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# SOCIAL INTEGRATION OF NEPALESE WOMEN INTO NORWEGIAN SOCIETY: INTEGRATION AS AN OPPORTUNITY OR CHALLENGE

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**Declaration**

I, Rozabela Singh, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature.....

Date: 14-03-2016

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to study social integration process of Nepalese immigrant women in light of the Norwegian government's integration policies. The dissertation is based upon semi-structured interviews with twenty Nepalese immigrant women living in Oslo, Ås, Ski and Tromsø. I explore how Nepalese women understand integration and their experiences in education, work, and social environments. Whether or not Nepalese women want to integrate and how they attempt to balance a sustained Nepalese identity with a New Norwegian one is analyzed.

The research examines the content and contestations over what 'integration' means. In addition, the concept of social inclusion might be an alternative way to discuss how immigrant women fare in the Norwegian context. The research has found that Nepalese women's social inclusion varies greatly but a professional background combined with Norwegian language fluency seems to lead to higher levels of inclusion. In addition, out of 20 informants, 19 women's experiences in the health and education sector in this context have been appreciated. Where Nepalese women feel that they have not been included has mainly been in the work sector.

This paper concludes by affirming the need of promotion of social inclusion of immigrants in Norwegian society.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| IMDi   | Integrerings-og mangfoldsdirektoratet                   |
| MIPEX  | Migrant Integration Policy Index                        |
| NCCR   | National Centre of Competence in Research               |
| UNHCR  | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees           |
| UN     | United Nations  |
| PhD    | Doctor of Philosophy                                    |
| MBBS   | Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery              |
| IT     | Information Technology                                  |
| NOKUT  | The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education |
| CV     | Curriculum Vitae  |
| NEPSA  | Nepalese Society in Ås                                  |
| EU     | European Union  |
| NOK    | Norwegian Krone   |
| NAV    | The Norwegian Labour & Welfare Administration           |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund  |
| EEA    | European Economic Area                                  |
| EFTA   | European Free Trade Association                         |



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## **1. Introduction**

This paper is the study of Nepalese immigrant women who live in Oslo, Ski , Ås and Tromsø. The struggle of immigrant women in terms of understanding their new society, somewhat transforming themselves, integrating into the society and getting used to the new social practices of the host country, are discussed. This paper studies the social integration process of Nepalese immigrant women in general and further analyses how Norwegian integration policies have contributed to Nepalese women's assimilation into Norwegian society.

I started my journey as a student in Norway in autumn 2013. When I look back, my journey was not as easy as people would perceive. It took me two years to learn the particulars of Norwegian society; to understand the social system, how it operates, and I must confess that each day I still learn new things. The reason for choosing the topic 'Social Integration of Nepalese immigrant women in Norwegian society' is from the understanding I gained through my experience.

The study is based upon interviews with 20 Nepalese women currently living in Norway, who have expressed their processes of social integration and their points of views on this process. To facilitate this discussion, the paper commences with a literature review detailing immigration in different parts of Europe and Norway.

### **1.1 Background of study**

Social integration is a widely used term that was created as migratory activities expanded, in combination with globalization of more recent years (Yvonne Riaño, 2006). Migration of people from one place to another is considered a continuous phenomenon, as millions of people around the world are leaving their homes and moving to other places (IMDI, 2014). Integration is the phenomenon where immigrants, individual or groups, are accepted by the society of where they migrated. According to Sen (2000) social integration is a dynamic process that aims at creating and maintaining peaceful social relations and increasing participation of every member of the society. It is requisite for expansion and strengthening of society, adopting social cohesion and collaboration for a stable society (Cohen & Syme , 1985). In order to integrate into Norwegian society, immigrants should contribute to the community, be positive, acquire stable jobs to support their families, communicate in the

native language, and comprehend social norms and values of Norwegian society so as to fit in (IMDi,2013-2014).

Integrerings-og mangfoldsdirektoratet (IMDi) is the Norwegian agency established to facilitate social integration, aims to contribute to equality and diversity and cooperates with immigrant organizations or groups. (IMDi, 2013-2014) The immigrants and the receiving society are the two different parties involved in integration process. Therefore, the success or failure of integration is determined by good communication and co-operation between the two parties.

Nepalese typically migrate to Norway for work, studies or family reunion. Nepalese students come to Norway for higher education and some Nepalese continue residing there as migrants, along with their family (Norway-Nepal, 2014). In this paper there are four different immigration policies in Norway discussed in depth. Of these, family reunion, study and labor immigration policies are the most relevant policies to Nepalese women in Norway. By studying Nepalese women with different immigration statuses, this paper aims to find out possible answers to the following questions; how Nepalese women transform themselves in certain ways in order to integrate into Norwegian society; what kind of social and cultural differences they face, do they think they are fairly treated at their workplace; what is the attitude of Norwegian people towards Nepalese immigrants; what Norwegian integration policies can offer to immigrant women. The paper also illustrates the opportunities as well as challenges immigrant women face during their integration process. Through exploring these issues this paper hopes to fill the knowledge gap on Nepalese women's integration into Norwegian society.

Initially, Nepalese women face lots of problems in adjusting to new social norms and values of Norwegian society; most simply strive to get a proper job and to adapt to the society (MIPEX, 2015). As non-Norwegian speakers, it is difficult to integrate for the Nepalese women as this language deficiency may disqualify them from better employment opportunities. It is also difficult to get the correct recognition for their qualifications and work experiences acquired back home in Nepal (Battarai, 2005). For immigrants, there are challenges regarding maintenance of coherence and solidarity of family, cultural differences and acceptance into the society's host country (MIPEX, 2015). Norway is very different from Nepal for various reasons, but largely due to the different language, lifestyle, education system, and laws. Immigrant Nepalese women are diverse even before they arrive in Norway: their place of origin, educational level, standard of living, and their religious and cultural

background. After their arrival in Norway there are many more experiences that differ between women: their migration experience, their civil rights in Norway, their living situations, etcetera. To understand the situation of Nepalese women and their struggle in the Norway, detailed research is needed to analyze the differentiated reality of these women (Thorud, 2013-2014).

The concept of IMDi is followed in this study to acquire cognizance on the integration process of Nepalese women. Social aspects such as networks, interaction with people, friendships, and marital relationships are analyzed to gain insight into the process of integration in Norwegian society. This report also sheds light on Norwegian policies: social integration and diversity that creates a stable and tolerant society so that immigrants are accepted (Affairs, 1995).

In Norway, gender equality is of high importance and the same treatment (rules and duties) is given to every individual; both women and men should be respected as equals (Norwegian Ministry of Children, 2013). The government of Norway strives for social integration by implementing policies targeting specific groups, and has implemented anti-discriminatory policies for equitable distribution and public participation. Social integration and inclusion in Norway, results from the high degree of social stability. To adjust and adapt to Norwegian society, immigrants need to adhere these policies. This is done by the promotion of established principles, such as social liberation, that is, human dignity, equal opportunities and liberties, and peace and stability (Yvonne Riaño, 2006). Furthermore, existing cultural and religious differences can be reduced through adherence to learning the national language, religious tolerance, and secularism.

## **1.2 Objectives of study**

- To describe how Nepalese women attempt to integrate into Norwegian society.
- To examine the Norwegian government's policies of integration
- To examine the experiences and narratives of Nepalese women as they have tried (or not tried) to integrate into Norwegian society
- To describe how respondents were able to find opportunities during this process

### **1.3 Research Questions**

**RQ1**What do Nepalese immigrant women view as social integration? How do they integrate/not integrate into Norwegian society?

- Does Norwegian language play vital role in establishing social relations with Norwegian people?
- Do Nepalese Families prefer their children to play with Norwegian children or Nepalese, or other immigrant's?
- Are Nepalese women working in managerial positions? If yes, what is the common profession they are involved in?

**RQ2**How do Norwegian integration policies contribute to assisting Nepalese women to integrate into society?

Sub-Questions

- Are they aware of Norwegian integration policies? If yes, does it help them during the integration process?

### **1.4 Scope and limitation of study**

The concept of integration is very broad and differs widely. In terms of the scope of this study, although both men and women need to integrate and understand the social process of being immigrants in a new society, the research was limited to women. Furthermore, the respondents were limited to those living in Oslo, Ås, Ski and Tromsø, Norway.

## **2. Literature Review**

In this chapter, the definitions and concepts of integration are presented to clearly outline social integration. In addition, the history of Nepalese immigrants is discussed, providing insight on Nepalese migrant workers and students, and specifically information on Nepalese immigrants in Norway.

### **2.1 Integration**

#### **2.1.1 Concept**

Integration is a term associated with migration: both are global social phenomenon. (Beckmann-Dierkes and Fuhrmann 2011:36) It is a concept that is currently under scrutiny, similarly with globalization and the increase in migratory activities, acquiring the interest of not only scholars but also policy-makers. These interest groups concern themselves with the actions of the receiving society so that a higher degree of integration of immigrants is achieved (Council of Europe , 1995). To achieve this, both the receiving party and immigrants need to adapt to each other for solidarity (Norwegian Ministry of Children, 2013)

Most migration takes place from an under-developed area, to a developed area, as half of the world's population lives in urban areas and people move to these areas seeking better opportunities and qualities life. When people migrate from one place to another there are differences in cultural, religious, and social backgrounds; people undergo a series of challenges and difficulties to adapt to new society.

Integration is a governance issue at the national and local level, one that governments find a considerable challenge to address. If immigrants are effectively incorporated into society, the potential advantages of migration can be maximized (Hellgren, 2015). Sometimes the the increase in immigrants is perceived as a threat to residents of the host country, as they fear losing their jobs. However, immigrants bring benefits for the host country and can further lift advanced economies. Immigration is a tool that fosters renewal of societies as, migrants boost economies through their skills and novel ideas (Cooper, 2005). Public institutions and legislation in the host country may impede access for immigrants, however the support of these is considered of paramount importance for the integration process.



The Council of Europe Project held a meeting in June 1994 to pool ideas on immigrant women (Affairs, 1995). In the meeting, the legal status, language barriers, lack of job qualifications, isolation of women and limitation rendered by illiteracy was discussed. It was found that the diversity of situations occurred due to differing integration policies of the host countries, and varied social welfare conditions and education from one place to another (Affairs, 1995). It was also found from the meeting that the majority of immigrant women in some countries were illegal immigrants, and therefore they were vulnerable to discrimination. Furthermore, some illegal immigrant women were compelled to work as prostitutes for their survival (Affairs, 1995). The facts revealed by the meeting were analogous to the situation of immigrant women in Switzerland (Riano, 2003). Most of the immigrants in Switzerland are women, and it depicts the feminization of migration. A high number of immigrants are women in Switzerland, and are viewed as uneducated and unskilled people, exploited as well as poorly integrated. It has been found that inadequate attention is given to women's diversity of skills and socio-economic backgrounds. But Riano (2003) argues that most of the immigrant women are literate with higher education and skilled as well. It further illustrates that many migrant women enjoyed middle to high class living in their home countries. Riano, (2003) also stresses the fact that research in the past has given less attention to the case of skilled women. Further, migration of poor women from impoverished countries to wealthy nations was viewed as an initiative towards the acquisition of legal status.

### **2.1.2 Social Integration**

Social integration is interpreted as analogous to participation in society as it is perceived as an issue associated with social justice, equality of rights and liberty along with social participation (Cohen & Syme , 1985). David Lockwood first coined the term social integration in 1964. It was further studied by Emile Durkheim to shed light on how societies maintain social integration. (Turner, 1981) According to Lockwood, society exerts powerful forces on individuals and their collective consciousness leads to the creation of social integration (Turner, 1981). Social integration of immigrants into new customs requires cultural integration that is a two-way process. Culture is heterogeneous but a requisite for the regulation of daily life and cultural integration; cultural diversity should be encouraged in the society (Lee, 2009). But it has been found that most cultural practices remain within the horizon of dominant classes (group of people who have control over resources and power in the society) that impedes the integration process. Social integration requires sensitivity to the

context along with cognizance of interventions most needed in the context. The term should be undertaken as an inclusionary goal to heighten solidarity and mutual identification (Fonn, 2012-2013). It intends to promote harmonious interaction and solidarity among different levels of society.

### **2.1.3 Cultural Integration**

Cultural integration of immigrants is one of the most frequently debated issues in Europe. The topic is gaining coverage as the number of immigrants to Europe is increasing every day. The religious and ethnic conflicts are getting worst in various European states in a range of ways. For instance, wearing the Islamic veil or Burqa in France was one of the most public of debates and raised questions against national identity (Yann Algan, 2012). Similarly in Switzerland, the government introduced a voting system to build new Islamic mosque (Yann Algan, 2012). The religious and ethnic debates are growing issues elsewhere as well.

In the late nineteenth century, sociologists discovered that the flow of immigrants not only affected the labour market and flow of goods and services, but also affecting cultural aspects of society. Later researchers discovered the need for accommodation of cultural diversity to develop a feeling of trust and respect between a state's citizens and the incoming immigrants (Yann Algan, 2012). In this way, cultural integration of immigrants is considered as one of the important aspects of overall integration.

### **2.1.4 Cultural Integration Theories**

#### *ASSIMILATION THEORY*

Assimilation is one of the cultural integration theories of the social sciences. It defines the three different stages of integration (Yann Algan, 2012). The first stage states, "diverse ethnic groups come to share common cultural as natural process along which they have equal access to socio-economic opportunities as natives of host country" (Yann Algan, 2012, s. 4). The second stage states that immigrants gradually adapt to their new culture by putting their own behind them. The third stage is where diverse groups are culturally integrated in the host country (Yann Algan, 2012).

## *MULTICULTURALISM*

This theory rejects the idea of assimilation described above. Society is composed of diverse ethnic groups and each have their own way of living. This theory states that multicultural societies are composed of both minority and majority groups (Yann Algan, 2012) and that the minority group as an inseparable part of the society, ensuring that every member is treated equally with respect and trust.

## *STRUCTURALISM*

The theory of structuralism focuses on social integration of immigrants with equal access to health, education, income, jobs, power, housing and social benefits. This theory emphasizes the distribution of equal resources to immigrants, facilitating their integration. The approach attempts to highlight conflicting factors in this process and implement measures to prevent obstacles (Yann Algan, 2012).

## **2.2 Integration of Immigrants**

### **2.2.1 Integration of Immigrants in Norway**

Norway has been attracting more immigrants recently, despite its small size. It accepts more immigrants per capita than the UK, which makes 15.6% of its total population. At the inception of 2015, 'Norway received 669,400 immigrants along with 135,600 Norwegian-born to immigrant parents according to statistics provided by Norwegian Directorate of Immigration'. (Diversity, 2015) It receives a high number of immigrants from Asian, African and Latin American countries (342,320) (Tamrat, 2010). One of the reasons people are attracted to Norway is that it is ranked highest in the HDI index, scoring 0.944; indicating a high standard of living or quality of life (Fonn, 2012-2013). Further, it also attracts many students due to its 'free education for all' policy. Tracing back the history of immigrants in Norway, during the 1970s the country received only 1.3% of total population as immigrants, that increased to 11.4% in 2010 and in 2015 it reached to 15.6% of its total population (Thorud, 2013-2014). Norway still shows a rapid increase in its immigration numbers up until now, receiving immigrants from the countries all over the world. Though the population includes many immigrants, mixed opinions were found regarding social integration; some are partially integrated, some fully integrated and some are not sure if they are integrated or not. Language also plays a significant role; according to Tamrat (2010), some Ethiopian women

perceived learning the new country's language as a prerequisite for social integration. The language of the host country is considered a barrier to integration as it obstructs communication among people in the society. The language barrier is considered a major obstacle in the acquisition of jobs and comprehension of the culture of the host nation (Blau, 1960). As social integration is two-way process, both the receiving party and immigrant need to be flexible. Further from the study conducted by Tamrat (2010), it is also clear that social networking, and social integration are influential factors that affect the integration process. Gemi (2010) similarly asserts this opinion of language barrier as an obstacle in the path of the social integration process. According to Gemi (2010), the language barrier is an obstacle that may cause isolation of the immigrant and increases the vulnerability of immigrant women by exclusion. The study conducted by Gemi (2010) also revealed that integration of immigrants in the labor market is more successful when they have adequate knowledge about this market. According to a study of 'European Women's Lobby and European Network of Migrant Women' (Gemi, 2010), both immigrant women and men in Norway are exploited due to illegal practices such as low-wage work, a lack of social benefits, long working hours, work load, etcetera. Thus, immigrants can benefit from integration policies by learning about important information, such as employee rights.

Norway's integration policy provides equal opportunities for all children so as to adequately include the children born to immigrant parents as well. Immigrants in Norway are from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds and have a rich knowledge and understanding that can be a valuable resource for their new society (Cooper, 2005). Accordingly; the schools and kindergartens in Norway are adapted to the diversity of children from immigrant backgrounds and take steps to ensure their inclusion.

### **2.2.2 Attitudes to Immigrants, Integration and Diversity**

According to a survey conducted by IMDi on attitudes to immigration, integration, and diversity in 2013-2014, the attitude towards immigrants is unaltered; it has been stable from 2005 to 2013 (IMDi, 2013-2014). That is, 55% of total population of Norway agreed to receive refugees, and 68% of them believed refugees can integrate swiftly into Norwegian society. The survey also revealed the reserved nature of Norwegians regarding social interactions and sharing stories. According to the report, some Norwegians believed in providing equal rights to the immigrant's equivalent to nationals. There were additional opinions presented by immigrants, such as they believed that they contribute to the labor

market by sharing skills and knowledge. However, despite efforts of the government, 40% of immigrants believe that the integration policy was not very successful (Pettersen & Ostby, 2014).

### **2.2.3 Integration Policies**

Integration policies are established to promote social integration and inclusion, targeting specific groups of people that could be excluded from a society (Blau, 1960). There are benefits to the government or concerned authority in improving social conditions and ensuring equal opportunities and services for the whole population. Norway espouses 'The White Paper' that encompasses a complete integration policy, endorsed in 2012 (Norwegian Ministry of Children, 2013, s. 3). As Norway receives many immigrants, integration policies play a significant role in maintaining a stable society (Haas, 2010). Policies are administered to deal with integration issues that emerge with increasing immigration activities, and are valued highly by society. The integration policies are directed towards better utilization of human resources and provision of employment opportunities for financial independence of all individuals (IMDI, 2014). Apart from these established integration policies, the government has also embraced some specific strategies and plans for integration promotion. The government provides language classes to reduce the language barrier that greatly hinder the social integration process. Furthermore, strategies are implemented for the empowerment of immigrant women as well; maximum participation of women in the Norwegian labor market is encouraged by the policies (Lee, 2009). To provide adequate information about the labor market and employment opportunities in Norway, distribution of information about minimum wages, minimum/maximum working hours, and benefits and working conditions is given so as to prevent illegal practices in the labor market. Policy provisions for children focus on equal opportunities for all, regarding education, benefits and opportunities to get involved in recreational activities for their overall growth (Cooper, 2005).

The integration policy also has provisions for equitable health services and care for all immigrants, in combination with equal welfare services for housing (Gemi, 2010). Additionally there are provisions for community involvement programs and municipal urban development so as to strengthen social inclusion in the society. After reviewing the integration policies of Norway, it has been elucidated that the government is dedicated to the social integration and providing suitable environments for immigrants.

### 2.2.3 Integration as Political Issue

The political significance of integration is one of high concern for policy-makers and has emerged as an important political issue in the country. Norway also has accepted a large percentage of refugees (relative to its population) and has increased even more in the last few years (Thorud, 2013-2014). It is crucial for Norway to develop effective integration strategies into the future. Norway is facing difficulties in dealing with people from different cultures, traditions, religions and origins (Pettersen & Ostby, 2014). The Norwegian government revised the Immigration Act 2010 to provide equal opportunities for immigrant workers in line with Norwegian workers (CLAD, 2015). The government endeavors to eliminate illegal practices and exploitation of immigrant workers through the implementation of strategies and policies that compels employers to treat every worker equally. The pursuit of this is monitored through regular inspections in every business so as to prevent illegal practices, such as human trafficking, through high penalties for offenders. Additionally to discourage illegal workers, a one-year Norwegian language program was on offer to immigrants, where by individual can also work part-time during their studies which is no more into practice.

## 2.3 Debates on Integration In Europe

As described previously, the inflow of immigrants to Europe has become an issue of strong debate, encompassing immigration policies, assimilation and security. In historical perspective there have been many security threats to Europe like The Irish Republican Army<sup>1</sup> in the UK, the Algerian FLN<sup>2</sup> bombing French cities, Turkish militant groups, etc. These incidents took place before declaration of 'open border policy' of EU. Meanwhile, The recent attacks on Paris (November 2015) have created another alarm among European states regarding security. What was initially named a crisis of migration was transformed overnight into one of national security. Since the attack was claimed by the 'Islamic state' (frequently termed 'ISIS'), Europe has become more reluctant to accept refugees from Middle Eastern countries (WALKER, 2015). As attackers were found to have entered and escaped through EU borders, the attacks have also drawn attention to the open border policy of the EU (WALKER, 2015).

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<sup>1</sup>After succession of militant nationalist organization, IRA (Irish Rrepublican Army) was created in 1919 to end British rule in Northern Ireland (Arthur, 2015)

<sup>2</sup> FLN( Front de Liberation Nationale) of Algeria is an organization formed by military and political leaders for independence from French Colonialism (Davis, 2007)s

The Paris attacks added to the questions of other European countries such as conservative Switzerland. After these massacres, Switzerland made an announcement banning the 'burqa'<sup>3</sup> and 'hijab'<sup>4</sup> punishable by a fine of up to EUR6500 for Islamic as well as non-Islamic women in one of the Italian speaking region, Ticino. (Iaccino, 2015). The Swiss government claimed that the abolition was for the safety of its citizens. Due to this, Islamic women who used to wear 'burqa' were adversely affected and some found these new laws to be highly offensive. This incident provides the basis for an emerging debate linking cultural integration and terrorism. (Iaccino, 2015)

In January 2016 the murder of a 22 year-old Swedish refugee centre worker, by a 15 year -old asylum seeker posed serious threat to all Swedes. The murder of someone who was working to help immigrants created a resoundingly negative impression of immigrants. Even though this was not an act of terrorism, it signified that Sweden is facing lots of challenges in the process of cultural integration (Pawle, 2016). This incident occurred in a location that receives 50 asylum seekers every month, usually from Afghanistan and Syria (Pawle, 2016). In an apparent act of revenge to this murder, 100 Swedish men dressed up in black with black masks covering their faces and attacked immigrants. They were also caught to be distributing leaflets where they asked the general public to assault refugees (BBC, 2016). This movement highlights the worsening scenario in Sweden, where citizens are increasingly skeptical of accepting greater numbers of refugees. There are numbers of such incidents happening in refugee's resided place in Sweden which are less discussed in media. In this way, we can say that lack of cultural integration can bring numerous problems to a society and can create an unpleasant environment for societal members, both citizens and immigrants.

## **2.4 Debates in cultural integration in Norway**

In 1964, the Norwegian constitution guaranteed that all religions could be freely exercised (Singh, 2016). Since, the population of ethnic minority groups is increasing in Norway, issues regarding cultural integration; diversity and multiculturalism have turned into serious debates. In July 2011, the 'Breivik<sup>5</sup> Massacre' "revealed the dimension of Norwegian society." (Eriksen, 2013, s. 2). Breivik , a right wing Extremist, was against of Multiculturalism and

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<sup>3</sup>burqa is a garment used by Islamic women to cover their body

<sup>4</sup>hijab is a garment used by Islamic women to cover head and chest

<sup>5</sup> Breivik massacre is the terrible day in Norwegian history when a Norwegian guy made car bomb explosion in Oslo and also made open firing in summer camp in Utøya and killed around 80 young people as movement against anti Muslims

wanted to protect the Europe from Islamic Colonization. (Eriksen, 2013) He was found not guilty for his deeds. After the Massacre, the state also received various negative opinion poll against Muslims immigrants from 'Right Wing Populist Progress Party. (Eriksen, 2013) The report of Eriksen(2013) also assessed that the "rise in resentment against Muslims immigrants" in some extent and call for the need of resettlement of increasing aggression towards immigrants in Norway . In Norway, the highest percentage of immigrants is from Muslim countries. In this way, maintaining multiculturalism and assisting ethnic minorities in integrating into Norwegian society has become one of the biggest challenges for modern Norway.

Some politicians state their beliefs in multiculturalism to promote cultural integration in the country. Eriksen(2013) wrote that Muslim women are given priority to be examined by female doctors and there are also gyms that have female only sections for Muslim women to work out without wearing a 'burqa'. This example of multiculturalism provides insights about the effort made by Norwegian integration policy maker in cultural integration process of Muslim immigrants.

Norway is found to be doing exceedingly well in terms of equality, but lacks behind in maintaining diversity (Eriksen, 2013).Some anti-immigrant citizens think that Islam is the greatest threat to national identity (Singh, 2016) .Some parties also argue that respect towards others cultures cannot be acquired, it should be earned. Norwegian scholar Wican (1995), points out that some women from Islamic communities are still compelled to sacrifice their dreams for the sake of culture (Singh, 2016)and are forced into arranged marriage and not able to choose their partner from a different ethnic group. In this way, immigrants can be blinded by tradition despite living in countries such as Norway, where women have the right to live without interference from their parents.

Norway has a state church. All Norwegian citizens become a member unless they seek to withdraw. Because of this Norway provides assistance to other religions on the basis of equality. There are Hindu temples, mosques for Muslims, Buddhist temples and many churches for Christians, Catholics and other denominations. Immigrants are able to perform their religious rituals in the same way they used to in their home country. There are also various religious associations that organize various festivals and events to promote their culture. Norwegian institutions are positive about the initiatives made by different religions in promoting their cultures and faiths, for instance the VHP Norway is a Hindu association that



organizes various festivals and has lots of successful events celebrated by Hindus, Norwegians and people of other nationalities.

Hindu religion also consists of its own limitations and norms, and values which contradicts from other religions. The population of Hindus from Tamil, Sri Lanka is greater than Hindus from North India in Norway. The majority of Hindus from Tamil had conflict with minority of Hindus from North India regarding the operation of Hindu temple, due to different rituals and traditions. (Kumar, 2014) Due to this, Tamil Hindus don't enter in the premises of temples of North Indian and vice versa in Norway. There are also Hindus from Nepal and Malaysia in Norway. However, these Hindus are found to be visiting the temples of both Tamil Hindu temple and North India Hindu temple. (Kumar, 2014) Since Nepalese Hindus have no conflict regarding the visit in temple, the cultural integration process has been running more smoothly.

The social fabric of Norway is one made up of a diverse number of peoples. Despite this diversity, equality and human rights are instilled in the constitution and the people, with immigrants taught these beliefs in an attempt to pass on these strong civic values and ensure a stable Norwegian society of the future. Cultural integration is a considerable challenge, but one that is tackled with generously and positivity, far more than many other nations around the world and because of this, one can remain hopeful.

## **2.5 Social Inclusion**

Social inclusion is a process that endeavors assurance of equal opportunities for all irrespective of their cultural or religious background or their origin. It is a multi-faceted phenomenon that focuses on the full and active participation of every individual living in a society in all aspects of life (MIPEX, 2015). Social inclusion is perceived as a significant element of the social integration process (Yvonne Riaño, 2006) and is imperative in the promotion of gender equality, improving economic conditions and promoting social equity. It is about developing an inclusive society that overcomes cultural and religious differences, irrespective of race, class, geography, etc. An inclusive society is a concept developed to weaken inequality through the promotion of social policies and create flexible and tolerant societies that provide space for all members (Silver, 1994).

The World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen in 1995) addressed elements that are necessary for social inclusion or creation of inclusive society: respect for all human rights

and liberty, the rule of law, equal opportunities for every member of society, and equal participation in all activities ongoing in society. For an all-inclusive society, every member of the society should have access to public infrastructure and facilities that provide a sense of belonging for people (Council of Europe , 1995). Education is another fundamental element for social inclusion that provides opportunities to gain cognizance of culture and history of the host country and cultivates mutual understanding and appreciation. Education can create respect and appreciation of diverse cultures and empowers the learner to participate in related decision-making processes (Riano, 2003). Despite all other factors, participation is significant for social inclusion; it provides access to activities within society and creates a sense of responsibility towards other members of the community.

The concepts of social inclusion and exclusion emerged in social policy discourse in Europe as a response to the crisis in welfare states. There are five different perspectives of social inclusion: economic participation, health and access to services, personal independence and self-determination, education, and interacting with society and fulfilling social roles (CLAD, 2015). Migration and social inclusion/exclusion are related terms along with increasing mobility of people in a global age. The rapid increase in mobility of people has also raised concern about social conflicts within nation-states (Europe, 2013). Migrants are different from the people of origin that increase global inequalities leading to a violent political conflict that threatens livelihood. Illegal migrants and refugees are sometimes viewed with serious concern; the recent refugee crisis has led to European governments losing control over borders. According to Young (2000), all the problems of social conflicts and injustice should be labeled for social inclusion. Furthermore, social exclusion can threaten social cohesion as when individuals are excluded in a society, willingness of members to cooperate is not supported. Social inclusion is best expressed regarding right based approach because by providing equal rights to every members of the society, their inclusion in the society can be ensured (Pettersen & Ostby, 2014).

### **2.5.1 Social Inclusion of Women**

Women make up around half the population of the human race and it is impossible to integrate people into societies by adopting policies that discriminate against women (CLAD, 2015). Women are placed in a disadvantaged group in patriarchal society about men in all spheres of life. Mostly in developing and least developed country, especially in male dominated society, women are constrained to household activities and subjected to social

exclusion regarding issues of poverty, power imbalances, gender-based violence and restrictions to access of resources along with exclusion from the decision-making process (Employment, 2013/2014). For instance, women are encouraged to learn household work like cooking, cattle grazing in rural parts of Nepal. The people of that society believed that spending money for the education of their daughters is expenses and they prefer to save money for the marriage for dowry.

Though women are not a homogenous group, they can be excluded from society through reduced access to resources and fewer educational and employment opportunities. In Norway, rules and regulations are strict regarding gender equality, and all individuals are obliged to defend men and women equally. Treating women the same as men is enshrined in Norwegian law as a basic tenant in promoting gender equality and social integration (Council of Europe , 1995).

### 2.5.2 Steps in Promotion of Social Inclusion

According to Goran Therborn (2007), there are five steps for the promotion of social inclusion: visibility, consideration, access to social interaction, rights, and the resources to fully participate. The steps to promote social inclusion are hierarchical starting from visibility as the first step.

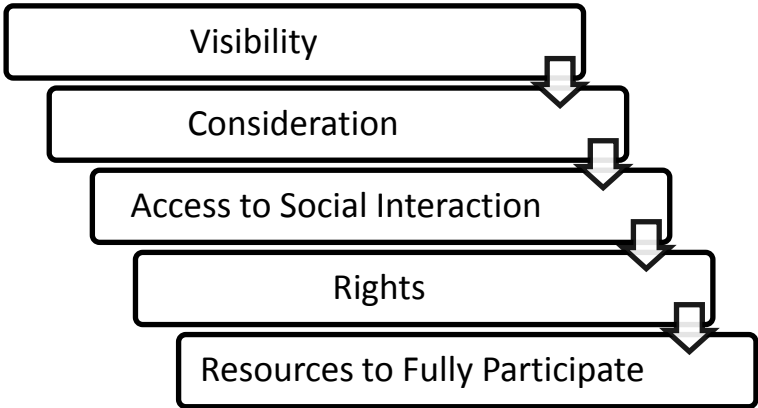


Fig 1. Steps Promoting Social Inclusion

Visibility: Visibility is about recognition of one's own voices for representation, in the processes that make up formal society. When people remain invisible, then they are not counted in the society; due to which, they are deprived of facilities and services enjoyed by other members.

Consideration: This is second step to promote social inclusion that focuses on consideration of the concerns and needs of individuals and groups in society by policy-makers. Despite the visible presence of marginalized groups policy-maker softens overlook them, and as a result, their needs and concerns are not addressed or incorporated (Blau, 1960).

Access to social integration: It is the third step of social inclusion that focuses on participation and engagement of an individual in society's activities. For social inclusion, members of society should be capable of engaging in social networks in their daily life. Furthermore, they also should engage in economic, social, cultural and political activities of the society in which they live (Hellgren, 2015).

Rights: Legislation is a prerequisite for assurance of social integration and should be concerned with providing equitable rights for all individuals so they can claim their rights to social services and facilities. For social inclusion, every member of society should be given the right to work, the right to participate in activities of society and right to claim against discrimination.

Resources to fully participate in society: adequate resources are considered fundamental for successful social inclusion and integration in society (Cooper, 2005) .Financial resources and others such as time, energy, respect, and physical constraints, are some of the barriers that obstruct the process of social integration (Europe, 2013). A lack of recognition and respect are further reasons that hinder social inclusion.

### **2.5.3 Paradigms of Social Inclusion/Exclusion**

Solidarity, specialization, and monopoly are purported as three paradigms of social exclusion by Hilary Silver (1994), and each of these paradigms are grounded indifferent conceptions of social exclusion/inclusion.

The solidarity paradigm explains social exclusion as the breakdown of social bond between the individual and society. Emile Durkheim (1897/1997) was an early theorist in the field of social integration who studied suicide and found that its prevalence was higher among individuals living alone or those who were isolated from the community. Further, Cohen & Syme (1985) elaborated the idea of social integration by depicting that higher levels of social integration led to fewer symptoms of depression; pointing out that relationships with others amplify the opportunities for social support. Durkheim and Cohen & Syme explained that

social integration is achieved through social support and reconciliation between differing groups in the society. The solidarity paradigm is dominant in France.

Specialization is another paradigm of social inclusion. In this paradigm, exclusion reflects discrimination, attributed to social differences, the economic division of labour and the separation of social spheres. According to specialization, differences between individual leads to separate social spheres and social exclusion results from this discrimination and inability to overcome various types of barriers.

Monopoly paradigm is another paradigm of social inclusion/exclusion that is taken from the works of Weber, Marx and Marshall (Taket, Crisp, Neville, & Graham, 2009). This paradigm views social order as coercive and a consequence of the formation of group monopolies. In this paradigm, group distinctions and inequality overlap. Individuals are encouraged for full participation in the community, and social democratic citizenship mitigates inequality through integration policies. For instance, In Norway members of the society are encouraged for full participation in the community and integration policies support social integration of the members in the society.

Social inclusion and exclusion are considered a group phenomenon rather than an individual phenomenon (Yvonne Riaño, 2006). Furthermore, they are based on social relations that require further studies of the relations between excluding and excluded groups, such as the excluded group, immigrants.

## **3 History of Nepalese immigrants**

### **3.1 Background**

Nepal is an agricultural country, and remittance contributes to around 25% of its GDP. It is a developing country and along with globalization Nepalese have been migrating to other countries seeking for employment opportunities (National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), 2011). Inadequate infrastructure and the poor economy of Nepal have obstructed growth of factories and industries. Lack of big industries result into less employment opportunities: most of the working population in Nepal migrates to other countries in search of permanent jobs. Nepal is landlocked country due to which it is isolated from rest of the world, impeding its opportunities for development as well, providing less space for technological advancement and infrastructure development for urban areas. Nepalese youths are the majority of the migrating population, and they migrate to other countries either for jobs or studies. Globalization has made migration easier, as it has made the world global village that is open for all (MIPEX, 2015). Further, technological advancement has transformed large distances into smaller ones. The status of the migrating population in Nepal can be comprehended by the report presented by Nepal Migration Year Book in which the data on people who migrated from Nepal was collected.

Migrant Nepali workers by destination for 2011 are presented below:

| No. | Country                  | Male    | Female | Total   |
|-----|--------------------------|---------|--------|---------|
| 1.  | Afghanistan              | 472     | 0      | 472     |
| 2.  | Algeria                  | 35      | 0      | 35      |
| 3.  | Bahrain                  | 16,554  | 119    | 16,673  |
| 4.  | Hong Kong                | 86      | 32     | 118     |
| 5.  | Israel                   | 65      | 0      | 65      |
| 6.  | Japan                    | 16      | 6      | 22      |
| 7.  | Jordan                   | 249     | 0      | 249     |
| 8.  | Kuwait                   | 3,916   | 8      | 3,924   |
| 9.  | Lebanon                  | 756     | 867    | 1,623   |
| 10. | Libya                    | 1,185   | 0      | 1,185   |
| 11. | Macau                    | 39      | 0      | 39      |
| 12. | Malaysia                 | 145,942 | 996    | 146,938 |
| 13. | Maldives                 | 45      | 0      | 45      |
| 14. | Mauritius                | 33      | 0      | 33      |
| 15. | Oman                     | 1,276   | 2      | 1,278   |
| 16. | Pakistan                 | 145     | 0      | 145     |
| 17. | Poland                   | 27      | 31     | 58      |
| 18. | Qatar                    | 26,964  | 29     | 26,993  |
| 19. | Russia                   | 8       | 0      | 8       |
| 20. | Saudi Arabia             | 46,040  | 7      | 46,047  |
| 21. | Seychelles               | 28      | 0      | 28      |
| 22. | United Arab Emirates     | 20,936  | 410    | 21,346  |
| 23. | United States of America | 22      | 0      | 22      |
| 24. | South Korea              | 2,118   | 0      | 2118    |

Table 1 Source: (National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), 2011, s. 13)

From above table, it is clear that many Nepalese are migrating to different countries across the world and their reasons behind migration are jobs, income or studies (Dhungel, 1999). Most of the Nepalese migrant workers seeking jobs or incomes migrate to Asian and Middle-Eastern countries; Nepalese migrants seeking to study migrate to European and North American countries. From the table, it is also clear that Nepalese migrate less to Japan, USA, Mauritius, Russia and other countries; it is because of strict procedure of these countries that is unwavering towards immigrants (Thorud, Mosli, Try, & Fonn, 2014). The data displayed

above shows that Nepalese are becoming more attracted to migratory activities, and migration is possible to develop into a culture of the society, observing the present scenario. The above table shows Nepalese migrant workers who have moved to different countries seeking employment opportunities to raise their economic status.

Table 2 presents Nepalese students who have migrated to new countries at various levels of education, including high school, diploma, bachelor, and Master's and doctorate level.

| SN | Country        | No. of Students | SN | Country             | No. of Students | SN | Country         | No. of Students |
|----|----------------|-----------------|----|---------------------|-----------------|----|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1  | America        | 5,099           | 32 | Japan               | 2,534           | 63 | Taiwan          | 8               |
| 2  | Armenia        | 18              | 33 | Georgia             | 1               | 64 | Taiwan (R.O.C.) | 3               |
| 3  | Australia      | 13,537          | 34 | Korea               | 63              | 65 | Thailand        | 325             |
| 4  | Austria        | 45              | 35 | Kyrgyz Republic     | 3               | 66 | Turkey          | 1               |
| 5  | Bangladesh     | 1,285           | 36 | Kyrgyzstan          | 20              | 67 | UAE             | 39              |
| 6  | Belarus        | 2               | 37 | Latvia              | 16              | 68 | UK              | 28,667          |
| 7  | Belgium        | 43              | 38 | Libya               | 2               | 69 | Ukraine         | 101             |
| 8  | Brazil         | 1               | 39 | Lithuania           | 26              | 70 | Venezuela       | 1               |
| 9  | Bulgaria       | 1               | 40 | Malaysia            | 161             |    | <b>Total</b>    | <b>62,391</b>   |
| 10 | Canada         | 973             | 41 | Malta               | 98              |    |                 |                 |
| 11 | China          | 847             | 42 | Netherlands         | 121             |    |                 |                 |
| 12 | Costa Rica     | 2               | 43 | New Zealand         | 539             |    |                 |                 |
| 13 | Cyprus         | 1,349           | 44 | Norway              | 381             |    |                 |                 |
| 14 | Czech Republic | 210             | 45 | Pakistan            | 140             |    |                 |                 |
| 15 | Denmark        | 348             | 46 | Philippines         | 502             |    |                 |                 |
| 16 | Dubai          | 87              | 47 | Poland              | 283             |    |                 |                 |
| 17 | Egypt          | 2               | 48 | Portugal            | 35              |    |                 |                 |
| 18 | Estonia        | 1               | 49 | Qatar               | 2               |    |                 |                 |
| 19 | Fiji           | 24              | 50 | Republic Czee       | 3               |    |                 |                 |
| 20 | Finland        | 586             | 51 | Republic Of Georgia | 1               |    |                 |                 |
| 21 | France         | 84              | 52 | Romania             | 53              |    |                 |                 |
| 22 | Georgia        | 273             | 53 | Russia              | 56              |    |                 |                 |
| 23 | Germany        | 559             | 54 | Saudi Arab          | 184             |    |                 |                 |
| 24 | Greece         | 1               | 55 | Scotland            | 279             |    |                 |                 |
| 25 | Holand         | 12              | 56 | Singapore           | 73              |    |                 |                 |
| 26 | Hongkong       | 5               | 57 | Slovakiya           | 3               |    |                 |                 |
| 27 | Hungary        | 97              | 58 | South Africa        | 77              |    |                 |                 |
| 28 | India          | 947             | 59 | South Korea         | 145             |    |                 |                 |
| 29 | Ireland        | 394             | 60 | Spain               | 123             |    |                 |                 |
| 30 | Israel         | 1               | 61 | Sweden              | 321             |    |                 |                 |
| 31 | Italy          | 45              | 62 | Switzerland         | 303             |    |                 |                 |

Table 2 Source: (National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), 2011, s. 54)

(SN refers to serial number)



Nepal is a developing country with poor infrastructure; hence it lacks adequate education facilities, due to which Nepalese students migrate to other countries with better education facilities (Employment, 2013/2014). Most of these students have moved to developed countries like the UK, USA, Australia and other countries, because of the high quality of education there, with worldwide recognition. Students also prefer to study in English speaking countries so they do not have to face communication problems (Battarai, 2005). English is taught in schools and colleges in Nepal as a second language so that students have the option to obtain higher education in foreign countries. Furthermore, Nepalese students find it easier to integrate into the UK, USA, and Australian societies, as they are diverse and have people from many different countries. Besides developed countries such as these, Nepalese students also prefer to acquire higher education in other European countries. The inflow of Nepalese students in European countries is increasing rapidly in the last few years. Due to poor economic conditions, the trend of Nepalese migration to developed countries is increasing fast, as is the attraction of higher education in developed countries (Dhungel, 1999).

### **3.2 Immigration Policies of Norway**

The Immigration Act 2008 of Norway regulates immigration policies regarding entry of foreigners: family, labor, protection, and education/training/exchange. A renewal of the act was later endorsed in 2010, with the most significant amendments passed in 2012 and 2013. Immigration policies govern rights of the immigrants to residence and work (Cooper, 2005).

According to the Immigrant Act 2010, permits for immigrants are classified into four different categories: labor immigrants, a person with family, students, and refugees (Pettersen & Ostby, 2014). According to these rules, students are only granted temporary residence permits allowing them to work part-time and change their status after obtaining jobs relevant to their studies. Besides the student category, other categories of permits are allocated either permanent or temporary residence. Residence permits in Norway gives immigrants the right to work and reside; permanent residence grants those rights after three years of continuous residence in Norway. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) handles applications for asylum and residence as well as permanent residence permits (Fonn, 2012-2013). The government believes that its greatest resource is its people, and that their skills and knowledge should be made use of: integration policies are disposed towards providing employment opportunities to immigrants.

### *FAMILY RELATED IMMIGRATION*

This policy is for people with close family ties to anyone residing in Norway (who has a permanent or temporary residence permit) and provides them the right to residence. Placed in family reunification category, the immigrant must be family members of Nordic national or foreigner residing in Norway (Council of Europe , 1995). Those who can obtain family-related immigration are, spouses over 18 years of age and living together, unmarried children under 18 years, parents of unmarried children under 18 years, or a cohabitant over the age of 18 who have been together at least two years. For this policy, the applicant needs to present a tax assessment document that shows sufficient funds and proves that he/she hasn't received any social benefits from NAV during the application process. According to 2011 data, 37% of immigrants fell under the family reunification category; of which 66.2% were women and 32.8% were men (Nepal, 2013).

### *LABOR IMMIGRATION FROM EU/EFTA*

This policy is for labor immigrants, for migrants working or seeking a job in Norway. To work or start a business in Norway, nationals from third countries need a valid residence permit (Directorate of Immigration UDI, 2014). Labor immigrants are divided into five different categories: skilled workers, skilled service suppliers or contractors, skilled self-employed, recent graduates from universities and colleges, and seasonal workers. To apply for any job, workers must be skilled and have an academic qualification equivalent to vocational level or Norwegian secondary education level, and they still have the rights to apply for family reunification or a permanent residence permit (Directorate of Immigration UDI, 2014). Skilled service suppliers and skilled self-employed or contractors are also allowed to apply for family reunification or permanent residence permits. Fresh graduates from universities and colleges are granted a six-month visa to search for jobs related to their field of study or skills after graduation. Seasonal workers are permitted a six-month work visa but are not entitled to apply for family reunification or permanent residence.

According to the 2011 statistics, 30% of immigrants in Norway fell under labour immigration category. Among immigrants who migrated for work, 76.4% were men, and 23.6% were women. This data shows that there are more men migrating to Norway for work in comparison to women (IMDi, 2013-2014).

## *EDUCATION/TRAINING/EXCHANGE*

The category of education, training and exchange comprises international students who gain admission to a Norwegian university or college. Students in this category are granted a temporary residence permit to study during their stay; quota<sup>6</sup> students do not require financial proof, but self-financed students need to prove adequate funds that support their stay in Norway (Directorate of Immigration UDI, 2014). This visa allows up to work 20 hours per week as a part-time worker (whereas their family members are allowed to work full time). Furthermore for student housing to be granted, a residence permit must be shown.

In 2011, Norway received 11% of its total immigrants under this category. Among immigrants in this category, 60.7% were women, and 39.3% were men. From this data, it is clear that many more women migrate to Norway for studies, training and exchange, in comparison to men (Fonn, 2012-2013). Perhaps because of gender equality, women prefer to study in Norway as they are given equal opportunities: women are respected in Norwegian society, resulting in a feeling of security enabling studies.

## *REFUGEES/ASYLUM SEEKER*

Norway also receives immigrants in the form of refugees and asylum seekers. It provided residence permits to Bhutanese refugees taking asylum in Nepal as a process of third country settlement undertaken by UNHCR (Norway-Nepal, 2014). Regarding refugees and asylum seekers, UDI has very strict rules regarding the processing of their applications. Regarding refugees, UDI espouses conditions following the 1951 UN Refugee Convention about the status of refugees. Further, the applications of refugees are assessed independently by the Norwegian authorities regarding their country of origin. The immigration policy of Norway appears to be strict towards refugees, however, humanitarian bodies are encouraged to review the applications and pass judgment.

Among the immigrants in Norway, 21% were refugees or asylum seekers, of these, 58.9% were men and 41.1% were women. (NORDPLUS, 2011).

Nepalese immigrants in Norway fall under the categories of education/training/exchange, labor immigration and family related immigration, but none of them fall under the refugee or

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<sup>6</sup> Quota is a type of scholarship offered to outstanding students as financial grant which covers the living as well as travelling expenses

asylum category (Norway-Nepal, 2014). Nepalese immigrants frequently change their visa status; i.e. husband is a student and his wife falls under family reunion category so that after completion of his studies, his wife can gain admission to the school or college - the immigration policy allows family reunion immigrants to apply for a student visa and also allow the student to apply for family reunion visa (Cooper, 2005). Despite frequent changes in policy and Nepalese immigrants’ awareness, these changes create a state of insecurity

### 3.3 Nepalese immigrants in Norway

Detailed information on the status of Nepalese immigrants in Norway can be obtained from the UDI website that provides complete statistics on all immigrants in Norway.

| Citizenship | Student at school, folk high school or denominational school | Student | Post-doc | Norsk kurs | Au pair | Trainee or guest worker | Necessary additional education | Total | Innvilgesesprosent |
|-------------|--|---------|----------|------------|---------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|--------------------|
| Nepal       | 4  | 174     | 0        | 43         | 8       | 0                       | 0                              | 229   | 86%                |

Table 3: Education permits according to nationality and type of permit, 2014(Directorate of Immigration UDI, 2014)

According to data provided by UDI, most of the Nepalese immigrants in Norway are students, followed by migrant workers. Norway receives around 200 Nepalese students every year including both male and female students (Nepal, 2013). There are higher numbers of self-financed students gaining admission to Norwegian colleges and universities than those on scholarships. According to the data available, there are few Nepalese immigrants that reside in Norway for work. Very little research has been done on Nepalese immigrants in Norway, with scant data available to reveal typical Nepalese job sectors, or the genders that work in them. .

| Citizenship | Skilled | Season | Other | Total |
|-------------|---------|--------|-------|-------|
| Nepal       | 31      | 58     | 12    | 101   |

Table 4: Residence permits for work, by citizenship and type of permit, 2014(Directorate of Immigration UDI, 2014)

Nepalese have migrated to Norway under the family reunification category, but this data is not available due to a lack of research on Nepalese family reunification migration in Norway (National Centre of Competence in Research (NCCR), 2011). Chandika Ohlsen Pandit is the first Nepali immigrant in Norway in the family reunification category, as she married a

Norwegian and had been residing in Norway for the last 45 years. Niru Games Pandit is the second Nepali immigrant woman in Norway under the family reunification category, as she also married a Norwegian. From this, the trend of Nepalese women immigrants started after these women married Norwegians and acquired residence permits under the family reunification category (Council of Europe , 1995).

Dr. Suraj Acharya is the former president of ‘Non-Resident Nepali in Norway’ and believes there are around 2000 Nepali immigrants in Norway (Nepal, 2013). Among these, one-fourth of the population resides in Oslo (Nepal, 2013).

Norwegian language understanding and targeted labor market qualifications are considered key success factors to increasing employment opportunities for immigrants. Participation of women in the labor market strengthens the women’s financial independence and sense of belonging (Ali, 2010)

## 4 .Research methods

In research, two of the most common types of methods are quantitative and quantitative. The quantitative method is an objective approach, employed to obtain measurable data that can be represented numerically. Qualitative research is more concerned with the quality of phenomena and is typically used in the behavioral sciences, in order to discover the underlying motives of people (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). It is characterized by the experiences and opinions expressed in words rather than numbers or data for analysis. It allows the researcher to study experiences of people in depth, with analysis carried out according to their responses and experiences (Creswell, 2014).

As this study intended to study experiences of people in depth, qualitative research methods were adopted. Qualitative research methods were also appropriate for this research to acquire answers of why, how, what, when and where of the desired findings. In order to examine the social system of Norway and immigrant women, this type of research was deemed appropriate. It hoped to study the experience of informants and their integration into Norwegian society, through evaluating basic aspects of social integration like Norwegian language skills, participation in social events, experiences with the job market and raising their children in the Norwegian society.

Sampling is a process whereby a small segment of the population is taken to represent the whole, allowing researchers to generalize results to that population (Bryman, 2012). There are two types of sampling: probability and non-probability. Non-probability sampling was adopted for this study, as every member of the population did not have an equal chance of selection. Within this type, non-random sampling was employed, as it was important to use the researcher's personal judgment in selecting respondents. The accessibility of participants was also an issue to consider because members of the target population were difficult to locate. Accordingly, snowball sampling was used for this study where 20 Nepalese women were selected as informants. Among them, 11 were students, 3 were skilled workers, 2 were on a spouse visa, 2 were permanent residents of Norway and, 2 were permanent residents of Portugal and in labour immigration in Norway.

## **4.1 Data Collection Method**

Primary data is collected to achieve data-rich, detailed descriptions of the research topic (Bryman, 2012). Survey, interviews, observation and discussions are some research tools used for the collection of primary data. Primary data for this study was collected by interviews and observation.

### **4.1.1 In-depth interviews**

Collecting primary data through a conversation between interviewer and respondent (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012) was the method adopted so that highly reliable data based on individual experiences were collected. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face and open-ended questions were asked. Interviews with respondents were recorded by tape recorder and notes were also taken. The questionnaires were designed accordingly which gave space to write their answers in the form. At the same time, most of the conversations were recorded in tape recorder.

### **4.1.2 Participant observation**

Observation is a research tool for the collection of primary data and is appropriate for qualitative research. In participant observation, the researcher participates in the activities of the sample population under study and records them to extract required data (Creswell, 2014). In this study, I became part of the population under study and visited participants on their premises during data collection.

Secondary data were also collected for this study for a better understanding of the research topic, where internet sources served as major secondary sources. Journal articles related to the research topic were also reviewed to acquire further secondary data.

## **4.2 Interview Guide**

I thought to design the interview guide so that the interviews would be conducted systematically; the result was that this achieved interesting data. I prepared the interview guide through the reference of integration theories and also from previous studies as well as my experience and observations. Additionally I consulted with my supervisor for feedback.

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data, where the interviewees were asked if they would like to participate in the study and to advise to answer however they wished.

The semi-structured interview allows both interviewee and interviewer to better communicate, and in a less-formal way. Interviews were conducted individually and in their own home to avoid unnecessary influence in the respondents' answers. By doing this, the informants were more comfortable and willing to share their experiences.

Interview questions were based around the following research questions and sub-questions:

**RQ1:** What do Nepalese immigrant women view as social integration? How do they integrate/not integrate into Norwegian society?

- Does Norwegian language play vital role in establishing social relations with Norwegian people?
- Do Nepalese families prefer their children to play with Norwegian children or Nepalese, or other immigrant populations?
- Are Nepalese women working in managerial positions? If yes, what is the common profession they are involved in?

**RQ2:** How Norwegian integration policies contribute to the Nepalese women being to adapt into Norwegian society?

Sub-Questions:

- Are they aware of Norwegian integration policies? If yes, does it help them during the integration process?

### **4.3 Area of Study**

The research was conducted in Oslo, Ås, Ski and Tromsø. I chose Oslo, the capital city, since it has the largest number of immigrants from all around the world. Also, it was possible to find there many Nepalese immigrant women who had lived in different parts of Norway. I also conducted research in Ås to include a few potential informants who were studying at the



Norwegian University of Life Sciences. The reason for including Ski in the study area was to interview second women from Nepal who came to Norway. Apart from Oslo, Ski and Ås, I also managed to interview two informants from Tromsø who I first met at a social gathering in Oslo.

#### **4.4 Data Collection Process**

Altogether, 20 informants were interviewed. All the informants were Nepalese women holding different visa statuses, different age groups, different educational background and different professions. The summary of information about the informants is given in the informants details chart.

Since the questions were prepared in English, a few of the informants had difficulty in understanding some of the questions. I used the Nepali language (official language of Nepal) to explain the questions and also to avoid misunderstanding.

As stated above, interviews were conducted individually for confidential issues. Some questions were quite personal and respondents would not likely have answered if they were asked in a group setting. The data collection process involved the use of a tape recorder for recording both the questions and answers with the mutual consent of the informants. Likewise, the questions were designed in the format which allows space for informants to write their experience. Both the recorded and duly filled questionnaires were studied. I also assured them to delete the recorded information after completion of my study. The time length varied from one informant to another: the shortest time period taken was around two hours, whereas the longest was around four hours. I made notes to remember some of the major themes that could be used for interpretation and analysis later. The interview was conducted in the month of November of 2015. It took almost more than a month for data collection.

#### **4.5 Data Analysis**

The inductive approach is used as data analysis method in this study and is the most commonly used approach in social science. “An inductive approach involves detailed readings of collected raw data through which concepts, themes and models is derived” (Thomas, 2006, s. 238). The results of the concept of 'social inclusion' were derived while assessing the primarily data. While analyzing the collected raw data, I also discovered the

implications of the concept of 'promotion of social inclusion', in the context of Norwegian society. In this way, the data analysis process involved listening to the detailed recorded data, filled form of informants and making notes. The notes were further studied to derive various themes and concepts to refine the result.

Color-coding was employed to sensibly present and highlight the most important data from the notes taken during interviews.

#### **4.6 Research Challenges**

The first challenge of this study was finding potential informants. Another big challenge was to organize interview times since all of them were so busy in their personal and professional lives. A few informants were not open in the beginning of the interview, so I had difficulties obtaining responses before the respondents opened up and increased their comfort levels, increasing the chance of unbiased and reliable data.

Being a Nepalese immigrant in Norway myself, I also had my own views on the questions but I tried hard not to convey my opinions and focus on the experience of the informants during interviews. I also had difficulties in explaining the questions, as a few of the informants did not fully understand English. In this case I translated each question into Nepali.

After the study was complete, I realized that this kind of study needs a high level of patience and determination.

#### **4.7 Ethical Considerations**

Research ethics were considered before conducting this study in order to carry out research in an ethical way. During the research, rights and privacy of informants were protected; ensuring that information given by them was stored securely. All required information about the researcher and the background of the research was provided to participants. The willingness of participants for the interview was acquired to ensure their voluntary participation (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). The informants were assured that data and information acquired from the study will not be misused and will not be used for other purposes than this study.

## **4.8 Validity and Reliability**

The questions were designed to be simple and specific to make it easy for the informants to answer. The use of the tape recorder also facilitated collection of reliable and accurate data from informants.

# 5 Research Findings and Analysis

## 5.1 Overview of Informants

Altogether, 20 informants participated in the interview. The youngest informant was 22 years old and eldest was 54 years old. The mean age of the informants was 28 years. The status of informants in terms of visas was that 11 informants were students, 2 had 'family reunion' status and 3 had 'skilled worker' status. Likewise, two informants were permanent residents of Norway and two were permanent residents of Portugal. The process of changing status from one category to another has become recent trend. This is discussed in more depth in next paragraph.

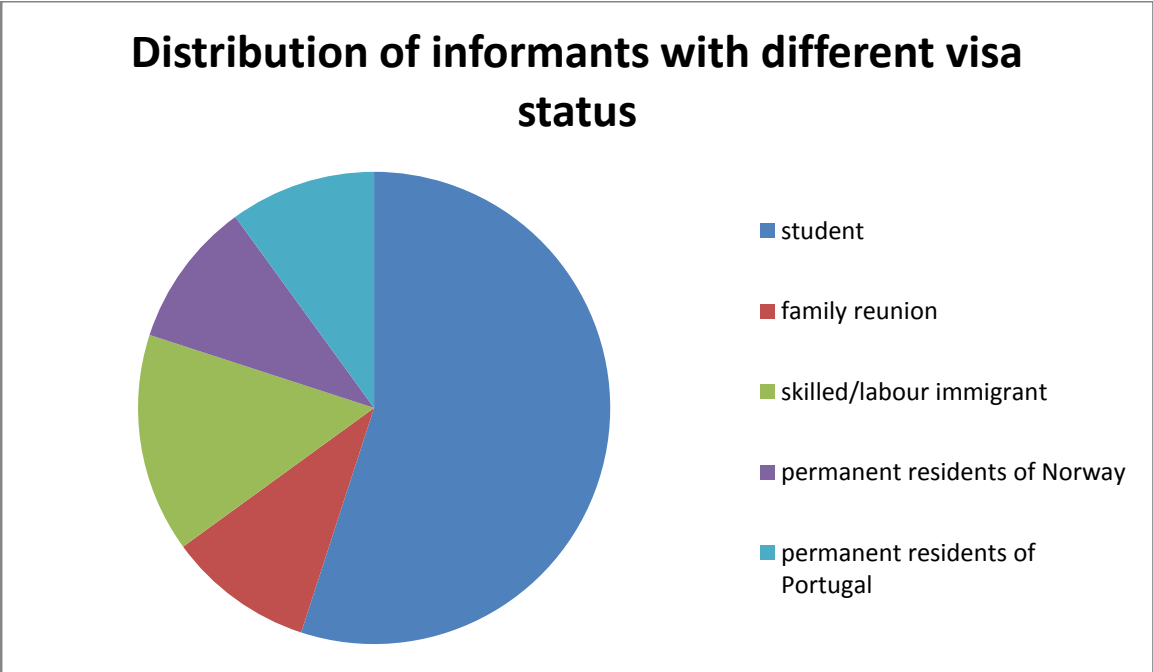


Fig 2: Distribution of informants with different visa status

It was found that a few of informants have changed their visa status quite often for many reasons. One informant who was working as a professional IT engineer in Norway originally came to the county under family reunion status. Her father was a PhD student at the time and his degree was classified as a 'skilled job'. The immigration policy of Norway allowed them to bring their family under this visa category. Later on, this informant changed her visa status to 'student' when she was doing her Bachelor degree. She had to change her status to student because her father moved back to Nepal right after completion of his PhD degree. She stayed in Norway on a student visa for 5 years. After her graduation, the informant managed to find a

job in her related field and subsequently changed her status to skilled worker. According to the immigration policy of Norway, people who have stayed under the skilled worker category and worked full time in a professional field are eligible for permanent residence in Norway after 5 years.

Another, informant, a manager in Norwegian retail chain, first came to Norway on a tourist visa. Later on, she changed her status to student and started going to high school. After completion of her studies, she married Norwegian man and changed to family reunion visa. At the time of interviews, she was permanent resident of Norway. Similarly, an informant who was also a permanent resident of Norway came to the country on a family reunion. She married Norwegian man and married 31 years ago, later obtaining permanent residency. She is the second Nepali woman who came to Norway as an immigrant in the year 1985.

Moreover, another informant who came to the county under the family reunion visa, changed to student status when she started her Master's degree. There were 2 informants who have permanent residency of Portugal. Norwegian immigration policy allows EEA and EU citizen to stay and work in Norway.

Another informant, who was working as a research assistant in her related field at the time of interviews, originally came to Norway as a student. She counts herself very lucky to have gotten a skilled job right after graduation from her studies. She too accordingly changed her status to a skilled worker.

## **5.2 Educational Background of Informants:**

The informants who migrated to Norway at young age have finished high school only. In the beginning, these informants were not comfortable about sharing their education level. But somehow with further discussions they disclosed their education level. It appears they were unhappy to share their qualification level.

Four informants were from the field of medicine. Among them, one informant had completed her MBBS (**Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery**) from China. She was a licensed medical doctor in Nepal. Similarly, one of them has completed her dental nursing qualification from London University. The other two hold diploma and Bachelor in nursing.

Eight informants had completed an undergraduate level of study in various faculties such as Business, Accounting, Rural Development and Bio technology.

The remaining four informants had master's degrees in various fields such as Biotechnology, Environmental Science and Business

### **Educational levels in Norway**

- An informant with a medical background was doing her double Masters in water and sanitation in Norway. This Masters is her second in Norway since she completed her first Masters in Tromso.
- Four informants were completing double masters in the same subject in which they already graduated in Nepal.
- Three informants completed their undergraduate education in Nepal and were pursuing their Masters at the time of interviews.
- Two could not finish their university studies as they had started working full time from the age of 21.
- One of the informants was undertaking PhD research right after completing her Masters in Norway
- Two permanent residents of Portugal had immigration status of workers. They were not indulged in any educational institutions in Norway.
- One informant was working in her related field as an IT engineer. She completed her Bachelor and Masters degree in Norway
- One informant that came to Norway under family reunion status was planning to pursue her Masters in 2016.
- Two informants were studying Bachelor degrees
- One informant who came on a student visa and held skilled visa status at the time of interview is studying the Norwegian language at level three. She was taking the language course to meet the eligibility criteria for permanent residency.
- Two informants were studying a nursing course. One of them was in her last year of the study program and working part time simultaneously. The other one just started studying from 2015.

Most of the informants were found to be have had well regarded jobs back home in Nepal. They were working in managerial positions in their related field or for example as stated

previously, one informant held a respected position as licensed Medical Doctor. Similarly other informants also had good work histories in Nepal in various positions including Quality Controller Office, Brand Promoter, News reader, Research Assistant, Teacher, Radio Presenter, Environmentalist and Hotel Assistant Manager. There were however, two informants who came to Norway following their high school education and didn't have any work experience in Nepal. Two of them were working in lower level managerial positions like receptionist and sales person.

Even though the majority of the informants were active in Norwegian labour market they found to be involved in typically unskilled work. Unskilled work can be described as involving little or no training. During the interview about their occupational status, these informants appeared uneasy in talking about their occupations at that time.

### **Civil Status of informants**

4 informants were single, one was dating someone.

10 women were married to a Nepali man. Amongst these, 13 were married in Nepal and 1 was married in Norway. They didn't have children.

1 woman was married to a Nepali man and had a 6 year old daughter

1 woman was married to a Nepali man and had a 18 month old daughter

1 woman was married to a Norwegian man and had 3 children

1 woman was married to a Norwegian man but was divorced. She had a 10 year old son

1 woman was married to a Portuguese man and had a 4 year old son

1 woman was married to a Nepali man and had a 7 year old son

The time period that informants spent in Norway varied from 3 months to 31 years. The experience of informants was typically determined by time length of their stay in Norway. Majority of the informants had been in Norway for 3 years. It is deduced that informants with different stay length gave diverse results of the findings based on their attitudes and experiences.

The field area where research was conducted include: Ås, Ski and Oslo. At the time of interview, five informants were residents of Ås, 11 were of Oslo and 2 were the residents of Ski. In addition, I met two informants from Tromsø in Nepalese social gathering and was enough to include them amongst those interviewed also.

### **5.3 Defining integration and the policies**

#### **5.3.1 What Nepalese immigrants women understand by integration?**

When the interviewees were asked to define integration, some responded as though they had never heard the term before, whereas some shared their views on what they had understood it to be so far. Two informants mentioned that they are unfamiliar with the term. Among those 2 women, Informant no. 5 was very new in the Norwegian society. It was her first 3 months in Norway during the time of interview. She acted confused when she was asked to define integration. She said "*I don't know the meaning. I think I have heard the term before but not surely what integration really stands for*" It was pretty obvious to get such answers from her who has spent less time in Norway.

Informant's no. 20 was another informant who told that she was completely new to this term. She said "*I work as cleaner and I am not highly qualified to understand these terms. I have my children to take care of and I also work as cleaner. I hardly had time to socialize to outsiders other than my family and few family friends. I really had hard time to explain her meaning of integration in Nepali and I gave her few examples about the facilities given by Norwegian government to provide of insights of Integration.*"

The majority of the informants shared similar ideas in defining the term 'integration'.

Informant number 15 define integration as

*"the process of adapting in the new social system and discovering the new values and norms of host country. It is more about bringing certain changes on oneself in order to indulge into new society"*.

Informant no 9 said "integration is continuous process. Every day you will get an opportunity to know new things about the host country. So, changing yourself in the existing social forms and preparing yourself to implement the newly learnt things in your practical life is integration for me."



Informant no. 2 defined integration with an example:

*"In Nepal, people usually don't feel necessary to throw the trash in the bin even though the bin is available at the end of every street. But I have seen most of the Nepalese people would rather carry trash with them until they find the bin in Norway. They don't throw unnecessarily in the street. This is integration. They have brought changes in their way of living and are more responsible towards society in Norway. Likewise, we don't greet strangers in the street or in metro back home. But the scenario is pretty different in Norway. Once we come in to eye contact with strangers in the street we greet them and say 'Hi'. So, we Nepalese people have learnt to be extrovert and open a bit to show respect which is part of Integration. So, Integration can be in different forms and deals with the changes in the behavior, thinking and way of living."*

The informant definition is clarified by an example in this case. It also shows that Nepalese people have become more social and responsible towards society from living in Norway.

According to Informant no. 19:-

*"Integration is more about developing good relations with the people of society that includes not only Norwegians and Nepali but also with their neighbors who could be from different nationalities apart from Norwegians. Norway is the country where you will find different nationalities under same roof next door as neighbors, work colleague, class mates, and, etc. I think integration is more about building friendship and participating in different activities of society."*

Informant no. 11 thinks:

*"Integration is more about showing respect to each other culture and religion. It deals more with equal respect and establishing sense of belongingness with people. It is also about knowing new people and going out with them. I have been staying in Norway more than decades and I think integration is very wide concept to have particular definition. It is also individualistic view which differs from people to people. Integration for people who is completely new in society can be studying how society functions to get familiar with the society. Likewise, people who have been staying in Norway more than decade like me could*

*carry different meaning of Integration like settling down in the country permanently and having family. I think you will get different meaning every time you knock the next door".*

In general, the informants thought that integration is a term that deals with building up social relations, bringing changes in the way of living and thinking in order to adjust into new society:- to respect people from different nationalities and come with a new frame of mind to the new society, by transforming themselves to some extent. Though the informants' definitions are very basic, integration itself is a very wide concept to define: the definition reflects the facts that informants put effort into understanding integration in order to make life easier in a foreign country. However, as mentioned there were also few informants who were completely unaware of the meaning of integration.

### **5.3.2 Informants Responses towards the Question 'Are you integrated into Norwegian Society?'**

#### **Informants Who Thought they were Not Integrated At All**

From the above responses it is plausible to conclude that there were some informants who were not integrated. They were unaware of the concept of integration and how it is useful in an immigrant's life. According to them, they had never heard of it from their husband or colleagues. One possible reason may be that they were less interested in learning new things or were perhaps less open-minded to the concept.

Informant no. 20 believed that she hadn't integrated at all into Norwegian society:-

*"I am so much occupied with my own life. I work full time and have to take care of my children. I don't even have time for myself. I am not good in English. I work as cleaner so I hardly meet people at workplace. So, I don't think I am integrated. On top of that, Norwegian people are really reserved. I have noticed that while travelling through public transport, when there is space to sit nearby me; Norwegians people prefer to stand rather than sitting nearby me. So, I don't think it is easy to make Norwegian friends."*

As mentioned previously in the literature review, the integration process takes place between two parties i.e. receiving parties and immigrants. If both the parties accept each other and take initiation to establish good relations, that could be in different forms, from both sides, it is easier for integration to occur.

### **Informants who believed They are Partially Integrated:**

Informant no.1 says if she had to rank her level of integration into Norwegian society, she would say she was partially integrated. Though she attended third level of Norwegian language classes, she still felt more comfortable to speak in English than in Norwegian. She found it difficult to have a good conversation in Norwegian.

Informant no.3 says

*"I neither can speak Norwegian nor write in Norwegian. Due to this, I always feel isolated at my work place, friend's party and any occasion. Most of the time, I stayed quiet and have tried to skip. I also feel awkward to be in the bunch of Norwegian friends as the culture is pretty different. We girls usually don't drink in Nepal but we can rarely find someone who doesn't drink in Norway. At times, I felt they make fun of mine. So, I always try to avoid the parties with my Norwegian friends even though I receive lot of invitation".*

Her experience highlights how the language barrier and cultural difference impose a significant challenge to an individual trying to integrate into a new society. This is often true of most immigrants from different parts of the world who is unfamiliar with language and cultural of host country.

*Informant no. 7 also thinks she is partially integrated:*

*" This is my 3rd year in Norway. I am doing my Bachelor. I always think to take Norwegian language class to improve my Norwegian language so that I can increase my possibility to get job in Norway and settle down. Every time we get some letter from NAV or health centre, we have to run to our Norwegian friends to find out what the document is all about. I don't want to depend upon others to get my things done. So, I still have lots of things to learn in order to integrate into this society".*

Informants who thought they were only partially integrated pointed out the language barrier as an issue that hindrances establishing good relations with Norwegians, fitting into the Norwegian labor market, and making the country feel like home.

### **Informants Who believe They Are Integrated Into Norwegian Society:**

Informant no. 11 is one who thought she was actually integrated into Norwegian society.

According to her:

*"I have already spent decade in Norway. I am working as Manager in the store. I have taken several jobs before this job. I have worked with several people with different Nationalities. Even though I am from Nepal and speak Hindi and English, I always prefer to speak in Norwegian. I follow every rules of Norway. I prefer to eat Norwegian food than Nepalese as Norwegian food is healthy. I usually go out on every weekend like Norwegian and party. I have more Nepali friends but I hang out with Norwegians a lot. I have also brought up my son in Norwegian culture .I think being immigrant I am fully integrated into Norwegian society."*

Likewise, Informant no.9 had the same experience regarding integration:-

*"I came to Norway in my early teen. I completed my high school, bachelor and masters in Norway. I started staying alone from the age 20 like Norwegians. In Nepal, daughter stays at their parents home until they get married. We don't have tradition of leaving home. Likewise, I communicate in Norwegian with my father and mother most of the time. I believe that I am living a life like Norwegian till the time."*

Informant no.17 also thought the same:-

*"I am married with Norwegian. I have three children. All of them are born and brought up in Norway. My elder son left home at the age of 19. The youngest one left home when he was 21. Likewise, my daughter left home at the age of 18. They visited me in Christmas. We have our Nepalese community which organizes various Nepalese festivals. But they actually don't show interest in it but they know that we always expect them in Christmas. My elder son is married with Korean. He married love of his life in Korea. We went to Korea to attend the reception. In Nepal, parents are supposed to manage all the expenses and necessary arrangements for the wedding. But we didn't need to do anything for our son's wedding. So, I have adapted to Norwegian life and I feel blessed with everything I have in my life."*

The experiences of these informants' show that they were in process of integration: they believed that it is an ongoing process.

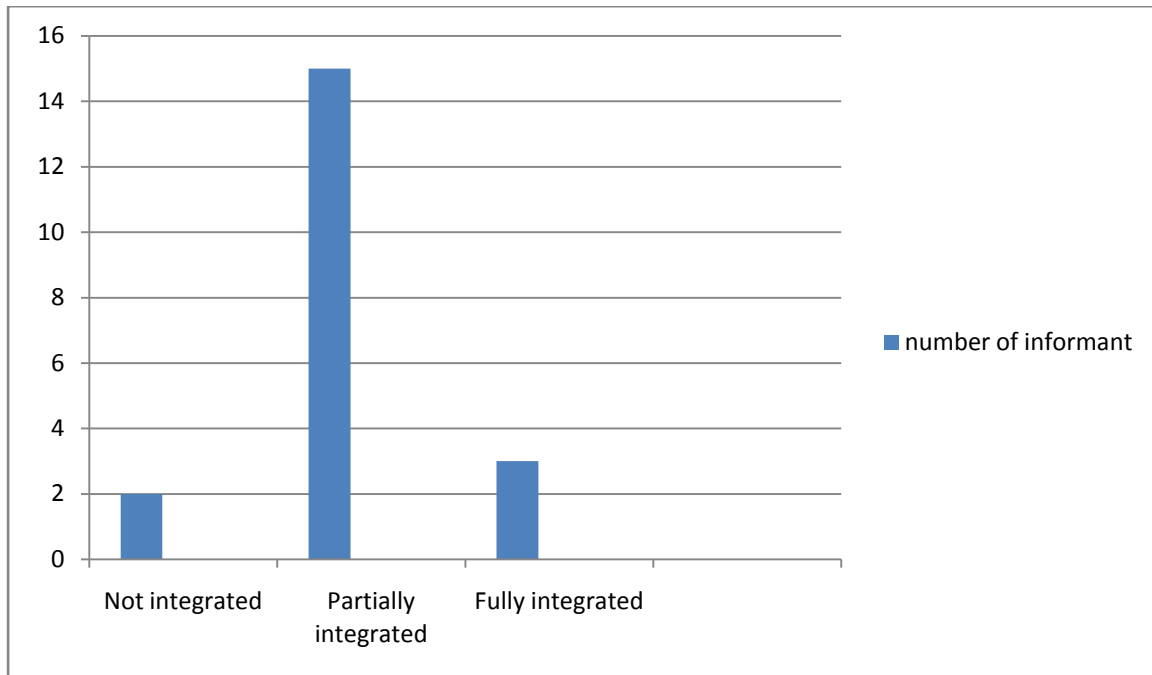


Fig 3: A graphical presentation of informants on the basis of their level of integration in Norwegian society (data from the survey)

The illustrated graph indicated the distribution of informants on the basis of integration in the society. The distribution was made on the basis of experience of informants. We have 2 informants who thought they are not integrated into the society at all. Informant no. 5 was new member in the society and she was unsure about the meaning of integration. Therefore, she was categorized in 'Not integrated' column. Likewise, informant no. 20 mentioned that she was busy with her own life and family and didn't have time to think about this stuff.

The column of 'partially integrated' held maximum number of informants. Among 20 informants, 15 informants thought that they are partially integrated. The reasons for partial integration were lack of Norwegian language skills, lack of recognition of their qualification and skills and their least participation in any social events.

The number of informants who thought they are 'fully integrated' is 3 in number. All of the informants who belong to this category were holding good position in their professional field and were good in Norwegian language. Out of 3, 2 informants were permanent residents of Norway and one is in the process to acquire permanent residency. All of them had spent more than 10 years in Norway.

### 5.3.3 How Have You Benefited From Integration Policies?

As discussed in the literature review, the Norwegian policies are designed to facilitate the immigrants in every possible way. The policies not only deal with free language class but also include awareness campaigns related to the Norwegian labor market and labor rights to discourage illegal labor practices.

Most of the informants were very happy with the health facilities in Norway. They all appreciate the Norwegian integration policies in relation to the health sector.

Informant no.1 appeared very satisfied with the education system and health facilities of Norway:-

*"I was very sick few months ago. I went to doctor. I think I did at least 3 tests and a minor operation. I was in hospital for 3 days. During my discharge, we asked for bill then they said the bill amount exceed 2000 so I am not suppose to pay even a single penny. I was really surprised. I remember my sister pays certain amount every month for health insurance in States and we have to pay huge amount for this kind of treatment back home. But it doesn't cost me anything for my treatment. The best thing is the health facilities are same for all the people of Norway. It doesn't offer different package for Norwegians and immigrants. It is same for all..."*

Informant no.12 had the same to say about integration policies:

*"I gave birth to my first child in Norway. I still remember all the care and timely visit of health assistant and doctors in my room. The meal was provided from hospital itself when I was admitted in hospital. They didn't treat me differently as an immigrant. I was given all the facilities like Norwegian pregnant women get. I am really impressed with the health services they offer for pregnant women. I would have paid huge amount of bills in Nepal and wouldn't have been offered great service like Norway. I didn't pay anything during my discharge. I think Norway has best integration policy in health sector for immigrants.*

*Apart from health services, my baby gets 970 Kroner every month as her expenses. "*

The provision of equally distributed health services among Norwegians and immigrants is indeed a very good practice. One of the informants additionally spoke about employment opportunities under the integration policy of Norway:-

Informant no.13 said:

*"If an immigrant is struggling to find job, he/she can go to NAV and tell his skills and qualifications. If you can speak Norwegian, they will find place to practice and it is always paid. So, Norwegian integration policies itself has formed authority to provide assistance to immigrants to find job. Apart from this, all the workers have equal access to certain benefits like sick leave, holiday leave, overtime pay, maternity leave and other benefits."*

Aside from health services and NAV benefits, Norway provides free education to all national and international students as well as immigrants. It is not necessary to have an outstanding academic background in order to obtain admission to a higher education courses. This is another benefit to living in Norway; the opportunity is provided to every individual to acquire education as per their interest. Some informants were also forthcoming about the benefits that refugees receive in Norway:

Informant no.6 said:

*"Norway accepts thousands of refugees every year. They offer them better life. They are not treated as refugees. They are offered free language class. They are provided place to stay, food allowances and travelling allowances. If they have children, the children are provided other benefits. I have seen many immigrants who came to Norway as refugees are having better life than they ever expected."*

According to some informants, integration policies are designed taking into account the Norwegian labor market as well. The policies aim to make every individual aware about the minimum wage, overtime payments and working conditions to discourage illegal labour practice. For instance, Informant no.7 discussed how Norwegian integration policies are contributing to assure labor rights of each immigrant:

*"One of the grocery store named lime was found to be paying the employees in cash and the payment was half of the minimum wages of Norway. Likewise, the store was caught to be employing illegal immigrants as well. The Norwegian government shut down the store permanently and the store was penalized with certain amount."*

Informant no. 1 who used to live in North before moving to Oslo shared her friend's experience who came to Norway as refugee:

*"I met few refugees in Alta .They were Bhutanese refugees. I had few conversations with them since they can speak Nepali as well. They were very happy with their new life. They said they are living their dreams. They are paid for everything. The government bought all the necessary goods for their apartment. People need to pay huge amount of money for the language class but we are paid back instead for going to language school. We are not only the one who is offered with all the facilities. I believe there are thousands of refugees in most of the cities of Norway and they all are enjoying the benefits."*

Most of the informants shared their experience about the role of integration in helping immigrants integrate into Norwegian society. Moreover, they counted themselves lucky to be in Norway, a country that has always offered each immigrant the possibility to live their life to the fullest.

From the findings of survey interviews: - it is clear that the integration policies of Norway support immigrants so that they can easily integrate into Norwegian society. Through the provision of equal opportunities and benefits for immigrants (as that of Norwegians), their social integration or inclusion is supported adequately.

#### **5.4 Integration of Female Nepalese Immigrants into the Norwegian Labor Market**

Informants were involved in different occupations to earn their livings and fulfill the basic needs of their family, with the majority involved in (unskilled) physical labor. Amongst, informants, very few were working in managerial positions or professional work.

Housekeeping and cleaning are the most common jobs among informants. Five informants work as housekeepers in hotels. Two work as cleaners in different offices and gyms. According to them, it is possible to make good money from these jobs and they involve less physical work.

One woman who completed her Bachelor and Masters in Norway is an IT engineer by profession. She achieved a lot in her younger years and felt optimistic about the Norwegian



labor market .She believed that selecting a profession based on the scope of the labor market increases an individual's chances of finding a professional job.

One informant who finished her dental nursing degree in London and had job as a dental Assistant was a clear example of integration into the Norwegian labor market.

An individual working as a manager in Norwegian retail chain store had several Norwegians who worked under her.

One of the informants was a restaurateur in Norway. She owned a Nepali Restaurant which served typical Nepali cuisine.

3 informants worked as health worker, whose profession in Nepal were nurses.

An informant worked as street ambassador for UNICEF where she spoke to many people in the street and asked for their donations to help the children of the world.

The informant, who was married to the Norwegian, is a housewife. She was previously working in a preschool.

One informant who used to work as a researcher in Nepal found a job as PhD research assistant in her university, straight after completion of her Masters.

Three informants were working as waitress in restaurant

#### **5.4.1 Types of Jobs Held By Informants**

Among the 20 informants, 11 informants were doing (unskilled) physical work. Despite their strong academic backgrounds and work experience, they were unable to find jobs in their related fields. They said that if they didn't choose to take physical jobs, they would have to have had stayed unemployed; there was no other option. The physical work involved positions as housekeepers, cleaners and waitresses. Even though, they were all overqualified for the work, they seemed happy with the pay, as it is reasonably high considering the average wage in Norway. They also believed that in order to obtain a better job such as a sale assistant or cashier, they needed to be fluent in Norwegian. Some of them were already taking the language classes and some had in mind to take them.

One informant, the permanent resident of Portugal, who didn't have a good educational background in Nepal believed that she was happy with her life in Norway. She thought she was not qualified for other kinds of jobs. Her aim was to generate substantial savings and start her own business in Portugal. The other one owned her own restaurant in Oslo. She had managed to open restaurant in Oslo from her savings from Portugal.

Some informants who were employed as health workers discussed the broad scope for health professionals in Norway. Norway invites considerable amount of nurses for immigration from other developing countries such as the Philippines and Thailand. Immigrants have a better opportunity to settle down permanently in Norway if they work in this field for a minimum of 5 years. This field has become one of the highly paid professions and has lots of potential into the future. Some informants said that they had friends who came to Norway on family reunion visas and started nursing school with the aim to settle down in Norway permanently. People who have passed their Bachelor's degree in nursing can obtain a job easily right after their graduation, and after 5 years can apply for permanent residency in Norway. Previous studies and this research have shown the nursing profession to be one of the professions for immigrants to easily integrate into Norwegian labour market. A clear example of this is a statement from informant no. 10 who was a Dental nurse by profession in Nepal. She came to Norway as a student to learn the language, paying a considerable amount of money in tuition fees at a language institute. Following from this though, she sent her academic documents to NOKUT (The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) for recognition and was granted recognition for her qualifications in Norway.

A trend is also evident that informants who had spent more than 10 years in Norway and were fluent in the language were working in very good positions. An informant who finished her Masters in IT was working as IT engineer, as is an informant who recently graduated received a PhD offer. This enabled her to change her visa status from student to skilled worker. Even though majority of the informants were earning their living through unskilled work, their struggle to get better job in Norwegian labour market was seen to be as an ongoing process. Although, very few informants integrated the labour market through holding desirable positions in different organizations, they became inspirations for others Nepalese immigrants. Furthermore, informants with medical background tend to had better job prosperities in Norwegian labour market.

### 5.4.2 Informants and a Basic Understanding of Norwegian Labour Market

One of the important aspects of Norwegian integration policies is to ensure adequate flow of information among immigrants, regarding central information such as minimum wages, allowances such as holiday, maternity, sick leave pays, tax return, working conditions and the provision of overtime payments. The informants were asked if they were aware of all the pay and benefits it was possible to receive from their work place, all of them were aware about the rules and regulations of Norwegian labour market and some had received different allowances like holiday and sick pay. Informant no. 11 received maternity pay after the birth of her first child.

However, informant no. 6 complained about not receiving sick pay when she was sick. When asked if it is because she was aware of it she stated she already knew about it but her manager did not pay out sick leave to her. She blamed herself in this case; as she mentioned that she could not speak of it to her manager as she was fearful of being fired if she spoke out against it.

Likewise, informant no. 7 also shared her incident related to sick leave.

*My doctor wrote sick leave for 15 days when I was suffering from severe stomach ache and digestion disorder. I work at nights. When I told my manager about it and asked for leave, she asked me to work for 2 nights until she finds someone to replace me during then sick leave. I agreed and said yes. But later on, one of the friends reminded me that if I will work even after the sick leave prescription from doctor, either my workplace need to pay me double or my sick leave will be void. So, I was completely unaware about this fact and just following my manager. At the same time, knowing the consequences, my manager made me to work. That was the worst experience I have ever had from my work place.*

Her experience shows that immigrants are provided adequate information about sick leave and other pay benefits but they still lack some useful information, such as what to so if workplaces do not comply with regulations. It is also evident that institutions are not entirely aware of workplace practices and the treatment of vulnerable foreign employees goes unnoticed.

### 5.4.3 Informants' Experience With Employment Struggles

When asked how difficult it is to find a job in Norway, I found that every informant had been through hardships and struggled to find their job. They said that first and foremost in order to find a job easily one needs a network. If one has a good network, it is less likely they will struggle to find a job. In the case that employers also look at references before hiring someone. These two factors of network and reference highly influence the Norwegian labour market.

Many of the informants waited a long time before finding a job. Even though their husbands had already lived in Norway for one year and had a good network they couldn't find job for many of them. Several tried many ways to find jobs such as distributing CVs to business in-person, applying online, asking their neighbors and friends if they knew of any vacancies: only few were successful

Informant no.8 said:

*"I stayed unemployed for 8 months of my arrival in Norway. I wouldn't have survived in the most expensive country like Norway if my husband hadn't supported me financially. I had to wait till summer to get job and in the beginning of June I got job in housekeeping. I am still not happy with my current job and looking for next one".*

*Informant no.3 shared her story:*

*She came as student alone in Norway. She was completely stranger .She came in Lillehammer, an hour and half way by train from Oslo. According to her "The place is less populated with no night life at all. The restaurant can be counted in fingers. So, I stayed unemployed for a year. I was running out of money. I moved to Oslo as I didn't have any other option left. I stayed in very sophisticated room sharing with 3 people. I thought to go home if the situation continues for 1 more month. Fortunately, I found work with very low pay in one restaurant. So, I was very frustrated during my first year in Norway".*

Some informants also mentioned some employers do not respond to CVs because "we are brown, they actually don't trust brown people". In finding a job in the beginning, every informant faced difficulty in their own way, some seemed unhappy with their jobs as they demanded physical work. These informants stated that in housekeeping for hotels for instance, they had to work like machines and had to run in order to finish everything in time. The overall experience showed that network play vital role to find a job. Therefore, a person

needs to be socially integrated within their Nepalese community in order to get job in Norwegian labor market.

#### 5.4.4 Informants' Response Towards Importance of Norwegian Language in The Labor Market

In Norway the ability to speak the language is a mandatory requirement to have job other than (unskilled) physical work. Most of the informants who were working as housekeepers said they took the job just because they couldn't speak Norwegian; they couldn't apply for other jobs such as waitress, sales assistant, cashier and others. There were only two options available, housekeeping or cleaning. As a result, most of the Nepalese women took housekeeping or a cleaning job as their first position.

An informant who was working as waitress said with deep breath: *"Thank god, I choosed to learn Norwegian language first before looking for job. I knew that I have to take physical work like housekeeping or cleaning if we don't have language. So, I compromised a bit to invest my time in learning the language first than looking for job. I was lucky enough to have my husband to help me financially while I was not taking any jobs. But I still remember it was pretty hard for him to pay all the bills and also pay fee for my language class."*

Informant no.10 said she took Norwegian language classes first and then obtained the job in her related field. She applied for several vacancies but was never shortlisted or called for interviews prior to learning the language. *"They all send me letter of rejection showing the language problem. And as soon as I mentioned about my language skills in my CV, it didn't take too long for me to get call for interview"*.

Informant no.1 who was certified as medical doctor from China applied for the same position in Norway. *"In order to work as doctor in Norway, I need to pass third level of language which is called Herpåberget. I also need to pass one medical exam in Norwegian. Due to this, my degree is not yet recognized and I am not able to work in my related field"*.

In fact, all informants thought they would have found a better job if they were fluent in Norwegian. They all had strong academic backgrounds from Nepal, in combination with work experience. On top of them being overqualified for their current jobs, they were not using their skills in physical jobs such as housekeeping, cleaning and waitressing. They believed

that the language would help them find a better job some day and assist them in their integration to the labor market in Norway.

#### 5.4.5 Informants' Experience with Discrimination in the Work place

Half of the informants had not experienced any sort of discrimination at their work place and the other half shared their bitter experiences of discrimination they had been through. Informants who hadn't experienced discrimination typically were employed in the position of manager, IT engineer and street ambassador. Only a few informants who worked in housekeeping said they haven't experienced any sort of discrimination so far. All others who worked as housekeepers, cleaners, waitress and health workers became frequent victims of discrimination.

Informant no. 1 who worked as a health worker said: *"when I take night shifts, they don't give me the full responsibility. They only asked me to do half because they don't trust in my credentials. They can blindly trust my eastern European colleague to handle instead of me. I felt they think that we are not smart enough to carry our work efficiently."*

Informant no. 6 states that her manager is from the Philippines. *"I work as extra help. I didn't get enough work. Her manager always gives first preference to Pilipino workers then to me. I always get less work. Even though I asked for more work, she doesn't respond to me at all"*.

Informant no. 10 feels that she is another victim of discrimination. *"During my training for dental assistant job, I was the only Asian and all the other participants were Norwegian. No one even gave me a glance in the 3 days training and Norwegians made their own circle. I felt like I was left all alone because of my brown skin"*.

Informant no. 13 also had a weird experience at her work place. In her restaurant, she works as waitress along with other 2 Swedish: *"it had happened to me many times. Guest asked me to call other Swedish waitress to take their orders. I speak Norwegian but they still prefer to give order to other white girls. I feel so discrimination and de -motivated"*.

The informants who felt discrimination at their workplace typically spoke of unequal distribution of work, unfriendly behaviors from manager and co-workers, and that they were treated as irresponsible and unskilled. They said that they frequently become de-motivated with such attitudes towards them at their work places.

Integration of immigrants in the labour market is imperative for social integration. It is clear that immigrants working in unskilled positions face difficulties of discrimination by their employers and co-workers; however immigrants working in higher positions do not experience any kind of discrimination in the workplace. This could be because informants who were in professional field are well aware about the labor rules and policies and can raise their voice against any sort of discrimination or wrong exercise whereas informants in labor work lacked adequate amount of information regarding labor rules and regulations resulting into being part of discrimination and illegal practices.

**5.4.6 Table 5: Influence of Norwegian language proficiency in Norwegian labour market**

| No of informants | Norwegian language proficiency | Current Occupation      |
|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 4                | Fluent                         | Health Workers          |
| 5                | Understand Basic words         | Housekeeping            |
| 1                | Basic Conversation             | PH D Researcher         |
| 3                | Basic conversation             | Waitress                |
| 1                | Fluent                         | Manager of retail store |
| 2                | Understand Basic words         | Cleaner                 |
| 1                | Basic Conversation             | Street Ambassador       |
| 1                | Fluent                         | Housewife               |
| 1                | Fluent                         | IT Engineer             |

|   |                    |              |
|---|--------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Basic Conversation | Restauranter |
|---|--------------------|--------------|

(data from the survey)

The above table indicates the influence of Norwegian language proficiency in Norwegian labor market. The table data is abstracted from the survey. According to table, there were three categories of proficiency namely fluent, basic conversation and understanding basic words. The occupation is vastly differentiated according to this proficiency level of language; basically the fluent immigrants hold stable and skilled job positions. On the other hand immigrants having basic conversational knowledge and understanding just basic words are holding various other job positions (housekeeping, waitress, cleaner, street ambassador). Nevertheless only one informant had managed to get skilled job without language proficiency. The reason behind it could be the nature of job is research assistant which doesn't require Norwegian language. The existing occupation of informants reflected that language play vital role to integrate into Norwegian labor market.

#### 5.4.7 Table 6: Job placement of informants with similar field of past work

| <b>Informant No.</b> | <b>PAST EXPERIENCE</b> | <b>CURRENT EXPERIENCE</b> |
|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1                    | Medical Doctor         | Health Worker             |
| 4                    | Dental Assistant       | Health Worker             |
| 10                   | Dental Nurse           | Dental Assistant          |
| 15                   | Staff Nurse            | Nurse                     |

(data from survey)

The table dictates all four informants with relevant background in medical field have acquired jobs in similar field in Norway as well. But even in these only nurses seem to be able to



remain in their respective position whereas doctors need to fulfill some extra criteria to be able to have their educational degree qualified and recognised by the NOKUT. Therefore, the informant who worked as medical doctor in Nepal hadn't managed to get the relevant job but according to her she had been trying to fulfill the requirement to work as doctor in Norway as well. The above analysis indicates that there is high scope of medical field in Norway especially in old care centre. None of the informants with various professional backgrounds had managed to get job of their related field in Norway.

## **5.5 Social Relations and Friendship**

### **5.5.1 Study of Friendship between Norwegian and Nepalese Women**

Since, this thesis studies the social integration of Nepalese women in Norwegian society, it is important to know the existing social relations and friendships between Norwegians and Nepalese.

When we asked if informants had Norwegian friends, 17 out of the 20 replied that they did and just 3 informants did not. Among those 3 informants, one was very new in the country as it is only been 3 months before the interview was conducted. She hoped to have Norwegian friends in near future. Another is a working woman who never had an opportunity to meet Norwegians as she was occupied with her family life. The last one said even though she had Norwegians as class mate she has never talked to them. Even when it came to group work, she has never formed a group with one of them.

Among the 17 informants who had Norwegian friends, were asked how often they go out with Norwegian friends. The response was quite surprising. Very few informants went out for a coffee or a drink with Norwegians. Most of them meet in the social gatherings like celebration of Nepalese festivals or workplace parties. Some informants had also invited Norwegian children for dinner while celebrating their son's or daughter's birthdays. They also invited parents of their son/daughter's friends to birthday parties. It appeared that the majority of informants were found to meet at Nepali festivals or Christmas parties.

### 5.5.2 Building up Social relationship is influenced by the profession

| No of informants | Present Occupation | Length of stay | Go out with Norwegian friends |
|------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 9                | IT Engineer        | 11 years       | Twice a month                 |
| 11               | Manager            | 12 years       | More than 5 times a month     |
| 14               | Street Ambassador  | 2 years        | Once a week                   |
| 17               | Housewife          | 20 years       | More than 5 times a month     |
| 19               | Housekeeper        | 2.5 years      | 3 times a week                |

*Table 7: Distribution of informants who went out with Norwegians on the basis of occupation (Data from the survey)*

The table above tries to show how social relationship of informants with Norwegian is determined by their profession. The informants were asked if they had Norwegian friend: majority replied with a positive response. But when asked if they go out with their Norwegian friends only 1 out of 4 informants said yes. The rest said they only go out during special occasions like Christmas parties, New Year parties etc. Out of 20 informants, only 5 informants had mentioned that they go out with Norwegians. The table shows that there exist relationship between building social relationship and their present profession. From this, we can conclude that informants working in skilled job had more Norwegian friends and they hang out with them. The informants whose present status is housewife was married to

Norwegian so she went out with her husband's friends and family several times in a month. In contrast, one of the informants who worked as housekeeper was found going out with Norwegians many times. She mentioned that she had Norwegian friends as flat mates with whom she hang out quite a lot. While talking about other informants, few of them mentioned that they only go out in office party and few of them had never been out with Norwegian friends.

### **5.5.3 Informants response towards nature and attitude of Norwegian**

Most of the informants described Norwegian men as calm and reserved by nature whereas Norwegian women were described loud and extroverted. Some says Norwegians were open minded and friendly, but sometimes they need some time to open up. Several informants described them as very friendly and helpful: "when you are in trouble in finding the direction or understanding something, you can easily ask Norwegian as they are so over welcoming and helpful".

Informant no. 14 said *"the nature and attitude of Norwegian is determined by their age as per my experience. I used to work as sales girl in street. During my work, I found that young Norwegian boys and girls are very friendly and open minded. The middle aged people are friendly but you need to take your own initiation to talk to them. The old people are pretty reserved and some are very racist."*

Likewise, Informant no. 1 and no. 4 thought Norwegians had a dual character. "They are fake sometimes; they pretend to be very nice by words but do bitching on your back."Both informants experienced this at their work place.

Most of the students however, thought that Norwegians are very positive about multiculturalism and show respect towards other's religion. From these interview excerpts, we found different viewpoints among informants in defining the attitudes and personalities of Norwegian people.

### **5.5.4 Role of Nepalese Students' Association in Integration Process**

There are several non-profit organizations formed by Nepalese students and Nepalese communities, in different parts of Norway. Usually, these organizations aim to help Nepalese people to integrate into Norwegian society and also make them feel like home in a foreign land. The organizations are named after the city: NESCO(Nepalese Students Community in

Oslo), NEPSA (Nepali Society in Ås), NRNA Norway (Non Resident Nepali Association in Norway) are the organizations which are actively involved in hosting different Nepalese festivals and Norwegian festivals in order to establish good relations between both cultures. Nepalese formed these associations in different cities of Norway and they play a vital role in integrating Nepalese people to their local Norwegian communities.

They celebrate different national festivals such as Dashain, Tihar, Holi, Teej and others. All the Nepalese as well as people with other nationalities can join and be part of the festivals. There is typically an entrance fee where three course meals were served. They believe that celebrating Nepalese festivals in Norway not only encourage Nepalese people to follow their culture and traditions no matter where they are but also provide opportunity to establish relationships with Norwegians through inviting them to be part of their happiness. Additionally, the organizations also celebrate Norwegian festivals together. Every year they organize a rally program on Norwegian Constitution Day (May 17). They ask all the participants to dress up in formal clothing and come up with Norwegian flags on their hands. The rally was held in front of King's Palace in National Theatre, Oslo. It is one of the best examples that demonstrate how a non-profit organization formed by Nepalese people is contributing towards integration.

#### **5.5.5 Informants' Response Towards Celebrating Different Nepali Festivals with Norwegians**

When the informants were asked about their response towards celebrating national festivals with Norwegians, the majority gave positive responses. In fact, all of them were glad to have Norwegian guests attending the Nepali events.

Informant no. 19 said *"we always have Norwegian guest in our festivals like Dashain and tihar. Few Norwegian women who are married to Nepalese men dressed up in Nepali costume in the event. I always feel good when they tried to dance like us. I personally invite my Norwegian friends in the event. I had celebrated several times this festival with my both Nepalese and Norwegian friends. I am glad that Nepalese organizations are always active in hosting the events."*

Informant no. 17 is married to a Norwegian man. She said *"My husband and I always attend the program organized by NRNA. I have my brothers and sister in law in Norway. We usually invite them for lunch or dinner in this festival. We also invite our son and daughter in law. So,*

*we celebrate this festival like Christmas every year. On top of that my husband really likes Nepali food."*

Informant 11 also feels happy to see Norwegians guest at the Nepali festival events. She herself attends the events with her Norwegian's friends. She believed that it is the best way to get to know Norwegians and build good relationship with them. It is another way to provide Norwegians with a way of learning Nepali culture and develop a sense of belongingness.

All of the informants had celebrated Nepalese festivals with Norwegians. They would like to see more involvement of Norwegians in their future events.

### **5.5.6 Informants' Response towards Celebrating Norwegian Festival**

The findings showed that both Norwegians and Nepalese are culturally integrated to some extent in celebrating the festivals. Nepalese people also showed the same enthusiasm in participating in Norwegian events. All of the informants noted that they celebrate the National Constitution Day of Norway following traditional way.

According to Informants no. 13, *"on May 17 all the Norwegians dressed up in their National dress, carried flags in their hand and walked around the street to celebrate the day of freedom. I also had dressed up in formal and walked with my friends around National Theatre last year."*

Informant no. 16 also celebrated this day with joy and happiness. *NEPSA always organize rally program on May 17. I joined the crowd of Nepalese as well as Norwegians people in the street. We also congratulated them. Usually, Norwegians people drank champagne, wine and beer in the street. We accompanied them in rally and made a toast.*

All other informants said that they had been part of this event every year and said it had become one of their own festivals. 'The Norwegian Constitution day' had been one of the important days to cherish and celebrate every year for Nepali people. Informants were pretty excited to express their feelings for celebrating this day. Although Nepalese women don't necessarily follow the tradition of celebrating the May 17 by drinking wine and dancing in the street, they tried to be in the crowd and congratulate Norwegians on their big day.

Informant numbers 17 and 11 mentioned about celebrating Christmas in traditional Norwegian style. Since, it had been a decade for both of them living in Norway and growing

up their children in Norway; they celebrated Christmas preparing Norwegian food, giving gifts, singing Norwegian Christmas songs together with the family.

The views of informants about celebrating Norwegian festivals differ from the time period spent in Norway. The experiences of informants showed that Nepalese women who had spent a long time in Norway had understand the Norwegian culture so well and were culturally integrated. Others were in the process of understanding and learning the cultural system. The student association had played a crucial role in cultural integration of Nepalese women in Norwegian society.

### **5.5.7 Norwegians responses to Nepali women immigrants--attending ceremonies etc.**

We mentioned earlier about how Nepalese women celebrated May 17 with joy and excitement. When we asked about the participation of Norwegians in various Nepalese festivals, I was glad to hear same kind of excitement from Norwegians as well. Nepalese students Association had been organizing various Nepalese festivals at least 3 times a year. The events were also open for interested International as well as Norwegian students. Some of the informants also mentioned about the participation of Norwegians in the festivals.

Informant no. 7 said *"I had few Norwegians flat mates who always expressed their deep interest to attend the Nepalese festivals. In fact, they really liked our food. They also liked our colorful dress. I still remembered that day when I had to ask my family to courier some Nepali dress for my Norwegian friends. I managed to get them of their size. I also had pictures of that event. They are twin sisters and are really good friend of mine. I had also taught them how to prepare Nepali meal. They had been part of our Nepalese festivals couple of times."*

Informant no. 9 also mentioned that she had invited couple of her Norwegian friends in Nepalese festivals. She said *"my boyfriend as well as my Norwegian friends joined Nepalese event most of the time. They surprised me every time with their outfits. They always made their efforts to put some ornaments and the scarf familiar to Nepali culture like put fancy ornaments in their head, rapped themselves in colourful shawl like sari. Since, we Nepalese ate our food with hand, they had also tried couple of times,* she laughs.

Informant no. 17 is married to Norwegian man. She also mentioned that she had always celebrated Nepali festivals with her husband. Her husband always marked the dates in the

festival calendar. She said" Even though my husband used to be away during the festival sometimes, he managed to attend at least one."

In this way, the experiences of the informants reflected that Norwegians had been part of Nepalese festivals many times. In fact, the efforts made by Norwegians to look like Nepalese for the events indicated that they were really fond of the festivals. In this way, we can come into conclusion that Norwegians had put effort to integrate culturally with Nepalese women to be part of Nepalese festivals.



Fig 4: Both Norwegians and Nepalese ladies were dressed up for Nepalese cultural events in one of the Nepalese cultural dress.



## **5.6 Immigration policies and integration**

Informants were asked if they were aware of the immigration policies of Norway, we found all of them were well aware about the different immigration policies. In fact, most of the Nepalese people with various visa statuses live in the same community or student housing. In



this process, they exchange information with each other of their different visa status. Most Nepalese immigrants change their visa status time and again during their life in Norway. As indicated in the findings, there was one informant who came to Norway on a tourist visa and then changed to a family reunion one upon marrying. Similarly, informants who came on family reunion visas changed their status to students when they were admitted to Norwegian universities or Nursing schools.

Norwegian Immigration polices play determining roles in people's integration these concepts interrelated. From the results, the impact of immigration policies on the integration of Nepalese women is that most informants were unsatisfied with the policies of Norway. In fact, they thought the regulations were unfair and disorganized. The irregularities of experiences highlighted in the following statements provide reason to support this claim.

Informant no.1 had problems with a delay in decision to grant a resident permit to her husband. She came together with her husband to Norway, where she received a residence card and personal number within 15 days of her arrival but it took 9 months for her husband to receive a resident permit under the 'spouse dependent' category. Due to this delay in the decision, her husband couldn't work for 9 months putting them under significant financial strain, surviving in one of the most expensive countries in the world.

Informant no 7 was unhappy with the provision of a 6 months' work seeking visa after the graduation from her Masters. She said there should be a minimum 1 -year work- seeking visa so that the student can get a job related to their studies and integrate into the labor market. In this way, she believed that there exist a direct link between immigration policies and integration.

Informant no. 4 stated there was no flow of information about the immigration policies and many people had only surface level information but lacked details. She said" *my husband came to Norway in visiting visa. Later on, he decided to stay with me. When I tried to consult with other Nepalese people about the procedure to change his visa status, everybody gave me wrong information because they themselves lack sufficient information about it. After writing several times to UDI, I came to know that one can change from tourist visa to other categories. I think it could be story of other immigrants.*"

Informant no. 7 also complained that UDI always delayed the renewal of her residence permit. She had renewed it 3 times and not once was she granted visa in time (before the visa expired).

Informant no. 8 had a similar problem. She complained " *I applied for family reunion visa when my husband was doing his masters. His friends' wife also applied at the same time. Something strange happened. His friend's wife got the decision within 3 months and I got after 8 months. So, UDI is really unprofessional in decision- making*".

An informant shared how immigration policies have affected her studies. Informant no.12 said " *I am supposed to go to Nepal for data collection for my thesis. My daughter is 19 months old. We have applied for residence permit for my daughter but UDI hasn't replied yet about the case. I can't leave my daughter in Norway since I still breast feed her. I can't take her with me since she has no travel document. I am really in stressful situation.*"

Among the various experience shared by informants, Informant no. 13 suffered significantly. She came to Norway on a family reunion status. Later on, she changed her status to student when she got admission to a master's degree, but UDI made certain financial inquiries and they took almost 10 months to give her a decision. She was really unsure whether they would send her back to Nepal. She said " *I was so stressed at that time. I was so excited to start my Masters but when UDI bothered me regarding my financial matters, I almost gave up. I was thinking I have to pack my bags and go home soon. But at the end of 10 months I was issued visa. I still remember the trauma that I have been through was really huge. I think this sort of action directly affect in psychological integration of an immigrant.*"

Informant no. 19 also had similar kind of experience regarding immigration policies. In her own words, " *Recently, UDI gave me a 6 month extension visa for my previous master degree when they were supposed to give me a visa extension for my new master. So, I had to file a complaint against UDI decision and wait for almost 3 months for the decision. Eventually, they granted me a visa for 1 year*".

Among the informants, very few informants didn't have any problem with Norwegian immigration policies, one informant shared good experience, stating " *I consider myself very lucky in this case. I have been hearing that UDI normally takes lot of time to make decisions in the applications or renewal but I have different story. My husband was granted visa within 15 days from the time of application received. It didn't even take a month to get the decisions.*

*So, all I can say is issue of visa or renewal decisions depend upon the individual case.UDI is not fair all the time".*

The different experiences shared by informants' highlights the irregular way in which visa permits are issued. The majority had become victims of delay in decision regarding their visa status and renewal process and wished to see UDI improving its organized and fair treatment for every case, specifically, timely processing periods.

### **5.6.1 How Nepalese mothers are bringing up their children in Norway**

In this survey, interviewees who were married to either Norwegians or Nepalese were targeted so as to provide an opportunity to compare their way of bringing up their children. Some informants gave birth to their children in Norway and some migrated with their children. Informants were asked whether they have received any kind of child benefits from the government, with all of them sharing that they had received benefits. Each of them said that an immigrant mother receives the same benefits as a Norwegian mother does in Norway; there is no such thing as a 'different package,' for immigrants -all informants thought this was one of the best policies.

One of the informant said," my sister paid large amount of bills during her delivery time and insurance but we are paid instead as children's benefits by the government".

Other informants said, "*apart from the various children's benefits, Norwegian government has provision of giving some amount for the mothers who haven't worked in Norway. They are provided 40000 Norwegian Kroner. I received 40000 since I haven't taken any job before birth of my child. I felt like rewarded for having baby and felt really touched. I can't dream of getting such wonderful benefits from Government in Nepal. I really appreciate the equal distribution of facilities to both Norwegian and immigrants' mother and children in Norway".*

Another question asked to informants was about what kind of food they prefer to prepare for their children. Apparently, the answers differed according to the time period the mothers had lived in Norway. The informant who was married to the Norwegian said what she used to do when she stayed home with her children 5 years ago. She said her children always preferred to eat Norwegian food and found Nepalese food bit spicy and oily. Her children used to prefer Nepali food only in special occasion. Likewise, Informant no.11 has a 10 -years- old son and she recalled those moments when she took her son to Nepal for holidays. His grandma used to

prepare rice and meat items but her son always looked for sausages and bread. She really has trouble to feed her son during their stay in Nepal.

In this way, we found some variations in the answers of the informants. The children who are born in Norway preferred Norwegian food but those children who migrated to Norway with their parents really don't prefer it; it varied on the basis of how they grew up.

I also asked the mothers whether they prefer their children to play with Norwegian or other nationals. All of them really didn't mind about the nationality of their children's friends. In fact, they wanted their children to be social and grow up in a multi cultural environment so that they can respect each religion and adjust in international environment.

It was really important for the mothers to know how good their children were at learning the language and seeing the integration of their children into Norwegian society. The children who were born in Norway are fluent in Norwegian but can hardly communicate in Nepali. Also the children who had just migrated were learning the language since they were taught in Norwegian at school. It is also found that only Informants no. 11 and 17 can speak Norwegian and rest of them don't know the language. On top of that, 2 mothers communicate with their children in both Norwegian and Nepali .At the same time, they are also encouraging their children to speak and understand Nepali.

Moreover, there was a question about the participation of their children's Norwegian friends at their children's birthday. Half of the informants shared their experience of celebrating their children's birthday every year with their children's Norwegian friend whereas half responded that most of the time they celebrate with their Nepalese friends. But they do distribute sweets or chocolates in the school at the very least.

In Norway, children are given sweets only on the weekends. The Norwegians do not like buying chocolates for their children all the time. Even if the children ask for the sweets, they will be asked to wait until the weekend. In Nepal, we don't have such hard and fast rules for buying sweets for the children. Parents usually buy sweets when their children will ask for them. So, adapting to this system also provided some reflections on how many Nepalese mothers and the children have integrated into the different practices. The experience of informants showed that 4 out of 6 followed the Norwegian culture of buying sweets for their children on weekends. One of the informants had an 18- months-old daughter so she said she had never had to think about it. One of the informants said she has to buy sweets regularly to

convince her son to go to school. She said saying 'NO' to her child is a tough job for her. However, she finds the idea of giving chocolates or candies only in weekend really good and she believes that such habit will encourage a child to live disciplined life.

The interviews also discussed mothers' preference in selection of partner for their children upon marital age. It is interesting to know that all of the informants believed in giving personal space to their children. The majority of the informants thought that martial relationship is the relationship of happiness and commitment and that if child thought that he/she is right person to spend his/her life with, they would have no objection at all. Mothers also didn't have any specific preference of having a son -in- law or daughter- in- law from Nepal, Norway or any other nationalities.

Among 6 mothers, Informants no. 17 shared her experience saying" *I didn't even know when my son decided to get marry. He just called me and his father and invited us in his marriage. Though I belong to Nepalese family, I never had feeling that my son must go for arrange marriage or marry with Nepalese girl*". Even though other informants' children hadn't reached to marriageable age but all of them want their children to make independent decision about life partner and their marriage.

Informant no. 11 was however a bit insecure about her son getting marring a Nepali girl because she thought her son is born and brought up in Norway:"His thinking and way of living might contradict with girl who is grown up in Nepal. She says "I am afraid if my son will have broken marriage".

## **5.7 Opportunities and Challenges**

The list of opportunities and challenges are discussed below are the shared experiences of the informants being as immigrants in Norway. Informants were asked to demonstrate their answers while mentioning about the opportunities as well as the challenges. All the answers they gave were interesting points of view; many had similar responses about the opportunities and challenges they had faced in Norway so far.

### **5.7.1 Opportunities**

a) **Increased income:** Three informants thought that Norway was one of the countries with the highest pay with even physical work paid relatively well. They thought it's possible to set

yourself up well in Nepal if he/she worked hard and saved money. They felt fortunate to be in Norway where the pay is high and they don't have to work hard to fulfill their basic needs and compromise their studies in order to survive in Norway.

b) **Good Health Facilities:** Five informants mentioned about good health facilities when we asked them what kind of opportunities they have enjoyed being as immigrants in Norway: they seemed very happy with the health facilities of Norway. Especially, women who gave birth to children in Norway believed that they have never been offered such good service and care free of charges in Nepal. They believed that receiving such health services in Nepal was actually impossible free of charge. Poor people often die in Nepal due to lack of health services.

c) **Free Education:** One of the greatest opportunities that Norway offers for international people is free education. Norway is desirable location for International students who have dream of studying abroad and acquiring an International degree. Even students from Canada, America and England come to Norway for Bachelors and Masters Degree because it is difficult to afford in their countries. Additionally, Norway has a quota scheme for students from developing country with excellent academic background that offer their living and travelling expenses to be covered. Nine informants mentioned about free education as an opportunity for immigrants in Norway.

d) **Women's safety:** Informants feel really secured and safe in Norway. Human rights in Norway are highly regarded. Informants felt safe walking at night, talking with people and furthermore, working at night. This is impossible back home. Society in Nepal has created boundaries for women and norms decide in advance what they are supposed to do and what not to do. Three informants believed that women have freedom to live their life their own way in Norway and they felt fortunate for this.

e) **Accessibility to Travel within Europe:** Almost all the informants found the accessibility of travelling within Europe (with their Norwegian residence card) as big opportunity. They were able to make their dream of exploring Europe possible being as temporary or permanent resident of Norway.

f) **Better life:** All of them believe that Norway offers a better quality life and a higher standard of living. Nepalese usually face the problem of frequent power cuts, which would be

a worst nightmare if this occurred in Norway. Informants believed that they have gotten an opportunity to live a better life with good infrastructure and safety.

Apart from the opportunities discussed above, informants also talked about the welfare system. They mentioned facilities to senior citizen and the physically challenged that receive equal rights and assistance so they can live a better life. Some informants also mentioned about the rights of the child. Parents are not allowed to give any kind of physical punishment to their children. If they are caught to be abusing their children, they can be either fined or punished. Equal rights in Norway provide every individual with the possibility of living their life in full.

### 5.7.2 Challenges

It is actually not easy to understand, adapt and adjust into new society when you are from a completely different background and culture. The culture and social practices differ from Nepalese society in many ways. Every immigrant encounters various problems and challenges during their integration into a new society. This section discuss about the challenges faced by informants in the process of understanding, adapting and adjusting with the new social system.

a) **Language Barrier:** The first and foremost challenge every immigrants faced in Norwegian society is the language barrier. Even though they don't have tough time to communicate with people while finding directions or any such information, since most of the people in Norway speak in English, the language barrier had affected them in many ways. Due to this, they had to take labor such as cleaning, housekeeping, and other physical works. Their previous qualification and experience doesn't help them to find job in their related field, because many jobs in Norway can't be performed without Norwegian language skills. Some informants also believed that one of the reasons for having few Norwegian friends is due to the language barrier.

b) **Extreme cold climate:** Extreme cold climate is another of the biggest challenges for immigrants to survive in Norway. Most of the immigrants are from eastern and central part of Nepal. None of the informants are from mountain region. The climate of the regions they are from is warm and tropical; in stark contrast to the climate in Norway. The winter lasts for almost 5-6 months with limited sunny days. Due to this, people generally suffer from vitamin D deficiency. The informants said in winter time, they hardly can go out due to extremely

cold weather and snow. The days are very short and they experience only 6 hours of day light. Most of the informants complained that they felt very sluggish, passive and slow at this time of year and some were afraid they may suffer from joint problem if they stay longer in Norway.

c) **Immigration policies:** Three informants thought that immigration policies are another challenge for immigrants. According to them, the immigrations policies are not effective in some cases and average time of processing application is biased. Informants' 8 and 12 suffered from a delay in dispatch of decisions regarding their applications. Likewise, informant no. 7 mentioned that according to the Norwegian immigration policies, there is provision for a 6- month's visa as job seeker for graduated students. She thought the given time period was not enough to find a relevant job in the limited Norwegian job market. She said they should be provided 1 year of visa to find job.

Apart from these issues, informants also mentioned about the high cost of living as Norway is one of the most expensive countries in the world. Although, education is free and there are no tuition fees at university, still one needs to work often to pay bills such as rent, transportation expenses and food. Four informants complained about the placements for graduates. Many universities abroad have provision for job placement or internships but such provisions are unavailable in Norway. On top of that, the job market is narrow and there is cut throat competition between the applicants. Informants seemed really disappointed with this. Cultural difference is also one of the challenges that every immigrant goes through in all parts of the world. In the initial phase, every individual goes through cultural differences. Informants also gave the impression that they have understood the fact of cultural difference and also thought they could adjust with it in the course of time.

Immigrants preferred to reside in Norway due to several opportunities available in this country; however they also face some challenges regarding integration in the host country, Norway. Improved quality of life and higher incomes are some of the attractive opportunities for immigrants. Free education and health facilities are ancillary to the opportunities for the immigrants in Norway; but cultural differences and the language barrier pose serious challenges that hinder their overall integration in the Norwegian society.



## **6. Discussions on findings**

The term 'social inclusion' refers to equal opportunities to all the people of the society. It is one of the important elements of the integration process. Ilene Hyman(2011) says social inclusion is the process that ensures equality of opportunities among every individual of the society, for their wellbeing. According to Hyman(2011), social inclusion can be in different dimensions like cultural, economic, religious and social. 'Social Inclusion' can be characterized in different forms of society but always focuses on the building of inclusive societies, and also aims for the integration of immigrants. Every nation includes immigrants, from different parts of the world, with different race, color, ethnicity and religion. These immigrants are supposed to live a life enjoying all the opportunities and rights similar to those of the nationals of the country, typically characterized as equal distribution of health facilities or education, for the overall development of an individual. The findings and experiences of the informants of the study, indicated that majority of the informants are provided equal health and education facilities, just like Norwegian nationals. The provision of free education is applicable to all immigrants unless they choose to study in a private college; they don't have to pay any tuition fees in public universities. Most of the informants counted themselves lucky to be in Norway as they avoided the burden of high tuition fees. In this way, provision of free education is considered an aspect of social inclusion.

Similarly, another aspect which informants highly appreciated is health facilities. The health service is not free in Norway like education; however it is not that expensive. If a person spends more than 2000 NOK on his/her treatments annually, then the additional health expenses are covered by the government (aside from dental treatments). This health policy is applicable to both Norwegians and immigrants. Based on the experience shared by the informants, few of them had already received this benefit. Some informants compared the health facilities of Norway with other developed countries like USA, UK. They also especially appreciated the Norwegian health policies, as they have seen their friends (who are immigrants) in other developed countries ,deprived from such facilities and having to pay huge lump sum amount in health insurance and furthermore for treatment in case of illness. Norway falls under 4th position out of 38 in integration policies in the health sector, according to the migrant integration policy index of 2015 (MIPEX, 2015).

Besides this, the informants who had given birth to their children in Norway shared their experience that they had received free health services during their delivery and follow-up

treatments. They found themselves fortunate enough to receive special care from health workers, like Norwegian nationals. Most of the informants who gave birth to their children in Norway received various monetary benefits for the children. All of those benefits discussed above provide evidence that Norway has been able to lead the world in providing equal opportunities to all individuals of a society. It also portrays that integration policy of Norway is equally dedicated to build inclusive society by ensuring equal health facilities to all.

Employment equality is another dimension of social inclusion (Andreas Hepp, 2009). This dimension is considered as one of the most important dimensions of social inclusion from the following studies. One of the studies conducted in Canada showed that fair treatment in labor market among immigrants was one of the biggest challenges (Andreas Hepp, 2009). The findings also showed that immigrants faced difficulties in integrating into the Canadian labor market and some decided to leave the country. The main challenges were the language barrier and limited job opportunities. According to the study, many immigrants lacked proficiency in English, resulting in limited job opportunities. The survey also showed that immigrants have no other choice than to leave the country due to lack of recognition of their previous education levels and work experiences (Andreas Hepp, 2009). Due to this; the Canadian government introduced the criteria of an English language test score as eligibility for entry into the country. According to the survey of this paper, the majority of informants were involved in housekeeping and cleaning job. Out of 20 informants, 8 informants were taking housekeeping and cleaning jobs, equivalent to 40% of the total informants. The study of Somali immigrants in Norway found similar statistics in the Norwegian labor market. The study showed 27.3% of total informants were involved in cleaning jobs, which was the highest in comparison to other professions in Norway (Ali, 2010). Furthermore; most of the informants had good qualifications, like the Nepalese immigrants involved in these professions. The existing scenario can be analyzed in two different ways. The participation of Somali and Nepalese women in cleaning jobs was greater than other occupations because this type of job didn't require Norwegian language skills. Another reason was despite of prior work experience and education levels, the job itself demand for Norwegian language as the work can't be done without the language. For instance, the dialog box and script of computer is in Norwegian, the correspondence has to be made in Norwegian. Therefore, Norwegian language skill is mandatory in order to be eligible for the professional job in Norway.

Nevertheless, the case of the Norwegian labor market doesn't contradict the Canadian labor market study, based on the experiences of informants from this research. The majority of informants who are not capable of communicating well in Norwegian are taking labor work. Only the informants who have passed at least level 2 of the Norwegian language tests (which are considered a reasonably good level) have managed to find good jobs. Most of the informants complained about the small job market of Norway. They also seemed frustrated due to lack of recognition of their skills and work experiences acquired from Nepal. The informants were not willing to study the language, as they don't intend to stay long in Norway. Opinions of informants varied on the basis of their current job, duration of stay and their current visa status. Tamrat (2010) made an appeal to the concerned authorities of Norway to address the increasing dissatisfaction of immigrants towards labor and suggested some sort of training or higher level of education to assist immigrants in finding better jobs than labor work. This approach would have significant impacts.

Language barriers not only cause limited employment opportunities, but also build walls in developing social relationships. Most of the informants had very few Norwegian friends and the reason behind it is they can't open up just because they are not good at the language. At the same time, the informants who mentioned they were only partially integrated into the society just because they were not good at Norwegian, found themselves isolated while sitting with bunch of Norwegian friends. An analysis of this research showed that informants who can communicate well in the language went out quite often with their Norwegian friends.

Social relations of immigrants with members of the host country are critical for social inclusion. A study conducted by Yvonne Riano (2006) indicated that social inclusion or exclusion is a group phenomenon rather than individual phenomenon, and for social inclusion of immigrants a social relationship with the Norwegians is necessary. Further, Ogilvie & Eggleton (2013) also point out that for successful social inclusion, immigrants should possess the appropriate combination of attributes that facilitate their becoming full members in the community in which they settle. Regarding social relations and friendship of Nepalese immigrant women with Norwegians, this point is essential for social integration. It was found from interviews that Norwegians accompanied most of the Nepalese women to festivals, helping to culturally integrate as they both celebrated each other's festivals. The findings of the present study also revealed that social relationships and friendship of immigrants with Norwegians amounted to a significant dimension of social inclusion. The experience shared

by informants indicates that they had been culturally integrated into Norwegian society to some extent, as they had made efforts to attend social functions as well as celebrating Nepalese festivals with Norwegian friends. The informants were also found celebrating their children's birthdays with their Norwegian friends. None of the informants mentioned that their children had been discriminated against at school, in the park or playground. However, Ali (2010) mentioned in his particular study that children of the informants used to complain about being bullied and discriminated against at school. In this way, the findings of this paper contradict the study results of Somali immigrants in some extent (Ali, 2010). In this case, we can also say that Somalis are treated differently than Nepalese.

Despite awareness about immigration policies in Norway, frequent changes in immigration policies perplex Nepalese. A literature review on integration policies of Norway reveals that the Norwegian policies are designed to facilitate the immigrants' lives in every possible way. The policies not only deal with free language classes, but also include awareness campaigns related to the Norwegian labour market and labour rights to discourage illegal labour practices. It is in-line with the findings of Ali (2010) as it perceived learning the Norwegian language a positive step towards social integration. According to Ogilvie & Eggleton (2013), becoming full members of the communities and finding an appropriate place in the labor market pose real challenges for immigrants, and the findings of this study also reveal that Nepalese immigrants face difficulties in becoming full members of the society. Some of the informants in the present study were unaware of the concept of integration, as they had never heard of it; they subsequently believed they were not integrated into Norwegian society. Most of the informants who believed they were only partially integrated pointed out that the language barrier was an obstacle for them to establish good relations with Norwegians, adapt into the labor market, and making the country feel like home. Only three informants out of 20 believed that they were integrated into Norwegian society, and they had spent a long period in Norway and adapted to the norms and values of the society. Hence, the findings of the present study are analogous to the findings of previous research work on social inclusion conducted by Ogilvie & Eggleton (2013).

From data collected through interviews with Nepalese immigrant women in Norway, and through review of relevant, it is clear that Nepalese women are striving to integrate into Norwegian society and the integration policies are also effective and supportive for social integration of immigrants into the society. Immigrants in Norway are from diverse cultural

and religious backgrounds and have a rich knowledge of a wide range of cultures and languages that are a valuable resource for society. From this, schools and kindergartens in Norway are adapted to the diversity of children and aimed at integration and inclusion of children and youths from immigrant backgrounds. Norwegian integration policies are focused on utilization of human resources and have the provision for assurance of its right utilization in the labor market. But despite efforts of the government to provide a favorable environment for immigrants' integration into Norwegian society, they still face challenges regarding social integration. Nepalese women faced a variety of tribulations and negative experiences while trying to integrate into Norwegian society, largely due to language barriers and cultural differences. Despite difficulties faced by Nepalese immigrant women while integrating or attempting to integrate into Norwegian society, they also acquired benefits provided from the Norwegian government.

Nepalese immigrant women were able to make friends with Norwegians and adapted to the culture and values of the society. It is also clear from the review of literature and informant interviews that it is essential for Nepalese women to learn the language to better integrate and communicate, and most importantly obtain better jobs in the labor market. In summary it can be concluded that social integration of Nepalese women into Norwegian society has provided them with opportunities but that they also have encountered challenges.

Based on the experience of informants, an immigration policy of Norway was found pretty disorganized. The processing time, fair treatment and systematic evaluation of documents were dependent upon the immigrant officer and it was found that every immigrant officer have different ways of handling the applications of immigrants. This resulted into different decisions were made in same immigrant case. For instance, the processing time varied from one applicant to another in family reunion visa. One of the informants was provided decision within 3 months whereas the other one received after 8 months. They both applied at the same time. Therefore, integration is a political issue in Norway which demands for active participation of immigration department, policy makers and government itself to create pleasant environment for immigrants to live.

## 7. Conclusion

The social integration process of Nepalese immigrant women in Norwegian society was understood in this study through review of the literature and interview of the participants; 20 Nepalese women living currently in Norway. The purpose of the study was to assess the integration policy of Norway and its effect on the daily lives of Nepalese women residing in the country in order to find out how the integration policy shaped individual experiences of women. The views and opinions of Nepalese women regarding the forms of their social and cultural integration within Norwegian society were also obtained from the research. As a result of the findings of the study, we can draw following conclusions:

It was found that most of the Nepalese women residing in Norway perceived integration as adjustment and building up of social relation in the society they live. It shows that their level of understanding 'integration' is limited. Based on the views and experiences of Nepalese women in Norway, it can be concluded that they are enjoying the benefits of integration policies administered by the Norwegian government that attempts to assist the immigrants in every possible ways. Regarding the integration policies of Norway for the immigrants, it is clear that several benefits are afforded to the immigrants for their integration. Norwegian integration policies regarding the health sector are admirable. Apart from health services the immigrants also enjoyed social welfare (NAV) benefits. The education system in Norway is also admirable as it offers free education to all, Norwegian and international individuals. It was also found that Norwegian integration policies address the integration of immigrants in the labor market. It is clear from the study that the integration policies of Norway helps the immigrants to integrate into the society and offers benefits to support them in living life to the full. However, minimal information about some policy like: free Norwegian language classes hinder and create an obstacle for the immigrant to integrate into the society. Therefore, we can conclude that Norwegian integration policy has failed to address certain issues like free Norwegian language class for immigrants that could better helped them to integrate into cultural and labor integration.

Regarding integration of Nepalese women in Norwegian labor market, most of them were involved in unskilled labor despite of their high qualifications and work experience; however Nepalese women with a good command of the Norwegian language are in higher positions in different organizations. The study also showed that there is good scope of nursing field in Norwegian labor market since all of the informants from medical background had managed to

find similar job in Norway. In other hand, Norwegian government aimed at providing adequate information about the labor market regarding the minimum wage, allowances, working conditions and payment systems through its integration policies so that immigrants receive the same opportunities as Norwegians in the labor market. It was found the immigrants were well aware about the rules and regulations of Norwegian labor market and enjoyed these benefits. Despite of the awareness and knowledge about the work benefits and allowances, the immigrants still lack adequate information about receiving it and it was also found that employers were reluctant to provide benefits and allowances to the immigrant employees readily.

Most of the immigrants who were involved in the unskilled labor market were de-motivated due to lack of opportunities and narrow job market. Based on the opinions and views of the informants in the research, it can be concluded that equal opportunities in the labor market is requisite for the social integration of the immigrants in the Norwegian society. Though the integration policies of Norway preach about equal opportunities, equity doesn't seem to be followed in practice at the workplace especially in unskilled labor market. For instance, informants mentioned about their experiences like unequal distribution of work and treated as less trustworthy. Furthermore, proficiency in Norwegian language is also another requisite for social integration in the Norwegian labor market and society.

Besides the integration of immigrants in the labor market, the relationship of the immigrants with the Norwegians in the society was also revealed to gain insight on the social integration of Nepalese women in the Norwegian society. In order to know about the social integration, it is necessary to know existing relations and friendship between Norwegians and Nepalese residing in Norway. . It was found that Nepalese associate with the Norwegians mostly in social gatherings and during celebration of Nepali festivals. Some of the Nepalese invited Norwegians to the dinners and lunch as well to keep good relations with them for social integration. Based on views and opinions of the informants in the study, it was found that Norwegians were very positive about multiculturalism and respected other's religion. The study also revealed that the attitudes and nature of Norwegians were different as some of them found Norwegians of dual character and some found them as friendly people. It is pretty obvious to generalize the attitude of Norwegians as every people are different. The immigrants residing in Norway since long period were integrated into Norwegian culture and others were either partially integrated or in the process of integration; and it can be concluded

that Norwegians and Nepalese were culturally integrated in some extent regarding celebration of Norwegian festivals.

Likewise, immigrants from Islam countries are considered as threat due to increasing uncertainties and terrorist attack in different parts of the world. The study of Tamrat (2010) also indicated that attitudes of Norwegian towards Ethiopian women were pretty unusual. He also mentioned that the Norwegian society hasn't accepted Ethiopian women because of color and the impression they held being part of poor country. But such kinds of opinions were not received in this finding. None of the informants felt that they were unacceptable or viewed as threat by Norwegians.

Immigration policies play crucial role in integration of immigrants into the society of the host country and it was found that the immigrants in Norway were aware about the immigration policies of the country. The immigrants faced difficulties regarding their visa issues and renewal process and desired for better organization of UDI to alleviate their sufferings.

This study revealed that equal benefits for the mothers' upbringing their babies in Norway either as immigrant or ethnic Norwegians is the best integration policy of Norway and also indicates the support of Norwegian government towards the immigrants. The immigrants preferred to grow their children in the multi-cultural environment and to adapt with the society of the host country. It was also found that the children born to immigrants in Norway hardly spoke the language of their country of origin but were fluent in Norwegian language. . Immigrant mothers had no objections regarding friendship of their children with the Norwegian or people of other culture and they desired their children could adapt with the society of the host country. So, this study revealed that that integration of the children born to immigrants in Norway is faster than their parents as they become a member of the society as soon as they born and get adapted to it soon.

The findings also showed that Nepalese women had brought some changes on themselves in some extent: - abiding rules and regulations stated by the community, following proper systematic procedure for various tasks, taking into account the thoughts and wishes of their children in various life decisions and not enforcing own ideas upon the children, giving chocolates to children only in weekend, learning Norwegian language to better interact with the natives and get more opportunities in the Labor market. However, the findings of this paper are more relevant to the concept of social exclusion. The studied population had shared



that they had been part of discrimination at workplace. It shows that they are still not accepted the way they are at their workplace. Moreover, the requirement of Norwegian language skills in most of the job is mandatory which creates an obstacle for the immigrant without prior language knowledge. However, all jobs in technical companies (IT, ENGINEERING ), multinational companies don't really require the proficiency of language. Similarly, the experience of the informants also indicated that the immigrants are treated differently. The immigration policies of Norway seem to be unfavorable and disorganized. According to experience of informants, master graduated student are provided only 6 months visa as job seeking visa. According to them, it is very little time to search and apply for the job of their related field. Such provision also indicated that Norwegian immigration is not very favorable to the immigrants.

In conclusion, social integration of Nepalese women in Norwegian society is surrounded by several challenges due to language barriers and cultural differences. Further, integration policies of Norway is supportive to integrate the immigrants in the Norwegian society as it bestows the immigrants with several benefits such as health facilities, free education, child benefits, and benefits for senior citizens. On the other hand, immigrants themselves need to take initiation to learn the language and to understand the social environment in order to integrate in the society. As we mentioned earlier, integration is two way process which demand for equal participation of both immigrants and the integration policy maker of host country to make integration process successful. Social integration of the immigrants in the Norwegian society is essential for their adaptation and adjustment in the society that supports their living in Norway and it is possible only through proper and fair execution of integration policies by the Norwegian government. At the same time, immigrants also should perform their duties and responsibilities towards the society. For instance, strict follow of rules and regulations of host country, respect towards the facilities and benefits provided by the government, develop the feeling like home country; carry their cultural values along with showing equal respect to the culture and practices of host country. For social integration, immigrants require grasping the opportunities to overcome the challenges that come in the way of the integration process and the support and cooperation of Norwegian government and Norwegians are imperative to accomplish the integration process.

### **7.1 Promotion of Social Inclusion of Immigrants in Norwegian Society**

### **1st step, Visibility:**

The term visibility means to be seen or noticed (DESA, 2009). This is the first initial step to promote social inclusion. In order to be part of the society, an individual needs to be recognized or noticed. This concept is applicable in the context of integration of immigrants in the society. In order to adjust to the society and receive equal opportunities like other society members, he/she needs to prove his/her presence in the society. Nepalese women need to be visible in the Norwegian society; this can be through different basic social interactions with neighbors, the workplace, schools, and other social places. They also need to raise their voice if they encounter any sort of discrimination or injustice.

### **2nd Step, Consideration:**

In this context, the term consideration means steps of promotion of social inclusion, referring to initiation taken by policymakers to ensure that the needs of every individual are recognized and fulfilled. The experience of informants showed that the integration policies of Norway are dedicated to the well being of immigrants, but respondents felt some gaps in the labor integration policies remained. The integration policies ensure that every immigrant should be aware of minimum working hours, sick leave, working conditions, provision of overtime and other policies. Most of the informants mentioned they didn't have enough information about the policies even though they were active in labor market. Policy makers therefore need to develop various steps to reach out to immigrants and ensure proper flow of information, to avoid illegal labor practices.

### **3rd Step, Access to Social Interactions:**

The third step to promote social inclusion refers to access to social interaction. For instance, in the universities, many international students are invited to various Norwegian festivals or different events of the universities. The organizers or event managers encouraged maximum participation of international students in such events. This is a clear example of the 'access to social integration' strategy. Similar interaction programs should be conducted nationally and locally to minimize the gap between immigrants and Norwegians. At the same time, it also helps to develop a sense of belongingness among immigrants.

### **4th step, Rights:**

Informants mentioned that they had been provided equal rights to education, health, transportation, housing, etc. The informants were granted the right to work depending upon their visa status and education. Also, the informants enjoyed equal rights in relation to transportation and housing, just as Norwegians. They can be granted loans to buy houses at reasonable interest rates, just like Norwegians. The only thing that needs to be improved is increasing the participation of immigrants in different social and cultural events in the society.

**5th step, Resource to fully participate in the society:**

The fifth and last step of promotion of social inclusion emphasizes the access to resources to fully participate in the society. According to (DESA, 2009) the resources could be 'financial resource, respect, recognition, time and physical conditions' (DESA, 2009, s. 15). While reviewing the experiences of informants, there was no initiation from the community or society to encourage immigrants' participation in social events. In fact, most of the informants were found to be celebrating Norwegian national day with their own interest. The immigrants who are already active in social events might need some more platforms to become completely integrated in the Norwegian society.

(DESA, 2009) Says social integration is a dynamic process. All members of society have something to contribute, and accordingly they all deserve equal rights and resources to fulfill their personal and societal goals. The different steps in social inclusion promotion briefly summarized above will help to significantly reduce social exclusion from its foundation, and provide favorable environment for immigrants to feel at home in Norway.

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Table 8. Overview of Informants' details

| S. No. | Age | Place  | Education level in Nepal | Education in Norway | Occupation in Nepal     | Present Occupation          | Past immigration Status | Present immigration status | Civil Status  | No of children | Norwegian language proficiency     | language learning center                               | Time of Stay(yrs) |
|--------|-----|--------|--------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--|-------------------|
| 1      | 30  | Ås     | MBBS(China)              | Double Masters      | Medical Doctor          | Health worker               | Student                 | Student                    | Married       |                | passed 2nd level                   | private language center                                | 5                 |
| 2      | 28  | Tromsø | Masters                  | Masters             | Researcher              | PhD researcher              | Student                 | Skilled                    | Married       |                | passed 2nd level                   | private language center                                | 4.3               |
| 3      | 28  | Oslo   | Masters                  | Masters             | Quality Controller      | Housekeeper                 | Student                 | Student                    | Married       |                | basic words                        |  | 2                 |
| 4      | 25  | Oslo   | Diploma                  | Bachelor in nursing | Dental Assistant        | Health worker               | Student                 | Student                    | Married       |                | passed 2nd level                   | 1 year language course as part of degree in university | 3                 |
| 5      | 22  | Oslo   | Bachelor BBS             | Bachelor in nursing | Receptionist            | Waitress                    | Student                 | Student                    | single        |                | No                                 |  | 3 months          |
| 6      | 22  | Ås     | Bachelor BSc             | Bachelor            | Brand Promoter          | Housekeeper                 | Student                 | Student                    | Married       |                | basic words                        | university language course                             | 2                 |
| 7      | 26  | Ås     | Bachelor BBA             | Bachelor            | Marketing               | Housekeeper                 | Student                 | Student                    | single        |                | basic words                        |  | 3                 |
| 8      | 30  | Ås     | Bachelor                 |                     | News Reader             | Housekeeper                 | Family reunion          | Family reunion             | Married       |                | basic words                        |  | 1                 |
| 9      | 24  | Oslo   | High School              | Bachelor+masters    | No prior experience     | IT Engineer                 | Family reunion+student  | Skilled                    | single        |                | fluent in writing+speaking+reading | from school  | 11                |
| 10     | 26  | Oslo   | Dental Nurse             |                     | Dental Nurse            | Dental Assistant            | Student                 | Skilled                    | Married       |                | enrolled in second level           | private language center                                | 2                 |
| 11     | 33  | Ski    | High School              |                     | No prior experience     | Manager in Nille            | Tourist                 | permanent residence        | single mother | 1              | fluent in writing+speaking+reading | from school  | 12                |
| 12     | 30  | Oslo   | Masters                  | Masters             | Research Assistant      | Cleaning                    | Student                 | Student                    | Married       | 1              | basic words                        |  | 2.5               |
| 13     | 27  | Oslo   | Bachelor                 | Masters             | Teacher                 | Waitress                    | Family reunion          | Student                    | Married       |                | passed 1st level                   | university language course                             | 2                 |
| 14     | 26  | Ås     | BBA                      | Masters             | Radio Jockey            | Street Ambassador in UNICEF | Student                 | Student                    | single        |                | basic words                        |  | 2.5               |
| 15     | 33  | Oslo   | Bachelor in Nursing      | Bachelor in nursing | Staff Nurse             | Nurse                       | Family reunion          | Family reunion             | Married       | 1              | passed 2nd level                   | private center   | 4                 |
| 16     | 32  | Oslo   | Masters                  | Masters             | Environmentalist        | Waitress                    | Student                 | Student                    | Married       | 1              | basic words                        |  | 2                 |
| 17     | 54  | Ski    | High School              |                     | Receptionist            | Housewife                   | Family reunion          | permanent residence        | Married       | 3              | fluent in writing+speaking+reading | private language center                                | 31                |
| 18     | 37  | Oslo   | Bachelor                 |                     | Hotel Assistant Manager | Restauranter                | Portugese               | labour immigrant           | Married       | 1              | basic words                        |  | 2                 |
| 19     | 25  | Tromsø | Bachelor                 | Masters             | Event manager           | Housekeeper                 | student                 | student                    | Married       |                | passed 1st level                   | university language course                             | 2.5               |
| 20     | 30  | Oslo   | High School              |                     | Sales girl              | Cleaning                    | Portugese               | labour immigrant           | Married       |                | basic words                        |  | 4                 |



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