

**Christian responses towards the victims of Sindhupalchowk
District after 2015 massive earthquake in Nepal**

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ABSTRACT

Christianity is one of the major religions in the world. Several Christian churches and International Non-governmental Organizations (INGOs) affiliated with the missionary's churches seem to be working on social development and transformation of societies throughout the world. This study examines and explores the experiences of Christian and non-Christian inhabitants of Sindhupalchowk district in Nepal on the help of Nepali Evangelical Church (NEC) after the 2015 earthquake, and the influence of this help on their view of Christianity. Attempt has also been made to investigate the ways in which the church leaders understand their roles in helping the victims after the earthquake.

The study used a qualitative case design. Semi structured interviews were conducted to elicit views of the respondents on the role of NEC after the earthquake. This study includes an exploration of the theories in the research related to the dual responses of the diaconal actors and victims. Grief theory has been used to capture the emotions of the informants, diaconal theory to elaborate the response of the church which further helps to determine the responses of the victims and survivors towards the church's help, transformational development theory to further explore the changes and development adopted by the informants after the crisis.

The findings indicate that NEC Sindhupalchowk has served the victims and survivors with various diaconal activities during crisis. NEC is committed towards the words of Bible to help the marginalized and vulnerable groups in need. NEC's support through its diaconal activities in coordination with local government has been significant to connect with the sorrows and pain of the survivors.

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May God bless you all!

DEDICATION

This thesis is specially dedicated to the victims and survivors of Sindhupalchowk district and NEC Ministry of Nepal. A huge respect to the survivors who never became tenacious despite the crisis and applause to the members of NEC Ministry who tremendously helped the survivors during their struggling period of life.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

NSD	Norsk Senter for Forskningsdata / Norwegian Centre for Research Data
UDGS	United States Geological Survey
NDRR	Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ibid.	Same reference as earlier
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
NEC	Nepali Evangelical Church
VDC	Village Development Committee
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
INF	International Nepal Fellowship
UMN	United Mission to Nepal
NEMRC	Nepal Earthquake Monitoring and Research Centre
UN	United Nations
NEA	Nepal Electricity Authority
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
NSD	Norwegian Centre for Research Data
Meredith Corp.	Meredith Corporation
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
WCC	World Council of Churches
NIV	New International Version
HRRC	Human Rights Research Centre
ILO	International Labour Organization
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
SID	Society for International Development

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction:

On April 25, 2015 at 11:56 AM, local time, an earthquake of magnitude 7.8 Richter Scale struck with epicentre Barpak, Gorkha district creating greater impact to different parts of a country including various cities and villages. (USGS, 2015). As per the data provided by Nepal Disaster Risk Reduction Portal (NDRR, 2020), 8979 people were killed. More than 8 million people were affected causing widespread displacement and destruction of homes, heritages, monuments, services etc. (World Vision, 2016). The survey report of UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2015) shows that 14 districts out of 75 districts of a country were severely destructed by the earthquake. All in all, 605,254 houses were destroyed where 288,255 houses were partially damaged, and 188,900 people were temporarily displaced during the emergency period. (ibid).

Sindhupalchowk district among the 14 worst hit districts of the country was disturbed physically and geographically. The catastrophic earthquake made the whole district grumble in a pain. Many houses and national projects (hydropower projects) got damaged which caused a huge financial fluctuation in the development project of a district. The earthquake even triggered to floods, landslides, blizzards, avalanches, and firebreaks. With much more difficulties, the district needed the strength and emergency support from government and international aid including NGOs and INGOs to stand from the rubbles. As the district was suffering from the poverty even before the earthquake, the earthquake smashed the huts and the cottages of several people including middle class families, and as a result, they had to spend their lives in an open space under the tent or in a temporarily built wooden hut. They had to even look for the members of their families who got buried under the destroyed house. The cries and the mourning of the people during such disaster brought tears into each an individual who experiences such painful calamities. In such scenario, the various organization including social, religion, governmental and non-governmental sector fled to Sindhupalchowk for the sake of the victims. During such services, Nepal Evangelical Church (NEC), a protestant church from Bhaktapur District, stepped forward to help the people of Sindhupalchok. And this made me explore some of the responses of the Christians, how they helped the victims and the views of the victims, how they perceived Christianity through a case study of *“Christian responses towards the victims of Sindhupalchowk District after 2015 massive earthquake in Nepal.”*

1.1 Research questions

As Christianity seems to be one of the major religions, many Christian churches and INGOs affiliated with the missionary's churches are found working on a platform of social development and transformation of the society. At the same time, many people are praising their help either in need or as a projected design for the betterment of a society and as a humanitarian aid. In this project, I attempt to explore the role of Christianity in crisis in general, and responses of NEC Sindhupalchok towards the victims after massive earthquake in Nepal 2015 in particular with the help of the the following research questions:

1. How did Christian and non-Christian inhabitants of Sindhupalchowk district experience the help from Nepali Evangelical Church after the 2015 earthquake, and how did this influence their view of Christianity?
2. How did the church leaders understand their role in helping the victims after the earthquake?

1.2 Scope and limitation of the research

Various churches and other religious organizations have been working for the welfare of the people in Sindhupalchowk after the earthquake. Regarding the role and the responses of a church, Nepali Evangelical Church, a protestant church of Bhaktapur, has been chosen as a specific church for the research. And for the responses of victims, Sindhupalchowk district has been chosen as a specific area. NEC and Sindhupalchowk district were taken as two main streams of the research. As the research is based on the diaconal activities, the respondents comprised of various religious backgrounds to provide a possible variation to the material. There was an increasing population in the cities of Sindhupalchowk district as many people migrated from non-affected area in order to collect the relief fund and materials. Such migrated population has not been included in the research and hence includes only those people who live in the cities and countryside of the district. The research is limited to the responses of informants who were selected for the interview.

1.3 Review of existing literature

There are numbers of research related to the role of church before and after the earthquake. Much of the literature focuses the role of the church during the crisis and social inequalities while some literature looks at the revolution and opportunities brought by the crisis and

inequalities. Beside that a little of the literature emphasizes the diaconal activities of the church and Christian communities in their research. Women empowerment and development through diaconal activities were carried by various researchers in the field of gender inequality in Nepal. For example, “*Diaconal Work for Women Empowerment by the Christian Organization: HimalPartner in Nepal*” by Binod Prasad Bashyal gives contribution to elaborate the role of Christian organization in empowering women through diaconal perspective. Sanu Maiya Bhadari’s “*Exploring in Diaconal Working Approaches of One Norwegian mission Organization: HimalPartner in Nepal*” focuses on the diaconal work of faith-based organization within Nepal. What sorts of problems and challenges were faced by the Christians in Hindu dominant country Nepal, was explained by Damodar Sapkota through his research “*Challenges for Christianity in Nepal Context*”. The research explores the reason behind the conversion of religion and the reaction after converting the religion towards Christianity.

The report of the ACT Alliance Nepal shows the diaconal activities of its members. A joint ACT Alliance member of 8 churches worked in remote and isolated VDCs of 10 districts in Nepal after the earthquake. They cover 122 VDCs and 6 municipalities which was succeed with the help of participation of 21 local partners in the various sectors like food and non-food items, WASH, shelter, education, psychosocial support, livelihood, disaster risk reduction, capacity building, advocacy, and cash for work. These sectors were responded as relief programs after the earthquake through various diaconal activities. The joint appeal of ACT members after the earthquake have been able to respond partially to the vulnerable groups of the country. (ACT Alliance Nepal, 2016).

To these points, this research has is distinct to the above-mentioned literature. This research explores the understanding of Christianity during crisis. It even elaborates the realities of the nature of the church when they stand together in support of the survivors and victims of earthquake. Furthermore, the research analyses the church response to the victims and the role they played during the crisis especially in the aftermath of 2015 Nepal earthquake.

1.4 Organizational structure of thesis

The study includes seven chapters. **Chapter one** begins with a general introduction of the study and includes the background of the study, research questions, scope, and limitation of the study.

Chapter two as Setting the context, provides few background information on Nepal and short description on Sindhupalchowk district relevant for the study, along with general overview of proposed protestant church.

Chapter three gives attention to the theories proposed. It includes an exploration of the theories in the research related to the dual responses of the diaconal actors and victims.

Chapter four accounts a detailed discussion on methodology which combines research design, sampling of participants, data collection, reliability and validity of data and ethical consideration.

Chapter five presents the data collected including the responses from interviewees with the proposed and its coordinating churches, related organisations as well as victims of the disaster.

Chapter six explores the analysis of the collected data that and linked with the proposed theories.

Chapter seven provides the recommendations and the suggestions on the major findings of the research.

CHAPTER TWO SETTING THE CONTEXT

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a general outline of a project including the context of Nepal which will be followed by the context of a particular area Sindhupalchowk district. Impacts of earthquake were explored in this chapter to provide a space for a church's response and to this, a short background of the protestant church, Nepali Evangelical Church has been included within this chapter.

2.1 Brief introduction of Nepal

This section explains briefly the geographical and physical features of Nepal, and the major religions followed throughout the country.

2.1.1 Geographical background and physical background

Figure 1: Physical Map of Nepal



Image source: ncthakuri.itgo.com

Nepal is a landlocked country that lies between the two most populated countries of the world, China to its north and India to south, west, and east. According to Nepali Constitution 2015, “Nepal is an independent, indivisible, sovereign, secular, inclusive, democratic, socialism-oriented, federal democratic republican state.” The Constitution also addresses that

there should not be any discrimination based on gender, religion, caste, race, origin, language and on similar other grounds. The rules and the laws executed by the constitution are applicable to all the citizens of Nepal. While talking about the geographical distribution of land, Nepal is distributed in three geographical regions i.e Himalayan (Mountain), Hilly (Hills) and Terai (Plain lands). According to Pradyumna, K (2020):

“Nepal contains since of the most rugged and difficult mountain terrain in the world. Roughly 75% of the country is covered by mountains (...). Nepal can be divided into four main physical belts, (...) first, the terai, second forested foothills and inner terai, third mid-mountain range (...) and the fourth, the Great Himalaya Range, rising to more than 29000 feet (some 8850 meters).”

Nepal is the country of Mount Everest and the birthplace of Gautam Buddha. Within the diversity of geographical status, Nepal comprises much more diversification in and among the people. Being religiously secular country, Nepalese people are living in harmonical behaviour as the country practises the culture and tradition of 126 castes (ethnic groups) with 123 different languages spoken all over the country. (CBS, 2011). ‘Nepali’ is national language and used as communication language between three geographical regions. The total area 1,47,516 km² of the country accounts 65.9 % of literacy rate. Nepal is a country that lies on the lap of Himalayas which is extended from low as 59 meters elevation in terai region up to 8848 meters at Mt. Everest. Nepal being mountainous country, it accounts 8 worlds’ highest peaks and all of them exceed more than 8000 meters high from the sea level.

2.1.2 Religions in Nepal

Nepal is a secular state declared by the Constitution of Nepal, 2015. Although, being secular country, ‘Hinduism’ as a religion accounts massive occupancy of the faith and culture. Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam are the major religions followed by Nepalese people. According to the CBS Nepal Census (2011), “81.34 % of the total population of Nepal practise Hindu religion while 9.04 % population are Buddhist.” Although the diversification of the religion can be experienced in the country, the margin of the Hindu followers with other religion can be found huge differentiation. 4.39 % people follows Islam where 3.05 % practise Kirant religion. While talking about Christianity and other minor religion, 1.42 % of Nepalese follow Christianity and 0.23 % follow other religion. (ibid) Since the Constitution of Nepal (2015) addresses that the people of Nepal are allowed to practise, profess, and protect their religion with their conviction. But the constitution has clearly mentioned in its article that nobody is allowed to forcibly change other` s religions. If

any person found jeopardizing other people's religion will be punished by law. Thus, nobody can change other's religion forcefully, rather they can practise their religion without any hazards. And this shows a good co-operation and coordination among the different religious people. The harmony among the people and the culture shows that the religions are there to bind them into their culture and faith practising their own tradition. The table below shows the distribution of people as per their faith:

Table 1: Distribution of population as per religion

Religion	Total Number	Percentage
Hinduism	21,551,492	81.34
Buddhism	2,396,099	9.04
Islam	1,162,370	4.39
Kirat	807,169	3.05
Christianity	375,699	1.42
Others	201,675	0.23

Source: Statistical Year Book of Nepal (2013)

2.1.3 Christianity in Nepal:

It has not been so long that the followers of Christianity have a significant increase in Nepal. People were not allowed to freely practise and follow Christian practices until recently. While talking about Christianity, Barclay (2009) asserts:

The earliest recorded entry of Christians into Nepal was the visit of a Father Cabral, a Jesuit priest, in 1628. Capuchin monks were given permission by the Malla rulers to reside in the Kathmandu valley in 1715, but they were forced to leave by Prithvi Narayan Shah in 1769. The few national Christians, expelled at the same time, migrated to Bihar, India. For almost two centuries Nepal was totally closed to any Christian presence or influence.

As the Christians and the followers of other minor religions were struggling for their religious rights, after the revolution in 1950, Nepal became open to the foreigners and simultaneously Christianity started emerging in Nepal. As per Majupuria and Majupuria (2004, p. 330), "Many Nepali Christians who had been living in India took this opportunity to return to their homeland. Christian missions were invited by the government to develop the country, especially in the field of education and medicine." Thus, during that time those missions were

not allowed to develop their religion and bound to their work only. “The oldest ones in the country are the INF based in Pokhara and UMN based in Kathmandu. But these missions, keeping their agreement with the government not to be involved in “preaching and proselytizing” have taken no active role in the leadership of Nepali church” (ibid). Before the revolution for democracy in 1990, conversion to Christianity and preaching were strictly prohibited. People used to go in India to get baptized. “At one time Nepalis wanting to become Christians would cross the border to India, get baptized there, and then return as Christians (which was allowed)” (ibid).

Though the continuous increasing number of the Christianity could be found in Nepal, it is quite difficult to trace the exact number of Christian in Nepal. But it can be claimed that there is a significant increment in the number of Christian.

2.2 Nepal-Gorkha Earthquake 2015 and its impact

It was a destruction of huge areas of Nepal when it was hit hard by a massive 7.8 magnitude of an earthquake on April 25, 2015 at 11:56 AM local time. It was Saturday and most of the people were enjoying their weekend with their family members, friends, and relatives. The strong tremor of shaking of ground was found tremendous at Barpak, Gorkha district which was the epicentre of the earthquake which was followed by sever aftershocks. Several huge aftershocks were recorded as 6.6 magnitude (Gorkha district) on same date followed by 6.9, 6.8 and 7.3 magnitude (NEMRC, 2020). Various aftershocks greater than 6 magnitude have been recorded after an earthquake. The earthquake’s massive impact was in the remote village areas which even makes the response more challenging whereas hundreds of thousands of people lost everything and faced extreme poverty (World Vision, 2020). The earthquake triggered an avalanche in Mount Everest which killed 19 mountain climbers whereas hundreds of climbers were stranded at the base camp (ibid).

Figure 2: Collage images of destroyed house, women crying and rescue



Image source: www.merokalam.com

The major impacts of the earthquake as per the various surveys were:

- i) April 25, 2015: About 100 international search and rescue with medical teams arrived within 24 hours of an earthquake (World Vision, 2020).
- ii) May 12, 2015: Aftershock of 7.3 magnitude destroyed many schools, health centres, water and power systems, roads, and bridges along with many houses. (World Vision, 2020).
- iii) June to September 2020: Monsoon season caused landslides making remote areas inaccessible to foot traffic and low clouds prevent air operation. (World Vision, 2020).
- iv) The shelter and household non-food items sector were the worst affected sector (World Vision, 2016)
- v) Kathmandu Durbar Square, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and Darahara Tower of Kathmandu Valley were collapsed. Manakamana Temple of Makawanpur district, Janaki Mandir of Janakpur was damaged. Many historical monuments, temples, gumbas, stupas of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Lalitpur were damaged or destroyed. Many churches were destroyed by an earthquake (Hossain et al., 2016)

The deadliest earthquake took the lives of thousands of people. Hundreds of thousands of people became homeless. Many children became orphan and thousands of old-aged people and children got killed. More than 22,000 people suffered injuries and more than 1200 health facilities got damaged or destroyed. Such a massive and destructive earthquake created grief, mourning and tears everywhere in the cities and remote rural areas. Majority of the population of Nepal was greatly affected by the massive earthquake of 2015 April. The hundreds of thousands were worst affected while thousands had lost their lives. Barpak, Gorkha, the epicentre of the massive earthquake had the worst and vulnerable impacts where almost every house was collapsed and destroyed leading 72 deaths, 150 serious injured and 5 permanently handicapped (NDRR, 2020).

2.3 Sindhupalchowk district as universe

Figure 3: Map of Nepal showing Sindhupalchowk district

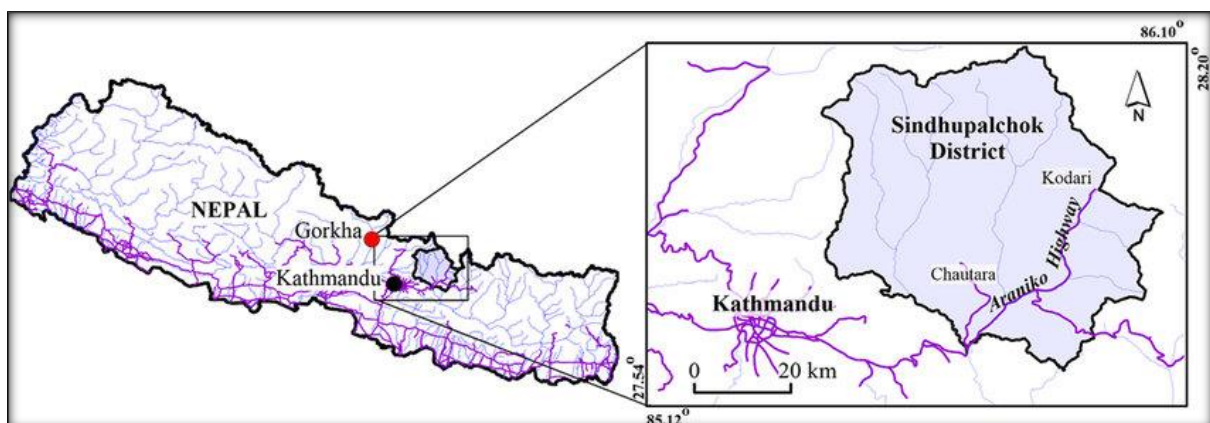


Image source: www.researchgate.com

2.3.1 Introduction

Sindhupalchowk district of Nepal is one of the small districts situated at the northern east of the capital city of the country. The district lies in Province number 3 and Chautara is the headquarter. According to the District Coordination Committee, Sindhupalchowk (2020), the district has 79 village development committees and 12 municipalities. Tatopani, Barhabise, Khadichaur, Chautara, Melamchi are the main trading centres of Sindhupalchowk district where Tatopani and Barhabise are major market centres famous for Chinese goods. (ibid). The district accounts 1.73 % of area of the country, i.e, 2542 km² out of 141,516 km². Most of the town areas of the district are connected with the headquarter which is connected to the capital city through Araniko Highway.

As per the habitats of the district, diversified ethnic groups with different cultures and tradition are living within the territory.

Figure 4: Physical map of Sindhupalchowk district

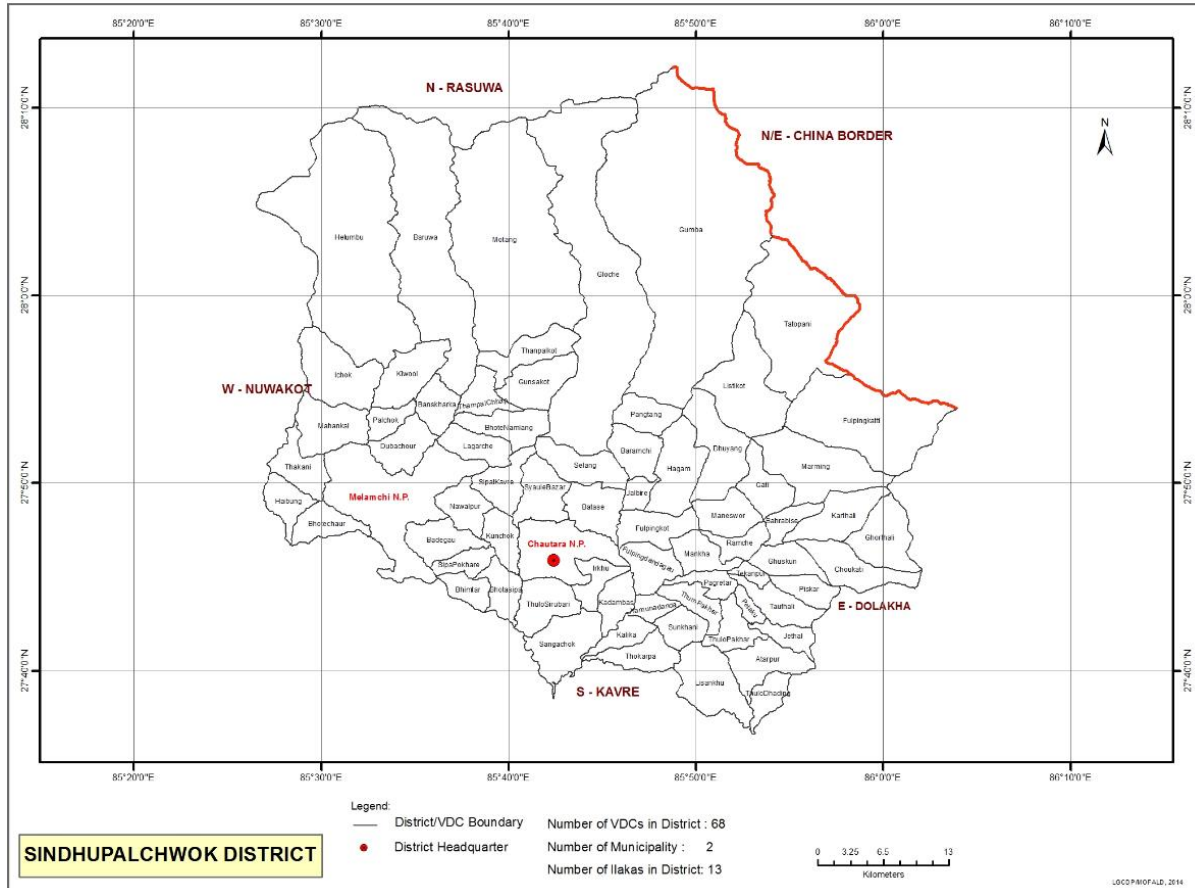


Image source: lgcdp.gov.no

2.3.2 Livelihood

Sindhupalchowk shares its border with Tibet which plays a vital role in the livelihood of people in the district. This district is counted as one of the least developed districts of the country. Agriculture is the main occupation of this district. Although, the district is full of many natural resources, lack of human power and minimal use of technology are the key factors behind the failure of the district being successful. Because of the low cultivable land and less fertility, the people here are not even able to produce sufficient food crops for their survival. The living standard of the people of Sindhupalchowk district is not high as it merely depends upon the agriculture. Despite low cultivable land and geographically hilly region, females are being migrated to the international market as a labour. The statistical data presented by Sedhai (2014) shows that 8.86 % of the female workers have migrated so far for the survival.

Male manpower has been found working on various hydropower project and mini hydropower project launched by the government in the district. According to Nepal Electricity Authority (NEA, 2020), there are 22 hydropower projects running in the district. Most of the male workers are working in those hydropower projects as labour for their livelihood.

Besides that, the tourism sector of the district had given few reliefs for the hotel owners in their livelihood. Helambu, Panchpokhari, Tatopani, Bhairab Kunda, Jugal Himal, Palanchowk Bhagawati, Patal Cave, Tripura Sundari Temple, Langtang National Park, Langtang Himal are the most tourism places that helps in the income of the local people through tourism sector. Nepal's first bungee jumping over the Bhotekoshi river and the rafting on Sunkoshi and Bhotekoshi rivers play a vital role to attract national and international tourists who love adventures.

2.3.3 Housing

The district comprises various villages and the living standard of the villagers are middle class having low incomes. The traditional societies of the district within the villages have traditional types of housing construction. Most of the houses in the district are built of mud, woods, stones, and bricks. This has been a great reason behind losing many lives of the people in Sindhupalchowk district during natural disasters. As per CBS Nepal Census (2011), published on Statistical Yearbook of Nepal (2013), the total number of houses in the district was 66,635. The maximum numbers of houses were built with mud-bonded bricks and stones which counts 61,377 (92.10%). Only 2708 houses were built with cement-bonded bricks and stones. Houses using RCC with pillar were 1322 whereas 651 houses were made up of wooden pillar. The rest of the houses were included in not stated and others section by CBS Nepal Census (2011).

2.3.4 Religion background of Sindhupalchowk district:

CBS Nepal (2011) shows the following statistical distribution of the population of Sindhupalchowk district on the basis of the religions that the people follow:

Table 2: Population by Religion of Sindhupalchowk:

	Hindu	Buddhist	Islam	Kirat	Christian
Male	80783	53494	25	9	2436
Female	89002	55744	13	15	2844

	Prakriti	Bon	Jainism	Bahai	Sikhism
Male	1465	3	1	2	1
Female	1639	2		1	0

	Unidentified	TOTAL
Male	177	138351
Female	187	149447

Source: Statistical Year Book of Nepal (2013)

As indicated in the table 1.2, Hinduism is practised in most part of the district with 58.99 % followed by Buddhism (37.95 %), Christianity (1.83 %), Prakriti (1.07 %), Islam (0.01 %) and others minor religions.

2.3.5 Religious organizations in Sindhupalchowk district:

The district practises various traditions and cultures throughout the year. Various religious places or religious monuments are closely built as the people here are living with religious harmony. Temples for Hindus, Gumbas and Stupas for Buddhists and churches for Christians are major religious places in Sindhupalchowk district. The faith and belief that the dwellers possess within themselves, worshipped daily as they have their own belief in a god.

2.3.6 Christianity in Sindhupalchowk district:

Christianity is counted as the third practised religion in Sindhupalchowk district in Nepal according to the population census (CBS, 2011). The churches of the societies are getting much more popularity among other religion because of the faith and the action of the churches laid on the ground. But while we compare the Christianity with the two major religions: Hinduism, and Buddhism, it is found that those two religious believers were and are predominant citizens of the area. The migration factor is taken as consideration behind the

increment in the followers of Christianity. More than 175 churches have been established after the country was declared Secular republic in 2008. (Nepali Times, 2017).

2.4 Nepali Evangelical Church Ministry, Nepal: A protestant church

In 1990 AD, a religious organization was established with the name Nepali Evangelical Church Ministry, Nepal. The church was established at Barahistan Chowk, Bhaktapur Municipality – 16, Bhaktapur Nepal with the aim of serving people in name of God. 25 volunteers are working under the Church ministry with the aim of transforming the people for the betterment and assured future with the love of God. The physical areas of the church were extended to twelve branches around the country.

The church now runs a corporate worship day every Saturdays from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Youth, ladies, Family leaders' and Children Fellowship programs are the special programs that the church is working on simultaneously. The funds that they collect from the offerings of the disciples and tithes were / are used in the welfare of the people who are in need. There were only 6 Christian individuals while establishing the church and gradually they found the people who believe on Jesus Christ were evangelized and was accounted more than 1000 individuals into the path of Christianity through the church ministry.

During earthquake, the church itself suffered from the cracks and minor damages of the church building. Despite that, the word from the Jesus as to serve the people, they step forward to help the victims of the earthquake at various remote areas of the country. The church played a serving role in relief and tent distribution program at the affected areas like Ramechhap, Sindhuli, Sindhupalchowk, Dolakha, Kavre and Kathmandu. They serve those areas in reconstructing the collapsed houses, too. With an encounter of various problems like blockade of the roads by landslides and carrying relief materials on a foot trail with the help of volunteers and other human resources, the church and its ministers including volunteers managed to reach Chautara, district headquarter of Sindhupalchowk District.

2.5 Earthquake and its impact on Sindhupalchowk district

Figure 5: Physical damages of houses and assets



Image source: onlinekhabar.com

The massive earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 hit Nepal on 25th of April 2015 (USGS, 2015) where Gorkha was the epicentre. As a result, thousands of people lost their lives and thousands more were injured. The earthquake was followed by large number of aftershocks, including one that measured 7.3 on 12th May 2015 where the epicentre was Sindhupalchowk district near the Chinese Border. (World Vision, 2016). Among the worst-hit districts was Sindhupalchowk – where more than 2000 died. (BBC News, 2016). The initial quake was followed by several aftershocks including a 5.6 magnitude tremor with the epicentre in Kodari and a 6.3 magnitude one with the epicentre in Ramechhap District. (UN Women, 2016). As the shocks were terrified, most of all people fled to and remain in open spaces. As the people were living in an open space since the first earthquake of 25th April, they were in a traumatic condition to live in the tents and temporary houses that were built by the local people with the help of some governmental fund or rescue teams. The aftershock on 12th May made them feel like they will not be living more of their lives. The tears and the shout of the people along with the sound of building collapses made the condition much worse than they think. The major towns of the district became the most prominent area for everything. Due to the lack of sufficient transportation (blocked due to landslides and cracking of the roads) it was very difficult for the rescue operation to reach there. The earthquake triggered various landslides which created a blockade of the pathway and highways. The effects of landslides

were most severe in settlements around Sindhupalchowk District, causing complete destruction of 96.8% of the houses and the loss of 3550 lives (Shrestha et al. 2017). At least 600 metric tons of rice and 4500 metric tons of wheat harvested just a few days before the earthquake was lost in the rubble. More than 4500 cows and buffaloes were killed. Many surviving livestock were injured, some were untethered, feeding on standing crops and were without shelter from rain or cool night-time temperatures. Besides that, 63,885 houses were severely damaged and at least 109,000 people were affected which is 40% of district population (FAO, 2015). According to data provided by Online Khabar (2017), 41 out of 43 government offices, 80 health facilities including district hospital, 13 suspension bridges and 91 drinking water projects were severely affected and damaged. The data provided by The OSOCC Assessment Cell (2021) shows,

As of 7 May, 3057 people were dead and 860 are injured. 3000 people remain unaccounted for. Many VDCs have still not been reached due to remoteness and accessibility both in terms of roads and telecommunications. According to district authorities 63,885 houses are severely and 2,751 houses are moderately damaged. Based on government reporting on damaged houses as of 6th May an estimated 109,000 people (Ministry of Home Affairs, 7th May) are affected (40% of district population as per the 2011 Census). Around 90,000 people have been identified as in need of assistance based on reporting at the VDC level.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter will explore the methods that have been used throughout the writing of thesis paper. It includes the strategy used for completing the paper, describing the process that I followed until getting into conclusion. This chapter will put the limelight on the strategy, methods, data collection, sources of the data, sampling procedure, reliability, and validity, along with ethical consideration.

3.1 Research design

This research paper is based on the data collected from respondents through the semi-structured interviews. Based on the nature of the research questions, this research uses qualitative method. The research is both descriptive and interpretative as it uses hermeneutical approach. As hermeneutics approach carries the interpretative analysis, this approach helps to interpret the understanding of Christianity among the non-Christian informants. (Bryman, 2012, p.28). A qualitative hermeneutical interview design provides framework for collecting and analysing the data, and to seek for patterns across different cases. (ibid, p. 560).

3.2 Qualitative research method

As the research focuses on the diaconal work laid by the church and church-based actors over earthquake victims, qualitative method in this arena will help to collect the data related to the experiences that the victims, church leaders and the volunteers had during incidents.

Considering this fact, the qualitative method helped to work in a systematic manner and even helped to find out the core materials for the project through the open-ended interview questions. Data collection method was fulfilled with the semi-structured interview. Using interview as a data collection tool which was relevant for research helped to offer the description and boost the phase of analysis the subject into its depth.

“Qualitative research can be employed to investigate quite specific, tightly defined research question of the kind normally associated with social science.” (Bryman, 2012, p. 615). This method even discusses the hypothesis and theory testing in connection with hypothesis or theories generated while conducting research. (ibid, p. 615-616).

As Creswell (2009:4) addresses qualitative research method explores and understands the meaning of individual which gives the responses to certain social phenomena. For the reason, the qualitative research method in this thesis, helped to figure out the experiences and the responses of the Christian leaders, volunteers and the victims while working on relief program after an earthquake. Furthermore, Creswell (2009, p. 4) states that the inductive analysis will help the researchers to interpret the collected data of the respondent. Taking this into consideration, I have first tried to analyse the data inductively, then I have discussed the findings in relation to relevant theories.

3.3 Data collection

For any social reality in research procedure under qualitative method, data plays a dynamic role. Considering the facts, semi-structured interviews were chosen as a primary source of data in this research. During collection of the data, informants and respondents were chosen as a representative of their group. The interview included open ended questions which helped to explore the core findings of the research questions. Each respondent in the semi-structured interview, as mentioned earlier, were allotted 25 to 30 minutes of time frame. Because of the pandemic COVID-19, Nepal was locked down for months which led the closure of international and domestic airline services. I was not able to go for a fieldwork because of the pandemic and for this an agent was appointed for interviewing process who took a role of interviewer in the field. My agent was my colleague. We worked together for almost four years in an office, and we are still in touch through various means of communication. I chose him as my agent because of his true spirit of helping nature, which also ensured me he would be eligible to establish the necessary empathic relationship to the informants in order for them to be willing to tell their story. My agent is a member of the NEC and helped various victims of Sindhupalchowk district after the earthquake. This made him sensitive to the situation and could probe for relevant data. On the other hand, his relation to the NEC could possibly make the interviewees tailor their answers after what they thought he would hear. However, as my agent have a background in research, I trusted that he would take measures to elicit also negative comments to the work of NEC if relevant. I was secured as he promised me to help me whenever I need his help. The interview was conducted by my agent into two categories: Christian and Non-Christian, with an assumption to optimize variation in terms of religion for the purpose of answering research questions. A Church Pastor, three church volunteers and three Christian victims of earthquake were kept in Christian category while three Non-Christian victims were allotted as second category of the interview. As my agent and his

church members were planning for the regular visit of the villages, they had helped in Sindhupalchowk district, it was perfect time for my agent to conduct interviews and the interviews were conducted in individuals' home of respondents, respectively. All the interviews were conducted in Sindhupalchowk district. The responses of the informants are subdivided into the themes mentioned in chapter five. As far as I can judge, based on the transcriptions I received, I believe that my agent had presented himself in a well-mannered behaviour and administered himself in questioning the informants according to the interview guide in order to collect precise data. However, as every interview situation is unique and that the interviewer is part of the construction of the material, I cannot exclude that some relevant data could have been lost in the interview and transcription process.

Beside interview, various internet websites and survey reports were accessed during collection of data related to the background and context of this research. Secondary sources like magazines and reports, journals, pdf, books, published and unpublished articles were used. Previously researched data have been accessed through internet service to accumulate adequate data and information for theoretical and methodological purpose. Government's official websites were being accessed for the statical and numerical values related to the earthquake. Related figures and images were accessed through reliable secondary source of data. However, these secondary data were not part of the material which was subject to analysis.

3.4 Sampling procedure: Informants and respondents

As earthquake has its huge impact throughout the country. Sindhupalchowk district as the universe of the thesis, comprises the population of various ethnic and indigenous groups. Majority of people residing over 12 municipalities were the permanent and fewer were migrant people from the neighbouring districts. It is thus, sampling of the informants had been carried out for the responses through field visit. "The first principle is that the sampling of the major units of analysis should be 'purposeful' rather than probabilistic or random." (Johnson, et. al, 2007, p. 61). In order to be more precise and for relevant information to be collected, such groups of people can be divided into several categories for the exact purpose. For those population, they can be divided into various categories such as - literature, language, religion, caste, age, dependent and independent, household, gender, marital status and so on. However, as per recruiting my respondents, I did not aim for a sample based on maximum variation on all these variables, but I considered those categories which I found as a huge asset for my thesis. Among the categories that I have mentioned above, I chose to

focus on a sample that contained a variety in terms of ‘religion’ background for my thesis into which I have categorised them into two groups- Christian and Non-Christian as they played a key role for answering my research questions. Through the sampling procedure, I have chosen Christian themselves as respondents, and other major religious informants are categorised as Non-Christian. Informants includes both Christian and Non-Christian population to avoid religious bias in terms of the view of the Nepali Evangelical Church mission.

Table 3: Informants Distribution

RESPONDENT	RELIGION	POSITION / STATUS
PR	Christian	Pastor
VR A	Christian	Volunteer
VR B	Christian	Volunteer
VR C	Christian	Volunteer
VNC A	Non-Christian	Victim
VNC B	Non-Christian	Victim
VNV C	Non-Christian	Victim
VC A	Christian	Victim
VC B	Christian	Victim
VC C	Christian	Victim

10 informants (Table 1.3) have been selected for the interview after they were enlisted into groups of individuals. Purposive sampling method was used to select the informants, believing that it helps in gathering multitude of viewpoints on the issues being studied. (Bryman, 2012, p. 419). Using purposive sampling, 10 interviewees were chosen on the basis of their position and religious background.

3.5 Reliability and validity

While carrying out any research, researchers must be aware about the reliability and validity of the data. In other words, both reliability and validity are the key tools and are equally important in qualitative research. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) in Bryman (2012, p. 390) termed internal validity and reliability as key component of qualitative research. In internal reliability the observers or the members of the research team agree with what they see and hear. LeCompte and Goetz (ibid) addressed that in ethnographic research, internal validity

tends to be a strength in qualitative research because “(...) the prolonged participation in the social life of a group over a long period of time allows the researcher to ensure a high level of congruence between concepts and observations.”

According to Ghauri and Gronhaug (2005, p. 80-81), validity explains the well structure of the collected data that covers the actual area of investigation. The researcher should be aware of the correctness and strength of the data and should collect the valid data. In addition to this, Kvale and Brinkman (2009, p. 241) addressed, “validity refers to the truth: the correctness and strength of the statements.” Furthermore, the researcher should be aware about the repetition of a research. In the sense, that the research should not be repeated that has been done by previous researcher in same topic and concern.

Being a researcher, I have followed the principles of the reliability and validity to avoid unreliable and invalid data. In this concern, interviews were done by my agent to collect the relevant data of the respondents. Considering the fact, the exact answer and response of the informants were audiotaped, and notes were made during interviews and was used for further analysis. Similarly, the confusion of any responses was consulted with my agent for clarification, interpretation, and analysis as the responses of the interviewees have translated from Nepali into English language. In relation to reliability, I have strived to be transparent in my account throughout the research process so the reader can follow the steps I have taken.

3.6 Ethical consideration

Ethical consideration is considered as one of the most important parts of a research. When it comes to deal with the human subject, confidentiality is what does matter a most. So, while carrying out a research work, we must consider ethical value and norms at utmost. In connection to this, Bryman (2012, p. 136) writes:

The issue of harm to participants is further addressed in ethical codes by advocating care over maintain the confidentiality of records. (...) means that care needs to be taken when finding are being published to ensure that individuals are not identified or identifiable.

The rights and privacy of any respondents should be subjected to respect and the identities of any respondent or informants and participants should not be disclosed without their concern and wish. In addition to this, the four ethical principles laid by Diener and Crandall (1978) in Bryman (2012, p. 135) states: whether there is a harm to participant; whether there is a lack of informed consent; whether there is an invasion of privacy; whether deception is involved. Considering these principles, I have considered the identities of my respondents remain

hidden. With their concern, pseudo name or pet name (informant A/B/C...) have been used in the analysis and interpretation part of the thesis.

Similarly, I have let my informants know that there will be no harm in their identity, status, and prosperity through my agent. I have also made them aware about their wish about discontinuing the interview if they wish to do so. The participants were made allowed to skip the question if they do not wish to make their response public. Nevertheless, all the participants and informants were informed that their information will be destroyed after completing the research through consent form. Amendments were drawn into the NSD's notification form when deciding to use an agent for data collection and NSD was informed that the interview will be conducted by a third party (agent). A written data protection agreement was drawn with an agent for the sake of confidentiality of the informants. Lastly, approval was applied and received from Norwegian Centre for Research data (NSD) to ensure the regulations of the university (VID) and was followed as per the instructions.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical approach used in / during this project. These theories are then applied for the discussion part of the paper. The ‘grief theory’ has been used to shed light on the experience of the victims. The theory of diakonia is interlinked as diaconal responses with the reviews and the perspective of the respondent along with the views of the active volunteers while working on the field. Finally, the ‘transformation development’ theory has then been applied to interpret the response from victims as well as volunteers experience during their suffering and offering, respectively.

4.1 Grief theory

Nepal, a country that lies in the lap of Himalayas, lies in the prone zone of an earthquake as it lies at the head-on collision between two tectonic plates: Indian and Eurasian plates (Oskin, 2015). An earthquake, when hits hard on the ground of Nepal, causes loss of the people making various geographical and physical destruction, collapses of houses, roads, and other infrastructures. The earthquake of 2015, namely Gorkha Earthquake 2015, killed around 9000 individuals. Sindhupalchowk district experienced 3570 loses of lives and around 1567 individuals went under trauma (Online Khabar, 2017). The loss and the damages emerged in such a way that many lost their lives and beavered persons went into mourning leading them to live in a grief with trauma.

This is a fact that during the life span of human being, people have to face the death of relatives, closed ones, beloved and loved ones. The phase after experiencing such loss is called bereavement (Stroebe et. al, 2001, p. 6). Bereavement as termed ‘grief’ is followed by a primary emotional reaction which is assimilated with various “psychological (cognitive, social – behaviour) and physical (physiological – somatic) manifestations” (ibid). Mourning is often used interchangeably with grief and is defined as “the social expression or acts expressive of grief that are shaped by the practices of a given society or cultural group” (ibid). Although there is not any definite distinction between mourning and grief, personal reaction of crying might reflect both emotion reaction (grief) and following a societal norm of crying on a certain occasion (mourning) (ibid). However, the human being is understood as an integral part of a society who are embedded with the culture, norms and values of the related society, the expression of mourning can be intertwined with grief. With this

understanding, both concept of 'mourning' and 'grief' reflects the same action, reaction, and expression on a single mirror (loss) (ibid).

Similarly, mourning and grief are two states of vehemence which exaggerates the mortality experiences both as a present loss and as an expectation of mourner's ultimate loss (Fisher, 2002, p. 201). Grief is termed as experience of pain when the person loss his / her loved ones, relatives, family members or their family belongings. To this term, Fisher (ibid) writes,

The physical details of grief are reviewed with an almost medical interest: tears, sleeplessness, tossing and turning, discomfort, agitated motion, inactivity alternating with pacing, and a climax of ritualised repetitions of the insults and injuries done to the slayer (...) (p. 207).

During the act of grieving, the person falls within the circle of those who died and feels like such death causes the stoppage of the world for us casting a shadow overall experience for certain time. (Fisher, 2002, p. 214). Likewise, is grieving only expressed only for those who are important for us? Or whom do we grief for? The answer might be varied for the respondents by the grievers. In this regard, Fisher (ibid) writes,

we find ourselves grieving not only for those obviously important to us—a lover, parent, close friend, or child—but for a person who, until the moment when his or her death sets loose in us grief and the immobilizing sorrow of mourning, we have never before been aware of as belonging to that inner circle of persons out of whom the fabric of our world had been secured.

It makes a sense that grieving is an act of placement of a person who died into what extent it affects until certain limit of a time or years and may be decades. More often, family plays a prominent role while experiencing grief emotion because the families came together as a group as the solidarity was based on the shared type of experiences. (Walter, 2007, p. 128). And to this, the grieving is concerned with the structures of the family and society (Walter, 2007, p. 123). Similarly, grief and mourning are linked with the way of how emotions are attached and the way how grief was affected as per the social structure and cultures. (ibid). To social structure, Walter (2007, p. 124) express that the grieving is different in traditional societies and modern societies. As traditional societies of small village live closer to each other and know each other, the whole village will mourn when they heard or found somebody's death. But when it comes to mourning experience in modern society, the chief mourners will be relatives and friends or colleagues. (ibid). To cultures, Walter (2007, p. 126) express two cultures where one kind of culture suggest leaving the past behind and move forward with four mantras: 'let go', 'move on', the goal is 'closure', and grief is to be

‘resolved’. And second culture suggest the culture of ‘memorialisation’ where the society shows the intimate and continuing bond between the mourner and deceased one. And to this culture, Walter (2007, p. 131) address that the key development by mourners in such culture is not everyone let’s go of the dead, but many mourners walk into the future with the dead as the mourners possess the continuous bond through memorialisation.

4.1.1 Types of grief

Even though the presence of nature of the death describes the modes of grieving, there are various types by grief as per the nature of the consequences elaborated by various anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and other scholars. When we talk about or take grief into consideration, it is equally important for any researcher to know about the nature behind being in grief. In this regard, Corless in Ferrell and Coyle (2006, p. 535-537) listed the types of grief as:

4.1.1.1 Uncomplicated grief

This type of grief is a normal grief in which, an individual in a normal emotional state experiences a loss that causes a reaction and an emotional low; subsequently, the individual begins a recovery to his or her former state. This process of recovery is occasioned by brief periods of relapse, but not to the depths experienced previously. Ultimately the individual moves to adjustment to the loss. In this model, an individual shows normal reaction, emotion, and behaviours towards the news of death. As the reaction shows the normal behaviour, the grieving persons get reconnected with the normal phase of his / her living societies (Corless in Ferrell and Coyle, 2006, p. 536). This type of grief is even related to the farmers. Losing the cows, a crop or the farm triggers a farmer towards uncomplicated grief as the grieving farmer get reconnected with his / her normal phase of his / her life. (Meredith Corp., 2021).

4.1.1.2 Complicated grief

This type of grief is intense level of grieving which shows the huge effects caused in individual’s life after death. The current experience of intensive intrusive thoughts even the person had died more than a year ago, pangs of severe emotion, distressing yearnings, feeling excessively alone and empty, excessively avoiding tasks reminiscent of the deceased, unusual sleep disturbances, and maladaptive levels of loss of interest in personal activities are sorts of the effects that undergoes within the griever when someone dies and as a result it became complicated to get rid out of it. Unresolved grief, traumatic death, death of newly born child,

multiple losses at same time, suicide etc are the risk factors that led a mourner into complicated level. This type of grief prolongs over longer period and the intense might not get decrease. (Corless in Ferrell and Coyle, 2006, p. 536)

4.1.1.3 Disenfranchised grief

This grief is related to the reason behind the death of an individual. Those who are grieving the loss of relationships that may not be publicly acknowledged are not accorded the deference and support usually afforded the bereaved. In other sense, this type of losses is subjected to be not recognised and validated. The intensity and expression of mourning goes in depletion within the short period of time. Deaths of AIDS patient, ex-spouses, stepparents etc are subjected to be not recognised to the person who find themselves into the grief. (Corless in Ferrell and Coyle, 2006, p. 537)

4.1.1.4 Unresolved grief

When one fails to accomplish the necessary grief work, then it is said to be unresolved grief. Psychological factors like feeling of guilt, loss of an extension of the self, reawakening of an old loss, multiple loss, inadequate ego development, and idiosyncratic resistance to mourning are implicated in unresolved grief. Similarly, social negation of a loss, socially unspeakable loss, social isolation and/or geographic distance from social support, assumption of the role of the strong one, and uncertainty over the loss are the social factors that trigger into unresolved grief. Disappearance of a person in a sea (died) is an excellent piece of example of unresolved grief. (Corless in Ferrell and Coyle, 2006, p. 537)

4.1.2 Risk factors of complicated grief

Collective grief and cumulative grief are prone to complicated grief, both griefs are key to complicated grief as these griefs trigger the bereaver to sink into complicated emotions. (Williams, 2013). Firstly, Collective grief is experienced by groups like community, village, society or even nation. Reason for such grief is the result of an event that trigger within the communities or nation or state such as natural disaster, war, terrorist attack, any other mass casualties, or national tragedy (Williams, 2013). Secondly, “It is all too common that a death is followed by another death. Pain is piled on pain; fear on fear; the abyss on the abyss. This experience of suffering a second loss before one has grieved the initial loss is sometimes known as “cumulative grief”, “bereavement overload” or “grief overload”” (Williams, 2013).

Though the collective grief accounts the society and nation (resulting the event), it seems similar to that of cumulative grief as it affects the society in a cumulative behaviour and the event might hit back-to-back (in this context, earthquake trigger landslides, avalanches, floods). A death of patient is also a bridge to cumulative grief for the nursing staff including other medical staffs of a hospital (Lindeberg, 2012, p. 12). In addition to this, Williams (2013) addressed, “When we become overwhelmed by anything our mind kicks into an incredibly powerful defense mechanism, which is avoidance. There can be an inclination toward avoidance when experiencing just one loss, so it is not surprising that this inclination grows when losses are compiled on one another.” Similarly, Parkes and Prigerson (2010, p. 267) allotted a factor ‘disaster’ as a key factor for complicated grief and writes, “Disasters are times of massive loss for which we are nearly always unprepared. They concatenate many of the circumstances that increase bereavement risk: unexpectedness, terror, violence, multiplicity of losses, and the disruption of the families and other social systems on which we rely.” As a result, the grief itself turn into complicated where a person in grief could hardly resist and can get through out of it. The pain and the sorrow that had been experienced by the mourner will be followed by another watery eyes and pain experiences which could even lead to trauma.

However, Complicated grief is associated with our social behaviour and health problems (Shear, 2015). In addition to this, Shear (2015, p. 153) states that persistent, sadness, longing and intense yearning are the symptoms of complicated grief which are accompanied by insistent thoughts or images of the death along with a sense of disbelief and inability to accept the painful reality of beloved death. In addition to this, Shear (ibid) writes,

People with complicated grief often feel shocked, stunned, or emotionally numb, and they may become estranged from others because of the belief that happiness is inextricably tied to the person who died. They may have a diminished sense of self or discomfort with a changed social role and are often confused by their seemingly endless grief. Friends and relatives are of-ten frustrated that they cannot help, and they may become critical or stop contacting the be-reaved person, increasing his or her feelings of isolation.

Moreover, Complicated Grief is unusual, severe, and prolonged type of grief it has its adverse effect in the important domains like social behaviour of a person who grumbles themselves in the pain. It seems difficult for a person to imagine a meaningful future when he / she experience such pain and found themselves in a null value of the virtual world. Risk factors

like anxiety disorder, alcohol, and drug abuse along with multiple losses and depression in person may interact with the characteristics of the relationship between a person in a grief and deceased or with consequences of the death. “Losing someone with whom one has had a close relationship can be especially hard if the bereaved person had a difficult upbringing or if there are unusually stressful consequences of the death, inadequate social supports, serious conflicts with friends or relatives, or major financial problems after the death.” (Shear, 2015, p. 155)

4.1.3 Dual model process of coping with bereavement

Though the grief concerns with the emotions of mourners, the concept of the grief should not be kept under a shadow. To be more precise, the dual model process laid by Stroebe and Schut in Stroebe et.al. (2001, p. 394) defines two broad types of stressors. And to this, the dual model process comprises “Loss – orientation” and “Restoration – orientation” model of coping with the grief.

4.1.3.1 Loss – orientation

Stroebe and Schut in Stroebe et. al, (2001, p. 394) explain that this process of coping “refers to the bereaved person’s concentration on and processing of some aspect of the loss experience itself”. Similarly, Funeral Guide (2021) addressed that loss-oriented stressors may involve in thinking about how much he / she miss his / her loved ones looking at old photos or recalling a particular memory of incidents which trigger a stressor to breach power emotions like sadness, anger, and loneliness. In essence, these are the feelings, thoughts, incidents, and actions which make stressors focus on grief and pain (ibid).

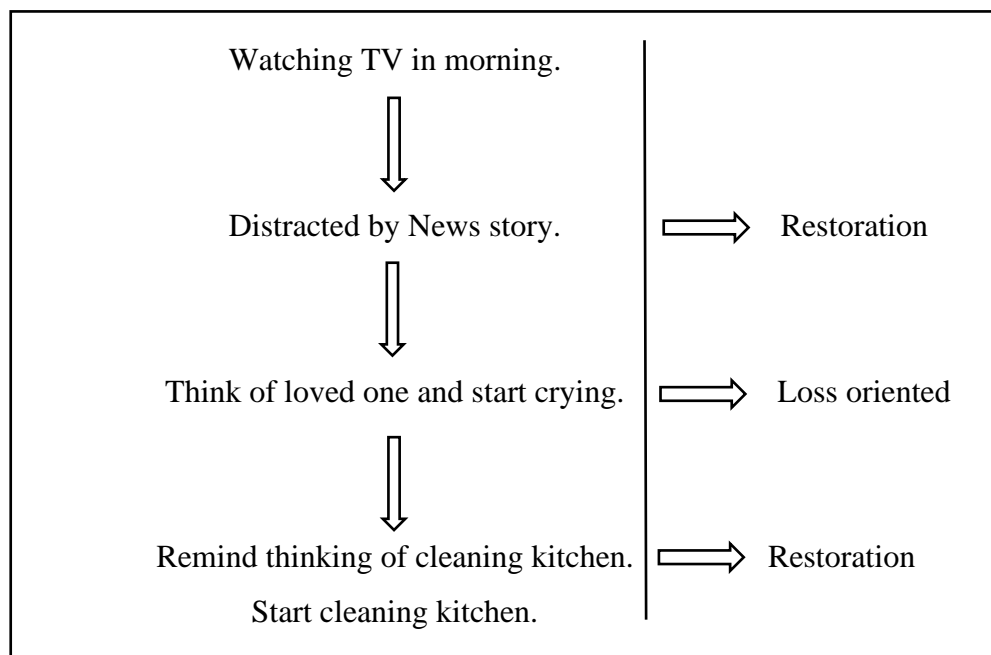
4.1.3.2 Restoration – orientation

Stroebe and Schut in Stroebe et. al (2001, p. 395) state that this model of coping “refers to the focus on secondary stressors that are also consequences of bereavement.” To this, Funeral Guide (2021) expresses, “restoration-oriented stressors are things that let you get on with daily life and distract you from your grief for a while. (...) will allow you a small break from focusing on your pain.” Furthermore, Funeral Guide (ibid) states,

Stroebe and Schut argue that without restoration-oriented behaviour, you could end up completely unable to look after yourself or get on with daily life. In this way, it is a vital part of carrying on after the death of a loved one. It is called restoration-oriented because it is behaviour that is trying to restore order and normality.

Both of the orientations are associated with anxiety and distress as they both are the sources of stress and burden (Stroebe and Schut, 2001, p. 395). As per Stroebe and Schut (ibid), “oscillation” distinguishes loss – orientation and restoration – orientation model. In a sense that, grieving person can move back and forth between these two models. And to this, bereaved person should embrace this in - between phase as stressors can move in an out of intense grief. (ibid).

Figure 6: The changes of phases between two models.
(Example explored out according to Funeral Guide (2021))



4.1.4 Parent – child bond in grief

Anthony and Benedek (1970) in Rubin and Malkinson (Stroebe et. al, 2001, p. 221) addressed that, “the parental attachment bond to children is a result of powerful, biological, evolutionary, and psychological forces operating to ensure that children will come into world and be cared for.” Similarly, Rubin and Malkinson in Stroebe et. all (ibid) write, “parents’ spend emotional, financial, and physical resource for the benefit of their children and yet experience this as a giving to the self.” And furthermore writes,

The ability of parents to establish a unique and meaningful love relationship with each of their children is an important feature of human attachment. (...) when a child dies, the complex interplay of elements that are shaken precipitate a crisis of emotion and experience that is devastating as well as pervasive for parents. (p. 221)

Smedig (1996) in Rubin & Makinson (Stroebe et. al, 2001, p. 230) admits that it is a disruptive and life shattering experience for families when the family face the loss of their child or children. In connection to this, Rubin & Makinson in Stroebe et. al (ibid) write,

Many people find it hard intuitively to understand why the grief for a child who has not lived long enough to define him – or herself should be so prolonged and intense. The guilt that parents feel for the loss of a young child, one who is totally dependent on them, is one of the most poignant features of these losses. (p. 231)

Grieving is an act of emotions and feelings related to the loss of loved ones, family members, relative and friends. (Fisher, 2002, p. 201). Tears, sleeplessness, tossing, turning, agitated motion, inactiveness are the medical interest of grieving (ibid, 207). The loss of the cattle and farm are also considered as a grief emotion of a farmer. (Meredith Corp., 2021). The dual model process of Stroebe and Schut (2001, p. 239) is a comprehensive process to determine the emotions and the concentration of the losses. In loss-orientation model, the grieving person is pushed to the emotions of the sadness, loneliness and even anger when the grieving person thinks and recall of his / her loss /es. In restoration – orientation model, the grieving person is pulled out from the emotions when got distracted by other factors as it allows a break for the grieving person from focusing on the loss. (Stroebe and Schut, 2001, p. 394-395).

4.2 Diakonia theory

4.2.1 – A key to transformational development

Diakonia refers to a biblical word which express the mission which include process of serving others. (LWF, 2004, p. 37). Oftestad sates that the Greek term “diakonia” used in the New Testament is translated as “service” (2009, p. 65). In contrary, Jørgensen (2011, p. 61), understanding of “diakonos” does not mean providing service but it refers to a person who has been given an important task to perform. And those important tasks include to be a messenger, “go-between” or pathfinder in carrying out the tasks and perform as per the call of the church throughout the world. According to Dietrich et al. (2014, p. 2-4), diakonia is both faith-based and right based action which was perceived as the activity of the professional deacons or diaconal workers and agencies. Lately, it was emphasized as the gospel of action which belongs to the nature and mission of a church. In addition to this, when there is a church, there is diakonia, as the church is what all about ‘being church’ (Ibid). the theological concept of diakonia is the mission of church, whereas the practical implication is a call to

action which includes responses against human suffering, injustice, and care for creation (LWF, 2009, p. 8). When it comes to the grateful response as per Christian understanding, diakonia is considered as a second act where the justification by faith stands as first act. And it is, thus, only the way to understand diakonia as consequences of faith and good work which is embedded in the dedicated to God (LWF, 2009, p. 35).

As diakonia is regarded as the caring ministry of the church, the mission includes one of the main aspects of a service that is to work and provide help for the vulnerable and marginalized people. Diakonia is considered as practical service rather than feeling pity for those needy people (Dietrich, 2014, p. 43). It is a service which push and pull the marginalized and vulnerable towards the development. In this regard, Dietrich in Dietrich et al. (2014, p. 43) widen the term diakonia in theological perspective and writes, “The communal and right-based approach (...) supports the development of a sustainable culture of mutual care where those are in need of help are respected and supported to find ways to solve their problems”. And when it comes to the service and help of the church as an action, it is the actions of the diaconal actors which announces the alternative ways of human perspective related to the faith, love, and the hope of betterment (LWF, 2009, p. 22).

As per the Norwegian Church Aid (NCA, 2017, p. 6), diakonia should give right to hope for people living everywhere especially for poor people who are living at the margins. The church is called to hold the power to serve as God’s mission through where the life of marginalized and vulnerable groups of people may rise themselves and could shade themselves on the shadow of development. Diakonia serve there, where people lack due to crisis and this sort of action will further help to heal the relationships and nurture the partnership among the people for the sake of God’s creation (WCC, 2012, p. 385). And this action is called God’s mission because the lives of marginalized people point toward the call or action showing them that they need transformation. (WCC, 2012, p. 387). Diakonia does not only cure the wound of the victims but it also aims at confronting and transforming the factors and forces that causes deprivation and suffering. (WCC, 2012, p. 389).

Transformational development in prophetic diakonia, is a call for action which is to serve, is commissioned by God (Nordstokke, 2011, p. 50). “It is empowered by God’s spirit, with the main of lifting up the downtrodden, of dignifying the expendable, and of empowering the excluded.” (ibid). So far, Nordstokke (2011, p. 52) addressed that diakonia is characterized as divine mission and it is always oriented towards the social margin, towards the vulnerable and marginalized people and their condition of lives. Furthermore, diakonia can be considered as first and foremost action and movement for transformational development

(ibid). Nevertheless, diakonia for transformation development is not limited to the marginalized and unprivileged individual or community, it also implies the changes on the structures and forcing factor that led people go under marginalized level of their life (WCC, 2012, p. 389). There must be the changes and challenges against the injustice and abuse of power too which can be taken as forcing factor of society towards marginalized group of people. (ibid).

As LWF (2009, p. 41) portrays that Christian faith teaches to love God which is the greatest commandment of Christian teaching. One should love his / her and their neighbours as they used to love themselves. While providing service or responding to the needy, diakonia must figure the area of the response. Whether the response is for individual or groups? Affected people could be an individual or groups. It depends upon the circumstances and the consequences that came out from the root cause (reason behind poor, vulnerable and marginalized) that relates with the need of response. (LWF, 2009, p. 41). Individual belongs to family and family belongs to society. Individual and community are both interrelated subject to be respond in terms of transformation development. Diakonia in other hand, plays immense role on transformational development for both individual and society.

4.2.2 Church and diakonia in Society

Diakonia itself means providing service to the marginalized and vulnerable people. It is taken as a mission of a church. And if this action is to church, then, this action is for the society as Church itself is a family and a family belongs to the society (Church of Norway, 2007, p. 10). In a society, church is empowered, inspired, and sustained by the God's dynamic Word (*creatura verbi*). And this dynamic Word contains the faith of the church as church is created to facilitate God's people for their good works (LWF: 2004, p. 33). Church in a society teaches to respect the integrity of its community. The church allows every individual of the community to love each other. As the Bible verses of Mark 12:31 (NIV) and Luke 10:25-37 (NIV) shows the importance of love and loving each other including neighbours, church teaches the society about the equality through loving and caring each other among the people living in the community. Similarly, church must be there to change social injustices. As Nordstokke (2015, p. 145) elaborate that the church, in Prophetic diakonia, must stand with the people who struggle for their survival and should always help them to tackle and fight against the injustices and consequences within the premises of society. In connection to this, Nordstokke (ibid) writes, "Inspired by biblical examples, diakonia is called to be prophetic when standing up against injustice and the abuse of power, and boldly defend the cause of the

downtrodden and marginalized.” Similarly, the diakonia does not end withstanding up with the downtrodden and marginalized only but also to empower them. And to clarify this, we must concur the meaning of diakonia laid by Dietrich in Dietrich et. al. (2014, p. 21) which reads as, “helping the other means assisting the other and walking together with them in order to help them to manage their own life”.

The church and the society must care their belongings and neighbours in such a way that the faith and hope in Lord stays alive within the people. The church is responsible for the caring ministry and society is responsible to practice rights with their dignity considering every aspects of social factors that includes geographical, political, and economic context. In social context, Church of Norway (2007, p. 5) defines diakonia as Church mission and gospel of action which can be fulfil by performing diaconal measures such as loving neighbours, standing against justice, creating inclusive communities, and caring for the communities. In addition to this, Dietrich in Dietrich et al. (2014, p. 43) assured diakonia as communal and right based approach and state diakonia as “(...) supports the development of a sustainable culture of mutual care where those who are in need of help are respected and supported to find ways to solve their problems.” Church of Norway (2007, p. 6) states that even in a society and community that we create through diaconal activities needs care and we should possess the norms of co-operative and coordination to enjoy the relationship with our neighbours. Furthermore, Church of Norway (ibid) writes,

We have been given to one another and we are dependent on one another and on all living beings. None of us can live totally by him- or herself or entirely for him- or herself. We have been set to serve one another and to care for one another. At the same time, all creation is dependent on human beings taking seriously their responsibility as stewards. Our faith in God involves responsibility for the world around us.

Since the church is a part of a society which might be local, national, or international, diakonia is what always practised and performed with in the social context (Church of Norway, 2007, p. 10). Similarly, the mission of the church in society must include the three main areas of its diaconal activities; prophetic voice in a society: consistent and self – critical in its own daily life and practice: and creative and inventive to find sustainable solutions of individuals and society (Church of Norway, 2007, p. 19).

4.2.3 Inclusive community and diakonia

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

- Galatians 3:28 (NIV)

Though every nook and the corner of a community needs caring and sharing services, diakonia plays a vital role for creating inclusive community. The above-mentioned verse of a Bible depicts that the society is for every human individual and the only Lord Christ is there for everyone. No one is beyond society; everybody deserves to be a part of it. 1 Corinthians 12:12 (NIV) reads, “The body is unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So, it is with Christ.” This verse of Bible, in terms of inclusivism, reflects that each an individual are parts of a society and those individuals together forms a unit (body), i.e Society. Similarly, 1 Corinthians 12:26 (NIV) states, “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.” When the society includes inclusivism as a practice, definitely people will rejoice with their life at full as everyone deserves to live in the glory of God’s grace. The people together in a society must share their sorry and happiness. This phenomenon is what we called inclusive society. Inclusive society comprises the togetherness and unity where they tackle and confront the social problems in a communal development strategy.

According to UN Organization (2016, p. 20), social inclusivism is “the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or economic or other status, through enhanced opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights.” Society must maintain social cohesion by making an individual participate responsibly in an aspect of ‘society for all’ (ibid). This will foster the societal prosperity as “a cohesive society creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, fights exclusion and marginalization and offers its members the opportunity of upward mobility” (ibid).

Church, in other side, being a part of society and diaconal actor mobilizes the human resources in an organizational manner so that the human integrity and dignity of each individual are respected. As the mission, being integral part of a church, Nordstokke (2011, p. 109) connects mission and diakonia to faith and transformation, respectively. Both of these have the distinct identity where faith is inbuilt as human phenomenon and it act as a basic condition for transformation. Whereas transformation reflect human realities related to the action taken against injustice and suffering. The diakonia works as empowering and dignifying agent of a life which further helps to construct a sustainable society (ibid). And for

this, the church in a society acts as an agent which allow diakonia go in a full swing in a community. To this, LWF (2009, p. 49) connects community and diakonia which reads as,

Community-based diakonia enhances inclusiveness and mutuality in dealing with challenges of suffering and injustice. It affirms the value of doing things together and the conviction that all persons are gifted and able to participate in working for what is good and right. It resembles the African saying: “If you want to hurry, walk alone. If you want to go far, walk together.

Being faith-based action, diakonia nurtures faith and give hopes. Similarly, being faithful to its prophetic diakonia, it “speaks up against sinful practice and structs that cause suffering and degradation of human dignity and speak out for a more human and just society.” (LWF, 2009, p. 30). The acknowledgement presented by WCC (2018, p. 49) promotes the network of solidarity and joint action. As all humans are created in the image of God, they are capacitated for loving, care and promotion of justice. WCC (ibid) proclaims that people beside Christians are more committed to this kind of action which include the action and emotions related to loving, caring and promotion of justice. Some people amongst them are from other faiths whereas some of them have no faith at all. And for such situation, diaconal action is a sense to cooperate with all people those who possesses good will (ibid). The various faith-based organizations and diaconal institutions have been working actively in civil society in the field of inclusive, participatory, and sustainable society. The inclusive community enrolled themselves in advocacy and promotes inclusiveness in society. (WCC, 2018, p. 13,55). The issue of ethnicity, gender, age, and social status are some major factors that counted as the cause of discrimination. (WCC, 2018, p. 44). So, diakonia as right-based practice should avoid such mechanism of exclusion so that there will not be any risk of losing its diaconal identity (ibid). Inclusivism is only a path which push and pull the society towards prosperity through diaconal participatory praxis.

The societal actors (diaconal institutions) play an important role to foster the society through the mechanism of inclusivism. And for such good deed, churches can be appropriate actors for inclusive society which have crucial contribution to make for the overall development of the society (Haugen, 2018, p. 162). Korslien in Dietrich et. al. (2014, p. 212) addressed that diakonia as a practical perspective in a society includes compassion, inclusiveness, respect, understanding, trust, mutuality, and accountability as its core values. Furthermore Korslien (ibid) considered diakonia as a hope and writes, “diakonia is (...) project of hope and we need imagination in order to create new opportunities for even more people to be included in

the life and work of the common fellowship.” The project of hope is emerged in a society where all the participant involved are dependent with each other and will be influenced by each other (ibid).

4.2.4 Diakonia: In connection to disaster

Earthquake is a sudden release of energy in the earth. It is a disaster done by earth itself which destroy the world or certain territory of the world (Feldman, 2020, p. 238). Similarly, the definition of an earthquake, as a disaster, laid by Parrillo (2008, p. 240) states, “are socially and structurally disruptive; they significantly disrupt routine patterns of action as well as the social structures and built environment.” The effect and the impact of such incident and event will either change some previous patterns of action along with physical structures or it may no longer return to its position or exist (ibid). Before moving towards the opportunities generated by such disaster, we should not ignore its impacts. Regarding this, Jhowry (2016, p. 4) claimed that the disaster risk is related to the human rights in various ways and writes,

The impacts of disasters are obstacles to individual’s human rights (...) We know that poor people are always hit worst by a disaster. The risks for disaster is greater in a context were people are denied their human rights and where access to information, resources, or decision-making is limited. Disasters should be seen as the result of unmanaged risks – which is a matter of injustice. (p. 04)

Such injustice that emerged in the society after such incidents should be tackle in such a way that the societal factors should not get disrupted. And for such action, church can play a key role to stand against such unjust through diaconal activities as the Christian understanding of diakonia accept that nobody is beyond society (Galatians 3:28, NIV). Moreover, building inclusive community through diaconal perspective is a mission of a church (WCC, 2018, p. 44), it helps in building the active citizenship which further help to foster the development of the society. Regarding the injustice as the results of unmanaged risk, the human rights here is found to be violated that makes the human indivual lacks to practice their rights which in returns hinder the people to live a better life through their own decision (Jhowry, 2016, p. 4). The voice is here to be raised against such injustice and for the matter, diakonia will be utmost important for a society to stand against such unjust. Diakonia being right-based action, the unjust voices are to be raised for a transformational development of a society. (ibid). Disaster results to the crisis which creates human suffering and diakonia here is

concern with an immediate demand of the human suffering against the crisis (LWF, 2009, p. 42).

4.2.5 Human rights and diakonia

Documents asserting individual right, such as Magna Carta (1215), the English Bill of rights (1689), the French Declaration on the Rights of Man and Citizen (1789), and the US Constitution and Bill of Rights (1791) are the written precursors to many of today's human rights documents.

The aforementioned documents of history addressed by Human Rights Research Centre, here as HRRC, were used to translated into “policy, excluded women, people of color, and members of certain social, religious, economic and political groups.” (HRRC, 2021). The establishment of International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1991 was to protect workers with respect to their rights, health, and safety. Later, the members of United Nations (UN) collaboratively adopted the commission named Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on December 10, 1948 which became a call to freedom and justice for people throughout the world (ibid).

Human Rights is “discourse of human unity rather than of human diversity, emphasizing our membership of a common ‘humanity’ from which our rights are derived, and hence can readily ignore such factors as gender, race, and class.” (Ife, 2010, p. 82). Human rights discourse such social disadvantages because human right tends to treat all people as one. (ibid). individual development and community development is an arena to a human which contributes to human rights. (ibid). Furthermore, Ife (2010, p. 84) states that, “Human rights are commonly considered to be universal, indivisible, inalienable and inabrogable.”

On the other side, through diaconal perspective, “human rights and human dignity are increasingly integrated into the strategies of diaconal agencies.” (Haugen, 2014, p. 123). According to Haugen in Dietrich et al. (2014, p. 124), diakonia as social perspectives “must be undertaken with the purpose of fostering empowerment of individuals, households and communities, by promoting participation, which in turn must be facilitated by transparency.” Haugen (ibid) considered the factors like dignity, non-discrimination, accountability, transparency, rule of law, empowerment, and participation, as the principles of human rights and admitted that these “principles must always be seen in conjunction with substantive human rights.” (ibid, p. 124). Comparably, Eurodiaconia (2010, p. 14) addressed the relationship between the diakonia and human rights which reads as, “Both topics address the struggle for the understanding, respect and care of human beings and human life.” In addition

to the context, the human rights give hope to the marginalized and vulnerable groups “as long as people are aware of their rights and where governments submit to human rights law.” (Eurodiaconia, 2010, p. 14). Human rights are expressed as human dignity and human dignity is God’s gift to us as an inherent essence. (ibid).

Eurodiaconia (2010, p. 14) convey that human rights perspective in diaconal care is ensured with right based approach where human being and his/her inherent dignity are kept at its centre. Into this, the emphasis of the diaconal work is to focus the effects of a problem and give more attention to the root cause of the problems with the help of two actors which comes under right base approach: right holders and duty bearers. (ibid). The duty bearers are the representative of the state that respect, protect and fulfil human rights. The diaconal actors have to meet the people who are in need on the basis of their immediate help and have to work for their independence, right based approach, here, no longer address the targeted people as beneficiaries but as “(...) holders of rights which then takes diaconal care providers to be facilitators.” (ibid). Consequently, when disaster is related to the results of unmanaged risks, diakonia being right based approach, is to provide justice for the victims and thus diakonia can consider ‘disaster risk reduction’ as its action for a change which, then, should be needed aftermath of the incidents. (Jhowry, 2016, p. 4). And to such marginalized and vulnerable group who experience the incident, Eurodiaconia (2010) indicates,

Justice is more than to simply have rights but also the movement to bring people to live in justice and use their rights to ensure just societies through positive change. As actors of change we have the task to promote and work for positive change in society and for better implementation of human rights in social law. (p.15)

4.3 Transformational development theory

4.3.1 Development

As per Cambridge dictionary, ‘development’, in literary work, is the movement from one event to another or the changes in the characters’ understanding. When we peep into the history of ‘development’, Ingham (1993, p. 1803) states that 19th century’s industrialization and institutional approaches as economic growth was regarded as development. But over the years, there has been found growing perspectives of development, not in economic terms but as a boarder perspective (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009, p. 13). Development should be viewed in the framework of opportunities, capabilities, and liberties (ibid). It gives wider view of ‘development’. In this term, opportunities refer to participate in the society and

to live longer and healthy live whereas capabilities include better standard of living and living condition with access to the resources. Similarly, liberties, in terms of development, is related to decision making process that affect them within the society. In addition to this, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2009, p. 13) inspired with Sen's thinking of development states that, "It is important to create situation where people can control their own resources and claim their rights, where they enjoy a minimum of economic and human security and are thus able to make choices that will improve their future." In a broad sense, development is a process where various components and factors are created such as progress, growth, positive changes, economic standard, and other social components. According to Society for International Development Israel (2018), here as SID Israel, quality of life of the entire population, expansion of the income, high employment opportunities and access to the available resources are the major components of development. In addition to this, SID Israel (2018) address, "development is visible and useful, not necessarily, and includes an aspect of quality change and the creation of conditions for a continuation of that change."

When it comes to recent development, Hiebert (2008, p. 262) evaluates that the old theories of development that had been laid and argued by various anthropologist, have been deconstructed and new theories of development have introduced stress development which includes the development from bottom-up like locally initiated programs, microloans, locally tailored projects. These sorts of development approaches, process and projects will, hence, empower the locals which helps them to increase their option and choices to decide their future using social system and local knowledge. Further, this empowerment will help to develop partnership of mutual respect and trust between the local people and the outsiders. (ibid)

4.3.2 Development as participatory

The development or the community development is a bottom-up process which is reinforced by the dominance of managerialism. (Ife, 2010, p. 30). This process views good management over the existing organizations of the community. Development as a participatory approach as per Ife (2010, p. 31-32) is about valuing the wisdom and knowledge of a community members. In addition to this Ife (ibid) writes, "community development will always try first to find wisdom, knowledge and skill in the community itself." Another major principle of the development as per Ife (ibid) is self-reliance, independence, and interdependence. For this, Ife (ibid) writes, "consistent with the idea of valuing expertise from below, self-reliance suggest that a community should where possible seek to rely on its own resources rather than

becoming dependent on other communities or on some central authorities.” Ife (2010, p. 39-40) admitted that the higher the participation of community members, the higher the effectiveness of community development will be. In connection to this, Ife (ibid) address, “A healthy community is an active, participatory community where many people can participate in different ways.” In addition to this, inclusiveness plays essential role for the development. (Ife, 2010, p. 34). If community development is for the renewal of humanity, there must be the promotion and celebration of the diversified community members and to this Ife (ibid) portraits, “rather than accepting the bland assurance that ‘in unity is strength’, it is necessary to build community development around the understand that ‘in diversity is strength.’” The inclusiveness welcomes the strangers who can encourage dialogue, have mutual learning interest, and enrich the development of both an individual and community. (ibid).

4.3.3 Transformation

A larva turning into alive butterfly can be taken as an example of transformation. In any structural and biological changes, the circumstances, the social structure, and environment get affected during transforming phases. Moreover, various social structures, components, culture, genetic structures, and elements are the key factors that determine the transformative changes into a new one. Transformation, in this sense, is profound and fundamental change which includes the alteration of those key factors (Gass, 2016, p. 1). “Transformational change is both radical and sustainable. Something that is transformed can never go back to exactly what it was before.” (ibid). It is not necessary that all changes are or should be transformation. It means that transitional, incremental, and gradual development changes are the key aspects for any sorts of transformation (ibid, p. 21). Transformation in society means the changes in the components of a social structures which includes tradition, faith, elements, and voices. And for these changes, the changes are motivated through various means of motivation of the transformation. “The transformative approach is courageous refusal to accept that we are victims of our own conditioning and habits of mind.” (ibid, p. 23). In connection to this, Gass (2016) writes,

Transformative change asserts that our success in creating a more just and sustainable world requires our ability to connect with the deepest longings of people, that we as our political analysis, that we live and practice justice and sustainability in the way we do social change, and ultimately, that we be spiritual (...) (p. 14)

LWF (2004, p. 32-33) in connection with the Christian faith writes, “transformation is a continuous process of rejection of that which dehumanizes and desecrates life and adherence

to that what affirms the sanctity of life and gifts in everyone and promote peace and justice in the society.” The transformation is changes related to justice and voice of the suppressed people, poor to enough to purchase, child to adult and so on. To make the changes as the development for marginalized groups of people, an international conference was held at Wheaton College from 20th of June to 1st of July in 1983 which was conducted on the nature and mission of a church. The conference was supported by World Evangelical Fellowship along with numbers of other evangelical agencies around the world which was focused on a Christian Response to Human Need. (Wheaton ’83 Statement, 1984, p. 23). Wheaton ’83 Statement (1984, p. 24) portrays that the development is the changes and states, “Transformation is the change from a condition of human existence contrary to God's purposes to one in which people are able to enjoy fulness of life in harmony with God.

4.3.4 Transformational development

Development was meant to be ‘modern’ West and was measured in economic growth factors but by 1990’s economic model of development was enlarged where it includes social development (Myers, 2011, p. 12). And the transformation is possible only when an individual discovers his / her true identity and thus, discover the vocation that God intends for them. (Myers, 2011, p. 178-179). Furthermore, Myers (ibid) admitted that, “No transformation can be sustainable unless this distorted, disempowering sense of identity is replaced by the truth. Healing the marred identity of the poor is the beginning of transformation.” The development of new reality is only possible when one discovers who he / she really is. It will further help each individual to develop a character where each one instills and form values that allows a better vision of the future and permit the poor to love others as themselves. And this will result life enhancing transformational development of an individual. (ibid).

According to Myers (2011), the freedom as a characteristic of transformational development laid by Bragg is the sense of being liberated in the Christ (p.153) whereas, Sen’s freedom is much more concentrated on “increasing human freedom or agency in ways that allow people to pursue” the needs that they think are most valuable and important to them (p. 167). For transformational development, people-centred development termed by Korten in Myers (2011, p. 155) portrays that the programs related to the development should not come from the outside instead “people should decide for themselves what improvements are needed and how they are to be created.” Limited access to social power is a cause of poverty, and for this Friedmann in Myers (2011, p. 158) writes development, “is a process that seeks the

empowerment of the households and their individual members through their involvement in socially and politically relevant actions.” Meanwhile, the kingdom vision for the development as “better human future” as per Myers (2011, p. 175) is “summarized by the idea of shalom: just, peaceful, harmonious, and enjoyable relationship with each other, ourselves, our environment and God.” Furthermore, Myers (ibid) writes, “This kingdom frame is inclusive of physical, social, mental, and spiritual manifestations of poverty, and so all are legitimate areas of focus for transformational development that is truly Christian.” Similarly, making, managing, and shaping the social system is a pathway towards the kingdom which accounts the work for well-being. Kingdom includes the better future for the poor as the kingdom listen and be with them. And for this Myers (ibid) writes, “Whatever heals and restores body, mind, spirit, and community, all can be part of the better future toward which transformation development should point.”

Continuous changing process from ‘what we were’ to ‘what we are’ through transformation can be said as development. Transformation development refers to the development of an individual to such level where one left his / her status into the ground floor and reach to the top of a building. Here, the floors in between top floor and ground floor can be observed as a transformation. To be more precise, development is not possible without transformation. Weak becoming strong is transformation while strength became the development. It emphasizes that the societal transformation is only possible only if there is individual transformation. In connection to this, Nordstokke in structural position (2011, p. 108), writes,

“(...) transformation means dealing with human realities, reacting to injustice, and suffering, empowering the excluded to be agents of change, dignifying human life, and constructing a more sustainable society.”

Transformation development is a continuous development process where factors and reasons play key role to determine the process. Each development has its hidden reality (factors and reasons) where the problems and its levels are grounded beneath. In this regard, the transformational development or the transformation is a process ‘From What?’ to ‘To What?’ (Myers, 2011, p. 152). Transformational development demonstrates the level of the problem in relation to its betterment for a certain level. Hunger is responses by social welfare as to feed, low agriculture product has ‘From What?’ to new skills and techniques of farming for huge production as ‘To What?’. Various problems call for responses and for this, transformational development takes each level and response seriously. (ibid). In addition to this, transformation ensure the achievement of the desired goals by respecting human dignity

with justice and peace for every people who came into encountering transformational development. Transformation is social change, progress, or development (LWF, 2009, p. 44).

4.3.5 Evangelism: A path to transformational development

Myers (2011, p. 309) addressed gospel as ‘message’ or ‘good news’ whereas evangelism as ‘to announce good news’. It refers to that the term evangelism means to announce the good news, in terms of Christian faith. Similarly, transformation is to proclaim the good news of Lord. The fact of the lives by every means available to them is a witness as per Christian faith. So, when it comes to transformational development for any Christians, “being a witness is integrated to who we are and what we believe” (ibid). Furthermore, this means “Christian Witness” is the new beginning of transformation and sharing the good news in the process of recovering one’s own identity and vocation. To the note, Myers (2011, p. 311) illustrates Brueggemann’s act of evangelism as a drama which includes a story of beginning, middle and an end. The story can be pointed as:

Beginning – conflicts between two powerful forces that battle for control of the future.

Middle – the witness witnessing the outcome of the conflict through experience.

End – making appropriate response to the witness.

In these regards, Myers (2011, p. 310-311) termed evangelism as ‘Christian Witness’.

Evangelism is not there in any areas for sales whereas gospel should not be treated as marketable product which are kept for people to purchase. Evangelism is needed: to proclaim the good news, ‘gospel’ which is directly related to the Christian belief and faith of transformation. When there is a need of development, transformation must be forwarded into the foremost action. (ibid). In connection to this, Hiebert (2008, p. 173) states that, “The modern evangelical mission movement was based in the assumption that the gospel is addressed to individuals, calling them to an inner experience of personal conviction based on the cognitive affirmation that Jesus Christ is Lord.” (Hiebert, 2008, p. 173).

4.3.6 Transformational development: In an eye of Christianity

Professional development work can improve materials, mental and social life within the lifetime of the community members without changing the ultimate outcome of the bigger story. Only by accepting God’s salvation in Christ can people and the community redirect the trajectory of then story toward the Kingdom of God. (Myers, 2011, p. 174-175).

The above statement emphasizes that the transformation and development is only possible by accepting God's salvation in Christianity. Transformational development is a story – a story of community and a story of a God at work in community. (Myers, 2011, p. 173). Related to this, LWF (2004, p. 33) states, “transformation perceived in the light of Christ's resurrection is the unfolding of the potential life-giving nature of all creation and an expression of the working of God's grace in nature.” For this, the church is only reliable source to put the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit through where the transformation development can be taken into action. (ibid). Similarly, when it comes to such passion and source as church, its mission as transformation should include individuals, structures, and relations in the concern community. (ibid).

Transformation in development, in terms of bible, counter the God's work upon community, for better community. (Myers, 2011, p. 174). In addition to this, 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV) addressed that the transformation is to transfer oneself into the God's image with ever increasing glory that comes from the Lord. Similarly, for the transformational development, one should have a vision for a bright future to secure development. If the God's love in action is to serve, then diakonia must moil to transform people, society, system, and the cultures. (WCC, 2012, p. 389). On this note, WCC (ibid) illustrates that those action works for the justice, development of the poor and states, “the God of the Bible seeks, and effects change in concrete situations of life, especially of those who are denied the same (...) and be transformed by the values of love, sharing, truthfulness and humility.” LWF (2004, p. 33) writes, “transformational development is a gift of justification empowers to denounce wickedness (...)”. As per Christian understanding of transformational development, transformation is God's will and is enabling change. It is because God has made it so (Myers 2011, p. 184). Everyone is poor in God's world, and everyone is need of transformation. (Myers, 2011, p. 17). This is insisting a hope and faith that one carries while serving the poor. The ‘hope’ based on biblical message prevails that God is the God of life to the poor and oppressed who gives future and this “faith motivates diakonia to resist evil and promote justice, to advocate with and for people in need, and to act boldly as transformative signs of hope.” (LWF, 2009, p. 25). And so, the diakonia as hope is taken as “responsible service” which focus on the needs of the people transforming themselves into their better future and endeavours through various development phases. (LWF, 2009, p. 40). It emphasised that the understanding expressed by WCC and LWF is shared also by Evangelicals, even if the terms chosen might differ.

Yoms and Toit (2017, p. 46) insists that justice, human dignity, equity, equality, and the people's participation are the bedrock of the development which further drives towards the path of sustainable development. Bowers in Yoms and Toit (ibid) clarified the concept of transformational development in Christian understanding which reads, "The Christian's development, however, is based on the New Testament concept of *Shalom* or the New Testament concept of *Kingdom of God*, which are characterized by material well-being, harmony, peace and justice." (p. 46). Similarly, Dudley in Yoms and Toit (ibid, p. 47) states that, "the foundation of Christian involvement in community development arises from concern for one's neighbour and the sustenance of the love of God." Furthermore, Yoms and Toit (2017, p. 50-56) admitted that affirmation of culture, context, and indigenous knowledge, just and peaceful relationship, dignity and self-worth, empowerment and self-reliance, and spiritual development are the key characteristics of transformational development to measure any Christian development praxis.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.0 Introduction

This section presents empirical material that deals with the perspective of the informants towards the Christian actions during the earthquake. The story of experiencing earthquake by the respondents is presented to illuminate the emotions and the reaction they had after facing the losses. The response related to how they were showered with the help of Christian church and the Christian communities will be carried further in the subsection on this chapter. This chapter also includes the views of the church members of NEC as they also play a key role of participants during collecting data. The codes in this chapter were used to anonymise the respondents and what they actually meant were described earlier in the chapter of methodology. To support the evidence of what was being reported during research, the quotation was used which I have kept them in quote, indented and italics in a passage.

5.1. Towards loss, pain, sorrow, trauma, and grief

The following sections deal with loss, pain, sorrow, trauma and grief through the presentation and analysis of relevant data.

5.1.1 Loss of lives and assets

Sindhupalchowk district was one of the worst hit districts by 2015 April earthquake. The disaster made every victim struggle when they faced the loss of their belonging and assets they belong to. Most of the survivors were found in trauma (pain and sorrow) when they lost their house and their loved ones. Almost same fear was shared by my respondents while experiencing the worst natural disaster for a landlock country. Living in a village with a joint family is a huge responsibility for any family members. One must take care of others and when it comes to the crisis, the responsibility of an individual becomes the duty which they should fulfil at any cost. Once the members of a family lost their other member during natural disaster, the fear led them to a trauma which goes much painful than the fear. The loss experienced by one of the informants when he lost his young daughter adds a painful sorrow when he found his house turns into the debris. The pain can be imaginable when he saw his child buried under the debris of his own house.

The pain after he saw his own daughter's death was additional grief to him and to his entire family members. Beside the loss of the house and the death of his younger child, he faced the food crisis too.

She was dead and was under the debris of my building. (...) we had faced the losses of not only of our child but lost our house, crops, and clothes. The food that we preserved for the future was mixed with the mud of our destroyed house which was not in the condition to reuse. (VC – A)

Another respondent shared her experience about the lost emotion when she found her child under the mud of the destroyed house. It could be imaginable how vulnerable and painful the moment was when she saw her only child's dead body lying on the ground in front of her and other family members.

...the house collapsed, and my son was buried within the rubble. (VNC – B)

There were then clouds of grief in her family. Her husband who was abroad during the earthquake was in grief when she informed the death of their only son.

My husband was abroad. He went abroad a couple of years ago before we were hit by an earthquake. (...) My husband was informed about this after a couple of days as we lacked the communication because the electrical powers were cut off (I don't know how) and there were no signals on the cell phones (have heard the network tower were also damaged). (VNC – B)

5.1.2 Fear, trauma, and grief

Some of the people who lost their physical assets and who were injured during the incidents were found in a trauma through which they are getting out of it day by day. The family members were bit more affected both physically and mentally when the earthquake resulted into some physical and mental disturbance to themselves and to their children. One respondent shared his experience that he was still suffering from trauma even after two years of the earthquake. He was suffering from pain and fear while he was living with his family members in the earthquake-damaged house. For two years, he and his family members were in trauma and fear. The fear was that he and his family members might die of the strong shakes again if their house gets collapsed. This fear was a trauma for them, and they were very much in sorrow and were struggling their life in a risk.

Our house was damaged with huge cracks, it was not a safe deal to live inside such building... (VC – B)

Another respondent also shared the experience of fear.

There were lack of food and place for us to hide our heads during such sorrow moment. We used cardboards and woods to make a temporary hut so that we can stay

inside. We collected few utensils and food crops from the debris until we receive any reliefs from the government or any other donor organizations. (VC – C)

Similarly, another respondent expressed his emotion of fear and stress:

I was crying and yelling, shouting, and calling my child. (VC – A)

One respondent expressed her grief when she found her child's dead body in front of her:

...I lost my child, and he was no more. I lost myself and was staring my child's body. (VNC – B)

Another respondent shared his grieving experience when he lost his daughter:

I was like shaking and shivering with huge broken heart. My mind became null, had no idea about what to do. (VC-A)

Out of six victims as informants, one of the respondents shared his sorrow when he got cracks on his house and the roof of his house which was used as a temporary kitchen got collapsed. He and his family members experienced the earthquake when they were on the top floor of their three-storeyed concrete building.

The top floor of my three-storey building was under construction as we had only one room at the top floor which we were using as a temporary kitchen. We were having lunch during the time. After finishing lunch my brother and two children went outside of the house to play football. (...) We ran in a hurry, and unfortunately my wife and my mom got tumbled on the stairs and got hurt. My wife had few stiches on her head while my mom got a fractured hand (left). (VNC- C)

Besides that, the family was afraid and stressed about the future of their children as they observed a kind of fear and trauma in their children. One of the respondents shared his experience he faced after the incident through which his children were directly affected.

We have six members in my family. Me, my wife, my mom and my three children. Me, my wife, and my mom were working on the irrigation field during earthquake while my children were playing at the courtyard. The tremble shacking quake hit such hard that my mud house gets destroyed within few minutes. My children were about to enter the house during earthquake, but sudden fall of the house did not let them in. As they were about to enter, the house gets collapsed and my elder son were hit hard by the door as it starts tumbling down. They managed to run far away from the home but my elder son who was 11 years old get hurt on his neck. As we were closet to our house, we ran fast enough to save our children. (...) All my three children are still in fear about an earthquake. They even cry when they face any aftershocks. They used to

cry and scream if they felt any aftershocks even if it is below 5 Rithcer scale of earthquake. The earthquake had a huge impact in my children. (VNC – A)

5.2 Towards smile and hope: helping hands during crisis

After earthquake, it was hard for the donor and helping organizations to reach to victims because of the difficult topography of the district. Landslides at various parts of the roads blocked the way to the affected area resulting into the slow delivery of the relief programs launched by the government, churches, and other various welfare organizations. Although the late response of such organizations was appreciated by the victims, they had shared the various perspective to the church whom they got the help from during the crisis. Almost every possible sector had tried to reach the people who were in crisis. The help of the neighbours was also applauded by the victims. Similar answers and views were collected when they were asked, “Who do you think will be there to help your family?”. Few of them thought of government help, while others thought of neighbours and church.

All the people were scattered here and there looking for open places. All people were full of fear because of earthquake so that no one was there in the right time of earthquake. Later, some rescue team of Nepal police and army arrived in the village. (VNC – A)

Similar responses were found as the views of other respondents when they were asked, “Who came first to rescue or support your family?”. It was observed that the respondents` expectation of who would appear to help them in crisis was both similar and different from who really offered the needed help. When VC – A respondent thought that Nepal Government would approach them to help and as expected “*neighbours, Nepal police and Nepal army team came to rescue us*”. Likewise, VC – B and VC – C were first helped by their church while they thought Nepal Government would be there for their help. While getting response from the informants, VNC – A was helped by “the local Red Cross Society and some social welfare organizations” as their first support.

On the other hand, despite the earthquake, volunteers from NEC have paced themselves forward to help the vulnerable victims of Sindhupalchowk district. There were several risk factors during the helping programs laid by the church and its volunteers. During the interview with volunteers, VR – A and VR – C, expressed similar opinion while they were about to launch the relief program.

-lots of victims and hard to select as we can only serve limited people.

-difficult topography and probability of aftershock during travel in hills scared me.

-limited resources that we could provide but the demand was high.

Similarly, VR – B expressed his views as:

Empty hand cannot help victims. More difficult things were to collect needy materials such as Tent, clothes, and food. And it was difficult to raise fund for relief materials. I became happy while people open their hand to help needy people.

Though it was hard time for the church and its volunteers to help the victims with the relief program, all the three volunteers (respondents) expressed the same ease factors which helped them then to buckle up themselves for instant help.

-No work pressure form office as office is closed at that time.

-Church leader to guide us in the community.

-Community leader and Church leader helped us to identify most vulnerable families.

While Pastor of the church was asked about managing the volunteers and selecting helping areas, he had his view which reads as:

Motivated the youths of the church for quick response to the urgent need as a practical response to the teaching of the Bible loving their neighbors. That was the time to put the Biblical principles into action. Basic relief material distribution for survival in the seriously hit areas, such as Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Ramechhap, Sindhuli, Kavre etc. The massive number of tents were distributed in these districts through identifying and mobilizing the resources from friends and loved ones.

Being a diaconal actor and agent, church and its volunteers played an immense role to protect the dignity of the vulnerable group of Sindhupalchowk district which was worst affected by the earthquake. When Pastor was asked, “Why did you choose that area?”

These areas were the places where life was comparatively more vulnerable and hit really hard by the quack. Vulnerable in the sense of no access to even the basic resources for survival and did not know how to present their situation properly to the concerned authorities. (PR)

During the post- phase of the earthquake, because of its difficulty level to reach the affected area, it was hard for any of the organizations to manage manpower to help the victims. In such case, Pastor was asked, “How were your volunteers mobilized?”

Motivation with the number of death toll, loss of rest of the basic necessities of life or making available the updated information on the painful incidents and why we are supposed to help meet the necessities to those that survived on the ground of the teachings of the Word of God. (PR)

Similarly, the church was there for providing courage and strength to the victims as the church was helping to overcome the effects of the earthquake. It gave strength and hope towards the faith to the Christian community. The strength was gained when the church was standing there during the crisis to which VC – A expressed *“church family was standing with us in the time of our sorrow and pandemic so that we felt comfort and good.”* Similar strength was shared by VC – B who expressed, *“they visited frequently and gave us hope and trust to stay strong and God will make everything good in his time for his Glory.”* VC – C shared, *“They came multiple times for pray.”*

When Pastor was asked about the services and assistance of the church and its volunteers, they had some basic medical supplies, salt, oil, rice packs and helping the victims to rebuild their collapsed houses were accumulated under the relief program launched by the church. All the respondents were helped by the church and other social welfare organizations. Almost every informant shared the common name when they were helped by the church and it was NEC who help them during such circumstances.

5.2.1 A hope and opportunities: the work of church

Before any diaconal activities to be carried forward, the members of NEC had to safeguard the church and its ministry. When Pastor was asked about how he and his ministry safeguarded the church.

Encouraged for prayer, taught from the Bible on how to stand firm in situations like this on the found of the Bible specially relating to the end times prophecy and its literal fulfilment and gave company and emotional, spiritual, and physical support.

(PR)

With the set of targets, NEC was about to launch the relief distribution program and for such huge relief program, the financial crisis was one of the major hinderance for anyone who wanted to help during the crisis. When Pastor was asked about the management of the financial support, he was found overwhelmed when he said, *“Church fund and friends and well-wishers from abroad.”* The church was found to offer help that includes a number of relief materials to the vulnerable groups.

Table 1.4: List of relief materials distributed by NEC

Health Sector	Food and clothes	Others
Basic Medical supply	Salt, Oil, Rice packs	Tents for makeshift shelters
	Lentils	Money as relief fund
	Clothes	Rebuilding houses

Figure 7: Volunteers distribution reliefs



Image Source: NEC Ministry

Beside this relief program of rebuilding the collapsed houses, it has given opportunities to the vulnerable group to have few incomes during the crisis. The government was under the program of rebuilding and reconstructing the damaged and collapsed houses, a significantly large manpower was needed. The church in this scenario, helped numbers of vulnerable youths to participate in the program which was conducted in coordination with the local government. The opportunities that were provided by the local government and the church helped various victims to have certain income during their struggle period. When one of the volunteers was asked, “What do you mean by helping them earning money?”

I mean to say that making them aware of the crisis and the opportunities that had been given by the community leader along with other social welfare organization including churches too. The volunteers who will be working in rebuilding the houses will get paid. The young vulnerable group of people could participate after they were found to be from most vulnerable victims. (VR – B)

Another respondent shared her experience related to the opportunities provided by the church:

From then I am working along with my colleagues in various development projects related to rebuilding and reconstruction of houses. ... I am still working on projects related to construction of various local school buildings. (VNC – B)

5.2.2 Appreciation of diaconal actions showered by Nepali Evangelical Church

As almost all the informants were helped by the local church NEC, the victims were found overwhelmed with the love and the support they received from the church and Christian community. Even the Non-Christian victims were surprised to receive the help during the crisis after earthquake which they had never expected. In order to know the religious area that the church had helped, Pastor of the church was asked, “Did you target your help to Christians only?” to know the areas of human society they were working on during such crisis. To this question, Pastor opined:

No! Not at all. Our church team went to non-Christians too specially to distribute relief materials. They are our neighbours according to the Bible. (PR)

The Non-Christian victims were asked, “How do you feel when they (Church) came to help you?”. Almost all the views were similar as they felt very happy, and they thanked for the good works laid by the church. They felt the work of the church as intimate, positive, and appreciative (VNC- B, VNC – C). Similarly, another Non-Christian victim replied in favour of the humanity with appreciation of the good work laid by the church, “*Church is reaching needy people.*” (VNC – A).

Likewise, the Christian victims too appreciated the relief efforts of the church and accepted it as a comfort to them. The help provided by the church to the victims were praised by almost all the respondents. All of the Christian victims (respondents) were happy with their church as they found church’s members visiting them frequently with the comfort words (VC – A). The help laid to VC-A by his church resulted his life living happily. ...*and are now living happily.* (VC-A). While another respondent, VC- C was found happy when he said, “*they*

came multiple times for pray and gave some money, foods and clothes.” Another respondent, Christian victim expressed his happiness with the bulk of relief he received from the church ministry.

They visited frequently and gave us hope and trust to stay strong and God will make everything good in his time for his Glory. They provided tent, a bag of rice (30 kg), 3 kg lintels, 3 kg beaten rice, 2-liter oil, 1 kg salt, 2 kg gram and 2 kg peas. And promised to visit again if any other organization or government do not approach for help. (VC – B).

All the respondents were found satisfied when they expressed their view regarding the satisfaction they received during the relief and the support from the church. When the respondents were praising the good work of a church, Pastor was asked, “How many victims were benefited by your activities? and “How was your service appreciated by the victims?” With a smile on his face, he answered,

Relief materials were distributed approx. to 1200 families and almost ninety completely collapsed housed were partially funded to rebuild. The beneficiaries demonstrated their appreciation through the words and even became friends since then. Some of them still remember us for the help they received during the life and death situation. (PR)

Likewise, almost all the volunteers were found happy when they were appreciated by the people they helped after earthquake and crisis and were satisfied to help the victims during their vulnerable and struggling period. Volunteers expressed their happiness with blushes and smiles on their faces. VR – B and VR – C share their appreciation with joy and happy as they found the help receiving people got near hope to come out from sadness and sorrow.

Heart touching response from the victims. They were in tears as no instant help was provided from government and local authorities. They are in despair, depressed and scared. They were very thankful to us from core of their heart for providing help in such worse condition where no other organization and government authorities had approached. (VR – A)

Similarly, Pastor, one of the informants was asked about achieving target as they set to help the vulnerable. PR was asked, “What was your aim on such circumstances, and did they fulfil?” To this, PR reply,

My aim was to demonstrate the true love of God through the distribution of the very basic materials to survive. Yes, I’m completely satisfied with what we were able to do for the victims. Most of all our God is glorified through our small help at times of

need.

5.3 Non-Christian victims' perspective of understanding Christianity

During the field-work, informants were asked about their experiences and their perspectives on Christianity. As it was to find out the views of the Non-Christian community towards the work of the church and the help of the Christian community about how they understood Christianity. The responses were familiar to each other and were similar, but they have praised the help of the church in their own perspective. When the respondents were asked to express their views on the understanding of Christianity now and then, the feelings they shared were almost similar to each other. All of them were amazed and appreciated the help. Their responses were according to the help they received from the church and church volunteers out of which few of them were helped during rebuilding houses and few of them were served by the relief distribution.

When Non-Christian victims (informants) were asked, "What did you think when they came to help you?". The various views were accounted into the answer paper. VNC – A felt that they all are human and are here to help, "*We are human being so that we need to help each other while people is going through crisis.*" (VNC – A). While VNC – B felt like the Christians were there only to advertise their Christian faith, "*They just arrive to advertise their religion and will disappear after giving sympathy.*" (VNC – B). Whereas VNC – C had negative feeling towards the Christianity, "*Previously I didn't like Christians...*" (VNC – C). With numbers of different views, they were asked, "Were you told to change your religion?" and all of them answered "No". They were not found to change their religion forcefully as they answered "No" when they were asked, "Did they force you to change the religion?". They were further asked, "What was your response towards them?" Answers to this question were found similar as they took it as an appreciation for being there during such crisis.

Their loving, sharing and caring were good in society. (VNC – A)

I'm very thankful and extend my hearty gratitude towards them. (VNC – B)

They are very good people, and they follow the Bible teaching. I'm really thankful to them because they did not know us but helped us on that needy situation. (VNC – C)

To be more precise about the responses to the Christian help from Non-Christian Victims' perspective, they were asked to express their opinion on how they felt about the Christian help they received after earthquake.

We lost houses and clothes. We were living very hard. We felt better when they came to meet us with some relief things. We are human beings so that we need to help each other while people are going through crisis. Church is reaching needy people. We are satisfied with their help. (VNC – A).

The respondent was lacking the accommodation and clothes. The church with the relief distribution program helped the vulnerable in building makeshift shelters and provide clothes. The same opinion on Christian help was explored by another respondent.

It was astonishing and delightful moment when they came to help us. The helps they served is very positive and appreciative. We are extremely satisfied and delighted. (VNC – B)

Although the similar views were found as the response, another informant had different views related to the Christian help during crisis.

Previously, I did not like Christians but when they came to help us in that situation, my views on Christians were changed. I felt very happy and gave thanks to God when they came to help us. I really felt intimate. They did what they could. I was happy with them. (VNC- C).

Furthermore, to accumulate the exact opinion on the Christian from Non-Christian Victims' with their own perspective, they were asked to express their feelings of Christianity before and after the earthquake. Without doubt, there could be a probability of getting negative comments on this as it was asked to the people who had faith in another/ their own religion. Surprisingly, the answers were out of the doubt and the understanding of the Christianity within those victims have been found changed with the positive vibes they gained from the help laid by the church and its members.

I thought the Christian are selfish and they just want people to be a Christian. But when me and my family members were helped by them, I have different opinion on them. I found them quite helpful. They used to say that they were sent by God to help us, I found them exactly what they mean to say. They are really helping the society and the people with their good work. Really good neighbours in our society. (VNC – A)

Similar surprising opinion was presented by another respondent when they found a Christian community was there to help them which was, they had never expected,

Beside the government sector, I was surprised that the Christians too came for us to help while we do not belong to Christian community. I thought that Christians are selfish and will work only for their disciples. I was wrong! They prove me wrong. I

found them very supportive. They really teach our community that we are human and should not be limited within the boundaries of religion. We must help each other when the crisis became superior to humanity. Humanity is what we must save. Their work indeed feels intimate, and I would like to thank them for what they have poured us with their smiles and motivations. (VNC – C).

It was an unexpected and unpredicted explanation related to the understanding of Christian faith, when one of the informants explained her faith on the Christianity.

They came as an exact opposite than my understanding. I used to think Christians as rebel. They are rice bag convert and they only work for their own benefits. But I was wrong. Even in such worse condition, they came first to help us where no other organization or government authority came. I'm really grateful to them. (...) I thought the Christians who came to help me was the disciples of god who was send by the god himself to take care of me and my belongings. (VNC – B).

Although the positivity and hope were forecasted by the informant's responses, they shared their love during the interaction that they had when they were asked, "Was there anything they told you to become a Christian?" And they found that all the volunteers and church members were there to help them, and they were sent by the God to serve them. "...they came to share the love they receive from Jesus." (VNC – B).

5.4 Transformational development within and through church

The physical, emotional, financial, and societal impacts were found changing and transforming towards the hope and happiness after many years of earthquake. It has been six years since 2015 earthquake. The earthquake had left sorrows and pain to thousands of people who were greatly affected. Sindhupalchowk district and its people were found much more vulnerable when they faced the 2015 earthquake. A large number of houses were collapsed and several people who were injured but survived in the quake still have fear on their eyes. They have been found entangled by such fears and sorrow for several years. They even cried when they were asked about the painful experiences of an earthquake. Beside the pain, sorrow, trauma, and grief, they received the opportunities that have been created as a new door for the victims as a relief. Those opportunities helped them to overcome their fear, sorrow, and pain. The hope they have found on the opportunities had let them to adapt the fear, trauma, and grief and helped them to return into their normal life.

My fellow friends and my church organized a voluntary program through which we gather various volunteers and help in rebuilding many more houses as we can. This

strength of the unity motivates me to withstand with the survivors. Then till now I am much happy to be able to serve others. We have built a house for my family and are now living happily. And that is all because of the God's grace. (VC – A)

The reconstruction and rebuilding programs conducted by the church and the local government after the earthquake gave new hope to the volunteers. The hope and opportunities were provided to those who had worked during rebuilding the houses of the vulnerable groups.

I joined the voluntary work that our church had organized to distribute the reliefs and helping the poorest and vulnerable families in rebuilding their houses. Moreover, with the help of the church, we stand strong after such disaster and all of us have the feeling of helping others whether they belong to different religions. (VC – B)

One of the respondents shared his own happiness while he found himself happy to serve others,

With loads of fears, the days past on. With the help of the church and other voluntary organizations, I was able to build a cemented one storey house. Involving in the voluntary work laid by our church, we develop ourselves and thus helps the other victims too. (VC – C)

As Pastor mentioned that everyone within the society are neighbours and the church had played satisfactory role to help the victims. Same sort of feelings and appreciation were observed when one of the respondents said:

I really thank them for being there when we were really in need of help. Today we are happy. The most important thing that I have learned is that it does not matter whether you are of any religious background, but the main thing is that you must help human first and the humanity. Saying this all, I must be thankful to all God and religious people who really helped us in crisis. (VNC – A)

The informants were asked, “Beside trauma, how you find yourself now? Are there any changes that you felt nowadays?” One Non-Christian Victim addressed,

It was hard days then when we had to stay outside (nearby) of our house as we might suffer from the theft of the commodities of our house.... The government sector and churches were there for us to help. With the help of the government sector and churches I was able to renovate my house and I do have a good kitchen now. We have faced such disaster; I wish we do not have to face such incident in coming future. But if we have to, then we are ready to face, because we now are ready with the preparation. We were taught simple and basic training about how to safe ourselves

during such disaster hits. And thanks to the church volunteers and other welfare organization for providing us such training. (VNC – A).

One of the respondents shared her changes when she changed her religion and became Christian after receiving help from the church:

...The matter in fact, I became Christian after I was served by the Christians. It is the only hope that I receive from my experience. When no one was there to help us, the church came to us for help. I saw a faith and hope right there. (VNC - B)

The government sector with other social welfare organization had launched a program to educate and aware the people about the risk management through which the church and the volunteers were able to take part in the campaign. The areas where government sector and other social welfare organization were not able to reach for the relief distribution along with development process, the church volunteers were able to reach there on foot and shared their ideas on disaster risk management that they had learnt from others. Similarly, one informant shared her experiences about the faith and hope that she received after Church's help,

Awww! We have learned how to live during such crisis. The strength we collected from the church members and their volunteers had led us live with a believe and a faith towards the god. No matter who the god is (of any religions) but the faith and belief are the only possible way to get ahead in a life. We have the dignity to live and we should live in passion that we must help each other. From then I am working along with my colleagues in various development projects related to rebuilding and reconstruction of houses. (VNC – B).

The volunteers of the church were found to be the happiest persons when they shared their happiness as being an agent of God and being able to be a part of victims' physical and social development process.

Quite happy to help the vulnerable in their development process through rebuilding houses, providing relief funds and relief materials along with few basic needs of human. And for that I would like to thank my God for choosing me one of his fellows. Amen (VR- A)

The volunteers were asked, "Have you noticed any changes before and after earthquake within yourself? Not physical changes but social changes of your working behaviour" to determine how they have found themselves in a transformational phase because of the responsibility they were given by the church after the earthquake. Similar and same aspects were observed when the data of the volunteers were collected. Out of them, one respondent expressed:

After the earthquake, I was like, I feel that this is the time to work and help my neighbours and friends and to the people who were in crisis as I felt I was told by my Lord to help others in need. The power that we receive from the God (faith) had led us to the immense happiness when we were able to help the victims of the worst hit district of our country. Teaching them about the precaution that needs to be undertaken while facing such earthquake, with the help of disaster risk reduction team was quite impressive learning during helping the victims and survivors. Moreover, the development that the victims had gone through their pain and sorrow gave me tears of happiness in my eyes. I am very much thankful to my Lord for choosing me as his fellow to serve the vulnerable and honest people. I really love being in the bucket of love showered by Christ. (VR – C).

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

6.0 Introduction

The aim of this project was to find out the responses of the victims of Sindhupalchowk district towards the help laid by a church after they were affected by 2015 earthquake. Along with this, their perspective on Christianity and the responses of the church towards the victims were parallel aims of this research. To collect the responses and views of the victims including volunteers and church member, ten interviews were conducted. This chapter comprises the discussion on the themes which were presented in chapter five in relation to the theories presented in chapter four: (i) grief theory, (ii) diakonia theory and, (iii) transformational development theory. Hence, the responses of the victims and Christian actors in relation to the prescribed theories will be accounted in this chapter.

6.1 Loss of lives, assets, and grief

Grief is termed as experiences of pain when a person lost his / her or loved ones, relatives, family members or their family belongings. (Fisher, 2002, p. 201). These sorts of grieving emotions vary with the nature and consequences how the person died. Here, in this context, grief is what have been found experienced because of the massive earthquake. (Williams, 2013). As mentioned in the background chapter, Sindhupalchowk district comprises almost 93% of houses built with mud-bonded bricks and stones. This fact shows that the earthquake had its huge impact on those houses which were destroyed by the quake. As Meredith Corporation (2021) expressed the loss of assets, cattle, farms, and crops are too often a reality and this reality triggers sharp emotion which are often called grief, the traditional houses (assets) became key issue for the society, village, and district for their losses. (ibid).

The multiple losses faced by the villages were collectively experienced by every villager when they lost their houses, cowsheds, cattle, and other assets along with their loved ones, relatives, and other family members. The cumulative loss faces by the villagers shares their pain and sorrow collectively (Williams, 2013). Theses experiencing multiple losses of the villages were “grief overloaded” to which they had faced as consequences of an earthquake. The whole village will mourn when they found someone’s death in the traditional societies of a small village because the people in such societies live closer to each other. (Walter, 2007, p. 124). In this sense, cumulative grief arises in the society when the event hits back-to-back (in this context, earthquake triggers major aftershocks, landslides, floods etc). The neighbours

were pulled into stress (probably in disenfranchised grief) when they heard the pain and sorrow of their neighbours. Despite being stressed after losing their own houses and assets, they had to share the same sorrow and pain with their neighbours. These, probably could be said complicated grief, had almost stunned the villages and whole district mourn together and share same pain and sorrow. More often, people who experiences the multiple losses feel shock, stunned or emotionally numb and often feel estranged from others. (Shear, 2015, p. 153). It seems difficult for a person to imagine a meaningful future when they experience such pain and found themselves in a null value of the virtual world. (ibid).

In chapter five of this research project, it was clearly observed that VC – A was in a grief when he found his daughter dead under the debris of his own mud-plastered house.

Furthermore, the multiple loss of his assets: house, clothes and crops gave him more pain and sorrow which pushed him into complicated pain. While he was in a grief, he became null and had no idea about what to do. It was painful for VC – A to remind himself with the incident when he was and is still facing the same pain and sorrow the family experienced when he shares his fears and pain even now when he felt some aftershocks. (Shear, 2015). The symptoms of sadness, longing, and intense yearning that VC – A expressed on these days too are accompanied by insistent thoughts or images of the death along with a sense of disbelief and inability to accept the painful reality of beloved death which probably shows he might be struggling with his complications of grieving emotions. (Shear, 2015). Parkes and Prigerson (2010) address that the ‘disaster’ is a key to grief which increase bereavement risk such as unexpectedness, terrors, multiplicity of losses and the disruption of the families. The disaster became a key reason of grieving to many villagers of Sindhupalchowk district as an evidence who experienced the worst impact upon their social life and living. The disaster caused the house collapsed and son was found buried in the collapsed house (VNC – B). The respondent was found in a grief when she lost herself while she was staring her only son’s dead body (VNC – B). The group of the families here lost their child, and it was the common suffering of the loss within the same circle of a society. As Walter (2007, p. 128) stated that the families will come together as a group as the solidarity will be based on the shared type of experiences, VNC – B’s husband came back from aboard to join in the sorrow, loss, and grief of the family that they were suffering from because of the earthquake. This evidence shows the survivors were suffering from complicated grief when she found multiple losses of her assets and child at a same moment (Corless, 2010, p. 536). Probable way to indicate that VNC – B’s husband and son (brother in law’s) were in grief when they heard the multiple losses of their assets along with their family member. The multiple losses of assets and

people were risk factors for complicated grief. (Coreless, 2010, p. 536). Although the material does not give evidence for complicated grief among the participants, one can reflect that this could be the case as the informants experienced are triggers to complicated grief in which the informants faced multiple losses at same time. Moreover, the parent – child bond also erupts powerful emotions to the parents when they have to face the death of their child (Anthony and Benedek, 2001, p. 221). As the parents established unique and meaningful love relationship with each of their children, VC – A and VNC - B indicates their pervasive and complex interplay of their emotions when they lost their child. (ibid). Their (VC – A and VNC – B) expression and emotions for their loss was their guilt when they felt for the loss of their child because their deceased child were totally dependent to them. (Rubin and Makinson, 2001, p. 231).

Disaster being a key for a loss for farmers who lost their cattle and farms and crops because they rely on agro-industry farm or cattle rearing activities. This loss of the cattle and crops is a grief for any farmers as they are so connected with this type of activities as these are the only means of income for them. (Meredith Corp., 2021). Beside the loss of human life, VNC – A was then found grieving when he lost his two goats and seven chicks. As per the farmers, the animal husbandry is a job through which they earn their livelihood. (VNC – A). It was quite painful to hear from a grieving farmer when they express their grief and sorrow with tears when they lost their cattle because of an unexpected disaster. (VNC – A). He found himself in a pity which shows he had uncomplicated grief into which his reactions were normal and was reconnected with the normal phase of his living societies. (Corless, 2010, p. 536).

During the period from earthquake until now, the informants were found oscillating between the two models of coping with grief laid by Stroebe and Schut (2001, p. 395). VC – A became null minded when he found his child dead and lost his mud-bonded house. (Loss oriented. See. 4.1.3.1). VC – A had worked as volunteer with other neighbours in rebuilding houses of other victims (probably accepted the reality of child's death). The struggle after the result of the earthquake and the opportunities laid by church in coordination with local and national government distracts him from his grief. (Restoration oriented. See. 4.1.3.2). The pain and sadness were still there somewhere in his mind which was observed by his saddened words when he was asked to recall the incidents. (Loss Oriented). Similarly, VNC – B who lost her son and the house had similar oscillating between the griefs. She lost herself when she had multiple losses as she lost her child and house. (Loss Oriented). She had some relief when she felt extremely satisfied with the church action. (Restoration oriented). Similar to

VC – A, VNC – B also had the opportunities to work with rebuilding houses which worked as a distracter to her to be in restoration orientation of grieving. She also shared her same pain, sorrow, and tear when she had to recall the unpleasant moment. (Loss oriented). VNC – B was distracted from her emotions to which she is continuing when she engaged herself in projects of constructing various local schools. (Restoration oriented). As Stroebe and Schut's point of oscillating between the two models and healing the grief, VC – A and his family might have adopted their grief to which they were found happy now. This somehow shows that VC- A was restored to a normal behaviour after huge time period.

6.2 Diakonia: hope and happiness brought through church

Because of the difficult topography of the district and the landslide that blocked the roads, it was hard for any organization to approach the villages for distributing relief materials and support to the survivors and victims of Sindhupalchowk district. As a result, there were late responses to those survivors through the road transport. The church played its diaconal role above the par to serve the various survivors and victims of the district. The church targeted to help most of the vulnerable groups of the villages, but it was hard for them to identify most vulnerable families. They continued to serve their plates full of love, compassion and helped them in coordination with the local community as the church helped to figure out the most vulnerable families.

As Church of Norway (2007, p. 10) addresses diakonia as an action for the society, the church, here NEC, played as an agent of God and helped the vulnerable and marginalized survivors and victims of Sindhupalchowk district after Nepal Earthquake 2015. Somehow, the church was able to fulfil the voice of society and partially sorted out with respecting human dignity within the society, (LWF, 2009, p. 42). As diakonia is a Christian response to people in need and situation of crisis, NEC approached the principle and were there in the district to help the people who were in crisis because of the earthquake (WCC, 2012, p. 385). Similarly, diakonia is characterized by the actions of reaching to vulnerable and help them with the available resources and infrastructure, to which NEC served the survivors and the victims through the relief distribution program (WCC, 2012, p. 385).

After the earthquake, NEC with the hope of helping the victims of Sindhupalchowk district collected fund from their loved ones and other helping hands residing inside and outside the country. Tents, clothes, oil, and food were also collected from the helping hands for the relief distribution program (PR, VR-A, VR-B). This was the first step taken by NEC as a diaconal action with the hope that they can wipe the tears of the survivors and the victims. To this

evidence, Korslien in Dietrich (2014, p. 212) considered diakonia as a project of hope and it is done for the common fellowship. Bible verse of Mark 12:31 and Luke 10:25-37 (NIV) expresses the love and loving neighbours, church thought that this time (relief distribution program) was the perfect time to put the Biblical principles into action and it was the urgent practical response of the teaching of the Bible to show the love of the church towards the survivors and victims as they are part of the neighbourhood (PR). NEC was there for the urgent action to help the vulnerable victims to help them to transform and develop (WCC, 2012, p. 387). The diaconal action is oriented towards the social margin and help the marginalized with their condition of living (Nordstokke, 2011, p. 52). Here, NEC's diaconal action helped the marginalized with their living condition during the crisis. Tents for makeshift shelters, food, clothes, basic medical supplies were served by NEC to help those victims who almost lost everything during earthquake. All the volunteers were motivated for the diaconal actions when they were informed about the death toll and vulnerability of the district (PR). Without feeling pity towards the victims, volunteers were ready to act as diaconal actors. It is considered as an evidence to the practical service when Dietrich (2014, p. 43) consider the diakonia as practical service rather than being pity for those who suffers. NEC took those understanding of diakonia into action as they helped the various earthquake victims and survivors through various relief distribution programs. The survivors (respondents) who lost their houses were partially helped by NEC to rebuild their collapsed houses. There was a moment of happiness when the Christian victims (respondents) were helped by their NEC church. Almost all the non – Christian respondents were surprised when they were showered help by NEC. Their understanding of Christianity was found significantly different than the way they used to think before the help they received from the church. The Christians were perceived as rebel, rice bag converter (VNC – B), selfish (VNC – C) and as agent to evangelize the people (VNC – A). In contrary to their perception, non-Christian victims (informants) rejoiced happiness when they were unexpectedly helped by the church. The expression of happiness was much adorable when the Non-Christian victims (informants) found that NEC church was there for the needy people (VNC – A). Despite difficulties to reach to the vulnerable groups in Sindhupalchowk district, NEC chose this district to help in an immediate action to alleviate human suffering (LWF, 2009, p. 42). As diakonia prioritizes the action against human suffering (LWF, 2009, p. 42), NEC took a step to help and serve this district as most of the villagers were suffering from the crisis. Financial support for few vulnerable groups was a noticeable help that was laid by NEC which furthermore helped the survivors to take care of their belongings (victims). NEC, being

protestant church, the good news to which the church announced (Myers, 2011, p. 309) was the relief distribution program in order to help the victims and the survivors. The earthquake resulted the crisis and the vulnerable groups were to be helped, and for this, NEC took their program as the beginning of their evangelical movement (Brueggemann's act of evangelism in Myers, 2011, p. 309). The vulnerable groups were the witness who needed to come out of the crisis and for the action, the appropriate response (helping with the relief distribution and rebuilding houses) to the witness were created as another evangelical movement of the NEC. (ibid). Additionally, learning from disaster risk reduction team and teaching the villagers what they have learnt about how to safeguard self and others during earthquake was another diaconal help served by the church which helped the victims and survivors to prepare themselves from any earthquake (VR – C).

Rebuilding houses was another diaconal activity carried out by NEC. The respondents who were helped by NEC to rebuild their houses were happy for the church's diaconal work. All the respondents shared the common name to praise the work laid by the church. NEC was praised as a helping hand by the respondents. The victims who were helped by NEC belong to various religious background to which NEC took them as the neighbours as per the Bible (PR). The diaconal work is to help the vulnerable so as the church did, and it gave immense happiness to the victims when they were helped by Christian community (VNC – C). While the district was under the project of rebuilding and reconstructing the collapsed houses, a mass of volunteers was needed to complete the project. For this, NEC helped the youths of the most vulnerable groups to participate in the project. This was another diaconal help provided by NEC.

In connection to this action, NEC's help was of two folds: it created opportunities especially for the youths and developing inclusive community. The opportunities let the youths to earn some money during the crisis whereas the participation of the vulnerable groups give rise to the inclusive community which further took the society into developing phases. The opportunities provided by the district administration with the coordination of various social welfare organizations and church was the right to hope for the people who are living at the margins (NCA, 2017, p. 6). Galatians 3:28 (NIV) portrays that all are one in Christ which shows the inclusivism of a society. Similarly, VR – B made the victims and survivors aware about the crisis and let them participate in the opportunities to take part voluntarily in rebuilding houses which can be seen as a practice to an inclusive society for development. The survivors and victims who worked voluntarily were paid for their work which further helped them to account numbers of youth who suffered financial crisis. This practice of social

inclusivism helps to improve the terms of participation in a society for people who were disadvantaged on the basis of economy, disability, and marginalization (UN Organization, 2016, p. 20). Mathew 25:31-46 (NIV) reveals that the hungry, stranger, thirsty, naked, sick, and imprisoned are people who need diakonia for each and individual to lift up as needing care and attention. Here, NEC has taken a step of helping each and individual through various relief programs and even helped to sort out the most vulnerable youth of the families to make them participate in rebuilding houses.

Furthermore, NEC helped in the process of curing the wound of the victims through their diaconal works. The church had transformed the factors and forces that caused deprivation and suffering by providing opportunities to the victims and survivors. NEC acted as a bridge for financial support which in turn, helped the vulnerable to develop themselves, to stand strong from the rubble (WCC, 2012, p. 389). The church worked in building active citizens from the vulnerable groups and engaging them in the field of inclusivism, participatory and sustainable society (WCC, 2018, p. 44). Regarding human rights, the vulnerable and marginalized groups of the society are allowed to live their lives without stress and fear. During crisis, it was hard for each survivors of vulnerable group to survive and hold their human right. As Haugen (2018, p. 162) expresses that human rights cannot transform all oppressive structures, but can legitimate the creation of programs and institutions, here social welfare organizations and church also provided help to empower the citizens. Here, the oppressive structure was crisis to which church and social welfare organization legitimated and helped to empower the citizens through opportunities which in return helped to protect the human rights and their dignity towards the society.

As Christian faith teaches to love God which is the greatest commandment of Christian teaching (LWF, 2009, p. 41), the church played a key role to teach the victims (Christians) to share and love the God's grace. Furthermore, the teaching as a diaconal action, laid by the church to the victims helped to strengthen the hope and even helped the Christian vulnerable groups to stand strong during the crisis. The Christian victims were comforted and strengthened when the church approached them with the regular visit and stood together during pray. (VC – A, VC- B and VC- C). This mission of standing together during the crisis helped to heal the relationship and nurture the partnership among the people for the sake of God's creation. (WCC, 2012, p. 385). Nurturing the relationship helped those groups to create diakonia together within themselves (Korslien, 2014, p. 209).

6.3 Transformational development throughout the society

After the destruction caused by the earthquake, the call of the victims and survivors was to develop and transform themselves from the crisis to an easy living environment. Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2019, p. 13) clarified that there is always important to create such situation where people can use and control their own resources and enjoy minimum of economic and human security and are able to improve their future. To this point, NEC had provided opportunity to the vulnerable groups to secure minimum economic support to their families through rebuilding the collapsed houses. As the bottom-up approach of development laid by Hiebert (2008, p. 62) encourages empowerment which helps to develop the mutual respect and trust between the local people and the outsiders. Church being outsiders to the non-Christian victims (informants) had encouraged the local marginalized youths to participate in the voluntarily works which created a mutual respect, trust, and hope among the Christian community. The damaged mud-built houses were rebuilt and reconstructed with the cemented plaster which provided sufficient evidence to SID Israel's (2008) perspective of development which includes an aspect of quality change and the creation of conditions for continuation of that change.

The opportunities provided by the church in the society helped to build inclusive community where the youths were included from the marginalized groups to develop themselves. The mission of the church is to build an inclusive community through diaconal perspective (WCC, 2018, p. 44), to which, NEC acted as an agent to create an inclusive community making the victims and survivors (informants) aware of the opportunities which had further helped to foster the development of the community. The loss of lives and assets were the result of lack of risk management and was injustice to the people (Jhowry, 2016, p. 4). The church volunteers appeared to provide help to the survivors by teaching them the methods and techniques about the disaster risk reduction with the coordination with NDRR team which provides rights to the people, their right to live a meaningful and harmless life (VNC-A). By creating such inclusive community, NEC helped to justify the people's rights. Justice is a movement to bring people to live in justice and use their rights to ensure just societies through positive changes (Eurodiaconia, 2010, p. 15). NEC brought the movement (opportunities) to the marginalized and vulnerable groups of the district under an umbrella which helped them to secure their rights: rights to survive and live, through which they were able to facilitate themselves with economic support (positive changes after crisis). The help laid by the church to the victims were positive changes when VNC-B addressed the help of

the church as positive and appreciative. This kind of positive behaviour and changes were found fostering the development of inclusive community.

Nordstokke (2011, p. 108) explains that transformation deals with the human reality, react to suffering and injustice, and empower the excluded to be agents of changes by dignifying human life maintaining sustainable society. The church dealt with the crisis in the communities and helped the sufferers through various relief programs. NEC was there for the victims and survivors to empower the marginalized and vulnerable groups by creating inclusive community. Myers (2011, p. 152) expressed that the various problems call for responses and for this, transformational development takes each level and response seriously. The marginalized and vulnerable group of population in the district had various problems during the crisis, and it was the church which offered help to 1200 families according to their needs (PR). The level of “From What?” to “To What?” as addressed by Myers (2011, p. 152) was answered by the church’s diaconal transformational development action “From rubble” to “To inclusive community”. Moreover, the positive changes were brought through the participation of community members with the opportunities provided by the local community and church together. (Ife, 2010, p. 39). Similarly, the participation of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the inclusive community created by the church after the crisis in the district are the bedrock of the development which had further driven the community towards the path of sustainable development. (Yoms & Toit, 2017, p. 46).

VNC – C was found very happy with the church and thanked the God when church was there to help them, and for this VNC – C felt it as intimate which shows the positive changes of transformation towards the understanding of Christianity by any non-Christian community. According to the non-Christian participants, Christians were selfish before the help but when the church helped them, their perception of church as being selfish changed into as being a helpful actor (VNC – A). This fact was another positive change for the understanding of the church. Myers (2011, p. 178) admitted that the healing marred identity of vulnerable group is the beginning of transformation, the church had helped to heal the wound of the survivors and victims’ (informants) in the district (PR). From the analysis of data, it has been discovered that when the victims and survivors asked for help in crisis, the church was present there, and for that church did not turn away from them (Matthew 5:42, NIV). Church was there as an agent for a transformational development of the societies in the district through the development projects (VR – A). The development and positive changes in the understanding of Christianity as ‘rice bag converter’ and ‘selfish’ (VNC – B) was changed into positive appreciation when they were showered by church’s help. The negative understanding of

Christianity was changed and developed into positivity (VNC – B). Such positive changes and development were brought in understanding of Christianity within non-Christian community. VNC – A and VNC – C were happy when the church was there with them in their development process. VNC – A had a new kitchen which was then demolished by the earthquake. He and his families were ready to face any earthquakes when they collected the strength from the basic training of disaster risk reduction received by the NDRR team along with church volunteers. VNC-A and his families had transformed their fear into strength and prepared themselves to tackle the crisis. These sorts of transformation development through the diaconal act gave them a vision for a bright future to secure development (Myers, 2011, p. 174). VC – A developed his strength to serve others through the motivation he received from the volunteers and was there withstanding with the victims and survivors which shows the development in his serving behaviour during the crisis. As, the transformation refers to the changes related to the suppressed people such as poor to purchase enough, hunger to feed, thirsty to drink, and so on (LWF, 2004, p. 32-33), here VC – A has been found to transfer his weakness into strength, VNC – B transformed her ‘selfish’ understanding of Christianity into ‘positivity’, whereas VNC – A changed his fear into strength. These transformational changes are subjected which never go back to exactly what it was before (Gass, 2016, p. 01). Myers (2011, p. 310) claimed that transformation must be forwarded into the foremost action when there is a need of development. Similarly, Wheaton ’83 Statement (1984, p. 24) states that transformation is a change in which one is able to enjoy full live in harmony with God. To these very facts, VNC – B had transformed herself into the image of God because there was indeed a need of development after the crisis created by an earthquake. She saw a faith and hope when she was helped by the church. On her view, she felt that the church was sent by God to save her and her belongings. She was really grateful to God when she found herself save in the lap of faith and hope showered by God. She found herself in the love of God when she felt that the church came to shower the love that they received from God (VNC – B). The God of the Bible seeks the effective change in situation of life and are transformed by the values of love, sharing, truthfulness and humility. This statement of WCC (2012:389) was similar the case to VNC – B when she was transformed by the value of love, sharing, and caring of the church. Myers (2011, p. 174-175) stated that the transformation development is possible only by accepting God’s salvation. VNC – B’s transformation into God’s salvation gave her the faith and belief towards the God. Transformation is a God’s will and is enabling change (ibid) which was proved by the changes in the faith and belief found in VNC – B.

As reflected in the methods chapter, the interviews had to be conducted by an agent because it was not possible for me to travel to Nepal. As the agent was affiliated with the NEC, it could have influenced the interviewees to give more positive reflections on the work of the church during the earthquake. However, as the material appeared to be rich in terms of detailed stories of what happened and how they reacted, it seems to a large extent to reflect how the interviewees remembered the situation in 2015 and had reflected on the role of the church afterwards. Although we cannot be sure that the interview situation as well as the retrospective characteristics may have created a more positive account, the positive diaconal transformative experience of the victims seemed to be the case among both Christian and non-Christian victims.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

7.0 Introduction

As the final chapter of the paper, this chapter will summarize the concluding remarks which have been revealed through the project. The summary of the thesis will be followed by some possible recommendations in order to provide responses towards the victims and survivors of the district. Furthermore, this chapter will provide some suggestions for further research.

7.1 Thesis summary

The main aim of this thesis project was to examine how Christian and non-Christian inhabitants of Sindhupalchowk district experience the help from Nepali Evangelical Church after the 2015 earthquake, and how did this help influence their view of Christianity. The responses of the church towards the victims and survivors were the parallel aim targeted to achieve throughout the project. To this, NEC church was taken as Christian agent and the responses of NEC towards the survivors and victims of Sindhupalchowk district were observed and analysed. It was a qualitative case study that took into consideration the semi-structured interviews with purposively selected earthquake victims and survivors.

The collected data were analysed, and the findings were extracted and analysed into themes. As this project was intended to carry out the responses of the church, it was concluded that NEC played a significant role to connect with the sorrows and pain of the survivors. Basic need of the victims and survivors were partially fulfilled by the church which created a friendly relationship among the church and other non-Christian communities of the district. The role of the church was praised by all the interviewees who were pleased with the helping hands of NEC they received during the crisis caused by the earthquake. This sort of helping nature of the church, which indeed is embedded itself as a Christian faith, had further helped to boost the positive understanding about the Christianity amongst the non-Christian community. Most of the victims and survivors, almost 1200 families were helped by the church through its diaconal activities such as relief distribution program and rebuilding the collapsed houses. The opportunities laid down by the church was a door of development which helped many marginalized people of the vulnerable group to go through their development process via financial support. The inclusive community created through the opportunities by the church helped many survivors and victims of vulnerable groups to develop their living standard.

The negative understanding of the non-Christian community towards the Christianity has been found changing significantly. Their previous understanding of Christianity as rice bag converter was changed into their new understanding of Christianity. As per their new understanding, Christians are the God's messengers who help them during any difficulties. The community who considered Christianity as being a selfish faith (since, for the community dwellers, they work only for their own benefits) had been proved wrong to which they found their understanding as imbecilic to themselves when they used to think the way before. It was understood by the non-Christian community of the district that the church was always there for the society, no matter which religions the society belongs to. Everyone can be benefited by the diaconal work of the church and the church is always ready to help them whenever they need a friend to share their sorrow and pain. The help of church for the non-Christian community had demonstrated the true human nature of a Christian faith where the church admires everybody as a neighbour in a society. Likewise, the non-Christian community who were benefited by the church activities, praised the diaconal work of the church, and felt that no religion is beyond humanity, everyone is created equal in God's image. The Christian praxis of understanding the dignity of human and acting according to respect them, helped the societies of Sindhupalchowk district to live in just and peace maintaining social justice and prosperity all over the district. As the transformation development is a social change or development or progress, the changes on the understanding of the faith towards the Christianity by non-Christians has been significantly changed after they received the help. The way church came together and closer to the non - Christian community during the relief distribution phases, has helped them to build a better understanding of Christianity and create a healthy relationship between them. The church in collaboration with the local government and community has helped in fostering inclusive community through various opportunities created after the crisis. Furthermore, the development brought by inclusive community through people's participation has evoked positivity in the transformational development field.

7.2 Recommendations

Based on the research and the findings, I would like to put some recommendations for the church and Christian community to build a strong relationship between a church and a society which can further nurture the positivity understanding of Christianity.

- There are several works related to the district developments ongoing on the district after the earthquake. In this field, Church should coordinate with the local government in such a way that many victims and survivors of marginalized groups can participate on the projects. The inclusive community will be furthermore united, and prosperity of each society will be developed along with those marginalized groups.
- The inclusive society created by the church during the crisis was and is appreciative. The church should continue the practise of inclusivism by providing various opportunities through long-term development project in the district.
- For Sindhupalchok being an agricultural district, the church should help the farmers in continuing their agro-based occupation, such as farming and animal husbandry.
- Church should bring awareness campaigns about the hazards of an earthquake and should support the villagers in construction of earthquake resistant buildings and houses to minimize the death, injuries of the villagers and to minimize structural damages bought by traditional styles of building houses.
- Many people and children were and are going through the trauma and stress even today when they experience small earthquake. Church needs to bring some health-related programs to curve the trauma of those victims and survivors to overcome so that they can start their life in a normal and transformative way.

7.3 Suggestions for further research

The church's role and its diaconal activities were explored through the research. The understanding of Christianity by non-Christian communities after receiving the help from a church were parallely explored during the research. There are other areas that the study would have explored more. Due to the limited space of this research, other areas were not possible to covered. It is therefore suggested that the church and its role could be exaggerated including non-vulnerable groups too. The studies also can be more detailed if the research can cover the role of the church and other Christian institutions in the field of health, education, and another sector. Lastly, there could be other possibilities of research on identifying the churches involvement in the overall development of the district and its influences on the local community.

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Appendix i: Interview Guide

i. Questions to the Church Leader / Deacon / Pastor

1. What was your quick response after massive earthquake?
2. How you safeguard the church and the ministry?
3. How you manage your volunteers?
4. Which area did you target for the quick response?
5. Why do you choose that area?
6. How were your volunteers mobilized?
7. What are the services and the help laid by your churches as diaconal activities?
8. How was fund organized?
9. Did you target your help to Christians only?
10. How many victims were benefited by your activities?
11. What was your aim on such circumstances, and did they fulfil?
12. How was your service appreciated by the victims?

ii. Questions to the Volunteers

1. How long has you been the member of the church?
2. How often you take part in the church's activities?
3. Why were you chosen as a volunteer after the earthquake?
4. How did you manage your time for such voluntary work? (as you might have to look after your family members too)
5. Was there no effect of earthquake in your native hometown / house?
6. Which area was given to you to serve?
7. What were the difficulties and the ease factors during your helping period?
8. What was your target?
9. Did you achieve your target? If not, why?
10. What are the reaction and the responses of the victims when you reach there to help?
11. Are you satisfied with the help you showered (as per church instruction)?
12. Have you notice any changes before and after earthquake within yourself? No physical changes but social changes of your working behavior.

iii. Questions to the Victims (Christian)

1. How many members in your family were affected by the earthquake?
2. How old was your daughter?
3. Where were you during earthquake?
4. Who do you think will be there to help your family?
5. Who came first to rescue or support your family?
6. Did your church response to your family after the earthquake?

Yes

How were their responses? What were the help you have been given by them?

7. Are you happy with the help laid by your church? If not, why?
8. How was your experience of an earthquake?
9. Beside trauma, how you find yourself now? Are there any changes that you felt nowadays?

iv. Questions to the Victims (Non – Christian)

1. How many members in your family were affected by the earthquake?
2. Where were you during earthquake?
3. Who do you think will be there to help your family?
4. Who came first to rescue or support your family?
5. Did any Christian community help you? If yes

Which church came by your side to help your family?

6. How do you feel when they came to help you?
7. What did you think when they came to help you?
8. How do you take their steps of helping in needs?
9. Were you satisfied with the help they provided? If not, why?
10. Were you been told to change your religion? If yes
Why? Was there anything they told you to become a Christian?
11. Did they forced you to change?
12. What was your response towards them?
13. How was your experience of an earthquake?
14. Beside trauma, how you find yourself now? Are there any changes that you felt nowadays?
15. What do you think about Christianity?

Appendix ii: Consent Research Form

Are you interested in taking part in the research project

Christian responses towards the victims of Sindhupalchowk District after 2015 massive earthquake in Nepal?

This is an inquiry about participation in a research project where the main purpose is to elaborate the main diaconal activities laid by the Christian after Nepal Earthquake 2015. Though the several citizens had died during massive earthquake, many others became homeless, hopeless, and even various faced economic difficulties. After the earthquake, the people tried to stand up for their livelihood, but many fails. In such cases, the Christian churches and other diaconal actors played immense role for concreting the mud and dust of the road into living tent house. In this letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project

This project is the master thesis for Vid Specialized University, Oslo to accomplish the partial fulfilment of master's degree in Diakonia in Christian Social Practice. The purpose of the project is to explore the role of a church during a crisis as well as to figure the diaconal activities of the church showered to the survivors and the victims of Sindhupalchowk district. The perspective of understanding the Christianity subsequently is another purpose of the project.

Research Question

1. How did Christian and non-Christian inhabitants of Sindhupalchowk district experience the help from Nepali Evangelical Church after the 2015 earthquake, and how did this influence their view of Christianity?
2. How did the church leaders understand their role in helping the victims after the earthquake?

The project is accounted to master's Thesis.

Who is responsible for the research project?

VID Specialized University is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

As the project is related to the experiences and responses of the survivors and the victims of the earthquake, the victims will be the informants in the process of collecting the data. The church pastor, and church volunteers will play a role of informants to figure the diaconal activities and the responses to tackle the crisis.

What does participation involve for you?

Methods: Qualitative Method

Participation: Interview

Scope: The project will focus on the overall help laid by the Christian faith actors through the interview guide. It will try to put some lights on the nature of the other religious pupil as how they look towards those helping hands. How often the church was able to allow themselves help humanity getting rid out of the crisis? How was church able to play its role during the crisis? These sorts of queries will be tried to pull out on the project through the sound recording.

Participation is voluntary

Participation in the project is voluntary. If you chose to participate, you can withdraw your consent at any time without giving a reason. All information about you will then be made anonymous. There will be no negative consequences for you if you chose not to participate or later decide to withdraw.

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data

I will only use your personal data for the purpose(s) specified in this information letter. I will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act).

I will replace your name and contact details with a code. The list of names, contact details and respective codes will be stored separately from the rest of the collected data.

VID Specialized University has an agreement with NSD to make sure that research at VID is done in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Act. The letter from the Vice- Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Doiakonia in Christian Social Practice at VID has been forwarded to NSD as a requirement for NSD's approval of the project. I am obliged to comply with the requirements of this letter and will not share any information with

anyone. If you are quoted, you will be given a code that is saying something about your position (elder / pastor / lay), but that cannot be traced to your name.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?

The project is scheduled to end 15 May 2021. The data will be deleted after the master thesis has been approved by VID, and no later than 15 June 2021.

Your rights

So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:

- access the personal data that is being processed about you.
- request that your personal data is deleted.
- request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified.
- receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
- send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data.

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with VID Specialized University, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Where can I find out more?

If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:

VID Specialized University via Anne Austad Førsteamanuensis / Associate Professor
anne.austad@vid.no

+47 22451910 / +47 92446904

VID vitenskapelige høgskole / VID Specialized University

- Our Data Protection Officer: Anne Austad (VID vitenskapelige høgskole)
- NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email:

(personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Austad
Supervisor

Chitra Bahadur Rai
Master Student

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project “Christian responses towards the victims of Sindhupalchowk District after 2015 massive earthquake in Nepal” and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

to participate in interview

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, approx. 15 May 2021.

(Signed by participant, date)

Appendix iii: Agreement with Data Controller

Concerning Interviewing the participants for master thesis paper in Diakonia and Christian Social Practice

This is to inform that I, Padam Krishna Prajapati, will be conducting the interviews of 10 respondents at Sindupalchowk district for a project entitled “Christian responses towards the victims of Sindhupalchowk district after 2015 massive earthquake in Nepal”.

My friend Chitra Bahadur Rai who is pursuing his master’s degree at VID Specialized University, Norway, was not able to visit Nepal and conduct the interviews himself because of the lockdown implemented by Nepal government to curve the pandemic COVID-19. I was asked to collect the required data from the participants to which I agreed. I will conduct the interviews on behalf of him.

I hereby agree to follow all the rules and regulations of interviewing and storing the collected data. I am aware of the confidentiality of the respondents. I will not be disclosing any sensitive data, if collected any. I assure that all the interviews will be conducted appropriately including that all the participants are properly informed about the purpose of the project before the interviews, and that they sign the consent form. I will make sure not to include any false and fabricated information during the data collection process. I ensure that all the data will be erased from my storage device after I get informed of the completion of the project.

I, herby, solemnly urge you to grant me a permission for collecting data through interviews.



.....
Date: 05 / 01 / 2020

Padam Krishna Prajapati

Email: padamkp@gmail.com

Contact No.: +977-9841637098

Bhaktapur, Nepal

Appendix iv: Notification and Assessment from the NSD



Message

08.12.2020 17:25

Det innsendte meldeskjemaet med referansekode 350872 er nå vurdert av NSD.

Følgende vurdering er gitt:

NSD has assessed the change registered on 03.12.2020.

The research period has been extended until 15.12.2021 . Please note that in case of further extensions, it may be necessary to inform the sample.

We ask that the information letter is updated with correct project end before further interviews are conducted.

NSD will follow up at the new planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded/is being carried out in accordance with what is documented.

Good luck with the rest of the project!

Contact person at NSD: Kajsa Amundsen

Data Protection Services for Research: [+47 55 58 21 17](tel:+4755582117) (press 1)

Contact person at NSD: Kajsa Amundsen

Data Protection Services for Research: [+47 55 58 21 17](tel:+4755582117) (press 1)