

NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR  
COMMUNICATION PRACTICES

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation has not been submitted for the candidature of any other degree to any other university.

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## AN ABSTRACT

Of the dissertation of *Ambar Mainali* for the degree of *Master of Philosophy in Development Studies* presented at Kathmandu University School of Education on August 17, 2021.

Title: *Non- Non-Government Organizations and their Communication Practices*

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Communication and development have a symbiotic relationship. Development efforts have faltered and failed to yield the desired results in the absence of a proper development communication plan and policy. In this study, I have inquired into the broader aspects of the development communication practices taking place in three non-governmental organizations working in the sector of development in general and human rights in particular. I took the help of multiple holistic case study method to study the working of the NGOs in terms of their overall day to day works related to communication and development. My unit of analysis for the case study were the development communicators in the respective NGOs who helped me to understand about the overall communication processes in the NGOs and the subsequent social changes that they were able to bring about in their respective areas of intervention. I pretested the questions in two NGOs before applying them to the three NGOs under study. I also conducted key informant interviews of development communicators who have spent long years in the field and had the expertise to share with them the existing scenario of development communication in Nepal. Although the development

communicators have the right perceptions about development communication, which is a contributor to ensure sustainability of development operations, they shared that they were not using an annual development communication plan to carry out their communication with their target audiences.

One pertinent observation that I made was that the messages, which are prepared to be disseminated among the target audiences are not pre-tested and accordingly trimmed to fit the level of understanding of the audiences, which has given way to some sort of confusion. The NGOs have not been making the desired efforts to do a follow up on how the messages that they have been disseminating have brought about changes in their respective domain of work. It was clearly revealed that development communication is being treated as a perfunctory work and treated as a subject of routine dissemination of information to the targeted audiences. The need to have a national policy on development communication cannot be overlooked if development communication is to be exercised in the right way for the desired development results.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Having worked first as a media person for over fifteen years and a development communicator for a diplomatic mission for nearly thirteen years now, my interest in the field has grown manifold over the years. Although the mass media are generally used for informing the citizenry about the contemporary social, political, cultural, and economic issues in any country, this also involves the process of building public opinion on development issues related to the wellbeing of humankind through the dissemination of information from different media outlets. My stint as a journalist and as a student of development communication at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, New Delhi, some two decades back provided me with the insights of how communication when used with the right kind of packaging could be instrumental to bring about social change, i.e. development in different sectors such as health, education, democratic practices, awareness raising against superstitious beliefs and practices, promotion of human rights and many more in the list.

My existing role as a development communicator has helped me to observe the positive changes that have come about in the development sector. The large extent of what has been achieved has been with the right communication channels, particularly the radio, newspapers, TV and the social media, which are growingly becoming more and more popular in the present-day Nepal. Nepal's experience with planned development is over five decade long. Notwithstanding that the nation has made impressive gains in the education and health sectors, there still remains a long way to go when it comes to hydropower and infrastructure development.

Nepal has been continuously employing the planned development policy since 1956. After the commencement of the planned development concept in Nepal, fourteen long-term plans have been completed under the leadership of the National Planning Commission (Limbu 2019). According to Limbu (2019), Nepal is still in the ranking of a Least Developed Country among 47 countries in the global race for development due to less economic growth and less per capita income. The 15<sup>th</sup> development plan has been introduced starting 2019-2020 against such a bleak development reality with the National vision of 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali.

People should be allowed to choose the kind of development they want (Sen, 1999). This is indeed quite intriguing as it is the people who better realize their needs for a particular type of development. Here is where comes the role of development communication to act as a bridge between the government and the people. The idea has been lost amidst long and protracted political transition and the media is splashed with very negligible number of development stories.

This study looked into the existing development communication practices in small scale non-government organisations. How are the practices taking place? Are they tailored to the right audiences with the right message? The research focused on both the internal and external communication practices of the individual NGOs. The primary focus of the research was to explore how the development communication practices have been taking place in small scale NGOs.

There has been an increase in the number of NGOs and Nepal is not an exception. Nepal ranks among the low income countries and does not have adequate resources to cater to the health and education needs of all its citizens. The growth for NGOs is very fertile in countries, which have weak resource base. NGOs are engaged in different activities. They range from delivery of basic services to people who are in

need to the launching of public or advocacy campaigns for social change (Karkee & Comfort, 2016).

The case of Nepal is not much different since NGOs have been actively involved in sharing the government's responsibilities as far as delivery of services are concerned. NGOs have been active and they have been taking up specialized roles of conflict mitigation, working as watchdogs for the prevention of the violation of human rights along with cultural preservation, environmental activism, and research and policy revisions.

The difference they can possibly make in the lives of the general people greatly hinges on their development communication practices. The motive of the research was to do multiple holistic case studies of three NGOs and to explore the ways they have been communicating with the development participants.

Development communication focuses on integrating diversified society to set the common goal of making clarification on developmental issues. It acts as a mediator between development planner and layman, which assists in sustainable development (Sylvester, 2016). The study being undertaken explored the experiences of development communicators through qualitative inquiry: in-depth interview, case study and went forth to establish what the existing practices are and how it has been impacting development efforts in the given localities.

### **Rationale of the Study**

Although the role of NGOs in Nepal's development is undeniably very instrumental, there have not been adequate studies to see how they have been communicating within their organizations and outside to expedite the process of multiplying their achievement indicators. NGOs work for achieving project driven goals related to development. To achieve the project driven goals, it is imperative that

they devise a log frame, which is a tool for improving the planning, implementation, management, monitoring, and evaluation of the projects. Communication is key to achieving the project goals. And it is thus essential to see what approaches of communication are being employed. A reasonably high number of NGOs in Nepal are not being able to hold back skilled human resource. It is the latest and new skills that always contribute significantly to achieve the project or programme goals in the communities (Kusendra & Bihari, 2014).

It is imperative that we look into the functioning of the NGOs and their role in spurring development, since they are an integral part of the development discourse in the country. Following the transition of Nepal from unitary system of governance to a federal structure; the expected areas of reform will cut across many areas of governance and administration. However, there are some fiscal challenges. Governments at the local and provincial levels are likely to face resource gaps while fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. The roles of development partners and I/NGOs will be crucial in plugging these gaps (Joshi 2018). In the Nepalese case, NGOs respond more quickly than the major government and international organizations in providing primary services such as in health, water and in sanitation and primary education often at lower cost (Lynch et al., 1997; Chand 1998; Shrestha 1999; as cited in Bhandari 2014). The NGOs have appeared an important instrument of mobilizing local people and resources in different parts of the world since the Second World War (Wagle, 2016).

The fifteenth periodic plan brought out by the Nepal Government has stated that the Non-Governmental Organizations, the Civil Societies and Community Based Organizations will assist the government in its development endeavours. It further states that the NGOs and other similar entities will mobilize social and human capital,



thereby dedicating themselves to the capacity building, poverty alleviation and raising the awareness of the citizens by launching development programmes that are in line with the government's objectives. They will ensure accountability and transparency, thereby contributing towards scaling up production levels and general services to the people (National Planning Commission, 2020).

The above emphasis clearly underscores the need to assess the working of the NGOs and their development communication practices, which are instrumental to achieve the development goals. This research investigated the role of the NGOs in giving a fillip to development through the use of different development communication outlets to disseminate their development messages.

The lack of skilled development communicators has a negative bearing in putting the message across the participants of development and ensuring a two-way information flow. Hence, it is logical that the working style as regards the development communication of NGOs be explored closely. The findings of the research will help development communicators at large to design a proper development communication policy while moving ahead with their development communication works.

### **Conceptualization of the Term Communication**

The word communication has its root in the Latin word 'Communis'. The meaning of communis is having commonness in meaning. The exchange of ideas and information between individuals and groups is known as communication (Vivian, 1997). There are different models of communications introduced during different periods of human history.

According to Vivian (1997), the earlier models of communication did not incorporate feedback and were linear models in which feedback was missing whereas

the more innovative models have come up with a two-way communication where feedback has been depicted as an important part in the entire communication process.

The above concepts of communication could be helpful to internalize the meaning of communication and its effects in the societies that we live in. I would like to relate the process to our own Nepalese context that has many linguistic and cultural groups living in different geographical settings. The messages created through the communication process vary based on which part of the country we are in. I see that the common language that is spoken in a particular social setting greatly rules whether or not people living in that place will be able to attach shared meaning for the messages they exchange. At the same time, I feel that the diverse cultural groups in Nepal who practice different forms of culture also participate in communication processes that are distinctly different from each other. Hence, culture is a key component of communication.

According to Mefalopulous (2008), "There are four different types of communication that are being practiced in development organisations. The first one is corporate communication. Corporate communication deals with communicating the organization's goals, missions, and objectives to the external audiences. The second category is 'internal communication'. Internal communication facilitates the flow of information within the organization. The third category constitutes advocacy communication, which involves bringing about changes at the policy or public level while the fourth category is development communication which aims at bringing about meaningful and sustainable change through the execution of development projects," (p. 9).

### **Conceptualization of the Term Development**

The concept of development has undergone successive changes in terms of its approach and overall meaning. Development was initially associated with the attainment of high economic growth propelled by a sound industrial base. This concept of development which began in the early nineteenth century continued to influence government's around the world especially those in the west.

The emphasis put on economic growth led to an unjustified expropriation of natural resources resulting in the rapid deterioration of the natural environment. The rapid depletion of the environment raised alarm bells the world over compelling development planners to brood over identifying a new approach to development that would be sustainable and at the same time adequate to cater to the ever growing demand of the denizens of the world for a quality life.

The first World Conference on Green Productivity held in Tokyo, Japan in 1959 came up with a plan to strike a balance between productivity and environment. This apart, the conference also called for the formation of an Asian Productivity Body (Asian Productivity Body [APO], 2014). Thereafter there were successive conferences held in different Asian capitals devising plans for consolidation and innovation of the productivity sector to boost development.

Hence, the need for a new approach to development was widely felt in the 1960s and 1970s, which reiterated the need to put the people first whenever setting out to devise development plans and policies.

The report prepared by Former Finance Minister of Pakistan, Mahbub Ul Haq served as a convincing explanation of what development really could mean (Schneider, 1995).

Haq defined development as:

A question of economic growth, self-sufficiency in food production, modern equipment or technology transfers. One obvious fact presents itself with force, development is about people. It is humanity, in all its dimensions, in full possession of dignity and individual rights. It is humanity developed in all its capacities of imagination, creativity, choice, decision-making and of responsibility to its natural and social environment. It is the learning or rediscovery of its capacities and its experience in the group which will become the engine of communal progress. (as cited in Schneider, 1995, p.60)

Although development has been defined in multiple ways, it broadly encompasses the goals of ensuring high quality of life, increasing the income levels of people and providing them with quality medical services and quality education. Apart from this, it also involves the provisions of allowing people to make free choices and give way to a favourable environment for growth of social, political, and economic institutions (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019)

The modernization viewpoint of development is an irreversible and straight process, whereby societies promote themselves to more advanced stages from their initial traditional stages (Rostow, 1960). This approach to development originates from the west and gauges it in terms of economic indicators, income per capita, and unemployment rates. This approach also known as the progressive approach was supported by classical Marxists and neo-liberals, who stressed on the means of development rather than the measure of development. These theorists were more interested in exploring whether development could be achieved through market control rather than raising questions against the economic objectives of development (Carter, 1995).

The modernization perspective of development looks at underdevelopment as the differences between the rich and poor countries, and holds the latter responsible for failing to bring about reform in technologies. The path to modernization was to be traversed through moving ahead from the stage of industrialization to the stage of information society by adopting latest technologies (Melkote, 1991).

Latin American theorists criticised modernization and development and blamed it for giving way to inequalities and underdevelopment. They argued that the economic stratification of the countries in around the world that placed them into the core countries, countries in the sub periphery and those in the periphery led to inequalities and underdevelopment of those in the periphery and sub periphery while the core countries expropriated resources from countries in the two other strata (Sommerfeldt, 2018).

I have been closely working with a foreign diplomatic mission that has been assisting the Nepal Government to achieve high enrolment of children in schools, a high level of nutrition in mothers and children to reduce maternal and child mortality. This apart, our mission also has been assisting to strengthen federal governance through the dissemination of skills at the lower tiers of the federal structure. During a field visit to Kalikot in the Karnali province in 2018, I was able to observe that children and mothers were benefitting from the multisector nutrition programme launched by our mission in partnership with UNICEF and the National Planning Commission. More children were enrolled in schools and parents seemed to be very optimistic that their children would grow into responsible citizens and would be able to contribute to the process of nation building. Hence all this summed up, I personally feel that development is context specific, country specific and to be more precise locality and culture specific. It is broadly to do with fulfilling the basic needs of the

people such as education, health while at the same time ensuring that the natural environment is not exploited so much so that it starts to give unwanted results such as erratic temperature rises, fall in productivity, floods and natural disasters.

### **Conceptualization of the Term Development Communication**

Development Communication is to do with strategic interventions either through education or different forms of media to bring about positive changes in the society. The changes could be of varied forms such as political, social, economic or cultural (McPhail, 2009). Development communication should be by and large information that can be used by the members of the community in order to ensure their own wellbeing through their active participation in a two-way communication. Development communication works as a catalyst to trigger development. It includes activities such as social mobilization, social marketing, media advocacy, behaviour change, dissemination of information and education. Development communication relates to the objectives of development planning and implementation and is often referred to as development support communication. It pays more attention to the whole gamut of human behaviour change in the design of development projects and their objectives. The essence of development communication is embedded in the fact that it uses certain strategies to bring about behaviour changes in individuals and works as an instrumental tool to ensure the success of the projects (Chua, 2019).

Although there are numerous definitions of development communication, the two definitions provided by the development communication division of the World Bank have been widely referred to. It has described development communication as an empirical research that seeks to bring about consensus and a two-way communication among different stakeholders of development, thereby giving way to positive social change. This apart, it is also an effective tool that helps to look into socio-political

risks and opportunities. Development communication has different streams ranging from health communication to agricultural communication to gender communication including education and communication, leadership and communication, science communication, and environmental communication (Alzoubi et al., 2016)

The earlier models of development communication considered people as receivers ready to be influenced by messages, which was also popularly known as the sender, messenger, channel and receiver model or SMCR model (Mefalopulous, 2009). This model has been widely criticized. The SMCR model was considered to be more effective to bring about changes in the less developed and backward communities. The model was used by the proponents of the modernization theory, which assumed that the more technologically advanced western world needed to assist the lesser developed parts of the world in their efforts to advance both technologically and economically.

The modernization theorists were widely criticized by the proponents of dependency theorists, which argued that the fact that the westerners accused the receivers of the development benefits and assistance to be responsible for their underdevelopment was not a justified claim. The failure on the part of the dependency theorists to propose a different model of development brought about the third wave of proponents who lobbied for a participatory model of development communication. This model in contrast to the SMCR model emphasised on a two-way and participatory nature of communication for development (Servaes, 2016).

### **Theoretical Review**

The reach of communication is always fixed while mass communication has a wider reach and constitutes of a process that gives way to the creating of shared

common meaning between the various mass media tools such as radio, television, newspaper and the internet and the audience (Hanson, 2016).

With the rapid development of mass communication in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the potential increased for terms such as development, under development and the *Third World*, to be globally transmitted and legitimized (Melkote & Steeves, 2015). According to Melkote & Steeves (2015), " Theorists in the preceding years increasingly questioned the potentials of the mass media to effect and influence change in societies and individuals. This in turn, gave rise to different theories and models in media and communication," (p. 9).

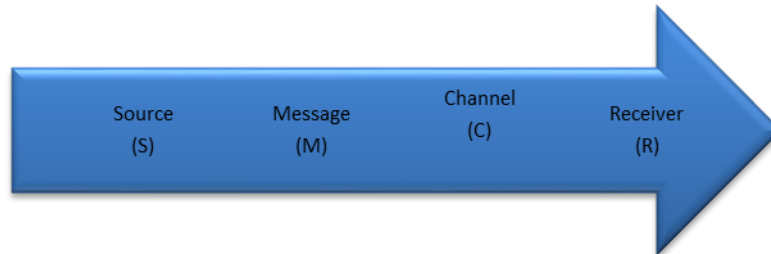
The World War-I was a turning point in stirring debate on mass communications theories. In the west, people were bombarded with war-related propaganda with the belief that they would be outright believed by their recipients (Melkote & Steeves, 2015). According to the proponents of this dogmatic belief, mass media messages were very powerful and had the capacity of hitting their recipients like a magical bullet. This was later also referred to as the magical bullet theory of mass communication. Harold Lasswell conceptualized mass media effects during this period. Lasswell's model, which was strongly influenced by Freudian theory contradicted libertarian philosophy (Vivian, 1997).

His verbal model focussed on the sender, receiver, message and the impact (Lasswell, 1948) while the libertarian school emphasized the latent rationality of men and women. Lasswell (1948) assumed from Freudian theory that human behaviour is irrational. Based on this conceptualization, a framework emerged which has been *hypodermic needle* model of mass communication effects (Berlo, 1960). This theory is also known by other names such as *Bullet Theory* (Schramm, 1971) or the *Stimulus*



*Response Theory* (De Fleur et al., 1975). This model predicted that mass media were powerful vehicles and had dominant effect on powerless and defenceless audiences.

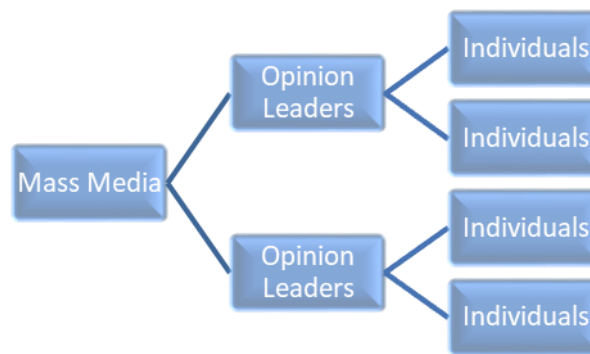
*Figure 1: Berlo's Concept on the Process of Communication*



Source: (Melkote & Steeves, 2015, p. 2)

The one step model of communication drew criticism from theorists in the preceding years. The research in the after years revealed that people were more influenced by their peer groups rather than the mass media while taking political decisions. These findings which were made in the US dismissed the claim of the magical bullet theory (Hilbert et al., 2017).

*Figure 2: Two-Step Flow Model of Communication Effects*



Source: (Melkote & Steeves, 2015, p. 5)

The effects of mass media were indirect. The two-step model of communication describes how the message is first internalized by the opinion leaders like teachers, doctors, and politicians in the society and is later passed on to the common recipients in the second phase (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). It was discovered that the opinion leadership was not confined to the elite but found at all levels of

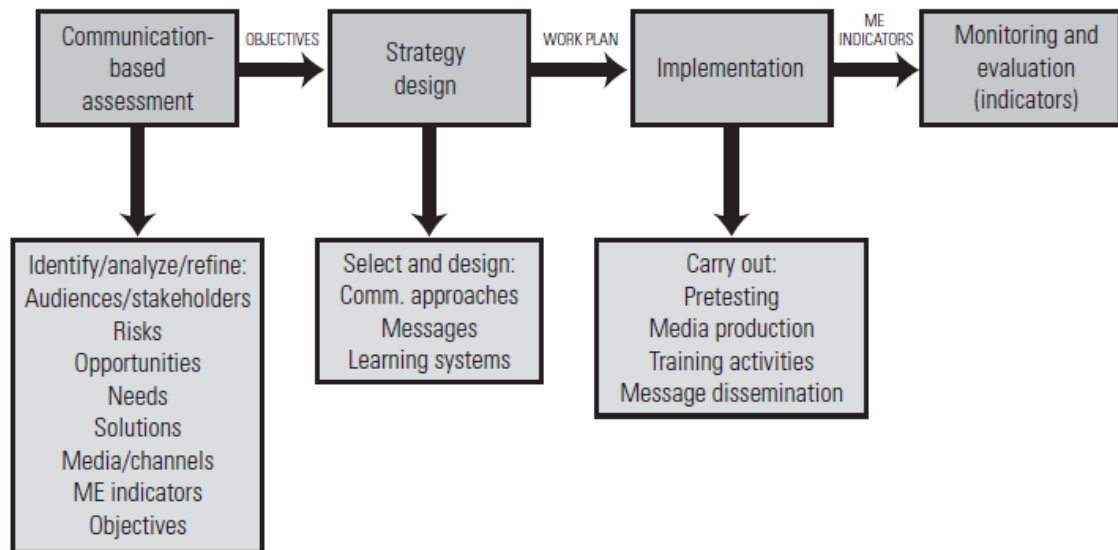
society. Unlike past beliefs, these research studies clearly suggested that the mass media were not all powerful in influencing the decisions of individuals and revealed their inherent weaknesses (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955).

Research in the preceding years showed that commoners were able to defend themselves against messages in three different ways: they chose which messages they wished to be exposed to and familiarised themselves the message they wanted to and also ultimately chose which messages they should keep with themselves (Klapper, 1960)

People are more likely to respond to messages that are closer to their ideas, beliefs, and values. People by and large are more likely to respond to messages that they can identify themselves with in terms of their political, cultural, social, and economic contents. The three selective processes outlined above could function as rings of defences for the receiver with selective exposure constituting the outermost shield, followed by selective perception, and selective retention (Melkote & Steeves, 2015).

The two step model of communication is very much in vogue in different parts of Nepal where people are not media literate. Local opinion leaders always have a say in how different messages including development messages are disseminated. Opinion leaders such as teachers, health workers, politicians have a major say in moulding a local view on different social, economic, political and cultural views.

### Methodological Framework



Source: (World Bank, 2008)

Development communication theoretical framework consists of four different key steps. The communication-based assessment is the first phase, which helps to evaluate which form of communication is desirable. The second phase provides the inputs for coming up with a strategy or design while the next phase involves the production of the materials. The last step is related to the execution of the evaluation of the entire communication intervention. The First phase involves research and is referred to as communication based assessment. This phase provides the inputs of the strategy design, which makes up the second phase. The next phase involves the production of the materials and implementation of the main activities. Finally, the fourth phase is concerned with the evaluation. Proper evaluation calls for developing the indicators for monitoring and evaluation (M&E indicators) during the initial research phase (Mefalopulous, 2003).

The concept of development has its roots in the concept of westernization and later modernization. It emphasised on the need for less developed countries to rise to the level of the developed countries through the adoption of their modern communication, concepts, and technologies (Flora & Alber, 2017).

According to the World Congress on Communication for Development (1st: 2006; Rome; Italy) "Communication for development is a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communications."

My research explored whether the NGOs under study have been using one or a two-way flow of communication. This apart it also looked at development communication activities from the perspective of modernization theory and post-development theory. There are a large number of NGOs working in different sectors such as education, protection and promotion of human rights, environment conservation, gender equality, etc. They have selected different districts while running their projects on the particular areas, which eventually focus on the larger good of the development practitioners. The NGOs have been using certain development communication practices to get their message across to the beneficiaries. Here it is important that these practices be closely studied to see what impact they have been making on the overall development scenario.

Modernization theory explains how countries become developed by going through different stages in reference to the societies of North America and Western Europe. The theory explains that the societies become more and more complex as they develop through different stages and the main reason for their development is the adoption of improvised technologies (Olajide, 2020).

### **Habermas's Theory of Communicative Action**

Habermas's theory of communicative action focuses on the concept of 'ideal speech' and public sphere (Jacobson & Storey, 2004). Approaches to the process of

development communication is seen to have undergone a gradual transition from the state of media dissemination to the state of participatory communication marked by dialogical and a two-way exchange of information among development stakeholders. Although the participatory approach is widely used, it is still under theorized and lacks fundamental definitions (Huesca, 2002; Jacobson & Seraves, 1999 as cited in Jacobson & Storey, 2004).

The public sphere has been explained by Habermas as multiple public spheres ranging from the village level public sphere to the regional, national, and global public spheres. The more candid and open the public sphere are there for the exchange of ideas, the more robust will become democratic practices in that particular country. I have used Habermas's theory of communicative action in my research to explore to which extent the NGOs under study have been able to promote the public sphere in order to ensure a high level of participatory communication.

My area of exploration was to explore whether the practitioners of development communication think that the social change they are pursuing through the current development communication practices really believe that they have been able to bring about the 'very' social change they were aspiring for or has it contributed to worsen the situation of the participants in development.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The importance of information and communication to trigger social change started growing since the 1950s in the global stage (Vivian, 1997). The same holds true for Nepal also that embarked on planned development around five decades back. Like the practices that continued around the world, i.e., development communication was a top down approach, and the development beneficiaries were taken for granted

for being ever ready to internalize certain development messages; Nepal too stuck to the same practice, which is still more or less the same.

Nepal too emulated the development communication practices from around the world that was influenced by the modernization theory which aims at modernizing the backward or to say the third world countries based on the model of westernization. Modernization theory is a theory that explains the process of development of a traditional society into a modern one through the adoption of technology and communication.

The top-down approach has been widely criticized by development communicators and planners and the proponents of post development theories. Robert Chambers, a renowned development practitioner talks about post development as a concept of well-being and responsibility Olajide (2020). According to Olajide (2020), "Robert Chambers advocates about the need for the wealthy to change and become more responsible towards ensuring a two-way dialogue on development communication."

Here, what is being emphasized is to explore what the people say about their development needs by having a two-way dialogue rather than impose development projects from the top. This is exactly what the post development theory highlights on the need to mobilize communities and seek their participation in a two way communication process to ensure that their development needs are addressed.

Bessette (2004) elucidates that participatory forms of development is only possible through effective communication. Taking cue from the above propositions, the objective of my research was to explore how the development communication practices are taking place in non-government organisations. Have they been following their own indigenous model of development communication or are they influenced by

the successive development theories and post development theories? Are their programmes being designed following successive dialogue with their stakeholders or are they merely imposing projects based on their unilateral premises of developmental needs?

There seems to be a conceptual ambiguity in the way our NGOs are communicating on development issues since the two-way flow of communication is often undermined. Moreover, there are only a handful of studies on how they have been pursuing their development agenda through the use of development communication (David & Nanjen, 2009). David and Nanjen have further stated that there is dearth of research at the empirical level on NGOs. Most of the studies on NGOs are in the format of case studies related to limited number of NGOs making it difficult to make certain generalizations. Moreover, the research studies have been carried out by those working in the NGOs themselves and may lack objectivity and last but not the least, as NGOs are always busy in their day to day works, it is not easy to get access to NGOs to carry out the research studies.

The Nepali context bears much resemblance to the above explanation and hence published reports have pointed at the need to do a critical study of whether or not NGOs have been using the appropriate forms of development communication channels to maintain a two-way flow of information, thereby giving a boost to their development initiatives.

When giving a cursory look at Nepal's development history, there is no denial that the country took impressive strides in the development front. Although the country achieved most of the targets under the eight Millennium Development Goals, some targets were partially achieved while there also exists some unfinished agenda (MDG status report, 2015). The report has provided recommendations for the

measures to be taken for achieving each of the unmet targets. Notwithstanding the fact that communication is key for achieving the targets and Non-Governmental Organizations have a significant subordinating role to spur development, the MDG status report has not specifically pointed the need to ensure effective development communication practices, to achieve the targets except for a recommendation that stresses on expanding telecommunication networks.

According to the recommendation of the MDG Status Report, the unfinished agenda should be included in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (2016-2030). The state has been working ahead to achieve the goals by incorporating the targets of the 17 SDG goals in its Annual Programme of Action. As stated earlier, the NGOs play a complimentary role to support the Government's development plans and programmes in the sector of education, health, human rights, gender equality, and industrial development, which have been pegged with the SDGs. If there are lapses in the way, NGOs devise and implement their development communication, plans; it ultimately has a negative bearing on the development indicators, it is by far an urgent call for this researcher to explore the development practices in the NGOs and see what the exact state of affairs is with the practices.

It is hence amply clear that Nepal is yet to make full use of a time bound and planned information communication technology for meeting its development goals of poverty eradication, improving the nutritional status of women and children, addressing the dropouts in schools and many more in the list. It goes without saying that there is a lot of rationale in exploring how the Non-Government Organizations are using development communication and for which motives.



### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to explore how the NGOs under study have been using development communication practices in their day-to-day work. The other purpose was to come up with some insights and cues on how the ongoing development practices could be improvised to make them more development friendly.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do NGOs practise development communication in their everyday functioning?
2. How have the development communication practices been contributing to bring about changes in the given social settings?

### **Significance of the Study**

The study explored the existing development communication practices in three NGOs, thereby coming up with a general trend of how small-scale NGOs use communication for development. The study also looked at the possibilities of how the practices could be improvised for better development results. The findings of the research have highlighted the best and ineffective practices of development communication, thereby providing cue to other NGOs in the development sector to rectify their approaches and take up or use the right models and methods for communicating with their stakeholders. The exploration of the communication practices in the three NGOs under study brought to the forefront a general trend of how the NGOs have been communicating as regards the issues related to their development interventions.

The findings of the research will contribute to make the desired changes in the modes of communication for better communication with the stakeholders. Since I myself have been working in the field of development communication, the study will

help me observe the real life situations, thereby enabling me to work more efficiently. Above all, the study will contribute towards sensitizing development communicators to ensure two way communications with their beneficiaries so that the envisaged development goals are achieved to the maximum level.

Since the study focused on NGOs that are working in the human rights sector, the study revealed a general trend of how the rights based NGOs are communicating both within and outside their organisations, thereby giving an idea about the issues highlighted in their communication.

### **Delimitations of the Study**

The study was delimited to exploring the dialogical communication within the organisations.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

In this chapter, I substantiated why the study of development communication practices is an essential topic of exploration. I also came up with conceptual clarity on communication, development and development communication. I described the problem statement and also my research questions. I also established the inter linkage between communication, development, and development communication.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the history of the emergence of NGOs in Nepal and their communication approaches. I think it is essential to trace the history of the NGOs in order to establish linkages regarding the way they communicate internally and externally. The chapter goes on to explore the history of development communication practices in Nepal in general, and in NGOs in particular. It also delves into the development theories that have been determining the overall trends and processes of development.

#### **Development of NGOs from Historical Perspective**

The attempts to define NGOs have been almost futile. Srinivas (2009 as cited in James, 2013) states that some of the attempts have even been obscure and alienated other groups which foster public good. This left social scientists with no alternatives but use the term in broad sense. Moore (1993) defines NGOs as vehicles for ‘democratization’ and essential components for thriving ‘civil society.’ Frantz (1987) describes them as “formal organizations that emerged when a group of people organized themselves into a social unit that was established with the explicit objective of achieving certain ends and formulating rules to govern the relations among the members of organisations and duties of each other” (p. 18). According to James (2003), NGOs are any organizations licensed or unlicensed, registered or unregistered as not-for-profit and non-governmental, that are made up of two or more persons in which the organizations primarily depend on volunteerism to achieve their mandate. Their mandate can be within a local framework, or it can be on the national or international level.

The history of the emergence of NGOs in Nepal is relatively very new. Nepal remained under a closed political system for a long time. The Panchayat government (1961-1990) had banned organisations from the private sector to contribute to the development initiatives. It was only after the fall of the Panchayat system and the ushering in of multiparty democracy that NGOs became more prominently involved in the nation's development. The advent of parliamentary democracy in 1990 brought about certain changes in the modalities of regulating NGOs and funding agencies (Acharya, 2000).

The Social Welfare National Coordination Council underwent a name change and became Social Welfare Council and came under the Government's Ministry looking after the social sector. The SWC is composed of representatives from the Ministries and other government agencies. The second major change was that the funding regulations were changed. The funds used to flow to the government system before 1990. This pattern was changed and with the legislative amendments, the funds could be awarded directly to the NGOs. This led to the sudden growth in the number of NGOs. Today there are 46,235 NGOs affiliated to the SWC, according to the website of the SWC Nepal. An NGO needs to be registered at the District Administration Office with necessary information that includes name and address, objectives of the organization, sources of funding, and names of management committee members. The organization needs to be affiliated to the Social Welfare Council of the Government of Nepal and its programme and any foreign aid needs the approval of the Council (Karkee & Comfort, 2016).

All projects need to be approved by the government before any funding from different resources can be achieved. Generally, the objectives of NGOs in Nepal are social reform and citizen's awareness building. For this to happen effectively, they need to devise development communication policies that are compatible with the local culture and realities. They must ensure that the target beneficiaries are well informed about their activities and must work

towards involving them in a two way process of communication so that their aspirations and their development needs are well communicated to the NGOs, which alone could contribute to timely and effective development results.

Since the SWC does not have its branch offices in all the seven provinces of the country, the monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the NGOs is indeed an uphill task. This is indeed a telling tale of the fact that their activities were closely studied as envisaged by this research.

### **Communication Approaches**

Highlighting the importance of communication in different states of development Hovland (2005) states that communication is important in different phases whether while promoting or advocating development endeavours, providing guidelines for development, disseminating reports on developmental activities, or recommending new practices in development. Communication cannot be limited to providing information. I have from my work experience gleaned that the correct approach to communication alone can help achieve the end result. It provides the much-desired clarity for the members of an organization to share information through the right channels on a daily basis and move towards achieving the development goals. Feedback in the communication process has optimum value in that it helps to improvise the process and do away with misunderstandings to achieve the envisaged goals.

For this study, it is indeed important to analyze whether the NGOs have been according priority to the task of seeking feedback from their beneficiaries and receivers of messages. The feedback is important in order to help the NGOs to see for themselves whether their envisaged goals are being achieved or not. At the same time, the practice of getting feedback will help the NGOs to take initiatives towards altering

their approaches of information dissemination if the beneficiaries say that they are not satisfied with the messages delivered to them. The research looked into these aspects of development communication through in-depth interviews with the development communicators in the field.

Two words draw particular interest when referring to development communication; they are development and communication. It is by and large the process of using different communication tools to achieve development goals. (Kusendra & Bihari, 2014).

Kusendra and Bihari (2014) further states that development communication through dissemination of information plays a key role in bringing about social change among the receivers. Despite this stark reality, development communication has always been taking the backseat in development organization and Non-Governmental organizations working in the development sector of Nepal, which calls for the urgent need to look into the issue and explore how development communication is being practiced in these organizations.

### **Previous studies on Development Communication**

The role of development communication is crucial when it comes to ensuring that the envisaged development goals are achieved. The practice of development journalism, the other form of development communication to highlight development failures and successes is fraught with problems in the third world. News media practicing development communication are heavily dependent on official sources for presenting development news. Critics have claimed that development journalism is no more than a means to provide publicity to political personalities (Servaes, 2016). Development communication and development journalism have been drawing criticism from different sectors. There is a misplaced perception that development

journalism is used as a mouth piece by the government to publicise its development works. Still, there are others who feel that it is something, which is to do with ensuring publicity for the projects (Chua, 2019).

Development is characterized by widespread participation where people share ideas on development issues in an open environment that ultimately elevates them to a better stage in life in terms of quality of housing, education, medical services and access to other basic services (Berning, 2019).

When looking at the trends and practices of development communication in Nepal, although policies have duly stressed on the need to step up effective communication efforts for development, the government has not thus far come up with any concrete plan to include development communication as an integral part of the overall development efforts. Development communication in Nepal was introduced from 1972 with the slogan Media for Development and formally came into execution from 1977 (Bagale, 2015). According to Bagale, the idea about using communication to achieve development results became all the more widely felt after Bharat Dutta Koirala was appointed editor at the Gorkhapatra Daily where he started a column '*Hamro Gaun Ramro Gaun*' in 1977.

The Nepal Television started airing its programme in 1986 with the slogan 'Communication for Development'. Ending decades of monopoly in the media sector, private televisions were also introduced which started to focus on development communication. Some of the examples of the practices of development communication can be traced in radio magazine *Chinophano*, *Paribatan and Digo Bikash* [decision, change and sustainable development] on Nepal Television, Bureau Reporter on ABC Television and Avenues @ Desh ma Aaja on Avenues Television (Bagale, 2015).

These are just a few examples of how the media are being used for development communication. The general picture in Nepal is such that the media are mostly into covering political news and development issues still seem to be neglected. The NGOs working in different development sectors have been giving priority to development communication. The role that they have been playing to give a boost to development communication, however, needs to be brought under a broader policy of development communication (Bagale, 2015).

Although there has been a widespread realization that development communication or development support communication is the need of the hour, the government has not so far prioritized the sector and come up with a separate development communication policy to cater to the development needs of the different sections of the society.

The Approach Paper for the 15<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan has stated that there is a need to build and increase the efficiency of the communication sector which is the catalyst for economic and social development. This has been mentioned under the sub heading: Communication and Information Infrastructure. The approach paper, however, does not mention about devising a 'National Development Communication Policy' to streamline the development activities taking place in the country (Nepal Government, National Planning Commission, 2019)

### **Development Communication Policy of the Nepal Government**

The Nepal Government came up with a long-term Information and Communication Policy in 2002. The policy was put into place as per the goals on development priorities envisaged by the Ninth Five Year Development Plan. The Policy has elaborated in length how the existing information and communication outlets across the nation will be modernized and expanded to use it prudently to give



impetus to the nation's development efforts in different sectors (Long Term Information and Communication Policy, Nepal Government, 1995, p. 3). Irrespective of the government policies that have underscored the need to use communication for development gains, this does not seem to be happening in practice. The government has not so far come up with an exclusive development communication policy, which elaborates on how development communication should be prioritized and practiced. The Ministries engaged in development works have not so far recruited communication experts who have university degrees in development communication and have the practical and theoretical knowledge that would be instrumental to guide the development works to achieve the envisaged results.

### **Booming Media Industry**

I think it is due to this farsighted policy of the government to expand the network of communication outlets across the nation that the nation's media and communication sector witnessed a boom in the subsequent years. The number of media outlets that have been developed over the years seems to be comparatively very high given the small size of Nepal. There are more than 200 television stations, more than 700 FM radio stations, and more than 7000 newspapers across the nation. Almost 2,000 online news outlets are registered with the government. The buzz of the online media has created a fast moving media market and journalists are switching jobs more often than ever (South Asia Press Freedom Report, 2019-2020, p. 54).

The rise in the number of media outlets indicates the growing coverage of diverse issues related to development. This might as well expand opportunities for development workers have their news covered in the media thereby giving way to a new momentum for using the communication outlets to achieve the goals of development communication. But a cursory look at the media coverage amply reveals

that development issues are less prioritized by the media, which seems to be more inclined to cover political issues.

### **Development Communication Policy of the World Bank**

Now it would be appropriate to look at how international organizations working in the field of development communication have been according top priority to development communication in order to achieve their development goals, I would like to discuss the development communication policy of the World Bank.

Based on their motives and objectives, organizations practice different forms of communication such as interpersonal communication, mass communication and health communication. The course of studies of organizations are also found to have listed subjects such as international communication, speech communication, intercultural communication, communication education, applied communication, organizational communication and political communication in their overall pedagogical approaches. Other forms of communication could as well be added to the list such as journalism, media production, information and communication technologies, public relations, corporate communications and development communication (Malaphorous, 2016).

It is always essential that one has a clear idea about what communication and communications are in the true sense of the words. The word communication in its singular form refers to the process while the other word communications refer to the products such as webcasts, videos, posters, pamphlets and so on. The World Bank has been abiding by a participatory model of communication. This model gives priority to cultural aspects and stays aloof from political and economic dimensions (Melaphoulous, 2016).

Development communication of today talks about a horizontal two-way dialogical model where participants in the communication process can communicate freely without any hindrances. It is taken to be the toll to involve stakeholders in the identification of development problems and accordingly work out their solutions (Witteveen & Lie, 2019). The objective of my research is to examine whether the NGOs in Nepal have been upholding the basic principles of maintaining two-way communication with their beneficiaries so that their development needs are rightly assessed.

Based on what has been discussed here, I would like to elaborate my own experiences as a development communicator working for a diplomatic mission, we have been trying our level best to localize our messages while communicating with the masses. We try to communicate in the local language of a particular community where our projects are being launched. For instance, we launched a project on combating 'Gender Based Violence' in province 2 in August, 2020. After charting out a communication plan on how we could communicate more effectively with our stakeholders and beneficiaries, we decided to draft a press release in Maithali language since our target beneficiaries in the province are mostly Maithali speaking. We have also decided to design and disseminate all our communication materials such as posters and pamphlets in the Maithali language. This will help to upscale the efficacy of our messages, which at the same time will also increase the possibility of having two way communication with our beneficiaries.

As a development communicator, I personally feel that one needs to simplify the development messages as if you are sharing a story with someone else. Anecdotal messages that have the local taste and cultural undertones are always very effective to start a two way conversation with the development stakeholders.

### **Development Communication: In need of a National Policy**

The field of development communication drew much optimism and enthusiasm between the period 1956-1987 (Serveas, 2016). Models show either powerful effects or limited effect on research. The future research directions suggested were a) to study the relevance of message content b) to conduct more comparative research and c) to conduct more policy research. And indeed the findings between 1987 to 1996 show a different picture (Fair sand Shah, 1997; Rogers and Heart, 2002 as cited in Serveas 2016). In the 1987-1996 study, the most frequent suggestion was the need to do more policy research. This clearly shows the policy implications of development communication research.

In the changed political context, it is imperative that Nepal charts out a clear-cut development communication policy with the view to give impetus to different sectors of development across the country. The policies thus far have focused on upscaling internet connectivity and penetration and increasing 4G coverage of mobile phones, but are silent on charting out a national development communication policy that would streamline all communication related to development. We have had several polices, for instance the Communication Policy of 1973 that talked about the need to use communication for the development of the nation. Similarly, the National Communication Policy was introduced in 1992 while the Long-Term Communication Policy was launched in 2002 followed by the National Mass Communication Policy in 2016. But all these policies have not clearly defined and encompassed the role of development communication in giving the much needed momentum to development.

### **Tracing Evolution of Communication for Development**

The evolution of development communication is linked to the modernization theory. The theory that came to the fore after the Second World War underscores

moving to higher stages of growth through the use of modern technology. It also talked about replacing the traditional modes of communication with the modern ones to step up development communication (Chua, 2019). The mass media were taken to be the agents through which changes could be brought about in the development front. (McCall, 2011)

By the late 1980s, the notion of participatory development, particularly participatory rural appraisal, in which poor communities are directly engaged in defining their own problems and solutions, had gained considerable traction within many development organizations, especially non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Since then, increased priority has been given to horizontal and multi-directional communication methods that utilize a mix of channels and emphasize the importance of dialogue in facilitating trust and mutual understanding, amplify the voice of poor people and enable them to identify ways of overcoming problems in order to improve their own well-being (Melkote & Steeves, 2011). Tracing the historical development of development communication, Quebral (1972) posits that the practice of development communication can be traced back to efforts undertaken in various parts of the world in the 1940s, but the widespread application of the concept came about because of the problems

### **Review of Empirical Research**

A critical case study on user-developer communication process from the US reveals that informal and interpersonal communication have a significant role in achieving effective project outcomes as formal communication (Gallivan & Keil, 2003). The case study relates to how software companies have been involving the users of the software and taking their suggestions while improvising on different software and making them more user-friendly. Kraut and Streeter (1995) surveyed 85

software companies and found that informal communication was as important as formal communication in order to achieve the desired project outcomes but they were not being used as often as they should be. Four stages were delineated in the communication process of the users and developers. It was found that although the user developer communication process does not necessarily guarantee positive outcomes, at the same time, there have been instances when positive outcomes are clearly evident. Project managers have perceived that the user developer communication process does not yield much result if the users tend to hide information and the developers are unable to figure out why such attitude is prevalent and how it can be overcome (Gallivan & Keil, 2003).

The case study was helpful for me to see whether the NGOs whose development communication practices have been involving the local beneficiaries in developing different aspects of their projects. It would also be interesting to see whether the NGOs have been trying to identify the reasons why the local beneficiaries have been unwilling to divulge certain information related to their projects.

My research examined whether the development triggered by the existing development communication practices can be explained by the modernization theory. Is technology imported from outside to promote development and bring about social change? This was a major area of examination. What do the development communicators that I look forward to interviewing say about their practices? Do they believe that they are adopting modern technology to trigger social change?

Communication networks play a key role in triggering social change and increasing the resiliency of social systems. This has been broadly examined in a study carried by Ostrum. The study is linked to how good communication networks serve to facilitate relations between political and social actors. Problems related to resource

overuse can be resolved with social and political actors are maintaining constant communication ( Ostrum 2005)

The study was taken as cue to see the existing state of communication networking among the NGOs and the political actors in my area of research. The NGOs were found to have a good networking with the local political actors which seems to have facilitated the process of communication.

In one other study carried out on the effective ways of communicating new climate technologies, it has been clearly outlined that the society needs to be put at the centre while crafting the messages.

The fact that communication should be focussed more on the society has been well articulated by those communicating about new climate technologies focussed on reducing carbon emissions. Narrow focus on technical efficacy is therefore likely to be insufficient, especially if the aim is engagement rather than convincing the audience (Buhr and Wibeck 2014).

This study clearly reveals that unless the messages are crafted with the audiences in the society in mind, they will not have a major impact in the overall dissemination of messages in the manner that the audiences can understand them and at the same internalize them. This example well fits into my research to look into whether the NGOs under study are crafting the messages by putting the society in the centre.

### **Research Gap**

After going through the literature from home and abroad, it is well revealed that there exists a research gap as regards knowledge on how the Non-Government Organisations have been making the appropriate use of development communication policies to achieve the desired development results. Development results will remain a

far cry until there are appropriate models of communication to maintain a two-way flow of information with the beneficiaries. Hence, it is imperative that the day to day communication approaches of the NGOs be scrutinized to identify whether or not communication is taking place in the desired manner for the desired results.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

In this chapter, I discussed how NGOs emerged and joined the development scene. I also looked into the trends of how development communication is being practiced in Nepal, the long term communication policy of the Nepal Government stresses on using communication for development gains but the practical side is lagging behind. I also reiterated the objective of my research, which is to look into how the NGOs have been practicing development communication. I concluded the chapter by sharing how my own office has been working to ensure two-way communication with development stakeholders. I also came up with a conceptual framework for my research.



## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I have provided the research methodology and the design that I used to get the answers to my research questions. My study aimed at exploring the development communication practices in three different Non-Governmental Organizations. Having worked as a media person and a development communicator myself, my experiences also assisted me in doing meaningful interviews with other development communicators to see how they have been practising development communication and with what motive. The selection that now follows gives detailed description on vital issues of the study. These are the philosophical consideration, the overall research approach, research design, the information collection plan and the process or techniques, analysis and presentation of the information, quality standards along with ethical considerations.

I used the case study method based on interviews to get the answers to my research questions. I took the help of key informants to cross-check my findings. Key informants are always key to the success of a case study (Yin, 2014). The case study method provides the possibility to look at why a certain decision was taken, how it was implemented and what the results of the implantation were (Lowe et al., 2018).

According to Yin (2014), the case study method is used when studying contemporary events but when the relevant behaviour cannot be manipulated. It involves direct observation of the events under study and interview of the persons involved in the event. The NGOs that this researcher studied are also part of contemporary events, which are bounded in a closed system towards which this researcher would have no control or only little control.

I interviewed development communication practitioners working in three different NGOs. I also examined the models and strategies that they have been using to communicate in

house and with the outer world with particular interest and emphasis on the beneficiaries. My unit of analysis was the development communication practitioners in each of the NGOs. The in-depth interviews also helped me find the answers to my second research question which sought to assess the impact of development communication activities being conducted by the NGOs. I triangulated my findings with the help of key informant interviews.

### **My Philosophical Base**

The philosophical base in my research consists of my stance towards the nature of reality (ontology), through which sources I gain knowledge (epistemology) and the role of values in my research (axiology).

Ontology deals with the nature of reality. Smith (2003) states that “ontology as a branch of philosophy is the science of what is, of the kinds and structures of objects, processes and relations in every area of reality.” In the case of my research, a particular style of development communication practices being used by the NGOs under study have been there because of a varied number of reasons and the result of those decisions is also perceived in a varied number of ways. My study hence was subjective and multiple. I constructed knowledge through my own lived and work experiences and the interviews that I conducted with the development communicators and also the interview of the key informants.

Epistemology deals with the sources of generating knowledge. Richards (2003) states that epistemology is the science of study of knowledge which refers to the views that we have about the nature of knowledge and the relationship between knower and known. Epistemology is also concerned with the ways of learning, knowing about the social world and focuses on how we can know about the reality and what is the basis of our knowledge (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In my study, I used

the subjective way of learning about the development communication practices being pursued by development communication practitioners.

### **Interpretive Case Study: My Study Paradigm**

According to Patton (2002), a paradigm is a broad view or perspective of seeing something. Scotland (2012) states that a paradigm consists of the ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. Ontology relates to the constitution of reality (Crotty, 1998). I developed a position on how the practitioners of development communication perceive their practices; are the practices helping them to put their messages across? Epistemology is associated with nature and forms of knowledge (Crotty, 1998). I should understand or know from where the practitioners of development communication are getting their knowledge from that is helping their day to day work.

Research paradigms are based on ontological and epistemological assumptions. Different paradigms contain different ontological and epistemological assumptions, so that they have different reality and knowledge which support the research approach. This is also reflected in the methodology and methods. Therefore to clarify my inquiry or structure of inquiry and methods, I discussed an exploration of the paradigm adopted for this study prior to any discussion on the specific methodology of this study.

Grix (2004) states that interpretivism, which covers a wide range of perspective in human science is concerned with subjectivity and understanding of individual or groups. It also emphasizes understanding of social phenomena (Grix, 2004). Hence, in this study I explored the subjective perspectives of development communicators in NGOs. Doing case studies would be the preferred method, compared to the others, in situations where the research questions are 'how' or 'why'

questions, the researcher has no control over behavioural events and the focus of the study is a contemporary phenomenon (Yin, 2014). In the case of my research, I explored how NGOs are conducting their development communication practices which are all contemporary ongoing events being carried out by development communicators in separate settings which are beyond the researcher's control. Hence, studying these particular cases helped me find answers to my research questions.

### **Methodology: Case Study**

Under qualitative research approach, I have chosen case study research design for selecting my cases as I understand case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases written within a bounded system, setting or context (Creswell, 2007). According to Stake (1995, p. 12), "case is "bounded system" and one should inquire into it "as an object rather than a process". It is a specific or a complex functioning thing like; boundary and working parts and purposive social interactions (Stake, 1995, p. 2 as cited in Yanzan, 2015).

Here, I explored bounded system (cases) in different ground realities through detailed in depth information generation, higher conceptualization of the views, understanding social process, and outcomes of phenomena (Yin, 2003). I studied three separate NGOs, where development communication practices are a part of daily functioning. I know that an advantage of the case study approach is that it can fit well with the needs of small-scale research through concentrating effort on one research site. Case study method helps a researcher to directly examine the data within a specific context (Denscombe, 1998). For me, the cases that I have selected relate to three small scale NGOs working on the same field, i.e. development and rights protection. Therefore, a number of relevant features are likely to bind these particular cases.

The key characteristic of case study research is the delimitation of the case from integrated system. The case is a thing, a single entity, a unit around which there are boundaries (Merriam, 1998). The most common use of the term 'case' associates the case study with a location, such as a community or organization (Bryman, 2009). I selected three organisations or NGOs for my study. All the three NGOs selected were my cases; although their nature of work was similar, they formed three different cases as they were bound by their own working modalities and limitations. Since this study explored the development communication practices in NGOs, first and foremost, I had to be sure that the cases I selected had a separate wing for communication activities and were communicating about their work with their partners and stakeholders. Upon inquiry with the respective NGOs, I selected, I have confirmed that all of them have a communication wing where people are working as development communicators. While doing case studies, a pertinent question that arises was the question regarding 'the unit of analysis' as I studied the development communication practices in three NGOs by interviewing the development communicators; the development communicators were my unit of analysis. I began my field work by pretesting the questionnaire in two different NGOs. I conducted interviews in the two NGOs on separate days. After pretesting and adjusting my questionnaire to make them in tune with my research questions; I interviewed development communicators in three different NGOs, I interviewed six development communicators in three different NGOs. I followed a reiterative process and inquired further and revisited the development communicators over the course of time to clarify certain things and collect further information. I also conducted key informant interviews of five development communication experts. I was engaged in the field a considerable length of time until I felt that my collection of information had reached

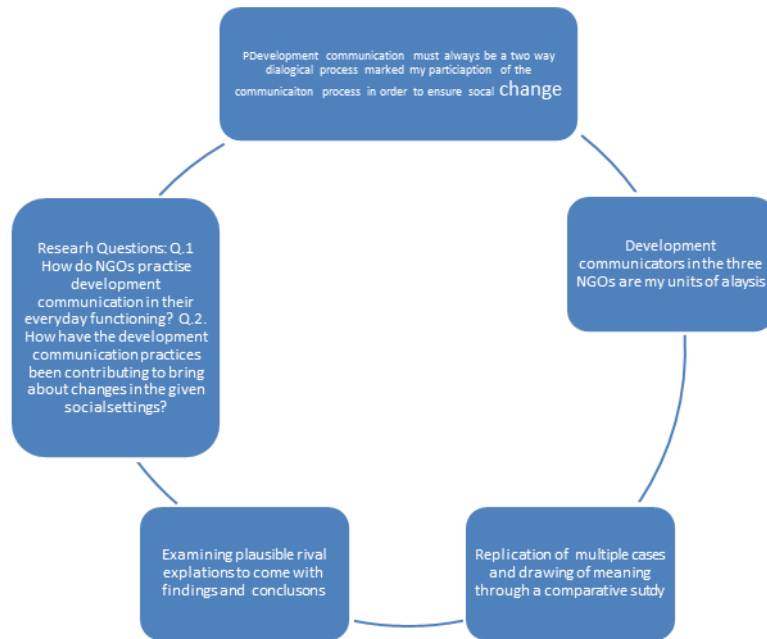
a point of saturation. Following the interviews, it took me almost three weeks to transcribe the interviews and organize my data. I took the consent of the interviewees to record information and also take notes.

### **Research Design**

According to Yin (2014), every type of empirical research study has an implicit if not explicit research design, in the most simplest terms, the design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions, and ultimately to its conclusions. *"In other words, a research design helps a researcher to navigate through the different steps from drafting research questions to drawing the relevant conclusions following the interpretation of the data collected. Another way of thinking about a research design is as a 'blueprint' for your research, dealing with at least four problems what questions to study, what data are relevant, what data to collect, and how to analyse the results (Philliber et al., 1980, p. 12 as cited in Ying, 2014)."*

According to Ying (2014), in case study research, five components of research design are especially important which are: i) Case study questions ii) Its proponents, if any, iii) Its units of analysis iv) The logic linking the data to the propositions, and v) The criteria for interpreting the findings.

As far as this case study is concerned, I took up, it was a holistic multiple case study of three cases representing three NGOs. Multiple case designs have distinct advantages and disadvantages in comparison to single-case design. The evidence from multiple cases is therefore regarded as being more robust (Herriott & Firestone, 1983, p. 15 as cited in Ying, 2014). My descriptive case study design was as follows:



Source: Yin (2014)

In order to familiarise myself with the descriptive case study model, I referred to the case study entitled ‘Midwestern University’: Leadership Under Pressure’ written by Lui (2012). The case study discusses in length the efforts made by an official of the Midwestern foundation to raise money for the scholarship fund of the university. The descriptive approach has paid attention to every minute detail on how gradual efforts were made to convince donors to donate to the university fund when there was widespread negative publicity against it. This study helped me to understand how a researcher should take note of minute details while collecting data for case study research.

### **Pretesting of interview questions**

Pre-testing is the process of carrying out the data collection process in a small scale in order to familiarise oneself with the data collection instruments, sessions and methodology.

Pretesting is helpful for the researcher since it allows the person to assess different cultural and linguistic barriers in order to correct them before the actual process of the interviews for data collection. The pretesting of interview questions is done among the study population having the same characteristics in order to assess how the entire process would unfold in the actual process and which impediments could arise (Cridland et al., 2016).

The pre-testing of the interview questions was carried out in two Non-Governmental Organizations that were similar in size and their nature of activities. One was the Child Welfare Society (name changed) and the other was Centre for Community Development (named changed). While doing the pretesting of the questions, I was mindful of the fact that the NGOs are of similar size and nature. My motive of pretesting was to ensure that they were the appropriate questions that would help to get the answers to my research questions. It was also to explore what changes were required in my questions in order to fine tune them before using them for the in-depth interviews at the three different NGOs or cases that I selected for my study.

The first NGO I selected for the pretesting was an NGO working in the sector of child rights for many years. I interviewed the person looking after the overall communication and tested the questions. Ms. Renu Giri (name changed) looks after the communication and development communication section in the child rights NGO. I did the second round of pre-testing of my interview questions at another NGO which was the 'Community Development Centre' (name changed). The pretesting helped me to draw inferences for my first research question: How are NGOs practicing development communication in their day to day functioning? The organization was working in the sector of community development in remote parts of Nepal.



### **Outcome of the Pre-testing of the Interview Questions**

The pretesting of questions at the two NGOs gave me a precise idea about whether the questions would guide me towards getting the answers to my research questions or not. I realized that I would have to let the conversation flow freely in the course of the interviews apart from sticking to the structured type of questionnaire which is deemed necessary for case study research. Interview questions for case study research should be allowed to flow freely and should not be very structured (Creswell, 2013).

The pre-testing of the questionnaires also helped me to look into the working styles of NGOs while dealing with the development communication messages. After the pre-testing of my questions, I conducted interviews at the three NGOs that were selected for the study.

### **Selection of NGOs**

Case selection is one of the most important steps prior to venturing into a research because the selection of the cases sets the agenda for studying those cases (Seawright & Gerring (2008). Choosing good cases for extremely small sample is a challenging task (Gerring, 2007). Since choosing the cases randomly has led to issues related to representativeness, the argument for some purposive case selection seems strong (Seawright & Gerring, 2008). Hence, I too, decided to choose my cases based on purposive method guided by similarity of cases which would make it easy for me to do a cross case analysis.

I chose three NGOs working in the sector of human rights in different parts of the country and within the Kathmandu valley. This purposive selection of NGO was to see how they are communicating with their stakeholders in the capital city with

more media exposure and with those in other parts of the country where media literacy along with exposure is comparatively less. A brief overview of the selected NGOs is as follows:

### **Sarathi Media Centre**

Sarathi Media Center (SMC) is a non-governmental organization established in 2000 by journalists from the Dalit community in Nepal. The organization has been involved in advocacy works with an aim to promote more equitable, inclusive, and accountable democracy, promote environmental justice and sustainable disaster risk reduction through the mobilization of the media. I took this as my first case.

### **Real Works Nepal**

Real Works Nepal (RWON name changed), is an NGO duly registered at the District Administration Office, Kathmandu in 2010 under the NGO Registration Act, 2034 B.S. It is also affiliated with the Social Welfare Council in Kathmandu. RWON's coordination office is located in Kathmandu with district offices situated in four other districts— Jumla, Mugu, Kalikot and Kavrepalanchowk. RWON is dedicated to support the poor, socially excluded and vulnerable people through result driven programs and intervention. I took this as my second case.

### **Nepal Bikash Samaj (NBS)**

Nepal Bikas Samaj (NBS, name changed) is a pioneer organization in combating "caste-based discrimination and untouchability" and promoting equality and dignity of the Dalits in Nepal. NBS, established in 1982, is a first registered non-government organisation *by Dalit for Dalit* rights. I took this as my third case

### **Nature and Sources of Information**

I collected primary data for my research. More precisely, primary information was generated from in-depth interviews.

## **Approaches of Information Collection**

“Information collection offers one more instance for assessing research designs within each approach to inquiry” (Creswell, 2013, p. 117). This study embraced mainly about three separate cases that focused on collecting, discussing and analyzing qualitative information. For collecting information in the field, I allocated four weeks.

### **In-depth Interview**

Interview signifies the process of viewing inside of the interviewee by the interviewer during their conversation (Kyale, 1996). It is regarded as one of the most popular techniques used for eliciting the views and perspectives of interviewees. In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of participants to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation. Gordon (1990) notes that effective in-depth interview entails creating a shared concern for each other in which both the interviewer and the respondent understand the contextual nature of the interview. For this study, I selected six development communication practitioners from each of the three NGOs. I developed interview guidelines in consultation with my supervisor and conducted the interview based on the interview schedule that I developed.

I also held interviews of other staff of the NGOs for my research. Through the in-depth interviews I conducted, I made a thick description of what the interviewees mentioned about the development communication practices that they have been adopting. This in turn helped me to draw meanings about how they looked at the overall process.

### **Interpreting and Meaning Making**

Information analysis is neither a distinct stage nor a discrete process; it is something that is happening, in one form or another, through the whole research process (Richards, 2003, p. 268). It is a process of systematically searching and arranging structured information so that the researcher can accumulate to increase understanding and is enabled to present generalized knowledge to others (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

In my study, I analyzed all the textual information collected through interviews to draw meanings relating to the types of development communication practices being used by the NGOs. After transcribing the collected raw materials in textual form, I identified, arranged, and systematized them to draw meanings relating to communication practices.

### **Quality Standards**

Qualitative research undertakings often draw flak for lacking the desired level of reliability and validity of its findings. The aim of quality standard in qualitative study is to support the disagreement that the findings are worth paying attention to (Lincoln & Guba, 2005). Hence, to maintain quality standard in my study, I applied trustworthiness, verisimilitude, informed consent and anonymity as the major considerations as presented below:

#### **Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness of information refers to the relation between desired information and collected information. It determines whether the research truly measures what was intended to measure, or how truthful the research results were (Golafshani, 2003).

According to Lincon and Guba (2005), thick description is a way of achieving a type of validity describing a phenomenon in sufficient detail so that one can begin to evaluate the extent to which the conclusions drawn are transferrable to other times, settings, situations and people. I conducted in-depth interviews and looked for recurring patterns when it came to development communication practices, which helped me to transfer the observations to other similar situations or settings.

Further to this, I employed four issues of trustworthiness in qualitative paradigms such as credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability (Lincon & Guba, 2005). For credibility, internal consistency, I observed the working situations and working style of the development communicators in the NGOs. I selected closely and held frequent consultations with the participants, conducted peer review and also made use of self-reflexivity during information analysis. Likewise for maintaining transferability, I applied thick description, theoretical interpretation and holistic analysis in order to unveil natural findings so that synergic knowledge would be transferred to similar settings.

Likewise, for ensuring dependability, I triangulated my information collection procedures and information analysis method so that I could ensure quality of the integrated processes of information collection, information analysis, and theorization. Finally, I considered conformability approaches and interpretations and recommendations supported by information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985 as cited in Loh, 2013).

### **Informed Consent**

I considered consent of my research participants during information collection. As I know ethical issues are important to consider in order to protect the rights and dignity of the people involved in any piece of research, in my case, they were the

development communicators working in different NGOs. In order to conduct my research, I took the prior consent of the development communicators. I informed them the purpose of my study and explained to them their right to take part in the research and to withdraw anytime in case they felt the urge to do so. I appraised my participants about the possible benefits, purpose and the procedure of the research project.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidentiality in research means to keep confidential the information that could divulge the identity of the participants. Spradley (1979) said that participants should be able to remain anonymous and should be afforded pseudonyms. I told my participants that whatever they shared with me would be kept confidential and the information would be used only for the purpose of my research. I identified the participants in my research only if they allowed me to do so.

### **Ethical Considerations**

“Ethical behaviour has been explained as a matter of principled sensitivity to the rights of others, and that while truth is good; respect for human dignity is better (Cavan, 1977, as cited in Cohen et al., 2007, p. 58).” I have a clear understanding that since I am working for a donor agency, the NGOs that I am researching on might be influenced by my position and might yield to my request for information. I clarified them that I was presenting myself as a researcher and not as a representative of a donor agency. I made it clear to the development communicators in the three NGOs that I would abide by all the ethical principles of 'maintaining confidentiality' of their identities while undertaking the research and also spoke to the respective NGOs heads that the identity of the NGOs would be well protected.

## Chapter Conclusion

The research was carried out in three different NGOs working in the sector of development in general and human rights in particular. The NGOs selected for the study were the Saarathi Media Centre (name changed), which was taken as the first case, Real Works Nepal (name changed) and the Nepal Bikash Samaj (name changed) was taken as the third case. I formulated two research questions for the case study. The first research question sought to explore how the NGOs are practicing development communications in their day to day operations and the second research question explored what kind of impact the development communication practices were having in the areas where the NGOs were working.

I used the case study method based on interviews of individuals looking after communication activities in the respective NGOs to delve into my research questions. I started my research by pre-testing the questions that I was looking forward to using to interview the development communicators at the three NGOs.

The essence of a case study, the central tendencies among all types of case study, is that it tries to illuminate a *decision* or set of decisions: why they were taken, how they were implemented and with what results (Schram, 1971).

I interviewed development communication practitioners working in three different NGOs and drew meaning out of the information they provided on their development communication activities that they provided. I also examined the models and strategies that they have been using to communicate in house and with the outer world with particular interest and emphasis on the beneficiaries. My unit of analysis was the development communicators in the NGOS that I studied individually. In order to cross check and verify my observations and findings, I conducted key informant interviews with experts who have had a long experience working in the development

communication field and solicited their observations on the level of impacts that are being felt.



## CHAPTER IV

### DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION PRACTICES OF NGOS

In this chapter, I have addressed my first research question “How do NGOs practise development communication in their everyday functioning?” Prior to setting out to do the actual interviews, I prepared the prompts for the interview.

#### **Perceptions on Development Communication Carried by Development Communicators in NGOs**

The development communicators in the NGOs where the pretesting of the interview questions was done possessed a clear understanding of the meaning and implications of development communication. Their perceptions were found to be similar to the modern day definitions given by communication experts,

According to Stevens and Melkote (2015), development communication is a two-way process. It deals with efforts towards consensus building and is also marked by resistance. The process is historically grounded, culturally sensitive and multifaceted and is carried out amidst the reality of politically and historically grounded situations. Some of the examples of development communication are participatory social change, social mobilization, resistance communication, liberation approaches, and participatory action research approaches.

I was able to assess the understandings of the persons looking after development communication in the NGOs where I did the pretesting of the interview questions and the respective NGOs where I conducted the case studies.

Renu Giri (name changed) at the Child Welfare Society (name changed) shared, "Media houses generally focus on the inconsistencies and the deviations in the society and are more critical about issues, but we are different and we look at

communication and development communication in a different way”, she shared. “We look at issues and problems not limiting ourselves to the problems alone, but sharing what could be done in order to improve the situation.”

Giri stated that development communication is more often than not used as a problem solving tool. It seeks to adopt a participatory model of dialogical interactions with the development stakeholders so as to find solutions to their development problems.

Similarly, Hari Karki (name changed), another development communicator working with Centre for Community Development when asked to define development communication said that unlike journalism and mass communication where the communicator communicates with the masses, development communication is more centred around only the stakeholders of development. In other words, it is a form of communication which is centred on development stakeholders.

I have come to glean that there needs to be some sort of mutual reciprocity in the cultural and linguistic similarities between the sender and receiver in the process of communication. Cultural and linguistic barriers become instrumental to disturb the communication process, thereby preventing it from being successful. Development communicators have a big role when it comes to using the right modes of communication to reach the right audiences with the right message. The messages related to how individuals can adopt a better lifestyle and better ways of doing things eventually leading them to a higher state of consciousness of political, social, and economic issues are only possible when the messages are simple enough for the receivers to understand and internalize.

Mr. Jiwan Khatri (name changed) is the chairman of the organization that has been working in the sector of advocacy to protect and promote the Dalit rights

through the Saarathi Media Centre (name changed). He has an experience of over two decades working in the sector of communication and development communication.

He was formally trained to be a journalist and has a university degree in communication and mass communication. Asked to define communication and development communication, Mr. Khatri shared that communication and development communication should be understood as a bridge that connects the people with development. It also connects the people with their government. But the essence of communication and development communication is not being understood well in our society. This has in turn given rise to a pertinent question: Are we engaged in the right kind of communication? Are we giving the right messages to our audiences? The failure to acknowledge that effective communication is essential for bringing about development has adversely affected our development efforts, Khatri said.

He observed that the meaning of communication is understood only as a tool to exchange information. Its meaning has not been gauged in terms of wider level of impact. Communication has been understood as a mere tool of management in an organization instead of the heart of the organization.

He shared that communication is essentially to do with how much an individual can make the other individual with whom he/she is communicating understand what is being talked about. For this, the communicator himself needs to have the skills to communicate effectively and properly. The level of communication with different levels of the people in the society is different at different times, he adds and says communication can be categorized as communication at the level of individuals, key people and wider groups.

He further shared that the content of any communication needs to be prepared doing due home work, but it so appears that we are not giving much thought to ensuring that our contents are informative and as desired by our target audience.

The second round of interview was done with the project manager and advocacy manager at the Nepal Bikash Samaj. I have taken this as my second case for my research. I interviewed Mr. Pramod Chapagain (name changed), who has a degree in Peace, Conflict and Development Studies and joined the organisation a year ago. The organization does not have a separate section to deal with matters related to communication. Most of the communication is carried out through the front desk. Chapagain is of the view that disseminating project related messages with the beneficiaries or stakeholders is a form of development communication. The organization has been using local radios, national radio, newsletters, brochures, posters, leaflets, TV and social media to communicate about the organization's activities with the target audiences.

### **Digital Communication and Its Role and Impact on Development**

#### **Communication**

The impact of digital revolution and the internet is omnipresent in our communication here and now. What connects is the internet and our shared interest in communication and development (Jensen, 2017).

According to Jensen (2017), communication for development is all about facilitating genuine dialogue in support of people-centred, people-led sustainable development outcomes. Digital is superior to traditional mass media in its ability to underpin and enable participatory communication.

Jensen (2017) cites other seven reasons why digital communication comes handy if we were to pursue dialogical communication. He says that digital

communication enables face to face communication across time, space and culture. Digital communication platforms give way to an enabling environment where people with similar ideas can share their views and work towards a common goal.

Compared to production and use of traditional mass media such as TV, radio and newspapers, digital communication is much cheaper both in terms of production and use. It also provides much more cost-effective options to analyze, segment, and target communication participants with customized content, states Jensen. Moreover, digital communication is more interesting and relevant. The two-way and real-time nature of digital allows communication participants to engage in ways that meet their needs and desires, at a convenient time and place. This makes it easier to access and be targeted with content that is relevant and therefore more interesting. This explains why millennials are happier using YouTube than watching TV.

Jensen (2017) further stated that the internet and in particular the social media is becoming the most important communication and marketing platform worldwide. In terms of marketing expenditure, the transition to digital has already taken place in China. The US is very close to the tipping point and even the most remote communities on the planet can often be engaged digitally in one way or another. With commerce going digital there is every indication that the ability to scale up investment in digital is key also to communication for social and behavioral change. Take for example the potential of analytics of big data and data points to predict future outcomes and behaviors and how you could shape your communication and services accordingly.

The rate of development of any nation hinges partly on the ration of digital connectivity of that particular country. Earlier studies provide some evidence that investing on information, communication, and technology can improve a nation's

economic health. Using data from 28 developing countries Shridhar and Shridar (2007) found that an increase in the number of phones, both fixed line and mobile have a positive impact on national economic output. Waverman et al. (2005) showed that in a typical developing country, an extra 10 mobile phones per 100 people results in 0.6% growth in per capita GDP. This is double the expected impact on a developed country. Looking at 113 countries over 20 years, the International Food Policy Research Institute (Torero and Von Barun 2006) found that 1% increase in telecommunication penetration led to a 0.03% increase in GDP.

Nepal's success in the area of digitalization is impressive with mobile penetration standing at 100% and internet penetration at 60%. The data of the Nepal Telecom Authority shows that there was an addition of 2.25 million internet users in 2017 and there has been an addition of 250 new internet users each hour.

Nepal is expected to surpass its neighbours – India and China as regards internet penetration. The main reason behind the increasing rate of internet penetration is the manifold increase in the number of social media users, which ranks second after Bhutan in South Asia. As in January 2018, Nepal has nearly 9.3 million Facebook users. Entertainment and video sharing are other popular use cases with more than 6.4 million registered users on YouTube.

This very depiction clearly outlines the fact that Nepal has a lot of prospects to make headways in using digital communication for its development. The three NGOs studied for this research were also found to be using digital communication to promote development.

Hari Karki at the Child Development Centre has been using digital communication to establish direct contacts with the stakeholders of the project run by

his organization. He said that he had the exposure and skills of working both in the print and online media.

Asked about the effectiveness of web-based communication, Mr. Karki said “There has been a global trend to discontinue the publication of newsletters and carry out all communication activities through the website. Printing of newsletters is always costly and there is no guarantee that people will actually read the newsletters about any organization’s activities. On the contrary, placing content in the online media or web is both cost effective and reaches a large number of people”.

The NGO has a Facebook page with 5000 followers. Social media is more effective than the print media since the messages in the social media reach a large number of audiences in a short span of time at very low cost. Glamorous issues such as trafficking, child labour, disability, climate change and migration draw more audience, Mr. Karki said adding further that their area of work, however, was more related to livelihood and governance. Health and education hence was less glamorous. These areas of intervention are necessary if some improvement in the state of poverty of the communities is to be brought about.

Similarly, Ms. Prema Chand (name changed) working for the Nepal Bikash Samaj says that despite not having a degree in communication she does not face any difficulty to deal with communication related matters. She says that she is full time into the job and has been working for many years.

Asked about the kinds of messages that she has been designing for her target beneficiaries, Ms. Chand said that she had been distributing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to the beneficiaries. The messages are often related to anti-discrimination and are aired through the local radios in the project districts. The project staffs also interact and talk to the beneficiaries whenever they

are paying visits to the project sites, she says. We also talk to the intended beneficiaries at the time of the development of the projects. This apart our organization has also been using facebook to communicate with our target audiences. We have district chapters in seventy-four districts which are also using the facebook to communicate with the target audiences.

Asked which medium has been more effective to communicate with the audiences, Ms. Chand shared “Facebook is very effective to reach out to the masses. Besides, the local radios are also equally effective because people can listen to them in all situations – while working in the field and cooking food. We have been developing the IEC materials in the local languages”. Asked if she worked on the basis of a communication strategy, she said;

*The organization does not have a communication strategy and a work plan. The projects carry out the communication as and when needed. We have a quarterly newsletter, which is distributed to different stakeholders. We also communicate through facebook and e-mails and our network in the seventy four districts. There are 8000 people in the network and information that is shared with the network is again forwarded to many other audiences in order to generate a multiplier effect.*

Regarding the types of messages shared, she said ‘Mostly the messages are related to any changes in the law related to the Dalit rights, new laws, and policy briefs. We also use a resource person to process the information so that the precise and latest information reaches the target audiences’.

Asked about the feedback received for the messages sent out, Ms Chand said “As our organization runs on advocacy based communication campaigns, the feedback received is in the form of requests for us to run livelihood programmes”.



She further added, "After the communities are made aware about their rights; they are then more eager to identify themselves with the resources they are entitled to. Our organization has been launching activities on education, disaster risk reduction, and advocacy."

**Role of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) in Development Communication**

IEC, BCC and SBCC are proven powerful tools for bringing social change and development. These strategies are research based consultative processes designed for addressing knowledge, attitudes, and practices to bring positive changes in the behaviours and attitudes of the target groups. They define a community's needs, create awareness, promote health education, and guide them on how to exercise their rights (Deep, 2019)

An individual's behaviour is shaped by the social, cultural, economic, and political systems. With well-defined strategies and participatory practices, these strategies of communication sustain and encourage positive behaviour eliminating social disparities.

Building linkages of the importance of IEC BCC and SBCC materials to this research, the NGOs under study were using different forms of such materials in order to bring about social changes and development. Hari Karki working for Centre for Rural Development says that among different communication materials that are being used by his office, IEC and BCC materials are quite prominent.

*Similarly, Ms. Pema Chand, who works for the Nepal Bikash Samaj when asked about the kinds of messages that she has been designing for her target audiences, Ms. Chand said, she has been distributing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to the audiences. The*

*messages are often related to anti-discrimination and are aired through the local radios in the project districts. The project staff also interact and talk to the beneficiaries whenever they are paying visits to the project sites. Adding we also talk to the intended beneficiaries at the time of the development of the projects. This apart our organization has also been using Facebook to communicate with our target audiences. We have district chapters in seventy four districts which are also using Facebook to communicate with the target audiences”.*

### **Role of Pretesting of Messages in Development Communication**

According to Dr. Satis Chandra one of the key informants for this research, one of the main failures of development communication messages to bring about the desired social change is that it is often disseminated through the wrong channel without any prior testing of how the message would be perceived in the targeted community.

Dr. Chandra returned after completing his PhD from the USA and has been in the field for nearly 30 years now. The first public service announcement that struck him was that of a small girl who intervenes and stops her father from being deceived by a money lender who upon lending NPR 100 added an extra zero and made it 1000 while the girl’s father was about to put his thumb impression on the contract paper.

Although the PSA carried a very meaningful and educative message that parents stand to gain on deciding to educate their daughters, the medium chosen for the dissemination of the PSA was inappropriate. As the number of TV sets in the 1990s was limited across the country, the message failed to reach the desired number of people. Had radio which had a greater reach been selected for the dissemination of the message, then it would have succeeded in achieving its intended goal of raising awareness among rural parents about the significance of sending girls to school, Dr.

Chandra said reiterating the importance of selecting the right medium to ensure that the message being transmitted through the process of development communication reaches the right audience.

Highlighting the role of the medium selected, Dr. Chandra said “Development communication in the context of Nepal is being promoted by Radio compared to other forms of media. Take for example, the case of Bijay FM in Gaidakot Chitwan, it does not play any ads and focuses on disseminating purely development messages”. Despite having a keen competitor, Kalika FM (powerful), Bijaya FM has been able to survive, it has a cooperative and a school, they have ensured revenue sources, Dr. Chandra said;

Dr. Chandra pointed at the need to pre-test messages. The messages are seldom pretested and hence fail to make the desired impact. Citing an example of how messages fail to make any impact when they are not pre-tested, Dr. Chandra said when bird flu hit Nepal in January 2000, posters were distributed in the eastern towns of Jhapa asking people to consume only healthy chicken. Chickens were being culled for fear of the spread of bird flu and there was not any chicken. The messages were being disseminated through the medium of posters and hoarding boards. After realizing that the messages were not precise and correct, we had to pull down all the posters. The problem with development communication messages is that they are never pre-tested, even if they are, they are only pre-tested within the organization and not amidst the stakeholders, Dr. Chandra said.

He said that pretesting of messages alone would ensure a high level of effectiveness of the message. Pointing at some inconsistencies in the development communication sector in Nepal, Dr. Chandra said that although the National Health Education, Information and Communication Centre (NHEICC) has earned a good

name for launching effective development communication programmes to bring about behavioural changes in the health sector, the irony is that it has at times failed to disseminate the messages to the intended audiences. This is evident from the fact that when one visits their office one can see stacks of posters. When asked why the posters were lying there at the office and had not been disseminated to the intended audiences, the answer one would often get is that there was budget to print the posters but there was no budget to disseminate them, Dr. Chandra said.

*“There is no empirical evidence whether there exists a research based development communication practice in Nepal or not. I had tested a book ‘A Farmer’s Primer on Growing Rice. The book had been translated in 34 languages (Visual literacy). A best seller in rice. My target groups were extension workers and contact farmers. First, I drew a baseline, I looked at their level of knowledge before giving them the book. After two months I did post-test. And again in the next two months, I tried to see if behaviour change had taken place”.*

The NGOs under study, however, were not found to be pretesting the messages before dissemination in their respective localities. Even at the office where I work, which is a development cooperation cum diplomatic institution, I have never pre-tested any messages to ensure their viability during my twelve-year stint. Although the need to pre-test messages has often been raised during meetings time and again, the practice has not been carried out due to constraint of manpower and resources.

### **Types of Development Communication Messages, Channels Used and Feedback**

Since all the NGOs where I conducted my research were working on the sector of human rights. Their messages carried information on why and how to protect human rights.

Ms. Renu Giri said that despite not having a formal degree in communication and mass communication, she is very comfortable handling development communication messages. Since she works for a child rights organization, the messages are focussed on the protection of the rights of the child.

She said that the content or message is disseminated through different channels. It is broadcast through NTV plus every Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. The content generated basically focuses on ways to consolidate the rights of the children and is also broadcast through Capital FM, Radio Sarangi Morang and Radio Sarangi Pokhara. Apart from this, the organization has its own website and You Tube channels where the prepared contents are posted.

On my query as to what kinds of messages and in which form her organization shares with the audiences, Ms. Giri said,

*If we talk about Radio or TV, the programmes we make are for children but they are indirectly for the adolescents also. In our last episode, we talked about how girls could be more organized to take care of their cleanliness during menstruation. We discovered that the sanitary pads could be made at home and we talked about that in our show. We disseminate information about child's participation, security, rights and their development. We also disseminate information through PSA aired through radio, mobile camps, we have started talking about the mental health of children now.*

On the relevance of the messages, most of which are on child rights, Ms. Giri shared that although the messages are meant for children, our main audiences are the parents. But it so happens that the parents are busy in their own world, the children watch the programme and share their experiences with their parents. She believes that while crafting the messages, the children should be given an active role. Generally

what happens is that the adults write the contents of the messages that are meant for children.

Feedback is very important during the process of communication. Asked whether, she receives any feedback following her communication efforts, Ms. Giri exclaimed,

*I feel that the thing that is not working is to do with feedback. We can say that there is no regular feedback at all. Generally we ask for the feedback through the e-mail. This must be why we do not get the feedback. I feel that we have not been able to develop a good mechanism for getting the feedback. We used to look at Hindi comics, some were in the Nepal language also. These days, the cartoon channels are in Hindi and English. Children get to learn about India's Independence Day and other things but not anything about Nepal. Oinsten, a communication expert, does programme on children's art., When he was here we did a programme with him and our cartoonists. The programme was about doing a good business by promoting cartoons. I got feedback from the Environment Minister who said it was good. We are not getting as much feedback as we expect. Actually, it needs to be strengthened. There are only few people who give us feedback.*

The reason for the negligible number of feedback received has been attributed to the fact that most of the time people are not interacting with the contents in the way they should. They do not internalize the messages seriously to the extent that they are able to give feedback, she added “If we get feedback it will certainly help us to overcome our shortcomings”.

Regarding a query on which media she thought was more effective while communicating the messages, she said, “The reason why radio is effective, is that it

can be listened to even when engaging in different activities. But one needs to sit fixed to watch TV.”

The other NGO where I looked at the development communication practices was the Sarathi Media Centre. I interviewed Mr. Jiwan Khatri at this organisation. Mr. Khatri is the chairman of the organization that has been working in the sector of advocacy to protect the rights of the Dalit community across the country. He was formally trained to be a journalist and has a university degree in communication and mass communication.

Asked whether his organization was ensuring a two-way communication with the stakeholders that it was working with, Mr. Khatri said two-way communication is glaringly missing. For instance, we assume what the people in Doti are expecting in terms of their development necessities and accordingly we tend to impose our programmes on them without first seeking to understand what their real needs are. Regarding a query as to why there was no two way communication, he conceded that the reason for not having two way communication is an organizational weakness. Organizations are not interested to spend time, go to the field and ensure two way communication. Instead, they are just for communicating one way with their beneficiaries.

He further shared “The content of any communication needs to be prepared doing due home work, but it so appears that we are not giving much thought to ensuring that our contents are informative and as desired by our target audience”.

The second person who was interviewed at the same NGO was Mr. Lok Shrestha. Mr. Shrestha has a degree in health and communication and has been working with the organisation for several years now. Asked to which audiences the contents created by the organization were targeted, Mr. Shrestha said, “The type of

receivers of the message is determined by the type of content that we make. If the content is related to caste based discrimination, then the audiences are the policy makers, political leaders and the actual people who are being discriminated”.

The third person interviewed at the same organisation was Mr. Rishi Kattel. Mr. Kattel received his academic training in rural development. He worked with different UN organisations and GIZ before joining the Sarathi Media Centre. He had taken up the role of communication officer in his previous offices but with at his present office he has been looking after projects while also assisting in the works of the communication officer.

Asked about the type of contents catered to the audiences, Mr. Kattel said,

*The content depends on the type of audiences targeted. For instance, the Saarathi Media centre had implemented a parliamentary support project in the past and the audience or receivers of the messages for this project were lawyers and parliamentarians. The lawyers would train and inform the Dalit parliamentarians on the constitutional provisions or any amendment in the existing laws. The parliamentarians would share their views in the parliament based on the analytical report provided to them by the lawyers. At this time, our office gets involved in one to one communication with the lawmakers through closed messaging system”*

“Similarly, we have the Dalit Human Rights Portal, the messages are directed to the law enforcement agencies and the parliamentarians only. When the content or messages are related to gender equality and social inclusion, our audiences are even wider and larger”, Mr. Kattel said.

Asked about the state of internal communications in the office, Mr. Kattel informed that communication within the organization was being carried out on a



weekly basis. Discussions related to progress of projects, finances and other managerial issues are held during our internal meetings which have facilitated the process of communication, he shared.

He shared that they have also been widely using the social media to send out the messages. Much of the feedback on our works is received through the social media, he shared.

The other person I interviewed at the Nepal Bikash Samaj was Ms. Prema Chand. Ms Chanda has done her Bachelor's degree in Education and is currently pursuing her Master's degree in Sociology. She has been working as an advocacy officer for her organization and also looks after communication. She said, "Despite not having a degree in communication she does not face any difficulty to deal with communication related matters. She is full time into the job and has been working for many years."

Asked about the kinds of messages that she has been designing for her target audiences, Ms. Chand said,

*I have been distributing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials to the audiences. The messages are often related to anti-discrimination and are aired through the local radios in the project districts. The project staffs also interact and talk to the beneficiaries whenever they are paying visits to the project sites. We also talk to the intended beneficiaries at the time of the development of the projects. This apart our organization has also been using facebook to communicate with our target audiences. We have district chapters in seventy four districts which are also using facebook to communicate with the target audiences.*

Regarding the types of messages shared, she said, *“Mostly the messages are related to any changes in the law related to Dalit rights, new laws, and policy briefs. We also use a resource person to process the information so that the precise and latest information reaches the target audiences”*. Asked about the feedback received for the messages sent out, Ms Chand said as her organization runs advocacy based communication campaigns, the feedback received is in the form of requests to run livelihood programmes. She further added that after the communities are made aware about their rights; they are then more eager to identify themselves with the resources they are entitled to. She shared that her organization has been launching activities on education, disaster risk reduction, and advocacy.

My next interview was with the Executive Manager, Surendra Khanal at the Real Works Nepal. Mr. Khanal has a degree in demography and public health and has been also taking the role of a development communicator at the organisation where he works. I have taken this as the third case in my case study.

Mr. Khanal is of the view that appropriate and timely communication both within and outside the organization helps to achieve the development goals or goals set out by the organization. As regards the internal communication in the organization, the executive manager looks after the overall implementation of the project. He said, “

*All the works need to be communicated to the Board through e-mail. The board meets once in every four months and communicates about its assessment on the overall situation of the project.s Real Works Nepal has been running different advocacy based projects relating to women empowerment and health in Jumla, Kalikot, Mugu and Dailekh. There is one other project manager in Jumla who communicates to the staff in rest of the districts.*

Asked about the messages that are disseminated by the organization, he said that the messages are mostly related to advocacy, which are directed to the beneficiaries. We also circulate internal messages and policy decisions as information for our internal staff. Elaborating further on the kinds of messages that are disseminated, he said:

*We disseminate messages related to health and human rights. Other messages are related to our programme and planning. We disseminate advocacy related messages, we have developed policy papers on Chhaupadi. We organized policy advocacy meetings. Chhaupadi elimination policy papers – we discussed with secretaries, journalists, parliamentarians, and representatives from institutions working on gender and women rights. We had done research in five areas on the effects of Chhaupadi. We developed the policy papers on the basis of the discussions.*

Asked about the communication strategy that was being adopted to get the messages across on discouraging and eradicating Chhaupadi practices, Mr. Khanal said;

*We have formed Miteri Samuha, which is being mobilized to do the advocacy works after they are trained on the issues related to women rights. We also have community facilitators who assist them in launching their advocacy campaigns. We also have social workers, and teachers who are working as change agents in our project areas. We have also been printing posters that highlight the risks when women live in the cowsheds during their menstruation.*

On the channels of communications being used, he shared that letters, e-mails. Public Service Announcements through local FM stations are the major modes of

communications being used. Regarding the impact of the communication efforts, he said that the impact was being seen in the villages, people were discouraged to continue with the practice of Chhaupadi. Women who used to live in the cowsheds and were subjected to multiple risks have now moved on to live in their houses during menstruation. This in itself is a positive change of our communication efforts. Drop out of girl students in the schools has been going down. Asked whether he was getting feedback on the messages that were disseminated through different channels, Mr. Khanal responded:

*We have interaction programmes in the field. During that time we continuously get the feedback. Other organizations also do meetings, and give us feedback on our work. Some friends said the Miteri groups are becoming effective. We have also been conducting social hearing in the VDCs. This is also a medium to get feedback. We have declared Chaupadi free area in 90 areas.*

Mr. Khanal shared that being a public health worker, his role was mostly related to advocacy and communication with the local masses. The messages were more related to the prevention of diseases and malpractices that hamper the health of individuals in the society.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

The approaches used by NGOs while conducting their day to day development communication activities were discussed in this chapter. It can be inferred from the discussions that none of the NGOs have recruited development communicators to carry out their day to day development communication activities. The individuals dealing with the issues are people who have taken up communication duties by virtue of being assigned to do so. It was also evident from the discussions that NGOs that

have people who have taken training on communication and development communication are better placed to deal with the situations related to development communications and have been doing comparatively a better job than their untrained counterparts.

## CHAPTER V

### DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATIONS PRACTICES, AND AGENT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

In this chapter I have responded to my second research question: How have the development communication practices been contributing to bring about changes in the given social settings? The practice of development communication by the three NGOs under study were found to have brought about changes in the social settings in terms of the rise in the awareness levels of individuals towards the need to protect and promote women and child rights. The changes were also seen in the form of discontinuation of the Chhaupadi practice, which discriminates women during their menstrual cycle.

#### **What is Social Change?**

The change in social relationships or behaviour patterns is known as social change (Regmi, 2003). The role of communications, information and the media in triggering directed and non-directed change is referred to as social change (Thomas, 2014)

The way we understand and practice communication for development and social change is at a crossroads (Obregon & Tufte, 2017). The rapid changes that have come about in the communication sector coupled with the digitalization of the media have triggered social movements in different parts of the world that have led to social change.

According to Obregon and Tufte (2017), the social movements are brought about because of collective actions on the part of NGOs, civil societies and other

national and international organizations because of the inequalities present in societies. When saying that both the writers also argue that movements for social change do not necessarily have to be a bottom up approach, it could as well be a top down approach sometimes like the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement launched by the UN.

According to Servaes (2016), Communication strategies for development are divided into mainly five groups which are a) Behaviour Change Communication (mainly interpersonal communication), b) Mass Communication (community media, mass media and Information, Communication, Technology Systems), c) Advocacy Communication (interpersonal and/or mass communication), d) Participatory communication (interpersonal communication and community media), and e) Communication for structures and sustainable social change (interpersonal communication, participatory communication, mass communication and Information, Communication Technology Systems).

Servaes stated that “Behaviour Change Communication, Mass Communication and Advocacy Communication, though useful by themselves will not be able to create sustainable change. Participatory Communication and Communication for Structures and Social Change are more concerned about long term sustained change at different levels of society, and more interested in sustainability and long term impact (p. 19).”

In our own context, there are only a few examples of projects that have succeeded due to collective action and strategies launched from the top. Most of the success stories come from projects launched by NGOs and civil societies in close consultations with the people at the grassroots level. The NGOs under study that have oriented their action towards social change have done so through collective action and

forging of coordination with the social mobilisers, local opinion leaders, and the local governments.

The three NGOs under study, as three different cases, are seen to be contributing to trigger social change in terms of behaviour patterns. They have been using different forms of media interventions such as radio, television, brochures, posters, pamphlets, social mobilisers, websites and the social media to sensitize people on the issues of child and women rights in different parts of the country. One other NGO under study has been involved in the sector of sensitizing lawmakers and the general citizens on the right of the Dalit communities who have been marginalized due to discriminatory practices in the Nepali society.

### **NGOs as Agents of Social Change**

“Although the concept of NGOs emerged in the 1800s, their presence was largely realized because of the United Nations in 1945 when the idea of NGOs entered the mainstream when they became a means to distinguish between the participant rights of intergovernmental agencies and international ones. The Human Rights Charter of 1948 highlighted the need to work towards sustaining peace and improving the quality of life for human beings globally, which called for NGOs to fulfil this gap (McPhail, 2017, p.23).”

Mcphail (2017) when referring to the definition of NGOs refers to institutions such as The Red Cross, The World Social Forum and the International Network for Cultural Diversity and says that they are good examples of NGOs. He further states that NGOs are either run by professional staffs or volunteers who contribute towards bringing about development through social change. He reiterates that many peripheral nations around the world are not able to improve the quality of life of their citizens on their own (p. 26)



NGOs came to the forefront in Nepal after the restoration of democracy in 1990. The NGOs are monitored and regulated by the Social Welfare Council. The NGOs have been classified in terms of their areas of work and thematic sectors. There are 25,403 NGOs working in “Community and Rural Development Services” sector. In contrast, there are only 517 NGOs under the category “Educational Development”, and there is not even a separate category for non-governmental entities working in the field of knowledge production (“academic NGOs”). Likewise, the number of NGOs under “Environmental Protection” category is only 1,451 and the number is a paltry 98 for “Aids and Abuse Control”. The answer to this mismatch is more non-governmental entities in sectors with fewer current numbers. For that to happen, one also needs to go beyond a simplistic conceptualisation of NGOs as service delivery and development “partners” in the mode adopted by the pre-1990 regime (Bhandari & Onta, 2017).

The three NGOs under study are working in the sector of human rights protection of women, children and the marginalized communities. They have been able to trigger positive change and have achieved some visible results in changing the perceptions of people towards the issue of human rights.

### **Controversies Surrounding NGOs**

While NGOs strive towards achieving different development goals through the use of development communication, there have been criticisms that NGOs have been worsening conditions in peripheral nations because of how they interact with local governments. Johanna Kalb (2006) stated:

*Despite being dubbed as the drivers of development in the earlier states, NGOs have drawn a lot of criticism in the later years for giving continuity to*

*colonial dependencies, intervening in the sovereignty of nation states and setting the atmosphere for corrupting private organisations (p. 229)*

The NGOs have been looked up to as agents that could possibly minimise the resource gaps between the three tiers of government. Despite this belief that has been widely rooted, the NGOs have not been without controversies (Joshi, 2018).

Nepal at the moment has around 47000 registered NGOs. But only a few hundreds of them are actively working. The country also has around 200 INGOs supporting the NGOs in different sectors such as health, education, sanitation, vocational training and many more in the list. All these interventions have, however, been put under a scanner many times whenever the impact of their activities is assessed from time to time (Snellinger, 2018).

I personally think that despite all the controversies surrounding NGOs in Nepal, their role towards strengthening service delivery has been prominently felt over the years. The progress made so far in reducing child and maternal mortality, scaling up enrolments in the primary schools, bridging the gender gap and advocating for women rights have all been achieved because of the joint partnerships between the NGOs and the government. Hence the role of NGOs will continue to be prominent in the days ahead since Nepal is yet to achieve the desired results in different development sectors.

### **NGOs Involved in Rights Protection, Awareness Raising**

#### **Protection of Child and Women Rights**

The motive of any development communication endeavour is to bring about positive changes in a given social setting. The changes will only be forthcoming if the development communication practice is a dialogical process where development communication is used to bring about sustainable changes in the society through the

use of messages and through the process of building consensus with the stakeholders or the receivers of development messages.

When asked about the impact of the communication activities in the social settings where it was working, Ms. Renu Giri at the Child Welfare centre said,

*The impact can be seen in the form of policy formulations that her organization has been assisting in. She shared that media is just a conduit to give messages, for social change to occur; all the concerned stakeholders should work in tandem.*

*She further shared that there are occasions when the development communicators try to make a difference when they happen to come across some social problems. Citing one instance, she narrated of raising a red alarm against the Temporary Learning Centers that were left in a neglected state as dumping ground where different things were dumped following the 2015 earthquake. She raised awareness on the issue and shared messages that leaving the Temporary Learning Centres (TLCs) in bad shapes close to where children were studying or playing could be hazardous to the safety of the children.*

The result of the communication exercise was that the government responded positively and intervened to remove all the building materials from the TLCs, thereby creating a safe learning environment for the children, Ms Giri shared.

My interpretation of the above case is that the communication efforts of the Child Welfare Centre helped to bring about changes in the behaviour pattern of the local government towards ensuring school safety. This is an example of how development communication triggers positive changes in the society.

My next interview was with the Executive Manager, Surendra Khanal at the Real Works Nepal. Mr. Khanal has a degree in demography and public health and has also been taking up the role of a development communicator at the organisation where he works. I have taken this as the third case in my case study.

Asked about the communication strategy that was being adopted to get the messages across on discouraging and eradicating Chhaupadi practices, Mr. Khanal said, *“We have formed Miteri Samuha, which is being mobilized to do the advocacy works after we are trained on the issues related to women rights. We also have community facilitators who assist them in launching their advocacy campaigns. We also have social workers and teachers who are working as change agents in our project areas. We have also been printing posters that highlight the risks when women live in the cowsheds during their menstruation.”*

Regarding the impact of the communication efforts, he said that the impact was being seen in the villages, people were discouraged from continuing with the practice of Chhaupadi. Women who used to live in the cowsheds and were subjected to multiple risks have now moved on to live in their houses during menstruation. This in itself is a positive change of our communication efforts. Drop out of girl students in the schools has been going down.

My interpretation of the case above is that the works of the NGO have been contributing to raise widespread awareness among individuals regarding the rights of women. A campaign against Chhaupadi has been launched in different districts where the practice has abated to a great extent and partly the NGO's communication efforts are to be credited for this positive change in the society.

### **Support to Sustainable Change in Development Operations**

During the pre-testing of interview questions at the Community Development Centre (name changed), I found that the development communication activities of the NGO were contributing to bring about sustainable change in the development sector apart from also taking up the role of advocacy communication, another form of communication that many organizations are involved in.

Mr. Hari Karki looking after communication at the NGO, elaborated about the impacts of the communication activities he was carrying out for the Community Development Centre (name changed). He said;

*We have not been able to give a push to communication with the beneficiaries at the level that is required. We target the IEC BCC materials to the communities. Our target audiences are sometimes heads of community institutions and representatives of NGOs. We use different channels to communicate with the government as it is a working partner. The Government agencies are well aware about our communication efforts. We have a two-way communication with the government through regular meetings, field visits exchange of views during meetings. We are involved in community development programmes at the grassroots level apart from our advocacy role to secure and promote the rights of the people. Our organization has two areas of works – community development at the grassroots level, it is also involved in advocacy work – rights of people, country. It advocates on development related issues at the local, regional and country and inter-country level. We are also involved in global and regional advocacy through the South Asia Alliance for Poverty Reduction. Its regional secretariat is hosted at our office in Nepal and it has been advocating for the alleviation of*

*poverty in South Asia. The secretariat of the LDC Watch is also located at our office. Nepal also was a chairman of LDC Watch. The African nations are members along with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh. Hence, it has audiences at the international level. I coordinate the communication of all these activities.*

Regarding the impact of the communication activities, Mr. Karki said that the impact is evident at the community level. Communities have been taking heed of our messages and have been showing behavioral changes as regards health, hygiene, giving birth to new ones at the birthing centers, intake of proper nutrition and use of organic fertilizer.

The impact brought about at the community level is testimony of the fact that the communities become more educated on different issues through the process of the right kind of communication and messaging.

On the query of whether local language and medium are more effective to carry out communication with local communities, Mr. Karki said that one needs to be mindful about local language and culture while designing information, education and communication materials. Recalling an instance when the communication efforts of a trainer, his organization had deputed to a terai district had failed, Karki shared the trainer had been sent to the district with the materials prepared in the local language, but the feedback received was that irrespective of the localization of the language, people did not communicate well, the reason cited was that those who are illiterate cannot read even if the materials are prepared in their own indigenous language. Later, the organization changed the modality of the training, a local trainer was hired and he was asked to train the people in the local dialect, this invariably worked better and everybody was happy.

### **Protection of Rights of Dalit and Marginalized Communities**

I started off with my interviews with the development communicators in three different Non-Government organizations which were selected purposefully. I conducted in-depth interview to get the answers to my research questions two: How are the communication practices of the NGOs having an impact in the social setting that they are working? My first NGO for the interview was the Saarathi Media Centre, , where I interviewed three people who shared about the impact that the communication activities were having on their target audiences. I took this organization as my first case for my case study.

On the impact of the messages, Rishi Ram Kattel, one of the three development communicators at the Centre shared that whenever the centre working for the rights of the Dalit community prepares news stories and posts them in their website, other institutions also share it in their own portals and widen our reach. Alumnae journalists who are trained at this centre also share the contents and recycle them for greater impact. The contents that are ventilated from our office go to other institutions and get more publicized. We also share the news related to rights violation of the Dalits in our own news portal. Although we are working day in and day out for the Dalit rights, there has not been much improvement in the rights situationHe further shared:

*There are 31 points on fundamental rights, but the laws on the fundamental rights have not been enacted. We made a draft and gave it to the government, but it has not acted so far. The Government has not taken a certain group of people in the society as assets but they are being treated as liabilities. The voices of Crony capitalists are heard as they pay taxes but the voices of poor Dalits go unheard.*

*We have not lost our hopes. We are determined to move ahead for our rights.*

Asked about the impact of the communication activities, she shared that the students whom we supported five years ago are now enrolled in their medical studies and are looking forward to a bright future. Elaborating further on the impact of communication activities, she said;

*There have been a lot of changes in terms of rights awareness. But the environment of eating at a person's home who is not a Dalit is still not there. Today both Dalits and non-Dalits are sitting together at programmes. Cases have shown that there have been improvements. The fact that there are positive changes in the society indicates that communication is being done in the right manner. The Dalits have now entered a stage where they are able to claim the share of their budget.*

When asked about the impact of communication that could be seen, Mr. Khatri had this to say:

*I can say that if we are to assess in terms of percentage; only 10 percent of the messages is being communicated properly. We use different languages while communicating. 90 percent of communication is not taking place in the right way in the absence of skills and knowhow. We have not been able to become good leaders and activists because we have not been able to communicate well with the people. We have reached the middle level of people in somewhat the right way. But my question is whether we have been able to communicate with the lower level of people in the right way. When we go to Doti, Siraha or anywhere, the people there should be able to understand us, but the reality is that they have not. My feeling is whether we have been able to reach the ground level.*



Asked to comment on the impact of the communication activities carried out by his organization, Mr. Shrestha differed from his colleagues and said that the impact was being well felt. Citing an example, he narrated that his organization came to know that some Dalits in Dakcchinkali were being denied of their old age allowance. After knowing this, his team went to the place and interviewed the local leaders including the Dalits. The interview was posted online after which the rights of the elderly Dalits were restored.

Asked to give his views on why he thought that there has not been much change in the rights situation, Kattel had this to say:

*We are only a watchdog. Our analysis is that as regards the cases of human rights violation, their nature has changed. There is a general belief that untouchability has come to an end. But although it was legally banned and punishable by law, we heard about the news of Dalit parliamentarians being denied rooms for their lodging here in Kathmandu where we have the most educated lot living. There are two theories of change. According to the first theory, change takes place in an ad hoc basis and the second theory stipulates that change comes through revolutions. Social change and political change have not been taking place in tandem in Nepal. The political changes that have come about have failed to make any impact to bring about social changes. Though politically we seem to have come way forward; socially we are trailing behind. The case of developed nation is different, social and political changes take place in tandem with each other. We have been educating our Dalit parliamentarians on constitutionalism, law making, etc. but their voices are not being heard.*

Although NGOs are constantly working ahead to trigger social change, in this particular case change in the attitude of general people towards the marginalized Dalits, politicians who are one of the major catalyst to back this change have been deliberately keeping aloof and not supporting the change agents which has led things to change but very gradually.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

NGOs that work closely with the people in the backward communities have a major say when it comes to bringing about positive changes in the society. They have a big advocacy role to play when it comes to raising awareness on child and women rights. The rights situation in the villages of Nepal have undergone a sea change owing to the active role being played by NGOs, which in turn have also been supporting sustainable operations of development activities.

## CHAPTER VI

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this chapter, I have presented in a nutshell the answers to my research questions discussing the different thematic patterns that were observed in the three NGOs where I conducted the case study. I studied the linkages between the communication theories and whether they are being followed by development communicators so as to ensure that the development goals are achieved. I conducted five key informant interviews with experts who have been observing the development communication scenario of Nepal for a long time and who themselves are development communication practitioners dealing with development issues. I used their individual assessments about the existing state of development communication in NGOs in Nepal to cross check and verify my findings from the research.

One of the main findings of my research was that social change was seen in the form of behaviour change patterns. The NGOs under study were engaged mostly in advocacy communication, which was found to be effective in changing the attitudes of the people towards the issue of child and women rights. It was found to have contributed to increased respect for human rights. This finding is linked to my second research question, which seeks to find what forms of changes have come about in the societies where the NGOs under study have been practising development communication.

The Real Works Nepal that has been focussing on changing the people's attitudes towards, Chhapaudi, an age-old practice that discriminates women during menstruation in west Nepal, was found to be advocating against the practice at different levels mainly with the help of social mobilizers. The social mobilizers with

the help of different advocacy tools such as posters, pamphlets and interpersonal communication with the locals were found to be shedding light on the negative impacts of discrimination of women during menstruation. The advocacy campaigns were well responded to by the locals as a result of which there has been a significant drop in the Chhaupadi practice.

The advocacy was found to be focussed on different levels of the social strata targeting different actors such as local politicians, teachers and local policy makers so that it resulted in the desired outcome. A similar approach seems to have been used in different parts of the world by different policy advocates.

The advocates in this study were the development communicators including the opinion leaders such as social workers, teachers, nurses, doctors and politicians who help spread the message that Chhaupadi is a practice that has a negative impact on the health of the mother and child and ultimately could lead to unprecedented social and financial problems for the family upholding and practising Chhaupadi.

Here, it would be relevant to discuss who qualify to become the advocates and what contributions they make to the societies they work in. "To be an advocate to engage in advocacy is to adopt a stance, advance a cause and attempt to achieve a result in behalf of an interest of a person, group or cause," (Cohen 2004, p.9). Relating this observation to the NGOs under study, the advocates are the development communicators who interact with the local people in their respective project areas. They were adopting a stance that Chhaupadi is not a good practice and it would if practiced lead to social and economic disparities in the society.

According to Cohen (2004), advocates may be friends or family members of the beneficiary, attorney for individuals, public interest lawyers, government attorneys, representatives of organized groups, for profit, not for-profit organizations,

trade associations, professional associations, labour unions, social worker in public and non-public agencies, legislators at all levels of governments, other public employees, as well as journalists and educators.

According to de Toma (2018), Advocacy communication and lobbying aims to inform, persuade, and move people to take action. You should base your messages on evidence and use them to convey your core values, motivations and human stories to help you sway your audiences. The same was found in the case of the NGOs under study, as they were advocating their core values centred around the need to protect and promote human rights of all groups irrespective of their sex, age, creed and colour.

Hinting on how messages are formulated by advocates, de Toma (2018) states that first a core message is developed around which clearly summarises one's position and the changes that are to be brought about. On doing this, the second step would be to develop more specific tailored messages directed at a certain category of audiences.

The NGOs under study practising development communication were also found to be first working on core messages, for instance the NGO Nepal Bikash Samaj working to protect the rights of Dalits, were found to have developed a core message saying, 'Dalits are Nepali citizens who enjoy the constitutional rights' like any other Nepali citizens and should always be treated equally.' The other messages that the NGO developed revolved around this core message.

My study of the communication practices in the three NGOs revealed that there is a growing practice of using social media for message dissemination. The use of social media seems to be more preferred owing to its low cost and wide reach coupled with instant feedback and more interactive communication. All the NGOs when asked about their primary mode of communication shared that they were using

social media channels such as facebook and twitter. They shared that preparation of easy to understand simple messages and their postings in the facebook brought instant feedback to them at very negligible costs compared to other forms of media. All of them had a good number of followers in the social media. With the internet penetration in the country growing at an encouraging pace, social media have also witnessed a big boom in different nooks and crannies of the country. This finding has helped me to respond to my first research question which seeks to study what forms of media are being used by the NGOs in their day to day practice.

Highlighting the growing adoption of the social media by people in different categories of the workforce, Miller, Costa, Haynes, McDonald, Nicolescu, Sinanan, Syper, Venkataraman & Wang (2016) have said that:

The number of people using digital communication has increased dramatically since the launch of commercial access to the internet in the mid-1990s. And it is not just the rich, cosmopolitan and educated; the current combination of mobile technology and social media has created a strong interest among various underprivileged populations, including illiterate or semi-literate people, low-wage manual migrant workers and migrants in places such as China, India and Brazil (p.128)

Nepal is not aloof from this trend and the use of social media has been on the rise ever since the advent of the new media in Nepal. According to Rijal (2019), the growth in mobile internet users has been attributed to exponential growth in users from the rural areas as more people are using social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter and communication platforms like Viber, Messenger, WhatsApp and WeChat. This clearly prioritizes social media as a viable medium to get their messages across for the NGOs working in Nepal. The interactive nature of social media and the instant

feedback that they produce are the advantageous points for development workers to engage in a two-way communication with their clients or beneficiaries. The NGOs under study were using local languages, more rampantly Nepali to get their message across with contents that were easy to understand for a literate person in the project area. The importance of content has been well substantiated by many experts around the world. In a similar vein Miller, Costa, Haynes, McDonald, Nicolescu, Sinanan, Syper, Venkataraman & Wang (2016) have stated that it is the content rather than the platform that is more significant when it comes to why social media matters.

The third finding from my research was that the development communicators have were not holding a formal degree in development communication and belonged to other fields of study. They were, however, comfortably taking up their duties and had a clear understanding of the subject. Although the universal understanding is that a professional needs to have an academic degree on the subject which he/she intends to pursue his/her professional career, there are instances and examples where people despite not having an academic degree on the discipline relating to their work; are seen to be working with ease in that very field.

Out of the three NGOs where I conducted my case study, only one NGO had professionals who had an academic degree in journalism and media studies but they did not possess degrees in development communication as such. In the case of others, their academic degree was somewhat closer to the field of development communication but did not really resemble with hard core development communication studies. Besides, these NGOs, the professionals working in other NGOs had a degree in some other subjects other than development communication. The intriguing part is that these professionals did possess knowledge about what

development communication is and exhibited that they were comfortably taking up their jobs as development communicators.

Despite the examples cited above for the three case studies where people who take up the roles of development communicators without having a proper degree on the subject are still managing with their jobs, the well-established universal practice is that without proper academic and practical trainings and orientation individuals in different fields are not able to do their jobs to the desired level of perfection and ensure quality.

The NGOs in Nepal are facing a tough time retaining skilled manpower that are crucially needed in order to expedite the development works (Kusendra & Bihari 2014).

Development communication is widely looked at from journalistic perspective where the actual professionals are not the real development communication workers but academicians. These academicians are frequently found to be in touch with development organizations by virtue of being approached for fellowships, etc. But these professionals naturally do not have the same insights and expertise of those who have undergone training in development communication (Uprety, 2018).

According to Uprety, 'development communication must be viewed from a different perspective and not mixed up with journalism.'

One other observation that I made was that the development communicators were not pretesting the messages before putting them in their chosen channels although pretesting of messages has been widely recommended by development communication experts for the success of the messages.

According to Brown, Lindenberger and Bryant (2008), pretesting should be used to understand the consumer's response to messages, activities, concepts and other



programme intervention components. The three writers have summarized the pretesting process in three steps which involves concept development, developing partially completed materials, developing alternative materials and in the end the final product. The development communicators at the NGOs under study said that they prepared the messages and disseminated them directly without pretesting. This could at times lead to misinterpretation of the messages at times leading to failure in achieving the desired communication objectives.

The NGOs were very much found to be guided by the modernization theory which emphasizes on adopting modern technology and improved ways of doing things while shaping their approaches to communication. They were toeing the modernization line by adopting the improved tools and techniques used for their communicative action.

### **My Insights**

As the NGOs studied were taking up advocacy roles to protect child, women and *Dalit* rights, the communicators in these NGOs, most of who happen to be social mobilizers working in the fields were found to be practising the dialogical model of communication. The two- step model of communication, which stresses on the dissemination of messages through the opinion leaders in the society, was seen to be practiced by the NGOs. The development communicators in these NGOs shared the messages with the opinion leaders in the project areas. The opinion leaders then passed on the message to the project beneficiaries.

The participatory model of development communication is the key to achieving the development results. Although the development communicators in the three NGOs selected for this research did acknowledge that participatory model of communication contributes to step up dialogue with the beneficiaries and allows them to have a say in

the overall development programme, the true nature of participation is yet to prevail in our existing model of development communication.

The development communicators had a mixed level of understanding regarding the meaning of development communication. Some had a thorough understanding of the subject while others seemed to have a limited perception that development communication was to do with disseminating project related information only. Those in this category failed to talk about development communication as an intervention through appropriate messages disseminated through appropriate channels to bring about social and economic changes.

The NGOs were found to be using local radios, national radio, newsletters, brochures, posters, leaflets, TV and social media to communicate about the organization's activities with the target audiences. The development communicators shared that local radios that are airing their programmes in the local neighbourhood where the development projects are being launched were more effective when it comes to the dissemination of information. The messages were well absorbed by the receivers when they are designed in local languages.

There seems to be a growing use of digital communication, especially the social media such as facebook and twitter. In the case studies that I conducted, digital communication was found to be more preferred by the development communicators since it provides a platform for two-way communication in contrast to other forms of communication which do not allow instant feedback and interaction.

I as a development communicator have been using digital communication for disseminating development related messages and have close to seventy thousand followers for the social media (facebook) of the European Union office in Nepal that I have been associated with.

The cost and the speed are the twin factors that have put digital media in development communication in the forefront. The three NGOs where the case study was done, all had a good foothold on digital communication and shared that they were able to get their messages across very quickly.

There is a global trend to discontinue the publication of newsletters and resort to web-based content to disseminate development communication related information.

The NGOs were found to have been taking up a mixed approach to share information to bring about social and behaviour change. Most of them were found to have been using digital communication to cater to the information needs of their audiences while others were also doing so through the publication of newsletters.

In my own office; the European Union, we have discontinued publishing newsletters and are now into channelizing most of our contents through the digital platform, e.g. website, facebook, twitter, etc.

My experience is that although the social media provide the advantage of having a two-way and instant communication; the onus falls equally on both the senders and receivers whether they are genuinely eager to step up further communication or not.

As regards the types of messages disseminated by the NGOs under study, the type of messages solely revolved around the type of audiences, their literacy levels and the areas that they were working on and also the main motive of the communication intervention. The child rights based NGOs that I went to study had all its messages designed for children and parents while the NGO working on the Dalit rights had its messages focused on parliamentarians and lawmakers. The messages tried to raise awareness among parliamentarians about what improvements were

needed in the law so as to ensure that the rights of the Dalits could be protected and promoted.

I also observed that the NGOs involved in advocacy for the protection of human rights have been successfully attaining their goals of message dissemination through their social mobilisers. The social mobilizers were found to be the most effective means of multiplying the messages.

### **Impact of Development Communication Messages**

The impact of the development communication practices of the NGOs had been seen in the form of increased awareness among the denizens towards discontinuing superstitious practices such as Chhaupadi in the far western part of Nepal. Similarly, the impacts were also been visible in terms of promotion and protection of the rights of the Dalits, who fall among the disadvantaged section in the society. An instance when an elderly Dalit was denied his rights to old age allowance was immediately corrected after the NGO working on the Dalit rights intervened and spoke aloud about it in its social media channels. This is a telling tale of the fact that social media are increasingly being relied upon and used as an effective means of information dissemination.

I observed that there have been impacts and changes that have come about in the places where the NGOs have focussed their activities. The impacts could have been multiplied many times through increased public participation in the development dialogues as has been shared by Dr. Joshi, one of the key informants for this research. When talking about participatory communication, it would be very relevant to compare how the communication approaches in the three case studies have or have not been guided by the communicative action theory introduced by communication expert Jurgen Habermas.

According to Jacobson and Story (2005), development messages fail to make an impact unless the beneficiaries are involved in the process of designing it. His theory of participatory communicative action, ideal speech and making use of the public sphere to the maximum level has been often referred to when it comes to exploring when and how development messages can have an impact in the overall development process.

### **Role of Communication Plans and Strategy in Development Communication**

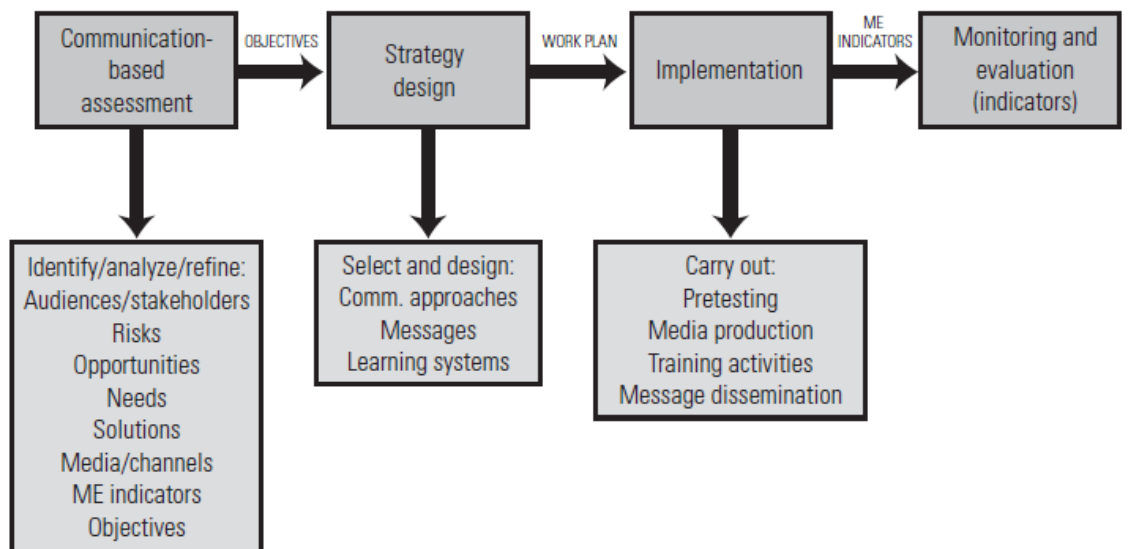
A communication strategy or plan is key to ensuring effective implementation of all development or project related activities in order to achieve the envisaged goals. The communication strategy or plan contributes to disseminate the right messages, through the right channels, at the most suitable time in order to achieve the set objectives of the development communication activity. A communication strategy is a time bound communication plan that aims at using certain tools and channels in order to achieve certain development objectives and goals (Mefalopulos & Kamolengra, 2004).

The three NGOs in the context of my case study did not have a well-defined communication strategy oriented towards achieving the development activities to their respective organizations. All of them were found to be carrying out their activities in ad hoc basis, instead of developing a concrete development communication plan for the entire year based on the activities they were carrying out for audiences who were in a pre-defined category, they were carrying out their communication as and when they received requests from their project managers to do so.

According to the Development Communication Source Book of the World Bank (2008), development communicators need to carry out their development communication activities based on a methodological framework, which involves four

different steps. The first step relates to the communication-based assessment where the development communicator must identify, analyse and refine audiences, stakeholders, risks, opportunities, needs and solutions, media channels, monitoring and evaluation indicators and objectives as cited below before finally setting out to develop the strategy design for communication. In the strategy design, the communication approaches, messages and learning systems are defined.

This work plan or strategy design is then implemented by first pre-testing of the messages whether they are in tandem with the level of understanding of the target beneficiaries or audiences. If the messages are well understood by the audiences during the pre-testing stage, the process of media production and training activities are then taken ahead with the final dissemination of the messages. The fourth step in the methodological framework is related with the monitoring and evaluation of the messages, how they have contributed to bring about the envisaged social and development changes in the set working areas of the given organization.



Source: (World Bank, 2008)

The three NGOs where the case studies were carried out were not following any form of methodological framework before disseminating their messages. The fact

that some of them confessed that they were carrying out their communication activities based upon requests coming from their project managers from time to time amply speaks of their lack of knowledge or training to implement their development communication activities in the desired manner.

### **Service Delivery: A Key Component of NGOs Practicing Development Communication**

International aid and development NGOs have become important actors in global politics over the past two decades. Despite their shortcomings and failure, they remain as one of the most powerful voices in the world for addressing key injustices and transnational problems such as global poverty, climate change, population growth, and income inequality. However, they could do much more by improving their current activities and leveraging them for greater impact, using advocacy, and other means (Kingsbury, 2013).

Crutchfield and Grant (2008) found those NGOs that have the greatest impact are those that are able to bridge the divide between service and advocacy and become good at both. Most of the development communication taking place in the NGOs under study is more often than not limited to the point of message delivery only. Development communication would be incomplete if the message delivery is backed by the prompt delivery of services.

The views of Ramesh Rana, who has worked as development communication officer for UNICEF and World Bank and who is one of the key informants for this research shared that services development communication would always remain incomplete without the delivery of products and services to the target beneficiaries.

### **Further steps needed to ensure two way Communication by NGOS**

Development communication fails to yield the right results if the process fails to become dialogical in its approach. Two-way communication should be there in order for the development communicators to rectify their messages if the recipients are not satisfied.

I observed that the NGOs under study were not completely successful to ensure a two-way flow of information. Their communication activity more often than not ended at the point of message dissemination. It was evident from the interactions with the development communicators that the development stakeholders at the community level are not involved in the designing of the messages, the choosing of the channels and expressing their preferences on the overall modes of communication.

A research carried out to measure the impact of communication using 'sustainability', which is described as the power to induce continued social change, revealed that the more local and interactive the participation- in levels, communication approaches, channels, processes and methods- the more sustainable the project will be ( Serveas, 2016).

In the case of Nepal's scenario of using communication for development, the researcher agrees with Dr. Kamalesh Joshi (name changed) who has been a development communication practitioner for over three decades and is a key informant for this research. According to him, development is still influenced by modernization theory where the donors are guided by the belief that Nepal needs not only aid but also technological knowhow and expertise from abroad.

Talking about the three NGOs where the case study was conducted, the NGOs that are mostly involved in raising awareness for the protection of the rights of children, women and the Dalits were found to be using social mobilizers to pass on



their messages. They claimed that they were using the social mobilisers to hold two way dialogue with the people at the project sites to assess their problems and accordingly design messages to address them. According to the key informants, Nepal's NGOs still do not have the practice of pre-consultations with the development stakeholders about their development needs, it is still a top down approach when we look at the identifying of the development projects for those in need and the right forms of development communication interventions needed to bring about the envisaged social changes.

### **My Own Experience as a Development Communicator**

I was into journalism before I joined my present job as a development communicator. Having graduated in science and having taken up sociology as my main subject in my Master's degree, I thought I was not the best person to handle works related to mass communication and development communication.

My stint at a daily newspaper for nearly fifteen years provided me with the confidence to enter into a full time job as a development communicator. This confidence was further boosted after I got an opportunity to study 'development journalism' at the New Delhi based Indian Institute of Mass Communication. It was a four month diploma course, which provided me with the valuable insights into the world of development and development communication.

All this background led me to apply for the position of a press officer at the Nepal based European Union office, which runs nearly fifty projects in partnership with different development partners, NGOs, INGOs, and the UN including the Government of Nepal. During my stint as a development communicator at the diplomatic mission where I work, I have had the opportunity to get valuable insights

about how a well-planned communication strategy can lead to effective output in terms of achieving the project related goals.

Although a part of my job is to look into the communication strategies devised by other development partners and suggest making changes for their plans to be more appropriate in tune with their project objectives, I myself have not undergone a formal academic training in development communication. The knowledge that I have harnessed is through the practical insights that I have received while visiting the project sites and while interacting with them to find out how my communication initiatives have made an impact on their lives. Impact assessments, as is well understood, are rigorous processes that need protracted interactions with stakeholders and continuous evaluation and monitoring of the communication activities conducted in concert with the field based staff. Hence, I am not prepared to confess that all that I have sensed and heard from the beneficiaries could be the ultimate and the factual messages.

Still, I would like to narrate my field visit to Kalikot in the Karnali province in farwest Nepal to observe the Multisectoral Nutrition Programme being launched by the Government of Nepal with the partnership of the UNICEF and the funding of the EU. What I observed in the field is that unlike the people from the main offices of the government, UNICEF or EU who go there to interact with the project beneficiaries occasionally, the field workers, be they of the local ward office, UNICEF or municipality are the ones who really can make a difference when it comes to communicating with the beneficiaries.

I found that the field workers have maintained a chain of two way communication with the beneficiaries. Both sides were eager and comfortable to talk about the nutrition problems in the village and the village was gradually adopting

healthy lifestyle in terms of food habits. Hence, seeing the frequent exchange of information with the beneficiaries and the practice of participatory communication that involves more the beneficiaries in the communication process, development communication was showing good results in terms of achieving the goals of the project.

### **Chapter Conclusion**

The insights and discussions above reveal that the NGOs in Nepal are more into official type of communication, with the view to give publicity to their projects and highlight what they are doing, but have failed to complete the cycle of development communication by ensuring that those who are supposed to get the dividends of development have received the service in a timely manner.

The other stumbling block that is quite evident from the discussions is that there needs to be a separate development communication policy in order to steer ahead the development process in a more organized manner with the development communication parameters set as per the development goals of the nation.

## CHAPTER VII

### CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In this chapter, I have presented the summary of my research and the conclusions drawn based upon the answers to the two research questions that I prepared for my study. The summary has dwelt upon mainly how the NGOs under study are practicing development communication and what impacts can be seen based on the communication interventions that are being made. The chapter also highlights the implications which are worth considering at the policy making level and the professional level.

#### **Conclusion**

Development communication is more donor-driven and based on a top down approach in the NGOs I studied. The reason behind this is that the NGOs depend largely on the donors for their funding. This dependency obliges them to adhere to fulfilling the communication demands of the donors. Hence, NGOs have limited breathing space to plan and execute development communication plans of their own. This in turn has been affecting the development practices of the NGOs. Thus It would not be out of place here to state that the development communication being practices by NGOs is more donor centric than people centric.

Although the communication of the NGOs is often referred to as development support communication, I felt that their overall approach of carrying out the communication has not given support for development to occur to the maximum level. This is also because the nation does not have an umbrella policy to guide development communication in different NGOs across the country. There is a dire need for policy guidelines to streamline the overall communication activities, be they

of the private sector or the government sector. It is evident that nations where development communication has yielded the desired results have a flagship development communication policy, which contributes to establish clarity on how the entire gamut of development communication should be taken ahead for achieving certain development results. Nepal should also work towards formulating a national development communication policy to guide its overall development communication initiatives.

### **Implications for Policy Makers & Professionals**

The findings of this research underscore the need for the policy making state agency to come up with a national development communication policy that would use communication for achieving development goals in the right way instead of treating communication as a one way and top down process. The findings making a clarion call to make communication a dialogical and participatory process so as to assess the development needs of the citizens and accordingly devise plans towards achieving those goals. The most recent models of communication are based on participatory communication, which need to be prioritized by all organizations working in the field of development. The concept of participation of development stakeholders or beneficiaries in the development projects gives way to a development dialogue, which in the long run helps to identify the development needs and challenges of the beneficiaries and thereby will help step up communication for better development results that will ultimately contribute to ensure social justice.

The development communicators working in the three NGOs under study were not professionally trained to do the job. They were taking up the roles by virtue of the duties assigned to them by their respective organizations. Their outputs would certainly see improvements if they sought to receive additional trainings on

development communication in the days ahead. Since service delivery is a key component in the entire development communication cycle, professionals involved in the development communication sector must always monitor whether or not their development messages are complimented by the desired services that are needed to complete the entire cycle.

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## APPENDIX

**Interview Questions**

1. Do you have a university degree in communication or development communication
2. What is your understanding about communication and development communication?
3. Are you engaged full time in your job as a development communicator?
4. What kind of messages do you share with your audiences and in which form?
5. Do you have an annual work programme or communication strategy to communicate with your audiences?
6. Do you think that the messages that you share with your concerned clients, stakeholders is relevant?
7. Do you also get feedback on the messages that you send? How often do you get the feedback?
8. How do the feedbacks help you to improve your communication with your audiences?
9. Are the messages tailored to the right audiences?
10. Are they the appropriate messages?
11. What modes of communication have you been adopting?
12. What impacts have your communication efforts made to trigger social change in the project setting?
13. What are the internal communication practices in your organization like?
14. How important do you think is internal communication to enhance the working environment of your organisation?