

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY  
DUE TO SETTLEMENT OF BHUTANESE REFUGEES IN  
SANISHCHARE CAMP: A Case Study of  
Sanishchare Village of Morang District**

**A Thesis**

**Submitted to the Central Department of Rural Development  
Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences  
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**Submitted By**

**SACHINJI GANDHARBA**

**Exam Roll No.: 281138**

**TU Regd. No.: 6-2-37-989-2008**

**Central Department of Rural Development**

**Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur**

**Kathmandu, Nepal**

**March, 2018**

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled **SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DUE TO SETTLEMENT OF BHUTANESE REFUGEES IN SANISHCHARE CAMP: A Case Study of Sanishchare Village of Morang District** submitted to the Central Department of Rural Development, Tribhuvan University, is entirely my original work prepared under the guidance and supervision of my supervisor. I have made due acknowledgements to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of preparing this thesis. The results of this thesis have not been presented or submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree or for any other purposes. I assure that no part of the content of this thesis has been published in any form before.

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Sachinji Gandharba

TU Regd. No.: 6-2-37-989-2008

Date: 2074-11-18

(02 March, 2018)

## **Recommendation Letter**

This thesis entitled **SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DUE TO SETTLEMENT OF BHUTANESE REFUGEES IN SANISHCHARE CAMP: A Case Study of Sanishchare Village of Morang District** has been prepared by **Sachinji Gandharba** under my guidance and supervision. I hereby forward this thesis to the evaluation committee for final evaluation and approval.

---

Prajwal Man Pradhan

Lecturer

Date: 2074-11-18

(02 March, 2018)

## Approval Letter

This thesis entitled **SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY DUE TO SETTLEMENT OF BHUTANESE REFUGEES IN SANISHCHARE CAMP: A Case Study of Sanishchare Village of Morang District** submitted by **Sachinji Gandharba** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree (M.A.) in Rural Development has been evaluated and approved by the evaluation committee.

### Evaluation Committee

-----  
Prof. Dr. Pushpa Kamal Subedi  
Head of Department

-----  
Ramesh Neupane  
External Examiner

-----  
Prajwal Man Pradhan  
Thesis Supervisor

Date: 2074-11-25  
(09 March, 2018)

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## **ABSTRACT**

“Being a refugee is not a choice; it is the absence of the choice”, says Ms. Carina Hoang, a former Vietnamese refugee and an award winning author of refugee stories. Citing Ms. Hoang’s statement, we can say that Bhutanese refugees have been living a life of no choice since early 1990s in the refugee camps of eastern Nepal. And with no doubt, their settlement has some impacts on local communities. The research or the study aimed to assess the socio-economic impact on the local community of Sanishchare village of Morang district due to settlement of Bhutanese refugees in Sanishchare Refugee Camp.

For the accomplishment of the study, exploratory and descriptive research designs were opted. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from primary and secondary sources. As a sample size, 80 households of the local community were selected by means of simple random sampling. Field visit and observation, household survey, key informants’ interview and focused group discussion were undertaken as data collection tools and techniques. And, tabulation and charts were used to analyze quantitative data.

Findings show that anti-social activities like prostitution, gambling, theft, alcoholism and crime; adverse economic impact like price hike on daily commodities, unhealthy competition at work places and unemployment problem; and environmental problems like deforestation, soil erosion and pollutions increased remarkably after the arrival of the refugees in the camp, and their involvement in such issues is noted. However, as to mention positive aspects, the refugee community has provided the easily available labor/work force at low cost. Also, the refugee arrival has indirectly contributed to market expansion, road construction and school establishment in the local community. Thus, it can be concluded that the settlement of the refugees has both positive and negative socio-economic impacts on the local community. However, the negative impacts are a bit more than the positive ones. The UN agencies and CBOs can be recommended to work on the mitigation measures regarding the negative impacts. The UN and the GoN need to address the repatriation call raised by a group of the refugees to avert potential untoward incidents. The community area can still be a suitable study site for future researchers as new socio-economic impacts are likely to arise following the departure of all refugees from the camp.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Declaration	i
Recommendation Letter	ii
Approval Letter	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Table of Contents	vi-viii
List of Tables	ix
List of Charts	x
List of Maps	x
Acronyms/Abbreviations	xi
<b>CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1-14</b>
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	10
1.3 Objectives of the Study	11
1.4 Significance of the Study	11
1.5 Limitations of the Study	13
1.6 Organization of the Study	14
<b>CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>15-29</b>
2.1 Bhutanese Refugees: An Overview of their Background	17
2.2 Socio-Political Context of Being Bhutanese Refugees	21
2.3 Bhutanese Refugees in Context of Nepal	23
2.4 Socio-Economic Relations between the Refugees and Local Community	28
<b>CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>30-33</b>
3.1 Rationale for Site Selection of the Study	30

3.2	Research Design	30
3.3	Nature and Source of Data	31
3.4	Sampling Procedure	31
3.5	Data Collection Techniques and Tools	32
3.5.1	Field Visit and Observation	32
3.5.2	Household Survey	32
3.5.3	Key Informants Interview	32
3.5.4	Focused Group Discussion	33
3.6	Data Analysis	33
	<b>CHAPTER IV: STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>34-43</b>
4.1	Study Location and Local Community	34
4.2	Socio-Economic Characteristics of Local People	35
4.2.1	Ethnicity and Caste of Local people	35
4.2.2	Religion	36
4.2.3	Education Status	37
4.2.4	Primary Occupation	37
4.2.5	Caste/Ethnicity and Education: Inter-relationship	38
4.2.6	Caste/Ethnicity and Occupation: Inter-relationship	39
4.3	Agencies Involved in Refugee Assistance Program	39
4.3.1	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	39
4.3.2	World Food Program (WFP)	40
4.3.3	Caritas Nepal	40
4.3.4	AMDA Primary Health Care Project (AMDA PHCP)	40
4.3.5	Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS)	41
4.3.6	Refugee Affected Areas' Rehabilitation Programme (RAARP)	42



4.3.7 Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Nepal	42
4.3.8 International Organization for Migration (IOM)	42
<b>CHAPTER V: SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF BHUTANESE REFUGEES ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY</b>	<b>44-62</b>
5.1 Social Impact of Refugee Settlement on the Local Community	44
5.1.1 Security Perspectives Before and After Refugee Settlement	45
5.1.2 Anti-social Activities after Establishment of Refugee Camp	47
5.1.2.1 Increased Prostitution	49
5.1.2.2 Increased Gambling	50
5.1.2.3 Increased Theft/Stealing Events	50
5.1.2.4 Increment of Alcoholism in the Community	51
5.2 Economic Impact of Refugee Settlement on the Local Community	52
5.2.1 Support to Agricultural Activities after Arrival of Refugees	52
5.2.2 Increased Competition on Economic Niches	53
5.2.3 Responses of Local People Regarding the Involvement of Bhutanese Refugees in Local Economic Activities	55
5.3 Environmental Impact of Refugee Settlement on Local Community	56
5.3.1 Deforestation and Soil Erosion	57
5.3.2 Pollutions as the Other Environmental Problems	60
<b>CHAPTER VI: FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>63-65</b>
6.1 Findings	63
6.2 Conclusion	64
6.3 Recommendations	64
<b>REFERENCES</b>	
<b>ANNEXES</b>	
ANNEX: I INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE	
ANNEX: II ETHICAL CONSIDERATION	
ANNEX: III PHOTO GALLERY	

## LIST OF TABLES

		<b>Page</b>
Table 1.1:	Citizenship Categories in Bhutan	20
Table 2.1:	Departure Statistics of Bhutanese Refugees: Jan 2007 to Nov 2017 – By Country	26
Table 2.2:	Departure Statistics of Bhutanese Refugees: Jan 2007 to Nov 2017 – By Year	26
Table 4.1:	Distribution of Respondents by Ethnicity and Caste	36
Table 4.2:	Distribution of Respondents According to Religion	36
Table 4.3:	Distribution of Respondents according to Educational Status	37
Table 4.4:	Distribution of Respondent According to their Occupation	38
Table 5.1:	Distribution of Respondents by their Perception on Security Situation before and after Establishment of the Refugee Camp	46
Table 5.2:	Distribution of Respondents According to their Perception on Anti-social Activities after Establishment of the Refugee Camp	48
Table 5.3:	Distribution of Respondents According to Their Response on the Basis of Increment of Prostitution in Locality	50
Table 5.4:	Distribution of Respondent According to Their Response about the Increment of Theft/Stealing events in the Community	51
Table 5.5:	Distribution of Respondents According to their Responses about the Increment of Alcoholism in the Community	51
Table 5.6:	Distribution of Respondents According to their Perception on Refugee Involvement in Various Economic Activities	53
Table 5.7:	Distribution of Respondents According to their Perceptions about the Impact of Refugee Involvement in Local Economic Activities	55
Table 5.8:	Distribution of Respondents Based on their Opinion about Refugee Involvement in Deforestation and Soil Erosion	58
Table 5.9:	Consumption Pattern of Cooking Fuel before the Establishment of Sanishchare Refugee Camp and Now (during field survey)	59
Table 5.10:	Distribution of Respondents Based on their Opinion about Refugee Involvement in Causing Various Pollutions	62

## **LIST OF CHARTS**

	<b>Page</b>
Chart 4.1: Interrelationship of Respondent as per Caste/Ethnicity and Education	38
Chart 4.2: Interrelationship of Respondent as per Caste/Ethnicity and Occupation	39
Chart 5.1: Distribution of Respondents on the basis of Education Level and their Perception on Security Situation in the Community	47
Chart 5.2: Distribution of Respondents according to their Occupation and their Perception on Refugees' Anti-social Activities	49
Chart 5.3: Various Religion Respondents and their Perception on Competition for Work Opportunity after the Refugee Influx	56

## **LIST OF MAPS**

Map 2.1: Bhutanese Refugee Population in the Camps as of 31 Oct 2017 and their Original Population in 2007	27
Map 2.2: Stats on Bhutanese Refugee Resettlement to the US as of 31 Oct 2017	27
Map 4.1: Pathari-Sanishchare Village of Morang District in Google Map	35

## ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AHURA	-	Association of Human Rights Activists
AMDA	-	Association of Medical Doctors of Asia
APF	-	Armed Police Force
CBO	-	Community Based Organization
CBS	-	Central Bureau of Statistics
DPHO	-	District Public Health Office
GoN	-	Government of Nepal
ICRC	-	International Committee of the Red Cross
INGO	-	International Non- Government Organization
INHURED	-	The International Institute for Human Rights, Environment and Development
IOM	-	International Organization of Migration
LP Gas	-	Liquid Pressurized Gas
LWF	-	Lutheran World Federation
LWS	-	Lutheran World Service
NGO	-	Non-Government Organization
NRCS	-	Nepal Red Cross Society
OXFAM	-	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
PFHRB	-	People's Forum for Human Rights, Bhutan
PHCP	-	Primary Health Care Project
RAARP	-	Refugee Affected Areas' Rehabilitation Programme
RCU	-	Refugee Co-ordination Unit
RGoB	-	Royal Government of Bhutan
SCF	-	Save the Children Federation
UN	-	United Nations
UNHCR	-	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	-	World Food Program

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

United Nations defines 'refugee' as a person who owes to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social/ethnic or political opinion that leaves the country of his nationality.

A refugee, generally speaking, is a displaced person who has been forced to cross national boundaries and who cannot return home safely. Such a person may be called an asylum seeker until granted refugee status by the contracting state or the UNHCR if they formally make a claim for asylum. (Wikipedia)

The definitions of 'refugee' in international law are of critical importance for it can mean the difference between life and death for an individual seeking asylum. It may be denoted, depart from the ordinary meaning of the word 'Refugee'. In everyday speech, the word 'Refugee' is used to describe a person who is forced to flee his or her home for any reason for which the individual is not responsible, be it persecution, public disorder, civil war, famine, earthquake or environment degradation. However, a refugee is a person who is forced to leave home for certain specified reasons and who, furthermore, is outside the country of his or her origin and does not have its protection.

At the first request of the U.S the United Nations Security Council recently held a meeting at which the topic of discussion was the definition of 'Refugee' The discussion was prompted by the growing number of "internally displaced persons" across the globe. Under the United Nations convention on the status of Refugees, a refugee is a person who, "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country". Internally displaced persons are people who have been forced from their homes, but because they are still within their native country, do not fall within the definition of "Refugee".

A 'Refugee' is defined as a person outside of his or her country of nationality who is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinions.

Under U.S. (United States) law, a person who has committed acts of persecution, or has assisted in the commission of persecution in any way, on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in particular social group, or political opinion is not eligible for classification as a refugee.

The term 'Refugee' shall also apply to every person who, owing to external aggression, occupation, foreign domination or events seriously disturbing public order in either part or the whole of his country of origin or nationality, is compelled to leave his place of habitual residence in order to seek refuge in another place outside his country of origin or nationality (Chimni, 2002/2004).

"Refugees are not born but created by states, individual and group", said Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. She has rightly said, "The issue of human rights and the problems of refugees are inextricably linked. The vast majority of refugees are driven from their homes by human rights abuses. Persecution, torture, killing and the reprehensible practice of 'ethnic cleansing' generate huge flow of refugees". The Nepali-speaking southern Bhutanese refugees just fit in her description.

The circumstances of being refugees are not an individual intention. The determinant factors for generating refugees may be due to the religious conflict political turmoil, racial discrimination, ideological contradiction, and economic degradation, social and environmental upheavals. More importantly the state policies may be responsible for creating refugee condition.

Refugees have created both positive as well as negative impacts to the local people and environment. Robbery, prostitution, alcoholism, gambling, fights include social negative impacts of refugee. Similarly exchange of culture and tradition, health facilities obtained from the camp are social positive impacts. Likewise, markets for local product, easy and cheap wage, skill and idea sharing, employment creation, benefits from remittance are economic positive impacts. High market price

exploitation of labor, unemployment is negative economic impacts of refugees. From the environmental point of view, refugee has created only negative impacts to the local community of Damak Village.

Bhutanese refugees have been residing in the eastern part of Nepal for more than 20 years. These refugees have created both positive as well as negative impacts to the local people and environment. This study is about the socio-economic impacts in the local communities of Pathari-Sanishchare Municipality of Morang district due to the resettlement of Bhutanese refugees in Sanishchare camp.

RCU, 2010 reported that Bhutanese refugees were spending their miserable and pity life in the seven different camps of Jhapa and Morang districts since 12 December 1990. Bhutanese people when began to struggle to establish democracy and Human Rights in Bhutan, the RGOB identified the Nepalese people as an anti-national and terrorists and exiled them from their homeland Bhutan. Nepali-Ethnic Bhutanese people of southern Bhutan fled to India leaving their properties, home, land, cattle, etc. But Indian government did not identify them as refugees and did not provide shelter for them in India and brought them to the Indo Nepal boarder in the eastern part of Nepal, i.e. Mechi River. Being a Nepali origin, there was no alternative for them except to enter Nepal. The refugee people entered Nepal through Kakarvitta and settled in the bank of Holy River Kankai. They regarded Nepal as the motherland.

The local people of Jhapa also paid the sympathy and helped them by giving small units of grains. After some months the influx of refugees reached in high number and the Nepal government could not control the highly influx of refugees and requested UNHCR for help. The presence of large number of Bhutanese refugees in Jhapa and Morang districts have created socio-economic, environmental and many other unsociable problems. Prior to the presence of refugee, the above mentioned crises and unsociable activities are not as high as present, but such problems are increasing very rapidly for the past ten years and HMG also requested to UNHCR to extend the assistance program for the relief to the local people. Now the total population of the refugees has reached one lakh of which 98,000 are living in seven different camps and the rest are living outside the camps. The lands for camps provided by HMG and other managerial service have been undertaken by UNHCR in cooperation with LWF, SCF, AMDA, Caritas International, NRCS, and OXFAM etc.

History of Bhutanese Refugee crisis also seems significant to learn about. Bhutan is a nation made up of several ethnic groups. One of these is the Lhotshampas, people of Nepali origin, who began to settle in the south of the country in the late 19th century. In the 1980s it emerged that Lhotshampas were being seen as a threat to the political order. When strings of measure were passed the discriminated against their group, the Lhotshampas organized a series of public demonstrations for which the participants were branded as "anti-nationals". Several thousands of southern Bhutanese were imprisoned, and more than 2000 tortured; according to Amnesty International very few of them were formally charged. Thousand fled to India and Nepal. By the end of 1992, there were more than 80,000 living in UNHCR camps in south eastern Nepal (Hutt, 1994).

Michael Hutt, professor of Nepali and Himalayan studies, School of Oriental and African studies, London, states that various events led to the Bhutanese refugee crisis.

Ethnic diversity: Like most modern nations, Bhutan's 650,000 people consist of several ethnic groups. The Ngalongs of the western mountains and the central Bhutanese with whom they have intermarried from the elite, but they constitute a minority alongside the more numerous Sharchoops ('Easterners') and the Lhotshampas ('Southerners' or 'Nepali-speaking Bhutanese'). Almost all of the refugees come from this last group, which before the crisis began was reckoned to constitute between one third and one half on the total population ([www.bhootan.org.sub](http://www.bhootan.org.sub)).

Settlement of the Southern Bhutanese: During the late 19th century, contractors working for the Bhutanese governments began to organize the settlement of Nepali-speaking people in uninhabited area of Southern Bhutan, in order to open those areas up for cultivation. The south's soon become the country's main supplier of food. By 1930, according to British Colonial Officials, much of the south was under cultivation by a population of Nepali Origin that amounted to some 60,000 people. With an annual growth rate of between 2 and 3 percent and continued immigration up to 1958, this population grew to its 1988 proportions. Many refugees claim that their ancestors came possess documents that support this claim.

In 1958, Bhutan passed its first citizenship act and the entire southern Bhutanese population, which had until then had very little security in Bhutan, was granted full citizenship. Nationwide Programs of development and modernization commenced in



1960, and the economic importance north of a certain latitude, and there was very little interaction between the northern and southern populations until the 1960s. During the 1960s and 1970s, with the development of education, social services and the economy, many southern Bhutanese rose to occupy influential positions in the bureaucracy ([www.bhootan.org.sub](http://www.bhootan.org.sub)).

Government repression of the Southern Bhutanese: During the 1980s, the southern Bhutanese came to be seen as a threat to the political order. A new citizenship act passed in 1985 became the basis for a so-called census exercise in southern Districts, in which every member of the southern population had to produce documentary evidence of legal residence in 1958, or else risk being declared a non-national.

In 1989, all Bhutanese became liable to a fine or imprisonment if they ventured out in anything other than northern traditional costume, and the Nepali language was removed from the school curriculum. Public demonstrations against these and other new policies took place in all southern Districts in late 1990, and all those who took part were branded 'anti-nationals' by the government. Several thousand southern Bhutanese were imprisoned for many months in primitive conditions; more than two thousand were tortured during their imprisonment and very few formally charged or stood trial. Many of those who were subsequently released in amnesties declared by the king of Bhutan found that their houses had been demolished and their families had fled the kingdom ([www.bhootan.org.sub](http://www.bhootan.org.sub)).

Expulsion of the Southern Bhutanese: The first refugees fled to neighboring India, but were not permitted to set up permanent camps there and had to move to eastern Nepal. Repressive measures continued against suspected dissidents and their families, and induced against southern Bhutanese in general, during 1991 and 1992. As more and more people had their citizenship revoked in the successive annual censuses, a trickle of refugees into Nepal during 1991 turned into a flow of up to 600 per day in mid-1992. By the end of that year, some 80,000 were sheltering in UNHCR-administered camps in Nepal's two south-eastern Districts. The number have since swelled by some 20,000 more some of these are later arrival, but most are children born in the camps. Of the estimated 100,000 southern Bhutanese who lost their homes, lands, livelihoods and country between 1990 and 1993, not a single person has yet been allowed home. Although the Bhutanese government coerced thousands into signing what it claims

were 'voluntary migration' certificates, it does tacitly admit that the camps contain some bona-fide citizens who were ejected from Bhutan against their will. The governments of Nepal and Bhutan have met sixteen times administrable level to discuss a resolution to the crisis, with no concrete result. Bhutan has resisted Nepal's calls for international engagement in the talks. India has maintained throughout that is a bi-lateral issue between the two governments ([www.bhootan.org.sub](http://www.bhootan.org.sub)).

Continuing Repression within Bhutan: In 1998 the Bhutanese government began a process of resettling landless people from northern Bhutan into the lands owned and previously farmed by the refugees. In the same year, 219 relatives of so-called 'anti-nationals' (refugee activities) were dismissed from government service. Southern Bhutanese have continued to face dismissal from government service since that time, but one by one.

Those southern Bhutanese remaining in Bhutan have continued F1 (full-Bhutanese) to F7 (non-Bhutanese) including placing members of the same family in different categories. Since 1991, southern Bhutanese have been required to obtain a 'No Objection Certificate' to state that neither they nor their relatives were involved in the democracy movement and other 'anti-national' activities. This certificate is very difficult to obtain, but is needed to access schools and other government services, as well as to work with the government or gain a business license, including for selling cash crops ([www.bhootan.org.sub](http://www.bhootan.org.sub)).

Verification exercise actually began in 2000 under increasing pressure from the international community to find a solution. Bhutan and Nepal agreed to commence a pilot screening of the refugee in one of the camps, to establish their status. In 2001, the 12,173 inhabitants of Khudunabari camp (about one eighth of the total population in the refugee camps) were screened by the joined Bhutanese Nepalese verification team. No monitoring by UNHCR or any independent third party was allowed.

The result of the process were announced in late 2003, 75 percent of those screened were found to be eligible to return to Bhutan on December 22, the Bhutanese leader of the verification team reported the conditions of return to the assembled refugees.

Category 1 (2.5 percent people) may return to Bhutan as citizens, but not to their original house and land.

Category 2 (70.5 percent) will have to reapply for citizenship under the challenging terms of the 1985 citizenship act after a probationary period of two years spent in a closed camp in Bhutan.

Category 3 (24.2 percent) termed as non-Bhutanese have their right to appeal the results of the verification unilaterally cancelled.

Category 4 (2.8 percent people) includes relatives of those to be charged with criminal acts. They will be detained in a designated camp.

The refugees expressed their frustration and in the ensuing scuffle, Bhutanese members of the verification team were injured. They returned to Bhutan and the process leading to any repatriation has since stalled ([www.bhootan.org.sub](http://www.bhootan.org.sub)).

In 2006, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk abdicated in favor of his son, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk. It is not known what, if any, impact this will have another situation. The Bhutanese refugees remain in Limbo, their future still unclear. Those in the camps continue to wait for a solution that might consist of a return to Bhutan, third country resettlement or local integration or an unknown mixture of all three, violence in the camps, between those favoring third country resettlement and those who insist on unconditional repatriation, is an increasingly serious problem.

An estimated 35000 exist outside of the camps, in Nepal or in India, without the protection of UNHCR or any status in the countries where they live. Increasing numbers have made the difficult journey to third countries to claim asylum. These southern Bhutanese were discriminated and had the possibility of being excluded from the emerging democratic process offered in the constitutions since years ago in Bhutan. ([www.bhootan.org.sub](http://www.bhootan.org.sub))

Lhotshampas (people of Nepali origin) were settled in Southern Bhutan, which had been shunned by the Drukpas (Buddhist Bhutanese of Tibetan origin) because of malarial condition. Little contact developed between the Drukpas in the north and the Lhotshampas retained their Nepali cultural. Language and religious traditions, which starkly different from that of the Drukpas until the mid-1980 there was little visible conflict between the Drukpas and the Lhotshampas. However, tensions between the two groups surfaced in 1985 with the passing of legislation, which mandated that Lhotshampas adopt Drukpa culture, language, religion as among other things,

television viewing was banned along with the use of the Nepali language, and a national dress code, which consisted of the Drukpa bakkhoo, was enforced in public areas. Protests ensued, followed by violence and killing. The citizenship act and the Marriage Act enacted in the 1980's led to the denationalization of over a hundred thousand Bhutanese of Nepali origin. A large majority of Lhotshampas was classified as illegal immigrants and a deportation program was instituted. The Lhotshampas organized demonstrations calling for the repeal of the newly implemented laws. The government cracked down on the demonstrators. What followed were a series of arrests atrocities and the forceful eviction of the Lhotshampas. Bhutan became the largest producer of refugee as between 1988 and 1994, more than a hundred thousand refugees made their way across India into south-eastern Nepal, seeking refuge in camps constructed under the supervision of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Bhutanese who fled Bhutan in the wake of the abuses of their rights in early 1991 first arrived in West Bengal and Assam states of India. They lived there for some months without any relief assistance, hoping for the Royal Government of Bhutan's initiatives in resolving their problems. However, with no positive initiative on sight, a group of Bhutanese entered into Nepal. With the help of local leaders, they established camps in the banks of Mai River in Jhapa in eastern Nepal.

The Bhutanese refugees first entered Nepal at the end of 1990. Temporary camps were established on the banks on the Mai River. Disease and squalor were rife. UNHCR began providing ad-hoc assistance to Bhutanese asylum seekers in February 1991. By September 1991, there were approximately 5,000 refugees when Government of Nepal (GON) formally requested UNHCR to co-ordinate all emergency assistance for the Bhutanese refugees. UNHCR, the World Food Program (WFP) and several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) launched a major program in the early part of 1992.

WFP, UNHCR and partners provide food, water, shelter, health, education, protection and other 'non-food' items. The established health and nutrition indicators suggest that assistance has been adequate and, in fact, exceeds the national standards for Nepali citizens. The structural layout in each camp is very dense, with shelters often about one meter apart. Fires occur frequently and can be very destructive. There is little

violence within the refugee population, and community committees undertake much of the everyday management of the camps.

Refugees and the local population compete for some environmental resources, such as the collection of dead wood for fuel and the supply of bamboo for construction.

Relations are relatively good, however, with some locals taking part in camp management.

The sites are all located on government forestry department land. Many large saal trees were cut down to provide space for the building of huts.

Food protection was required on some sites, but the engineering works undertaken have not proved wholly successful.

Construction materials and perishable foodstuffs are sourced regionally, but without sustainable strategies. Locals have complained that wells near some camps have run dry, as a result of over-extraction and 'draw down' near refugee wells.

Organizations working in camps: UNHCR is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the camps. They subcontract to a number of agencies and organizations listed below to provide food and essential services in the camps.

**UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

Currently, the overall responsibility for the maintenance of camps lies with UNHCR.

**WFP World Food Programme** a United Nations agency, Provides food aid.

**LWF Lutheran World Federation:**

LWF Nepal was the first organization extending humanitarian assistance to the Bhutanese refugees. Initially, LWF Nepal established systems for all key needs and later handed over some services like health, distribution of food and non-food items and logistics when UNHCR and Other NGOs arrived on the scene in response to the continuing arrival of new refugees.

LWF, as an implementing partner of UNHCR, has been responsible for care and maintenance of shelters, service-centers, water supply and sanitation and community services activities for the refugees. Since January 2006, LWF has taken over the

responsibilities for the distribution of food and non-food items, including vegetables for the refugees, upon the request of UNHCR and WFP.

Caritas (Nepal): since 1992, the UNHCR has delegated responsibility for secondary and higher secondary education for refugees to Caritas (Nepal) under the management of the Jesuit Refugee Service, South Asia. There are over 35,000 pupils and 700 teachers in the refugee schools. The programme is run almost entirely by Bhutanese, with a small number of Nepali staff.

The Nepal BAR Association: Provides legal counseling and legal representation for victims and alleged perpetrators of serious anti-social activities and crimes, including gender-based violence.

AMDA: Association of Medical Doctors of Asia; provides primary health care.

OXFAM: OXFAM Nepal organized non-formal adult literacy and pre-school education classes for the refugees from 1992-1996 before withdrawing from the camps. It also initiated community-based income generation programmes and rehabilitation programmes for people with special needs.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Residing of Bhutanese refugees in Sanishchare Camp has both beneficial as well as adverse effects on the local communities pertaining to the social, economic and cultural aspects. This study tries to address and answer the following questions:

1. How is the current socio-economic status of the Bhutanese refugees and the local communities in Pathari-Sanishchare?
2. What are the socio-economic impacts of Bhutanese refugees on the local communities?
3. Are there symbioses or competitive relationships between the refugees and the local communities?

The problem of refugee is rapidly increasing in the world day by day, even though it is not a new problem in the world's history. Before several centuries the people who were not in favor of the government's law, political system, tradition and culture they were victimized as refugee. In the world history, many famous personalities had to

face these problems. Some of them are Albert Einstein, Maying Bran, and Kissinger and in Nepalese context, they are B.P Koirala, Ganesh Man Singh, Man Mohan Adhikari, etc. (Oli, 2001).

Since 1993, several ministerial and secretarial level bilateral meeting between Nepal and Bhutan have been held in order to solve the refugee problem but any bilateral talks have not progress to repatriate the refugee. To solve this problem Nepal government and many other agencies like UNHCR and Human Rights Organization have been exercising.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The settlement of Bhutanese refugees in the Sanishchare camp, Morang has both good and bad influences on the local communities. Therefore, the main two objectives of the study can be mentioned as below:

- To find out what socio-economic impacts Bhutanese refugees have on the local community people, and
- To find out how the local people perceive the refugee activities and how they relate them to socio-economic impacts

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The residing of the Bhutanese refugees in Sanishchare camp has certain impacts on the local ecology and economy. This study aims to identify the mutual relationships between the refugees and the local communities from the socio-economic point of view. It can be a good reference material for future researcher, and other interested people. It can also be beneficial for the local authorities and policy makers.

In the year 1990, after the arrival of Tibetan refugees small number of Bhutanese refugee entered Nepal. After 1990, when the refugee number became large, Nepal government paid special attention and gave place for their settlement near the Mahendra (East-West) Highway and the bank of Kankai river of Jhapa district. Though the government gave them place to live, it has to face many problems since the Bhutanese government has no yet come to the final decision. First of all refugees are evicted from their homeland because they couldn't bear violence and many kinds

of tortures therefore it forces the victims to flee to other countries along with this. They have to face many kinds of problem such as basic needs of human to survive in strange country.

The impacts of social economic status in the rural area will be concerned by this thesis research. This study would help us to come up with some suggestion for mitigations to the policy maker and authorities of the communities near the refugee camps. Therefore, the finding will be helpful also to all stakeholders in making proper decisions.

In general, “the conceptual framework of analysis” can be interpreted with both negative and positive impacts of settlement of Bhutanese refugee in Nepal.

*Fig. 1: Negative Impact of refugee settlement (Acharya, 2013)*

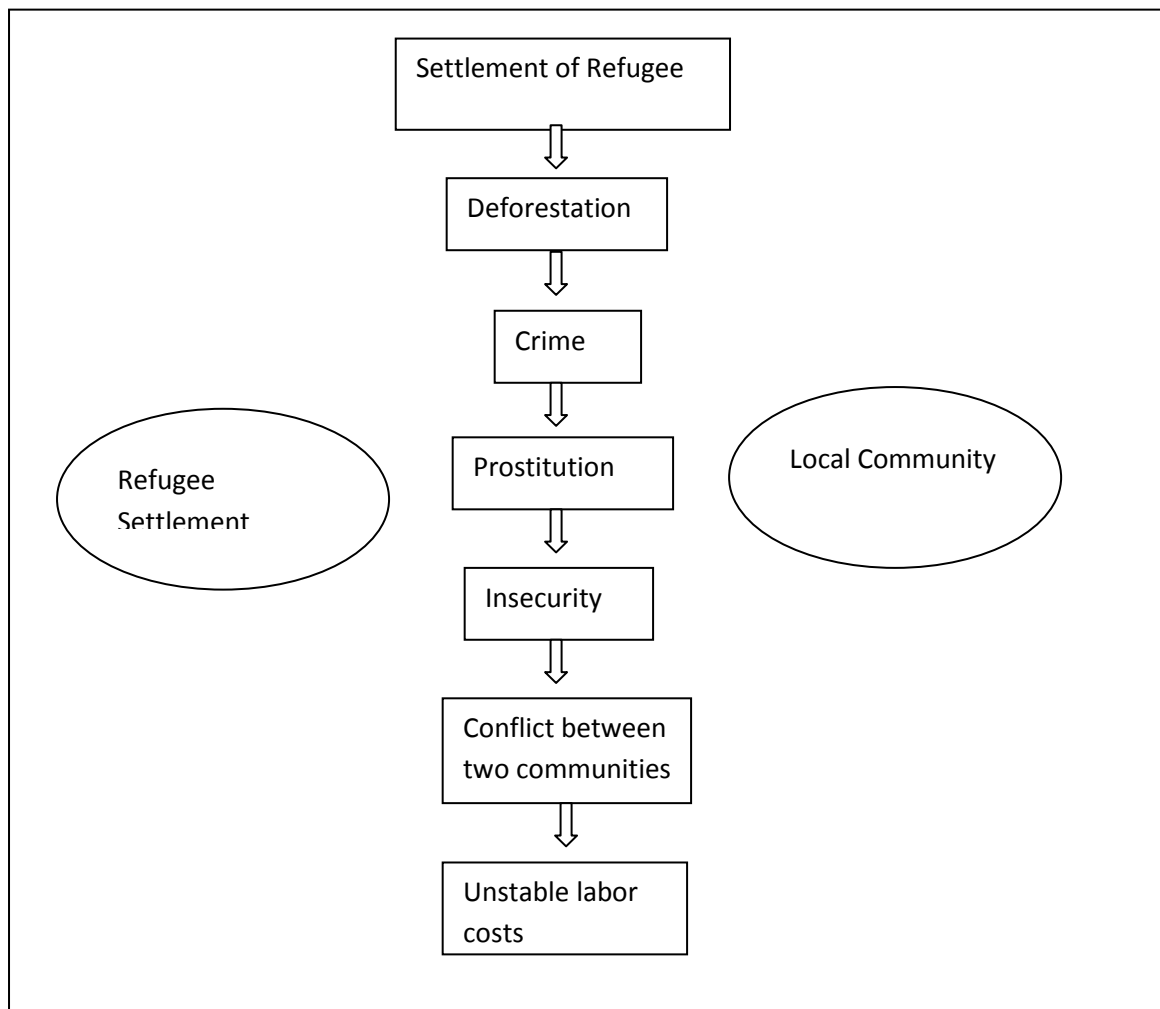
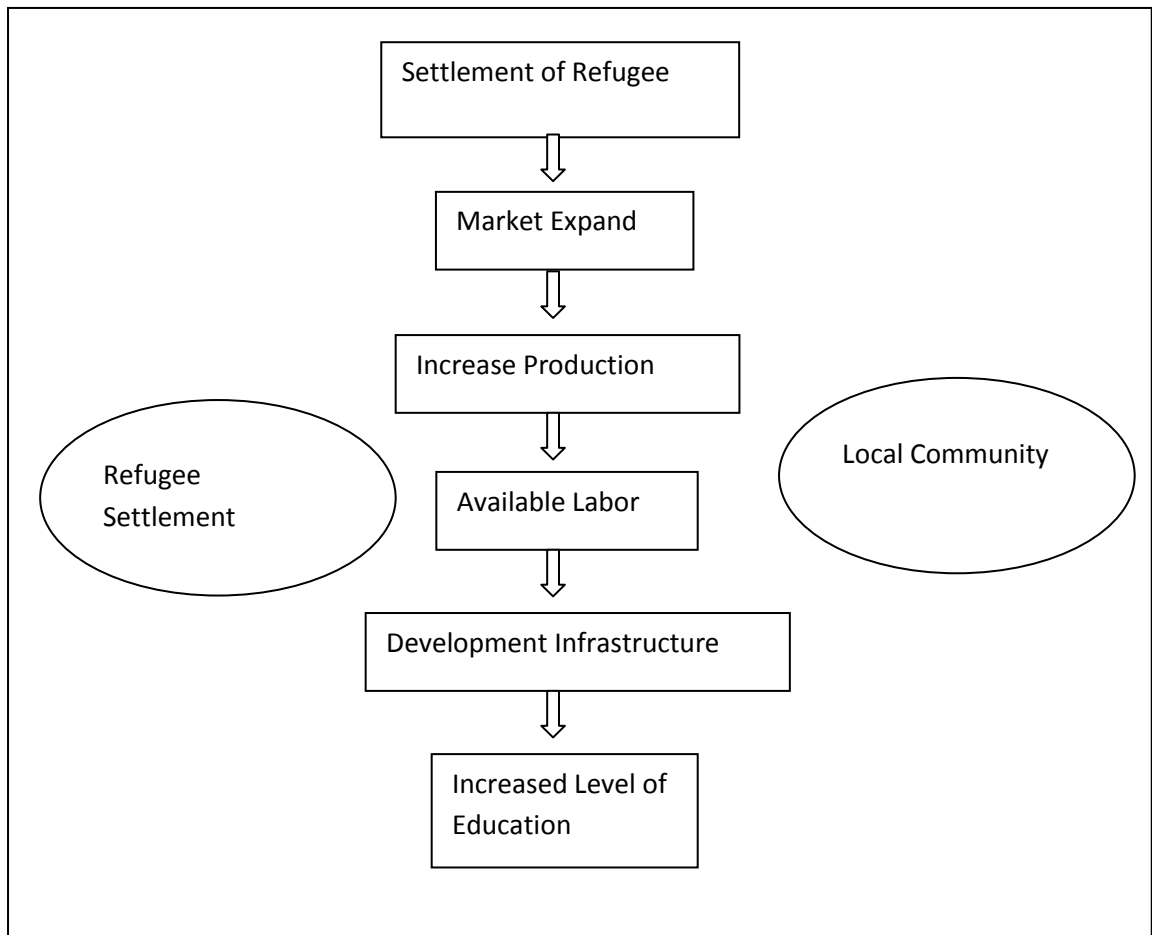




Fig. 2: Positive Impact of refugee settlement (Acharya, 2013)



## 1.5 Limitations of the Study

We know that the limitations of the study are those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the interpretation of the findings from our research. They are the constraints on generalizability, applications to practice, and/or utility of findings that are the result of the ways in which we initially chose to design the study and/or the method used to establish internal and external validity. The limitations of the study can be highlighted in points as below:

- Limited availability of previous works on the subject.
- The site visit of the Sanishchare refugee camp needed to follow various formal procedures and approvals from Camp Management Committee.

- Refugees have their stories of pains and sorrows. They may go quite hesitant and introvert while we put forth our queries.

## **1.6 Organization of the Study**

The proposed thesis has been divided into six chapters. The first chapter begins with introduction which describes the background of the study, statement the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study and limitations of the study. The second chapter is about literature review. The third chapter consists of the research methodology. The fourth chapter covers the data presentation and analysis. The fifth chapter includes the study area, location of the study area and socio-economic impacts of refugees' settlement on local communities. Lastly, the sixth chapter covers the findings, conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is an evaluative report of information found in the literature related to our selected area of study. The review should describe, summarize, evaluate and clarify this literature. This chapter deals with the review of existing literature in context to the Bhutanese refugees. The last part of the review includes that socio-economic relationship between Bhutanese people and local communities. The main objective of literature review is to gain familiarity with the subject matter. The literature on Bhutan, Bhutanese and the refugee's case have been written in limited numbers keeping this in mind available literatures have reviewed is possible.

The problems of refugees are increasing day by day in the world. To solve this problem UNHCR is involved but has not achieved its final goal yet. Refugees are legally define as people who are outside their countries because of a well-founded fear of persecution based on their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group, and who cannot or do not want to return home. As a humanitarian, non-political organization, UNHCR has to basic and closely related aims to protect refugee and to seek ways to help them restart their lives in a normal environment. International protection is the cornerstone of the agency's work. In practice this means insuring respect for a refugees basic human rights and ensuring that no person will be returned involuntarily to a country where he or she has reason to fear persecution a process known as defilement.

Reilly, Rachael, 1995, "the politics of participation in Refugee assistance programme, the case of the Bhutanese Refugee camps in South east Nepal" submitted to the Department of social sciences and administration of the London school of economics and political science, stated that the first people to leave Bhutan in 1990 settled in refugee camps across the border in India. However Indian government made it clear that it was not willing to provide official asylum to the southern Bhutanese and trucks were provided to transit the asylum seekers in through India into Nepal. The first refugees arrived in Nepal in 1991 and stayed in spontaneous settled camps along the banks of rivers Mai and Timai in Jhapa district, South East Nepal (HUROB, 1992). The large influx of refugees occurred between March and July 1992, when UNHCR

estimated that 300 to 600 people were arriving a day. By the end of 1992 there were 72,300 Refugees registered in the camps. The influx dropped steadily during 1993 and 1994, although families to be in exile. 100,000 refugees are settled in Nepal, 86,000 of them in the seven camps, while several thousand refugees are self-settled in India. In her concluding remarks, she stated that the Bhutanese Refugee situation, amongst others, shows that where circumstances are conducive, high levels of refugees' self-management can be achieved (HUROB, 1992).

Sinha, A.C, 1998, in his book "Bhutan, Ethnic and National Dilemma" stated that and exodus of the Bhutanese Nepalese in June 1991 and by August 16, 1992, their number reached above 10,000 in various camps in Nepal and India. According to him, there are seven of the camps located at different parts of east Nepal. He states that refugees entered into Nepal via India. He writes that many dignitaries of the world had already visited refugee camps and voiced their plea in the international arena.

Chaudhari, Kalyan, 1999, in his essay at Frontline magazine (November issue), stated that the talks between Nepal and Bhutan remained uncertain which directly had impacts on the fate of thousands of Bhutanese of Nepali origin, who fled southern Bhutan to seek shelter in eastern Nepal. He found that the conditions of asylum seekers in Nepal were worsening despite efforts from relief INGO's.

Ghimire, Sanjeev, 2001, " The Space Times Today" states that EU is planning to resettle half the Bhutanese Refugees who are bound to stay in Nepal after failing to prove themselves as the genuine Bhutanese national during the verification process. He also writes that there is not a single instance of refugee crisis in the world, which may have culminated in the total repatriation of the refugees. The possible arrangement to resettle some 40,000 Bhutanese refugees has already been started. If this happens, then the already densely populated Jhapa will have to bear the burden of many corresponding consequences, which arise from the added burden.

INHURED, 1993 has indicated human rights record in Bhutan is extremely poor. The government does not recognize the citizen's fundamental freedom and civil liberties. People are not allowed to wear even the dresses of their own choices. There is no rights to speech and expression, no rights to publications and press no social cultural rights, no rights to from association unions and organization etc.

In terms of psychological health, local people living in the vicinity of the refugee camps have been negatively affected. Key informants and even ordinary farmers and women unanimously reported that daily they fear social insecurity. Prior to the presence of the refugees, they did not have these sorts of fear. They could close the doors of their houses and work in their kitchen garden and paddy fields. They could go to the local bazaar but now one member of the family always has to be in the house to prevent the possibility of being robbed. During the night, they have to be more watchful and alert than before. Similarly, women formerly could go to the forest to fetch fuel wood and take care of their animals without any sense of insecurity or fear. Now the situation has changed. One can see groups of the refugees' men and women roaming in the forest to collect fuel wood for sale and consumption. Local Nepalese women have difficulty going to the forest in groups because they have their own domestic chores and farming activities to perform. Now they feel that if they go alone, they may be robbed or even sexually harassed (New Era, 1993).

The Minority Buddhist monarchy has sought harassment to the ethnic population living in Southern Bhutan, under the slogan "One Nation One People" 1988. But this slogan was unbearable for the 49 percent of the Nepali ethnic Bhutanese people. The multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, Nepal ethnic Bhutanese could not follow the "One Nation One People" policy of Bhutan government. Under this policy every people of Bhutan should follow the same culture, religion, language, dress etc. This means that they didn't have any liberty and human rights of celebrating festivals, people protested the government policy and the government evicted the people from Bhutan by using military force thinking it as an anti-national task and terrorism (AHURA, 1993).

Aryal (1998) has analyzed the Bhutanese Refugee crisis as a multi-dimensional problem produced by presenting the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB) as the imposer of a medieval type of Bhutanization and integration of Nepal and not taking seriously by the related parties.

## **2.1 Bhutanese Refugees: An Overview of their Background**

Bhutan's southern Nepal-speaking population began leaving Bhutan in early 1990, in the wake of increasingly rigid citizenship laws and cultural/linguistic policies that favored the ruling Dzongkha class at the expense of the Lhotshampas population.

Protests by Lhotshampas during that time were followed by a swift crackdown by Bhutanese police, and soon after tens of thousands of Lhotshampas crossed the border into India and then continued on to Nepal. By September 1995, there were nearly 90,000 Lhotshampas in Nepal. (Banki, Susan 2008)

Ethnic Nepalese first began migrating to Bhutan in the nineteenth century. Many became eligible for Bhutanese citizenship under the 1958 Nationality Law. Moreover, from the mid-1950s ethnic Nepalese began to be admitted into the bureaucracy, the army and the police, and were made members of the cabinet and the judiciary. However, by the late 1970s the Drukpa establishment had come to see the ethnic Nepalese' growing numbers and influence as a threat to Bhutan's cultural identity and the Drukpa own privileged position. Increasingly, Bhutan's ruling elite asserted that the majority of the ethnic Nepalese in Bhutan were not in fact citizens but illegal immigrants who threatened Bhutan's "survival as a distinct political and cultural entity." (Human Rights Watch - <https://www.hrw.org/report/2007/05/16/last-hope/need-durable-solutions-bhutanese-refugees-nepal-and-india>, 16 May 2007)

The Lhotshampas were Hindu and they practiced Hinduism based lifestyle and culture. The religions and culture practices were not similar to those of the ruling groups. In course of time when the populations of Lhotshampas were fast growing they realized the possible threat of growing population religious and cultural dominance of Lhotshampas. Thus, conflict arose from the religion and cultural rivalry led the Lhotshampas in to the refugee status. (Koirala, Surendra 2005)

According to cultural and religious explanation refugee problem is the result of conflict between the Buddhism of the ruling Drukpa versus the Hinduism of the Lhotshampas (Subedi, 2002). In Bhutan there have been the Mahayana Buddhism based feudal systems of hereditary monarchy where religion plays a vital role in shaping the policies and programmers of government.

Refugees began to arrive at the end of 1990 from Bhutan, via the state of Sikkim in India, to Nepal. The peak influx was in mid-1992, with 600-800 arrivals daily. Refugees self-settled very densely near the town of Maidhar (on the bank of Mai/Kankai River). They arrived during the dry season, but when the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and UNHCR arrived, the agencies soon realized that the site was prone to flooding. New sites were identified and the refugees moved. Seven refugee

camps were established in the Jhapa and Morang districts of south-eastern Nepal, with a total population of over 90,000. Co-operation between the aid community, Nepalese government, and refugee populations has resulted in camps being often held up as examples of good management. (Shelter Project Organization, 1997: “Bhutanese Refugees, Nepal, 1997”)

According to the Citizenship Act of 1958 Lhotshampas who had already settled in Bhutan prior to Act of 1958 were treated as genuine Bhutanese and placed them in the category of F-1. The people of other categories had to pay a fine to the government. Nobody was allowed to marry a non-Bhutanese (outsider). Those who married outsiders were categorized into F2-F7. Based on the new citizenship policy, a rather curious census exercise was undertaken in southern Bhutan in 1958. On the basis of the 1958 Citizenship Act-where 1958 was arbitrarily fixed as a cut off year (BREP, 2007).

Citizenship is the status of a person recognized under the custom or law as being a legal member of a sovereign state or belonging to a nation. A person may have multiple citizenships and a person who does not have citizenship of any state is said to be stateless. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Citizenship>)

Before 1988, Bhutan remained peaceful country with only some disturbance in 1974 during coronation of the present king. The policies of the RGOB then had been reasonably good. It was only in 1988 that the RGOB introduced a number of policies that directly violated the human rights and fundamental freedom of Bhutanese citizen. Instead of amending the policies as desired by the people, the RGOB went on forceful implementation and penalized those who opposed these policies. As a result, the people were compelled to organize themselves and challenged the authorities of the RGOB. The census policy adopted by the RGOB in 1988 was drastically different from the earlier census. The Citizenship Act enacted in 1985 was forcefully implemented in 1988. The Citizenship Act enacted in 1985 was forcefully implemented in 1988. The 1958 Citizenship Act became a matter of great controversy and public resentment due to its:-1) retrospective implementation from 1958 thus nullifying all previous decisions on citizenship and 2) suppression of all previous laws and by law by this act. Under this act, 1958 had been decided as the cut off year for grant of Citizenship through registration and all those who could produce

documentary evidence of their presence in 1958 declared as illegal immigrants. Three types of citizenship were prescribed by act: 1) citizenship by birth 2) citizenship by registration and 3) citizenship through naturalization. Contrary to the provision of the previous laws which had mentioned fatherhood as the sole criteria for grant of citizenship the provision that had been extensively used by RGOB to revoke the citizenship of southern Bhutanese are citizenship by birth and registration i.e. article two and three of the 1985 act respectively. With the implementation of the 1985 act through a census in 1988, the RGoB began to categorize southern Bhutanese in seven different types viz.

**Table 1.1: Citizenship Categories in Bhutan**

F1-	Genuine Bhutanese
F2-	Returned Migrants (those who left Bhutan and returned).
F3-	Dropouts (those not available during the time of census).
F4-	A non-national woman married to a Bhutanese man.
F5-	A non-national man married to a Bhutanese woman.
F6-	Adoption case (children legally adopted).
F7-	Non-national (migrants and illegal settlers).

*Source: BREP, 2007*

To quote the law, "A person whose parents are both citizen of Bhutan shall be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan by birth". In other words, a person who's either parent is a non-citizen now would be declared as a non-citizen. Since, the act had been given a retrospective implementation from 1958 all children born to such parents during 1958 to 1988 were declared as non-citizen. In sharp contrast to the provision to 1958 national law of Bhutan this act (1985 Citizenship Act) prescribed 1958 as the cut off year to decide on Citizenship through registration. To quote the act "A person permanently domiciled in Bhutan on or before 31st Dec. 1958 and whose name is registered in the census register maintained by the ministry of home affairs shall be deemed to be a citizen of Bhutan by registration. In other words, all those who were granted Citizenship by the local authorities in exercise of the power in the 1958 law even after 1958 were declared as illegal immigrants. The national assembly of Bhutan during its 19th session held on May 23, 1963, had expressed its concern to enumerate all southern Bhutanese in the national census. The resolution number 26 of the above



session mentioned, "It was noticed that the Nepali residing in southern Bhutan were not enlisted in the government system". It was decided to enlist them after conduction the census of southern Bhutan and submitted the same to the government. A reliable census had been carried out only in 1980-1981 after the establishment of the department of registration in late seventies. Citizenship by naturalization included aliens and children born to parents either of which was a non-citizen. The act stated "The person must have attend the age of 21 years and 15 years in the case of the person whose either parent is a citizen of Bhutan, the person must have resided in Bhutan for 15 years in the case of government employees and also in the case of applicants, either of whose parent is a citizen of Bhutan and 20 years in all other cases, and their period of residence must be registered in the records of the department of registration. This provision contradicted the earlier provisions of 1958 and 1977 citizenship law, which had prescribed automatic assumptions of Bhutanese citizenship by a child born to a Bhutanese father irrespective of the citizenship of mother (INHURED, 1993).

## **2.2 Socio-Political Context of Being Bhutanese Refugees**

In 1990, tens of thousands of Lhotshampas – Nepali-speaking minority groups from Bhutan’s southern regions fled from Bhutan in the face of discrimination and forced displacement. After crossing through India, they sought refuge in Nepal. Today, more than 107,000 Lhotshampas live in 7 refugee camps in Nepal’s eastern Jhapa and Morang districts, where they have remained in legal limbo, claimed as citizens by neither Bhutan nor Nepal. (Banki, Susan 2008)

The different ethnic and caste groups may appear as the centrifugal force which can also be integrated by the state's ideas in the national mainstream but the Bhutanese government chose the oppressive policy towards the Lhotshampas. (Datta-Ray, 1984)

The government of Bhutan in order to preserve the Buddhist tradition and culture, proposed the policy of “Driglam Namza”. Driglam Namza is a type of religions, cultural indoctrination based on Buddhism, which directly interferes with one's personal rights. And, when the policy of “One Nation One People” was implemented, the southern Bhutanese had to face many problems. (*van Driem, 1993*).

The southern region of Bhutan is the homeland of the people of Nepali ethnicity who constitute around 50% of the total population. This group largely of Indo-Aryan stock speaks Nepali and practice Hinduism, whereas the Drukpa rulers claim the southern Bhutanese of Nepali ethnicity to be recent settlers or economic migrants. (Dhakal and Strawn, 1994). In fact, there are two major groups of Bhutanese refugees in the camps of Nepal; the first group is being resettled and the second group is politically struggling for repatriation.

**Repatriation of Refugees:** While many refugee repatriations have run their course without problems and have resulted in a total return of all refugees and their subsequent effective reintegration into their home regions, in other cases, repatriations have turned out to be a most difficult and problematic durable solution to implement. There have been instances where not all refugees have been willing to return; where a home government has been less than welcoming; where a host government has been too forceful in encouraging return; where there has been limited assistance to returnees creating difficulties in reintegration; and there have been cases where, after long periods in exile, returnees have encountered many and complex problems in re-establishing themselves their traditional areas and societies. The office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has conceded that repatriation is a most difficult durable solution to implement and that exception than the rule. There is therefore, much scope for each on repatriation so as to create a better preparedness in the planning and implementation of return movements when circumstances permit (Chimni, 2004).

**Resettlement:** Resettlement is geared to the special needs of an individual whose life, liberty, health or fundamental human rights are in jeopardy in the country where he or she first sought asylum. It is a highly complex, organized process that involves identifying those in urgent need and finding a suitable country prepared to accept them. People eligible for resettlement include those who are essentially protection cases-refugees threatened with revilement to their country of origin and people in physical danger in their country of asylum. Resettlement is also used for 'vulnerable groups', such as torture and rape victims, the disabled and other injured or severely traumatized people in need of specialized treatment unavailable in their first country asylum, and for 'long-stagers' for whom no reunite refugee families who, through no fault of their own, find themselves divided by borders or, sometimes, by entire

continents. At first sight, history and terminology appears to have been conspiring to kill off resettlement, which has long been referred to as the 'least preferred solution' and 'the last resort'. In 1980, a total of 267,000 people- 3 percent of the world's refugees-were transported from one asylum country to another, many of them with the help of the intergovernmental committee for migration. The agency, now known as the International Organization for Migration (IMO), is UNHCR's long established partner in resettlement. Through the 1980's the annual number of resettlement cases averaged 122,000 per year. By 1992, however, the number had plummeted to a mere 37,000, or 0.2 percent of the total number of refugees in the world (Rupert, 1993).

### **2.3 Bhutanese Refugees in Context of Nepal**

After 18 years, a lasting solution to the plight of Lhotshampa refugees is now available. In March 2008, over 100 Lhotshampa refugees boarded planes to the U.S., one of several countries that have agreed to resettle this refugee population. Other countries to offer resettlement to the Lhotshampas include New Zealand, Canada, Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Australia. (Banki, 2008)

The seven Bhutanese refugee camps were distributed throughout the Jhapa region of the east Nepali terai, adjoining the foothills of the Himalayas. The climate was hot and humid, with heavy rains in June and July. In spring, the mountain melt water meant that flooding was common. Planning in each camp was very dense, with shelters often less than one meter apart. Fires did occur and were destructive. There was very little violence within the refugee population, and community committees undertook much of the everyday management of the camps. The local population was competing with the refugees for some environmental resources, such as the collection of dead wood for fuel and the supply of bamboo for construction. Relations were relatively good, however, with some local representation in camp management. The sites were all on government forestry department land. Many large saal trees were cut down to provide area for accommodation. Flood protection was required on some sites, but the engineering works undertaken had not proved wholly successful. Construction materials and perishable foodstuffs were sourced regionally, but without sustainable strategies. Locals complained wells near some camps ran dry, as a result of over extraction and 'draw down' near refugee wells. (Shelter Project Organization, 1997: "Bhutanese Refugees, Nepal, 1997")

In close collaboration with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR), the Government of Nepal (GoN) and eight Resettlement Governments, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) facilitates selection missions, conducts medical examination of refugees selected for resettlement as per the protocol of the destination country, conducts cultural orientation for the destination countries, facilitates exit permits and arranges travel for the refugees until their final port of entry. (IOM Nepal - <http://nepal.iom.int/jupgrade/index.php/en/aboutus/18-topic-details/52-third-country-resettlement>)

The first reports of people of Nepalese origin in Bhutan was around 1620, when Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal commissioned a few Newar craftsmen from the Kathmandu valley in Nepal to make a silver stupa to contain the ashes of his father Tempa Nima.[3] Since then, people of Nepalese origin started to settle in uninhabited areas of southern Bhutan.[4] The south soon became the country's main supplier of food. Bhutanese of Nepalese origin, Lhotshampas, were flourishing along with the economy of Bhutan. By 1930, according to British colonial officials, much of the south was under cultivation by a population of Nepali origin that amounted to some 60,000 people. (Wikipedia - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhutanese\\_refugees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhutanese_refugees))

Aryal (undated) states that in Nepal, the arrival of Bhutanese refugees started since 1991. They set up making shift camps and hoped for the situation in Bhutan get worse and the refugees were not permitted to set up permanent camps in India. A small group of refugees crossed into Nepal and establish the first camp by the banks of Mai River in July 1991, which housed only 235 refugees. From August 1991 the influx of refugees increased at the rate of 1000 a month. The flow of refugees leaped in February 1992 to a massive 10,000 per month. From February to March 1992, the refugee population rose to 48,000. It became impossible to manage, many of them died and hundreds suffered from malnutrition and diseases.

A report of Red Cross (1997) has reported that 93,385 refugees are living in seven camps in Jhapa and Morang districts of Nepal and about 15,000 are staying outside the camps.

During the eighth round of bilateral talks in September both governments made some progressive in defining the category of people who would be eligible for return and

reportedly discuss the mechanism for the verification progress. (*Amnesty International report, 2000, p-50*)

In mid-2008, the UNHCR acknowledged the failure of repatriation efforts (Feller, 2008), saying the United Nations had ‘found it impossible’ to broker solutions, so the strategy was to ‘phase out assistance’ and support targeted third-country resettlement as a ‘solution to this problem’. The Bhutanese in Nepal were seen as a ‘priority’ for resettlement.

Situated between the superpowers of India and China, the isolated Buddhist kingdom of Bhutan, hailed by some as ‘the last Shangri-La’, has generated one of the highest numbers of refugees in the world in proportion to its population. From 1991 over one sixth of Bhutan's people sought asylum in Nepal, India and other countries around the world. The vast majority of the refugees are Lhotshampas, one of Bhutan’s three main ethnic groups, who were forced to leave Bhutan in the early 1990s. Since 2008 a resettlement process has seen the majority of those living in the camps re-settled in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Europe. (<http://bhutaneserefugees.com/>)

The Bhutanese issue is not an ethnic issue but a real political issue, which need to be resolved politically. The ethnic colour to a democratic struggle is given by the Bhutanese regime to hide the real issue of human rights and democracy. All the political forces including the Druk National Congress formed by ethnic Drukpa and Sharchoops are demanding human rights, political pluralism, and rule of law and democracy. If the Bhutanese regime is sincere, then, it should allow the democratic forces to function inside Bhutan and call for general elections where every Bhutanese will freely cast his/her vote (PFHRB, 1995).

While the refugees have found safety in Nepal from the threats to their security they faced in Bhutan, the situation in the camps is not sustainable. Against this background many refugees have welcomed the U.S. resettlement offer. Many of the younger generation are overjoyed to be offered the opportunity to start a new life in the U.S., while many refugee parents are immensely grateful that they can finally allow themselves to have some real hopes for their children's future. (Human Rights Watch - <https://www.hrw.org/report/2007/05/16/last-hope/need-durable-solutions-bhutanese-refugees-nepal-and-india>, 16 May 2007)

**Table 2.1: Departure Statistics of Bhutanese Refugees: Jan 2007 to Nov 2017  
– By Country**

<b>Destination Countries</b>	<b>Departures</b>
United States	94715
Australia	6752
Canada	6813
Denmark	878
Netherlands	333
New Zealand	1090
Norway	570
United Kingdom	358
<b>Total--&gt;</b>	<b>111509</b>

*Note: International Organization for Migration (IOM), Departure Monthly Report for November 2017*

**Table 2.2: Departure Statistics of Bhutanese Refugees: Jan 2007 to Nov 2017  
– By Year**

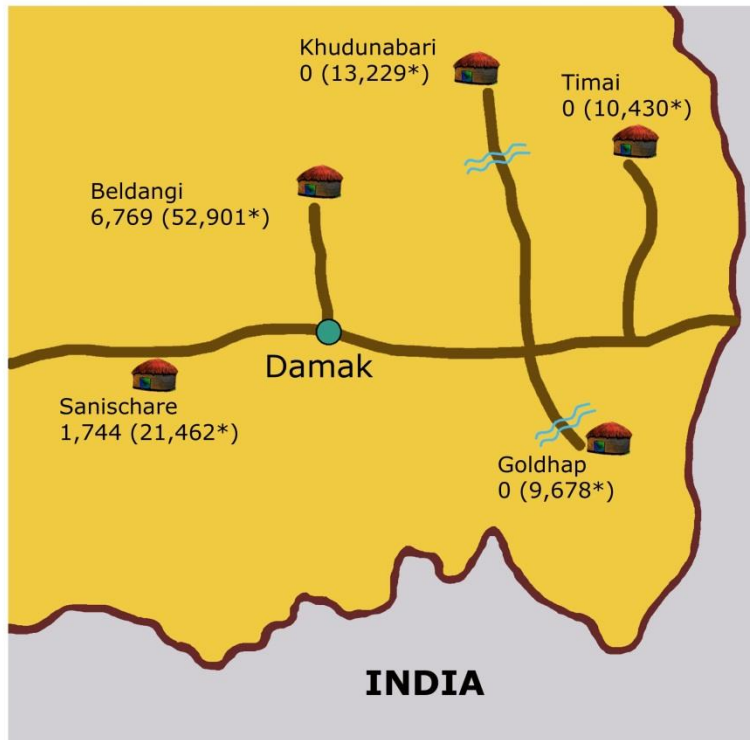
<b>Years</b>	<b>Departures</b>
2007	2
2008	8,152
2009	17,438
2010	14,812
2011	18,124
2012	16,733
2013	10,807
2014	8,583
2015	6,570
2016	6,738
2017	3,550
<b>Total--&gt;</b>	<b>111,509</b>

*Note: International Organization for Migration (IOM), Departure Monthly Report for November 2017*

# Bhutanese Refugee Camps in Nepal

Stats as of 31 Oct 2017

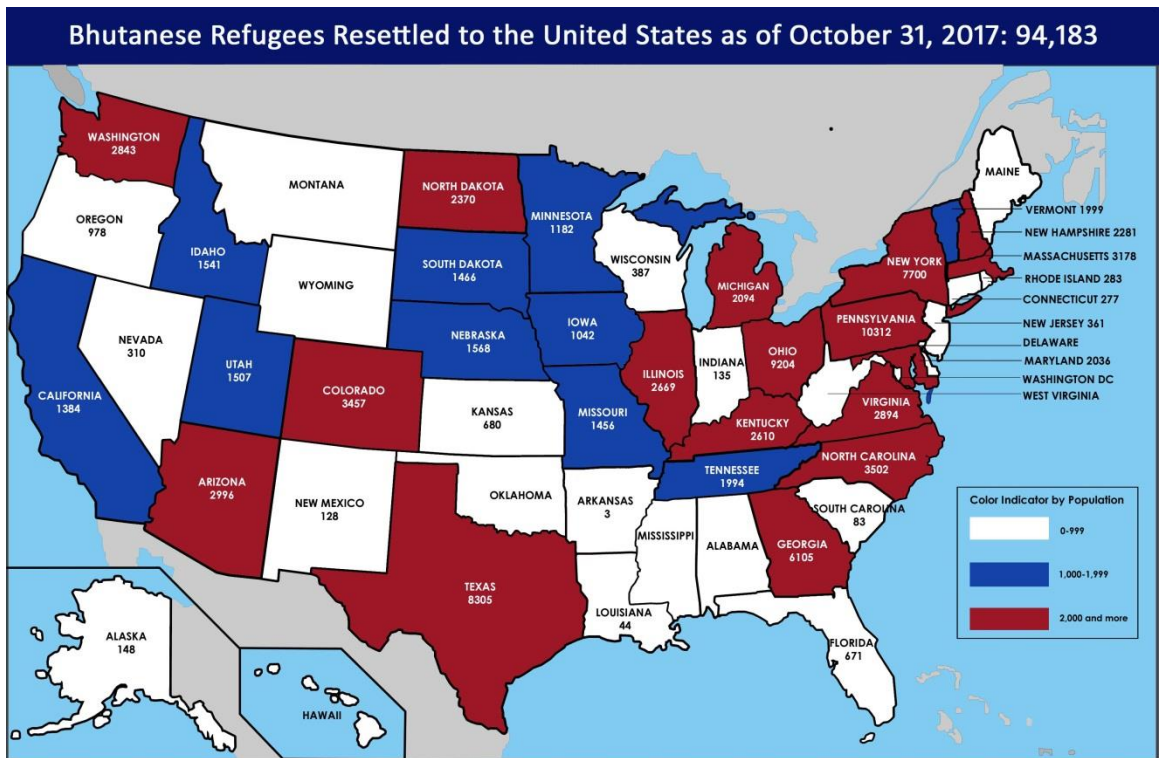
\*Original population in 2007



## Damak to:

- Beldangi Camp: 08 Kms/20 Mins
- Sanischare Camp: 17 Kms/30 Mins
- Goldhap Camp: 42 Kms/60 Mins
- Khudunabari Camp: 50 Kms/75 Mins
- Timai Camp: 61 Kms/90 Mins

Map 2.1: Refugee population in the camps as of 31 Oct 2017 (Source: IOM, Nepal)



Map 2.2: Bhutanese Refugees in the US as of 31 Oct 2017 (Source: IOM, Nepal)

## **2.4 Socio-Economic Relations between the Refugees and Local Community**

The social and economic relationship between Bhutanese refugees and local people is widely studied by different scholars from different angles. Some scholars examine from competitive relationship between refugees and local people (*New Era, 1993; Rai 1997; Giri, 1996; Oli 2002*).

Oli (2002) has observed that the presence of the large number of the Bhutanese refugees in Jhapa and Morang district has been negatively affecting the host communities. Theft, prostitution, alcoholism, misunderstanding, conflict gambling and robbery have become the major social problems.

New Era (1993) has analyzed that the local people living in the vicinity of the refugee camps have been negatively affected. Local women have difficulty to go to the forest alone. Now they feel that if they go alone, they may be robbed or even sexually harassed.

Similarly, some studies point out that the resettlement of Bhutanese refugees has brought some positive impact to the local communities and society. For example UNHCR (2005) report stated living condition of the adjacent local population have been improved by buildings, roads, river embankment, bridges, village health post and schools.

Himal Khabarpatrika (2013) reported that daily remittance from the refugees have exceeded NRs.70, 00,000 per day extended to the refugees living in Nepal. Most of the remittance amount is invested in Damak market. Nevertheless, daily consumption of 300 kilograms of chicken meat is normal in those areas.

A recent study undertaken by the Government of Australia (2011) lists some positive impacts of refugees to the host country. Migration and the intake of refugees can diversify and enhance the skill level of the population, increase economies of scale and foster innovation and flexibility.

The Bhutanese refugees first entered Nepal at the end of 1990. Temporary camps were established on the banks on the Mai River. Disease and squalor were rife. UNHCR began providing ad-hoc assistance to Bhutanese asylum seekers in February



1991. By September 1991, there were approximately 5,000 refugees when His Majesty's Government of Nepal (HMG-N) formally requested UNHCR to co-ordinate all emergency assistance for the Bhutanese refugees. UNHCR, the World Food Program (WFP) and several Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) launched a major program in the early part of 1992. WFP, UNHCR and partners provide food, water, shelter, health, education, protection and other 'non-food' items. The established health and nutrition indicators suggest that the assistance has been adequate and, in fact, exceeds the national standards for Nepali citizens. The seven Bhutanese refugee camps are located throughout the Jhapa region of the east Nepali terai (sub-tropical lowlands), adjoining the foothills of the Himalayas. The climate is hot and humid, with heavy rains in June and July. In spring, the mountain melt water means that flooding is common. The structural layout in each camp is very dense, with shelters often less than one meter apart. Fires occur frequently and can be very destructive. There is little violence within the refugee population, and community committees undertake much of the everyday management of the camps. Refugees and the local population compete for some environmental resources, such as the collection of dead wood for fuel and the supply of bamboo for construction. Relations are relatively good, however, with some locals taking part in camp management. The sites are all located on government forestry department land. Many large saal trees were cut down to provide space for the building of huts. Flood protection was required on some sites, but the engineering works undertaken have not proved wholly successful. Construction materials and perishable foodstuffs are sourced regionally, but without sustainable strategies. Locals have complained that wells near some camps have run dry, as a result of over-extraction and 'draw down' near refugee wells. (Bhutanese Refugees Online Report – <http://bhutanese-refugees.com/new-page/>)

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Rationale for Site Selection of the Study**

Bhutanese Refugee Camp in Sanishchare of Morang district is one of the two camps that exist in eastern Nepal at present. Previously in 2007, the eastern Nepal had five refugee camps – in Goldhap, Timai, Khudunabari and Beldangi of Jhapa district, and Sanishchare of Morang district. Originally, in 2007, the total refugee population was 21,462. However, by 31 Oct 2017, the population fell down to 1,744 (according to IOM – The UN Migration Agency, Oct 2017). Sanishchare refugee camp covers a large area, and therefore it creates more impact on local community from economic, social and environmental point of view.

The close quarter with a refugee camp creates lot of effects on the surrounding community which we shall deal with in greater detail in the upcoming chapters. The major objective of this research is to identify the effects of the refugee settlement on the neighboring areas. The camp still has hundreds of refugees, so it was chosen as an area of study. The area was suitable for me to examine the impacts of refugees to the local community because they are generally engaged in some kind of economic activities in the surrounding villages. The socio-economic impact of the Bhutanese refugees on the local community was quite an interesting subject to work on, and the site gives good opportunity for the research.

#### **3.2. Research Design**

We know, a research design is the set of methods and procedures used; and it is also the framework that has been created to find answers to research questions. Exploratory research design was opted to investigate about the impacts of refugees on the local community from socio-economic point of view.

It was also a descriptive study because the researcher describes the socio-demographic, as well as economic data to relate them with impact of Bhutanese Refugee to the local people and society.

### **3.3 Nature and Source of Data**

The nature of data of this study was qualitative and quantitative. Data were gathered from primary and secondary sources.

The primary data were collected directly from field work by using observation, interview and survey with the local community, and secondary data were collected from various published and unpublished information sources available in different libraries, information and documentation centers at the government and non-government organization. In addition, information was also gathered from published and unpublished reports.

### **3.4 Sampling Procedure**

Sanishchare Refugee Camp is located in ward no. 10 of Pathari-Sanishchare Municipality of Morang district. For the universe ward no. 10, there are 748 households and population of 3,284 comprising 1,431 males and 1,853 females, according to Central Bureau of Statistics citing National Population Census (NPC) 2011. However, it is important to note that the present ward no. 10 was previously ward no. 8, during NPC 2011. The researcher had selected around 10% of the total households (80 households) for the sample size by means of simple random sampling as the impact of the refugees was determined to be homogeneous throughout all parts of the universe ward no. 10. Also, it would have been more tough and challenging to cover larger size of respondents. The people of this area are mostly interactive with refugees all the time. The universe Ward No. 10 is inhabited by different religion followers, caste and ethnic groups such as Brahmin, Chhetri, Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Dhimal, Newar and Magar. It was not that difficult to find willing respondents. I sought local farmers, teachers, reporter and other members of the community to interview them on the research matter.

Pathari-Sanishchare Municipality was formed by merging two existing village development committees i.e. Pathari and Sanishchare in May 2014. This municipality is a well-developed area with many facilities that include health care, communication, education, etc. Presently, Pathari-Sanishchare Municipality consists of 17 wards. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pathari-Sanishchare\\_Municipality](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pathari-Sanishchare_Municipality))

### **3.5 Data Collection Techniques and Tools**

Techniques and tools like field visit and observation, household survey, key informants interview and focused group discussion were used. Thus, as a social research, the various sociological tools and techniques were used to collect the data during the field work, which can be discussed briefly as below.

#### **3.5.1 Field Visit and Observation**

During the field visit, lots of interaction was conducted with local people and their activities were observed to understand the impact of refugee camps. Most of the qualitative information was collected through observation during the field visit. Interaction between refugees and local people, social activities of both refugees and community people, situation of sanitation, health and environment, habits of alcoholism, gambling, and fighting, economic condition were observed. I also observed the economic activities of the refugee out the camp especially in local communities.

#### **3.5.2 Household Survey**

Questionnaire was used to obtain the data of refugees' impact on local communities. Household survey was conducted by using structural question sheet. They were used to collect some personal identification like population structure i.e. age, sex, occupation, literacy rate and various impacts of refugee like social, environmental, economic, forest degradation, health and sanitation and life standard both in community and refugees camp by asking them both close-ended and open-ended questions.

#### **3.5.3 Key Informants Interview**

General discussions were conducted with knowledgeable people of the community. During the course of the study, I took the interview of 80 people that include both male and female. Out of them, 36 were farmers, 17 were students, 3 were teachers, 7 were job holders in the service sector, 12 had their own business venture, 1 was media reporter and 4 were from the laborer group. I used both structured and unstructured interviews to collect the required information.

### **3.5.4 Focused Group Discussion**

Focused group discussions were conducted with the local people. The topics discussed with local people were points on the impacts of refugee on their natural resource, social activities economic condition, health, sanitation market price. In total 2 group meetings were held inside the community with group size 22 and 21 respectively. A total of 24 female and 19 male were involved in the focused group discussion. Mainly, 6-11 people were considered best for the social discussions. The meetings were short because many attendees had to leave for jobs and some household activities.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

The data were processed through tabulation and charts. The data processing and analyzing were done manually after collecting primary and secondary data. Basically qualitative data were analyzed and interpreted descriptively. The quantitative data were processed and analyzed by relevant tabulation and charts.

## CHAPTER IV

### STUDY AREA DESCRIPTION

#### 4.1 Study Location and Local Community

Sanishchare village lies in the mid-eastern part of Morang district. It is located in between two famous towns of Morang district, Urlabari in the east and Biratchowk in the west. The camp is also near to Itahari bazaar of Sunsari district. The refugee camp of Sanishchare is adjoining to the Pathari bazaar along the east-west highway of Morang district.

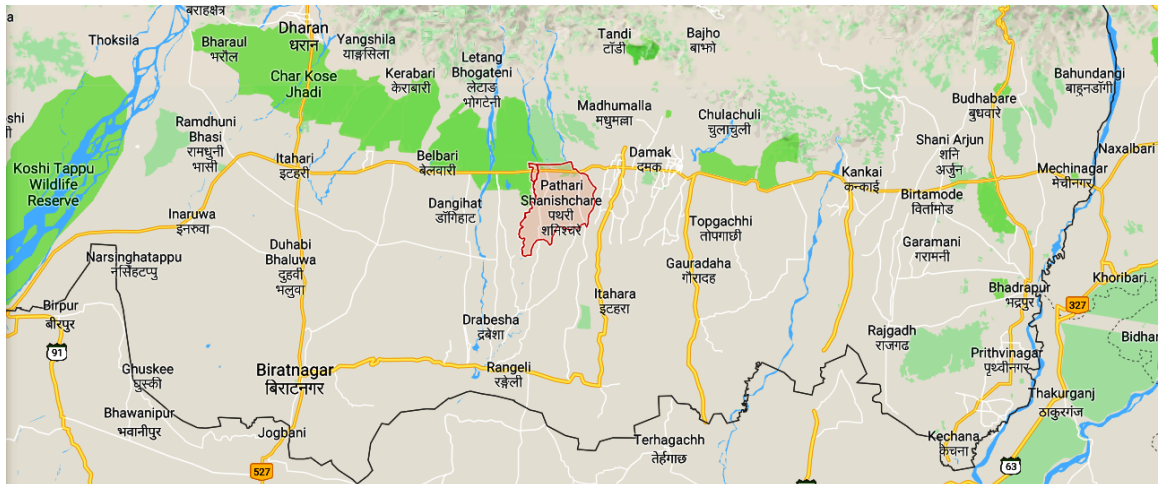
Geographically, the village is located in the Terai plain, but very close to the Chure hills. The camp is specifically located in the area of Chaarkoshe Jhaadi, which was covered with thick forest of sissou and Shorea robusta species, as well as other small bushes before the arrival of the refugees as said by the local people. Local people used to graze the cattle, collect firewood and grass from the jungle in the past, as well as at present.

Nepal government allowed establishment of the Sanishchare Refugee Camp in 1992 A.D. The camp was established by encroachment of the Chaarkoshe Jhaadi against the local peoples' objection towards it. The respondent informed me that after the establishment of the refugee camp at the adjacent of Pathari bazaar, forest is subjected to decrease in regeneration, growing stock, forest yield.

Sanishchare Refugee Camp is just a few meters south to the Mahendra (East-West) Highway and a few meters west to the Pathari bazaar. The total population of Sanishchare Refugee Camp as of 31 October 2017 is 1,744 (IOM, Oct 2017). This added to the 49,808 total population (according to the census of 2011) of Pathari-Sanishchare Municipality, after adding up the population of the two VDCs – Pathari and Sanishchare, makes more than half a lakh residents in an area intended for much lesser inhabitants.

More the population means more the dynamic will be various aspects of the community – socially, politically, economically and culturally. The growing

population may really increase economic competition, as well as over exploitation of environment which I will discuss in chapter five.



**Map 4.1: Pathari-Sanishchare village in google map**

## 4.2 Socio-Economic Characteristics of Local People

The population of Sanishchare is composed by different ethnic groups like Brahman, Chhetri, Newar, Rai, Limbu, Dhimal, Kumal, Bhujel and Tamang. Different occupations like agriculture, government service, business and labor work is occupied by the people of Sanishchare. The religions followed by the community people are Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim and Kirat (CBS 2011). The following sub-headings look into the categorical distribution of population of Sanishchare village.

### 4.2.1 Ethnicity and Caste of Local People

As I mentioned, there is diversified people living in the village like Brahman, Chhetri, Newar, Rai, Limbu, Dhimal, Kumal, Bhujel and Tamang. Dhimal is considered as the traditional inhabitant of the area. It is understood that caste is any of the hereditary, endogamous social classes or subclasses of traditional Hindu society, stratified according to Hindu ritual purity, especially the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra castes. Whereas, an ethnic group, or an ethnicity, is a category of people who identify with each other based on similarities such as common ancestry, language, society, culture or nation. Ethnicity is usually an inherited status based on the society in which one lives. The following table 4.1 shows the distribution of sample population by caste and ethnic composition.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Ethnicity and Caste**

S.N.	Caste groups	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Brahman	32	40
2	Chhetri	20	25
3	Limbu/Subba	10	12.5
4	Tamang	5	6.25
5	Dhimal	7	8.75
6	Rai	3	3.75
7	Bhujel	2	2.5
8	Kumal	1	1.25
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

The above table clearly shows that the highest percentage of local community comprises entirely of Brahman and Chhetri i.e. 40% and 25% respectively. Sanishchare village is considered the traditional habitat of the Dhimal people. However, the data shows that their population is in minority. This clearly indicates that Bhutanese refugees are not only the new comer for the local people. Before the arrival of these people, the indigenous people felt the impact of other migrants too.

#### **4.2.2 Religion**

Sanishchare village is a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multilingual society. The people have been following different religions in the community. The following table shows and presents the distribution of respondents by religious backgrounds.

**Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents According to Religion**

S.N.	Religion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Hindu	60	75
2	Buddhist	13	16.25
3	Kirat	3	3.75
4	Christian	4	5
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*



It is clearly seen from the table 4.2 that about 75% of total population follows Hindu culture, 16.25% believe in Buddhist, 3.75% in Kirat and 5% in Christian culture. The relationship between religion and how it influences their perception of refugees will be analyzed in chapter five. It is seen that most of the Hindus believed that refugees brought about negative impacts on the society while the religious minorities believed that they also had positive impacts.

### 4.2.3 Education Status

Education makes a difference in one's life and plays a major role in shaping a community. The structure of a community is always based on the level of education of its members. It is a strong tool for development. It was learnt that people with higher level of education believe that there are security issues in the region since the advent of refugees.

**Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents according to Educational Status**

S.N.	Education	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Primary School	33	41.25
2	Secondary School	24	30
3	Intermediate Level	12	15
4	Bachelor's Degree	9	11.25
5	Master's Degree	2	2.5
<b>Total--&gt;</b>		80	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

It is clearly seen in the above table 4.3 that about 41.25% of the local respondents are of primary educational level, 30% are of secondary level, 15% are of intermediate level, 11.25% are of bachelor's level and 2.5% are of master's level. The detailed relationship between education and the difference it makes on how they perceive refugees will be analyzed in chapter five.

### 4.2.4 Primary Occupation

Occupation means any activity that serves as one's regular source of livelihood. It is also understood as a person's regular work or profession; job or principal activity. Some people may also say that occupation is a person's usual or principal work,

especially in earning a living. As per the table 4.4, it is seen that the highest percentage of respondents is farmers and the least is laborers. This could be because, with the arrival of Bhutanese refugees, cheap labor force or manpower had entered Pathari-Sanishchare, and so only fewer local people can find jobs as laborers.

**Table 4.4: Distribution of Respondent According to their Occupation**

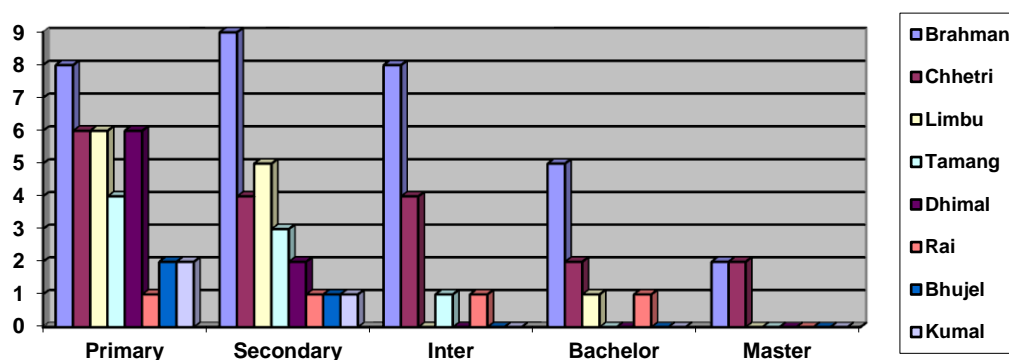
S.N.	Occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Farmer	36	45
2.	Student	17	21.25
3.	Business-person	12	15
4.	Job-holder	7	8.75
5.	Teacher	3	3.75
6.	Media-person	1	1.25
7.	Laborer	4	5
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

Source: Field Survey, 2017

However, irrespective of their occupation, a majority of the respondents believed that refugees have brought about several social impacts in Sanishchare village. The relationship between occupation and the difference it makes on how they perceive refugees will be analyzed in chapter five.

#### 4.2.5. Caste/Ethnicity and Education: Inter-relationship

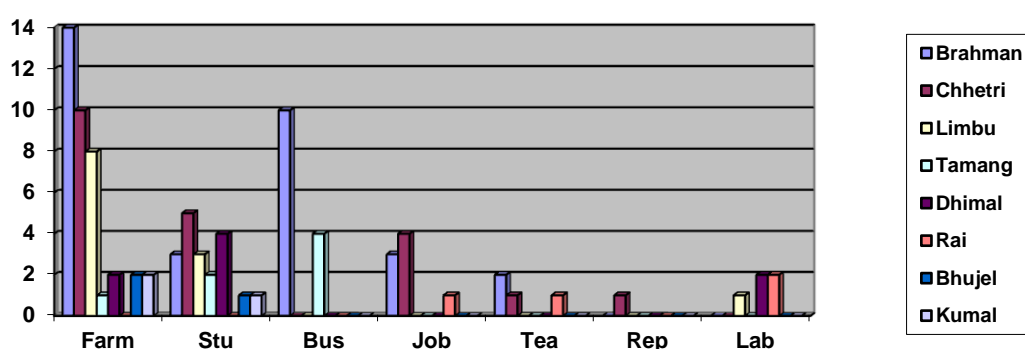
**Chart 4.1: Respondents' Caste/Ethnicity Vs Education**



Above chart 4.1 shows that Brahman and Chhetri caste groups are more educated, up to Bachelor's and Master's degrees. Most of the other minor caste groups are less educated. This is a proof of the fact that caste groups like Brahman and Chhetri place higher value on school based learning while other caste groups are mostly occupational from a lower age.

#### 4.2.6. Caste/Ethnicity and Occupation: Inter-relationship

**Chart 4.2: Respondents' Caste/ Ethnicity Vs Occupation**



In the above chart 4.2, Farm stands for farmers, Stu for students, Bus for business persons, Job for job holders, Tea for teachers, Rep for reporters or media persons and Lab for laborers. It can be seen that a majority of the respondent population is farmers. Even among them, mostly Brahmans are farmers but that can be because Brahman was the major caste group even in the survey. Most Limbus are also farmers. However, the high-ranking occupations such as teacher, media person and office/company job holder are also achieved mostly by Brahmans and Chhetris while most of the indigenous groups can be seen as farmers and laborers.

### 4.3 Agencies Involved in Refugee Assistance Program

#### 4.3.1 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

In Nepal, it has its main office in Maharajgunj, Kathmandu and sub-office in Damak, Jhapa. UNHCR acts as the donor agency and co-ordinates all the protectoral and assistance activities to the refugees at the request of and in close consultation with the Nepal. The Nepal as the counterpart ministry responsible for leasing with UNHCR

has entrusted the home ministry for the implementation and supervision of assistance to Bhutanese refugees in Nepal.

### **4.3.2 World Food Program (WFP)**

In Nepal, its main office is in Patan Dhoka, Lalitpur and the field office in Damak, Jhapa. WFP makes available all food commodities, which are distributed by NRCS. Moreover, WFP is providing fund for supplementary income generation to the refugees through RWF and assisting to the CARITAS Nepal for vocational training activities to the refugees and the people of refugee affected area. Moreover, it has given assistance on the home gardening and nutrition education program in the camp.

### **4.3.3 Caritas Nepal**

Caritas Nepal is a social development/relief organization operating under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church in Nepal as its social arm. It was established in 1990 and is registered as an NGO. Caritas Nepal is a member of Caritas International. Caritas is responsible for running school for refugee children and operation of vocational training. This training contains the training of house wiring, welding, automobile and radio/TV repairing. Many refugee children have been benefitted from this organization in terms of learning and education.

Caritas Nepal tries to spread the love of Caritas by working in solidarity with the poor, downtrodden, marginalized people of Nepal with a mission to empower them to overcome poverty and realize basic human rights and social justice and to provide relief to those suffering from disasters and conflict. The main programme areas of Caritas Nepal currently are: Improving Food Security of Rural Households through Sustainable Agriculture; Building Sustainable Peace; Socio-economic Empowerment; Poverty Alleviation through Cooperatives and Micro Enterprises; Combating Trafficking of Women; Education for Bhutanese Refugee Children; Community Based Disaster Preparedness; Emergency Relief for Disaster Victims, and so on.

### **4.3.4 AMDA Primary Health Care Project (AMDA PHCP)**

AMDA Primary Health Care Project is responsible to manage and provide the health and nutrition services to Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal. AMDA (PHCP) has taken

responsibility of primary health care in camps from January, 2001 as an implementing partner of UNHCR. Mechi Zonal Hospital, Bhadrapur & AMDA Hospital, Damak are being used as its primary referral centers. Drugs and other necessary treatments are provided free of cost to all the needy refugee patients. PHCP provides Nutrition program, safer motherhood and mental health clinical care including 24 hour emergency, health education, sanitation and referral up to tertiary care in Kathmandu. It provides services to refugee patients at the camp in collaboration with other implementing partner of UNHCR. It is working in close coordination/collaboration with the Government of Nepal through District Public Health Office (DPHO) and the UNHCR.

#### **4.3.5 Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS)**

In early part of 1993, Nepal Red Cross Society started expanding its activities with organizing training programs for the refugees with introduction of fire prevention and the afforestation program. NRCS is one of the first organizations to provide services to the refugees when they first started arriving in Nepal. At first the refugees were temporarily settled at the bank of Kankai River of Maidhar, Jhapa. NRCS phased out when LWF moved in as implementing partner of UNHCR to provide necessary assistance to the refugees. NRCS restarted the refugee's assistance program in November 1992 with running ambulance services, distribution of blankets, mosquito nets and clothes for the entire population of the refugees. Funds have been generously contributed by different sister societies and the governments towards the global appeal launched by the ICRC in favor of the Bhutanese refugees at the request and initiation of Nepal Red Cross Society.

After a series of discussions among UNHCR, WFP, NRCS and LWS at various levels, NRCS took over entire distribution activities in all the camps since 1 January 1995. The distribution of kerosene was taken over by the NRCS from UNHCR since 1<sup>st</sup> January 1995. The criterion for kerosene distribution is each person upto 3 members receives one liter each and subsequent increment gets ½ liter per week/person. NRCS is responsible for distribution of food and non-food items, vegetables, and kerosene. It is responsible for fire prevention and fighting program, daily operation of ambulance for medical emergency, environmental protection and afforestation program and home gardening and nutrition education program.

#### **4.3.6 Refugee Affected Areas' Rehabilitation Programme (RAARP)**

RAARP was established with the aim of reducing negative impact and improving difficult relations between the host communities and the refugees. It is estimated that 353,000 host community people are directly and indirectly affected by the major refugee's presence in Nepal. The programme has been instrumental in developing host community villagers and supporting their people.

#### **4.3.7 Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Nepal**

LWF Nepal is one of the first NGOs involved in Bhutanese refugee and continues to play a major role in maintaining the camps and their services in collaboration with UNHCR, the government of Nepal and other implementing NGOs NRCS, SCFUK, CARITAS and OXFAM and the refugees themselves. LWF Nepal is responsible for maintaining basic camp's infrastructures, road and buildings, refugees' shelters, water and sanitation, environmental protection and vehicle maintenance. Australian Lutheran World Services (ALWS) provided financial support in addition to UNHCR funding' (LWF annual report, 1998, p-28)

LWF is responsible for development of infrastructure, shelter, water supply and sanitation in camp. LWF had launched its program in Nepal in 1985. LWF Nepal implements the program through the implementing partners NGOs, CBOs, groups and user committees or LWF is directly involved implementing some of the activities through its field based project office of Jhapa. LWF Nepal country program office is located in Kathmandu and the development program office is in Nepalgunj as the Western Region Center Unit.

The strategic priority of LWF Nepal lies in the area of Nepal development program, empowerment projects, relief and rehabilitation, advocacy and networking, and organization development.

#### **4.3.8 International Organization for Migration (IOM)**

The International Organization for Migration is the world's major organization for migration. IOM works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. IOM offers services and advices to governments and migrants

to promote humane and orderly migration. Established in 1951, it has around 150 member states, 15 states on observer status, 3,000 active projects, 500 field offices and more than 8,000 staffs.

Nepal became a member state of IOM in 2006; after a 10-years-long armed conflict in Nepal came to an end on 21 Nov 2006 with the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Maoist Party and the government. In 2006 itself, IOM opened an office in Kathmandu and in 2007, the Government of Nepal and IOM signed a memorandum of understanding, which led the organization to increase rapidly in size and scope. IOM Nepal has its main office in Baluwatar, Kathmandu and field office in Damak, Jhapa. Notably, till the date, IOM Nepal has helped over one lakh ten thousand Bhutanese refugees to resettle abroad. The third countries for resettlement are United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Australia and New Zealand. Thus, IOM is mainly responsible for refugees' resettlement program to the third countries.

## **CHAPTER V**

# **SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF BHUTANESE REFUGEES ON THE LOCAL COMMUNITY**

The socio-economic and environmental impacts of Bhutanese refugees in the local community are dealt by this chapter. The first part describes about the socio-economic impacts and the second part about the environmental impacts in the context of surrounding villages of Sanishchare Refugee Camp.

### **5.1 Social Impact of Refugee Settlement on the Local Community**

The local people, business, educational institutions, health sectors, companies and agencies have been affected due to the presence of refugees. In the discussion with the local people, they reported that the various different anti-social activities such as burglary, loot, prostitution, rape, illegal trade and unemployment problem have been increasing in Sanishchare village for the past 24 years due to the presence of refugees. In addition to social and economic impacts, villagers also pointed out the several ecological problems such as deforestation and reduction of forest resources like firewood and fodder. The increase in population has added the problem of pollution. The settlement lacks systematic sewerage. Due to this, sewage overflows in the rainy season and spreads in nearby settlements, causing various diseases such as typhoid, diarrhea, jaundice and others visceral diseases to appear in the society. To cure and control such diseases, only the few local health care centers in Pathari-Sanishchare are not enough to provide high level service to local people.

A large number of refugee students are studying in Pathari Multiple Campus of Pathari-Sanishchare Municipality. But, this campus is unable to provide the desks, benches, classrooms and other academic facilities to all its students due to higher number of student admissions than the campus can actually accommodate. Mentioning these reasons, the campus takes the added refugee students as a burden. As a result, the quality of education of this campus is decreasing day by day. From



every angle, the local people of Sanishchare have been bearing many problems created after the arrival and settlement of refugees in Sanishchare Camp.

### **5.1.1 Security Perspectives Before and After Refugee Settlement**

Majority of the Bhutanese refugees had once migrated to Bhutan from Nepal. Therefore, history says that they have Nepali origin. However, at present, they are no more Nepalese because they had already cleaned out their Nepali citizenship. Yet, they have faces similar to Nepalese and languages same as Nepalese do have. The respondents informed me that every night the people of Sanishchare village have been suffering from robbery and so motorcycle, pots, animals and grains are being stolen. And they conclude that these problems of robbery, burglary and theft are being enhanced by the similarity in faces and languages between refugees and local people.

Local people have claimed that the thefts have much increased at Sanishchare village, after arrival of Bhutanese refugees than before. A farmer told me that he stopped grazing his cattle near the jungle after arrival of the Bhutanese refugees. Local people's cows were many times mistreated by Bhutanese refugees because many of the refugees eat beef and added that Nepali people cannot do such kind of sins considering cow as a goddess. The farmer also reported that a leg of a cow was cut off few days ago.

Another farmer reported that crops such as paddy and maize are stolen from the field by the Bhutanese refugees frequently. A respondent mentioned that bicycles, motorcycles, clothes, cattle, household goods are stolen often. These days no one keeps the above mentioned things on the ground floor of the house. They are kept on the first floor, where the thieves have relative difficulty in stealing because the entrance gate of the first floor is properly locked or closed. Further, local people do not dare to go to the jungle alone. Most of the girls and women are looted with their ornaments. It is very difficult to walk alone on the road when it falls dark. Some local people reported that there are more security risks or there is a situation that can put people in danger if the ongoing security situation does not improve. Few of them felt the need of security guards, proper security lights and security cameras in the community. However, there were also few academic persons who argue that Bhutanese people solely cannot be blamed for the reported anti-social activities

because there are involvements of local people as well. It seems that the security situation can be improved by the joint effort of the refugees and the local people. The table 5.1 shows that the local people perceive the security situation of Sanishchare village better before the establishment of Sanishchare Refugee Camp.

**Table 5.1: Distribution of Respondents by their Perception on Security Situation before and after Establishment of Sanishchare Refugee Camp**

Responses on Security	Before Settlement		After Settlement	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Good	51	63.75	15	18.75
Normal	25	31.25	23	28.75
Bad	4	5	42	52.5
<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100	80	100

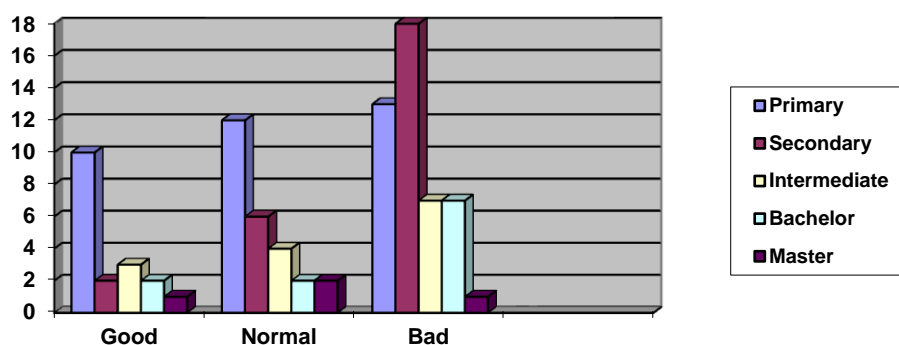
*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

As mentioned before, most of the local community people see a decrease in security status with 52.5% of respondents stating bad security situation after settlement of refugees. Whereas, 63.75% of respondents say that security status was good before refugee arrival at the camp.

I also found that comparative responses on security situation before and after refugee settlement varied from one person to another. Thus, different categories of respondents perceive and report it differently.

The following chart 5.1 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of their education level and their perception on present security situation in Sanishchare village. It is evident that most of the secondary level students believe that with the arrival of Bhutanese refugees, the security situation in Sanishchare village has been going bad. A teacher, who was a Master's degree graduate, stated that since the settlement of the refugees in Sanishchare Refugee Camp, it has become difficult for people to leave valuables such as bicycles, dishes, paddy and other personal belongings unguarded. Yet, there is a small group of people that includes mainly primary level students, who say that the security situation is still good in the community.

**Chart 5.1: Distribution of Respondents on the basis of their Education Level and their Perception on Present Security Situation in the Community**



### 5.1.2 Anti-social Activities after the Establishment of the Refugee Camp

During the field visit and observation period, the respondents told me that anti-social activities are dramatically increasing in the refugee camp and also in the surrounding village since the establishment of refugee camp at Sanishchare. When I asked them about the anti-social activities, they mentioned about burglary, loot, prostitution, rape, bootlegging and illegal trade. The following table 5.2 shows the local responses about the number of anti-social activities in the refugee camp and the surrounding village.

There were several rape cases of local women by Bhutanese refugees. For example, in a discussion with Armed Police Force (APF) in Sanishchare Refugee Camp, it mentioned the several rape cases charged against the Bhutanese refugees residing in the camps. The population of the village is increasing with time. More the population means more the safety and security issues that may eventually affect the existing culture, economy, politics, traditions and the environment.

According to an APF staff, 14 year old Rakshya (name changed) of Sanishchare village, Morang was allegedly raped in July 2017 by a 17 year old Bhutanese refugee boy. Similarly, in September 2017, 18 year old Pratima (name changed) of Pathari bazaar, Morang was allegedly raped by a 34 year old Bhutanese refugee man. These rape cases also show an increase in anti-social activities. There can be many more anti-social activities which were not reported or made public.

**Table 5.2: Distribution of Respondents According to their Perception on Anti-social Activities after the Establishment of Sanishchare Refugee Camp**

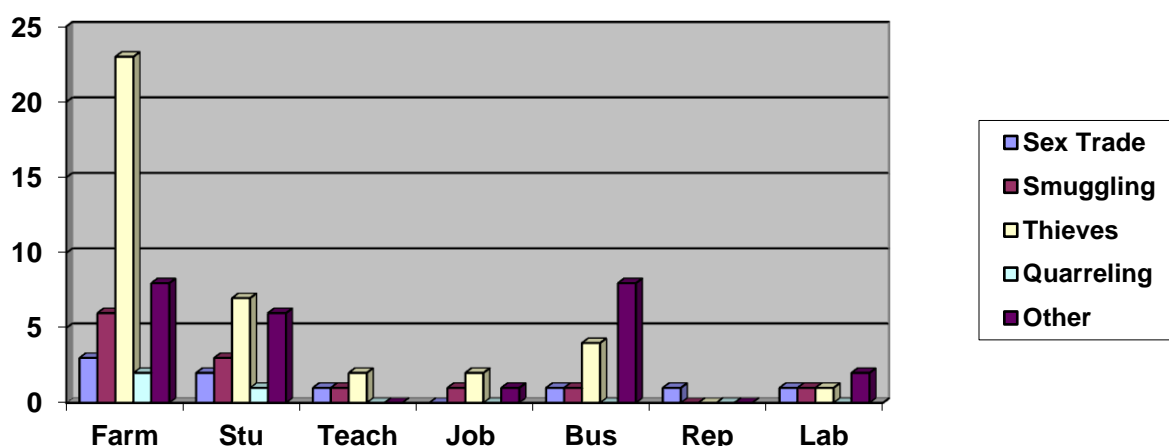
S.N.	Anti-social Activities	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Thieves	35	43.75
2.	Smuggling	11	13.75
3.	Sexual Trade	6	7.5
4.	Quarreling	4	5
5.	Other	24	30
6.	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

Most of the local people told me that anti-social activities are increasing in Sanishchare village and its surrounding area after the settlement of Bhutanese refugees in the camp. However, I found that different categories of respondents perceive the degree of anti-social activities differently. I also learnt that local people are aware of such activities and they know that anti-social behavior is violent or harmful to other people or shows that one does not care about other people. Some local people said that the increasing anti-social activities in the camp and the surrounding village are worsening the harmony and relationship between the refugees and the local community. They also suggest that the NGOs and INGOs should take care of these issues in time and contribute in making the camps and the locality free of the anti-social activities. Otherwise, there are chances that the local community, in the long run, will lose all its values and glories and the existing as well as upcoming generations will have to face the bitter experiences regarding their community.

The following chart 5.2 shows the distribution of respondents on the basis of their occupation and their perception on anti-social activities of Bhutanese refugees. A majority of the respondents, despite their occupation believe that sex trade and quarreling have not increased by a great percentage as can be interpreted through the following chart 5.2. A single teacher respondent stated that sex-trade had increased in the community. Some respondents also highlighted that other problems such as gambling, alcoholism and vandalism have increased in the community. Highest percentage of farmers believes that thieves have increased since the refugees came to the camp.

**Chart 5.2: Distribution of Respondents according to their Occupation and their Perception on Anti-social Activities of Bhutanese Refugees**



### 5.1.2.1. Increased Prostitution

Out of total 85 respondents, 45 claimed that prostitution was another growing problem at Pathari-Sanishchare. Prostitution is the business or practice of engaging in sexual activity in exchange for payment. Prostitution is sometimes described as commercial sex or hooking. A local teacher told me that a large number of young refugee girls have no jobs. They have plenty of time and desire to wear good clothes, cosmetics and watch movies. However, these things are not provided by the agencies to them. It is difficult for them to purchase these things and to watch cinema. Thus, they are engaged in the prostitution, which assist their necessities.

A local farmer residing near the Sanishchare camp told me that many men from different parts of Jhapa and Morang districts visit the camp for fulfillment of their sexual desire. An old woman of Pathari bazaar said that some pairs of boys and girls are noticed entering a nearby jungle just to engage in sexual activities even in the daytime.

During my study, I asked the respondents about their responses on the increment of prostitution at present based on their experience. The table presents the responses about the situation of prostitution in their locality after the establishment of Bhutanese refugee camp.

**Table 5.3: Distribution of Respondents According to Their Response on the Basis of Increment of Prostitution in Locality**

S.N.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Yes	42	52.5
2	No	21	26.25
3	Don't Know	17	21.25
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

The table 5.3 clearly shows that majority of the respondents, i.e. 52.5% mentioned that prostitution is increasing in the community. Also, 21 of them (26.25%) said ‘no increment’ and 17 of them (21.25%) stated that they have no idea about it.

### **5.1.2.2. Increased Gambling**

In the field observation, I found that Bhutanese refugee people have lots of leisure. That means they have not much work inside the camp. Thus, they are mostly engaged in visiting markets and playing cards with the local people. The refugees as well as local children that surround them to watch their gambling are imitating their bad habits. I also happened to see such events many a times in the market as well as in the camp. However, the local people told me that gambling is really increasing in their surroundings after the establishment of the refugee camp in their village. A respondent told me that it is really difficult to save the local children and students from gambling as they are exposed to it as an enjoyable pastime from an early age.

A local woman, however, stated that even much before the refugees arrived in Sanishchare; there were many unemployed young people who would waste their days gambling around her field. So, she believed that it is a deep rooted social evil that has nothing to do with the influence of refugees.

### **5.1.2.3 Increment of Theft/Stealing Events**

The respondents, in the study area, reported that the events of stealing and robbery are increasing in the locality. A local shopkeeper told me that it has become difficult to keep household utensils, bicycles and other valuables in the open areas of their shops and residences as they are likely to get stolen. A farmer complained that his bicycle

went missing from his home one day in the afternoon when his family was out in the field. He also stated that before refugees resided in Sanishchare refugee camp, there were very rare cases of theft and robbery in the village.

**Table 5.4: Distribution of Respondent According to Their Response about the Increment of Theft/Stealing events in the Community**

S.N.	Response	No. of respondent	Percentage
1	Yes	51	63.75
2	No	25	31.25
3	Don't Know	4	5
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

The table 5.4 shows the response of the respondents on the increment of theft/stealing events in the community. Out of 80 respondents, 51(i.e. 63.75%) respondents expressed that the theft/stealing events are regularly increasing in the community. However, 25 of them (31.25%) said 'no increment'. But, 4 of them (5%) said that they do not have idea about it.

#### **5.1.2.4 Increment of Alcoholism in the Community**

The study and observation show that Bhutanese refugees have a lot of free time and are hence drawn towards social evils such as alcoholism. With the increasing consumption and demand of alcohol, its local production and sale are also increasing in the community. The following table 5.5 shows the different responses of the respondents about the increment of alcoholism in the local community.

**Table 5.5: Distribution of Respondents According to their Responses about the Increment of Alcoholism in the Community**

S.N.	Response	No. of respondent	Percentage
1	Yes	54	67.5
2	No	19	23.75
3	Don't Know	7	8.75
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

The table 5.5 shows that 67.50% respondents agreed that the habit of alcohol consumption is increasing in the local community. However, 19 of them (23.75%) mentioned that the habit of alcohol consumption of the people in the community has not increased and 7 of them (8.75%) stated that they had no idea about it. An owner of a local alcohol shop stated that most of the people who come to her shop to buy various kinds of alcohol are from the refugee camp.

However, a local teacher reported that the over consumption of alcohol has been observed in the community since the time before the arrival of Bhutanese refugees, and therefore only the Bhutanese refugees cannot be blamed for the increment of alcoholism in the community.

Various negative impacts of refugee settlement on the local community have been analyzed. However, as we discussed in the previous chapters, specifically in the literature review, we have several positive impacts as well. For instance, as briefed in Chapter 4, AMDA health project was established specially as a Primary Health Care Program for the refugees, but this program is also facilitating the local people regarding their health care. Similarly, water conservation project also seems beneficial for the local community. A local college teacher accepted with gratefulness that expansion of shops, hotels and restaurants has been experienced since the settlement of Bhutanese refugees in Sanishchare camp.

## **5.2 Economic Impact of Refugee Settlement on Local Community**

### **5.2.1 Support to Agricultural Activities after Arrival of Refugees**

Majority of villagers of Sanishchare are depending on agriculture for their livelihood. They cultivate paddy, maize, rice, wheat and other cereals which demand more labor during the time of plantation, harvesting and threshing. Local people say that Bhutanese refugees are supporting them by providing the labor manpower. During the field survey, I also observed that many Bhutanese refugees were harvesting or threshing the paddy in the field of local farmers.

I approached 80 local people regarding them as my respondents, and asked their perception about the involvement of refugees in various economic sectors like agriculture, livestock keeping, markets, etc. Majority of respondents, i.e. 36 of them



(45%), said that most of the refugees from Sanishchare camp are involved in agriculture field work. But, 20% of the respondents said that most of the refugees are engaged in livestock keeping; however, 15% mentioned market for production, 13.75% mentioned post-harvest work and 6.25% mentioned other economic activities like plumbing, house construction, teaching, etc. This study is presented in table 5.6.

**Table 5.6: Distribution of Respondents According to their Perception on Refugee Involvement in Various Economic Activities**

S.N.	Involvement of Refugees	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Agriculture field work	36	45
2	Livestock keeping	16	20
3	Market for production	12	15
4	Post-harvest work	11	13.75
5	Others	5	6.25
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

During the field survey, I got to learn that local farmers of Sanishchare are glad to have many skillful refugees and relatively cheap refugee manpower mostly after the arrival of refugees. Thus, the local farmers are motivated in agriculture and are successful to have increased productions.

### **5.2.2 Increased Competition on Economic Niches**

The Pathari-Sanishchare people are severely affected by negative economic impacts due to the influx of Bhutanese refugees. The refugees affect most of the farmers and wage laborers. There are not any rules and regulations and strictness for Bhutanese refugees. They can do whatever sort of work they like, and it is difficult to distinguish between a local person and a Bhutanese refugee due to the same or at least similar costumes, languages, castes, appearances, culture and traditions. The refugees are capable of doing various sort of work and they agree to do at cheaper rate. So, the employers prefer to call the refugees at work, rather than local laborers. This has caused the unemployment problem among the local working class people in Pathari-Sanishchare.

During my recent field study, I learnt that wage rates of refugees and local laborers are different. Most commonly, as a daily wage, a Bhutanese refugee is paid NRs 450 to 550, but a local laborer demands NRs 600 to 700. Therefore, refugee labor cost is pretty cheap and so local employers prefer to hire refugees at work.

During my field visit, I observed many groups of Bhutanese refugees working in farms of local people. In addition to agricultural sectors, they are working in many other sectors like construction of roads and buildings, teaching in private boarding schools, pulling rickshaws, plumbing and working as electricians. This clearly indicates that there is a great competition between local people and the Bhutanese refugees in terms of economic opportunities available in Sanishchare.

Bhutanese refugees have been provided food commodities by UN agencies but local laborers have to buy everything on their own for their livelihood. Thus, the poor local laborers have to compete with the foreigners (refugees) and struggle hard to get their hands to mouth sources and are going through difficult times in their own land. If this problem is not seriously acknowledged and properly addressed, it might contribute to some misunderstandings and unwanted incidents between the local people and the refugees.

Similarly, refugee technicians such as plumbers, electricians, drivers, building construction laborers, etc. are displacing local technician people as the employers have the chance to hire refugees at relatively low cost. Similarly, private boarding schools also prefer to hire refugee teachers providing them with less salary. Unlike government schools and colleges, the private schools do not ask refugee teachers for citizenship cards and so it is easy for educated refugees to get recruited as teachers.

A local woman was reporting me that price hike on daily commodities is being a major problem in Sanishchare village since the arrival of refugees in the camp. The influx of refugees caused the over population in the small market area. So, demand of daily commodities is remarkably high than the production of the items. This in turn is causing the high market price of daily consumable goods like vegetables, milk, curd, butter, fruits, meat and firewood. This issue is badly affecting especially the local poor people who are struggling to live their life.

### 5.2.3 Responses of Local People Regarding the Involvement of Bhutanese Refugees in Local Economic Activities

When I asked to the respondents about their perceptions on the involvement of Bhutanese refugees on local economic activities like agriculture, teaching at schools and construction of roads and houses, I heard diverse responses from them. Some respondents took it positively and some respondents negatively, and some respondents did not give the responses saying that they have no idea about it. Table 5.7 shows the responses heard from the studied sample population.

**Table 5.7: Distribution of Respondents According to their Perceptions about the Impact of Refugee Involvement in Local Economic Activities**

S.N.	Impacts	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Negative	42	52.5
2	Positive	27	33.75
3	Neutral	7	8.75
4	Don't Know/Can't Say	4	5
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

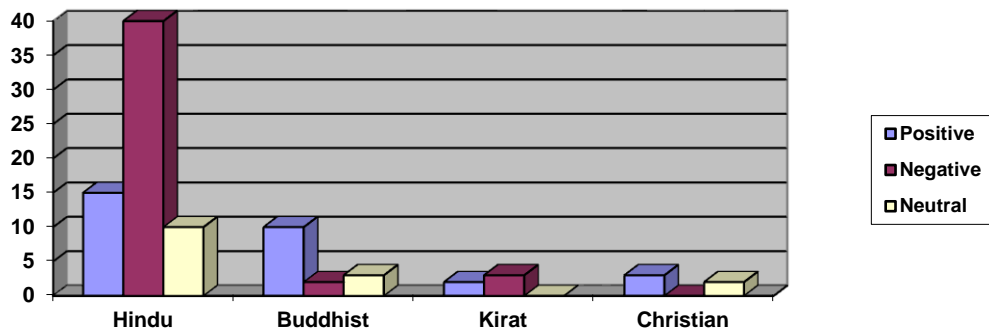
*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

The table 5.7 shows that 52.5% of the total respondents are negative regarding the impact of refugee involvement in local economic activities. Human activities which are performed in exchange for money or money's worth are called economic activities. The majority of local people say that many of the local workers and laborers are deprived of employment opportunities as the employers prefer to hire refugees at work with less daily wage. Yet, 33.75% of sampled respondents have positive feeling about the impact of refugee involvement in local economic activities. They say that workers and laborers are easy to find and labor cost is relatively low after the arrival of mass of refugees in Sanishchare camp. However, 8.75% of respondents told me that they are neutral on this and believe that the impact of refugee involvement is neither positive nor negative. There are 5% of the respondents, who say that they have no idea about the impact of refugee involvement. In brief, we learn from this table that majority of the local people feel that the impact of refugee involvement is negative. But at the same time, we find in the table that there are some

local community people who believe that there are also positive impacts of Bhutanese refugee involvement in local economic activities.

Most of the local community people perceive that competition for work opportunity is increasing after the settlement of Bhutanese refugees in Sanishchare camp. Chart 5.3 shows the distribution of respondents from various religious groups on the basis of their perception (positive, negative or neutral) about the level of competition for work opportunity after the refugee influx.

**Chart 5.3: Various Religion Respondents and their Perception on the Level of Competition for Work Opportunity after the Refugee Influx**



In the chart 5.3, it is seen that most of the Hindus say that the Bhutanese refugees have negative effect on the occupational status. A Hindu local woman reported that Bhutanese refugees have been recruited as teachers in many private boarding schools displacing the educated local young men and women. This has, in turn, is enhancing the unhealthy competition in teaching profession. She also mentioned that a group of Bhutanese refugees are working as wage laborers at cheaper rate and making the local labor class people deprived of life sustaining opportunities. However, most of the religious minority people such as Buddhists, Kirats and Christians believe that the refugees have also positive impact as the increasing competition for work opportunity is providing the workers and laborers at cheaper rates or low cost.

### **5.3. Environmental Impact of Refugee Settlement on Local Community**

During my field visit, the local people of Sanishchare village reported that there are various environmental impacts following the settlement of Bhutanese refugees in the

camp. The local community claims that the wells, tube-wells, agricultural and non-agricultural land are drying up day by day due to the deep boreholes of drinking water supply for refugees. They say that their agricultural production is decreasing due to the declining of water resources. They blame that the cause of dryness is deep boreholes in the Sanishchare refugee camp.

A local man said that he used to grow onion, garlic, tomatoes, lettuce and coriander in his small piece of courtyard farm for his home use. But, after the arrival of Bhutanese refugees in Sanishchare refugee camp, he stopped growing these vegetable items noting the decreasing supply of public water in Pathari-Sanishchare area.

An LWF official stated that there is one drinking water reservoir for each camp. In every camp, there is one water tap for every 30-40 households. Water is supplied three times a day –in the morning, at noon and in the night. This deviation of water from local community to the refugees is creating water shortage in the houses of local people.

### **5.3.1 Deforestation and Soil Erosion**

The cutting down of trees and the destruction of forests is understood as deforestation. The removal or depletion of outer layer of soil is called soil erosion. Both of these phenomena degrade the environment and can even adversely affect the ecological balance. These are unfortunate not only to people living in the houses but also to animal and plants existing in the jungles.

The local people of Sanishchare complain about the deforestation and soil erosion in their region. They say that these problems have been remarkably increasing since the shifting of Bhutanese refugees from Maidhar (bank of Kankai/Mai River) to Sanishchare Refugee Camp. In order to build the refugee camp, UN agencies in coordination with CBOs (Community Based Organizations) and representatives of local community, cut off plants and tress of sissou and shorea robusta (saal) from the forest of Chaarkoshe Jhaadi along the southern side of East-West Highway in Sanishchare, Morang. The international agencies which were responsible for the supply of food and energy did not supply the fuel regularly. As a result, the refugees

were compelled to bring the firewood from local jungle even though there was restriction to enter the jungle and cut off the trees.

Sometimes, the refugees entered the jungle and cut off the trees for firewood and timber with selling purpose. A local shopkeeper reported that the refugees also used to collect firewood from jungles in order to save kerosene distributed by a UN agency, so that they would exchange the kerosene for locally brewed wine. The president of Pashupati Forest User Committee (the user committee for local forests) stated that there was no strict control for the refugees to enter the jungle. Initially, Sanishchare refugee camp population was 21,462. And, it was difficult to monitor and inspect the large mass of refugees pertaining to their intrusion into the jungle.

Local people confirm that the forests of the local area were large and dense prior to the settlement of the refugees in the camp. The deforestation has not only increased landslides but also converted fertile land into either sandy or rocky. We know that plants, trees and vegetation hold the soil firmly and control the soil erosion. But, due to destruction of the plants and vegetation, soil erosion is occurring in the locality of Sanishchare village. People of Sanishchare village are also the members of Pashupati Forest Users Committee. The committee in some interval of time holds a meeting to discuss on the issues of utilizing the forest resources, conserving the forest and mitigation measures of floods and soil erosion. The local people mentioned that soil erosion is noticeable mostly during landslides and floods. Table 5.8 shows the local people's opinion about the involvement of refugees on deforestation and soil erosion in the study area.

**Table 5.8: Distribution of Respondents Based on their Opinion about Refugee Involvement in Deforestation and Soil Erosion**

S.N.	Involvement of Refugees	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Are Involved	52	65
2	Are Not Involved	17	21.25
3	Are Partially Involved	11	13.75
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

The table 5.8 shows that out of total of 80 sampled respondents, 52 (i.e. 65%) think that refugees actions and activities are responsible for the ongoing deforestation and soil erosion. However, 21.25% of the respondents believe that refugees are not involved in the activities that cause deforestation and soil erosion. Yet, there are 13.75% of the respondents who state that refugees are partially responsible for the deforestation and the soil erosion. These respondents believe that both the local community people and the refugees are equally responsible for such environmental issues, and so only the refugees cannot be blamed.

During my field survey, I approached 80 sampled households from the local community. I asked each family about the cooking fuel they were using before and also after the arrival of refugees in Sanishchare camp. The findings show that after the arrival of refugees in Sanishchare camp and with the increasing deforestation and scarcity of firewood and tinder, the villagers are using alternative sources of fuel like LP gas, solar energy, biogas (gobar gas), bio-briquettes, etc. It is also seen that the use of kerosene has also significantly decreased. It seems that the community people are using both the renewable and non-renewable sources of energy. Firewood and kerosene are major non-renewable sources of energy, whereas solar energy and bio-gas are major renewable sources of energy. The table 5.9 presents the consumption pattern of cooking fuel in the local community before the establishment of refugee camp and now (at the time of field survey).

**Table 5.9: Consumption Pattern of Cooking Fuel before the Establishment of Sanishchare Refugee Camp and Now (at the time of field survey)**

S.N.	Cooking Fuel	No. of Households		Percentage	
		Before	Now	Before	Now
1	Firewood	49	11	61.25	13.75
2	Kerosene	17	9	21.25	11.25
3	Bio-briquettes	4	5	5	6.25
4	Biogas	5	6	6.25	7.5
5	LP Gas	3	39	3.75	48.75
6	Solar Energy	2	10	2.5	12.5
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	80	100	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

From the table 5.9, it is clear that the use of firewood has significantly decreased with the time. While studying 80 households, I found that various cooking fuels are used in the community, but the extent of consumption before the arrival of Bhutanese refugees and now noticeably varies. Before, 49 households used to depend on firewood, but now only 11 households use firewood. Similarly, 17 households were using kerosene; but now, only 9 households use it. There seems not much change in the consumption pattern of bio-briquettes and biogases. However, the use of solar energy is significantly increasing because as per the table, 2 households were using the solar energy before, and now 10 households are using it. But, most remarkably, the consumption graph of LP gas is in ascending order. Before, only 3 houses were using the LP gas; but now, as many as 39 households are using it.

One group of local people says that refugee activities and the deforestation led to the change in consumption pattern of cooking fuels. They give the logic that with the arrival of refugees, the population of the area increased and this enhanced the destruction of forest, and this compelled the local households to choose alternative sources of fuels like LP gas and solar energy. However, there is also another group of local people who likes to assure that both the refugees and the local community are responsible for the changes in consumption pattern of cooking fuels. They further state that these changes would have occurred even if there was no refugee influx and believe that these changes are not due to activities of refugees, but due to the consequences of time and technology, and provision of facility.

### **5.3.2 Pollutions as the Other Environmental Problems**

During the field study, local people were reporting about the other environmental issues, in addition to deforestation and soil erosion. They were especially focused on various environmental pollutions. Most of the villagers are worried about the water pollution. They say that lack of maintenance of drainage system, septic tank, and toilets in the refugee camp, and sometimes open air urination and defecation by the refugees are gradually polluting the local water resources. As a result, the chances of epidemic related to water-borne diseases like diarrhea, dysentery and cholera are high in the community.



Local people also complain about the sound pollution. A mass of 21,462 Bhutanese refugees had settled in Sanishchare camp in 2007. It was indeed a large crowd of people that remarkably enhanced the loudness of sound leading to sound pollution. A shopkeeper recalls that there was a refugee family who used to hang a radio from a tree-branch and keep it turned on throughout the day in its highest volume. The shopkeeper had to request the refugee family many a times to turn the volume down. Not only that, many of the refugees in the later stage have motorbikes which negatively contribute to sound pollution. These days, there are public vans and buses that operate especially for refugee community in Pathari-Sanishchare. Further, local markets seem flourishing near to the refugee settlement considering that the refugees are good customers. But, these over growing crowds are definitely intensifying the sound pollution.

The community people know that air pollution is also a prevailing issue in the locality. The dusty pathways in the refugee camp, smokes from refugees' huts and motorbikes; and smokes due to public bus services to and fro the refugee camp are all adding up to air pollution. As a result of this, many of the men and women in Sanishchare often do suffer from skin allergy, throat pain, eye irritation and chest infection.

However, there is other group of local people who does not want to blame only the refugees for the pollution issues. They believe that both the local community people and the refugees are responsible for the pollutions. These people also mention that there are INGOs including various UN agencies and their implementing partners, who work on making the Sanishchare refugee camp well managed and systematic, clean and hygienic; who train and advise the refugees to maintain sanitation and live a healthy life. If a local person leaves his stereotype behind, he can learn something good from a refugee. Therefore, blaming the minority group (refugees) blindly is not justifiable. This group of local people states that various types of pollutions like air pollution, water pollution, sound pollution and soil pollution had started increasing gradually since the time prior to refugee arrival. They claim that, with the modernization and various phases of development in technology, industry and market, these pollutions slowly started prevailing as adverse side-effects.

During the field survey, I approached 80 sampled respondents amongst the local community and asked each of them whether they thought that refugees are mainly involved in causing various pollutions. I got to hear varying responses, which are presented in table 5.10.

**Table 5.10: Distribution of Respondents Based on their Opinion about Refugee Involvement in Causing Various Pollutions**

S.N.	Involvement of Refugees	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Are Involved	52	65
2	Are Not Involved	17	21.25
3	Are Partially Involved	11	13.75
	<b>Total--&gt;</b>	80	100

*Source: Field Survey, 2017*

The table 5.10 shows that out of total of 80 sampled respondents, 52 (i.e. 65%) think that refugees actions and activities are responsible for the increasing pollutions. However, 21.25% of the respondents believe that refugees are not involved in the activities that cause pollutions. Yet, there are 13.75% of the respondents who state that refugees are only partially responsible for the pollutions. These respondents believe that both the local community people and the refugees are equally responsible for such environmental issues, and so only the refugees should not be blamed.

## CHAPTER VI

### FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Findings

In this case study, socio-economic impact on the local community of Sanishchare village of Morang district due to the settlement of Bhutanese refugees in Sanishchare Camp was majorly explored, discoursed and analyzed. In addition, environmental impact was also discussed and interpreted.

The intensity and the sort of impact vary from people to people depending on their social class and economic status. The management of private schools and colleges seems to be benefitted from educated refugees, as many such refugees agree to work as teachers in less pay-scale. Similarly, landlords and rich farmers also seem taking advantages of labor class refugees as these refugees are easily available for work and are relatively cheap to hire.

In Sanishchare, we can experience also other positive aspects of refugee settlement. INGOs and NGOs including UN agencies and their implementing partners, while working for refugees, also care and consider local community issues and try to address them for the welfare of local people. These organizations closely work with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) prioritizing people's participation and raise awareness regarding social issues like safe drinking water, hygiene and sanitation, child rights to education, nutrition and ways to healthy life, etc.

Findings tell that certain developments in Sanishchare took place mainly after the mass influx of the refugees. Still today, there is continuation of these positive effects, as we can see markets expanding, company products increasing, roads widening and being black-topped, schools and hospitals growing in number and many other infra-structural development happening in the locality.

However, there are also some negative impacts of refugees on local community like deforestation, pollution, crime and insecurity, prostitution, unstable labor cost and conflict on local resources. As the refugees agree to work for less wage or salary, employers prefer to hire the refugees at work. Bhutanese refugees get free food and

other supplies in the camp from UN agencies, but poor working class local people have to earn their living on their own. Hence, they undergo difficult situation when they are displaced at work by cheap labor/work force from refugee community. So, we can find local plumbers, electricians, building construction workers, teachers and farm workers experiencing high and unhealthy competition at their work-places. Problems related to alcoholism, gambling, fight, theft and robbery are other negative impacts that the refugees have on the local community.

## **6.2 Conclusion**

It can be concluded that the Bhutanese refugees have both positive as well as negative socio-economic impacts on the livelihood of the local people and the community on the whole. In addition, they also have some adverse environmental impact on the local community. The study shows that the negative impacts are a bit more than the positive ones. It seems that the local people are aware of the impacts due to the various activities of the Bhutanese refugees. Most of them perceive negative impacts rather than the positive ones pertaining to the socio-economic aspects.

## **6.3 Recommendations**

- The community area (Sanishchare village) can still be a suitable study site for future researchers as new socio-economic impacts are likely to arise following the departure of all refugees from the camp.
- Regarding refugee camp visit requests, Camp Management Committee can improve upon implementing formalities and approval procedures in a way they are researcher friendly and contribute to research findings.
- Refugees also do have their stories of pain and sorrow. Therefore, researchers need to anticipate and accept that they may go quite hesitant and introvert while we put forth our queries. Their views and feelings must be respected.
- In order to best maintain the mutual understanding and relationship between the refugees and the local people, the GoN and the UN agencies along with the CBOs should be aware of dealing with both the parties without any stereotype, pre-conceived notion or prejudice.

- There are a few hundreds of refugees who do not want to resettle in third countries but request repatriation. The GoN and the UN need to turn their attention to this repatriation call. They may either convince this group of refugees to resettle in third countries or need to put an effort into bringing the Government of Bhutan to a round table to discuss and debate about this repatriation appeal. Otherwise, prolonged stay of these refugees in the camp will more adversely impact the local community people.

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## ANNEX: I

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

General Information of the Respondent		
Name:	Sex:	Age:
Address:	Caste and Ethnicity:	
Religion:	Education:	Occupation:

1. How long have you been staying in the locality/community for?
2. Are you aware of the Bhutanese Refugees?
3. Where do you hire your workers from?
4. Is your wage rate different for a refugee worker and a local worker?
5. Have you ever engaged or interacted with the Bhutanese refugees?
6. What are the effects on local labors' market due to the refugees?
  - i) Displacement of local wage labors
  - ii) Low wage rate
  - iii) Lack of efficient labors
  - iv) Others (specify).....
7. What are the social impacts of refugees on the people living around the camp?
  - i) Insecurity
  - ii) Theft
  - iii) Prostitution
  - iv) Alcoholism
  - v) Gambling
  - vi) Fight/Quarrel
  - vii) Others (specify).....
8. What are economic impacts of the refugees on the people living around the camp?
  - i) Market price hike
  - ii) Increment of local productions
  - iii) Scarcity of firewood
  - iv) Market expansion
  - v) Effect on work opportunities



9. What are the environmental impacts of the refugees on the people living around the camp?
- i) Deforestation
  - ii) Water, soil or/and air pollution
  - iii) Destruction of flora and fauna
10. Which of the following types of pollution do you think existed before the refugees settled in Sanishchare camp?
- i) Air Pollution
  - ii) Water Pollution
  - iii) Sound Pollution
  - iv) Soil Pollution
11. Which of the following types of pollution do you think came into existence after the refugees settled in Sanishchare camp?
- i) Air Pollution
  - ii) Water Pollution
  - iii) Sound Pollution
  - iv) Soil Pollution
12. Would you mention the impacts on the local community after the refugee camp establishment?
- i) Economic
  - ii) Social
  - iii) Cultural
  - iv) Political
13. It is reported that Bhutanese refugee women are engaged in prostitution. Do you think it is true?
14. How is your agro-production annually? Does it have any impact of the refugees?
15. Is it true that the market price has inflated since the refugee settlement? Can you comment on this?
16. The socio-economic condition of the local people has improved also due to the refugees. Can you elaborate?
17. Do you think that deforestation and soil erosion have increased since the refugees came to Sanishchare village?
18. Which of the following types of cooking fuel do you think were in use remarkably before the refugee arrival?
- i) Firewood
  - ii) Kerosene
  - iii) Bio-briquettes
  - iv) LP gas
  - v) Biogas (gobar gas)
  - vi) Solar energy
  - vii) Other (specify)....

19. Which of the following types of cooking fuel do you think came into use remarkably after the refugee arrival?

- i) Firewood
- ii) Kerosene
- iii) Bio-briquettes
- iv) Biogas (gobar gas)
- v) LP gas
- vi) Solar energy
- vii) Other (specify)....

20. What impacts do you think the refugees have on safety and security issues of the local community?

## **ANNEX: II**

### **ETHICAL CONSIDERATION**

- Prior permission was taken from each respondent before taking their interview and collecting information.
- The purpose and objectives of the survey were clearly explained to the respondents of the local community.
- Respondents were not given any type of incentives as to influence their thoughts and ideas about the Bhutanese refugees.
- Researcher was aware enough about preventing forced participation of the respondents during interviews and group discussions.
- Confidentiality of the respondents' personal information has been respected and maintained.