

# CHAPTER: ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General Background of the Study

The issue of refugee and asylum is not a new subject. Refugee problem is as old as the concept of nation-state itself. Territorial integrity and sovereignty are basic reasons for the creation of refugees. Conflicts and tensions within a state and between or among states give rise to the creation of refugees.

Today refugee problem appears to be one of the principal issues in international relations and the growing challenge to the human civilization. At least 40 million people around the world have made the agonizing decision to leave their home and hearth, communities and countries because of terror created as a result to generalized violence, human rights violation and persecutions (AI- Refugee, Asia, Ethnicity and Nationality). Nepal has been providing asylum to dignitaries from India since Rana rule, and refugees from different country like Tibet, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, and Bhutan have been living in Nepal at different location on humanitarian ground.

Bhutan is also known by various names such as “Druk Yul” which refers to ‘Land of Thunder Dragon’. Similarly *Lhoman*, is made of two words that are *Lho* means south/down from Tibet and *Man* means inhabitant of that place. In ancient time Bhutan was called “South Kirat, Sandal Wood country.” Bhutan is situated between Tibet in the north and India on other three sides along the slopes of the Himalayas. The total surface area is approximately 47000 square kilometer. The land lies between 88°45' and 92° 10' longitude east and between 26°40' and 28°15' latitude north. The land is relatively compact with an average latitudinal distance of 170km and longitudinal distance of 300 km. Bhutan is known as *The Last Shangri-La* to outside world, remained a sealed book before 1960 A.D.

Bhutan is geographically divided into three regions viz; Southern Foot Hills, Central Mountain Region and the Northern Himalayan Region. There are diverse forms of plants and animals, soil type, religion ethnic group, climate, etc. due to abrupt altitudinal change within short range from foothills to the great Himalayas. It has population of about 700,000 spreading over twenty two districts. There are three major ethnic groups along with some minorities. The three major ethnic groups are; the Ngalongs are the Tibeto-mongoloid origin, the ruling class spreading over north-western region. The Sharchops are Tibeto-Burmese origin settled in the central and eastern regions and the Lhotsampas are the inhabitants in the southern part of the kingdom. The Lhotsampas mainly migrated from Nepal and settled there upon an agreement between Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel and the king Ram Shah of Gorkha of Nepal in 1624 AD some have migrated in the later half of nineteen century.

Bhutan has been ruled since 17<sup>th</sup> December 1907 AD, by an absolute, autocratic and party less monarchy under dual system of spiritual and temporal rule called Chhosi Nyidhen. Under the dual system, Je Khempo heads the spiritual rule as supreme authority in Bhutan whereas the temporal rule is headed by hereditary absolute monarch of Wangchuk dynasty. There is no constitution or the bill of rights in Bhutan. The King is sovereign and as such all state powers rest upon Him. No political opposition/party is allowed. Buddhism has been declared as the state religion. The Bhutanese people have to follow the state prescribed code of conduct for dress, language and cultural codes known as *Driglam Namsha*, (code of conduct). Different political and legal changes were brought after 1985 A.D. which directly or indirectly affected all the southern Bhutanese. Some of the changes are *Driglam Namsha*, One Nation One People Policy, Green Belt Policy, Citizenship Law, 1958 cut off year, etc. These legal provisions are prone to create statelessness and automatic and arbitrary deprivation of nationality. This made the southern Bhutanese to raise voice against these policies and request the Royal Government of Bhutan to look and reconsider the matter very urgently.

People finally came to streets in September 1990 for the common cause. The Royal Government of Bhutan reacted with vehement and brutal force. Arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, extra judicial killings, rape and arson became the order of the day. International human rights, SOS/Torture and ICRS raised their concern at the gross violence of human rights in Bhutan. But the Bhutanese Government charged the dissidents as terrorist and labeled them illegal economic migrants. The increasing military crackdown against the defenseless people forced them to leave their motherland. The government of India failed to provide them the most humanitarian relief; instead the victims were deported in Nepal. The Nepal government provided asylum and accepted as refugees and assisted on humanitarian ground. They have been living in Jhapa and Morang districts of eastern Nepal since 1990.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The forceful eviction of a large number of southern Bhutanese of Nepalese ethnicity by the Royal Government of Bhutan accusing them as illegal economic immigrants resulted into Bhutanese refugee issue in Nepal since 1990. These evicted people were given asylum by the Nepalese government on humanitarian ground. Later on, Nepal requested various organizations including UNHCR to assist in taking care of these ill-fated Bhutanese people.

Nepal has been categorized as one of the least developed countries of the world. The people of the Nepal depend on subsistence agriculture for their livelihood. Due to the rapid growth in population and unstable political scenario, the food deficit, unemployment among the educated lots, regular strike and irregular functioning of factories and industries have been occurring and the country is getting more poverty stricken. In this situation, the Bhutanese refugee problem is a challenging problem for

the Nepalese Government. It is not possible to mitigate the negative impacts caused by the refugee influx in different areas without the assistance of donor agencies.

The Bhutanese refugees are not restricted with in the camps. They are allowed to move any where without any prohibitions. They have been working as teachers, labors, shopkeepers, doctors, businessmen in Nepal. It has created problems of employment in locality. Mistrusts, quarrels, gang fights often occur in the vicinity between locals and refugees. The refugee has nothing to do but remain ideal due to which it gives rise to many evils. After the arrival of Bhutanese refugee and rapid population growth local people are facing many social, economic psychological, political and environmental problems. It includes theft, gambling, pollution, drug trafficking, deforestation, alcoholism, murder, prostitution and child labor, etc. This study focuses on the Bhutanese refugee problem and its impact in refugee affected areas of Nepal. The study basically deals with the various refugee problems, situations of Bhutanese refugees and their impacts in the vicinity of refugee settlement.

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

The general objective is to study the Bhutanese refugee problem and its impact in Nepal. The specific objectives are as follows:

- ) To study events and causes leading to the creation of Bhutanese refugees.
- ) To explore the situation of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal.
- ) To explore the socio-economic, environmental and security and political impacts due to the presence of Bhutanese refugees in host community.

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

Nepal has been providing asylum to the refugee of many countries. But the burden of Tibetan and Bhutanese refugee is not bearable for long time due to her own multi-facet problems. Detail and indebt researches about the Bhutanese refugees' problem and its impact have not been done sincerely and seriously by any researcher or scholar. So to realize and find out the real existing social, economic, environmental and political situation among the refugees in Nepal is necessary for prevention and mitigation from its impacts.

This research helps to identify socio-economic, environmental, psychological, political and security problems created by the establishment of refugee camp particularly in Khudunabari VDC of Jhapa district. Furthermore, it differentiates various problems vulnerable to the refugees and host community people, which will help policy makers and program designers to develop and implement appropriate program interventions in the camp and host community site.

It will be the baseline data-base for the programs to be launched in refugee camp and its surrounding community site, which will also be useful for evaluating the on-going programs and for designing new programs in the field of environmental protection and socio-economic development and security and political issues.

Recommendations based on this research findings will also be useful for the local government bodies and NGOs to contribute towards preventing negative actions of the refugees, and resolving the conflicts (if any) between the refugees and host community people. In short, this research helps NGOs, INGOs and government as a guideline to design and implement their programs. It helps scholar, researcher and individual who are interested to study in the related field. It also helps us to focus the refugee problems in the world and compels to resolve at the earliest.

### **1.5 Limitations of the study**

Every research has certain limitations. This study has also some limitations listed below:

- ) The study is limited to the Khudunabari refugee camp only.
- ) The findings of the study may or may not be generalized to other refugee settlements
- ) This study is academic one, so the sample size taken is small due to time and money constraints.
- ) The study has been done under the scarcity of reliable resources available materials and data.

### **1.6 Organization of the Study**

This research is divided into five chapters. The first chapter begins with introduction, which describes the study contest, states the statement of the problem, objectives, limitations and rationale of the study. The second chapter is specific in literature review. The third chapter deals with research methodology which includes; selection of the research area, research design, universe and sampling, nature and sources of data, sampling procedure, data collecting techniques, reliability method of data analysis. The forth chapter covers analysis and presentation of data. The last (the fifth) chapter consists of summary, conclusion and recommendations of the proposed research.

## CHAPTER: TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Refugee

A precise meaning of refugee is set out in the 1951 UN convention of Refugee and the follow up protocol of 1967. A refugee is any person who owing to well founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country or who not having a nationality and being outside the country of his formal habitual residence is unable or owing to such fear is unwilling to return.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica (15<sup>th</sup> ed. vol.30, USA) defines refugee as ‘any uprooted, homeless, involuntary, migrant who has crossed a frontier and no longer possesses the protection of his former government.’ The problems of refugee have become global problems. A large number of refugees have crossed the borders and the rest have been either unable or unwilling to cross and compelled to take shelter in the neighboring countries. Problems of refuge have risen from time to time in the world.

The international law, the 1951 United Nations Convention and Protocol relating to the status of refugees provides that refugees have rights -the right to live a normal life without a durable solution, the right to work for wages, the right to be in business, practice their profession, own property, own intellectual property, the right to freedom of movement, the right to travel documents, the right to elementary education and the right to social services equivalent to those available in their country of residence. These are refugee rights- rights they are suppose to enjoy while they are refugees. The framers of the Convention were like the drafters of the Magna Carta or Declaration of Independence. They drafted documents setting out rights for people like themselves and for both these documents it took hundreds of years for the principles and values they asserted to be applied to people not like them- poor people, women, and people of color. And it wasn’t just the passive passage of time that extended these rights. It took struggle, massive economic and social change and sometimes war. But looking back, would any of us say that the struggle to give people their rights and the resulting costs in human lives and economic upheaval.

For many refugees in internationally operated camps there is little protection from attacks, sexual exploitation, or conscription in militias. Many do not have adequate food or shelter. So, trading your rights for “protection” is a bad bargain. Those refugees who choose not to avail themselves of protection become “urban refugees” or “irregular movers” subject to further exploitation, abuse, and trafficking because they do not enjoy their rights as refugees. His meeting is about resettlement of

refugees - a durable solution and we love durable solutions. But, resettlement is only offered to about 1% of all the refugees in the world and although we would like to see that number go up dramatically it clearly is not the solution for most refugees (UNHCR, 2004).

According to UNHCR and amnesty international, about 1.8 million refugees are in Asia and about 1.7 million people are internally displaced. Many countries are facing such problem in Asia. Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Nepal are becoming main victim in south Asia due to the ethnic conflict, political oppression and civil war. The ethnic conflict, which has been rocking in Sri Lanka since 1983 uprooted hundred of thousand of people over the years. A small country with population of only 18 million people, Sri Lanka is the one of the old principal source of refugees and displaced people. India, a safe heaven for refugee and displaced person for countries, is a most to sizable refugee population even now. In addition to Sri Lanka refugee about 12 3,000 Tibetan refugee have settled in India, and about 47 thousand Bangladeshi Chakmas live in north eastern India. The territorial dispute between India and Pakistan continuous to cause sporadic violence and the displacement of people from the Kashmir valley. Since 1990, about 3 hundred thousand Kashmir Hindus' and up to 50 thousand Muslims have fled the valley. Most of the Hindus now live in camps in Jammu and Delhi. Widespread human rights violation by all side of the militant groups and the government process are other reasons for people to flee. The ethnic conflicts in north-east India status uprooted thousands of people in recent year. In Pakistan still around 1.2 million Afghan refugees are living of whom some 815,000 were registered. Pakistan is sheltering over 26,000 non-Afghan refugees like Iraqis, Somalis and Iranians (GRINSO, 1997).

## **2.2 Tibetan Refugee in Nepal**

The flow of Tibetan refugees through the Himalayan border into Nepal commenced when the Dalai Lama XIV left Lhasa for asylum in India in 1959. The influx of these refugees into Nepal continued for some years. According to the information received from different reliable sources, the total number is estimated to have reached 200,000 (both recorded and unrecorded). However, the 1993 record has confirmed only 12540 Tibetan refugees in Nepal. These refugees are scattered over 20 different districts of Nepal. The refugee camps are provided with housing, drinking water facilities, schools, monasteries, cottage industries etc. The refugees in camps are engaged in carpet-weaving, handicrafts, mobile trade and other business for their livelihood.

Each adult refugee is issued with an identity card which is valid for a year. Refugees are required to renew their identity cards every year from the concerned district administration office. These refugees are also provided with travel permit to facilitate travel outside the country. Up to this year, the ministry of Home Affairs has recommended for a travel document to 1449 such refugees for study and tour abroad. Not with standing the stiff Himalayan border between China and Nepal, sporadic flow of people from Tibet, China to Nepal has been observed even at present. Travel

from the people's Republic of China to Nepal and vice versa is regulated only by the valid passport and visa of the respective countries with the exception of those inhabitants staying within the periphery of 30 kilometers of the border area between two countries (Refugees, 2000).

In the world today, over 7 million refugees have been warehoused for 10 years or more. This figure includes more than 120,000 refugees in Nepal. For many years LIRS and international partner, the Lutheran World Federation, have strongly advocated on behalf of these refugees for protection and durable solutions. Over 20,000 Tibetans and their descendants reside in settlements scattered throughout Nepal. The vast majority arrived before 1989 and particularly during the period between 1959 and 1974.

In 1986 after Nepal and China implemented a new treaty, the ability of Tibetans to travel through or into Nepal was significantly restricted. In 1989, pressure from the Chinese government and the growing number of new arrivals led Nepal to initiate a strict border-control policy. The Nepalese government made clear that it would in the future refuse to accept or to recognize new

The status of Tibetan refugees in Nepal is unclear; they are not recognized as refugees or given any definable legal status. Without rights to own property and businesses, to travel, and to work freely in industries outside their settlements, Tibetans remain socially alienated from Nepalese society. Their future is increasingly insecure in a country that reluctantly acknowledges but refuses to accept their presence. The fragile and unknown status of the Tibetan settlement residents highlights the need for a more durable solution that either permits the refugees to acquire Nepalese permanent residency or to resettle to a third country (Ralston, 2006).

### **2.3 Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal**

Refugees from Bhutan began entering Nepal at the end of 1990 (A group of 60 Bhutanese asylum seekers were recorded on 12 December 1990 for the first time) with a peak in their influx during the first half of 1992 went up to 300 to 1000 persons a day crossed the border. By July 1993, it was estimated that there were over 84,000 Bhutanese refugees in eastern Nepal. The rate of new arrivals from Bhutan has steadily decreased since then, with the introduction of the Government of Nepal's screening centre in Kakarvitta on the border between Nepal and India. Some refugees are believed to have spent varying length of time in India prior to their arrival in Nepal. New arrivals in the Bhutanese refugee camps have dropped to insignificant number since 1996 while a natural increase has taken place in the camp population owing to an average growth rate of two percent.

Refugee Coordination Unit (RCU), Jhapa has registered a total number of 1, 02,263 refugees at the end of the year 2002, all of them are accommodated in seven camps of Jhapa and Morang districts of eastern Nepal. ID cards have not been distributed for

the Bhutanese refugees, till now. An additional number estimated from 10,000 to 15,000 is believed to have taken asylum elsewhere in the country. The records show that out of the total registered refugees 84.65% possess Bhutanese citizenship certificates, court and service certificates of Bhutanese Government, while 2.35% do not seem to have any evidences- it is alleged that their documents were seized by the Bhutanese authority forcefully (Refugees, 2005).

Bhutan, a country with multi-racial and multi-lingual ethnic population, has not the history of communal clashes or ethnic strife in the kingdom. This country is governed by the *Ngalongs* who originally are Tibetan migrants (they call themselves as *Drukpa*). The people who dominate eastern part of the country are called *Sharchops* who constitute about 37% of the population. Many writers believe that they are the original inhabitants of Bhutan. They belong to Indo-Burmese stock and speak *Sharchopkha*- a language similar to the one spoken by the people of North Eastern Frontier Agencies (NEFA) of India. The southern region of the kingdom is the homeland of the people of Nepali ethnicity who form around 50% of the population. This group largely of Indo-Aryan stock speaks Nepali and practice Hinduism, whereas the *Drukpa* ruler claims the southern Bhutanese of Nepali ethnicity to be recent settlers of economic migrants. Thus the claim of *Drukpa* rules that Bhutan only the homeland of the *Drukpa* of the north-west region and their attempt to portray southern Bhutanese as economic migrants and recent settlers is not only a serious distortion of the fact but is also a denial of the existence of a large distinct ethnic groups in the kingdom who have made equal contributions and sacrifices to the building of modern day Bhutan (Carol, 1993).

The minority Buddhist monarchy has sought harassment to the population living in southern Bhutan under the slogan "One Nation One People" in 1988. But this slogan was unbearable for the 45% of the Nepali ethnic Bhutanese people. The multi ethnic, multi-cultural, Nepalese 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 cultural, religion, language, dress etc. This means that they did not have any liberty and human rights of celebrating festivals, customs, religion, wearing dresses, marriage system etc. Nepali ethnic Bhutanese 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, 1995).

It is difficult to know the country and at what number of the refugees entered Nepal because there is no reliable data or documents published before 1990. Before 1990, a small number of Tibetans refugees entered Nepal and settled in Katmandu valley at Lalitpur areas. These refugees have been living in Nepal without any significant problems. Similarly Bengali and Burmese are also there in Nepal. Bhutanese refugees have been living in Jhapa and Morang districts in seven different camps in miserable condition. Approximately they are 200,000 refugees in Nepal.



## **2.4 Impacts in the Host Community**

The terms of psychological health of local people living in the vicinity of the refugee camps have been negatively affected. Women fear social insecurity. They could close the doors of their houses and work in their kitchen, garden, and paddy fields. But now one member of the family has to be in the house. Since the influence of the Bhutanese refugees has had a negative bearing on the socio-Economic of the communities living close to the camps, Nepal in general, the concerned authorities must think of it very seriously for its mitigation. If the negative impact is not mitigated with appropriate measures, the local communities will be further adversely affected (New ERA, 1993).

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 work in their kitchen garden and paddy fields. They could go the local bazaar but now one member of the family always has to be in the house to prevent the possibilities of being robbed. During the night they have to more watchful and alert than before. Similarly women formally could go to the forest to fetch fuel wood and take care of their animals without any sense of insecurity or fear but now the situation has changed. One can see groups of refugee men and women roaring 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 one domestic chores and farming activities to perform. Now they may be robbed or even sexually harassed (New ERA, 1993).

Many refugees are selling the oil, lentils and powder milk (given to them in the camp) to local traders. Consequently, the market price of these goods has fallen to 50% of regular prices. This makes the local middle class consumers happy and may act as a deterrent to the growing antagonism towards such large influx of refugees. To add to the resentment of the locals, there has been a marked increase in unsocial activities likes (prostitution, consumption of drugs and liquors, etc) in recent time which most locals feel are due to the presence of the refugees. The refugees who collect fuel wood from the forest are unlikely to cut down big trees as claimed by the forest department. The big trees are usually cut by timber smugglers in collusion with corrupt forest officials. More important has been the dampening of the daily ways of the locals that we have talked to paint out that before the arrival of the refugees a day labor earned taka 200 per day, but now the some person earns around taka 60-70 . This has meant more hardship and poverty for the locals' poor a situation about which many locals are quick to complain but that is not all (Refugee, 1999).

The problems of refugee have brought many negative impacts in the affected areas. It was reported during the field's visits that theft, prostitution, alcoholism, conflicts, gambling and robbery have become the major social problems. These social problems are the conditions threatening the well- being of the host communities. One of the greatest negative impacts is the continual loss of employment opportunities in agricultural, construction and educational sectors. Defecation on the grazing land, degraded forest, irrigation canals and riverbanks has contributed to increase the

population of mosquito that helps to spread the epidemic diseases such as measles, cholera, dysentery, diarrhea, encephalitis, meningitis, etc (Oli, 2001).

H.O. Agrawal, Implementation of Human Rights Covenants with special reference to India (Allahabad Kitab Mahal, 1983 1<sup>st</sup> ed), refugee issue always affects the security situation not only of the country that receives the refugee but also the region to which that country belongs. Even though Nepal has granted asylum to the so-called *Lhotsampas* of Bhutan on humanitarian ground, we can not over look the security expects of this small country with almost no military and strategic advantages like the giant neighbors. It's not only national concern for Nepal but a subject of national security also (Hari, 2052 BS).

The presence of very large number of refugees have had adverse socio-economic impacts on eastern Nepal where the refugees have been sheltered in the camps and outside the camps. Heavy pressure of these refugees in the area surrounding the forest resources has caused deforestation and environmental degradation. Besides these problems like price hike, scarcity of food stuffs, alcoholism, social conflicts, epidemics and pollution have been experienced. Similarly maintenance law and order peace and security has been threatened by the occurrence of frequent vandalism and violence inside and outside camps where the refugees have taken shelter (Refugees, 2005).

For refugee's solution, Nepal has three options in creating a dialogue: the bilateral between only Bhutan and Nepal trilateral bringing India into the negotiation, and international, trying to get foreign countries or international bodies, such as UN, to apply pressure on Bhutan to talk or even broker talks between the two countries (Rai, 1998).

According to the statement of Ralston H. Deffenbaugh, the Bhutanese government continues to refuse to consider readmitting all but a small percentage of the Bhutanese refugees, and Nepal refuses to allow them legal permission to work or reside outside the camps. LIRS recommends that all durable solutions be explored for the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal including the involvement of the Bhutanese government in re-admitting some; the United States and other nations to extend offers for resettlement; and India and Nepal to grant basic rights to the remainder. LIRS strongly recommends that PRM consider the dire situation of refugees in Nepal and continue strengthening the partnership with NGOs to determine the best durable solution. As has been a repeated refrain at today's hearing, deserving refugees across the world have been or will be victims of the well-intentioned but misguided security provisions in the Patriot Act and Real ID Act. While refugee determinations have not yet been done in Nepal, advocates predict that deserving refugees, particularly those from Tibet who aligned with the US government, will be victims of the provisions.

## 2.5 Gender-Based Violence in Nepal's Refugee Camps

The problem of gender-based violence in the Bhutanese refugee camps punctured the camps' image as a "model" in late 2002, when UNHCR received reports about sexual exploitation of refugee children and requested its Inspector General's Office (IGO) to review the allegations and examine the conduct of UNHCR offices in Nepal. The results of the investigation team's findings became public in November 2002, documenting eighteen cases of sexual exploitation, including rape and sexual harassment, of refugee women and children. The perpetrators were two Nepalese government officials whose salaries were paid by UNHCR and fifteen refugee men working for NGO implementing partners. Refugee girls comprised the vast majority of victims in these cases. In addition to sexual exploitation by refugee aid workers and officials, the team discovered many other cases of gender-based violence within the refugee community, including rape, attempted rape, sexual assault, child marriage, forced marriage, and domestic violence.

The official, who was in a managerial position, was sexually harassing refugee women in his office. There was a case of a [repeated] rape of a disabled girl; this was by an aid worker. There were many cases of teachers being involved with their students. They would impregnate the girls, who were then kicked out of school. Nothing would happen to the teachers; they would continue to teach and went out with other girls.

In December 2000, OXFAM, which had been working in the camps for several years, conducted a survey of refugee women that suggested alarming levels of domestic violence. The report stated that Bhutanese refugee women "are subject to harassment and abuses by refugee male members and also host communities." The report noted complaints that Bhutanese refugee women are "sometimes also sexually abused by male staff of service delivery agencies."

In a UNHCR-facilitated consultation with refugee representatives and NGOs in July 2001, refugees raised their concerns about girl trafficking, rape, suicide, discrimination, and child marriage. The refugees highlighted alcoholism and its links with quarrels between married couples and the sale of rations, polygamy-related problems, and the widespread occurrence of domestic violence coupled with social sanctions against reporting such cases.

As grassroots networks, the Bhutanese Refugee Women's Forum (BRWF) and the Children's Forum often identified and supported women and children survivors of violence. The Children's Forum monitored the camps for child abuse and forwarded cases to The Lutheran World Federation. If cases reached UNHCR, the staff had no system to forward them to the Bhadrapur office and failed to respond to many cases. The third organization, Bhutanese Refugees Aiding Victims of Violence (BRAVVE), provided training in weaving and other income-generating activities to economically and socially marginalized groups like widows, women heads of households, and people with disabilities.

# **CHAPTER: THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Selection of the Research Area**

Bhutanese refugees have been living in seven different camps located in Jhapa and Morang districts of eastern Nepal since 1990. It is not possible to study all the camps due to time and money constraints. So the researcher has selected a medium sized (about 14000 refugees) refugee camp for research work, which lies at ward number-8 and 9 of Khudunabari VDC of Jhapa district. The Khudunabari Bhutanese refugee camp is the average sized camp among the seven different camps. This refugee camp is surrounded by number of small villages of Khudunabari VDC. There is a few numbers of schools, health posts, youth organizations, government organizations working in the camp. Different ethnic groups with diverse culture, tradition, religions are found here. The researcher has selected this research area for number of reasons such as;

- ) The researcher is familiar with the various castes, ethnic groups, culture, language, etc of the study area.
- ) It is convenient to do research work in medium sized camp.
- ) The researcher himself is the resident of the refugee affected area.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Research design refers to the arrangement of condition and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance information to the research purpose. The study was conducted with the refugees as well with the host community taking samples from both groups. In order to produce empirical evidence to fulfill the set objectives, data collection was necessary in a particular location. Both primary and secondary data have been collected using appropriate methods and techniques. The study included both exploratory and descriptive analysis. The exploratory research design was effective to explain the impacts of Bhutanese refugees on the local communities and their existing conditions. The descriptive research was useful to study the historical background of the refugees.

### **3.3 Universe and Sampling**

The universe includes all the households of Bhutanese refugees situated in Khudunabari camps and the host communities adjacent to the camp. At present, there are about 14,000 refugees and 12,000 host communities' population. The study was

conducted on 36 sampled households each from refugee and the host community. The study sample was selected by simple random method.

### **3.4 Source and Nature of Data**

For this research work, both primary and secondary sources have been used for the collection of related information and data. The information was collected directly from the refugees and from the villagers of neighboring areas. Primary data has been collected through structured questionnaires and open ended from respondents in the field. To collect secondary data, the researcher has visited various offices of the Government of Nepal and other non governmental agencies and organizations who are taking care of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal such as UNHCR, LWF-Nepal, CARITAS-Nepal, WFP, RCU and different offices. Similarly, secondary data have been collected from related published and unpublished literatures, reports journals, articles, newspapers, text books, etc. The nature of data is both qualitative and quantitative.

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

The whole study was mainly based on both the primary and secondary data. Household survey, key informant interview, observation and focus group discussion were the techniques of data collection. The tools applied for data collection were household survey questionnaire (structured and open-ended questionnaire), key informant schedule, checklist and participant observation. Interview schedule for household head, interview and focus group discussion for user groups and personnel were conducted to obtain the level of participation, present status and their views/opinions. The social phenomenon which couldn't be investigated through questionnaires like social status, types of house, etc. were done by observation techniques.

### **3.6 Methods of Data Analysis**

Every filled questionnaire was carefully checked to remove possible errors, and inconsistencies. The data was carefully edited for ensuring quality, recorded where necessary and processed with the help of computer. The required tables were obtained and the data analyzed on the basis of frequency table, percentage, etc. Some statistical tools and techniques are also used to list the data. After analyzing information/data necessary summary, conclusion and recommendations have been written.

## CHAPTER: FOUR

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### 4.1 Events and Causes Leading to the Creation of Bhutanese Refugees

From the very beginning Bhutanese people had been living with peace, harmony and brotherhoods. Till 1970s, the Royal Government of Bhutan was not obsessive about cultural pluralism in Bhutan but RGOB had dominated to others. There was no right to speech and expression. Anyone who speaks against *Tsa-Wa-Sum* (The King, Country and the Government) is liable to punishment for treason, i.e. capital punishment as per the law of Bhutan. This law empowered the king and government to punish anyone who opposes them. No rights to publication and press, publication of newspaper, journal and magazines other than the government owned ones are strictly forbidden. There was no any newspaper or magazine privately published but recently two private newspapers have been in circulation. No equal political right is being exercised by its citizens. Bhutan is ruled by a feudalistic set up. Politics is considered as a property of the ruling family. Political activities and political protest are strictly banned in the kingdom. Electorate system and adult franchise are non-existent. No right to form association, union and organization other than governments are allowed to form. There are no human rights organizations, NGOs, INGOs and Red Cross Society in side Bhutan. A few such organizations are working from exile for human rights and democracy in Bhutan. There is no any law to safe guard the individual's rights.

To establish democracy and human rights in Bhutan, the Nepali ethnic Bhutanese people formed "Bhutan State Congress" in 1954 A.D. The RGOB suppressed the movement of the Bhutan State Congress. The submission of appeal to His Majesty the king Jigme Singye Wangchuk by Teknath Rizal and B.P. Bhandari on 9<sup>th</sup> April 1988, formation of Bhutan People's Party on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1990, mass demonstration within all the southern districts demanding democracy and human rights were against the law of Bhutan. The RGOB took it seriously and implemented hard laws and rules against the southern Bhutanese. The government slowly introduced many policies in 1988, which violated human rights and fundamental freedom of Bhutanese people. The Royal Government did not amend the policies desired by the Bhutanese people, instead suppressed those who opposed the policies forwarded by RGOB. It was too much to tolerate, at last people unified and protested against the Government of Bhutan in September 1990. As the people thronged the streets demanding democracy and human rights, the Bhutanese Government branding all the peaceful activists and supporters of the movement as anti-nationals and sent the Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) to suppress the movement. Being given carte blanche, the RBA had a field day. The consequences were appalling arbitrary arrest, torture, rape, intimidation, harassment, arson, loot, demolition of houses and confiscation of citizenship cards by RBA. The

government also imposed economic sanction in southern Bhutan depriving the people of their basic day to day necessities. The demonstrators were coerced to sign the voluntary migration forms and compelled them to leave the country. The continued repression and army rule compelled the people to flee from the country. In Garganda and other places of India, the BPP managed camps for refugees where they remained for some months but when Indian authorities began loading these innocent people in trucks and deporting them in indo-Nepal border at Panitanki, the BPP couldn't continue its activities (Bhutan Today, 1993).

#### **4.1.1 Policies of Citizenship and Nationality**

The Bhutanese are the bona fide Bhutanese citizens under the provisions of the 1958 Nationality Law, and the 1977 Citizenship Act. Article 4(1) a and b of the 1958 law provides that a person is a Bhutanese national if the person is a resident of the kingdom for more than ten years and owns agricultural land within the country. It may be noted that Bhutanese people have been living in Bhutan for generations and they possess agricultural land and property in Bhutan. Beside these, they have valid documents to prove as Bhutanese identity like land tax receipt, citizenship cards and other related papers. But the Royal Government has enacted another Citizenship Act on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1985 AD with entirely new provisions which contradicted the provisions of 1958 Nationality Law and 1977 Citizenship Act. In the course of implementing of 1985 Act, the Royal Government of Bhutan arbitrarily and retrospectively revoked the citizenships of tens of thousands of Southern Bhutanese citizens. The RGOB has maneuvered the 1985 Citizenship Act to turn bona fide citizens into non-nationals overnight. The 1985 Citizenship Act has three major provisions viz. Citizenship by birth and by naturalization. The provisions of the people citizenship by birth and registration i.e. article 2 and 3 of the 1985 Citizenship Act. With the implementation of the 1985 Citizenship Act through the census in 1988, the government categorized the southern Bhutanese population into seven distinct groups which are as follows:

F1- Genuine Bhutanese

F2- Returned Migrants (those who had left Bhutan but returned)

F3- Drop out (those who were not available during the time of census)

F4- A non national women married to Bhutanese man

F5- A non national man married to Bhutanese woman

F6- Adoption cases (children legally adopted)

F7- Non-national (migrants and illegal settlers)

Using Article-2 of the 1985 Citizenship Act, the census team retrospectively categorized southern Bhutanese children as F4- if father is a Bhutanese and the mother is non Bhutanese and F5- if the mother is Bhutanese and the father is non Bhutanese. This way the government revoked the citizenship of southern Bhutanese children and rendered them stateless. This illegal action of the RGOB has contravened and disordered the relevant provisions of the 1958 nationality law and the 1977 Citizenship Act and on the other hand, it has bluntly violated article 7 and 8 of the International Convention of the right of child which the Bhutanese Government ratified in 1990, and of article 15 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Next, by using article 3 of the 1985 Citizenship Act both arbitrarily and retroactively, the census team categorized tens of thousand of southern Bhutanese as F7- when the southern Bhutanese could not produce the evidence of residence in Bhutan on or before 31<sup>st</sup> December 1958, during 1988 census. The required document of residence was a 30 years old land census receipt of 1958 and 1977 Citizenship Law.

#### **a) Process of Granting Citizenship Certificate before 1988**

As per the provision of 1958 national law of Bhutan and existing practices, the local authorities- (i) the *Gup* or the village head man, (ii) The *Dungpa* or the head of the sub-division and (iii) *Dzongda* or the head of the district were empowered to decide on Citizenship matters of the people in their jurisdiction and issue nationality certificate. This arrangement was necessary in 1960s and 1970s since government in Thimphu was primarily occupied with developmental task and Citizenship issue was left to the local authorities. It was only in early 1980s that the government felt it necessary to give due importance to the immigration issue because of increasing number of foreign labors and civil service workers mainly from India. Foreigners in Bhutan can be categorized as; (a) Laborers recruited from India and Nepal through contractors and their dependence, which were issued non-national identity cards to be renewed from time to time and (b) Civil service workers and their dependence recruited from India including educationists and their families from the government of India.

As per the government's regulations, all Bhutanese citizens are required to produce (i) *Sathramno* (a record of register of land holding issued by the department of land records of the Home Ministry against which the census of the house hold is maintained, (ii) House number issued by the local authority and the department of registration, (iii) Enumeration in the census record maintained by the village headman and the district authorities annually, (iv) Bhutanese citizens are required to fulfill such nationals obligations as compulsory labors contribution of monthly basis under *Saptolemi*, *Chunidom*, *Goondawoola*, (labor contribution schemes) or payment in case in lieu of labor contribution for development projects both for the locals as well as central schemes and (v) Payment of taxes in case for land, house, cattle, crops, etc. It is not worthy that foreigner acquiring citizenship through naturalization are not required to fulfill the above obligations as they are mostly settled in urban areas. Therefore, all those people in possession of above documents irrespective of their date of entry to Bhutan cannot be called as illegal immigrants. The so called illegal immigrants include even those people who are in possession of these documents with any exception that they were unable to produce such documents of 1958 as the proper documentations system was introduced with the requirement of land transaction to be approved only by the court of law after coming into force of Bhutan Land Act in 1977

#### **b) Policies of Implementation of 1985 Citizenship Act**

The implementation of the 1985 Citizenship Act actually turned out to be detection of foreigners based on the 1958 cut off year. The government went on implementing the act ruthlessly; seizing citizenship identity cards issued earlier threatening of



deportation. As the government had no previous authentic records, use of personal knowledge, past memory and sometimes even guess work by a committee of the village elders usually known as *Chhopkpas* comprising of two to three village people selected by the authorities were made to determine the date of arrival of the person concerned. The operations required each person to produce documents of 1958 (earlier documents were not accepted) such as the land tax receipt and a cross examination and verification by the census team leader and the committee. Sometimes a comparison would be made to a very old and torn out land record register. For immigrant people were asked to produce certificate of origin, which created innermost problems and difficulties to the public due to unavailability of proper records and hardships in traveling difficult terrain in the country.

Those who had lost their documents due to natural calamities such as floods, fire, destruction by parasites or shifting of houses, etc. were all listed as aliens even if they had lived for centuries. Many people were simply listed as illegal immigrants as the village committee could not provide adequate information due to human limit to their knowledge. The committee was made responsible not only to determine the date of arrival but also date of birth, date of and place of parents details on children, their educational background, occupations, marriage, divorce, etc. which in other countries even computers would have failed to do so due to enormous size of the memory required while the census created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among the people in southern Bhutan. The king Jigme Singye Wangchuk went on rewarding the census officials by approving one month's salary as bonus for their good work.

#### **4.1.2 Policies of *Driglam Namsha***

After implementing the sixth five year plan in 1986, the government of Bhutan, in order to preserve the Buddhist tradition and culture, proposed the policy of *Driglam Namsha*. It is a type of religious, cultural indoctrination based on Buddhism, which directly interferes with one's personal rights. It teaches such manners as how to eat, how to speak, how to bow down before the authorities, how to dress, etc. Under *Driglam Namsha* every citizen of Bhutan irrespective of his/her ethnic background and belief is required to learn Buddhist way of living through state sponsored training or else face the official percussions. It is a sinister way of enslaving the people's mind and heart by forcibly implementing this policy on non-*Ngalong* communities. The government tried to destroy the social etiquette and values practiced by other communities. Similar attempt had been made as far as in 1954 when the National Assembly of Bhutan had passed resolution which read "with the aims of converting the Nepalese of southern Bhutan into Buddhism, His Majesty the king was pleased to commend the establishment of monk body consisting of five monks with one head lama in Nepali village of southern Bhutan. In this connection the house recommended that *Chedo Lama* and *Shiphu Lama* would be the most appropriate choice for this assignment. Under this policy, the southern Bhutanese people were persuaded to follow Buddhism, which contradicted the Hindu culture.

#### **4.1.3. Dress Policy**

Under the pretext of national integration, the government banned wearing of all other dresses and has prescribed *Gho* and *Kira*, the national dress of the ruling *Dryukpa* community suited only in the cold climate. For the last several decades, the students in southern Bhutan where the temperature goes as high as 40 degree Celsius during summer had been allowed to wear school uniform – shirt and frock for the girls, shirt and pants for the boys. The wave of *Drukpanisation* swept the southern Bhutan schools where kids in extreme summer heat were required to wear the national dress *Gho* and *Kira* or else forgo the free school facilities.

A Royal *Kasho* (decree signed by the king) issued sometime in 1988 required all Bhutanese citizens to observe strict *Driglam Namsha* and wear the national dress. The Royal command, many believed written in Dzongkha, was misread and misinterpreted by the district authorities who were assigned the task to oversee implementation of the royal decree in rural areas. Nevertheless, the message was cleared-strict implementation of *Driglam Namsha* and the national dress. Over enthusiastic and keen at getting hundred percent result, the Home Ministry developed the task of implementation of the dress code to the Royal Bhutan Police (RBP) with instructions on penalty i.e. imposition of fine of Nu.100 (NRs.160) or imprisonment with hard labour for one week. The RBP personnel were encouraged by providing them 50% of fine for personal use. With this “make quick buck” project, the police went berserk and began a reign of harassment and persecution. The madness spread from Thimphu to district head quarters and then reached to the remotest country side. It especially affected the southern Bhutanese with a distinct culture, language and dress. The implementation of dress policy was so ruthless that the fine imposed had to be paid on the spot or face imprisonment. Such act of persecution required no permission from the court of law or observance of due process of law thus greatly undermining individual freedom and liberty.

#### **4.1.4 Language Policy**

Under *Driglam Namsha*, the government started a vigorous campaign of promoting *Dzongkha*- the national language spoken mostly by *Ngalongs*. A *Dzongkha* Development Committee headed by a Ministry was set up to develop and promote *Dzongkha* while teaching of Nepali in southern Bhutan was banned in February 1989 after remaining in school curriculum for over the last 35 years. In fact teaching of Nepali had began in 1950s in southern Bhutan schools, much before the government decided to take over while *Dzongkha* was included in the school curriculum only in late 1960s. All official correspondence in southern Bhutan was done in Nepali. The discriminatory approach adopted by the Royal Government on a sensitive issue like the language added another dimension to the already swelling problem. The following interview of King Jigme Singye Wangchuk in “The Economic Times” of Delhi of September 1990 explains clearly the sad fate that has befallen the Nepali language in Bhutan. The king said, “We recently decided to stop teaching Nepali in our schools. The National Assembly had suggested this a year ago, but I turned down the proposal then. Now the situation has changed more so because the Assam Government has also stopped the teaching of Nepali. I admit this is a very unpopular decision and I fully sympathies with Nepalese. The main aim of this kind of language policy adopted by

RGOB was to expel southern Nepali ethnic Bhutanese people and establish a monopoly government (AHURA, 1993).

#### **4.1.5 Forceful Implementation of Marriage Act**

The Marriage Act was forcefully implemented in 1988 targeted especially towards southern Bhutanese. The act prescribes a number of restrictions against nationals marrying non-nationals; such as denial of training and fellowship abroad, denial of promotion beyond the grade seven in civil services in the armed force and in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and denial of industrial and agricultural credits. The southern Bhutanese were mostly affected because traditionally and culturally they had been entering into matrimonial alliances with brides from the neighboring India and Nepal.

#### **4.1.6 The Policy of Green Belt**

The “Green Belt Policy” was approved by the National Assembly of Bhutan during its 69<sup>th</sup> session held from 19<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> March 1990. This policy required creation of a green forestry belt in all areas falling within one kilometer in the southern bordering districts with India. It is not worthy that these are the only available plains in the country. The plains are not barren fields but provide the best fertile paddy fields, the only means of survival of the southern population. Opposition to this policy was spontaneous as it aimed to destroy thousand of acres of lush paddy fields, demolition of houses and displacement of several thousand southern Bhutanese. The compensation decided by the government was unacceptable to the people who were largely farmers for they considered the land as permanent asset, which could last for generations whereas the compensation would last only for a few months. The government’s plan to shift the people to the areas in north was met with opposition, as it would mean de-linking them from their community. The above policy was highly discriminatory against the southern Bhutanese. Later on this policy was withdrawn due to the pressure of donor agencies as they have decided not to support the RGOB policy which was against the southern Bhutanese.

#### **4.1.7 Taxation and Forced Labor**

The Taxation system of RGOB is very unscientific and multiple taxes have to be paid on a same piece of land of poor farmers. For example, if one owns an acre of land, one is required to pay the land tax, if a house is built on that land- house tax has to be paid, if cash crops is grown on that land- tax on the cash crops is required to be paid, if cattle is reared- cattle tax is required ,etc. The system of compulsory labor contribution like *Chunidom*, *Shaptolemi*, *Gungdo-Woolo* and national work force are not only highly exploiting but have also added to the misery and poverty of the southern and eastern Bhutanese because of the unreasonable ways and difficult working conditions. The Bhutan Government permits people for free and compulsory labor throughout the year irrespective of age and sex, failing which calls for punitive measures. The 16<sup>th</sup> session of National Assembly held on July 1961 had prescribed use of police force in the event the people refuse to provide free labour. The Assembly decided “those refusing to report to work under the conscripted labour force would be brought to work under policy escorts.”

#### **4.1.8 Mass Demonstration and Protest against RGOB**

Those inhumane and discriminatory policies, laws and acts passed by the National Assembly were implemented by force without considering the culture, tradition, and socio- economic conditions of other section of population residing in the southern part of the country. The councilors from southern Bhutan Mr. Teknath Rizal and Vidyapathi Bhandari submitted a petition to the government and then to the king for review of the above Acts in 1988 were given political color. Mr. Rizal was terminated from the service and later released from jail. Utterly humiliated Mr. Rizal fled the country to Nepal where he formed the People's Forum for Human Rights Bhutan.

The increasing public resentment exploded on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1990 when a mass demonstration and public protest were held in several places in the kingdom demanding human rights, release of political prisoners, reforms in the National Assembly and Judiciary, freedom and democracy in the country under the banner of Bhutan People's Party (BPP). The Student Union of Bhutan, Bhutan Women's Organization and PFHRB greatly contributed to the management and originations of demonstrations. The people from all walks of life had participated in the procession continuously for 15 days. Never in the history of Bhutan had the people taken to streets in such a mass strength. The situation turned bloody with the deployment of Royal Bhutan Army (RBA). Due to the brutal suppression of the peaceful procession, several thousand (around 30,000) Bhutanese citizens crossed over to Indian State of Assam and West Bengal for protection. The RGOB went on punishing every citizen who participated in the peaceful procession. Thus a reign of terror by RBA was let loose which included arbitrary arrest, torture and imprisonment, rape of women and children, demolition and burning down houses and seizure of properties finally forceful eviction of every suspected government opponent. As a result there are currently more than one hundred thousand Bhutanese refugees living in Nepal (INHURED and GRINSO, 1993).

#### **4.2 Agencies and Organizations Involved in Care and Maintenance of Bhutanese Refugee Camps in Nepal**

- 1 Ministry of Home, Government of Nepal has been providing shelter site, safety, security, registration, distribution of identity card and camp management.
2. UNHCR: Financial support, manpower and other managerial assistance.
3. WFP: WFP has been providing basic and supplementary food materials.
4. LWF: LWF is responsible for developing the camp, distribution of food and commodities, logistic support, water supply and sanitation.
5. NRCS: NRCS is responsible for distribution of food and non-food items like soaps, clothes, kerosene, and vegetables. It is also responsible for prevention of fire, operation of ambulance in seven different camps for medical emergency and afforestation programs.

6. AMDA-Nepal: AMDA hospital at Damak is a referral hospital for Bhutanese refugees. It provides medicine and other medical services.  
UNICEF: It has been working for proper sanitation and prevention of malnutrition in camps.
7. OXFAM: OXFAM has been imparting non formal education to the refugees.
8. CARITAS-Nepal: CARITAS has been providing formal education and managing the schools in camps.
9. CIVICT: CIVICT is the centre for health and psychological treatments for the victim of tortures.

## **Major Activities of LWF and CARITAS-Nepal**

### **a) The Lutheran World Federation Nepal Department for World Service Bhutanese refugee Project:**

LWF Nepal continued its activities including water supply, sanitation, maintenance of shelter and other infrastructure. Similarly, Supervision and implementation of community services activities, awareness programs and skill /vocational training through LWF partner organizations also continued. The infrastructure of other agencies was repaired by hiring refugee skilled labor as and when needed. In addition, more than 3,500 refugees established ‘pot gardens’ (vegetable growing in clay pots) with WFP-LWF support.

The possibility of LWF Nepal assuming the role of UNHCR implementing partner for the distribution of food and non-food items in the Bhutanese Refugee Project was negotiated. Community development activities were implemented through LWF Nepal support to the Bhutanese Refugee Women Forum (BRWF) and Bhutanese Refugee Aid for Victims of Violence (BRAVVE), and a gender-sensitive HIV/AIDS awareness program was conducted by AMDA (LWF, 2005, p 18)

### **Refugee camps care and maintenance: Major activities in 2005 (LWF, 2005 p 21)**

- ) Repaired 3,168 refugee shelters and 2,610 refugee latrines and supplied 22lit/person/day water.
- ) Constructed 34 new shelters and 10 toilets for newly registered families. RCC poles provided for 1,224 refugee shelters.
- ) Gravity flow water supply system constructed for Timai refugees and local communities of Santinager VDC, Jhapa. Three submersible motor pumps and two transformers were procured for existing boreholes and extend electric power.
- ) Electrification completed for 5 refugee camps. Repaired 4 public latrines. Maintained camp access road, internal camp roads and some bamboo foot bridges.
- ) Repaired 748 classrooms, 2 blocks (for people with disability) and 120 school toilets.
- ) Constructed 7 day care centers.

- J Repaired 43 agency blocks (office blocks for UNHCR and implementing partners, police posts, and camp management committee offices) and 45 health-building in the camps.
- J Closed down auto mechanical workshop that gave services to the vehicle fleets of the agencies.
- J Facilitated 7-refugee children forums aiming at raising awareness and protecting child rights in the camps.
- J 7,319 (boy-3,761 and girl-3,551) students received various awareness raising and child rights training.
- J Organized 3,542 refugee families and established the pot gardens nearby their huts.
- J Organized gender sensitive HIV/AIDS awareness programs for school students attending class 8 and 9 in all refugee camps.
- J 721 vulnerable people received vocational training through BRAVVE.
- J Through BRWF: implemented social awareness program in all camps, provided 37 training/workshops for 1,103 refugees (male 390 and female 713). BRWFF engaged 1,441 refugees (312 male and 1,126 female) in the various income generation activities.
- J 500 refugee women of seven camps started the women in business programs and received training on it.
- J 5 days, Institution development training conducted for 28 persons (26 female and 2 male), leadership training for 14 re3fugees, peace and reconciliation training for 35 persons
- J 7 days, dalmod/papad making training conducted for 14 female refugees in the camps.
- J 2 months, cycle/rickshaw repairing training completed for 28 persons.
- J 3 months, bamboo furniture making training conducted for 14 persons

## **b) CARITAS- Nepal**

Bhutanese Refugee Education Program (BREP) implemented by CARITAS Nepal. CARITAS Nepal has been providing education and managing the school of the refugee camps. Jesuit refugee Service helps CARITAS- Nepal with administrative personnel and resource people. UNHCR funds pre-primary to class eight for providing education to the refugee children. In pre-primary section there are classes from pre- primary to III, where New Approach Primary Education (NAPE) syllabus is followed. From class VI to class VIII, mixed syllabus is followed which includes the revised syllabus of Nepal District Board, Dzongkha- national language of Bhutan and social studies of Bhutan. Class VIII refugee students appear Jhapa District Board Examination. Students of class IX and X in the refugee camps are funded by CARITAS-Nepal. The CARITAS-Nepal also facilitate in higher studies for refugee students who are studying nearby colleges and higher secondary schools.

Altogether there are 42 schools in the seven Bhutanese refugee camps. The total students in the refugee camps from pre-primary to class VIII are 27,972 as of 30 June

2006. Similarly there are 4,500 refugee student studying in class XI and XII in Nepal and in India. The total refugee teachers in all the seven refugee camps are 982 out of which 315 are female teachers and 667 are male teachers. The total staff working in CARITAS-Nepal at Damak sub-office is 45. Out of 45 CARITAS staff, 9 are Nepali nationals, 6 staff is non-national and 30 staff is refugees.

### **Disability Program**

In every Bhutanese refugee camp there is a disability center. There are total of 3347 disable refugees in the camps. The disable center provides education and other necessary treatment to the disable individuals.

### **Child Play Center (CPC)**

Similarly there is one each child play center in every refugee camp which has enrolled a total of 3393 children from age group 3 to 5 years old. These children are provided basic psychological treatment and help them to adjust in various environments before entering in pre-primary school.

### **Vocational Program**

Vocational training program with collaboration with World Food Program (WFP) is being provided from two vocational centers- one from Damak and another from Birtamode to both the refugees and the locals. The vocational centers have been providing trainings in nine different areas such as; motor mechanics, plumbing, electrician, beautician, muda-making, hair cutting, electronic mechanics, tailoring and knitting.

During 2001 -2005, more than 130 projects were operated for the development of schools inside camps and refugee affected areas. The total budget distributed for this purpose was Rs.13, 500,000. CAFOD has provided outlet program and emergency program such as firefighter, flood etc. both in side camps and refugee affected areas. (Source: CARITAS Office, Damak, June 2006)

## **4.3. Situation of Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal**

With the change in present political environment and dramatic restructuring of the Government of Nepal, UNHCR is hopeful that the new leadership will demonstrate its commitment in finding, and implementing comprehensive solutions for the Bhutanese refugees, UNHCR offers protection and general care and maintenance to the refugees, who have been confined to the camps for over 15 years. With each passing year, questions surrounding the sustainability of the current level of support arise anew and UNHCR has had to rely to a great extent on the international donor community, which has generously contributed to funding assistance programs for Bhutanese refugees for over a decade now.

Over the years, UNHCR has carried out its protection Mandate in close co-operation with the government of Nepal and extended its expertise and assistance in the search for durable solutions. Nonetheless, as of today, even in some cases despite protection concerns, not a single refugee has been able to voluntarily repatriate to Bhutan of avail of another durable solution.

### **A few basic facts**

Bhutanese refugees began entering Nepal at the end of 1990 and UNHCR began providing extemporized assistance of Bhutanese refugees around the beginning of 1991. By September 1991, there were an estimated 5,000 refugees in the eastern part of the country. A major emergency assistance program was launched in the early part of 1992 together with the World Food Program (WFP) and various non-governmental organizations as implementing partners and at the request of the government that UNHCR coordinate all relief assistance to the Bhutanese refugees. UNHCR, in co-operation with the National Unit for Co-ordination of refugee Affairs (NUCRA) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the Government of Nepal are primarily responsible for providing protection to the refugees and assisting them in various sectors such as health care, education, water supply, sanitation, shelter, domestic needs and legal assistance. Basic food rations and supplementary food items are provided by WFP. UNHCR's current partners in the implementation of the Bhutanese refugee operations are: Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Caritas Nepal, the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia- Nepal AMDA), Nepal Bar Association (NBA) - Jhapa unit, as well as, on a needs basis, the Centre for Victims of Torture (CVICT).

Today, it is estimated that around 106,000 Bhutanese refugees reside in seven refugee camps in eastern Nepal: Beldangi I, Beldangi II, Beldangi Ext., Khudunabari, Timai and Goldhap in Jhapa district and Sanischare in Morang district.

### **Bilateral Talks**

Based on an agreement reached between Nepal and Bhutan in 1993, negotiations on a solution to the Bhutanese refugee issue have taken place in a bilateral framework. Since this time the government of Nepal and the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGB0) have pursued no less than 15 rounds of bilateral talks. In 1993, it was agreed, by the two countries, that the people leaving in the camps should be placed in four different categories: (1) bona-fide Bhutanese, if they have been evicted forcefully; (2) Bhutanese who left Bhutan on their own choice/initiative; (3) Non-Bhutanese and (4) Bhutanese who have committed criminal acts. At the same time both countries agreed to undertake a joint verification of the refugee population and to place refugees in one of the above mentioned categories. As decided at the 10<sup>th</sup> Round of Ministerial Joint Committee (MJC) talks, the Joint Verification Team (JVT) started the verification process for the 12,500 refugees in Khudunabari on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2001. The categorization, as endorsed by the 14<sup>th</sup> MJC meeting was announced to the Khudunabari camp population on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2003.

The result of the JVT process left UNHCR and international observers greatly concerned, as over 70% of the Khudunabari refugees were categorized as persons



who had voluntarily left Bhutan, thus losing their citizenship in accordance with Bhutanese Laws. In addition, some 85 families were categorized as criminals and even babies and young children born in the camps were placed in this category. Further, UNHCR was greatly disturbed by categorization that would lead to the splitting of families as a result of being placed within categories. In the end, out of a camp population of 12,500, only 293 individuals (74 families) were found to be bona-fide Bhutanese able to repatriate.

The government of Nepal assured UNHCR that a fair appeals opportunity would be given to refugees who wished to question his or her categorization. After the categorizations were announced in June, over 94 percent of the Khudunabari camp population appealed the results. However, the bilaterally agreed process did not comply with international legal standards, which calls for an independent body to be the reviewing instance of such appeals. During this time, the government of Nepal continued to reassure application of the principle of “due process of law” whereby it would be the MJC itself that would decide on each individual appeal, as opposed to the first categorization where all decisions were reached by JVT and only endorsed (as a package) by the 14<sup>th</sup> MJC. Appeals were set to be decided upon by the 15<sup>th</sup> MJC scheduled to take place in late October 2003. The outcome of this MJC meeting was mixed, as none of the appeals of categories 1, 2 and 4 were upheld while the appeals of category 3 were yet to be finalized. Yet the MJC did reach an agreement and set a roadmap for long awaited repatriation to start in early 2004, during which UNHCR was to ensure the voluntariness of return. This was and still is a positive achievement which needs to be capitalized on.

Despite the fact that a date for repatriation was set, answer to intrinsic questions surrounded the modalities and conditions to return had yet to be announced. Then in December 2003, an information session was conducted in Khudunabari camp by the JVT on details surrounding return- the refugees were taken back by the harsh conditions presented to them which stipulated that they would be placed in refugee camps in Bhutan with even less freedoms than they have enjoyed while living in exile. As a result, some of the refugees reacted violently. Understandably, perceptions and expatiations surrounding the conditions of return held by both sides were diametrically opposed to each other and led to what is commonly referred to as the ‘incident of 22 December’ (2003) in Khudunabari camp; leading to the delay of the repatriation and breakdown of the bilateral process.

In late 2005, at the sidelines of the SAARC and UN General Assembly, the bilateral process between the Royal Government of Bhutan and the Government of Nepal- stalled for over two years, showed potential with informal talks held between the Ministers of the two countries. RGOB reportedly wrote to the government of Nepal, starting a willingness to accept the return of categories I and IV. Throughout the later part of 2005 the international community continued to increase pressure on the government of Nepal and RGOB. Also significant, for the first time refugees openly advocated for a comprehensive approach to durable solutions including resettlement and local integration.

The new government of Nepal is trying to restart the bilateral process. In this regard informal contacts and discussions between the two governments are taking place since June 2006. UNHCR has started its willingness to participate in a tripartite process if called upon to do so; this has often been requested by the refugees and NGOs. To date, UNHCR has been kept out of the bilateral process.

### **Security Issues**

The political developments in April 2006 have brought about the foundations for longstanding peace as well as an immediate ceasefire agreed upon by both sides of the conflict. UNHCR remains optimistic that this process will continue. Not surprisingly, the long-standing conflict in Nepal has at the times affected humanitarian access to the refugees in addition to negatively imparting the general daily security situation in and around the camps, particularly following the withdrawal of police presence from the camps in 2003 after a attack on the police post in Khudunabari camp. Since this time there have been problems in enforcing law and order in the camps.

The lack of police presence has compelled refugees themselves to under take task that were normally performed by the state security forces; such as transporting suspects to local police stations. UNHCR continues to work closely with the Community Watch Teams (CWTs) to empower and encourage their capacity to assist in security within the camps through additional training and support from UNHCR. UNHCR remains hopeful that a police presence will be reinstated in all of the camps in near future.

Lack of security lighting in public spaces at night has further complicated the safety and security environment in the camps. In response the office is planning to pilot a solar light project in 2006. With the successful piloting of this project and availability of necessary funding, the office plans to bring solar lighting to all of the camps in 2007.

Recently, it is noted that there has been an increase in radical youth groups in the camps who do not feel that traditional refugee leaders are adequately representing them. Refugee parents have expressed concern surrounding the nature of such youth activities.

It is hoped that the neutrality, protection, safety and security of the camps will be maintained and respected by all parties in the spirit of the UN Basic Operating Guidelines (BOGs) that have been accepted by all concerned. Equally important is that the youth do not engage in activities that are incompatible with their status as refugees and jeopardize their prospects for repatriation or other durable solutions.

UNHCR has been planning to open Youth Friendly Centers in near future which focus on skill training, recreational programs, and advocacy activities. These Youth Friendly Centers work to address the concerns of the youth through an integrated approach, including security, confidence building, psycho-social needs, vocational

and skills training. In addition, UNHCR has to continue a dialogue between with youth and the relevant refugee stakeholders in order to better understanding the dynamics of their situation and address it properly in the context of UNHCR's protection mandate.

In the upcoming months UNHCR will also be launching an informational session within the camps on durable solutions in order to educate the refugees on what durable solutions means, what options would be open to them and how the durable solutions works, in order to dispel any misinformation, fears or apprehension refugees may hold. Refugees will also be educated in their rights under international laws surrounding durable solutions and voluntary repatriation, should these options arise.

### **Protection Issues**

#### **a. Involvement of Women in Refugee Committees**

In 2005, the CMC elections saw fundamental procedural changes in order to democratize the process; including the introduction of a secret ballot system. The need for these changes was raised by refugees, particularly refugee women, to ensure better representation of the interests of all segments of the refugee community in the CMC. As a result there has been a noteworthy rise in female candidates nominated over the past two years. 2006 saw a total of 51% elected female CMC members, up from 49% last year and 43% in 2004.

This illustrates a change in the perception of the refugee community, pointing to a growing awareness of refugee men and increasing empowerment of refugee women. This is a noteworthy achievement for UNHCR and its partners. Women have also been appointed in the Community Watch Team to strengthen protection of women and children in the refugee community in particular with respect to SGBV

#### **b. SGBV**

Despite security challenges, the office has continued its focus on the vulnerability of refugee women, children and other identified protection cases through its system of monitoring and response to instances of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV). As in the past, the SGBV program remained a core component for UNHCR Nepal's work with special focus given to the High Commissioner's five commitments to refugee women, Guidelines for the Protection of Refugee Women and Children, and the Guidelines for Prevention and Response to Sexual and Gender Based Violence. As such, the office promoted the status of refugees' women and children and targeted SGBV incidents through a variety of mechanisms, such as informal campaigns highlighting gender issues with the intent of raising community awareness. The office also maintained timely and responsive legal, medical, and psychosocial support for survivors of SGBV.

This comprehensive system continues to be improved and monitoring increased through active participation of many segments of the refugee population such as through the use of Gender Focal points in the camps and increased accessibility of our

staff. UNHCR also strengthened its network with local human rights NGOs in addressing SGBV issues such as trafficking, including cross border movements.

Through UNHCR 's implementing partner Nepal Bar Association (NBA), The office made breakthrough in several judicial decisions in 2005, particularly concerning SGBV survivors. The District Courts of Jhapa and Morang were cooperative in introducing new practices when addressing refugee related cases, particularly those involving SGBV crimes.

#### c. Census/Registration of Vital Events

Approval of the government to allow UNHCR to conduct a refugee census in order to obtain accurate and updated information surrounding the Bhutanese refugees living in all seven of the camps in eastern Nepal has been requested by the office since 2004. Most of the information gathered for Bhutanese refugees was compiled at the time of their arrival, and has not been checked or updated for over 15 years. Although births, deaths, and transfers have been recorded by the Government, the data of the entire population cannot be checked off of these limited records. Accurate information surrounding the vital details of the Bhutanese refugee population is now essential. Minimum requirement of any large scale humanitarian operation in terms of delivering appropriate levels of assistance and protection as well as enabling UNHCR to target support and special programs for vulnerable or disabled refugees.

#### d. Durable Solution

The bilateral process, stalled since December 2003, was revived in late 2005 following informal talks on the side-lines of the UN General Assembly and the SAARC Conference between the Royal Government of Bhutan and the government of Nepal which was followed up with an exchange of letters. The new Government of Nepal recently took up the issue with Bhutan informally while at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) ministerial meeting in May 2006. UNHCR remains expectant that the bilateral dialogue will officially restart soon.

International recognition of the urgency to find solutions has been mounting within the framework of Working Group on Resettlement. At present there is a basically harmonious position among donors the at includes the strategic use of resettlement and the potential need to internationalize thee issue should bilateral talks produce no tangible results, as resettlement opportunities would not be open indefinitely. Within the Bhutanese refugee community, a perceptible change has been noted of an increasing openness to other durable solutions in addition to repatriation. In discussions with the refugee community, some members did not exclude the possibility of resettlement

## 4.4 Demographic Composition and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents inside the Refugee Camp

### 4.4.1 Distribution of respondents according to their educational status

**Table 1**

<b>Educational level</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Primary	10	27.8
Secondary	8	22.2
Intermediate	8	22.2
Bachelor	4	11.1
Master Degree	2	5.55
Illiterate	4	11.1
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 1 shows the educational status of respondents. Among the respondents, 89% are literate and only 11% are illiterate. This indicates that literacy rate has increased due to formal and informal classes conducted inside the refugee camp. More than 70% of them have attained up to intermediate level. This reflects that the refugee population is utilizing the opportunities provided by CARITAS-Nepal and Oxfam to a maximum extent. There are less number of refugee population acquiring master degree and bachelor because they cannot afford for higher studies.

### 4.4.2 Distribution of respondents according to religion

**Table 2**

<b>Religion</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Hindu	24	66.7
Buddhist	7	19.4
Kirat	3	8.3
Christian	2	5.6
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Bhutanese refugees' society is a multi-religious society. Despite they practice different religions; they respect each other's religion and live in total harmony and peace. In other words we can say that there is no religious discrimination and conflicts in the camps. According to this study (Table 2), it was found that majority of refugee people follow Hindu (66.7%) followed by Buddhist (19.4%), Kirat (8.3%) and Christian (5.6%).

#### 4.4.3 Distribution of respondents according to caste /ethnicity

Table 3

Caste/ Ethnicity	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Brahmin	7	19.44
Chhetri	9	25.00
Sharki	1	02.80
Kami	3	08.33
Damai	2	05.55
Limbu	4	11.11
Gurung	2	05.55
Magar	2	05.55
Rai	3	08.33
Newar	3	08.33
Total	36	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Like Nepal, Bhutan is also a country of heterogeneous society. There are sixteen different ethnic groups have been living in Bhutan. The heterogeneous refugee society has been living in peaceful environment in the refugee camps. Table 3 shows that the highest proportion of respondents is from Chhetri (25%) which is followed by Brahmin (19.44%), occupational group (around 17%) like Sharki, Kami, Damai and ethnic group (around 39%) like Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Magar and Newar.

#### 4.4.4 Distribution of respondents according to their occupation

Table 4

Occupation	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Social Service	7	19.44
Business	4	11.11
Camp Management	5	13.90
Labor	9	25.00
Without Occupation	11	30.60
Total	36	100

Source: Field survey, 2006.

Table 4 shows the information about occupational status of respondents in the camp. It was studied that 19.44 % of respondents are involved in teaching activity in the camp's school. They are involved in imparting formal and informal education to their future generation. Some of the refugee population is also found doing small business (11% respondents) inside the camp. They have been running small business like Pan-shop, grocery, tailoring, cycle repairing, vegetables, clothes, supplying diary produce (milk, curd, butter and cheese), etc. Around 20% of respondents said that they have been engaged in proper and efficient management of camp. Their main responsibilities are; distribution of food items and non-food items, counseling and settling of quarrels and conflicts and keeping records of different activities, events and incidents inside the refugee camp. 25% respondents fall under unskilled and semi-skilled labors. Unskilled labors do low profile activities in and around refugee

camps. The unskilled labors are hard working individuals who are compelled to work as ploughmen, glasscutters, paddy harvesters, coolies, etc in the local villages. They are treated and paid lowly by the by local people. The semi-skilled labors comprise carpenters, masons, etc. Majority of the respondents (30.6%) were found without any occupation. They have nothing to do and some are indulged in unsocial activities like playing cards, carom board, theft, trafficking, alcoholism, etc.

#### 4.4.5 Distribution of respondents according to age and sex

**Table 5**

Age Group (In Years)	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
10-20	3	13.00	1	07.70	4	11.10
20-30	6	26.10	4	30.80	10	27.80
30-40	7	30.40	3	23.10	10	27.80
40-50	2	08.70	2	15.40	4	11.10
50-60	5	21.70	3	23.10	8	22.20
Total	23	100	13	100	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 5 shows that the proportion of respondents of the age groups (21-30) and (31-40) years with 27.8 % each, which is followed by the age groups (10-20) and (41-50) years with 11.1 % each. Similarly, the number of male respondents is higher (63.9%) than female respondents (36.1%) in this study.

#### 4.4.6 Distribution of respondents according to economic status.

**Table 6**

Economic Status	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Rich	4	11.10
Middle	28	77.80
Poor	4	11.10
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

According to the economic status, refugees are classified in to three groups. They are rich, middle and poor groups. Table 6 shows that 77.8 % respondents lie in middle classes who are followed by (11.1%) proportion of both rich class and poor class.

#### 4.4.7 Distribution of Bhutanese refugee population according to camps

**Table 7**

Camps	Population			Percentage
	Male	Female	Total	
Khudunabari	6,756	6,662	13,418	12.55
Beldagi-I	9,393	9,004	18,397	17.20
Beldagi-II	11,499	11,111	22,610	21.14
Beldagi-II Extension	5,933	5,682	11,615	10.86
Timai	5,261	5,066	10,327	09.66

Goldhap	4,944	4,580	9,524	08.90
Sanischare	10,790	10,248	21,038	19.67
Total	54,576	52,353	106,929	100.00

Source: RCU office Chandragadi-Jhapa, June 2006.

Table 7 shows the distribution of refugees' population in seven different camps in Jhapa and Morang districts of eastern Nepal. The highly populated camps are Beldagi-II (21.14%), Sanischare (19.67%) and Beldagi-I (17.2%). The small camps are Beldagi-II Extension (10.86%), Timai (9.66%) and Goldhap (8.9%). Khudunabari Bhutanese refugee camp is a medium sized camp. It holds population of 13,418 (Record of June 2006). Comparatively the male population is slightly higher than female population in every refugee camp.

#### 4.4.8 Distribution of respondents according to the role of women in camp

**Table 8**

<b>Roles</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Domestic Chores	23	64.30
Service	4	11.11
Labor	6	16.33
Others	3	08.33
Total	36	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 8 shows the role of refugee women in the camp. 64.3% of them are reported to have been involved in daily cooking, washing and taking care of household's activities. Some of the educated refugee women are involved in services (11.11%) like teacher, health workers, and camp management activities. Nearly 16 % of female are engaged in semi-skilled and unskilled labors like gardening, peon, knitting tailoring, weaving, etc.

#### 4.4.9 Distribution of respondents according to the types of settlement in camp

**Table 9**

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Scatter huts	-	-
Cluster huts	-	-
Parallel huts	36	100
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 9 shows the settlement pattern in the refugee camp in Nepal. The researcher found there is 100% parallel settlement. The huts are built with bamboos and thatch. Some places the parallel huts are very congested and some time difficult to identify ones own hut. A toilet constructed close to the hut has to be shared by two huts.



#### 4.4.10 Distribution of respondents according to helpfulness of local people

**Table 10**

Local people's helpfulness	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	14	38.9
No	22	61.1
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 10 gives the information about the helpfulness of local people. 61.1% respondents reported that local people are not cooperative and helpful. Rest of the respondents (38.9%) reported that local people are helpful for them.

#### 4.4.11 Distribution of respondents according to the satisfaction on goods and services provided by different agencies in refugee camp.

**Table 11**

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	10	27.8
No	26	72.2
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Many implementing agencies and organizations are providing food and non-food goods and commodities for refugee in camps. Table 11 shows that only 27.8% respondents reported that the goods and services provided by the implementing agencies is satisfactory. But 72.2 % of them said that it is very difficult to sustain with limited amount of basic necessities with out other supplementary food provided by different agencies in Nepal.

#### 4.4.12 Distribution of respondents according to response to the prevalence of communicable diseases in camp

**Table 12**

Communicable Disease	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Diarrhea/dysentery	12	33.33
Tuberculosis	9	25
Typhoid	6	16.66
Others	9	25
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 12 provides the information about various types of communicable diseases prevalent in Bhutanese refugee camps in Nepal. Among the different communicable diseases diarrhea/dysentery (33.33%), tuberculosis (25%) and Typhoid (16.66%) are wide spread. Other diseases like cholera, jaundice, viral fever, etc are also found in rare cases.

#### 4.4.13 Distribution of respondents according to their feelings in camp

**Table 13**

Feeling of refugee	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Good	2	5.6
Normal	12	33.33
Bad	22	61.1
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 13 shows the respondents' feeling in the camp, 61.1% respondents feel bad to staying in the camp. Only 33.3% and 5.6 % respondents feel normal and good respectively in the camp.

#### 4.4.14 Distribution of respondents according to the way of spending leisure time

**Table 14**

Spend leisure time in	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Studying	18	50.0
Domestic chores	10	27.8
Watching T.V	1	2.8
Playing games	7	19.4
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 14 shows that the majority of (50 %) of respondents are spending their leisure time in studies. 19.4 % respondents reported that they spent their leisure time by playing games and sports. Around 28% population respondents said that they spend their leisure time by doing household works. Only little percentage of the respondents have been enjoying with televisions and listen radios.

#### 4.4.15 Distribution of respondents according to cause of entering in Nepal.

**Table 15**

Cause to enter Nepal	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Social	4	11.11
Economic	1	02.78
Political	28	77.78
All	3	08.33
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Data in table 15 shows the respondents' causes of entering in Nepal during early 1990s. Around 78% respondents reported that the causes of entering into Nepal is political. Rest of the population have said the causes of entering in Nepal is social, economic. This study reveals that southern Bhutanese are politically victimized by the autocratic monarchy of Bhutan.

#### 4.4.16. Distribution of respondents according to problems faced by them

**Table 16**

Faced problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Addiction	0	0
Quarrellings	4	1.11
Robbery	2	5.6
All	21	58.3
No	9	25.0
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Data in Table 16 shows the problem faced by refugee in the camps, only 25 % respondent reported that no one problem faced by them in the camp. Rests of the respondents (75%) are facing many problems like addiction, quarrel, robbery and theft, etc.

#### 4.4.17 Distribution of respondents according to relation with local people

**Table 17**

Relation with Locals	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	10	27.80
No	26	72.20
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 17 gives the information about the respondents' relation with local people. 27.8% respondents have reported that they have matrimonial and close relationships with local people but other remaining 72.2 % respondents have no any type relationship with local people.

#### 4.4.18 General ration entitlement for beneficiaries according to family size (Kg)

**Table 18**

Commodity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Rice	5.600	11.200	16.800	22.400	28.000	33.600	39.200	44.800
Pulses	0.560	1.120	1.680	2.240	2.800	3.360	3.920	4.480
SWG	0.280	0.560	0.840	1.120	1.400	1.680	1.960	2.240
V-Oil	0.350	0.700	1.050	1.400	1.750	2.100	2.450	2.800
Sugar	0.280	0.560	0.840	1.120	1.400	1.680	1.960	2.240
Salt	0.105	0.210	0.315	0.420	0.525	0.630	0.735	0.840
Unilito	0.490	0.980	1.470	1.960	2.450	2.940	3.430	3.920

Source: RCU Office, Khudunabari Camp, June 2006.

The Table 18 shows the amount of ration distribution according to the family size in the refugee camp. As we move from left to right along the row the amount of distribution of different commodities go on increasing as the number of individual members increase. For instance, a member in a family gets 5.600 Kg rice, two members get 11.200 Kg, and eight members get 44.800 Kg rice for 14 days and so on.

## 4.5 Demographic Composition and Socio-Economic Characteristic of Respondents in the Host Community

### 4.5.1 Distribution of respondents according to caste/ ethnicity

**Table 19**

Caste / Ethnicity	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Brahman	15	41.7
Chhetri	12	33.3
Tamang	2	5.6
Limbu	2	5.6
Subba	2	5.6
Dhimal	1	2.8
Magar	2	5.6
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

The community of the research area is composed by different ethnic groups. People of the study are all migrated at different period of time except indigenous ethnic groups like Dhimal, Rajbangshi and Meche. Most of them have settled here from hilly region of eastern part of Nepal and India. Table19 shows that the highest proportion of respondent is from Brahmin (41.7%) which is followed by Chhetri (33.3%). Rest of the castes/ethnic groups constitute less than 6% of the respondents.

### 4.5.2 Distribution of respondents according to their religion

**Table 20**

Religion	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Hindu	29	80.60
Buddhist	3	08.30
Kirat	3	08.30
Christian	1	02.80
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Being a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious society, Nepali people have been following different religions in Nepal. Hindu population in the country has been consistently higher than other. Table 20 shows that overwhelming majority (80.6%) of the respondents are Hindus, whereas 8.3% each from Buddhist and Kirat.

### 4.5.2 Distribution of respondents according to educational level.

**Table 21**

Education level	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Primary	2	5.6
Secondary	18	50.0

Intermediate	6	16.7
Bachelor	6	16.7
Master	4	11.1
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Education is the main weapon of development. It can play a vital role to accelerate the development of a country. Educated citizen can lead the country to the path of progress. As a result it can be considered as the back – bone of a country. Table 21 shows the information about the respondents' educational level. More than 50% respondents are studying in secondary level which is followed by I.A and B.A levels with 16.7% in equal proportion. Master degree and primary level of respondents seem 11.1 and 5.6% respectively.

#### 4.5.3 Distribution of respondents according to their occupations

**Table 22**

Occupation	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Job	6	16.7
Business	12	33.3
Farmer	16	44.4
Labor	2	5.6
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Nepal is a landlocked and predominantly an agricultural country. The main source of income of Nepalese is agricultural and allied activities. When we analyze the Table 22, we can find that the majority (44.4%) respondents engaged in agriculture and related activities which are followed by service (16.7%) and labor 5.6%.

#### 4.5.4 Distribution of respondents according to age- sex group

**Table 23**

Age Group	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage	total	Percentage
10-20	9	40.90	6	42.90	15	41.70
20-30	7	31.80	4	28.60	11	30.60
30-40	4	18.20	2	14.30	6	16.70
40-50	2	09.10	2	14.30	4	11.10
Total	22	100	14	100	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 23 shows that the proportion of respondents is higher (41.709%) in age group (10-20) years than other age groups. The low number of respondent's age group is (40-50) years with 11.1%. Similarly the number of male respondents is higher (61.1%) than female respondents (38.9%) in this study.

#### 4.5.5 Distribution of respondent according to their condition of security after the establishment of refugee camp

**Table 24**

Security condition	No. of Respondent	Percentage
Good	2	5.6
Normal	7	19.4
Deteriorating	27	75.0
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Similarly, Table 24 reveals that 75.0% respondents have reported deteriorating condition of security which is followed by 19.4 % respondents with view of bad security condition after the establishment of refugee camp. Only the 5.6% respondents have said about the good security condition in the host community.

#### 4.5.6 Distribution of respondents according to unsocial activities in the presence/establishment of refugee camp

**Table 25**

Unsocial Activities	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Increasing	27	75
Decreasing	-	-
As Usual	9	25
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 25 provides the information of unsocial activities like sexual abuse, prostitution, smuggling, theft, gang fight, quarrel, etc in and around the camps. It is noted that 75% of the respondents have given the view that such unsocial activities are frequently noticed but 25% claim that either they are unaware or as it was.

#### 4.5.7 Distribution of respondents according to disappearance of domestic animals or other things from their field

**Table 26**

Disappearance of animals or other goods	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	28	77.8
No	8	22.2
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 26 shows that 77.8% of the respondents have experienced the lost of animals or other goods from their area but only 22.2 % have not experienced such lost.

#### 4.5.8 Distribution of respondents according to their response on earning

**Table 27**

Affects in earning	No. of respondents	Percentage
Yes	16	44.4
No	20	55.6
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 27 shows that there is severe negative affect on earning after the presence of refugees. The proportion of respondent is higher (55.6%) on the attitude of not affecting the earning than on the attitude of affects on earning (44.4%) of the local people.

#### 4.5.9 Distribution of respondent according to the source of energy (fuel) before the establishment of camp

**Table 28**

Source of Fuel	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Kerosene	6	16.70
Fire-wood	19	52.80
Gobar Gas	9	25.00
L.P.G.	2	05.80
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 28 shows that majority (52.8%) respondents were using firewood for daily purposes like cooking food, boiling water, getting warmth, etc, which is followed by 25 % respondent by using gobar-gas. The use of kerosene and L.P.G. fuel were negligible. After the settlement of refugee camp, the use of kerosene oil for lightening and cooking purposes had increased due to easily and cheaply available of kerosene in the camp (some of the refugees used to exchange kerosene with other goods in the local area). Now it has decreased again due to high prize and stoppage of distribution in the camp. Some refugees are illegally involved collecting firewood from the nearby jungles which has adversely hampered the local people. Now they are compelled to buy firewood after the establishing camp at nearby jungles. They also used other alternative energy to fulfill their needs.

#### 4.5.10 Distribution of respondents according to response on the environmental degradation

**Table 29**

Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	27	75
No	9	25
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 29 gives the information about the degradation of environment through various activities done by refugees and its implementing agencies. In this study, 75.0 % respondents reported about the degradation of environment through harmful activities like deforestation, defecation in open fields, removing a huge volume of soil for construction of huts, burning of fire brigade, thread spinning, etc.

**4.5.11. Distribution of respondents according to the facilities they have been getting from nearby forest**

**Table 30**

<b>Response</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	21	58.30
No	15	41.70
Total	36	100

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

The accessibility to forest facilities to local people has been decreased tremendously. Now they are deprived from firewood, grass, grazing field and fodder. Table 30 reveals that 58.3 % respondents reported that they were devoid of facilities from nearby forest, which is followed by 41.7 % with negative response.

**4.5.12 Distribution of respondents according to the facilities they have been receiving in refugee affected area**

**Table 31**

<b>Response</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	33	91.7
No	3	8.3
Total	36	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2006.

Table 31 shows that the majority (91.7%) of respondents have been facilitated with basic medical care, supply of safe drinking water, vocational training to the local youths, training on flood and soil erosion control methods, training on vegetables farming, etc. as a people of refugee affected area with in the reach of 10 Km diameter. Only 8.3 % respondent are not facilitated because of some other factors



## **4.6 Impacts in the Host Community due to the Presence of Bhutanese Refugee in Nepal**

### **4.6.1 Negative Impacts**

#### **Economic impacts**

The problem of unemployment has been accelerating after the arrival of Bhutanese refugee in Jhapa and Morang districts of eastern Nepal. Majority of the active refugee population are unskilled and semiskilled. To support their necessities provided by implementing agencies, they are engaged as carpenters, masons, coolies, manual labors, teachers, technicians, professionals, etc in nearby towns and villages. These people are willing to work even at low wages and salaries which have hardly hit local labors and other employees of the community. There is a cut throat competition between refugee and local people for limited jobs and services available nearby towns. It has been observed that quarrels and conflicts became the daily routine.

- ) Demand for goods and commodities have been increasing rapidly for more than one hundred thousand Bhutanese refugees, but the supply could not be increased in the same proportion. This has lead to rise in market price. The majority of poor people cannot afford to pay higher price for goods and services available in nearby towns. The influx of large number of refugee has adversely threatened the very survival of labor and lower income groups.
- ) The local farmers have reported that the agricultural production has been decreasing every year despite intensive modern farming practice. Drying of land caused by deforestation, abstraction of huge volume of underground water to supply in camps, addition of harmful chemicals from motor workshop, hospitals and vehicles have been the main reasons for the reduction in agricultural production.
- ) The refugees who are financially sound have been operating business activities inside as well as outside the camp. The local businessmen especially from villages find competitive and challenging task with the refugees who devote total time and effort in business activities. We can see that many hotels, bus services, language and computer institutions, boarding schools, vendors, grocery and vegetables shops run by refugees at various nearby towns like Birtamode, Damak, Patheri, Madumalla, etc.

#### **Social Impacts**

Unsocial activities have been increasing in and around refugee camps. It has been the main concern and challenging task for locals, different agencies, organizations and local administrator. Sever research and studies have observed that gambling, prostitution, alcoholism, girl trafficking, drug addition, theft and robbery and other illegal activities are increasing since establishment of refugee camps in eastern Nepal.

- ) Many young refugees are involved in theft and robbery in near by areas to fulfill supplementary needs and more over their temptation to acquire modern facilities and entertainments. Police report and other evidence have revealed that some of them are imprisoned in different jails of Jhapa and Morang districts. Loss of domestic animals, motor cycle, bicycles, food grains,

ornaments utensils and money, etc. have been reported from nearby towns and villages.

- ) Although selling of alcohol 'jaad, raksi' near by refugee areas has made some locals economically well off but added fuel to the fire in the community in general and in the refugee camps in particular. The refugees who are addicted to alcohol do not hesitate to sell their ration- inviting quarrel and conflict in the family. It is also reported that some refugees are themselves involved in making and distributing alcohols inside the camp. If we happen to visit refugee camp especially in the dusk, there we find many young locals as well as the refugees in intoxicated condition. Sometimes they quarrel and fight themselves. They have been involved in teasing young ladies, sexual assaults, raping and even looting valuable goods and ornaments.
- ) Flesh trade has been the challenging task in Nepal since a long time. A number of reports have proved that thousand of Nepalese girls are trafficked and are engaged in prostitution in Indian cities. The people of refugee affected areas claim that large number of young girls are attracted to have latest designed clothes, valuable ornaments and access to entertainment facilities. The temptation and desire to fulfill these facilities and amenities lured to engage in sexual activities. It is learnt that many young people have been visiting (from nearby towns and villages) the camps for sexual activities, but there is no concrete evidences to prove whether refugee girls are engaged in such inhuman activity. There is a great threat of dissemination of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS in host community in general and refugee camp in particular. So immediate measures have to be implemented to avoid this threat.
- ) Gambling is a way of entertainment and source of income to many people. But it is looked as social evil because it has invited quarrel, theft, fight, breaking of family ties. Playing cards and dice in and around the refugee camp seem to be usual phenomenon. Especially the refugee men are found to involve in playing cards either to kill the time or to make money. Sometimes they sell their ration and even engage in robbery and theft for gambling. Many young boys are imitating these bad habits which ultimately lead the society in wrong path.
- ) Physical, economic and sexual exploitation of the refugees by the officials working in the camps for the government as well as the non-governmental organizations have frequently appeared in the media.

### **Environmental Impacts**

- ) To settle down Bhutanese refugee in 1990, large areas of forest and bushes had been cleared in Jhapa and Morang districts of Nepal. The kerosene and the fire briquette provided for cooking and lightning purposes are not adequate. Some refugees are reported to have been illegally cutting trees for fire wood from near by community forest. Local timber smugglers have been using refugees for smuggling timber and logs. Deforestation in this way has been leading to drying of agricultural land and water bodies. Natural calamities like flood, landslide, and soil-erosion have been increasing.

Disappearance of wild birds and animals, valuable medicinal plants, grazing fields for domestic animals, and scenic beauty like greenery, water falls, lakes are also adversely affected.

- ) Pollution is a global threat in the modern world because of man-made harmful chemical substances, incompatible activities and rapidly growing population. Concentration of high density of population has contributed adverse effects in the environment around the refugee camps. Various types of pollution like noise pollution, air pollution, soil pollution, water pollution and thermal pollution have been in increasing trend. The unwanted sound coming from a mass of crowd, loud speakers, radios, television sets and running vehicles has been causing loss of hearing, irritation, high blood pressure and heart attack. The air pollution is caused due to smoke coming from fire briquette, dust particles from graveled roads, thread spinning and carpet industries, rotten and foul smell from pig and poultry farming adjacent to the refugee camp. People of the camp and the host community are badly suffering from eye and respiratory tract related diseases. The water bodies around the refugee camps are highly polluted due to open bathing, washing clothes and sometime defecating in rivers and water canals. Various types of water related diseases like diarrhea, dysentery, jaundice, typhoid, cholera, meningitis, encephalitis, viral disease, tuberculosis, etc sometime threat if not checked in advanced. For the construction of huts, a large volume of mud has been dug out from near by public ground and forest leading to land slide and soil erosion.

### **Political Impacts**

- ) The Bhutanese refugee problem is affecting the policies and activities of the Nepalese government. Democratic stability is, to some extent, connected to the issue of refugees. If the democratic government fails to resolve the refugee issue, its credibility would be eroded. As a result non-democratic forces may unite themselves and advocate for ultra nationalism of any other forms of political extremes. This affects the democratic governance.
- ) The presence of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal has long term and wide ranging effects to the relations of Nepal with Bhutan. Since Bhutan has accepted to be guided in the matters of external affairs by India, it affects India also. Despite tireless efforts the government to resolve the problem, Nepal has been continuously experiencing diplomatic failures. Lack of clear and unambiguous policies and existence of refugee laws have affected further.
- ) In the affairs of defense and external matters India guides Bhutan by virtue of Indo- Bhutan friendship treaty. When the presence of Bhutanese refugees affects the national security, three countries (Nepal, Bhutan and India) are entangled in the problem relating to security. The repartition of Bhutanese refugees has now become an integral part of the geopolitical complexity of the region.

### **Security Impacts**

- ) The political developments, in April 2006 have brought about the foundations for long-standing peace as well as and immediate ceasefire agreed upon by

both sides. Not surprisingly, the long standing conflict in Nepal has at times affected humanitarian access to the refugees in addition to negatively imparting the general daily security situation in and around camps, particularly following the withdrawal of police presence from the camps in 2003 after an attack on the police post in Khudunabari camp. Since the time there have been problem in enforcing law and order in the camps.

- ) The refugee issue affects the security situation not only of the country that receives the refugees but also the region to which that country belongs. Even though Nepal has granted asylum to the southern Bhutanese (Lhotsampas) of Bhutan on humanitarian ground, we cannot overlook the security aspects of this small country with almost no military and strategies advantages like the giant neighbors. It is not only national concern for Nepal but a subject of national security also.
- ) At a number of occasions, Bhutanese refugees have been taking initiatives by themselves for voluntary repatriation via Indian soil. All the attempts have been in vain due to prohibition and blockage by Indian authority to use Indian soil. Similarly Bhutanese refugees have been organizing hunger-strike, relay-strike, Sit-in-program at different public places and offices for speedy and durable solution. These types of activities and programs may have created internal security problems as well as may hamper the cordial and friendly relation between the concerned governments.
- ) Bhutanese refugees and the people of the host community are alike culturally and linguistically, so there is a high chance for local assimilation and integration. With the Bhutanese crisis having the potential to destabilize the entire region and absorb huge resources if not resolved in time. The time has come for everyone concerned to act. 'Stitch in time saves nine.' So one problem solved is one problem less for everyone.

#### **4.6.2 Positive Impacts**

To overcome aforementioned adverse impacts created due to the presence of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal in general and refugee affected areas in particular, different agencies such as LWF, CARITAS-Nepal, UNHCR, UNICEF, SCF, WFP, and other Governmental and non-governmental organization are working together for overall the development. Some of the positive impacts in the refugee affected areas are mentioned below.

- ) Majority of the refugees are unskilled laborers. Some are professionals, technicians, teachers, businessmen, contractors, barristers, etc. Due to deteriorating economic condition they are somehow must engaged in whatever works they find at near by areas. It seems a golden opportunity for local contractors, landlords, agriculturists, and other concerned to exploit their muscles and intellectual potentials to a maximum possible extent. They are paid much less wages and salaries as compares to the local counterpart. They are engaged in developmental activities at the refugee affected areas such as in

- construction of modern buildings, roads, involved in imparting quality education in different private boarding schools, institutions, colleges.
- ) Local farmers are encouraged to maximize agricultural production by using cheap refugee labors and intensive cultivation technique because of increasing demand of goods and services in the camps. This has helped the local farmers to raise their living standard.
  - ) The constructions of motor able roads connecting refugee camps and the main highway have benefited the local farmers and other local businessmen. The surpluses agricultural production can easily be transported and marketed at nearby expending towns and markets otherwise have to be sold at low price to the local traders.
  - ) The expansion of local markets 'haat bazaars' adjacent to refugee camps have been advantageous to the local people. This has solved unemployment problem to some extent. The people of refugee affected areas are running and operating hotels, vegetable markets, buss services, language and computer institutions. They are also supplying food and non-food items and commodities like rice, pulses, vegetable oil, diary products, green vegetables, bamboos, etc in refugee camp. Hundreds of Nepalese and some Bhutanese incentive workers are employed in different agencies and organizations that are maintaining and taking care of Bhutanese refugees.
  - ) The film industry of Nepal in general and cinema hall owners in particular have been benefited due to the presence of thousand of refugees at Jhapa and Morang districts. It can be noticed that hundreds of refugees rush daily to the towns like Birtamode, Damak. Madumalla, Patheri, Chandragadi to watch movies.
  - ) Private boarding schools and colleges are mushrooming up at refugee affected areas. These private institutions are established mainly for commercial motive. Refugee teachers are employed at very low salary on the one hand but on the other hand, these institutions would not run profitably without refugee students. The proprietors are benefited from both angles because of presence of Bhutanese refugees at nearby camps.
  - ) The value of land near the towns and around refugee camps has increased too many folds. Many local people cannot afford to pay higher market price to purchase basic food items like rice, pulse, cooking oil, sugar. They get these items at lower price from the camp. Some local businessmen are also making economic benefits from camps.
  - ) A number of gauge ways and concrete bridges have been constructed at several places of Jhapa and Morang districts supported by UNHCR and other implementing agencies for refugees in Nepal. This has increased the frequency of bus services and employment for local people.
  - ) Training on construction of embankments using sand bags, stone and wires and by bio-engineering techniques for flood and soil-erosion control has been provided to the local people.
  - ) Vocational training on electrician, plumbing, carpentry, mason, beautician, handicraft making, tailoring, and mechanic has been given to the local youths for their empowerment sponsored by LWF and CARITAS-Nepal.

- ) Afforestation programs have been launched at several refugee affected places with the support from NRCS and refugee volunteers.
- ) The area with a radius of 10 kilometer from the refugee camp (refugee affected area) have been getting free medical services and facilities, safe and pure drinking water supply, budget for the renovation and purchase of desk bench, school dresses for needy students in number of government schools.

## **Refugee Host Community Support Project**

In 2005, LWF's support in school rehabilitation allowed the learning environment in schools to be enhanced. Similarly, the formation of a Disaster Management Committee (DMC) Federation and its active role in relief and mitigation measures can be seen as change brought from the capacity-building among the DMC members over several years. Vegetable farming training especially organized for indigenous Dhimal people has been effective as has the saving and credit program and Women-in-Business program in addressing landless, disadvantaged and deprived women (LWF, 2005 p 19).

### **Refugee Host Communities Support Project (RHCSPP): Major activities in 2005**

- ) 8 school blocks and 7 school toilets constructed at Jhapa, Morang and Illam districts.
- ) 60 poor and disadvantaged students (28 girls and 32 boys) of Devkota Primary school supported with school dress.
- ) 408 sets of school furniture made for 19 schools.
- ) Public health awareness training conducted for 288 persons.
- ) Supported 92 farmers with vegetable production at Shantinagar, Damak and Chulachuli VDCs.
- ) 3 irrigation canals improved at Sanishare (Morang), Khudanabari and Budhabare-Jhapa.
- ) Skill development training for income generation conducted for 218 persons.
- ) Vocational training (electric wiring, plumbing, cycle repairing, beautician, muda making, candle making, etc. conducted for 215 disadvantaged people.
- ) Disaster preparedness training conducted for 12 groups 585 persons Supported 13 groups for river control works under disaster mitigation.
- ) Women in business program with goat rearing and vegetable production conducted for 275 women.
- ) Solid waste management and compost manure making training conducted for local 25 DMC members.

## CHAPTER: FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1 Summary

In Nepal, since mid 1991, over one hundred thousand Bhutanese of Nepali ethnic origin (*Lhotsampas*) basically from southern Bhutan and few hundreds from other parts of Bhutan have taken refuge in Nepal. They were stripped of their citizenship and pushed out of Bhutan by its Royal Government following the implementation of the program of 'Bhutanization' through the enforcement of *Driglam Namsha* and the so called 'Green Belt Policy.' Bhutan out rightly refugees to take majority of them back while Nepal has refused to rehabilitate them. In short, the post colonial states in South Asia were born expelling large number of people and the state system, as it stands today in the region is perched precariously on the creation of minorities, stateless populations and the continuing exodus of victims of various kind of violence.

The main objective of this study is to explore the Bhutanese refugee problems and its impacts in the host community. For this study, descriptive and exploratory research design has been used. The seven different refugee camps in eastern Nepal have been creating many social, economic and environmental, psychological and political and security problems in neighboring areas. Deforestation, loss of grazing land, land slides, flood, disappearance of wildlife, etc. are the environmental problems. The economic problems are: highly decrease in income, high price of essential goods, gradually destitute of labor, lack of employment opportunities etc. similarly, theft, alcoholism, gambling, prostitution, robberies, insecurity, quarrellings, murders, rapes etc. are the main social problems.

Before the entrance of Bhutanese refugees, Nepal was facing the Tibetan refugee's problems. However, being in small number, they had not shown the significant impact. After the entrance of Bhutanese refugees in 1990, Nepal government could not control the problems and requested to UNHCR and other agencies for help. Agencies manage the refugees in seven different camps under the supervision and financial support of UNHCR. The population pressure in refugee affected areas have created many negative impacts which has been facing the by the host communities.

#### **The major findings of this research work are summarized below:**

By studying refugee camp the researcher has found different characteristics of respondents as follows:

- ) Among the respondents, 89% are literate and only 11% are illiterate. This indicates that literacy rate has increased due to formal and informal classes conducted inside the camp.
- ) Despite they practice different religions; they respect each other's religion and live in total harmony and peace. In other words we can say that there is no religious discrimination and conflicts in the camps. It was found that majority of refugee people follow Hindu (66.7%) followed by Buddhist (19.4%), Kirat (8.3%) and Christian (5.6%).
- ) The heterogeneous refugee society has been living in peaceful environment in the refugee camps. The highest proportion of respondents is from Chhetri (25%) which is followed by Brahmin (19.44%), occupational group (17%), and ethnic group (39%).
- ) The highly populated camps are Beldagi-II (21.14%), Sanischare (19.67%) and Beldagi-I (17.2%). The small camps are Beldagi-II Extension (10.86%), Timai (9.66%) and Goldhap (8.9%). Khudunabari Bhutanese refugee camp is a medium sized camp.
- ) The researcher found that there is 100% parallel settlement. The huts are built with bamboos and thatch. Some places the parallel huts are very congested and some time difficult to identify ones own hut.
- ) Among the different communicable diseases diarrhea/dysentery (33.33%), tuberculosis (25%) and Typhoid (16.66%) are wide spread. Other diseases like cholera, jaundice, viral fever, etc are also found in rare cases.
- ) 19.4% respondents reported that they spent their leisure time by playing games and sports. Around 28% population respondents said that they spend their leisure time by doing household works.
- ) 75% respondents reported that they have been suffering from various problems like alcoholism, drug addiction, quarrel, robbery, theft, sexual assault inside the camp.

By studying the refugee affected area, researcher has found,

- ) That the highest proportion of respondents is from Brahmin with 41.7% which is followed by Chhetri (33.3%), occupational and ethnic groups.
- ) Overwhelming majority (80.6%) of the respondents are Hindus where 8.3% and 2.8% are found Buddhist, Kirat and Christian respectively.
- ) More than 50% respondents are studying in secondary level which is followed by I.A and B.A levels with 16.7% in equal proportion. Master degree and primary level of respondents seem 11.1 and 5.6% respectively.
- ) The majority (44.4%) respondents engaged in agriculture and related activities which is followed by 33.3% with business and labor (5.6%).
- ) The majority of respondents (77.8%) have said that there was good security condition before the establishment of refugee camp which is followed by 13.9% respondent with normal views. But only 8.3% of respondents said about bad security condition.
- ) It is noted that 75% of the respondents have given the view that unsocial activities are frequently noticed but 25% claim that either they are unaware or have not noticed.



- ) About 78% of the respondents said that the lost of animals or other goods from their area but only 22.2 % have not experienced such problems.
- ) The proportion of respondents is higher (55.6%) on the attitude of not affecting the earning of the local people than on the attitude of affect on earning (44.4%) due to the presence of refugees.
- ) In this study, 75% respondents have reported that environment is being polluted through the harmful chemicals by establishing refugee camp whereas only 25% disagreed.
- ) The majority (91.7%) of respondents have been facilitated with basic medical care, supply of safe drinking water, vocational training to the local youths, training on flood and soil erosion control methods, training on vegetables farming, etc.

### **Impacts faced on the host community due to the presence of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal**

- ) To solve the scarcity of fuel, refugees have been using fire wood from community forest land some are engaged in smuggling of timber logs, these activities led the deforestation as well disappearance of wild animals, birds and medicinal herbs.
- ) Due to the lack of awareness and overcrowd in refugee camp, some refugee people have been using open field for defecation at nearby community forest, river banks, cultivated lands and so on.
- ) The people of refugee affected areas claim that large number of young girls are attracted to have latest designed clothes, valuable ornaments and access to entertainment facilities. The temptation and desire to fulfill new clothes, valuable ornaments and entertainment facilities and amenities refugee girls are lured to engage in sexual activities. It is learnt that many young people have been visiting from nearby towns and villages in the camps for sexual activities. There is a great threat of dissemination of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS in host community in general and refugee camp in particular. So immediate measures have to be implemented to avoid this threat.
- ) There is increasing threat of theft and robbery at the host community due to dense forest near the refugee camp.
- ) Same quantity of ration is being distributed to each and every refugee without discrimination. Some families sell the rice, sugar, cooking oil and pulses in the local market at cheap price to fulfill supplementary needs. This has created imbalance in the local market price of the basic goods.
- ) Many refugees are selling the oil, lentils and powder milk (given to them in the camp) to local traders. Consequently, the market price of these goods has fallen to 50% of regular prices. This makes the local middle class consumers happy and may act as a deterrent to the growing antagonism towards such large influx of refugees.

- ) The security condition before the establishment of refugee camp was good but now it is deteriorating.
- ) The employment opportunities for local labors and educated youths have been decreasing due to the presence of refugees which adversely influence the earning of local people.
- ) Local people are facing scarcity of fodder, grazing field, firewood, supply of drinking water, etc after the establishment of refugee camp.
- ) People reveal that the harmful chemicals are polluting the environment after the establishment of refugee camp. They agree that all kind of environmental problems can be found in refugee affected area like soil, sound, water, air pollution.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The political crisis that has overtaken Bhutan has seen 20% of its population being exiled and the rest within the country living in abject deprivation and fear. International interest has been lukewarm. Refugees are not born but created by states, individuals and the groups. Sadako Ogata the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees has rightly said that “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 Bhutanese refugees just fit in her description. They were driven off from their homes by the racist Bhutanese government since 1990.

In many cases, today’s neighbor is tomorrow’s refugee. They have lost their homes, jobs, community and often family. They are not a threat but they do need temporary help until they can re-establish their lives. The great majority of people wish to return to their own homes once the situation there normalizes. But if a refugee does stay for whatever reason he or she can often become a valuable asset to a community. A Who’s Who of the world’s leading businessmen, artists and politicians includes many former refugees.

It is not possible to say whether host communities in eastern Nepal as a whole gained or lost as a result of the influx of refugees and relief resources. The situation created both positive and negative opportunities for local hosts. Many Nepalese took advantage of these opportunities and benefited substantially from the presence of refugees and international relief organizations. Other Nepalese were not able to benefit as much, and some even lost access to resources and power which they previously enjoyed. In general, hosts developed ways to cope with the negative impact of the refugees while attempting to take full advantage of the positive opportunities created by their presence.

The broad pattern which emerged was that hosts who already had access to resources

or power were better poised to exploit the refugee situation and capitalize further. Hosts who were disadvantaged in the local socio-economic structure struggled to maintain access to even the most basic resources and thus became further marginalized. This pattern held true at a broader level as well; districts which were already generating development opportunities tended to benefit more than poorer areas. In this sense, it was a typical example of the type of development which reinforces divisions embedded in the local setting. Still, in some cases, these realities were transformed by emerging possibilities and new circumstances. Different strategies and structures led to a wide range of experiences within host communities. These changing socio-economic opportunities were likely to have long-term implications for the ongoing process of development in eastern Nepal.

As the world has become smaller because of improved communications and transportation, refugee crisis have moved 'closer' to unaffected countries. Some governments have reacted with alarm. In such climate, a lot of misinformation is disseminated. Clearly, solutions are urgently needed for the protracted Bhutanese refugee situation. Without active participation and innovative involvement from all stakeholders, there is a risk of the situation remaining as it is or worse for years to come, and life in the camps is neither sustainable nor humane.

The international community has graciously responded and indicated its willingness to offer third country resettlement to the refugees in order to relieve the burden of refugees continued stay in the camps and to also support Nepal and Bhutan in the search for permanent solutions to this protracted situation. All that's left for the Government of Nepal and the Government of Bhutan to holistically respond in a dedicated manner to solving this issue.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

- ) The people of refugee affected areas claim that large number of young girls are attracted to have latest designed clothes, valuable ornaments and access to entertainment facilities. The temptation and desire to fulfill these facilities and amenities lured to engage in sexual activities. It is learnt that many young people have been visiting from nearby towns and villages in the camps for sexual activities. There is a great threat of dissemination of sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS in host community in general and refugee camp in particular. So immediate measures have to be implemented to avoid this threat.
- ) Physical, economic and sexual exploitation of the refugees by the officials working in the camps for the government as well as the non-governmental organizations have frequently appeared in the media. So all the concerned authorities must take this issue seriously and should punish the culprits to avoid in future.
- ) The local farmers have reported that the agricultural production has been decreasing every year despite intensive modern farming practice drying of

land caused by deforestation, abstraction of huge volume of underground water to supply in camps, addition of harmful chemicals from motor workshop, hospitals and vehicles. To control deforestation at nearby camps the Department of Forest coordination with the concerned Community Forestry User Groups should not allow the refugee to enter in the forest. Alternative source of safe drinking water supply (pipe water supply from nearby rivers and springs) in the refugee camps should be found out.

- ) If we happen to visit refugee camp especially in the dusk, there we find many young locals as well as the refugees in intoxicated condition. Sometimes they quarrel and fight themselves. They have been involved in teasing young ladies, sexual assaults, raping and even looting valuable goods and ornaments. To reduce such unsocial activities, production and distribution of alcohol should be banned.
- ) There is a cut throat competition between refugee and local people for limited jobs and services available nearby towns. It has been observed that quarrels conflicts became the daily routine. In this regard UNHCR should open Youth Friendly Centers which will focus on skill training, recreational programs, and advocacy activities. These Youth Friendly Centers will work to address the concerns of the youth through an integrated approach, including security, confidence building, psycho-social needs, vocational and skills training. This approach will help refugees to be involved inside the camps.
- ) In order to mitigate pollution in and around the refugee camps loud speaker should be operated at low volume, fire briquette should be substituted with solar oven or kerosene oil, thread spinning and carpet factories should be established at far distance from camp, pig and poultry farming should be removed from nearby camps, bathing, washing and defecating in open ground should be control by creating awareness among the refugees by campaign programs.
- ) For the construction of huts, a large volume of mud has been dug out from near by public ground and forest leading to land slide and soil erosion. It should be checked and control by local authority.
- ) Loss of domestic animals, motor cycle, bicycles, food grains, ornaments utensils and money, etc. have been reported from nearby towns and villages. The lack of police presence has compelled refugees themselves to under take task that were normally performed by the state security forces; such as transporting suspects to local police stations. UNHCR continues to work closely with the Community Watch Teams (CWTs) to empower and encourage their capacity to assist in security within the camps through additional training and support from UNHCR. UNHCR remains hopeful that a police presence will be reinstated in all of the camps in near future.
- ) The refugee issue affects the security situation not only of the country that receives the refugees but also the region to which that country belongs. Even though Nepal has granted asylum to the southern Bhutanese (Lhotsampas) of Bhutan on humanitarian ground, we cannot overlook the security aspects of this small country with almost no military and strategies advantages like the

giant neighbors. It is not only national concern for Nepal but a subject of national security also.

- ) It is hoped that the neutrality, protection, safety and security of the camps will be maintained and respected by all parties in the spirit of the UN Basic Operating Guidelines (BOGs) that have been accepted by all concerned. Equally important is that the youth do not engage in activities that are incompatible with their status as refugees and jeopardize their prospects for repatriation or other durable solutions.
- ) The new Government of Nepal recently took up the issue with Bhutan informally while at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) ministerial meeting in May 2006. We remain expectant that the bilateral dialogue will officially restart soon.
- ) To solve the refugee problem, Nepal has to make every effort for a durable solution that would insure repatriation of the Bhutanese refugees to their homeland. Nepal would have to make clear that the refugee problem is not only the problem of Nepal but also the problem of the Bhutanese government and people. Nepal would have determined to find an amicable solution to this problem preferably through bilateral talks between Nepal and Bhutan.
- ) The involvement of representatives from the refugee community is the most during the bilateral talks as well as the verification process. In the process of bilateral negotiation, a deadline for meeting, the objectives of the talk must be mutually agreed upon before the talks are held.
- ) In cases of the frequent change of government in Nepal, a high powered task force should be formed to deal with the refugee issues. This body can serve as a think-tank and provide guidelines for resolving the refugee crisis.
- ) If the government of Bhutan shows unwillingness to cooperate with Nepal in resolving the refugee crisis, Nepal should internationalize the issue and bring it up in the appropriate international forum including the United Nation.
- ) A comprehensive approach solution to the Government of Nepal and the Royal Government of Bhutan by combining voluntary repatriation, third country resettlement and local settlement- these being traditional solutions in a complex refugee situation should be open for durable Bhutanese refugee solution.
- ) The Government of Nepal should allow for those who need to leave Nepal for protection concerns assessed by UNHCR and recognized by the international community to leave the camps on humanitarian grounds, receive the care they need, allow them to establish a meaningful life free from fear of violence in the camps, elsewhere in a third country.
- ) It is hoped that UNHCR continuously works in the best interest of refugees and remains committed and ready to assist the Government of Nepal and the RGB to find permanent solutions to this long-standing problem. UNHCR should continue to advocate on behalf of the refugees towards comprehensive durable solutions so that their aspirations to live a full and meaningful life outside the camps, become a reality.

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## **APPENDIXES**



## APPENDIX- A

### i) Questionnaire for Refugees (Household Survey)

1. Personal Details:

a.

Name:.....b.Age:.....

...

c. Sex: Male ( ) Female ( )

d. Caste/ Ethnicity: ..... e. Religion: .....

f. Occupation: ..... g. Education: .....

h. Marital status: ..... i. Address: .....

2. When did you come in Nepal as refugee?

3. What was the main reason to leave Bhutan?

a. Voluntary migration b. Forceful eviction c. To escape political persecution

d. To accompany friends and neighbors d. Other reasons

4. What was the occupation while in Bhutan?

a. Businessman ( ) b. Farming ( ) c. Service ( ) d. Others ( )

5. How are you feeling for the last sixteen years in the camp?

a. Good ( ) b. Very good ( ) c. Uncertain future ( )

d. Bad ( ) e. Very bad ( ) f. Neutral ( )

6. How are you spending your leisure time?

a. Playing games ( ) b. Playing cards ( ) c. Gardening ( )

d. Watching TV/ movies ( ) e. Others

7. Is there any income generating activity in the camp? Yes/ No

\* If Yes, mention the type of activity.

8. Is the ration provided sufficient? Yes/ No

\* If no, how do you manage?

9. Have you kept any livestock in or out side the camp? Yes/ No

\* If yes, which of the following:

a. Cow ( ) c. Goat ( ) d. pigs ( ) f. Others ( )

10. What is the role of women in your society?

a. Domestic chores ( ) b. Service ( ) c. Labor ( ) d. Others ( )

11. What are the unsocial challenges you have been facing in the camp?

a. Robbery ( ) b. Alcoholism ( ) c. Prostitution ( ) d. Gambling ( )

e. Drug trafficking ( ) f. Girl trafficking ( ) g. Listed above ( )

12. What type of settlement is there?

a. Scatter huts ( ) b. Cluster huts ( ) c. Parallel huts ( )

13. Is water supplied in the camp sufficient for daily use? Yes/ No

\* If no, how do you manage?

14. Where do you dispose your garbage?

a. River side ( ) c. Jungle ( ) d. Ditch ( ) e. Other sites

15. Where do you defecate?

a. Jungle ( ) b. Open ground ( ) c. Toilet ( ) d. River ( )

16. What are the common communicable diseases prevalent in the camp?

- a. Diarrhea/dysentery ( )      b. Cholera ( )      c. Typhoid ( )  
d. Jaundice ( )      e. Others ( ).
17. Do you get adequate medical facilities and services from the health centers in the camp?      Yes/ No
18. Do you adopt contraceptive measure?      Yes/ No  
\*If yes, mention the type.
20. Generally in what age group marriage take place?  
a. 12-16 years ( )      b. 16-20 years ( )  
c. 20-24 years ( )      d. Above 24 years ( )
21. Are you satisfied with the education system in the camp?      Yes/ No Why?  
22. Is there any bias between boys and girls to send school?      Yes/ No
23. Which festival do you celebrate?
24. Is the incentive provided to the service holder sufficient?      Yes/ No
25. How do the locals look upon the refugees?  
a. With respect ( )      b. With intimacy ( )      c. With discrimination ( )
26. How do you solve the social problems like quarrel and conflict?  
a. By Compromising      b. By Camp Committee      c. By Police  
d. By Other way
27. How do you solve the social problems like conflicts and quarrels?  
a. Compromising ( )      b. Sector head ( )      c. Camp committee ( )  
d. Police officer ( )      e. District court ( )      f. Others ( )
28. What type of relation do you have with the locals?  
a. Matrimonial ( )      b. Relatives ( )      c. Friends ( )      d. Others ( )
29. What should be done in order to solve refugee problem?  
30. Any comment.

**Thank you**

## ii) Questionnaire for Host Community (Household Survey)

1. Personal Details:
  - a. Name:.....b. Age:.....
  - c. Sex: Male ( ) Female ( )
  - d. Caste/ Ethnicity: ..... e. Religion: .....
  - f. Occupation: ..... g. Education: .....
  - h. Marital status: ..... i. Address: .....
2. When was the refugee camp established in Khudunabari VDC?
3. How was the security situation before establishment of refugee camp?
  - a. Good b. Bad c. Normal
4. How is the security condition now days?
  - a. Good b. Normal c. Bad
5. Unsocial activities ..... after establishment of refugee camp.
  - a. Increased b. Decreased c. As usual
6. Loss of domestic animals/goods from home and field.
  - a. Yes b. No c. Don't Know
7. How is the affect on earning after refugee settled in your area?
  - a. Decreased b. Increased c. Remain Same
8. What is your source of fuel at present?
  - a. Fire wood b. Kerosene c. Gobar gas d. LPG
9. What is the trend of accessibility to forest facilities after refugee arrived in Nepal?
  - a. Increased b. Decreased c. Normal
10. Do the refugee affected people receive any benefits as compensation?
  - a. Yes b. No. c. Don't Know
11. What type of pollution have you been facing now days due to refugees' presence?
  - a. Water Pollution b. Air Pollution c. Noise Pollution d. All
12. Is there any increase in deforestation and smuggling of timbers?
  - a. Yes b. No c. Don't Know
13. How is the unemployment problem of local youth and labor now days?
  - a. Worsening b. Not Very Bad c. No Change
14. In there any positive change in transport and market facilities after the arrival of refugee?
  - a. Yes b. No c. Remain Same
15. How do you treat a refugee?
  - a. As Friend b. As Relative c. As Beggar d. As Uncivilized
16. What are the socio-economic, security and environmental impacts on your community due to the establishment of Bhutanese refugee camp in your VDC?
16. What type of advantage have you been receiving from refugee community?
17. Is the presence of refugee blessing or curse for your community?

18. What are the developmental works been carried out by agencies who are taking care of Bhutanese refugees in your locality?
19. What do you think the durable solution for Bhutanese refugee?
20. Any comment.

**Thank you**