills as follows:

*I went abroad when I was seventeen. It was the time to shape my personality. When I returned for the first time after two years, I had started questioning things. That is, why are things like this, or like that? My mother scolded me for asking so many questions. I was so surprised because when I went there, I was taught to question things, to understand why things are the way they are. I was taught to question things in order to learn about them. When I came here*

*[Nepal], I was told not to ask many questions but to accept what is already there.*

The above-mentioned narrative focuses on two different individual qualities namely, analytical skills as a part of achievement for women returnees. In this context question for the kind can be raised: why do women returnees in Nepal explain analytical and critical thinking as their achievement abroad? To address this question, one needs to observe the socio-cultural construct for the women in Nepal. As cited in Carling (2005), migration affects gender relation in a particular context. It provides an individual (woman migrant in this context) with multiple opportunities and develops their confidence and autonomy from where they raise questions against the malpractices existing in their society.

Culturally, women are supposed to be subjugated to their male counterparts in the Nepali society. They are not supposed to be leaders: but the subjects to be led. As a result, they are brought up in the family and community in a taken for granted form; but not as an imaginative and critical creative member (Liechty, 1996). Maya's narrative, in this context, shows that females in Nepal are encouraged to grow up being submissive which means they are not supposed to ask any questions against the socio-cultural norms and values in which they are to live. On the contrary, when they step on to the land of the target country for academic purpose, they are encouraged to be critical, analytical and imaginative towards the self, others and the environment which they are exposed to (Maharjan, 2013). Balsera (2014) has mentioned that being active is the part of the acquisition of knowledge which is excluded from the curriculum. The learning as such does not only support them to live their life as a female being but also opens up their insight to create opportunities and space to make meaning of being a female. Analytical and critical imaginative skills in the part of female returnees also seem to have helped them redefine their identity and aspirations within the socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political landscape in the source country (Ghimire & Maharjan, 2014). When these skills are related their outer world, they also seem to be helpful in transforming themselves from being voiceless to voice. In this regard, Nitu, one of the study participants, also shared her story. Nitu did her Engineering from Norway. While presenting her achievements abroad, she mentioned that learned to perceive and explain the world around with different perspective. Specifically, she acquired the courage to speak up. She states:

*Women there [Norway] are very much forward. If you look, it seems that men are mute (lato) and women are more talkative (patarpatar) than us. But with us, when we experience it ourselves and get an education from there, then even if we don't talk that much (do patarpatar), we have to speak, but it doesn't mean that we will get everything just by speaking out. But we have to be able to do analysis, have skills to decide if it is ok to speak or not, because if one doesn't have decisive intent and then speaks out, that person will have to bear its consequences. It is not that women have to tolerate everything. We have to speak.*

At this context, a famous saying in Nepali can be taken as a reference “*bolne ko pitho bikchha, nabolneko chamalpani bikdaina*<sup>19</sup>”. This well-known saying in Nepali highlights the importance of human voices in terms of getting things done in the family, community and workplace. But, it is wonderful to think that the socio-cultural context that encourages one to be voiced hardly makes room for women's voices. In the context of the traditional family culture in Nepal, women are often encouraged to follow the culture of silence (Adhikari, 2010). As a result, most of the women in Nepal, being impressed by cultural tradition, like to hear from others rather than putting their constructive arguments to the mass. According to Nitu, female returnees explain that they require the capacity to argue and negotiate with the people to comfort their living and social relationship. Adding to Nitu's claim of being argumentative in front of others in relation to personal/social agenda, Susma, another participant for this study, says:

*I had this habit of keeping myself quiet even if someone said something, but we shouldn't keep quiet. Now I think we must speak what we think ... Even if some people say something to me in front of others, I should not just keep quiet. I need to say what I know and things that others don't know ... Even in my personal life I learned that confidence builds up. We must work hard. We must do what we can from our position. I feel that there have been lots of changes, changes in my personality. Others also said that I have become different, before and after. My relatives and others said so ... They said when people*

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<sup>19</sup>*bolne ko pitho bikchha, nabolneko chamalpani bikdaina*: People who speak or have an oratory skill can sell the floor and people who don't have that skill can't even sell the rice.

*return from abroad or come back from their studies from abroad, they have changed a lot. They said that 'manche arko hudoraicha' (referring to personal change). Their nose, mouth, ear are all the same, but what it means is that their thinking, ways of expressions all differs. Their behavior changes*

Susma's views reflect how Nepali women change their perception through transnational educational exposure. The international educational exposure helps them to change not only their perception but also the personality. These qualities are not notice by the individual but also by the people of the surrounding. Through these changes the returnees are taking as the change agent in society. So why they feel that they are different is because of the exposure and the educational opportunities gained through the transnational exposure. If these women were excluded from the opportunities, they would not have developed newness among themselves. So, here the access of the mobility provided to Nepali women was the changing factor from where they could develop newness in themselves. The geographical mobility gained by these women helped them to gain other access of the mobility like social mobility. In their society these women are taken as a change agent. Studies have reflected that there is relationship between the access of the mobility and the empowerment among the women (Hanson, 2010). If women get access of the geographical mobility, they can explore themselves in the new phenomenon. This further helps to develop and change the society they live in. Here, Susma's story also reflects that she got changed with the access of mobility.

Manita is still another participant of this study who has returned from the USA after accomplishing her Diploma and Master's Degree in social sciences. Like another returnees, she also insisted on acquiring some specific qualities that contribute to shape and improve her ability to pursue time duly. According to her, the skill of managing and following time can be taken as a part of one's own ability to promote self. Highlighting her learning of managing time during her stay abroad, she explains:

*Time management is a great learning for me. During my stay abroad my daily activities were fixed in relation to time. I mean to say "what I must do, at what time" was fixed previously. To perform things in a defined time, one had to be more active and accurate. As a result, I finished many works in a day. At times, I remembered the people in my surrounding in Nepal who were*

*engaged in unproductive work like playing card, talking about politics and backbiting. What I now feel is that why many countries in the West became developed and why the country like Nepal is underdeveloped. It is the matter of time management.*

“Time and tide’ waits for no man”. This well-known saying is often heard in the family community and work-place in Nepal. Yet, the saying has hardly been the part of culture among the large mass of people. Manita thinks the importance of time can be realized only when time is utilized in a productive way. Certainly, time is for performance. As accepted by Manita, backbiting talking about politics and playing cards hardly gives the return to smooth life. To her, performing such works is the total waste of time. What a female returnee like Manita has learned in a developed country like the USA is that one needs to utilize time by engaging oneself in constructive works that indirectly contributes to advance the personal way of living. Why does time management keep much importance in the life of the individual? Focusing this question, Manita explains:

*Pursuing time is part of our ethics. For nation building, we are missing ethics. I also learned the concept of ethics from the USA. In the USA, there are different forms of work ethics. In Nepal, we have very substandard types of work ethics. Talking about government sector they have lost work ethics. In the USA, people talk about the work ethics. But in Nepal, we never give it more importance which I have felt in my students also. I took my students for a trip but I have seen them throwing the papers and the plastic bag out from the bus and I told them that it was not good even though they didn’t listen to me.*

As discussed in Rand (1984), ethics is the first philosophy. Ethics is the guideline that helps us to perform our behavior towards others. It provides us with specific values and principles to differentiate the right behaviors from the wrong ones (Cranton et al., 2006). Langlois (2011) has also considered ethics as the study of norms and values that guide people to act and behave in an acceptable way. With reference to Manita, female returnees in Nepal grow up with the sense of work ethics in relation to time and perspective towards the work in question. In this context, perspective towards the work may refer to the hierarchy of works practiced in Nepal. In general, “works” in Nepal are explained in terms of “respected” and “low graded”.

The 'respected work' is often labeled as 'thulo kaam'. Those who engage in 'thulo kaam' claim to have high status. But in the developed country, the concept of work is different. All the works that contribute to address human needs are considered as dignified works. Female returnees in Nepal explained that they have individually come up with a changed perspective towards work ethics during their stay abroad.

Erel (2010), in line with Bourdeau, has gone beyond the economic capital and discussed the other forms of capital such as social and cultural ones. Bourdieu has explained economic capital in the strict sense (i.e. material wealth in the form of money, stocks and shares, property, etc) but also cultural capital (knowledge, skills and other cultural acquisitions), symbolic capital (i.e. accumulated prestige of honour). Analyzing the narratives of the research participants with Bourdieuan lens has provided a space to interpret the hierarchy in the job market, time management, freedom and ethics performed in the human action and behaviors as cultural and symbolic capitals. The cultural capital acquisition is a result of the transnational habitus which is mentioned by the scholars who focused on Bourdieu's habitus and it transforms the migratory process.

According to Bourdieu, in Tsang (2013) education credentials (cultural or social capital) can be converted into economic capital. Therefore, most of the research participants emphasized academic achievement through which they can get access to economic resources.

#### **5.4 Social learning: Accepting social diversity**

Nepalese female returnees explained social learning as achievements they acquired during their abroad studies. But the question is: can social learning be taken as achievements for the returnees in question? In line with the question, Baldwin and Baumann (2005) cited in Alandejani (2013) have echoed that knowledge and skills in the part of the individuals are expected to bring change in society. This means the knowledge and skills of an individual must possess a social dimension of life. If it is so, the knowledge utilized brings change in society which can also be taken as the achievement of the returnee.

Social achievements for the Nepali female returnees refer to the knowledge and skills that hold the notions of social importance. Of course, the knowledge and skills of social importance in Nepal are different from those abroad. But, the study

participants felt those social learnings as achievements abroad help them to redefine self and others within the given social network (Levitt, 1996), especially focusing the life under the existing social relations. In many interviews, they explained their learning for socialization abroad contrasts with the learning for socialization in Nepal. The original knowledge can become transformed through the processes of socialization, articulation internalization, and so forth (Oddou et al., 2008, p. 184 as cited in Alandejani, 2013). Some of the social skills available abroad are more helpful and inspiring for them.

Menda, who has returned from the UK by accomplishing courses on Social Science and is working as a freelancer in Nepal states:

*There exists racism in Nepal, and so is the case abroad. But in Nepal, we say Brahmins are such.... Gurungs are such... Newares are such... But, as I feel, after going abroad, all these are unimportant ... ridiculous. We focus these issues so much which are not much important. There are so many people, perceptions and cultures in the world. All go together for the sake of survival and existence. I was in a Hippie College so I had a lot of exposure. It really induced me to accept others.*

Acceptance of diversity is one of the social qualities that Menda learned during her abroad studies. In fact, it is international migration which is a dynamic and fast-growing phenomenon to help accept wide diversities in terms of people and countries involved (Belsera, 2014). Society relies on diversity because novelty creativity, change and learning can rise only when there are differences that enable and compel departure from established patterns (Thakur, 2017). However, avoidance, and not acceptance, of diversities invites conflict in many parts of the world. In the context of Nepal, there are diversities in castes like Brahmins, Newar, Gurung, etc. Referring to Menda, these diversities are often taken as the source of disputes and conflict (Awasthi, 2004), which is an unimportant issue. It is not only Menda but many scholars around the world who take diversity in inter-cultural context as an issue so far the matter of social relationship is concerned. Vendeberg et al., (2012) have also maintained that students make meaning of their intercultural encounter. According to them, individuals in inter-cultural context begin to challenge their own cultural assumptions, consider other cultural perspectives, and shift their frame of

reference to the particular cultural context. While doing so, they sometimes appear to be in conflict, while some other time they strengthen relational cohesion. While relating diversity and inter-cultural context as discussed above with the caste-based differences in Nepal, it gives rise to a question: Why should we quarrel over caste issues rather than seeking meaning within the network of the people of different castes? This question seems important in this context because it duly induces one to seek the meaning of situating oneself among the people of diverse cultural and social background.

Accepting socio-cultural diversity means assimilating self with others and vice versa. Such senses of acceptance strengthen social ties between self and others, where self thinks of others as a second self (Sol, 2013, p. 30). In such a context, the horizon of the social relationship increases creating space for intimacy and mutual support. In this context, the question of the kind seems important: What makes one ready to accept differences? With reference to Menda, it is one's perception towards self and others. It is an individual's perception that makes him/her see the world around. If an individual changes his/her ways of viewing the world, s/he begins to see the world in a changed way. Linking these ideas with Menda's opinion, Nepalese women returnees achieve a new perspective abroad that she feels helpful in viewing and dealing with others for increased social cohesion. Acceptance of diversity is not something that one does in black and white; it demands a method and/or let's say a procedure for building and strengthening self and others confidence (Awasthi, 2004). What might be the procedure or method of socialization as such with reference to this question seems to have been responded by Asmita, one of the study participants who spent five years in the USA and returned. She states:

*There I found people saying 'sorry', if they feel that they caused discomfort to others. I adopted a culture of saying sorry. I also observed that they often smile looking at others. I also began to do the same when the context demanded. But in Nepal, it is not often taken as favorable. There people do not bother much to dress up but here in Nepal people are sensitive in terms of dresses. Our thinking could be always "What might others think of my dress?" We often seek the consent of parents or close relative if we perform something in Nepal, which is not the same there.*



With reference to Asmita, the words like “sorry” and “thank you” occupy a broad space in social discourse. These two words also represent the social acceptance of self and others within the social discourse. Using the words like “sorry” and “thank you” also gives the meaning that self is welcoming to other and they honor one another in the given social environment. Referring to Asmita, responding others with a smile is another way of socializing that reflects safe social relationship. Freedom of dress up and work is still the most celebrated social phenomenon abroad, where an individual in question feels freedom and thereby the meaning of being a human. At this stage of research, it seems pertinent to put a question: Can such a way of socialization be an achievement for the returnees? In this regard, Berg et al., (2012) maintain that the primary goal of learning abroad is not simply to acquire knowledge, but to develop ways that allow an individual to learn how to shift cultural perspective and also how to adapt their behavior to other cultural contexts -- knowledge that will allow them to interact more effectively and appropriately with others throughout their lives.

Out of many returnee women, Shanti is one who has accomplished her Master’s Degree in Population Studies from Australia and is currently working in an INGO in Nepal. She claimed to have developed the sense of accomplishing works in companionship during her abroad studies. Uncovering her ideas on the importance of building up a team for accomplishing works, she said that:

*During my study in Australia, we performed a learning task in a group. While we went outside, we were in a group consisting of Nepali, Indonesians. We are still in contact with each other. These days, I intend to do work in a group. I never think of doing work individually.*

Is performing work in a group more effective than performing it individually? It is a debatable question. Some prefer group work while some other likes to perform it individually. Both ways of doing work might have some disadvantages. But in the case of this research, Shanti seems to prefer doing work in a group of like-minded individuals. One question seems to be important in this context, as mentioned by the participants regarding group work i.e. why is a group work more celebrated than the individual one? Each member in a group, thus, becomes familiar with one another’s

perspective and attitudes. The task to be accomplished in a group demands low risk and provides with a higher level of achievement.

Group work also provides the group members a space to collaborate, argue debate and negotiate to reach the conclusion. A group work, thus, does not only make the individuals in a group to solve the problem easily but also provide them with an opportunity to realize them as a social being. O'Hara and Wood (2003) have mentioned that the group provides its exclusivity, transcends own boundaries and open itself to membership, participation, and interconnection in even higher order entities. At this context of research, one question seems to be pertinent, i.e. what makes the women returnees like Shanti realize the idea of collaborative work as an achievement abroad, and not in Nepal? Does this mean that there was no idea of collaborative work in Nepal, especially for returnees like Shanti? While inquiring in line with these questions, Manita (introduced earlier) said as follows:

*There are so many things that I don't like about my society but there are [also] so many things that I don't like about the US society. I think the ideal is somewhere in between. I hate this caste system (jatbhat) in Nepal. The way they treat helpers, I don't like that. If someone touches food, then one can't eat. Everyone is more concerned about what the other's daughter is doing rather than what their own daughter is doing . . .*

The above-mentioned data uncover two different ideas in the socio-cultural context of Nepal. One, on the social ground the individuals are judged in terms of caste but not in terms of their performance. The other, an individual in society often intends to find out the fault of the other; but they do not make the fault themselves. Both of these practices seem to have weakened the social grounds for a living and working together. In the learning process, scholars have mentioned that deep learning by individuals seems to be facilitated by their participation in a group that is also learning. By fully participating in a conscious group and expanding oneself to incorporate all seen and unseen realities, individuals are helped to enter a state of flow in which creativity and learning are transcended (O'Hara & Wood 2003).

The returnee women in this research context claim that the various forms of achievements (academic, social, cultural) can be related to the social remittances. Social remittance plays an important role in the process of knowledge transformation

and knowledge generation. The movers bring the knowledge, ideas, and beliefs in the form of social remittances and connect them with non-movers in the home country. Levitt (1996) has brought the idea of normative structures in social remittances which basically focus on the learning of ideas, values, and beliefs. They include norms for interpersonal behavioral, the standard of age, gender appropriateness, and the principle of neighborhood, community participation, and aspirations for social mobility. The participants claimed their learning through the transnational exposure as their social remittances. The women's perception of the group work, developing the ethical behavior, accepting the diversity, expressing gratitude in front of others are the social remittances developed by the individual participants. These social remittances can be transformed in the society where they return and utilize for the development of the society.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

The returnee women came across three different but inter-related achievements during their study abroad. Their achievements appeared mainly in relation to academic, individual and social dimensions which are interrelated in the sense that they all appear to be complementary to each other so far their personal, social and professional growth and development is concerned. How do these three life dimensions receive the status of achievements? How do they influence returnees' academic, individual and social life? How do their achievements make meaning to their life? These questions demand to analyze their perception of learning with the relevant theory. In this context, the transnational theory of migration is applicable. This theory explains the perceptions of the women in terms of what they have learned. The learning experiences are the outcome of their exposure in the international education. The transnational theory emphasizes the learning out of the stories of the people who move abroad. But these migrants remain connected with the cultural stances of their home countries. This means, in some ways, they are occupied with the cultural norms and values of their home country during their stay abroad. On the contrary, they also come back to their home country with the habitus which they acquired in the host country. Although dealing with the transnational theory in the migration scholars have dealt with the economic remittances (Suksomboon, 2008), the returnees' learning in the context of this research can be associated with the social remittances.

Here, women have also talked about their various forms of achievements (individual, social and academic) and later these learning are expected to implement in the home country. Tamara (2013) has mentioned that a transnational perspective is for analyzing people's links between first and third world countries, where they have two different perspectives. One perspective focuses their learning in the home country and the other focuses their learning in the country they are migrated to. In the context of this research, the returnee women compare their learning taking place in two different locations (home and host countries) and expect to implement in the home country which is extensively discussed in the next chapter. The returnee women basically claim that the pedagogical practices, the perception of the people, observation towards human freedom, and the insights to give the meaning of the socio-cultural practices which they observed and practiced during their stay abroad are the part of their achievement.

There are some key insights to explain returnees' achievements. First, the academic achievements of returnees have brought change in their habit of mind and worldviews towards academic purpose and performances in which the learners are active, heuristics and life-oriented; but not passive recipients. Second, the returnees' ways of redefining and understanding the social process of being and becoming changed after their stay abroad. They began to examine self, others and social relationship critically in their source country challenging the long-rooted status quo in their socio-cultural life. Third, at the individual level, the returnees realized changes in terms of self-confidence, self-esteem, inter-personal relationship, the skill of being collaborative, etc. Their achievement can relate to the social remittances from which they can transform their traditional ideas as well as a change in their social economic and family situation. The new values, ideas, behavior and practices brought by the returnees as their achievements are collectively claimed as social remittances (Levitt, 1996). Although social remittances are less observable and quantifiable in the comparison to economic remittances (Goldring, 2004), these remittances appear to be vital components of changes in the migrants' personal, social and professional spheres of life (Rahman, 2009).

## CHAPTER VI

### 6. IMPLEMENTING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS OF RETURNEE WOMEN IN NEPAL

#### 6.1 Chapter overview

The migrant women often intend to come back to their home country after accomplishing their abroad studies (Alandejani, 2013; Ting, 2015). Their intention and motivation to return might be the product of their social, economic, family and cultural background. While returning from abroad, they carry the knowledge and skills to their source country which they acquired during their abroad study (Ilkjaer, 2015). The knowledge helps an individual to change in their personal, social and professional life. Skilled returnees are playing the significant role in local level by transferring technical skills, managerial and professional activities. Moreover, they are also helping to develop entrepreneurial ventures and investments, and the generation of new jobs (Saxenian, 2006).

This section deals with returnee's engagement in various networks after their return. The micro and macro engagement of the participants in relation to the implementation of their knowledge and skills are discussed. The micro-engagement is related to families, friends and the macro to the social, political and economic engagement along with various institutional networks. Ruerd Ruben et al., (2009) have mentioned that 'return' does not only mean to come back home but also to reintegrate oneself in the family, community, and society of the home country. The reintegration is possible when they are re-embedded in terms of economic and social networks, and also in terms of their emotional dimensions (p.908). This chapter, therefore, consists of the narratives of the returnees in relation to what and how they do for articulating their knowledge and skills in the home country.

#### 6.2 Social network after the return

The social network of the returnee women is analyzed while migrating to other countries or maintaining the transnational ties. Sijapati (2010) has studied the social network of Nepalese students living in the USA. In line with transnational ties, she has argued how students living in the USA keep in contact with various organizations in the host and home countries. Thieme and Boker (2005) have linked

returnee women's network focusing on labor migration. Current migration research emphasizes social network in various stages of the migration process including decision making to migrate, direction and persistence of migration flow, transnational links, settlement patterns, and incorporation (Kuschminder, 2013). Basically, the migrants take the information of the host countries and make a plan of migration. In fact, a network approach to migration studies gained increasing popularity in the 1980's. Boyd (1989) has begun to formulate a new approach to the sociology of migration on the basis of networks. In relation to the returnee reintegration into the home country, the social embedded concept portrays how and why migrants feel to integrate themselves in their own society after coming back from abroad. Migrants also build a network after their return which is less discussed agenda in the literature of return migration. The upcoming section deals with various forms of social networks, where the returnee migrants are engaged in.

There are various forms of socio-cultural interactions, where the returnees are engaged in the home country. The returnees have not only been engaged in the family after their return but also various forms of socio-cultural interactions. There interaction and relationship on the way to self-integration is influenced by tradition, religion, extended family, friendship, acquaintance political ideology, gender, age, tribe, neighborhood or work experience (Tilly 1990 as cited in Stamm, 2006). This kind of network provides opportunities and constraints. Moreover, the social network facilitates or discourages adaptation and integration. There should be exhaustive studies on the return and reintegration with the social network (Stamm, 2006). So, the multiple platforms to implement women's knowledge and skills are discussed.

In the migration literature, there are various researches on the return intention and motivation. Skilled returnees in India are playing the significant role in contributing to develop entrepreneurial ventures and investments, and the generation of new jobs (Saxenian, 2006). However, not much attention is given to the post returns experience (Fokkema, 2011; Hunter, 2010). Scholars are bringing their attention on reintegration in relation to migration and development nexus (Sinatti & Horst, 2015). King (2000) has mentioned that return is the process of returning, and reintegration is generally the story of what happened next. He has further stated that most of the studies lack understanding on how people reintegrate from the various dimensions. Besides, there is a common assumption that there is no issue regarding

reintegration. While returning home, people are returning to their country of origin, their culture, their home, and therefore the process is straightforward. But the process of entering home is not easy. The scholars have illustrated that return is not merely going home and reintegration is not simply fitting back into your old life (Hammond, 2004). Reintegration is a process that takes time, years for some and for others reintegration can never be achieved, which may result in re-migration (Kuschminder, 2013). Some studies (Agunias & Newland, 2012) illustrate some practical ways in which countries of origin can benefit from skilled migration through both the Diasporas and returnees (IOM, 2013). It is related to individual profiles like employment and length of staying abroad. Another issue is related to the structural and institutional context of the countries.

While dealing with women reintegration Bourdieuan capital theory and the concept of transnational migration are discussed to show women's reintegration in home countries. All forms of social capital are dynamic and can be transformed into one another as mentioned in previous chapters. The extent of social capital depends on the extent of the social relationship that can be mobilized in a number of other kinds of capital such as economic or cultural capital that members of networks can master (Bourdieu, 1986). Bourdieu's theory views social practices as being generated by the interplay between dispositions (*habitus*), resources (capital) and spaces (*fields*) for acting (Bourdieu, 1990).

Sijapati (2010) has discussed several networks used to maintain the transnational ties. She has classified the ties in three layers. Initially, the core ties which contain, family, community, and kinship. Another is organizational ties which contains ethnic enclaves, workplace and diffuse ties, socio-political participation and other public domain. Based on this framework, this section reveals returnees' family ties, professional ties, and organizational ties. While discussing the return and reintegration, the structure and agency theory is relevant. This structural approach argues that return is not solely analysed with reference to the individual experience of the migrants, but also with reference to social and institutional factors in countries of origin. In fact, the return is a contextual question .

### 6.3 Reintegration to the family

After years of staying abroad, the returnee women felt the need of reintegrating self with others and vice-versa, especially in the family and community . A recent change in the migration research has overlooked the peripheral area, bringing the family as a central subject of analysis in migration (Messey et al., 1987). Self-reintegration was the first and for most important attempt for them to begin their life in the source country, particularly at the phase of post returns. Current research in the migration studies has recognized family reunion as one of the most legitimate reason for acceptance by a host society. How did their knowledge and skills facilitate and challenge? This question was asked to the participants. Most of the participants (Vidhya, Binita, Maya, Nitu, Roji, Chahana, Manita, Anita, Anu Susma, Nitu and others) have raised the issue of family in their reintegration. Manita, Nitu, Anita and Anu said that their family always support in their settlement. However, other participants, Maya, Menda and Sarmila have a different perspective. They mentioned that their family wanted them to settle them abroad instead of in Nepal. As Maya stated:

*After accomplishing my abroad studies, I came back to Nepal. Initially, my family and friends were happy to see me back. Slowly, I began to find my career in Nepal, which my parents did not like at all. I insisted on staying and working in Nepal after my return. But my parents said, “Staying in Nepal would certainly not be as good as abroad particularly in terms of economy.”*

Re-integration of returnee women in family remains under the influence of perspective conflict. “Family consists of those people who share a certain set of moral values and expectations” (Olwig, 2007). With reference to Maya, returnees’ perspective in relation to their reintegration in the family often does not match with their perspective of their parents. Returnees’ point of views towards reintegration includes them to fit oneself in the family. They, on the other hand, view their permanent stay in the family in the source country as redundant.

In returnees’ perspective, permanent settlement after the return is helpful in rebuilding their social and professional foundation. Negron (2012) has expressed that there is less discussion on the influence of persons with local networks. Returnees in this study think that permanent settlement with the family members would also



contribute to make life usual. On the contrary, parents perceive the returnees' settlement with them as insignificant. Living in the source country would be helpful in terms of economy and social prestige. The perspective change as such in the life of returnees does not remain the same for all. Menda thinks that there is hardly any space for family and social member at large. In an interview, Menda revealed:

*I decided to live separately from my parents after my return to Nepal. But my mother did not support in my decision initially. At that time, I needed to do a lot of struggle. Because of my abroad exposure, I have developed the habit of living alone. I don't like the interference of others in my space but my mum did not understand those things. She disagreed in my decision. However, I have decided to live alone. I can't live with them. They have their rules and regulations and I have my own. There are more do's and don'ts which I don't follow.*

Menda thinks of life as a private affair in which external intervention cannot necessarily be helpful. For Menda, reintegration in the family seems to be redundant. After staying many years away from parents, Menda set a habit of staying alone, which she wants to continue even after coming back to Nepal. Menda's way of claiming to live alone does not favor the cultural standpoints for women's way of living in Nepal. It seems that Menda's perspective towards self-settlements, and reintegration was adapted as a cultural shift.

Here, Menda's changed perception regarding the adjustment with family can be related with the transformed habitus. Scholars have mentioned that the habitus is related with the action performance in the field when an individual enters in the unfamiliar fields. Bourdieu has initially mentioned that habitus is durable perception. However, it is more flexible which is mentioned earlier by Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Habitus is not only the disposition towards a certain practice which is based on the social position. These are, however, the rules of the game and the sense of the likelihood of various outcomes derived from the practices. Therefore, Menda's social practice regarding the family intimacy was changed where she developed the individualistic behavior. It is the outcome of her changed habitus which she developed during her abroad study.

Generally, family culture in Nepal hardly supports a female to stay away from family. In an unusual condition, they can either stay with parents or with husband. A female being away from her family is often questioned. In the case of Menda, her mother denies her decision of staying alone, which she claims it as her right. This shows that the perspective of Menda's mother is guided by local culture. But, Binita, Aparna, Sweta, Sneha had a different story to share. Representing their stories regarding family support Aparna mentioned that reintegration in the family should not only show for the cause of economic and individual rights but also be illuminated to heighten the feeling of love, affection and, social relationship. Aparna completed her study from Australia. After completion of her study in IT, she returned to Nepal. She focused more on family intimacy and cooperation. Aparna shared:

*My parents supported me when I shared with them about my return decision. They supported me that it was a good decision. Everyone appreciated my decision and they welcomed me at home. My father told me that it was good to come to Nepal and implement the skills and knowledge that I got abroad. He also told me that it was not good to stay abroad for the sake of money; love, affection and mutual support in the family count much in our life. Most importantly, he said to me, "it is our moral duty to contribute to our birthplace where we were born and brought up." He also welcomed my return saying the relatives and community members, "see, my daughter has come back from abroad after her education." So I was given a very positive response when I shared them about my return plan.*

Reintegrating oneself in the family, especially after coming back from abroad responds various needs in the part of returnees and also the family in question. In the case of Aparna, reintegration in the family reflects the need of "being together" in the family. In this context, Aparna's attempts for reuniting with the family, especially after long years of abroad study has been facilitated by the family members. It was a matter of love and affection to live and work together in the family. The facilitating remarks of the family members encouraged Aparna to settle herself permanently in the source country, particularly after her return from abroad. Here, Aparna's decision shows that her family structure accepted her return decision. Valse (2013) has claimed that the individual decision is associated with the social and institutional factors while making the decision of return.

#### **6.4 Implementing knowledge among relatives and friends**

Returnees' reintegration in their socio-cultural context, especially as a part of implementing their knowledge and skills is not only limited to the family, but also influences their life among relatives and friends. So, how do the returnee women implement their knowledge for their friends and relatives? Most of the participants mentioned that they are perceived as the information provider regarding the academic culture exercise in abroad. Chahana, Manita, Nitu, Sweta and Sarmila have said that their relatives always welcome them and interested to listen to their experience what they gained in abroad. Basically, their siblings and cousin are more interested to know about their abroad education and opportunities. Similarly, Silpa shared the implication of her knowledge. She is a returnee woman from Australia. She completed her Engineering course from Australia. She is a married woman. She said;

*I have a prestigious position among my relatives and friends. Many of them are interested to go abroad. They expect me to serve the way abroad. Most of my relatives and friends ask me where to go, whom to approach for abroad degree. My sister-in-law has also applied to Aus-Aid. Perhaps, she will also get that scholarship. They ask me where to approach instead of Anna (Australian returnee associations) network. There is the network of the friends and relatives. I help them who ask for help.*

When a returnee woman places herself among other returnees, she is expected to serve them in various ways. Generally, a returnee woman is often viewed in a respectful way by relatives since she has got an academic degree abroad and has long years' of experience of staying abroad. She is thought of as someone who knows especially by her friends and relatives in the home country. Following her ideas, many of her relatives approach her for the suggestion, guidance, and counseling about abroad studies. Most frequent questions which she is asked by her relatives are: which country is good for their educational purpose? How long do they need to pay for the course? Would they get the freedom to generate money to support their living? What is the procedure for getting a visa? After their return, the returnee women offer the service of consultants for relatives and friends, particularly for those who are interested abroad study. Actually, people approach those for help whom they feel as intimate and helpful. On the way to going abroad, they find returnee women more

helpful in guiding and counseling them about the prospects and challenges that they would possibly face during their abroad study.

As a result, the returnee women become a source of network for other youngsters to accomplish their abroad study. The returnee women do not only implement their experiences in instructing their relatives and friends in the affair of abroad study, but also share the prospects and challenges among them, particularly in relation to creating opportunities in the home country. How do returnee women contribute to their relatives and friends in creating opportunity in Nepal? Chahana is another participant for this study. She is a US returnee. She completed her Engineering from a prestigious government college from Nepal and later she prepared for GRE. She went to the USA in a partial scholarship programme. She spent around five years in the USA and returned to Nepal with the hope to implement her skills and knowledge in Nepal. While putting forth this question to Chahana, replied as;

*I am engaged in the friends' network. We often share about our engagement in the organization. Besides, we discuss the opportunities and challenges available in the market. We also share the unavailability of the opportunity in the professional market in Nepal. I regularly keep in contact with friends. At the initial time of my return, I used to meet my friends regularly, but gradually it diminished. In the friend circle, we also discuss our future project, political and social situation of Nepal. Most of my friends are abroad and we contact one another through the social media. But, I lack friends in Nepal. I am trying to build up a new circle.*

The returnee women seem to have been helping their friends and relatives as a part of their strategy for implementing knowledge and skills. Most of the participants have said that friends and relatives are the major networks from where they get inspired to engage in the society. Manita, Maya, Aarpana were the participants who raised the issue of the importance of family and friends for their reintegration.

According to Chahana, while helping others (friends and relatives), they help each other. On the way to applying their knowledge and skills for creating opportunities in the home country, they attempt to develop a network of friends who possess similar interest. The network with friends as such also serves the prospects and challenges on the way to getting access to the available opportunities. Sometimes the available opportunities appear to be insufficient for them. They, thus, think of creating new opportunities with the help of their relatives and friends. Creating a new opportunity

demands a new individual in question. The knowledge and skills of the returnee, at this context, becomes helpful and rewarding. However, the returnee woman like Chahana often feels the lack of intimate friends in Nepal with whom they can share their true meaning of doing things on the way to developing a career. As a result, they intend to develop a friendship for the sake of their journey towards a future career.

Not all participants of this study appeared to share the same idea as Chahana did, particularly in relation to building up the network of friends. After many years of staying abroad, some participants felt the friends in Nepal are no more useful and worthy in supporting to meet the purpose of life. In the same vein, Binita said:

*I need to face so many criticisms if I join the friend's network after I return. Therefore, instead of being the part of such a network, it is good for me not to engage in return and readjust myself with friends. There is too much gossip among friends. Their talk appears to be unproductive and they do not also contribute worthy ideas in creating new opportunities. They often intend to back-bite others instead of focusing their own business. The main thing is that I don't have any friends. My home is my world. I don't have any place to go. I hardly meet my relatives.*

After coming back from abroad, the returnee women often intend to compare the friends and relatives with themselves. They mostly don't find them fit in line with their skills and experiences. As a result, they do not entertain the network of friends. In this condition, they feel all alone. They also feel that the knowledge and skills which they acquire abroad are no more worthy of implementation in their host country (Ilkjaer, 2015). They, thus, begin to feel being detached from friends. In this context, it seems important to raise the question of the kind: what makes the returnee women like Binita think of their friends in Nepal as no more helpful? Referring to the data above, many of the young individuals in Nepal engage in back-biting and talking about political affairs rather than contributing to create productive platform to give their life a meaning. A returnee woman finds such network of friends unworthy to meet the purpose of her return. The perspective of the women returnee like Binita is itself a challenge for them. Binita's expectation from her friends in Nepal is unusual in the sense that her friends may not show the same interest, aspiration, and experiences as Binita does because they are not the returnees.

The friends' network has become one of the social fields for the returnee women where they see similarities among themselves and can share the transnational habitus which they developed during their abroad study. Here, on the one hand, the research participants are sharing the social habitus and trying to be in the social relationship for a long time. They participated in various programmes for knowledge and skill implementation. On the other hand, some of the returnees see critically to these social networks and are not interested in engaging in such social network where they interpret that these friends are very much embedded with the transnational habitus and are not suitable in Nepal.

### **6.5 Implementing the knowledge of returnees in the profession**

Profession is one of the key targets of the returnee women in Nepal. After coming back from abroad, the returnee women attempt to search for a job in some kind of organizations which resemble their interest and the area of knowledge. In this connection, participants were asked a question: how do you implement your knowledge and skills in your professional context? To respond this question, many participants explained their strategy for implementing knowledge and skills differently. Binita was one of the participants of this study who told:

*It is very difficult to approach the organization for a job in Nepal. You need to have some linkage and the network. After I returned, I worked in an NGO which has focused on the eradication of women violence. I got access to that organization through my uncle. After working there for two years, I did quit the job. I did not find any kind of newness in my learning. Actually, I love to face challenges and I want to learn something new which I did not find working there. Therefore, I established my own organization. Here, I can practice new approach which I have learnt abroad.*

“Bhansun”, “afno manchhe”, “chineko manchhe”, function as agency in the context of Nepal, so far the matter of *jaagir* (job) is concerned. No matter what qualification and how much experience one possess, a job is claimed by those who have got a close connection with the officials in the organization. Although vacancies are announced by the constitutional body like the Public Service Commission, they cannot get an access for various reasons like ‘age limit’. Most often a connection with

the service provider plays an instrumental role in getting jobs in the context of Nepal; qualification and experience of the job holders often play only subsidiary roles.

When the returnee women attempt to enter the job market in Nepal, they often feel the lack of such a network which helps them present themselves as “afnomanchhe”, “chineko manchhe”, etc. As a result, they feel as if they were excluded from the job market in Nepal. At this context, either they use the network of their family members to enter the job market or they begin to develop a new network of their own. While taking the case of Binita as a reference, finding out a job in an organization requires some kind of linkages and “bhansun”. Although the returnees like Binita join a job, they hardly enjoy it because of the underlying status-quo in the nature of the job. Since the returnees possess the skill and knowledge of being critical, imaginative and creative, they hardly enjoy the job that promotes ideas in taken-for-granted form. As a result, most often they intend to quit the job and they develop an organization on their self-initiation, expecting to use their knowledge, skills and experiences on their own conscience.

Bourdieu (2005) calls the relation between fields ‘the invisible structure which influences the agents to react to these relations of forces, to these structures; they construct them, perceive them, form an idea of them, represent them to themselves and so on’. He has also argued that there exists a hierarchical relationship between fields that some fields are dominant while others are subordinate (Bourdieu, 1990). Therefore, the returnees found that the social field in the Nepali professional market is predominated with the culture of nepotism where the people who have access to the resources and the access to the network get the position. Otherwise, for people who are outsider and the beginner, it is very difficult to enter in the professional field.

There are some returnees who do not go in line with Binita in terms of implementing knowledge and skills after their return from abroad. In interviews, the study participants explained that they strive for change in the organization by applying their knowledge and skills although they had to struggle hard in the initial stage. Echoing the similar ideas, Roma, another participant of this study said:

*I am trying to implement the knowledge and skills that I have learned from abroad. But I am feeling difficulties because of the unavailability of the technology that I have learned abroad. At the initial year of my return, I was*

*too much interested in giving my effort to the organization and desire to change. But, after the time passed, I did not see any changes and did not find any favorable environment to implement my skills which I learned abroad. So, I was frustrated at the initial stage but later I mixed up with others. Because of this environment, sometimes I feel like migrating abroad again. The technological knowledge that I learned abroad is not in use. Later, I struggle hard for the sake of organization. I counseled those staffs who often did not agree with my way thinking for getting works done. I also co-ordinate the ideas and actions performed by the staffs. Although it is tough to implement ideas and experiences, I somehow manage it.*

The returnee women initially engage in the organization with high enthusiasm. On the way to showing performance, they happen to face a number of challenges that often do not support them to articulate their knowledge and experience concretely.

This knowledge has to be useful in the context of the home country. They should have aspiration towards the development of the home country (Ammassari, 2001) if they are supposed to use their knowledge and skills. What might be the challenges for them on the way to articulating their knowledge and experiences for their professional growth and development? This question needs attention for uncovering the returnees' practices for applying their knowledge and experiences in their professional contexts. One perspective is that the returnees often intend to see the similar kind of working culture in the organization of Nepal, which they have observed abroad. Here, the perception of the returnees can be related to the transnational habitus theory. Zechner (2017) has said that international mobility provides an individual with various forms of capital developing transnational habitus. Here, participants after their education abroad bring home new practices and perception regarding the professionalism and the academic skills which they want to implement in the transformation related to the local habitus with their transnational movement. Through the transnational exposure, the returnee women developed the new strategy based on new habitus. The education institution is a social arena where an individual experiences the change of habitus. Bourdeau supports this idea by arguing that habitus can be changed through the contact with total institutions such as boarding schools, prison which called as "institutional habitus". Here, returnee women also developed their habitus regarding their academic performance through



their schooling in their universities from where they developed new habitus which they want to implement in the home country and relate the educational habitus which is developed in the Nepali culture.

The culture of organizations has an intimate connection with the staff motivation to work. Perhaps, the returnees like Roma are not used to the working culture in the Nepalese organization which appears to be a challenge to them. Another perspective is that organizational performances in advanced countries are based on technology. Since most of the organizational system of performing work is based on manual labor, the returnee women with technological skills feel difficult to work manually.

Although the returnee women attempt to bring some positive achievements in the organization, they often do not become successful due to the lack of technology and the unfavorable working culture. As a result, they tend to be frustrated and begin to think of going back abroad again. Some returnees, however, still nurture hope that they would do something better in their profession. Referring to Roma, some returnees attempt to achieve success in their profession by using their skills of counseling, coordinating and bringing coherence among the various ideas and actions prevailing among the staff working within that organization.

It is not only Roma but also Rupa who explains the differences between the working culture and context in the source and target country:

*I am from an agriculture background and I learnt the GIS (Geographical Information System) while being abroad. In Australia, many facilities are available for students. The university launched many courses and students had to choose from those subjects. In Nepal, we don't have that many facilities for the specialized skills. I have specialized in GIS which I have used in my Ph.D thesis. After I returned to Nepal, I also tried to introduce this system in my office and wanted to teach others but I did not get success in this journey. In my office, there is a GIS section. If I were placed to that department, I would better perform. But I was not given that responsibility. Therefore, I searched for that opportunity but I could not find that job. Now, I am working at horticulture sector in the Ministry of Agriculture.*

There is often a tension between general and specific knowledge in the part of returnee women in Nepal. While studying abroad, the women develop specific knowledge and skills in the area of their academic interest. After coming back to Nepal, they often face the context in which they feel the need of being a generalist. They realize that their positioning/being as a specialist in a particular branch of study is being challenged by the contextual need of being a generalist. As a result, they find themselves being excluded from their professional context in terms of using their specific knowledge and skills. The context as such induces them to go on searching for jobs, where they can work as an expert. With reference to Rupa, the returnee women as such, however, get very limited opportunity to work as specialists.

The returnee women also attempt to utilize their academic achievement abroad. The participants believe that their cultural capital, especially their acquired institutional cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) such as academic qualifications and work experience could be useful in Nepal. However, they are feeling challenges regarding the implementation of this capital. Some returnees choose schools, colleges, and universities as sites for the profession and engage into the works like teaching, researching, counseling and administrating. Concerning the way they apply their knowledge, skills and experience in the academic organization, one of the participants, Manita, said;

*Many teachers in Nepal teach from Wikipedia. We have a culture of giving lecture note to the students. I often tell my students that it is considered as a plagiarism. No one in the colleges where I teach care it. I tell them that it is illegal to copy from Wikipedia. It is somebody's work. I never do things like giving a readymade lecture note to the students. I also do not encourage them to copy answers from the electronic source. From my initial class, I tell my student that I never judge them based on the rote learning that they do in the classroom. I encourage them to understand the content and their marks will also be based on those understanding. I make them read newspapers. I tell them it is global world and you have to know about all the countries in the world; at least some major things happening around the world. But, students neglect those things and they said that the most important thing is to pass the exam.*

Pedagogical approach abroad differs from the one in Nepal. Many scholars in Nepal who have got an opportunity to study abroad admit that classroom learning mechanism abroad is student-centered while the same is not true to the classroom pedagogy in Nepal. The classroom pedagogy in many schools and colleges in Nepal is claimed to be teacher-centered in which teachers are supposed to be the source of knowledge to be transferred to the students. Following this approach, the teachers are supposed to be active in explaining the learning unit, preparing the lecture note and presenting them to the students in the classroom. In teacher-centered learning method, the students are supposed to be passive who receive the information delivered by the teachers and write the same in the exam.

The student-centered method of teaching helps the students to perform their life successfully while the teacher-centered method contributes to perform their exam successfully. Should students value their life? Should students value their exam? Should they value both? These questions often become the part of a debate in the academic discourse in Nepal.

With reference to Manita, the returnee women in Nepal cannot escape themselves from the debate. Since they possess a long experience through abroad studies, where they learned that academic engagement of the students must focus them life but not entirely their exam in the end of the semester, they often support student-centered teaching method. Their perspective as such often gets challenged when they become the part of pedagogical culture in Nepal. But, some returnees like Manita become ready to face the challenge as such and try to apply their perspective and experience in the pedagogical context in Nepal. As a part of strategy for using their knowledge and skills, they challenge the existing culture of pedagogy and introduce the new methods of teaching that demands maximum participation of the students. While taking Manita as an example, the returnee women sensitize the educational practitioners like teachers and students through counseling and giving an illustration from abroad. They also present themselves as a role model for the same.

Transnationality involves transnational practices, transnational social ties and/or multiple belongings which does not limit people to integrate into a new state although often assumed in general discourse and in previous migration research, especially South-North migration. Rather “movement and attachment are not linear

or sequential but capable of rotating back and forth and changing directions of time” (Levitt & Schiller, 2004). In relation to return migration, this is important as one crosses national borders and integrates into the country of ‘roots’, one has to renegotiate a transnational way of being and belonging. This, in turn, might be an integral part of the integration processes. Often, migration research focused on the host or home- country neglecting simultaneity of connection.

### **6.6 Implementing knowledge and skills through volunteer organizations**

The returnee women also expect to contribute to the social life of people. While staying abroad they do not only attain academic but also social and cultural empowerment. After coming back to Nepal, they feel the need of serving community people, especially those who are vulnerable to the unhelpful social practices. How do they implement their knowledge and skills in improving the social life of the needy people? This question was asked in many interviews. Responding to this question, Chahana, Sneha, Manita, Sweta and Vidya has emphasized on their engagement in the volunteer organization. Sweta’s story is relevant here to present regarding her engagement in society. Sweta went to India for her education. After completion of her school level education in Nepal, her parents sent her to India for higher studies. Later, she was accustomed to Indian culture and she stayed there around 8 years. After completion of her degree, she came back to Nepal and desired to work in the international organization. Her story goes as follows:

*I learned to accept the reality and tell the truth. I want to recall the event that I faced in one rural area in Nepal. I was there to conduct the field work on gender violence. I was in the police office and I saw a woman there to complain but the police scold her telling that why you frequently come here for complain, you need to tolerate all the deeds of your husband. When I listened that I literally fought to that police in that station. I threatened him that I will complain him to the senior police officer. Then I wrote to complain to the police officer and ask him that why people come to your station. It is because people have an expectation and the woman is the vulnerable situation. Then I kept the women’s husband in prison.*

Women’s empowerment is another scope for the returnee women to implement their knowledge and skills. In the socio-cultural life in Nepal, there is a

gender hierarchy in which males often intend to dominate females. Culturally, the women in Nepal are supposed to be subordinate to their male counterparts that they occupy a lower social rank than the males. As a result, they are often heard to have faced inequality, injustice and indifference of the family and community members. In this context, their empowerment is urgently required to help them lead their life is free from all the unhelpful social practices. Since the returnee women like Sweta have knowledge and skills on empowering vulnerable women, they can contribute to improving the socio-cultural life of the women in question. As in the case of Sweta, returnee women are outspoken and they make a voice against the violence, injustice, and inequality against the voiceless women in Nepal.

Do all returnee women have the access to serve the community? This question paves the way for uncovering the realities for the returnees like Chahana, Manita, Maya, Vidhya, Nitu, Binita, Dipa and Sarmile who lack the platform to implement their knowledge and skills in Nepal. Highlighting the scarcity of platform to deliver service, Chahana said:

*At the initial time, the returnee organization like Farkeka Nepali was active. There was funding for the programme. We used to discuss various volunteer activities. There used to be a discussion on the entrepreneurship and the further opportunities in Nepal. But later this group dismissed and I have no longer contact with the group. Now, there is only a facebook of this group and we share the opportunities through this group. Especially, I personally am not benefitted from this group. Frankly speaking, there is no any platform for the returnees from where they get to engage and participate in various activities.*

While coming back to Nepal after accomplishing their studies abroad, the returnee women begin to seek a platform through which they can utilize their knowledge and skills. In some occasions, they get some INGO's while some other do not. Studies have shown that return migration is the potential drive of development for their countries of origin. If the returnee reintegrated in the home country successfully, then it would help to create potentials for others. So, it needs good policies from the national and international market (Kuschminder, 2017). In this context, the returnees like Chahana contact and call on the assembly of the returnees and discuss the possibilities of contributing their knowledge and skills. While taking Chahana as an

example, women returnees make a group and plan to work voluntarily. They also plan to develop entrepreneurship to create opportunities to work for self and others. However, such attempts of the returnees do not go for a long time for various reasons.

In this context, the returnees' way of uniting themselves for applying knowledge and practice remains at stake. What might be the way that can contribute to making their attempts sustainable? One of the ways to create a sustainable platform for implementing their knowledge, skills, and experiences is to form an alumni association of women returnees in Nepal. But, how does this association in Nepal encourage the returnees to implement their knowledge and skills? To inquire about the role of the alumni association in implementing returnee's knowledge and skills, a series of interviews was held with its members. One of the participants, Sudha, told regarding the returnees' network in Nepal. Sudha returned from the Netherlands after earning her master's degree in engineering in 2010. She is working in an international organization as a senior engineer. Her story is presented below:

*In my opinion, it is not helping in finding a job but it is helping to develop the network. We come to contact with friends through Facebook also. I have started my job after I returned. I had applied in other organizations also, but I got with this. I had heard that they help to develop the career. In my case, I have not approached them. They launched the work for the profession. We have a sharing on vacancies and scholarships. There is a network, but I have not actively involved in the alumni association. I am doing my work on my own effort.*

An alumni association is another platform for the returnees. They get engaged and interact with each other through this organization. There are many alumni associations in Nepal. Basically, women who are under the scholarship programme are more active in the alumni association. It is a voluntarily initiated organization developed by some of the active people among returnees. These organizations are performing various programmes on a yearly basis. While approaching various alumni associations of the returnees, most of the women were associated with these organization but they have mixed views regarding their engagement in such organizations. One of my participants named Sudha who completed master's studies from the Netherlands mentioned that it is good to share the experience through the

network. In the meantime, she said that she was unable to utilize the alumni network. Instead, she approached the organization by herself. Here, she has stated that she was engaged in the alumni but she did not approach for the job. However, she thought that it was a good platform to build the network and got known to people of diverse sectors. Talking about the organizational engagement of the returnees, it is helpful for them for their easy reengagement in the professional works. It also helps to create a platform to utilize their knowledge and skills in their workplace.

The network as such is fruitful for making a new connection. It was claimed that the returnees participate in that kind of network at the initial stage of their return, but later they think that it is not worthy enough to participate. Therefore, they gradually reduce the frequency of their participation on these networks. The network as such helps the Nepalese youth while they make the decision of migration. It provides them with skills of language and adjusts them with the environment. But it is not helping to find job opportunities after return. On the way to exploring the implementations of returnees' knowledge and skills through their organization, one of the participants, Vidhya, said:

*There are so many youths who are returning after higher education from abroad. You can take the example of the organization called Biruwa, Dolma foundation which is working for the youth entrepreneurship. When I return I come in the contact with the small NGO working for the youth of Nepal. however, there are so many challenges while working in Nepal like red tapism, lack of funding these organization are launching so many programme creatively. I am also motivated from this network and working for old age people. My dream to work in this sector would not be fulfilled if I were not engaged in this group. Therefore I am working in the social entrepreneurship.*

Many returnees in Nepal are active and constructive who engage themselves in some kind of social entrepreneurship. Either they enter I/NGO's or they develop an organization of their own focusing to bring change in the life of common people. With reference to Vidhya, youth entrepreneurship service to the elderly people in the community, health educations etc. are some important aspects of human life, where the returnees intend to apply their knowledge and skills.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

So far utilization of the returnees' knowledge and skills has been analyzed with reference to the data obtained from the field. It is seen that family, friends and relative (community), professional and volunteer's organization are some sites for returnees in their source country where they intend to implement their knowledge and skills. In this context, the question of the kind can be raised: what is the pattern of returnees' way of implementing knowledge and skills in the context of Nepal? How do the returnee women in Nepal respond to local-cultural context while utilizing their global cultural knowledge and skills? These questions demand an intensive observation of applying knowledge and skills.

Concerning the application of returnee's knowledge and skills, the transnational theory of migration is relevant. Transnational approach sees transnationalism and helps to formulate a conceptual framework aimed at a better understanding of the strong social and economic links between migrants' host and origin countries; and at the individual level too, sustained social contacts between the destination setting and the homeland (Tamara, 2013). Hence migrants, or people of migrant heritage, return to their homeland because of their social and historical attachment.

The increasing two-way flows of skilled labor national borders, along with the internationalization of higher education and transnational practices in production, have started to transform highly skilled labour market in many ways. There is an increasing need to understand the mechanisms for labor flows and the emergences of new institutions in these transnational labour markets. The study shows that migrants are deeply embedded in a web of social connections. The return migration of Nepal is very often a group process instead of an individual process. New forms of ethnic associations have emerged and acted as important intermediaries between migrants' communities. The interactions between these different players largely shape the return flows.

It seems that utilization of returnees' knowledge and skills in Nepal does not only depend upon their personal but also the socio-cultural and institutional structure in which they situate themselves. This means that the structure, norms and values of returnees' family, friends, relatives, the professional and volunteer organizations in



which they engage play instrumental role in deciding what knowledge and skills they need to utilize and why. Structural approach of return migration focuses on the relationship between the returnees' expectations and the socio-economic reality of the source country. But the returnees, under this research, have not only attempted to go in line with socio-economic reality, but also have portrayed themselves as inventors, negotiators, advisors and change agent in the course of applying knowledge and skills in their local context. For example, while reintegrating themselves in the family, they negotiate themselves partially by accepting family norms and values and partially by challenging them. In the same way, they play the role of an advisor and/or a path-finder by instructing their friends and relatives in relation to abroad studies. They also appear to be an inventor and a change-agent while utilizing their knowledge and skills in their professional and volunteer organization.

In the context of Nepal, the returnee women do not come back from abroad merely in flesh and bones, but with aspiration for new innovation in their local context. The very sense of innovation induces them to use the skills they have obtained while studying abroad. In the course of reinventing their abroad experiences in the source country, they appear to be a change-agent. But, they hardly portray themselves as change agents due to the existing power relations, stereotypes, socio-cultural structure, taken- for- granted kind of cultural norms and values at the local context, where they are supposed to utilize their knowledge and skills. Soon after some months of return, they feel that the prevailing socio-cultural context in their source countries appears to be unhelpful preventing them from taking initiative based on their migration experiences.

## CHAPTER VII

### 7. RETURNS AND GENDER RELATIONSHIP

#### 7.1 Chapter Overview

In the course of exploring the realities in relation to the returnee women in Nepal, there has been a substantial discussion on migrating for education, achievement abroad during their studies, and the way they attempt to implement their knowledge and skills in Nepal. Since this research focuses on the uncovering of the idea related to the returnee women, it purposely demands an inquiry into their roles for changing gender relations in the family and community context. The global trend of migration has not only resulted in new migration patterns and new gendered labour markets but has become an important agent for transforming gender relations (Lawson, 1998).

The returnees belong to the social structure in which caste-based hierarchy, patriarchy and class-based human relationship exist (Subedi, 2011). Due to such social structure, the women are bound to face a number of challenges like inequality and injustice. Women in such society are marginalized and disadvantaged in comparison to men, irrespective to their class, caste, and education (Dhungana, 2014).

Viewing the ideas as such this research has inquired into the returnees roles in changing the existing gender relationship, especially through the research question: how do they contribute to transforming the existing gender relations in their family community and the workplace? While inquiring in line with this research question, some key roles and responsibilities of the returnees came into play, which is expressed under the sub-heading of this chapter as transforming gender role in family, community and professional level.

#### 7.2 Changing gender role in the family

The attempts of the returnee women in Nepal to transform gender roles in the family were observed through their stories they narrated during the interview. It is obvious and proper to expect their contribution to transforming gender role in the family. When Nare and Akhtar (2014) have claimed social change through migration, they portray how the change in gender role contributes to the change in the society at

large. Pessar and Mahler (2003) have explained migration as one of the key components to cause changes in gender roles. If so, one can raise the question of the kind: What changes can be observed in the Nepali returnee women because of their abroad migration? The returnee women in Nepal have expressed their opinions regarding their empowerment which is related to negotiate the role after their return. The women returnees studied abroad and equipped themselves with the cultural experiences of abroad, where gender equality and inclusivity is supposed to be the fundamental right.

Migration has become one of the empowering factors which help to liberate and empower women by providing better economic opportunities and exposure to more egalitarian gender norms (Parrado & Flippen, 2005). After their return, they are supposed to articulate their abroad experience, particularly in relation to gender roles and relationship. From this point of view, the migration of women leads to the challenging and “undoing<sup>20</sup>” of their traditional family gender roles. It is important for them to prioritize their family in terms of transforming gender roles because family is the social institution where they were born, brought up, and cultivated the foundation for their holistic development in life. Also, family members are the most immediate and intimate individual to whom they interact with in their daily life. Their knowledge and skills which they acquired abroad would easily influence the gender roles and relationship existing in their family.

In relation to gender roles, Okin (2013) has said that “family is the central piece of an institutionalized system of gender subordination”. She has asserted that there is an equal status of men and women in the public sphere but women are often designated with the second-class status at home. The family unit is taken as a political realm, where inequalities are becomes the part of culture and socialization. Therefore, there is Okin’s corpus in the feminist idea that the personal is political. It remains an important subject of discussion and debate. In the similar vein, by exploring the returnee women’s engagement the home, their private life is brought into the discussion. Realizing the context as such, most of the participants have expressed the

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<sup>20</sup>Undoing gender: *Sometimes a normative conception of gender can undo one’s personhood, undermining the capacity to persevere in a livable life.*

gender structure prevalent in the family. They further explored their negotiation for changes. Anu was one of the research participants who completed Ph.D. from Australia and returned Nepal in 2011. While articulating a change in gender roles, she said;

*In Nepal, the situation is different; even husband and wife never share their work. The household activities are only the duty of women. But this circumstance changed after I went to Australia for study. I went to Australia in the scholarship programme. While I was there, my husband and I used to share the household activities. He helped me a lot and I could complete my Ph.D. in time. If he was not there, it would be impossible for me to complete my study. However, the circumstances changed after we return. When we returned to Nepal he again started ignoring to help me in the household activities. It was because of the family. They are like “bausap” of the house and don't prefer to engage in the household activities. There were lots of utensils in the basin which I should wash. In the morning also, I need to engage in the household activities. It may be because of their socialization in-house. But, I bargain in-house for his equal participation but that did not work.*

The existing family roles and relationships, which the returnee women in Nepal have faced, represent the patriarchic notion of understanding gender in the caste-based social structure (Bennett, 2005). There exists the hierarchy of gender, where the roles and relationships between males and females in the family appear to be dominant and dominated. The male, being in the family, is supposed to be superior while the females are supposed to be inferior. The males in the family are supposed to be the family leaders/holders while the females are the subject to follow their male counterpart. Gender understanding in the family as such often creates new opportunities for the male members while the female members in the family are bound to be limited with the household chores. No matter how much educated the female member is who is expected to follow the traditional cultural norms in the family where they work for their male counterpart suppressing their own desire and aspiration for developing a dependent identity.

Here, Anu's view can be related in line with the views expressed by Pessar and Mahler (2003). They have mentioned that the gendered social agency is performed within multiple hierarchies of power across transnational context. She has dealt with three concepts while dealing with this framework: geographical scale, social location and degrees of agency . Social location involves the social positioning of individuals within various interrelated power hierarchies and stratifying system. Anu's position in the household after her international education reflects that her husband was ready to help her.

Anu, as a scholar, was working and generating economic resources being abroad and she had the higher power in abroad which made her husband to help in household activities. However, while she returned back to home, Anu's power diminishes and her husband's power has been increased because of the different social construct situated in different social location (in Nepal). Being a son or the male member of the house, he was given the authority and his performance also reflects according to the family norms of the house. On the other hand, Anu loses her power after return and she was reflecting her transnational family and social exposure which she missed after return.

The gender roles and relationship in traditional cultural context situate women within the strictly defined realms where they hardly feel and understand the meaning of being women in the context of this century. While linking the patriarchal meaning of gender roles and relationship as such with the family context of Anu, a long-rooted patriarchal hegemony seems to be irrelevant and unproductive, especially for the returnees like Anu. Unless the power relationship between men and women as such is transformed the women in question can hardly realize their being as a human. In this context, a question can be raised: how do the returnees like Anu contribute to transforming the traditional cultural gender roles and relationship as such? With reference to Anu, it seems that returnee women in Nepal hold a debate on patriarchic issues in relation to gender roles and relations in the family. In their attempt to transform the existing gender roles and relationship, they present and discuss their new insights and experiences which they acquired abroad and argue against the existing inequality and exclusion of women. While arguing with the family members in this regard, they attempt to convince, advise and inspire them for due transformation.

There is gender differentiation while discussing on the women's roles. The narrowly defined function of women as child bearers and housekeepers is well documented in classical and Greek literature (Okin, 2013, p.18). Besides, philosophers have also mentioned the discriminatory views regarding female. There was the matriarchal society where women were in the powerful positions in the history. Later, various philosophers have presented the women's position in the subordination. Philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, John Lock, Thomas Hobbes and Hegel considered women are for domestic roles in the private sphere and maintained. Women are not for the public domain because of their suitability in caring roles as mothers and wives (Okin, 2013).

In the German ideology, Marx and Engels have discussed on the division of labor in early pre-capitalist society in familial terms. The division of labor imposed by the family is spoken of as natural; it is not reflective of the economic society which defines and surrounds it, but rather at these early historical stages it structures the society and its division of labor (Eisenstein, 1977). According to Engels in the origin of the family, private property and the state, the social organization of the society is determined by production and the family. First, a division of labor is that between man and women for child breeding. And, the first social antagonism arises with the antagonism between men and women in monogamous marriages.

Gender roles and relations in the family are not only the scope for returnee women to contribute their ideas and experiences but there are some unhelpful cultural rituals waiting for their support to be transformed. Being the part of caste-based and gender-based socio-cultural relationship, the women are ascribed to such roles and responsibilities that are supposed to push them into the state of exclusion with the study participants. They were asked on some unhelpful traditional cultural rituals that push the women to be excluded and also the way they contribute to transforming them out of many participants. Sweta (introduced earlier also) narrated as follows:

*I was privileged in my family. I was provided with all the facilities. There were no any differences but I had to face certain restrictions regarding some rituals that women need to follow. It is related to menstruation where there are practices that women are not allowed to enter the kitchen of the house. I was always in favor of changing rituals when I was in my maternal home. I negotiated on it with my mother but she did not accept it at the beginning.*

*Later on, she accepted not to make any restrictions to enter the room during menstruation. I again practiced the same thing in my home after my marriage. I negotiated with my mother-in-law and other family members regarding the changing rituals of the menstruation but they did not accept it. There was always conflict with in-laws regarding this. After all, I compromised and followed the rituals because I was living in the family.*

Some cultural rituals in the context of Nepal are supposed to be unhelpful in the sense that they prohibit women's inclusion and participation in the mainstream socio-cultural processes. Menstruation can be taken as an example of a ritual that does not support women on many occasions. Especially, going to temple, performing puja, engaging in the work like cooking, touching others in the surrounding are some occasions where the women under menstruation are restricted to participate (Dhungana, 2014). At this context, a question arises: why are women under menstruation prohibited to participate in socio-cultural performances? In this regard, According to the Manu Smriti, women under menstruation are supposed to be unholy and impure (Duwadi, 2013).

Such cultural notion of menstruation keeps the women in question away from many of the socio-cultural opportunities. Culturally, menstruation is not only the matter of exclusion for women, but also of hate and humiliation. Although menstruation is natural, women under this condition are supposed to be the subject of exclusion. As a result, many women suppose it unhelpful occurring so far the matter of socio-cultural inclusion for women is concerned. Many of the women like Sweta are in need of transforming the common cultural understanding towards menstruation. The women returnees like Sweta challenge the practice of excluding women under menstruation from the socio-cultural performance. As a part of her contribution to transforming unhelpful cultural rituals, they appear to be role models.

Here, the practices adopted by Sweta can be related to the concept of social position as mentioned by Pessar and Mahler (2003). The notion of gender geographies of power and the interrelated concepts of geographical scale, social location and agency are applicable here. Sweta's experiences show how the women, by virtue of their relatively privileged position in the social hierarchy, are bound to certain gendered norms, which can be experienced as socially restrictive. However, the social

position and power change while resettling in the home country. Therefore, the women are negotiating to resettle with their changed thoughts. The notion of the social location can be analyzed among the families. The women before marriage live in their own house (birth home). After marriage, they get settled in (husband's house) different surrounding where they have less position. Therefore the position they hold makes them accept the behaviour which they desire to change.

The returnees' contribution to transforming unhelpful rituals in the part of women is not limited to menstruation. It rather encompasses many other un-helpful rituals that primarily take place in the context of marriage. Binita (introduced earlier also), argues over many terms and terminologies that portray gender discrimination in the socio-cultural life of women in Nepal. Taking "marriage" as an example, she stated her opinion on transforming some of the rituals in marriage as follows:

*I see that there are so many rituals imposed upon women. In my brother's marriage, I saw the trend like 'kanyadan' and 'bowing the head' in front of elders in the family. While I was preparing for my own marriage, I thought not to perform such kind of rituals. Besides, I also say that I did not accept the ritual like 'Kanyadan'. I think that women are not for daan, a thing to donate. Therefore, I reject the rituals of 'kanyadan' in my marriage. It was accepted by my sister in law and my mother they also put 'sindur' and 'tike' all the time but for me I put these things occasionally.*

She further added that:

*In the initial stage, it was not accepted but later everyone agreed. In my view most of the middle-aged career oriented highly educated women are facing in a way of maintaining the relationship with their parents and mother in law. There are many expectations from family but I have made certain bargaining to family so I can focus on my career. I told them that I could not do the things like bowing my head onto one's leg. There was not the trend of a sister in law sitting on the sofa. But I break that rules that why this kind of restriction for women. I am also living with a brother in law and at this time it is very difficult to adjust in the kitchen as well. Besides, I never like the word 'maiti'. It is my home. It does not matter where you live; the main thing is dignity.*



To portray a key discrimination between men and women in the existing gender roles and relationship in the socio-cultural context of Nepal, one may ask questions of the kind: why does Binita put forth such question to challenge the existing gender roles and relationship in the socio-cultural life of a woman in Nepal? What does the question as such has to do with the gender roles and relationship within the family construct? While analyzing the narrative explored during the interview with Binita, it induces one to dig deep into the term “*kanyadan*”.

Culturally, marriage is equated with *kanyadan* in which a girl at the age of her marriage is gifted to a selected boy. Perhaps, the culture of gifting (doing *daan*) a daughter to a selected boy in the name of marriage began with the knowledge of a verse in the *Garudpuran*. In this verse, *kanyadan* is illuminated as a part of the righteous performance. The practice of *kanyadan* might have been taking place since then. *Kanyadan* has, however, invited many arguments at present context, so far the matter of gender discrimination and/or gender hierarchy is concerned.

The term “*daan*” in Sanskrit is equated with the term “donation” in English and the term “*kanya*” in Sanskrit is equated with the term “a girl” in English. In this way, *kanyadan* refers to the donation of “a girl”. In this context, one can raise a question: should a daughter be donated? Is it really a righteous performance? Although it is supposed to be righteous in the Nepali culture, it goes against the human right. If an individual donates something to somebody else, the use of a donated object depends upon the desire of the one who receives it. The common understanding of *daan* (donation) as such gives a woman the status of an object; which is inhuman. The use of the term “*kanyadan*” at the marriage, thus, denotes severe discrimination in the part of women. Binita, in this context, denies accepting the term “marriage” as “*kanyadan*”. She, thus, escaped the ritual of *kanyadan* at her own marriage which she explains as the part of her contribution for transforming the unhelpful cultural rituals that portray discriminatory gender relationship within the family.

It is not only “*kanyadan*,” but also the practice of putting on *sindur*, *pote*, *chura* (bangles) for the returnees like Binita. It also portrays the discriminatory relationship between men and women in the family. In a sense, Binita seems to be right in her opinion. While interpreting Binita’s narrative, it gives the meaning that a

woman is born as free as a man. But after birth, she is chained in the unhelpful cultural norms and values like sindur, pote, chura, kanyadaan, etc. that never ever allows them to realize their free and independent existence. It often compels them to live under patriarchal hegemony which is unacceptable and improper for the returnees like Binita. Breaking down the chain and shackles of unhelpful patriarchal hegemony over the life of women can be taken as the part of returnees' contribution towards transforming the existing gender roles and relationship in the family.

Here, Binita's voice regarding confronting the cultural practices adopted among the Nepali women can be related to the idea of agency which is discussed as one of the concept in (Pessar and Mahler, 2003). As they have mentioned, women agency is differed according to the geographical space. Furthermore, the social location is also the important part which determines the agency of the individual. So, while being abroad, Binita developed her education and access to migration as a capital. Later, when she came to Nepal, she saw the women not bargaining in terms of the cultural practices. She, thus, perceives that the cultural practices bind her performance. Therefore, she is unwilling to accept the cultural practices applicable to the Nepali women. Why she is able to do this is a pertinent question to ask. It is because of her developed agency which she gained as part of higher education and access to the migration. Moreover, she is situated in her maternal home. This has also provided her power to bargain the position and the performance. Here, she got flexibility to the cultural performance and the ability to reposition regarding gender roles and norms. She raised the question as taken for granted idea of performing cultural practices which she challenged through the access of geographical mobility.

### **7.3 Changing gender role in community: Raising voices from community**

Contribution to the community for an individual is supposed to be the part of his/her social responsibility. Either one way or another, individual attempts to contribute to the community in which she lives. In this context of research, there is a question to rise: why is an individual supposed to contribute to their community? The individual is born, brought up and survived in their social surrounding in which the community members play a pertinent role. Being influenced with the ideas as such the returnee women in Nepal feel responsible to contribute to community transformation. Although the community has several components that are waiting for change, this part

of the research consists of returnees' contribution to transforming only gender roles and relationship.

In Nepal, educated women are playing important role by mobilizing other women in the idea of modernity, human rights and democracy so the women status in society can be improved (Dahal, 2004). Literacy not only helped women to understand their traditional roles, but also encouraged them to reduce dependency (Pokherel, 2012 as cited in Dhungana, 2014). Studies have shown that skilled women who studied and work abroad have a specific notion of gender equity. Raghuram and Kofman (2004) highlight the ways in which migration enables skilled women further enhances their skilled and then to overcome gender equalities in the labor market of the home country.

In line with the fourth research question, a series of interviews were held to explore how women returnees contribute to transforming gender roles and relationship at the community level. Lila discussed on how she is working in the Nepali society as a role model to change the gender structure. Lila is a returnee from Netherland. She completed her Ph.D. in gender and health. After spending seven years in Netherland, she decided to return to Nepal. She said;

*I decide everything in my home. I never depend on others. In my maternal home, they obey my decisions. I took the property from my father. I am eating rice from my father's property. When I ask for the property to my father, then they used to say that it will bring the differentiation. But it does not happen in my family. I am sharing all the things that I have and they are sharing all they have. I didn't take the property for the greediness. It was only stepped to show that the daughter has also right to the property of their parents. At the time of taking property, we went at the district court. There, the officer did not want to sign in our paper even all the family members accepted it. He was not in favor then, we stay there. There was a huge system so we apply all procedures but the district officer was saying that there was not any provision to give a property to a woman who is married.*

With reference the narrative, gender discrimination is often reflected when the matter of property right comes into play. In the context of Nepal, the cultural meaning of being a daughter in relation to the property rights is different from that of son once

a daughter is married. She is supposed to go to her husband's house to live life. Here, newly married bride resides in husband's house. The newly married life with the husband's family forms a family, and generates a means of living and produces and rears children (Gartaula et al., 2012).

In this context, they are not supposed to claim any property of their parents, as done by the son in the family. Substantially, a daughter often marriage is supposed to be the member of their parental family. They, thus, are not attributed to the right of parental property. The practice as such was heavily challenged by the women activities claiming that such practice in the community reflects severe discrimination in the part of the woman. As a result, the right of women in their parental property has been safeguarded by law. However, there are many obstacles for women to get their rights implemented. The women have thus felt the need of being served by someone to materialize their property right.

The returnee women like Namrata feel the need of engaging themselves in raising more voice of marginalized women in Nepal. They also feel their importance in advocating in the favors of the women who are bound to lead their life with injustice and inequality in terms of owning and enjoying their rights provisioned by law. The returnees like Namrata, claim that their attempts in comforting the community woman in getting access to justice, equality and inclusion as defined by laws is their contribution towards transforming gender roles and relations in the community. Based on the interview with Namrata, the returnee women contribute their ideas, understanding, and argument to address the unhelpful gender issues prevailing in the community context.

Why do women have to face discrimination? This question often takes place so far as the gender roles and relationship is concerned in the context of Nepal. The discriminatory socio-cultural structure can be an obvious response to the above question. But, it is not only gender hierarchy in caste-based social structure but also the marginalization and exclusion that push them to be vulnerable to severe discrimination in society. In the context of Nepal, women are often under-rated in terms of the economic return of their work. As a result, they appear to be unable to cope with the challenges brought by the poor economy at this context; they need an economic transformation to make themselves able to combat any possible form of

discrimination against them. The returnee women, thus, are expected to contribute to the expected change in the life of the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged women. Highlighting her contribution to such women in their community context, Silpa, a participant of this study, told in an interview as follows:

*In my perspective, social and mental change is the biggest challenge. The main thing is what type of change you want to bring.*

She further expressed:

*To bring change you need to know the situation and need to analyze what they need. For example, you can see in my team I have recruited the college student. The reason behind taking the college student is to grow her and to help her in her studies financially. What she needs is the most important. You also need to open the door to the women as well as network. I also do the same in the organization. I am working on this by opening my own venture.*

The contribution of the returnee women, especially in the area of their economic upliftment, seems to be pertinent. This kind of contribution does not only enable the women in question to improve their standard of living, but also empower them to respond to the discriminatory practices. No one can deny the idea such as “economy shapes the reality,” if women have to go under various discriminations, her economic inability is responsible for it. Transformation of gender roles and relationship in the context of Nepal thus demands the economic transformation of the women in question. In this context, a question can be raised: how do the returnee women contribute to the economic transformation of the women on the way to bring expected change in the existing gender roles and relationship? It is important to analyze and interpret the narratives of Silpa aligning with this question.

The returnee women engage in the community and progress through some sorts of organizations. They basically identify the needy women in the community and promote them with the training of the kind to impart knowledge and skills for generating income of their own at local levels. The returnee women like Silpa claims their support as such to the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged women in the community as a part of their contribution towards gender roles and relationship. At this context, it seems important to raise the question of the kind: How does economic

upliftment in the part of needy women in the community help them transform the existing gender roles and relationship in the family and community? In the existing gender socio-cultural and socio-economic context, a large number of women depend upon their male counterpart. Since they are dependent on to the male in their surrounding especially for their survival, they are bound to follow the discriminatory gender roles and relationship imposed upon them in the patriarchy designed culture.

It is expected that once the women in question become independent economically, their compulsion for being under their male counterpart for survival will be over and they can freely keep their say against the culture. If they are empowered in such a way, they can realize gender transformation in their socio-cultural setting. The intervention of returnee women in the life of the socio-economic life of the community women vulnerable to gender discrimination can be termed as their contribution to transforming gender roles and relationship at the community level.

The contribution of returnee women towards transforming gender roles and relationship is not only limited to freeing women from cultural and economic discrimination, but also bringing awareness among them and empowering them through education. In this regard, Sweta, Maya, Binita, Priya, Vidhya have also presented their views on making others empowered. Representing the views regarding the empowering others, Priya, stated in an interview as follows:

*All the men are same. There are not any cases where the men give the opportunity to the women. There are only rare cases where the men give facilities to the women and women succeed. I had a great desire to complete higher education. However, I could not complete my Ph.D. But, I went to Japan for my Masters. I have two kids. I manage everything by others. I became the head of the department as well. I have a habit of giving. That is because of my abroad cultural exposure. While I was there I saw a gift-giving culture. Here, I have also established funds for women education. In my college, I have arranged the funding for two girls for their bachelor and masters. The main intention of this funding is to empower women through the education.*

Priya's narrative needs interpretation in terms of questions of the kind: what is the meaning of empowerment? How does it contribute to transforming gender roles and relations in the context of Nepal? Aligning with the idea of Kabeer (1999), empowerment can be perceived as a force within an individual that encourages and inspires them to cope with the challenges occurring in their day to day life and ability to make a choice in the given circumstances. It can also be understood as the state of being powerful to attain the intended goal in life. If the transformation of gender roles and relations in the context of Nepal is a question, the empowerment of the target women is supposed to be vital.

Empowered women in the context of this research grow with the capacity to question against the discrimination they are likely to face within their daily life. If they are empowered, they can identify alternative ways out and activate themselves to be free from the possible discrimination imposed upon them where individual develop the agency (Kabeer, 2000). Their attempts as such do not only help to root out gender discrimination but also promote the ground for transforming the existing gender roles and relationship. Transformation does not only take place by external intervention (the intervention of returnees in this context), but also by making the subject to be transformed (community women in this context) come into action.

Sharma-brymer (2006) has discussed the concept of gender transformation in the private sphere of life. The women returnees, thus, inspire, encourage and prepare the community women in question for the same, which they claim to be the part of their contribution towards transforming gender roles and relations in the community. How do they do that? Interpreting the narrative of Priya aligning with this question gives the meaning that the returnee women adopt the course of imparting education to the poor, marginalized and disadvantaged women in the community. They expect that their attempts as such help the women in question equip themselves with the insights and power to redefine their socio-cultural positioning and transform their roles and relationship in the community at large.

Why do the women think that they need to bring transformation for the Nepali women? To see this, the concept of geographical scale is applicable. Geographical scale implies that gender operates differently in various social spaces. By getting exposure in the transnational education, the position women achieve abroad is very

high in terms of social and economic merits. Therefore, by that exposure, they want to bring their transnational visibility in the Nepali context where women could develop their independence and uplift social position.

#### **7.4 Changing gender roles in professional sites: Raising voices on work culture**

The women in Nepal are vulnerable at their professional sites as well. The reason behind this was again the same, i.e. patriarchic hegemony and socio-cultural supposition for being a woman (Dhungana, 2014). But why is a woman vulnerable to discrimination at professional sites? One reason is that their professional sites exist in the same socio-cultural context, where patriarchy and caste-hierarchy are existent. The gender disparity existing in the socio-cultural context also influences the gender roles and relationships within the professional context (Meinzen-Dick et. al., 2014). At this point one may wonder what is the nature of discrimination in the part of women at their professional sites ? How do the returnee women contribute addressing the existing discrimination in the part of women at their professional sites? In line with this question, Maya, a study participant, narrated her opinion as follows;

*I am too much influenced by my abroad degree. I would not be empowered if I did not go abroad for studies. Although women are aware in many respects, they often do not bargain for their salary in the organization. In most of the organizations, there is a woman receptionist and they are paid less or they are paid very little. Once I had encouraged the women to negotiate the salary and to upgrade her position. However, they never did that. Here, women accept the status quo and never want to change themselves. But, in my case, I always appeal them to change and encourage them to ask for their rights. It is very difficult for them to take the position. There are so many issues where women need to engage for change. I always encourage women not to tolerate any discrimination against them. I always encourage them to fight for their right. I always ask them to ask for their own space.*

Mostly, women are vulnerable at their professional sites particularly in terms of their remuneration. In the traditional cultural context of Nepal, the women are not supposed to be as equal and able as men (Dhungana, 2014). That may be the reason behind thinking the subject to the low-paid job. The cultural supposition as such did not only chain the women like Maya but also perpetuate the long cultural tradition



that explains women as an individual to be of lower in rank in comparison to their male counterparts. The professional context of Maya is no more exception to this. So far as the matter of returnees' contribution for changing gender roles and relationship is concerned, providing women with an unequal amount of salary is the best option. This means that at many places in Nepal, women are provided with the remuneration which is not equal to the remuneration available to their male counterpart for the same nature of work. At this context of the research, it is important to ask a question: how do the returnee women in Nepal respond to such discriminatory roles?

With reference to Maya, it is obvious that the returnee women contribute to gender roles and relationship at their professional sites by empowering them to question against all possible ways of discrimination. For example, the returnee women like Maya has been re/orienting the women staffs at her professional to make a voice against their low-paid salary. Remuneration for the accomplished work at an office is the part of the individual right of the woman in a professional organization. They, however, are less paid in comparison to the male members of the organization. In this context, energizing, encouraging, empowering the women by the returnees for an equal share of remuneration can be taken as an attempt for transforming gender roles and relationship at professional context.

As mentioned by Passar and Mahler (2003), she developed the agency where she bargains for the position because of her access to the mobility. However, the women who are working in the organization were not able to develop their bargaining position due to the lack of access towards the mobility. These women who are working have less opportunity to explore themselves. However, with the education as well as the migration capital, she (Maya) has a better position than the other women in the organization. Therefore Maya thinks that she needs to counsel the other women to bring change in the existing organizational culture which is male-dominated.

Gender roles and relationship within the professional site also remains discriminatory in relation to professional leadership. More specifically, women are often thought of not worthy for holding a senior post (Piterman, 2008). In many professional contexts, male members think that the roles and responsibilities of the one who holds senior post do not match with nature, capability and cultural concern of women (Piterman, 2008). As a result, women are often not encouraged to hold the

leadership roles in the professional organization. In this regard, Sudha (Introduced earlier) has the following opinion:

*In all contexts, it is male-dominated. When you look at it, how many women are at the decision-making level in any office? When you look at it, generally there are women at the officer levels, and there are so many hindrances reaching the managerial level. There will be meetings, gatherings in the evening. Only men attend such meetings. Women are always wondering, 'what will my family say?' They lag behind. Men have a circle, a different one, and we can't even go out like that, can we?*

Although women reach the higher post in her professional organization, they cannot escape household responsibilities like taking care of children, cooking, washing, etc. They, thus, hardly pay the amount of time needed for the nature of the job they hold in an office. The more remarkable point is that it is not taken good in the part of a woman when she comes late night at home. A number of questions are raised against her late arrival. If she holds the leadership role in an organization, she sometimes has to work up to late hours in the office which is hardly acceptable for her family members.

In this context, returnee women like Sudha attempts to resolve such sort of patriarchal mind set in the part of women in question. As a part of their contribution, they encourage such women to negotiate with their family members and also the staffs in her office. Counseling, managing ideas and work, negotiating with the challenges at home and also at the office need some kind of professional and social skills in the part of women through which they can get confidence over them. While doing so, they do not need to choose culture over the profession and vice-versa; but they can hold their culture and profession together. Women's empowerment as such requires support, which the returnees in question are expected to get. In this context, a question is raised: how do the returnees provide the women in question with the support? Shanti, another participant of this study, narrated her opinion in line with this question as follows:

*At the initial stage when I worked at the ministry level, they never listened to me. It is not that I am teaching them. In Nepali society the patriarchic belief is predominant. It is rooted in everyday life. People who are at top position have*

*certain kinds of static culture where they do not want to change. So, they never listened to us. But, I had the project related to gender roles and its changing practices in Nepal. We had made the gender focal person in the ministry. Some people get changed in the ministry. Besides, they also criticized us and said that “oh! Gender is coming”.*

Advocacy for transforming the existing gender roles and relationship is another contribution made by the returnee women in Nepal. Advocacy in the part of vulnerable women is highly demanding and relevant. A number of INGOs are working in the area of advocating for the right of the voiceless, be it children or woman from the marginalized, disadvantaged and poor family. Since the voices of grief and anxiety in the part of women in question are not often heard and their issues of discrimination based on gender are not addressed, the woman returnees in Nepal chose advocacy as a way of their contribution for transforming the existing gender roles and relationship at the professional context. In this context, one may ask a question; what are the existing gender roles and relations in the professional context for which the returnees need to choose advocacy as a transformational tool?

With reference to Shanti, discrimination in gender roles and relationships exist ideologically in a professional context in which the male members at the level of policy level often develop guidelines suppressing the women’s possibility of being positioned in the mainstream organizational development. For Shanti, the male members holding the post on the top level of the office need some sort of gender-sensitive insights while developing an official plan of actions. The gender-sensitive insights in the part of males require training, orientation, media support, etc. The returnee women advocate for these aspects of the gender-related program as a part of their contribution to transforming existing gender roles and relationship.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

The returnee women in Nepal have engaged in transforming the existing gender roles and relationship in the family, community, and workplace. Their attempts for transforming the existing gender roles can be viewed in terms of their personal and social responsibilities. Besides this, their contribution as such can also be taken as the part of their academic practice in which they attempt to make meaning of what they learned and experienced during their abroad studies. So far as the matter of

return migration and their contribution is concerned, the transformation of the existing gender roles seems to receive the status of the personal, social and academic enterprise.

Before discussing the existing roles of gender and its attempts for transformation, it is pertinent to portray how gender can be viewed in this research context. Bhasin (2003) has viewed gender as a socio-cultural construct in which the roles and responsibilities of masculine and feminine being are determined based on the socio-culturally established norms and values. Since the terms 'society' and 'culture' are complementary to each other, the roles and responsibilities within their given socio-cultural context also do the same. It is the society that promotes the culture in question and again the later contributes to the existence of the former one. But the terms 'culture' and 'society' do not make any sense if the individuals of different genders remain absent. It is, therefore, essential to view 'gender' as a tool to bring cohesion between the 'culture' and society in question (Butler, 1990). Although it is the gender in terms of masculine and feminine to form and sustain their culture and society for the sake of themselves. While doing so, they distribute the roles responsibilities of masculine and feminine being differently.

Distribution of roles and responsibilities among different genders depends on the question of the exact agent. This question creates a political context within the socio-cultural setting of individuals of different genders (Okin, 2013). Political context, here, means the power relationship between men and women where the one who holds more power can control the one who holds less power. The game of holding 'more' and 'less' in terms of power, resources, status, thus created the spaces for the terms inequality, exclusion, discriminations, marginalization, etc. it seems that the existing gender roles and relations within the socio-cultural context of Nepal has been following the similar trend (Bhasin, 2003).

At this context of research, it seems important to put forth the question of the kind: what might be the basic elements within such trend of gender positioning in the socio-cultural setting of Nepal which requires change in the existing gender roles and relationship? It seems that the basic question (who does what?) is insufficient upon which the gender roles in the Nepali context are distributed. The question demands revision. If we attempt to address the situation of inequality, exclusion,

discrimination, and marginalization created by the existing gender roles and relationship, we need to base gender roles and responsibilities upon the question of the kind: Who does what, but why? The very element of 'why' in the basic question creates the situation of redefining and revising the term 'gender' and also its existing roles and relationship within the socio-cultural context of Nepal. The element of 'why' in the basic question suggests us that 'gender' is not only 'social' and 'cultural' enterprise but also 'political' one.

While connecting the above interpretation of the term 'gender' and the distribution of roles and responsibilities between men and women in the context of Nepal, it appears to us that the existing gender roles and relationship require the element of 'why' in its basic construct (Hawkesworth, 2010). If so, how do women returnees attempt to address the issues related to 'why' element which is missing in the existing gender roles and relationship within the socio-cultural context of Nepal?

While scrutinizing the returnees' contribution towards transforming gender roles existing in the family community and their workplace, it portrays a number of unequal and suppressive role performances in the part of women. For example, existing gender roles in the family assert women as the subject to be limited to the performances taking place within the four walls. While their exposure in the international arena enabled them to think more on the gender construction, then the negotiation starts. In this circumstances the gender geography of power is applicable where women are bringing the gender construction working in abroad are bringing to negotiate the everyday life in Nepal (Pessar & Mahler, 2003).

Similarly, the discrimination of the women in the community is portrayed through rituals like kanyadan, menstruation, etc. In the same way, existing discriminatory roles at the workplace are reflected in terms of remuneration, services, and facilities. These unequal and exclusionary practices in terms of gender perpetuated in the absence of 'why' question to be put forth. The returnee women, thus, adopted the transformative course of action putting forth the question; why do the women in Nepal need to follow culturally prescriptive performance?

Transformation in the roles and relationship between men and women do not only demand ideological change, but also performative change. Since performances of men and women are based on the socio-cultural capital, it is important for returnee

women to make efforts for bringing change in the existing social capital. In this context a question can be raised; how do returnee women attempt to bring a change in the existing social capital of women in Nepal? While going through the narrative of the returnees mentioned in this chapter, it seems that the returnee women perform the role of adviser, counselor, negotiator, on the way to helping them get access to the increased social capital. They sometimes debate, argue and challenge against the unequal and suppressive gender roles and relationship existing in the socio-cultural context of Nepal.

## CHAPTER VIII

### 8. FINAL INSIGHTS, AND CONCLUSION: CLOSING AND OPENING

#### PATHS

This chapter consists of the discussion of the findings and conclusion of the study. The findings are based on the analysis and interpretation of the data accomplished in the previous chapter. The findings discussed below are presented in line with the research questions: (a) What makes the returnee women decide to migrate abroad and come back to Nepal after accomplishing their abroad education? (b) How do they explain their achievements gained during their study abroad? (c) How do they implement their knowledge and skills in their social and professional life-world in Nepal? (d) How do they contribute to transforming the existing gender relations within the family and society?

#### **8.1 The women's migration abroad: exploring the feminization of education migration**

This study has focused on the trajectories of women's migration through international education. The women in this study thought of their independent migration as an attempt against patriarchal culture of Nepali society. The formal education in the past was supposed to be unworthy and unhelpful for the women, particularly in the male-dominated socio-cultural context (Mishra, 2012). But in later days, awareness for female education grew up among the family and community members. As a result, they were included in the mainstream education. Many female students in Nepal chose to go abroad for higher education. But the trajectories of their migration are unexplored, un-interpreted and almost under-discussed. This research, therefore, generated data on the facets of women's migration for education and their return.

At this context of research, one may put the question: why and how has the women migration abroad, especially for education, been the part of the social discourse, particularly at the context of the family and community where patriarchal norms often go against independent migration? Why does social discourse at present stand against the social discourse in the past so far as the matter of independent women migration is concerned? These questions demand strategic intervention in the patriarchal ways of dealing with a female to create a spacious ground where

knowledge (women migration) and power (relation between male and female in patriarchy) is changing where women are also giving preferences in education and economic sector in the urban context of Nepal.

Women's migration in Nepal was found to be an attempt to explore the feminization of education migration. The attempt of returnee's mother to send their daughter abroad for education is evidence that the decision for migration in the part of a daughter is a kind of female intervention in the trend of male-dominated migration. If the history of the religious and cultural trend of migration is observed, there was hardly any instance of independent migration of women in the past. Migrating of the women independently was supposed to be the subject of social stigma. It was supposed to be the subject defaming not only the woman in question, but also her family as a woman (Kharel, 2016). A woman's migration in the past was the symptom of moral bankruptcy on the part of the woman and her family; it was an issue against social prestige (Adhikari, 2010). Such monopoly of male over the subject of migration, perhaps, created the ground for feminizing migration in Nepal.

This study finds that the former generations (mothers) are now engaged in the decision for their daughter's migration. In the past women were far behind in terms of cultivating new experiences through migration. Since they were not supposed to be the individuals to migrate independently, they missed the opportunity for interacting with people, culture and environment strange to them. As a result, they lagged behind in cultivating new experiences and legitimizing these as part of their knowledge claim.

The decision for women's migration was found to be an ideological shift. The belief system embedded in migrant women in the past often created an adverse circumstance for women to decide to go abroad independently. There was a certain belief that women are unable to cope up with the adverse circumstances likely to take place in an environment that they lose confidence in the matter of protecting themselves from the exploitation that are likely to be imposed upon them; that involving women in the work outside the family means defaming the family itself and that the formal education for women is not so much important for family advancement. These and other convictions often kept women migration for education away from family and social discourse in the past. Their migration abroad for



education could not receive social acceptance. They often thought themselves as a social creature dependent on their male counterparts. The terms like opportunity, access and empowerment became the attributes to males, not females. Hence, women became more prone to inequality, discriminations, marginalization, and exploitation. The decision of mothers for sending their daughter for abroad education reflects the ideological shift in relation to the women's migration in Nepal.

## **8.2 Family as a decision maker in the women migration**

The Nepali migrant women abroad were found to have decided to come back to Nepal due to their family proximity. So, why does family matter in the return decision of the Nepali migrant women abroad? The view of Boyd (1989) seems more satisfying to respond the question phenomenon. For her, the family serves as a socializing agent and helps to transmit cultural values and norms as well as influence in the migratory process by making the decision who migrates and why. Moreover, families also transmit the family-based obligations over time and space. It is such an inspiring institution in the life of an individual.

Why does family become more intimate to an individual than any other social or academic institutions? Boyd (1989) asserts that it is family that contributes to form one's identity and provides her with the language, gives her emotion a shape and helps her to acquire the meaning of being in the world. As a result, family affairs govern individual words and actions, attitude and emotions, aims and aspiration. This applies in relation to participants of this study, and explains the decision for coming back to Nepal after completion of her education abroad.

Family proximity was not only found to have played convincing role but also has been obligatory to the return decision in the part of the Nepali women abroad. But their close proximity with the family in their home country often compels them to decide for coming back to Nepal. Once they step into the countries in America and Europe, they feel themselves spellbound with the availability of their access to it. The culture of freedom, access to job opportunity and chances of self-development help them increase the quality of life. As a result, they often feel like staying abroad. On the contrary, family intimacy often over powers their decision to stay abroad. They, hence, decide to come back to Nepal.

### **8.3 Return decision as the perception of being a responsible citizen**

The Nepali female students abroad were found to have decided for coming back to Nepal after the accomplishment of their education because of the love they possess for their own country. In this sense, patriotic feeling in the heart of the Nepali female students abroad also appeared to be one of the elements that inspired them to decide on the return. In citizenry sense, such feeling is natural and obvious for a citizen in general and female citizen in particular. In this context, one may raise a question like, why does patriotic feeling play decisive role in return decision for the Nepalese female students from abroad? In the context of Nepal, there seem to be some reasons for a Nepali female citizen abroad that convinces them to decide for return.

In the feminist's lens, the Nepalese women have been the victim of gender inequality in Nepal for centuries. Their knowledge claim has often been questioned within the socio-cultural framework of their own country. The return decision in the part of the Nepali female students abroad appears to be a doorway providing them with an opportunity to perform their acquired knowledge in their home country. This opportunity also provides them with a platform where they can legitimize their knowledge and validate their presence as a female in the patriarchal cultural context. In the sense of citizenship, their return decision seems to be pertinent.

The Nepali female students abroad feel as defined individuals, i.e. citizens for their own country. They, thus, claim an equal share in terms of the rights and duties connected with their status of citizenship in Nepal. The citizenry sense as such inspires them for return decision which does not only help them to establish themselves as responsible citizens but also provides them with an opportunity to make meaning of being a female in terms of participation and inclusion as a part of the civil rights in Nepal .

Their return decision also seems to be pertinent to the lens of participatory development. The traditional socio-cultural and economic context of Nepal caused to flourish inequality, discrimination, exclusion, and domination in the part of females. As a result, the development attempts in Nepal became too weak and insufficient to address the need and demand of people of all gender residing in all the class, castes and ethnicities. Later, the sense of participatory development emerged in which

gender equality; participation and inclusion were advocated with a special focus. The need and importance of empowering females and including them in the mainstream development were duly felt. The migrant women thus realized the importance of participating in the development activities in their own country. As a result, they thought to come back to Nepal after accomplishing their education abroad.

#### **8.4 The return decision as a cultural obligation**

The return decision in the part of the Nepali female students abroad was found to be their cultural obligation. There are a number of scholars who have claimed cultural influence over human behavior. In this sense, return decision as a behavior performed by the Nepali female studying abroad can also be explained as their cultural obligation for an individual is born, brought up and educated within a given set of culture. An individual is a cultural construct right from the birth. With reference to these scholars, it seems that there is hardly any moment of life which remains free from the culture of one kind or another. Likewise, culture influences the process of thinking, a mental schema of an individual that exerts its impact throughout their life. In this sense, whatever an individual thinks and acts in life, more or less there is the presence of a culture that influences them.

If the above cultural premise is linked with the return decision in the part of the Nepali migrant women abroad, particularly in the context of this research, the cultural reason for their return decision needs an observation. In the traditional cultural context of Nepal, a female being does not have any say about why, where, what, how and to whom aspects of her marriage. Despite having earned higher education in her own country or abroad, she is supposed to be cultured and wise only when she follows the marriage procedure led by her parents and/or family members.

A female who thinks otherwise is supposed to be ill-cultured, impolite and unrespectful in their family and community context. Since culture is imperative to life, the returnee women in Nepal cannot deny the culture of marriage that obligates their return decision. During her stay abroad, the Nepali female students feel to have better opportunity to flourish themselves in terms of her education, international friendship, global community network, job opportunities which are rarely available to her in Nepal. As a result, they feel reluctant to return to Nepal. But, at the same time, they also feel to defame themselves on the cultural and social setting of their own family

and community so far the matter of their marriage is concerned. They, thus, feel to be obligated for their return.

### **8.5 Education migration for individual development**

Abroad migration of the Nepali women was found to have contributed to enhance individual qualities. For example, it equipped them with the skill of living independently, thinking creatively and caring themselves. The abroad migration was also found to have empowered them to cope up with unhelpful circumstances in life. The returnee women in Nepal were also found to have achieved the skills of thinking analytically and critically. They were also found to have possessed the insight to create opportunities and space in their socio-cultural situations to make meaning of being a female.

While accomplishing their education abroad, the Nepali migrant women earned the capacity to argue and negotiate; built up their self-confidence, inspired oneself to be self-disciplined in terms of maintaining time. These qualities, as they felt, were found to be additional attributes to their personality. As a part of enhancing their individual achievement, they were found to have learned the ways of engaging themselves in constructive works within the socio-cultural context of their home country. Besides this, they were found to have learnt to maintain personal ethics in the way of dealing with others.

Although the returnee women in Nepal went abroad for academic purpose, they cultivated some important social qualities along with their academic achievement during their stay abroad. Abroad migration for education in the part of returnee women in Nepal was, thus, found to have contributed to their social qualities. They interacted with their colleagues, classmates, teachers, to name a few. They got ample opportunities to perform group work sharing their ideas, emotions and personal talent. While doing so, they developed an insight that appeared to be helpful for the social dimension of their life. They, thus, attributed such learning as their social achievement. The key social achievements they claimed to have got during their stay abroad are stated below.

First, the woman returnees were found to have learned the way to accept differences. According to Thakur (2017), acceptance of social differences covers the way for social harmony, where self and others live and work together in peace.

Learning to accept differences in the part of the women returnee in Nepal seems to be useful for them to live and work with the people who are from different socio-cultural and economic backgrounds. Nepal, being the multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi lingual country, consists of a variety of cultures, languages and ethnicity. In such a context, the skills of accepting others different in ideas, culture, languages etc. seems to be pertinent. Berry (2001) has highlighted the importance of accepting differences for enhancing intimacy and mutual support within the social network.

When we link this idea with the social situatedness of the returnee women in Nepal, we can find it useful in socializing themselves. For example, being the part of patriarchal society, the women in Nepal often face challenges to place themselves in the mainstream social decision. If they go on accepting differences prevailing in the society, they are likely to claim their importance in the mainstream social leadership. But the question is: in what ways did they learn to accept differences? The idea of Asmita, one of the study participants, helps to find out that the woman returnees in Nepal learned some social codes of conduct that helped them reveal their sympathy/empathy towards others. For example, they were found to have learned the words like “sorry”, “thank you” etc. which helped them socialize in the broader social network. Second, the returnees were found to have achieved the skill of building a team to make synergetic efforts to accomplish a particular task.

Working in a group is both entertainment and skill. According to them, each individual in a group performs individually but their individual performance is linked to the performance of others to get the whole thing done. While doing so, each individual participant argues, interacts, negotiates, challenges, agrees, debates and accepts with their co-workers in the group to reach a particular consensus. The group work as a part of academic activities abroad was found to have helped the returnee women to equip themselves with the skill of arguing, interacting, negotiating, challenging, agreeing, debating, and accepting which did not only contribute to raise their informative/cognitive consciousness but also empowered them to deal with social issues that are likely to take place in their day to day life.

Third, the returnees were found to have achieved an insight, during their stay abroad for education that an individual doesn't need to be treated in terms of their

castes, religion, and ethnicity but in terms of their performance that contribute to bring change in the life of self and others.

The returnees were found to have claimed academic achievement during their stay abroad for education. Academic achievement, in general, refers to the level of qualification in a formal educational institution for which they moved abroad. They were found to have claimed some specific and small-scale qualities as a part of their academic achievement. The narrow meaning of academic knowledge refers to the collection of information and broadening the thinking in relation to the subject of study.

In the context of this research, the academic knowledge may also be termed as the increased level of consciousness in the part of women returnees to deal with self and others with whom they live and work. The consciousness as such may not only encompass the level of the range of information, but also enhances their understanding towards values of education and its implication in the life of self as a female in Nepal, and others, who live and work in their immediate surroundings. Being a part of patriarchal society, the returnees were found to define academic knowledge in terms of the power constructed for transforming their own closed (not free) situatedness and emancipating themselves from the entrapment of patriarchal hegemony .

In this research, the term “achievement” was found to be an attribute or quality in the part of an individual which they could not acquire in the past. If this understanding towards the term ‘achievement’ is linked with the context of academic achievement of the women returnees, it can be claimed that the returnee women in Nepal acquired the academic qualities abroad which they were not able to achieve during their study period in Nepal. If so, one may ask what academic qualities the woman returnees cultivated during their stay abroad.

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data under the heading of “academic achievement” in Chapter V, the returnee women in Nepal were found to have achieved a number of academic qualities. First, they were found to have realized “learning” as exploring which they claimed as their academic achievement. Their realization as such was far better, according to them than the “learning” in the context of Nepal which often takes place in the part of learners in the form of

“memorization”. Since “learning as exploring” became basic to their academic performance, as a part of exploring knowledge, they happened to be independent learners by consulting libraries, interacting with friends on particular learning units, developing papers on given issues, presenting them in the classroom, getting feedback, to name a few. These academic activities helped them cultivate a new insight and perspective to understand self, others and surroundings in a new way.

Second, the returnee women in Nepal were found to have realized learning as “constructing”. The realization towards learning as constructing appeared based on their practice of analyzing, interpreting, imagining and critical thinking as a part of their academic activities abroad, which is discussed in the narrative of Vidhya, one of the study participants. Third, the returnee women were found to have realized learning as performing the understanding, which had encouraged them to perform learning activities to expose themselves as better learners rather than reading and reciting books for writing in the exam, which they used to do in Nepal.

### **8.6 Challenges to implement knowledge and skills by the returnee women in Nepal**

Based on the analysis and interpretation of the data related to the implication of returnee’s knowledge the returnee women were found to have implemented their knowledge and skills in the process of reintegrating themselves with their family. While doing so, some of them were found to be in a challenge to integrate themselves in their family while some others were facilitated for the same. There were still some other returnees who were reluctant in integrating themselves in their family. The economic strength, individual rights, love and affection with the family members were some key determinants influencing their attempts to integrate into the family. In the case of this research, the family economy appeared to be impeding components for the returnee women to reintegrate themselves in the family. For example, Maya was interested to develop her career in Nepal after her return for the purpose of enhancing her family economy. But her parents denied her idea of being herself in Nepal arguing that she would better contribute to the family economy by being abroad. Reintegration with family in the part of returnee women was, thus, an economic affair.

In the case of some returnees family reintegration in the country, especially after accomplishing abroad studies, was found to be socio-cultural and emotional affairs. In this kind of reintegration, they were not only reunited with family by their physical appearance, but also by their love, affection, moral duty and social responsibility. Reintegrating with family in the country was also an individual affair, rather than economic and social. Returnee women were found to have developed the habit of staying alone. They have grown the sense of leading their life individually. As a result, they appeared to be reluctant in staying with family members in the country. According to them, it is their individual right to decide where to stay and how. Such perspective in the part of the woman returnees embedded in the process of reintegrating themselves with their family.

The returnee women have implemented their knowledge and skills among their friends and relatives. They have been welcomed among their relatives and friends because of their long experience and sound academic knowledge which they cultivated during their stay abroad. This kind of environment among the friends and relatives helped them create a ground for utilizing their knowledge and skills among them. Basically, they have implemented their knowledge and skills among friends and relatives in two ways: first, by placing themselves as a consultant before them, particularly in relation abroad study and, second, by developing a network to create a new opportunity for themselves as well as for their friends and relatives.

The returnee women were found to have shared their global exposure and experience among their friends and relatives. As a result, they were known to be the persons who 'know'. This helped them receive the trust of others. Their friends and relatives, thus, asked them for counseling and guidance, particularly in terms of abroad studies. They basically helped their relatives and friends, particularly those who were interested in abroad studies by explaining them the procedure to get abroad for education, and the challenges and prospects for female students abroad. On the way to utilizing knowledge and skills, the returnee women were found to have developed a network through which they attempted to create a new opportunity for themselves and also for their friends and relatives. After coming back from abroad, they realized that their social network becomes poor due to the long absence in the home country. They, thus, used their knowledge and experience to develop a social and professional network in which their family and friends supported them.



The returnees have applied their knowledge and experience in their profession. But they have faced challenges in the process of getting to the job market in Nepal. For example, *bhanasun*, *afno manchhe*, *chineko manchhe* etc. in the job market were some agencies that often undermine what qualification the candidates possessed and from which university they acquired their educational qualification. In many cases, the returnee women realized that a connection with the service provider plays an instrumental role in getting a job in Nepal. In such situation, they have used the network of their family and friends to get a job or they developed a new network consisting of their relatives and other returnees.

In the beginning, they also used the agency like *bhanasun*, *afno manchhe*, *chineko manchhe* to enter the job market. They were reluctant in continuing the job because they often felt their knowledge and skills being challenged within the traditional framework of the profession. For example, the returnee women possessed a critical imaginative and creative thinking which they often feel difficult to link in their professions.

For some returnee women like quitting a job was not a due solution. Instead, they decided to struggle for bringing change in the existing professional norms and values. Basically, there were two different kinds of perspectives that influenced the implementation of returnee's knowledge and skills. First, the culture of work abroad did not go in line with the culture of work prevailing in the professional setting of Nepal. As a result, the returnees have not enjoyed much being in the profession in Nepal. Second, the professional performance abroad was largely supported with technology, which they often found missing while being in the profession in Nepal. The most remarkable use of their knowledge and skills in their profession was in the area of communication, counseling, coordinating and bringing coherence among the ideas and actions within their professional setting.

On the way to finding out the use of their knowledge and skills in the professional setting, they were in ideological conflict between the nature of their job and the knowledge they possess to perform the job. For example, the returnees have developed themselves as experts of a specific branch of knowledge, while in many cases they are expected to perform their professional responsibilities as generalists.

Some returnee women have chosen educational institutions like schools and universities and engaged themselves in teaching, counseling, researching and administering while some others engaged in the business organization. Those who engaged in educational institutions have emphasized in bringing change in pedagogy, learning environment classroom management and the way of dealing with the learners. Those who engaged in the business organization have emphasized on the proper use of business ethics and work environment for the staffs.

### **8.7 Implementing knowledge in a volunteer organization**

The returnee women found to have worked in a volunteer organization. They implemented their knowledge and skills in improving the socio-cultural situations of the community members in question. Basically, they have contributed their knowledge and skills against gender violence, child abuse, and trafficking and also against the unhelpful socio-cultural practices that often challenges the gender rights to inclusion and participation. They empower women in the community to combat against the ongoing social inequality, discrimination, and injustice with the perspective of gender, especially through the volunteer organizations in which they worked. However, all the returnees under this research did not have the access to implement their knowledge and skills for improving the life of vulnerable, exploited, marginalized and excluded members of the community in question. They have been in need of developing an active alumni association of returnee women in Nepal so that they could be known for their strength and areas of community life where they can contribute to. So in a way of implementing their knowledge through volunteer organization women themselves get engaged in the various alumni association. While talking about their engagement in the volunteer organization, participants have shown mixed approach. Some participants expressed that the volunteer organization helped in their knowledge enhancement and developing further network. Besides, some of the participants expressed that there is no any help from the organizational network. So, in a way of implementing their knowledge and skills, women are entering in various volunteer organizations.

### **8.8 Contribution to change the existing gender relationship**

The returnee women were also found to have contributed to transforming the existing gender roles and relationship, especially in the family, community and the workplace. Being the part of a family where patriarchal norms are imposed over

female members, the returnees have realized the importance of contributing to liberate women from patriarchally influenced cultural rituals in the family. They realized the need for their intervention to transform the existing gender roles in the family which consisted of discrimination, inequality injustice and patriarchal imposition in the part of female members of the family in question. For example, they challenged the existing practice of excluding women from participating in socio-cultural rituals, especially during menstruation.

The other contribution of the returnee women in the family, as recorded in this research, was to challenge the practice of *kanyadan*. Culturally, marriage is often taken as *kanyadan* in which the bride is supposed to be donated to the bridegroom. The returnee women supposed the perspective and practice of *kanyadan* in the marriage as a patriarchally imposed ritual upon the women in question. As a result, they challenged the practice of *kanyadan*, a ritual within the marriage procedure, claiming that a woman cannot be an object to be gifted to the man in question.

The returnee women were also found to have contributed to transform gender roles and relationship in the community context. One of the issues upon which they initiated to work was the implementation of property rights. Previously, the women were excluded from the right to get their share from the parental property. Later, the right to have parental property was ensured by law. Yet, they could hardly enjoy this right due to the ongoing unfair cultural role. The returnee women, in this context, supported those women in the community who were excluded from their parental property. As a part of their contribution, they have advocated and argued against women's exclusion from the right to parental property. The other contribution of the returnee women was to advocate against the women exclusion from participation in the mainstream economic activities in the community. They have also empowered the women in question to challenge the imposed behaviors of men to improve their own socio-cultural situations.

The returnees have also contributed to transforming economic condition of the community women so that they could liberate themselves from their dependency on men and thereby transforming the unjust gender relationship in which they were entrapped for years. Supposing that freeing the women in question may not only be sufficient for transforming the unequal gender roles and relationship in the

community, the returnee women have participated in empowering women through education. For them, it is awareness and education that would help them realize the importance of being a female and also their equal rights and responsibilities in the socio-cultural, economic and political world in which they are the part.

## **8.9 Conclusion**

The purpose of the study was to examine the impact of return migration on the social and work life of the educated Nepali women. It discussed the trajectories of the migration among the young Nepali women who had an experience of international education and again returned with the hope to engage in the Nepali society which is moving towards the political stability and the development through the Constitution of Nepal 2015. On a broad level, the research is expected to contribute to understanding the socio-political development of the country addressing migration and development through the return perspective with gender lens in the context of the Nepali society. It has depicted how women are engaging for the transformation of the society through their knowledge and skills which they have learnt abroad.

This section concludes the returnee women's situation through the relationship between women's motivation for the higher education and return home after completion of their study. Through the women's story, it reflected that the women education migration abroad is the outcome of expectation and aspiration for the career enhancement through the knowledge and skill. The gender construction of the Nepali society among families had restricted women for their geographical mobility in the past. The women were not supposed to be the breadwinners as men in the family. Having been to the home and brought up in the patriarchal family and community, the women in Nepal have been the victim of discrimination, inequality, and injustice prevailing in their socio-cultural situations, particularly in terms of economy, education and the mainstream process of decision making. As a result, gender discrimination is occasionally observed, mostly in the families affecting the socio-cultural and economic life of the women. However, the research shows that the scenario has changed with their access to mobility through education where the parents are ready to invest in their daughter's education.

The changing culture among families reflects that women are getting an access for higher education and the geographical mobility. Getting abroad education has become the prestige among the families from where women get an access to mobility and exposure to the international education system. Families' prestige is associated with the migration culture among their children (Acharya, 2012). The parents' perception relating to women's education and migration has changed. Through this, it is concluded that the gender roles are also changing where the women are recognized by the families. Nevertheless, the access to social, professional and geographical mobility is restricted while they return home after completion of their study. The research, thus, concluded that the women are playing the active role while making the journey of migration successful. In the meantime, these women need to negotiate with the existence of gender role after they have returned to the home. The most important issue of gender was found in all stages of their life. These women took new gender roles both in Nepal and abroad.

Through the experience of migration, the women developed the perception of freedom and independence. However, the prevalent gendered cultures among common Nepali families create certain restrictions where the idea of respectability plays the prominent role (Radhakrishnan, 2011). Thus, these women feel pressure regarding their professional life and the personal duties as a wife, mother and daughter-in-law. In daily life activities, the returnees negotiate to change the existing rules instead of obeying them submissively. So, the women develop a new understanding regarding the gender role.

Through their education and migratory experience, they develop new ideas of womanhood as a source of empowerment. These women think that they are different from the women who are left behind. They, thus, perceive that they need to play the prominent role for the change. So, women are playing an important role in the society by implementing ideas, knowledge, beliefs, and skills which are also known as the social remittance. They do not restrict themselves into the household while engaging in the gender transformation role. However, they also raised their voice against the malpractices in the community. Moreover, they show their participation in the organization where they work. This shows that the migration and the development in the Nepali context are not only related to the economic remittance. The social remittance has also a great implication in the Nepali migration discourse

from where we can discuss more on migrants' soft skills like knowledge, belief and skills. It shows that women's access and opportunities have changed through which they become socially, economically and culturally independent.

Analyzing education migration through a gender lens, the researcher proposes that the new form of mobility is a vehicle for challenging previous definitions of acceptable behavior for young. The analysis has contributed towards the rise of education migration in the contemporary migration of Nepal which has rendered challenges to the gender norms for young and affluent women.

Returning home is not easy for these women because the work plan is not functioning according to their desire. New opportunities are there in the market. However, it is difficult to work in the Nepali market. These women feel the lack of a functioning system and the work ethics. Moreover, they feel that there is no any professionalism and people are recruited in the organizations where only the network and the nepotism work. So, these kinds of the working environment make women face more difficulties. Thus, it is concluded that the women's return is not the one-way path. The women, as a result, are navigating for another destination pushing their return as temporal in nature.

The research also concluded that there is a changed dimension in education migration where the families and the parents see the return in a positive way. The women get new knowledge and skills with their transnational migration. The women developed the social, professional and academic skills. If they didn't have access to the international physical mobility, they would be excluded from the resources. They are getting empowered. If they were not given the access to international mobility, these women might lack the opportunity. In the Nepali context, the women's access to mobility and the education enhancement have helped them to empower themselves. Through this, there are multiple effects of empowerment. So, it is concluded that the access to higher education has helped to empower women as well as to bargain in their position. Furthermore, there is perception among the women returnee to develop their country through their engagement in various professional sectors. However, they feel challenges while implementing their knowledge and skills.

It is concluded that the practice of abroad migration among women seems to have helped them in many ways. First, they acquired some relevant skills and knowledge to transform the life of their own and other female members liberating them from the patriarchally imposed norms, values and attitude towards female being, especially in the context of family, community and workplace. Second, they could link themselves with the broader level of national and international network ensuring their sustainable career to strengthen their socio-economic situatedness. Third, they learned the meaning of being independent of their male counterparts to economically bring change in the attitude of self and others towards own status of being a female in the family, community, and workplace of the home country. Fourth, they have been able to actualize freedom, to more extent in the patriarchal setting of their home country, particularly by sharing their hands in transforming the lives of self and many others on the way to achieving individual and social development.

#### **8.10 Avenue for future research**

As this study has focused on the returnee women in Nepal, it can contribute to future studies in the same area. This study is concerned with return migration from gender perspective focusing on women. Moreover, we can take both male and female to see the return, reintegration and readjustment issues in the future. I comprehend that a gendered approach in understanding return is necessary in order to move the analysis beyond the economic and financial dimensions to include socio-psychological and cultural elements. Basically, gender approach enables one to have a greater awareness of the broader social factors that influence women's and men's motivations and roles, the dynamics of gender relations, and a better understanding of the effect of migration. This understanding of gender can be used while dealing with other forms of migration like forced migration and labour migration.

While analyzing the literature on the Nepali migration, the review, nevertheless, identified several research gaps such as insufficient gender analysis, the lack of longitudinal interdisciplinary studies to investigate the social costs of female labour migration. The effects on family, children, and community, the impact on marriage as a social institution, issues and problems of reintegration as well as the ineffectiveness of government agencies dealing with the issue of migration are yet to

be reflected in migration research. It has opened the bases for the feminist research in the migration studies.

This research focuses on the consequences or outcomes of the growing phenomenon of feminized international education migration through the access to mobility. In future, women's social mobility and aspiration can be researched in relation to other dimensions of migration like the economic empowerment and the women's access towards the economic and social resources with their participation in the development. Furthermore, this research has dealt with the issue of the transnational from the social remittances. However, the future researches can bring the issue of transnational regarding the economic and political discussions. Furthermore, the relation between women's mobility, immobility and its consequences in the gender and development could be the prospects for future researches.



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## ANNEXES

### Interview guidelines

1. About respondents' academic and other background
2. Recall of the process followed while being abroad
3. Reasons to choose abroad for study purpose
4. Some of the interesting/ important experiences while she was abroad as a student
5. Reasons to come back.
6. Her own assessment about her life after she returned from abroad
7. Whether she feels like she could bring something (economic/social/cultural) for her own household while coming back
8. Her assessment about recent political and social change in Nepal
9. Her own contribution on that changed/changing context, if any.
10. Her assessment about how society receives the returns (mentioned above) she brought along with her.
11. Whether she is engaged in any networks or alumni after she returns back.
12. When / how did she engage in the alumni?
13. What is the purpose and activity of the alumni?
14. What kind of social relations and networks does she find there?
15. Is it different from other social relations / do they have a shared identity of some kind?

**KATHMANDU UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF ARTS**

Date: May 13, 2014

Subject: **Request for resource materials and cooperation**

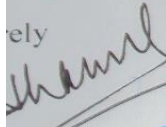
Sir/Madam

Please allow me to introduce to you one of our student, **Mrs. Laxmi Dhungel** who is currently doing her PhD in Development Studies at Kathmandu University. She is currently working on her PhD "**Returns of education Migration**" and is conducting her field works necessary for the research.

In this regard I would like to request you to kindly give her access to any relevant resources and publications that you possess and provide her with any other support you can, so she will be able to find necessary resources for her research paper. Also any information obtained during this process will be kept confidential and used only for the purpose of this research.

Thanking you for your kindest cooperation

Sincerely,

  
Nagar Raj Sharma

Head of Department

Department of Development Studies

School of Arts, Kathmandu University



### Chapter Plan of the study

Research Questions	Key Themes	Components	Theories and Literature
1. What makes female returnees take the decision of migration abroad and come back Nepal after accomplishing their education abroad?	Motivational components for female returnees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Family decision</li> <li>b. Cultural landscape</li> <li>c. Professional continuity</li> <li>d. Feeling of contribution to their own country</li> <li>e. Personal recognition</li> <li>f. Making meaning (how other see themselves ) of their abroad study in their own socio-cultural context</li> </ul>	a. Bourdeau's theory of habitus
2. How do they explain their achievement that they gained during their study abroad?	Knowledge and skills gained abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increased academic strength as achievement                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Reading, writing, presentation, certificate, analytical, critical</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Social skills</li> <li>c. Problem solving, communication,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Transnational theory</li> <li>b. Social remittances</li> </ul>



		<p>outspoken, not to be submissive, independency, Emotional strength</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Confidence, feeling towards the self and others,</li> </ul> <p>d. Different pedagogical style of learning: Learner friendly environment</p> <p>e. Culture, ethics and perspectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. acceptance of cultural diversity</li> <li>i. ethics</li> <li>ii. time management</li> </ul>	
<p>3. How do they implement their knowledge and skills in their social and professional life world in Nepal?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Entering various professional and social networks.</li> <li>b. Perception on contribution to society by engaging in various network</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Using family network to enter in professional market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Family network</li> <li>ii. Friends network</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Entering the returnee organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Getting contact with unorganized returnee group</li> <li>ii. Engaging in organized returnee organization alumni association</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Participating in the entrepreneurial job <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Self initiation creating</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Social network theory</p> <p>Theory of the social capital</p>

		<p>opportunities in home Nepal</p> <p>d. Engagement in the political sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engagement in political activities, awareness raising,</li> </ul> <p>e. Engagement in social sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Engage in various volunteer activities (NGOs and INGOs)</li> </ul> <p>f. Engagement in the economic sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Generating economic self and creating employment</li> <li>ii. Developing the entrepreneurship</li> </ul> <p>g. Engagement in the educational sector</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Engagement in academic and research work</li> </ul>	
4. How do they contribute to transforming the existing gender relations within the family and society?	Negotiating gender roles after migration	<p>a. Giving my own reflexivity regarding education migration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. My own position to show the gender roles in Nepalese society</li> </ul> <p>Brining stories from returnee: Feminization of migration</p>	<p>a. Bourdeau theory of Habitus: Gender geography and power:</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ii. Expected gender roles for women after migration</li> <li>iii. Women lack the position in society</li> <li>iv. Changed thought on traditional and cultural practices</li> <li>v. Engagement to change the prevalent social and cultural</li> <li>vi. Gender role and habit of speaking</li> <li>vii. Socializing with traditions</li> <li>viii. Stories of married and settled women</li> </ul>	<p>respectable femininity</p>
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