



Integration Challenges for Bhutanese Refugees in Norway via Third Country Resettlement

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DECLARATION

I, Mahesh Bhattarai, 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:

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My grateful thanks go to my supervisor Prof. Mohamed Husein Gaas, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB), for valuable suggestions, feedback, critical comments and supportive guidance. I am also thankful to Prof. Bishal Sitaula, PhD and Associate Prof. Stig Jarle Hansen for their support and guidance during thesis subject and content search.

My special thanks go to Department of International Environment and Development Studies (Noragric), NMBU for travel and other supports to carry out this study. I would like to thank Mrs. Anima Basnet, Mr. Mahendra Basnet, Mr. Dhan Bahadur Karki, Mr. Devi Charan Chamlagain and their families along with the whole Bhutanese Community in Alta for their support and cooperation during my field visit.

I am thankful to Mr. Raju Rimal for continuous help, without his valuable time, this thesis would not have come in this form. Also I am indebted to my friends Vishwa Raj Adhikari, Siddhartha Dhungana, Bharat Adhikari, Ganesh Karki, and Saroj Koirala for their encouragement. Similarly I acknowledge the help and support of my spouse Karuna who let me engaged in study without any work burden and interruption.

Finally, my respect goes to my parents, my sisters, and my daughter who provided their love, motivation and guidance.

Mahesh Bhattarai, Ås, 2014

ABSTRACT

This thesis studies the integration challenges of resettled Bhutanese Refugees in Alta, Norway. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used. The study finds that though the relatively successfulness of integration of Bhutanese refugees in Norway, the process is so rapid that there is a concern among them of it leading to assimilation which may lead to the loss of their ethnic identity. So it is recommended that a corrective self assessment is needed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
<i>Statement of Problem</i>	5
<i>Objectives</i>	6
<i>Research Questions</i>	6
<i>Rationale of the Study</i>	7
<i>Structure of the Thesis</i>	7
Methodology	9
<i>Context</i>	9
<i>Mixed Method</i>	9
<i>Site Selection</i>	10
<i>Sample and Sampling Technique</i>	10
<i>Data Collection</i>	11
<i>Data Collection Method</i>	11
<i>Data Analysis</i>	11
<i>Research Ethics</i>	12
<i>Limitations</i>	12
<i>Reliability and Validity</i>	13
Literature Review	15
Theoretical Framework	19
<i>Migration Theories</i>	19
<i>Acculturation</i>	22
<i>Identity Theories</i>	25
Results, analysis and discussions	30
<i>Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal</i>	30
<i>Resettlement in Norway</i>	31
<i>Glimpse of Bhutanese Refugees</i>	31
Language	31
Religion	31
Cultural Practices	32
<i>Resettlement and Integration</i>	32
Employment	32
Language	33
Social contact	36
Social Status	37
Access to Health and Social Facilities	38
Access to Political Rights	38
Discussions and Observations	38
Resettlement and Identity	40
Discussions and Observations	44
Conclusion	47
References	49
Appendix	53

LIST OF FIGURE

Figure 1 Overview of Respondents	33
Figure 3 What Bhutanese Refugees Speak?	34
Figure 4 Parents desired children to speak	35
Figure 5 Respondents having Norwegian Friends	36
Figure 6 Respondents with Norwegian Friends and invitation in parties from them	36
Figure 7 What the respondents think about their identity	41
Figure 8 Responds want for their children to be known	42

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Bhutanese refugees were displaced from Bhutan during 1990s to Nepal via Indian route. Since then different attempts of either repatriating them or integrating them into Nepalese society were not successful (Lænkholm, 2007). As a result of this, UNHCR the sole commissioner of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal, opted for third country resettlement as it was the only a remaining option. Following this, about 90 thousands out of 110 thousand Bhutanese refugees were resettled into different countries across the world. Among these, about 550 Bhutanese refugees have been resettled in Norway¹. This study would focus that how is the integration process of Bhutanese refugees is going on in Norway, and have the problems for the refugees been solved or not.

The third country resettlement was not the choice of Bhutanese refugees, but a compulsion. The government of Bhutan was not ready to take them back with full rights and all in numbers; the government of Nepal was not ready to integrate them in the Nepalese societies either (Rizal, 2004). And it was not possible for them to remain as a refugee in the refugee camps for long. In such critical condition, third country resettlement was only an escape. But it was not easy end for them for many reasons. First, they have been settled in different parts of the world, to say straightly, in almost all continents. In this process, even some families are split. The sole agency for third country resettlement International Organization for Migration (IOM) claims that it tried with all aspects to maintain the coherence and solidarity of the family, but it was not always correct because of the different opinions of the older and younger generation (Dhungana, 2010). The time of application for third country resettlement, marital status, age, the target country were some reasons that the families were split during distribution to different countries.

¹Retrieved from
<http://www.thehimalayantimes.com/fullNews.php?headline=+100%E2%80%9A000+milestone+for+Bhutanese+refugee+resettlement&NewsID=374165&a=3>

Similarly, the second reason is the difference in social, cultural, linguistic, religious and geographical aspect of their destination. Wherever they go, they face these differences to start a new life. If we ponder deeply, we can trace out that the main reason of Bhutanese refugees' displacement was cultural imposition. They were following the Nepalese culture, and when they were obliged to follow Driglam Namzhag (Bhutanese culture), they revolted. Obviously, it resulted their forceful displacement (Ringhofer, 2002). The cultural differentiation is inevitable so, the fruitful and successful third country resettlement is questionable.

Third, they may not be accepted as the part of the particular countries and cultures, at least for the second generation. How much effort one gives, he or she is not fully accepted in the new culture, it needs to be the continuation of generations to become an outsider to be a part of a particular society (Bonney, 2013). So, the same process would also apply for the Bhutanese refugees all over the world.

In this scenario, this study would try to focus the Bhutanese refugees resettled in Norway via third country resettlement program. It is specifically focused in the Alta, Finnmark. How the process of resettlement has started, how they have been settled in a new place, would be the concern of this study. Similarly, this study would analyze the overall resettlement in Alta and their integration in Norwegian society highlighting the challenges they faced during resettlement process, and now.

Bhutan is comprised of three major ethnic groups: Bhutia (or Bhote), Nepalese and Assamese. The Bhutia cover around 50 percent, Nepalese about 35 percent and Assamese 15 percent². The official language of Bhutan is Dzongkha, a dialect of Tibetan language whereas Nepali and Assamese are also spoken among the respective communities. Similarly majority of people follow Buddhism, and Nepalese ethnic group follow Hindu religion.

² Retrieved from <http://www.everyculture.com/we/Afghanistan-to-herzegovina/Bhutanese.html>

In the late 18th and early 19th century, many Nepalese migrated to Bhutan in search of opportunities and farming³. They were Hindu by religion and followed Nepali culture. In the long run, they were recognized by Bhutanese authorities as Lhotsampa, and received Bhutanese recognition in 1958³. In this long time span, they grew in numbers and accepted as Bhutanese citizens legally as well as socially. But during 1990s they were threatened in their land culturally, religiously and linguistically, so they fled to take refuge in Nepal.

Bhutanese refugees with Nepalese origin are mostly displaced from the southern part of Bhutan. They all have evicted from Bhutan to Nepal through Indian route during 1990s (Hutt, 1993). After the 1988 national census, Bhutan began to identify Bhutanese nationals; on the other hand the Five Year Plan (1987-92) included a policy of ‘one nation, one people’ and introduced a code of traditional Drukpa dress and etiquette called Driglam Namzhag (Hutt, 2005). These made the southern people suffer because they were following the Nepali culture yet. But the government forced to apply it without any alternatives. On this basis, they were considered non-Bhutanese. At the beginning, the older people tried to prove their legality showing their legal documents form 1958, but they were caught and imprisoned by the security forces. When they were released, they were forced to sign the voluntary return form to Nepal⁴. Whereas, the young tried to protest³, but the government force killed, tortured, raped and made the people flee away (Ringhofer, 2002). In this scenario the southern Bhutanese fled to Nepal.

There have been many bureaucratic, minstrel and state level meetings for the repatriation of Bhutanese refugees but in vain (Kharat, 2003). Time and again, the Bhutanese authorities show their indifference to take the refugees back. The verification by Bhutanese authorities at the refugee camps on 2001 showed that they are not in the plan to take them back (Hutt, 2005). This verification proved that out of 12,183 individuals of Khudunabari

³ Retrieved from <http://bhutanestudents.blogspot.no/p/where-is-bhutan-if-refugees-are.html>

⁴ Retrieved from <http://www.hurights.or.jp/wcar/E/doc/other/Refugee/AHURA.htm>

Camp, only 2.5 percent were bonafide Bhutanese, thus liable to return back but the remaining were either emigrants, non-Bhutanese or criminals (Hutt, 2005). After this, though there were other talks too, but all hopeless discussions. This made the concerned UNHCR to think for another option – third country resettlement.

International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNHCR and other stake holders decided about the third country resettlement of Bhutanese refugees in November 2007 (Bonney, 2013). Australia, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, UK and USA were willing to take all the refugees in their countries and started by the beginning of 2008 (Banki, 2008). USA has offered the resettlement of 60 thousand refugees, and the other countries 10 thousand each out of 110 thousands⁵. By May 2014 about 90 thousand Butanes refugees have been resettled in third countries⁶. This is still going on and many refugees are waiting in their turn to move away. Despite some minor violence and protest at the beginning, third country resettlement has been successful⁷.

Starting from 2008, Norway has resettled 550 refugees by 26 March 2014⁸ in different parts of country like Vadsø, Alta, Trondhiem and Rogaland. It is a permanent solution for the Bhutanese refugees because there is no hope of returning back to Bhutan. Like other refugees in Norway from Africa and Asia, Bhutanese are also settled in different parts of the country mostly in the distant areas from its capital Oslo.

Norway is much different than Nepal and Bhutan where they were born and grown up. The language, the lifestyle, education system, legal matters etc. are different than they practiced. Since they were evicted from Bhutan due to cultural imposition, resettlement is certainly not easy in western and advanced Norwegian society.

⁵ Retrieved from <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/asiapcf/03/25/bhutan.refugees/index.html>

⁶ Retrieved from http://www.myrepublica.com/portal/index.php?action=news_details&news_id=75195

⁷ Retrieved from <http://www.bhutannewsnetwork.com/2013/12/analysis-nepals-successful-refugee-resettlement-operation/>

⁸ Retrieved from <http://www.nepalnews.com/index.php/news/32647-88,000-Bhutanese-refugees-resettled-in-third-countrie>

Statement of Problem

During the late 1980s, Bhutanese refugees' migration started because of cultural threat. Their migration was not the solution rather the beginning of their misery. Since they were from Nepalese origin, the migration was easy but its solution was very complex. They were recognized as refugees by UNHCR and placed in different parts of eastern Nepal. UNHCR could make the arrangement for refugees' living but could not force Bhutan to take them back since it was the concern and consent of government of Bhutan and Nepal. However, the bureaucratic talks were all unsuccessful in spite of UNHCR's mediation and repatriation efforts⁹.

International agencies and non-governmental organization like UNHCR, WFP and CARITAS and Nepalese Government were concerned about the peaceful repatriation of the refugees but that seemed a far cry. When it was sure that Bhutanese government would never take the refugees back in all numbers and full rights and freedom, UNHCR started settling the refugees in the third countries through IOM¹⁰. In spite of initial protest, the two decades long problem of Bhutanese refugees is resolving, as more than 90,000 of them have been resettled.

Starting from 6 refugees, resettlement continued through the quota system in Norway. Each of the refugees was given language and cultural classes, and social funding for living, studying and medical expenses. Technically, they have everything: a country, home, society and most importantly their identity, yet there are other aspects in practical livelihood.

Difficulties and challenges are inevitable which are to be studied and analyzed for future lessons. In particular, this study focuses the problems the Bhutanese refugees face as a 'refugee' and their integration in the new society.

⁹ Retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2011/04/2011420121856587955.html>

¹⁰ Retrieved from <http://nepal.iom.int/jupgrade/index.php/en/aboutus/18-topic-details/52-about-us-2>

The older generations were grown up in Bhutan but new generations evolved in the refugee camps in Nepal. Nonetheless, Nepal and Bhutan have similar culture, locale and society in contrast to Norway. Can they live in very different geography and climate easily? Can they cope up with the liberal and advanced social structure of Norway?

The integration of outsider to any society not only depends on the newcomer but also on the existing members of the society (Polzer, 2004). The Bhutanese refugees have resettled with the effort of UNHCR; IOM arranged the movement and the Norwegian government received them in the fixed and systematic quota. But, would they be accepted by the Norwegian societies with warmth? Would there be mutual social harmony among and between different cultures? These are the issues and problems this study would focus and try to answer with all means.

Objectives

This study has the following three objectives:

1. To understand Bhutanese refugees' settlement in Norway.
2. To analyze the perception of self and identity after resettlement.
3. To describe their integration process and the challenges they face.

Research Questions

The study endeavors at answering the following research questions:

1. How Bhutanese refugees in Norway perceive their identity?
2. What is the resettlement experiences in Norway
3. What Challenges they face in their integration in the new society?

Rationale of the Study

I have observed the Refugee Camp life in Nepal personally. Since I am in Norway now, and some Bhutanese have been resettled here, I am keen to know whether their miserable 'Camp Life' has improved or not. Therefore I chose to study the resolution of their problem and integration challenges they are facing in Norway. Although the social and cultural structure of Norway is better than they came from, they feel isolated from their relatives. This study would present their experiences; describe their social and cultural practices in the new land and their concept about the Norwegian society. As their identity is in between, the study would present their integration status, which would be beneficial for the rest of the resettlement process. Similarly it would be an insight for improvements and changes for the concerned parties like IOM, UNHCR and the NRC (Norwegian Refugee Council). There have been studies about the Bhutanese immigrants in US, Australia and Canada but Norway, so it is also a new topic.

Structure of the Thesis

This thesis contains six main parts with necessary sub divisions. The first part is introduction that begins with the introduction of whole thesis. The materials and methods adopted are described in second part. The collection of data, its processing, challenges and difficulties in the process, authenticity and limitations, and research ethics are all stuck on this part. Third part is literature review; it surfs the literature about refugees, especially Bhutanese. The studies about Bhutanese refugees resettled in other countries would also be analyzed to compare and contrast the settlement in Norway. The theoretical modality for the study is placed in fourth part. The migration, integration and identity theories are the main modalities in focus.

Part five contains results, analysis and discussions of the findings. Data do not speak, they need to be analyzed and discussed, however they suggest the findings. Thus, this part

would clear the ambiguity and present the findings and result of the study. The last part would conclude the whole study and present the final conclusion with recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

METHODOLOGY

Methodology is a means of planning and undertaking research by making choice on the case study, methods of data gathering and forms of data analysis (Silverman, 2006). This chapter includes the methodological approach for this research. As well, it includes the methodology for the whole research plan, for data collection and analysis. Since this study has used mixed method, this chapter defines its plausibility in present dissertation; and research ethics and limitations.

Context

This study deals with the process before and after the Bhutanese refugees came to Norway based on the experience of the refugees settled in Alta. During fieldwork, I lived with them for some time, talked with them and participated in their cultural and social activities. Though the time is more favorable than they first settled in Norway, challenges are still there for integration. I met the people of different origins, levels, ages and social strata; keenly observed their livelihood and social integration process. I have tried to present the challenges, difficulties and achievements of social integration process of Bhutanese refugees in this dissertation.

Mixed Method

Qualitative and quantitative research methods are the dominant design from the long time. Qualitative research is best when the purpose of the research is to answer ‘why, how, and what’ of people’s actions and associated meanings, beliefs, value and feelings (B. Berg & Lune, 2012). This information cannot be achieved via quantitative research method, which relies on numbers, and reluctance and acceptance. Quantitative research method is suitable for the observable entities using statistics or numerical data. “Quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things, the extents and distributions of our subject matter (B. L. Berg

& Lune, 2004)”. But in reality, everything is not measurable, and cannot be diluted to numbers like the feeling of happiness, satisfaction, sympathy and empathy. So it is not proper to study such matters.

Qualitative could only include *meanings, beliefs, values and feelings*, whereas quantitative encompasses observable entities using numbers and statistics. In this connection, both are mutually exclusive to each other if used separately, so mixed method has been used in this study because it was useful to discover what Bhutanese refugees think about the resettlement, a part of study of qualitative method, along with their difficulties and challenges they face in integration process via quantitative method. Mixed method, as its name suggests, is a mixture of both methods in research design, data collection and analysis for the valid answer of research questions. It helps to triangulate the findings and reach to valid and reliable conclusion. However, mixed method does not replace either of the methods rather it take strengths from both methods and minimizes the weaknesses going through single method as well as across method (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

Site Selection

The data for this study have been collected from Alta Municipality in Finnmark County Norway. The interviews were taken in the dwellings of the respondents. All of the respondents were from the same community, except two who were from another municipality in Finnmark called Vødso. One of the refugees living there were in contact with the researcher since they were in refugee camps in Nepal. So, Alta was chosen because the familiarity which helped to contact more respondents.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Twenty respondents were chosen as sample to collect data living in Alta. The respondents were chosen randomly except the resource person whom I knew before. With her help, we randomly chose available respondents of different age, gender, and race. Two

respondents were from another municipality nearby but living in Alta for two years with their relatives for study.

Data Collection

Primary data was collected through questionnaire attached in Appendix. Since I used mixed method, the questionnaire contained both yes-no questions and long analytical answer demanding questions. I stayed in Alta with the respondents for a week and observed their activities. I also participated in their meeting for cultural festival plan. The respondents were of various ages ranging from 14 to 67 years. The interview session was about one and half-hour; Nepali language was used for interview that they felt very convenient. I have known the resource person before she came to Norway, so may stay there was productive that I could observe all of their formal or informal activities. On the other, secondary data were collected through libraries and Internet browsing.

Data Collection Method

Interviews were conducted based on the questionnaire for primary data. The whole session was recorded and later I transcribed them using excel sheet. Similarly, observation was also done during the stay and, each and every detail was noted down at the evening. For the secondary data, libraries and Internet browsing were used. The studies about refugees, Bhutanese refugees, and Bhutanese refugees in Norway were studied and analyzed. The local newspaper of Alta, Altaposten was also accessed through Internet for secondary data collection.

Data Analysis

The collected data were first transcribed in Microsoft Excel 2011. The quantitative data were coded for further analysis and qualitative data were grouped based on theme, pattern and proximity. Descriptive analysis of data was performed using 'R' Software.

Further, Bar Diagram and Pie Chart used for interpretation were also created using the same software.

Research Ethics

During the data collection and analysis, the research ethics have been maintained. The respondents were given clear information about the purpose and nature of the study. They were clearly informed about the social, economical and cultural risk they might have as a respondent. The participation of the respondent was voluntary and their formal consent was taken before the interview. They were given right to participate in the process or quit at any time they wanted. They were convinced that the information they provided was confidential and safe; and they were anonymous in the study. While doing this, the research ethics given by Forskningsetiske Komiteer (National Committees for Ethic in Norway, 2010) was followed.

The whole interview session was recorded with their consent, and they were assured that the information they provide would not be misused or given to other people or organization that could harm them. The respondents were informed that the data taken was for academic research and that would not bring any negative impact in their life or social status in Norway. They also acknowledged that the study helped them to consider their status in Norwegian society and their own culture.

Limitations

The Bhutanese refugees have been resettled in different parts of Norway, and still there are more refugees to come. Different communities have regional, cultural and other social differences. My study is conducted in Alta; and there are other three settlements in whole Norway, thus the result cannot be generalized the situation for all the Bhutanese refugees in Norway.

In Alta more than 74 Bhutanese refugees live, excluding the newborn babies. I have interviewed randomly selected 20 respondents, which is hardly one fourth of the population. So the sample size can also be one of the limitations of this study. First, it cannot be claimed that whole of the refugees in Alta assume the same, and it cannot be generalized for the whole Bhutanese refugees in Norway as well.

The study is based on primary data like interview and observation, and secondary data like library research and Internet browsing. In all these activities, the role of researcher is vital. I also follow the same culture they do and speak the same language, and might have been bias about other cultures, or might have been influenced by the society and lifestyle.

Reliability and Validity

For any good and proper research, reliability and validity of the data are necessary. Time sources, cost, research design and other external factors determine the validity of data. On the other, the data, and the result from such data would be always same if they are reliable. “While reliability is concerned with the replicability of scientific findings, validity is concerned with the accuracy of scientific findings (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982)”.

In this study, to maintain the validity of the data, research design and method have been used with special focus. The data have been analyzed using the mixed method, so that the result remains valid. The triangulation has been maintained by adopting both qualitative and quantitative research design. The refugee cases are always serious, and human emotions can lead to misconceptions and misjudgments, so the use of quantitative proves its validity. Similarly, the expressions, sufferings and concepts of identity cannot be observed through quantitative ways, here qualitative method is useful.

Reliability is a condition to which extent the study can be replicable. For this, if the same method and situation is repeated, the same result should come as before. To maintain this, I made familiarity with respondents so that they can be comfortable with me. As I was

from the same culture group and speak the same language, I was easily accepted and given chance to participate in all formal and informal daily activities. I collected data being a part of their community, so am convinced that the data are reliable, and so are the findings.

CHAPTER 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

The third country resettlement of Bhutanese refugees only started the last months of 2007, so there have been very few studies about them. Whatever literature we find, most of them are about settlements in United States because more than 60 thousand refugees have been resettled there. Norway has resettled around 550 refugees till date, so few studies are found. There are some reports and newspaper articles about resettlement in Norway, so this study is new and significant. Thus, this chapter will analyze the literature about refugees, Bhutanese refugees in third countries and available studies about settlement in Norway.

“A refugee, we might say, is a person fleeing life-threatening conditions” (Shacknove, 1985). Persons only move away from their homeland when they have life-threatening conditions. So, a refugee is one who is away from homeland, and reached in another country to secure life. The UN Convention, Article 1A (2) defines clearly about their origin, possible causes and conditions:

A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or owing to such a fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country (qtd. in Shacknove, 1985). Hence, the Bhutanese refugees in Nepal also fall under this definition: they have run away in fear of persecution, moved to another country and they could not return.

The ethnic Nepalese in Bhutan were taken as political and cultural threat, the government implemented ‘Bhutanization’ policy in the 1980s aimed to strengthen their national identity. The beginning of a series of discrimination ended up with expelling the ethnic Nepalese from their own country by the end of 1990s (Di Marzo & Chapagain, 2012).

After several unsuccessful attempts of repatriation and local integration, third country resettlement was started.

There are different views about the third country resettlement, its reason and effect. Some argue that it is the policy of Bhutan to weaken the democratic movement just started. Shiva K Dhungana claims:

The Bhutanese government successfully used the international community, including the UN, to apply the colonial concept of ‘divide and rule’ among the Bhutanese refugees and weaken the movement in favor of its undemocratic and brutal act of expelling one segment of its population from the country and scattering them around the world, so that they will never be united to claim their right to return in the future again (Dhungana).

Dhungana claims that the resettlement in different parts of the world in small number further weakens the pro-democracy agenda. But the third country resettlement in different parts of the world is the long-term solution although seems coincide with the claim.

The case of Bhutanese refugees is a universal case that can be a precedent for the other refugee groups. So, some scholars argue that by resettling in the third countries, UN (or UNHCR) has established a wrong precedent for others who are struggling to go back to their countries with full rights. Mathew Joseph C. is one of them who argue that the international communities should pressurize the concerned parties for repatriation instead of focusing third country resettlement. Repatriation is the meaningful solution of refugee problems and that can create hope for other refugee communities waiting for solution¹¹. Joseph stresses that this case should not be studied as particular and different; the result can effect similar other cases. It would also psychologically weaken the side of the refugees, and support the side of concerned home countries of the refugees. However, the two decade long deadlock must have

¹¹ Retrieved from <http://www.americanbazaaronline.com/2013/01/06/bhutanese-refugees-and-the-politics-of-third-country-resettlement/>

some long-term solution, and when both Nepal and Bhutan turned a deaf ear to the refugees, third country resettlement was only remaining solution.

Christine Bonney, who has studied about the Bhutanese refugees resettlement in UK opines that neither local integration and repatriation nor third country resettlement is easy for the refugees. They have been already away from the society and any society they go is new, and have to start from the very beginning to assimilate. She writes:

Just as repatriation and local integration are complex processes and hold difficulties, so too does resettlement. Language barriers and employment difficulties prevent social and economic independence, and this can prevent refugees from properly integrating and contributing to their new society (Bonney, 2013).

But it depends the success of resettlement that where they are moving. The resettlement of Bhutanese refugees is in the developed countries, so it can be expected that not only in economic but also in the social level they would be at ease.

Though there are different opinions about the third country resettlement, some studies are positive about the resettled refugees in Norway. However, there have not been enough studies, so to conclude the same would be an exaggeration. APFANEWS interviewed a Bhutanese refugee settled in Norway with her three daughters and two sons, concluded that they have overcome the miserable life of refugee camp in Nepal and leading a comfortable and peaceful life. They have been helped by Alta Kommune in their daily expenses, and are happy to be part of the Norwegian cultural activities and running a ‘cool and perfect’ life¹².

But there needs to be more studies to uncover the truth about the actual conditions of the refugees. The challenges they are facing to anticipate the new society and social rules, the hardships they have to run their life smoothly, and the difficulties they are facing to be known as ‘Norwegian’ are yet to be discovered. Thus, this study is focused on the challenges and

¹² Retrieved from <http://apfanews.com/tag/bhutanese-refugees/page/4>

difficulties the Bhutanese refugees are facing to be 'citizens' from 'refugees'. Every society has its own rules and regulations, norms, values and traditions; how these Bhutanese refugees are going through these spheres, and how far they have reached would be analyzed in this study. Thus this would be a new study about the Bhutanese refugees being Norwegian, and the perception of refugees to be Norwegian.

CHAPTER 4

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section contains the theoretical approaches, which guide the analysis of collected data. No studies can be baseless; and the theories play the role of base. To study and analyze the integration challenges for the Bhutanese refugees in Norway, Migration, Acculturation and Identity Theories have been used in this dissertation.

Migration Theories

Migration is a movement of human beings from one settlement to other. There can be many reasons, forms and goals of migration. Mainly, it can be classified as ‘voluntary migration’ and ‘involuntary migration’ (Richmond, 1988). If people move for opportunities or facilities, it is generally voluntary migration. Generally, involuntary migration is forceful and can be for various reasons – slave trade, ethnic cleansing, human trafficking or any kind of life threatening conditions. In voluntary migration, only an individual or very small group of people moves, whereas involuntary migration is a movement of mass. Refugees are also the product of forceful migration who migrate when they are threatened in their homeland. As per the context, the theories discussed here are of involuntary migrations, and international migrations.

Ravenstein (1834-1913), a German-English geographer was one of the first modern person to define and describe migration (Richmond, 1988). He made ‘laws of migration’ based on his empirical knowledge as a geographer. It argued that “most migrations are over short distance, that they generate counter-streams and that they are related to technological development (Richmond, 1988). His ideas were the product of his personal observation and analysis during his visit, yet that was a truth at 19th century European world.

There were some other theorists emerged at the mid nineteenth century like Stouffer (1940,1960), Lee (1966), Mabogunje (1970), Tos and Klinar (1976) and others who caught

the zeitgeist (Richmond, 1988). As the societies were developing, the international boundaries were made systematic and international migration became complex. During 1980s and later, the countries, which were before sending its citizen to other countries, became strong enough to attract the migrants,

By the 1980s even countries in Southern Europe – Italy, Spain and Portugal – which only a decade before had been sending migrants to wealthier countries in the north, began to import workers from Africa, Asia and the Middle East. At the same time, Japan – with its low and still declining birth rate, its aging population, and its high standard of living – found itself turning increasingly to migrants from poorer countries in Asia and even South America to satisfy its labor needs (Massey et al., 1993).

So, as they claim, migration became a common phenomenon all over the world for the betterment, good opportunities and to uplift the social and economic status. The world is defined as a global village in this 21st century, and the national boundaries are widening. Societies are multicultural and world economy can hire anyone from anywhere. So, migration from one corner of the world to another has become a common thing, and to be more precise, a natural and inevitable process.

The definition of migration is not simple and single now; there are numerous theories from the past to present. In the past, national boundaries did not exist, if exist, were not considered a barrier to move freely. With the advent of such systematic border, ethnicity, culture, religion, and geography are considered important. This has directly affected the concept of migration. So, now, “Migration embraces all dimensions of social existence, and therefore demands an interdisciplinary approach (Castles, 2010). It should be studied and defined analyzing all dimensions. There are various reasons of migration ranging from study to knowledge, jobs to fame, and opportunity to freedom. "At present, there is no single,

coherent theory of migration, only a fragmented set of theories that have developed largely in isolation from one another, sometimes but not always segmented by disciplinary boundaries (Massey et al., 1993)".

Nevertheless, the whole concept of migration has changed but not the basic traits. There have been the emergence of new reasons of migrations but classical concepts of opportunity, facility and freedom are always the same. In spite of all these developments and complexity in the field of migration, the refugees, who are the product of forceful migration, suffer the same plight they suffer in the past.

The forceful migration as a refugee is a shame of 21st century, yet it is increasing. This is not for opportunity or betterment, but for escape from suffering. There are international organizations like UNHCR to assist in repatriation, but it is still a major problem of international politics. The common misconception about refugees is that it is only a temporal problem, and can be solved shortly, but "This inaccurate perspective is the most corrosive and damaging element that all refugee programs must confront" (Stein, 1981). There are many factors before such kind of eviction, and they create many evil outcomes. To analyze Stein's logic, we can take the example of Bhutanese refugees, when they were evicted from Bhutan, the chances of establishment of democracy in Bhutan has been pushed back for decades. Similarly, their first asylum Nepal has also been socially and culturally affected, and this kind of effects remains even with the third country resettlement.

"Involuntary migration leading to re-settlement in a non-adjacent country (and such migrations are not a negligible proportion) are not necessarily single-step movements connecting an origin and a destination point with a single line" (Kunz, 1973). Involuntary or forceful migration of refugees does not always begin with origin country and end with the asylum or vice versa. There can be more steps, complexities and hurdles. The Bhutanese refugees began with Bhutan and gathered in Nepal but still they have many third countries to

go with after two decades long pause. Thus Kunz claims that this directly or indirectly relates many other countries, agents or asylums.

Since the refugee issue has become a popular but serious issue, Richard Black observes that after 1950s there has emerged a new field called 'refugee studies'(Black, 2001). He differentiates refugees from other migrants:

The refugee is commonly distinguished from the economic migrant, as someone who is forced to migrate, rather than somebody who has moved more or less voluntarily. As such, a refugee is a person with particular experiences and needs, for whom special measures of public policy are justified (Black, 2001).

It becomes clear from Black's analysis and opinion that 'migration as refugee' is a special case and be treated differently. They should not be misunderstood as general migrants, but Black does not talk about their solution. He studies the cases of refugees since 1950s, and more focused about establishing 'refugee studies' as a separate school rather than solution (Black, 2001).

The trend of migration is in practice from the ancient time and the same is with refugees, "Ideas about sanctuary, asylum and refuge have an ancient lineage and are found in written records and oral traditions worldwide" (Marfleet, 2007). The different theorists analyzed here thus, define and describe migration with special focus on 'refugee'. Whether their definition, categories and touchstone make the Bhutanese refuses fit or not are discussed in chapter 5. Further, not only their categorization, but also their reasons to be refugee in the past, and the present scenario of resettlement is discussed in the very chapter.

Acculturation

We are social being and live in society. Social life is progressive and changes are inevitable. However, the natural changes bring positive results but if they are forceful and imposed, the results are negative. But in practice, the changes are generally imposed with

power, “For most indigenous aboriginal populations, changes have been imposed or produced invariably through legislation, colonization, war, disease and industrialization” (Berry, 2003). In modern time, people migrate, and this confronts two or more cultures at the same platform. The encounter of the cultures results many different outcomes. Acculturation is a condition or state when two or more cultures encounter. Though acculturation is neutral, there is always the possibility of one culture being dominant over others. At the same time, the confrontation of culture takes language, religion, food and dress side by side. According to Berry:

Acculturation is a salient form of social change. Certainly acculturation may well be synonymous with sociocultural change. Originally identified and conceptualized by anthropologists, the concept now is included in the research agenda of psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, social workers and educators (Berry, 2003).

All the aspects of human life, or in short, culture is a main issue in acculturation. When it comes side by side with other way of life, changes are inevitable, and the very changes can be said acculturation.

The first and formal use of acculturation was at 1936 when some anthropologists defined it. They coined the term ‘acculturation’ for the first time to define the encounter of cultures; they defined:

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936).

They stress ‘first hand’ cultural contact can cause change in both the cultures. In the justification that follows the definition, they distinguish ‘cultural-change’, ‘assimilation’ and ‘diffusion’ from ‘acculturation’. In this way the result of encounter of different cultures can be varied, and usually unpredictable. In this study as well, the confrontation of Nepalese

culture of Bhutanese refugees to Norwegian culture is studied whether there is subsequent change in host or guest culture or not.

After this formal definition of acculturation, there comes another, more precise definition from Social Science Research Council (SSRC) in 1954. They also repeat the basic ideas of Redfield, Linton and Herskovits (Redfield et al., 1936), but focus on the added concept of ‘change’ and ‘adaptation’. (Quoted in (Chun, Balls Organista, & Marín, 2003)).” Acculturation itself is neutral, but its result can be positive or negative for the host culture. The result depends on how much the new culture has changed itself or adapted the host culture. But, there can be the possibility of adapting new culture without changing own, or vice versa.

John W. Berry describes four stages of acculturation in his 1997 Journal “Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation”. When different cultures confront, there can be four probable outcomes (Berry, 1997):

1. Assimilation
2. Separation.
3. Integration.
4. Marginalization.

In *assimilation*, individuals do not care about their culture but interact with other culture, and even try to practice. They are no more interested to reform their own culture but influenced by new culture.

When individuals are not interested in others culture, and cling with their own culture, glorify their own values, they are in *separation* stage. Even they avoid other cultures in this stage.

Integration is a stage when individuals have interest on their own culture as well as new cultures. They maintain both cultures at the same time and engaged with reformation and glorification.

When there is no interest in cultural interaction with other as well as very little or zero possibility of cultural maintenance, it is *marginalization* stage. In it, they are rigid about their culture and turned a deaf ear about others culture.

Despite some criticisms, Berry's stages are quite useful and successful to study the confrontation of cultures. This dissertation has used these criteria to analyze the acculturation stage of Bhutanese refugees. Nevertheless, Berry's stages are apt to study any resettlement and/or migration issues.

Identity Theories

Identity is recognition of an individual in social science. At the basic level of identity, we are human beings and different from animals. The quality of self-awareness and capacity of self-reflection gives us human identity. It gives the basic information about his or her past, present, culture and social status. In fact, identity is merely a virtual thing that is volatile, flexible and abstract. It can change with time, place or a person's role. There are various ways of defining identity depending on the branch of knowledge like psychology, social science, cultural studies, natural science and so on. Like identity, identity theory has also many faces. But there are three kinds accepted by many: 1) place identity theory 2) social identity theory and 3) identity process theory (Hauge, 2007).

Harold M. Proshansky, an American theorist, was one of the first persons to discuss about place identity theory. He argued that every individual has attachment with his house/home – attachment with society, community or the culture of the region (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). In this process, an individual gets his self and identity joined with place consisting the physical world where individual lives; “These cognitions represent

memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behavior and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of physical setting that define the day-to-day existence of every human being (Proshansky et al., 1983)".

In this way, the writers connect the identity of individuals to their origin with all aspects like culture, livelihood, experience and everything that affects shaping identity. Though they use the term 'place', it stresses the individual or self-identity intertwined with society, family and community.

In this dissertation, the connection of place with identity is vital. Some of the Bhutanese refugees were born and raised in Bhutan and evicted to Nepal, which was also the origin of their ancestors. Others were born in the refugee camps in Nepal and have identical livelihood with Nepalese. When all of them be moved to another distant third country, will the connection with their 'place' be same for both generations; and how the older and younger generation will identify with their respective 'past places' in the new land are some of the issues discussed in the coming chapters with the limelight of 'place identity theory'.

When we answer 'who am I?' we generally take ourselves a member of any group, community or society. "People construct a perception of themselves and others by means of abstract social categories, and their perceptions become part of people's self-concepts (Hauge, 2007)". Identity, thus leads individuals towards society or social group we belong to. So, our social condition or status gives us identity, which is social identity. The Polish born British social psychologist Henri Tajfel and his student John Turner are considered the pioneer of social identity theory. Turner defines social identity as "individual's knowledge that he belongs to certain social groups together with some emotional and value significance to him of this group membership (Turner, 1975)". In the communal societies where social values are more important than individual, social identification is natural. People make assumptions according to what the society think –what other members or community think.

Many societies give importance to social concepts rather than individual feelings. Individual existence is nothing before society; the consensus, reality and truth are what the society makes. And, this thinking gives identity to its members. Literally speaking, a society does not think but the members do. So, social identity is the same for each member of the society. To create an identity based on society is ‘social identification’ for Tajfel, he further defines:

Social identification can refer to the process of locating oneself, or another person, within a system of social categorizations or, as a noun, to any social categorization used by a person to define him – or herself and others ... It will also sometimes be used to indicate the process whereby an individual internalizes some form of social categorization of the self-concept, whether long-lasting or ephemeral (Tajfel, 2010).

Tajfel defines that individual ‘internalizes’ some social concepts or ‘categorizations’ that remains for long time and affects in creating identity. So, the concept and internalized social categories create social identity of an individual.

Some other theorists believe that identity is not mere projection of place or society rather it is culminated through self-esteem, continuity and distinctiveness. This concept is known as ‘identity process theory’, and British scholar Glynis Breakwell is the forerunner of this theory. She proposes that identity should be focused on personal and biological factors like “accommodation, assimilation and evaluation of the social world (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996)”. This theory stresses that the personal attitudes and other traits go through different stages and processes, so is identity. Therefore, identity should not be taken permanent; it is the matter of personal biological traits. Breakwell writes in her 1996 journal defining identity process theory that:

This model of identity process is based on the argument that identity is a dynamic product of the interaction between on the one side the capacities for memory,

consciousness and organized construal which are characteristic of the biological organism and on the other physical and societal structures and influence process which constitute the social context (Breakwell, 1993).

Breakwell argues that individuals are different with each other in mental, biological and social nature, and even the continuous interaction with different social facts can create and recreate identity. She believes that identity is dynamic and influenced by internal traits as well as external social factors. “Identity can thus be seen as both a structure and a process (Hauge, 2007)” in identity process theory.

Individual is important and pivotal in identity process theory. The identity formation consists of two types of process: assimilation – accommodation, and evaluation (Breakwell, 1993). Individual takes the elements from society like values, attitudes or style in assimilation – accommodation process. It is an external process. He or she evaluates internally based on his or her experience, knowledge or idiosyncratic nature to create identity. So, identity is all in all personal creation according to identity process theory.

In this way, the identity process theory gives more value to individual than society or place unlike former theories. The application on Bhutanese refugees in Norway has been fruitful since Norwegian society is more individualistic than their previous asylum Nepal. How they have gone through the process of identity creation and how much the individualistic Norwegian society has influenced them in their new identity formation is discussed in the coming chapters.

In a nutshell, these three theories (migration, acculturation and identity) have been used as a tool to analyze the collected data from Bhutanese refugees in Norway. The concept of migration and refugee migration, integration in a new society with various probable outcomes, and formation of identity in a new society among different influences have been discussed in detail in Chapter 5. The main objective of this dissertation is to discover the

integration process of the refugees, and the challenges they face while doing so. And, these afore mentioned theories have been used as tool to reach the conclusion.

CHAPTER 5 RESULTS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter deals with the analysis of collected data using primary and secondary methods, and discussions of results. It begins with the presentation of the collected data and results, followed by discussions. All the research questions are answered in this chapter using data with the help of tables, figures, statistical results and charts. Migration, acculturation and identity theories have been used as basic tools of discussions.

Bhutanese Refugees in Nepal

Bhutanese refugees were living in refugee camps arranged by UNHCR and other international organizations in Nepal. They were restricted for movement outside the camps, employment and citizenship. However, they used to work as farmers, traders and teachers, but they were paid so less that salary of a refugee teacher was less than a national daily laborer (Adelman, 2013). Education level of refugees was good, about 13 percent of them had completed secondary school, and 35 percent could communicate in English (Banki, 2008). Furthermore, the revolutionary Maoist used them to fight against the government authorities during civil war in Nepal(Adelman, 2013).

Because of restriction of movement and employment, they could not use their free time. Some of them started knitting and other household business but those were all limited within their camps. Due to miserable camp life, they were very concerned about the future of their children. They wanted to go out of the camp in any condition - one of the respondents recalled. Thus most of them chose third country resettlement because repatriation to Bhutan was next to impossible and local integration was denied.

Resettlement in Norway

Since 2008, 550 Bhutanese refugees were resettled in Trondhiem, Rogaland, Bamle and Skien (Telemark), Bodø, Alta and Vadsø (Finnmark). Some of them are temporarily reside in Oslo for work. According to the respondents, there are about 74 refugees in Alta.

Glimpse of Bhutanese Refugees

Language

Nepali was the *lingua franca* of Bhutanese refugees, and very few old people spoke Dzongkha. English was also spoken in schools among the youngsters. As youngsters did not know Dzongkha and elders English, Nepali was the common language. When they settled in Norway, they learned Norwegian. I had interviewed 20 respondents in my field visit among them 17 could speak Norwegian, only four could speak Dzongkha, yet all of them could speak Nepali. The language of communication with parents was mostly Nepali but the youngsters going to school communicate in Norwegian even with other Bhutanese. They had started a Nepali language class in Alta for the children where they taught language and cultural activities supported by Alta Commune.

Religion

Hinduism is the main religion of the Bhutanese refugees. About 60 percent follow Hinduism, 27 percent Buddhism, 10 percent Kirat and approximately 3 percent follow Christianity¹³. Bhutanese refugees, more or less, follow the same structure. They celebrate all Hindu as well as Buddhist festivals like Dashain, Tihar, Holi, Buddha Jayanti and Losar. People started to convert into Christianity during their camp life. One of the respondents remembered that there were no Christian when they came from Bhutan. They celebrate festivals like Christmas and Easter.

¹³ Retrieved from http://www.hplct.org/assets/uploads/files/backgrounder_bhutanese.pdf

Cultural Practices

About 97 percent of the Bhutanese refugees were ethnic Nepalese by their origin¹³. Approximately the same ratio is in Norwegian resettlement. It follows the caste system in which Brahmin and Chettri are in upper position, elderly male is the head of the family, and females are supposed to do indoor jobs while males work outside (Sharma, 1978). Thus the family structure, marriage, gender roles, dress and food are similar to Nepalese tradition. They only marry within their communities with the consent of the family. Children live with their parents and take care of them on their old age. The males have higher position in decision-making and low workload than females. Most of the families are joint family, and they have Daal and Bhat as main dish.

Resettlement and Integration

This study analyzes and observes the integration of Bhutanese in Norwegian society. Bhutanese refugees have their own culture, and have been resettled in multicultural Norwegian society (Gressgård & Jacobsen, 2003). Integration can be analyzed through their living ways, employment, social contact and their own opinion. According to Berry, integration is such a stage of acculturation when both host and guest cultures are maintained with balance without dominating or prioritizing other (Berry, 1997). In the preliminary analysis, Bhutanese are happy to be resettled in Norway and they are struggling for bright future. The following pages examine their condition of integration on the basis of field data.

Employment

The Bhutanese refugees have easy access to job market in Alta. The respondents believe that social security fund from the commune is not necessary, and they can sustain on their own. When they were given introductory courses, they were trained in what they were interested. A thirty years old respondent said that he was a carpenter in Nepal. He got trained in the same field and started working just after his introductory class in wood and

manufacturing sector. Out of 20 respondents, 12 were neither student nor old, and they were all employed.

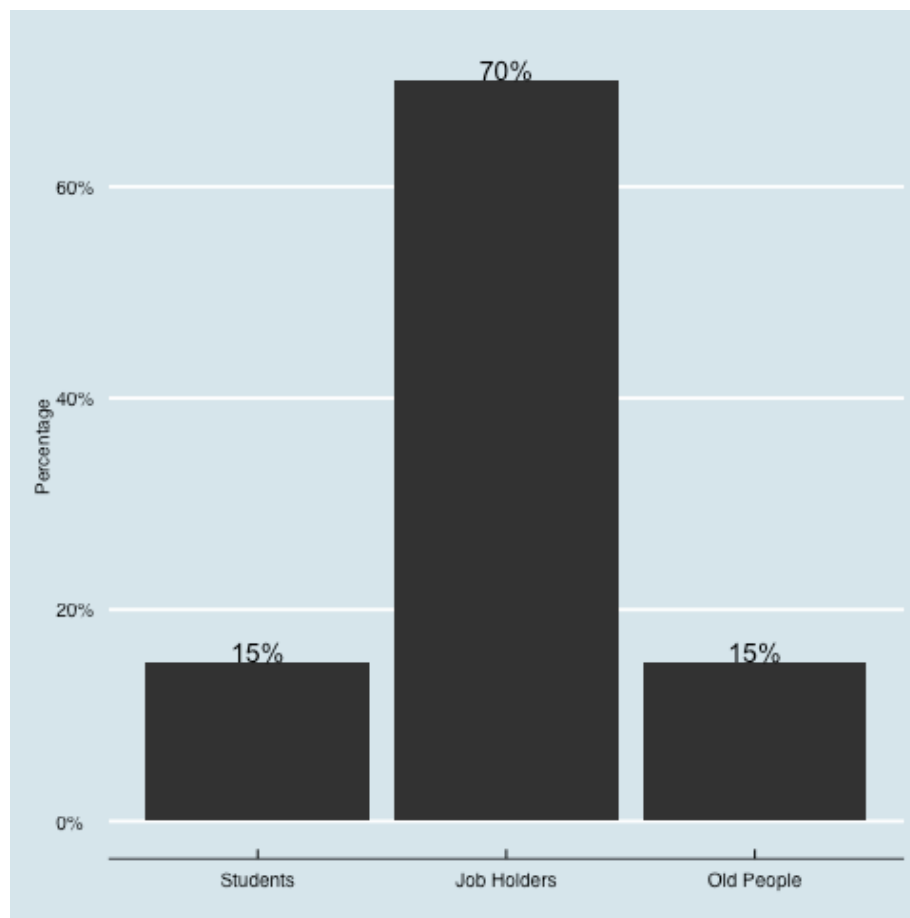


Figure 1 Overview of Respondents

Except the school children and old people, they have jobs and earn enough for living (Figure 1). They speak both Nepali and Norwegian languages, follow what they practiced, and do whatever their culture directs. They work side by side with Norwegians and other immigrants and they are happy with their job and its environment however they are not able to save enough. It shows that they have been integrated in the labor market properly.

Language

Language, being a window between cultures, makes integration faster or slower. Language is not only means of communication but also understanding of social etiquette, concepts, history and literature. This study focused the four languages that were used among

Bhutanese refugees: Dzongkha, Nepali, English and Norwegian. All of them could speak Nepali and majority of them could communicate in Norwegian as well.

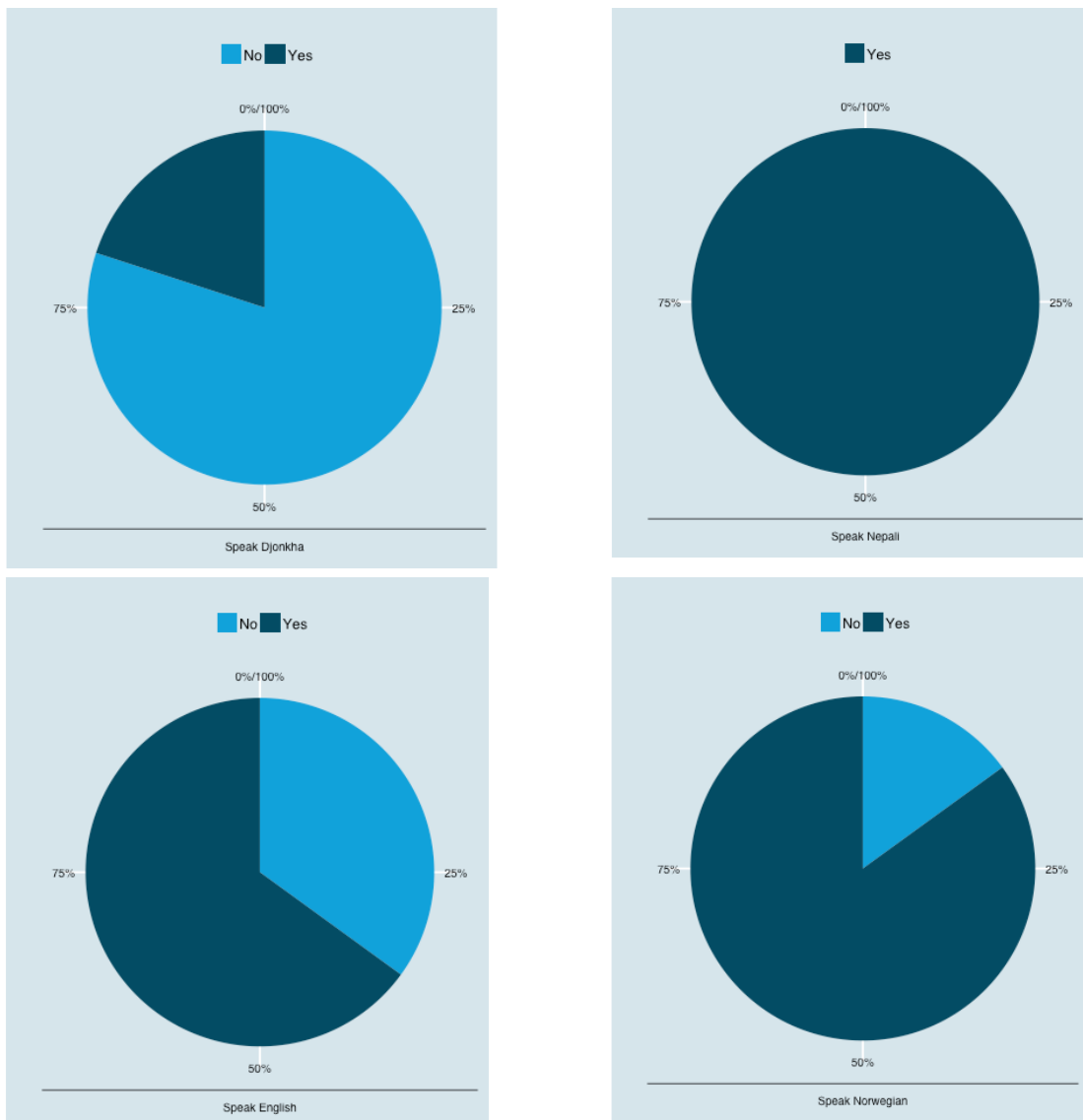


Figure 2 What Bhutanese Refugees Speak?

As we see in Figure 2, about 20 percent respondents could speak Dzongkha, and they are all old people who grew up in Bhutan. Only settled seven years ago, more than 85 percent could speak Norwegian, they have considered that knowing Norwegian language is very important. The Bhutanese refugees rarely speak Dzongkha on request but almost all of them speak Norwegian. A 21 years old student recalled that even old people are eager to learn Norwegian. When I asked another respondent in her mid thirties and working in hospital, she said:

I can hardly communicate in Norwegian. If my children can speak fluently like Norwegians, I think, they would be successful in life. My husband speaks better than me and he could acquire driving license, so we also try to speak Norwegian at home.

They are trying to adapt Norwegian language so that they can get all the opportunities. Those parents think that speaking fluently is a success, and they give examples of some office workers who could speak better and got such jobs.

It shows that they are already in the way of integration in Norwegian societies. The success and failure of integration depends on second generation of immigrants. If they learn and accept language and culture of the host, integration is easy and successful, if not it is a failure (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The parents or first generation of immigrants like their children to learn Norwegian language and culture. They have tried to make their children fluent in Norwegian by all means.

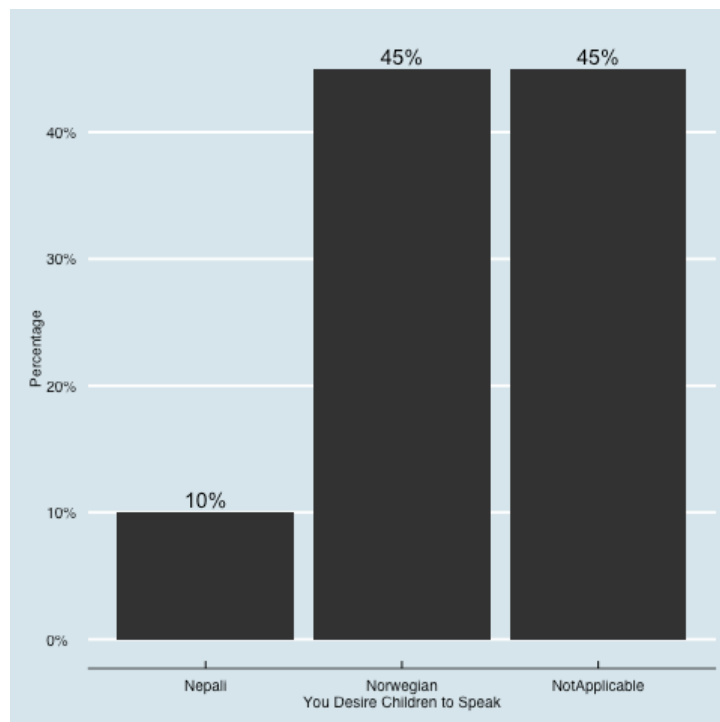


Figure 3 Parents desired children to speak

Figure 3 shows that about 45 percent of respondents desired their children to speak Norwegian while only 10 percent like them to speak Nepali. The remaining 45 percent do not

have children. As parents encourage their children to learn Norwegian, this can result fast and easy integration.

Social contact

When people from different cultures live in a same society, social contact is important to know each other. Norwegian people are considered individualistic and rather reserve (Gressgård & Jacobsen, 2003), in such society social contact may be difficult. Friendship and parties are important markers of social contact. Bhutanese refugees have sound social contact with Norwegians; they invite each other to private parties as well. About 95 percent of the respondents have Norwegian friends (Figure 4); they have good social contacts with each other in all age groups. These 5 percent are actually old people who even cannot communicate in Norwegian.

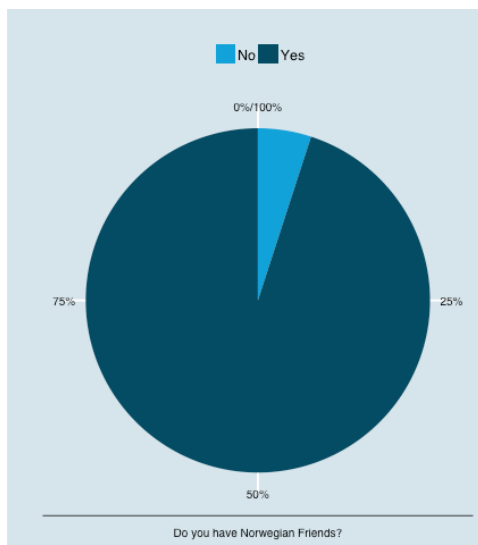


Figure 4 Respondents having Norwegian Friends

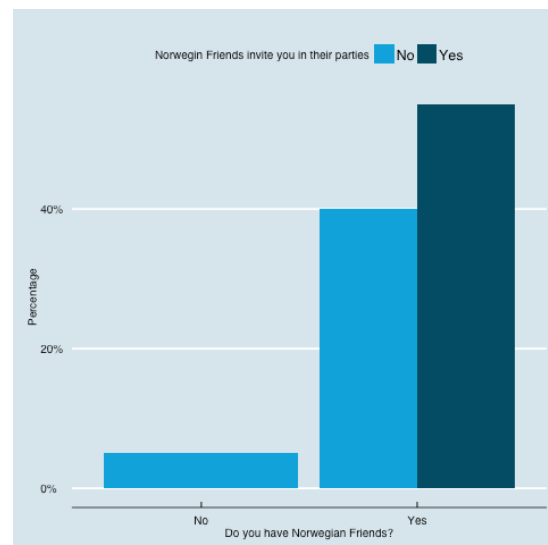


Figure 5 Respondents with Norwegian Friends and invitation in parties from them

Major of the respondents (55 percent of total) have Norwegian friends and were invited to their private parties (Figure 5). Only the intimate friends are invited in such parties, so it is clear that Bhutanese have good social contact with Norwegians.

Social Status

Social status is one of the measuring factors to which extent people are integrated in new societies. Anyone from outside is not taken as a part easily in any society. It was more complex in Alta because Norwegian people are considered reserve. But the respondents I interviewed felt that they have been treated with equality. An old widow of 60 noticed that Norwegians had treated them with respect from the beginning, she remembered the first day of their arrival in Alta. She came with her three children and found that Norwegians were waiting her with Nepali food (Daal - Bhat), they served the family and also arranged places for sleeping. Similarly among 20 respondents, no one felt discriminated being a refugee in Alta.

Alta with 19822 people¹⁴, getting a job in such small town is rather difficult. But all Bhutanese refugees have jobs. One widowed women working on-call job in a hospital said “There are also Somali refugees working, but local people prefer us because we are ready to work at any time while they mostly live on stipends. I am a replacement worker and work about 4 days a week, it shows that they like my job”. They are proud that they could have earned their living. In Nepal they were not allowed to work but in Norway they have jobs and enthusiastic to work. Norwegian government provides social benefit for the jobless but they have not taken that after they finished language classes.

The Bhutanese were maltreated in Nepal, rebuked as ‘refugee’ and underpaid for any work. Gopal (changed name), an 18 years student said that he had never thought of this respect in Norway. The term ‘refugee’ was a common chastisement for them in Nepal. In Norway, they are getting citizenship soon which is an achievement for them. It signifies that the host culture is also accepting them, and the integration procedure is in action properly.

¹⁴ Retrieved from <http://www.ssb.no/en/befolkning/statistikker/folkemengde/aar/2014-02-20?fane=tabell&sort=nummer&tabell=164165>

Access to Health and Social Facilities

The Bhutanese refugees in Alta have access to all the facilities provided by the commune and government. They received emolument during their introductory courses just after they arrived Norway, the student and old people are still receiving the money. They have equal access to such facilities like the native Norwegians without any prejudice. Khina Maya (62, changed name) had been sick before she came but in 2010 she had life threatening kidney problem. She was immediately taken to hospital at Oslo by an air ambulance. Her daughter said that she would have died the same day if they were in Nepal; Khina Maya is recovered now.

The refugees have been given funds to arrange their cultural activities. Further, the commune has helped them to conduct Nepali language class for children. Above all, they have got equal opportunities in study support, health insurance, business and others. They have been accepted in the Norwegian societies for equal access to such things that paves the way for proper integration.

Access to Political Rights

Bhutanese refugees have enjoyed all the political rights like freedom, movement, jobs and opportunities, language, citizenship and religion after resettled in Norway. None of them have become a political leader yet but they have participated in Norwegian parliamentary election, 2013. Unlike Norway, when they were in Nepal they were restricted of movement, job and citizenship; in Bhutan they were forced to follow the national religion, wear national dress and speak national language. The collected data and facts suggest that they are in the right path of integration with the expectation of positive result.

Discussions and Observations

Along with collected data from questionnaire, I keenly observed their situation, activities and attitudes while I was staying with them. They looked happy and content to be a

‘citizen’ rather than ‘refugee’. They have respect for their host and struggling for the bright future. But I noticed that the youngsters were using more Norwegian language than Nepali. The school children behaved as if speaking in Norwegian is a trophy for a winner, and parents were proud of children’s language efficiency. It is good for some extent for integration, but eventually it may lead to assimilation instead of integration.

During my observation, two little children of 7 and 9 years did not understand the meaning of *Pahuna*, a Nepali word for guest, and their mother explained them in Norwegian. Only after 7 years, they seemed influenced by Norwegian culture and language much. In the interviews the parents answered that they wanted to follow their culture side by side with Norwegian ways but at practice they wanted their children to learn more Norwegian ways and culture. They see language learning as greatest achievement and boast with others that their children did not know or speak Nepali. They might have either confused about their role as parents to maintain both cultures or influenced by the Norwegian ways of living, which is considered far better than theirs. On one hand, the elders are concerned about their culture, on the other hand they want youngsters to be ‘Norwegian’, and this can be a hamartia in integration process.

Interviews based on the questionnaire in Appendix, show that the integration process is successful and Bhutanese refugees think they are accepted in the society. At surface, it is true but subtle observation suggests that there are still some problems and challenges. They have highly prioritized Norwegian language and culture, and that might lead to assimilation. This also would help to weaken their language and culture. For example, Alta commune helped them to conduct Nepali language and cultural class, but it ran only for two months. They could not find another teacher for last six months. However, the refugee community has not tried to arrange another teacher because everyone is busy in maintaining their economy and language fluency.

In the interviews and observations, the parents said that the greatest challenge of their integration is language fluency, and if it were achieved, the integration would be easy. I observed that the youths have mastered Norwegian language and are successful at school or work. But knowledge of language also comprehends culture; they are imitating Norwegian culture as well. Nepali culture advocates the joint family – parents look after their children, and the grown up children look after the aging parent living in the same family. However, in Alta I saw the Bhutanese refugees starting to imitate Norwegian ways and trying to set up their own families when they became 18 years old. They were also advocating co-stay of unmarried boy and girl that is highly criticized in Nepal or Bhutan.

In a nutshell, the integration of Bhutanese refugees in Norway is positive and successful. They have settled properly with full rights, freedom and opportunities as a citizen – now elevated from ‘refugee’ – they believe that their future is bright. But I observed some challenges that may lead the process to difficulty – they seem assimilating rather than integrating. But this anticipation needs a rigorous study and long time span to come into effect. However it can be possible that the Bhutanese can be more concerned about their culture and ways of life in the coming days like Somali refugees in Norway felt (Fangen, 2006) and remain integrated rather than assimilated.

Resettlement and Identity

“Refugees to Citizens” – it is the greatest change in Bhutanese refugee identity. But this change encompasses other aspects than this technical difference – what they think of themselves. Bhutanese refugees were Nepalese by ethnicity, so they were treated as other in Bhutan (Hutt, 1996). In Nepal they were identified as refugees from Bhutan but now in Norway they are becoming Norwegian citizen. Identity of a person is attached with history, society and place (Proshansky et al., 1983). The Bhutanese were considered Nepalese in Bhutan and Bhutanese in Nepal, what would they be called in Norway is a complex question.

It certainly have changed with the change in place, society and time because identity is a dynamic aspect that changes with thought, situation, mentality or age (Breakwell, 1993).

The identity of Bhutanese refugees is always complex for researcher and for themselves. Some of the respondents thought they were Bhutanese because they were born in Bhutan, while others felt that they were Nepalese since they speak Nepali language and follow Nepalese culture. Those who thought themselves Bhutanese were born in Bhutan and became familiar with place, environment and locale, so they identified themselves with Bhutan. But most of them think they were Nepalese because their origin was Nepal, their forefathers had migrated from Nepal to Bhutan.

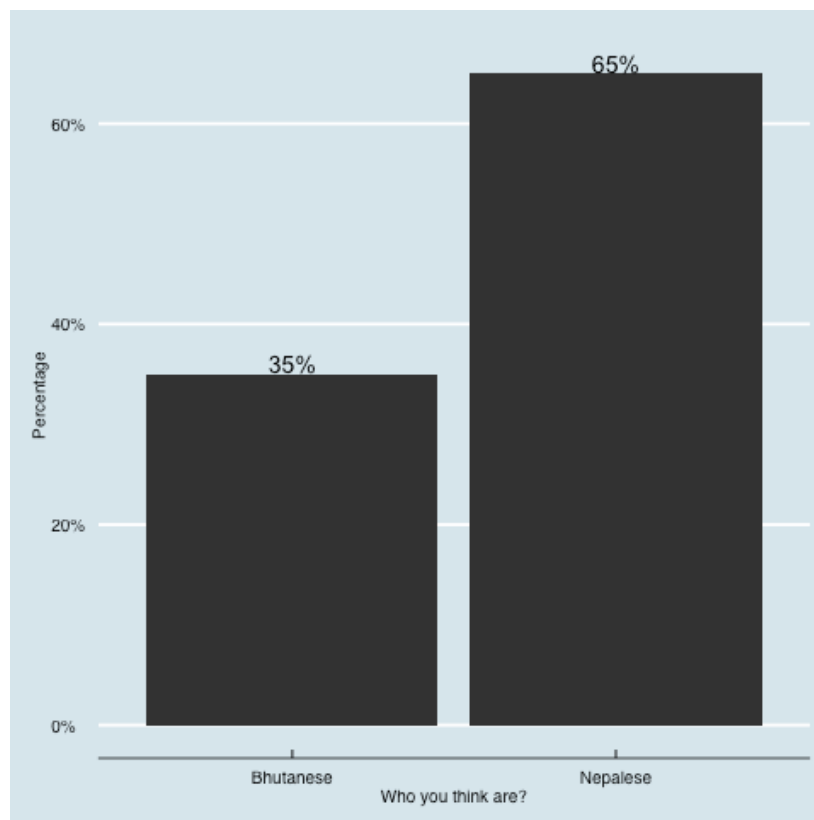


Figure 6 What the respondents think about their identity

In Alta, 65 percent of the respondents thought that they were Nepalese and rest thought them as Bhutanese (Figure 6). They were given three options in the questionnaire: Nepalese, Bhutanese and Norwegians. Majority of them wanted to identify themselves as Nepalese, where they were denied any sort of integration, but still are not ready to identify

themselves as Norwegians. When I asked Mahendra (21, changed name) about the same, he replied that though they were rejected recognition from Nepal, they were still Nepalese by language, culture and ethnicity.

None of the respondents thought themselves Norwegian, and this identification would have created hurdles if only they were rigid. Contrary to their identity, many of them desired their children to be known as Norwegians.

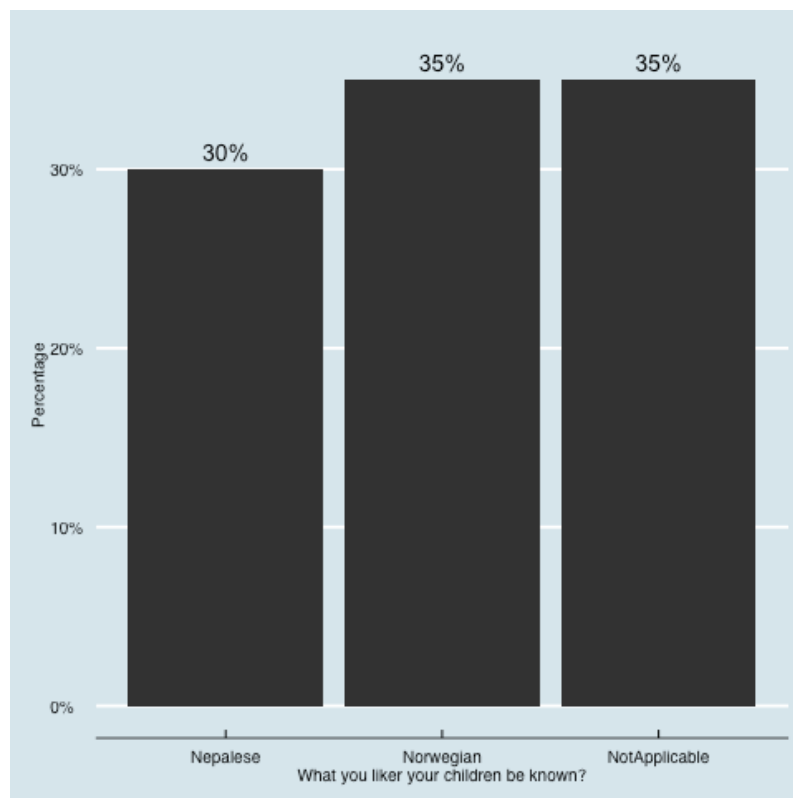


Figure 7 Responds desire their children to be known

About 35 percent of respondents wanted their children to be known as Norwegian while 30 percent still believe that their children to be known as Nepalese (Figure 7). They want to change their identity in the coming generation who would be brought up with Norwegian ways and culture. Since identity is dynamic and is always in process, the second generation of Bhutanese refugees may form a new identity as Norwegian.

On the other hand, the respondents are not clear that their identity of 'Bhutanese Refugee' has changed or not. Many of them think they are Nepalese but their stereotype

‘refugee’ is same in the official registration in Norway. Dhan Bahadur (47, changed name) said that in official matter he is called Bhutanese refugee but in social interactions he is called Nepalese. Although, others are also confused about their identities, they all believe that it would change soon since their living condition, social status and mentality has been changing.

Besides their perception about identity, they are embedding into a mixed cultural society. Out of 20 respondents, 18 were Hindu and celebrated all Hindu festivals. At the same time, after they came to Norway they are celebrating Norwegian festivals as well. About 60 percent of respondents who feel as a part of Norwegian society celebrate Norwegian festivals. Further, about 15 percent of respondents also celebrate Norwegian festivals despite they do not feel as a part of Norwegian society (Figure 8).

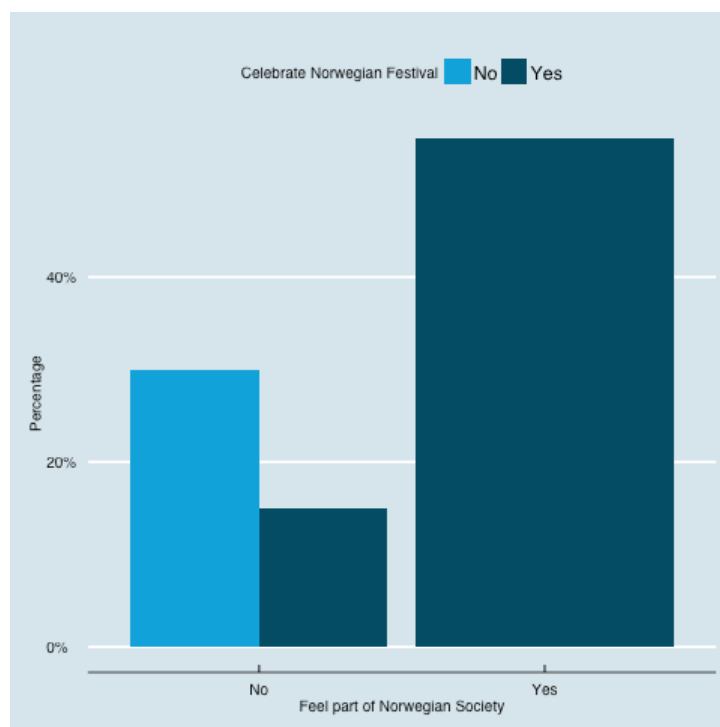


Figure 8 Respondents feeling as a part of Norwegian society and celebrating Norwegian festivals

They were aware that the participation in Norwegian festivals would not affect their culture. Bishnu (31, changed name) said, “we celebrate both festivals and I never think that celebrating Norwegian festivals would influence our culture because both celebrations are

different in nature and time, so I enjoy both.” Her opinion is representative because both cultures can coexist, the time of celebration, nature and types of the festival allow Nepalese to attend and balance for both. However the coexistence of culture might have made Bhutanese refugees confused, they can be identified as Nepali speaking Bhutanese in Norway, like Deepak (19, changed name) suggested.

Discussions and Observations

In their daily activities in social networking, personal contact and communication with other immigrants, they presented themselves as Nepalese, rather than refugees or Bhutanese refugees. But the youngsters want to be Norwegian by following language, life style, gender roles and family structure. They are in a different situation that any theory could define. On one hand, the adult people are more Nepalese but the young are Norwegians, on other hand both adult and young wanted to present themselves as Nepalese before Norwegians and other immigrants but within themselves they compete to be more Norwegian. This paradoxical thinking is making the question of identity very complex. In the formal interviews through questionnaire, it was clear that some adults and old respondents thought they were Bhutanese, whereas young respondents liked to be known as Nepalese, and none of them thought they were Norwegian. However, in my observation I found that they desired to be known as Norwegian. This can be the influence of host culture, respect for Norwegian people and society for resettlement or the step towards integration.

Despite the fact that some of them wanted to be known as Bhutanese, none of the respondents wanted to go back to Bhutan if given chances. Many older people have desire to visit their birthplace, but the authorities have strictly warned them that they cannot go back to Bhutan until they have Norwegian citizenship. However, they liked to visit Nepal and a group of 10 people had gone just after my field visit. In this sense, they are more connected to Nepal than Bhutan.

In my informal group discussion session, they wanted to be known as Norwegian rather than derogatory 'refugee', though they think they are Nepalese in ethnicity. So they can be called Norwegian-Nepalese, but it may take some more time for them to be clear about their identity. But the young respondents and many adults were proud for speaking Norwegian fluently. Most of the time youngsters pretend not to understand Nepali, and parents explain them in Norwegian. When asked about their plan to take Norwegian citizenship, they replied that they would get it soon when their stay in Norway completes 7 years and some of them had already applied too.

During data analysis, I contemplated whether their identity has been changed or not. Technically the Bhutanese refugees now are Norwegian citizens, but in reality they are in confusion because of their past identities. First, they were evicted from Bhutan and failed to repatriate. Youths were born in refugee camps in Nepal and had never seen Bhutan. Neither they follow mainstream Bhutanese culture nor they speak Bhutanese national language 'Dzongkha'. Second, they could not be Nepalese because they were discriminated and humiliated as 'refugees' and were not locally integrated despite following the same culture and language.

Third, they were new to Norway who came just about 7 years ago. Technically they are able to get Norwegian citizenship but denoted as 'refugees from Bhutan' by the authorities. In addition, Norwegian culture, social view, family structure, gender roles, marriage and individuality all are new for them.

Therefore, the Bhutanese refugees would remain in confusion for the present generation; the new generation would be easily identified in Norwegian societies as 'Immigrant Norwegian'. In the future, it is possible that they would either gradually lose their former culture and identity of Nepalese ethnicity and assimilate in Norwegian societies, or

remain as integrated. But it may take several generations to be accepted by the core Norwegian societies.

To sum up, Bhutanese refugees in Norway are integrating in Norwegian societies faster than expected. They have succeeded in language learning, cultural practices, employment and all the social and governmental facilities. They do not have many challenges for integration except the language fluency, which they acknowledge themselves. But the researcher's observation pointed out that they might be going towards assimilation beyond integration. Integration is a balanced state of coexistence of host and guest culture where both cultures are treated equally whereas assimilation is a state of glorifying host culture disregarding own (Berry, 1997). The interviews with the respondents show that they are in the right path of integration but my observation forecasted some elements, which suggest that they are assimilating the Norwegian culture. Nevertheless, Bhutanese refugees in Alta have been well integrated overcoming all the challenges; they have been legally migrated forming a new identity as Norwegians, but that can only be possible with the emergence of new generation.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

Bhutanese refugees in Alta are on the right path of integration in Norwegian society and have overcome the challenges. Besides the old people, they have mastered Norwegian language and culture, are employed and self-sustained. At the same time they are concerned about their own culture and maintaining their ways, religious practices and cultural festivals. They believe that they are part of Norwegian societies and expect that the coming generations would be known as Norwegians. They do believe that their identities as 'refugee' have changed to 'Norwegian citizen' but still they feel that they are either Nepalese or Bhutanese.

Though the Bhutanese refugees have overcome the challenges to integrate in the Norwegian society, their acculturation looks more like assimilation than integration. Integration advocates for 'salad bowl' where all cultures are equally exist and operate with respect to each other, but my observation is skeptic that the Bhutanese are in the 'melting pot' and diluting with Norwegian culture gradually. The collected data suggest the successful integration of Bhutanese but researcher's subtle suspects that they are melting before Norwegian culture.

This dissertation has used both quantitative and qualitative methods so that triangulation was possible. Although quantitative data show successful integration of Bhutanese refugees, observation and in-depth interviews hint assimilation. Unlike informal interaction and observation, answers during formal interviews do not provide complete realities as the results are from formal contemplation, caution and wisdom. So, qualitative analysis through in-depth interviews and observation were also used to uncover both sides of reality. Although they surpassed the challenges of integration process, the subtle observation and in-depth interviews warn for self-assessment, and correction before assimilation.

This study recommends that integration of any immigrants needs to acquire proper and systematic knowledge of host culture and language. It is highly suggested that one should not give less priority to own culture, which may lead to assimilation instead of integration. In addition, an in-depth study of resettled Bhutanese refugees about their cultural, linguistic and social transformations, which are linked with identity, should be made to understand integration. Such study would not only guide the resettlement process of Bhutanese refugees waiting for resettlement but also benefit resettlement of other refugee communities. This study would be considered successful if it adds some insight for the concern parties, international originations and refugee communities.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Place:

General Information

Name :

Age :

Occupation :

Education Level :

Literate School High-School Graduate Illiterate

Gender:

Male Female

Read and Write

Nepali English Norwegian Dzongkha

Marital Status:

Married Unmarried Divorced Widowed

Resettled Date:

With family member Alone

Settlement in Norway

Did you take any introductory courses before you came to Norway?

Yes No

Did you have any introductory sessions when you came to Norway?

Yes No

How long did you take the course?

... Months

What type of course you attended?

Did you learn the language, history, social behavior, religion, laws, rule and regulation of the country?

How useful was the introductory course in your practical life?

Are you getting any special facilities from the Norwegian government for being a refugee?

Yes No

Do you like your children marry Norwegian?

Yes No

Are there any marriages between Bhutanese and Norwegians?

Yes No

Social condition

Do you speak Norwegian?

Yes No

If yes, which level?

Basic Satisfactory Fluent

Which language your children speak?

Neapali English Norwegian

Which language you like them to speak?

Nepali English Norwegian

Do you have Norwegian friends?

Yes No

How do they treat you?

Who is your next door?

Norwegian Bhutanese Refugee Other

Are you invited to the Norwegians' parties?

Yes No

Do you feel you are discriminated by local people just being an immigrant?

Yes No

Do you feel, you are a part of Norwegian society?

Yes No

Are you planning to get Norwegian citizenship?

Yes No

Economic status

How many members are there in your family?

Do you work?

Yes No

Do you earn enough money to support your family?

Yes No

Are you able to save money from your earning?

Yes No

Are you satisfied with your job and pay?

Yes No

Resettlement Experience

How did you feel after resettling in Norway?

What impressions the weather made when you arrived Norway?

Do you think UNHCR/IOM is doing the right things by resettling Bhutanese refugees in third countries?

What differences do you find among Bhutan, Nepal and Norway?

If Bhutan allowed Bhutanese refugee to return home are you interested to go back?

Yes No

If yes why?

In your opinion, what must be done so that Bhutanese refugees get better and easy integration into Norwegian society?

Do you think the resettlement process is challenging? Why? Why not?

Do you think fluency in the Norwegian language will help you to integrate in the society?

What are the challenges for social integration of Bhutanese in Norway? (Cultural, Economic, Social, Legal)

Identity

What do you think of yourself?

Bhutanese Nepalese Norwegian

Do you like to be known as Bhutanese?

What do you want your children be identified as?

Norwegian Bhutanese Refugee Nepalese

Is your identity as Bhutanese refugee changing?

Culture

Which religion do you follow?

Hindu Other

Which festivals you celebrate?

Do you celebrate Norwegian Festivals?

Yes No

Do you think Norwegian culture influencing Bhutanese culture?

Yes No

Which language do you prefer to communicate in home or with other Bhutanese people?

Nepali English Norwegian

More Specific Questions

Do you talk about Bhutan or Nepal with your children?

What do you think about the intermarriage, is it good or bad?

Is new generation becoming more Norwegian?

Will it affect Bhutanese tradition and culture?

As you are resettled in Norway, do you feel you are becoming more Norwegian?

In your opinion, what is mean by becoming Norwegian?

Do you feel like you are forming new identity rather than identity of being refugee?

Do you think you are adopting more Norwegian culture and tradition?

Are you happy?



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