Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) as a critical praxis of Intersectionality

Understanding and manifestation of intersectionality in GESI frameworks of development organizations in Nepal

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Abstract

This thesis explores understanding and manifestation of a feminist theory "Intersectionality" in a popular gender equality framework called "GESI" (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) by development and humanitarian aid practitioners in Nepal. Though Intersectionality has been mentioned in some GESI frameworks, it has not been used as an analytical tool its understanding.

Intersectionality refers to the interaction of different categories of identity and social arrangements in shaping different lived experiences of inclusion and exclusion of groups and individuals. By exploring GESI measures are operationalized in the structure and function of the organizations, and how they operate around multiple marginalization of an individual or a group, the thesis aims to answer if GESI can be considered a critical praxis of intersectionality.

For this, I conducted online interviews with 11 representatives of 6 different organizations and 1 GESI expert; reviewed grey literatures like reports, policies, frameworks of the participating organizations as well as ministries and other international development partners; and conducted literature review of Intersectionality and discourse of "Feminism and Development" to provide theoretical perspective of the thesis.

The thesis found that there is definitional dilemma of GESI and intersectionality, differences in operationalization of GESI sensitive measures as well as limitations and challenges among the studies organization. GESI is considered as a summation of gender equality and social inclusion by most. Intersectionality was mostly understood and used in analyzing intra-women difference. Some of the core principles of intersectionality like, social inequality, social justice, and power relational and centering minority group were also resonated in their understanding. In terms of manifestation, they operationalized identity categorical complexity by assessing amalgamation of marginalization and vulnerability, interplay between four major identity categories (social, physical, geographical, and situational) and use of different methods and tools to identify and prioritize groups of categories via contextualization that can vary through time and space.

Thus, the thesis concludes that though it can be considered as a praxis of intersectionality there are several challenges in practice and recommends working on addressing those challenges for the way forward.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB: Asian Development Bank

AIN: Association of International NGOS

CBS; Central Bureau of Statistics

FAD: Feminism and Development

GAD: Gender and Development

GAO: Gender Analysis Officer

GDI: Gender Development Index

GE: Gender Equality

GEDSI: Gender Equality Disability and Social Inclusion.

GESI: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

GESI: Gender **Equality** and Social Inclusion (mainly), one participant organization referred it as

GGGI: Global Gender Gap Index

GII: Gender Inequality index

GoN: Government of Nepal

HR: Human Resources

INGO: International Non-Government Organization

LNGB: Leave No Girls Behind

LNOB: Leave No One Behind

M and E: Monitoring and Evaluation

MEAL: Monitoring Evaluation Analysis and Learning

MoHP: Ministry of Health and Population

MoUD: Ministry of Urban Development

NGO: Non-governmental Organization

NSD: Norwegian Center for Research Data NSD

SI: Social Inclusion

WAD: Women and Development¨

WID: Women in Development

Chapter 1 Introduction

Gender equality and social equality are two of most important global agendas that are also endorsed by the sustainable development goals (UN 2022a and 2022b). They are considered not only fundamental rights of every individual but also a must for a prosperous world (UN 2022a). Though we are still much behind achieving social and gender equality, many countries have improved their Gender Inequality Index and Social Inequality (WEF 2019). This thesis explores and analyzes one of the latest gender equality reforms in Nepal called Gender Equality and Social Inclusion.

GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) has become a buzzword in development policy and practice in Nepal. Intersectionality is considered as buzzword in feminist theory (Davis 2008). What are the commonalities and differences between these two phrases? Are they limited to being jargon that is relevant only for a particular time or phase in the history of Women's studies and the journey of women empowerment, or that they have become popular for a reason?

"Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) is a top policy priority of government agencies and development partners in Nepal" (ADB 2020) and it is considered the most inclusive campaign in the field of development in Nepal (Shrestha 2017). Similarly, intersectionality is claimed to be the most important theoretical contribution so far to women's studies (Yuval Davis 2011). It is used as a theory, method, and analytical tool in the fields of women's and gender studies (Davis 2008). While there are several definitions of intersectionality adjusted to its purposes as a theory a heuristic device (Lutz 2015), a method (McCall 2005), or an analytical tool (Kings 2017, Yuval-Davis 2006) etc., the generic definition is understood as *"the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power"* (Davis 2008, p 4). The term intersectionality was first coined by Kimberley Crenshaw, a professor at UCLA Law School and Colombia Law School, because the intersected experiences and struggles of women of color could not be explained by neither feminist nor anti-racist discourses

alone (Crenshaw 1989). A similar notion has been raised in the development of GESI policies and strategies: women in Nepal face multiple layers of marginalization based on other identities such as their caste, sexual orientation, geographical region, marital status, physical condition, etc. (ADB 2020, GESI Working group 2017). Intersectionality is explicitly mentioned in some GESI policies and guidelines (ADB 2020, MoUD 2013, GESI working group 2017) as the base principle to commit to the constitutional promise to eliminate all forms of discrimination and recognize geographical and demographic diversity to ensure socioeconomic prosperity and social justice (GoN 2015).

In this thesis, I aim to explore how and to what extent elements from intersectionality theory, such as categorical complexity, social inequality/justice, power relation, centering around minority are integrated in GESI approaches in selected organizations in Nepal.

Background

Where does Nepal stand in gender and social equality?

Nepal has taken many steps in improving gender equality in recent decades (CBS 2022a). Yet it is still far from eradicating gender gaps in all forms of social, economic, cultural, and political facets. Nepal ranks 142nd in the Human Development Index. As of 2019, Nepal's Gender Inequality Index (GII) is 0.38 and Gender Development Index 0.58 (CBS 2022 a). According to the Global Gender Gap report of 2020, Nepal ranks 101st among 153 countries with a Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) of 0.680 (1 is highest parity and 0 highest imparity). Though there is equal participation of both men and women in the labor force, the wage difference of 60% is still very high. Though women hold 33.4% of parliament seats and there are 41% women representatives in local governments, they occupy only 14.3% of ministerial positions (CBS 2022 a). There have been only 2 female heads of state so far. Also, representation of women in leadership roles such as legislators, senior officials, and managers is very low. There are more than four times as many men as women in these roles. Only 11.7% of firms have female majority ownership and only 17.2% of firms have female top managers (WEF 2019).

Similarly, social equality in Nepal is very poor. Nepal is a multi-cultural, multiethnic, and multilingual country. As mentioned above, the human development index (HDI) of Nepal is very low,

but HDI of women, people living in rural and western parts of Nepal and some specific social groups are even lower. For instance, Brahmins and Chhetris have higher HDI than indigenous, Dalits, Madhesis, Muslims, and other groups[1]. In addition to that, gender equality differs within regions and ethnic groups (ADB 2020). The World Bank suggests that women and other marginalized groups have not been able to enjoy the developmental progress of Nepal equally (World Bank 2018). Women's subordinated position in Nepalese society is intersected with their other caste-based, religious, and regional identities.

The government has established many reforms and bodies to enhance gender and social equality and inclusion. Some recent improvements are as mentioned equal property rights (at least in theory), a provision to issue citizenship from the mother's name, extended time to report rape and sexual assaults, and reduced tax for land that is registered in a woman's name (GoN 2029). Some others national policies and mandates implemented by the government are listed below.

- Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act 2007

- Domestic Violence (Crime and Punishment) Act 2009

- Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Protection) Act 2014

- Directives to Regulate Domestic Workers to Work in Gulf Countries

- National Action Plan on Foreign Employment

- Witchcraft Accusation (Crime and Punishment) Act 2015

- National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Empowerment and Ending Gender-based Violence 2013-2017

- Domestic Violence (Crime and punishment Act) 2009

- Criminal Code 2017 to criminalize Chhaupadi, Disabled Protection and Welfare Act 1982 which is currently being amended

- Women and Children Service Directorate

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[1] Nepal has a long history of caste system where Brahmin and Chhetri are considered the highest caste Dalits as the untouchable lowest caste. More information is shared in the Nepal chapter.

- National Policy and the Plan of Action on Disability 2006, (GESI working group 2017)

The 14th Three Year Plan (2016/17-2018/19) of the Government of Nepal (GoN) has a prime motto of attaining economic prosperity through social justice with special focus on uplifting backward communities, women and indigenous people who are economically and socially disadvantaged. The National Women's Commission was established in 2002. The ministry of women, children, and social welfare was established only in 1995 and it hosts the department of women and children (ADB 2010, 2020). However, the capacity and resources of the ministry to function effectively is doubted given that it has three different areas of focus: gender, child welfare and social welfare (ADB 2020).

Nepal has joined numerous international conventions for promoting gender equality and human rights in general. The country is a signatory of 23 different international human rights conventions and legal instruments that target many aspects of gender equality and social inclusion. Some of these are

- the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW);

- the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA);

- the Child Rights Convention;

- the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;

- MDG when it was active;

- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples' rights (International Labor Organization 169);

- UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820.

- National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and Comprehensive Peace Accord (ADB 2020, UNWOMEN working group, 2017).

Nepal has committed to the Sustainable Development Goals of 2015, where one of the primary agendas is to create "a just, equitable, tolerant, open, and socially inclusive world in which the

needs of the most vulnerable are met," ensuring that "no one is left behind (UN 2015) (ADB 2020, UNWOMEN 2017).

Among all these national and international efforts, GESI has been considered the most inclusive reform of Nepalese government (ADB 2020).

GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion)

GESI is considered to be born in Nepal and is said to be a reform unique to Nepal, developed in an effort to empower women and marginalized ethnic groups in socio-economic and political discourses (Copp 2020, Shrestha 2017, GESI working group 2017). GESI is an important concept in Nepal because it not only focuses on hegemonic power relation between men and women but also among other social strata.

According to the Ministry of Urban Development in Nepal,

"Gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) is a concept that addresses unequal power relations between women and men and between different social groups. The GESI approach to development focuses on the need for action to re-balance these power relations and ensure equal rights, opportunities, and respect for all individuals regardless of their social identity" (GESI Working Group 2017, p. 37).

GESI is promoted as "*a mindset, a process, and a set of desired outcomes — a way of doing development with a focus on ensuring that no one is left out of development programs and government services that are intended to be universal*" (Copp 2020, p. 3).

GESI approaches, policy, reforms have gained tremendous support and attention from the Nepalese government as well as multilinear organizations and bilinear donors over the past two decades. Eight ministries have developed their respective GESI operational guidelines while many others have published strategies and policies, including the ministries of health and population, agriculture, cooperatives, education, and ministry of local development have established separate GESI units and department, ministry of finance[2] (ADB 2020). Some of them have dedicated resources like GESI department, GESI experts and focal persons. The government has a provision

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[2] "The eight ministries which have approved GESI guidelines for their sectors include: (i) Federal Affairs and General Administration, GESI Policy, 2010; (ii) Urban Development GESI Operational Guidelines, 2012; (iii) Forest and Soil Conservation GESI Strategy, 2010. (iv) Education Consolidated Equity Strategy; (v) Health GESI Operational Guidelines, 2012; (vi) Agriculture GESI Strategy. (vii) Irrigation GESI Guidelines; and (viii) Physical Infrastructure and Transport GESI Operational Guidelines, 2017." (ADB 2020)

under the intergovernmental Fiscal Arrangement Act of 2017 to release grants to the state and local government to foster GESI sensitive projects at their offices (ADB 2020).

Similarly, many multilateral and bilateral development partners have also heavily adopted and promoted GESI in their own, and their project partners' operations and functions (ADB 2010 and Shrestha 2017).

Rationale for the study

As mentioned above, GESI has been considered a progressive reform in Nepal (Copp 2020, Shrestha 2017). It stands out from former gender equality approaches because of the added consideration of social inclusion. It started as a unique approach in Nepal and has since become supported by big multilateral organizations like the UN, the World bank, Asian development banks and bilateral organizations like USAID, DFID etc. (Working Group 2017). GESI as an approach has the potential to be used transnationally — it has already been adopted in countries like Kenya, Nigeria, and other south Asian countries by UN agencies and international organizations. The approach is applicable transnationally for several reasons. Firstly, gender equality and social inclusion is a global concern and ensuring equality is important everywhere. It is especially important in development and humanitarian aid because the motive is to ensure that relief, services, donations, information, and support are equitably accessed by the most vulnerable and marginalized groups (Working Group 2017). Secondly, there is a growing demand for understanding diversity and inclusion in organizational structures globally as well as in Nepal. It has become more important in Nepal after the introduction of a quota system which proactively enforced diversity and representation in organizations. (Quota systems, though controversial, are still considered progressive moves from the government (Mohtey 2021).

Yet, many criticisms have been raised regarding the understanding and application of GESI. It is claimed to be limited to policies and lack enforcement and practice (ADB 2010, ADB 2020, Copp 2020, Sita online interview 2021 and Shrestha 2017) and that diversity and intersectionality are not completely addressed (Shrestha 2017). Shrestha (2017) also criticized that there is not enough of an analytical framework to understand GESI. He did not include intersectionality in his theoretical framework, but he concluded that the essence of intersectionality is not reflected in this policy. Therefore, he concludes with a further question: how the mainstreaming of GESI

can accommodate the intersectional needs of individuals with multiple marginalized identities, e.g., "Dalit woman versus a poor Dalit woman versus a single non-Dalit mother versus a Dalit man" (147). He argued that the GESI mainstreaming process "does not seem to have a solution for differing inequalities, nor does MOUD (2013) address this issue" (147). In summary, he did not see the practical integration of intersectionality in GESI.

Research Question

My research aims to pick up Shrestha's note, and take a step back and ask:

> How is the theory of intersectionality understood and manifested in Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Frameworks applied by development and humanitarian aid providers in Nepal?
>
> - Can GESI be considered a praxis of intersectionality?
>
> - How do the studied organizations operate around multiple marginalization of an individual or a group? "What identities constitute to being marginalized? How do they "select/consider" and prioritize such identities in their GESI frameworks?"
>
> - "How do the studied organizations operationalize their GESI frameworks? What are the measures and strategies used?"

To answer these questions, I
1. conducted online interviews with 11 representatives of 6 different organizations and 1 GESI expert;
2. reviewed grey literatures like reports, policies, and frameworks of the participating organizations as well as ministries and other international development partners;
3. and conducted literature review of Intersectionality and discourse of "Feminism and Development" to provide a theoretical perspective for the thesis.

The thesis discusses definitional dilemma of GESI and intersectionality, contextual categorical complexities of marginalized and vulnerable Nepalese and explore how they operationalize

GESI guidelines in their structure and function. Then it draws analysis on resonance of some of the core ideas of intersectionality in GESI approaches in building an argument that it is a critical praxis of intersectionality.

Thesis outline

The thesis is comprised of 8 chapters. In this introductory chapter I have presented the context of and justification for the research questions. In chapter 2, 3 and 4 help learning about the methodology of the thesis, relevant background about Nepal and theoretical perspective in feminism and development and intersectionality respectively. I present my findings and analysis in chapter 5 and 6 and 7 summarize the thesis with a conclusion and recommendation for future research in chapter 8.

Chapter 1 introduces the background about the situation of gender equality and social inclusion in Nepal, problem statement, rationalization, and research questions of the thesis, Introduction of the thesis, and Research Question

Chapter 2 formulates the qualitative methodology of the research by describing the research design, participants, limitations and strengths and ethical considerations throughout the research process.

Chapter 3 presents the geographical divisions, demography, caste system, patriarchy, and the political structure and changes that have affected the current stratification of the Nepalese people's identity and situation.

Chapter 4 highlights the theoretical perspective of feminism and development and intersectionality that will be used in the analysis of the findings.

Chapter 5 contains findings and analysis of definitional dilemmas among the organizations in encompassing intersectionality in their GESI approaches yet resonating some of the core principles of intersectionality

Chapter 6 adds analysis on three more core principles of intersectionality: categorical complexities, time and space and contextualization and to defend GESI as a critical praxis of Intersectionality and

Chapter 7 discusses further structural and functional operationalization measures of GESI, as well as challenges in implementing those measures.

Chapter 8 summarizes the thesis and present the conclusion, recommendations, and limitations.

Chapter 2   Methodology

This chapter presents and reflects on the study's methodology and methods. I shall first present \ the research design, before I discuss the process of recruiting for interviews, and tools and software used to record, edit, and transcribe the interviews and for document review. As the interviews were conducted both in English and Nepali, I shall also discuss nuances that might get lost in translation. Then I will close the sub chapter discussing the effects of the Covid pandemic on the research design. In the second sub chapter, I shall introduce the participating organizations, interview participants of respective organizations, and the reasons for recruiting them. Similarly, I will also discuss challenges encountered during the process of writing the thesis and how I overcame them. Similarly, I will examine the biases and ethical considerations that were handled in accordance with Norwegian Center for Research Data (NSD) policies.

Research Design

This section presents the rationale and formulation of methodology and methods. A qualitative research method following online interviews and document analysis was the most appropriate approach in the context of the pandemic to answer my research questions. This section explains the context, method details, considerations, challenges, and resolutions that I encountered and applied throughout the research process.

A qualitative research method is the most suitable research method for my thesis because this method appreciates subjectivities and multiple perspectives and does not call for generalization (O'Leary 2017). One of the aspects of qualitative research is that it argues for "value of depth over quantity and works at delving into social complexities to truly explore and understand the interactions, processes, lived experiences and belief systems that are a part of individuals, institutions, cultural groups and even the everyday" (O'Leary 2017, p. 272). My aim is to explore subjective perspectives, processes, and interaction of the participant institutes on the complexities of GESI and how they practice (experience) GESI in their structure and function. Qualitative research also provides researchers the opportunity to develop suitable emergent methodological design addresses the research in the most appropriate and accessible way and accommodates

non-random sampling, small numbers, and rich qualitative data (ibid). This feature of qualitative methods was useful for me because I had a low number of participants, and I did purposive recruiting—I will describe this in the "recruiting people for interview" section. Similarly, in qualitative studies, authenticity[3] (by triangulation), dependability[4] and transferability[5] are more important than validity and reliability because of its openness and acceptance to multiple realities (O'Leary 2017). I used triangulation of interview and report/ policy document analysis to confirm the authenticity and credibility[6] of my findings (O'Leary 2017, p. 274, 320). I cross-checked their organizational structure and investigated their policies and reports that they sent to me, or I downloaded from the Internet. The purpose of this document analysis was to have better understanding of the organizational stance as interviews with the representatives were colored by the opinions of the interviewees. In some of the interviews, the participants explicitly said that it was their opinion and that it may differ from the organizational policy, as it does with e.g. organization 1 and organization 2. Therefore, triangulating what they said with the reports and policies of the organization was important to strengthen the authenticity of the findings. Though validity is not the primary concern of qualitative methods, one of the methods to increase validity proposed by Cho and Trent (2006, p. 331) is a manifestation of collaborative relationship between researcher and researched during (and after) the research process. I had multiple interactions before and after the interview to set date, to send documents, to ask permission to store their personal information longer because of the extension of the thesis deadline, and to inquire for the latest development in GESI after the interview date until the analysis of findings (February 10, 2022). Similarly, the focus of qualitative research on transferability rather than generalizability is also directly relevant to my motive of recommending similar analysis of GESI operationalization in other types of organizations and sectors.

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[3] Authenticity indicates that the conclusions are justified, credible and trustworthy even when the truth is based on perspective (O'Leary 2017, 129)

[4] Dependability meaning: "methods are systematic, well documented and designed to account for research subjectivities" (ibid, 697)

[5] Transferability means that the findings/ conclusion from a sample may be germane to another group or larger population (ibid)

[6] Credibility judged in "post positivist" criteria.

Tools

All the interviews were conducted via Zoom. Though conducting interviews with video was possible, video was turned off during the question/answer session with all participants except one because of poor internet connection and participants' preferences. Licensed Adobe audition was used to reduce background noise in the interview recordings and to convert MA4 files to MP3 because the transcription software could read only MP3 files. Free version of Express scribe transcription was used to transcribe the interviews.

Recruiting people for interviews

I used a combination of purposive and snowball sampling. In the beginning, I wanted to study organizations that had worked both in disaster risk reduction and management as well as GESI. Therefore, I got a list of different organizations from the website of the Housing Reconstruction and Recovery Platform (HRRP) that was established in 2015 by the Nepalese government to co-ordinate post-earthquake rehabilitation projects carried out by these organizations in earthquake-affected regions of Nepal. I emailed several organizations who had proactively advocated for GESI mainstreaming in their public platforms. I did not, however, get a response from any of them.

Therefore, I had to go through personal connections. Three of the participant organizations were connected via personal connections, two organizations were referred by one of the participant organizations and I had worked in one of them. I shall describe further tje recruitment of each organization in the "Research Participants" sections. I have been carefully monitoring my subjective stance throughout the process—see the section on researcher's position and ethical considerations below.

Initially, I wanted to interview a representative of a government organization as well. I sent emails to several departments and ministries who'd been actively advocating GESI approaches. However, none of them responded to my inquiry. I have included analysis of grey literature published by few public organizations, e.g., the Ministry of Urban Development. When I asked one of the INGOs to refer me to a government representative with the intention of snowball sampling, the respondent said that the government officials were busy with Covid-19, so I decided not to pursue it further.

Conducting interviews

Synchronous[7] online interviews are my primary mode of empirical research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted so that I could ensure the accommodation of intended questions while allowing space for the participants' open and free expression (Seale 2018). Semi-structured interviews ensured that the interviews had conversational flow with follow-up questions rather than a guided interrogation by the research questionnaires. Open-ended questions were asked with follow up questions when necessary (see interview guidelines in appendix *).

Like mentioned above, I opted for online interviews with a limited number of representatives instead of in-person interviews with multiple staff within the same organization due to the pandemic. Conducting online interviews was the best possible method of collecting primary data at this pandemic period for me. Nepal underwent country-wide lockdown from 24th March to 21st July 2020 (Pradhan 2020). As we were unsure how long the pandemic would last, I was still hoping to conduct in-person interviews. Even after the lifting of the ban there were many travel and movement restrictions. Many offices in Nepal had introduced 'work from home' policies even after lifting the covid restrictions. Considering these restrictions, new measures, and ethical concerns of exposing participants to the possibility of a viral transmission, I decided to change to online interviews. I took the interviews over the period of January through June 2021. All the interviewees were working from home when I conducted the interviews. Therefore, conducting physical interviews in tje usual office setting was not possible even if I had travelled to Nepal. After the participants agreed to participate in the research, I sent each a Zoom meeting link for the date and time decided. The participants were office-based staff of the organizations; they had been working remotely (from their respective homes) prior to the interview. Therefore, they were used to online meetings and did not report any issues in accessing and participating in the meeting. I sent follow-up emails requesting to send documents, and to store personal data longer than the agreed-upon date. I also emailed all the organizations to ask for any recent updates on GESI-related projects in February 2022. Sona from Org 2 responded that she could also talk; thus, a follow up call was made with her.

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[7] Synchronous online interviews are simply real time interview, via conferencing platforms using chats audios and videos. Traditionally this method encompassed only written medium on conferencing sites. were O'Connor, H. and C. Madge (2017). The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods. 55 City Road, London, SAGE Publications Ltd.
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Conducting online interviews had both negative and positive consequence on my research and the process. With the access to the Internet and related technologies, online interviews are becoming more popular and practiced as it allows to transcend geographic boundaries (O'Leary 2017, p. 457). Time and budget in traveling and coordinating in-person meeting was saved. Similarly, I did not require logistical arrangements such as enclosed spaces for conducting interviews, audio recorders, etc. Also, I did not have to worry about a arranging larger space when there were many interviewees participating in the same interview[8]. In this case, interviewing online was probably better for the participants because they did not have to risk being infected with Covid. Similarly, participants were at the "comfortable location of their home while being interviewed without the sense the researcher is encroaching on their personal space" (Hanna 2012). In individual interviews, three of the participants also shared their personal opinions and limitations of their respective organization in GESI approaches. I think being in their comfortable space helped them express more freely than they would if they were in the premises of the organization and in group interviews[9].

On the other hand, there were many challenges and obstacles while conducting online interviews and thus I had to apply various methods to minimize the effects of these limitations. Frist, video was turned off for better audio quality as well as per the comfort of the interviewees. This limited the chance of observing nonverbal communication cues like facial expression and body movement that was already stunted by the fact that the interview was online (Kendall 2008). Observing such cues strengthens rapport between interviewees and the researchers (Holt 2010, Hanna 2012 and Kendall 2008). Second, this also limited the natural flow of the conversation that could have been supported by visible facial expressions and body language. As suggested by O'Connor and Madge (2017), I considered the possibilities of these limitations and planned for strategic attention to building rapport as close to in-person interview as possible. I had several friendly email exchanges to send invitation, information letter and consent form and decide and/or change date and time of the interview.[10] Similarly, before starting the interview, I had my camera on, we had a light conversation about "the weather". We then introduced each other before I described

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[8] In two interviews the main contact person had invited other staff to participate; however, I was not informed prior to the start of the meeting.

[9] Both the organizations who participated in groups did not share the limitations openly than the ones who interviewed one on one.

[10] Difference in time zone was considered. Interviews were conducted in the weekdays, mostly in the afternoon in Nepal and morning in Norway.

the plan and aims of the interview, estimated length of the interview and the types of question (O'Connor and Madge 2017). Grounds of similarity was built as suggested by feminist research method to strengthen rapport (O'Connor and Madge 2017). I informed them that I had worked in INGOs and NGOs in women's issues prior to moving to Norway to study. At the same time, I was careful not to influence the participant with the chances of manipulating their answer because of the established closeness. I also informed that the interviewees could choose the language of their choice and keep the camera on or off. After the interview, we turned our cameras back on and talked little bit longer about sending the organization's report and relevant documents and how I would process the data collected. Many of the interviewees were interested to know about where I am originally from and my current education in Norway. In addition to that, as suggested by Holt (2010), I was explicitly directing the conversation to accommodate the lack of nonverbal cues to understand the flow of conversation.[11] I improved in taking online interviews: the latest interview was much smoother than the first. Initially, I thought I had to give verbal confirmation that I am still on the other side listening to the interviewee/s, therefore, I would make sound like "um" and "*hajur*". On the contrary this action distracted the interviewee and made them pause from what they were saying. Therefore, in the later interviews, I did not speak until they were done with what they had to say. I was also attentive on the intonation of their voices when they sounded like they were about to conclude and when they wanted to say more. It was confusing sometimes because I would think that they were concluding "by the sound of intonation", when, to the contrary, they would add more information or latch into another sentence. In the later interviews, I waited until they went completely quiet after saying something like "that's it".

Secondly, other disturbances occurred because I could not see the interviewees. Sometimes some participants were not actively engaged in the interview, both in group interviews as well as in individual ones. In a one-on-one interview, a participant was attending another call while I was still speaking. In a group interview, I had to repeat questions multiple times because the person who was referred to answer by another participant was not listening. Moreover, there were many background disturbances during the interviews such as noise of other people coming in and out

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[11] It is not in the sense of having a structured interview, rather utterly saying "I am sorry to interrupt, can you please repeat because I could not hear you properly…" or using transition sentences, "thank you very much for that moving onto the next question…"

of the room, sound of door closing, shrill noise of pressure cooker and children speaking, etc. As I did not have other options, being aware of this limitation was the most I could do.

Document Review

Document review is a good way to complement the understanding of the researched (O'Leary 2017). Therefore, I also performed document analysis of the interviewed organizations as well as GESI guidelines published by various government bodies and international organizations. I investigated GESI-related information on their official websites in addition to analyzing their GESI-, and gender-related reports and policies sent by the interviewees. Org 1, 2, 5 sent different types of documents while Org 3, 4 and 6 asked to access whatever was already published on their website. These three organizations said that all the documents that are permitted to be shared with the public are accessible in the home page of the organization. I think my rapport with the interviewed organization may have affected their motivation of sending relevant documents. I knew Org 2, 4 and 6 personally whereas I connected with other three via gatekeepers. Therefore, they may not have been motivated to give extra time and effort to aid my research. I also studied GESI frameworks and guidelines from the ministries of Urban Development (MoUD) and Health and Population (MoHP), the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), the Asian Development bank (ADB) and GESI Working Group 2017.

Translation/ Transcription

I tried to be as transparent as possible throughout interview, transcription, and translation process. The interviews were transcribed with vocal stresses and pauses to not lose the details of the interview in the process because such stresses are helpful in the research (O'Leary 2017). Meaningless Nepali phrases like "*hunxa ni…*", "*k bhanchha*" etc… hesitance and pauses like "*hmm…*" "*ahh..*" were also transcribed. Pauses were transcribed because it would signify the meaning of the pace of the dialogue, tone, and intonation.[12]

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12 I coded two types of errors during the transcribing process: 1. S.E: Sound Error (when I could not hear the sound because of background noise, poor microphone connection, interruption from another participants) and I.C.E: Internet Connection Error (when I did not hear because of poor internet connection).

I did not anticipate that transcription and translation would be so labor intensive, despite being warned by O'Leary. The average interview was an hour long. It took me an average of 5 hours to transcribe each interview. Similarly, translation took more time than what I had expected. Though this phase was tedious, it made me more acquainted with the content of the interviews. In this process, I could also analyze the complication of languages, nuances of pauses and stresses, and the setting of the interviewee (noises, doors opening and closing, dogs barking,),

Language

It is important to consider power of language when conducting qualitative research in a multilingual/bilingual setting in general (O'Leary 2017). It was especially interesting to consider elements of language in my research process not because Nepalese language had extraordinary impact on my research but because of the common use of a mix of Nepali and English in the interviews and using English words to refer to important topics in this sector. Methodologically, I first translated the interview guidelines in Nepali. The interviewees were asked to answer in whichever language they felt comfortable; most of them used both languages. The researched organizations operate mostly in the English language. All their websites are in English; Org1 had Nepali contents on their website. Most of their reports, articles, agendas, etc. are published and shared in English. It is quite common to mix both English and Nepali when people talk—for instance, "**Designing** *ma uniharu* **involve** *nabhayeko huda uniharuko* **need** *hamle* **assess** *garera rakhediyekohunxa…*" which means "because they are not involved in designing, we access their needs…". This made the translation process tricky because it was difficult to do exact translation, which is recommended for a fairer research project; I had to summarize the gist of the sentence. Similarly, many terms and terminologies in development were used in English. "Gender Equality and Social Inclusion" was commonly referred as "GESI" (Je-si) by all the participants. They rarely used the direct translation of the pharase: "*Laingik Samanata ra Samajik samabesi-karan*" Copp (2020) found that "GESI" was used to refer "feminist/feminism". Similarly other terms like LGBTIQ were used in English letters rather than Nepali. Intersectionality translates as "*antarpakshiyata*" in Nepali. I used this word in Nepali language in my interview guideline. When I posed a question, I used both Nepali and English versions. None of the participants uttered "*antarpakshiyata*" to respond to my questions. Those who had heard about intersectionality

used the word in English. Similarly, "women empowerment" was said in English rather than "*Mahila sasaktikaran*".

Nevertheless, there were also elements of lingual richness in Nepali whose weight was lessened when translated in English, as warned by O'Leary (2017, 127): Language can be "metaphorical, mythical, poetic with hidden richness whose interpretation and nuance are often lost in the translation." A participant said multiple times, "*ghamko jhulko pani nadekheka*" to describe marginalized people which literally means *those who did not even see a ray of sunlight*. It does not trigger as much pathos in the audience when said in English as when said in Nepali. Another note on language is grammar rules for second and third person based on seniority level. Nepali has different pronouns for referring to a second person who is senior to the subject in age or any other position or in a professional setting. "You" is translated as "*tapai/hajur*" in this setting otherwise it can also be translated as "*timi*" for person of similar/junior level and "*Ta*/" for person junior/lower level—often used with a voice of authority. I said *tapai/hajur* to refer to the participants because of the professional setting and me being younger than them. This acknowledgement is important because in the interviews, some participants used the word "*tiniharu*"— a lower-level word to refer marginalized groups while others used "*uhaharu*"— senior level of third person. This reflects the attitude of the participants towards the marginalized groups meaning some did not have a respectful attitude towards these groups though the organizations worked for the groups while others considered them with respect.

Working in the context of a pandemic

Though qualitative research gives us the liberty to mold our own method, it is also crucial to reflect on the context/premises of the research. As the research was remolded in the middle of pandemic, there were several impacts of on my data collection. First, the research project was designed to do a field visit and conduct physical interviews by visiting the offices of the organization. Because of the pandemic I had to transit to online interviews which had its own strengths and weaknesses that are mentioned in the online interview section above. Secondly, I wanted to interview multiple representatives from different positions at the same organizations separately to have more representational and varied understandings. It would have been interesting to learn about the differences in understanding of GESI based on the seniority level. Similarly, having one-on-one interviews would probably allow the participants to be more open than when a senior colleague is present. Though I interviewed multiple representatives of the same organization, two

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of them were group interviews. I was vigilant to see any difference in the expression tendency and power relation between the interviewees. However, such a tendency was not observed. Online group interviews on the other hand were more time efficient and easily accessible. Thirdly, the organizations were more focused on delivering help in response to Covid than promoting GESI on the policy level. This factor can be taken in a positive light because some organizations reported that they had been more GESI-sensitive when they conduct covid-response projects (Org 1 Org 2 and Org 4).

Research Participants

I interviewed representatives of 6 organizations: 4 INGO, 1 NGO, and 1 private company. Though the aim is not case studies of these organizations, I think it is important to mention the nature of the organizations, primary field of their work and GESI-associated projects. All the participant organizations have worked on or advocated for GESI in their public platforms. A brief background of how interviewees were recruited is given below. Org 1–4 are international non-governmental organizations; Org 5 is a national non-governmental organization and Org 6 is a private company. All these organizations have their main office in Kathmandu and work in at least one more district. Before describing the organizations further, I have tabulated below the organization, their nature, and pseudonyms of the interviewees with their sex so that it is easy to follow.

Table 1 Organization and interviewee pseudonyms

Organization	Nature	Interviewees Pseudonyms / Female(F)/ Male (M)
Org 1	INGO	Junu (F)
Org 2	INGO	Maya (F) and Sona (F)
Org 3	INGO	Hari (M) and Ram (M)
Org 4	INGO	Chetana (F)
Org 5	NGO	Sonam (F)
Org 6	Private company	Kumar (M), Rani (F), Mira (F) Nitesh (M)
---	GESI expert	Sita (F)

Org 1: Junu (F)

Org 1 is a global humanitarian organization. The organization works in health, livelihood, disaster management and education with children, adolescence, disadvantaged groups, disaster-affected households, small holders, farmers, landless and women. They have published various GESI-related programs on their website. The oldest one dates to April 2019. They also published their GESI policy on July 1, 2020. Org 1 was referred by the interviewee of Org 5, Sonam. After the referral from Sonam, the chairperson of the organization connected me with Junu, the Gender Analysis Officer. It was a coincidence that Junu and I had worked at an organization together [13]. I was unaware of that. She had been working at Org 1 only for about 2 months when I interviewed her. However, she said that she had been working with GESI-related projects for 6 years. She mentioned later during the interview that she read through the organization's policy guidelines and GESI policies and gender policies prior to the interview so that she could get a better overview of the organization. Junu sent their GESI policy document for analysis. Their website has information both in Nepali and English.

Org 2: Maya (F) and Sona (F)

Org 2 is an international non-governmental organization that began its mission after the 2015 earthquake. Since then, they have been working on emergency preparedness and response, resilience and nutrition security, and social inclusion and protection. They worked with women and girls at high risk since 2015. Recently, they have developed their own GEDSI policy and hired a GEDSI mainstreaming coordinator.

I worked in this organization with Maya and Sona[14]. Maya is the MEAL Advisor and Sona GEDSI mainstreaming coordinator. I approached both if they could participate in my study. Maya agreed to be interviewed first. When I asked them about the latest updates on their GEDSI policies in February 2022, Sona agreed to have a Zoom follow-up session. Thus, the interview questions were different to Sona.

Org 3: Hari (M) and Ram (M)

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[13] Time, duration, and the name of the organization is not mentioned to maintain anonymity.
[14] See note 13

Org. 3 is also an international non-governmental organization that works with women and girls, persons with disabilities, Dalits, internally displaced people, youth, obliged laborers, and indigenous communities. They mention their efforts to help marginalized and vulnerable people several places on their website. They have also published a GESI policy in 2021, which is easily available on their website. Org 2 was also referred by the interviewee of Org 5, Sonam. Orgs 1, 3, and 5 are consortium partners[15].

Hari is the thematic Coordinator for Protection and Social Cohesion and I do not know Ram's because I was not informed that he would also join the interview.

Org 4: Chetana (F)

Org. 4 is a renowned international organization in the humanitarian aid and development sector. They have been primarily working for women's economic empowerment, leadership, and participation in governance. They have actively advocated for GESI. They are also a contributor to the GESI working group which developed the common GESI framework published in 2017. I initially sent email to two different people in the organization. However, I did not receive any response. I later asked a personal connection who used to work in the organization for an introduction. I finally connected with Chetana. She is the Program Specialist for Peace Security, Humanitarian Action, and Disaster Risk Reduction.

Org 5: Sonam (M)

Org 5 is an NGO working in humanitarian and emergency aid for women, especially the indigenous community, children and youths, and migrant workers. They work on economic empowerment, social support, and humanitarian aid. They have 11 different policies published on their website along with advocacy for GESI sensitivity.

I know a couple of current and former employees of the organization. I emailed an employee who forwarded my information letter to the director. The director then connected me with Sonam, the program manager of the organization. Sonam was so kind to refer me to four different organizations out of which Org 1 and 3 agreed to participate in the study. I am very grateful to Sonam for her help.

Org 6: Kumar (M), Rani (F), Mira (F), and Nitesh (M)

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[15] It is a common practice to form collaborative alliance of multiple organizations in executing certain projects in development field in Nepal.

Org. 6 is a private research and development consultant firm that works in Governance, WASH, climate change, renewable energy, peace building and infrastructure development, disaster risk management and other cross-cutting themes (GESI, climate resilience and green infrastructure). They have also conducted GESI analyses for other organizations. A friend of mine who used to work there connected me with Rani.

I conducted a group interview with Kumar, the CEO (who joined the interview later than the others); Rani, the System Administrator and Business Development Lead; Mira, a Research assistant; and Nitesh, a Project Manager. I was not informed that Kumar, Mira, and Nitesh would join. Rani invited them as they had worked closely with the GESI projects.

Sita (GESI expert)

I interviewed Sita because of her renowned position as a GESI expert. I first virtually met her in a live online event hosted by an organization called Women in Disaster Risk Reduction Platform. She was the moderator of the event. She shared that she has worked with more than 100,000 women in Nepal and visited 55 of Nepal's X districts. I had a different set of questions for her because she was not representing any organization. I wanted to learn about her perspective and knowledge on the subject matter.

Limitations and Ethical Considerations

Limitation of qualitative research

One of the limitations of a qualitative study is that it is difficult to generalize for larger populations and validate and reproduce the same result (O'Leary 2017). However, as mentioned above, the research purpose was not to generalize. Therefore, this method was the perfect fit for this research. I focused on authenticity and dependability rather than validity and reliability.

One of the advantages of synchronous interviews is that interviewees can choose the level of contact (O'Connor and Madge 2017). They were asked to keep their camera on or off depending on their comfort. I had my camera on intentionally because I wanted to show them my face and build rapport prior to the Q and A session. Most of the interviewees preferred to have the cameras off.

As mentioned earlier, a lack of understanding of nonverbal cues along with other disturbances and technical difficulties were the major methodological challenges with online interviews. However, I believe that my personal familiarity with 3 of the participants helped to balance that lack of observation of non-verbal cues.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

The guidelines from NSD were followed to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. The NSD approved the written consent form, and an information letter was sent to the interviewees prior to the interview. Two organizations were unable to send the consent prior to the interview date. Therefore, I read the content of the consent form during the meeting, and they consented. Though the consent form was straightforward, the participants had assumptions and follow-up question regarding the postulates. I clarified the information during the interview. Although interviewees from two organizations consented to the use of their names and the name of the organization in the thesis, I have anonymized all the organizations to be able to discuss the findings and analysis as frankly as possible. Similarly, to ease data analysis, I have provided pseudo names to the participants mentioned above in the *Research Participants* section.

Feminist and Intersectional lens

As I am using a Feminist theory that asks for Intersectional approaches in methodology of re-search (Moradi and Grzanka 2017), I would like to reflect on positionality and the researcher and participants in recognizing any possible biases and (powerplay). O'Leary (2017, p. 297) criti-cizes that the feminists' methodological emphasis on recognizing positionality biases is not unique to feminist perspective and that it is simply a "what I see is good qualitative research practice. However, she also acknowledges that, in the simplest sense, considering feminist per-spective is characterized by "critical perspective, overcoming patriarchal biases, working to-wards social change, empowering, marginalized voices, as well as acknowledging the position of the researcher" (ibid, p. 699).

Feminist methodology is taking deliberate action on celebrating diversity and including voices of marginalized group, distinguishing difference between different gender, race, age, class, ethnic-ity etc. To learn about feminist theory, I attended the course "Feminist Theory" at the Faculty of Gender Studies. I am also informed by feminist podcasts and podcasts on intersectionality.

Positionality of the researcher

Feminist theorists as well as many other researchers have highlighted the importance to understand the researcher's position so that biases and subjectivity can be identified. Managing subjectivities is an important aspect of qualitative research methods (O'Leary 2017). "Understanding, gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status/education, position of power and culture etc. are important in building trust" (ibid 131). It is especially emphasized by feminist researchers and intersectionality advocates that one should consider positionality in the study of intersectionality. Similarly, Christoffersen (2019) argues that intersectional positionality is a key ethical consideration in social research as it helps clarify insider/outsider position. This clarification is important to establish a transparent power relationship in research. She built the argument on the premises that despite improvements and critical approaches to methodologies, significant numbers of sources still lack any meaningful consideration of the researcher's intersectional positionality (ibid).

Therefore, I want to mention some of my identities that could influence the dynamics with my study participants. I am a 27-year-old woman from an indigenous and ethnic tribe called Tamang (third out of four in Nepal's caste hierarchy). I have worked with development organizations, attained higher education, and am now living in Oslo, Norway for further study. Two common reactions that I received from all the interviewees were my ethnicity: Tamang, place of origin, and my location. All of them asked where I was originally from. This is a tiny bit of evidence of how identity and expectation are based on ethnicity and location. As I had worked in a few development organizations, I could understand the metaphors and the language the interviewees used, e.g., gender audit, child protection policy code of conduct, etc. As mentioned earlier, I have worked at Org 2.

Another consideration is that I am trained in natural science and the scientific method. Therefore, I spent a lot of time designing and redesigning methodology and methods. For example, though I knew that my goal was not to generalize, I did not initially feel comfortable doing research without conducting a survey and having a representative percentage. Unconsciously, I tried to strengthen the measurable validity and reliability of my research method, only to learn that it would be difficult to ensure these with a qualitative approach. However, I taught myself that it is not necessary, thus I did not take survey.

Biases and sensitivities to identities

Though I did my best in considering biases because of my positionality and the fact that I knew some of the interviewees, there were still some effects on the interview quality and the engagement of the participants with the study. For example, to avoid being biased in favor of participants I knew from before (O'Leary 2017), I tried to establish personal relation with the others before and after the interview. Regardless, three of them (Org 1 and 2) were more responsive in sending me the necessary documents of the respective organizations. This is most likely because of our pre-existing relationships. Similarly, I think they were more comfortable to share their personal knowledge and experience, as well as the organization's stance on the research topic and challenges in the respective organizations. Comparatively, the interview with Org 3 felt short and direct among all the interviews with flowy conversation. This could be because of because of the greater differences between me and the participants than in the other interviews. Firstly, I did not know anybody from the organization (they were recommended by Sonam). Secondly, both were males from castes higher than mine. Interviewees from the other organizations had some sort of connection point or similar identity: personal contact (Org 1, 2 and 5), referred via personal contact (Org 4 and 6), female and identified as women (Org 1, 2, 4, 6 (two were female)), and similar caste hierarchy (Org 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6).

I also experienced instances of interview bias. Posing opinion-based questions was difficult. It is common that the answers of the interviewees are affected by the presence of the interviewer and the interview context (O'Leary 2017). This was vividly an issue during my data collection because one of the respondents of Org 1 asked me to give my definition of GESI so that she could answer according to my expectation—to which I kindly responded that the goal is not to find a correct definition but to understand what it means to the respective organization. Similarly, in the group interviews, there was an issue of social desirability—I sensed that they gave answers that were more normatively acceptable and increased the value of the organization in the eyes of the interviewer. For instance, an interviewee talked highly about their organization and inclusive mission and vision however when I asked about the operationalization of GESI, although their activities did not necessarily reflect that.[16]

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[16] Keeping anonymous to avoid prejudgement

O'Leary (2017) recommends being sensitive to gender, race and class and avoid hearing only the dominant voice. As my research questions are directly concerned with the inclusion of marginalized groups, I address these sensitivities on my research. Using had random and snowball sampling, I did not choose the gender, caste, and origin of my interviewees. 7 were female, 5 were male; 3 were Newars, 4 were from Adhibasi Janajati, 5 were from Bhramin Chhetri[17]. Org 6 had 4 interviewees: 2 males and 2 females. Another organization had two men, both from the Bhramin-Chhetri caste, but with different rank[18]. I was attentive to the power relation between male and female, as well as status differences when there were multiple interviewees. I did not find such dynamics; the questions were passed on to the respective person of expertise. The interviews were not dominated by a single person.

Learning Process

A vital part of my thesis that I want to highlight is the learning process. As for any thesis, my thesis writing process underwent numerous up and downs. Starting from research question to methods to theoretical framework, I revised every section.

The thesis was written over an extended period which had both negative and positive aspects. I lost the track of my work because of dropping and picking it up months later. I spent more time recapping and revisiting, and sometimes I would write about a topic only to realize that I had written about it already. On the bright side, I got a different perspective when I picked up a section after some time had gone by—I found solutions I was struggling to with previously, and I could see patterns of how different sections should be connected.

I always had the research questions on top of the chapter I was working on. This helped me to reflect on whether my introduction gave enough background on important topics and built the justification for why addressing these questions was vital, whether my methods were ideal to answer the questions, and where my theoretical framework was able to analyze my questions and findings and where they were not.

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[17] The further division of who were from which organization is kept confidential to maintain anonymity.
[18] All castes will be described later

Chapter 3   Nepal

In this chapter I want to present relevant background about Nepal that are important in under-standing the context of the thesis question in understanding the challenges and reforms around the status of gender equality and social inclusion of Nepalese people. The geographical setting, demography, caste system, patriarchy and political history were also mentioned by the study participants during the research process. Thus, in this chapter I shall briefly present about these aspects of Nepal.

Note 1: Rivers were generated from Advanced Spaceborne al Emission and Reflection Radiometer (ASTER) 30-Meter-Resolution Digital Elevation Model (DEM), National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Earth Observing System (EOS) May 14, 2010.
Note 2: In addition to the encroachment of Nepali territory east of the Limpiyadhura tri-junction (the source of the Kali River), there is also encroachment of Nepali territory by India in numerous places in almost all districts bordering India.
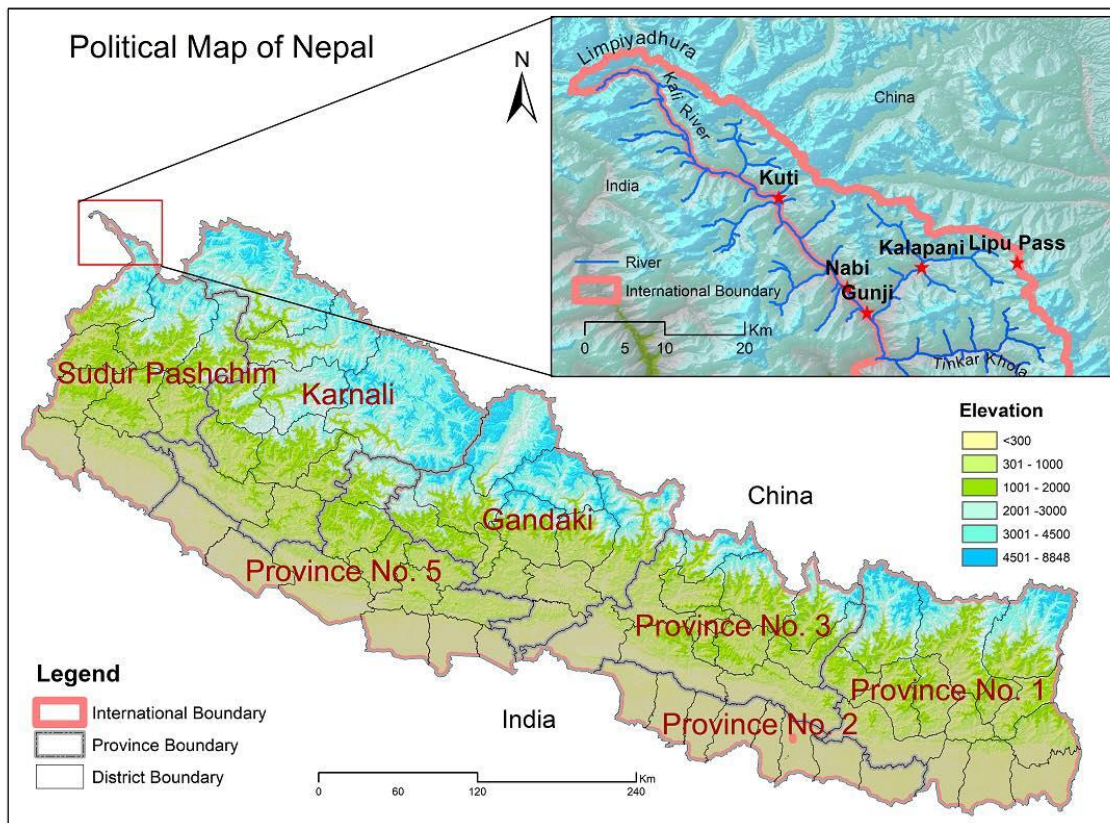Prepared by: Save the Border Campaign, Nepal: Mapping Sub-committee.

Figure 2 New political map of Nepal with geographical elevation (Source: Aawaaj News (2020))[19]

Geography

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[19] The same map was shared by Save the Border Movement and endorsed by council of Ministers on 18th May 2020.

Nepal is a landlocked country between India and China. The elevation of the Nepal starts from 60 m above the sea level up to the tallest mountain in the world, 8,848 meters above the sea level. Nepal is divided into three main geographical regions: Terai (plain land) in the south, Hilly region in the middle and Great Himalayan region in the north. The Himalayan region cover 15% of the land with Himalayan Mountain ranges bordering Tibet, the Hilly region covers 68% and Terai region covers about 17% of the total area of 147,516 sq km20 (Nepal Tourism Board 2022).

Terai is plain starting with an elevation from 60m to 305 m. It is also called Madesh and granary of Nepal as it has the most agricultural yield amongst the three development regions. Hilly regions fall between the elevation from 305 m to 3000 m covering Mahabharat range and the Churia Hills. Himalayan region begins from above the elevation of 3000m. It is the most remote because of the geographical difficulties in developing physical infrastructures eg. road. There are also rural parts in hilly and Terai regions that do not have adequate modern infrastructures.

Demography

As of the preliminary result census of 2021 published in January 2022, the total population of Nepal is 29,192,480[21] with 0.93% annual population growth (CBS 2022). According to the census population of female is 51.04% and male is 48.96%; the census has not differentiated the counting for other sexual minorities eg. intersex. Among the total population, 6.09% of the total population live in the remote villages of Himalayan region, about 40.25% of the population lives Hilly region and 53.66% Nepalese live in Terai region. 66.08% people live in urban areas (municipalities) and 33.92% people live in rural villages (rural municipalities). The preliminary census report has not provided population division based on age group, but according to the census of 2011, the population of 65 years and above age group was 5.27% (CBS 2012). As per the report of UNICEF in 2017 on demographic changes of Nepal, Nepal is getting closer to becoming an "ageing society" where 7% of the population is comprised of 65 years old and above.

As mentioned earlier, Nepal is a multi-ethnic, multicultural, and multilingual country. There are 126 ethnic groups speaking 123 different languages. The division of ethnic groups is complex

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[20] The total area of Nepal was changed from 147, 181 sq meters to 147, 516 sq meters in May 20th 2020 (The Kathmandu Post 2020)
[21] This data includes population census from new areas that are included in the new Map of Nepal (CBS 2022).

because it is mixed with caste system in Nepal. Caste system will be explained in the following section. For now, the CBS report of 2014 has divided Nepalese ethnic/ caste groups into 9 different groups for easy socioeconomic analysis: caste –origin hill groups, hill Adibasi/Janajati[22] groups, hill dalit[23], madhesi[24] caste-origin groups (Level 1), Madhesi caste origin groups (Level 2), madhesi caste-origin dalits (Level 3), Terai (madhesi) adibasi/janajati, muslims[25], and other cultural groups. Caste origin hill group (31.2) is the largest group followed by janajati (27.3%). Dalit populations constitutes 12.6% combining Dalits in hill as well as in Terai. Nepali is the most spoken language as mother tongue (44.6%). Most people follow Hinduism (81.3%) followed by Buddhism (9%), Islam (4.4%), Kirat (3.04%) Christianity (1.4%) and other religions. About 2% of the population lived with some form of disability (CBS 2012)[26].

Caste System

Caste system is deeply rooted in Nepalese sociocultural history resulting in caste-based discrimination until today. Social stratification "relates to the differential hierarchical locations of individuals and groupings of people on society's grids of power" (Yuval-Davis 2011, p. 162). Such caste-based stratification of society prevailed since the 15th century in Nepal. It was formalized by the Civil code of 1854 (ADB 2010). There are four major castes: Brahmin, Chhetri, Vhaisa and Sudras. Brahmins are the uppermost caste whereas Sudras are the lowest. Among many definitions of caste, one of the practically associable one is by Singh who states that "it is a hierarchy of endogamous groups, organized in a characteristic hereditary division of labor" (Nightingale 2011). While many writers claim that caste system is a fundamental institution of Hinduism and has innate attributes and rationales of the religion, others point to the prevalence of caste systems in "non-Hindu" parts of the world (Nightingale 2011). Caste distinctions in

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22 The Adivasi Janajatis are indigenous groups who have distinct tradition, culture, language, written and oral histories, traditional homeland who live in specific geographical areas and have egalitarian social structures (ADB 2020). They do not fall under Hindu caste hierarchy and there are 59 distinct cultural groups (CBS 2014).

23 Dalist are considered the lowest caste in the Hindu Hierarchy; it is explained in the following section
24 The Madhesis are people who live in the southern plains of Nepal (Terai) who also have their own languages, culture, and traditions. They are said to have ancestral ties with the people living in different states of India like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal (International Crisis Group 2007)
[25] Muslims are not only considered as a religious group following Islam but also an ethnic community
[26] These statistics are taken from 2011 census because the preliminary result of 2021 census has not published data on these categories yet.

Hindu origin are maintained through many birth-ascribed social obligations, systems, rituals of purity, hegemonic social relations, restrictions on food interaction and marriage outside the same caste and traditional occupations. Brahmins have associated profession as priests, Chhetris as warriors, Vaishays as farmers and merchants and Sudras as service providers (Kami: metal workers, Damai: tailors, Sarki: shoemakers and Badi: traditionally singers and dancers but also sex providers) (Nightingale 2011). Sudras are infamously called as Dalits and have been historically discriminated as untouchables. They were innately considered inferior to the rest of the castes regardless of their nature, potential and achievements thus they have been excluded from goods, services, and resources in the first place (GESI Working Group 2017, Sita, online interview 2021). People from upper castes did not eat from the hands of lower caste (Copp 2020). The caste system was abolished only in 1963. However, the Nepalese constitutions of 1963 and 1990 still had many discriminatory provisions based on caste and other identities that further fortified the caste system (ADB 2010). The interim constitution of 2006 and now the constitution of 2015 criminalizes any forms of discrimination based on caste.

Patriarchy

Similarly, the patriarchal foundation of Nepalese society has kept many Nepalese women within the boundary of household chores and family care (Sita, Online interview, and Shrestha 2017). It has limited their participation in economic, public, and political spheres and inhibited access to educational, parental inheritance, health, and opportunities of empowerment (Sita, online interview). Children could have citizenship from their mothers only since 2006 with the launch of the Citizenship Act 2063 (2006) (GoN 2010). Similarly, daughters could inherit parental properties only after the interim constitution of Nepal was established (GoN 20010). Still now, married daughters do not have the same inheritance rights as sons (GoN 2019). Similarly, various religious, traditional, and cultural values, norms and practices situate men in superior position than women (GESI Working Group 2017). Unfortunately, such patriarchy persists (ADB 2020 Copp 2020, Sita Online interview 2021, Org 2 online interview 2021 and Org3 online interview 2021). On a different note, Nepalese society has not been welcoming and accepting of non-binary sexes and genders. Though there are many who have been recognized as non-binary in different parts of the country.

Chapter 4   Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, I shall present the literature on theories of 'feminism and development' and intersectionality. I shall first discuss how different agendas were adapted in different discourses within the history of feminism and development. I shall then elaborate on the theory of intersectionality—unfolding its history, debates and criticism, and multivariate expansions before discussing how intersectionality is promoted and practiced in the development sector. Concluding that intersectionality is a work-in-progress theory, I shall then give a brief overview of different approaches developed by various authors in various disciplines about theoretical and methodological operationalization of intersectionality. Finally, I shall describe the commonalities and differences between three significant approaches that I will be using to interpret and analyze my findings.

I chose these theoretical frameworks for their direct relevance the subject matter and to my personal experience. One of the characteristics of a successful theory is that it speaks to a primary audience of concern and is recognized as "imperative, crucial, or key to understanding something that a particular audience holds near and dear" (Davis 2008, p.70). The zest of my research question is to understand a gender-based framework (GESI) that is gaining popularity in development and humanitarian organizations in Nepal. Therefore, I think it is to have a literature review of how gender is incorporated and articulated in development. Similarly, I wanted to understand this framework from a feminist theoretical perspective because as a feminist, I want to highlight the ability of feminist theories to understand social and institutional phenomena. When I was exploring different theories in feminism, many of them did not fully resonate with my and other Nepalese women's lived experiences. I came across intersectionality theory endorsed by black feminists and some ecofeminists for example Collins (2015) and Kings (2018) that argued for differences in lived experiences of women intersected by other aspects of their identity. Additionally, intersectionality has been considered the most successful outcome of feminist theory (Davis 2008). It is claimed to have a fundamental ability of analysis but also became a uniting theory for diasporas of feminist theoreticians; it has sustained old theories while giving room for alternative analysis (Davis 2008). Moreover, using intersectionality as an analytical tool is sup-

ported to provide a critical lens for human rights initiatives as the ethos of equal rights and anti-discrimination actions align with critical inquiry and the praxis of intersectionality (Hill Collins and Bilge 2020). I shall elaborate on intersectionality's practical use in development and humanitarian section after the section on intersectionality theory.

Nonetheless, as GESI has been considered as an attempt to address all forms of marginalization in the local context of Nepal, I consider intersectionality to be the most suitable theory. Many development organizations have also mentioned that they used intersectionality as their principle in GESI initiatives (e.g. ADB (2020)). However, intersectionality has, to my knowledge, not been used to analyze GESI. This is where this study intends to contribute. It has been a delightful opportunity to delve into the literature and understand how rich, complex, flexible, versatile, and sophisticated the theory is.

Feminism and Development

One of the earliest feminists, Rebecca West, said, "*I have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is… I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat or a prostitute*", (Walters 2005).

Feminism was also referred as womanism around 1895 "with the same hostility" (ibid, 1). The earliest dictionary meaning of feminism carried a negative meaning and it still has a negative connotation for many (Copp 2020, Walters 2005). Many younger women shy away from calling themselves feminists (ibid). Though the recent dictionary meaning is "the belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way, or the set of activities intended to achieve this state" (Cambridge English Dictionary 2022), feminism has evolved differently in different parts of the world (Crenshaw 2006, Hill Collins 2020, Walters 2005). Three distinct waves are proclaimed in the history of feminism in the dominant Eurocentric narrative: the first wave of women's suffrage in the 1920s; the second wave with emphasis on greater equality in education, workplaces, and the home in the 1960s and -70s; and the third wave correcting the definition of feminism by accommodating "third world feminism", political identities (race, class, religion, etc.) and acknowledging differences within women (Easton 2012). However, this divide of feminism into different waves is criticized by many feminists (Hill Collins and Bilge 2020 and Walters 2005) for several reasons. First, there is

no clear-cut distinction in the timeline (Walters 2005). Secondly it gives the impression that feminism outside the west did not exist prior to the third wave (Hill Collins and Bilge 2020). An example is Iran that has a long history of women's active participation in politics. Iranian women were audacious enough to issue a pamphlet titled "Shortcomings of Men" in the 18th century; they also actively participated during the Islamic revolution (Walters 2005). Finally, the third wave homogenizes different feminist movements around the world under the umbrella of "third world feminism". Chandra Mohanty describes that the term includes vast geographical areas like Latin America, the Caribbean, Sub-Sahara Africa, South and South -East Asia, China, South Africa, and Oceania. It also includes feminists in the 'West' belonging to minorities— e.g., black, Asian, Latino, and indigenous peoples (ibid). The term sidelines the richness, complexities, diversity and simply differences of women and feminist movements around the world as "'the other' in contrast to 'the norm' of western feminism" (ibid, 119). Margaret Walter puts concisely that the phrase is *"a useful reminder to Westerners about how little we know about those women's lives, and the way they may be complicated by deep-rooted local beliefs, by practices arising out of class differences, caste, religion, ethnic origins; and also, by the legacy of colonialism"* (ibid, 119). Other terms like "women of color" or "representing global south" are used interchangeable in the recent days, though they are also subject to criticism. Latin feminist groups argue that using "women of color" constitutes an "*invention of solidarity, an alliance a political necessity that is not the given name of every female with dark skin and colonized tongue, but rather a choice about how to resist and with whom*" (Latina Feminist Group 2001: 100). On the other hand, Purkayastha (2012) argues that this concept is effective in framing the social location of these women in global hierarchies between North and South, but does not reflect well while understanding the axes of power and domination within countries, along with the pre-existing hierarchies in global level. These complex discussions about feminism around the world, acknowledgement of the intersection of multiple identities resulting different forms and ways of subordination are described by intersectionality (Davis 2008). The definition of intersectionality, its significance in development, history, progression, operationalizations will be elaborated in later sections but before that, it is important to see how feminism or women's stance evolved in development and humanitarian sector.

The discourse of feminism and development also followed similar pathway from only including women in developmental projects to addressing the differences between women in different parts

of the world and providing space for other genders. Women in Development (WID) was first used in the 1970s (Rathgeber 1990). Though women were found to contribute to economic and agricultural development, they were not included during planning and implementation of development projects (Boserup 1989). While its agenda was primarily formed to revolt against exclusion of women from development, it still followed a masculinist and western-dominated approach to development (Koczberski 1998). Later, the concept of Women and Development (WAD) emerged. It focused on projects exclusively designed for women (Hyndman 2008; Hydman and de Alwis 2003). WAD was followed by a holistic term, Gender and Development (GAD) in the 1980s that advocated not only a socialist feminist perspective to analyze gendered roles and responsibilities, but also examined the power relation between men and women (Rathgeber 1990, Connelly, Li et al. 2000). Advocates of GAD believed and represented women as agents of change and not only recipients of development. (Connelly, Li et al. 2000). One of the improvements adherents of GAD advocated was the "interconnection of gender, class, and race and the social construction of their defining term" (Connelly, Li et al. 2000, p. 63). Still, many development and humanitarian projects were considered to be gendered (Hyndman 2008; Rathgeber 1990). For example: providing training on poultry farming and gardening, implicitly implying the gendered necessity of women to be around the house or feminine training like weaving and tailoring to women whereas masonry, welding, and electricial training for men (Hyndman and de Alwis 2003). After that, Hyndman and de Alwis developed the concept of gender inclusion framed as 'Feminism and Development (FAD)' that further "enhanced the analytical framework to incorporate multiple bases of identity and power" (Hyndman 2008: pg 105). Arora Jonsson (2014) documents that the framework then shifted to "gender mainstreaming" which focused more on policy changes than the grassroot agendas that were supported by earlier frameworks. The inception of gender mainstreaming in international development occurred during the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 (Hunting and Hankivsky 2020). Gender mainstreaming has been gaining more popularity as an international strategy to advance gender equality (ibid). Similarly, discussions and uses of intersectional analysis is increasing in gender mainstreaming projects in international development, (Yuval-Davis 2006, Hunting and Hankivsky 2020). But Hunting and Hankivsky (2020) urge development practitioners to be cautious when co-opting intersectionality in gender mainstreaming projects.

The frameworks WID, WAD, GAD and FAD received approval and criticisms during their respective period of attention. WID particularly became renowned after its integration in the Percy Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 (Shrestha 2017). Following the WID idea to integrate women in aid agencies and meet the needs of "third world's" women, UN agencies, USAID and AUSAID implemented initiatives like WID units, WID advisors, gender analysis and awareness training amongst staff starting in the 1970s (ibid). However, WID approach was criticized to have failed to acknowledge and incorporate social and cultural contexts of women in design and strategy development (Koczberski 1998). WID also homogenized women from the "third world" with assumption of facing same oppression and social restriction and development problems. It was blind to class, economical, ethnic, religious, and spatial differences within the same region and hence disadvantaging the poorest groups (Koczberski 1998). Like mentioned earlier, there are parallel evolvement of accommodating differences within feminism and the frameworks of women and development. In fact, several writers have already started to highlight importance of intersectionality lenses in humanitarian and development sector, e.g., Christopher (2019), Falcon (2012) and (Grzanka 2014). I shall first elaborate on the definition of intersectionality and its details and then circle back to discussing the promotion of intersectionality in this sector.

Intersectionality

As said earlier, intersectionality was first termed by Kimberle Crenshaw in 1989 on her article, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," to address the marginalization of Black women within single-axis framework of antiracism and feminism (Carbado, Crenshaw et al. 2013). She argues that "because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address that particular manner in which Black women are subordinated." (Crenshaw 1989, p.140). Two years later, Crenshaw further elaborated the framework in analyzing political and structural aspects of violence against women of color in her article "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" (Crenshaw 1991). In this article she highlights "the need to account for multiple grounds of identity" (ibid, p.8), namely

class, race, and sex and demonstrated intersectionality's significance in understanding lived experience—violence, in this article—of women of colors, Latina women, immigrant women and black women. By exploring the political and structural aspects of violence against women of color, Crenshaw demonstrates how subordination of women is overlapped at the margin of racism and feminism (Crenshaw 1991, 2006).

Other popularly cited definitions of intersectionality are:

> "Intersectionality' refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power" (Davis 2008, p68). "Intersectionality references the critical insight that race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nation, ability, and age operate not as unitary, mutually exclusive entities, but as reciprocally phenomena that in turn shape complex" (Hill Collins 2015, 2).

It is considered as the most important contribution of feminism in women's studies, (Davis 2008, McCall 2005). It has become popular among feminists in multiple disciplines (Vicar and Lutz 2016) and evolved from feminist theory, gender studies and travelled across other disciplines (Lutz 2015), McCall (2005). Those who use intersectionality as their major theoretical framework have claimed that the framework has "improved their ability to study social lives" (Purkayastha 2012, p 63). Kathy Davis explains in her essay "Intersectionality: a Buzzword" on why and how intersectionality has spread like wildfire and considered a successful feminist theory. She defends that intersectionality is vague and that's why it has move many feminists' theory to use it as a theory of query in their quests. She uses the argument of Murray S. Davis (1971 and 1986) that successful theory is vague and that it convinces broad audience of scholar because of their ambiguity, incompleteness haziness and open-endedness (69). She argues that intersectionality has become a successful feminist theory because of five different reasons: its focus on a pervasive and fundamental concern in feminist theory, its provision of novelty, its appeal to both generalists as well as specialists of the (feminist) discipline and its inherent ambiguity and open-endedness that beg for further critique and elaboration. She argues that it "fit neatly into the postmodern project of conceptualizing multiple and shifting identities" that many feminist theories like postcolonial theory, queer theory, diaspora studies were looking for (Davis 2008, 78). Thus, she concludes that the paradox of intersectionality's vagueness and fluidity are what make it a successful theory.

Unraveling the history of seeking these alternative definitions, narratives and future pathway of feminism can set the stage to highlight the significance of this theory.

Pre-Coinage Period

Many studies have credited Crenshaw's (1989 and 1991) articles as the origin of Intersectionality. However, the core ideas and essence of intersectionality existed before the coinage. Two influential feminist theorists, Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge (2020) have dedicated a chapter, "Getting the history of Intersectionality straight?" in their book "Intersectionality*"* where they document movements, agendas, activism in academia, politics, and public discourses about the intersection of identities in shaping experiences of Black, Asian American, Chicana, and indigenous women before 1980s. Patricia Hill Collins is one of the influential social theorist who has published and co-authored numerous highly acclaimed books and articles examining issues of race, gender social class, sexuality and nations (University of Maryland 2020a)[27]. Similarly, Sirma Bigle is a full professor at the department of Sociology at University of Montreal. She has also published and co-authored many works on intersectionality (Academia 2022)[28]. Moving forward, Davis 2008 also states that though Crenshaw was the first person to introduce the term, she was not the first one to point out marginalized voices of black women in feminism (Davis 2008). Crenshaw herself acknowledges that discussion about the overlay of racism and sexism had been discussed before her (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall 2013, p. 787). During the 2020 Makers Conference, she said, "It's (intersectionality) a new word for an old idea" (Makers 2020).

I want to dedicate this section for at least mentioning a few if not all-important historical figures and groups who paved the pathway for intersectional inquiry and activisms pre-coinage of the term because of two reasons. First, I want to acknowledge the co-evolution and existence of other women's movement alongside western feminism rather than terming them as "third world" feminism evolved during the time of the third wave feminism—intersectionality is put in the third wave feminism starting in 1989. In my opinion this bulk summation of feminism outside

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[27] See (University of Maryland 2020a) for her biography.

[28] See (Academia 2022) for her biography.

west and only acknowledging them in late 1990s in the third wave discredits the effort, complexities, and richness of feminism in rest of the world (Spivak, multi-cultural feminism etc.). Secondly, one of the guidelines for responsible use of the intersectionality theory developed by (Moradi and Grzanka 2017) is to credit Black Feminism so that the scholarship giving credit to roots of Intersectionality—I will be describing more about the guideline in the coming section. The history of intersectionality does not have clear organization of time and geographic origin (Hill Collins and Bilge 2020). They mock that the contemporary trend of crediting early 1990s as the origin of intersectionality like,

"Intersectionality seemingly did not exist until it was discovered by academics and named and legitimated within academia. Via institutional amnesia that rewrites history, entire categories of people who were central to intersectionality's inception became erased from intersectional canon." (Hill Collins and Bilge 2020, p.97)

The intersection of identity as a black and woman was raised as back as 1851, when Sojourner Truth gave her revolutionary speech "Ain't I a Woman?" at Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio. She was the only black women speaking to the audience of white women gathered to celebrate feminism that at that time reflected womanhood of only white middle class women. She questioned the shortcoming of the then celebrated women's right and black rights that did not capture her experience of being a black woman who worked outside housekeeping, was not treated lady-like, and took lashes from men.

> "That man over there says that women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mud-puddles, or gives me any best place! And ain't I a woman? Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And ain't I a woman?" (Truth Sojourner 1851).

Similarly, Francis Beal had published an essay "Double Jeopardy: To be Black and Female" in 1969 on a pamphlet that was circulated by New York's Third World Women's Alliance where she criticized patriarchy in Black power movement and racism in white women's movement for resulting the intersectional oppression of black women. In 1971, they started another publication called "Triple Jeopardy" that had the title, "Triple jeopardy: Racism, imperialism, sexism" that published anthology on political identities of women of color in the United States (Blackwell 2015). Another prominent figure is Anna Julia Cooper who analyzed intersecting oppression of

race, class, gender, and sexuality in her book A voice from the south, By a Black Woman of the South in 1892. Hills Collins and Bilge (2020) say that all these three prominent figures did not have community of black feminist intellectuals, collective activism and audience and space and that is why their ideas did not travel to a mass audience. Instead, the Combahee River Collectives (CRC)'s "A Black Feminist statement" written in 1977 that expressed similar essence of inter-sectionality—and incorporated discussion on heterosexuality and homophobia has been used and addressed more frequently in the history of intersectionality because the collective had the fac-tors these individual courageous activists did not have (ibid). The statement not only emphasized integrated analysis on the interlocking oppression of race, gender sexuality and class division but also highlighted ideas on the intersectional lens to identity politics that has been excluded from the core ideas of intersectionality—it gained structural direction after its institutionalization in 1990s (ibid). Bell hooks book Ain't I a Woman, (1981) is also considered as an starting point of analytical scrutiny of the interconnection between race, sex and class, to be very specific. The implication she pointed out that "all women are White and all Blacks are men" due to the negli-gence of black women in feminism and racism is popularly credited in the history of intersec-tionality (Yuval-Davis 2006). Alongside African Americans, indigenous women, Chicana (Mex-ican American), Asian Americans were also raising concerns of their intersected position of race, sexuality, "colonized" and "third world" in intellectual and political discourses around the same time. Other authors have also acknowledged more prominent figures and groups who contributed to highlighting intersectional rationality for eg, Gloria Anzaldua Boderlands/ La Frontera who wrote Boderlands/ La Frontera in 1987, Cherrie Moraga who edited "The bridge called by Back" with Anzaldua in Chicana/ Latina feminism; Latin feminist group was founded in 1993 against the confounded oppression. The first Asian American Journal was published in 1971; Asian American feminism was formed in 1980s. Some important anthologies that helped shaping Asian American Feminism are Making Waves (1989) and the Forbidden Sticth (1989), Similarly native American indigenous women have also fought against colonialism, patriarchy, white supremacy, and poverty. They have also incorporated sexuality and queer theory in the indigenous studies. They have heavily criticized the dominant narrative of feminism in waves and mocked at the ig-norance of their existence pre third wave era (Carastathis 2016). By highlighting these individu-als, groups, and movements, I do not want to imply that they are synonymous to intersectionality or that they are comprehensive definition of intersectionality because they are not.

Debates and criticism of intersectionality

As a work in progress theory, (Carbado, Crenshaw et al. 2013; Davis 2008) debates, criticisms, misinterpretations, clashes pertaining different dimensions, applications, operationalizations are inevitable. In this section, I discuss some criticisms pertaining superficial/ over association with identity, criticisms of being single axis politics, either/or analysis, proliferation of victimhood, gender-primary, acontextual, too much focus on black, feminism, repetition, and struggle of epistemic distortion.

Identity and Identity Politics

One of the major criticisms that even Crenshaw herself mocked at the 2020 Makers conference is "Identity politics on steroids" (Makers 2020)
Identity and identity politics have been commonly connected with intersectionality (Crenshaw 2006). Though my research question does not directly seek to understand people's perception of self-identity, one of my questions is to understand how the studied organizations categorize identities in their GESI approaches. Therefore, in the first section of the debates section, I will be discussing about identity, identity politics, criticisms of identity politics and their critical association with intersectionality.
Basing on the definition of Stuart Hall, Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) have mapped 4 themes of identity. Firstly, identities are strategically essential[29], meaning individuals have flexibility to choose an identity or set of identities that are most relatable in around specific social context. Secondly identity is inherently coalitional that reflects relationality with intersectionality (Crenshaw 1991; Hill Collins and Bilge 2020).). Thirdly, it is necessary to situate both individual identity and collective identity that give premise to understand the intersecting power relation of intersectionality. And finally, identity has the potential to transform based on previous themes of identity.

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[29] The idea of strategic essentialism was endorsed by postcolonial writer Gayatri Spivak (see Spivak 1996)

Because of this close connection of identity, there are contradicting debates like intersectionality does not focus on identity (Staunæs 2000), it over emphases on identity and identity politics (Yuval Davis 2006), single axis representation of identity, essentialism of identity etc. (Hill Collins and Bilge 2020). These arguments are refuted by (Hill Collins and Bilge (2020), Davis (2008), Crenshaw (1991, 2006). Significance of having identity categories have also been criticized (McCall 2005). However, Crenshaw argues that though the categories are socially constructed, "power has clustered around certain categories and is exercised against others" thus intersectionality "attempts to unveil the processes of subordination and the various ways those processes are experienced by people who are subordinated and people who are privileged" (Crenshaw 2006 pg.16). Identity politics has its own criticism that it is "separatist and fragmentary" (eg. Ehrenreich 2002), "values culture recognition over economic redistribution" and "fosters victim hood" (eg. Brown 1995). These criticisms were contended as back as in 1998 by political scientist Jose E. Cruz in his article "Identity and Power: P Puerto Rican Politics and the Challenge of Ethnicity" where he demonstrated that identity based political groups formed by Puerto Rican were neither separating nor selling the stories of victim wood, rather they used it to promote political mobilization to enter mainstream society and politics (ibid.)

Intersectionality undoubtedly, gives spaces for the articulation of multiple identities formed by social constructions. However, it is much more than that. It provides structural analysis within groups and shows different ways of configuring and conceptualizing the interlocking tendencies of identity; it has given a theory to it.

Other Debates and Criticism

Vivian May in her article, "Speaking into the Void"? Intersectionality Critiques and Epistemic Backlash" presents a complex list of criticisms against intersectionality, diagnoses them, and contends them with the history, meaning, significances and implications of intersectionality referencing numerous works of prominent intersectionality theorists. She addresses that those critiques are important for intersectionality as they provide opportunities to clarify the epistemic distortions.

She blames those critiques as "hermeneutic marginalization and interpretive violence, the politics of citation, and the impact of dominant expectations or established social imaginaries on

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meaning making" of intersectionality" (May 2014). She contends that the critiques still view intersectionality with "single-axis politics, either or analysis and gender primary notion of feminism" though these frameworks are strongly problematized by intersectionality theorists. May shares her disappointment that "despite its popularity, intersectionality still constitutes an "idea that resists being heard"—or, to use Cooper's nineteenth- century metaphor, an "comprehended cadenza" (ibid, p. 99). She argues that because intersectionality has been crafted and derived from the marginalized location, it has two major struggles: "the struggle to articulate what cannot necessarily be told in conventional terms, and the struggle to be heard without being (mis)translated into normative logics that occlude the meanings at hand" (ibid, p. 99). Intersectionality has been redefined as methodological problem, ontological problem. It is also criticized as favoring identity over contextualization (Hunter and de Simone 2009) who also seek answer in the binary or either/or analysis. In response to that, May begs them to have a thorough reading on intersectionality's genealogy at any period of time that have endorsed "'both/and' approach to (multiple) identities contextualized within myriad social structures and cognizant of relational power dynamics within and between groups" (ibid, p. 103). This criticism was addressed and elaborated by (Carbado, Crenshaw et al. 2013) in 2013 when they published "INTERSECTIONALITY: Mapping the Movements of a Theory" elaborating the intersectionality's move within and across disciplines, borders and wider range of experiences and power structures enabling social movements. The subordinated position in intersectionality is associated with marginalizing and seeking victimhood. (Crenshaw 2006)

Other criticisms May refutes in this article are, using intersectional lens without proper articulation or attribution rather highlighting shortcomings to showcase their "new ideas", denial to its institutional process, multiple and complex level of approaches, easy to make and readily accepted, repetition or recycling black feminism, too much association with black feminist theorist (Nash 2009), offering nothing new (Davis 2008), (May 2014). While some authors like Havkinsky (2014) and Yuval-Davis (2006) have pointed out that it is not a gender priory theor, others have criticized intersectionality for constructing hierarchy between different identity categories and having gender-first inclination (May 2014). However again, Helma Lutz (2015) Hill Collins and Bilge (2020), (Grünenfelder and Schurr 2015) advocate the need to prioritizing certain groups of identity categories depending on the context of analysis.

I think the comprehensive description that Hill Collins and Bilge summarized at the end of their book invalidates, or at least addresses, many of the criticisms that have been raised along the development of this theory in its critical inquiry and praxis.

> "Intersectionality investigates how intersecting power relations influence social relations across diverse societies as well as individual experiences in the everyday life. As an analytical tool intersectionality views categories of race, class, gender, nation, ability ethnicity and age—among others—as interrelated and mutually shaping one another. Intersectionality is a way of understanding and explaining complexity in the world, in people and in human experiences." (Hill Collins and Bilge 2020, 221)

Expansion of intersectionality

Because of the above-mentioned features of intersectionality, it has expanded and evolved in many academic disciplines, international contexts, encompassed wider range of structural contextual identity categories. (Carbado, Crenshaw et al. 2013) have formulated 5 themes of intersectionality in their article. They argue that because of the work in progress (theme 1) nature of intersectionality, it has the ability and potential to be used in other academic disciplines (theme 2), international setting (theme 3), to include different types of identities (theme 4) that affect the power dynamics of people and thus to create social movement (theme 5). It is tricky to make separate analysis on each of these types of expansion because they are not mutually exclusive, for example using intersectionality as a theory to understand experience of tsunami (theme 2) among religious minorities (theme 4) in Srilanka (theme 3), see. (Banford and Froude 2015) for more. Therefore, in this section, I will present different instances of expansion of intersectionality in all forms except methodology and operationalization because I will discuss more about these in the next section.

As intersectionality is such that as there is no priori place of origin in academia, it can be adopted, refined, articulated, and used across multiple disciplines in academia and outside. (Carbado, Crenshaw et al. 2013) have documented such versatile use of intersectionality in the field of psychology, political science, law, sociology, and history. (Thacker and Duran 2020) have re-

searched the operationalization of intersectionality in thanatology. They argue that intersectionality is an appropriate framework to support critical qualitative research to analyzing grief in different sociocultural context and forms of oppression. (Matsuzaka, Hudson et al. 2021) in social work and (Moradi and Grzanka 2017) in psychology.

After the coinage of the term, "Intersectionality", it has travelled across and outside the United States of America to explain intersection of identities affected not only by those mentioned in the previous paragraph but also ethnicity, physical ability, class, national state, and geographic locations in Asia, Africa, Middle East, Europe and South America (Carbado, Crenshaw et al. 2013) a. Though the prominent writers of intersectionality like Hill Collins have discussed about need of analysis of intersectional marginalization of women of colors mostly outside the United States as well, (Purkayastha 2012) claimed that they did not discuss on how to conceptualize race outside Euro-American context. Therefore, many writers have also suggested how to use the intersectional lens in the global context as well. In 2013, (Carbado, Crenshaw et al. 2013) published another article discussing the expansion of the theory in wider range of socio-political issues in wider geographies. In recent year, many other writers have documented its use in transnational sector. This section will discuss some of the what's, where's and how's of the framework in global context both in intersectional critical inquiry as well as critical praxis.

Hae Yoen Cho, South Korean Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto translated the book by Patricia Hill Collins the "Black Feminist Thought" into Korean. In her article, "The transnational journey" article she endorses the book and uses the intersectional lens to (Choo 2012) explain intersectional stories of immigrant women in South Korea. She says that her work in translating the book is an effort to make the South Korean scholar discover and realize

> the common struggle and possibilities of solidarity and coalition building…. with Black women explored in Black Feminist Thought, and that together these stories will travel beyond national boundaries to become the building blocks of a newly emerging intersectional and transnational feminist scholarship and advocacy (Choo 2012, p. 6).

Her empirical research found that intersectional lens was needed to expose the complexity in South Korean feminism that is perpetuated as ethnically and nationally homogenous. She claims that uneven burden faced by immigrant women (namely: factory workers, wives of Korean man,

hostesses at American Military Camptown clubs), complexity and diversity in South Korean academia can be benefited by the intersectional lens. Intersectional analysis has also been used to understand experiences of disaster by Sri Lankan women in the 2004 Tsumai of following the interlocking domination of interceding cultural, ideological, and religious viewpoints, age, and disability by ecofeminist Alyssa Banford (Banford and Froude 2015). Another example is the reproductive health justice and rights in Africa that houses 54 different nations states. In the UN's 57th commission on status of Women in 2013, Grace Adofoli requested to make nation specific reproductive and sexual health right agenda instead of imagining a single Africa because the national policies, population, government, cultural values etc. differ drastically. She highlighted the need for focus in combatting violence against women, rape and providing clinical access during conflict and war in military led Sudan and Congo, while need for focusing on reducing high maternal mortality rate in countries with stable government like Ghana and Zambia (Adofoli 2013). Hill Collins and Bilge have used intersectional lens to discuss about powerplays and social inequality of race, gender, class, nation and sexuality in International Federation Association of Football, Black women's movement in Brazil, use of different principles in microcredit initiative of Grameen bank by Yunus Mohammad in Bangladesh, and in virtual spaces for eg. digital and social media in across transnational borders.

(Purkayastha 2012) had also emphasized on the importance of contextualizing and defining the categories that are important in that geographical and virtual spaces while using the theory to understand the intersectional complexity. She argued that though the birth of intersectionality came in from black feminism, analysis on racial hierarchies is not the only important dimension all the time and everywhere. She explained, "Indeed, in places where caste and religious or ethnic hierarchies—with their own set of ideologies, interactions, and institutional structures—are more salient, we should consider the relative importance of these axes of domination within those countries (and the extent to which these structure transnational social lives) as we use intersectional frameworks" (Purkayastha 2012, 60). Her article's main argument is to examine lives of people who live in transnational spaces and how people's access to transnational spaces, both tangible and virtual social spaces, balances the sense of marginalization in one country by the sense of privilege in another. Outside the Euro-American society, there are variations of other categories and identities that may fall in the privileged majority or marginalized minority within a country

that are outside the grouping concept of "women of colors"; thus, it fails to track other forms of power relations within that country.[30] Therefore, she argues for the need of considering other axes of domination and oppression especially when many or simultaneous social locations are involved.

The argument to contextualize the intersectional analysis is also supported and endorse by Helma Lutz and Sylvanna M. Falcón. Lutz also argues that it is "important to investigate diversity in the context of power relations and analyze in detail what precise aspect of all possible differential markers makes the difference, that is, creates unequal identities." (Lutz 2015). Falcon highlights the importance of "contextualized intersectionality" to incorporate an awareness of social location and power relationships in the transnational salience (Falcon 2012).

In terms of uses of the theory in Nepal, Intersectionality has been used to understand various legal, and sociopolitical stance of women and other marginalized groups. Pradhan, Heinzen-Dick et al. (2019) discusses intersectional discrepancies of property right over women's empowerment based on various factors like social locations, ethnicities, household structure and social classes. Poudel (2019) uses intersectionality lens to understand challenges faced by educated women in white color job. Mohtey (2021) argues how the intersectional identities of Dalit women and intersecting structures in the workplace and local government have limited meaningful participation of Dalit women representatives. Recently, Chaulagain and Pathak (2021) have published their research on methodical efficacy of using intersectionality in the context of Nepal. Intersectionality is mentioned as a core principle in framing GESI policies and approaches in many government and non-government organizations eg. (ADB 2020, MOUD 2013, Shrestha 2017, UN-WOMEN 2017), however it has not been used as an analytical tool.

Intersectionality and Development

Like discussed earlier, discussion on the importance of gender equality in development has evolved through mere inclusion of women in projects to streamlining the developmental policies

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[30] A self-explanatory example she gives is of a Black Ugandan immigrant and an Indian Ugandan immigrant in the USA. Both women might face sexism and racism in the USA, but the Black Ugandan immigrant may face similar racism faced by African American while the Indian Ugandan may face like the structural discrimination faced by Asian American. If they were to go back to their country, Uganda, Ugandan woman may have higher privileges in the Black majority country. If both were to travel to India, Indian-origin Ugandan-born woman may have higher privilege association than Ugandan woman. However again if she is lower caste Hindu or Muslim, she may experience different soc

to enhance gender equality. It is evident that national and international non-government development partners and agencies play important roles in promoting gender focused interventions in different countries (Winther, Matinga et al. 2017). With the parallel shift in the focus of intersectionality in feminism, discussion on intersectional lens to examine and execute developmental projects were highlighted in the realm of international development and humanitarian sectors as well (Yuval-Davis 2006).

Though the term intersectionality was not used, UN policies and equal right and anti-discrimination advocacies align with the essence of intersectionality. In fact, Hill Collins and Bilge supports that

Article 1 of 1948 UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights" and Article 2 affirms that "everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." (UN). Similarly, The Beijing Declaration at the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) was another prominent milestone where the concept of intersectionality was integrated in the UN language (UN 1995). The 32nd declaration stated that the participating government are determined to,

> Intensify efforts to ensure equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all women and girls who face multiple barriers to their empowerment and advancement because of such factors as their race, age, language, ethnicity, culture, religion, or disability, or because they are indigenous people (UN 1995, P. 4)

UN World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) in Durban South Africa in 2001 was the major platform that helped intersectionality gain global dissemination and development. The full name of the conference was "The United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance." This was the first anti racism conference that addressed intersection of violence, racism, xenophobia with gender discrimination, homophobia, immigration via the term "related intolerance" (Grünenfelder and Schurr 2015) Hill Collins and Bilge 2020, 105). Kimberle Crenshaw was invited by the Geneva planning committee to present position paper and organize training workshop for the preparation of the conference. Her input for the workshop highlighted the visibility of intersectionality in the conference. Intersectionality

was referenced more commonly across wide arena of UN agencies and international arena following this meeting (Falcon 2012). She argues that the preparation of the conference formed and evolved new feminist coalition at the crossroad of intersection. The 54th declaration states, "that the intersection of discrimination on grounds of race and gender makes women and girls particularly vulnerable to this type of violence, which is often related to racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" (UN 2001, p. 30)

Similarly, the declaration of WCAR NGO Forum had 11 articles directly referring intersectionality of various identities producing complex form of discrimination, and thus emphasized the need to intersectional analysis in different sectors (WCAR 2001). Article 119 states,

> An intersectional approach to discrimination acknowledges that every person be it man or woman exists in a framework of multiple identities, with factors such as race, class, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability, citizenship, national identity, geo-political context, health, including HIV/AIDS status and any other status are all determinants in one's experiences of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerances. An intersectional approach highlights the way in which there is a simultaneous interaction of discrimination as a result of multiple identities. (WCAR 200, p. 19)

EU adopted legal frameworks about discrimination based on race ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, and religion, (Kantola and Nousiainen 2009) and UK added the equal opportunity and diversity legislation on top similar anti discriminatory legal derivatives (Bagilhole 2010). Other European countries also followed intersectional directive in introducing the rules. Similarly, Nepal also incorporated these directives in the constitution that prohibits any discriminatory acts on the ground of one's identity (GoN 2007/ 2015).

However, operationalization of intersectionality in human rights arena is not devoid of challenges. Hill Collins and Bilge 2020 points out that as human right-based frameworks depend much more on judicial formalities than individual or collective initiatives of intersectionality, it is important to have a baseline understanding of what intersectionality means and what it requires in terms of government obligations, how it has been applied in practice and how it can be

reflected within (institutions) through decisions, reports, recommendations, and remedies. Christofferson (2019) argues that it is especially difficult for "equality third sector organizations"[31] to operationalize intersectionality because of their lower status vis-a vis the state. They face barriers such as power relationship with the state, neoliberal austerity[32] and competing discourse of identity-based inequalities and socioeconomic inequality. Another example of challenges in adapting intersectionality lens is discussed by Grünenfelder and Schurr (2015). Their article focuses executing intersectional analysis while dealing with the receivers of the development and how the beneficiaries identify themselves as eligible to the development. The authors evaluate the intersectional inter and inter categorical approach of Leslie McCall in bridging the categories of class, gender, status, kinship, geographical marginality in the northern village of Pakistan. They concluded that local people navigate through intersection of varieties of social categories to negotiate their eligibility and responsibility for development. They argue that it is key to have the understanding and sensibility to intersecting identities (in that area) and the skills to analyses them while planning and implementing development projects together with communities and individuals (783). They also highlight that inappropriate use of intersectionality concept can risk depoliticization of the categorical differences and identities.

Thus, they propose three steps model of approaching intersectionality for development researchers and practitioners. First is to define how development practitioners want to define or use the categorization. In this step, they explore the methodological complexities explained by McCall (2005) (inter, intra and anti-categorical complexity) among development practitioners and argue that anti categorical approach is not a suitable node of analysis in development sector because they believe, "in development practice, structural inequalities that shape current societies can best be identified by comparing different social groups" pg. 3. Similarly, the practitioners must focus on specific groups at certain point of development because of limited budgetary and personnel resources. Thus, they suggest opting for analyzing inter and intra categorical complexities by defining strategic use of provisionally adapted categories and testing the boundary of the same category(ibid). The second suggested step is "to explore inductively axes of differentiation

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[31] It is a constructed term that can encompasses from large and relatively powerful charity to small community-based organizations working on equality, that are less like to benefit from public service provisions. (Christofferson 2019)

[32] This includes "policy mobilization of intersectionality as a 'generic' approach to equality, lack of funding for intersectional work, and competitive funding environments" (140)

that people use to position themselves and others in interviews and group discussions or in everyday life" pg 3 and note "what identities become prevalent in what contexts and moments and to what extent" pg 3 (ibid) and possibilities of some identities being silenced or obscured. The third step is to explore inter-and intra-categorical among the identities self-inducted by the second steps. They found, marginality, remoteness, gender, social status, class, tribes, immigrants and natives and the categories inducted by the study participants and these categories intersected with each other in defining who is eligible for development.

Similarly, there are many other operationalization methods and guidelines that are proposed by different authors in wide range of disciplines. I shall mention some of them in the following section.

Work in Progress: Operationalizations of Intersectionality

Intersectionality still needs attention with specification, fundamental logic of categorizing social divisions and inequalities, rigorous methodological guidelines, demarcated parameter of operationalizing the theory so that it would diminish confusion among researchers and practitioners on its application (Davis 2008). In this quest, many authors have contributed to developing, articulating and explaining different overlapping principles, interventions, postulates and guidelines of theoretical and methodological analysis.

Starting with theoretical analysis, Crenshaw differentiated structural, political, and representational intersectionality during the early years of the name coinage in her popular article of 1991. Similarly, Dill and Zambrana (2009) proposed four theoretical interventions of intersectionality that many other writers took inspirations from. Dr. Bonnie Dill and Dr. Ruth Enid Zambrana are feminist scholars and professors distinguished professor at Department of Women Gender and Sexuality at the university of Maryland. Both have numerous years of experiences gender and especially in the studies of intersectionality.[33] The four interventions are to center for people if color and minorities, to necessitate comprehending the complexities of identity, including attending to within-group differences, to center analysis of power meaning exerting importance in examining manifestation of power relation through structural, disciplinary, cultural, and interpersonal means and to emphasizing on the reflection of social change from the applied intersectional

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[33] See (University of Maryland 2022a and 2022b) for their respective bios.

frameworks. This interventional analysis has been referenced by other authors. It was also used by (Thacker and Duran 2020) to study intersectional expression of grief. Hill Collins and Bilge (2014 and 2020) have grouped similar focuses as core ideas of intersectionality. They are addressing social inequality, intersectional power relations, social context, relationality, social justice, and complexity. According to them, investigation on social inequality remains the fundamental investigation of intersectionality. In the analysis of power relation, they refer to Dill and Zambrana (2009). As discussed in earlier section, different dimensions of social context can stretch from geographical to local, to transnational, and to global sphere. Need for contextualization and accommodation of more identities was argued by (Crenshaw 2006; Purkayastha 2012,)—it is considered a core idea of intersectionality. Relationality refers to interdisciplinary connection with other ideas, discourse, and political practices eg. Intersectionality and development. Social justice is considered the core theme of intersectionality. The authors warn for only pay lip service by superficial integration of mere identities at the crossroad of marginalization. They summarize the importance and complexity of all these ideas in a concise statement, "thinking about social inequalities and power relations within an ethos of social justice and doing so not in abstract generalizations but in their specific context, brings complexity to intersectional inquiry and praxis." (Hill Collins and Bilge 2020, 234). Another prominent author of intersectionality, Olena Hankivsky, has also developed 7 principles of intersectionality. She is a professor at Simon Fraser University with specialization on public policy, political theory, gender, care ethics and Intersectionality. She has contributed to publishing eight books and numerous book chapters and articles in intersectionality and other topics[34]. The seven interventions are: social justice and equity, intersecting categories, power, time and space, multi-level analysis, diverse knowledge, and reflexivity. The first three principles explain the similar essence to the some of the principles of Dill and Zambrana (2009) and Hill Collins and Bilge (2020), shown in the fig, no.3 later. Principle of 'time and space' argues that experiences of identity-based marginality change through time and space. Multi-level analysis involves understanding of intersectional affect between and across macro (global), meso (provincial) and micro(community) level societies. Reflexivity acknowledges importance of power across all these levels and diversity of knowledge concerns with considering perception and world view of marginalized and excluded people in production of knowledge.

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[34] See (Simon Fraser University 2022) for her biography

Figure 2 Principles of Intersectionality by Hankivsky (2014) (source: Hankivsky 2014, p. 08)

Leslie McCall's Methodological complexities is one of the most cited and based mode of operationalization. In a meta-analysis of how intersectionality was used in social work in last decade, Matsuzaka, Hudson et al. (2021) 24/33 articles—that met their study criteria—used McCall's complexity. Leslie McCall is a political scientist, professor of sociology and political science at City University of New York. She has specialized in the field of Sociology, Political Science and Women's Studies. She has written books like "Complex inequality: Gender, Class and Race in New Economy" in 2001 and "The Undeserving Rich: American Beliefs about Inequality, Opportunity, and Redistribution" in 2013. In her long article "Complexity of Intersectionality", she elaborated the need of methodological and theoretical analysis of complexity of intersectionality. Her goal is to describe several methodological complexities that can explain the intersectional behavior of social issues and critically engage with some of them. She says that though intersectionality has been a paradigm of research in women's studies and elsewhere, there has not been enough analysis of how to conduct it (methodological discourse). She builds her analysis on the

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premise that there are limited range of methodological approaches used to study intersectionality. She says that though the terms, complex and complexities are frequently used in intersectionality discourse by many feminists, they either do not pinpoint matters of complexity or that they do not focus enough. Therefore, she describes three types of complexities that she articulated by critical analysis of common features of a wide range of methodological approaches that have been used to study intersectionality. They are anti-categorical, intra-categorical and inter-categorical. Anti-categorical approach promotes the notion that social life is fluid and by trying to differentiate the differences, it is going to cause further inequalities. Therefore, it defies and deconstructs analytical categories. Intra-categorical complexity accepts that there are stable categories of identities and acknowledges them, but it also questions the boundary and defining process of such categories. For eg. where does the boundary end? Inter-categorical approach acknowledges the categories and bases the analysis around those group and identities. Some have also contested eg. Nira Yuval Davis in her article "Beyond the Recognition and Redistribution Dichotomy: Intersectionality and Stratification" that she does not see intra-categorical and inter-categorical complexity as mutually exclusive (Lutz, Vivar et al. 2016). However, she is aware and has provided disclaimer that her analysis may be different from other feminists and social theorists.

Other examples of incorporating intersectionality in methodological analysis are Floya Anthias (1998) who suggested a multi-level analysis that works on four levels: the level of discrimination (experience) the actors' level (inter- subjective praxis); the institutional level (institutional regimes); and the level of representation (symbolic and discursive).

As a work in progress theory (Carbado, Crenshaw et al. 2013; Davis 2008), it is remarkable to see that many writers credit previous methods of operationalization and recommend flexibility and modification to conduct research in different fields of interest. Colfer, Basnett et al. (2018) have tabulated approaches of Crenshaw (1991), McCall (2005) and Hankivsky (2014) and suggested appropriate grounds for their application. They have then adapted these formulations into proposing five lenses to analyze intersectionality, especially in forest conversation: cognitive, emotional, social, economic, and political. As mentioned earlier, Thacker and Duran (2019) have used Dill and Zambrana (2009)'s 4 theoretical interventions and further proposed 5 guidelines to utilize intersectionality when designing a study, recruiting participants, collecting data, engaging in data analysis, and having critical reflexivity throughout the study. Similarly, Moradi and

Grzanka (2017) had postulated 7 guidelines to formulate intersectionality for 3 different purposes: as a field of study, as analytical strategy, or disposition and 3. as Critical praxis for social change. Matsuzaka et al. (2021) further elaborated these postulates by proposing sub operationalization guidelines.

For the theoretical interpretation of my thesis, I will use three of the prominent operationalizations of principles of Intersectionality whose analyses are overlapped. They are Dill and Zambrana (2009), (Hanskivsky 2014) and Hill Collins and Bilge (2020). These authors are renowned for their work in intersectionality and like mentioned above, their analyses are cited by many other following authors. I have illustrated the overlapping analysis of them in the following Venn diagram. In the following chapters, I shall depict how the overlapped core ideas and two other ideas: 'time and space' and social context are resonated on the GESI approaches of the studied development organizations in Nepal in arguing that GESI is a critical praxis of intersectionality.

Hill Collins and Bilge (2020)

Social Context
Rationality

Hanskivsky (2014)

Dill and Zambrana (2009)

Categorical Complexity
Social Justice
Social Inequality
Power Relation

Multi-level
analysis
Diverse knowledge
Time and Space
Reflexivity
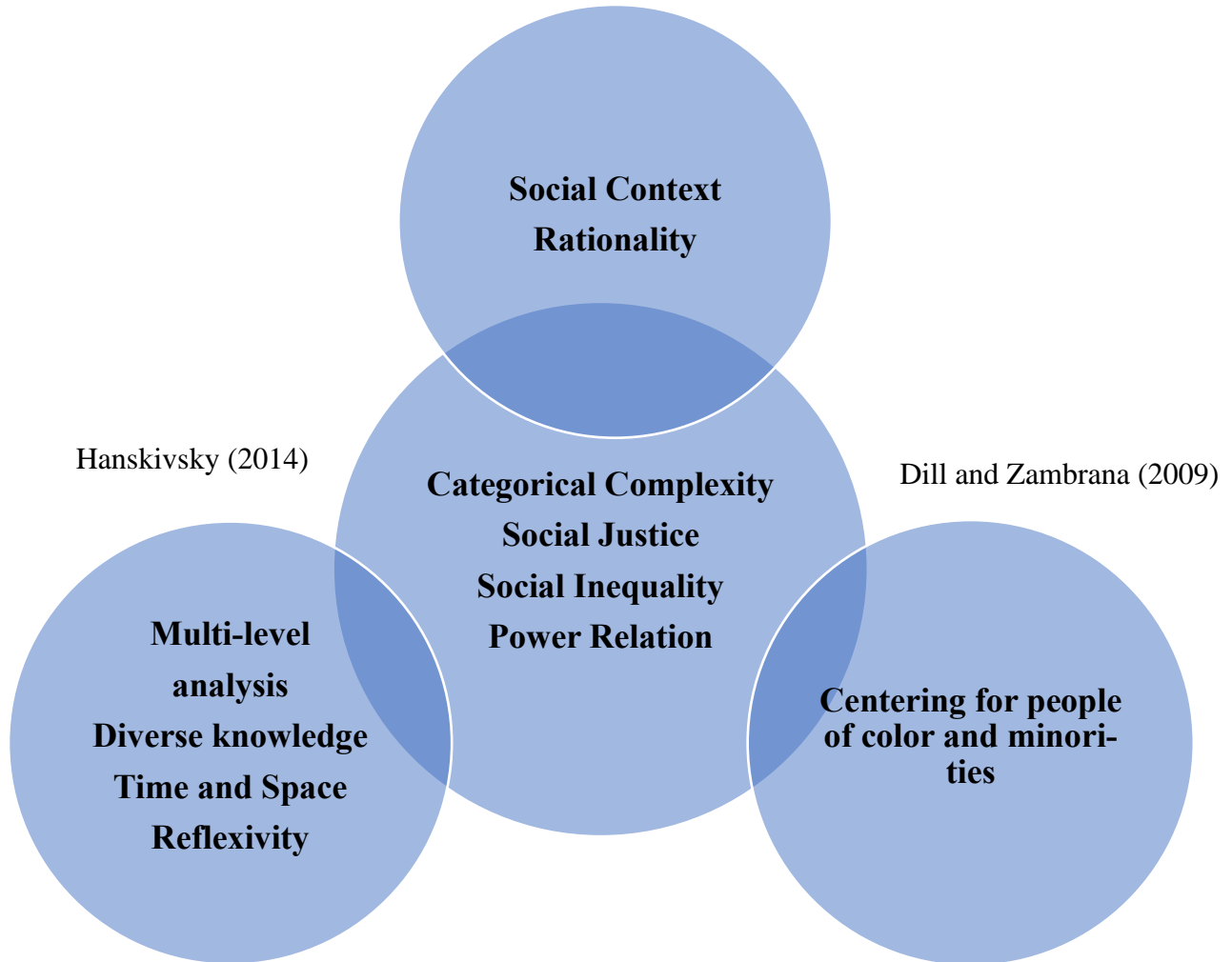
Centering for people
of color and minori-
ties

Figure 3: Venn diagram of overlapping Core ideas of Intersectionality from three groups of prominent feminist scholars: created
by author)[35]

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[35] Terminologies of overlapping principles are changed

Chapter 5 Definitional dilemma: Understanding of Intersectionality in GESI frameworks

"Definitions emerge from more iterative, grassroots processes that enable intellectual and political consensus to emerge through everyday practices such as organizing sessions, developing syllabi, or choosing citations." (Hill Collins 2015, p. 3)

This chapter presents findings on understanding of gender, GESI and Intersectionality and aims following question:

> How is the theory of intersectionality understood in Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Frameworks applied by NGOS, INGOs, private sectors development and humanitarian aid providers in Nepal?

In the quest of exploring the understanding of intersectionality and then operationalizing it in the GESI frameworks, I found varied perceptions not only about intersectionality but also on definition of gender and GESI. Consequently, their understanding of GESI resonated with different core values of intersectionality for different organizations. In the chapter, I shall first summarize different definitions, outlook and understanding of all three concepts shared by the participating organizations and then discuss and analyze plausible explanations for the difference in their definition of the terms using existing literature. In a statement, I found that their understanding of intersectionality resonates with some prominent principles/ core ideas of intersectionality discussed in the literature of intersectionality targeting social inequality, promoting social justice, addressing power relation, centering minorities, contextualization, complexities of identities.

It is important to understand participants' perception of the notion of gender before we start investigating into their notion of GESI and intersectionality.

Gender: Men and Women

Understanding of gender was different among different organizations. Though some organizations referred identities of sexual and gender minorities (LGBTIQs), findings showed dominance of dichotomy of male/female or men/women in their understanding of gender. Org3, 5 and 6 defined genders within the limited premise of socially constructed attitude and social interaction and relationships between male and female. Rani from Org6 said, "*When we talk*

about gender, we want female participation". When I asked if their definition of gender included other genders than men and women at the end of the interview, Mira the research assistant replied, "*of course, they are part of gender inclusion because even if not biologically, socially they are obviously members of LGBTIQ. But as far as I am concerned, we have not worked with anybody who have identified themselves in this group. Please correct me if I am wrong Rani jee*". Rani confirmed, "*we have not yet gotten to work with LGBT groups*.". Orgs 3 and 5 did not mention about LGBTIQ and sexual minority during the entire interview. Org 3 mentions "LGBTIQ in 3 places in their GESI policy only the background, forward and in the last page under the definition of disaggregated data and gender equality such as *"Gender equality means equal opportunities, rights and responsibilities for women, men and LGBTIQ, girls and boys" (Org3 GESI Policy Document). However*, this statement is immediately followed by their definition of gender equity that goes back to dichotomous definition of gender*: "It refers to the fair treatment of women, girls, boys, and men according to their respective needs and perspectives" (GESI policy, org 3 2021)[36].* On the other hand, org1,2 and 4 understood genders outside the dichotomy of male/ female or men/women. Sona and Maya (Org2) also referred to sexual and gender minorities in several instances of their interviews. Their GESI policy published in 2021 defines gender as "the roles of women, girls, men and boys and non-binary gender identities in a given society" and have included "identities that are outside the gender binary belonging" in their description of gender equality. However, the definitions of these terminologies in their "Gender Analysis Guide" published in 2019 does not mention non-binary gender identities [37]. Though the GESI policy of Org1 does not mention about gender minorities in their definition of gender and gender equality, "people of third gender" is stated on the definition of "GESI sensitive"[38]. During the interview, Junu defined gender equality as "*not just looking into men and women's condition and position but also for different gender orientation; and the gender role can also be* different". Chetana from Org4 also referred to genders outside the binary categorization during her interview and their GESI policy also reflects on inclusion of LGBTIQ. However again, though their organization's documents have referenced nonbinary sex

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[36] Organization document *not referenced to maintain anonymity.*
[37] Not cited to maintain anonymity
[38] See note 37

and gender in above mentioned instances, they used binary language to reference sex and gender in other general section.

Discussion and Analysis

This dilemma in the binary or nonbinary definition of gender and sex can be attributed to the societal understanding of gender, and gender equality in Nepal, and prominent use of the language of WID, WAD, GAD, and gender mainstreaming approaches in development sector.

First, inclusion and acceptance of gender and sexual minorities is not a common understanding of sex and gender in Nepal. We did not learn about biological and social dimensions of sex and gender in schools. Similarly, the language, values, and importance of equality between men and women is more strongly reflected in socioeconomic, political, and constitutional sphere in Nepal.[39] The dialogues around the rights and representation of gender and sexual minorities became more common only after the people's movement in 1990 (GESI Working Group, 2017). Though there is growing recognition and acceptance of gender minorities, it is still not fully adapted. An example is Nepalese government's effort in this regard. GESI documents developed by the ministries, include gender and sex minority under the list of identity factor but the language of defining gender in the document is binary (see MOUD 2013) for example. Similarly, when we fill an official form, we can select sex as male/female/other (personal experience) however, official population census report does not differentiate intersex as a type of sex in its population statistics of different regions, provinces, and districts of Nepal (CBS 2022b). Just like the GESI policy documents of the participant organization, the document on GESI sensitivity of the census highlights the importance of acknowledging gender and sexual minorities, but only consider binary definitions in rest of the analysis (CBS 2022a).

Secondly, we can see that the language of WID and GAD is still used by development practitioners and these approaches did not highlight other gender minorities. As discussed in the theory chapter, these approaches highlighted different progressive agendas of women's and men's—in GAD—roles and relations in development but no other gender minorities (Connelly, Li et al. 2000). The GAD approach focused more on the distinction between women's biological identity as female and "socially constructed set of relational and material practices (Connelly, Li et al.

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[39] As mentioned in the earlier chapter, constitution of Nepal requires 33% representation of women, but not necessarily other sexual and gender minorities. Another example is that international women's day (*Biswa Mahila diwas*) is much widely celebrated across all geographical areas from remote villages to larger cities whereas pride month is celebrated only in few major cities like Kathmandu and Pokhara.

2000) pg 63). Similarly, the notion of women empowerment was focused by all the participating organization and the language of women's agency, agents of change was mentioned during the interview of all the organization. The same nation was the prime agenda of GAD approach in 1980s, in fact, GAD was also called "empowerment approach" or "gender aware planning" (ibid). The gender mainstreaming overview of UN 2001 also does not address nonbinary genders (UN 2002). The definition of gender from UN women itself circles around social constructions and affiliation of men/women or boys/girls (UNWOMEN 2001). Thus, we can connect the dots that because the gender mainstreaming strategies in international development focus much on binary identification of gender and are not critical about promoting nonbinary definition, the signatories and development practitioner in the field are indeed influenced by such dominant narratives. Though I did not find many academic articles criticizing dominance of binary definition of gender and sex, dominance in gender mainstreaming efforts in development, Gaillard et. al 2017, have criticized this dominance in disaster risk and reduction projects (Highlighting the case studies from the Philippines, Indonesia, and Samoa, they have argued that such projects have failed to capture and address vulnerabilities of gender minorities because of their focus on men/women dichotomy when considering gender Gaillard et. al 2017).

GESI as a Summation of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

As mentioned in the introduction, GESI is born in Nepal and widely practiced by development partners and different public departments of government of Nepal. It has in fact has become a buzzword (Maya 2021). However, different GESI advocates and practitioners have their different understanding of GESI (GESI Working Group 2017). Thus, a group of development partners in Nepal developed a common framework for gender equality and social inclusion in 2017. Because many prominent international multilateral and bilateral organizations were involved in the development of the framework, I expected that the participant organization would mention or at least refer to this framework in developing their own GESI framework. However, beside org4 who a contributor in was developing the framework, the rest of 5 organizations had not used it. As emphasized by the framework, I also found that the interviewed organizations had different understanding, interpretation, focus and versions of GESI. In this section, I shall discuss about the perception around meaning and importance of GESI by the studied organization.

Though GESI was used and valued by all the organizations, the meaning, rationale of adoption, focus, and even the full form was different. GESI was referred as Gender Equality and Social Inclusion by Org4, 1, 3 and 5. However, Org6 called GESI as Gender '**Equity**' and Social Inclusion and Org2 had an extension: 'GEDSI' Gender Equality '**Disability**' and Social Inclusion. Mira from Org6 said, "*we know the difference of equity and equality*" and added that equity was more important than equality for them because they think, "*all can come together but it does not have to be in similar manner*". She did not elaborate more. Maya explained that the reason why they have GEDSI instead of GESI is such that people living with disability are also overlooked but are not necessarily considered within the umbrella term of 'social inclusion'. Thus, they chose to use the acronym GEDSI. In my interview with Sona later, she referred as GEDSI during the entire interview.

In a nutshell, GESI is considered a vital tool (Org1) to understand marginalization, vulnerability, social inclusion, and exclusion because of different factors preventing anybody from accessibility to resources (Org2). Maya (Org2) and Chetana (Org4) stated that such definition should be contextualized for the community the organization is working. Chetana (Org6) gave an exhaustive answer to what GESI meant for them with numerous instances of adopting GESI sensitive approaches in their organizational structure and function. She said that they work in three levels to ensure GESI sensitivity: at normative level, at coordination level and at operational level. Her elaborative answer summarized the impression that GESI meant going beyond attending the obvious immediate needs of the excluded groups and ensuring coordination among agencies and adopting GESI language in the policy. The chairperson of Org6, Kumar said that GESI is a pathway to approach the goal to Leave No One Behind (LNOB).

Importance of GESI and barriers for Implementation

Regardless of what GESI meant in their words and action, all the participant organizations agreed on the importance of GESI. Some reasons mentioned and highlighted are diverse geography and demography of Nepal (Org3,5,6, Sita), unequal sociopolitical situation of Nepal (Sita, Org 3), prioritization to reach the most vulnerable communities (Org 1,2,3,5,6), promoting equal access and distribution of resources and opportunities (Sita, Org 2), enabling decision making power (Org1,2) and enabling clearer picture to social equality (Org 2).

The GESI expert Sita, and representatives of Org3 referred to women's subordinated situation due to sociopolitical history of Nepal in emphasizing the need for GESI approach. Sita said that

different religious aspects, policies, social norms and cultural values and their interpretation, and lack of opportunities have restricted women from equal access to education and better health system. These factors in return have limited them to showcase their potential. She said, "*changes have occurred but not the extent required… There is a patriarchal phenomenon or expectation for women to seek support from men.*" Hari fortified the same notion, "*we have patriarchal mindset. Research and file have shown that women are historically, and still lagging … For example, in the local government election of 2017, there were 26% women in the post of vice chair, they are only on the second layer (vice chair and not chair). They are still not allowed to come in the first layer or decision-making power.*"

Maya also emphasized along the similar,

> "*We need GESI lens to see those who are left behind. GESI is a process, a tool, and an output…. Leave No One Behind is like a principle. To achieve that principle, we need a GESI lens otherwise it's going to be a total disaster*" (Maya (Org2), Online Interview 2021)

Chetana said that one may focus only on elite groups or city women if they do not consider about their other vulnerability and marginalization. Thus, she emphasized that "*gender equality is met only when different layers of background are equally empowered*".

Sonam from org5 explained understanding and importance of gender equality and inclusion of excluded groups separately. He said that hinderance of girls and women's education and limitation to go outside the household have led to their lower social status and discrimination. His view on importance of working on social inclusion was such that, "*the government has been prioritizing to include ethnic and Dalits …We still need to boost their situation. We NGOs play only the supportive role of the national government.*". Junu gave several reasons of why gender equality and social inclusion are important separately, and importance of their combination. As her quote is very clearly reflective, I have included below:

> "*The importance of gender equality is such that if there is an unequal power relation (between gender), that should be recognized and valued. In social inclusion, there are different barriers of social norms and values, conservative social stereotypes, stigmas that may have hampered certain groups from coming in the frontline to seek opportunities…*".
> (Junu, (Org2), Online interview 2021)

She summarized that GESI is important for their organization to ensure that the community has equal accessibility to the resources the organization has to offer and build a sense of accountability and contribution in them.

Maya said that different identity characteristics that can prevent anybody from accessibility. Therefore, they considered to define and identify those characters, to look at everything from GESI approach, to reach their aim. Maya said that adding aspects of social inclusion and disability on the stories of women or other gender, sexual minorities give a different, more realistic, broader, and clearer picture.

"... *when we keep gender and social inclusion separate, it may not give a complete picture about historically disadvantaged groups (based on) caste, ethnicity, even religion, different gender.*"
(Maya (Org2) Online Interview 2021)

Discussion and Analysis
I this section, draw two observations and analysis based on their perception about meaning and importance of GESI. First, many organizations focused on empowerment of women though they referred GESI; the explanation for this can be the nature of their organization and transition from opting gender mainstreaming to GESI mainstreaming. The later reason also explains the second observation that GESI is considered as a summation of gender equality and social inclusion. Their responses on the importance of GESI also reflect some of the core principles of intersectionality. However, I shall discuss that later after presenting how they understand intersectionality in the following section.

Though most organizations promoted GESI approach and promoted it in their projects, their work and focus were concentrated around women's empowerment and participations and not necessarily targeting the complex integration of other identities (Org1, Org3, Org4, Org5 and Org6). Chetana herself confirmed that many organizations tend to use GESI sensitive and approaches in their public relation communications although their action, focus and work are focused to gender only. Most of the organizations reflected more about ensuring higher percentage of female beneficiaries in their projects as well as increasing number of female staff in decision making power. The foremost reason for this observation is that all the organizations have been working primarily for women. Moreover, Org1,2,3,4,5 had some sort of gender analysis or audit

after which the organizations had considered "lesson learn" in improving their gender policies and mainstreaming efforts prior to steering their focus on GESI.

GESI is a summation of GE and SI, to put in other word, addition of focus on social inclusion of different marginalized groups on the agendas of gender equality. Some of the examples to highlight this conclusion are in the GESI policies of all the organizations[40] first defined gender, gender equality, social inclusion separately and then gave their definition of GESI. Similarly, as quoted above, many of them (Org1, org2, org3, org5 and org6) shared the importance of gender equality and social inclusion separately and then gave their stance on why the combination is important. By pointing out that most organizations still focus only on women's agenda while talking about GESI, Chetana said that "*It is important to combine gender equality and social inclusion because if one is to focus only on gender equality, one may leave behind excluded groups who are also at the margin of vulnerability.*". Junu also said, "*If these (gender equality and social inclusion) are not combined, I think it equality cannot be ensured…*"

As discussed previously, GESI mainstreaming is incentivized in the recent development interventions. Thus, organizations are following this trend by including 'social inclusion' in their gender mainstreaming policies. MOuD's definition of GESI is such that it addresses inequality between men and women and between different social group. This definition first fortifies binary definition of gender and situates GESI as adding SI with GE. This analysis was also evidenced by Umit Shrestha 2017 that GESI mainstreaming is a re-presentation of gender mainstreaming.

> "In essence, the GESI Mainstreaming process does not reinvent the wheel on gender equality and social inclusion, but it builds on the platform that was already created by different approaches such as gender mainstreaming and gender equality/equity. The process is more inclusive now that it has added other vulnerable groups within its spectrum."
> (Shrestha 2017, p.136).

He used Squires (2005) framework of inclusion, reversal and displacement and Daly's framework of integrative and embeddedness to analyze GESI implementation at MoUD—a pioneer in promoting GESI. He concluded that the implication of GESI was limited to paper, and understanding and acceptance of GESI practices differed among staff from different positions and departments. He then claimed that diversity and intersectionality are not completely addressed in the ministry (See Shrestha 2017 for more). He criticized that there is not enough analytical

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[40] All the organizations who have their published GESI policy.

framework to understand GESI. Therefore, he concluded with further question: how GESI can mainstreaming process accommodate the intersectional needs of individuals with multiple marginalized identities eg. "Dalit woman versus a poor Dalit woman versus a single non-Dalit mother versus a Dalit man" (147). He argued that "The GESI mainstreaming process does not seem to have a solution for differing inequalities, nor do the MOUD (2013) address this issue" (147). This is where I believe my research contributes to understand how is intersectionality is situated in GESI starting with a direction question: what is the perception of intersectionality among the development partner organizations?

The next section discusses how intersectionality was perceived and reflected by the participant organizations.

Intersectionality: Definitional dilemma persists

As discussed in the theory chapter, intersectionality has also been used to understand different intersecting social relations, identities, political and historical structures in Nepalese population in recent years (see Heinzen-Dick et al. (2019), Poudel (2019), Mohtey (2021), Chaulagain and Pathak (2021). Similarly, intersectionality has been mentioned in many GESI policies and dialogues (ADB 2020, Working Group 2017, MoUD 2013, etc.). We just discussed that the understanding of GESI differed among organizations. This leads to consecutive question of unraveling if the perception about intersectionality mentioned, used, embedded in these GESI framework also differed. The following sections examines how intersectionality is understood by the participant organizations in their GESI approaches.

Two interview questions were posed to directly understand their perception of intersectionality

1. How is the concept of intersectionality understood at your organization?
2. How do you incorporate understanding of GESI and intersectionality in designing practical guidelines?

There was a mixed perception about intersectionality and its importance among the participant organizations. I have separated the understanding of intersectionality in three groups: unaware about the concept (Org5, 6), understood as addition of other social identities in further marginalization of women (Org3) and interaction of different identities in contributing social inclusion and exclusion of an individual or groups (Org1, 2 and 4). Org2,3 and 4 described intersectionality and its importance in their respective GESI policies.

Org5 and 6 did not mention the terminologies directly. Sonam replied that he did not know the terminology both in English as well as in Nepali. The documents that I received from him also did not use the terminology, but it wrote about of multiple discriminations and increased risk of abuse for children falling under vulnerable groups was reflected on the Social Protection and Safeguarding Policy of Org5[41]. The three staff of Org6 were not familiar with the concept of intersectionality. However, the chairperson, Kumar responded in different time of the interview that they, "*nearly associate with the intersectionality approach because we look into the factors of race, group who are politically and socially discriminated and restricted from privileges in combination and have institutional priority that matches with the principle of LNOB*". Given that 3 representatives did not know about the concept, it is possible that the concept is not commonly discussed at their organization.

Respondents from org3 and org4 said that they understood intersectionality as a phenomenon where subordination of women was deepened by other social identities like marital status, disability, ethnicity, caste, class, and geographical location. Though, the representatives of Org3 did not put the following rationale literally, they said that it was important to combine GE and SI because within different minority and socially excluded groups, women are more excluded and women from certain identity are more excluded than others eg. single women, women with disability. The thematic coordinator said, "*there are intersectionality of caste and ethnicity for women. She may face double or triple burden*". He gave an example of how a women can face triple burden if she is a handicapped woman from Dalit community. They have referred intersectionality as a part of gender justice that they consider to be a basic principle in developing the GESI framework.

Chetana from Org 4 said that she did not know the terminology of intersectionality. However, she referred to intersection of different identities in marginalized position of women. As mentioned earlier, Org4 is a contributor in developing the common GESI framework published in 2017 and Chetana mentioned that they follow the same framework. The framework credits intersectionality as a core principle of the framework.

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[41] See note 37

"There must be a recognition that the people who suffer from any of these forms of ex-clusion or vulnerability and those who experience an intersectionality of political exclu-sion, social exclusion, economic exclusion and/or vulnerability, will require different ap-proaches and strategies." (GESI Working Group 2017, p. 22)

With this quote, they basically recognize that people may face single-axis marginalization based on the socioeconomic and political exclusions as well as an intersected situation fueled by situational vulnerability.

Chetana's response about the concept of intersectionality as "*shifting the attention to multi-sectoral level*" and focusing on excluded groups as well resembled the essence of the following statements in their GESI framework:

"The concept of intersectionality enables agencies whose institutional mandate is to work with specific groups (such as women or children) to address other crosscutting dimen-sions of identity that lead to exclusion." (pg 18, GESI working group 2017 p. 18)

On the other hand, Org1 and Org2 emphasized that intersection of identities of everybody influences their experience of social equality and inequality. During the interview Sona, the GEDSI mainstreaming coordinator of Org2said, "

"Intersectionality, we cannot miss it or leave it in any way, right? because as an individ-ual, I do not have only one, let's say, identity. My identity overlaps with lots of differ-ent…. contextual as well as … my own universal characteristics as well which means my age, gender, and things like that... and contextual is that where if I am any sort of disabil-ity or not, what language I speak, where I live and all these stuffs…" (Sona (Org2) online interview 2022)

This idea was reflected on the organizational stance on intersectionality. The opening page of their GESI policy of Org2 is the definition of intersectionality and the intersectional approach as important factors necessary to understand and implement GESI mainstreaming. Maya also forti-fied the notion of intersection of identities,

"*... there are many characteristics of intersectionality that one cannot differentiate. Even though they are separate category, when we put them together, the impact of the execution is amplified that may not have happened if they were considered separately... the people whom we want to reach are probably overshadowed because of multiple marginalization.*"

The GESI policy of Org1 does not mention "intersectionality" in their policy. However, the GAO, Junu understood the concept of intersectionality. She elaborated in detail about the complexity and importance of intersection of identities in ensuring social equality. She answered,

"In intersectionality, age, sex, gender, ethnic and different components are considered. For example, a certain ethnic community may have access to resources, but they may be undermined because of other factors like their age or sexual orientation, gender, or different elements. These factors may not be considered. Therefore, if we consider intersectionality in the projects, we can see that people may have unequal access to resources because of geography, age, sex, gender, ethnicity".

The overall narrative from those who knew intersectionality, was such that as one an individual has intersected identity of gender and other social identities, it is important to combine efforts of ensuring Gender equality and Social Inclusion through GESI.

Discussion and Analysis

This section draws analysis on the inconsistency in the understanding of intersectionality, tendency to miss-representation of intersectionality as an 'add-on' and its use in understanding intra-women differences. I shall then discuss resonance of some of three of the core principles of Intersectionality:

It is interesting to see how intersectionality is understood ranging from not knowing the term to reflection on intersected identities of an individual resulting that can lead exclusion and vulnerability. There are two plausible explanations. The foremost possibility can simply be difference in language. The direct translation for intersection in Nepali is "*antarpakshiyata*". Though the interviews were held in both English and Nepali, most respondents preferred to interview in English. None of the respondents used Nepali terms *antarpakshiyata* (intersectionality) nor *laingik samanata ra samajik samabesikaran* (GESI). They used the acronym GESI. Moreover, all the GESI

policies published on their home pages and sent to me were in English language. Only the common framework for GESI published by the GESI working group is available in Nepali language well. Intersectionality is comparatively a newly coined term in English, and it is only very recently that the term has been used popularly used in the field of international development. Thus, it is understandable that practitioners would not be familiar with the terminology.

This leads to the second explanation that insufficient focus and explanation about intersectionality theory in GESI frameworks advocated by governments other international organizations. Shrestha (2019) found that the essence of intersectionality was not reflected in the GESI policy of MoUD. Like mentioned earlier, many GESI frameworks either only mention intersectionality or do not even mention (Org1). On the other hand, some have its definition and explanation on the opening of the policy document (Org2).

I was reflecting if the types (i.e: INGO or NGO) of organization had any effect in their understanding of the theory. However, I concluded that it may not have significant effect because though org 5 and 6 are an NGO and private sectors, they work very closely with INGOs. Internal staff training, connection with international personnel and experts can be different in an INGO vs NGO or private organization, but I do not have significant information about it.

The second finding and analysis is that intersectionality is used to justify addition of other identities on gender identities in GESI framework. This is not intersectionality (Hunting and Hankivsky (2020); Yuval-Davis (2006). There are several possible reasonings. First, as we discussed in previous section, GESI is considered as an addition of GE and SI. Thus, intersectionality is drawn by mere association like "intersectionality of gender equality and other social identities" (GESI Working Group 2017, p. 18). Secondly, another popular principle in development and humanitarian aid, leave no Girls Behind (LNGB) or (LNOB) was also associated with GESI by Org2 and 3. However, these two principles do not necessarily reflect the interested marginalization but only to include all people facing inequalities and discriminations beyond gender, geography, age (UNSDG 2022). Third reason circles back to the shift from gender mainstreaming approaches to intersectional approaches in the sector of international development. As discussed in the theory chapter, intersectional analysis is gaining popularity in gender mainstreaming projects in international development. Many UN organizations including UN Women, UNDP, WHO, UNCHR are acknowledging that intersectionality is key in identifying intersected vulnerabilities, strengthening the training and competence for gender mainstreaming (Hunting and Hankivsky

(2020). Hunting and Hankivsky (2020) have observed that these organization have co-opted and misrepresented intersectionality as add-on' effort. Like mentioned earlier, as the studied organizations have some sort of connection with international development communities, similar pattern could have been shared, but I do not have enough information to strongly argue for it.

On a positive light, I found that those who knew about intersectionality, used it to refer and understand intra differences the differences between women. Hari from Org3 said, "*within women's group, there are other social identities like Dalit, ethnicity, disability, single women who are not taken care by the society and thus prohibit and inhibit them from moving forward*." Both Sona and Maya from Org2 gave account of their adolescence girls literacy project in province 2 and as example of how they address intersected vulnerability. They work with Muslim girls who are more hindered from getting education than girls from other religion. Sona said, "*we have a section where we provide cash grants for our 'out of schoolgirls'*, and for girls with disability, we provide them additional support which help them with additional devices, …to access other services in an equal basis". Based on this finding, we can deduce that GESI use intra-categorical approach among the three approaches highlighted by McCall (2005). Analysis on different categories will be elaborated in the next chapter.

Though their operational works involved working mostly for women's project, Junu, Maya, Sona, Hari, Kumar gave reflected the correct definition of intersectionality as intersection of all forms of identities in conditioning social inclusion and exclusion.

"*…when we work in the community, in terms of gender obviously, women are underrepresented, and their voices are repressed. Now we have learnt more that the voices of gender minorities group are even more repressed...*" (Maya (Org2) Online interview 2021)

These correct association of intersectional in GESI by some of the participants helps us to reflect that GESI resonates with some of the core principles of intersectionality highlighted in the Venn diagram in theory chapter : social inequality, social justice, power relation and centering minority groups.

Social inequality and social justive have been considered as the fundamental investigation of intersectionality by Hanskivsky (2014), Dill and Zambrana (2009), Hill Collins and Bilge (2020), Carbado, as well as Crenshaw et al. (2013). The essence of human right and development organizations are the direct utilization of this theme of intersectionality (Hill Collins and Bilge 2020). Dill and Zambrana 2009 pointed out that, "intersectional knowledge reveals the various impacts

of the presence of racial and gender disparities and is a critical first step toward eliminating inequality" (9). This was resonated by Junu in her statement on what happens if GESI is not there? Repeating what Junu said in her definition that social equality cannot be ensured if GESI is not considered. There are multiple other instances where the studied organizations mentioned that GESI is crucial for social equality creating social justice. GESI is an effort to bridge the gap of social inequality by targeting the people who have been left behind at the intersection of marginalization.

Addressing political and structural power relation have been cited as an important rationale of GESI. As noted in earlier sections, GESI expert, Sita, Hari, Junu, Maya and Sona attributed the power difference created because of the patriarchal, political, and social history of Nepal have led to marginalization of women and other communities. Some of the examples where such understanding of power and power relations were brought up are,

"*They (women) are still not allowed to come in the first layer or decision-making power*" (Hari (Org3) online interview 2021)

"*It (GESI) focuses on cultivating equal sharing of power in socioeconomic and political process… Exclusion is because of the consequence of power relation that creates the inability to access social economic and political resources.*" (Hari (Org3) online interview 2021)

These organizations centered their attention to the minority groups that has been marked as an important aspect of intersectionality by Dill and Zambrana (2009). All of them reflected the motivation of bringing the marginalized, economically backward, 'hard to reach' excluded individuals or community to fore front. Intersectionality is adopted as a method of identifying the most disadvantaged. Nitesh from organization stated that, "Our priority is to reach the most disadvantaged 'back benchers', 'those who have not even seen a single ray of the sunlight' within the targeted social groups of their project." The importance of administering social context was highlighted by the studied organization that will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

We cannot forget that intersection is still a "work in progress". Patricia Hill Collins herself had found her in situations where she did not have a definitive definition of intersectionality and could only justify in the phrase, "I know when I see it". Intersectionality is not in the name, but you know it when you see it. Also, she points out that the definitions emerge through everyday practices and grassroot processes (Hill Collins 2015). Similarly, Carbado points out, "*scholars across the globe regularly invoke and draw upon intersectionality, as do human rights activists,*

community organizers, political figures and lawyers. Any theory that traverses such trans-demo-graphic terrains is bound to generate controversy and contestation" (p. 811)." (Carbado 2013, p.811). On top of that, as mentioned theory chapter, there is still vast ambiguity and flexibility in the definition of intersectionality, its use as theory, analysis, and application. Such ambiguity is rather considered a reason of the success of this theory (Davis 2008). rather, many scholars have fortified its strength in contextualization and including the categories in making the analysis or using it (Carbado, Crenshaw et al. 2013).

"Firstly, GESI was considered a summation of agendas of gender equality and social inclusion. Secondly, the theory was understood as an addition of other identities on gender identities in de-teriorating the marginalized status which is not a trait of Intersectionality. However, the intersec-tion of different identity was used to differentiate the intra differences between Nepali women traversed by other social identities. Some of the interviewees knew its definition as intersection of different categories of identity affecting social inclusion/exclusion. Their understanding of in-tersectionality in GESI frameworks reflected some of the core principles of intersectionality in working for promotion of social equality and social justice by resisting historical, political, and structural power structure in Nepal via centering their functional effort for vulnerable and mar-ginalized groups.

Chapter Conclusion:

The first and foremost conclusion is that there is inconsistency in understanding of intersection-ality in GESI approaches starting with the definition of gender and sex and GESI. Though some of the participant organizations recognized and highlighter non-binary gender and sex in their definition and in the GESI policy documents, there is still dominance of binary definition of gen-der and sex. Secondly, based on the findings, I conclude that GESI mainstreaming is a contin-uum of gender mainstreaming. Thus, there is still much emphasis on empowerment of women though within framework of GESI and GESI is perceived as the summation of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion. This additive approach of GESI has further influenced understanding of in-tersectionality among some organizations as gender and 'add-ons approach, which is not the es-sence of intersectionality. Some of the organizations were unfamiliar with the principle. Those

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who were familiar with the principle utilized intersectionality primarily to see address intra-difference among women while being aware about its definition as intersection of different categories of identity. All in all, we analyzed that some of the chosen core principles were reflected on their understanding of GESI. This paves foundation to build an argument that GESI is a critical praxis of intersectionality.

Chapter 6   GESI as a critical praxis of Intersectionality

Intersectionality as a form of critical praxis is simply individuals and institutions drawing upon intersectional frameworks in their everyday life (Hill Collins and Bilge 2020). Intersectionality as praxis is not as emphasized as critical inquiry (as in knowledge production (Hill Collin 2015). Patricia Hill Collins and Bilge (2020) rather argue that it is an equally important arena of intersectionality because the practices question intersecting power relations and try to fix social problems caused by complex social inequalities. The authors have dedicated a significant section of their book bringing in instances and analysis of intersectionality in practices around the world stretching from black women's movement in Brazil (p. 25), reproductive justice around the world (p. 113), human rights advocacy and policies (p. 104), digital media debates (p. 127) to stories of smaller community-based organizations (p. 51).

This chapter builds up further analysis on how three other core values of intersectionality: categorical complexity, contextualization and 'time and space' are reflected and manifested in GESI approaches. By this analysis, the chapter aims to answer an important research question:

> Can GESI be considered a critical praxis of intersectionality?

This chapter shall unfold answer for this question by answering another research question:
> How do the studied organizations operate around multiple marginalization of an individual or a group? "What identities constitute to being marginalized? How do they "select/consider" and prioritize such identities in their GESI frameworks?"

Categorical Complexity and Contextualization in identification of people at the margins of intersectionality. Intersected identities in Nepali crossroads.

"Rainbows include the whole spectrum of different colors, but how many colors we distinguish depends on our specific social and linguistic milieu" (Yuval-Davis 2006) pg. 203

Along the essence of the statement, this chapter presents identification, groupings, contextualization, and prioritization of different categories of individual's and groups' identity in the intersected crossroad of marginalization in Nepal and a short analysis on how they can change according to time and space.

How do the studied organizations operate multiple marginalization of an individual or a group? "What identities constitute to being marginalized? How do they "select/consider" and prioritize such identities in their GESI frameworks?"

In development sector, the categorization and complications of identity should be more nuanced starting with investigating what identities are prevalent in a particular context. (Grünenfelder and Schurr 2015).

As mentioned in the Nepal chapter, Nepalese government has identified groups who are historically and socially marginalized and thus have regulated positive State Provisions for Welfare and Development Assistance discrimination through quota system (GESI working group 2017). To repeat, the groups who are identified marginalized and thus protected by the quota systems women, *Dalit*, indigenous people, Madhesi's (southern inhabitants), persons with disabilities, and citizens from rural regions. As argued by the study organizations and other advocates of GESI, these groups are not mutually exclusive; a person can fall into multiple categories of marginalization.

The participating organizations work for different groups in the different geographical locations and in different sectors in Nepal. They have their own historical working regions/ targeted groups of focus. However, the primary purpose of this chapter is not to identify whom they work

for; it is rather to analyze what identities do they consider in their structure and function[42] in defining the marginalized group they work for. As coherent to previous findings, differences between the organizations persist. They have different approaches of basing identity and situational attributes, and they use different helping methods and tools to select and prioritize the set of identities and socioeconomic conditions. The chapter provides finding and analysis that the organizations adopt three different modes of identifying identities. I drew these patterns based on what the participants said, what was reflected on their policies. First, I found that most of them consider amalgamations of "socially and historically marginalization" and vulnerability when they address the complexity of identity as presented by figure 4. Secondly, within this amalgamation, they distinguish four major categories of identities and situations: social, physical, geographical, economic and others presented by figure 6. However, their understanding of the categorizations is that these elements overlap each other as reflected by figure 7. Finally, they use different methods and tools used in identifying and prioritizing the groups via contextual mapping, vulnerability assessment, baseline and endline survey, social audit, gender analysis and diversity survey.

Amalgamation of Marginalized and Vulnerable Categories

In short, the combination of marginalized and vulnerable situation was used to identify the intersecting identities. The studied organizations distinguished identities based on the language of "historically and socially marginalized groups" and "vulnerable people". These two terminologies are associated in three different ways. First, they are considered as distinct states or phenomena; secondly social and historical marginalization was considered as a reason for vulnerability. Finally, there are also other instances where the terminologies are used interchangeably.

Starting with the definition, constitution of Nepal (2020) second amendment defines marginalized as "politically, economically, and socially backward, are unable to enjoy services and facilities because of discrimination and oppression and of geographical remoteness or deprived thereof and are in lower status than the human development standards under federal law …" Pg.

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[42] Structure means the organizational structure of an organization. Function meaning the task and projects they carry out and the beneficiaries of these tasks

237 (GoN 2020). The constitution does not have a specific definition of who are constitutionally considered vulnerable. Org5 defined vulnerability as "*Inability of people organization and societies to withstand adverse impacts of various stressors, shocks and to which they are exposed*." Org1, 2 and org 4 distinguished the meaning of these phrases and thus they were considered distinct. Marginalization is associated more with socially constructed structural whereas vulnerability was associated with situational. The GESI framework of Org4 emphasizes that conceptual difference in exclusion and situational vulnerability is considered in the projects. The framework also distinguishes who fall in exclusion or marginalized category, who falls in the situational vulnerability and for whom "Intersectionality applies" (See GESI Working Group 2017, p. 9). In differentiating who falls under vulnerable versus marginalized, Junu from Org1 responded:

"If certain people are disadvantaged because of reasons like persons with disability, homelessness, elderly, isolated, children, people who face difficulty because of different reasons, lower-level education, unemployment, they fall under the criteria of vulnerable groups". In the marginalized groups, people who are discriminated because of caste, like indigenous groups, ethnic groups, Madhesi's, Dalits and Muslims are categorized. (Junu (Org 1) online interview 2021) There are other instances of such distinction during the interview eg., falling under poverty line, migrant workers, pregnant mothers, children, single women when she explained who are vulnerable during the covid situation.

Moving on, org2 also made another point that marginalization is a reason for vulnerability of people. First, they consider the terminologies distinct from one another. Though they do not provide separate identity categories of who fall in vulnerable group and who fall in marginalized groups, their policy document differentiates "socially vulnerable and marginalized/excluded"[43] groups in all the instances throughout the document. Secondly, Maya responded that, "social exclusion/ marginalization is a cause of vulnerability". Giving an example of their Leave no on Behind (LNOB) approach in housing resettlement project after the earthquake of 2015, she said that socially excluded groups are vulnerable.

Along the same understanding that marginalized groups are vulnerable, Org3, 5 and 6 used these terminologies interchangeably. The Social Protection and Safeguarding policy 2020 of Org 4 included all the groups under the umbrella of "Vulnerable individual groups or communities". Groups that were distinguished separately by org 1,2 and 4 eg, Dalit *Janajati Madheshi*, elderly,

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[43] See note 34

women, single women, LGBTIQ, illiterate, landless, people with disability, are kept in the same heading by org5. On the other hand, org3 placed all these groups under excluded or marginalized. Their policies listed women, girls, people with disability, Dalits, refugees etc. under "Traditionally excluded group". Lastly, org6 does not have a GESI policy. During the interview with representatives of org6, the phrases socially marginalized, historically affected, traditionally uncapable were used interchangeably by them and no distinctions were highlighted. They basically said that they do not have any specific guidance of whom they should consider marginalized. *"We follow the same guidelines of the government to determine who are marginalized or not. The castes and groups defined by the Nepalese government as historically excluded are also the group of concern for us",* said Nitesh.

In summary, I have listed the identities and situations mentioned and worked with by the participant organizations under these two terminologies in the tree diagram below. This does not mean that given organizations work for all the groups mentioned below. It shows only how they understand and categorize them.
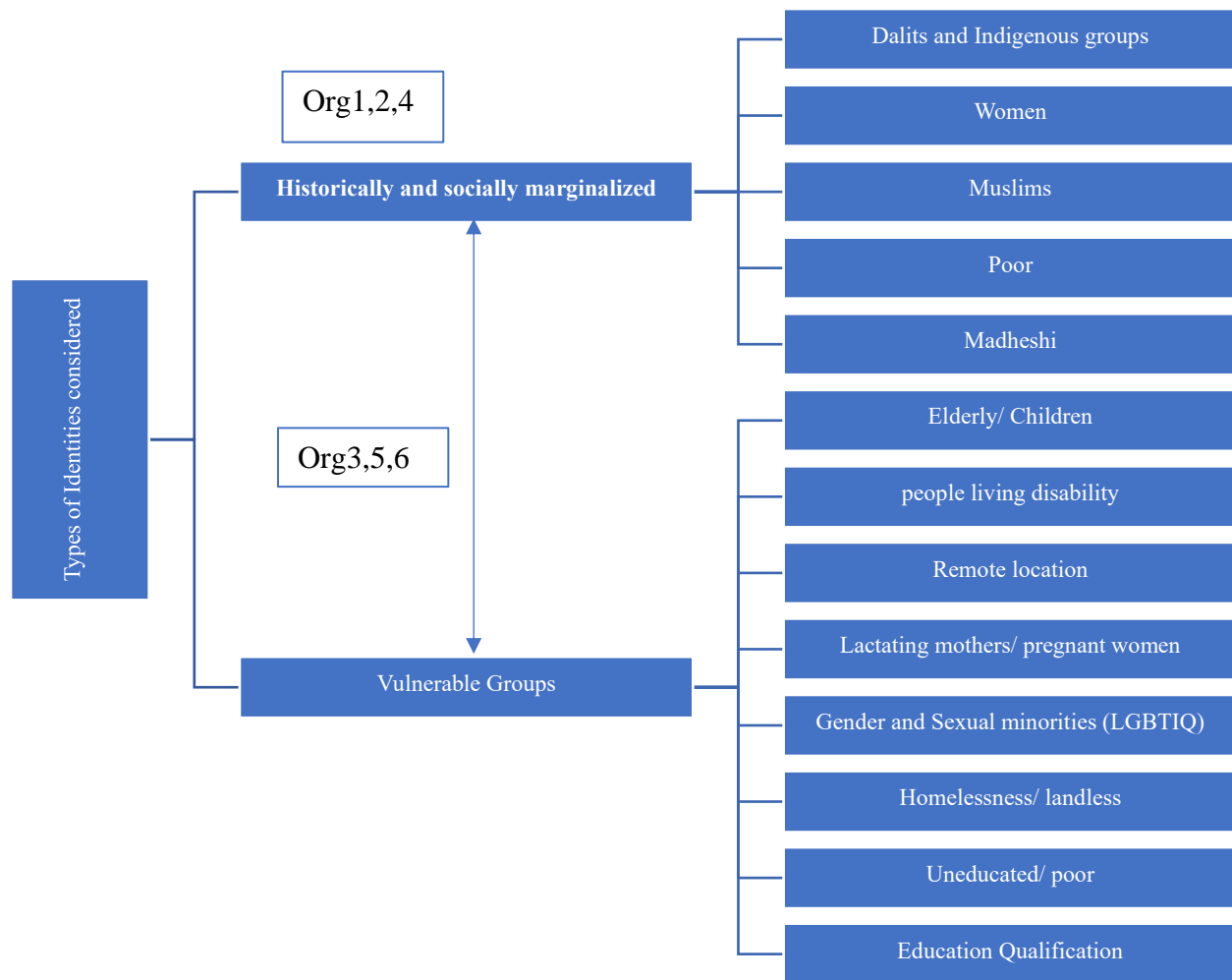
Figure 4 Tree Diagram of Marginalized and Vulnerable groups (Created by author based on findings)

Similarly, it is also important to point out that all the organizations have highlighted the interaction of both social and structural constructions marginalized identity and situational vulnerability. Thus, the accurate representation is the overlap between these terminologies presented by the following Venn diagram:
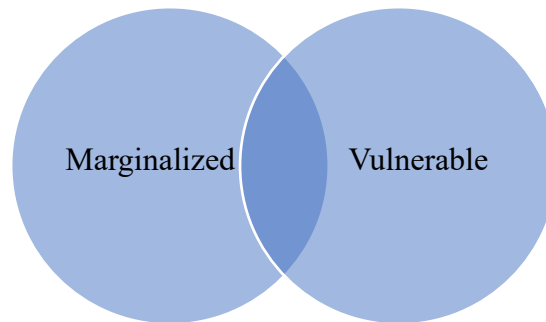
Figure 5 Intersection of Marginalization and Vulnerability (Created by author)

Thus, the conclusion is that these terminologies reflecting different identities are understood as interrelated by causational relations, interchangeable or considered under the same umbrella without clear distinction. However, I agree with Org4 that there should be distinction between structurally or socially constructed marginalization and situational they can vary with 'time and space'.

This resonates with another principle of intersectionality, 'time and space' articulated by Hankivsky (2014). "Privileges and disadvantages, including intersecting identities and the process that determine their value, change over time and place." (Hanskivsky 2014, p.10). She states that time and space are not static but fluid and "changeable and experienced through our interpretations, senses and feelings, which are, in turn, heavily conditioned by our social position/ location, among other factors." (ibid p.10).

One may think that marginalization based on caste or social identities would not be as fluid as a state of vulnerability caused by geographical location or crisis. However, it is not the case. The discriminatory attitudes associated with social identities can change with time and space. An example is that women's and lower caste people's access to resources and political positions have improved in recent years (Sonam, Org 2) though not much as expected (Sita, GESI expert). Junu Maya and Chetana also reflected that, natural calamities and crisis affect everybody, though some are more than others. Other examples are marital status, age, ability.

Situational vulnerability changes when one changes one's space eg. from rural to urban areas (all organizations). This notion on effect of space is evidently elaborated by Purkayastha (2012) who argues how people's sense of inclusion/exclusion change when the cross-transnational boundary. Thus, a person or group may not always remain vulnerable or marginalized.

This brings to may another analysis on the distinction between attributes of identities.

Categories of Identity

"An understanding of, and sensibility to, intersecting identities and the skills to analyze them is key to planning and implementing development projects together with communities and individuals."(Grünenfelder and Schurr 2015) pg. 784

Another interesting observation that I made in this process is the elements or attributes of different identities mentioned by the studied organization. Having this said, I want to provide disclaimer that the following division is summarized and differentiated by the author based on the marginalized and vulnerable individuals and groups the studied organizations considered. These divisions of attributes both structural marginalization as well as situationally vulnerability are generally considered.
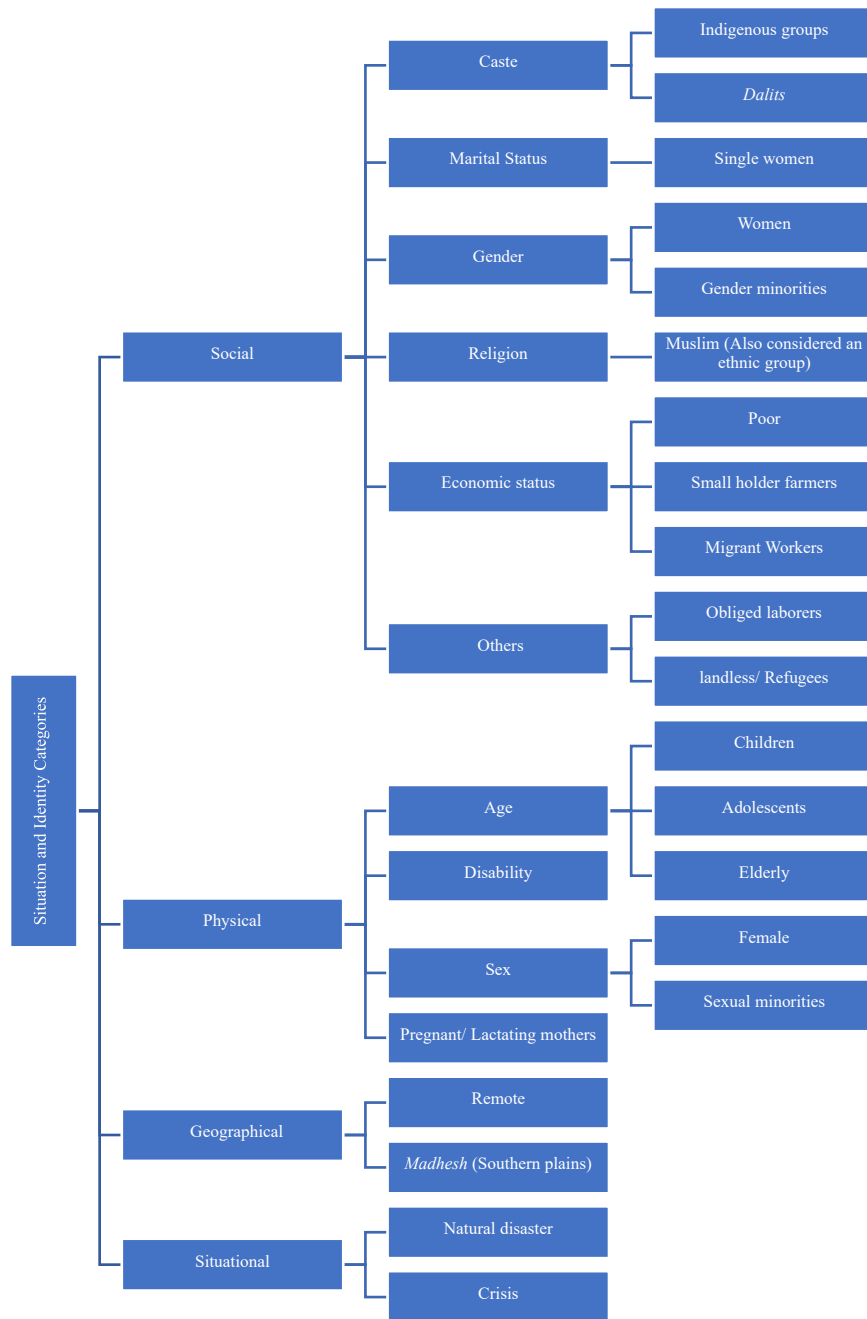
Figure 6 Situation and Identity attributes (Created by author)

As reflected in the definitional dilemma chapter, all the studied organizations agree on multiple categories of identities. In this section, I have grouped those dimensions into 4 different categories: social, geographical, physical, and others. I observed that aspects of different social catrgories like caste hierarchy, religion, marital status, gender, and economic conditions were recognized and reflected by the organizations. Dalits, women, indigenous groups, Muslims, single

women "poorest of the poor", Soman (Org5) employment types (Org1) etc. are considered as marginalized social identities or situations. Single women are considered more vulnerable than married. It is only "remaining single" or not dating or married; it is staying unmarried divorced or widowed at their prime marriage age. This is supported by Raghu Bista, an associate professor at Tribhuwan University that despite increased political and financial independency, single women are still vulnerable (Bista 2019). As a Nepali woman, I can verify that being a single woman is a taboo in Nepal. It is a topic of analysis on its own, however I will not delve more into it (you can see (Bista 2019 and Tiwari and Bhattarai 2017) for more. Moving on, some of the social situation like landlessness, and obliged laborers were also reflected by some organizations (Org1, 2,3,4, and 5); I have kept them under social attributes.

Physical category of individuals was another important factor in situating marginalization and vulnerability. Though sexual minorities like intersex were not dominantly placed under associating a person's gender, I have placed it under physical attribute. Age was another interesting attribute that many organizations considered. Elderly, adolescents, and children were mentioned to be facing different types of vulnerabilities (Org1, 2,3,4,5). Org 6 mentioned the possibility of discrimination but do not work for these groups specifically. Org 2,3 and 5[44] also have child protection policies. Similarly, physical ability of people was considered as another important factor in differentiating one's situation regardless of other social and geographical attributes. This factor was especially emphasized by Org2 and Org3. As mentioned earlier, Org consider GEDSI instead of GESI and Org3 explicitly said in their interview and has mentioned in their policy that they prioritize people with disability. An interesting and warming observation is that the participants did not refer anybody as "disable person". All the participants referred such people as "people living with/with disability" during the interviews. All the policy documents also refer in the similar manner.[45] I think this demonstrates use inclusive language.

Geographical locations of people were also considered in contributing to marginalization or vulnerability. "*Hard to reach places*" (Maya, Org2), "*living on a top of a hill*", Nitesh, "Remote and rural places" Junu (org1), Madhesh, and other geographical locations were frequently mentioned during the interviews and/or GESI documents of the organizations.

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[44] I do not know if other organizations have child protection policies.
[45] It made me remember in the school that we are taught not to refer someone with disability as disable person because they are not disable rather, they are differently able.

Another important finding is that the organizations referred unusual situations like crisis or natural disasters in pushing everybody into vulnerability, especially those who are in marginalized situation because of the above-mentioned attributes are more exposed to more vulnerability. Thus, most of the organization shared that GESI lens is particularly important during such situations (Org1,2,3,4,5). An example is quoted from Junu's interview (Org 2):

> "*In the present context of covid, obviously, everybody's livelihood is affected we prioritize those people whose livelihood is most affected like migrant workers, laborers, other marginalized community, person with disability who need others support, pregnant and lactating mothers, children, single women people with children, people with different sexual orientation.*" (Junu (Org1), online interview 2021)

Again, like mentioned above and reflected by participants, these categories are not mutually exclusive. One's marginalized and vulnerable position is shaped by complexities of these attributes. Thus, a correct illustration of such intersection is presented by the Venn diagram below:
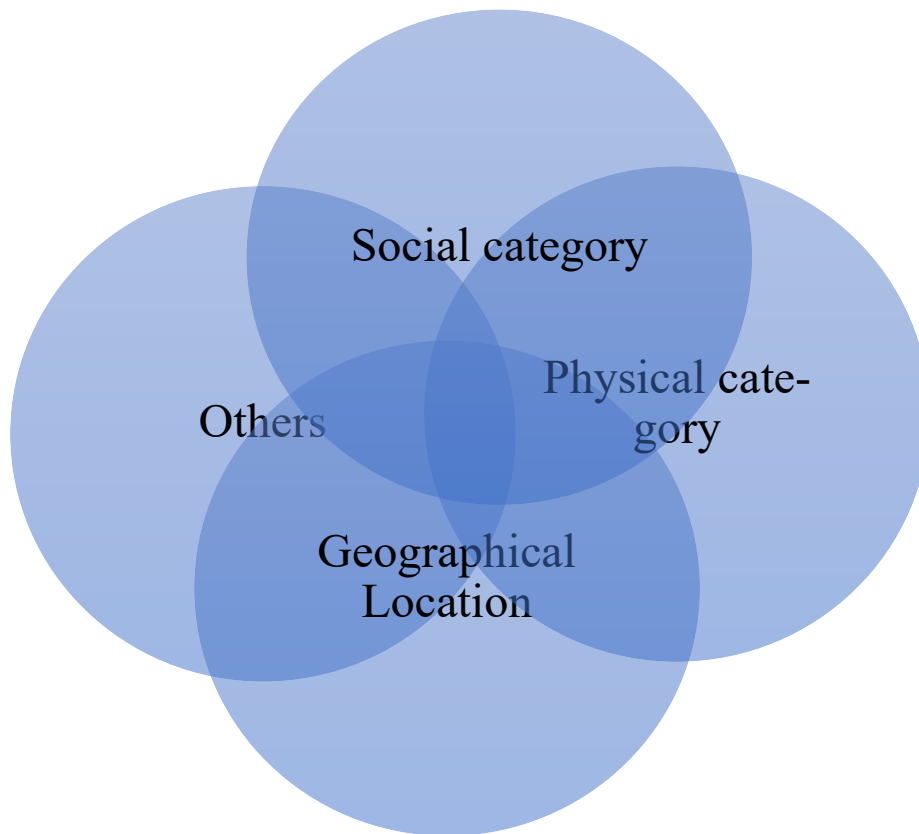

Figure 7 Intersection of situation and identity attributes in Nepal (Created by author)

Contextualization

As discussed in the theory chapter, contextualization is, is not of the core element of intersectionality (see Venn diagram 1). It is especially important in defining the categorization (Purkayastha 2012). This section highlights how the studied organizations identify, select, and prioritize the above analyzed identity and situational categories. The GESI expert Sita emphasized succinctly that "because there are different types of marginalization based on caste, class, economic security, physical security, educational security; thus, priorities must be identified and categorized". In short, all organizations mentioned about contextual analysis and prioritization on top of the basic listing of marginalized groups from the government. Though contextual analysis was mainly referred to the environment of their respective working areas, I observed that other contexts like organizational type and field of expertise, types of projects and assistance the organizations also impacted. The studied organizations emphasized the importance of using GESI lens or intersectional analysis in this process.

The basic criteria all organizations said that they adopt is the government guidelines of marginalized and vulnerable groups. Org 5 and 6 mentioned that they primarily follow such government's guideline of who is considered marginalized groups and they work for these communities. "NGOs play only the supportive role for the national government" Sonam from org 5. However, Maya from Org 2 said that single mode criteria assigned by the government did not reflect the real story of vulnerability in the field.

Thus, all the organizations had other modes and influencing factors of identification and selection based on contextualization. Starting with contextual analysis in the field, all the organizations mentioned that they perform vulnerability and need assessments using various protocols. Org1 and 4 said that they conducted vulnerability mapping via location and population/ demography mapping. In highlighting the necessity of such mapping in finding intersectional vulnerability, Chetana from Org 4 shared a touching example that in *Madesh*, *Musahar* are considered Dalits and *Yadab* and *Mishras* are considered higher caste. There is hardly a single water well and no electricity around *Musahar* community, whereas Yadab, Mishras live in the city where there are government buildings, electricity, and other resources. Along the similar line Maya from org 2 also said that "one cannot be marginalized or vulnerable just because they live in remote areas. Likewise, one cannot we cannot say that one has access to physical (resources) just

because they live in the city. So, I think it is important to assess who are vulnerable and marginalized in that community and context". Thus, they have made 3-4 contextualized assessment criteria based on baseline surveys and in-depth interviews. "We try to look at multiple vulnerability criteria that exclude people. Viewpoint of Intersectionality is associated with it, and we aid by considering all these factors", said Maya. Similar multiple criteria-based vulnerability assessments were also performed by Org3. The policy document of Org5 mentions and Sonam fortified that they also conduct situational analysis and vulnerability assessment via their field staff, regional office, and consortium partners. Additionally, Sonam informed that they implement projects direct requests from the local community and donors meaning, they do not choose whom to work for. As Org 6 is a research and development consulting firm, they said they also comply with the mandates, protocol of their clients on representation of the beneficiaries. Mira said that according to their organization's protocol and depending on whom their clients want to address, they try to ensure at least equal participation of men and women.

Moving on, it may sound like an absurd question to prioritize an attribute or category of identity over another. As discussed in the theory chapter, it is debated as being gender priory by some and as not being gender-priory by others. However, I do not think intersectionality is "an explicit rejection of the concept of 'gender first' and by logical extension, a GM framework" as argued by the Hunting and Hankivsky (2020). As suggested by many authors including Kimberle, Cardabo, Patricia Hill Collins, intersectionality is very fluid, and the practitioners of intersectionality have the flexibility to study identities that are appropriate in that context, time, and place. Similarly, Helma Lutz (2015) says, "not all categories of difference are equally salient" (pg 42). The impact of some category can be much more than the impact of others. Moreover, in development sectors, often the practitioners must focus a specific individuals or groups due to limited scope budget and resources (Grünenfelder and Schurr 2015). In terms of prioritization after the contextual analysis of the working area, Org2 and 3 have standard scoring system in addition to their respective field of expertise. Maya gave an example where they considered 4 domains of vulnerabilities: physical, social exclusion, economic and access vulnerabilities. They weigh these vulnerabilities in their baseline survey and finally prioritize the households who scored highest in all types of vulnerabilities. Org3 considered their prioritization based on the addition of other vulnerability attributes. First, Hari mentioned clearly that they prioritize gender then physical disability, and then caste. With caste, they funnel down first ethnic groups and then age of individual.

Ram added that within gender they prioritize women with the highest burden. In his own words, "first we consider women, then single women, disability, women with disability, there can single disable women. Whoever faces 4 different burdens, 4th burdening, we take them as first and then that's how we set 1,2,3,4 criteria."

Moving forward, other contexts like expertise and type of the organization, resources available, types of the assistance, project also affected the selection of marginalized attributes. First all organizations worked for women's socioeconomic empowerment and welfare in general. Thus, as mentioned earlier, they had gender priori approach of understanding as well as categorizing. Similarly, among many other groups, org1 works for specific groups like farmers, migrant workers, org3 works for obliged laborers, landless, org 5 works for special ethnic group and stateless. Secondly, Org 5, an NGO and org6, a consulting service provider have more flexibility/ uncertainty to work for different types of marginalized groups because they worked on the mandates of donors and clients. This may be different with rest of the organization who have international supporting body as an INGO. Thirdly, Chetana and Maya mentioned that the contributing capacity/ resources of an organization may also limit how they can address the intersected marginalization or that they must choose only the highest scorer in the vulnerability and look way to those who are still vulnerable but scored lower. Lastly, as many organizations reflected, sometimes the selection is based on the project types eg. the primary groups for Leave no Girls Behind are girls or women.

Among all approaches the most interesting and important observation is that the organization recognized the need for GESI lens in this process. GESI is in fact considered a tool or lens in identifying intersected vulnerability and marginalization based on the above-mentioned attributes by the organizations. They had been using other linear form of tools like social audit (Org3, gender audit (Org1, Org5), gender analysis (Org2) etc. However, it was reflected the holistic analysis was not observed (Org2). The lesson learnt that they needed GESI analysis (Org1 and 5) and therefore, they have developed policy of regular GESI analysis (Org1,2,3,4).

Discussion and Analysis

By no means I want to assert that the above-mentioned form of categorization is new knowledge. It is my effort to draw pattern on the observation made in context of Nepal through mt interaction with participant organizations. Other people may contest on such structural analysis. This chapter provides structure of contextual categorizing of situational and identity attributes in the recent advancement in understanding in the development sector that marginalization of people is intersected.

Reflecting again on the categorical complexity of Leslie, McCall, the complexities the studied organization fall into intra-categorical complexity because they are critical about the social, physical, geographical categories in defining a person's vulnerable state as well as are aware about intra difference within a specific group (women in particular) (McCall 2005). Her intra-categorical approach has been fortified for being suitable to study a group/s at the intersection of (Colfer, Basnett et al. 2018). Similarly, Grünenfelder and Schurr (2015) also used intra-categorical approach in their study people of northwest Pakistan in developing intersectional methodology to involve with claims of development. This study also found that geographical location and social organization was used by the residents of that area in Pakistan in situating themselves as eligible for development.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, I analyzed three ways of operationalizing categorical complexity. They are amalgamation of marginalization and vulnerability, interplay between four major identity categories (social, physical, geographical, and situational) and use of different methods and tools to identify and prioritize groups of categories via contextualization that can vary through time and space. Thus, based on the findings and analysis on resonance and operationalization of above-described principles of intersectionality in GESI framework and understanding, this chapter concludes that GESI in a critical praxis of intersectionality.

Chapter 7 Measures of GESI frameworks in structure and function with limitations

Like mentioned in the theory chapter, many authors and researchers of intersectionality have developed different frameworks and methods of operationalizations of Intersectionality with their

respective strengths and weaknesses. In the previous chapters, I discussed resonance and manifestation of some of the core principles of intersectionality in GESI approaches of the studied organizations. And based on the findings, I drew the conclusion that GESI is a praxis of intersectionality. This chapter will discuss about practical GESI sensitive measures taken by the studied organizations. In doing so, it aims to answer

> "How do the studied organizations operationalize their GESI frameworks? What are the measures and strategies used?"

The interview questions on this inquiry were somewhat based on the recommendation from the common framework developed by the GESI working group 2017 under "How to "do" operationalize GESI?". They have distinguished three measures of operationalization: integrating GESI in policies, integrating in project and program cycle and institutional arrangements. I shall present the findings under the division of organizational structure and function.

Structure and function reflect different aspects and stances of an organization. Under structure, I have considered GESI sensitivity adaptation in policies, staff composition, human resource (HR) management and tangible and intangible resources and provisions for staff. And under function, I have considered GESI adaption in project or program cycles and relation/ collaboration with other organizations and donors.

After this, I shall discuss the limitations and challenges of those operationalization measures shared by the participants.

Structure

Structure reflects how an organization is organized and run.

Policies

Starting with organizational policies, 5 out of 6 studied organizations have GESI policies. Organizational policies are one the most important foundation for promoting GESI approach. Some of the policies reflected not only definitions, principles, commitments, goals, and objective but also provided practical guidelines (Org1), GESI modes (Org3), measures (Org4). Besides GESI policies, they also have other policies like "do no harm", conflict sensitivity, child protection, anti-sexual (org2), protection (Org5). The policies of orgs1, 2, 3 and 4 have also differentiated goals and measure in the structure and their functions.

Diversity and Inclusion

Staff diversity and inclusion is considered another vital measure of GESI framework in the structure of the organizations. Most of the organizations focused on having gender balanced staff composition and representation of females in higher positions. All the organization emphasized at least 33% percent—mandated by the government—or more representation of female in different positions of their organization. They also shared that they have staff from indigenous communities coming from different geographical locations. Org2,4 and 5 shared that they have staff from lower castes. To strengthen diversity, Org4 follows quota system recommended by the government. Org1,2 and 3 followed either systematic, meaning scoring and adding points, or unsystematic positive discrimination for those identified as marginalized individual or groups. An example of unsystematic positive discrimination is exerting leniency on requirement of many years of experience if a female was on maternity leave, and hiring local people from the same area where a project is being launched (Org 2). However, again Maya from Org2 said that they prioritize competency of the candidates; they favor candidates from marginalized groups among two equally competent candidates. Org 6 also shared the same stance that they want qualified and competent candidate. This brings the issue of inclusion in the organizations.

Ensuring diversity does not necessarily ensure inclusion. Use of understandable language, different provisions at the workspace and a welcoming environment are some of the inclusion related themes that I noticed during the interviews. First, language of vacancy announcement is a considered an important GESI measure in promoting inclusiveness. Most of the participant organizations were sensitive about language of job vacancy announcement. Orgs 2 and 6 said that they announced central office-based vacancies in English whereas and posts for outside central office, support staff and enumerators in Nepali language. Org 2 shared that they also publish vacancies in local languages in local newspapers when they hire for a niched project in a particular area. Second, all the organizations reported that they have different provisions make the workplace more inclusive like maternity leave and special arrangements for lactating mothers at the office for female staff. Org 1 and 2 shared that they have prevention of sexual harassment, exploitation policies. Org 4 had a visually impaired staff who was a project manager. Chetana said that they provided computer and technology support to give better operating environment for him to work. She said, "*we provided support staff with paid income. We did all these to make him welcomed*". They also have disability friendly office building. On the other hand, Org 2 shared that they do

not have disability friendly building though they would have liked to. Org 6 shared that they take precautions before sending female or lower caste staff to work in areas with high prevalence of caste-based discriminations. Org 6 did not have staff from lower caste. At one instance, Rani said the reason why they do not have staff from lower caste is that it depended on their ability to "adjust" (*tikna sakne ki nasakne*) in the organization.

GESI Capacity Building

Capacity building of staff is considered another important measure in mainstreaming GESI. All organizations had carried out different trainings and workshops for their staff as well as for consortium partners and implementing partners (Org 1 and 3), local government (Org 2) and beneficiaries (Org 5). Org 1, 2,3, 4, and 5 have focal person for ensuring gender/ GESI approaches in their respective organizations. Org 5 has a focal person for Gender, Child Protection and Complaint Handling. Sona is the GEDSI mainstreaming coordinator for org 2. Junu is the GAO of Org1 and Org3 has three separate focal representatives to for gender, child protection and complaint handling. Junu and Sona shared that they conduct regular GESI related workshops and trainings for their colleagues as well as provide their feedback and GESI perspective on different aspects of projects and programs. Moreover, all organizations have different types of complain mechanism, feedback mechanisms, whistle blowing, and complain handling groups for any types of harassment, violation of conduct, exploitation, or discriminations in the field or at the organization. Such provisions are meant to allow the beneficiary and staff feel safe comfortable and a procedure to how to access such safety net and hopefully make more inclusive.

Function

Function reflects the use of GESI lens in relation to the beneficiaries the organizations work for, all phases of project or program cycle from planning, developing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating, and inter organizational collaborations. Some parts of GESI approach in beneficiary relation and planning phase of project cycle has already been discussed in the above chapters about definition, identification, categorizations, and contextualization understanding of marginalized groups. In terms of project cycle, the GESI common framework has recommended to have GESI responsive budgeting, resource arrangements, monitoring, evaluation, and reporting.

GESI Responsive Budgeting

GESI responsive budgeting bridges between both structural and functional aspects of an organization. Maya and Chetana shared that being GESI sensitive in projects implies requirement of

more budget. All organizations reported that they have GESI sensitive budgeting, at least in some projects. Gathering from what respondents said, GESI responsive budgeting stretched from separating budget to hire a GESI focal person (Org 2), conducting extra rounds of need/ vulnerability/ field assessment and in-depth interviews (Org 2) building disability friendly infrastructure (Org 2 and 4), adding more budget for additional support beside the direct project tasks eg. disability assisting equipment, cane, hearing aid devices, glasses, medicals checkup (Org 2 and 4), covering travel expenses (Org 4), allowance for caretaker of beneficiaries' children's (All) etc. However, not all organizations have the capacity to be GESI sensitive in their projects because of budget limitations (Org 2 and 4).

GESI lens in Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting

Having GESI lens during the monitoring and evaluation of project was a common GESI measure among the organizations. Org 1,2,3,4 and 5 had GESI monitoring, evaluation and reporting provision mentioned in their policies. Org6 conducted GESI evaluation for their client organizations. Org 3 has developed 4 different modes[46] of sensitizing GESI in developing, implementing, and evaluating their projects and sustain meaningful impacts.

Involvement and Collaboration with External Supporters

Collaboration among different organizations was also reflected as a way of strengthening GESI approach in their functions. As mentioned before, Org1,3 and 5 are consortium partners for one of the projects in women empowerment that emphasized application of GESI sensitivity. Sonam shared that consortium culture has helped in mobilizing GESI. They had workshops and orientation about GESI for their staff via consortium. Similarly, Org 2 said that they are a member of GESI working group via Association of International NGOS (AIN). Org4 collaborated with other development partners in making the common GESI framework. Similarly, all organizations said that they work with local governments and other implementing partners.

Another type of involvement of external agent is donors who play an important role in mandating GESI approach the project they fund. Sonam said that donors mandate that the recipient organization should have GESI policy to secure budget. Similarly, Org6 also said that they work for the clients and apply GESI sensitivity as per the mandate of the clients. Secondly, Org4 and Org1 as international organization said that their implementing partners should follow GESI mandates in the projects they are collaborating with.

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[46] Word has been replaced to maintain anonymity.

Discussion and Analysis:

Operational guidelines for using intersectionality as a praxis have been developed by Moradi and Grzanka (2017) and Matsuzaka et al. (2021). However, both guidelines are tailored for the field of research only. Thus, I shall not discuss and analyze the measures the organizations practiced basing on these guidelines. It will be rather discussion and analysis on my observation.

Before starting the analysis, let us remind ourselves the conclusion of how GESI was perceived so that we understand what is meant by GESI lenses/ GESI sensitive measures. In general, it was considered as a tool, pathway, or principle of considering marginalization of women and other social groups or reflecting on different vulnerable experiences of women that is affected by their other social identities.

The findings presented in this chapter indicate that the organization attempt to employ a comprehensive approach to have GESI lenses in their structure and function. Needless to repeat, these measures confirm the summation of GE and SI in the GESI approaches. However, as depicted above, there is inconsistency among the organizations in their operationalizing efforts as well; some are ahead than others in taking GESI sensitive measures.

GESI responsive budgeting is also a continuum of gender responsive budgeting. Gender responsive budgeting was introduced and endorsed by UNWOMEN and SDG Integration (Klatzer and Ivanina, T 2015). A gender responsive budgeting manual was published in 2015 (ibid). Similarly, as a continuum of gender mainstreaming, all organization had government mandated percentage representation of female in their organizational structure and beneficiary but no other social groups. Though they are endorsing GESI frameworks, they are still following guidelines of the gender mainstreaming.

Another analysis is that thought these organizations reported to have GESI sensitivity in both structural and functional aspects, some organizations seemed to have focused more on the functional aspect than intersectional. Some of the examples are: more tools and protocols were used

to identify marginalized and vulnerable groups in the field like vulnerability assessments, surveys, interviews etc, having GESI sensitive budgeting in the field projects, and developing analysis in planning, and MEAL. Though structural GESI sensitive measures like capacity building, having special provisions, use of appropriate language in vacancy announcement, complain and feedback mechanism were available in most organizations, inclusive efforts like disability friendly infrastructure, representation of lower caste in staff composition, positive discrimination to facilitate this representation, were not equally endorsed in all organizations. Similarly, while most of the organizations shared that they ensure majority female participation in their projects, they seemed satisfied to see at least 33% of female representation among the staff. Also, the respondents referred that they consider of "double burden" and "triple burden" of their female beneficiary (Org 3), such analysis was not shared in their efforts of hiring employees.

There can be several reasons for this observation. First as mentioned earlier, utilizing GESI sensitivity need more budge eg. building disability sensitive building, paying for an "extra" employee etc. Secondly, closer collaboration with external partners may influence organizational focus on ensuring GESI sensitivity in their projects while, they are more independent in making internal structural decision. This reasoning was confirmed by Sonam that GESI sensitivity is mandated by donor organizations. Third reason can be genuine need of competent staff with relevant higher education and some years of work experience (Org 2 and 6). This brings me reflect on what the GESI expert had highlighted about basing the recruitment of staff only on their competence:

> *"Marginalized people cannot reach until this phase. During the selection process, even if extra 5 points are added on the required eligibility criteria, potentials, experience, competence, we cannot get a female employee or a Dalit employee. Even though there are special affirmative actions of accumulating 5 credits for belonging to a lower caste, 10 for being a woman, we cannot select them because of these aspects"* (Sita, Online interview 2021).

Thus, I think, mechanisms of positive discrimination are necessary to address this and build an inclusive approach.

Likewise, based on my observation and shared by the organization, I have listed following limitations and challenges of incorporating GESI sensitive measures in both structure and function of these organizations:

- The policies may not be implemented (Sonam, Junu, Sita, Chetana, Maya, Sonu).

- There are budgetary limitations (Kumar, Sonu, Chetana).

- The implementation of such approaches also depends on interests and support from higher management (Maya)

- There is inadequate knowledge and capacity among internal staff (Junu, Sonam, Kumar)

- There is lack of sense of accountability of general staff because they consider GESI sensitivity as responsibility of GESI focal person only (Junu)

- "Inability" or lack of enthusiasm and confidence from of marginalized community to participate in the projects (Nitesh, Mira, Ram)

- Nepal's deeply rooted discriminatory socio-political structure is still considered as a major challenge (Hari, Ram, Maya, Sonam, Sita).

- There is possibility of exploitation of quota system (Maya).

- There is possibility of conflict in the community when a development project focuses only a specific group. The organizations informed that to mitigate this challenge, they go with the local representatives (Maya), involved members of other community, and communicate with the community why the project chose to work for a particular group or community (Junu, Maya, Chetana)

- There is further risk or encouragement of exclusion, discrimination and marginalization and diminishing the self confidence among the project beneficiaries. Therefore, Maya, Junu and Chetana said that it is important to have respectful and inclusive language while communicating with the people in the community.

- As described earlier, inadequate, or different understanding of GESI and intersectionality is a limitation. When there is such difference in understanding of the concept, collaboration—that is crucial for development organizations—becomes hard.

As GESI is a recent framework, there are still many rooms of improvements.

Chapter Conclusion

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Therefore, this chapter concludes that the studied organizations have operationalized GESI approaches in their structure and function by implementing GESI measures in policy development, diversity and inclusion in the staff composition, HR management, relationship with beneficiaries and collaborators and in all aspect of project cycles. Based on observation and report from the participants, I drew conclusions that most of the studied organization had more GESI sensitive measures adapted in their function than in their structure and that there are still several limitations and challenges in taking GESI sensitive measures. Thus, adding on the conclusion from previous chapter, I thereby conclude that GESI is a critical praxis of intersectionality with challenges and limitations.

Chapter 8 Conclusion and Recommendation

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion framework has been hailed as most progressive and inclusive gender equality framework in Nepal. Unlike other gender equality approaches, this framework has added components of social equality with the premise that gender equality cannot be achieved without considering other social factors. Many ministries and development and humanitarian aid organizations have opted and endorsed this framework. Some of the frameworks have also mentioned. Though there are many literatures of intersectionality's analytical usefulness on different social aspects of Nepal, there has not been any analysis on its analytical use in GESI framework. Therefore, the thesis examined the understanding and manifestation of intersectionality Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) framework of development organization in Nepal. For this, I conducted online interviews with representatives of six different organizations who've adopted GESI approaches in their organization and reviewed policy documents and other grey literatures. I also explored the development of theory or Intersectionality and strengths and weaknesses along the way via literature review. Thus, I explored understanding of GESI among the organization and analyzed resonance and operationalization of some of the core principles of intersectionality. This chapter shall summarize the thesis and present my arguments based on the findings, conclusion, limitations, and recommendations.

Summary

Nepal is a unique country with a complex geographical and socio-cultural diversity. Nepal has a long history of deeply rooted caste system integrated with many indigenous groups and persistent patriarchy. Throughout the sociopolitical history people from higher castes and men have dominated political, social, and economical sectors of the country creating high gender inequality as well as social inequality. Therefore, in later years especially after the fall of monarchy, actions for many socio-political reformations have been taken from writing an inclusive constitution, to enforcing representative quota system, being a signatory member of many international gender and social equality and inclusion conventions. The government as well and non-government development organizations have been playing a vital role in gender mainstreaming in society and their respective operations and functions. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, GESI Framework introduced around 2010 is considered one of the most progressive approaches in this quest promoting gender and social equality. It is considered as a re-presentation of gender mainstreaming approaches by adding other social groups. Some of the frameworks referred the principle of intersectionality that one many face multiple marginalization based on different attributes of identity. However, none of them delved into reflecting and explaining how understanding intersectionality is integrated in GESI other than possibility of multiple marginalization.

Thus, this research explored how development organizations understood and operationalized this principle in their Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) frameworks, what might have been the consequences if intersectionality is neglected, how they understand multiple marginalization of an individual or a group is sorted and what the measures and strategies. Empirical data was collected via individual and group online interviews of twelve representatives of six development organizations and one GESI expert. Available policy documents and web contents of the organization and grey literatures were also reviewed.

For theoretical perspective, I first examined the theory of intersectionality and discourse of feminism and development. As we are evaluating the narrative of gender equality in development sector, it is important to see the evolvement of development and feminism. It has changed over the last half century from merely accommodating women's issue in development via WID to developing exclusive project for women via WAD, to advocating women as agent of change via GAD and finally incorporating multiple bases of identity and power relation among people via FAD. Approaches of mainstreaming agendas of gender equality in every aspect of development

started gaining popularity in early 2000s. Recently, many international humanitarian and development organization have started recognizing and adapting intersectionality in their operations. Before highlighting examples of use of intersectionality in development, I then drew analysis on Intersectionality from what I call pre-coinage period to engaging debates, discussions, expansion, and operationalization of the theory.

The concerns about intersected oppression of women were raised as back as 1851 when Sojourner Truth gave her poignant speech questioning her womanhood that did not fit with what was considered womanly at her time. I have examined and credited other pioneers, activists, and theorists in different parts of the world who recognized subordination of women due to intersection of different identity such as race, ethnicity, and argued for its recognition in feminism which otherwise was historically dominated by euro centric view of sexism and thus approach to achieve gender equality. I also presented different debates and criticism of intersectionality and how advocates of intersectionality have refuted or addressed those criticisms. All in all, intersectionality is considered a "work in progress" theory thus there are also disagreements even between the advocates on what, where and how to operationalize intersectionality.

Nevertheless, intersectionality is considered as one of the most successful feminist theories that has transcended to sectors beyond feminism and gender studies in understanding complexities of different identities social conditions in different parts of the world. As a result of such vast expansion many efforts have been centralize core principle of intersectionality that can hopefully be preserved along the expansion. After reading many remarkable works on analysis of principles, lenses, ideas, structures, and interventions of intersectionality, I chose to base my interpretive analysis of the research on three prominent groups of authors: Dill and Zambrana (2009), (Hanskivsky 2014) and Hill Collins and Bilge (2020). I chose them because firstly, they formulated what intersectionality is in its core principles and secondly, their formulation was cited, adapted, and elaborated by many other authors. I created figure 2 to depict overlapped and disjoint core principles articulated by the authors. Principles of categorical complexity, social justice, social inequality, and power relation overlapped. I have drawn interpretative analysis from Leslie McCall's (2005) approach of working out categorical complexity.

My findings are such that there was definitional dilemma or inconsistency in understanding of Intersectionality, GESI as well as gender and sex. Sex and gender were mostly referred with binary differentiation (male/female or man/woman). Though some representatives and some parts

of policy documents addressed non-binary sexual and gender identities, the language of most parts of the policy documents used dichotomous references to sex and gender.

GESI approach was understood as a summation of Gender Equality and Social inclusion a tool or lens to understand social inclusion and exclusion that can lead to limiting access to resources for excluded and marginalized groups. It was considered important in context of Nepal because of its diverse demography and geography, unbalanced sociopolitical situation, need to prioritize to reach the most vulnerable communities, promote equal access and distribution of resources and opportunities, enable decision making power of marginalized groups and enabling clearer picture to social equality. Thus, the summation of gender Equality (GI) and Social Inclusion (SI) is needed. Another finding is that most of their GESI approaches concentrated around women's empowerment and participations and not necessarily targeting the complex integration of other identities.

The awareness of intersectionality varied from never knowing the terminology to understanding it as addition of other social identities on gender identity in resulting marginalized status of women and intersection of multiple identities contributing to social inclusion or exclusion of the group.

Regarding dichotomous definition of sex and gender, my analysis is such that it can be attributed firstly to the unfavorable social environment to nonbinary identities and the perception that gender equality entail equality between men and women. Secondly, throughout the history of Feminism and Development in WID, WAD, GAD until gender mainstreaming, these terms were referred only with binary distinction. I also argue that high focus on gender mainstreaming in development has led to adhering to gender responsive or sensitive outlooks even though the goal of GESI is ideally different than that of gender mainstreaming. I presented that the difficulty in distinguishing is further fortified by that notion that GESI is simply adding other excluded groups in the gender mainstreaming. This outlook also affected in their understanding of intersectionality that is it is addition of other social identities. However, authors like Hunting and Hankivsky (2020) and (Yuval-Davis 2006) affirm that this is not a correct understanding of intersectionality. Nevertheless, some of them recognized a more comprehensive, or a definition that better resonates with feminist theory definition of intersectionality. They mostly used intersectionality to see intra difference between women; intra-categorical complexity was reflected here. Moreover, I observed and analyzed that the core principles of intersectionality were also reflected in their

GESI approach, namely: social justice, social inequality, power relation, centering around minority, categorical complexities, time and space and contextualization. Thus, based on my findings and analysis, I built the argument that GESI is a praxis of intersectionality.

In supporting that argument, I further explored how the organizations manage and prioritize categorical complexities and contextualize intersectionality. First, I saw a pattern of amalgamation of marginalization and vulnerability fig. no 4. These terms were used distinctly, interchangeably and in causational manner. Yet, the general perception was that they are mutually exclusive. Secondly, based on participants answers on whom they consider marginalized and/or vulnerable, I created a chart packaging the reported identities into category of social, physical, geographical, and situational. Identities of caste, marital status, gender, religion, economic status, and other social circumstances were kept under social identity category, age, disability, sex, and pregnant status were kept under physical identity category. Geographical identity category included remoteness or availability of infrastructure in an area and situational identity categories involved crisis and natural disaster. I also drew a modest analysis that another core principle of 'time and space' was also resonated to shape and change the intersected status of marginalization.

I then presented that these organization use government's list of marginalized groups, perform different types of contextual and vulnerability assessments of the community as well as consider their own field of expertise, types of organizations, available resources and nature of project in contextualizing whom and how they work for. When it comes to prioritizing a set of identity and their intersection, is considered important because not all categories of identity are equally significant and development organizations usually have limited budget and resources. Some conducted scoring, others considered multiplication of different vulnerability risks, while others simply focus on women or people with disability etc.

I have then highlighted different GESI sensitive measures in structural and functional operations and analyzed that they are more GESI sensitive in their functional aspects (e.g., relation with beneficiaries, partners, M and E in project cycle) than structural aspects (e.g., staff diversity, disability friendly office infrastructures etc.) and listed various other limitations and challenges that I observed as well as shared by the participants.

Conclusion

 The GESI is fairly a new framework that is a continuum of Gender mainstreaming to add other marginalized groups of Nepal. As it is a new approach there are differences among development

organizations about its meaning, importance and operationalizing efforts and capacity. Though the term intersectionality has been referred in many GESI frameworks and guidelines of ministries and international organization working groups, there are also differences in understanding of this theory. Among the organizations I interviewed, some were not aware of this theory. Those who were aware, also differed in their understanding and use. Firstly, GESI was considered a summation of agendas of gender equality and social inclusion. Secondly, the theory was understood as an addition of other identities on gender identities in deteriorating the marginalized status which is not a trait of Intersectionality. However, the intersection of different identity was used to differentiate the intra differences between Nepali women traversed by other social identities. Some of the interviewees knew its definition as intersection of different categories of identity affecting social inclusion/exclusion. Their understanding of intersectionality in GESI frameworks reflected some of the core principles of intersectionality in working for promotion of social equality and social justice by resisting historical, political, and structural power structure in Nepal via centering their functional effort for vulnerable and marginalized groups. They identify these groups by reflecting on situational vulnerability affected by 'time and space' and contextualizing the complexity of identity categories. Thus, GESI is a praxis of intersectionality but with some challenges in practice.

Recommendation

A simple way to improve and move forward is to address the challenges mentioned in the earlier chapter. In addition to those I want to share few more recommendations based on my finding and analysis.

The prime agenda of operationalizing these GESI framework is to endorse a GESI sensitive lens in the structure and function of an organization. The foremost recommendation from this thesis, I would recommend is to adjust that lens first. We should sensitize nonbinary existence of sexes and gender in languages of everyday life, structure, and function and official policy document. Secondly, correct understanding the theory and meaningful integration is recommended because it affects further planning as well as sustainability of the idea, approach projects. Third, there should be more nuances in the structural and functional operational measure on recognizing and addressing the multiplicity and intersection of identity categories instead of counting number of

additive vulnerabilities. Similarly, the organization should work to live the principles they support meaning, GESI approaches should also be equally applicable in their structure and function. I also agree with the GESI expert and further recommend that formal and systematic quota system should be in place. Another recommendation is to have the policy documents translated in Nepali language as well. Finally, I would also recommend stronger and meaningful knowledge sharing, contribution, and collaboration among government, development partners and private sector.

Limitation

I have discussed about methodological limitations in chapter 2. An additional limitation that I want to bring up is that I do not have holistic understanding of the organization's stance. First, the interviewees were the GESI experts and higher position holders of respective organizations. The participants themselves shared that other colleague do not feel obliged to be acquainted on GESI topics and consider that to a sole responsibility of the focal person. Similarly, lower-level or field staff were not interviewed. From the study of Shrestha 2017, it was found that lower-level staff were not as fully acquainted as higher managers about GESI approaches. Thus, it could have been the same case though the participants informed that they organize workshops and orientations for all colleagues. Secondly, I did not get all documents. Thus, there are possibilities that my document analysis is incomplete.

Like mentioned in the methodology chapter, this limitation could have addressed been addressed by interviewing multiple representatives separately.

Chapter 1   Appendices:

Information Letter (The topic and focus were changed later but the methodology was the same)

Implications of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Frameworks

This is an inquiry about comprehension of GESI framework in different institutions working in the sector of disaster risk reduction and management in Nepal. This letter we will give you information about the purpose of the project and what your participation will involve.

Purpose of the project
This is a master's thesis project carried out under the department of Development, Environment and Cultural Change at the University of Oslo, Norway. The research is carried out by a Nepali student Christina Tamang, who had engaged in various post-earthquake rehabilitation projects before pursuing her degree with the university. The aim of this study is to analyze implications of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in organizations who are working in the sector of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Nepal.

Who is responsible for the research project?
The center for Development Environment and Cultural Change under the University of Oslo is the institution responsible for the project.

Why are you being asked to participate?

You are approached because your organization has been actively working in the sector of disaster risk reduction and management. In addition to that, the organization also has public portfolio of promoting GESI approach in organizational programs and projects.

What does participation involve for you?
Participating in the research involves an online interview via zoom or teams depending on what medium is accessible to the interviewee. The audio of the interview will be recorded and transcribed and the transcription will be stored on the institutional devices and in the could server of one drive. The interviewee will be asked questions related to their experiences, knowledge, and

opinions on gender equality and social inclusion. The interview will be about an hour long depending on the flow and pace of the conversation, and time availability of the interviewee.

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

Your personal privacy – how we will store and use your personal data
Your personal data, (name, position, and name of the organization you work for) will be used on the research only if you consent. The online interview will be recorded and transcribed. After that, the audio file will be deleted and only the interview transcription will be stored on institutional devices (PC at the center, institutional account and one drive of the researcher) for the purpose of the study. Furthermore, we will process your personal data confidentially and in accordance with data protection legislation (the General Data Protection Regulation and Personal Data Act). Only the researcher, Christina Tamang will have access to your personal information.

Similarly, the above specified personal information will be used in publication only if you consent.

What will happen to your personal data at the end of the research project?
The project is scheduled to end on Dec 31, 2021. The data collected will be stored for future research and publication until August 2023. For that purpose, the personal information of the interviewees will be anonymized and will be known only to the researcher. The purpose of storing personal information—name, email address, phone number, name of the organization you are working for—is such as to contact interviewees for prospects of future research. Understanding gender inclusion in development projects in a vast topic. The scope of master's thesis may not provide comprehensive and extensive platform to investigate multiple variables that are crucial in scrutinizing this issue. Therefore, it is intended that if opportunity provides, the researcher intends to do her PHD in the same area. Therefore, the interviewees' knowledge will be highly appreciated and may be sought again in the future.

Your rights
So long as you can be identified in the collected data, you have the right to:
access the personal data that is being processed about you
request that your personal data is deleted
request that incorrect personal data about you is corrected/rectified
receive a copy of your personal data (data portability), and
send a complaint to the Data Protection Officer or The Norwegian Data Protection Authority regarding the processing of your personal data

What gives us the right to process your personal data?

We will process your personal data based on your consent.

Based on an agreement with the Center for Development, Environment and Cultural Change, NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has assessed that the processing of personal data in this project is in accordance with data protection legislation.

Language of the interview:

The interviewee can choose whichever language they prefer: ☐Nepali or ☐English or ☐both. (please tick one of them)

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the project, or want to exercise your rights, contact:
Researcher, Christina Tamang: chritam@student.hf.uio.no; telephone: +47-45232618
Center for Development, Environment and Cultural Change via Niladri Chatterjee: niladri.chatterjee@sum.uio.no
Our Data Protection Officer: Kristian Bjorkdahl, kristian.bjorkdahl@sum.uio.no
NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS, by email: (personverntjenester@nsd.no) or by telephone: +47 55 58 21 17.

Yours sincerely,

Project Leader   Chrisitna Tamang (Researcher)
Niladri Chatterjee (Supervisor)

Consent form

I have received and understood information about the project "Implications of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Frameworks" and have been given the opportunity to ask questions. I give consent:

to participate in the interview
for my personal data to be processed outside the EU
for information about me/myself to be published in a way that I can be recognised
Name
Name of the organization I work for.
for my personal data to be stored after the end of the project for further research if necessary
Name
Name of the organization I work for.
Phone number
Email address

I give consent for my personal data to be processed until the end date of the project, 31 Dec 2021.

--Signed virtually--

(Signed by participant, date)

NSD Approval (The topic and focus were changed later but the methodology was the same)

Assessment

Reference number
518199

Project title
Contribution of Women in Post-Earthquake Rehabilitation Projects in Nepal

Data controller (institution responsible for the project)
Universitetet i Oslo / Universitetsstyret / Senter for utvikling og miljø

Project period
01.12.2020 - 31.08.2021

Notification Form ⬈

Date	**Type**
22.04.2021	Standard

Comment
NSD has assessed the change registered on 26.03.2021.

A new project leader is added.

We find that the processing of personal data in this project will comply with data protection legislation, so long as it is carried out in accordance with what is documented in the Notification Form and attachments, dated 22.04.2021, as well as in correspondence with NSD. Everything is in place for the processing to continue.

FOLLOW-UP OF THE PROJECT
NSD will follow-up the project at the planned end date in order to determine whether the processing of personal data has been concluded.

Good luck with the project!
Contact person at NSD: Karin Lillevold

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