PERCEPTION AND EXPERIENCES OF HILL FARMERS ON CLIMATE CHANGE: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDY OF TWO COMMUNITIES IN OYAKJUNG, EASTERN NEPAL

A dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Central Department of Sociology/Anthropology in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Anthropology

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**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION**

This dissertation works entitled **“Perception and Experiences of Hill Farmers on Climate Change: An Anthropological Study of Two communities of Oyakjung, Eastern Nepal”** is an independent work of Mrs. Srijana Thapaliya and she had completed her works under my supervision and guidance.

It is presented for the requirements of the partial fulfillment of Master’s Degree in Anthropology. To the best of my knowledge this is an original work. I forward this work to the dissertation committee for approval and acceptance with recommendation.

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**LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE**

PERCEPTION AND EXPERIENCES OF HILL FARMERS ON CLIMATE CHANGE: AN ANTHROPLLOGICAL STUDY OF TWO COMMUNITIES OF OYAKJUNG, EASTERN NEPAL

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**Srijana Thapaliya**

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**FIELD EXPERIENCES**

Initially, I selected the place called Tallo Bhangal of Mahankal VDC, near to Kathmandu as my field site. From here, milk was supplied to different areas in Kathmandu. One widow lady, who was in fact, cooperative to me, also did the same business of supplying the milk. She told me that I could stay at her house until I complete my field study. Therefore, one evening, carrying all my belongings, I went to her place from Kathmandu. It was late night when she came home after her work (supplying milk). After an hour, her two totally drunk sons and one brother-in-law also entered into the house. I came to know that this mother was over-burdened with work as well as family problems. In the evening, at 9:00 pm she started lighting the fire for preparing dinner. I also helped her to prepare curry. Her elder son refused to eat and the other two used rubbish words while eating. I talked with her until 12:00 pm (midnight). I could understand that most of the areas of that place were full of big houses and other infrastructures, flat roads. It was difficult for me to distinguish the changing nature of resources such as forest, water, wind, dews, fog, weather naturally caused or by the cause of infrastructural development. She told that people of that area were busy whole day in their work and can be met only in the evening and night. After knowing all these information, the next early morning I carried my bag and returned to my room in Kathmandu.

I consulted my sister Bandana to go for field study at Terhathum, she was convinced. It was raining the whole day and in the evening, I reached the bus station in Kalanki with heavy big baggage on my back, holding my umbrella in one hand and my small (4 years) daughter on the other. I was half wet by rain. In this situation I took the bus. Whole night starving of cold, I reached Dharan at 6:30am. There were taxis in line for Terhathum and as my final destination was Terhathum, I took the taxi ticket and set off for Terhathum. We reached there by 1:00am. That night I stayed in a hotel and the next morning I woke up and marched towards Oyakjung on foot. It took me 6 hours to approach Oyakjung, my rural home in fact, where my parents-in-law live. Approaching there, I freshened myself, took lunch and washed the utensils. It was already 3:00pm. I met one of residents (Damai Dai) of the village and began asking some questions related to agriculture, the impact of water, air and similar other questions. That day I passed like this.

From the next day, I started my work by asking some questions to elders and a brother about the different people residing in the village, their caste, ethnic group, belief, religion and as per their response, I categorized them as Brahmin, Chhettri, Kami, Damai and Limbu. I visited different communities of the village on different days for my research. I had to go two-three times to meet same persons. As it was the winter time, most of the women in the village have gone to the Terai after harvesting the crops. Some males were also gone to the Terai. At first visit, the people inquired what benefit they would get by giving response to me and they humiliated me by saying that many people like me have come and gone before. However, I tried my best to build rapport (establish cordial relation) with them through patience and later entered into the topic. I was successful enough to establish an emotional tie with them after some times. And as per my enquiry, majority of the informants said that the air and water of that area today is not the same as that used to be 10/15 years before. They said that the water sources have declined and the climate has changed a lot, which directly has impacted to the production. The production has declined and that some plants and animals have become rare and some have even extinct forever. They also added that the place did not experience mosquitoes before but now the problem of mosquitoes have increased giving rise to several diseases. Rainfall has declined and there is also no timely rainfall. Snow and fog is seen less in winter and even in this season temperature has not fallen to the level it actually used to before. I was actually busy in my field work, I did my work regularly. My daughter got problem of vomiting and fever and I was shocked, but feeding her herbal medicine I had to stay more days. I had gone three times to the VDC Office (three and half hour on foot up the stiff hill) for the village profile but I could not meet the VDC Secretary. Lastly I met him on Myanglung Bazaar. One day when I was on the way to Hattisar, there was Majau Gufa, where people gathered for the local mela (fare) of that particular place. Limbu young male and female were looking happy with ‘Dhan Nach’ Most of the mothers-in-law were sitting with their oranges to sell in high price. There were temporary hotels for dal bhaat and people of local area were having. Many people were in queue opening their shoes to enter into the Majou Gufa. Dalits and Janajatis were taking cultural Sagun, local alcohol and local whisky. Some Brahmin and chhetri people were also habituated taking such things. Each other’s culture is respected. Researcher came early in the morning in this Mela to meet all caste people. Before, they drank alcohol, researcher attained group discussion and took interview with them. After discussion they looked red and full of alcohol. In the group discussion informants were asked about the impact caused by delayed rainfall, change in weather condition and reduction of agricultural productions. There were contradictory responses from the males and females and nearly a face to face quarrel broke out for some time. However, lastly all of them started to talk slowly and in cooperative way in fresh mood. Mela was held near the river in vertical shape, people told that the particular river was very big in the past and they did not give their children to come alone sneer the river but now river was in pitiable condition.

The time was winter but even at midday it was too hot and morning and evening it was too cold. When researcher was on the way from Hattisar to Logwa, I felt so tired walking without water because of common cold. After returning home, I had to prepare dinner anyhow and others household work as well. It was 11:00 pm at night when the researcher had finished household works. Because of long walk whole day, my body was tired and getting pain. So, I could not sleep whole night almost for 4 days.

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**ABBREVIATION**

DHM: Department of Hydrology and Metrology

NGO: Non Government Organization

MOPE: Ministry of Population and Environment

UNEP: United Nation Environment Program

WHO: World Health Organization

CBS: Central Bureau of Statistics

VDC: Village Development Committee

IPCC: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

GoN : Government of Nepal

RAP: Rapidly Assessment Program

FGDs: Focus Group Discussion

GIOF: Glacier Lake Out-burst Flood